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INTERVIEW



TIM PEAKE

"I sympathise with schoolteachers"

IT ALL ADDS UP

Let's teach the maths of home ownership

"I CAN DO THAT?"

Change lives with smart careers advice

PAST TENSE

Why do we make students quit history at 13?

TEACHER RETENTION

The profession's problem with motherhood

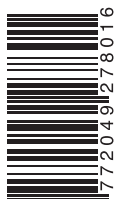
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Transition, SEN and Literacy Teacher,
Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy

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FROM THE EDITOR

“Welcome...



As expected, the exhibition floor at the Bett 2025 show this past January was dominated by AI-related offerings. There were a considerable number of companies showing off the ways in which their AI solutions could help teachers and leaders take care of their student assessments, of course – but also some less obvious applications of AI, such as delivering feedback, creating resources and... helping to catch dastardly vapers in the school toilets, apparently. You can view our roving reporters’ highlights of the event at Teachwire, via tiny.cc/ts142-L1.

Inevitable though the AI Bett blitz was, it still served as a striking reminder of just how hard and fast companies operating in the edtech space – from the biggest players, to the newest start-ups – have gone all-in on the technology. A fortnight earlier, the AI industry had received the blessing of no less a figure than Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who assured us that, “*AI is the way to secure growth, to raise living standards, put money in people’s pockets, create exciting new companies and transform our public services.*”

And sure, some of those AI demonstrations at Bett did seem impressive, making short work of marking and grading tasks that might otherwise take hours to complete. So why do so many – myself included, admittedly – feel somewhat wary in response to AI’s rapid adoption and integration into the daily technologies we’ve come to rely on in our professional and personal lives?

For me, it’s partly to do with how the same generative AI technologies – albeit via a number of different models – readily enable activities both innocuous (whipping up a list of maths questions, summarising the lengthy minutes of yesterday’s staff meeting) and nefarious (deepfakes, financial scams, cheating at homework assignments). Maybe I’ve got it wrong. After all, there were plenty of teachers, employers and public officials expressing similar sentiments about this new-fangled ‘internet’ thing back in the mid 90s.

But then I read that the US and UK were the only non-signatories to a declaration calling for policies “*ensuring AI is open, inclusive, transparent, ethical, safe, secure and trustworthy*” at the recent Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris. 60 other countries signed the pledge – China, India, France and Canada among them – so why didn’t we? The US provided no official explanation. According to a spokesperson for Starmer, “*We felt that the declaration didn’t provide enough practical clarity on global governance and [didn’t] sufficiently address harder questions around national security and the challenge that AI poses to it.*”

Let’s hope that the UK government receives the clarity it demands soon. Because a little openness, ethical awareness and transparency with respect to AI technologies doesn’t seem like too much to ask.

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser
callum.fauser@theteachco.com

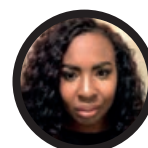
On board this issue:



Gemma Hargraves is a history teacher and A Level examiner



Kit Betts-Masters is a lead practitioner for science



Nikki Cunningham-Smith is an assistant headteacher



Aaron Swan is an English teacher



Alex Frappell is a career and aspirations lead



Andy Lewis is a director of RE

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teach
SECONDARY

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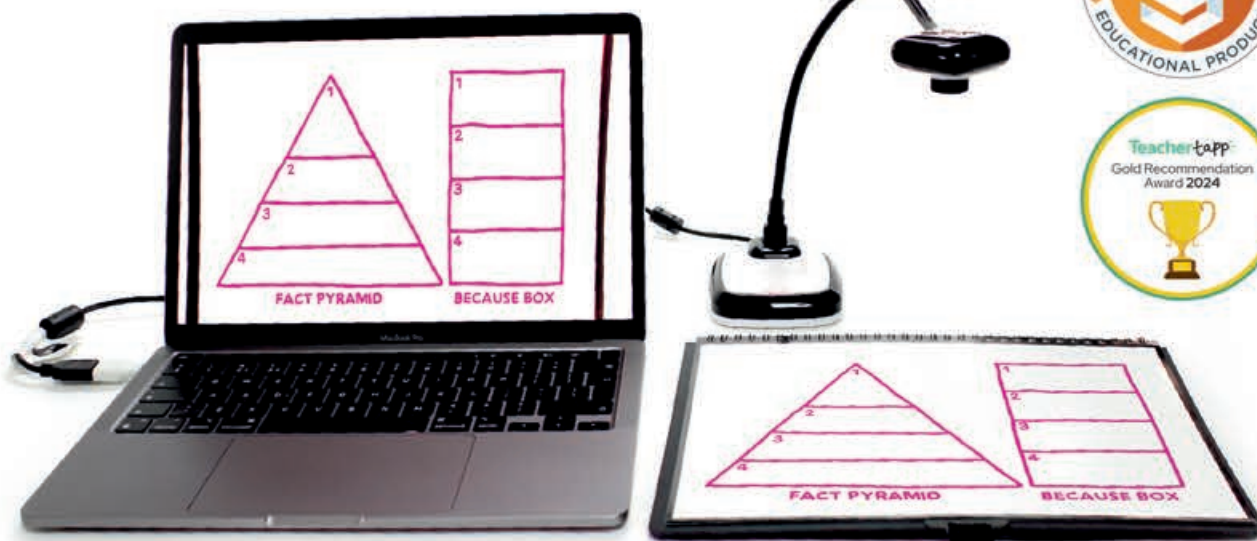
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The newsletter

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

The UNINFORMED teacher's guide to...



DEEPSEEK

Until January this year, the tech industry's party line on generative AI was that it needed vast amounts of data, huge storage capacity and significant processing left to function. At which point, an AI assistant bankrolled by a Chinese hedge fund called DeepSeek knocked on the door and said, "Is that your lunch? Think I'll eat that."

Because DeepSeek, you see, is a genuinely open source AI model – meaning researchers can check its reasoning and adapt it to specialist purposes – that costs far less to run, and can even be installed on local hardware so that it doesn't require an internet connection.

That said, DeepSeek does get coy when you ask it about the events that took place in Tiananmen Square on 4th June 1989, reportedly responding with "Let's talk about something else." And then there are the allegations from OpenAI, the owner and developer of ChatGPT, that DeepSeek may owe its existence to the theft of trade secrets.

So while it might give your Y9s yet another handy way of suspiciously aceing those history essays, we can at least chuckle at the delicious irony of how AI models themselves now appear to be brazenly copying each others' homework...

DO SAY

"...whatever's on your mind. I'm here to help you!"



DON'T SAY

"Name a country with six letters, starting with 'T' and ending with 'N'"

BEAT THE BUDGET



Who is it for?
KS3

What's on offer?
Videos highlighting different aspects of the six-year, Defra-funded Stronger Shores project to examine how undersea habitats protect coastlines from erosion and flooding. These are accompanied by PowerPoint presentations, quizzes and activities for classroom use.



How might teachers use the resources?

To support teaching around climate change, sustainability and marine biology, and as a prompt for discussions around the roles pupils and schools can play in preserving coastal ecosystems.

coastal ecosystems.

What are we talking about?

The Stronger Shores curriculum-based toolkit from Durham Wildlife Trust

Where is it available?

durhamwt.com/learning-and-education-packs

WHAT THEY SAID...

"I thought [the detention] was unjustified. Trying to foster aptitude through negative reinforcement doesn't really work"

Parent of a pupil attending Stewards Academy in Essex, where top set pupils scoring less than 90% are issued with detentions

Think of a number...

£7,400

Projected secondary school spending per pupil in 2024/25 – down from 30% in the 2000s, and from 50% in the early 90s

Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies

70%

of secondary schools require parents to provide five or more branded items of school uniform

Source: DfE

£13.5 billion

is spent by local authorities every two to five years on repayments for private finance initiative infrastructure projects

Source: National Institute of Economic and Social Research

ONE FOR THE WALL

"A nationalist encourages us to be our worst, and then tells us that we are the best"

Timothy Snyder



Student voice

As the profession waits with bated breath for the Labour government to unveil its Curriculum and Assessment Review, a group of 11 youth leaders has been running a parallel grassroots curriculum review of its own.

The group, operating under the 'Youth Shadow Panel' banner, has now published its own interim report, having invited KS1-KS5 students in England to share their likes and dislikes with regards to the learning and assessment processes in place at their schools. After issuing a call for evidence that ran from 02/12/24 to 12/01/25, the group gathered 556 responses.

The findings indicate that many respondents struggled with anxiety and stress stemming from a reliance on final exams. While some believed exams to be a fair means of assessing students, most expressed a preference for coursework – with some suggesting that there may be a place for skills testing focused on the application of critical thinking, analysis and the ability to interpret data.

The report further highlights submissions from KS4 and KS5 who felt that what they had learnt at school wasn't adequately preparing them for their futures, pointing to a lack of teaching around cookery skills, consumer rights, and how to manage their personal finances.

The group has also announced a series of 'Shadow CAR' in-person discussion events that will take place across March 2025, at venues in Bristol, Dudley, Durham and London, as well as two live events that will be hosted online, further details of which can be found at tinyurl.com/ts142-NL3

Download the interim report via tinyurl.com/ts142-NL2

SAVE THE DATE

SPEECHES AND CORRESPONDENCE

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



THE SPEECH:

[Education Secretary delivers keynote speech at Bett 2025](#)

WHO? Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education

WHERE? Bett 2025, ExCeL London

WHEN? 22nd January 2025

“Tech can power the future of learning when children get to school. But first we must close the digital divide. Because at the moment, tech is delivering new incredible opportunities for some children, whilst others are left disconnected. So we’re acting decisively to support all schools.

We recently launched new digital service called Plan Technology for Your School. It’ll help schools make the big decisions about what technology to buy and how to use it properly. Our Connect the Classroom programme has reached almost one and a half million pupils already. Working in partnership with more than 3,700 schools, we have funded new wireless networks so that kids can get online safely, securely and at high speed.

Technology could do so much for so many children. Artificial intelligence, virtual reality, adaptive learning – they are breaking down barriers and lifting up life chances.

The evidence is there for all to see. The Education Endowment Foundation found that digital tech in the classroom can accelerate learning by two to three months, and we’ll build on that to make sure that the use of tech in our classrooms is based firmly on the most accurate evidence. Firmly on what the latest neuroscience tells us about how children learn.”

THE RESPONSE:

[ASCL responds to inspection reform proposals](#)

FROM? Patrick Roach, NASUWT General Secretary

REGARDING? Ofsted’s proposed reforms to the school inspection framework

WHEN? 3rd February 2025

“Some of the proposals Ofsted has put forward may have merit, but others fail to address the root problems and could make the experience of inspection even worse...

Whilst we welcome the Chief Inspector’s commitment to securing a constructive and collaborative relationship with the profession, we are concerned that the continuing high stakes system of inspection and accountability will do more harm than good.”

NASUWT
The Teachers’ Union

15 MAY 2025 Schools & Academies Show | 26 JUNE 2025 The Northern Education Show | 3-4 JULY 2025 Festival of Education

15 MAY 2025

Schools & Academies Show
ExCeL London
schoolsandacademiesshow.co.uk

If you’re a school leader looking to boost student outcomes while managing costs, you’ll find plenty of innovative ideas, informative discussions and inspirational talks taking place at this day-long event, which is set to include an extensive exhibition floor, a packed CPD agenda and opportunities to obtain one-to-one practical advice from representatives of the DfE.

26 JUNE 2025

The Northern Education Show
Bolton Stadium Hotel
northerneducationshow.uk

Free to attend for school leaders, administrative staff and local government representatives, The Northern Education Show will give key education decision-makers the chance to meet directly with educational suppliers and hear first-hand from government officials about the latest policy trends and developments that are poised to shape the profession.

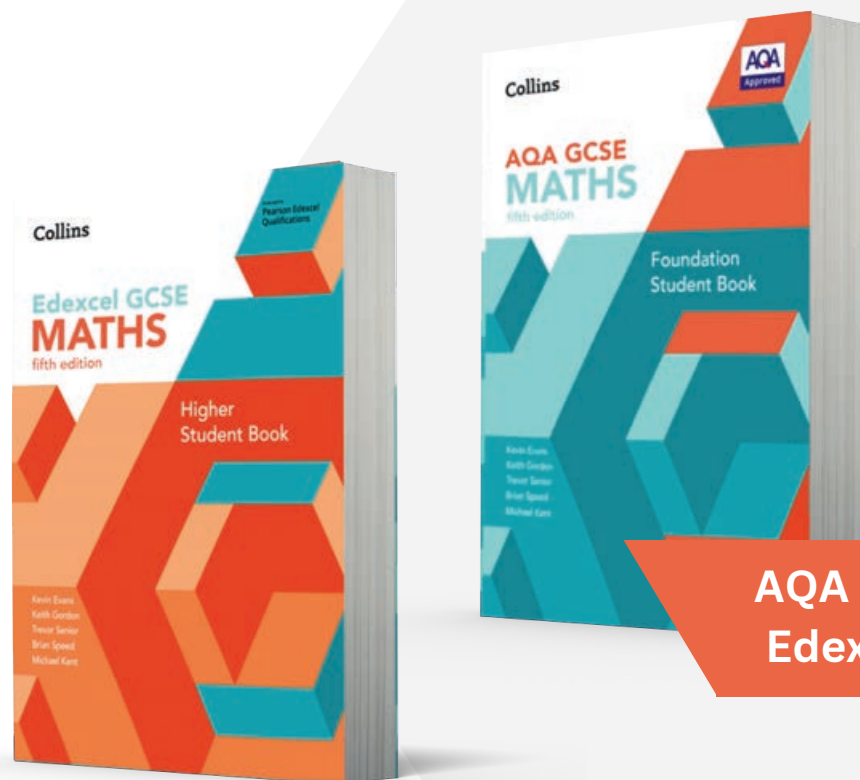
3-4 JULY 2025

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

This annual gathering of educators will once again be hosting a series of thought-provoking discussions and engaging speakers across some 40 on-site locations. Visitors will have ample opportunities to share their ideas, experiences and practice with like-minded – and indeed very differently inclined – teachers from across the country within relaxed indoor and outdoor surroundings.

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VIEW
SAMPLES





Get Into Film

ARE YOU THERE GOD? IT'S ME, MARGARET (2023, 106 MINUTES, PG)



CURRICULUM LINKS:
English Literature, PSHE, RE

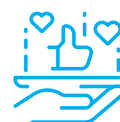
It's 1970, and 11-year-old Margaret finds her life turned upside down when she moves from the bright lights of New York City to the suburbs of New Jersey. While she quickly finds a group of new friends, there are bigger things for her to worry about. Her Jewish father and Christian mother expect her to figure out which religion she belongs to, she misses her grandma – and, most importantly, she hasn't got her period yet and barely needs a bra.

As the school year goes on, Margaret finds herself pulled in a million different directions without yet having a clear idea of who she really is...

Discussion questions:

- What is a 'coming-of-age' film? Can you name any examples?
- Why do you think 'fitting in' is so important to Margaret? Can you relate to the peer-group pressures she experiences?
- Where do Margaret and her friends get their information on womanhood from? Is this information helpful or harmful?
- What do we understand about Margaret by listening to her prayers?

Head online to intofilm.org to stream this film for free, download the accompanying film guide and read our Curation Team's blog post, which examines how the film addresses the complexities of puberty (tinyurl.com/ts142-NL1); be sure to also keep an eye out for Into Film's dedicated resource page to mark International Women's Day on March 8th



Like and subscribe

Who's been saying what on the socials this month?

Natasha Porter OBE @NPorter_(X)

You know what is REALLY boring and uncreative and bad for the most vulnerable kids? Kids getting away with disrupting lessons. Never checking for knowledge, so building on insecure or absent foundations. Inconsistency between different teachers and lessons.

Vic Goddard @vicgoddard (X)

The practice of manipulating your school intake through messaging and immoral behaviour is not limited to any type of school. It is unique to those lacking integrity and true care for the whole community they serve. It is not an academy issue.

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TEACHER TALES

True stories from the education chalkface

Did you pack your own bags?

Some time ago, our school used to regularly host a group of visiting students from Moscow every other year. At the end of one such visit, I offered to transport the group to Heathrow for their early morning return flight.

I already had the minibus keys, having taken a team of athletes and their equipment to a district sports event the previous day. They finished late, however, meaning that some items of said equipment had to be left in the minibus overnight, and returned to the PE store when time allowed.

The 12 Russian students, plus their two teachers had all been staying with different families, so we had to wait until everyone arrived at school that morning before we could set off. Time passed, to the point where the party was at risk of missing their flight. Eventually arriving later than planned at Terminal 2, I hastily dropped off my passengers and their assorted luggage.

Arriving back at school, I was then informed that in my haste to ensure the group made their flight, I'd inadvertently given one of the students not just their own luggage, but also a holdall containing three starting pistols, which had caused some alarm at airport security. I was then duly summoned to attend Heathrow Police station to explain to the stony-faced officers why I'd transported firearms onto the airport premises...

Pulling my leg

Reponse to a Y7 general knowledge test question:

What are Doberman Pinschers?

A pair of trousers

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

A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

#34 YOUR TYPE

A Few Minutes of Design YOUR TYPE

NAPOLEON

Look at the word shown below. Write your name in the same typeface. Are there clues to any letters that are in your name, but not in the sample?

Practice drawing the common elements of the letters. What do the curves look like? The line thicknesses? What gives the letters their unique character?

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David Voisin is a head of MFL

DICTIONARY DEEP DIVE

Join **David Voisin** on a rich, and sometimes surprising journey through the points at which literacy, language and vocabulary intersect...

PARDON MY FRENCH

Michelin-starred chef Tom Aikens once congratulated a contestant's creation on a TV cooking show by saying, with a tinge of humour, "Le bonbon est très bon". He could have added 'bon appétit', But the root 'bon' also exists outside the culinary world. 'Bonhomie' is a friendly feeling, felt in good company. It stems from 'bonhomme', the French for 'goodman'. If you want to describe a confident person displaying a certain sense of charm and sophistication, you may choose to employ the term 'debonair', meaning literally 'of good air'.



TEACHING TIP: 'I THINK, THEREFORE I SPEAK'

With the arrival new governments come new initiatives and new foci. When it comes to education, the current government's focus on oracy is generating quite a bit of ...talk. Notwithstanding that rather facile pun, it's ironic that we educators can sometimes struggle to articulate what 'oracy' actually means, and whether schools should impose prescriptions, such as 'Answer in full sentences'.



Anyone familiar with the work of the great linguist David Crystal will know that spoken language very much differs from written language – and that 'standard' doesn't necessarily mean 'good'. Because when it comes to spoken language, the consensus among linguists is that there's no such thing a thing as 'standard' spoken English.

Language performs both a *cognitive* and *social* purpose. Dialogic isn't just about *what* students say, but also *how* and *when* they ought to speak, based on the relevant context, audience, purpose and societal conventions (in the 'school context', for instance).

If you need any further convincing that language deviating from formal parlance can be just as intellectually demanding (or even more so), then watch the British freestyle rapper Chris Turner. Rap's prescriptive use of rhymes imposes huge demands on the brain, so there's a lesson to be learnt here. Norms and prescriptions, when used meaningfully, can be good for language.

Purposeful, well-directed use of connectives (originally intended for philosophical purposes) can help students better sequence and articulate their thoughts. Language thus becomes a form of thinking; not just an expression of it.

LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS



In his book, *The Unfolding of Language*, linguist Guy

Deutscher reminds us that the English language is replete with metaphors – many of which have latterly evolved into 'dead metaphors'.

In addition to being a useful literary tool, metaphors often bear witness to our linguistic and biological evolution. Thus, many of them are evocative of the three-dimensional world we all inhabit (see 'rise', 'grow', 'descend') or its physical elements ('pour', 'erupt', 'wave', 'blow'). They can also reflect various social and cultural constructions ('to save', 'bank on', 'capitalise', 'espouse', 'adopt'), as well as illustrate how our intellect and language have grown together co-independently.

The use of metaphors is often linked to the expression of abstract concepts. The complexity of the words involved – when it comes to memorisation, for instance – isn't usually predicated on said words' length or orthographic intricacies, but rather on the level of abstraction we're presented with.

As Deutscher puts it, "*The concrete to abstract did not happen on home turf.*" It transpires that this transfer from abstract to concrete terms was first enabled by the borrowing of French or Latin terms. Indeed, 'transpire' means 'sweat' in French, while 'metaphor' literally means 'transfer' or 'carry across'. In this way, metaphors help us to both complexify language, and alleviate our understanding of abstract concepts.

SAME ROOT, DIFFERENT WORDS



The **Godfather trilogy** comprises three films



A **trident** is a three-pronged spear



A **tripod** is a contraption with three legs ('pod' here meaning 'foot')

ERA DEFINING

With the National Curriculum set to undergo extensive reform, now is the ideal time to extend the history offered at secondary school – and have students study the subject for longer, says **Louise Burton**...

Labour's imminent curriculum review, "*Will breathe new life into learning for all children, by ensuring that what they are taught is engaging and allows them to achieve and thrive at school*". That's according to a spokesperson for Bridget Phillipson, as quoted late last year by *The Daily Mail* (see [tiny.cc/ts142-TP1](https://www.tiny.cc/ts142-TP1)).

It also proposes that all secondary school students will follow a National Curriculum up to the age of 16 – and that this should include academies and independent schools, marking a break with the recent past.

'History for all'

The history taught in schools today can be traced back to an Ofsted report on history teaching in England commissioned by the Conservative-Liberal coalition government back in 2011. This 'History for all' report (see [tiny.cc/ts142-TP2](https://www.tiny.cc/ts142-TP2)) highlighted some serious issues. The fact that history was mostly being taught in primary schools by non-specialists, it argued, meant that, "*An increasing number of students are taught by a specialist history teacher for no more than two or three of their 11 years of compulsory education.*"

This wasn't helped by many secondary schools only teaching history at KS3 for three years – or even as little as two, so that students could spend three years on their GCSE courses – thereby potentially resulting in some giving up history at the age of 13.

It remains the case that history is typically an

optional subject when students take their post-KS3 options, thus bringing many students' formal study of history to an end once they've turned 13 or 14. As it stands, pupils in most English schools study history for around three hours per fortnight.

A chronological understanding

England's last major set of curriculum reforms, which were led by Michael Gove and took effect in schools from 2015, were criticised by many as 'list-like', and even

"We've seen an increase in the range of topics studied... and acknowledgement by the government that teachers have brought their subjects alive with 'knowledge-rich teaching'"

'jingoistic', with their emphasis on British history. They did, however, set out a programme of study, followed to this day, that is chronological in approach and covers four broad periods of British history. Within each area, teachers can decide what to teach and in how much depth, and there's also scope for wider world studies and some local history.

Personally, I've found that this emphasis on developing a chronological understanding of history has resulted in less focus on 'skills based' approaches and the associated obsessions with source analysis and interpretation, and reduced those long periods of time spent on one enquiry.

Over the last 10 years, there's been a growing focus on curriculum content, and demands on teachers to develop coherent curriculum plans with substantive knowledge at their core. The introduction of a '200' year rule' as part of the 2015 reforms broadened the range of historical periods studied by pupils (though a number of history teachers will maintain that this came at the expense of loading the curriculum with too much content).

On the whole, there's been an increase in the range of

topics studied – which now regularly span medieval, early modern and modern – more appropriate short-depth studies and longer-term development studies, and acknowledgement by the government that teachers have brought their subjects alive with 'knowledge-rich teaching'.

This can be seen in Ofsted's latest subject report report for history, which notes how "*The trend towards erosion of history as a distinct subject appears to have been reversed.*" (see [tiny.cc/ts142-TP3](https://www.tiny.cc/ts142-TP3)).

'Canons of knowledge'

More recently, however, there have been criticisms of the existing approach. For example, a September 2024

OCR review led by former education secretary, Charles Clarke (see [tinyurl.com/ts142-TP4](https://www.tinyurl.com/ts142-TP4)), stated that "*What is learned needs to be focused far more on the world as it now, is and is going to be, than on the past.*"

Another talking point to have emerged ahead of the curriculum review is a perceived need for more teaching around critical thinking. The riots that took place across 27 British towns and cities during summer 2024, following the stabbing of three young girls in Southport, underlined for many the importance of educating the public, and particularly young people, in how to detect disinformation.

In an interview with the *Telegraph* following the riots, Bridget Phillipson claimed that, "*It's more important than ever that we give young people the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge what they see online.*" (see [tiny.cc/ts142-TP6](https://www.tiny.cc/ts142-TP6)).

Campaigning organisation The Media and Information Literacy Alliance subsequently welcomed these words as "*A real prospect for media and information literacy to be properly built into the future school curriculum.*" (see [tinyurl.com/ts142-TP7](https://www.tinyurl.com/ts142-TP7)). Charles Clarke would presumably agree, given his argument in the OCR review that the school curriculum "*Should be more about enabling young people to develop the skills and confidence to meet the challenges which they will face in the future, than simply acquiring the canons of knowledge which have been built up over centuries.*"

Value judgements

The historian and philosopher Hannah Arendt once asserted that we must separate children from public, political life as they are not yet adults. Doing so doesn't have to mean ignoring what's going on in the world; rather, it requires teachers to make value judgements and select those forms of knowledge that will enable children to *become* part of the adult world.

A curriculum based around contemporary employability or life skills will diminish what young people are capable of learning and understanding, thus narrowing their educational experience. A rich history curriculum – one requiring engagement with the struggles and issues of the past – is among the best ways of addressing modern concerns regarding young people's political engagement and suggestibility.

In a recent lesson on Elizabethan

England, we asked our Y8 students to consider how far this era could be considered a 'Golden Age' for England. This required them to know about Drake's circumnavigation; the Renaissance in England; the Religious Settlement; the Poor Laws; and religious plots against Elizabeth I.

By learning about these topics (acquiring substantive knowledge), students could then discuss their own interpretations of Elizabethan England and how these may have changed over time (disciplinary knowledge). There then followed some good debates over who benefited from her reign and why some groups rebelled against her, as well as a better understanding of the changing relationships between monarch, parliament and the Church.

This was no 'Gradgrindian' approach to absorbing facts. Indeed, history should be for *all* students – and for at least until they

are on the brink of adulthood.

Historical consciousness

Charles Clarke's comments around the value of historical knowledge and other spheres of academic knowledge seem to be part of a worrying trend. In my view, the government would do well to extend compulsory history teaching in schools up to 16, and ensure that all students have been taught about the history of the place they inhabit – in our case, Britain. Without that, how can young people have a sense of what it means to *be* British?

This doesn't have to preclude learning about the wider world or Britain's international impact – nor indeed the role that migration has played in the creation of British society. But Britain is a place with a particular history, and a specific set of institutions and traditions. This knowledge has to be the foundation upon which our students build their engagement with the contemporary world.

Writing in *Tes* back in 2006, history teacher Christine Counsell once observed that, "*The historical consciousness of these children matters, because they are human beings. History teaches us the meaning of human-ness. These pupils too can experience the awe and humility that a disciplined, stretching study of the past confers.*"

I hope the government agrees.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Louise Burton is a history teacher in Buckinghamshire and a member of the Academy of Ideas Education Forum.

IN BRIEF

► WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

The teaching of history has changed considerably over the past decade, though it's still the case that all students would benefit from receiving more than three hours of history instruction per fortnight, as many do at present.

► WHAT'S BEING SAID?

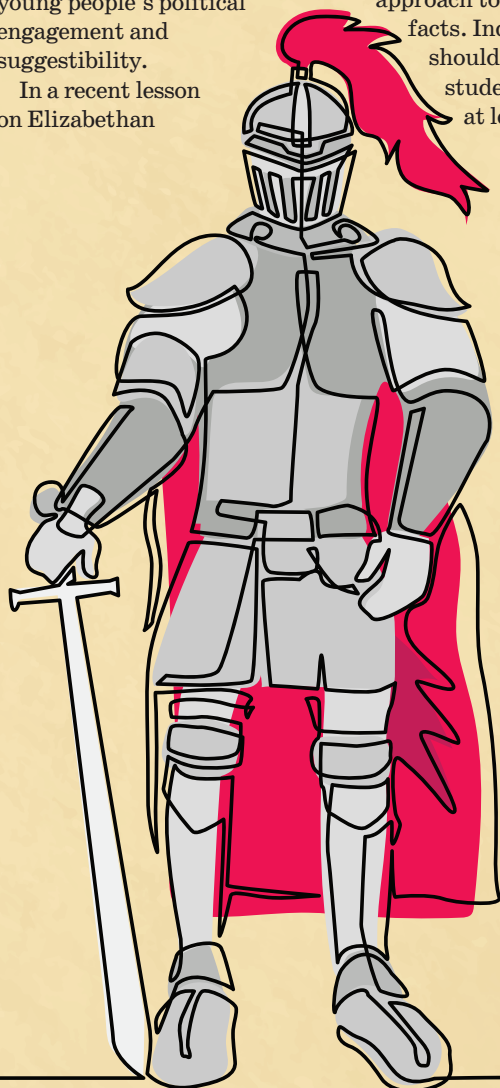
Ahead of what's billed as a far-reaching review of the National Curriculum by the Labour government, a number of voices are now pressing for course content – in history and elsewhere – to have a greater emphasis on contemporary relevance, in contrast to the current teaching of a more UK-centric history presented in some quarters as 'jingoistic'.

► WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING?

While there is some common agreement around the need for better teaching of critical thinking skills, a renewed focus on contemporary concerns and perspectives risks undoing the progress made in making the history curriculum more knowledge-rich.

► THE TAKEAWAY

Students need to be taught history for longer. The subject is too important to be dropped at the age of 13-14, if we want young adults to possess a certain level of knowledge and understanding of the society in which they live.



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a result, **91% of students feel confident enough to ask for help in their lessons**.

More broadly, flexible online learning platforms allow students to access their classes from those locations that suit them best – at home, in an inclusion room or even in a medical setting. This flexibility, paired with adaptive technology, removes traditional classroom barriers and prevents learning gaps from growing.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Digital solutions will continue to evolve, offering even greater opportunities for engagement and inclusivity. One significant development on the horizon is the increased use of virtual reality and immersive learning tools. These technologies will allow students to explore complex concepts in ways that are more engaging and memorable. Additionally, AI will play a larger role in identifying gaps in learning early, providing real-time data that teachers can use to make immediate adjustments and personalise their teaching approach yet further.

As technology advances, the focus will be on partnering with education providers that can leverage innovative tools to personalise education, ensuring that every student's needs are met, regardless of their background, circumstances or abilities.

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*Student Voice survey, Dec 2024



It's widely acknowledged that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit hugely from acquiring cultural capital – which is why any attempts at diverting them away from supposedly 'middle class' cultural pursuits should be firmly resisted...

Natasha Devon

Elliot Majoy, a Professor of Social Mobility at Exeter University, recently made headlines after suggesting some changes to the curriculum that would make it more inclusive for children from low income backgrounds.

In the interests of balance, I should begin by stating that I agreed with much of what he had to say. He referenced the narrowness of how we currently assess learning progress, suggesting that we should strive to celebrate those pupils who go on to become nurses and plumbers, just as much as those who go on to Oxbridge.

He also said that teaching the origin stories of authors like Dickens would inspire children facing similar levels of deprivation and hardship themselves. I can't fault any of this.

Elitist attitudes

Where he lost me, however, was when he said this:

“National directives encouraging schools to boost cultural capital have prioritised middle class pursuits – visits to museums, theatres and highbrow art galleries, while our creative industries remain stubbornly elite preserves.”

My issues with this statement are manifold. For starters, it seems to be predicated on the deeply problematic notion that the sole purpose of education is to prepare young people for work. School isn't a recruitment process and nor should it be. Creative industries may be difficult to access as professions, but that doesn't mean children shouldn't enjoy the benefit of their output.

More importantly, however, I find the statement (ironically) indicative of an elitist attitude surrounding the arts – namely, that working class people couldn't possibly be interested in, or relate to them.

Under the radar

I speak as someone with personal experience. I'm from a working class background and grew up in a low income family. Whilst my parents emphasised the importance of academic learning, and were pleased when I got good grades, we didn't spend our weekends doing things like going to the theatre. Partly because it was prohibitively expensive for us, but more because it simply wasn't on our radar. No one we knew went to the theatre, so we simply didn't consider it as an option.

My first theatre experience came via a school trip and I was instantly hooked. Now, I can't imagine it not being part of my life. In fact, as I write these words, I'm looking forward to seeing a production of *The Merchant of Venice* ingeniously set in the East End of London during the 1930s – a play that I first developed a passion for when being taught by one of my English teachers, Dr Cochran.

Theatre isn't my job, but it enhances my life immeasurably. I know others who speak in similar terms about art

galleries and museums.

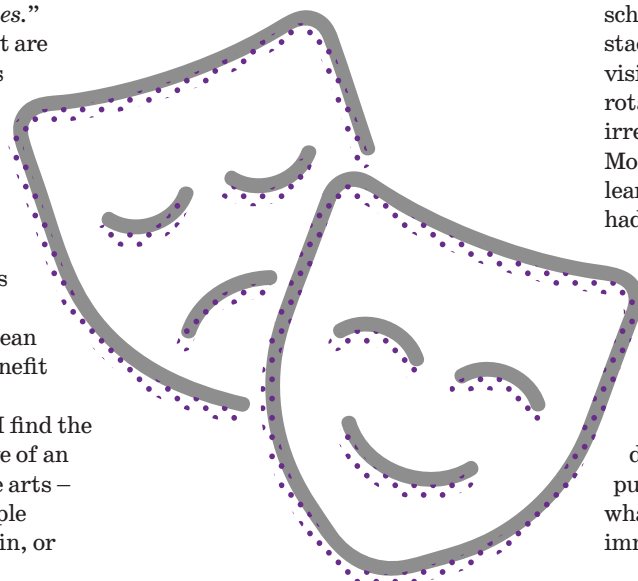
The impact that being exposed to the arts can have on an individual is, in some respects, intangible and indescribable. Though on the other hand, there is a reason why fascist governments seek to ban them. The arts foster empathy for our fellow human beings, whereas populism relies on us fearing and hating anyone different from us. I think we can all agree that the former is needed now, more than ever.

Broadening minds

The arts can also afford us perspectives on the world well outside of our own. In 1990, the musician Frank Zappa worked with the government of what was then Czechoslovakia on a study which found that providing access to 'highbrow' arts could make people feel less poor than they actually were, even with no changes to their financial income, because they were being spiritually nourished.

Elliot Majoy, however, seems to think that I should have been going on school trips to *checks notes* football stadiums. I've no objection to such visits being included on schools' trip rotas, but I can't tell you how dull and irrelevant I would have found it. Moreover, even if I *had* wanted to learn more about football, I already had ample access to ardent fans within my extended family or, once I was old enough, I could have simply wandered into the local pub.

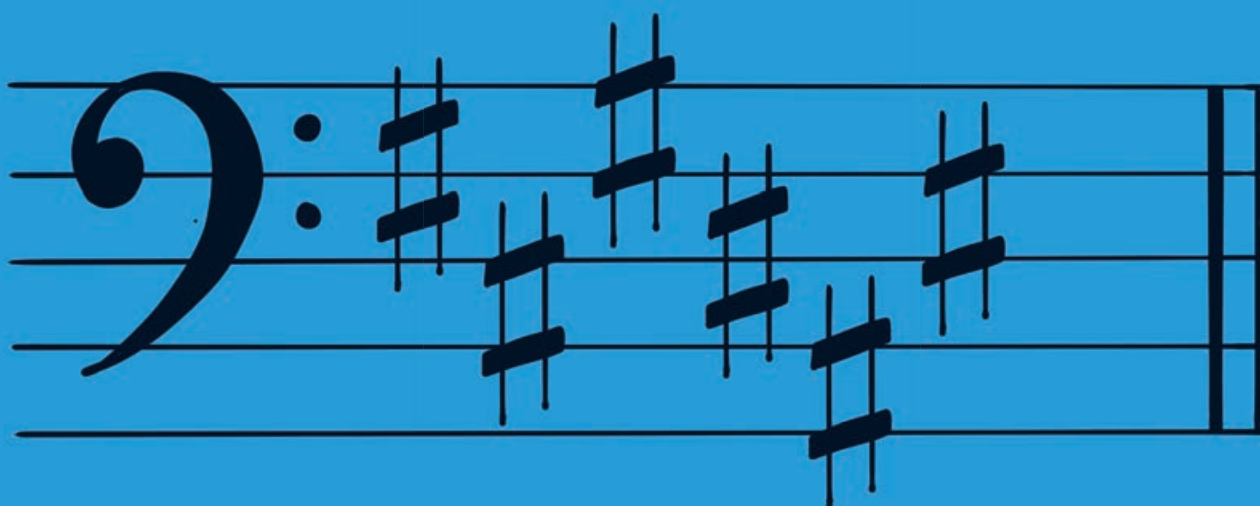
A key purpose of education is to broaden our minds. Yes, good teachers can make everything feel interesting and relevant. That doesn't mean that the scope of what pupils encounter should be limited to what already exists within their immediate environment.



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

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The price of EVERYTHING

We want students to engage with maths, and to possess the financial awareness they'll need as adults – so let's combine the two, suggests **Dr Katie Steckles...**

The teaching of maths often involves supporting students in learning vital life skills. I've recently been involved in creating a series of GCSE videos for the BBC Bitesize website, which go through crucial mathematical methods, such as rearranging and writing equations, converting between fractions and decimals and working with indices.

These skills, along with a solid foundation of number sense, will be invaluable when these future adults eventually come to wrangle their personal finances.

From choosing a credit card or mortgage, to understanding how your wages add up, a solid foundation of mathematical knowledge is extremely useful when making decisions around personal finances. And yet, while these skills are covered at school, they can feel somewhat removed from the contexts they'll later be needed for, with students not always able to make the relevant connections.

In the classroom, making use of real-life personal finance examples can better prepare students for tackling similar challenges themselves later in life. At the same time, it will also help to reinforce relevant curriculum topics, and make it easier to tackle tricky exam questions by applying similar techniques – thus providing

a quick answer when a student asks, *'When am I ever going to use this?'*

Income tax

Take income tax. Almost everyone needs to pay it, but there are some misconceptions around how it actually *works*. Even if the amount is calculated for you through PAYE, salaries tend to be advertised 'before tax', so understanding a bit about tax helps people know what to expect.

Any earnings below £12,570 are tax-free. Earnings *up to* £50,270 are taxed at 20% (what's called the 'Basic Rate'), while any earnings between £50,270 and £125,140 are taxed at 40% (the 'Higher Rate'). Finally, there's an 'Additional Rate' of 45% for any earnings over £125,140.

Someone with an annual salary of £20,000 would therefore not pay income tax on the first £12,570 they earn, but the amount remaining (£20,000 - £12,570 = £7,250) would be taxed at 20%. That means they'd pay £1,450 each year (£7,250 × 20%).

Studying examples from different tax brackets will further reinforce an understanding of how the total is calculated, and show that the rate only applies to earnings *within each bracket*. It's also illustrative to calculate how much someone's take-home pay would increase, if given a pay rise that would change their tax band, compared to one

that wouldn't.

Students could write an equation to describe the tax paid by someone earning £ x for values of x in each tax bracket – starting by subtracting the tax-free allowance from the total, then calculating the tax rate on the remaining sections as needed.

This equation could then be used to visualise the relationship between salary

and net income. The resulting graph would be made up of straight line segments, and plotting it would involve interpreting each equation as a straight line.

Credit cards

Many people will end up using credit cards at some point in their lives, so it's important to know the factors involved when borrowing money this way, and how quickly debts can grow.

“Asking students to look up how much major credit card companies charge can be an illuminating experience”

and net income. The resulting graph would be made up of straight line segments, and plotting it would involve interpreting each equation as a straight line.

This activity could also include searching for and examining real job adverts. Students would need to consider what data they need to collect, and what assumptions they need to



If you pay back your credit card balance at the end of each month, then using the card will have likely not cost anything. Hold off for longer, and the credit card company will charge you interest at a pre-agreed rate – usually in the region of 20% annually. This interest will continue being added to your balance each month until you pay it back.

There will often be a minimum balance that needs to be paid off – for example, ‘1% of the outstanding balance, or £5, whichever is

greater’. Fail to pay back enough each month, and you’ll incur payment fees (usually around £12).

Interest is a common application of percentages, but the information given to consumers about credit cards is often presented in ways designed to complicate how much they actually cost. Credit cards can often charge additional fees for cash withdrawals, balance transfers, overseas transactions or when you exceed your credit limit. Some may even levy an annual fee just for using the card itself. Asking students to look up how much major credit card companies charge for their fees and how often can be an illuminating experience.

Mortgages

This is less broadly applicable than the other examples – since those students who will eventually buy a house likely won’t do so until later in their lives

– but it still involves the same mathematical ideas. Mortgage lenders charge interest on mortgages at a pre-agreed rate, and homebuyers then usually pay back their mortgages monthly until the debt is eventually cleared.

Working with these kinds of calculations can help students develop an intuition for how the amount of interest you pay changes over the term of a mortgage, and how much difference having a large deposit can make to the payment term and monthly costs. Some banks will offer a better interest rate if you pay a larger deposit.

A project exploring this could involve looking up the cost of houses similar to the students’ own, or ones they’d like to live in, and then finding details on bank websites of what mortgage rates they offer. Given a deposit, house price bank interest rate and a monthly payment of £ x , how long will it take them to pay off their mortgage if interest is added on at the end of each year? Students could try different monthly amounts until they get a 20-year term.

How much more would the monthly payment be to get a 10-year term? It can be instructive to calculate how much money is paid in total over the course of a mortgage, and to investigate how a 4% interest rate and a 5% interest rate compare.

Personal finance examples can serve as good motivation for understanding percentages, solving equations and developing an intuition for numbers. These kinds of calculations also provide good opportunities for getting students working with technology – from using spreadsheets as a mathematical tool, to figuring out how to get the most out of their calculators. Hopefully you can use these ideas to put together some activities for your own students!

PERCENTAGES IN PRACTICE

- ▶ The average annual percentage rate (APR) of a standard credit card is around 19%. If that’s the annual rate, how much will the interest amount to per month?
- ▶ If the monthly percentage increase is $x\%$, then each month the balance will be $(100 + x)\%$ of what it was previously. After a year, the balance will be $((100 + x)\%)^{12}$ times its original value. This rate can be equated to the annual rate, and solved to find a value for x .
- ▶ GCSE students can use trial and improvement, while A Level students can find a more precise solution using logarithms.
- ▶ Having established the monthly rate for a particular credit card, along with the minimum payment and late fees, we then can ask questions like:

Given the interest rate and a specific balance (i.e. the cost of an item the student wants to buy), how much will I owe after 1, 2, 3 or 6 months if I...

- a) pay off the minimum amount?
- b) don’t pay anything at all (so that the late fee is added to the balance each month)?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Katie Steckles is a mathematician, maths communicator and *New Scientist* columnist; she has recently worked with the BBC Bitesize team on its new set of GCSE maths revision resources, further details of which can be found via tiny.cc/ts142-LS1

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WHAT I LEARNT AT SCHOOL

Tim Peake reflects on how his school's Combined Cadet Force programme laid the foundations for a career that saw him take to the skies – and then travel beyond the stratosphere...

What was your secondary school experience like?

I attended a state comprehensive, Chichester High School for Boys. Getting there involved walking a mile to the station and catching the train from Emsworth to Chichester, which felt a bit daunting at 11. I'd gone from a small village primary to a much bigger school with around 2,000 pupils, but I made a couple of friends there.

The first two years or so were very ordinary, but things changed once I turned 13 and became old enough to join the school's Combined Cadet Force (CCF), which was responsible for some of my fondest memories of secondary school. Looking back, I didn't hate the academic side – I can see now how those lessons helped sow the seeds of curiosity and wonder – but academically, I definitely blossomed after school, not while I was there.

I stayed on to do A Levels in maths, physics and chemistry, and 'excelled' in getting a C, a D and an E. Teachers are horrified when I tell them that now. Students often laugh – 'Wow, that's brilliant. If you can do that and still become an astronaut...' Though I do caveat that by explaining that it's been a constant process of self-development and learning since I left school.



When did you first decide that you wanted to travel into space?

I was different compared to some of my peers. My ESA colleague, Luca [Parmitano] for example, had wanted to be an astronaut since the age of four. My other colleague, Samantha [Cristoforetti], had her sights set on becoming an astronaut since at least her early teens.

My decision to travel into space didn't come about until my 30s, when the European Space Agency opened up applications for its astronaut selection to UK citizens in 2008. Up until then, my passion had been flying, qualifying as an instructor pilot before becoming a test pilot, while completing a

degree in flight dynamics. Those experiences had brought me close to the space industry, so I'd already been following what was happening there for a few years when I applied. I was perfectly placed at the right time, with the right set of qualifications.

It's quite the story – putting your head down after leaving school, getting everything in place in time...

When studying academic subjects at school, it might not seem apparent as to why you're completing those quadratic equations or a Laplace transform. That had been the case for me, but when I commenced my test pilot training – studying flight dynamics, control inputs,

simulator tuning – the maths suddenly became very relevant.

I sympathise with school teachers. There's a lot to pack in to the school curriculum, and always a limit on time and resources. Teachers don't have the luxury of being able to spend ages on wonderful experiments and exploring real world examples – but the more of that they can do in the classroom, the better.

Were there any teachers who had a positive impact on your subsequent career ambitions and achievements?

Mr Anthony Forrest was my chemistry teacher, as well as head of the school's CCF programme, so I got to know him both in the classroom and in an outdoor environment with the cadets. He was a strict, no-nonsense teacher, but his lessons were huge amounts of fun. You'd always come away with some snippet of information you didn't expect, or having done some experiment that you perhaps *shouldn't* have... He was happy to push the boundaries with what he showed to his students, and really brought chemistry to life.

What are the most important aspects of knowledge that science teachers can pass on?

Critical thinking and curiosity. It's important to impart the knowledge of *how* to think, and *why* it's important to think properly about a subject. Lessons should be about questioning things, developing the curiosity to find out why things happen, and always remaining observant and open to new suggestions and ideas.

Tim Peake was the first British ESA astronaut to visit the International Space Station, on a six-month mission that saw him undertake scientific research, as well as educational outreach, engaging with over 2 million schoolchildren across Europe. He is also an ambassador for The Prince's Trust and The Scout Association. The BBC has produced a series of video resources for KS3/4 physics introduced by Tim Peake, which can be viewed via tinyurl.com/ts142-TP1

READY *for anything*

Rather than adopting one form of practice and never shifting, the most capable teachers will bring different approaches to bear on specific teaching challenges – and so can you, says **Colin Foster**...

Have you ever been in a meeting or professional development session, where someone has rejected some teaching suggestion by saying, “*Oh, I don’t do it like that?*”

Someone may, for example, suggest teaching a certain topic in a novel way – only for a teacher to respond that that may be fine for the presenter, but not for *them*, because that isn’t how they do things.

Lying behind responses like these is the assumption that every teacher has a very particular, and often quite narrow range of operating methods. Any proposal gets evaluated relative to that, to see how well it fits – and anything that lies outside those limits is considered beyond the pale. The teacher is locating themselves within a comfort zone which excludes any new ideas that don’t easily mesh with the teacher’s current practice.

Don’t limit yourself

This sort of perspective limits our development as professionals, because it paints us into a corner. If we stop trying new things once

we’ve found one way that seems to work, we end up narrowing our range unnecessarily and imprisoning ourselves in a cell of our own making. While that might make us feel safe, it means that we miss out on a lot of potentially enriching opportunities, for both the teacher and their students.

One great strength of experienced teachers is that they can handle whatever they encounter among the

which is why they don’t panic when the first thing they try doesn’t appear to succeed – ‘*That’s okay, it was just Option 1 on the list. Let’s try option 2...*’ If that doesn’t succeed either, then down the list they’ll go, as far as necessary before achieving their teaching goal.

You’ll see the opposite with keen ‘amateur’ teachers, such as parents. When parents try to help their children with

homework, even if they possess the subject knowledge and motivation to do so, they’ll still typically

lack the experience of actually teaching it. All they’re likely to have is their own (distant) memories of learning the topic themselves when they were at school, and may therefore try to present it to their child in whatever way they remember it.

“No teacher will ever claim that they’ve found the ‘perfect’ way to teach anything”

full range of young people taught by them. If one way of explaining something doesn’t seem to be getting through to a particular student, an experienced teacher can swiftly pivot to an alternative.

They can call upon a list of strategies as long as their arm,



And if that doesn't work, they usually won't have any other methods to fall back on: "Well, that's the only way I know to do it..."

Expand your range

As professionals doing this all day long as our day job, we aspire to do more than that. Being able to master the content ourselves is merely the beginning of a teacher's journey.

We want to learn as many different ways of doing things as we can – as many different examples, as many different explanations. We'll then be as prepared as we possibly can be for whatever we encounter in the classroom. Simply knowing something one way is never enough.

In his 1987 book *Impro – Improvisation and the Theatre*, the theatre director Keith Johnstone described how professional actors often specialise in either high-status roles ('straight actors') or low-status roles ('character actors'). He wrote that "In a bad drama school it's possible to play your 'preferred' status all the time, since they cast you to type, exploiting what you can do, instead of widening your range."

In contrast, he observed, "the very best actors can play both tragedy and comedy."

Similarly, in teacher training, irrespective of the route you go through there's always the danger of capitalising on what you're naturally good at and ending up only being able to do that.

This approach may seem sensible, especially early on, since it can be hard enough to just 'survive' when starting out as a teacher. Any approach that achieves that goal will be seen as desirable.

However, as a teacher gains experience and becomes increasingly comfortable and successful doing things in a certain way, that's the point at which they should start to

that we should all remain open-minded. Unless we try new things from time to time, how will we ever improve or discover better ways of working?

Sometimes, the teaching methods a teacher uses day to day can be the product of historical accident. They'll use ideas they picked up during their initial training, or continue doing what they witnessed their mentor doing when they were in

“We want to learn as many different ways of doing things as we can – as many different examples, as many different explanations”

ask themselves, "How else might I do this?"

Be open-minded

That's not to say that there's necessarily anything *wrong* with whatever a teacher's established practice might be. It's probably very good. Alternative methods may not be 'better' in any absolute sense. But under certain circumstances, with certain pupils, they might be *more effective*.

No teacher will ever claim that they've found the 'perfect' way to teach anything, so it follows

their first job. Those practices then stick with them, because the more they repeat them, the more familiar and 'safe' they'll feel. This can eventually give way to "That's how I do it", and perceiving suggestions from others to try something else as threatening.

Again, there may not be anything wrong *per se* with a given teacher's preferred methods – but as professionals, we must be constantly open to being challenged.

Professional autonomy isn't just the right to do things 'my way' if I want to; it's also the autonomy to decide to experiment, and be willing to consider new possibilities. We should be able to reject ideas we don't like, of course – but we might want to test things out, or at least think them through carefully, before rejecting them.

Mix it up

One way to avoid going stale in teaching is to add in some variety. Mixing things up a bit will keep your lessons varied – which students will appreciate – while keeping us on our toes.

Once you've taught addition of fractions to every class, every year, for multiple years, things can get a bit... monotonous. Thinking regularly about new ways of doing things, rather than just repeating whatever it was you did last time, will help to break that cycle of sameness and keep things fresh.

Instead of thinking, "I have an [X] teaching style, and that's what works for me", take the view that "I can teach in way [A], [B] or [C]." Do that, and you'll quickly find that there's no such thing as a 'typical' teaching day.

Because who knows – your eventual preferred way of teaching something might be one that you haven't even tried yet...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NATIONAL
MEMORIAL
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Give burnout the boot

Among school staff, DSLs can be particularly susceptible to burnout – Sarah Cook offers some advice on how the role can be made more sustainable

Designated safeguarding leads need to have broad shoulders, carrying as they do many complex responsibilities in a role that seems to get increasingly involved and complex as the years go by.

The role (currently, at least) covers oversight of safeguarding, staff training and guidance, alongside the managing of all safeguarding concerns. As every DSL will know, it's a role that's demanding ever more vigilance, empathy and capacity for decision making under pressure – and yet, DSLs are only human. The heightened accountability that comes with the role can sometimes get too much, giving way to stress and even burnout.

It's crucial, then, that DSLs – alongside their colleagues and line managers – know how to spot the signs of burnout early on, and can tackle them before they start to present problems (while also adopting longer-term strategies aimed at preventing burnout altogether).

6 steps to prevention

When DSLs get the help and support they need, through suitable self-care and supervision measures, they can dramatically reduce their levels of stress and susceptibility to burnout, while improving their standards of decision-making and engagement.

Here, then, are six steps for preventing burnout among your DSLs...

1. Know the signs

Burnout can present in a range of ways – including fatigue, loss of confidence and the DSL feeling disconnected or withdrawn from their work and colleagues. It can also involve physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomach problems or disturbed sleep.

2. Look after yourself

The wellbeing benefits of regular exercise, such as walking or stretching, are obvious, alongside watching what you eat and staying hydrated. Taking lunch breaks away from your desk can also have a surprisingly positive impact. You may

find that mindfulness and meditation exercises are helpful. Breathing exercises and mindfulness apps can be easily found online – find ones that work for you. There's also journaling – the practice of recording reflections on your various daily challenges and achievements to paper.

3. Try a fresh approach

Prioritising tasks and setting realistic goals will help your time management skills, as can establishing firmer boundaries between work and your personal life. Commit to leaving at a certain time, and speak out if you feel your workload isn't manageable. Due to the reactive nature of the role, it's important to build in capacity by ensuring that at least one trained deputy DSL will be available to support you at those crunch points when urgent tasks have to take priority.

4. Get supervision

The government's 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' statutory guidance (see [tiny.cc/ts142-DSL1](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/616226/Working-Together-to-Safeguard-Children-2016.pdf)) states that those working in the roles of DSL and headteacher should have opportunities to engage in peer learning, knowledge exchange and group supervision. DSLs will require dedicated time with a trained and trusted colleague to reflect, analyse and strategise about the challenges of individual cases, and the job as a whole. It seems there's a clear appetite

amongst DSLs for more supervision – Judicium ran a survey of DSLs last year, and when asked what they would find most useful in their role, half responded with 'supervision'.

5. Create a personal wellbeing plan

A written plan can help to identify stress triggers, and assist with planning daily or weekly self-care activities. It can also help to identify when might be beneficial to ask your line manager for additional support, or identify external resources that you can use.

6. Leaders set the weather

It's down to line managers and leaders to foster a culture of care, promote flexible work environments and prioritise strategies that demonstrate commitment to their team's wellbeing, in order to foster a healthier, more motivated work environment. This approach might include encouraging the use of break times and mental health days; acknowledging and celebrating the work and resilience of DSLs in meetings or newsletters; and using supervision as a tool to reduce isolation, facilitate reflection and enhance decision-making.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Cook is a former head of safeguarding at an academy trust with 13 years of experience in safeguarding issues, now safeguarding consultant at Judicium Education; for more information, visit [judiciumeducation.co.uk/safeguarding-service](https://www.judiciumeducation.co.uk/safeguarding-service) or follow @JudiciumSG

THE WOW FACTOR

Step into the fascinating world of STEM careers with KS3 and KS4 at *Technicians: The David Sainsbury Gallery* at the Science Museum, London. Schools can also book onto a free, 60-minute Careers Uncovered session.



Recreating the workplaces of technicians across multiple sectors – health science, creative arts, manufacturing and renewable energy, your class will get hands-on with interactive exhibits that simulate technical, job-related tasks. The Science Museum has collaborated with Marvel Studios, the NHS, the National Grid and others to create this unique careers gallery. Pupils will experience what it's like to create visual effects on a blockbuster film set, analyse blood samples in a medical laboratory, fix a fault on a wind turbine and much more.

SCIENCE MUSEUM

Contact:

[sciencemuseum.org.uk/groups/technicians-david-sainsbury-gallery-school-info](https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/groups/technicians-david-sainsbury-gallery-school-info)
info@sciencemuseumgroup.ac.uk
 03300 580 058



TECHNICIANS GALLERY

At the *Technicians* gallery, your class will learn how technicians work behind the scenes to save lives, make energy greener, provide entertainment, create everyday items we couldn't live without and much more. They'll have the chance to operate a robotic arm, solve problems on top of a wind turbine and create lifesaving medicine.

CAREERS UNCOVERED

KS3 and KS4 groups can also book places in free, 60-minute careers sessions held in the *Technicians* gallery, where they'll meet real-life technicians, take part in hands-on activities and get to ask lots of questions. The sessions help pupils see how they can use their existing skills to make a difference. Bookable online via the link or QR code above.

CAREERS TRAILS

To support your visit, the Science Museum has created a fun, careers-themed activity trail, accessible via the website, that will lead your pupils around the museum. Pupils can explore *Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries* and *Mathematics: The Winton Gallery* to learn how real-life technicians helped design and build the world around us.

GATSBY BENCHMARKS OF GOOD CAREER GUIDANCE

A visit to the gallery will support productive careers conversations with young people by offering informal, yet educational encounters with a huge range of technical career pathways. A visit can also help your school meet **Gatsby's Good Career Guidance** benchmarks by providing opportunities to experience different workplace environments.

THE TS GUIDE TO... CAREERS

We take a look at the benefits to be had from not just telling students about the careers options available to them, but actively showing them

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IN FIGURES: HOW MUCH WORK EXPERIENCE ARE PUPILS DOING?

77.9%

of secondary schools recorded some pupils as having done work experience in Y10 equivalent to at least 1 or more sessions (one session being half a school day, as confirmed by morning and afternoon registrations)

9.3

The average number of sessions completed by those pupils able to undertake work experience placements, amounting to just under five days

3.4%

of those pupils able to complete placements attended 20 or more work experience sessions (equivalent to at least two weeks)

Source: 'How many pupils are getting work experience?' report issued by The Key Group (see tiny.cc/ts142-C1)

3

TEACHWIRE
ARTICLES
FROM THE
ARCHIVES

EVERY TEACHER IS A CAREERS TEACHER

There's a good chance that you're already linking curriculum learning to careers, says Liz Painter –so why not make those links even clearer and more engaging for your students?

tiny.cc/142special1

8 STEPS TO SUCCESS

Debby Elley highlights some supportive steps that teachers and careers advisors can take when helping neurodivergent students enter the world of work

tiny.cc/142special2

ACADEMIA ISN'T THE ONLY ROUTE

There are many paths that can lead young people into a successful and fulfilling living, says Edd Williams – and great careers advice should take that into account...

tiny.cc/142special3

Laying the GROUNDWORK

Alex Frappell explains how the careers provision offered at St Martin's School in Brentwood starts early and builds over time...

Soon after our current headteacher, Jamie Foster, was appointed in September 2023, he recognised that the careers provision at St Martin's School wasn't as effective as it could be. As part of a wide-ranging review, in which he considered the type of careers provision he wanted to see, I was appointed as the school's Careers and Aspirations Lead in January of 2024.

This entailed a huge learning curve – as a history teacher, it was a world that I didn't previously know a great deal about. One of my first priorities was to therefore ensure that the school consistently met the Gatsby benchmarks, which became an Ofsted-mandated requirement for all schools from 2021.

Gatsby benchmarks are measured in percentages, based on schools' completion of a termly assessment via a platform called Compass Plus. Following our first such assessment in March 2024, some of our scores were as low as 11% – but

using that assessment as a guide, we were at least able to identify where those critical gaps were, and work with outside agencies to ensure we attained scores of 100% across all eight benchmarks.

Opening eyes

I've been a teacher for 13 years, and held pastoral responsibilities for 10 of those. Much of my pastoral experience has previously

involved working with underachieving students, particularly boys, and I've also spent some time as a head of year.

My decision to move into pastoral roles, in addition to teaching history, was because I wanted to make more of a difference. When teaching in my classroom, I know that I'm making a difference by inspiring my students and enabling them to succeed at their GCSEs and A Levels. In my pastoral roles, I've been able to make a difference to the students *as a whole*.

My current careers role

originally appealed because it allows me to extend that work yet further, to making a difference at a whole school level. Our Y7 cohort learn key foundational skills for their subjects, before progressing on to GCSE and hopefully achieving the highest grades they can (and potentially doing the same again A Level).

But what does any of that effort actually count for if

they don't know what to then *do* with those outcomes; with what I call their 'tickets' to the next stage of their learning, be it A Levels or college? Their A Level results are their tickets to further education – but in what ways? To attend university? To further their career ambitions? *What* career ambitions?

“My objective is to open students' eyes to as many different career opportunities as possible”

My objective is to open students' eyes to as many different career opportunities as possible, so that they can make more informed decisions. A student's dad may be a doctor; their mum might be a

Planning and balance

lawyer. They may well have some useful family connections within certain sectors, but that's still *their* world. There will be many other opportunities and possibilities that they know nothing about – some of which they might embrace, while at the same time finding out about other career paths they conclude definitely aren't for them.

In terms of setting aside time for our careers provision, it's been a case of trying to strike the right balance. I'm grateful that we have an excellent headteacher in place, who knows how important careers provision is to our broader curriculum goals. There have been some occasions when I've asked for something, only to be told '*not this week*' or '*not this month*' – but generally, when I've put forward the case for certain opportunities that will require taking students off timetable, we've been able to come to an arrangement.

For example, we recently welcomed representatives from Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), who

hosted a series of one-hour workshops for our Y9s, where they got to learn about the local labour market, giving them an awareness of job opportunities across Essex and London they wouldn't have known about otherwise.

So long as we plan such activities carefully throughout the academic year, we're able to maintain that balance. Some elements, like our assemblies, will be timetabled to take place before school. One thing we're looking at possibly introducing are Y11 careers breakfasts, whereby local employers will visit the school from 8am until 8:45am, to discuss particular jobs and sectors that our Y11 students might be interested in finding out more about.

Progress made

In November 2024, we launched a new work experience scheme that saw our Y10s participate in 2-hour CV workshops, again led by DWP representatives, from which they came away with CVs created using a DWP template designed to be 'AI-proof', which listed key skills and keywords that the representatives knew employers are looking for.

In January this year, those CVs were then used as part of a 'mock interview' activity

that involved a number of local employers. They volunteered their time across two days help us organise 30-minute mock job interviews, for which they, as the interviewers, were given some guided questions to put to our students, while assessing the CV prepared by the student sat before them.

The employers were tasked with being adaptable and creative with their questions for the activity, which served to familiarise our students with what a formal interview situation looks and feels like, while also giving them a chance to put some questions of their own to the interviewers.

The students then received feedback on their interview performance and CVs, which they'll use to further develop their CVs ahead of securing work experience placements from July 2025 onwards.

Meaningful encounters

To help us reach out to local companies, we received some assistance from the national Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and its Greater Essex local branch. We've also taken part in CEC's termly networking meetings, to which all Essex are invited, with each meeting lasting approximately three hours.

These meetings feature speakers from local education settings and businesses putting forward various ideas and partnering opportunities, some of which we'll then follow up on later. The Greater Essex CEC has also assigned us a school link

colleague, who has helped me bolster our local networking by identifying companies and local bodies who may be willing to work with us. Otherwise, our outreach efforts have been largely done through word of mouth.

Our biggest school activity is Careers and Aspirations Week, which takes place in July. The main school timetable is collapsed, so that we can dedicate five hours each day across that week to a different form of careers activity for all year groups. This year, one of those days will be set aside for a 'take your child to work' initiative for Y7 to Y9, where a parent, other relative or trusted family friend will take the student to their place of work for the day.

Previously, we've also put on an enterprise activity, where students were tasked with suggesting ways in which companies could operate in a more environmentally friendly way. For students showing early signs of being entrepreneurial, we've organised activities based around showing them what it's like to set up their own business and become self-employed.

WHAT WE DO AT ST MARTIN'S

- ▶ Career-themed assemblies for all year groups
- ▶ Dedicated lessons on careers for all year groups, in accordance with the school's PSHE curriculum.
- ▶ Drop-down careers sessions held throughout the academic year – including a September session for Y7, in which DWP representatives deliver a 'goals and aspirations' hour, intended to help students pursue more far-reaching career ambitions
- ▶ A mock interview activity for Y10s
- ▶ A 'Careers and Aspirations' week held at the end of the academic year, incorporating a Y7-Y9 'Bring Your Child to Work' day

Our plans for this year's events include setting aside an hour for Y7, in which they'll have the chance to meet with four different employers for up to 15 minutes via a carousel system, and get to hear about the employer's job, find out what they actually do and ask some follow-up questions.

We want to encourage more of these meaningful encounters over time, help our students develop employment skills right from Y7 – and ultimately encourage them all to pursue their dreams however we can.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex Frappell is a history teacher and Careers and Aspirations Lead at St Martin's School, Brentwood

5 REASONS TO TRY... Into Film

Expand your students' creative and professional horizons by showing them how to go about pursuing a career in the screen industries...



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Into Film is the UK's leading charity for film in education and the community. We provide educators with the latest essential information, guidance and free resources needed to advise young people (11-18) on opportunities across the screen industries.

1 RESOURCES THAT CONNECT

Careers in the screen industries span all subjects, skills and interests. Whatever you teach, you'll find free resources linking curriculum learning to careers. Heads of year, careers teachers and leaders can access ready-made content for school-wide programmes, form times or assemblies, Showing young people how subject learning connects to the world of work, identifying in-demand skills and setting career goals can all boost engagement and attainment. Our ready to use resources make it easy to integrate careers insights into your classroom.

2 FREE TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

Looking for quick, free training to boost your knowledge? Our screen careers CPD offers the latest insights, key messaging and top resources. Take short (under an hour) courses like 'Supporting Screen Careers Conversations' or 'First Jobs in Film and TV'. Prefer interactive sessions? Join webinars on 'Getting into the Screen Industries' or 'Screen Careers: Finding the Right Fit'. Visit intofilm.org/careers for upcoming dates, or contact us for more information.

3 A BRIDGE BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION

Our partnerships with screen industry organisations - including BFI, BAFTA, Warner Bros, ITV, C4, Aardman, Sky Studios and more - mean you can be sure that the resources, training and events we offer are industry-standard, up-to-date and impactful, packed with insights into what a career in the screen industries might look like and what it takes to make a success of it. Our



Contact:

Into Film supports the whole of the UK with offices in London, Salford, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast. Contact the Careers Team via screencareers@intofilm.org, or visit intofilm.org/careers

encounters are meaningful and two-way, giving your students the chance to ask questions of professionals who work on a wide range of productions.

4 CAREERS EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE

We take careers seriously, and our team have substantial expertise and experience in careers development, industry insight and work experience delivery. We understand the screen industries, bust myths and uncover the latest trends so you don't have to. Our resources, training and events align with careers benchmarks and standards, including the revised Gatsby benchmarks in England, supporting Ofsted, Estyn, ES or ETI inspections. As

an affiliate member of the Career Development Institute, you can be confident that our content is ethical, impartial and trustworthy.

5 IMPROVING ACCESS TO SCREEN CAREERS, FOR ALL

At Into Film, we want to ensure that the young people who are least likely to have access to screen industry careers get the most support in exploring or pursuing opportunities in the sector. All state schools and colleges can access our offer, but we do offer a little bit extra to settings with higher than average free-school meals, or located in our priority regions. We open doors to career opportunities. Sign up to a free account with Into Film to find out what you can expect.

Need to know

Into Film covers film, TV, animation, and VFX, demystifying career opportunities in the screen industry and making them accessible to educators and young people.

The Teachers Careers Hub offers free CPD training, curriculum-linked educational resources and advice to help meet benchmarks and improve your knowledge of the screen industries.

Roles in the screen industries are diverse, but in high demand - we help teachers navigate what opportunities are available, while supporting young people's interests via our go-to Careers Hub.

An Into Film account is free. We currently have more than 75,000 registered teachers from 23,000 UK-based schools and colleges, with over 1.5 million teaching resources downloaded.

Learning experience

Angela Edwards looks back on the efforts that went into organising Gloucestershire's largest ever educational employment outreach event – and what local schools got out of getting involved...

Labour's 2024 election manifesto included a pledge to guarantee two weeks' worth of quality work experience for every young person in the country. As many within the education sector will know, however, actually achieving that is a huge task.

At C2S Growth Consultancy, our response was to organise Gloucestershire's largest ever educational outreach event, aimed at connecting students with employers across the region and inspiring young people about their future career prospects.

Connecting students with sectors

We successfully hosted the inclusive C2S Educational Outreach Live event at Cheltenham Racecourse last November, attracting over 1,800 students from more than 30 schools, and connecting them with some 55 local companies. As a result of the event, 69 work experience days were awarded to pupils with some of the region's leading employers, including L3 Harris Technology, Renishaw, Kohler Mira and the NHS.

Our research had shown that local schools were concerned about the level of soft skills and confidence their students possessed. Post-COVID, many had missed out on opportunities to gain the kind of important social skills that help build the confidence employers look for. For their part, many organisations had

lost previously established relationships with schools. Their inability to deliver work experience placements during the pandemic was also beginning to impact upon their talent pipelines.

The main objective of the event was to enable students to engage with a range of businesses, of various sizes, operating across all sectors. These included manufacturers, defence specialists, healthcare providers, finance organisations, charities, law firms and more besides.

Drawing on our knowledge of the challenges faced by businesses when attempting to connect with students, we sought to create a movement for change by reaching out to our C2S business community, comprising thousands of organisations, and offered them the chance to exhibit and become part of the event.

Getting buy-in

As part of our pre-event research, we met with schools so that we could better understand their priorities, learn what they hoped to gain from the event and confirm the best time within the academic year to hold the event. We

made sure to include activities on the day that would support the Gatsby Benchmarks, and liaised with our County Council and Educational Partnership to help spread the word. We also delivered online events for school representatives to explain the event schedule, how the day would be structured and, most importantly, the measures that we would be putting in place to ensure students' safety.

Conscious of schools' limited time, tight budgets and prioritising of student outcomes, the activities we delivered on the day included financial wellbeing sessions, mental health workshops, CV writing classes and First Aid training, as well as 'speed networking' events attended by businesspeople.

We soon learned how challenging it was to reach the school representatives we needed to speak to, and how our 'career contacts' would sometimes not be able to attend on the day. Internal communication can indeed be difficult; with some schools, we found that certain departments had been made aware of the event while others weren't.

Breaking down barriers

An important aspect to consider when putting on such events is that schools, businesses and students will

all have different needs. By connecting with all parties pre-launch, we were able to uncover how we could address these requirements and hopefully cater for everyone.

One initiative we came up with was 'student activity cards', which exhibitors were asked to stamp each time they spoke with a student. We found that these worked exceptionally well, by helping to break down those initial conversation barriers. In all, we recorded 1,517 interactions between students and businesses on the day. We know that many more took place besides those, but the cards gave us traceability – which, alongside student feedback we received, proved to be invaluable.

We chose to host the event at Cheltenham Racecourse, since we knew it would be capable of coping with thousands of people while offering good toilets, parking facilities, transport links, options for refreshments, disabled access and so forth. These are, of course, necessary for schools to see any such event as a safe environment for their students. The more preparation you do beforehand, the more schools can feel reassured and confident in your event when the day comes.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Angela Edwards founded C2S in 2013 alongside Suzanne Hall-Gibbins; C2S has since grown into a thousands-strong business community operating across the South West. For more information, visit circle2success.com or follow [@Circle2Success](https://twitter.com/Circle2Success) (X)



Let's hear it for...

THE TECHNICIANS

Jamie Sloan looks at how students can be made more aware of the vital differences technicians are making across all areas of society

The vital role that technicians play in society can often be hidden, despite us relying on them every day to keep our modern world working. Technicians often work behind the scenes – behind a camera, in the laboratory or somewhere out in nature.

Power network technicians keep our lights on. Hospital lab technicians test medical samples to aid diagnoses.

Arts venue technicians enable artists to stage live shows and gigs – and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

It's estimated that there are over 1.5 million technicians currently working in the UK (see bit.ly/TI24-T1) across many different sectors, in roles that most of us have never even thought about because they're so often unseen.

An urgent challenge

In November 2022, the Science Museum opened *Technicians: The David Sainsbury Gallery* – a free, interactive gallery designed to introduce 11- to 16-year-olds to the vast, varied and often hidden world of technicians.

This STEM careers gallery was made possible by generous funding from the Gatsby Foundation, and was developed in consultation with local young people using the principles of the Science Capital approach, as well as the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Careers Education.

The result is a gallery

bursting with hands-on exhibits, bold displays and stories from people working in technical roles. It's a dynamic and engaging space, which serves to educate young people about technical careers, and inspire them to consider pursuing a technical career themselves.

It's estimated that the UK

“It inspired me to think you can do anything in life. No matter where you come from, you can do what you want to do – not what people want you to do”

– Y10 STUDENT

needs over 800,000 additional technicians and apprentices to meet the needs of the technology economy (see bit.ly/TI24-T2), and yet there's currently a shortage of people working in technical roles. This presents an urgent challenge for the country, but also an incredible opportunity for those young people currently considering their future career options.

Technicians: The David Sainsbury Gallery at the Science Museum aims to shine a light on the work technicians do and celebrate this unseen workforce. It invites young people into the world of technical careers, empowering them to explore job opportunities they might not have previously been aware of, and familiarising

them with the skills these roles will require.

Based on prior consultations with young people, the gallery aims to address those topics and issues that young people actually care about. After a visit to gallery, we hope that young people will recognise and value the impact that

making lifesaving medicine and re-enacting the role of a lighting technician on the set of Marvel's *Black Panther*. Students can also take part in an interactive careers quiz to find out what technical roles their existing skills and interests might lend themselves to. More than a hundred job roles are featured in the quiz, presented alongside useful details such as starting salaries, entry requirements and job availability.

If young people are to successfully imagine themselves working in a technical role, then it's vital that they have opportunities to meet people already doing those jobs. Students can do this at the Science Museum's free, 60-minute *Careers Uncovered* sessions, where they will have the chance to meet and connect directly with professionals working in technical roles.

During *Careers Uncovered* events, the Science Museum partners with organisations working within the STEM sector. Representatives of these organisations are invited into the gallery to deliver hands-on activities that showcase their work, and speak with young people about what it's like working in a technical role.

Meeting Gatsby Benchmark 5, *Careers Uncovered* presents an opportunity for young people to ask questions, discover their own skills and explore how they might be applied in a technical role. So far, the

technicians have had on our world, and see how they too could become a technician, via a number of different career paths.

Challenging stereotypes

The *Technicians* gallery highlights technical careers across four key areas – **energy networks, advanced manufacturing, creative industries and healthcare**.

Within each area, young people will get to discover a variety of technical jobs, learn about the people performing the roles in question and explore the skills required in such roles, by trying their hand at a range of interactive challenges.

These include learning how to operate a robotic arm,



Science Museum has partnered with organisations such as the Environment Agency and the Fragrance Foundation, which have presented young people with unexpected applications of STEM skills and fascinating glimpses into the world of technicians.

It's well known that many young people

struggle with misconceptions around jobs in STEM; that they're solitary, only for the academically gifted or 'important, but not for me' (see bit.ly/TI24-T3). Through *Technicians: The David Sainsbury Gallery* and *Careers Uncovered* sessions, the Science Museum is challenging these stereotypes.

Inspiring aspirations

Technicians are critical thinkers, and will regularly work together to solve problems creatively. All sorts of people become technicians, and will go on to work in a

of choice can be overwhelming. Post-16, there are A Levels, T-levels, and apprenticeships. For 18+, there are an array of university and Higher Technical Qualifications to choose from.

At *Technicians*, students can learn about the different entry routes for multiple roles, while in *Careers Uncovered*, they can find out more by talking to people who have previously travelled those career paths and experienced those roles first-hand.

In our evaluation, young people and teachers at KS3/4

“It was an informal environment... [the students] did not feel intimidated or shy. It was a very inclusive and safe space to get involved”

– TEACHER

diverse range of settings – from nuclear power stations and farms, to factories and film sets. The skills they develop and use in their careers are moreover transferable to many other roles.

To encourage young people to aspire to become technicians, they'll need to know about the different routes in. There are many different technical career pathways, and the abundance

find that the *Technicians* gallery creates an awareness of previously unfamiliar STEM professions. Young people value the opportunity to speak to STEM professionals, and feel inspired to find out more.

By meeting and connecting with technical professionals, and discovering the wealth of diverse roles across many different sectors, we hope that young people can more easily see themselves as technicians in future, and better understand the steps needed to make that happen.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Jamie Sloan is Schools and Families Manager at the Science Museum Group

WHY I LOVE...

Apps for Good's free, introductory computing courses for secondary school students

ABOUT ME:

NAME:

Fraser Christie

JOB ROLE:

Principal Teacher of Computing

SCHOOL:

St Paul's RC Academy, Dundee

WHAT I LOVE THE MOST:

"The resources are high-quality and visually appealing, proving a one-stop shop that doesn't require a lot of preparation - they're good to go."



differ from the types of jobs students' families have, making it useful for the students to see these different routes and possibilities.



Contact: Explore our free computing courses and sign up for our new Career Series for students and school leaders: www.appsforgood.org

their app prototype. I think framing computing in this context helps keep them motivated, engaged and driven to make a difference. Working in teams on topics they are passionate about ensures the final project is something they can all be proud of.

“ A culture of inclusion and diversity

Apps for Good is passionate about giving young people from all backgrounds opportunities to make a positive impact on the world. The courses provide a platform for all students to shine, opening their eyes to future career possibilities and broadening their horizons. It inspires them to think, "That could be me!"

“ Industry engagement opportunities

Students got a real buzz out of the Industry Engagement Sessions. The volunteers have been brilliant; very inspiring, engaging and encouraging for students. It's valuable because the volunteers' careers might

“ Development of computing and essential skills

Students get to create an actual working app prototype during the course. It requires a combination of creativity and technical problem-solving. My students also really enjoyed the chance to develop their teamwork skills and build up their confidence. They had the opportunity to work with many different people throughout, meaning they came on leaps and bounds.

“ Independent learning

Students address issues that are very real and relevant to them through

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Tel: 01544 230563

Pay and display

A frustrated **Gordon Cairns** sets out his reasons for why CPD courses need to jettison the ‘make a poster’ finales...

You might think that a teacher grumbling about a time-saving feature is about as likely as a student demanding more French verbs to parse – but I’m sure I’m not alone in feeling somewhat peeved when I discover that the really interesting CPD I’ve just signed up for culminates in making a poster – and nothing else.

For some things, a shortcut simply doesn’t cut it. When an intensive course of training adds up to little more than the production of a *single sheet of paper* that displays our findings, we attendees could be forgiven for wondering what all the effort of organising cover, or rushing to a twilight course after work was for, if all we ultimately end up with is a pretty graphic.

Selling ourselves short

Alas, poster production seems to be steadily creeping into more and more personal development training, as the endpoint of the learning

experience. I believe any training course that entails a labour-intensive research project – and potentially much reflection and evidence-gathering from our own teaching practice – merits rather more than a mere poster communicating our discoveries. As reflective practitioners, we’re selling ourselves short.

Our completed posters will typically be pinned to the four walls of the training room, so that we and our fellow poster-makers can then circulate around them in a clockwise direction, slowly absorbing all the educational discoveries we’ve collectively made.

In reality, those first few graphics we see might be closely perused, but our focus will quickly start to wander. As a group, our thoughts will turn to when the next coffee break is due. Or we become engrossed in chats with our colleagues. And, if we’re being honest, we’ll take more than a few glances back at our own displayed work, hoping to

glimpse a gaggle of rubbernecking teachers agog at our outstanding academic research, rather than focusing on the work displayed before us.

The ‘workload’ argument

The course organisers, meanwhile, believe themselves to be doing us attendees a favour, by reducing our workload. Theoretically, posters are much quicker to make than a PowerPoint presentation or mini essay. They can also be assessed more speedily too, thus reducing the workload of the (well compensated, I’d expect) training provider.

Not all teachers will respond to the poster task in the same way. The conscientious and more visually literate will spend forever perfecting a publishable poster, choosing only the most impactful colours, font sizes and graphics. Conversely, some produced by others may as well be daubed with the words ‘*Will this do?*’

I would imagine that pretty much anyone who undertakes a learning experience needs to feel that their learning is valued – which is something a poster simply doesn’t do. A poster is as much about about its presentation as the content. For the more visually clumsy among us, putting our amateurish doodlings on display can be a dispiriting experience, unless accompanied by a more substantial piece of work – such as an essay, or possibly a talk of some kind.

Steady devaluing

Even in academia – where the practice of presenting research information via a poster format first

originated – posters are becoming steadily devalued. Researchers have been presenting their findings at scientific conferences using this simple format ever since the ready availability of computer-assisted desktop publishing. Their typical aim now is to encourage fellow scientists to stop, ask questions and then read the concrete research that backs up the poster’s assertions.

More recently, however, some academics have become uneasy about using the poster format, since event organisers won’t necessarily endorse the findings shown on a poster if its creator has had to pay for the privilege – as I’ve previously discovered to my cost.

Some years ago, I submitted a poster to a conference, and found that if it were accepted, I’d have had to pay a fee of £250. So I declined. Maybe my antipathy towards posters began as disguised form of bitterness...?

At the end of a year’s course of study, we don’t ask our students to create a pictorial representation of all that they’ve learned. And yet, we’re now being asked to accept a poster as the culmination of our own studies. It really doesn’t make any sense. Posters do have their place – that place being on the walls of teenagers’ bedrooms.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

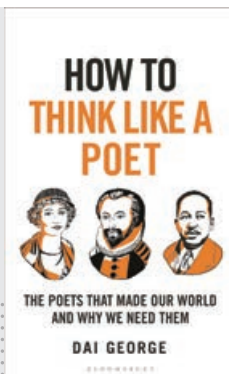
Gordon Cairns is an English and forest school teacher who works in a unit for secondary pupils with ASD; he also writes about education, society, cycling and football for a number of publications





Off the Shelves

Brilliant titles for you and your students to explore



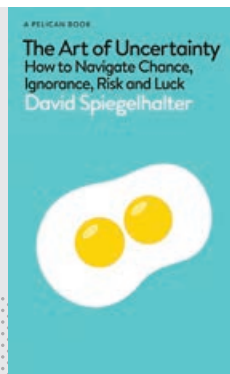
How to think like a poet (Dai George, Bloomsbury, £16.99)

A book containing 23 considerations of a wide variety of poets. Alongside the usual suspects, like Milton and Chaucer, we also find the classical Greek poet Sappho and the late 17th century Japanese poet, Matsuo Bashō, with each chapter a mix of biography and quotations.

George puts something of a modern spin on the poets' works, making them more accessible. The author reimagines Sappho, for example, as a modern day big sister, anxiously checking her phone for a text from her brother, who went out the previous night and has yet to return home.

The author's interpretations are highly engaging and readable, though a full bibliography would have been welcome, rather than the list of permissions we get. Otherwise, warmly recommended.

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



The Art of Uncertainty (David Spiegelhalter, Pelican, £22)

This tome goes far beyond what students actually need to learn about probability at KS3-4, but its strength for secondary teachers is the sheer wealth of easily relatable examples it provides. It could also find use as a resource for other subject areas outside maths.

Your computing department will likely find the section on facial recognition interesting, for instance – Spiegelhalter observes that even if such systems can boast of high accuracy, most of their identifications will still be wrong. There's also a good chapter on attempts at taking a scientific approach to uncertainty. It might not be ideal bedtime reading, but the book's prose is easy to follow, with handy bullet-point summaries at the end of each chapter, and it's comprehensive in scope, complete with an excellent index and glossary of terms.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman



The Newsmongers: A History of Tabloid Journalism (Terry Kirby, Reaktion, £20)

Aside from journalism being included in the KS4 English programme of study and GCSE media studies, there's another good reason for reading *The Newsmongers* – because perhaps the most fascinating aspect of this highly detailed account is the extent to which the news, and how it's reported, depends so much on the personal predilections of publishers and editors. Yes, we might instinctively know that already – but seeing so many examples of it in practice, presented in one place, is quite something.

The timespan covered by the book is extraordinary, running from the Middle Ages up to the present day. Politics, history, culture, 'churnalism', fake news – it's all here, making this book well worth reading for both curricular considerations and for personal research purposes.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

ON THE RADAR

Creating Safe, Healthy, and Inclusive Schools

Christopher C. Morpew, Vanya C. Jones, Ashley Cureton (Ed.) (Johns Hopkins University Press, £33)

Though written with an audience of US educators in mind, this collection of thoughtful academic essays on school safety and student wellbeing contains a series of interesting ideas, observations and case studies that may well be of interest to SLTs, local government officials and trust leaders on this side of the pond.

Its foreword is notable for being penned by Michele Gay – a former educator and mother to one of the children who lost their lives in the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting, who went on to co-found the school safety campaigning organisation, Safe and Sound Schools. As she says of both her activism and the book's broader objectives, the issue of gun-related school violence is one that inevitably has to be engaged with – but that any discussion of what it means for a school to be 'safe' has to extend far further, to include considerations of mental health, diverse school populations, and what constitutes an appropriate level of supervision and security within educational settings.

To that end, the book contains illuminating analysis and commentary on topics ranging from suicide prevention, trauma-informed care and restorative practices, to strategies for preventing in-person bullying and online harassment via social media platforms, in ways that could potentially translate to British contexts. With recent tragic events in Carmarthenshire and Sheffield prompting urgent discussions of school violence on these shores, the sharing of ideas and practice in this area seems more important than ever.

**Meet the author****EVELYNE GILLES****What prompted your decision to write *Empowering Black Boys*?**

I've worked in secondary schools across London for around 20 years and have seen, first-hand, the challenges that Black boys face with respect to low expectations and exclusions. At parents' evenings, it was clear to me just how vital a role parents played in shaping their children's success, and the concerns, questions and sometimes even anguish these parents felt with regards to their experiences of dealing with schools. The mostly Black parents told me that they felt overwhelmed by the system, and didn't know how to navigate it.

What was your reason for addressing parents of Black boys, in particular?

I had to narrow down the topic to better address the book's audience, and because the problems girls face are different. I've since started writing a similar book, for parents of Black girls, and when it comes out, people will appreciate how different those issues really are.

Have you had much feedback regarding the book so far?

I've asked colleagues to give me feedback on some of the book's chapters, and they've told me that they didn't even recognise some of the issues I'm writing about. They simply don't know that many parents of Black boys are feeling helpless, and not listened to by their own sons.

There's a chapter in the book on mental health and wellbeing, where I urge parents to not be ashamed to seek mental health support for their child; that doing so is a sign of strength, not weakness.

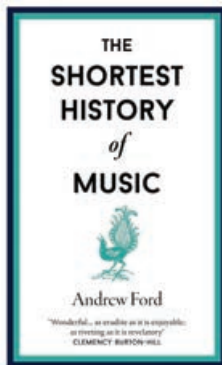
What impact do you hope the book will have?

I hope that some hope can come from it. There is support out there, from a number of agencies, but many parents don't know that and feel alone. When parents are empowered, they're able to empower their children.

At those parents' evenings, I'd see many parents to Black boys gathered in the same room, but rarely talking to each other – through which they could have supported each other, and shared their problems, challenges and commonalities. They were just there to hear how their child was doing at school before going home.

The book comes from my first-hand experiences, but I didn't want it to be political. It's a guide that tells parents how it is, why it is, how it used to be – and what they can do now to help their child.

Evelyne Gilles is a secondary school MFL teacher

**The Shortest History of Music**
(Andrew Ford, Old Street Publishing, £14.99)

The music programme of study requires students to possess an understanding of the music they perform and that which they listen to, as well as a grasp of music history, and an appreciation of different musical styles. This book certainly delivers on those counts, lighting on different kinds of instruments, forms of notation and general structures of music. It even delves into the distinctions between diatonic, chromatic and pentatonic scales, in a way that seems quite astonishing for such a short (256-page) book. There's a good breadth too, touching on classical, jazz, folk and blues, with a few 'one-page dives' into certain topics. Perhaps the only disappointment is that the index, while detailed, isn't as comprehensive as it could be, with some obvious key terms strangely omitted. Regardless, this book is highly recommended.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

**Empowering Black Boys in British Secondary Schools**

(Evelyne Adeline Gilles, Independently published, £20.99)

Though aimed at parents, there's lots here that teachers will find valuable. Part history lesson, part roadmap, *Empowering Black Boys*... opens with a concise overview of how immigration, local demographics and parental advocacy have impacted upon the English school system. The middle portion surveys the barriers preventing Black male children and teens from realising their true academic potential, before giving way to a final section in which Gilles sets out steps for navigating the issues explored in earlier chapters – from techniques for resisting peer pressure, to advice on establishing support networks. The overall tone is gently supportive, but never patronising – particularly when explaining the school system's bureaucratic complexities, and their role in compounding a problem that's gone under-examined for too long.

KEEPING MUM

By being more open and sensitive to the needs of their parent teachers, schools could make real progress in tackling the retention crisis, writes **Nikki Cunningham-Smith**...

Missing Mothers' – it sounds like a Sunday night drama about mums who have suddenly packed a bag and disappeared without trace. Though when I reflect on some recent research that indicates women in their 30s are the largest demographic that's departing teaching, it's perhaps not a million miles away from the truth...

I remember how, during my teacher training year, a fellow trainee arrived at our Monday morning seminar and excitedly showed us the fruits of her life-changing weekend – an engagement ring. As you can imagine, the assembled group of early twentysomethings became very excited at the prospect of a wedding, and all the trappings that go with it (Hen do, dress shopping, champagne, somewhere down the list a husband). And then our visiting course tutor casually remarked that she might want to hide her ring when attending one of her job interviews for a full-time teaching post the following week.

'Mothering' teachers

At first, we were confused by this unsolicited piece of advice. He elaborated further. Speaking as a former headteacher, he explained how, when young women interviewed for a role, he and the interviewers would check the candidate's ring finger. If she wore a wedding ring, then it was more likely that she'd be somewhere further along on her family journey – though still not as dedicated to the role as her professional peers, since her evenings would be spent with her

children, rather than on planning and marking. A wedding ring also suggested that she'd be absent more frequently, from having to be the one staying at home if her children fell ill.

The winning female candidate would typically have no ring at all, given the likelihood that she'd have plenty of time to dedicate to the school. One of us fired back with a question about men and the rings they wore, to which his only response was, "Ah, well – now that's different..."

I remember thinking at the time that this was ridiculous – but also, feeling for the first time *glad* that I was

“Flexible working is indeed possible; the problem lies more with inflexible thinking”

single, ahead of the recruitment scrum we'd be having to contend with. I think back now to that conversation, and my blood starts to boil.

This was, admittedly, the perspective of a misguided dinosaur, who continued to be professionally indulged in the days before diversity and inclusion directives, or gender pay gap initiatives. His views plainly weren't those of the profession at large, but had evidently been arrived at on the basis of some unspoken rule – namely, that 'mothering teachers' were a burden that ought to be avoided.

Breaking barriers

In the present day, those old barriers are now in the process of being broken down, but still remain highly visible. There are some pioneers out there, trying to make things more accessible for parent teachers and helping them thrive at a time that can be very difficult to navigate; raising your children whilst nurturing other people's children. But support is still woefully lacking in some areas.

For one, how in the world do we expect teachers to get their own children to school, when the standard expectation is for all

staff to commence work at the same time, often in conflicting locations?

The pandemic taught us that flexible working is indeed possible. The problem lies more with inflexible thinking. Against this backdrop, and amid a period of low teacher retention, the



'Missing Mothers' report (see tinyurl.com/ts142-MT1) is extremely welcome.

Produced by The New Britain Project think tank and The Maternity Teacher / Paternity Teacher Project (MTPT) campaign group, the report finds that while teaching remains a female-dominated profession, 9,417 women between the ages of 30 and 39 left the profession in 2023 – the highest proportion of any demographic. The top three factors cited as their reasons for leaving were excessive workload, family commitments and a lack of flexible working arrangements on the part of their school.

Adaptive timetabling

So is the answer to offer more working from home? Surprisingly not, since these leavers' chief request was actually the ability to attend significant events in their children's lives, and for there to be more adaptive timetabling options.

As a teacher, I'd certainly hope that the parents of my students would be able to attend those meaningful moments in their children's school journeys, such as assemblies and Nativity plays, and where possible, be able to pick them up at the end of the school day. And as a mother, I'd like to do the same for my own children.

When inflexible work

practices collide with teachers' hopes for more flexibility around their roles, it can, and evidently has pushed experienced teaching staff into different professions that are actually willing and able to provide what they're looking for.

Moreover, the 30 to 39 age bracket in question is the sweet spot for advancing into leadership roles. Women for whom teaching has been their sole profession will have acquired years of highly valuable experience by that time – but if they leave, all that acquired experience will go when they do.

This might partly explain why men are 2.3 times more likely to become headteachers than woman. Until very recently, it was virtually unheard of for men to request flexible working. Women, on the other hand, can be off for long periods on maternity leave or to raise their children, potentially multiple times. Upon their return, they'll then be expected to continue as if they had never left, catching up on various profession-wide developments while dealing with their own life changes and taking everything in their stride. Their male counterparts will typically only receive a few weeks of paternity leave before being expected back at work, enabling them to resume their career trajectories largely uninterrupted.

The 'default' parent

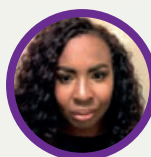
I've discussed with my husband the frustrations I've felt at being a 'working mother', while he's seen as 'a man at work who happens to have kids at home'. For all that he's incredibly active and deeply involved in attending to our children's needs, he's never viewed as the 'default' parent. Whereas I am – purely by default of my XX chromosomes!

18 months ago, I made a

personal decision to leave the classroom and my leadership role, in favour of taking up a support staff job at an independent school. While the experience and the flexibility it afforded were fantastic – I could work from home, be there for school pick-ups, book days off in term time for health visitor and hospital appointments – I felt desperately unfulfilled. I therefore decided to return to teaching via a SEN leadership job. I've worked part-time since having children. They've attended nursery, during days that could naturally be longer – but there was something about my children starting school that made me want to be there for pick-up at least once a week. So that's what I asked for in my letter of application.

At the interview, when asked if I had any questions, I replied, "How do you feel about me going to my children's Nativity?" If I were to be offered the job, they asked, would I still be a firm candidate? I responded by asking them, "Would I be able to collect my children from school on at least one day per week?"

Reading through the findings of the 'Missing Mothers' report made me realise that if I wanted to stay in the profession I loved, then I'd have to clearly outline exactly what I needed to thrive, rather than simply survive. It's a document that I feel all school leaders – whether they're faced with teacher retention issues or not – should immerse themselves in. Before then figuring out how to embed its recommendations into their standard practice.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

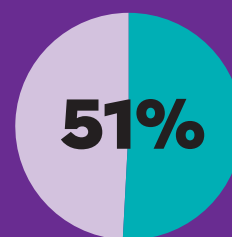
Nikki Cunningham-Smith is an assistant headteacher based in Gloucestershire

IN NUMBERS

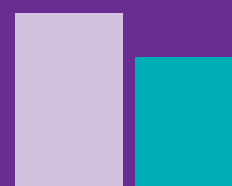


127,910

The number of women teachers aged 30 to 39 within the education workforce



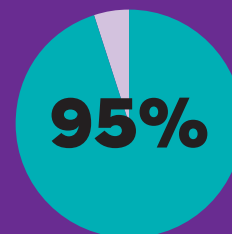
of female teachers aged 30 to 39 have left teaching due to family commitments



2,194

of the headteachers in English state schools are men; 1,652 are women

Source: DfE School Workforce in England 2023



of women teachers aged 30 to 39 opting to remain within the profession cited 'supportive school policies around parental needs' as a key reason for them staying; 71% cited the ability to secure part-time roles

Source: 2024 survey carried out for the 'Missing Mothers' report

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Twists and turns

Adrian Lyons surveys the latest developments in the ongoing saga that is Ofsted's evolving approach to school inspection...

Some of us are old enough to remember a wonderful comedy that parodied the television soap operas of the time. It was called simply *Soap*, and ran from 1977 to 1981. Each episode began with a précis of the convoluted story so far, and always ended its introduction with the phrase, “*Confused? You won't be, after this week's episode of ... Soap.*”

I was reminded of this show when reading Ofsted's plans for the future of school inspection from the next academic year. Perhaps the most eye-catching aspect is Ofsted's example colour chart, which illustrates a school where ‘Achievement’ has a grade of ‘Attention needed’. Everything else – ‘Leadership and Governance’; ‘Curriculum’; ‘Developing Teaching’; ‘Personal Development and Wellbeing’; ‘Sixth Form’; ‘Attendance’; ‘Behaviour and attitudes’; ‘Inclusion’; i.e. the things that result in achievement – are all at least ‘secure’.

In with the old

You may remember the days prior to 2012, when a grade 3 was called ‘Satisfactory’. It was the grade below Good. In everyday English, Satisfactory, of course, means ‘okay’. Sir Michael Wilshaw wanted to send the message that ‘less than good’ was *not* okay, and so the judgement was renamed ‘Requires Improvement’. The old Inadequate grade, meanwhile – indicative of serious weaknesses – will become ‘Requires Significant

Improvement’. Which is perhaps a little confusing.

There are some good – or should that be ‘Strong’? – elements within the ‘new’ framework plans. (Because while Ofsted may claim that they're new, they're largely drawn from suggestions previously considered in the past.) The return to a focus on inclusion is welcome, though this seems to be limited to pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, rather than a more serious analysis of performance as it relates to different groups.

The existing ‘Quality of Education’ judgement will be split and restored to the older judgement areas of ‘Curriculum’, alongside ‘Teaching’ (or ‘Developing Teaching’, to use the new terminology.) ‘Achievement’ also returns, and as in previous frameworks, will be comprise a balance of attainment and progress.

The pendulum swings

The new framework's Curriculum judgement will need to be robust. Ofsted has stated that a school's curriculum will cause concern if, “*It is narrow, and therefore does not prepare pupils for adult life.*” Though the case could be made that any school diligently following the current National Curriculum and EBacc would, in fact, meet that concern criterion.

My worry about the pendulum swinging back to data is that in ‘poor areas’

particularly, the curriculum will indeed narrow. One area in which HMCI Spielman had a positive impact was ensuring a wider and improved curriculum in many (albeit not her most favoured) schools. I'd argue that this was a poor curriculum, lacking in many key areas and insufficiently broad (especially with respect to oracy, technology and the arts), but I fear these latest curriculum plans could actually take us backwards, forcing schools to focus on English and maths even more than they already do.

The proposed reintroduction of ‘monitoring visits’ – where Ofsted has arguably had the greatest impact on school improvement – is welcome, assuming they go ahead. Their withdrawal stemmed from a combination of Ofsted's limited resources and re-brokered schools being considered as new schools. It's also encouraging that the ‘Personal Development and Wellbeing’ judgement talks about impact, which had been prohibited from personal development inspections under the existing framework.

As predicted

However, this misses the larger point. I predicted that it would soon become apparent how last year's routine change of Chief Inspector would be followed by a routine change of framework, resulting in widely publicised ‘dramatic changes’ to the Inspectorate's expectations of schools, when little would actually change in the way schools are inspected.

There presently seems to be a real danger of the new scorecard being simply a cosmetic change to the way Ofsted reports, with little fundamental reform to underpin it. And sadly, Ofsted has proved my prediction to be correct.

The real issue remains the ‘cliff edge’ nature of judgements. When the overall effectiveness judgements were abolished, I commented at the time that schools may well find themselves swapping one cliff edge judgement for four or five. Now it's ten.

That's in stark contrast to education inspectorates in other countries – even those as close to home as Wales' Estyn – that seem to manage without any grades at all.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adrian Lyons was one of His Majesty's Inspectors between 2005 and 2021 and now works with MATs, teacher training providers and LAs to support education; find out more at adrianlyonsconsulting.com

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FUNDING *your dreams*

Hilary Goldsmith looks at the fundraising avenues available to schools, and what it takes to generate revenue in an effective, sustainable way...

Wherever you are in your school leadership journey – whether you're new in post, or an experienced pro – you're very likely going to be grappling with the realities of long-term underfunding, and the unpredictability involved in setting school budgets.

Fear not. You aren't alone, and the shortages and pressures you're experiencing *aren't your fault*. Whilst we can't do much individually to raise our per-pupil funding, there are some things you can do to equip yourself with the fundraising know-how needed to secure the resources your school truly needs.

Maximise your entitlements

There are two parts to this process. The first is to make sure that your school is getting all the funding to which it is entitled – and that means checking eligibility, understanding the rules around who gets what and making sure you get it.

The second part involves fundraising – but first things first. Before embarking on any ambitious fundraising campaigns, ensure that your school is already receiving *all* the funding it could be – which might include, but not be limited to...

• Free school meals

Your school's eligibility for the Free School Meals (FSM) entitlement should be regularly reviewed as a matter of course. Ensure that all eligible families are fully aware of the funds that are available, and are accessing this vital support accordingly. Actively encourage families to apply by signposting them to the application process.

Also, ensure your families are aware of the positive impact that just their applications will have on the school's resources – because simply by applying, their FSM entitlement may yet unlock additional funding streams for the school, such as the Pupil Premium.

• SEND funding

Carefully review the needs of your students with SEND, and ensure that your Local Authority's information is complete and accurate. Also check that any funding you're currently in receipt of is what you are owed. It can be difficult, but try to take time to understand the complexities of SEND funding across your LA.

Work closely with your SENCo, and make sure they're fully up-to-date with any new Education, Health and Care Plans (as well any changes needed to other EHCPs already in place) so that you can plan your budgeting and

staffing needs accordingly.

By diligently reviewing these two areas, you'll be that much closer to maximising your school's income, and ensuring that every pound is used to best support your students' learning and wellbeing.

Raising those funds

Before embarking on any fundraising journey, it's crucial to first identify your school's most pressing needs. What are the biggest obstacles getting in the way of you providing an excellent education for your students? Outdated playground equipment, perhaps? Limited access to technology? Insufficient resources for extra-curricular trips, clubs or activities?

Remember that any needs you identify at this stage should be linked closely to your school's development priorities and broader educational ambitions.

This is your cue to open up a dialogue with staff, parents and, most importantly, your students. What are *their* priorities? What new additions or revised offerings would genuinely enhance their school experience?

Sure, a brand new swimming pool might seem like an admirable, if lofty aspiration, but you may be better off considering a set of more achievable goals – such as securing regular access to a visiting mobile swimming pool, for example.

Harness that energy

Let's face it, your schedule is *packed* – which is why low-effort, high-impact fundraising ideas tend to be treated as easy wins. These can, however, set the tone for a culture of regular giving that risks making some parents feel bad or inadequate for not being able to donate as often as they might like to.

For short, sharp cash injections, cake and jumble sales are typically easy to organize, universally enjoyed – and sometimes, surprisingly lucrative. I've previously worked at a school that held an annual 'Wear it Weird' day, where students were encouraged to arrive at school wearing the most outrageous and unusual outfits they could come up with, in return for a small fee. You

should know the kind of thing that engages your school community, so harness some of that energy.

Try running a school-wide raffle, with prizes generously donated by local businesses – a simple, yet consistently engaging activity. You could also try seeing if 'Guess the weight of the teacher' or 'Name the teddy' competitions can generate unexpected funds, whilst getting your community onto the school site and making emotional connections with your cause.

Non-uniform days remain an evergreen favourite, but maybe consider

organising a few themed days – like 'Superhero Day' or 'Animal Day' to add an extra layer of excitement.

Apply for grants

Grant funding can be genuine a game-changer for schools. Begin by identifying potential funders, which you can do by exploring any charities and foundations in your local area that support education initiatives. Remember that local knowledge is key.

After this, you can then try researching any national charities that are aligned with your school's priorities,

SURVIVING THE SQUEEZE

The recently published 2025 Kreston UK Academies Benchmarking Report (see tiny.cc/ts142-HT1) shows how the sector's finances have tightened over the last 12 months.

Uncertainty persists, as trusts wait to see what potential reforms the government has in store, against a backdrop of worsening financial results. On average, single academy trusts (SATs) have again incurred deficits this year. That's now three years in a row for primary SATs, and the first time secondary SATs have hit budget deficits since 2021.

Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) fared better, but have still only broke even or achieved small surpluses at best.

Among our sample of 260 trusts, nearly 60% incurred an in-year deficit this year. Reserves are also slowly declining, from an average of 9% for larger MATs in 2022/23, to 8% by 2023/24. Given burgeoning estate costs, worrying SEND budget deficit trends and no concrete plans as yet for funding ongoing staff cost rises, academy leaders are rightfully concerned.

Academies must be allowed to operate at a surplus if they're to navigate the choppy waters ahead, yet under the current model, this appears almost impossible. Trusts have had to dig deep to find cost savings in recent years, while funding has failed to keep pace with rising costs.

Growth stalled

The solution is growth. The larger an academy becomes, the more it can

benefit from cost efficiencies through centralisation and economies of scale. 81% of academies are reported to be fully centralised, with MATs on average having grown to include around 12 schools – an increase of 11% from 2022/23. However, more are reporting deficits than not, so how large does a trust now need to be?

Government plans to end growth funding through the Trust Capacity Fund (TCAF) and start-up grants are coming at a time when, for some trusts, growth might be the only available option for stabilising their finances. Over 50% of trusts have reported that these announcements had altered their plans and mindset towards growth.

A mixed picture

Capital funding for all but the larger MATs that receive school condition allocation (SCA) remains a lottery. Trusts must presently bid on a project-by-project basis for even the most essential repairs. Capital funding has risen by just 1.5% since 2021/22, over a period that's seen inflation sometimes exceed 10%.

There is, however, some welcome news. Updated government projections regarding the falling pupil roll have confirmed that the reduction is now expected to be less severe in the short term. There may also be an influx of pupils from private institutions, following the government's imposition of VAT on

school fees accounted in its 2024 Autumn budget.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, which is currently making its way through Parliament, offers a further glimpse of the government's new approach to education, with its greater emphasis on Local Authority involvement, and shift in attitudes towards forced academisation.

According to Leora Cruddas CBE, chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, "School trusts have seen a real tightening of their budgets in recent years, and the gap between the funding received and real costs on the ground is unsustainable. Pupils and teachers are working hard to improve standards, and we need government to meet them by providing the resources to do the job properly."

What the sector ultimately needs is open, transparent dialogue between school leaders and government, and more certainty beyond short-term funding. This will enable more strategic decision making, and deliver far greater value for money where every pound has to count.



Kevin Connor is head of academies at chartered accountants, Bishop Fleming; for more information, visit bishopfleming.co.uk

“Fundraising isn’t solely about acquiring funds; it’s also about fostering a sense of community within your school”

such as those focusing on educational support or specific student needs. Don’t forget to also investigate any government funding programs available for schools, and above all, don’t wait for grants to drop into your inbox. Because they won’t.

Instead, make use of online grant databases to search for any funding opportunities that match your school’s needs and location. Attending grant writing workshops can further provide invaluable tips and insights from experienced professionals.

When crafting grant applications, be sure to emphasise those details that make your school and specific project truly *unique*. Articulate how the funding will be used as clearly as you can, while emphasising the positive outcomes it will achieve for your students. Tell your story, and make sure it comes from the heart.

Keep in mind the kind of people who will be reading your bid. What motivates *them*? Meticulous proofreading and writing to the bid criteria will also be essential for maintaining your bid’s credibility and ensuring that it doesn’t end up getting rejected on a technicality.

Get everyone involved

Remember that grant applications often have tight deadlines, so early starts are crucial. Building up your relationships with potential funders – by attending events they’ve organised, for instance – can significantly increase your chances

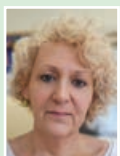
of success. That said, it’s also important to remember that rejections are an inevitable part of the process. Learn from each setback, ask for feedback and be sure to refine your subsequent applications accordingly.

Fundraising isn’t solely about acquiring funds; it’s also about fostering a sense of community within your school. Encourage active participation from all members of the school community, from students, to parents and school staff. If you eventually have cause to celebrate your school’s fundraising successes, see to it that you acknowledge and appreciate everyone’s contributions.

Maintain transparency with your school community by keeping them informed of any ongoing and upcoming fundraising activities, and by making them aware of how previously raised funds are being utilised.

Remember – fundraising should be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Embrace your school community’s creativity. Try out new approaches. Foster a spirit of collaboration wherever you can. With enough dedication, and perhaps a touch of ingenuity, you too could unlock the funding your school truly deserves.

Now, go forth and fundraise!



Hilary Goldsmith is a school business leader, consultant and NAHT mentor



DFE CONNECT

Originally introduced in April 2024, the government’s free ‘DfE Connect’ service aims to provide school leaders and SBLs with a central resource for DfE-produced guidance, data and resources. At present, access is only open to academies and academy trusts, though this will be extended to maintained schools later in the year.

The main headline feature of the service is its offer of a single sign-in for a DfE’s assorted services and information sources, developed in response to feedback from school leaders and SBMs that accessing these had often proved much more involved and time-consuming than they would have liked.

DfE Connect instead presents registered users with a personalised point of contact for all DfE enquiries that seeks to provide:

- A streamlined and straightforward means of checking upcoming submission deadlines and the support available
- Custom views displaying content and information relevant only to the registered user’s specific role, setting and location
- A less time-intensive way of logging in, completing forms and searching for guidance on specific topics

The DfE’s hope is that the service will connect school leaders to essential data and guidance more quickly, and reduce demand for the school data return and reporting services increasingly provided by third parties.

As of January this year, DfE Connect will also provide users with direct access to all DfE grant and funding opportunities, plus a number of other additions planned for the near future.

These are set to include new material relating to school procurement, safeguarding and workforce management; optional alerts and communication tools; and a function for academy trusts to assist with delegating tasks and tracking progress.

The DfE Connect service can be accessed via dfecconnect.education.gov.uk (DfE sign-in account required)

The ‘special RELATIONSHIP’

Andy Lewis highlights the divergences in faith, politics, and education between the US and UK – and how those differences can make for some memorable lesson material...

The US and the UK are often described as having a ‘special relationship’ that reflects their close political, economic, military and cultural ties over the past century. It’s a relationship essentially built upon shared values, mutual respect and global co-operation.

However, one area where these two nations diverge significantly is in their respective approaches to religion and government. Examining this contrast provides a fascinating lens through which to explore how history, culture and society shape the intersection of faith and politics.

In the UK, the Church of England is known as the Established Church, with the monarch serving as its Supreme Governor. This institutional connection between church and state has deeply influenced British national identity, particularly since the English Reformation. The Church’s role extends into governance, with 26 bishops (the ‘Lords Spiritual’) holding seats in the House of Lords.

In contrast, the U.S. Constitution, adopted in 1789, enshrines a strict separation of church and state. The First Amendment explicitly prohibits the establishment of a national religion, reflecting the early settlers’ desire to avoid the religious conflicts and state-imposed doctrines they had experienced in Europe, particularly during the Reformation. This principle

England, the Church has played a pivotal role in establishing schools. Early institutions, such as the monastic schools in Canterbury (est. 597) and Jarrow (est. 674), focused on religious instruction and literacy. These were then followed by cathedral schools, and later grammar schools, such as Winchester College (est. 1382) and Eton College (est. 1440).

State became involved.

In the United States, early schools like Boston Latin School (est. 1635) were founded by Puritan Christians, with a focus on Biblical literacy. Education in New England was closely tied to religion, but in the middle and southern colonies, it was more decentralised. For example, groups like the Quakers opened inclusive schools in Pennsylvania, educating boys, girls, Native Americans and even enslaved people.

However, the Establishment Clause of the US Constitution has ensured that public schools cannot promote or mandate religious instruction. In contrast to the UK, RE doesn’t form part of the curriculum in US public schools. Successive Supreme Court rulings have reinforced this over time, including banning school-sponsored prayer, Bible readings and religious displays – such as crosses – in classrooms. The US does have some religious schools, but these are usually private and fee-paying, making them exempt from Federal oversight.

“In the UK, the Church remains entwined with government and education, in keeping with a legacy of religious influence spanning centuries”

highlights the US’s pluralistic foundation, where religious freedom is a core tenet.

Religion in education

The educational systems of the UK and the US provide a further useful example of their differences when it comes to how religion intersects with public life. In

After the Reformation, all of England’s monastic schools were either dissolved or repurposed, leading to the creation of ‘free schools’ and the provision of a broader education. However, many schools with religious character still exist today – a legacy of the Church’s historical role in providing free education before the

Demographic considerations

Yet despite being subject to that constitutionally mandated separation from government, religion has historically played a significant role in US public life. Many political candidates openly discuss their faith, with Christian values often featuring prominently in election campaigns.

The high levels of religious identification among US citizens, especially in Southern and Mid-western states, have often influenced the country's broader societal values and public policy. Long-running debates over abortion and marriage equality, for example, will frequently draw on religious arguments. That said, public institutions, including public schools and government buildings, must still remain secular, in line with the Establishment Clause.

There have been some shifts in this, following some of the Trump/McConnell appointments to the Supreme Court and other courts, which has provided a way for States to adopt different practices. In Florida, for example, the Department of Education proposed in August 2024 to place religious chaplains in public schools. Opponents claimed that this would amount to promoting the religious viewpoints favoured by the governor, and as such, would be in contravention of the Constitution.

Another example came in June that same year, when every school in Oklahoma was mandated to incorporate the Bible – and more specifically, the 10 Commandments – into their curriculum. Oklahoma's State Superintendent further plans to spend \$3 million on a Christian Nationalist version of the King James Bible that includes the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, Pledge of Allegiance and Bill of Rights – seemingly ignoring all aspects of the Establishment Clause in the process.

Two nations, two approaches

All this is in stark contrast to what we see in the UK, where church attendance and religious affiliation have declined significantly in recent decades. Most politicians tend to keep their faith private, with notable public expressions of religion by high-profile figures often inviting criticism or ridicule.

Nevertheless, the Church of England has managed to retain its formal role in governance. Beyond the aforementioned 26 bishops providing a religious perspective in the House of Lords, all MPs in the Commons and peers in the Lords swear allegiance to the Crown when taking their oath of office (unless they wish to specifically use a secular affirmation) – a tradition that reflects the UK's historical intertwining of monarchy, Church and state.

The contrasting approaches taken by both countries reflect two unique historical and cultural trajectories. In the UK, the Church remains entwined with government and education, in keeping with a legacy of religious influence spanning centuries. The US' strict separation of church and state meanwhile reflects its founding principles of religious freedom and diversity. Yet recent developments suggest that in some places, the Christian faith may eventually find a place in state legislation and policy.

These differences challenge us to consider how differently various nations will balance matters of faith, governance and public life – even those considered quite similar in many respects. It's going to be interesting to monitor how, when and where such changes begin to emerge, and their wider impact on the Constitution.

These divergences also highlight how the supposed 'special relationship' enjoyed between the US and UK is as much about understanding and respecting differences as it is about declaring shared values – which many would argue is the very essence of the early settlers who brought their European experience to the newly discovered land of the United States.

BROADER CURRICULUM THEMES

This topic is one that can provide rich opportunities for classroom exploration, debate and discussion. Teachers can use it to address a range of areas – such as...

- ▶ **Respecting religious diversity** – How can societies protect religious freedoms while maintaining secular governance?
- ▶ **Historical legacies versus modern pluralism** – How do historical institutions like the Church of England adapt to a more secular society?
- ▶ **Faith and policy** – How do religious beliefs influence debates on moral and social issues – such as abortion and marriage equality – in both nations?

By examining these themes, students can gain valuable insights into how history, culture and politics continue to shape the complex relationship between religion and governance, with a particular focus on the UK and US.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Lewis is a teacher of RE and deputy headteacher at St Bonaventure's, East London; follow him at @andylewis_re (X) or visit mrlewisre.co.uk

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the school holidays, thus avoiding disruptions for students and staff. The team even carried out some mid-project rewiring, which allowed dimmable lighting in specific areas, making the upgrade even more effective.

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James Whatley, school business manager, Goldwyn School

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Reality check

Elena Lengthorn explains why an informed awareness of the realities concerning climate change can, and should become a core component of every teacher's practice

As a teacher educator, I want to ensure that we give our secondary teachers a grounding in the challenges that today's children will face from growing up in a declared climate emergency.

The campaign group Teach the Future has produced a set of 10 guiding principles that could inform a new National Curriculum (see tiny.cc/ts142-S1). These include drawing links between the ecological crisis and social injustice; recognition that the concept of 'sustainability' can be interpreted differently within the various subjects students study; and encouraging the development of creative and critical thinking skills, as well as a preparedness to confront uncertain futures.

A deeper dive

In the meantime, we at the University of Worcester and others, including Dr Paul Vare from the University of Gloucester, and Dr Elsa Lee from Homerton College, University of Cambridge, are exploring ways of embedding those principles into teaching practice more widely via avenues already available to us, without having to wait for major curriculum reforms.

We introduce sustainability on day 2 of our PGCE course, showing our trainees ways of being sustainable themselves while learning with us and after they've graduated – from keeping reusable cups to hand for their teas and coffees, through to making shared

travel and parking arrangements and using public transport.

In January, after the trainees have completed their first placement and got a general idea of what's happening in their schools, we're then able to dedicate time and space for the whole cohort – not just the geography trainees I teach – to engage with a deeper, more extensive dive into what climate education involves.

Climate-anxious teachers

This year, we invited a group of pupils from one of our local partnership schools, The Chase, who had been trained in the 'Teach the Teacher' course run by the charity Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK). This equips pupils with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver a one-hour lesson on climate change to an audience of teachers, explaining what it's like to be a young person confronting the climate crisis, and emphasising the need for climate education.

The school's formidable sustainability leader, Sarah Dukes, accompanied the pupils, who then shared their perspectives with us. This was a chance for all of our

trainees to hear some key sustainability messages – ranging from the projected number of future climate migrants, to the size and number of areas at risk from flooding. More importantly, they were hearing these sustainability messages from *children*, who were fully aware of the difficulties relating to climate and ecological emergency, and concerned for their futures.

There's been some recent research around the growing proportion of young people who are climate-anxious. What we perhaps need now are more teachers who are climate-anxious themselves, and who can channel their awareness and concerns into their classroom practice.

A geographer's burden

In my own experience, I've seen how geography teachers in schools can find themselves becoming the 'sustainability person', the 'eco schools co-ordinator' or similar. The DfE's 2023 'Sustainability and Climate Change' policy paper (see tiny.cc/ts142-S2) talked about encouraging all schools to appoint sustainability leads, and providing them with carbon literacy training by 2025, but it wasn't a statutory requirement.

A TEACHER TAUGHT

"Our 'Teach the Teacher' session took place in front of the whole PGCE cohort – around 180 adults in total. The children from The Chase were aged between 11 and 13, and were brilliant in how they portrayed the climate emergency. They weren't especially emotive in what they were saying, but everything they said really hit deep.

They gave a highly engaging lesson on why we need climate education in schools, citing various statistics relating to environmental harms. With my background in conservation and sustainability I knew some of the facts already, but I could see that some trainees in other subjects were shocked by what was being said. Hearing the children explain these issues to us – it felt really emotional."

– Anna Inglis
PGCE geography student

I know that anecdotally, some of our graduates have felt empowered to ask questions at their schools about the sustainability policies they have in place, and the forms those should take. We're seeing applicants now citing sustainability concerns as among their reasons for wanting to train with us – and a growing recognition across all subjects of the need to support our children as they confront the climate and ecological emergency.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elena Lengthorn is a senior lecturer in teacher education and lead for the PGCE secondary geography course at the University of Worcester



LET THEM COOK

The food education children receive in school has changed a great deal since the 80s, says **Maria Dunbar** – but the skills it can teach are needed now more than ever...

Few would argue against the suggestion that all children should learn how to cook from scratch. The ability to feed oneself is one of Maslow's basic psychological needs, alongside water, warmth and rest – yet many children (and adults) now lack the knowledge and skills needed to turn basic raw ingredients into wholesome and nourishing meals.

Almost a quarter of 10- to 11-year-olds are now described as obese (see tiny.cc/ts142-F1), with ultra-processed foods accounting for more than half of the total energy intake in the UK's diet (see tiny.cc/ts142-F2). Diet is a key factor in what the Academy for Medical Sciences has called an 'appalling decline' in young children's health (see tiny.cc/ts142-F3) – hence the pressing need for more understanding of the important role a good diet plays in long-term health.

Back to the 80s

Over the same period, however, there's been a steady decline in food preparation and nutrition lessons. A recent survey by the Food Teachers Centre revealed that less than a fifth of secondary schools teach weekly food lessons throughout the school year (see tiny.cc/ts142-F4). So where did things go wrong?

I was fortunate enough to attend a secondary school in the mid 1980s that had home economics as part of the core curriculum. I had weekly double practical cookery lessons, and learnt about everything from fruit and vegetable prep, to how to

make a roux sauce, shortcrust pastry and even how to joint a chicken.

Alongside this, I also learnt about food hygiene, basic nutrition and budgeting. Consequently, I left school with all the foundational skills required to turn fresh ingredients into affordable home cooked meals to feed myself, my friends, and in time, members of my family.

The development of the National Curriculum throughout the early 1990s saw food technology sitting within design and technology, vying for curriculum time alongside resistant materials, graphic design and textiles. Food teachers were training to

transferable skills, including organisation and timekeeping; the ability to prepare and work both independently and as part of a team; awareness of good hygiene practice; problem solving; and resilience.

Delivered well, practical food lessons can be extremely powerful. Very few subjects can deliver such positive, tangible (and nutritious) outcomes within an hour, whilst simultaneously improving students' levels of engagement, attendance and confidence, right across the curriculum.

That said, the subject is similar to D&T more generally, in that practical food education can be costly to deliver, and managing

So long as the space in question has some wipeable tables and a sink, food lessons can be taught effectively and sustainably. Simple equipment kits can be stored between lessons in a lidded box, making for an excellent long-term use of PTA funds (as well as being useful preparation for students who may soon be contemplating the prospect of communal living spaces or bedsits). Often, the easiest solutions – such as using a set of wipeable, plastic-coated aprons to reduce laundry costs – can be the most effective.

Straightforward, well-written recipes that utilise four or five main ingredients (plus store cupboard

“Very few subjects can deliver such positive, tangible (and nutritious) outcomes within an hour”

become D&T teachers, and would regularly have to deliver lesson across all related subjects.

That may be part of the reason for the steady decline of food technology teachers in the years since, with only 3,745 teachers recorded for the 2022-23 academic year – a 4% drop from the previous year, and part of a worrying decade-long trend.

Rethinking food education

Food education is an important subject in itself, but it also has a huge role to play in addressing many wider issues, such as the aforementioned obesity trends. It's a subject that contains a wealth of

practical lessons within the typically allotted slots of around 50 timetabled minutes can be a challenge. There are, however, some effective strategies and approaches that can help.

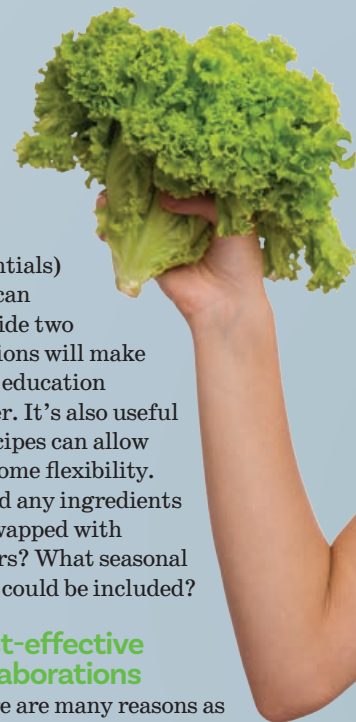
Beyond the equipment

Specialist kitchen teaching space may be essential at KS4, but food preparation and cooking skills can be taught well at KS3 using just a pop-up kitchen space situated in a school hall, classroom or even outside. It's surprising how many delicious recipes can be prepared with a very simple set of equipment available from any supermarket, a bowl of hot soapy water and a plug-in induction hob.

essentials) and can provide two portions will make food education easier. It's also useful if recipes can allow for some flexibility. Could any ingredients be swapped with others? What seasonal food could be included?

Cost-effective collaborations

There are many reasons as to why schools should provide ingredients for all pupils. As well as being inclusive and ensuring both hygiene and safety for all students, buying in bulk results in some significant cost savings – whether it be



purchasing a jar of cinnamon for whole class use, a sack of carrots or 10kg of minced beef from a wholesale supplier, rather than from a local supermarket.

Paired or group work can be real game-changer in this regard, sometimes helping to bring the cost of ingredients down to as low as 30 or 40 pence per pupil. It's also far easier for a pair of pupils to make a recipe and do the washing up within 50 minutes, versus one pupil working on their own.

Moreover, if the school provides the ingredients, each pupil can concentrate on making a single portion, rather than a meal for four to take home with them –

thus further cutting down on cooking time, the amount of storage space you'll need and required laundry loads.

Exciting times

Most people considering entering teaching now won't have had the same experiences of food education that I did. As things stand, we need more teachers, and new routes into food education – approaches that leverage our growing fascination and interest in food, whilst accepting that we're 'selling' a teaching role that likely isn't what applicants will have experienced themselves.

Right now, it's an exciting time. The University of Roehampton has recently launched two new food teaching qualifications, which helpfully demonstrate the innovative thinking we need. Its new 10-day L7 qualification is designed for two distinct audiences – the first group being qualified teachers of other subjects, who want to gain the specialist

knowledge and confidence they'll need to deliver hands-on food lessons.

The second intended audience comprises chefs, TAs and technicians who possess some culinary or classroom experience, but without the degree qualification needed to enable a PGCE pathway. It's a new qualification, specifically designed to teach the specialist knowledge and skills needed to deliver a practical food curriculum – and would be a good investment for any school wanting to set up or revitalise their practical food learning provision.

Leiths Education is proud to be working with the University of Roehampton on this new qualification, and to be supporting them with the first regional PGCE in Food and Nutrition.

Closing thoughts

While I make no apologies for being passionate around food education, I must acknowledge that secondary education today is very different from my experiences over 40 years ago. That's why we need new, innovative thinking, so that we can enable more children to benefit from hands-on practical food lessons.

What encourages me is the commitment shown by some teachers and school leaders to offering young people a broad and balanced curriculum, and the courage with which they have tried to innovate, despite the many challenges schools regularly face.

High quality food education is valuable in and of itself, but also a subject that gives much more to young people than you may initially think. I urge you to make it a priority in the curriculum!

THE IDEAL FOOD EDUCATION RECIPE

1 CONSIDER THE WIDER BENEFITS

Food education is a great way of helping young people learn valuable life skills, such as problem solving, timekeeping and project management.

2 KEEP IT SIMPLE

Introducing food education needn't entail major investments in equipment. At KS3, there are many recipes that require little in the way of specialist kitchen aids and utensils.

3 TEAM UP

Getting students to work in groups can significantly reduce the cost of ingredients and the amount of equipment needed within the learning space.

4 HELP DELIVER OUTCOMES

It's rewarding for young people to create (and sample) delicious food. Doing so affords a sense of accomplishment and a positive connection with the food they eat.

5 EXPLORE DIFFERENT CUISINES

Food education provides opportunities for young people to be exposed to – and appreciate – a wide range of foods, while exploring new tastes from different countries and cultures, and expanding their palate.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maria Dunbar is CEO of Leiths Education and is a former secondary food technology teacher; for more information, visit leiths.com/explore/partner-schools



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FOCUS ON: STEM

We examine the powerful learning unique to science practicals, find out how one school goes about building its students' coding prowess – and learn how D&T is no longer the subject it once was...

How are schools engaging students in STEM subjects?

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The appliance of SCIENCE

As any science teacher knows, practical lessons are often challenging, but hugely rewarding – **Kit Betts-Masters** offers some advice on ensuring yours go without a hitch...

1 4 years ago I was a young, somewhat supercilious teacher in a training session. The Association of Science Education trainer was explaining to us why he'd left teaching after a few difficult years 'at the coalface', as he put it.

He'd clearly found his calling, because what followed was a considered session, with a clear and actionable message that's stayed with me throughout my career. (And I'd still maintain that if you ever find yourself lacking enthusiasm, or needing a new spark, enrol yourself on a course from a professional subject body).

He asked us: "*Why do we do experiments?*" All kinds of suggestions were put forward by the assembled science teachers – '*Engagement!*' '*Additional context!*' '*Better understanding!*' and so on. Our trainer took those suggestions on board, and then said, "*None of you have said 'because that's what science is.'*"

A verb and a noun

In all honesty, many students think experiments are an easy ride compared to sitting and writing. If you were to ask some of our science students '*Why do you enjoy the experiment lessons?*' they'd probably tell you, '*Well – it's more fun, isn't it?*'

Tell them they're doing a practical lesson, and many students will look forward to a bit of downtime whilst something heats up, or some plant starts bubbling. As the teacher, however, *you* of

course know that it won't be an easy lesson at all. Because experiments are very hard to do well.

It's hard to keep students engaged while ensuring that they're actually learning something useful. And alongside that are all the usual worries you'll have around there not being enough time to complete the method, plot the graph, or even pack away in a calm and orderly manner at the end of the lesson.

And yet, as our ASE trainer memorably put it, "*Science is as much a verb as it is a noun. In science, experimentation is the process of making new knowledge.*" So how do we get students to understand that? How do we get them to feel like they're part of that process, and to maybe one day love it?

Changing the atmosphere

Ask students what science is, and the most common answer you get will be some variation of '*Science tries to explain how things work.*' That's not incorrect *per se*, but it doesn't tell the whole story. A useful rephrasing might be, "*Science lets you explain how things work.*"

By performing experiments, we're helping them to model their universe; to make sense of the evidence in front of them.

I recommend having a discussion with your classes about what science is, the purposes it serves and the

potential science careers they could pursue. When I get that discussion right, the atmosphere of that and future lessons changes. The kids henceforth arrive at the door expecting a lesson that will fascinate them, which makes it a joy to guide them through the material.

Pick a time for this discussion when you think they're ready for it – maybe

after completing a practical lesson that they really enjoyed, or as preparation for an important upcoming experiment.

Engage them with the interplay between the process and theory of science, and explain how science isn't 'fixed', but rather seeks evidence, and then uses that evidence to develop models. Explain

"By performing experiments, we're helping students to model their universe"



how, if we obtain new evidence, then we change our model – and how they can play a part in that process.

Work to do

A decade on from that training session, circa 2021, I was a head of science. The department was navigating pandemic arrangements, determining students' GCSE and A Level grades while simultaneously managing their wellbeing (and our own).

For the practical elements of the course, we'd come to rely heavily on incorporating simulations and video demonstrations into our online lessons – and part of me wonders if we developed habits at that time that we haven't yet managed to shift.

I took the time to read Ofsted's 'Science' entry in its ongoing subject report series and would recommend that all science teachers do the same. What I found most meaningful was its recognition of the need to explicitly teach both *disciplinary knowledge* (the processes of science) and *substantive knowledge* (the conclusions science has reached).

I'm certainly not against science teachers spending large portions of time giving skilled expositions, using repeated and spaced retrieval practice to speed up recall and practising the application of powerful knowledge to exam questions. Yet to my mind, we still have work to do if we

want to make our teaching of practical science as good as our teaching of theory. And that will only happen if we talk about it more, and commit to doing more practical science in the classroom.

Teaching the process

In February 2023, Ofsted released a report on science education titled 'Finding the Optimum' (see tiny.cc/ts142-SP1). I'll paraphrase here two of its key recommendations:

- Clearly outline the essential knowledge students need to work scientifically, covering all aspects of inquiry, like pattern seeking, evidence and accuracy – not just techniques or fair testing.
- Provide every student with purposeful, high quality practical work – including labs, fieldwork and teacher demonstrations – at secondary level

Consider what percentage of your time involves teaching the *process* of science. How often are you telling stories about how scientific knowledge progressed, while weaving in demonstrations and quick, low-stakes practical activities? These can link pieces of substantive knowledge and make them more memorable. Even if students aren't discovering something entirely new, involving them in the practical process brings the story of science to life.

And as an old friend once said to me (albeit using more choice language) – unlike a textbook, booklet or exercise book, you can't doodle on experience.

Net benefits

The current exam specifications do include mandatory practical elements, due to worries among curriculum designers that we'd otherwise see a gradual decline in practical

school science.

They were right to be concerned. According to the Royal Society's Science Education Tracker (see tiny.cc/ts142-SP2), only 26% of GCSE students completed hands-on practical work at least fortnightly in 2023, compared to 44% in 2016. This decline was prompted not just by exam pressures, but also by budget constraints and reduced technician time.

Remember – including practical science in your lessons isn't just a net benefit to the fullness of your students' education, but will also be useful for their exams.

Consider one of the topics you're due to teach. List the practicals and demonstrations that you love (or add to them via a quick online search), and revisit those that you see illustrated in the textbooks – most of which can be performed using the resources you already have in your school's cupboard areas. Personally, I'm thinking about the famous tale of how Archimedes left his bath. It's always good for a laugh, and helps ensure that the subsequent practical proceeds with a smile.

Both you and your students will come to enjoy your science lessons more. They'll get more out of the time they spend in your classroom, and start to see how science is so very different from other subjects. Because none of us fell in love with science for the rote learning of facts.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kit Betts-Masters is a lead practitioner for science and produces physics, education and technology videos for YouTube under the username @KitBetts-Masters; for more information, visit evaluateeverything.co.uk

STEPS FOR SUCCESS

Here are some practical tips for accommodating a full science experiment within the time constraints of a one-hour lesson...

1 BE ORGANISED

Carefully plan and collaborate with your technicians. Providing clear, detailed requisitions in advance helps avoid any surprises!

2 USE YOUR TIME WISELY

Estimate how long tasks will realistically take, and get students collecting data as quickly as possible. Spread your planning or analysis tasks across other lessons, if needed.

3 CALIBRATE THE CHALLENGE

Assess your students' existing experience and skills, and anticipate which parts of the method will be most challenging for them.

4 WATCH YOUR DELIVERY

Use clear, step-by-step instructions at all times; assign specific roles in pairs, so that everyone stays engaged.

5 KEEP THE CLASS OCCUPIED

Avoid forming groups larger than two to minimise distractions. Plan productive activities for any unavoidable 'wait times', like forming hypotheses or packing the equipment away.

6 FORMULATE A PLAN B

Test practicals yourself and review all safety rules beforehand. Have a backup plan in place, like a demo or example data, to ensure the lesson stays on track in the event of any problems.

7 STAY FOCUSED

Focus on the core learning objectives and simplify the outcome, if this will have greater impact.



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Cracking the code

Roweena Warnakulasuriya explains how coding lessons at Wilmington Academy will see students getting hands-on with some familiar use cases...

By the time our students are taking their options at Y9, they'll have completed a KS3 Python coding project over the course of six weeks that tasks them with using their computational skills. This gives us a good sense of which students possess an aptitude for coding, and could be encouraged to choose computer science as one of their GCSE subjects.

The GCSE course begins with students being introduced to the principles of system architecture, before moving on to computer algorithms, flow charts and exploring how a computer 'thinks'

We'll then spend a whole term focusing on coding with Python, but at present, our GCSE cohorts only have one double computer science lesson per week – which doesn't give us a lot of time.

Making time

I've tried to address that by providing both our Y10 and Y11s with weekly 'intervention' sessions, to ensure they're able to cover everything. These interventions take place on

Thursdays, with our Y11s having theirs before school from 8am to 8.30am, and the Y10s being offered an after-school session.

The Y10 interventions task students with tackling a series of distinct Python challenges over the course of the academic year, beginning with tasks that require inputs/outputs, before advancing to increasingly

complex projects that call for 'if' statements, for-loops, and so on.

Complex fun

The Y11 interventions tend to concentrate on one or two specific exam questions and the techniques needed to pass them – or at the very least, what's needed for them to score, say three marks from a six-mark question by applying what they know as best as they can, rather than giving up completely when the question appears to be too difficult for them

to answer.

Every six weeks, our student will complete a mini exam that tests their Python and general computer skills, while helping with their knowledge retention ahead of Y11. I'm happy to report that this year's Y10s have done especially well in their testing up to now.

Once they've progressed to Y11, our students will then

start to apply more advanced Python coding skills and knowledge to challenges that are more complex, but also more outwardly fun.

One task I've recently set is for students to create a mock dating app, which saw them having to use functions, create a signing-in process and configure question fields using 'if' statements. The process of applying everything we've covered up to then, in terms of additional programming, to apps and contexts they recognise is something the students have really enjoyed.

Our Y11 students have been using the Gizmo app (gizmo.ai) to create their own personalised flashcards when revising specific keywords, adding the notes and explanation that are most helpful for them.

We also organise regular 10-minute quizzing and learning game starter activities in class, to help them refresh their knowledge and complement their independent revision.

Managing AI

If we encounter any serious errors or misconceptions in students' work, we'll sometimes take a picture, display it in front of the class (without any details that will identify the student), discuss what's gone wrong, and how everyone can avoid making similar mistakes in future.

We assess the aforementioned 6-weekly tests using a question level analysis breakdown, so that we can quickly identify where students have struggled with their responses, and which areas we might need to revisit and try to improve on.

More recently, we've had to manage the issue of students using AI. Students are made aware of the school's AI policy at the start of the course – which effectively bars them from using AI in their work – and will receive regular reminders of this.

We can spot instantly if students have used AI, because the code clearly won't be theirs. For example, AIs will make frequent use of F functions – which we've seen students include in their work before they've been taught about them.

AI can be good for explaining how certain processes work – but we ultimately need students to use their own initiative when working on the coding activities we've set them...

“We can spot instantly if students have used AI, because the code clearly won't be theirs”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Roweena Warnakulasuriya is computer science subject lead at Wilmington Academy in Dartford, Kent

Free AI safety resources for your classroom

"Exceptionally good resource for schools!"

- teacher, UK



Download the resources at rpf.io/aisafetyts



5 REASONS TO TRY... AI safety resources to navigate AI responsibly

The Raspberry Pi Foundation and Google DeepMind offer AI safety resources to help prepare today's students for daily lives and jobs that will be very different to ours...



30 SECOND BRIEFING

The Raspberry Pi Foundation, in collaboration with Google DeepMind, has added **new, free AI safety resources** to its Experience AI programme. These resources aim to empower students to navigate AI safely and responsibly as it continues to reshape our world.

1 ADAPTABLE LEARNING RESOURCES

The new AI safety resources consist of three highly adaptable sessions:

- *AI and your data*: Encourages reflection on how personal data is used by AI and how AI affects data protection
- *Media literacy in the age of AI*: Explores how AI tools can both spread and combat misinformation
- *Using generative AI responsibly*: Prompts students to reflect on their responsibilities when using AI and their expectations of developers

Each session includes lesson plans, slide decks, worksheets and other teaching materials.

2 EMPOWER STUDENTS

Your students will learn to identify data-driven systems, advocate for privacy and set expectations for ethical AI use. They will learn how to identify AI-generated media, critically assess online information and recognise the importance of fairness and transparency on social platforms.

Students will also develop an understanding of the issues surrounding ethical and responsible uses of AI and its capabilities, and the need for privacy and data security. These will all be crucial skills in a world increasingly shaped by AI technologies.

3 SEAMLESS INTEGRATION

Based on teacher feedback, we've designed these resources to integrate seamlessly into your teaching schedule. In common with our other



Experience AI

Contact:

Find out more and download the resources via our website at rpf.io/aisafetyteach

Experience AI resources, they are tailored for easy delivery by non-specialist teachers of 11- to 14-year-olds.

Each session includes a video that delivers key messages, supported by unplugged activities and discussions. The activities are flexible, standalone and can be done in any order, giving you the freedom to choose and adapt them to suit your own specific classroom needs.

4 FREE TEACHER TRAINING

We've partnered with Parent Zone to provide free teacher training for secondary educators in how to use and implement the Experience AI resources. This training will be delivered throughout 2025, with options for in-school sessions, virtual twilight sessions and in-person sessions held at the Google AI Campus in London.

Teachers who sign up to take part will gain confidence in discussing AI, and be better equipped to deliver Experience AI

lessons within the classroom.

An educator's guide is also available for those unable to participate in the free training. For more information, visit rpf.io/aisafety-pz.

5 ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

AI is increasingly shaping our digital world, and starting to influence the information young people see, the tools they use and even the decisions they make. This means they will need to know how to use AI safely and responsibly.

By understanding AI's potential risks – such as misinformation, data privacy issues and other ethical concerns – they can make more informed choices, protect their personal information and navigate AI technologies more safely and responsibly. The skills students learn from engaging with the AI Safety resources will be essential for ensuring that they engage with AI in ways that benefit both them and society.

Key Points

Inclusive materials

Tailored for specialist and non-specialist teachers of 11- to 14-year-olds to make it easy for educators without AI expertise to teach the material.

Flexible and adaptable

Sessions are standalone and flexible, allowing you to integrate them into your existing schedule and adapt them to suit your students' needs.

Comprehensive support

Each session includes detailed lesson plans, slide decks, worksheets, and additional resources to assist in delivering the content effectively.

Critical skills

Empower your students to develop critical thinking skills around AI, privacy, misinformation, and responsible AI use, preparing them for an AI-driven world.

A NEW ITERATION

Tony Ryan reflects on how D&T has evolved as a subject in terms of what it used to be – and what it now has to be...

In terms of where D&T currently sits within the secondary curriculum, it's a complicated picture. Our biggest problem is currently staff numbers, which have declined from 15.5 thousand trained D&T teachers in 2009, to around 6,300 now.

That's due to a combination of people taking early retirement and others dropping out of teaching altogether – sometimes because their skill sets make them highly employable in other sectors.

This has essentially left us without enough teachers to cover the subject. At the Design and Technology Association, we regularly hear from secondary leaders who really value the subject, and want it on their curriculum, but are encountering real difficulties in sourcing the subject leaders they need.

As such, we're seeing a growing number of art and design teachers now teaching D&T – some quite willingly, while others have been left with little choice in the matter. Without these non-specialists teaching the subject, there wouldn't be the cover for it at KS3, so we welcome them with open arms – but they need support and suitable professional development. Art and design

and D&T might have the word 'design' in common, but they really are two completely separate subjects.

Secondary leaders struggling to find staff therefore have a decision to make. Should they push for a thriving art and design department *and* a thriving D&T department? Or should they – as some have – combine them and provide one offer? In my view, by combining those two subject areas into one you'll only be dumbing both down.

From 'making' to 'designing'

On reflection, however, do we need to change as a subject? Do we need to move on? Yes, we do – and in the best departments across the

country, that's what's exactly been happening.

For one thing, there needs to be an increased emphasis in D&T on matters of sustainability. The design process behind every object ought to start with a series of questions: 'Does the world need this?' 'Will people actually use it?' 'What does its end of life look like?' 'Will it end up in landfill?' 'Can I recycle it?' Those are the kind of questions that need to be in the KS3 D&T curriculum.

It's not necessarily meant as a criticism, but some schools have lapsed into seeing KS3 D&T as being solely about 'making things'. Students will make a clock, then a pencil case, then possibly a bird box, maybe a cushion in textiles.

Plus, if we're not careful, we come to be seen as a subject where kids with behavioural issues get sent, because they struggle to sit and pay attention within standard lessons and classrooms. The thinking can be 'Let them go and make something instead.'

We've got to be more than that. And in those top departments across the country, we are. They're leading a move in D&T away from simply 'making', to placing more of an emphasis on the process of designing, prototyping – and failing.

The importance of failure

The school system at the moment is largely set up to ensure that students *don't fail*. Deeming it acceptable for students to fail at tasks is typically viewed as 'the wrong thing to do' – but in our subject, you can't create anything new, or really design anything of worth, without first failing. In D&T, you *are* going to fail at some point.

The trick is to

“We want students to see the world through the eyes of whoever ends up using the object they're designing”

recover quickly, learn from what happened and then go again. We need students to develop that tenacity, and to perceive failure not as an endpoint, but as just another stage in their design journey. And that can be a difficult thing to teach the average 12-year-old.

Also intrinsic to our subject is the need for empathy. We want students to see the world through the eyes of whoever ends up using the object they're designing: *'How warm is material I'm using? When it's picked up, will it feel cold? Does that matter? How well will it fit in the user's hand?'*

A problem-solving subject

I don't believe the only object of education should be to prepare students for work, but that's at least partly what we're here for. We're there to give students the skill sets, attributes and knowledge that will allow them to progress to the next stage in their lives – which will include work.

Yet in many schools, there's often been little correlation between what's happening in their D&T departments and the larger developments shaping business and industry, so we've tried to bring both sides closer together (see 'Inspired by Industry').

Placing real world industry problems into a wider context that students can work in, and which teachers can integrate into their curriculum backed up by

teaching resources, will help us to make D&T into a problem-solving subject, rather than one that's just about making things.

Creating thinkers

That said, the act of 'making' will always be part of the subject. Those kinaesthetic, hands-on experiences are important, but they don't have to always be the end product. We can instead prototype on our way *towards* an end product and build up a flow of ideas – from students' imaginations to cardboard, to polystyrene, eventually CAD and onwards.

Something I often hear is that *'The kids like taking something home.'* Yet we never hear the same thing in, say, physics. Yes, it's a nice thing to do sometimes, but we can't allow that to be the sole purpose of our subject. Our purpose should be to create thinkers; people who can look at a problem and identify potential solutions.

This change in the nature of what D&T involves is partly why many departments are changing the conception of what a school D&T workshop is. If you're not actively teaching engineering, then you probably don't need four full-size lathes, as you might have had in a traditional workshop 20 years ago.

In effect, we're creating design studios where students can work with a range of materials. Instead of dictating the materials students must use when tasked with the same build

project, we're now presenting problems and asking students to choose the materials best suited to the task at hand.

Warm nostalgia

When visiting a school in the Humber, I saw how there were plastics in one corner of the room, metals in another, and plenty of cardboard and assorted bits for prototyping. The students were allowed to move around the space, with the teacher acting as a facilitator.

We want students to be able to switch easily between using CAD, hand drawing and using a 3D printer, because that's how industry operates. A company like Joseph Joseph will have a huge area at the centre of their design studio – a messy space full of materials, where designers can essentially experiment and play, and discuss their designs before moving to the next step of the process.

We're also looking at parental perceptions. Often, when parents visit school workshops they'll smell that wood dust and talk wistfully about how they once made a clock, and this, and that. You'll hear few people say that they hated the subject, but even that warm nostalgia can cause issues. A parent once told me, *"You need a new smell, because that smell brings me back, not forward."*

I quite like that observation, as it sums up where we are. We need to be looking forward. Yes, we should be informed by what's

INSPIRED BY INDUSTRY

We know that professional development is hard to come by in schools at the moment, which is why we've launched 'Inspired by Industry' – a suite of learning materials aimed at KS3 D&T teachers. We've taken difficult design challenges, developed some accompanying support materials, and then invited students to wrap their heads around a problem they've been presented with, and see what ideas and suggestions they might have for resolving it.

One example saw us working with a design agency that had been set the following brief by Age Concern: *'Loneliness among elderly people is a bigger problem than it's ever been. Design a solution that's going to help elderly people overcome loneliness.'*

We've produced 20 such challenges to date, with a further five to follow soon. You can find more details about Inspired by Industry at inspiredbyindustry.org.uk.

gone before, and take those practical skills with us – but we also need to be looking at the skill sets that kids will need to live, thrive and work in a very different environment to that which they would have entered 20 years ago.

It's a long way from making a clock.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tony Ryan is chief executive officer of the Design & Technology Association; for more information, visit designtechnology.org.uk

What's New?

Our pick of the latest solutions and innovations for secondary education

1 GCSE support

We may be in the lead-up to exams season, but there's still time to join Academy21's DfE-accredited GCSE Rescue courses. These courses uniquely blend 100% live teaching with interactive lessons, revision and skill sessions, as well as personalised support to help your students achieve their best outcomes.

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python in pieces
by 2simple

2 Python for all

With coding becoming an ever more essential skill for future careers, Python in Pieces by 2Simple provides the perfect bridge between block-based coding and Python. Designed for both specialist and non-specialist teachers, this award-winning platform supports students with interactive lessons, explainer

videos and curriculum-mapped activities. One of its key unique features allows for seamless translation between block code and Python, thus deepening students' understanding and boosting their confidence. With its progress tracking, debugging tools and a vibrant community showcase, Python in Pieces makes coding accessible, engaging and achievable for all learners. Equip your students with the skills they need for the digital world – find out more at 2simple.com/pythoninpieces.

3 Capture their attention

The HUE HD Pro is an affordable, multipurpose, plug and play visualiser suitable for teachers working right across the curriculum. Flexible and portable, it's able to capture images, record lessons, facilitate livestreaming and be used to share content both in person and online.

This easy-to-use camera enables effective live modelling while aiding student focus. Plus, if you want to use your iPad as a live screen for your HUE camera, you now can (if running iPadOS 17 or later). Find out more at huehd.com/pro.



Safer AI

At the Raspberry Pi Foundation, we're excited to launch our new AI safety resources as part of the Experience AI programme, co-developed with Google DeepMind. These cutting-edge resources are designed for non-specialist educators teaching 11- to 14-year-olds, and focus on the crucial topics of AI safety, privacy, data use and responsible tool usage.

Organised into flexible, standalone sessions, these lessons make it easy for teachers to introduce students to the world of AI.

Empowering young learners to think critically and navigate the digital world safely, these lessons are essential for an AI-driven future! For more information, visit rpf.io/aisafetyteach.

The tech inspiration charity

5



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Inspiring talent

Tech She Can is an industry-backed charity dedicated to inspiring the next generation of tech talent. We create and deliver free, engaging, and inclusive resources for children, teachers, and parents, aiming to spark interest in tech careers from an early age.

Our mission is simple, but powerful – to increase the number of girls and women entering tech roles, and ensure that the technology shaping our world is designed to reflect all of us. What sets us apart is our unique cross-sector community of over 250 partners spanning 40+ industries operating far beyond just tech. This collective expertise enables us to craft educational materials designed by our experienced teachers, to help children explore technology as a potential career path. Visit techshecan.org for more details.



6 Level up
Looking to level up your students' career game? Rise has you covered. In partnership with Causeway Education, it's launched a set of free classroom resources for students aged 11-14 that are

designed to save you time, while enriching your students' learning.

Ideal for use in class or as homework, the new KS3 resources will open your students' eyes to a wide range of industries and job roles, and the essential skills needed to succeed in life and work, inspiring them to think about their future careers. Free to download, with no sign-up required, find out more at rise-initiative.co.uk/resources.

7 Maximise engagement

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8 Sowing seeds

Grow Your Future is a new green careers hub from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, inspiring young people to cultivate careers in science, horticulture and the natural world. From mycologist to botanical artist, pupils can discover real-life roles at Kew.

Teachers and careers advisors can use Grow Your Future to spark discussions on green careers, help pupils explore future opportunities and connect learning to real-world jobs. Start exploring at endeavour.kew.org/careers.



9 Careers trip inspiration

Visit the Science Museum in London and step into a fascinating world of STEM careers at *Technicians: The David Sainsbury Gallery*. Recreating the workplaces of technicians across multiple sectors - including health science, creative arts and renewable energy - your group will get hands-on with interactive exhibits that simulate job-related tasks.

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10 STEM careers

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The problem with PEE

When it comes to teaching students how to write essays, we can do better than the ‘point, evidence, explain’ approach, says **Aaron Swan**...

My own high school education finished in 2000, without me ever once hearing the term ‘writing scaffolds’. The period between the end of my education and the start of my teaching career, however, saw the emergence of ‘point, evidence, explain/explore’ (PEE) paragraphs.

As early as 1998, SEND and ITT specialist Margaret Mulholland highlighted the “*Danger that pupils will use [writing scaffolds] without recognizing that it is merely a technique to develop extended writing which, with practice, they will develop for themselves.*” Yet despite this prescient warning, PEE-related scaffolds have spread like ground elder.

Defining the PEE strategy

As every English teacher is sure to know, PEE paragraphing is a scaffold for framing students’ analysis by ‘stepping’ their objective into a series of short, easily replicable phrases. This analysis might be one that students can perform verbally through back-and-forth dialogue with a subject specialist – but for them to do the same in their written responses, teachers will need to (re)acquaint them with some basics.

What is a paragraph? What shape is it? What purpose does it serve? Mulholland’s early work on PEE paragraphing (then called the ‘evidence sandwich’) sought to help students, “*Recognise for themselves where they have slipped into narrative [writing],*” and out of the analytical style they’ll have

spent time developing collaboratively in class.

The PEE scaffold directs students to first make a **Point**, supported with **Evidence** (or a **Quotation**). Depending on the practice being followed, that final E may require students to **Explore, Explain, Evaluate** or **Analyse** the point in question.

The PEE scaffold has been adapted and modified in various ways over time. Attempts at incorporating ‘**Link**’ into the scaffold has previously given us the PEAL. Other variants have

for students, by essentially removing the cognitive load associated with transcoding internal and abstract thinking into concrete written statements.

This has the potential to lower the germane load of a given writing activity. Some teachers now believe that without such detailed guidance, their students will end up lacking awareness of the nature and requirements of argumentative, analytical writing, and become unable to generate genuine causal arguments.

There is, however, some

paragraphs’.”

Enstone went on to observe how “*PEE formula prevent convincing and sophisticated written expression, and limit opportunities for the creation of individual, detailed and powerful arguments.*” This is a point made elsewhere by history teachers Jennifer Evans and Gemma Pate, who argued the effect of these mechanical responses is that ultimately, “*Students atomise things, and lose a sense of what was being examined.*”

Scaffolding the scaffold

This poor essay writing performance prompted by PEE formula has, though, encouraged some teachers to undertake their own grassroots classroom research and attempt to develop some alternatives to the PEE model. How many of us have had to ‘scaffold the scaffold’ through dramatic expression, interpretive dance or fancy PowerPoint visualisations? The moment your scaffold itself needs scaffolding is the moment that PEE’s failure should be obvious.

Reading back through the literature, I worry that the true intent behind PEE scaffolding was never to help students develop analytical skills, but rather to get them to write *something passable*.

Margaret Mulholland has described how she tried, “*Persuading pupils to reason for themselves, and to develop independent argument.*” Personally, however, I feel we’d be better off exchanging Mulholland’s investigative prompts for questions such as ‘*What is an argument?*’ and ‘*What constitutes analysis?*’, and

“By focusing only on the tripartite line level of student responses, the wider logic and sequence of essay writing is never considered”

included the PEGEX (**Point, Example, Explain**) technique, and a different spin on the original ‘evidence sandwich’ concept via Dale Banham’s HAMBURGER visualisation.

To that we can add Claire Riley’s work on the concept of ‘inference layering’, and more recently, the ‘Statement, Quote, Inference’ technique adopted by HarperCollins for its *Reimagine* series of KS3 teaching materials. I’d bet there’s even more lurking out there...

Why use PEE?

On the surface, at least, the PEE scaffold and its ilk give off the appearance of good pedagogical practice by ticking many of Rosenshine’s educational principles. They can be a useful aide-mémoire

literature on the shortcomings of PEE paragraphs from teachers who have found them limiting – see (Foster, 2013), (Teo, 2015), (Evans, 2007) – and to these detractors, I would add my own voice. I believe that paragraph structuring acronyms are ineffective at producing analytical essays.

The principle issue with these scaffolds is that, by focusing *only* on the tripartite line level of student responses, the wider logic and sequence of essay writing is never considered. Writing in the NATE journal *Teaching English*, Louisa Enstone remarked that, “*As an examiner, I was disheartened by the lack of knowledge and understanding demonstrated by these... meaningless ‘PEE*

have students carefully consider the key ingredients of evaluative work.

Writing in the journal *Teaching History*, Rachel Foster and Sarah Gadd acknowledge that analytical objectives ought to involve more than simply creating paragraphs; the challenge should be centred on helping students with their “*Organisation, construction, methods, and extended analysis*”.

Foster and Gadd go on to argue that students need “*Criteria by which to select information in order to deploy it as evidence, or to judge its strength*”. ‘Judgement and strengths’ thus become part of the analytical process, with the objective being to, “*Appreciate the disciplinary distinctiveness of history as a form of knowledge.*”

Yet this ‘disciplinary distinctiveness’ that forms the analytical process isn’t stemmed within any of the various PEE strategies. It’s established afterwards, through dialogue with the teacher, as a kind of ‘post-game debate’ learning experience that falls outside of the scaffolded game.

Disciplinary dialogue

We know from meta-analysis how important the learning environment is for academic success. PEE strategies might sometimes correlate with high grades, but it’s surely teachers’ broader disciplinary dialogue that produces this added value.

PEE strategies don’t even seem compatible with what exam boards are looking for. Can they encourage students to, as required by OCR in 2023, “*Develop independent and critical thinking?*” Or, as OCR previously wanted in 2022, help to underpin a “*skills-based approach, building confidence in developing and articulating a fresh, individual response?*” Do these scaffolds, “*Inspire, challenge*

and motivate every student, no matter what their level of ability?” Because that’s what AQA was calling for in 2022.

As Louisa Enstone observed, by training students to follow a mapped writing stem, we are failing to help them navigate a form that requires “*Expert thought, understanding, processing*”.

We can see for ourselves how examiners feel about PEE scaffolds in AQA’s 2022 ‘English Literature Modern Prose and Drama’ examiner’s report: “*Some students, who potentially might have worked at a higher level, were rather limited and constrained by overly formulaic [PEE / PETAL-type] approaches. While there may be some virtue in such methods for students looking to move into level 3, for those aiming higher, these approaches tend to militate against the extended development of ideas, which is necessary for access to the higher reaches of the mark scheme.*”

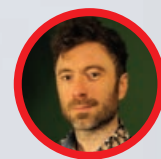
A reductive approach

Learners often lack sufficient prior knowledge or cognitive structures to effectively discover new knowledge on their own. Analysis has to be explicitly taught, but many teachers don’t possess the experience or subject knowledge needed to effectively teach ‘analytical domain’ writing. The onus is therefore on departments to formulate discipline-specific models showing what good analysis looks like. On their own, command words like ‘explain’, ‘analyse’, ‘evaluate’ and ‘link’ are insufficient to cover the different disciplinary routines often grouped together under ‘analysis’.

Good analytical writing demands a holistic approach, but ‘the PEE paragraph’ method is reductive. The one element isn’t indicative of the whole. It’s akin to defining ‘flowers’ by their

final intended objective – we overlook the root, stem and leaves that must exist before that objective can be reached.

So how do we define, describe and set out, formally and accurately, what the analytical process actually is, for teachers still needing such instruction? In teaching circles, there’s still almost no referent for this analytical skill, and so there remains a pedagogical need that outlines exactly what is expected when we are asking students to analyse.



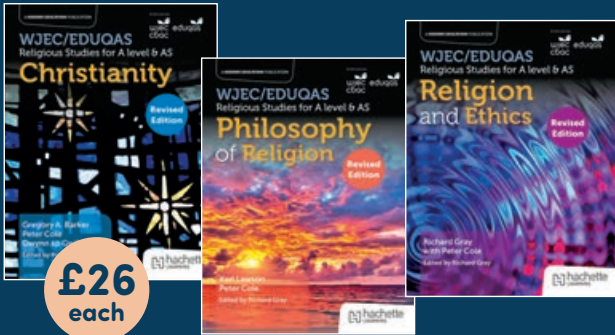
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aaron Swan is an English teacher, Language For Learning, and has been a head of department

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[MATHS PROBLEM]

VENN DIAGRAMS FOR PROBABILITY

Calculating probabilities using Venn diagrams can often lead to confusion, says **Colin Foster**

In this lesson, students learn how probabilities can be calculated by using the correct regions of a Venn diagram.

THE DIFFICULTY

I want you to estimate the probability that if I select a person from this school at random, they will be a football player.

Students might be unsure what 'at random' means. We just mean that everyone has the same chance of being selected. They might also query who counts as a 'football player' - someone who belongs to a team, or just someone who plays occasionally? These are good questions to ask, so agree on some definition.

Students might answer in words (e.g. 'very likely') or give fractions or percentages. Agree on some sensible value, such as 20%.

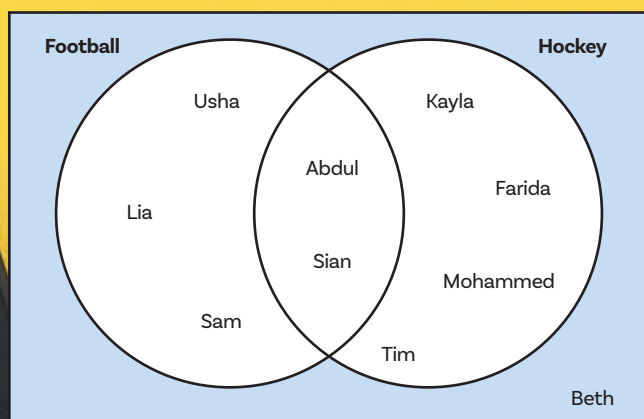
Now estimate the probability that if I select someone randomly from this school they will be a **hockey** player.

Now estimate the probability that if I select someone randomly from this school they will be **either** a football player **or** a hockey player.

See whether students think they should add the previous two probabilities or not.

THE SOLUTION

Rather than our whole school, let's imagine just a small class of 10 students. Here they are on a Venn diagram



What does this diagram tell you about Abdul? That he does football and hockey.

What does this diagram tell you about Beth? That she does neither football nor hockey.

What does this tell you about Usha? That she does football - **and not hockey**.

Which is more popular - football or hockey? Hockey (6 people versus 5 for football).

If I select someone from the class at random, what's the probability they will do football?

Students might think that the answer is $\frac{3}{5}$ or $\frac{3}{10}$, but it's $\frac{5}{10} = \frac{1}{2} = 50\%$. To answer this they need to **disregard** whether someone plays hockey or not, which means completely ignoring the boundary created by the right-hand circle.

If I select someone from the class at random, what's the probability they will do hockey?

The answer is $\frac{6}{10} = \frac{3}{5} = 60\%$.

If I select someone from the class at random, what's the probability they will do **either** football **or** hockey?

The answer can't be $50\% + 60\%$, because that would be more than 100%, which is impossible! The answer is that 9 people do either sport, out of 10 people altogether, so the answer is $\frac{9}{10} = 90\%$. Another way to see this is that it's everyone **except** Beth, who is $\frac{1}{10}$ of all of the people, so $\frac{9}{10}$ of the people do at least one sport.

If I select someone from the class at random, what's the probability they will do **both** football **and** hockey?

This is just Abdul and Sian, and the probability of selecting either of them is $\frac{2}{10} = 20\%$.

Checking for understanding

Make up a Venn diagram with two partially overlapping categories and 12 people altogether. Write the people's names in whichever regions of the diagram you choose. Make up 6 probability questions about your Venn diagram, similar to the ones you've seen in this lesson. Write out the answers clearly. See if your partner can answer your questions.



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

WOMEN *of the world*

The story of women's struggle for rights and self-determination demands a better account than what students are taught, says **Gemma Hargreaves**

Teaching just Elizabeth I, the Suffragettes, plus maybe Rosa Parks doesn't do enough to accurately represent women, or the progress of women's rights over time. We can do better than that.

Often, the first historical women that students encounter in the course of their studies will be Henry VIII's wives, Elizabeth I or perhaps Empress Matilda – all upper class royal types, and mostly while focusing on their proximity to powerful men. Why not start with Cattelena of Almondsbury? She was a Black Tudor, described by historian Miranda Kaufmann as having a 'Small-scale existence' – but that doesn't mean she was insignificant. Kaufmann notes that, "*Her very ordinary presence, with her cow, on an English village common, is extraordinary,*" because of how it gives us the chance to look at commonly taught Tudor history through a different lens.

Inaccuracies and neglect

If we can at least rely on students learning about the Suffragettes, then how well is that history being taught? Not as accurately as it should be, argues historian Fern Riddell in her biography of the Suffragette activist Kitty Marion, *Death in Ten Minutes: "The violence of the Suffragettes has been sanitised, downplayed and, in some cases, simply denied – a final injustice to those brave women who made impossible choices in the hope that the ends could somehow justify the means."*

These women were

terrorists, and deserve to be remembered as such. Famous portrayals of the Suffragette movement in popular fiction – such as the 'Sister Suffragette' number in *Mary Poppins* – have conveyed inaccuracies, while overlooking the efforts of working class women involved with the cause. This can lead to misconceptions among students, since as Riddell points out, "*The sole purpose of the attacks was to cause terror.*"

Kitty Marion would have likely found herself having lots in common with the French activist Pauline Léon, who was active a century before Kitty's teenage exploits with the Suffragettes in London. Pauline Léon is now known primarily as a French revolutionary, with her advocacy for women's rights often seen as secondary – yet she actively encouraged

such as the fanatical Nazi Hanna Reitsch – the first woman in the world to fly a helicopter, who begged Hitler to let her fly him to safety from his Berlin bunker. And then there's Melitta von Stauffenberg – a talented Jewish aeronautical engineer who was involved in the July 1944 bomb plot to kill Hitler.

Beyond the binaries

When viewing women throughout history, we must get away from the idea that a woman must be either devout or faithless; virginal or promiscuous; violent or peaceful. Similar to how the 'hero/villain' narrative is inadequate for fully assessing men who lived in the past, we must recognise that women were – and are! – complex and multifaceted, and that many different things can be true of a woman at the same time.

“We must get away from the idea that a woman must be either devout or faithless”

women to bear arms and literally fight for change.

An interesting challenge for history teachers could be to explain the values, goals and characters of complex women like Pauline Léon, alongside Marie Antionette – who was herself complex, but in starkly different ways.

We could also explore the similarly complex lives of the women who flew for Hitler as pilots. Nazi Germany is a perennial curriculum fixture in virtually every school, but the experiences of women under that regime are often overlooked or marginalised. In this era we find women

in the history classroom about who gets remembered, and the criteria used to ascribe 'significance'.

20th century America may well have seen some women gain the right to vote via the 19th Amendment, but the 'Roaring 20s' and subsequent decades were markedly less full of joy and opportunity for working class and Native American women. African-American women had to wait until 1965 for the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

Most British secondary school students will know the story of Rosa Parks, but far fewer will have knowledge of Claudette Colvin. She was 15 when, in 1955 – nine months before Rosa Parks' famous protest – she refused to give up her seat on a segregated Montgomery bus to a white passenger. There are clear opportunities for classroom debate here – from the causes and consequences of Colvin's actions, to whether she, or someone or something else ought to be credited with triggering the Civil Rights movement.

Let's also not forget that much closer to home, women were involved in the Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963.

The 'change' narrative

It was around this time that students in Mao's China were being taught a revised, and distinctly limited story of their country via the *Little Red Book*. Fanatical female students were employed as Red Guards, who would use violence to tackle, and ultimately

RECOMMENDED READING

- ▶ *Black Tudors* by Miranda Kaufmann (2018, Oneworld Publications)
- ▶ *Death in Ten Minutes: The forgotten life of radical suffragette Kitty Marion* by Fern Riddell (2018, Hodder & Stoughton)
- ▶ A series of free resources to support the teaching of lesson content about Kitty Marion can be downloaded via tinyurl.com/ts142-WH1
- ▶ *Liberty: The Lives and Times of Six Women in Revolutionary France* by Lucy Moore (2009, Harper Perennial)
- ▶ *The Women Who Flew for Hitler: The True Story of Hitler's Valkyries* by Clare Mulley (2018, Pan)

remove any opposition – a useful illustration of how ‘women fighting for change’ doesn’t necessarily mean that those women were on the side of democracy or progress.

One pro-Mao rally organised in 1966 involved over 2 million attendees – a scale unimaginable in other countries. 20th century China remains a challenging, yet fascinating topic to teach, with the plentiful propaganda posters produced at the time being ripe for classroom analysis. (Lest we forget, even now there’s only one party in China that people can actually vote for.)

It’s interesting to note that women have consistently turned out in slightly higher numbers than men in every US presidential election held since 1984. At that time, however, Black women in South Africa still couldn’t vote. They only gained the right to do so in 1993, following the end of the Apartheid regime, under which white women had been able to vote since 1930.

A representative past

There continue to be some significant silences and gaps in the history of women that’s being taught in the classroom. Many history teachers will be familiar with the people and places highlighted above, but there’s so much more that we don’t yet know. Until Riddell found Kitty Marion’s diaries, her story was relatively unknown. Students must be taught that this is what historians do, and why it matters.

To create active citizens – i.e. people who regularly vote, volunteer and feel empowered to

change things – we must educate all students about a past that’s representative. Women’s rights are still very much under threat today in Afghanistan, Sudan and even in the USA. History teachers might not be able to solve the global issues that vex us now, but we can certainly educate the leaders of tomorrow who perhaps one day will.

The women cited here may not feature prominently in the textbooks you’re using, but *they were there*, amid the sights, sounds and smells of their respective times. We must do justice to their presence, and keep learning about them.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

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Effective online TEACHING

Head of School **Amy Husband** explains why online teaching is a powerful tool we can't afford to overlook when it comes to alternative provision...

Online teaching is a crucial educational tool, particularly for students who attend alternative provision. Typically, these will be students who have faced challenges in mainstream settings, ranging from Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), to repeat suspensions, difficulties in self-regulation or even permanent exclusions.

As an experienced headteacher, working with a diverse range of pupils who have additional needs in an online alternative provision setting, I've witnessed first-hand the transformative power of effective online teaching. But what is it that makes an online teacher genuinely effective?

Fresh starts

Teachers who choose to work in alternative provision understand that for some students, the idea of yet another educational setting can feel daunting, rather than promising.

At Academy21 – the UK's first, DfE-accredited online alternative provision – we embrace a 'fresh start' philosophy. Our teachers often choose to not know the reasons behind a student's enrolment, thus ensuring that they welcome each learner without any preconceptions. Instead, they focus on creating the foundation for a positive and supportive learning experience.

In an online setting, non-verbal communication becomes even more crucial. Teachers' body language should be open and relaxed, and their facial expressions



should convey warmth and engagement.

At Academy21, our teachers maintain a friendly and warm tone, which helps students feel at ease. Teachers provide clear instructions while supporting students' engagement through the use of varied vocal tones and facial expressions, creating a non-threatening environment in which students can feel comfortable engaging without fear of making mistakes.

The power of praise

Praise and encouragement are fundamental to excellent online teaching in AP. The focus isn't on getting the correct answer, but on *having a go*.

This approach helps build self-esteem, which is essential if students are to participate regularly and in greater depth. With this foundation established, teachers can then provide academic feedback to advance learning, but it's a process that takes time. Compared to the walls of a

physical classroom, there's limited space for permanently displaying reminders, key vocabulary and other points of information during online teaching, meaning teachers must prioritise what information is made visible to students and when.

Visual prompts and scaffolds can help students with auditory processing or memory retention difficulties, reducing cognitive load so that space can be freed up for new concepts. Chunking information into small, manageable sections will prevent students from becoming overwhelmed. The '*I do, we do, you do*' approach – where teachers model tasks before students attempt them independently – is particularly effective.

Retrieval practice

A spiral curriculum provides opportunities to consolidate prior learning and engage in retrieval practice. Students consolidate what they have learned by revisiting topics throughout the year,

supporting information transfer from working memory to long-term memory. This can then be applied to other areas of students' learning, aiding their understanding and development of critical thinking skills.

Online teaching isn't suitable for every student or teacher, but it does offer an effective solution for many who can't attend a physical school setting. Peer-to-peer socialisation may be optimal for most students, but not always in the best interests of every learner. Effective online teachers recognise this, and will take steps to help students reach a place where reintegration is possible.

At Academy21, we focus on staged reintegration at students' individual pace, working in partnership with local authorities, schools, and MATs to provide an excellent online education experience.

Confidence, participation, and engagement are at the core of our provision, and our teachers excel at conveying this through every interaction. While building relationships is the most critical aspect of our work, the academic rigour underpinning our teaching and curriculum is widely regarded as an excellent provision for students at their greatest time of need.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Husband is Head of School Academic at Academy21

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ASK THE EXPERT

Holland: A Sports Haven

David Lewis, Sales Manager for MasterClass, focuses on four key benefits of sports tours to Holland



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1 MAXIMISE OPPORTUNITIES
One major advantage of sports tours to Holland is the short travel time. Valkenburg is only a three-and-a-half-hour drive from Calais, and accessible by airports or Eurostar. This convenient journey lets groups maximise the time spent on sporting activities, ensuring a more enjoyable and less exhausting trip.

2 REASSURE PARENTS
Holland is known for its safe and welcoming environment. Valkenburg's compact, pedestrian-friendly layout makes it easy for groups to explore securely. Students can enjoy a sense of independence within a safe setting. The

town offers a rich blend of experiences, from historical sites to local cuisine, making for a visit that's both educational and memorable for all.

3 GREAT LOCATIONS
A real highlight is the range of nearby excursions, all within easy reach of the accommodation. Activities like tobogganing, laser tag and water park visits provide excitement, while cultural experiences – be it a local pancake house, or the Phantasialand theme park – can enrich your tour. These diverse options let students engage with Dutch culture, be adventurous and create unforgettable memories.

4 ELITE SPORTING CULTURE
Holland's strong sporting culture, especially in football and hockey, makes it a standout choice with MasterClass customers. Excellent local clubs and facilities offer competitive fixtures and high-quality coaching. Masterclass is uniquely positioned to offer high-quality netball in Europe, alongside these other sports, making it an ideal choice for a multi-sport tour suited to all abilities.

At a glance

- Short, convenient travel times
- Safe, enriching group experiences
- Diverse sports and excursions

For more information, visit edwindoran.com/MasterClass, contact 020 3617 7983 or email info@masterclasstours.co.uk

ASK THE EXPERT

School-wide Vocabulary Instruction



Lexonik's Sarah Ledger explains how to successfully implement vocabulary instruction and ensure it becomes a 'classroom habit'



1 SEIZE EVERY OPPORTUNITY
Encourage your students to always question their base-level understanding of words or vocabulary they already know, and apply this to the challenge or query they're facing. We need them to grapple with reading discovery, and be presented with opportunities for vocabulary development every day, across all classes and school settings.

2 CONNECT, QUESTION, CROSS-CHECK
Improving students' reading will require them to improve their vocabulary, so be a champion for connecting, questioning, and cross-checking. If, for example, students know the word 'chronology' refers to the study of time, ask them

what's meant by 'chronic pain.' If they say, 'bad pain', query this – "How can it be 'bad pain' if we know 'chron' is linked to time?" We need students to experience 'desirable difficulty' because it's during struggle that we learn.

3 EXPLORE MORPHEMIC ANALYSIS
The majority of the English Language is made up of morphemes – small units within words that hold their own meaning. If we can increase our knowledge of morphemes, then it follows that we can decode the meaning of any word. This is where Lexonik Vocabulary Plus (bit.ly/ts132-Lex1) is especially effective.

4 INVOLVE STUDENTS IN SELECTING CORE WORDS
In any subject or topic, there will be certain pivotal keywords. What are they, and what level of comprehension is required to understand them? Involve students in listing these 'priority words', and get them comfortable with analysing their own knowledge gaps. Ensure that your students can interpret specialist vocabulary early on in the unit, curriculum or Key Stage, as this will allow for further exploration related to synonyms and inferences.

At a glance

- Get students questioning and connecting
- Bring vocabulary learning into everything
- Identify solutions to empower teaching

For more information, visit lexonik.co.uk or email enquiries@lexonik.co.uk

LEARNING LAB

IN THIS ISSUE

- + How should a teacher respond when they discover that a student engages in self-harming behaviours?
- + Why you should thank your students for doing what you ask, before they actually do it
- + Researchers shed further light on precisely how and why sleep is good for students' wellbeing
- + The key points of cyber security advice your students should be told
- + Public Accounts Committee highlights just how bad things are with SEN provision
- + The instrument recycling scheme that's hoping to help schools equip their music departments
- + When it comes to lesson delivery, one size doesn't necessarily fit all – so here are some ways of ensuring every student remains engaged

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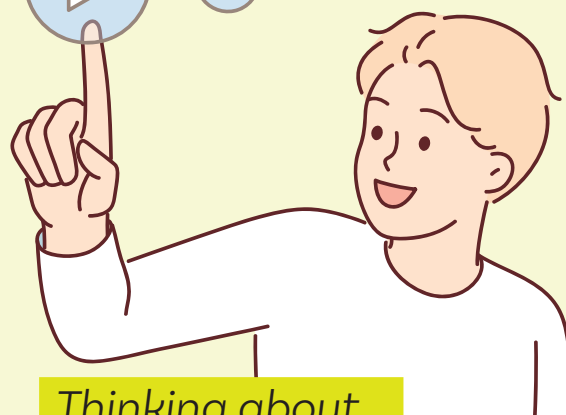
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VISUALISING HISTORY

History teachers can argue about pretty much anything – which makes it odd that we don't often discuss the use of video clips in the classroom. They're a staple of history lessons everywhere, but rarely mentioned in CPD, books or blogs. It's as though they're some guilty secret.

So don't tell anyone, but *using media in lessons is fine*. Documentary and historical drama clips aren't just entertaining filler, but can, in fact, bring rich and multi-faceted historical stories into our classrooms via objects, sites, artefacts and landscapes – all presented by expert historians.

We can critique the interpretations of those presenting, which will help build our students' ability to critically consume broadcast and social media. Above all, quality documentaries and dramas can build richer and fuller historical worlds in our students' minds.

Mike Hill has written persuasively about how we can consciously build past worlds in students' minds (see tinyurl.com/ts142-LL1), arguing that we should place, "*The imagined past at the heart of the curricular planning process*." I believe we can supplement Hill's strategies – which include engaging story texts, maps and rich images – with high-quality broadcast media to help curate this imagined space yet further.

History teachers have always known the learning potential of using historical video clips, but doing so risks significant pitfalls. Accessing content via traditional streaming

platforms can be hard, between dead links and incidents of 'YouTube roulette' potentially exposing Y9s to videos or adverts you'd rather they didn't see – but fortunately, this can now be avoided.

Using the ERA video streaming platform (era.org.uk) has been a revelation. The ERA Licence is funded by the DfE for all state schools in England, and includes free access to a high-quality streaming service designed for classroom use that utilises archive material from the BBC and Channel 4. Documentaries that present interpretations of leading historians in captivating ways. Historical dramas that help to construct the past as imagined spaces in our students' heads. *Blackadder*.

There are no adverts, and if you add a video link to your curriculum resources, you can expect it to still be working next year. If a BBC programme is listed as 'unavailable', you can file a request for the full programme to be made available, or just specific clips from the parts you want to use. Those clips can then be shared with students for them to view at home, and A Level students even get their own logins.

I've used ERA myself to develop my own subject knowledge, and that of my colleagues. It can enrich a rigorous, academic curriculum, and I'd love to see more teachers using the platform. The more history teachers sign up (for free), and request specific uploads, the more comprehensive its coverage will become. We could even discuss the clips we're using in lessons. Maybe.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hugh Richards (@hughrichards.bsky.social) is head of history at Huntington School, York; he will present a free Historical Association webinar about his use of ERA in the classroom on 15/05/25 at 4pm – sign up at history.org.uk



FOCUS ON... SELF-HARM

Self-harm continues to increase in prevalence among adolescents, with school staff often being among the first to notice signs of it in a young person's behaviour. However, recent research has highlighted that school staff often lack confidence in discussing self-harm, potentially leading to unhelpful responses following disclosures by students – such as anxiety, shock and panic – that can impact upon a young person's trust and willingness to share (see tinyurl.com/ts142-LL2).

To address this, our team at the University of Cambridge has co-produced a free training toolkit for all school staff on how to recognise and respond to self-harm effectively. SORTS (Supportive Response To Self-harm) is a comprehensive, school-based training intervention comprising a website, e-learning module and downloadable resources.

EVIDENCE-BASED

The SORTS toolkit is based on existing research evidence, developed in collaboration with the Charlie Waller Trust (charliewaller.org) and a range of school mental health professionals. We conducted focus groups and interviews with young people, as well as teaching and non-teaching school staff, to co-produce the toolkit.

Based on their feedback, we developed a training resource aimed at secondary schools and colleges (see tinyurl.com/ts142-LL3). SORTS presents a whole-school approach that involves training all school staff (including those in admin and support roles) in how to build a supportive school culture, with a range of free resources that schools can download via the SORTS website (sorts4schools.org.uk/resources).

The SORTS e-learning training module takes around 30 minutes to complete, and can be incorporated into staff induction sessions or other forms of staff CPD. The training includes evidence-based information on self-harm behaviours and risk factors, quiz questions to test learners' knowledge and video scenarios depicting student/staff interactions.

HOW TO RESPOND TO SELF-HARM

Be sure to familiarise yourself with your school's safeguarding procedures, and consider which colleague(s) would be best to inform and seek support from in the event of any self-harm safeguarding concerns coming to light.

When students present suspected or clear signs of behaviours linked to self-harm, there are three key things to be aware of:

- Young people may engage in intentional self-injury to manage distressing emotions. Intentional self-injury can occur in many different ways that are often hidden.
- Demonstrating an understanding of self-harm will signal to the young person that they are accepted, and that the school knows how to help them. Allow time for the student to respond, and then recap what they have told you to show that you have actively listened.
- It's important that you respond calmly and with empathy. Inform your school's safeguarding lead so that a plan can be put in place for the student, and always seek personal support when processing the information shared with you. Further advice on how to respond supportively can be found in our e-learning module.

DO THIS

THANK IN ADVANCE

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

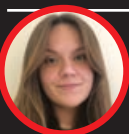
To bypass the kind of defiance that can arise when an instruction is given, make a point of thanking the student for following your instruction before he or she has actually done so.

Before Jack puts his gum in the bin, for example, say, "Put the gum in the bin, Jack - thanks." Prior to the point where Jill finally stops chatting to her friend, say, "Thank you, Jill, for being quiet while I read the story."

Using this technique implies the expectation that the student will follow the instruction – though it's important to use a friendly tone when doing so, to ensure there's no suggestion of sarcasm.

On a related note, try to get into the habit of saying 'thank you,' rather than 'please.' 'Thank you' is just as respectful as 'please,' but the latter has something of a begging quality. 'Thank you,' as explained above, is stronger, since it *assumes compliance*.

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



LAUREN HITCHCOCK IS A RESEARCHER WITHIN THE SORTS TEAM; THE FREE SORTS TOOLKIT AND E-LEARNING MODULE CAN BOTH BE ACCESSED FROM [SORTS4SCHOOLS.ORG.UK](https://sorts4schools.org.uk); FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE SORTS TEAM AT [SORTS@PSYCHIATRY.CAM.AC.UK](mailto:sorts@psychiatry.cam.ac.uk)

4.1%

Education spending as a share of national income in 2023/24; in 2010/11, the proportion was 5.6% of national income

Source: 'Annual report on education spending in England: 2024–25' produced by the Institute for Fiscal Studies

As any teacher will tell you, if students get a good night's sleep, they're much more likely to have a productive time of it in the classroom the following day. Now a study by researchers at the University of Manchester has found that good sleep habits can appreciably improve students' mental wellbeing over the span of a year – at least among girls.

Drawing on survey data recorded by the #BeeWell youth programme (beewellprogramme.org), the researchers tracked around 28,000 teenagers across Greater Manchester for a period of three years, in an effort to identify connections between their sleep habits, rates of physical activity and mental wellbeing.

Adolescent girls who reported getting sufficient sleep also reported better mental wellbeing after one year. This relationship was moreover found to be a reciprocal one, with better mental wellbeing appearing to predict the subsequent quality of sleep that girls experienced – especially between the ages of 12 and 14.

Sleep was similarly found to be a predictor of boys' mental wellbeing, but without the reciprocal effect – i.e. boys' levels of wellbeing didn't appear to predict their quality of sleep later on. That said, the study did point to boys' level of wellbeing being a predictor of their subsequent physical activity levels.

According to the project's lead researcher, Dr Jose Marquez. *"Our research demonstrates the critical role of sleep in adolescent wellbeing, particularly for girls. It is therefore vital that young people are empowered with the knowledge, practices and benefits of good sleep habits, in addition to raising awareness of the immediate and longer-term consequences of poor sleep quality."*

CLOSE-UP ON...

CYBER SECURITY



We live in a digital age, with technology an integral part of our daily lives. From online shopping to streaming media, we're spending more time online than ever before – making it all the more important to prevent cyber criminals from accessing our devices, data and accounts.

The National Cyber Security Centre is responsible for helping to make the UK the safest place in which to live and work online. Below are some learning steps we've put together, to help teachers shine a spotlight on the importance of cyber security for young people.

UPGRADE YOUR EMAIL SECURITY

Some of our most personal information and financial data can be contained within emails. If a cyber criminal manages to compromise your inbox, they could gain access to other online accounts registered to you via password recovery links, or acquire the contact information of people you know and use this to scam you. Always activate any 2-step verification functions offered by your email provider, and use a strong and unique password. If you're struggling to come up with something sufficiently random, try mixing three words using everyday objects with scattered numbers and symbols – e.g. Hippo!PizzaRocket1. Hard to remember passwords can then be saved to your browser settings or a dedicated password manager.

STAY UP TO DATE

Applying the latest software and operating system security updates as soon as they're available will help protect your devices and accounts from cyber criminals. These updates will often include revised protection from viruses and other forms of malware, and can sometimes be accompanied by various system improvements and extra features.

If you receive a prompt to update your device or any of the apps you use, don't ignore it. The NCSC advises turning on automatic updates. Device updates can take some time to complete, however, and will typically require a reliable internet connection. It's best to apply these at home, where you can access your personal WiFi (and preferably while keeping your device plugged into the mains).

BACK UP YOUR DATA

Most of us will at some point have been unable to access important data – be it school-related documents, personal photos, videos, contact details or other forms of personal information.

A backup involves making a copy of your important data and then storing it in a separate (and hopefully even more secure) location – typically an external hard drive, or online cloud storage. If you lose your original data, you can simply restore a copy of it from the backup you've made. Making backups doesn't take long, and can usually be scheduled so that it takes place automatically.

FOR THE LATEST CYBER SECURITY INFORMATION AND ADVICE, PLEASE VISIT [NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk); YOU CAN PLAY THE NCSC-DEVELOPED CYBERFIRST NAVIGATORS LEARNING GAME FOR KS3 STUDENTS BY VISITING [NCSC.GOV.UK/COLLECTION/CYBERFIRSTNAVIGATORS](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/cyberfirstnavigators)

27%

of parents admit to 'lying, bending rules or playing the system' to ensure their children gain admittance to their preferred schools

Source: Mortar Research survey commissioned by Zoopla, carried out amongst 1,019 individuals who applied for a school place for their child(ren) within the last five years

Need to know

The House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee (PAC) last month delivered a withering assessment of SEN provision across England, stating that it, "Is reaching, or, arguably, has already reached, crisis point."

According to the Committee's 'Support for children and young people with special educational needs' report, the past decade has seen a 140% increase in the number of children with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs), hugely outpacing a 58% rise in the DfE's high needs funding over the same period.

The report's authors note that in 2023, half of all EHCPs were issued within the statutory 20-week turnaround period, with significant regional variations between those having their needs met, and those for whom SEN support was delayed or denied. Just 2.5% of local authorities' EHCP decisions were subject to appeal that same year – but of those, 98% were ultimately decided in favour of parents and carers.

The report recommends that the DfE set out a costed plan for measuring progress, acquire better data so that funding can be targeted more accurately, and collaborate more extensively with other areas of government – such as harnessing the expertise of officials within the Department for Health and Social Care, as part of efforts to reduce waiting times for SEN support.

The full report can be downloaded via tinyurl.com/ts142-LL6



HOW TO... OVERCOME UNEQUAL ACCESS TO MUSIC

Inequality in music education is widening. Every child deserves access to high quality musical instruments, but a widespread lack of resources has meant that one in five primary schools aren't able to offer regular music lessons as part of their curriculum. State-funded secondary schools find themselves in a similar position, with almost 40% unable to offer compulsory music lessons in Y9. This needs to change.

Music provides children and young people with unique opportunities for expressing themselves, exploring their creativity, working hard at something and being able to shine. These experiences can stay with them and can shape their lives – yet sadly, more children than ever are being denied such opportunities.

FALSE ECONOMY

Chronic underfunding has prevented many schools from being able to purchase quality musical instruments. Traditionally, musical instruments were made to last for decades and be repairable, making them inherently sustainable. In recent years, however, some areas of production have become less sustainable, giving rise to instruments that are lacking in durability, and which can't be repaired with easily available spare parts.

These cheaper instruments can be more attractive due to their cost – though the impact of importing from halfway round the world can entail a significant environmental cost. The incremental carbon cost of using an existing instrument could save an estimated 97% of the carbon footprint that shipping a new one from another continent would entail (based on government calculations available via tinyurl.com/ts142-CC5).

The piano, in particular, should be the centrepiece of any music department – yet many teachers and students are having to rely on old, neglected

instruments that are barely functional (if, indeed they even have one at all). Simultaneously, there are thousands of quality pianos sitting idle in homes across the UK. Pianos are generally perceived as being expensive items that are difficult to move, and which require specialist knowledge to repair – but they also have the potential to last for decades.

By way of bringing about a long-lasting positive change, we believe that unwanted pianos should be recycled, repaired and donated to schools, to ensure they possess the resources needed to provide a quality music education for their students – and so that those resources can remain in place for future generations.

A NECESSITY, NOT A LUXURY

The potential impact of this shouldn't be understated. Overnight, schools and teachers could be empowered to deliver a curriculum that supports students as both learners and people. An in-depth music education can help students understand the theory of music, while also giving them a hands-on experience that's been shown to improve social and emotional skills.

Music itself shouldn't be seen as a luxury, but rather as a necessary part of a well-rounded education. *Every* student deserves the chance to learn and play music – which an effective piano donation programme can bring about.

Schools and students can no longer simply wait for their economic fortunes to change. By the time adequate funding arrives, a generation of musicians will have been lost, which we can't let happen. Through piano donation programmes, schools can finally be offered an alternative to the financial burden of outspending their budgets, by working with organisations to ensure that they receive the high-quality resources needed to once again make music accessible to all students.



SIMON POLLARD IS MANAGING DIRECTOR AT MILLERS MUSIC; FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPANY'S PIANO DONATION PROGRAMME CAN BE FOUND AT MILLERSMUSIC.CO.UK



On the radar *Education for Wellbeing*

A recently concluded research trial carried out by UCL, which sought to put five school-oriented mental health awareness interventions to the test, has now delivered its findings.

The Education for Wellbeing trial ran from 2018 to 2024, involving 32,655 students in Years 4/5 and 7/8 based at 513 schools across England. Following analysis by specialists at the University of Dundee, University of Manchester, the LSE's Care Policy Evaluation Centre and the

University of Bath, three interventions showed signs of promise – Mindfulness-Based Exercises, Relaxation Techniques, and especially Strategies for Safety and Wellbeing (SSW).

The latter helps students to normalise everyday negative emotions, such as stress and sadness, and distinguish them from mental ill health. When implemented in full, SSW interventions were found to significantly improve students' mental health literacy at both primary and

secondary, and made them more willing to seek help if and when they became affected by mental health problems later on.

The SSW approach was developed for the trial by the mental health charity Anna Freud (annafreud.org), which now plans to deliver training for UK school staff in how to deliver the intervention at KS2/3.

The full Education for Wellbeing trial findings can be downloaded via tinyurl.com/ts142-LL7

TRENDING

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

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Geography and history teachers may be interested in a web-hosted interactive timeline launched as part of the Railway 200 campaign, marking the 200th anniversary of modern rail travel. Commencing with the 1825 opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the timeline uses a mix of contemporary photography and illustrations to explain the major rail milestones between then and now. railway200.co.uk/timeline

FROM THE NILE TO BETHNAL GREEN

The Young V&A museum has unveiled a new exhibition, 'Making Egypt', that focuses on the centuries-spanning influence Egyptian culture has had on international art and design. Some 200 works from the V&A's collection are on display, including ancient funerary masks and linen shrouds, as well as Princess Sopedet-em-haawt's fully painted inner sarcophagus, on show in the UK for the first time. vam.ac.uk/young

TEACHER WALKTHROUGH

ADAPTIVE TEACHING

ZEPH BENNETT FLAGS UP SOME WAYS IN WHICH YOUR LESSONS CAN BE TAILORED TO STUDENTS' DIFFERING ABILITIES



1

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

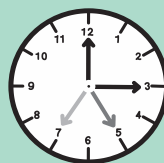
Regularly checking for understanding will ensure the teacher can quickly identify any misconceptions, thus making task setting and adapting the level of challenge more accurate



2

SCAFFOLDING

Setting appropriate work for all students may involve assigning sentence starters, keywords, chunked explanations, etc. – scaffolded tasks made slightly easier to navigate for students who are struggling with the learning



3

TIMING

The timing of tasks is essential within adaptive classrooms; students all work at a different pace, so allowing them to complete tasks within different time frames will demonstrate an awareness of their needs



4

EXTENSION

Students who complete initial tasks more quickly than their peers must be provided with additional challenge via an extension task



5

FEEDBACK

Personalised and tailored feedback, which gives guidance on next steps and how to improve performance, can be provided to students in a timely fashion during the lesson

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 @ZEPHBENNETT.BSKY.SOCIAL

Got a great learning idea? Email editor@teachsecondary.com or tweet us at [@teachsecondary](https://twitter.com/teachsecondary)

SAFEGUARDING



Experience AI

AI Safety

Meet the looming opportunities and concerns of the AI revolution head on, with these safety resources aimed at KS3 learners

AT A GLANCE

- A cutting-edge curriculum for introducing AI technologies to 11- to 14-year-olds
- Gold-standard lessons for empowering students with critical thinking skills around AI issues
- Carefully aligned topics focusing on privacy, misinformation, trust and responsibility
- Includes key message videos supported by offline activities
- Thoughtfully developed based on guidance published by the PSHE Association

REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL



The rapid development and growing adoption of artificial intelligence technologies has caused school leaders to grapple with all manner of questions regarding ethics, safety and the wellbeing of their school community.

Of these, there are perhaps two key questions that hold particular urgency. How do we ensure that young people aren't accessing or creating harmful or inappropriate content online through generative AI? And how can we be certain that their data and intellectual property are properly protected?

The 'AI Safety' series provides the essential information educators will need to confidently run activities and discussions in relation to AI safety. The resources form part of Experience AI – an AI literacy program co-developed by the Raspberry Pi Foundation and Google DeepMind to equip teachers with the tools to engage young people while fostering a passion for, and understanding of the subject.

The materials on offer are grouped into three distinct sessions, focusing on 'Your data and AI', 'Media literacy in the age of AI' and 'Using AI tools responsibly'. They're well-designed, and should succeed in their aim of empowering learners to interact purposefully with the topics presented, becoming more analytical and effective users of AI technologies in the process. The three sessions are essentially standalone

and can be completed in any order, but follow a similar structure in that they start with a video introducing a key concept, followed by a selection of offline activities that teachers can pick from and use as the basis for guided class discussions.

The materials for each session include a detailed lesson plan, a slide deck and activity worksheets. Said activities variously include an escape room-style challenge, a poster creation task, a 'business boss' game and a roleplay activity that involves students assuming the role of data detectives.

Students will be tasked with calling upon their own knowledge of AI and AI-adjacent apps for some activities – including one where they'll be required to detect 'digital doppelgangers' and another where they'll be wielding a 'personalised emoji creator'.

Objectives, competencies and key vocabulary are provided for all sessions, alongside a clearly presented video that's just a couple of minutes long. The videos are intended to act as springboards for further discussion and follow-on activities, so that students can develop a more nuanced understanding of how generative and large language model AIs work in practice.

This is a powerful and much-needed set of resources that will help students more rigorously evaluate the role AI is set to play in shaping their lives, while enabling them to safely navigate the dilemmas and

predicaments associated with issues of data privacy, misinformation, fact-checking and deepfakes.



VERDICT

- ✓ Provides students with the knowledge and understanding needed to navigate and mitigate the challenges associated with AI
- ✓ Can help with the auditing of safeguarding procedures and implementation of safe AI practices
- ✓ Promotes essential discussions regarding responsible uses of AI
- ✓ Helpfully explores key AI concerns, ranging from data privacy to misinformation and bias

UPGRADE IF...

...you're looking to broaden students' understanding of AI and related safety issues via a set of engaging, relatable and accessible resources, while encouraging a culture of safe and responsible AI use across your school.

The AI Safety resources developed by the Raspberry Pi Foundation in partnership with Google DeepMind can be downloaded via rpf.io/aisafetyteaching

MATHS | SCIENCE

Collins

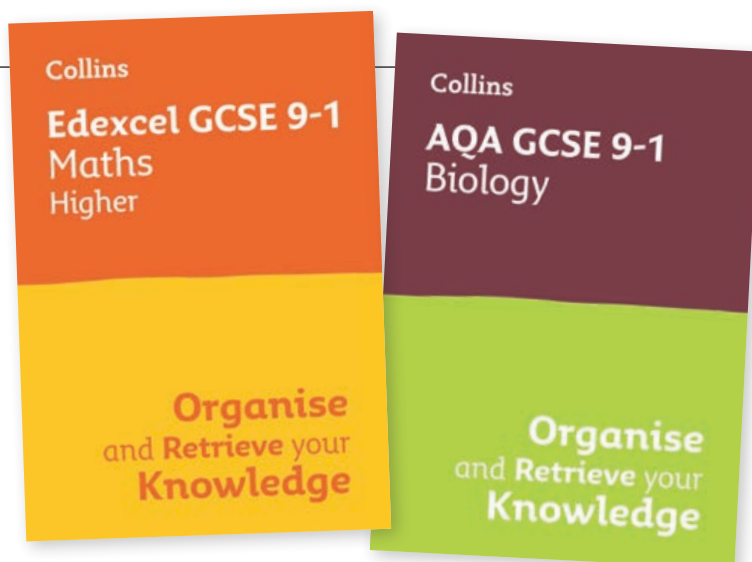
Collins GCSE Organise and Retrieve your Knowledge

Compact and cleverly presented revision workbooks for GCSE maths and science

AT A GLANCE

- Focused revision of key concepts
- Designed for the systematic embedding of learnt knowledge
- Complete curriculum coverage
- Available for maths, physics, chemistry, biology and combined science learners
- Separate editions for AQA science and AQA and Edexcel maths

REVIEW BY MIKE DAVIES



When I think back to my secondary school days, especially the lead-up to exams, I shudder. Whatever I was doing in those last few weeks, you couldn't call it 'revision' by any standard definition. I was highly unfocused, and my notes were a joke.

Back then, it was O Levels, but the principle remains the same with GCSEs; you get taught, you revise, you sit exams. Trouble is, you're fed with more information than a distracted teenage brain can handle. Which is why the quality of students' revision has such impact on their success.

That's where the Organise and Retrieve your Knowledge workbooks from Collins come in. I've seen a fair few revision guides in my time, and many that were very good – but there's something about these workbooks that immediately made me feel 'Yes, I can do this!' I'm not sure I've felt that reaction quite so strongly before.

With the learning content having to be consistent, the main differences with these revision guides come down to their presentation and organisation. And these ones just feel extremely helpful and sensibly laid out.

Firstly, there's the size. Their A5 format somehow makes them feel less intimidating, as well as easily pocketable, making it possible to do a page or two while on the bus or train and feeling like

you've achieved something worthwhile in your downtime.

Best of all, though, is the layout. Each curriculum topic is given its own two-page spread. On the left is an 'Organise' section, presenting the clearest, most concise set of notes you could ever imagine trying to copy from more diligent classmates, with crucial key points clearly indicated. Higher tier content is appropriately marked out, and the workbooks' diagrams and illustrations, where needed, are both visually appealing and useful. There are also some worked examples when the content calls for them.

On the right-hand side you'll find a 'Retrieve' section. This is designed to test students' understanding and powers of recall via questions concerning the information covered on the opposite page. These are set out in ways that pupils might expect to see in exams, adding to the sense that these books will prepare students appropriately (with model answers found at the back).

The Organise and Retrieve your Knowledge series therefore succeeds in its aims. While no substitute for a good, inspiring teacher – there's little room for extended explanations – they are an excellent tool for those students who have been paying attention in class. If you want

to boost students' recall when it matters most, you've come to the right place.

teach
SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ The compact format makes them practical for everyday use
- ✓ All content is cleverly organised and structured
- ✓ The text contained within the workbooks is consistently concise and to the point
- ✓ Illustrations are suitably clear and deployed well
- ✓ The workbooks represent great value for money

UPGRADE IF...

... you want an efficient and convenient revision support and practice tool for your maths and science students.

From £3.50 per book for schools; find out more at collins.co.uk/revision



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Lawson is a former secondary teacher, now serving as a foundation governor while running a tutoring service, and author of the book **The Successful (Less Stressful) Student** (Outskirts Press, £11.95); find out more at prep4successnow.wordpress.com or follow @johninpompano



THE LAST WORD

"No darkness but ignorance"



We should always review and interrogate what students are taught at school, concedes **John Lawson** – but we should also be guided by ‘challengeable expertise’...

In 2016, Michael Gove shared his ‘expert’ view on political ‘experts’. Gove famously stated that “*People in this country have had enough of experts from organisations with acronyms who think they know best.*”

We should know that nobody possesses sufficient expertise to tell us what all British people think about anything. While we can, and should demolish rules and arguments that are nonsensical, we must also be extremely wary of vain populists who set out to demonise as many regulations and experts as they can.

Challengeable expertise

When important decisions must be made, ‘challengeable expertise’ is indispensable – especially with regards to social welfare, the environment and education.

I recently listened to a discussion on Teachers Talk Radio (teacherstalkradio.podbean.com), in which one contributor floated a proposal to drop classic authors – such as Shakespeare, Dickens and Steinbeck – from the school syllabus to make way for more ‘relevant’ contemporary fiction. Perhaps, they ventured, *Of Mice and Men* and *Macbeth* could be replaced with novels by Barbara Kingsolver, Sebastian Faulks and Khaled Hosseini?

All superb novelists, yes. Thankfully, however, TTR always welcomes dissenting non-expert voices, so I suggested that if we stop teaching Shakespeare, then 50 years from now, how many people will still regularly read this literary giant? Why, in 2074, would anyone opt to read *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, let alone take the time to comprehend those works’ breathtaking language, rich symbolism, intricate structures and transcendental beauty, wit and wisdom?

Banishing The Bard

The works of Shakespeare pack a punch, but much like holy books, can be almost impossible to appreciate without expert help. From the texts alone, we don’t know that he had to compete with live executions for audiences. The hags on the beach can be seen in those figures dog-whistling from the tabloids and social media channels.

Barely anyone else has portrayed life’s greatest dramas – happiness, love, war and peace, loyalty, social class, justice, death, destiny – with the ageless finesse of the Bard. But it can take a guiding hand to show us that.

I’d like to know what the UK’s finest literature and

drama teachers think about axing Shakespeare. After all, they’re the ones at the chalkface, daily gauging his impact on the nation’s teenagers – and the views of the latter matter too, of course.

Are the arguments against teaching Shakespeare genuinely compelling and coherent? Is Barbara Kingsolver’s (superb) *Demon Copperhead* more engaging and relevant than *David Copperfield*? Possibly. But why banish the Bard offshore, rather than celebrate someone admired globally for his incomparable contribution to literature?

A broad consensus

I hope that our expert teachers can and will excoriate such false either/or propositions, and recommend that we continue teaching the best of classic literature *alongside* the works of our finest modern writers. Naturally, we can’t study every esteemed author, so there has to be a broad consensus over those who make the cut and who don’t.

Yet how clear are we as to the *raison d’être* for teaching classic literature? Stories play a huge role in the teaching of history, and our decisions over what beliefs and positions we should respect and reject. I’ve rarely seen students exhibit indifference to Wilfred Owen’s ‘*Dulce et Decorum est*’.

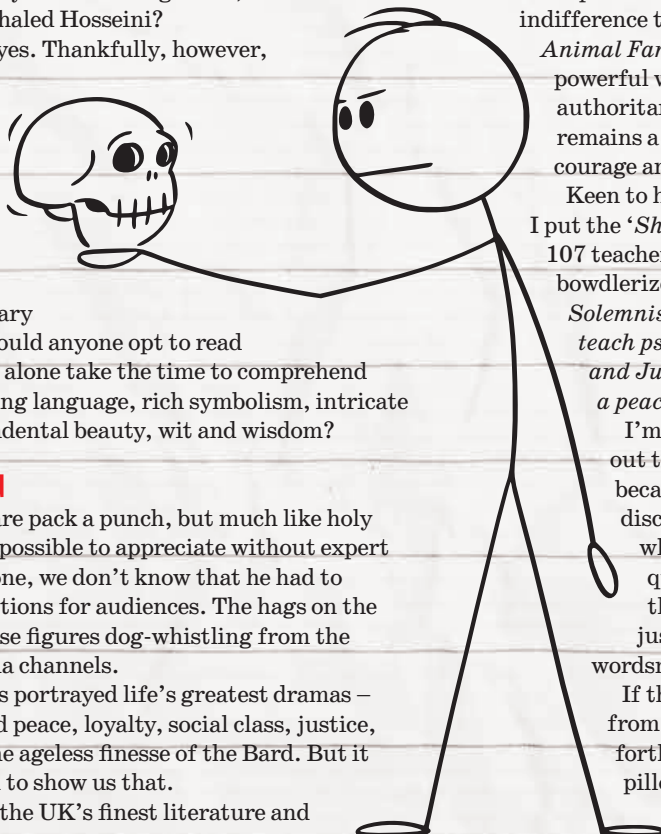
Animal Farm has given successive generations powerful warnings about the dangers of authoritarianism and deception. *Lord of the Flies* remains a brilliant exploration of adolescent angst, courage and cruelty.

Keen to hear what our education experts had to say, I put the ‘*Should we scrap Shakespeare?*’ question to 107 teachers on #Edutwitter/X. To summarise their bowdlerized view: ‘*Yes – if you think the Missa Solemnis sounds better on a banjo; yes, if you’d teach psychoanalysis without mentioning Freud and Jung; yes, if you’d choose Gordon Ramsey as a peace envoy.*’ Seems like a resounding ‘No’.

I’m sure there are many thousands of adults out there who find Shakespeare awesome, because an expert once taught them how to discern classic literature from pulp fiction when they were a teenager. There are no questions that shouldn’t be asked – but there would surely need to be overwhelming justifications for England’s finest-ever wordsmith to be sidelined in schools.

If the peerless Bard were ever to be dropped from the syllabus, I would let my tears pour forth without shame and make of them a pillow for my heart.

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