

innovate

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School Partnership
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FEATURE
ARTICLE

teachers
as curriculum makers

BY MELANIE DUDLEY



editor's message



Dear Readers,

I hope that you have had a restful break and a fantastic start to the new year!

First, I must say a huge thank you to all our **#TeachersAsWriters** who have contributed to this edition. The response to our last edition was epic!

This edition is our biggest edition yet, we have a wonderful range of articles that focus on the topic of Teachers as Curriculum Makers. For the first time ever, we have chosen to focus on one topic for one issue! I chose this as the topic in light of the New Ofsted Framework. Many teachers in the UK have been responding to the publication in their departments, in particular there has been a keen focus on defining the 'intent... implementation... impact' of their given subject areas.

With our special feature **Teachers as Curriculum Makers**, by Melanie Dudley who provides an outline and a reflection of the National Curriculum at Brooklands Farm Primary school.

We also have a superb variety of articles on the topic of Teachers as Curriculum Makers. This range of articles presents different ideas

- Developing An Oracy Curriculum, **VOICE21**
- An Inter-cultural Nature of Science, **CTTR**
- Developing our Maths Curriculum, **OAKGROVE SCHOOL**
- Whose English? Whose Knowledge? **DEBORAH LINTON**
- Teachers as Agents of Change, **LRTT**

to take away, whether they are specific to your subject area or can be adapted to suit your context, class and practice.

Alongside these wonderful articles we also have:

- Collaboration is key, **SANDY KAUR**
- Children's understanding of charity, **JOANNE JOSEPHIDOU**
- Evidence Informed Practice, **JAMES MANNION**
- Writing for Pleasure, **ROSS YOUNG**

Again these are just some of nuggets of wisdom that can develop your teaching practice. We have Sandy Kaur showing us how to create a collaborative culture in the classroom; Joanne Josephidou showcase her research into how children develop an understanding of charity. Whilst James Mannion looks to open up a discussion of the role of practitioner-research 'a systematic process of reflection on our practice, trying out new ideas and evaluating the impact of what we do.' It is a part of this process that we encourage teachers to take part in when writing for Innovate Journal.

One of our other successes of the academic year has been presenting research at the Children's Research Centre, Open University. Previously, giving readers a snippet in prior editions of Innovate Journal, our collaborative research with the Open University has enabled to engage in practitioner-based research. At the heart of this piece of research is a piece of software, Talk Factory <http://talkfactory.uk/> - we

are interested to see how this software is used in different contexts, so please feel free to get in touch if you try it out in the classroom.

For our next edition of Innovate Journal, we are going to be working with Educating Northants @EduNorthants to create a local journal that showcases local talent! If you are a teacher in the Northamptonshire area and can share what is your celebration of best practice and innovation, then get in touch through educatingnorthants@gmail.com

As for our summer edition of Innovate Journal, we are thinking of focusing on the topic of technology in Education. If you have any examples of using technology in the classroom, then I would love to hear from you! We are looking for a range of technology that is used to develop teaching and learning.

So, get in touch through Twitter: [@innovatejournal](https://twitter.com/innovatejournal)

or via email: hello@innovatejournal.com

Do give
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research-informed
education articles!

This is a fantastic
journal, proving a
space for teachers to
share their research
inquiries.

Innovate looks amazing and
what a variety of people that
have contributed to this issue!
Innovate continues to go from
strength to strength!

IAN TETT
HEADTEACHER,
OAKGROVE SCHOOL

MEERA CHUDASAMA
EDITOR, INNOVATE JOURNAL

Be a

1:

Stop! Pause from your teaching practice. Think about one area of your teaching practice you would like to change.

Refine your reflection. Which... year group, class or student would you like to alter your teaching practice for?

teacher

2:

Search! Search for articles, tweets, posts and blogs about the area of your practice you would like to change.

What are other practitioners doing?
How have they changed their practice?
What has been effective for their class or student?

researcher

3:

Action the change. Try the new strategy or technique. But, keep in mind what you have read and what you wanted to change in your practice.

If this technique doesn't work, go back searching and researching ways to develop your practice.

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EDITORIAL

managing editor Meera Chudasama
graphic designer Tim Macdonald
reprographics Mel Hackett

writers

Jessie Cross
Erin Schaal
Sandy Kaur
Deborah Linton
Kara Dowson
Heide Frank
Derya Deniz
Kayleigh Robinson
Melanie Dudley
Valerie Critten
David Messer
Hannah Hagon
Aimee Mills
Kirsty Watell
Huw Humphreys
Esther Gray
Carly Waterman
Haira Gandolfi
Joe Freeman
Charlotte Dukes
Mark Quinn
James Mannion
Zubair Junjania
Jane Sheard
Rebecca Clark
Shenaz Merali
Amy Icke
Liz Chamberlain
Joanne Josephidou
Linda Plowright-Pepper
Claire Andrews
Ross Young
Amy Groome
Sarika Patel
Rebecca Beagley
Shelby Hawksworth

innovate Journal of
Innovate Teaching
School Partnership
INNOVATE TEACHING SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Venturer Gate
Middleton
Milton Keynes
MK10 9JQ

TELEPHONE: 01908 545318
EMAIL: hello@innovatejournal.com
TWITTER: @innovatejournal

TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

ERIN SCHAAL

TEAM LEADER, LRTT TEACHER TRAINING
FELLOWSHIP IN MALAYSIA, JULY 2019

For so many of us, teaching is a calling. We hear it from the time we're young – that desire to nurture children and develop tomorrow's generation of leaders and innovators. That's why I was surprised when I told my mom, who recently retired after nearly 40 years of teaching, that I wanted to become a teacher, and she emphatically told me, "DON'T!" I thought she would be proud and excited that I was following her footsteps and attempting to change the world, but instead, she offered a long list of reasons why this was a horrible idea, including: it's isolating, it's being shaped

by unfair tests and assessments, it's the most difficult job you can pursue... As you can see, I didn't listen.

Nonetheless, years later, when I was standing in my own classroom, I understood exactly what she meant. I looked around the room at my students' faces, and not only was I reminded of the joy and fulfillment of what I do, but also the pressure. Looking back at me were roughly 20 futures, and I was responsible for all of them. On my own. There were no other adults in the room to help when one student threatened another, or when they asked the questions with impossible answers. I felt lost and helpless when I tried every strategy I knew, and regardless, certain students weren't able to grasp a new idea.

I felt a bit like a tree that had been planted in a flower pot. Restricted.

I quickly learned the value of reaching out. It started when I asked the teacher next door for advice on classroom management. Without any judgment, she offered ideas for me to try, and I was suddenly filled with optimism. And that was only reaching next door!

“It's isolating, it's being shaped by unfair tests and assessments, it's the most difficult job you can pursue...”

When I went to my first professional development session, I was amidst teachers from dozens of schools. When we had opportunities to share our diverse experiences, it was almost like shopping – indulging in the joy of seeing and trying on exotic new ideas and adding the ones that seemed practical to my own toolbox.

The flower pot had cracked! This is what growth felt like!

Then...then I had the opportunity to collaborate with teachers in Penang through an LRTT fellowship last summer. I arrived here in George Town under the expectation that I would share my experience and ideas with in-country teachers. But that wasn't quite an accurate description. There was shared learning not only amidst the fellows, but also amidst the incredible teachers here in Penang.

Working with dozens of teachers representing dozens of schools from various countries, my toolbox was suddenly overflowing with innovative ideas! Even though it was the middle of my treasured summer, I was so excited about these strategies and this energy that I couldn't wait to return to the classroom and implement everything I was learning. My confidence erupted, and my excitement was unbridled. More than that, I felt deeply and meaningfully connected to all of my international colleagues.

The flower pot was shattered. I had discovered an incredible way to obliterate the four walls of my classroom and work around the weighty pressures that seem to descend upon us more and more each year. I realized it's not about pushing back, but pushing out. Reaching out. I had found a way to gather seeds of inspiration, get the expert help necessary to nurture those seeds and grow them into beautiful strategies that make me a more competent and confident educator. My roots now expand much further than the soil of a much-too-small pot. My roots are now intertwined within a global network of amazing educators, each who are growing their own trees and branches, reaching out to protect and nurture an immeasurable number of students.

“My roots are now intertwined within a global network of amazing educators, each who are growing their own trees and branches...”

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<https://www.lrtt.org/start-journey>



That's why I have returned this year as a team leader. I am humbled and honored to facilitate the same kind of growth for another cohort of eager, adventurous, and inspiring educators. I feel privileged to be part of a program that truly shapes global education and strengthens both individuals and systems.

Since 2017, LRTT has partnered with Teach for Malaysia and the Penang District Education Office. In two years, we approximate roughly 50 fellows have partnered with more than 150 teachers. If those teachers are working with 40 students at a time, imagine the exponential impact! More than that, we are only planting seeds... after this partnership, the people involved will continue to build upon the ideas they gain, expanding their practices and reaching students more deeply and effectively with each passing year. Not only are we reaching students, we are reaching administrators and officials. Word of our work has spread, and those at the top are curious about how to shift their own approach.

This is anything but a flower pot. We are a forest. Interconnected and strengthened by the relationships we are developing, and expanding via the ideas that we are sharing. One branch at a time, one fellowship at a time, we are bringing meaningful change to the world, and we are making a world of ideas more accessible for our students.

Collaboration is key

SANDEEP KAUR

SENIOR LEARNING LEADER

@SANDYK1978

The essence of collaboration is to work together to achieve a common purpose or goal. The most successful organisations create a culture of 'we' rather than 'I'. In schools we could easily assume that collaboration is the norm, but in a sector where learning is the core business, teachers working in isolation; literally and metaphorically is widespread, Atwal, K (2019) 'The Thinking School'.

For learning to take place it must be within a social context argues Vygotsky (1962). To be active learners, talk is necessary to clarify learning, but also to access language role models. It is through language exchange that ideas are developed and created. If this is the social constructivist notion of learning for children why would this not apply to teachers in schools? Collaboration is learning in a social context.

At Highlands Primary School we take every opportunity for teachers to collaborate, from Learning Review and Communication meetings (PPA), informal learning focused conversations, professional teams across the school, peer learning and lesson study. We maximise opportunities for teachers to continually refine and improve practice. There is a shared understanding that we take responsibility for all children in our teams, not just our own classes.

Every opportunity is taken to collaborate and empower the staff's ability and capacity to lead. Strong, unselfish and trusting relationships are essential to this. A way to describe this collective spirit is 'Ubuntu', as shared by Steve Munby, (2019) 'Imperfect Leadership'. He discusses the way in which generosity of spirit connects us to the energy and affirmation of a larger community. "A person with Ubuntu is open and

available, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished'. Desmond Tutu

“By collaboratively developing this together as a team the power of talk has become the heart and strength of the school”

All aspects of school development are collaborative and this has its foundation in the distributed leadership model at the school, where everybody is viewed as a leader.

If we take the example of developing oracy across the school, all staff engaged in a launch day via No Pens Day Wednesday and together reflected upon how this impacted upon their practice. Many teachers reflected that if we take away the need to record then the richness in talk is automatically elevated; teachers reflected on how they felt they learned more about the child by engaging in deeper dialogue. This was just the beginning of our six year project, but the immersion was

essential for teachers to begin to see the value and impact. Teachers then collaboratively engaged in reading the research by Robin Alexander to begin to understand the theory behind the practice. For teachers who were not so confident to engage with research the collaborative nature of the task ensured everybody felt included and able to contribute.

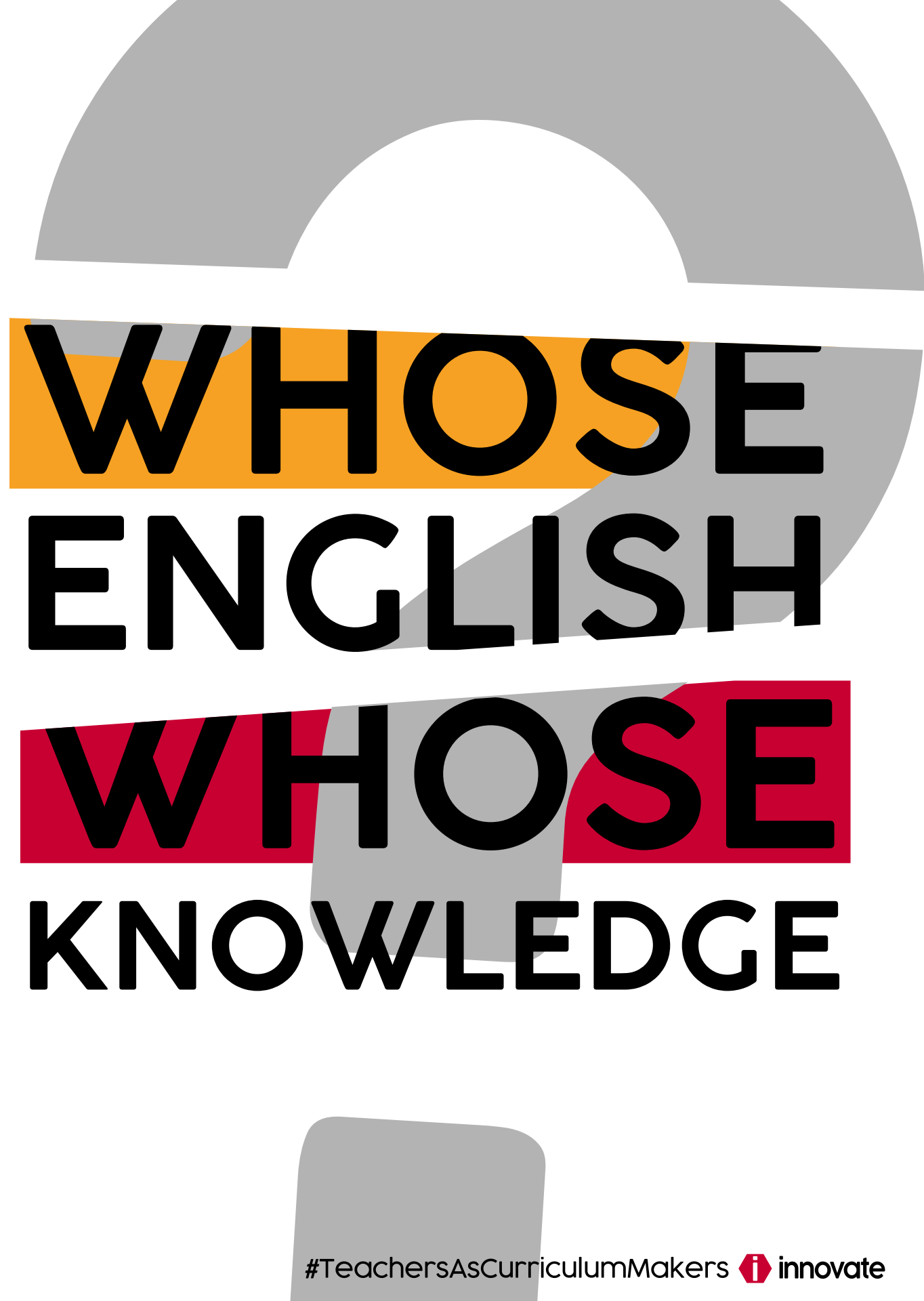
The essential element is the opportunity collaboration gives to developing a shared language of learning and pedagogy. We used the collective research to co-construct our principles of talk at the school. The bringing together of talent (human capital), the power of the group (social capital) and frequency of focus and conversation (decisional capital) is what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) describe as professional capital.

By collaboratively developing this together as a team the power of talk has become the heart and strength of the school.

Collaboration is the heart and key to our success.

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WHOSE ENGLISH WHOSE KNOWLEDGE

**“You don’t look like you can teach me
English Language!”**

DEBORAH LINTON
ESOL & LITERACY TEACHER

As I browsed through LinkedIn, I came across two phrases which immediately intrigued me and evoked further thought; ‘Whose English?’ ‘Whose Knowledge?’ which was the title of a conference being hosted by The London Association for Teachers of English. Meera Chudasama, who is the editor of Innovate Journal, was promoting the conference and encouraging people to share any related ideas on the title.

It took me a short moment to identify how I define the title of the conference, what it means to me in reflection of my experiences as an ESOL teacher; without omission of expressing my identity in its entirety, as a female BME teacher. With that said, in my experience, what do I believe to be some of the core concepts related to the title of the conference?

This was my brief response:

The age of technology brought swift changes to language worldwide, more specifically to the topic of the conference – English language. Whose English? Does being a native speaker of English make you more competent to teach English than someone who isn’t? Does perceived “ownership/ possession” of English language/ knowledge govern opinions of students – who may be more competent to teach/ impart knowledge – Whose knowledge?

Developing this initial thought a little more, here is a more thought response.

During the early years of my teaching career, I secured a position within the community education sector (family learning and adult learners) teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The diversity of the learners presented

ample opportunities for me to learn more about different cultures, religions, and traditions; as well as gain an insight on wide-ranging life experiences and issues, sometimes related to the obstacles created by language barriers. I admired the perseverance and determination of the learners and quickly formed solid teacher-learner relationships; this amplified my motivation to teach, and my passion and commitment to valuing equality and diversity. I was eager to help them grow in every way possible to improve their quality of life (and assimilate in the UK); education is an integral part of survival, and language is merely a vehicle to express one’s knowledge and experiences.

After the first class of term, a few of the students (who were all of Chinese origin) asked my manager to transfer them into alternative classes, the sole reason for them wanting to transfer was confirmed by two students (also of Chinese origin) who had decided to stay in my class regardless of my appearance; they expressed their frustration about the fact that the other students had transferred because they felt that an African (black person) could not teach them English language and British culture – after all, English language and knowledge couldn’t possibly be associated with to me! Irrespective of the fact that I was born and raised in the UK (South London), and I am actually of African-Caribbean (Jamaican) descent where the official language is English.

Until the (transferred) students discovered their ability to manipulate and employ a variety of sensory processing skills to make assumptions about a person’s origin, identity and ability, they would be misguided by rigid perceptual expectations; it’s more about the knowledge that a person has to impart, and the guidance a person wants to give, rather than preconceived notions based on a person’s appearance. I abruptly learned

“Things are not always what they seem; the first appearance deceives many; the intelligence of few perceives what has been carefully hidden in the recesses of the mind”- Roman Poet Phaedrus

that student's perceptual expectations somewhat dictate the conditions for effective teaching and learning to occur, but equally, I realised that the perceptual expectations of other people is totally unrelated to my knowledge and ability to teach English language – my confidence lives on! ‘If (the teacher) is indeed wise, he does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind’ (Gibran 1991: 76, cited in Harmer 2011: 56). ‘There is a wide range of perceptive tools that we can employ to navigate us through this lifelong journey of learning.

Linguistic, historical and cultural knowledge is not determined by ethnicity; in my experience, I found that my peers at university held extensive knowledge and understanding of the syntactic structure of English language (more so than native speakers of English). Over the years, I've observed the nature of the term ‘native’, particularly beyond the era of instructed grammatical teaching, native speakers of English very rarely question the reasons for saying words in a certain tone, grammatical order etc. because speaking English is something which occurs quite naturally without conscious thought – ‘native’ is associated with the place of a person's birth.

Dominant dependence on visual sensory skills as a guide in life, failing to critique and question one's perceptual expectations is not congruent with growth and development. We should employ the variety of sensory skills – which are

innate to human beings – interchangeably to challenge and dispel misconceptions; this may be achievable by sharing our thoughts and experiences, and being the change that we want to see in the world. As Bhopal (2015: 3) argues, ‘BME trainee teachers experience different forms of exclusionary practices related to their identities in the classroom. However, many use their identities in a positive way in which to reinforce aspects of BME experience and history in the classroom.’

There is a positive ending to my anecdote, so after the students who initially transferred to alternative classes observed the speed at which the other students who remained in my class had progressed, and witnessed their achievements: winning poem competitions at local library events, gaining accreditation to evidence progression (taking/passing exams); they asked to be transferred back into my class! I welcomed them into my class, they had already learned a valuable life lesson; ‘... first appearance deceives many ...’.

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FORMED IN 1947, LATE (THE LONDON ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH) IS A VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AND RELATED SUBJECTS. LAST YEAR, LATE HOSTED A CONFERENCE TITLED ‘WHOSE ENGLISH. WHOSE KNOWLEDGE.

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LATE
LONDON ASSOCIATION FOR
THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Relatability

What's the point?

KARA DOWSON

HEAD OF JUNIOR SCHOOL & NURSERY
AKELEY WOOD SCHOOL

Teachers spend an umpteen amount of time planning a progression of lessons for the children in their care to ensure they reach their full potential. What they teach is potentially pre-determined by the National Curriculum to check they are aligned to expectations. How they teach is a carefully considered practice to facilitate differentiation and ensure all children are challenged and supported appropriately, usually in a creative and engaging way. Teachers are skilled practitioners in both of the above, however, due to a number of factors there is something that we don't potentially take as much time and consideration as we should.

Consider the question why? Why are we teaching the children what we are teaching them? Also, somewhat more importantly, why are the children learning what they are learning? How is the Curriculum we plan relevant to their daily lives and the bigger picture? This, I pen, as relatability.

My passion for ensuring that learning is purposeful and meaningful stemmed from my early career working in the Foundation Stage. Having the freedom to plan from children's interests resulted in a flexible and engaging curriculum, which inspired the children on a daily basis. I could ensure it was purposeful and also tackled current day interests and trends. We would jump from a week focused on Doctor Who to hatching butterflies and chicks.

Following that, I spent two years working in an International School in Bangkok teaching Year 2, a class which was predominately made up of Thai children. Back then, schools were heavily reliant on the

traditional QCA documents and I was faced with planning a unit on the Great Fire of London, which is a very popular topic with children of that age. Whilst I fully appreciate the importance of learning about significant historical events, for the children I was teaching at the time I struggled to see the relevance to their lives in the present day. They had a developing use of language and had mostly travelled locally in Asia. Furthermore, Thailand at the time was suffering from a period of severe localised flooding. Therefore, in studying the Great Fire of London we instead looked at the impact it had on people's lives and then spent time producing a comparison with similar events in Thailand.

The change in the National Curriculum in 2014, to a more skills-based approach, gave teachers back freedom to have more flexibility when planning. For some, this was a challenge, as they had become used to the constraints provided by the rigidity of schemes of work. I was leading a Year 1 team at the time, having recently moved to an International School in Dubai. The focus here was on a concept-based curriculum, planned under an overarching creative topic-

“Why are we teaching the children what we are teaching them?”

based umbrella. By focusing on a concept, the learning automatically became more relevant to children's daily lives. For example, when studying Jack and the Beanstalk, children can rarely relate to magic beans or giants in castles in the sky. When you think of it through a contextual lens though, or provide a guiding question, the learning has reliability. In this case, whilst looking through the lenses of wealth and ambition, the question 'is it ever right to steal?' could be posed. Children's responses are usually resoundingly no and then they are encouraged to discuss Jack's behaviour at the castle and they start to consider a different viewpoint. They can then make the links to similar behaviour patterns in the real world.

Another planning approach in which reliability can be promoted is through cross-curricular planning with a real-life purpose. Recently, our Year 1 children were very keen to develop our outdoor space. The teacher responded positively to this and helped facilitate learning for the children with a real-life purpose. They did research in Science, wrote letters to ask permission, grew a pound at home for fundraising, visited the local garden centre to purchase their equipment, built planters in Design Technology and then planted their crops. They plan to set up their own Farmers' Market at school this academic year. The children's enthusiasm and engagement in

their learning was second to none. They knew what and why they were learning and could also relate it to real life skills in the wider world. It can be argued that planning for reliability is easier with younger children, due to the increasing constraints and content of the Curriculum as children get older. In this case, it could be that tweaks to planning, focused on looking at a global perspective or a real-world current issue, could hold the answer, therefore teachers don't necessarily need to reinvent the wheel. An example could be a World War Two topic. Instead the context could be changed to Conflict in Europe. Instead of focusing solely on historical events, this could focus on modern day conflict, such as Brexit and immigration and what may happen in the future. We, as educators, have a responsibility to facilitate learning around modern day issues and tackle them with children. We need to encourage students to be inquisitive, challenge respectfully and have the freedom to ask questions and debate. Another example is the KS2 local geography study. We have traditionally studied a local market town and written to the local MP to provide feedback. To gain even more depth from this topic, children could also discuss the recent press centred on the supposed decline of the High Street and market towns in the UK. Furthermore, they could debate whether we should be trying to save them at all?

To conclude, reliability ensures that children's learning can be placed within a real-life context. They understand what they are learning, but also why they are learning and how this is relevant. This can be achieved by encouraging children to think about things from a different perspective, providing a purpose

“We need to encourage students to be inquisitive, challenge respectfully and have the freedom to ask questions and debate.”

for learning with a tangible outcome or tackling current global issues in an age appropriate way. From experience, when teachers have the flexibility and freedom to plan like this, not only are they much more enthused, classrooms are more engaged and learners are more enthusiastic.

Interview a teacher!

“Language is the road map of culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going
– Rita Mae Brown”

HEIDE FRANK
BUSINESS ENGLISH TEACHER

1. GIVE ME AN OVERVIEW OF YOUR JOB ROLE?

I started my teaching career back in 1998. After 19 years of organising language courses (mainly Business English) at various levels and settings (corporate and academic) in 2017, I embarked into the journey to teach German in the so-called integration courses funded by the BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and refugees).

The number of people needing German has arisen since 2015. This year was the year when thousands and thousands of people fled their homelands for safety; a large majority of refugees were Syrians and East Africans. From 2017 to March 2019 teaching in the so-called courses “German for illiterate people”, I mainly dealt with learners from Syria who had no knowledge of the German language. In fact, 90% were completely illiterate even in their mother-tongue,

since they never had had a chance to attend schools in their native countries (Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia).

Learners needed to gain a grasp of the German language before thinking about securing employment. At the end of a year’s course students have to take the “DTZ-B1” which is equivalent to a “German test for immigrants”. Once achieved learners either try to look for a job or go on pursuing with B2 courses, which for most jobs is highly recommended if not a requisite. The hardest part in these special courses is to make learners familiar with German culture, political systems etc.

Aside from teaching, learners need language to survive. If they can’t communicate in another language, like English, it is quite often impossible to get important information about them and their daily lives; sometimes interpreters are required to help the teachers communicate.

Later on I had the chance to dive into the so-called German for special purposes (DeuFöV) courses, aimed at learners of a minimum intermediate (B1) level wishing to further improve their level of German and heading towards B2. These courses end with the so-called TELC B2 test. For more about this test provider:

<https://www.telc.net/en/about-telc/who-we-are.html>

In the intermediate level courses the attendees have already a good command of the German language and the teacher can easily transmit cultural and language notions as well as work-related topics.

“If learners can’t communicate in another language, like English, it is quite often impossible...”

From April 2019, I have also been acting as a coach as an intercultural German tutor/mediator, who tries and cover job-related topics ranging from CVs and application, interviews, labour law etc. In these courses most attendees can express themselves quite well, most of them are motivated as the service bureau for craftsmanship, which launched the course, is on the constant outlook for internships and jobs to help them integrate into the German labour market. Even here the majority are Syrians, as well as a few Afghanis.

Personally this is the most rewarding teaching setting that concerns the German courses, is that I do not teach German in the literal sense, but can bring life experiences into class every topic.

2. TELL ME SOME OF YOUR HIGHLIGHTS IN TEACHING SO FAR.

My corporate Business English courses, are mostly not goal-oriented, there's no luring final exam. However, sometimes companies want to have learners tested, which is merely for the supervisor to check the level of fluency learners have grasped in class. The atmosphere is in these classes is mostly disciplined and relaxed, with a mix of learners.

I have had great results at uni, because of this free approach, listening to so many fantastic talks. Integration courses with the refugees have been monotonous, as the nature of the final exam is hardly feasible with the long preparation after 500 hours of class. Further to this, the highlights of teaching come from students being able to find employment and really thrive in the German market and culture. When there are so many hiding factors that cause trauma and frustration - much of our work is emotionally supporting learners when there is no real psychological provision put in to place. Even showing the highest grade of empathy and resilience and creating a pleasant class atmosphere, there have been few positive outstanding cases. I still recall however one outstanding situation where a deaf-mute girl managed to pass the final exam with me. She was such an example to everyone.

“...bring [ing] life experiences in to every class topic...”

“A different language is a different vision of life
- Federico Fellini”

3. TELL ME SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE AS A TEACHER?

In this field of work, a high level of resilience, empathy and cultural understanding are the bread and butter of my daily work. A teacher can only be successful in their job, if they involve their learners, shows an understanding of their learners, is capable to develop strong relationship with the target group. They need to be approachable, be excellent communicators, at the same time be friendly and empathetic and last but not least be outstanding motivators.

My next step on my CPD list is to take a Certificate of Advanced Studies as Intercultural Trainer in order to enhance my cultural understanding of my learners and to develop my intercultural competence.

how can you take care of yourself?

“Nourishing yourself in a way that helps you blossom in the direction you want to go is attainable, and you are worth the effort.” – **Deborah Day**

DERYA DENIZ

YOGA TEACHER AND THAI YOGA MASSAGE THERAPIST

WWW.DERYADENIZYOGA.COM

Self-care is one of the most popular pieces of advice we hear in recent years. But what exactly is it to take care of oneself? Is it all about bathtubs, chocolate and massage or is it something more than that? Although each of these can obviously be related to self-care, it is about much more, and it might require some effort.

The thing is, all of us think that we “of course” take care of ourselves. But do we really? According to World Health Organization (WHO), self-care is defined as: “The ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider”.

Which brings us to the crucial point of being healthy, mentally and physically, and doing the necessary things to

support this. For example; are we getting enough sleep? Is the food that we are eating nourishing us? Are we exercising enough? What about meditating?

It sounds easy to feed ourselves the food we love, get lazy on the couch instead of going for a walk or sleep more than enough. But the simple way to understand if something is for our care or not, is to check with the question; what is the end result? Is it serving towards a healthier and happier version of ourselves in the long term, or is it just giving temporary happiness but intoxicating us in the end?

This works in the same way with regards to the people around us and the thoughts that fill our minds. Are the people in our lives helping us to live a more fulfilled life and inspiring us, or do they tend to take our energy? What about our thoughts? Are we more on a worried path rather

than thinking about things in a more positive way?

Truly being aware of what we are doing, why we are doing it and how it makes us feel are the key questions we can ask ourselves when we are deciding if something is working towards our self-care or not. Make a list of the things that make you happy. Write down your goals, write down the things that serve towards your goals and then check them daily. Make a list of your “no’s. Include in this list the things that you do to please people, but which make you feel bad afterwards.

Maintaining a healthy body and mind can be made easy, and self-care does not only mean being wrapped in cotton-wool (as perfect as it may sound!). With a little effort to take care of our bodies and minds, we can slowly work towards a better version of ourselves and the world around us.

teacher wellbeing

COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM

KAYLEIGH ROBINSON

HEAD OF PRIMARY ENGLISH, STRAITS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, PENANG

A classroom full of excited children, there are always some who are too shy to share their ideas and others who are at the forefront answering every question. Becoming a cooperative learning classroom has completely changed this for me and it can for you too.

Interestingly, 'Kagan structures carefully engineer student interaction to maximise cooperation, communication and active engagement by all'. Ensuring this is done in a structured manner will ensure true cooperative learning is being used in a conventional manner to allow for whole class engagement in a way that benefits all students. Typically, students will work in teams of four, which allows for easy transition into pairs for some activities

Cooperative learning changes the role you play as teacher within the classroom and places more ownership on the groups of students working together. This comes through the opportunities they now have to actively participate in their learning, question and challenge others and share and discuss their ideas with their peers. With this self-esteem, motivation and empathy amongst students is increased.

As with all new learning approaches there are some challenges that might be faced when first setting up your cooperative learning classroom including noise levels and resolving initial conflicts. These challenges can be resolved by carefully structured activities, which will allow them to learn the skills to work as part of a group successfully and understand how to better reflect on their own and others ideas.

When implemented effectively cooperative learning can make for a successful classroom and allows children to gain skills they can adapt to situations they may come across later in life.

A few simple strategies you could try out in your classroom to see if cooperative learning could work for you:

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

A cooperative learning strategy that promotes higher level thinking. Teacher asks students in pairs to think about a specific topic and discuss their own thinking. Ideas are then shared with the class but to ensure good listening and pair work has taken place I usually ask pupils to share what their partner has told them rather than their own ideas. Think Pair Share ensures maximum discussion within a group/ pair and works in a way that makes each student accountable.

STUDENT LED TEACHING

A cooperative learning strategy that enables mastery. In groups students are assigned a segment of information. They are given time to research, master and teach this information to the group, then as a class they learn all about a new topic by sharing their leaning collaboratively.

ROUND ROBIN

To begin discussion during revision time/ to gain an understanding of students' prior knowledge. The teacher presents students with a category (such as names of countries) for discussion. Students take it in turns going around the group and naming items that fit the category.

These are just a few of many strategies to introduce cooperative learning into the classroom. It is important when using this learning approach to establish classroom norms to guide your students to be helpful to others, encouraging, problem solvers and learn to give and accept feedback from peers in a safe environment.

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- https://www.kaganonline.com/free_articles/dr_spencer_kagan/281/Kagan-Structures-A-Miracle-of-Active-Engagement



FEATURE ARTICLE

MELANIE DUDLEY,
YEAR 1 TEACHER AT BROOKLANDS FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Goodwin (2015) highlights the importance of Teachers as Curriculum Makers, stating '[such teachers] are better equipped to be active partners in reform because they can be architects of change and not simply passive bystanders'. The role of the teacher in shaping the curriculum is an area which has been greatly researched, considering the actions that must be taken and the subsequent benefits it has for our children. I will therefore aim to identify the need for 'Teachers as Curriculum Makers', whilst sharing how this concept is embedded at Brooklands Farm.

One of the key issues surrounding schools has always been that children continue to be categorised by arbitrary measures of ability, where they are restricted to classrooms and sorted by grades (Wong, 2015). Despite the fact that our children are diverse learners, learning in unique ways, our measure of learning boils down to some form of test. It is therefore clear that as teachers, we need to begin changing the way we are shaping our curriculum to not necessarily demolish test culture, but to enable and actually celebrate personalised and differentiated learning. Wong (2015) has explored over the world, finding that countries such as Singapore have adapted approaches which embed the concept of 'teach less, learn more', putting a greater emphasis on soft skills such as communication and social interaction.

The aim of the National Curriculum is to ensure that all children are taught the essential knowledge in the key subject disciplines

(DfE, 2013). However, the DfE (2013) also highlight that 'schools are free to choose how they organise their school day as long as the national curriculum programmes of study are taught to all pupils'. With that said, teachers are therefore given the flexibility to engage their children in creative and imaginative ways.

At Brooklands Farm, our main aim is that children will leave our school with an independent sense of self within the community and the wider world. As teachers, we hold personalisation at the key of all we do, recognising that each child is strong, powerful and most importantly unique. The belief that the learning journey of each child is distinct has been vital to the process of our school building and developing a curriculum which works for our children. Where our curriculum is sculpted by our local community and the immediate world around us, it helps children to become familiar with their surroundings and helps to give purpose to their learning.

National Curriculum requirements are significant for ensuring every child meets the standard, however our timetables reflect an equally important emphasis on building children's self esteem, confidence and well being. This is important when considering that research shows children with mental health and wellbeing issues are more likely to become disengaged from education (ONS, 2005). With this in mind, aside from the curriculum, our timetables include access to regular learning breaks. Carlson et al (2015) refer to research enforcing that short, physical activity

breaks improve students' behaviour as well as increasing the effort they put into activities and their ability to stay on task.

The effectiveness of our curriculum which factors in personalisation, self-esteem and confidence building can ultimately be measured through the use of our well being scales and learning zones. At Brooklands Farm, our children recognise how their well being can impact on their learning zones, whereby a low wellbeing resembles a low learning zone and thus low achievement. These measures are used by teachers to build relationships and dialogue with children. If children's wellbeing and learning zones are consistently high, we know our curriculum is pitched correctly.

It is clear that the curriculum is key for shaping the learning children are exposed to, however what appears more important is the connection between the teacher and the curriculum. This is where it ensures personalisation and that the needs of the culture, society and expectations of the community can be met (Alsubaie, 2016). Huberman (1983) supports this stating that teachers can and should be trusted to make decisions that are based upon the individual needs of learners in the classroom. Where Sir Ken Robinson's research (2006) notes a lack of creativity in schools, reducing children's confidence, ability to take risks and be creative, it is clear that as teachers, preventing this from happening through a rich and individualised curriculum must be a priority.

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UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

Landmarks and mapping

HANNAH HAGON
PARENT GOVERNOR
VALERIE CRITTEN
EX-IT CO-ORDINATOR & TEACHER, OPEN UNIVERSITY
DAVID MESSER
EMERITUS PROFESSOR, OPEN UNIVERSITY

Part of the EYFS consists of developing children’s understanding of the world through their environment. We believe that promoting children’s understanding of landmarks and simple mapping will not only help the children to understand their environment but engaging with these ideas can provide a basis for teaching maths, especially spatial awareness and orienteering, and help to provide a concept of computational thinking skills such as planning and sequencing.

To navigate around our environment, we rely on landmarks. Consequently, as part of our activities with pre-school children at our Coding Clubs (see Innovate article: January 2020) we asked the children to find landmarks in the pre-schooler’s garden, which included a toy dragon and a fairy garden. After identifying landmarks and finding routes between the landmarks in the garden,

the children were asked to match photographs of the landmarks with clip-art images which could be used as symbols on a map (see Figure 1). The children enjoyed this and were usually able to match the photographs and images

An example of one of the table-top activities was icing biscuits which included the basics of an algorithm in the form of a recipe, but the children were not given the recipe and had to collaborate to work it out (see Figure 1)

Figure 1: The landmarks in the garden are on the left and the clip-art map symbols are on the right.

In the garden, we extended the children's route-finding and orienteering abilities by placing large arrows on the paths and the children were asked to follow the arrows and find which landmarks were on the routes. This was followed by a basic mapping activity in which the children were asked to stick the clip art landmark symbols onto a map of the garden (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Treasure Hunt! The route was marked with arrows to help the children find the treasure (gold chocolate coins).

We created a treasure hunt for the children to motivate them to follow routes on the garden map. From previous work with the children we used a green rectangle as the starting position and an

X to mark where the treasure was hidden. The route was marked with arrows on the paths (see Figure 2). The children were able to identify[MD1] the landmarks and routes on the map in the classroom and were able to finger-walk the routes successfully on the map. However, they found it more difficult to follow the map once they were in the garden and needed some help from the adults to follow the arrows on the map and find the treasure[HH2] . It may have been that the children found it difficult to relate the garden map to the garden in the real world.

The pre-school was really interested in what the children were able to accomplish so they followed up our work by designing a pirate ship in their playground; playground equipment (landmarks) was utilised to make an obstacle course and large arrows were used to mark routes around the playground. The children were able to mark

their own routes with these arrows for the other children to follow. These activities promoted the concept of computational thinking skills by sequencing specific routes via landmarks in which the children themselves planned routes (programming) and followed routes (codes) planned by others. We also used these activities to form one of the first steps in young children's progress to being able to programme a robot.

[MD1]Is this naming the landmarks and tracing the route with a finger – again good to have a bit more detail to make it clear what was done and accomplished.

[HH2]Perhaps put something in about 2d maps and 3d maps and the difficulties children had with correlating/seeing the similarities between the two

Curriculum

Makers of...

AIMEE MILLS

ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER
MONKSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leading a subject as part of a teaching role has been an element of the job for a number of years now - whether it is a core or foundation subject, most teachers lead a designated subject/curriculum element. It may well be an area in which the member of staff has a specialism in or a love for, making the role a lot easier. However, it is often the case that they may not have a lot of experience with the particular subject for which they have been asked to take a lead on and that can be a challenge. Leading a subject carries a lot of responsibility as there are several focuses and questions, which need to be addressed to ensure that the subject is being taught, assessed, progressed, differentiated and challenged in the right way. Although teachers aim to lead their given subject to the best of their ability, it can be tricky given the elements needed in a subject; they may not have a lot of expert knowledge needed to be able to progress in their role for the WHOLE school, not just their class or year group.

The new Ofsted inspection framework (released in May of this year) sets out the ways in which Ofsted will now be looking at a variety of different areas – including

subject leadership in schools. There has been a particular focus on the intent, implementation and impact of each subject. With this new document being released, a number of schools have jumped on these '3 I's' and have spent a lot of time rearranging the details of their subject under these three headings to make it as clear as possible for both staff and Ofsted inspectors. However, it can be easy to overcomplicate things and focus too much on these three elements as being completely separate, when they should be used to present your subject as a whole. These strands can help a subject lead really think in more depth about their subject, allowing them to have a better understanding of WHY the school has chosen to teach to what they teach in each subject, HOW we might assess the subject, HOW we allow for all abilities to access that subject, what the PROGRESSION across year groups looks like and HOW the specific subject skills are being covered by the end of each key stage.

The 'intent' strand states that inspectors will be making judgements on the quality of education by evaluating the extent to which school leaders construct a school curriculum which is 'ambitious' and designed to give

all learners (especially those who may be seen as disadvantaged in any way) the knowledge and 'cultural capital' needed to succeed in life. The content of the subject and the reasons behind why we teach what we teach when is vital. Thinking about this strand allows us to go back to the drawing board and make decisions as to why year 2 might be looking at the Great Fire of London in history or why year 3 might look at a particular continent in geography.

“Thinking about the 'intent' for your subject gives you the chance to look back at what those vital national curriculum subject skills are...”

It is an opportunity to not only re-find those cross-curricular links, but to also think about a possible order of areas taught across a whole school journey (most easily achieved in areas such as history through choosing content which covers a chronological order through primary school year groups). Thinking about the 'intent' for your subject gives you the chance to look back at what those vital national curriculum subject skills are and what we want our KS1 and then our KS2 children to be achieving in their subjects (such as the basic skills of collecting and analysing data through fieldwork and interpreting maps in geography). What do we want the progression in expectations for these skills to look like by the end of each key stage?

The 'implementation' strand is concerned about how teachers can ensure that they have a good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching and how leaders can support teachers when focusing on subjects outside of their expertise, allowing them to feel confident enough to adapt teaching and directions of discussions when necessary. The careful sequenced planning and arranging of subject content (set out through the organised and carefully thought out 'intent' of the subject) means that the curriculum can be designed to allow learners to remember their learnt content, makes links and to then

add new knowledge easier as the years go on. Again, if you have a strong and clear intent, it can allow for resources and appropriate useful assessments to be selected and used to reflect the 'coherently planned curriculum' and not just be included for the sake of it.

This process allows subject leads to really have a good grasp and understanding of their subject and therefore add to a balanced and exciting curriculum...

Through a solid intent and an ideal implementation (set out both by subject leads and other relevant leaders at school), the desired 'impact' of each subject can be set out. All schools want their learners to develop knowledge and skills across their subjects and to achieve well. For this strand, Ofsted also points out the importance of how this knowledge and achievements can later on reflect in

national test results and further qualifications needed for learners to move onto their next stage of education or employment. Knowing exactly what you want for your learners at the end of their learning journey feeds directly back into the origin of your intent and implementation – they all work together to create an ideal curriculum.

If subject leads have been given the time and guidance needed to take a step back and reassess their subject thinking about the '3 I's', it can lead to a more succinct and successful curriculum. If they can ensure a suitable intent has been devised (allowing for an obvious progression of areas and skills over the years and a clear vision and reasoning behind why certain content is being taught in certain year groups), ideas and advice on suitable implementation (allowing for all teachers to feel confident enough to know why and how to teach the subject, including an ability to differentiate and challenge to allow all learners to be included), then subject leads can then see a positive and wanted impact for all pupils and staff involved. This process allows subject leads to really have a good grasp and understanding of their subject and therefore add to a balanced and exciting curriculum allowing all of our pupils to become successful lifelong learners.

Monkston Primary

Where is RE going?

HUW HUMPHREYS

CO-AUTHOR OF THE 2017 MILTON KEYNES AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RE

RE IS AT A CROSSROADS AT THE MOMENT. IT IS A STATUTORY SUBJECT (BUT NOT ALWAYS TAUGHT MUCH!) WHOSE CURRICULUM IS SET BY LOCAL BODIES CALLED SACRES WHO REVIEW/RE-PUBLISH THEIR LOCALLY AGREED SYLLABUS EVERY 5 YEARS. THE LAST ONE IN MILTON KEYNES WAS PUBLISHED IN 2017. WHEREAS PREVIOUS ONES WERE DIVIDED INTO "LEARNING ABOUT RELIGION" AND "LEARNING FROM RELIGION," THE 2017 ONE ASKED TEACHERS TO LOOK AT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BELIEVING, BELONGING AND BEHAVING.

The whole syllabus is based on the links between what a believer (and we included scope for humanist perspectives in this) believes and how she lives (behaving) and worships (belonging). This opens up some interesting teaching, but it may be the last Locally Agreed Syllabus we see, because....

Last year the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) published its final report. It is a well-researched document and contains a number of headline recommendations: a change of title for the subject (to "religion and worldviews"); a statutory National Entitlement for all young people to be taught high-quality RE to age 16; a change to CPD and ITE to enable that; non-statutory national Programmes of

Study for RE to be developed; local SACREs converted to "local advisory networks"; Ofsted to report in whether schools meet the National Entitlement; and a review of the right of parents to withdraw children from RE.

A conference in June 2019 explored the report's implications, and I came away from it with four thoughts that might really help me make sense of this in the RE classroom.

Firstly, comparative approaches to a theme across world religions is a total waste of time. The idea that we look at clothing, or food, or the use of water, etc. across 6 major faiths (or even 3!) should be discontinued, because it avoids the deeper understanding of faith that my children have a right to.

Secondly, religious texts and how we interpret them ("hermeneutics") are really important, and especially if I can help young people see the link between those texts, the narrative they relate, religious practice, the way believers live their lives, etc. Going to the texts and finding interesting ways of exploring them is a key requirement of me as an RE teacher. The Understanding Christianity resource is a good example of how to teach this way, and similar resources are in the pipeline for other faiths. There are some other ideas in this blog.

If you like academic papers, see Farad Panjwani's paper here about interpreting texts in Islam.

Thirdly, the experience of believers from different faiths, and their agency. There are lots of good YouTube resources of adults and young people talking about how they respond to and challenge the ideas in their own faith (see Naval al Saadawi's talk about being a Muslim feminist). Believers don't just believe inertly, but see their life as a work in progress. They interact as an agent with the texts and wisdom of their own faith and that of others to gain understanding and live better. I explore that interaction to help pupils understand how religious life "works."

Fourthly, religions are not monolithic. They are not even in "camps" – very few believers think the same as other believers, even within fairly strict sects of their faith. So when I teach, I need to be aware of those differences, and what they mean for the way that my pupils regard people of faith. Not all Christians think the same (we debate constantly!), and nor do all Hindus, and in both religions, practice varies widely.

If you teach RE, try these things out and let's get children and adults thinking more deeply about the world they live in!

Social Media & MENTAL HEALTH

KIRSTY WASTELL

LEARNING CO-ORDINATOR, OAKGROVE SCHOOL

The rise of social media has meant that we are more connected than we have ever been. Social media is seen as a great way to connect with friends and family. A recent government survey of over 3,000 pupils aged between 6 and 19 years showed that “following friends’ updates” was the main reason 27% of respondents used social media. There is an idea now growing that social media helps to maintain relationships between young people and allows them to be more open and honest along with feeling less lonely. In addition to keeping in touch with existing friends, social media has also been highlighted as a way to make new friends, particularly with people who have shared interests and experiences. According to the Anti-bullying Alliance, building these types of connections can be particularly important when a young person is “experiencing social difficulties or isolation in their daily lives”. Whilst our students use of social media can be seen as a positive thing, their reliance on it can have a detrimental effect on their mental health, with the average person in Britain (adults included!) checking their phone as much as 28 times a day. Using social media platforms this frequently can make you feel increasingly unhappy and isolated in the long run. The constant posts of perfectly filtered photos that appear on Instagram are bound to knock many people’s self-esteem, while obsessively checking your Facebook feed just before bed could be contributing towards poor quality of sleep. Here are three ways that social media could be negatively affecting yours and our student’s mental health without us even realising: when only phone calls and certain apps are available for use. Android is currently developing something similar for their devices.

SELF-ESTEEM

We all have our fair share of insecurities, some that we speak about openly and others that we prefer to keep to ourselves. However, comparing yourself to others on social media by stalking their aesthetically perfect Instagram photos or staying up to date with their relationship status on

Facebook could do little to reassure your feelings of self-doubt. The reality is that a lot of what is posted on Social Media is not actually the reality. Becoming more aware of the amount of time you spend scrolling through other people’s online profiles could help you concentrate more on yourself and boost your self-esteem. For our students, this is easier said than done. Social media can cause young people to feel left out or like they are missing out on events their ‘online friends’ are going to. This can increase feelings of loneliness and anxiousness. Another factor that massively impacts self-esteem is Cyberbullying. A recent study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology, found that one in five children aged 11 to 19 had experienced cyberbullying in the past year (21.2%). Girls were more likely than boys to have been cyberbullied. The reasons for Cyberbullying do vary but for our students it is very easy to hide their identities which can really increase the worry and anxiety of the victim. Another factor is that people who cyberbully often do not see the reaction of those experiencing it so it can sometimes be harder for them to see and understand the impact of their actions. This sometimes leads to disinhibition and a tendency to post more extreme and hurtful comments.

MEMORY

Social media can be great for looking back on memories and reliving the past. However, it can also twist the way in which you remember certain events from your life. Many of us, as well as our students are guilty of spending far too much time trying to take the perfect photo. Whilst doing this however, we are not actually captivating the first-hand experience of seeing it with our own eyes. Spending too much time on our phones will lessen other parts of the experience, damaging the happiness we could be gaining from them.

SLEEP

We all know how important sleep is! But can we say we regularly get enough of it?! One reason we may not get enough sleep is the use of our

SO WHAT CAN WE DO TO SUPPORT BOTH OURSELVES AND OUR STUDENTS? HERE ARE SOME TOP TIPS:

- Introduce a strict rule of not going on your phone for at least 40 minutes to an hour before going to bed, could be something for you or our students to try!
- Have social media free time at a certain point each day
- Instead of following people who have a negative impact on you, follow inspirational people
- Have a follower clear up on a regular basis. Reducing the amount of people you follow or are friends with will help with the amount you see on your timeline and lessen the anxious feelings or pressure to post your amazing life to everyone!
- Be in the moment! Don’t feel you have to get the perfect picture to remember an event, be in the moment and it will stay with you just as long as a picture!
- If you see or witness any negativity online, report it and block straight away
- Stop comparing yourself to others online, no one is perfect!
- If you have any concerns about students you teach, inform your DSL/ Learning Coordinator straight away.

phones before we go to bed, making it harder to doze off. According to some doctors, getting worked up or feeling envious from what we see on social media keeps the brain on high alert, ultimately stopping us from falling asleep. The blue light from our devices just inches from our face can also suppress the release of the hormone melatonin which is the hormone that makes us feel tired. Students who use social media at night are three times more likely to feel tired at school which explains a lot!

MENTAL HEALTH AND WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP IT:

When used excessively and without restraint, social media has been proven to cause unhappiness, as well as lead to the development of mental health issues such as anxiety or depression. The NHS’s 2018 Digital survey of the Mental health of children and young people in England, found that 11-19 year olds with a mental health condition were more likely to use social media every day (87.3%) than those without a disorder (77%). They were also more likely to be on social media for longer.

SOURCES:

- www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/social-media-mental-health-negative-effects-depression-anxiety-addiction-memory-a8307196.html
- <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmsctech/822/822.pdf>



Educating Northants

Educating Northants is a grass roots movement designed to flip the narrative about education in our county. Instead of accepting bad news stories about a broken local authority and major underfunding compared with other similar counties nationally, we wanted to speak up about the things we were proud of.

So a small team of local school leaders came together to plan an ambitious event. The event was to be an education conference that would attract some of the biggest names in education while at the same time providing a platform for local teachers and educators, many who had never presented their work or spoken at a national conference before.

On a day of national uncertainty about whether we would 'Brexiteer' or not, we were very clear about what we wanted to achieve as 600 delegates gathered on Saturday 30th March at the University of Northampton's Waterside Campus, to be part of this incredible experience. The event brought together local educators from all phases and backgrounds including nurseries, pupil referral units, special schools, primary and secondaries; from Early years Foundation Stage right through to Further Education. We were non-partisan and non-political and our strapline for the day's event was **#everyoneswelcome**.

Following the success of the conference, it was unclear what would happen next but we were determined that Educating Northants would continue to be developed by those local voices who had made the conference so special. We wanted it to be the 'glue' between all the education providers in the county, providing collaborative professional development and promoting Northamptonshire as a great place to teach.

That mission is still very much alive. Nine months on from the conference and the Educating Northants movement continues to flourish. A programme of NEDTalks - twilight CPD, free to all local educators - has begun in earnest.

The talks run all year, hosted at different local schools, and focus on different themes each time. The next NEDTalk will take place on January 31st 2020 at Kettering Buccleuch Academy and will focus on teaching and learning.

We also have a team of educators working on an Educating Northants journal. The aim is to provide a window into local schools, with the spotlight firmly on practitioner research and collaboration. Through the quarterly publication of the journal, we will continue to focus on the professionalism and outstanding practice of teachers and school leaders who insist on using their own agency to look outward and share best practice.

There are other plans in the pipeline too: the creation of an Educating Northants directory which will help to facilitate visits and school-to-school projects; a termly newsletter to capture the brilliant work of our local schools; a strong social media presence so we continue to attract national attention as a hub of professional learning; links to other local events like ResearchEd Northants and BrewEd Northampton. The list goes on as new ideas emerge and local people continue to volunteer their time for this brilliant cause.

So have we achieved our aim? We have certainly begun to. We set the agenda, brought people together and hopefully changed the narrative about education in our county. In many ways, what happens next is the most exciting bit because it is uncharted territory. Everything is possible!

If you are interested in getting involved, please get in touch or come and talk to any one of us at the NEDTalk in January.

ESTHER GRAY
ESTHER@WATERMANLEARNING.CO.UK
WWW.EDUCATINGNORTHANTS.CO.UK

Celebrating innovation & best practice

**Educating
Northants**
WORKING
WITH... **innovate**

Feature as a published writer in a Educating Northants journal (special edition of **innovate journal**). Be a part of Northamptonshire's teaching community who share and develop their teaching practice together.

What is your **celebration** of
best practice and **innovation**?

Write a short feature supported by reading from blogs, articles or even Twitter!

Deadline for all entries is...

3rd February 2020

E: educatingnorthants@gmail.com

An intercultural 'Nature of Science' in science classes?

HAIRA GANDOLFI

RESEARCHER, UCL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

JOE FREEMAN

HEAD OF SCIENCE, CANONS HIGH SCHOOL

As a Chemistry teacher in Brazil, I was always interested in doing something else in my classes, especially to try and “run away” from the obvious. But as full-time teachers with heavy workloads, is it possible for us to go beyond what is written in the curriculum? Can we innovate in our science classes to make them as rich as the actual scientific practices? Can we enrich our regular curriculum and have complex and in-depth conversations about how science works with our students without losing sight of the expected content and traditional exams?

Life took me away from my school in Brazil and brought me to UCL to work as an educational researcher, but I have never lost the interest in understanding how we teachers can make our own curricula. And that is how I met Joe, a Science teacher and Head of Science at Canons High School, in Harrow. Joe accepted to join me in this curricular endeavour and we have worked together on an attempt to enrich his year 8 science classes with conversations about how science works – or “Nature of Science”.

Most science teachers will certainly know about the “how science works” or “working scientifically” parts of the national curriculum here in England: in theory, they involve “understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science for each year group” and

they “should not be taught as a separate strand” (DfE, 2014, p. 169), they should be embedded in the teaching of the regular scientific content. But most science teachers will also agree with Joe when reflecting about actually doing that:

“When I started teaching seven years ago ‘how science works’ was such a forced thing upon us. [...] As a trainee I was just like wanting to crack up how to deliver content and manage behaviour, and that was it. [...] I read a lot about science around the world, but I didn’t know how that could come to this curriculum.”



But more than realising how to bring Nature of Science to his own practice, something that in theory is already part of the national curriculum, Joe and I decided to be a little more radical and make his KS3 science curriculum an “intercultural” one. Inspired by the recent movements around “decolonising the curriculum”, we opted to talk about how science works in these KS3 through an intercultural perspective of scientific work: one that looks at science as a global enterprise and at scientific knowledge as the result of exchanges, collaborations and circulation of knowledge, instruments and resources among different communities around the world. That would enable Joe not only to bring interesting aspects related to

how science works to his lessons, but also to explore multicultural examples of scientific work with his (very) multicultural group of students.

Joe then became not simply a teacher who was implementing what the national curriculum was saying with its “working scientifically” section, but he was creating his own approach to it and actually going beyond a narrow view of “how science works” to also use his group’s cultural diversity in his favour when planning his lessons. Under this perspective, we worked together on a collaboration to create four different teaching and learning plans (TLPs) about topics from the KS3 scheme of work adopted at Canons High School: Medicines, Magnetism, Evolution and Earth’s Resources.

This partnership between myself as a researcher and Joe as the one in charge of teaching these TLPs was established through a constant work that lasted for more than only one topic from the curriculum. It involved weekly meetings for planning and reflecting about the experience of creating these resources and teaching them, following “design-based principles”. These principles aim at promoting innovation in school practices through cycles of “planning” a resource, “implementing” and “evaluating” it before another cycle (for another resource) is carried out. This approach then allows for constant enactment and reflection about the innovative experience and for these reflections to inform the work in the next round: lessons learned in the teaching of the Medicines TLP were very relevant for our planning of the Magnetism TLP, for instance.

Innovating and making our own curriculum can be deeply satisfying for us teachers, as stated by Joe at the end of this project: “In the end I felt absolutely fine, not out of my comfort zone at all. And I felt that these resources and working on them provided me with a platform that benefited me a lot as a teacher”. But the success of this kind of experience relies, among other things, on being able to try out new ideas on a medium or long-term basis: carrying out different cycles of innovation, instead of only one, is key for teachers’ professional learning via curriculum-development. Therefore, planning, enacting and reflecting about a new teaching resource should be part of a constant innovative movement, informing the teacher’s subsequent actions and decisions, and not

be considered as a one-off experience and forgotten after the new resource is taught.

In addition, a point that we cannot forget as teachers is that we are not alone: reflection about a new strategy we are trying out should not be done in isolation. Being in the form of a community of practice (e.g. teachers’ networks) or of a partnership with other communities (e.g. academics and universities, like Joe and I did), reflection about our practice is more effective when done collectively through sharing of suggestions and experiences. That should not be only “how science works”, but also “how teachers work”.

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New School Curriculum a gamble for Wales?

CHARLOTTE JUKES

MASTERS IN EDUCATION STUDENTS, OPEN UNIVERSITY

The year 2019 brought the unveiling of the first draft of Wales' new national curriculum. Learning is based on four core purposes (fig. 1) which underpin a controversial departure from an education system that was developed in a world before global and technological changes that impact the way we live today. Replacing traditional subjects, six Areas of Learning and Experience promises knowledge and skills rather than prescribed content. This move in the curriculum will empower schools in mapping out a personalised, deliverable curriculum that fits the needs of both their pupils and the local community – a chance to put teachers' professional learning and skills to the test.

Do schools have the ability to design a curriculum that fits the needs of their learners? This will depend upon teacher knowledge, confidence, time and skill as well as budgets and management. Sherrington (2017) points out, "there is a fine line between being given autonomy or being left to sink or swim" and with no guidance, education could certainly sink. An open-ended curriculum while being full of possibility, runs the risk of falling at the first hurdle. Knowledge is the foundation of skills and creativity so without the "nuts and bolts" of basic speaking, reading and writing, some pupils, particularly those with little family support, are in danger of missing out (ADEW, 2019).

In preparing learners to thrive in the changing world of the 21st Century, we need to re-think our re-thought education system. When France dissolved their curriculum in favour of locally developed skills-based pedagogy, statistics showed a sharp decline in attainment, particularly in children from low income backgrounds (Hirsch, 2016). The Welsh

Government aims to reduce the impact of deprivation on young learners, but the long-term impact for children with weak language skills is poor and unless the new curriculum addresses the lack of powerful knowledge included, the poverty gap may widen. Schools can improve outcomes through robust exposure to language alongside well-planned inquiry-based provision. Snow (2016) agrees that knowledge of words underpins all education and learning, not only in language-based subjects but in the sciences and mathematics. If we want to raise children's attainment, the role of talk in the classroom should be prominent in the curriculum.

Classrooms that are rich with dialogic talk and engaging story will inspire children to become natural linguists. Knowledge is developed through the creation and sharing of experiences with members of communities, in spoken and written language (Mercer and Howe, 2012). Talk-based, collaborative learning with an emphasis on higher-order questioning, and ongoing assessment based on communication between learner and teacher creates a culture of learning that will enable children to develop skills, knowledge and language.

Building a curriculum fit for the 21st Century is an opportunity to move Wales into the future, though it is clear that we need to consider the importance of both knowledge and skills. A well-balanced curriculum that not only develops critical thinking and collaboration, but teaches learners how to communicate with others in an ever-changing world will enable our children to recognise their capabilities and lead the flourishing lives they deserve.

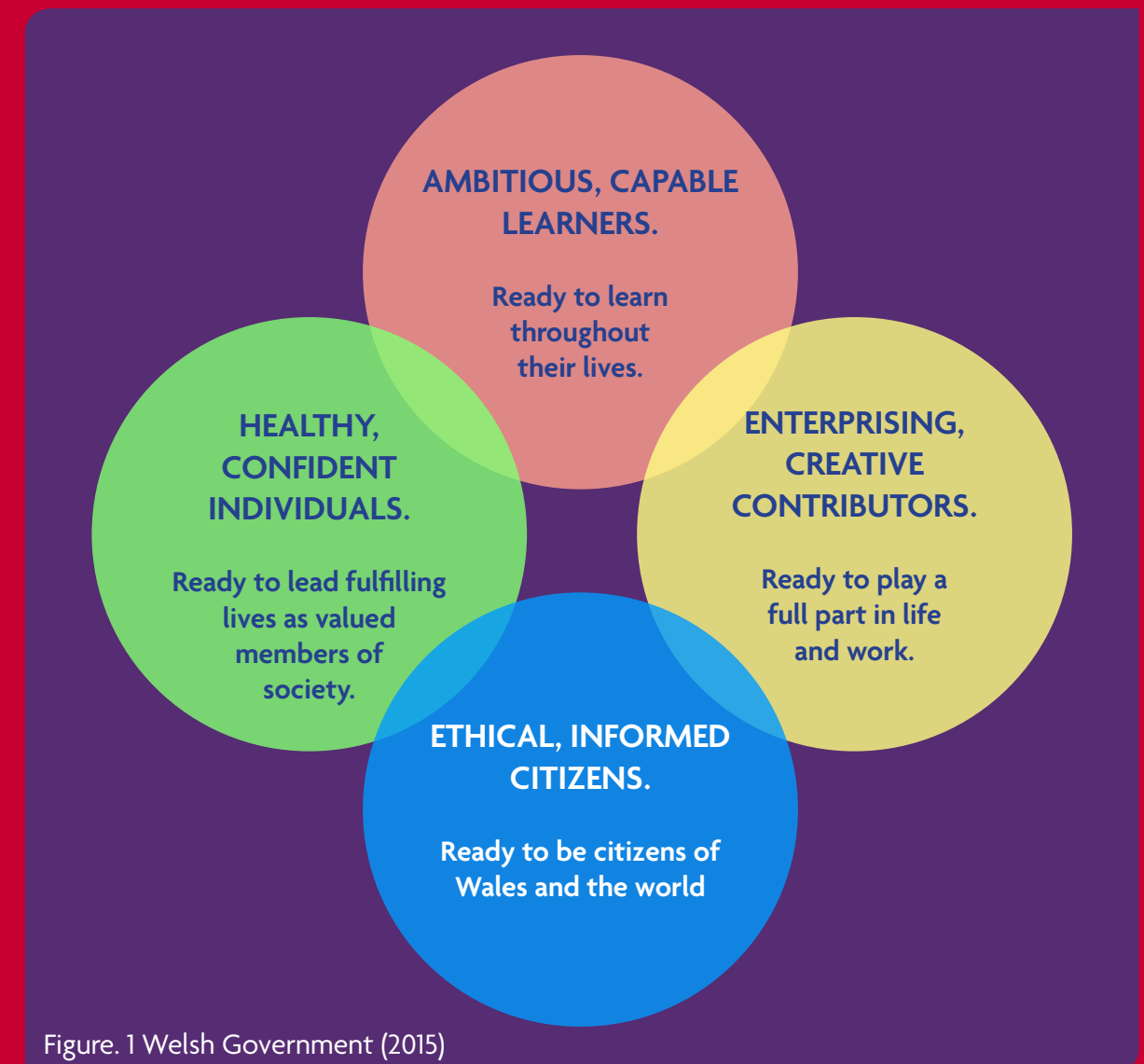


Figure. 1 Welsh Government (2015)

What works?

Teacher Action Research works.

MARK QUINN

BESPOKE PROGRAMMES LEADER
UCL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

“I think the thing that attracted me to TARP was the fact that actually what we are doing is looking at something that is a lot more research-based... it's much more useful to be thinking about what does make a difference in the classroom; how does one implement it; how does one disseminate it and how does one go through the process of being more professionally engaged with the science and craft of teaching.”

WHAT WAS THE TEACHER ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT?

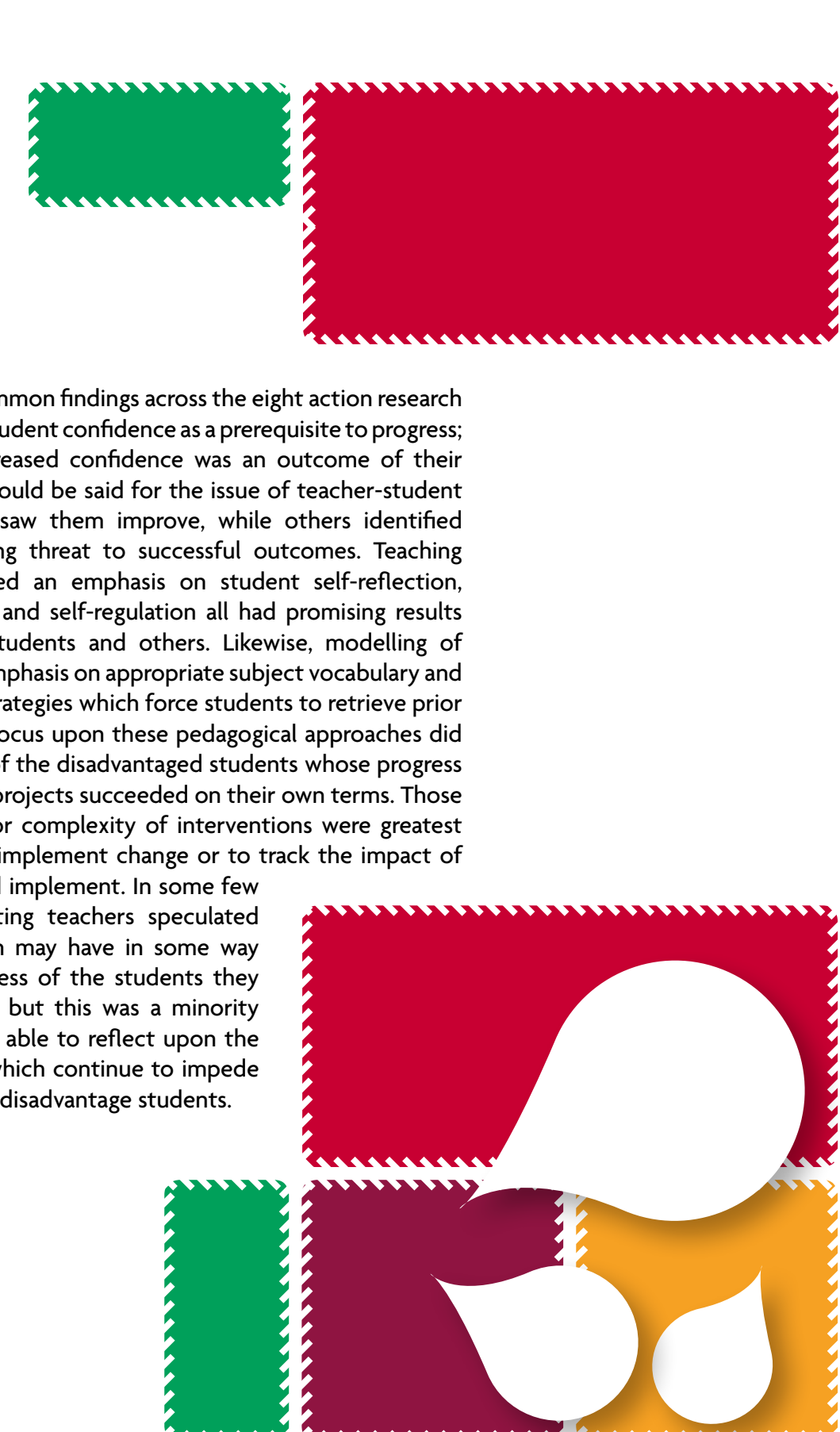
Between October 2018 and June 2019 I delivered a Teacher Action Research Project – TARP – to a group of 8 secondary school teachers from across England, meeting on three occasions at UCL Institute of Education (IOE), where I work. The project was funded by UCL Widening Access and Participation, whose remit is to increase the uptake of places at leading universities by students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The teachers chose themes and interventions that they judged likely to make a substantial difference to their own students: some focused on aspects of their classroom practice that they wished to adapt; others conducted their action research on an element of their wider school responsibility. The only stipulation was that they must concentrate on outcomes for their disadvantaged students.



SUMMARY OF THE INTERVENTIONS AND OUTCOMES

Three were interested in the process of student learning; they were keen to increase their students' awareness of how they learn, and to see the extent to which this would contribute to their academic progress. These projects may be labelled metacognitive strategies. The self-regulation of learners was a feature across several other projects. One hypothesised that, to address the demands of new linear exams at A level, teachers needed to address the metacognitive skills of their students and could best achieve this through explicit modelling of written responses; two English teachers conducted projects which focused on boosting subject-specific vocabulary in Key Stage 4. These three enquiries can be loosely grouped as language and literacy. One teacher, whose whole-school role embraces Careers Education, was interested in the link between students' self-efficacy and realistic career choices; the project of the final practitioner-researcher saw her department take a range of new evidence-informed approaches to teaching Geography at Key Stage 3. These last two come under the very broad heading curriculum development but, like the rest, are complex interventions concerned largely with students' self-regulation.



There were many common findings across the eight action research projects. Many saw student confidence as a prerequisite to progress; others saw that increased confidence was an outcome of their projects. The same could be said for the issue of teacher-student relationships: some saw them improve, while others identified them as a continuing threat to successful outcomes. Teaching strategies that placed an emphasis on student self-reflection, their metacognition and self-regulation all had promising results for disadvantaged students and others. Likewise, modelling of exemplar answers, emphasis on appropriate subject vocabulary and the embedding of strategies which force students to retrieve prior knowledge: greater focus upon these pedagogical approaches did bear fruit for many of the disadvantaged students whose progress was tracked. Not all projects succeeded on their own terms. Those where the number or complexity of interventions were greatest found it difficult to implement change or to track the impact of the changes they did implement. In some few cases, the participating teachers speculated that their innovation may have in some way hampered the progress of the students they were trying to help, but this was a minority finding. Others were able to reflect upon the extraneous factors which continue to impede the progress of their disadvantage students.

EVIDENCE-INFORMED

PRACTICE:

THE

IMPORTANCE

OF

PROFESSIONAL

JUDGEMENT

JAMES MANNION
DIRECTOR, RETHINKING EDUCATION

The late, great Ted Wragg once calculated that a teacher typically makes upwards of a thousand ‘on-the-spot, evaluative decisions’ on any given day (MacBeath, 2012). When I first came across this, I thought: ‘That sounds like a lot... you’d be exhausted!’ However, when you consider how busy a school is – how busy a classroom is – and how many instances might trigger a response from a teacher in the course of a day, it soon starts to look like a reasonable figure.

If you accept this to be true, a number of questions arise. First – what are all these decisions? What factors influence the decisions that teachers make when planning and teaching lessons? How many of these decisions are made consciously and how many are predetermined by past experience, habits or beliefs? To what extent are these decisions informed by research evidence? Perhaps most importantly, can we get better at making these decisions and, if so, how?

Here we arrive at a methodological question – how can we know when we are making better decisions? – and this is where practitioner research enters the fray. To be clear, by ‘practitioner research’ I mean a systematic process of reflection on our practice, trying out new ideas and evaluating the impact of what we do. In seeking to get even better at what we do – professional development in a nutshell – we first need to get a handle on how effective different aspects of our practice are. The question is: in the absence of some form of systematic research inquiry, how can we know which practices, habits and routines are the most useful – and which might most usefully be jettisoned?

‘WHAT WORKS’ VERSUS THE BANANARAMA EFFECT

Readers may be aware that the Chartered College of Teaching recently secured access to paywalled journal articles for its members. This is a welcome development. However, if the teaching profession is to become more evidence-informed, looking to the literature to determine ‘what works’ is only part of the solution; it may be helpful, but it is by no means sufficient. Here’s why:

In recent years there have been a number of publications seeking to tell us ‘what works’ in education e.g. (Marzano, 2003); (Petty, 2006); (Hattie, 2008); (Lemov, 2010); (Higgins et al., 2013); for example, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) tells us that ‘feedback’ is the most effective thing schools can do, providing ‘high impact for low cost’.

If this sounds too good to be true, that’s because it is. Guides to ‘what works’ can only point us towards what works on average; for any given area of practice, there is always huge variation in terms of efficacy, ranging from the highly effective to the highly counterproductive. For example, in one study – a meta-analysis of 607 feedback interventions (FIs) – in 38% of cases, the FI actually decreased student performance (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996); see Figure 1.

It is worth restating this point, because it is really quite mindblowing: in more than 230 of the cases studied, the FI – a practice that supposedly gives ‘high impact

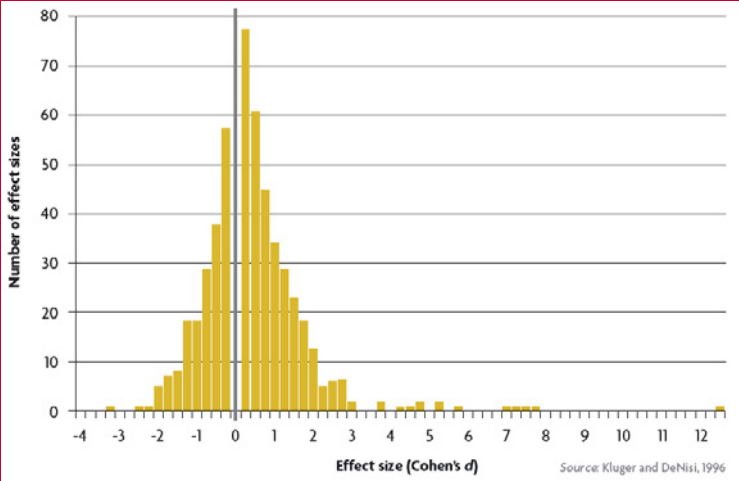


Figure 1: Feedback Interventions: distribution of effect sizes

for low cost’ – actually made things worse than if the schools had just done business as usual. A recent EEF study of effective feedback also reported ‘wide variation’ in practice because ‘teachers struggled to understand and use evidence on effective feedback consistently across all schools’ (Gorard et al., 2014).

Imagine if a school leader said to their colleagues, ‘We’re all going to do a new thing but there’s a one in three chance that we’ll be making things worse’; they would be unlikely to garner much support for their new initiative. However, in the absence of a systematic

impact evaluation of any shiny new initiative (or existing area of practice), this is precisely what school leaders are saying – even if they don’t realise it. What’s worse, they can’t possibly know where on the bell curve their school sits in relation to any given area of practice.

Steve Higgins (2013) refers to this phenomenon of wide variation as ‘the Bananarama effect’: it ain’t what you do, it’s the way that you do it – and that’s what gets results. The question is: in the absence of some form of systematic research inquiry, how can schools know whether ‘what they do’ is helping improve student outcomes, having zero impact or making things worse?

CASE STUDY
WHAT DOES PRACTITIONER RESEARCH LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

People often think of practitioner research as a huge undertaking – something resulting in a 20,000-word Masters dissertation that only a handful of people will ever read. If we are to become a more evidence-informed profession, we need to embrace the idea of small-scale practitioner research inquiry.

In recent years, I have spent a lot of time exploring the question ‘what is the minimum viable model for a research cycle?’ The surprising answer is that you can do a meaningful piece of inquiry within an hour, easily. In fact, teachers already do this kind of ‘what’ inquiry pretty well. What is the relative attainment of boys and girls in Year 10 physics? Search the existing data – done. What do Year 11 pupil premium boys say about revision? Write a short survey and ask a sample of them to fill it out – done.

There are longer ‘how’ pieces that might take a half-term, say. How can we increase attendance at parents’ evening? Collect some baseline data, perhaps conduct a telephone survey, devise a strategy, implement it, take a post-intervention measure – done. And then there are longer pieces still. How can we maintain the momentum of learning and development across the

“... you can do a meaningful piece of inquiry within an hour, easily.”

transition from Year 6 to Year 7? Arrange reciprocal school visits for teachers of Years 6 and 7, observe some lessons, take samples of pupils’ work, devise some training for teachers to enhance consistency of provision, monitor and evaluate the impact and compare it with previous cohorts – done.

At the start of each inquiry cycle, we review the literature briefly, and at the end of each cycle we ask: how impactful is this area of practice? Should we tweak it, scale it up or discard it altogether? Through this simple methodology – read stuff, try stuff, measure stuff – we bootstrap our way to a better-informed, more surefooted future.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
Context matters – when considering findings from the research literature, think about the context of your school and use your professional judgement.

Embrace the idea of small-scale practitioner research. You can conduct a meaningful study in a short amount of time.

Follow this simple process: reflect on your practice, try out new ideas and evaluate the impact of what you do.scope and disclaimer with regard to claims.

THE ONE YOUNG WORLD SUMMIT #OYWS19



ZUBAIR JUNJUNIA

FOUNDER OF ZNOTES @ZNOTESREVISION

What happens when you bring together over 2000 young leaders from every country in the world? The One Young World Summit is one of the most inspiring gathering of youth from all over the globe who have collectively made a positive impact in the lives of over 20 million people.

At it's 10th anniversary, the summit returned to it's inaugural city of London; the world's melting pot. The summit is catalysed by the global leaders that champion it as counsellors like the 7th Secretary General of the UN Kofi Annan, Nobel Peace Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus and even the Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle.

I was lucky enough to attend this fantastic set of events as part of the Young Leadership Alliance Forum as part of the work and the impact ZNotes has had on over 2.5 million people globally. The forum convened for its annual high-level meeting at the inspiring offices of Amnesty International and brought youth organisations, international institutions and the private sector to promote learning, collaboration and partnerships.

The summit officially commenced on the 22nd with the Opening Ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall. In the gilded building that echoes centuries worth of art, we were welcomed by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan who's closing remarks resonated with the audience which represented the 190 countries of the world:

"That our diversity is our strength, not a weakness, that dialogue can overcome difference and indifference, and that the heights we need to reach can only be scaled by building bridges, not walls."

We were treated to a selection of world performance from the Royal Ballet, pieces from a West-end musical and the flag ceremony where each of the 190 flags were brought to the stage among deafening cheers and applause.

And if the night had not wowed already, the Natural History Museum's door were flung open exclusively to us for a dinner, surrounded by more than 80 million life and earth science specimens.

The rest of the 4 days of the summit were a scheduling exercise as I juggled my university lectures and returned to the Queen Elisabeth II Center to attend talks, workshops and networking round-tables. My highlights included exhibiting ZNotes at the Social Venture Challenge run by the Resolution Project, an opportunity to get on stage at the lightning pitches and the interactive workshop run by UNICEF, bringing to light the major challenges our education system faces.

After literally meeting hundreds of people, it all came to finality at the closing ceremony on Friday, held at the Central Hall Westminster. We were addressed by the amazing founders of the summit, Kate Robertson and David Jones and the roof was blown off as the summit officially declared climate emergency.

After a roller-coaster ride that only went higher, the baton was passed from the London to the Deputy-Mayor of Munich who welcomed the summit for it's next in Munich 2020 #OYWS20

Lifelong learning

The benefits of developing a lifelong learning mindset in students

JANE SHEARD

CAREERS ADVISOR, OAKGROVE SCHOOL

Learning is most commonly associated with formal education in a school, college or university environment with society reinforcing the idea that we should “get a good education”. It’s true to say that formal education culminating in qualifications is important for young people and enables them to maximise their potential to find better, more satisfying jobs with higher earning potential. However, this is only one type of learning and it’s important that young people are aware that there are many other opportunities to further their knowledge and develop the skills they will need throughout life.

Learning is an ongoing process, its unavoidable and happens all the time, however, lifelong learning is about creating and maintaining a positive attitude to learning beyond the school walls for both personal

and professional development. Lifelong learners are motivated to learn and develop themselves because they want to, enhancing their understanding of the world and creating opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Learning for its own sake can:

- Boost confidence and self-esteem
- Improve ability to adapt to change
- Result in a more satisfying personal life
- Challenge entrenched ideas and beliefs
- Be fun!

LEARNING GIVES YOU OPTIONS

Whatever their life path, there are a number of sometimes unanticipated benefits for students in creating a culture of continual personal and professional development. A majority of students will, as adults, rely on succeeding

in employment for their ability to earn a living. The more flexible they can be about their direction the better prepared they will be to adapt to a fast-changing employment market. For example: our economy is shifting increasingly towards short-term and part-time contracts with more flexible work-patterns whilst old industries are disappearing abroad. Once they are participating in the working world students will need to adapt to changes going on in the work-world and make more opportunities for themselves by stepping out of their comfort zones, challenging and adapting their ideas of their working life. Additionally, relying on job permanence for earnings and promotion is not as feasible as it once was and more people of all ages are turning their hobby into a business idea. Being involved in a passion outside of work hours can lead to developing transferable skills and could lead to getting paid for doing what you love.

ways to help build a lifelong learning mindset in students

1

LEARNING OWNERSHIP: Beyond school, students will be expected to learn on their own. When students own their own learning it sticks with them. Highlighting the rewards of taking responsibility for your own learning is also significant – higher self-esteem, pride in achievement and independence.

2

TURN MISTAKES INTO OPPORTUNITIES: Learning from mistakes is one of the best lifelong learning skills students can master. Mistakes show us better ways to think and work and provide opportunities to develop resilience both mentally and emotionally.

3

INTRODUCE NEW LEARNING TOOLS: Blogs, podcasts, debates and discussions sharing knowledge and ideas. Opportunities to experience new ways of learning can help develop a desire to learn and grow.

4

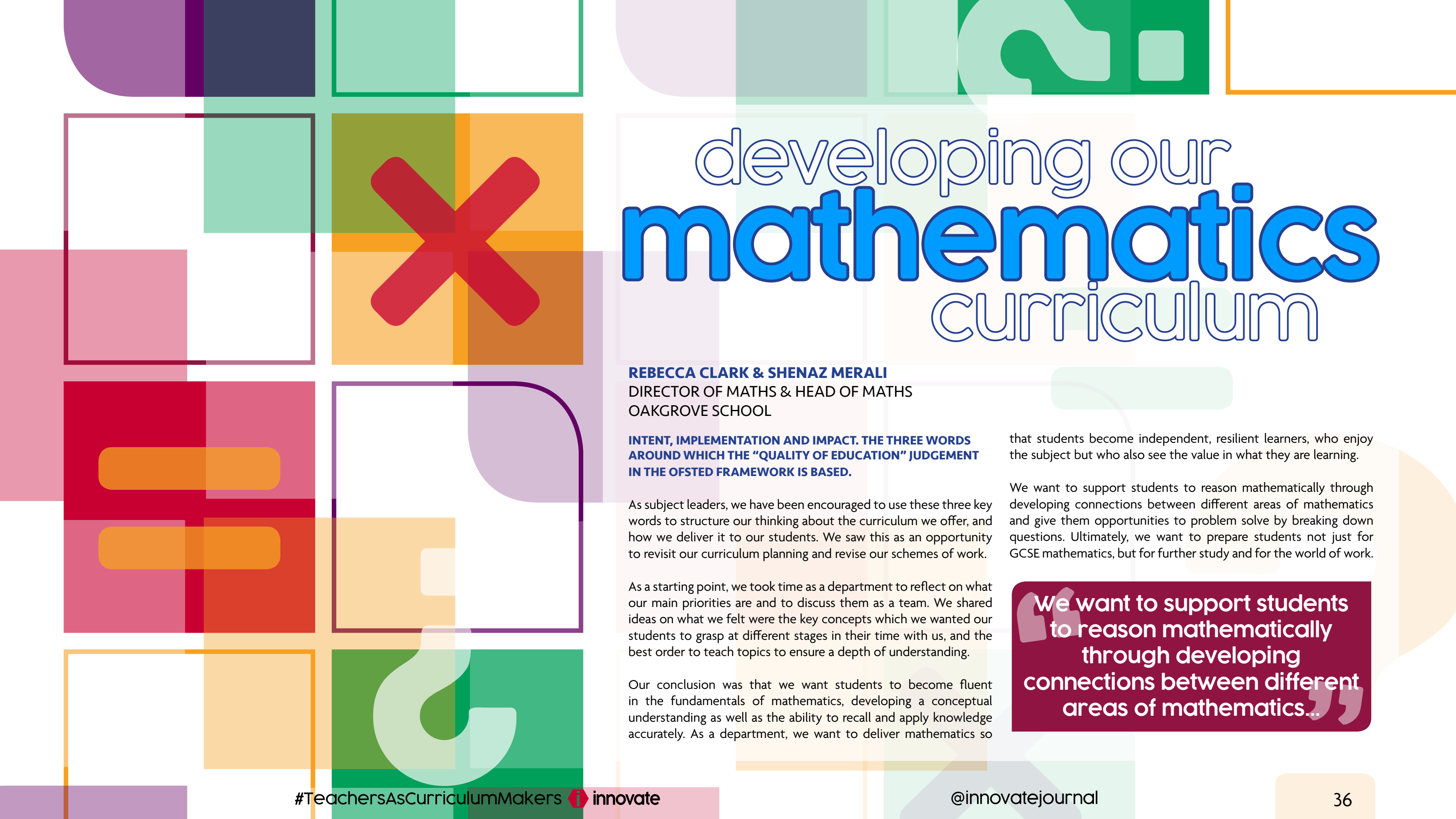
STUDENTS AS TEACHERS: It's widely known that learning retention is maximised when we teach our knowledge to someone else. Students sharing knowledge and assisting their peers are demonstrating learning ownership can be an inspiration to others.

5

THE VALUE OF PLAY: Ensuring learning is fun and enjoyable. Creating opportunities for discovery and personal growth.

6

SETTING LEARNING GOALS: Goal setting is a lifelong learning skill that strengthens the desire to learn.



developing our mathematics curriculum

REBECCA CLARK & SHENAZ MERALI

DIRECTOR OF MATHS & HEAD OF MATHS
OAKGROVE SCHOOL

**INTENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT. THE THREE WORDS
AROUND WHICH THE “QUALITY OF EDUCATION” JUDGEMENT
IN THE OFSTED FRAMEWORK IS BASED.**

As subject leaders, we have been encouraged to use these three key words to structure our thinking about the curriculum we offer, and how we deliver it to our students. We saw this as an opportunity to revisit our curriculum planning and revise our schemes of work.

As a starting point, we took time as a department to reflect on what our main priorities are and to discuss them as a team. We shared ideas on what we felt were the key concepts which we wanted our students to grasp at different stages in their time with us, and the best order to teach topics to ensure a depth of understanding.

Our conclusion was that we want students to become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics, developing a conceptual understanding as well as the ability to recall and apply knowledge accurately. As a department, we want to deliver mathematics so

that students become independent, resilient learners, who enjoy the subject but who also see the value in what they are learning.

We want to support students to reason mathematically through developing connections between different areas of mathematics and give them opportunities to problem solve by breaking down questions. Ultimately, we want to prepare students not just for GCSE mathematics, but for further study and for the world of work.

**We want to support students
to reason mathematically
through developing
connections between different
areas of mathematics...**

Essentially, we had a common view of our “intent” and the next stage was to think about the “implementation”, or how we believed that our aims could be delivered. Again, we spent time as a department discussing this and sharing our thoughts. We asked colleagues to think about what features they might expect to see in a typical Maths lesson and how these features linked to our goals. Discussions were based around sequencing of lessons, problem solving, pitch, pace, expectations, questioning, assessment and modelling.

One of the key features was questioning; which were the best types to use at key points in the lesson. Did we want to ask open questions? Give students time to think and share ideas, thus enabling them to find a way through a problem? Or would it be more appropriate to scaffold questions, allowing students to link different areas of Maths, as well as develop, and check for, depth of understanding? Should we always use ‘hands down’ questioning to allow for targeted questioning?

Of course, there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to teach. We all use our skills as teachers every day to make judgements, on a minute by minute basis, as to the best way to approach topics and, indeed, individual students. But what we began to form, is a shared vision of

“One of the key features was questioning; which were the best types to use at key points in the lesson.”

the features we would expect to see in most lessons. We amended our schemes of work to reflect our discussions, thinking carefully about the ordering of topics that would allow our students the opportunities to make those really important connections.

Moving forward, we will use learning walks, lesson visits, work scrutinies and data to monitor the “impact” for students. We will continue to review and amend our schemes of work. We know it is important to build in time for reflection and discussion at team meetings and hope to continue to build on current successes!

WHAT DOES ALEXA THINK?

EXPLORING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE CURRICULUM

AMY ICKE

ONLINE LEARNING & INNOVATION MANAGER, GDST

contributions from:

RACHEL EVANS, DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL LEARNING & INNOVATION, WIMBLEDON HIGH SCHOOL

MATTHEW LLEWELLIN, HEAD OF DIGITAL LEARNING & INNOVATION, SYDENHAM HIGH SCHOOL

The GDST is a family of 25 independent schools and academies across England and Wales. Our schools are interested in exploring innovative practice with emerging technology and several of them are exploring the possibilities that Artificial Intelligence (AI) may bring to the sector. Two schools who are piloting innovative practice in this area are Wimbledon High School and Sydenham High School. Both schools educate girls between the ages of 3-18, ensuring their students learn without limits. The work of Rachel and Matthew is further explored below.

At Wimbledon High School we are keen to ensure that our students will gain an understanding of the social, moral and ethical issues around the use of AI, and also that our Computer Science curriculum equips them for life in an AI world, following the current thinking which concludes that in the future many jobs will require interaction with AI. A recent Royal Society review of the literature notes that "The first-order effects of AI on work may not only include substituting workers in existing tasks, but also generating new tasks for workers to perform." (1)

This year we will integrate the Machine Learning for Kids activities (2) and the MIT Media Lab AI + Ethics programme (3) into our KS3 Computer Science curriculum. Projects in the pipeline this year and next include working with experts to develop our own shareable scheme of work and resources for this kind of learning, and extra-curricular clubs where girls can programme autonomous social robots and study for Microsoft data science and AI qualifications.

We also strive to introduce conversations around AI ethics into other curriculum areas, most recently our Year 12 'Open Minds' course, a Year 10 study day, and in our Grow 2.0 Festival where we welcomed speakers on the topic of 'Being Human in an AI World'.

At Sydenham High School, a year 7 enrichment programme, exposes students not to AI coding or more specifically AI ethics, but a series of four sessions on the origins and evolution of AI: the Turing test, current online machine-learning experiments, a data-exploitation game and self-driving cars. The intention is not to make them AI experts, but instead give them a well-rounded viewpoint of where AI came from and where it is going. The programme is delivered as part of an enrichment programme - it's always a challenge to lever something in to the time available but it's a starting point.

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Findings from research

Capturing children and young people's views on rights

LIZ CHAMBERLAIN

SENIOR LECTURER IN EDUCATION STUDIES, OU
CO-DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN RESEARCH CENTRE @OpenUni_CRC

In November this year, the Open University's Children's Research Centre launched its latest report Representing children's rights from discussion through to illustration and interpretation. The report presents the findings of research undertaken with Children and Young People (C&YP) across nine project settings in England and Wales to capture their views and understandings about rights, and how books and visual images might represent their rights.

Thirty years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and it was opened for signature on 20th November 1989. Endorsed and ratified by the UNCRC, children's voice has become part of a dominant policy imperative as practitioners, policy makers, institutions and researchers find ways to consider children's experiences (L'Anson and Weston, 2018) which have been marginalised and in many cases silenced (Cooper, 2017; Bennett et al., 2018). The focus on voice is part of a wider dialogue about the capacity, competency and choice children have in when and how they express their views (Bucknall, 2014), how many encounter barriers to sharing their views (Cooper, 2015) as well as the multifaceted nature and complexity of children's rights (Hammersley, 2015; Montgomery, 2018).

The focus on voice is part of a wider dialogue about the capacity, competency and choice children have in when and how they express their views (Bucknall, 2014)

As the Convention reflects on its thirtieth anniversary, this call for debate and discussion on children's rights is timely. In response and a guiding principle for the design of this study was the recognition of rights as something that cannot be precisely categorised or easily granted, but are fluid, complex, and socially constructed. Consequently, this research employed a multimodal research design, utilising focus-group interviews, young researcher projects, role-play and drama, and photo-elicitation as the means to engage with and listen to diverse groups of C&YP. The aim was to use the multimodal activities as a stimulus for conversation and to provide opportunities for the C&YP to contribute to a shared narrative about rights within the context of their own lives.

Over the Autumn and Spring of 2018/19, the Children's Research Centre commenced an initial phase of research with C&YP in England and Wales. Across the nine project settings, the findings illustrate the intertwined relationships across the various articles of the UNCRC (as envisioned by its original authors). The C&YP people in this study understood their rights as active entitlement that changes over time and according to age and context. Their conversations and activities reveal the evolving nature of their understanding of the concepts of rights, even though they may not always recognise their own individual rights as embodied in the UNCRC.

C&YP highlighted a relationship between rights, reflected through their prioritisation of rights; for example, some C&YP prioritised their rights to have friends and to learn over their right to privacy, while others prioritised the right to shelter over the right to education. The research highlights the ongoing debate that rights are context-specific: as one child emphasised, 'What's important to me might be different to what's important to someone else ... to someone who's getting beaten up, safety is the most important thing.' The C&YP liked images that promote friendship and provide positive role models of disability, as well as images that represent them and enable them to identify themselves and their families. They are attracted to and responsive to visual images related to rights that promise change, possibility and potential empowerment, in contrast to their reactions to images of segregation or rights denied. For some of the older C&YP in this research, images of rights not being respected are more powerful.

A key outcome of working in this way is a commitment by the Children's Research Centre for ongoing dialogue and consultation with C&YP, an approach that we will continue to foster through all the organisations we work with.

For the full report:

Chamberlain, L., Afroze, J., Cooper, V. & Collins, T. (2019) Representing children's rights from discussion through to illustration and interpretation, Milton Keynes, The Open University Children's Research Centre.



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Children's understanding of charity

JOANNE JOSEPHIDOU
EARLY CHILDHOOD LECTURER
OPEN UNIVERSITY

Research literature which focuses on how and why people give to charity is often concerned with ways to encourage them to give larger amounts at greater frequency. There seems to be a gap in understanding about how people arrive at these kinds of charitable behaviours. For example, how do children develop a sense of 'fellow feeling' (Roughley and Schramme, 2018)? We know that both schools and the home environment impact on how children develop empathy but at what age does this happen and what do children really understand about charity? Psychology research tells us that children as young as 12 months will comfort their peers who are upset but how does this translate to philanthropic behaviours?

We decided to carry out our own piece of research to add to this gap in knowledge. We adopted a participatory approach, informed by democratic principles, to work with 150 children aged 4 to 8 years old. They were recruited by student research assistants from Canterbury Christ Church University; this university also gave ethical approval for the research. The research assistants devised different methods along with the children to find out what they knew about charitable giving; these methods included games, tours of the high-street, taking photos, drawings etc

Our main finding was even young children had a good understanding of being charitable; they had learnt this from the home, the media and the wider community. However,

adults and educational settings had the potential to stunt this understanding by teaching children that charity was a transaction. For example, children came to learn that charity meant buying a cupcake with Pudsey's face on or donating money for a non-uniform day. An example of this is when one girl (eight years old) said:

"I've done fundraising at school. We sold cakes on the playground at break time and people put money into the pot, but I don't know what charity it was for though..." (Girl, 8) This made us question how adults and educational settings can either 'shut down' or 'open up' spaces for children to think about charitable giving, philanthropy and social justice.

We suggest that it is important how schools and educational settings approach charity initiatives during the school year in order to help children take a more critical approach. For example, children could be encouraged to research the most popular charities and find out why. They may also learn to

question why other charities struggle to attract donations. If young children are led to believe that giving to charity is predominantly a transactional experience then they may not develop more long-term charitable behaviours (Dahl & Brownwell, 2019).

We recognise the great work that educational settings do to engage children with charity initiatives. We argue though for space to discuss this kind of philanthropy at a more critical level in order to support children in developing the dispositions and behaviours that will mean they continue to engage with their communities on social justice issues as they grow in to young adults.

If you would like to download the full report for free it is accessible from:

<https://research.kent.ac.uk/philanthropy/wp-content/uploads/sites/225/2019/03/our-charitable-children-research-report.pdf>

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What do children tell us when they co-research their own experiences of physical activity?

LINDA PLOWRIGHT-PEPPER
PhD RESEARCH STUDENT
OPEN UNIVERSITY & ASSOCIATE CRC

Linda trained as a secondary school physical educational teacher and applied her passion for physical activity in a career in community recreation. During that time, she witnessed the failure of two decades of investment in children's Physical Education, School Sport and associated community sport to improve physical activity levels. In 2018 the UK Chief Medical Officers' reported that only 18% of children met the recommended physical activity levels in England (Public Health England, 2018). Simultaneously through her work with Sports Leaders UK she witnessed the ability of people as young as 9 years old to reflect upon and understand their own and others' physical activity experiences. She believed that a new approach to understanding children's physical activity was needed; an approach which challenged adult-driven public policy discourses about health and educational outcomes. Instead she focused upon how children experienced physical activity. In September 2019 Linda submitted her thesis

reporting her study with nine 7-11 years old co-researchers about their own free-choice physical activities.

In the thirtieth anniversary year of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which highlights the rights of the child to have a voice in matters which affect them (UNCRC, 1989), it was fitting that Linda set out to also challenge the adult-led nature of research into the motivations of children to be active:

- Firstly she adopted the all-inclusive Public Health England (PHE) definition of physical activity as "body movement that expends energy and raises the heart rate" (2014, p.4) to move away from public policy dialogue around participation in organised sport and competition.
- Secondly she adopted James' (2010) perception of children as social agents in their own development and socialisation recognising children shape their own

physically active lifestyles

- Finally, she recognised children's abilities to not only fully participate but to guide research processes.

Over a 12-18 month period, nine, 7-11 years old co-researchers collected over 1,200 photographs and videos, issued 32 invitations to the researcher to observe activities and jointly recorded over 20 hours of discussion about what they liked to do in their free-choice time. Whilst participatory data collection in research with children has developed significantly in recent years, participatory data analysis has had far less attention (Nind, 2011). Linda argued children's participation in data analysis should be at the heart of participatory research and attributed key findings to the co-researchers' guidance. Co-researchers in this study seamlessly migrated from data collection to data analysis, grouping and mind mapping their data and considering not only "what" they liked to do but "why". The results were fascinating.



Existing research into children's physical activity widely highlights fun and enjoyment as a key motivator for participation. However, much less is understood about sources of fun and enjoyment. In this study coresearchers identified the following features underpinning their free-choice physical activity.

- Fun and enjoyment could be found in an eclectic range of activities and coresearchers moved spontaneously and seamlessly between active and inactive pursuits; sport and play etc., without differentiating
- Creativity and imagination drove much physical activity often stimulated by social media and computer games giving rise to humour and high drama
- Enjoyment came from an embodied experience of movement as an aesthetic, kinaesthetic, social and emotional engagement in movement (Whitehead, 1987);
- Being physically active with close family, particularly parents, was a strong source of fun and enjoyment in which humour and teasing underpinned physical activity as a form of psychosocial bonding experience.

Understanding the sources of fun and enjoyment which lay down positive memories of physical activity for later life seems important to motivate lasting active lifestyles (Wellard, 2014). The coresearchers in this study guide us to new insights and interesting avenues for further study for both researchers and practitioners.

If anyone is interested in entering a dialogue on ideas in this article contact linda.plowright@open.ac.uk at the Children's Research Centre.



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one teacher's *writing for pleasure* practice



Writing for Pleasure is a newly formulated pedagogy which is attracting growing interest in primary schools in the UK. It is based on the findings of more than three hundred pieces of scientific research and literature spanning fifty years. These studies clearly show that the most effective writing teaching attends to children's affective experiences, attitudes and feelings of pleasure in writing.

ROSS YOUNG

FOUNDER. THE WRITING FOR PLEASURE CENTRE. NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, UKLA
[@WritingRocks_17](#)

We also know that children who enjoy writing and are motivated to write are eight times more likely to achieve well academically (Clark, 2017). Taken collectively, the studies reveal fourteen principles which constitute the Writing for Pleasure teaching model, all linked to: motivation, agency, volition, self-efficacy, self-regulation, writer-identity and pleasure in writing.

Through The Goldsmiths' Company, we carried out a research project entitled What is it Writing For Pleasure teachers do that makes the difference? Its aim was to investigate the practices of a number of teachers who have responded strongly and positively to the Writing for Pleasure philosophy and its associated pedagogy. The teachers had identified themselves as Writing for Pleasure teachers via an online audit, and were able to provide school data showing accelerated progress and high academic achievement amongst their pupils.

A DESCRIPTION OF ONE TEACHER'S PRACTICE

'I feel like if I never wrote – life would be a bit boring wouldn't it - having loads of thoughts but never being able to show it.'

Mr H teaches a Year 4 class in a large primary school in London. The school has a higher proportion than the

national average of Pupil Premium children, children with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language. His young writers see him as positive, caring and interested in their lives and this undoubtedly contributes to his class' engagement in writing at a high level of achievement.

CREATING A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS; EVERY CHILD A WRITER

'I like to do writing because it's one of my hobbies.'

Mr H creates a strong sense of a purposeful, sociable and sometimes collaborative writing community. Children talk about their writing while it's in progress, seek and give peer support, and know how to share and present their work at the end of the lesson in a constructive way. Writing projects are always meaningful; we observed them writing a memoir of something from their own lives, to be shared and published into the class library for all to read.

Mr H has high achievement expectations for all the children and gives them confidence through teaching strategies which lead to greater independence. He ensures that everyone stays in the community, and is a member himself, talking, writing and sharing alongside the children.

We see his classroom as a really democratic space with the exciting feel of a writers' workshop and the efficiency of a publishing house.

EXPLICITLY TEACHING THE PROCESSES

'There is a day where we do idea generation and we think of loads of ideas and then we pick one we want to write about. It's not really strict that you have to write about that one. You can choose.'

Mr H. gives direct instruction in the different components of the writing process (how to generate an idea, plan/ dabble, draft, revise, edit, publish). He supports children's understanding of these processes through demonstration, discussion, modelling and sharing exemplars which he has written himself. As a result, he has earned their respect and trust as a fellow writer. He shows them that the writing process is not necessarily linear but discursive, and he encourages them over time to develop and use their own process. The writing posters they produce collaboratively are always on display for reference.

PURPOSEFUL & AUTHENTIC CLASS WRITING PROJECTS

Class writing projects are seen as meaningful by the children. This is because they are first taught about a particular genre and then choose their own subject and purpose, write at their own pace, in their own way, and with a clear sense of a real reader. They remain focused on a task, maintain a strong personal agency over and commitment to their writing, and so produce something significant for themselves and in keeping with his expectations.

SETTING WRITING GOALS

To maintain children's commitment and motivation, Mr H. ensures that they know the distant goal (the purpose and future audience) for each class project. Children have a say in setting the product goals for their project - what they will have to do (and maybe not do) to ensure their writing is successful and meaningful. Mr. H sets loose process goals (e.g. generating an idea/ planning/ drafting/ revising/ editing/ publishing) which keep his class on track without forcing them to rush their work. For example, he will say "Remember that your pieces need to be published into the class library in three weeks time, so plan your writing time with that in mind".

PERSONAL WRITING PROJECTS: WRITING EVERY DAY

'We don't have to write what the teacher says. It's actually better if you choose what you're going to write because you know what you're going to write about [laughs].'

Mr H gives children time to write for a sustained period every day, working on both class and personal writing projects. Personal projects (not to be confused with so-called 'free'


writing) are seen by him as an important part of the writing curriculum since it is here, through exercising their own choice of subject, purpose, audience and writing process, that his class have true agency and come to see writing as an essentially empowering and pleasurable activity which they can use now and in the future. Mr H rightly sees this as a social justice issue and therefore holds equally high expectations for both class and personal writing projects.

BALANCING COMPOSITION WITH TRANSCRIPTION

The children in Mr H's class know that transcriptional issues can be attended to after the act of drafting and during the revision and editing stages. Spelling and punctuation are largely self-monitored; as they write, they mark their texts for items to be checked and corrected later. He promotes the idea that children's handwriting skills are best practised when publishing their completed pieces, the motivation being to make them 'reader-ready'.

Mr H knows that if grammar is to be understood in a meaningful way, it must be taught functionally and examined and applied in the context of real composition.

"...if grammar is to be understood in a meaningful way, it must be taught functionally and examined and applied in the context of real composition. He teaches grammar through mini-lessons and invites the children to try and use a particular grammatical feature in their writing that day."



He teaches grammar through mini-lessons and invites the children to try and use a particular grammatical feature in their writing that day. Decontextualised grammar exercises do not feature in his classroom.

Young, R., (2019) What is it 'Writing For Pleasure' teachers do that makes the difference? The University Of Sussex: The Goldsmiths' Company [Available: www.writing4pleasure.com]

TEACH SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES

Mr H believes in the importance of self-regulation strategies and how these allow his class to write with confidence and independence. He has taught them techniques for generating ideas, using story maps, planners and checklists for revising their compositions. They have easy access to resources for editing and publishing.

BEING A WRITER-TEACHER

Mr. H's class gain so much from knowing that their teacher faces the same writing challenges that they do. He writes in and out of the classroom and shares his writing regularly with the children in the spirit of seeking constructive criticism. The researchers felt that the conversations they observed taking place during this sharing were inspirational. He maintains genuine reciprocal relations when discussing and modelling his own writing processes and the exemplar texts he is in the process of writing. He shares the 'tricks, tips and secret strategies' that he employs in his writing and invites the children to give them a try too.

responsibilities during writing time:

- Use our time productively
- Look after equipment
- Make writerly decisions
- Get the views of other readers
- Take advantage of your experiences
- Get writing reader-ready
- Take control of the writing process
- Work on class goals
- Request conference to support our development

PUPIL CONFERENCING: MEETING CHILDREN WHERE THEY ARE

He actually gives us fun tricks and tips of things you can do and how to do it.

Mr. H's rich response to children's writing is crucial. During the planning and composition stages he gives conferences and provides immediate, relevant and non-judgmental feedback to individual children, drawing on his own experiences as a writer. He allows them time to reflect on his suggestions and to attend to learning points while

they are still engaged in their writing. Only later in a child's process does Mr H give support to transcriptional issues. Because he is a writer-teacher, the children feel that they can talk to him as writer to writer and that he reciprocates this feeling.

CONCLUSION

I just write at school and forget about all the other lessons. Just love writing.

The researchers were in no doubt that Mr H's class wrote for pleasure and genuinely felt themselves to be writers and not simply producers of text - a rare thing in the current climate of children's writing at school. That he was able so successfully to create a Writing For Pleasure community together with the achievement of exceptionally high progress data in a very diverse class of children suggests that Writing For Pleasure as a pedagogy has huge potential.

Join now!

Join The Writing For Pleasure Centre community where you can download free resources, access free CPD, become a teacher of literature and read more about the research project at www.writing4pleasure.com

Mentoring for Early Career Chemistry Teachers

AMY GROOME

SCIENCE TEACHER & PUPIL PREMIUM ACHIEVEMENT LEADER

REBECCA BEAGLEY

SUBJECT LEADER FOR CHEMISTRY, SCIENCE TEACHER

SARIKA PATEL

SCIENCE TEACHER & PUPIL PREMIUM ACHIEVEMENT LEADER

The Welcome Trust recently published research, highlighting that the chance of a Science teacher leaving the profession in the first 5 years of teaching is 5% higher than across other subjects. This could be due to the demands of teaching multiple areas of Science, despite only having expertise in one field, coupled with the excessive workload which is faced by teachers across the board. The following article is based on three participants, who are all at different stages of their professional development, from the same school in a current scheme aimed to increase Chemistry teacher retention.

Mentoring for Early Career Chemistry Teachers has been launched by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), with funding from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). They plan to support 40 mentors and 40 mentees over the period of a year, contributing to research on the impact of mentoring. If the findings are significant, when evaluated by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), they hope to roll this out nationwide. Megginson & Clutterbuck (1995) describe mentoring as “off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking”. The aim of the scheme is to support Early Career Chemistry Teachers and improve retention of talent within

the teaching profession, as well as supporting the professional development of more experienced teachers. In this scheme, Early Career Chemistry Teachers are paired with a mentor who is an experienced Chemistry teacher. The mentors are provided with training and resources, which they combine with their expertise to help mentees progress and develop their teaching pedagogy.

AMY - MENTEE

Since joining the teaching profession in 2015, there isn't a week which goes by where I haven't seen an article about the number of teachers leaving the profession or the current crisis schools face with recruitment. Occasionally you come across an article about what the government are doing but these are few and far between and the monetary bonuses for those new, bouncy, keen teachers often leaves a sour taste in the experienced teachers' mouths.

When I heard about the scheme, I was keen to be involved from the offset. I have been incredibly lucky with my mentors since joining the teaching profession. When I decided to join the teaching profession, I was assigned a mentor to guide me through the application process. During my initial teacher training (ITT), I was mentored by a number

of individuals who supported me with classroom management, delivering engaging and challenging lessons to ensure students made progress, developing skills to deal with the pastoral demands of the job, and helped me to secure my subject knowledge across the three Sciences. Throughout my newly qualified teacher (NQT) year and with the support of my current line manager, who are always prepared to share best practice with me, I have been able to develop a 'toolkit' of tried and tested strategies to use in the classroom allowing me to grow into my own style of teaching and classroom management. I have been incredibly lucky to work within a supportive school, where even staff who have not had the formal title of my mentor have always been keen to support.

Since joining the scheme, as a mentee, I have been paired with a mentor, who I met at the training day in February. During the first mentoring session we discussed areas which I felt were development points around my self-confidence to enable my progression to my next promotion and my concerns that my lessons had become a bit boring/dull. My mentor has given me suggestions, and I have found huge inspiration from the Science teacher twitter community, which has helped me refresh my teaching style in particular with practicals and trying new teaching strategies out of my comfort zone.

Whilst, I know (at least for now), that my future career plans involve remaining in the teaching profession, who knows what it will look like in terms of career progression. So far, this scheme has provided an exciting opportunity to be involved in research about something, I believe is key in increasing Chemistry teacher retention. More importantly it has helped me to refresh my approach to teaching of Chemistry in the classroom, reigniting my passion for trying new strategies to ensure the best outcomes for the students in my class. My involvement in this scheme has also encouraged me to get involved in mentoring myself within my school to share the support I have had with others who are new to the profession. I have been given the confidence to become a Chemistry subject specialist for trainee science teachers.

REBECCA - MENTOR

Why did I sign up to be a mentor? I've been teaching for 8 years and throughout that time, many of the teachers I trained with have left the teaching profession. Some for career changes, some to spend more time with families and others who decided that teaching was just not for them. We all know that teaching can be both a rewarding and challenging career, but without the support of those around you, the rewards do not always outweigh the challenges. I have been lucky enough to work within a supportive department and school and have experienced the benefits of this. I decided to enter into the scheme as a mentor, as I wanted to be able to provide the support to others that I have been fortunate enough to receive myself.

I attended the training event for the scheme, in February. This was a great opportunity to meet other individuals who, like myself, wanted to support Chemistry teachers newer to the profession. We are all from different backgrounds but all shared the same viewpoint that teaching can be made less challenging if the teacher has a supportive network round them. During the training event, we discussed the role of a mentor, the phases of the mentoring relationship including ideas of how to build rapport and set direction and the log we

needed to complete after each meeting. The afternoon was then dedicated to meeting the mentees and to spend time getting to know each other. There was a lot of enthusiasm from all the mentors about being involved in the mentoring scheme and a real desire to support and help guide those teachers who are newer to the profession. The uptake from more experienced teachers to be mentors was greater than that of mentees so some of us were left without mentees on that training day, but most have since been paired up with mentees.

SARIKA - MENTEE

I am currently in my third year of teaching post training and have found this year to be a real struggle in terms of motivation. After talking with other colleagues who are at a similar stage in their career I realised there is something known as the 'three year itch', a reason many leave the profession. The three year itch is a state of comfort where you feel monotonous in your work and find tasks tedious. As I reflected on where I thought I would be in teaching, I realised that I had become too comfortable in my surroundings. This was something hard to admit and I honestly felt like it wasn't something I could verbalise in house as I absolutely love where I work. My current school is overwhelmingly open, honest and supportive all the time. I have had excellent mentors both inside and outside subject areas at all stages of my development, from filling out the application for a graduate training program (GTP) course all the way to my current position. All of my mentors have influenced my teaching and taught me a lot about the pedagogy of teaching.

I chose to join the scheme as it would allow me to open up this dialogue around self-motivation, something not easy to speak about in your own department. The scheme so far has been a fantastic experience. I have been paired with a mentor, who I met on a day that fitted around both of our schedules. During our initial meeting we talked openly about feelings of demotivation at times, underutilisation and ways we can step outside of the comfort zone. The experience has been completely refreshing and my mentor has

been an excellent aid in helping with my self-confidence. She has currently been helping me formulate a 'Professional Development Plan' so that I can work to targets that push me to limits within my own teaching. This has been an excellent tool for me and really re-energised my teaching. It has been nice to have a mentor that has more of a bird's eye view of my current position. The scheme has provided me with a boost in motivation to continue to develop and to look for different opportunities. The scheme itself has been well designed to help support me in this. Choosing to move school was an extremely difficult decision and something that I have done to push myself into facing new types of challenge in teaching. This is something that has come out of the conversations with my mentor, allowing me to see how I can meet personal needs in my profession.

Whilst we are only at the beginning stages of the scheme, our involvement has had a positive impact on us individually and as well as a team. We would recommend the Mentoring for Early Career Chemistry Teachers or equivalent scheme by the Institute of Physics for any early career Science teachers wanting to support in their career development and for schools who are interested in supporting their staff to help tackle the high attrition rate in Science teachers.

Mentoring for Early Career Chemistry Teacher is run by the Royal Society of Chemistry, with funding from the EEF and evaluated by the NFER.

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NQT

SHELBY HAWSWORTH

ENGLISH TEACHER, OAKGROVE SCHOOL

After qualifying from my PGCE in 2019 from The University of Oxford, I moved to Milton Keynes and enrolled in an NQT position at Oakgrove School. My training year prepared me for so many aspects of life as a teacher, such as: lesson planning, marking, applying for jobs, presenting in front of a class, developing my subject knowledge, dealing with and responding to feedback from colleagues, creating effective displays, using school databases and balancing this profession whilst having a social life.

Despite this, in the summer leading up to my first full teaching role, I worried (unnecessarily, I should add), about several aspects of the job and whether I was ready to be stripped of my title 'trainee teacher'. My aim is to be honest about some of the challenges that you will face as an NQT, whilst reassuring you that the highlights of my NQT year have outweighed these challenges.

The teaching profession has the ability to take control of your life, with a never-ending to do list; it is important that you work efficiently and have strategies up your sleeve to create a great work-life-balance. I have provided you with a few handy time-saving tips, that I wish someone had told me before I began my first term!

CHALLENGES OF MY NQT YEAR SO FAR:

- The increased timetable; use your NQT time/ PPAs each week to plan when you will complete lesson planning; good lessons shouldn't take hours to plan.
- Lacking confidence in my ability to mark accurately. Don't be afraid to ask other colleagues for advice and use moderation evenings to your advantage.
- Taking on a behaviourally challenging GCSE class was my greatest challenge at the start of my NQT year. Use challenging classes as an opportunity to keep up to date with pedagogical research; I had to trial several new behaviour management strategies in my classroom.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY NQT YEAR SO FAR:

- Having your own tutor group creates a safe space, with a group of students that you begin to know very well.
- The increased teaching time means you won't be writing PGCE essays and there is far less paperwork.
- There are continued opportunities to attend CPD sessions and make close connections with other NQTs/ trainees at my school.
- You are observed less often and so, when you are observed, it's an earned opportunity for feedback.

TOP TIPS

SOME HANDY TIPS TO KEEP YOU AFLOAT IN YOUR FIRST TERM:

- Pin and flag important emails; you will receive a lot more as an NQT.
- Use moderation evenings as an opportunity to develop your practice, not as criticism.
- Develop an efficient assessment record for each class you teach, this makes parents' evenings and reports much easier.
- Keep asking to observe other lessons in your NQT time.
- Explore Twitter and use teaching platforms to steal resources!
- Don't be afraid to ask other colleagues for their resources; the teaching profession naturally has a 'sharing is caring' culture.
- If you are an essay-based subject NQT, ask your department lead if they are happy for you to make use of marking codes.
- When planning your term, stagger each class' end-of-unit assessments, this avoids the overload of marking in certain weeks of the term.
- Keep up to date with pedagogical research; just because you are qualified, this doesn't mean that you won't have to make alterations to your practice as a teacher.

the library: a safe haven

The school library is more than about literacy and ICT, it should be a safe haven for all pupils and should cater for the whole child. Valerie Dewhurst offers some practical ideas

VALERIE DEWHURST

RETURN TO TEACHING TEAM MANAGER
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Over my many years working in schools, and across the many libraries I have seen and managed, I have learned that students benefit from the solace and protection – the safe space - that the library often provides throughout the day.

Allowing the library to be many things to many students can be quite challenging for the librarian, but ultimately the library can offer crucial social and emotional support.

There are many ways that my school library has become a safe space. It provides a comfortable environment with soft furnishing, colourful artwork, promotional posters and inspirational quotes.

The library space itself is often a refuge for students, a safe space where they are comfortable and free to be themselves. The library is a physical and emotional place of safety, away from tough situations and helps to overcome the stress students may have to encounter during the day.

A library can be a place to escape loneliness and bullying and the librarian is quick to notice any signs of problems and to act upon them. I try my very best to always be there for our students, to be ready to listen when they are troubled and to offer a friendly ear.

I will always remember something which my predecessor shared with me many years ago: “The librarian takes vulnerable children under their wing helping to give pupils confidence socially.”

A range of activity ideas Reading Well: Mental health, mindfulness and the wellbeing of our students are things we all have in common. The Reading Well Books on Prescription campaign is something we

have embraced and offers expert-recommended books to help students to understand and manage their health and wellbeing using self-help reading. It has often been said that reading is good for stress and relaxation, so what better way to promote this than in a library (see further information).

READ TO RELAX: One important message I am keen to pass on to our students is to “read to relax” which is a topic close to my own heart. In this context, I would highly recommend author Nicola Morgan and her many books offering students guidance in how to relax and de-stress from their busy lives. They cover exam and peer pressure as well as body image and seek to promote a healthy and happy lifestyle for our young people. Titles include Blame my Brain, Positively Teenage, The Teenage Guide to Life Online and Body Brilliant (see further information).

SCHOOL CLUBS: The library can be a focal point for many clubs, such as my school’s book and craft clubs, helping to encourage confidence and to develop social skills.

BIRTHDAY BOOK BOX: This year our Birthday Book Box project has flourished. During library lessons, year 7 students had the opportunity to share their birthday with their peers and choose a book from the Birthday Book Box (they could also do this privately if they preferred). Free bookmarks: Although a small gesture, bookmarks are very much appreciated by our library users and can really help to put a smile back on the face of an upset or worried child. Themed bookmarks work the best; even better bookmarks with inspirational quotes as there is always something for everyone.

PUPIL LIBRARIANS: I, like many other school librarians am proud to have a hard-working and dedicated team of pupil librarians, who work with me during each lunch break and thoroughly enjoy the new skills they acquire while being here. I have seen many pupil librarians grow in confidence and I feel strongly that the role of a

school librarian helps to nurture shy and lonely children. A number of volunteers are SEN and Pupil Premium pupils and it is satisfying to know that the library is there for them, giving them lots to do, keeping them busy but also helping them to feel included and valued.

MINDFULNESS: A hot topic in education, I have brought this into my own school library. During a recent INSET day, I saw how the simple act of colouring-in helped to calm students. During Book Week and working closely with PSHE teachers, we devised a colouring-in competition that proved hugely popular. Colouring-in sheets at lunchtime are now one of our favourite activities and I have gone one-step further by linking the colouring-in sheets to many books. This has had a massive effect on those pupils and students who find it difficult to settle and concentrate at the start of a lesson, including my own library lessons. The colouring in sheets prove to be popular during rainy lunchtimes too.

CRAFTWORK: This has played a big part this year in our school library, with the bookmark club and colouring-in sheets being just two of our successful activities. There is no end of opportunities to share craft skills at events during Book Week, Christmas, Easter, Harry Potter Book Night, National Libraries Week, National Non-Fiction Month, National Storytelling Week, Valentine's Day and many more. I have offered and delivered sessions including colouring, card-making, bookmark-making, bunting design, cake decorating, knitting and even some crochet activities.

BIBLIOTHERAPY: The June 2019 School Library Association (SLA) and Youth Libraries Group Weekend Conference for librarians – Building Identity, Building Readers - shared a variety of new ideas. One of my favourite sessions was the “Bibliotherapy” workshop - Bibliotherapy being a therapeutic approach that uses literature to support mental health. This involves using poetry, literature and song lyrics to help engage young people experiencing mental health, wellbeing issues, loneliness and isolation. I was able to take away so much from this session and indeed start to build my own bank of resources to use, share, promote and display.

RESOURCE BOX: As a learning space, my library supports all who uses it, even those who cannot, due to time constraints. My Resource Box initiative put in place many years ago really was, and

still is successful. A simple resource box filled with books, journals, movies and anything else to help support particular topics being studied is available for classrooms, to support teaching and learning or even form time use – meaning the library can go to those who cannot otherwise come to us. It is simply all about getting the message out – the library supports everyone in school.

THE WHOLE CHILD

At the heart of an effective school library programme is the importance of individual understanding of each child. The rise in students dealing with mental health issues is well documented in recent years. Boundaries between real and virtual lives have blurred and technology is now a big part of student lives much earlier.

This alone offers reason enough to think about how our school libraries are meeting the needs for a comfortable, welcoming and personalised learning environment that takes the whole child into consideration.

I feel very strongly about making our school library an available space to students during lunch time and even after school, as this is a time when vulnerable students especially need a refuge or a safe place in school to get away from all the hustle and bustle during a busy school day.

I have often found creative ways to include some of our regulars, giving them the opportunity to mentor younger pupils (usually year 7) through book selection and reading aloud during lunchtimes. This activity worked extremely well during National Storytelling Week when an array of lunchtime activities took place in the school library, seeing both students and staff reading, sharing stories and having fun.

Other lunchtime library activities including an abundance of jigsaw puzzles and termly competitions and many book promotions which all lend themselves to helping keep the library a hive of activity.

I strongly believe that a way to help to create a safe space for our students is to make them a big part of the library process. We can offer our students ownership and autonomy and help them feel part of a community – be that a world of books and resources or

simply a library and a safe and comfortable space to gather their thoughts and relax.

My school library is a place for learning, collaboration and creativity for our students, staff, and the school community as a whole. If I can play my part in some small way of providing the path for students to constructively deal with the issues of isolation or other issues that often arise, then I feel this is a job well done. We continue to work hard to see, hear and value our students and to create ways for the library to be a judgment free, accepting space for the entire school community. We recently celebrated Diversity Week and our school was indeed awash with colour, with fun, laughter and, of course, a book display.

GREAT SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Author Neil Gaiman is a strong supporter of libraries and describes the library as “a place of safety, a haven from the world. It’s a place with librarians in it” (Gaiman, 2018) He sums school libraries up so well and if you agree then why not support the Great School Libraries campaign, which is a three-year campaign launched in 2018 and spearheaded by the SLA, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and CILIP’s School Libraries Group.

Meanwhile, the SLA, the umbrella for all school librarians, plays a big part in offering sound advice and expert help for anyone managing a school library. I would strongly recommend fellow school librarians to join this association if not already a member.

school librarians

working alongside curriculum makers

ELIZABETH HUTCHINSON

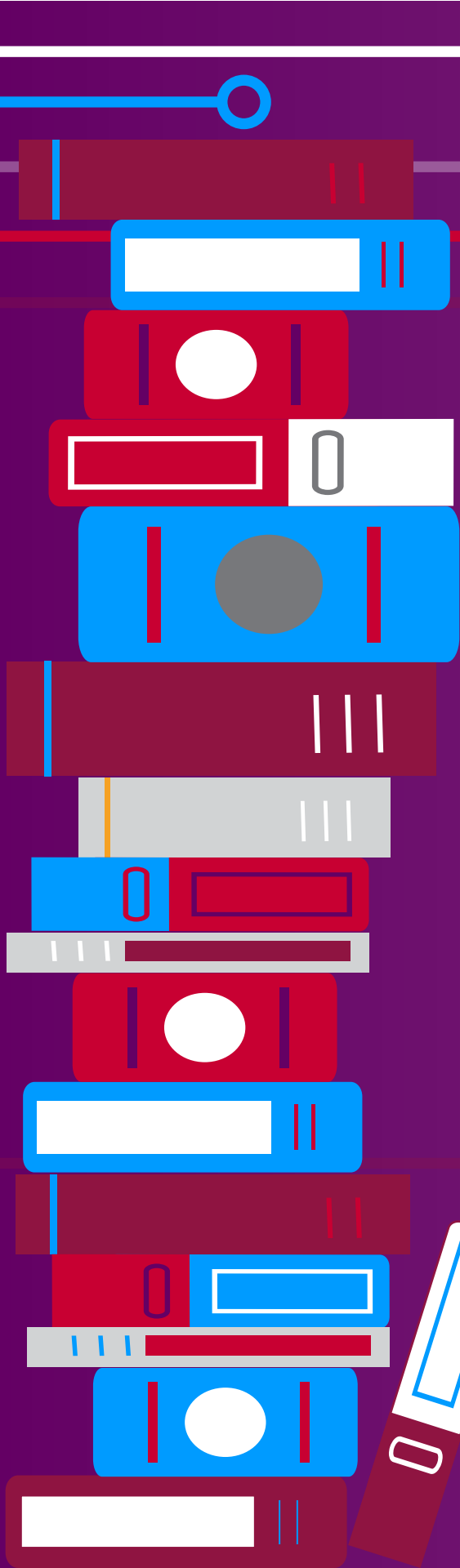
INDEPENDENT ADVISOR & TRAINER,
SCHOOL LIBRARIES

How often do teachers think about the school librarian when planning their curriculum? I would suggest that very few tap into this great resource and I hope that in the next few paragraphs I will be able to change the idea that your school librarian is there to issue books and promote reading for pleasure and make you want to walk down the corridor and ask for help.

School librarians are information experts and are increasingly becoming overlooked in this area. Several research articles including Williams, Wavell and Morrison's Impact of School Library Services on Learning have been written about the impact that a school librarian can have on academic attainment but we seem to be increasingly removing the professional librarian from our schools to replace them with someone who can do what most people think school librarians do which is issue and return books.

**WELL, IT IS TIME FOR YOU ALL TO THINK DIFFERENTLY AND
HERE IS HOW TO DO THIS:**

- Think of a research project or scheme of work you are teaching next term
- Talk to your school librarian and ask them to help you
- Work together on the resources and skills your students need
- Use your Library Management System to curate good quality online resources with the help of the librarian
- Invite the librarian into the classroom to demonstrate how this system works
- Invite the librarian to co-teach the skills your students need i.e. Keyword searching, note taking, referencing...
- Ask the librarian to help mark the research area of the project



Imagine being able to tell others that you have added value to your curriculum and have evidence of impact through what your students produced at the end of their topic. Imagine being able to show how you have used the Library Management System as a digital literacy tool demonstrating value and initiative.

As the school librarian becomes embedded within your curriculum you then might want to consider an inquiry framework. Something that helps create the building blocks to independent learning. There are many out there but I like FOSIL (Framework of Skills for Inquiry Learning). This is a framework used in the New York City Schools Library System is supported by Barbara Stripling, Professor Emerita of the iSchool at Syracuse University, a pioneer of learning through inquiry and has been adapted by The Fosil Group to work as a tool enabling teachers and librarians to work together using the expertise of both in the classroom.

“It is time to bring the two together and give our children and teachers the support and skills they need.”

As fake news and misinformation become more of a problem it is imperative that our students are able to find out for themselves. This is essential for all students and not just those going onto higher education. Ruth Carlyle, Head of Library & Knowledge Services and Technology Enhanced Learning for the Midlands and the East of England, talks about the importance of health literacy and the increasing impact this has on the NHS and this is only one segment of our society.

Teaching was never a DIY job and school librarians have the expertise to co-teach in the classroom. It is time to bring the two together and give our children and teachers the support and skills they need.

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PROMOTING COMPUTATIONAL THINKING

programming and coding without screens

HANNAH HAGON

PARENT GOVERNOR

VALERIE CRITTEN

EX-IT CO-ORDINATOR & TEACHER, OPEN UNIVERSITY

DAVID MESSER

EMERITUS PROFESSOR, OPEN UNIVERSITY

Children as young as 3-6 years have taken part in studies to find out whether they are capable of learning to program and code simple robots such as the Cubetto (Marinus, Powell, Thornton, McArthur and Crain, 2018) and the Beebot or the Beebot app (Messer, Thomas, Holliman & Kucirkova, 2018). We wondered if it was possible to apply the principles of computational thinking to other areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) using natural surroundings, no screens and utilising equipment that is readily available. Computational thinking skills have the ability to be transferrable to other areas of a child's life, for example:

- algorithms – creating or following verbal or written instructions in its most basic form, for example, a recipe;
- ordering instructions - ensuring that an algorithm is followed correctly;
- bug fixing, i.e. identifying errors with the confidence to acknowledge and correct

These skills are considered to be the bedrock for learning science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects and could be taught alongside other academic subjects (Wing, 2006).

The first author was interested in setting up a Coding Club for very young children (2-4-year olds) involving one-hourly sessions over a period of six weeks. Each session had four, 5-10-minute activities: an introduction where the children came together with toys and sang songs; planning movements around a room or garden area; sitting together on a table-top activity; and completing a paper-based task. These were interspersed with short intervals of free play.

An example of one of the table-top activities was icing biscuits which included the basics of an algorithm in the form of a recipe, but the children were not given the recipe and had to collaborate to work it out (see Figure 1).

An example of one of the table-top activities was icing biscuits which included the basics of an algorithm in the form of a recipe, but the children were not given the recipe and had to collaborate to work it out (see Figure 1).

In our Coding Clubs we found that even the younger children (2-3 years old) were able to collaborate to plan and order the initial recipe and were able to correct errors (see Beech, 2019). All the children were able to create the recipe as a picture code with up to four pictures, e.g. a packet of icing sugar,

jug of water; bowl and spoon; an iced biscuit (see Figure 2); while the older children could manage up to six pictures.

Similar activities are carried out in pre-schools and nursery settings every day; the only difference in the Coding Club was the focus, and an emphasis on asking the children to plan the activity, carry out the activity while identifying and correcting errors; and recording the order of the activity. These are the basics of computational thinking which can be incorporated into many young children's lessons and activities. The children really enjoyed all the coding activities and have been asking for more sessions.

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Activity: Table-top activity (icing biscuits): evaluating and correcting errors

Relevance to coding: Develop children's concentration and listening skills; collaborating and working out the algorithm; correcting errors in the algorithm.

Materials: Icing sugar, warm water, biscuits, bowls, spoons.

Main Activity: Put the cut materials in the middle of the table. Ask the children, "How do we make icing, what do we first?"

Follow the children's instruction exactly, making mistakes. Ask, "Is that right?" Then work out the correct algorithm together.

The children are given their own materials and asked to make icing and ice a biscuit.

Subsequent Activity: The children create a picture code sequence of the recipe.

Figure 1: Lesson/ activity plan for icing biscuits

DEVELOPING AN ORACY CURRICULUM

AMANDA MOORGHEN
IMPACT & RESEARCH LEAD
VOICE 21

CHILDREN'S SPOKEN LANGUAGE SKILLS ARE ONE OF THE STRONGEST PREDICTORS OF THEIR FUTURE LIFE CHANCES, YET TOO MANY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN ARRIVE AT SCHOOL WITH POOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS, ALREADY BEHIND THEIR MORE ADVANTAGED PEERS. LEFT UNADDRESSED, THIS GAP GROWS RATHER THAN DIMINISHES. TEACHING ORACY CAN CHANGE THIS, DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE, ARTICULACY AND CAPACITY TO LEARN.

You are the only second chance for some children to have a rich language experience. If these children are not getting it at school, they are not getting it.

**Neil Mercer, Emeritus Professor,
University of Cambridge**

Children's spoken language skills are one of the strongest predictors of their future life chances, yet too many disadvantaged children arrive at school with poor communication skills, already behind their more advantaged peers. Left unaddressed, this gap grows rather than diminishes. Teaching oracy can change this, developing students' confidence, articulacy and capacity to learn.

Voice 21's recently published Oracy Benchmarks (available online at: <https://voice21.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Benchmarks-report.pdf>) were developed based on our experience working with thousands of teachers and hundreds of schools since 2016, supporting them to develop oracy both at a classroom and whole-school level. The Benchmarks show what teachers and school-leaders must do to ensure all students learn through talk and to talk. They reflect the ambitions and actions of educators who understand that oracy is not a programme to be completed one year and gone the next, but rather an essential facet of an effective, empowering and expansive education.

The knowledge, experience and professional judgment of classroom teachers and school leaders forms the core of any school development process. The 'right way' to provide a high quality oracy education will differ from school to school, reflecting their diversity and complexity. Schools and teachers can meet the Benchmarks in a myriad of ways, consistent with their different approaches.

"On accelerate curriculum days [part of 1-year+ school-improvement programmes] we provide participants with a framework to think critically about effective curriculum design, alongside developing their understanding of student progression in oracy, in order to reflect on and refine their curriculum provision enabling students to develop the skills needed to become effective communicators."

**Natasha Palladino, Programme Design and Quality Lead,
Voice 21**

The third Benchmark, "has a sustained & wide-ranging curriculum for oracy" addresses the importance of ensuring that oracy is part of every student's education, and is not left to chance or enjoyed only by a self-selecting few. This could be realised through embedding oracy into the core curriculum with different subjects or year groups taking responsibility for teaching different aspects of oracy. Or it could be through a discrete oracy curriculum taught in dedicated curriculum time, perhaps led by specialist teachers. Alternatively, it could be a combination of both approaches.

"We started by planning oracy into our existing curriculum. We looked at what was taught in the foundation subjects in each year group and considered which oracy skills could be taught in conjunction with each subject. We ensured that at least twice a year students worked towards an 'oracy outcome', producing a scientific tutorial for younger students, for example. We also made sure that key oracy skills are revisited as students move through the school."

**Gemma Kirk, Oracy Lead, Filton Avenue Primary School,
Bristol**

To learn more about delivering a high-quality oracy education, or about Voice 21's teacher development & school improvement programmes, please visit our website at www.voice21.org. From January, look out for our Connect space, a free hub for teachers to share resources and best practice for oracy.



meta-cognition: developing language to match audience and purpose

ANNA FOSTER

REGIONAL ENGLISH LEAD & LECTURER IN ENGLISH EDUCATION (TEACH FIRST PGDE)
MANCHESTER INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Should we choose to educate by a process of omission? It is not uncommon for learners to be provided with glossaries and suggested 'wow' words however some teachers also provide a list of words which learners should avoid. However, what does this actually do in terms of education? Firstly, those who regularly employ the unfavourable words within their own lexis could feel 'othered' by this approach; they are now inferior as they search to find 'approved' words from a prescribed list which contrast with their own idiolect. The approach does not encourage learners to recognise or develop effective skills for adapting language for audience and purpose. They may seek a synonym from a thesaurus but in doing so be no closer to developing their understanding of matching language to audience and purpose.

In my own approach to teaching of writing, learners were encouraged to evaluate all word choices rather than providing a list of words to avoid. I did have one class of very low-confidence writers where I did feel it necessary to ban "No" and "Can't" but this was isolated to their verbal responses to tasks. The reason for this was fully explained and the removal of these two words had a startling impact on their development as they began to think of ever more elaborate ways to inform me of why they felt they were not clever enough to do the task, thus building their vocabulary in a way which maintain a central focus upon audience and purpose.

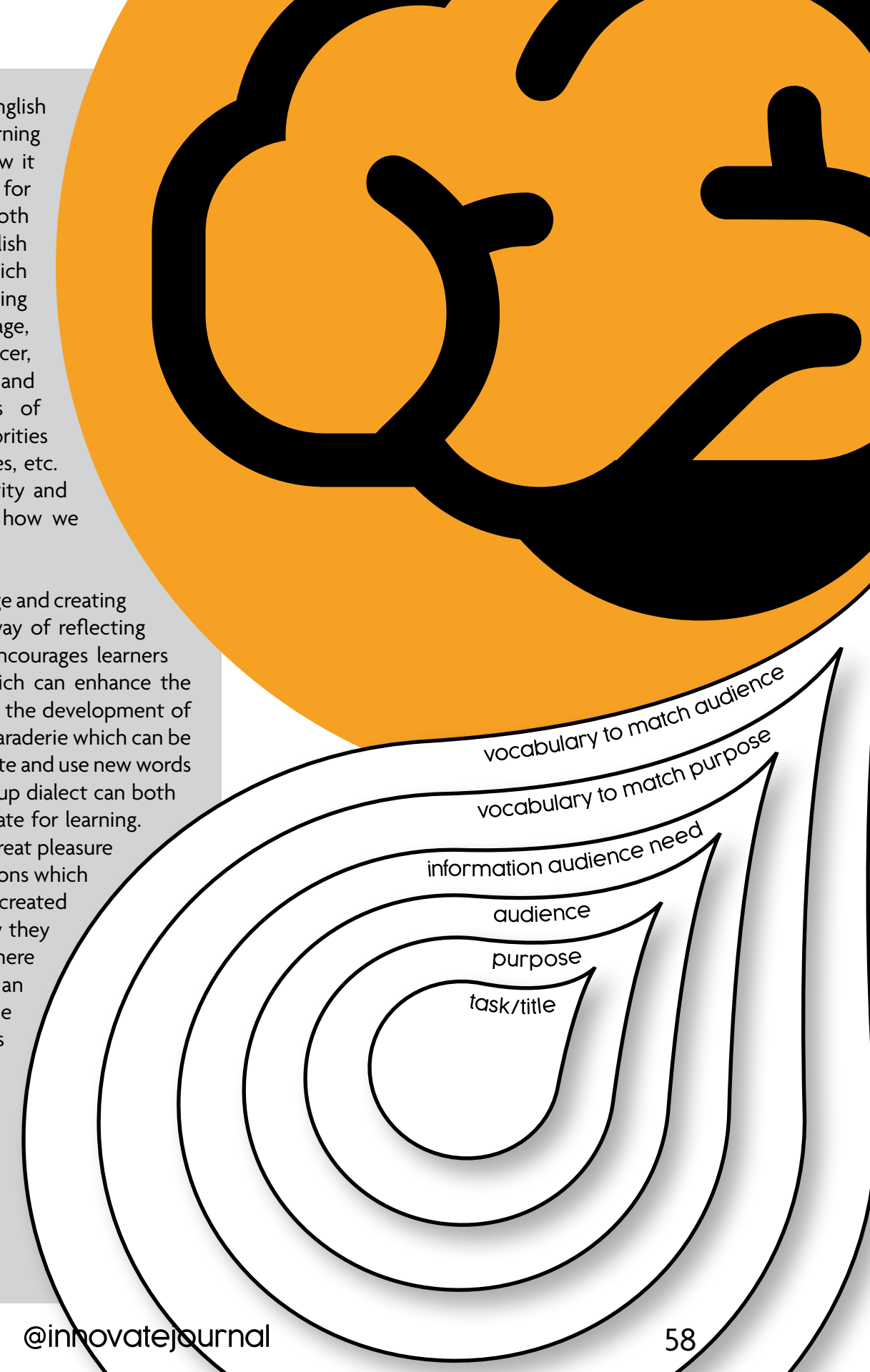
Getting learners to think about language is key. When setting either transactional or creative writing tasks I always took time to encourage learners to explore word choices and develop semantic fields. No words were of limits whether it be colloquialisms, profanity, etc. as long as they could justify their choice and convince me it was the best word that could be used to suit both audience and purpose. This meta-cognitive approach was one which I found learners of all ages and abilities enjoyed. Where the opportunity arose, the chance to use a word they deemed illicit in the normal educational context became exciting. A challenge. A game of cat and mouse to see whose words would get through. When no illicit words were called for then the focus on use of the best or most appropriate word for audience and purpose maintained standards and encouraged creativity.

Combining this focus on audience and purpose, with my known enthusiasm for Carol Ann Duffy's 'Valentine' and recurrent references to 'peeling back the onion' and 'exposing layers' within both reading and writing lesson, the 'Planning Onion' was created as a class in-joke, using the template as a starting point to consider appropriate language at the planning stage rather than addressing it as a reflection and re-draft activity.

Meta-cognition to enhance vocabulary does not however, need to be solely focused upon task-specific audience and

purpose. Within the teaching of English pupils should also engage with learning about the history of language as how it has changed over time. It is important for contemporary learners to explore both the history and future of the English language and see it as something which is alive and forever evolving. Getting learners to experiment with language, using words taken from Chaucer, Shakespeare, Austen and Dickens and interspersing these with examples of idiolect from favourite modern celebrities to create sentences, tweets, headlines, etc. sparks both engagement and creativity and encourages learners to think about how we communicate in a different way.

Making predictions on language change and creating new words for the group is also a way of reflecting upon how language develops and encourages learners to consider patterns and trends which can enhance the teaching of audience and purpose of the development of appropriate semantic fields. The camaraderie which can be created from allowing learners to create and use new words within the classroom as part of a group dialect can both support and enhance a positive climate for learning. As a teacher, it has always given me great pleasure to see cards or end of year presentations which reference the secret code words created months if not years ago and see how they have endured. In these instances there is a celebration of language and an understanding that words have the power to both unify and divide. It is often not the words themselves that do this but how they are used and so developing awareness of language through use of meta-cognition and placing audience and purpose as central to the task will ultimately have greater impact developing the quality of written communications.



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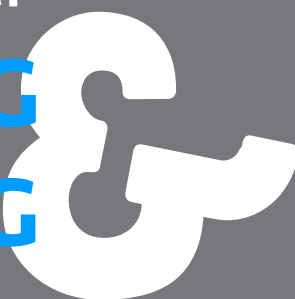
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