

THE
ISA JOURNAL

INNOVATIVE AND DIVERSE LEARNING | NO 24 | FEB 2021



- INSPIRING INVESTIGATORS
- INNOVATING IN DARK TIMES
- BLENDING CHALLENGE AND ENJOYMENT

Trust the online uniform experts.



schoolblazer

schoolblazer.info 01832 280 011

Welcome

FROM THE CEO

Rudi Elliott Lockhart



As I write it is less than one week into the Spring term and already what seems like a decade's worth of events have taken place. Having spent all of the Christmas break preparing to administer mass COVID testing in secondary schools, Heads found that within the first 24 hours of term the Government position on keeping schools open underwent a 180 degree turn. Added to this, plans for public exams this summer have been

thrown into (further) confusion with an announcement that they will not take place as normal, but as yet, there is no detail on what is planned instead.

In these fevered days it is hard to know what to expect next, and it is hard to completely dispel the thought that by the time this edition ends up on your desk everything will have changed again. I know that it has been an extremely tough time to be a Head and that the current set of crises have been incredibly draining. So as an antidote to some of the grim challenges of the present, I thought it would be more uplifting to focus on some more positive and more long term themes. This edition of the Journal therefore offers a range of perspectives on the theme of enjoyment in education.

With a theme like this, it should be no surprise that it has been a real pleasure to bring this edition together. There is an article from Catherine Meilleure that takes an in depth look at the role that humour can have in learning. Annie Thackray considers how to provide challenge for pupils hand in hand with them enjoying their learning. Judy Willis takes a look at the neuroscience behind joyful learning. There is a focus on making maths enjoyable from Karolina Harmer. Matt Donaldson considers how to develop independent learners through inquiry based learning. There is also an article from Barbara Lockee and Kibong Song on the gamification of learning. Jeff Shaw

gives a great example of how perspectives can be opened up through his work on the global classroom with the World Health Organisation and UNICEF. There are also articles from Stephen McKernan on busting myths about inspection and Dan Sayers on his experience of how to achieve excellent for academic progress in a semi-selective school.

I hope that within the pages of this issue of the Journal there is something for everyone to encourage a positive approach to the months ahead. And while there is plenty of dark news at the moment, there are also very good reasons to be positive about the future. There are now three vaccines that have been approved in the UK and increasing numbers of people have had their first shot. Independent schools have again proved themselves able to adapt quickly and provide educational excellence whatever the circumstances, and ISA members have shown remarkable resilience and leadership. Winter will soon turn to Spring. The next twelve months look better than the last twelve, and a focus on enjoyment in learning will make the future even brighter for pupils and lift the spirits of Heads too.

CONTRIBUTORS

- Rudi Elliott Lockhart, CEO** – Editor in Chief
- Dr Karolina Hammer** – Mathematics Teacher at ACS International School Cobham
- Catherine Meilleure** – Creative Content Writer @KnowledgeOne
- Annie Thackray** – Headteacher of St Christopher's School, Epsom
- Matt Donaldson** – Headmaster of St Nicholas School
- Judy Willis** – Leading authority in the neuroscience of learning
- Jeff Shaw** – ISA Chair – Headmaster of Scarisbrick Hall School
- Dr Barbara Lockee** – Professor of Instructional Design & Technology in the School of Education at Virginia Tech
- Dr Kibong Song** – Assistant Professor of Practice in the School of Education at Virginia Tech
- Stephen McKernan** – Headmaster of St Edward's Preparatory School
- Dan Sayers** – Headmaster of St Hilda's School
- Colin Parker** – Headmaster of Egerton-Rothsay School

Front Cover photo : The Pointer School (LS)



New Hall School (E)



Normanhurst School (LN)



WRITE FOR THE ISA JOURNAL

ISA Members want to hear about best practice in any area. Send a brief outline or topic to journal@isaschools.org.uk



Perry

Uniform that speaks for itself.

www.perryuniform.co.uk

Perry Uniform is a full service school uniform and sports kit supplier with an extensive range of services that make us a natural choice as your uniform supplier.

We work alongside our schools to deliver exceptional performance to parents, tailoring our services to meet the needs of both school and parent alike.

Offering the convenience of on-line, showroom and shop as a truly integrated and multi-channel shopping service is just one of the many benefits of working in partnership with Perry Uniform.

Call us on 0113 238 9520 or email info@perryuniform.co.uk today and find out how we can work with you and your school.

Contents

- 06 School News
- 08 Inspiring Investigators: Why thinking outside of the textbook is key to engaging students in mathematics - *Dr Karolina Hammer*
- 12 Do humour and learning mix well ? - *Catherine Meilleure*
- 20 Blending Challenge and Enjoyment - *Annie Thackray*
- 22 ISA Courses
- 24 Pupil-Driven Inquiry Projects; the end of fact-based learning - *Matt Donaldson*
- 27 Neuroscience of Joyful Learning: opening tag line option - *Judy Willis*
- 31 Three Perspectives to See Students in Gamified Classes - *Dr Barbara Lockee & Dr Kibong Song*
- 34 Innovating in Dark Times - *Jeff Shaw*
- 36 How to achieve Excellent for Academic Progress in a non-selective school – *Stephen McKernan, Dan Sayers, Colin Parker*
- 40 ISA Sport
- 42 ISA Arts



School News

SCHOOLS FROM ACROSS THE ISA SHARE THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS



PATTISON COLLEGE STUDENT JOINS ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL (M)

Pattison College has been able to trumpet the many performance successes of alumni for over hundred years in Coventry, indeed the school celebrated seventy years of academia in 2019 and its long established reputation of excellent results, both vocationally and academically, are well known across the region.

2020 was no different for a talented young lady currently in the Junior department of the school, who has successfully auditioned for the associate programme of the Birmingham Royal Ballet school.

Scarlett has started her Saturday lessons with the associate company based at the Hippodrome Theatre since January 2020 and is thrilled to be following in the footsteps of both her mother and uncle who also attended Pattisons in their school years and achieved successful performance careers. Mum Carly danced professionally, and Uncle Aaron is still dancing, currently with the San Francisco Ballet company after a recent stint with the English National Ballet. A talented family indeed; congratulations Scarlett.

LAMDA DISTINCTIONS ALL ROUND FOR CRACKLEY HALL PUPILS (M)

All fifty-four Crackley Hall pupils who took the London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art (LAMDA) examinations in September have been awarded the highest grade possible, a distinction. The children who are now in Junior 2, Junior 3 and Junior 6 studied for the examinations in their Drama lessons in school last year. Teacher Nicki Wildey, explains, "The children worked so hard for their exams but then had them cancelled at very short notice due to the lockdown. Since then they have continued to work tirelessly to polish and perfect their performances." The examinations finally took place when the children returned to school in September and the children took the Solo Introductory Stage Two, Solo Introductory Stage Three and Speaking Verse and Prose Grade 1 examinations respectively. The children are judged on interpretation, technique and knowledge. They have to consider their diction, expression and movement. Nicki Wildey continues, "What's brilliant about the LAMDA exams is that they equip the children with communication skills which will serve them throughout life."



They not only promote an appreciation of literature and poetry, but also help unlock their imagination and creative-thinking. All the children's hard work and extra practice certainly paid off. We are delighted with this super set of results, some of the best the school has ever seen."

'SURF'S UP' FOR SEN SCHOOL PUPILS AT WHITSTONE (SW)



Highgate Hill House School, a co-educational school for children with special educational needs aged five to sixteen years, near Holsworthy, has fully embraced the opportunities on its doorstep, by offering 'surf club' lessons to some of its pupils.

Initial sessions were held by Outdoor Adventure based at Widemouth Bay, and then subsequent sessions by the school's own Outdoor Learning Instructor, Ollie Norton, who holds various surf qualifications himself.

Ollie said: "I find surfing a great way to relax and clear my head, and I'm really passionate about teaching young people to learn to surf so that they can reap the benefits too. The calm, quiet connection you feel with nature is like nothing else."

Initially the children were a bit sceptical about how cold the water would be at this time of year, but it's surprisingly warm. You soon get used to it!

The safety of the children is paramount at all times, so we start off slowly with learning to get your wetsuit on, how to carry your surfboard and general beach safety. Then we move on to paddling and starting to catch waves in the prone position (lying down) before finally catching a wave standing up".

Sir Peter Birkett, School Founder, added: "It's great to see the children's confidence building each week, achieving things that some of them thought they'd never be capable of. It's well documented that people learning to surf can reap huge mental health benefits from it, so we're very pleased to be able to offer it to our children. They are very keen to resume lessons once lockdown is over".



CLAIRES COURT CELEBRATES ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY THIS ACADEMIC YEAR HAVING FIRST OPENED ITS DOORS IN SEPTEMBER 1960 (LW)

The Maidenhead-based school continues to be family run by the founding family, the Wildings, and has pupils from Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. The school is for Nursery to Sixth Form age and is 'diamond-structured', with the Nursery co-educational, the Junior Girls and Boys and Senior Girls and Boys single sex, and Sixth Form co-educational.

Hugh Wilding, Administrative Principal and one of the nineteen founding pupils, said: "We're incredibly proud of all our pupils, staff and partners, past and present, to have been part of this history and reaching this tremendous milestone. Although we can't celebrate in quite the way we would have liked due to safety measures

and restrictions, we wanted to share the occasion with everyone connected with the school and we're inviting our alumni to share their stories with us on our Facebook page, and we hope to celebrate over the course of the year.

"We continue to be a family-run school for families, as well as working with the wider community, and are committed to providing the best education and facilities for the benefit of people in local and surrounding areas. We have enjoyed the many moments and academic, sporting and creative achievements of our pupils and staff over the years. Above all, our close-knit and values-based school community is incredibly inspiring."

BELLEVUE SCHOOL AWARDED SECONDARY GEOGRAPHY QUALITY MARK (LS)



Farlington School, part of the Bellevue group, has been awarded the Secondary Geography Quality Mark (SGQM) by the Geographical Association in recognition of excellence in teaching and learning in Geography.

The Secondary Geography Quality Mark is a prestigious award which recognises and promotes quality and progress in geography leadership, curriculum development and learning and teaching in schools. It is recognised nationally and internationally and is valid for three years.

Farlington is one of just twenty-four schools globally to be awarded the Secondary Geography Quality Mark in 2020.

The process is a rigorous one, and schools are assessed on a number of challenging criteria, including quality of geographical education; how this education shapes behaviour, attitudes and values; how it supports students' personal development; and how geography education is led and managed within the school. The department is required to provide evidence to demonstrate excellence across all these areas.

Nicky Edgar, Head of Geography at Farlington School, comments: "I am absolutely thrilled to have successfully led the Geography Department through the Secondary Geography Quality Mark. To be awarded the prestigious mark of quality for excellence in geographical teaching and learning, is testament to the dedication and enthusiasm of the Geography Department at Farlington School over the past eighteen months."

DALE HOUSE SCHOOL RANKED ONE OF THE TOP 50 IN ENGLAND (N)

Dale House School, in Batley, has been ranked by the Sunday Times as the 46th best preparatory school in the country. It is one of only two West Yorkshire schools to make the paper's top 50 Independent Preparatory Schools in England list this year. And the achievement is even more impressive given that the school started with just three students when it first opened in September 1999. Headmistress of Dale House School, Mrs Sarah Fletcher, was gifted the building on Ruby Street by her husband for her 40th birthday in 1997. "I had a daughter who was three at the time and I looked at fifteen schools but found faults in all of them," said Mrs Fletcher. "I think my husband just got exasperated and said, "if you think you're so good, you do it! And that's why he bought it."

Today, it welcomes seventy-five students between the ages of two to eleven and employs fifteen staff - all of whom are celebrating being named in the top 50 preparatory schools in the country. The list was determined by ranking schools on the average scores achieved by children in reading, grammar and maths in 2019's SATS.

Mrs Fletcher said everyone was "over the moon" after receiving the news.



"We are a bit shocked that we've been listed as one of the top 50 schools in England," she said. "We're absolutely over the moon, we're proud of the children and our results - we're just a bit taken aback. "We're just a tiny school in the middle of nowhere."



ACS International School Cobham (LW)

DR KAROLINA HAMMER

Inspiring investigators: Why thinking outside of the textbook is key to engaging students in mathematics

For many students, mathematics can seem very black and white; it's either "I'm good at maths" or "I am not". This can, unfortunately, result in a kind of stigma and anxiety around the subject; at the beginning of the school year I will often see young people feeling very unsure of their abilities and even a little fearful of mathematics. Maths anxiety is a real thing – data from the Maths Anxiety Trust, an organisation that aims to eliminate anxiety around mathematics, reveals that more than a third of 15- to 24- year-olds feel anxious when shown a maths problem and a study published in Psychology Research and Behaviour Management indicates that higher levels of maths anxiety can be found in females.

Despite this unease around maths, there are many wonderful ways in which teachers can not only help students cross these emotional hurdles, but can inspire them to enjoy their learning and, as a result, help them to develop important critical thinking, problem-solving and inquiry skills that they will take with them throughout their lives. It's our role as teachers to provide an un-puzzling experience, showcasing that mathematics is everywhere and the skills you learn are incredibly transferable – much like our wider lives, there are problems everywhere, we just need to find out the best ways to solve them.

A key point from my perspective is that when teaching subjects like mathematics, you need to go beyond the textbook syllabus; maths cannot be taught in a simple, standalone way if you want students to, firstly, engage with the topic, and, secondly, develop the skills they need to thrive at university and beyond. Students are full of curiosity and it's the duty of the teacher to take this

curiousness and turn it into an investigation and hence a learning experience. There are many ways you can do this both within the boundaries of the classroom and as extra-curricular activities.

Classroom practice

In the very first instance, teachers need to make students feel comfortable as soon as they step through the classroom door – we need to help them overcome that initial fear. If a student is feeling anxious about their mathematical ability, it's important to sit them down and focus on what their strengths are and then build from there. Teachers need to remember to look at students as individuals; everybody has a different threshold, learning curve and skills – and we need to work to help them grow. It takes a lot of time and patience, but eventually we can begin to break down the barriers and help all students discover their abilities and a love of the subject. Research suggests that if teachers can take the time to encourage children to try to approach a problem in a different way – a way that suits them – this can be incredibly beneficial for shifting the student's mind set.

Getting to know your students, their strengths and their interests, can go a long way in making them feel more comfortable with mathematics and can also allow teachers to personalise lessons, engaging students by linking to something they already know and love. Before every lesson I take the time to chat with my students – not about mathematics but about their hobbies, what sports they like and other interests. I can then apply this to what we're learning; for example, recently we have been covering quadratic functions, and, because half of my students either

“One of the wonderful things about mathematics is that it plays such a big role in our everyday lives.”

play football or rugby, I initiated a maths exploration in the classroom looking theoretically at the moment you kick the ball up and how it comes down, plotting the trajectory. I try to make my students feel that mathematics can be more enjoyable – it’s not just numbers, it can provide a whole new perspective on a football or rugby match.

Bringing enjoyment to the mathematics syllabus can be achieved in a number of ways and it’s often the students who can help a teacher direct their lessons in a way that is fun and engaging. A common theme throughout my classroom is a love of technology – my students are always the first to want to get their laptops out! As such, I tend to use technology to enhance my lessons as much as possible. Building again on the quadratic function unit within the IB syllabus, we used technology and graphing apps to launch a maths investigation into parabolas and how they work in real-world situations. The students learnt a lot, many noting ‘Oh, I didn’t know that’, and they even asked if they could do this kind of maths exploration again. Assigning real-world investigations and thinking about maths in context is a fantastic way to make maths feel less intimidating for anxious students - when you can see it happening outside in real life, it’s automatically easier and it engages the students’ curiosity too.

Going beyond the curriculum

One of the wonderful things about mathematics is that it plays



ACS International School Cobham (LW)

such a big role in our everyday lives. Presenting mathematics as part of a wider STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) initiative or activity can be incredibly rewarding for students and also provides many entry-routes for a wide range of students – particularly girls.

About five years ago I established a STEM club for High School students at ACS Cobham. From my teaching experience, I felt that we needed something to encourage students to take more risks in their learning. In mathematics, students often feel this stigma that it’s not okay to get the answer wrong – but we need to demonstrate that that is simply how we learn. Through the STEM club activities, we provide a ‘safe space’ for students to have more freedom to make mistakes; we are testing and encouraging students to take risks, while developing their mathematical knowledge too.

“Assigning real-world investigations and thinking about maths in context is a fantastic way to make maths feel less intimidating for anxious students”.

The biggest projects we usually run are the FIRST® LEGO® League challenge and the Land Rover challenge. In FIRST® LEGO® Leagues students work in teams of up to 10 to build and programme a LEGO robot to complete a series of missions and are also required to present a project which solves a problem related to the annual theme. Last year, the High School STEM Club collaborated with the ACS Cobham Middle School to form our LEGO team and this provided a wonderful opportunity for the students of different ages, who did not previously know



ACS International School Cobham (LW)

each other, to work together and provide valuable mentoring. Rather than learning from teachers or grownups, the older students acted like big brothers and sisters for the Middle School students and again this helped to ease some of the anxiety around mathematics and STEM. Both parties enjoyed this collaboration and the team even went through to the National finals!

The gender disparity in STEM subjects at higher education is alarming - according to UNESCO, only 35% of STEM students in higher education globally are women. But, research also suggests that a powerful way to engage girls in STEM subjects is to provide hands-on, inquiry-based STEM experiences that incorporate practices used by STEM professionals. At ACS Cobham we run a number of initiatives which are specifically designed for females, including Talent 2030 which enables girls to take on an engineering or manufacturing project in any form that they are interested in. One student, inspired by the concept of electric cars, looked into car batteries and the engineering side of how they work. It is enormously important for students to have the freedom to explore the topics they are inspired by; once they're engaged in that, the mathematics specific learning will follow.

Outcomes

Ensuring students enjoy their mathematics learning has a dual benefit: firstly, it helps students engage in their learning and overcome a fear of mathematics that has the potential to plague them for the rest of their lives. Secondly, it provides valuable opportunities for students to learn beyond the textbook and exams. My goal as a teacher and STEM club leader is to help students develop the skills they will need once they leave school and hit real life – confidence, communication, risk-taking, creativity, innovation, problem-solving to name a few. Through effective teaching practices, students can learn those skills and have fun while doing so. Of course, things will be different once they enter the workplace, but if students can have some experiences before they enter the big world, then that's a real bonus.



Dr Karolina Hammer is an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) Mathematics teacher at ACS International School Cobham. Karolina started her career in the engineering industry, where she worked first as a researcher while completing her studies and then as a civil engineer. She then switched to teaching and gained experience in secondary schools and as a university lecturer before joining ACS Cobham in 2011. Dr Karolina is now an Apple certified teacher, an IB Mathematics Examiner and also leads a number of extra-curricular activities and competitions to help students develop a greater interest, and ability, in STEM subjects.

Bibliography

Bell, Derek, Maths Anxiety Summit Report. London: The Maths Anxiety Trust and Learnus, 2018.

Boaler, Jo. Mathematical Mindsets: Unleashing Students' Potential through Creative Math, Inspiring Messages and Innovative Teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2016.

Luttenberger, Silke, Sigrid Wimmer and Manuela Paechter, "Spotlight on math anxiety," *Psychol Res Behav Manag* 11, (2018): 311–322.

SciGirls Connect. "Proven Strategies for Engaging Girls in STEM." SciGirls Connect. 2019. Accessed Nov, 2020. <http://www.scigirlsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SciGirls-Strategies-One-Page.pdf>.

UNESCO. Cracking the code: girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Paris: UNESCO, 2017.

Derek Bell, Maths Anxiety Summit Report (London: The Maths Anxiety Trust and Learnus, 2018): 8.

Silke Luttenberger, Sigrid Wimmer and Manuela Paechter, "Spotlight on math anxiety," *Psychol Res Behav Manag* 11, (2018): 316.

Jo Boaler, Mathematical Mindsets: Unleashing Students' Potential through Creative Math, Inspiring Messages and Innovative Teaching (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 68.

"Proven Strategies for Engaging Girls in STEM", SciGirls Connect, 2019, accessed Nov, 2020. <http://www.scigirlsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SciGirls-Strategies-One-Page.pdf>.

UNESCO, Cracking the code: girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (Paris: UNESCO, 2017): 11.

"Proven Strategies for Engaging Girls in STEM", SciGirls Connect, 2019, accessed Nov, 2020. <http://www.scigirlsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SciGirls-Strategies-One-Page.pdf>.

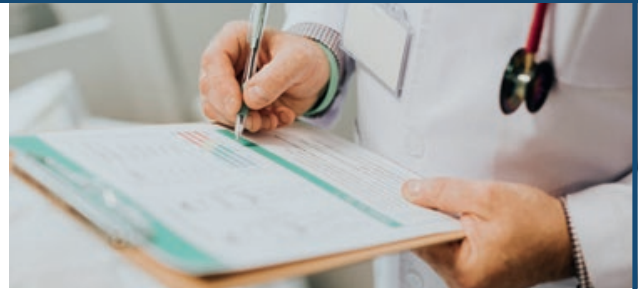


Affordable, Local Driver Medicals

Planning your next school trip or sports fixture?

Pupils' safety is paramount - Ensure your driver is licensed to drive minibuses.

- The UK's leading minibus medical provider
- Weekend, evening and out of term clinics
- Site visits to suit your staff
- D4 Driver medicals from £55 (including eye test)
- Experienced Doctors
- Trusted by 4000 professional drivers a month
- Local service and 70 locations nationwide



Rated Excellent 
on  Trustpilot

BOOK YOUR MEDICAL

d4drivers.uk/book-now | 0300 3030 668 | bookings@d4drivers.uk

Is your catering really adding value to your pupils' experience?

Your catering says a lot about what sort of school you are.

We've been helping schools and businesses maximise the potential of their catering for over 30 years.

Our small, specialist team adds value through operational reviews, business planning and strategy creation, contract auditing, benchmarking and supporting schools when they want to tender their catering contract.

We are an independent catering consultancy of industry experts who have all held senior roles within the catering industry and have a passion for healthy, culturally enriched food, first class service, championing sustainability and social enterprise.

We pride ourselves in passing our skills on to our clients, so they are better able to manage their facilities, supported by our post-consultancy 12-month free telephone advice line.

We would welcome a no obligation chat on how we can help you improve your catering operation.

Call or email Chris Stern on 01403 273555 / 07802 863847

chris.stern@sternconsultants.co.uk

www.sternconsultants.co.uk



STERN CONSULTANCY

Put 'bums on seats' with...



- Insightful marketing
- Considered creative
- Engaging digital
- Perfect print



Journey with us

t: +44 (0)1707 876 555

e: hello@barley.agency

w: barley.agency



Hollygirt School (M)

CATHERINE MEILLEURE

Do humour and learning mix well?

Learning requires effort, and that is a serious activity. On top of this, the figure of the teacher, who carries a certain authority, has always called for respect. That said, the quest for well-being is now present in almost every environment, and rigid hierarchical relationships are no longer appropriate. The pedagogical effectiveness of games and gamification, not only among young people, but also among adults, is well documented, and the importance of emotions in learning is no longer denied.

This leads us to humour, an ingredient that, in the classroom, is most often spontaneous and dependent on the teacher's personality, but which deserves to be taken a little more "seriously," given its potential positive and negative impacts. Without making an exhaustive analysis of the subject, here are some things to think about.

Irresistible humour

On the list of the most prized human and relational qualities, having a sense of humour occupies a special place. We know it: tactful use of humour is a formidable weapon of seduction, in the broadest sense of the word! It is because it mobilizes some of the most sophisticated cognitive faculties in the speaker: self-awareness, mastery of the nuance of language, understanding of emotions and non-verbal language, spontaneity, empathy... and because it usually provokes in the recipient that most pleasant and valid reflex that is laughter!

This ability, which can be elevated to the rank of "art," is all the more precious to us since it could well be one of the last strongholds of the human race in front of the machine; artificial intelligence is not on the verge of "cracking" its codes (i). There aren't, therefore, many who do not appreciate the distance, the de-dramatization, the relaxation and all the other benefits that can come from humour.

In the context of pedagogy and learning, subject of our interests here, a few studies seem to support the idea that learners better perceive a teacher who makes good use of humour in the classroom than one who makes little use of it. While this is not surprising, let us insist on the importance of "good use"

(ii), since it is often enough to have a slight clumsiness to break the appeal. A German study (iii) also reveals that students, while they attach more importance to humour in a course than teachers, are more sensitive than teachers to negative humorous situations.

Few researchers in the field of educational sciences have explored in depth the links between humour and learning. Among the first to try to overcome the lack of empirical studies on the subject was Avner Ziv, Professor of Psychology at Tel Aviv University. Ziv argued that humour could do more than just mobilize students' attention, suggesting that it could promote learning by the association of ideas. In 1988, he published the results of his experiments with two groups of psychology students for a full term, each group having received instruction in the same subject, but one with humour and the other without. The first group ended the semester with a higher average than the second group, 86.4% versus 73.1%. The problem is that evaluating the pedagogical effectiveness of humour is far from simple since the variables involved are so many and for the most part impossible to isolate.

Define the elusive

Humour may be part of our daily lives, but when we look at it more seriously, we realize that it can be of immeasurable complexity. Robert Aird, a Quebec humour historian, argued in an interview with *Le Devoir* that "Any definition of laughter or what makes you laugh has a reducing effect," adding that it is nevertheless what makes this subject so exciting. Among our neighbours to the south, Jim Holt, author and contributor to *New Yorker* and *New York Times Magazine* as a specialist in science and philosophy, is also one of those who have tried to understand humour better. After a rigorous investigation, he concludes in his book *Stop Me If You've Heard This: A History and Philosophy of Jokes* that while the mechanics of laughter are scientifically dismantlable, the same cannot be said for humour, which remains mysterious. Journalist Joel Warner and Peter McGraw, director of the Humor Research Lab in Colorado, have travelled around the world to try to understand this phenomenon and published their observations in a book called *The Humor Code*. The most convincing theory,

according to them, would be that of the “benign violation,” put forward by the linguist Thomas Veatch at the end of the 1980s, who maintains that we laugh at what seems inappropriate or shocking... but not too much! However, the “benign violation” as such varies from one culture to another – and even from one person to another – according to its taboos, codes, history, etc.

In France, linguist Patrick Charaudeau, who has studied the categorization of humorous facts based on several parameters derived from speech analysis, concedes that while the literature on humour is abundant, talking about this subject poses several difficulties, particularly because it is necessary to “avoid approaching this question by taking laughter as a guarantee of the humorous fact” or because it is necessary to overcome the challenges posed by “the choice of terms used to designate the humorous act.” According to the linguist, humorous acts rarely fall into a single category. “Here, we find ourselves in the presence of a fact of discourse which, perhaps more than others, plays on the plurality of the senses, which makes it charming. The meaning of a humorous fact depends on the combination of several categories that can coexist,” he says. Charaudeau also describes any humorous fact as “an act of enunciation for strategic purposes to make the other person an accomplice.” As for the possible effects of the humorous act, he describes them as “types of complicity” – playful, cynical and mocking critique – which, while distinguishing themselves, can, in his view, overlap with each other.

In short, analyzing humour is not a light thing... Despite the blurred nature and contradictions encountered when exploring this mysterious continent, it is still possible to navigate it with the help of some reference points that we owe to the various disciplines that have taken an interest in it.

Vital mechanism

Humour is part of our defence mechanisms and is defined in the DSM, the American bible of psychiatry as follows: “A mechanism by which the subject responds to emotional conflicts or internal or external stressors by highlighting the amusing or ironic aspects of the conflict or stressors.” A sense of humour is a faculty that develops very early in children. If their smiles are a reflex in their first weeks of life, around the age of four months, they already begin to laugh at what amuses them. “Unlike adults, very young children can laugh 20 times at the same joke, because repetition reassures them and helps them anticipate certain situations to have more fun,” we learn on the website *Naître et Grandir*. Like play, humour develops in children in several specific phases, and some believe it has a role in the acquisition of information useful for survival.

It is difficult to deny that humour is a fundamentally social act of humankind, as anthropologist Christine Escallier explains in *Pedagogy and Humour*: laughter as a mean of building an attentive audience in the classroom: “From the anthropological point of view, talking about laughter is first to emphasize the cultural aspect of behaviour. Anthropologists, like sociologists, consider laughter as a mode of communication, so for Desmond Morris, laughter is closely linked to the development of social life in primitive man.” In his article *Humour and Communication*. The link between emotions and cognition, the communications teacher Maria Lucília Marcos expresses how, no matter how you look at it, humour is always part of a relationship involving the individual and the collective: “As a response to certain demands of living together, hiding an ulterior motive of understanding and complicity with others, laughter has an undeniable social function: in the face of any individual or collective imperfection, laughter and laughter play, at the same time, as a correction and as repression or repulsion of human distractions and events. [...] Humour and laughter always reveal a kind of individual tension that projects itself on the collective (which can be, of course, a collective of two) and absorbs the unease of others (or the other), according to a complex process of communication and capillarity, albeit brief.”

Christine Escallier also points out that humour has a filiation with a highly ethical value: “During the 19th and 20th centuries, laughter was related to the greatest of all wisdom. For Friedrich Nietzsche and Vladimir Jankélévitch, humour allows man to

become aware of himself, to rise, socially and intellectually, by surpassing his condition. By becoming aware of oneself, one becomes aware of the other. Laughter, therefore, contributes to the formation of humans and the development of their humanity.”

These analyses show that humour is as important for our psychological balance as it is for our social balance. The classroom, being a microcosm of society and adding the fact that we spend a good part of our lives in it, comes with the necessity for humour to be included in it and for us to take a greater interest in its effects in this context. Like play, humour seems to share with learning natural connections, but while there is no longer any doubt about the relationship between play and learning, it is not the case of humour. However, do not the potentials attributed to it by Nietzsche and Jankélévitch more than a century ago, correspond to those of learning?

A double-edged educational tool

Despite the scarcity of empirical studies on the links between humour and learning, a few studies on the subject provide some insight into what distinguishes humour that could be called “pedagogical” from humour that is “non-pedagogical.” In this regard, the German Dieter Kassner published *Humour in the Classroom* in 2002, after examining the relationship between humour and the pedagogical context of students and teachers in commercial vocational training schools. He defines “pedagogical humour” as “humour that influences pedagogical processes in a targeted way,” adding that “if humour influences the objectives of the pedagogical process in a positive way, it can be considered as part of the pedagogical tools.” Among his observations, Kassner notes that students and teachers agree that a course should not be without humour, but that the humorous situations experienced in it should be positive and fall within a certain humorous spectrum – which could be described as “benevolent” (iv). The limits of benevolent humour are exceeded when one enters the spectrum of mockery, sarcasm, irony or so-called malignant enjoyment or when one uses humour excessively.

Similarly, Avner Ziv concludes in his study that while humour can significantly help to memorize information, the teacher must use it in moderation and avoid sarcasm, at the risk of having a negative influence on learners. An article published on the Israeli Ministry’s website summarizes Ziv’s reservations about the systematic use of humour in the classroom: “He concludes that humour is not essential in teaching and is certainly not the most important quality of a good teacher: it should only be used by those who feel comfortable practicing it.” Ethnologist Christine Escallier comes to a similar recommendation: “If I advocate the use of laughter in teaching, it should be used sparingly, without making it a principle or a rule, but simply a healthy didactic tool among others.”

It goes without saying that humour influences as much our intellect as our emotions, one and the other being intimately linked. Since we now know how much emotions can become a driving force or a brake on the learning process, it is essential that the teachers – who are primarily responsible for injecting

“By becoming aware of oneself, one becomes aware of the other. Laughter, therefore, contributes to the formation of humans and the development of their humanity.”

a benevolent and measured sense of humour into a classroom – take an interest in the emotional impacts of the humour they use with their students (v).

Humour destabilizes, for better or for worse, the traditional relationship between teacher and learner, as Christine Escallier depicts it: “One of the paradoxes of teaching through humour is that it transforms the study context, in which knowledge is usually transmitted, where discipline and rigour prevail. The teacher-student relationship is established on the basis of complementary and stereotypical behaviours: the teacher speaks, the student listens; the teacher orders, the student obeys, etc. Introducing humour and laughter in a place where it is generally highly controlled or even banned, inevitably leads to physical change, a different physical and gestural attitude on the part of the teacher that will reflect on his public: the students.”

In a post entitled *Humour and Teaching* published in the *Voir*, philosopher and essayist Normand Baillargeon asks himself if humour has a place in teaching, if we can learn through it, if it really has pedagogical virtues. The columnist begins by mentioning the pedagogical function that satire has played since antiquity: “By bringing to light, through mockery,

“Humour may be part of our daily lives, but when we look at it more seriously, we realize that it can be of immeasurable complexity.”

what these institutions, people, etc. have that is ridiculous or indefensible, satire invites us to reassess them and, hopefully, to change them. In this way, it fulfils one of the great social functions of humour, which is to reveal our shortcomings by inviting us to correct them.”

The problem, as the columnist points out, is that the use of satire or humour in the classroom is risky and can, if it fails, cause considerable damage to the teacher himself, to some students and the classroom atmosphere. So how can we get the most out of humour in the classroom, make people laugh to make them think and generate change while avoiding at all costs hurting and creating the opposite effect? Baillargeon has two suggestions that he explains with the help of examples: the didactic and mnemonic joke – the idea of which came to him from a book introducing him to philosophy written in the form of jokes – and the witty remark.

Finally, a word on the Socratic irony to which the columnist refers, since, he recalls, it is “impossible to talk about humour and education without mentioning the first – and possibly the greatest – professor of philosophy: Socrates.” “This Socratic irony consisted of pretending ignorance in front of an ignorant’s surge of pride, who thinks he knows everything and questioning him by expressing the need to learn from him. The result of the exercise, conducted in front of witnesses, is that, in the end, the so-called scientist gradually loses his presence and is finally forced to admit his own ignorance,” explains Baillargeon. Although like Kassner, the columnist admits that irony has no real place in the classroom, it would be wrong to assert that this process, particularly when expressed in the Socrates way, is devoid of pedagogical value: “It is not recommended to practice this in the classroom. But before an Important and a Pretentious one, the pedagogical value of this way of doing things can be great, if not for the Important itself, at least for those who observe the verbal jousting and who will conclude, as the child pointing his finger at the parade of the Important, that this royal person is indeed naked. And it’s really not pretty to see...”



Bridgewater School (N)

Christine Escallier reminds us that in class, humorous expression can take many forms. “The teacher can project an image (cartoon, comic strip, photograph, etc.); he can also give a humorous text to read; tell a story or use terms from the talk of young people or any other social and community groups. But whatever the chosen means and/or the medium used, the difficulty lies in knowing what type of humour to deploy, and for what type of audience (age of pupils, cultures). It is necessary to use a kind of “neutral” humour; avoid jokes about religions (God, Mohammed), about political leaders (right, left, extreme) because they could then be considered as a backdoor way for the teachers to express their thoughts and manipulate their students.”

The issue of humour in the classroom could be summarized by this reflection by the French pedagogue and philosopher Hugues Lethierry, taken from his book *Training in Humour*, to the effect that we must “move from the involuntary humour of the school to a conscious use, partly controlled, to overcome institutional conflicts and take a step back from our own mood, develop with the divergent spirit the imagination and its indefinite potentialities.”

The potential of humour in the classroom

Facing new knowledge, having to admit your ignorance or accepting that knowledge that you thought was right is the opposite can put you in uncomfortable positions, but this is indissociable to learning. Humour can be a powerful antidote to this discomfort, if only because it desacralizes knowledge, thus making it less intimidating and thus helping the learner to tame it and then appropriate it.

In his post discussed above, Normand Baillargeon summarizes the potential benefits of humour in pedagogy when used judiciously: “The classroom atmosphere can be improved, interest in the subject and participation can increase, stress can decrease, relationships between students and between teachers and students can be better. Humour can still attract or maintain attention, provide a welcome break from a difficult lesson, break down psychological barriers and even facilitate the expression of ideas that would otherwise not be advanced.” It should be noted that several studies – more from the field of psychology than from the educational sciences – indicate that humour helps to create a favourable learning environment, attracts learners’ attention, and stimulates their creativity and motivation (vi).

Concerning memorization, Avner Ziv, who had noted in his experiments the positive impact of humour on this ability, hypothesized that we would be more likely to remember information that generated emotions. It should be noted that neuroscience has recently confirmed that the learning process unfolds in a series of specific steps in which emotions have an up-to-date role, whether to stimulate attention and active

engagement or to allow the encoding of information (vii).

Christine Escallier evokes the necessary balance – one could also speak of homeostasis – that humour can bring to the learning context, which necessarily comes with its share of seriousness and rigidity: “Contraries are a source of dynamism. From this complementarity, necessary for every human being, the Work/Leisure couple here follows the theatrical rule of the three units – action, place and time – whereas in pedagogy this couple is fundamentally and traditionally always separated at school (Work = classroom / Leisure = playground). Consequently, the teacher creates an atmosphere conducive to study – Tonus / Relaxation –, that is, when the intellectual effort of understanding and memorization is compensated by relaxation and casualness. Thus this gymnastics, both physiological and intellectual, increases the student’s receptivity and emissivity. In other words, the student participates. This is the objective sought by every educator, because teaching is also, like laughter, communicating.”

Until research gives us a clear picture of all the potential of humour in learning, we can at least note this evidence, as Escallier does, that it can at least help to “combat the boredom that too often reigns in a classroom” ...

Catherine Meilleur is Creative Content Writer @KnowledgeOne. She has over 15 years of experience in research and writing. Having worked as a journalist and educational designer, she is interested in everything related to learning: from educational psychology to neuroscience, and the latest innovations that can serve learners, such as virtual and augmented reality. She is also passionate about issues related to the future of education at a time when a real revolution is taking place, propelled by digital technology and artificial intelligence.

Bibliography

- i AI, Make Me Laugh!
- ii the Effective Humor in the Classroom: A Brief Guide
- iii Kassner, 2002
- iv Hain, 2000
- v The Importance of Emotions in Learning and 4 Emotions of Learning
- vi Foll, 2007; Garner, 2005; Guégan, 2008; Ziv, 1979; RiBland and Gruntz-Stoll, 2009
- vii Neuroscience: Learning in 4 Steps

Source and full references: <https://knowledgeone.ca/do-humour-and-learning-mix-well/>



Woodlands School Great Warley (E)

Providing good nutrition

By Emily Stuart, *apetito* Dietitian



When it comes to planning tasty and well-balanced meals in schools, it is important to first consider the nutritional needs of children at various ages, as well as the common nutritional concerns that children can experience during their years at school. Just like adults do, children require a balance of macronutrients (carbohydrate, protein, and fat) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) to help them thrive and ensure their nutritional intake enables them to keep up with key periods of growth.

Principles of Good Nutrition in School-aged Children

Planning balanced meals for children at school will help to support this period of rapid growth and give children the energy they need to set their learning off on the right foot. If growing children do not get enough variety in their diet, they can experience the effects of nutrient deficiencies or faltered growth.

A practical way to help schools to focus on good dietary habits in their settings is to consider the nutritional pattern set out in the government's Eatwell Guide. This familiar public health nutrition model is appropriate for most children over 5 years of age and can help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group, for example, sharing the well-known and evidence-based nutrition message that most of us would benefit from eating more fruit and vegetables, more wholegrain foods, and more sustainably sourced oily fish (or alternative omega-3 source for vegetarians).

Of the evidence available that looks at the effect of nutritious school lunches on attainment levels, the focus does tend to be on those children receiving free school meals in a state school setting. Nevertheless, despite these gaps in the research relating to the wider school population, it is broadly agreed that children who are fed well, learn well.

Eating at School: The Environment

To improve the overall experience and benefit of meals consumed at school, we must, of course, consider the nutritional content of the meals, but also the environment in which they are enjoyed. Minimising noise distractions in the dining room, reducing queueing time, playing music, and considering re-organising tables and chairs are all important factors to consider when thinking about your dining experience. Whilst in normal times we can also give thought to providing as much social interaction as possible for children at mealtimes at school, throughout the pandemic this is understandably more challenging. Yet, where possible, it is still advisable to encourage social peer-peer mealtimes to help children link the experience of eating with positive interactions.



To find out how *apetito* can support your school, please visit www.apetito.co.uk/school-meal-services/

in schools



Example menu

Practical Recommendations for Healthy School Meals

Key findings from the UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS), a continuous Rolling Programme designed to assess the dietary habits and nutritional status of the general adult and child population in the UK, provide us with the latest insights into the diets eaten by children in the UK.

The key findings suggest children, on average, are not eating enough fruit and vegetables, fibre, or oily fish; and are generally consuming too much added sugar and higher than the recommended levels of saturated fat. By making small, but meaningful, changes to the food we provide for children, we can begin to close the gap between what the typical diet of a child looks like, and how evidence shows us it should look.

Practical, evidence-based guidance, provided by the School Food Standards, outlines menu planning considerations to help you meet the nutritional needs of children at their lunchtime meal. For example, vary your fruit and vegetable offerings, ensuring different options, colour, and texture are a primary focus. Ensure to include an oily fish option at least once every three weeks and avoid providing purely cheese-based options for vegetarian children. Desserts, particularly those based on at least 50% fruit, are appropriate after a lunchtime meal and these higher sugar foods should not be demonised. However, sweets and cakes should not be routinely provided between meals. For those with special educational needs, personalised meal plans should be put in place to ensure nutritional intake through individual accepted foods.

Providing Good Nutrition at Lunchtime

Involving your apetito account manager with planning your school menus can help you to maintain focus on these points. apetito have an extensive product range and a team of dedicated staff who can support you with planning menus including for those needing special diets, sharing our approach to sustainability, and implementing our systems and services. A collaborative approach to menu planning and school catering is essential. Consider involving other school staff outside of the catering team, including parents, and crucially, the pupils. Children want to know more about their food as much as adults do and if we can involve them in decision making it is a firm step toward improving their knowledge and appreciation of food, thus setting them up for a healthier attitude toward food and nutrition for life.



	Meat Free Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Main	BBQ Mexican Bean & Jackfruit	Beef Bolognaise Sauce	Chicken & Sweetcorn Bake	Sausages in Onion Gravy	Salmon Crumble
Vegetarian		Lentil Bolognaise	Creamy Vegetable Cheese Bake	Vegetarian Sausage Casserole	Beetroot & Feta Frittata
Accompaniment	White Rice	Penne Pasta	Sauté Potatoes	Mashed Potatoes	Croquette Potatoes
Accompaniment	Mixed Vegetables	Sliced Carrots	Broccoli	Baked Beans	Sweetcorn
Dessert	Bread & Butter Pudding	Apple & Strawberry Compote with Crumble Topping	Chocolate Sponge with Apple Compote	Plum & Cherry Pie	Clotted Cream Rice Pudding

WILTSHIRE
EST. FARM 1991
FOODS

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERS

Future Education	Jane Maclennan	East
Al Sadiq	Kohei Seyed	London North
Al Zahra	Zamina Rizvi	London North
Hendon Preparatory School	Sarah Jane Davies	London North
Farlington School	Louise Higson	London South
Cameron Vale School	Bridget Saul	London West
Farnborough Hill School	Alexandra Neil	London West
Herries Preparatory School	Rob Grosse	London West
Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation Slough	Sajeada Ahmed	London West
Maida Vale School	Steven Winter	London West
The King Fahad Academy	Mark Dunning	London West
Darul Uloom Birmingham	Azahrul Islam	Midlands
Gloverspiece School	Lynne Duffy	Midlands
Alex Park Democratic School	Susana Lopez Penedo	North
Ashbrooke House School	Adrian Gifford	South West
Cardiff Academy	Andy Henderson	South West

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Aurora Eccles School	Arabella Hardy	East
Colchester High School	Karen Gracie-Langrick	East
Ipswich High School	Mark Howe	East
Mander Portman Woodward Cambridge	Tom Caston	East
Oaks International	Amanda Gibbard	East
St Margaret's Prep School	Carolyn Moss	East
Abercorn School	Chris Hammond	London North
Beehive Preparatory School	Jamie Gurr	London North
Coopersale Hall School	Claire Osborn	London North
Ealing Independent College	Allan Cairns	London North
Hendon Preparatory School	Tushi Gorasia	London North
Holland House School	Emily Brown	London North
Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts	Gynis Rodgers	London North
Lyonsdown School	Helen Stanton-Tonner	London North
Mount House School	Sarah Richardson	London North
Normanhurst School	Jacqueline Job	London North
St Anthony's Girls School	Donal Brennan	London North
St James Prep School	Kris Spencer	London North
Teikyo School	Yukihiro Hamada	London North
The King's School Harpenden	Andy Reeves	London North

Bellerbys College Brighton	Sarah Bakhtiari	London South
Caversham Preparatory School	Naomi Williams	London West
Eaton Square Upper School Mayfair	Trish Watt	London West
Luckley House School	Areti Bizior	London West
Meadowbrook School	Sarah Warner	London West
Red Balloon Centre Reading	Christina Pepper	London West
Sinclair House School	Sasha Gibson	London West
The Gregg Preparatory School	Matt Pascoe	London West
Wandsworth Preparatory School	Jo Fife	London West
Mylnhurst Catholic Preparatory School	Hannah Cunningham	Midlands
St Winefride's Convent School	Elizabeth Devey	Midlands
Alderley Edge School for Girls	Nicola Smillie	North
Brackenfield School	Joe Masterson	North
Clarendon Cottage School	Emily Bagnall	North
Hipperholme Grammar School	Nicholas James	North
Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate	Jeff Smith	North
EF International School	Robert Tasker	South West
Highgate Hill House School	Gina Wagland	South West

SCHOOL ASSOCIATES

Christopher Lofthouse
 David Williams
 David Young
 Tahani Aljafari
 Karen Wallington
 Graeme Smith



St Christopher's School Trust (Epsom)

ANNIE THACKRAY

Blending Challenge and Enjoyment

During a recent conversation with a group of friends about degree choices and career dreams, one member of the group gave a throw away comment that has stuck in my mind ever since. He said, "I love learning about the past and would have loved to study history but I hated history lessons at school". This concept should surely be an oxymoron: to love learning about the past but not to have been engaged with the very subject dedicated to teaching it? My reply was immediate and consisted of absolute faith that the next generation will not see history lessons like that. Talking from my experience as Head of a small Pre-Prep, I then began to discuss how history is currently taught with a delicious emphasis on the practical wherever possible and a very early introduction to an awareness of bias by historians with even young children asked to consider the primary source of their factual evidence taken from books or the internet.

The job of any teacher is to inspire and motivate. In my opinion the independent sector lead the way with the confidence that 'enjoyment' is a pre-requisite to successful learning and certainly here at St Christopher's our stated objective is to provide 'irresistible' learning activities in a stimulating environment that cannot fail to engage even the most potentially reluctant child. In order to prepare our young children to succeed in subjects such as the humanities, we need our children to enjoy and feel confident about writing, but above all to believe in themselves as independent writers.

We are famous for our writing, as our Reception classrooms will demonstrate. There are many daily reasons to write independently, allowing the children to use early phonics skills with confidence. Using fiction is a perfect initial stimulus. Under the umbrella topic of 'Superheroes' Julia Donaldson's 'Superworm' inspired the Reception teachers to fill the classroom with worms! Children patiently layered the worm tank with compost and newspaper strips before putting the real worms in to it, having handled, measured and studied them with joy! Very lifelike jelly worms were placed on every table encouraging maths for the part-part-whole method of

investigating numbers, and the children cut out different lengths of worm before laying them out across the classroom to order them according to size.

The following week Sue Hendra and Paul Linnett's delightful book 'Supertato' launched a room full of industry. By creating a crime scene overnight with vegetables left taped around the classroom in perilous places, and signs of Evil Pea at work, children were delighted to witness the chaos and inspired to seize sheets of paper to write to Supertato asking for his help as illustrated by 4 year old Maryam's contribution complete with full stop: "help me sooputayow plis." The success of diverse learning opportunities comes with strategic planning. The cooks were asked to arrive in pretend shock describing how there had been a break in at the school kitchens with the freezer door mysteriously left open. Cue a discussion about frozen food, why it exists and what happens to it when subject to heat. The children were beyond excited (possibly at the thought of no more peas!) as they sought paper once again to write down their findings and plan a strategy. The 'Making Area' was packed with children trying to make an Evil Pea 'catching machine' ranging from helicopters with cages to long mouse trap configurations, the constructions kept coming with children deliberating on their choice of machine, diligently perfecting

"We need our children to enjoy and feel confident about writing, but above all to believe in themselves as independent writers".

their designs oblivious to the bell for break time. Early Years excellence provides the foundation that KS1 can build upon. A reason to write in Early Years generates handwriting practice and plausible phonic attempts which are duly celebrated and embedded. By the time the children arrive at the top of the school their foundations skills are honed and strengthened, ready for the icing on the top. That brings me back to my opening paragraph. How can we protect the magic of history when we are trying to ignite a lifelong passion for the subject?

Enter the practical approach but never underestimate a Year 2 child. Here is how we taught the Plague to Year 2: when considering the plague now, teachers will now be able to reference on a recent experience in living memory for the children to draw upon by referring to the Covid-19 pandemic. During an interesting talk about using complex vocabulary the word 'isolation' was recently mentioned. In 2019 a handful of children may have heard of this concept but in 2020 the whole class was able to not only understand but spell it! To return to the plague of 1665, Year 2 began by considering sources such as drawings, paintings and diaries from the time. Each child was then given role to play, from the Mayor (declaring rules), to two Corpse Bearers who had a wonderful time! These roles included families, both rich and poor, merchant and doctors. The lesson moved into drama as the 6 and 7 year old children considered what they might be doing or saying in their allotted role with, in this case the King deciding to flee and a carriage driver turning away customers who wished to leave town with the sentence "No money? No ride!" The classroom was alive with creativity as the Teaching Assistant (primed with red face-paint) marked the plague ridden characters with buboes as the lesson unfolded. Posies of flowers were provided for people to hold and a pot of vinegar was placed in the centre of the classroom. Why? The children came up with ingenious ideas about the purpose of this vinegar pot which was actually designed to hold the coins in between exchanges from family to merchant and back again. An early sanitiser that, without debit cards to swipe might well have been wheeled out again during the pandemic!

With just five minutes to go until the end of the lesson, each child was delivered their fate by the teacher contained in an individually folded piece of paper. They were either able to flee or they had caught the plague and their time was coming to an end. Their final challenge was to write on a tea-stained page, a letter to a friend or relative from another town explaining what was going on in their town and what to look out for lest the plague should arrive in their town. As long as the children wrote with focus as their time on this earth might be nearly over, they could write anywhere in the room, on the carpet, even under

a desk. You can imagine the extraordinary results with children totally gripped and engaged by the experience with plenty to write about and everything to understand.

I hope that you will now understand my immediate and confident response to my friends discussing history for indeed, as I shared my personal experiences of current teaching with them, their optimistic faith in the future became equally strong. I am part of a creative and innovative school with high aspirations. We do not see the limits of working with young children we only see the possibilities and we are rewarded for our courageous expectations every single day.



Following a very happy time teaching in London, Annie Thackray arrived at St Christopher's Pre Prep School in leafy Surrey and began a very happy association now entering her 10th year as Headteacher. Her passions for literature, music and art were readily embraced by this creative and original school and she has been delighted with ambitious innovations such as annual Music Festivals, Great Read literature competitions within the school which involve local state schools and their award winning art department. Annie continues to love the creative demands of her job and the daily surprises and joys that are generated by working with children aged between 3 and 7.



St Christopher's School Trust (Epsom) (LS)



ISA Professional Development

how to book

ISA training promotes excellence in independent education and helps schools to keep up to date with the latest best practice.

Our online day courses take place via Zoom and offer a mixture of expert advice and networking opportunities.

Online training is offered at the affordable rate of £120 per delegate. Face-to-face training is £175 per delegate, with every second delegate offered at a discounted rate of £139.

For more information and to book, please visit our website: www.isaschools.org.uk/events

DRUGS NOW: NEW SUBSTANCES, NEW TRENDS, NEW ISSUES FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

4 March | Online via Zoom | 9.00am - 2.30pm

Who should attend? All staff who require up to date information on drugs issues

Course Aims:

- Examine the impact of new psychoactive substances
- Understand the problems associated with poly-drug use, in particular the impact on mental health
- Understand the increasing role that the internet and social media play in drugs culture
- Explore appropriate harm reduction advice to give pupils
- Explore the issues around advising pupils

Leadership

HOW TO BE AN OUTSTANDING PASTORAL LEADER

16 March | Online via Zoom | 9.00am – 2.30pm

Who should attend? Heads, deputy heads, existing and new pastoral leaders and boarding staff (middle or senior leadership)

Course Aims:

- Examine key facets of pastoral care
- Examine how ISI evaluate the quality of pastoral provision under the new inspection framework
- Explore practical ways to ensure your school conforms with current best practice
- Complete scenario-based exercises to develop strategies for tackling difficult pastoral issues

MANAGING DIFFICULT PEOPLE SUCCESSFULLY

17 March | Online via Zoom | 9.00am - 2.30pm

Who should attend? Heads, deputy heads, heads of department and pastoral leaders

Course Aims:

- Provide guidance on dealing with instances of serious pupil misbehaviour in a legally compliant manner
- Provide strategies for dealing with various types of difficult parents
- Equip leaders with the knowledge and skills to challenge staff under-performance and deal with misconduct
- Identify reasons for resistance to change and explore ways it can be overcome

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR TEAM

14 April | Holme Grange School | 10.00am – 3.30pm
(Or via Zoom as necessary)

Who should attend? Headteachers, senior leadership teams and team leaders

Course Aims:

- Equip leaders with further leadership knowledge and skills
- Develop more powerful communication skills for handling difficult people
- Understand core motivators and how it can influence people's choices and actions
- Learn how to leverage natural strengths and recognise potential weaknesses in your team
- Discover strategies to improve communication, teamwork and productivity

RECRUITMENT: MAINTAINING THE STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY AND FULFILLING PROCEDURES CORRECTLY

24 March | Online via Zoom | 9.00am - 2.30pm

Who should attend? Staff involved in making appointments and those who have a responsibility for recording evidence of the process.

Course Aims:

- Gain a greater understanding of required and best practice elements of the staff recruitment process
- Work with an experienced safeguarding specialist who will advise on ISI Regulatory Requirements
- Learn about the expectations of the recruitment process and how to ensure that its requirements are correctly evidenced
- Get assistance with developing procedures and associated checklists

Learning

CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

3 March | Online via Zoom | 9.00am - 2.30pm

Who should attend? SLT, middle leaders and teachers looking to develop critical thinking skills in their pupils

Course Aims:

- Explore practical ways to increase students' abilities in problem-solving pedagogies
- Turn typical classroom activities into engaging tasks, where learners do the cognitive work
- Discuss potential barriers in the way of critical thinking and how to remove them
- Promote a culture of deep thinking in the classroom

USING YOUR SCHOOL'S DATA TO RAISE STANDARDS IN THE CLASSROOM

16 April | ISA House, Great Chesterford | 10.00am - 3.30pm

(Or via Zoom as necessary)

Who should attend? Any member of staff who has responsibility for data collection, analysis, dissemination and use.

Course Aims:

- Take a more critical and evaluative approach to the acquisition and use of data
- Learn how to generate and use data from within your own school
- Understand how to get under the surface of the data and what it can tell us about pupils and classrooms

SAFEGUARDING: ASSESSING YOUR SCHOOL'S ONLINE HABITS AND IMPROVING YOUR SAFEGUARDING POLICY

23 March | Holme Grange School | 10.00am - 3.30pm

(Or via Zoom as necessary)

Who should attend? Those responsible for safeguarding within the school

Course Aims:

- Enable delegates to identify when and how children might be exposed to risk, including grooming and cyberbullying
- Bring you up to speed on all the latest trends in social networking, messaging, gaming and other activities
- Understand how the school can help to encourage safer online behaviour through education, positive cultures and school policies

Conferences

With a mix of informative speakers and open forum discussions, our day conferences offer an invaluable opportunity to join together with other like-minded professionals and keep up to date with the latest developments in your area.

SIXTH FORM LEADERS CONFERENCE

10 March | Online via Zoom | 9.30am - 2.30pm

DEPUTY AND ASSISTANT HEADS CONFERENCE

18 March | Online via Zoom | 9.30am - 2.30pm

As always we are also holding a range of inspection training, helping your school to stay up to date on the latest ISI guidance and keeping your staff prepared for whenever the inspector calls. More information can be found on the website.



St Nicholas School (LN)

MATT DONALDSON

Pupil-Driven Inquiry Projects; the end of fact-based learning

Whilst we of course all know of the many challenges and difficulties we have all faced in recent months, both personally and professionally, very little has yet been written on the positives that we can draw from the impact of the pandemic. Almost every element of our lives has of course changed in recent months, but perhaps more than any other industry, we as educators have a wonderful opportunity to take this moment to innovate and improve our strategies to suit pupils' skill sets and moreover their needs for the future.

To indulge a significant oversimplification, a case could be made that education has changed very little since the Education Acts through the 19th century, and dare we speculate, earlier than that. Learning was predicated on scarcity of information – stories and information passed down from elders to juniors, then in classrooms, with content dictated by teachers. This system worked because experienced individuals were the best source of knowledge available to those seeking to learn, be it individuals in a classroom or apprentices in a factory. Nowadays, we of course utilise different resources – keyboards replace slates and notebooks, interactive screens replace blackboards, but crucially, the premise remains largely the same. Information delivered in rigid boundaries – this is a science topic; here is a history lesson.

Today though, for pupils growing up in the Information Age, children studying have access to an overwhelming amount of content – not even the expression at their fingertips applies any more thanks to the advent of smart speakers and voice commands. Content can be read aloud by watches; practical

tutorials available in an instant via video. The dynamics of how people access information, and develop and learn new skills is rapidly changing.

Lockdown has brought a huge amount of innovation to our field, and so to return to the traditional strategy of pure fact retention would be a missed opportunity in terms of how we prepare children for the future.

Certainly at primary level, there is a strong emphasis on simply regurgitating information: Can you remember Henry VIII's six wives? Can you name three mountains around the world? Label the parts of this plant. Circle the pronouns in this passage. Whilst knowledge remains important, the accessibility of information nowadays means that we as educators have a much broader scope to teach the application of this knowledge.

So, what should this new curriculum focus on? Successful individuals in the workplace have the ability to problem solve, to interpret and analyse, to critique and question. These skills have always been important, but we have assumed that children have needed a grounding in basic knowledge before they learn them. Nowadays, with that basic knowledge more accessible, why not begin teaching skills at an earlier age, helping children to become adaptive learners, academically independent and resilient?

To achieve this end, greater focus is therefore required in allowing children to become independent learners. This does not mean that they are able to work on an activity for 30 minutes without disturbing the teacher – it means that they are

“We as educators have a wonderful opportunity to take this moment to innovate and improve our strategies to suit pupils’ skill sets and moreover their needs for the future.”

able to interpret a task, identify key elements of the question or activity, undertake appropriate research, select that which is most pertinent to their interpretation of the task, and then present accordingly. Prescriptive tasks that tell children exactly what do rely too much on the enthusiasm of a teacher at the front of a room, and the listening skills of their pupils. Broader tasks centred around independent learning represent a wonderful opportunity to ignite interest and passion in learning, as well as applicable skills for the future.

From the lessons and remote teaching that I have observed in the past few months, it has demonstrated that even children of a young age are much more resilient as learners than our current strategies give them credit for. We do not need to keep them within boxes, directing every task for them. When there are calls, as there are at present, to review how we deliver lessons, we should be able to begin to entrust them as self-motivated learners; organised pupils who increasingly know how to manage their time on a task, or can prioritise what needs to be done first. Because information is so much more prevalent, as much as we are teachers, perhaps we should see ourselves as facilitators – not just handing down information to the next generation, but allowing them to explore the content they have access to, and builds skills for the world beyond education in doing so.

To achieve this shift in teaching strategies, we also have an opportunity to do away with old subject paradigms – information does not exist in a vacuum, nor tasks and jobs outside of education, so teaching within strict boundaries can have a stifling effect on learning.

What triggers hope therefore, and makes the prospect of innovation less daunting, is that in many cases, it does not require fundamental shifts in what we teach. Cross-curricular learning has been around for some time, and it is these tasks which can facilitate the skills that we should be aiming to develop.

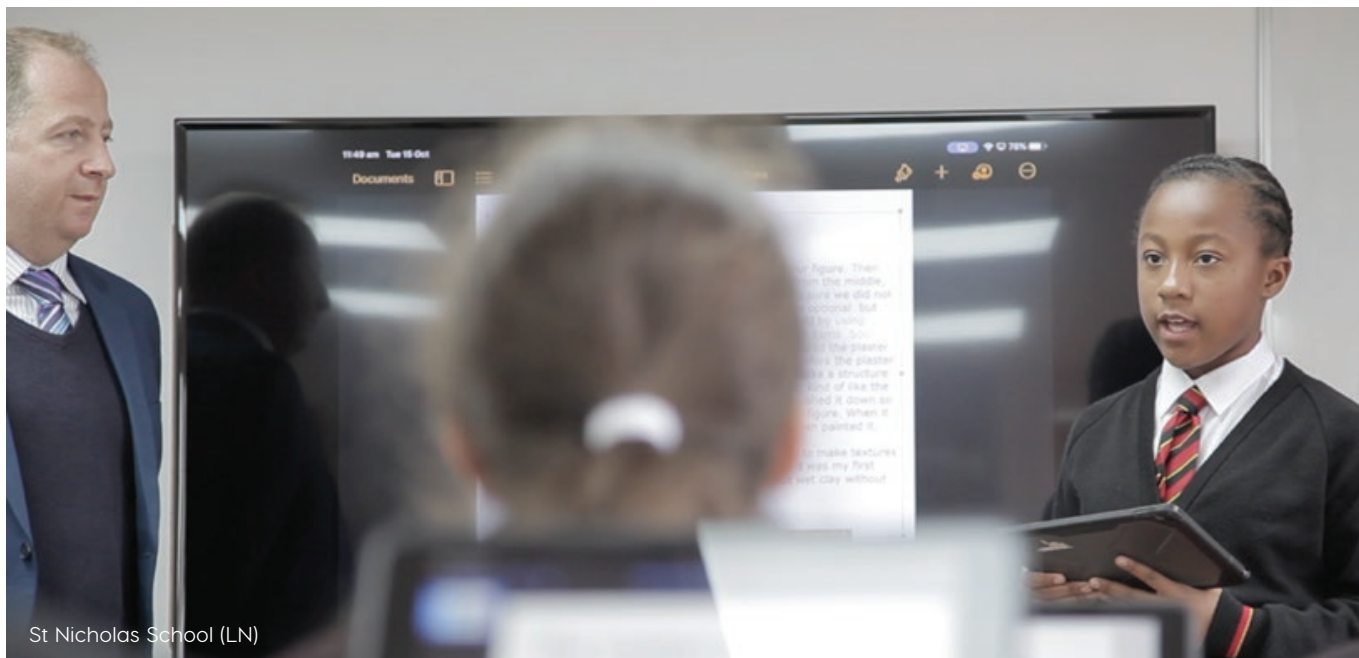
In our experience at St Nicholas’, one simple change has shifted our perspective in how we teach, and importantly, how children begin to perceive their lessons. Teachers have moved away from using Learning Objectives, and instead begin a lesson by referring to what we have termed Key Skills. As professionals, we can still make firm links to subjects, but to the children, they begin to develop an understanding of how skills apply across subjects, and as they progress through their education. To return to the examples above, a Learning Objective, or WALT, of ‘To



St Nicholas School (LN)



St Nicholas School (LN)



St Nicholas School (LN)

know the names of Henry VIII's six wives' is a largely isolated lesson – it is predicted on simple retention of facts. Likewise, 'To know the names of mountains around the world' essentially condenses the content into standalone content. To shift the perception slightly, and present lessons as having a focus on a key skill 'To develop a secure chronological knowledge and understanding of British history', or 'Pupils should extend their locational knowledge and deepen their spatial awareness of the world's countries'

For example, to take what would ordinarily be a Geography topic in volcanoes – children can develop skills as geographers by being asked to compare a historic eruption, say Krakatoa, with the 2010 Eyjafjallajökull eruptions, considering the impact on geographical, environmental, sociological factors, but also then consider as historians how events in the past can be compared to contemporary events. Taking the emphasis outlined above, requiring open ended questioning, and phrasing the lesson as 'Compare the impact of two volcanic eruptions; one historic, one contemporary' offers a much wider scope, and a much more interesting prospect to spark interest in pupils. Children have broad parameters to operate in, are engaged to take responsibility for their work, inspired to explore content of their choosing, and free to present their answers however they see fit, provided it meets the parameters set out by the teacher. It should be stressed that this mindset may be difficult to apply to all subjects. Although core subjects are also structured around skills, there is perhaps greater emphasis on retention

of concrete facts in maths; number bonds, tables, formulae, and likewise English, requiring punctuation or spelling which demands greater structure in knowing these elements of the subject outright. However, foundation subjects can be taught in the way outlined above with greater ease, indeed with the core subject skills referred to help pupils contextualise their learning. For example, at St Nicholas', we have combined curriculum time for History, Geography and DT to create 'Inquiry Projects'; a two week, intense study on a particular topic. Children are not asked to look at a topic for an hour a week for 12 weeks as was the case prior, ironically making the retention of facts harder to achieve, but instead are able to focus all of their attention on a particular topic. This might be one we traditionally study at primary level - volcanoes, the Tudors, rivers; but excitingly, it opens the door to a more dynamic and focussed curriculum; consider the excitement of delivering a two-week project specifically on the Roman Army, on 'Hostile Environments' or on pandemics as has been the case in recent weeks.

Much can be said for asking too much of children too soon, but the pace of change in our world is unheralded, with or without pandemics prompting new approaches. Assuming the old model of handing down information from one generation to the next is not as relevant now as it once was, our job in preparing pupils for the future must recognise this. We should be guiding children to learn life skills from a younger age, using information as the context in a skills-driven curriculum, not a fact-centric one. It is only by doing so will we be able to give children the skills they need to be adaptable and successful throughout their lives.

Matt Donaldson has been Headteacher of St Nicholas School, Wembley, since 2017, having worked in private and preparatory schools for fifteen years, and has implemented a number of different initiatives focussed on embedding independent learning skills. He has been an ISI Inspector since June 2017 and has designed curriculum content for Galore Park Publishers.



Bridgewater School (N)

JUDY WILLIS, M.D., M.ED.

Neuroscience of Joyful Learning

It is unlikely to be surprising to you that both learners and teachers are more engaged, motivated, and effortful when they enjoy their learning and teaching experiences. Indeed, these observations are supported by neuroscience research that can offer guidance to develop strategic interventions. Neuroimaging and neuroelectric-recording studies of the human brain allow us to see what happens when students are affected by both positive and negative emotions (i). This article will summarize research and insights about the neuroscience of learning and focus on avenues to boost a powerful, joyful learning experience.

What happens to that Joy?

Most children anticipate kindergarten with awe and enthusiasm. Often lower grade elementary students speak passionately about what they learn and do in school. Then, as years progress, the burdens of increasing curriculum requirements and high-stakes tests deflate that spirited enthusiasm. The pandemic reduced access to group activities, art, music and field trips, the discovery and conceptual understanding gained through projects and experiments, and thwarted meaningful and joyful learning.

Brain Traffic Flow - What does Neuroscience tell us about how this works?

High stress or perceived threat flips the brain into survival mode. In learning experiences, sensory information may be routed into either of two major ultimate destinations: the prefrontal cortex (PFC) or the lower primitive brain. The PFC serves as the higher thinking brain which consciously processes and evaluates information and experiences. The lower, automatic, brain reacts to information through instinct rather than reflection (ii).

The destination of information is determined by activity in the amygdala deep within the neural emotional limbic system. Cellular activity level in the amygdala impacts whether information will pass ahead to the cognitive reflective control networks or down to the lower reactive brain.

In the normal state of alertness, without high stress, the amygdala allows input from the senses (what is heard, read, experienced, etc.) to reach up to the prefrontal cortex, where it can be processed into long-term memory and reflected upon by the neural networks of executive function such as emotional self-management, judgment, and thoughtful decision making (iii). With high stress, the amygdala restricts passage of information flow including instruction to and from the prefrontal cortex with adverse impacts on learning and behavior. Stress, anxiety or confusion can trigger involuntary responses. Mirrored in other mammals as fight/flight/freeze, students manifest acting out, aggression (disruptive behavior)/fleeing (bathroom trips, illness symptoms)/zoning-out (switching off, daydreaming)

Boredom and Frustration Stressors

Regarding learning experiences, two of the most prominent stressors (amygdala hyperdrives) for students are boredom and frustration. Sustained boredom can be experienced by students with topic mastery but suffer through unchallenging or personally irrelevant instruction. Highly stressed students, reacting to discomfort, academic frustration, or emotional struggles, slip into this involuntary survival state with reactive behavior and impaired memory construction. These responses,

even though involuntary, can be misinterpreted by teachers, and the students themselves, as intentional misbehaviors (iv).

In addition, the frequent frustration, of not reaching desired goals despite repeated efforts is another high amygdala stressor impeding learning (v). Behavior manifesting in these stress states, though not voluntary, may be interpreted by teachers, parents, coaches, and students themselves as intentional misbehavior, evidence of lack of effort or disorders of attention or cognition. Therefore, educators understanding the mechanisms of the impact of stress on learning, recognize that the brain's involuntary responses in high stress states may misrepresent students' academic or emotional potentials. Instead of attributing these responses to willfulness, laziness, or low intelligence, these educators provide supportive interventions to reduce the impact of stress on their students' learning.

“When joy and comfort are scrubbed from the classroom and replaced with homogeneity, conformity displaces spontaneity. Students’ brains disconnect from effective information processing and emotional self-management”.

Teaching students about their brains' powers of neuroplasticity, can also empower them with the belief that they have the neural capacity to build the brains, behaviors, skills, and achieve academic outcomes they seek. In addition, when students are taught about their brains' programmed, reactive survival reactions to stress, they gain understanding from which they can alter their beliefs, responses, and efforts as they become more successful, motivated and joyful learners (vi).

Finding the Goldilocks Zone to Reduce the Stressors of Boredom and Frustration

By becoming the guardians of stress, educators serve as the frontline professionals for three critical components of this task: building supportive climates, strengthening students' emotional self-awareness/control, and providing the flexibility to address boredom and frustration.

We will now focus on the third aspect and suggest strategies to provide flexibility for reducing the stressors of boredom and frustration. The goal is for all learners to progress in their Goldilocks zone of recognizable achievable challenge, by lowering the barriers, not the bar.

As we dive further into the neuroscience, consider the phenomenon of extreme effort and motivation displayed by dedicated video game players while engaged in their games. Their perseverance in these games is driven by the release of a brain neurochemical, dopamine. We'll look at how we can adapt and use this information to enhance our teaching sans video games.

Dopamine is a brain neurochemical that, when heightened, can trigger a pleasurable feeling of deep satisfaction with enhanced perseverance, attentive focus, and memory (vii). This dopamine



New Hall School (E)

response embodies the neurochemical activation of intrinsic satisfaction one feels when achieving a desired challenge, such as an exercise goal or finally organizing your closet.

You've likely already incorporated known dopamine release boosters, such as choice, music, peer interaction, reading aloud, and humour as positive mood interventions for learners and yourself. An even bigger dopamine boost, and positive connection to learning, comes from the intrinsic satisfaction of achieving challenges (viii).

Further insights from research on avid video game players, dopamine, and awareness of achieving challenges supports the impact of the dopamine response to prediction and challenges achieved. Dedicated gamers, playing a well-designed game, can make errors in choices up to 80% of the time while playing at each new level. As most students would experience amygdala stress-blockade from such repeated failure, gamers persevere. One reason is that they know they will get another immediate chance to make another "prediction" choice as they build mastery. In addition, they are not vulnerable to feeling embarrassed about failures because they are working independently and benefiting from the feedback.

Even more powerful is that these most played games place them at their achievable challenge level. This means that as soon as they show mastery of a task at one level, they progress right up to the next level (without the boredom of being stuck at the same level as beginning players). If they do not achieve mastery, the game provides them unlimited trial/error skill building practice as they continue to advance their skills (without any social embarrassment of being "behind") while getting little bursts of dopamine with immediate feedback of even small skill progression.

In addition, reaching new levels come with bigger dopamine rewards. If a game has ten levels, the change in background, avatars, sound, and welcome to new level proclamations, etc. provide clear feedback that the player has achieved a challenge. This increased response of satisfaction, motivation, perseverance, and memory from dopamine release motivates the player to pursue greater challenges at the next level of the game as the brain seeks the satisfaction of achieving further progress (ix).

Teachers can access this learner motivation and sustained effort by providing variable pathways of student access to mastery at their individualized achievable challenge levels. These experiences can promote students' dopamine response, such as that seen in the video gamers, with their increased motivation and sustained effort. There needs to be recognizable challenge for each learner accompanied by their own realization that with practice and instruction they can achieve a desired challenge. With opportunities to progress at their individual achievable challenge levels, the barriers have been lowered, but the bar remains.

Providing various pathways to mastery, with opportunities for self-pacing choices, is one of the biggest challenges that educators face. Achieving mastery is a gradual process that needs administrative support allowing resources and time for collaboration and collegial planning. Many resources are available to meet students' levels of different achievable challenge and progress. These can include options such as digital readers with supports for vocabulary and oral reading, Newsela.com (content in four reading levels by topic), flexible groups, Khan Academy, and other online supports. For young students, workstations with different challenge levels (e.g., marked with one or two stars, etc.) can allow them to start at their own challenge choice and progress or even return to the previous level if not successful. The goal is to provide students options and choice to enjoy achievable challenges while residing within a safe comfort zone.

“Especially when stressed, frustrated, or encumbered by expectations of failure, students need more frequent and early feedback of their ongoing progress on route to the goals to engender a robust dopamine response”.

Recognizing Goal Progress

Learners' awareness of their ongoing goal progress is integral to the dopamine-satisfaction response that sustains their perseverance to reach their goals. Teachers can promote this recognition and response similar to the way video games acknowledge achievement, by providing students with regular and timely feedback on their progress toward their recognised goals. Especially when stressed, frustrated, or encumbered by expectations of failure, students need more frequent and early feedback of their ongoing progress on route to the goals to engender a robust dopamine response.

Start with increasing learner connections (reducing the reactive boredom) with goal buy-in through personal relevance. Promote curiosity, through intriguing questions, demonstrations, or videos that serve as a brain bridge to engage their motivation to achieve the learning goals. This strategy has the additional bonus to pre-prime neural circuits to be more receptive and learn new information.

As teachers help learners recognize their incremental goal progress, students become less perturbed by mistakes and less susceptible to experiencing feedback as criticism or evidence of failure. Students gradually recognize that feedback stemming from mistakes helps them improve and progress toward their goal achievement. As students have repeated experiences in which they recognize that their sustained efforts can result in progress and learning achievements, they will take on more challenges.

As teachers look for the best in their learners, with optimism and continued dedication to providing the flexibility, variety, choices, and ongoing goal progress feedback that sustains them, students feel the excitement of personal growth and academic achievement, allowing them to better meet learning challenges, and even setbacks, with more confidence-driven effort.

Educator Stress

As much as educators need to consider student stress, it is also critical for them to recognize their own emotional state. Educators remain vulnerable to stressful brain states from the loss of stability and control, global unpredictability, the uncharted realm of remote instruction, along with the concerns about the health of family, friends, self, and their students.

Support between and among teachers and administrators is an active approach to promoting learner success and joy. Collaboration can support all involved by sharing concerns and previously successful strategies for addressing problems with student behavior and motivated, joyful learning (x). Faculty

collaboration can also help increase students' emotional-academic connectedness by increasing academic relevance, such as by integrating curriculum based on themes of high interest to students.

Especially critical is that teachers have the time and guidance to plan for how they will get their own dopamine boost for perseverance, starting with even focusing on one challenging student or unit at a time. Success and its inherent dopamine boost sustain motivation to persevere with these efforts.

Preserving the Child in Every Learner

Eliminating all stress from students' lives is impossible, but when students feel safe, supported, aware and trusted, they have the comfort that enables them to return to the enthusiastic, positive curiosity they had in their early schooling. In such an environment, they can be most receptive to learning with achievable challenges and channel their enthusiasm into new explorations. Classrooms can again become joyful learning places where the imagination, spirit, and curiosity of students are encouraged, rather than being left outside on the playground as the school bell rings.



Judy Willis, MD, MEd, combined her 15 years as a board-certified practicing neurologist with ten subsequent years as a classroom teacher to become a leading authority in the neuroscience of learning. Dr. Willis has written ten books and more than 200 articles about applying neuroscience research to classroom teaching strategies. Her most recent book is *Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning: Insights from Neuroscience and the Classroom, Revised and Expanded Edition* (2020). Dr. Willis is adjunct faculty at Williams College, and travels nationally and internationally giving presentations

Bibliography

- Berke, Joshua. 2018. "What does dopamine mean? *Nature Neuroscience*. 21 no. 6 (June): 787-793. doi: 10.1038/s41593-018-0152-y.
- Boot, Nathalie, Matthijs Baas, Simon van Gaal, Roshan Cools, Carsten K W De Dreu. (2017) "Creative cognition and dopaminergic modulation of fronto-striatal networks: Integrative review and research agenda." *Neuroscience Biobehavior Review*. 78 (April): 13-23. doi: 10.1016/j.neubiorev.2017.04.007.
- Good, Catherine, Joshua Aronson, and Michael Inzlicht, M. 2003. "Improving adolescents' standardized test performance: An intervention to reduce the effects of stereotype threat." *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 24, no. 6: 645-662. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2003.09.002>
- Hakvoort, Ilse, Kristoffer Larsson, and Agneta Lundstrom. 2018. "Teachers' Understandings of Emerging Conflicts. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 64, no 1 (June):1-15. DOI: 10.1080/00313831.2018.1484800
- Hermans, Erno, Marlos Henckens, Marian Joëls, and Guillen Fernández 2014. "Dynamic adaptation of large-scale brain networks in response to acute stressors." *Trends in Neurosciences*, 37 no. 6: 304-314. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tins.2014.03.006>
- Passingham, Richard and Jeroen Smaers. 2014. "Is the prefrontal cortex especially enlarged in the human brain allometric relations and remapping factors." *Brain Behavior Evolution*, 85 no 1: 156-166. DOI: 10.1159/000365183
- Schwabe, Lars, Marian Joëls, Benno Roozendaal, Oliver Wol, and Melly Oitzl. 2012. "Stress effects on memory: An update and integration." *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 36 no. 7: 1740-1749. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2011.07.002>
- Seehagen, Schneider, Rudolph, Ernst, & Zmyj, 2015. "Stress impairs cognitive flexibility in infants." *PNAS*. 112 no 41: 12882-12886. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1508345112>
- Valizadeh, L., Farnam, A., & Rahkar Farshi, M. (2012). "Investigation of stress symptoms among primary school children." *Journal of Caring Sciences*, 1 no 1: 25-30. <https://doi.org/10.5681/jcs.2012.004>
- Willis, Judy. (2014) "Neuroscience reveals that boredom hurts." *Phi Delta Kappan*. 95 no. 8 (May): 28-32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171409500807>
- i Hermans, Henckens, Joëls, and Fernández 2014, 304-314; Schwabe, Joëls, Roozendaal, Wol, and Oitzl. 2012, 1740-1749
- ii Passingham and Smaers. 2014. 156-166
- iii Seehagen, Schneider, Rudolph, Ernst, and Zmyj, 2015. 12882-12886; Schwabe, Joëls, Roozendaal, Wol, and Oitzl. 2012. 1740-1749
- iv Willis 2014. 28-32
- v Valizadeh, Farnam, and Farshi 2012. 25-30
- vi Good, Aronson, and Inzlicht 2003, 645-662
- vii Bergey et al., 2016
- viii Berke, Joshua. 2018. 787-793
- ix Boot, Baas, van Gaal, Cools, and De Dreu. 2017. 13-23
- x Hakvoort, Lindahl, and Lundstrom. 2018. 1-15



Braeside School (LN)

DR BARBARA LOCKEE & DR KIBONG SONG

Three Perspectives to See Students in Gamified Classes

Researchers and practitioners in various fields have been interested in gamification in solving a problem in a specific context. Gamification refers to “a set of activities and processes that solve problems by using or applying the characteristics of game elements”. Some researchers and practitioners focus more on the use of gamification to solve educational problems. Though gamification is outcome-oriented and focuses on organizational performance in many cases, gamification aimed at developing students’ academic skills and talents should focus more on the cognitive development process of students rather than the final outcome of the gamification. To support the cognitive development of students, it might be required to see the students in a gamified classroom with the following perspectives: cognitive explorers, social beings in the real world, and individuals with sincerity and conatus.

Cognitive explorers

Students in a gamified class can be viewed as cognitive explorers. They are not just the audience of an instructional event, but also the players of a game. They explore different

situations and conditions embedded in the gamified class and expect accurate, prompt, and fair feedback during their exploration. While many students are afraid of not being able to answer questions in a normal class, students in a gamified class do not tend to worry about the accuracy of their first attempt to respond. Rather, they come up with various answers, even though they already know some of the answers are likely not correct. However, by comparing the different feedback provided for each of the various answers, they can elaborate and internalize the concept they are learning in the class. As a result, they will construct an efficient knowledge structure that stores what they learned in the class. Some researchers argue

“Students are cognitive explorers on the journey to their own learning goals.”

that people are cognitive misers and tend to prefer quick, simple, and less effortful solutions to time-consuming, complicated, and more arduous solutions in solving a problem. However, very few students in a gamified class give up a given mission due to the complexity of a solution. They are willing to try a different solution, even if it is more difficult since they want to compare and evaluate various solutions to find the best solution to successfully complete a given mission. As such, students are cognitive explorers on the journey to their own learning goals.

Social beings in the real world

Students can experience various types of fun in a gamified class depending on the characteristics of the gamification designed for the class. However, some types of gamification research are biased towards certain types of fun. For example, Korhonen, Montola, and Arrasvuori studied various categories of fun and introduced the Playful Experience (PLEX) framework. The framework focuses on intrinsic fun, such as discovery, exploration, nurture, thrill, etc. However, some students value more extrinsic forms of fun, such as a feeling related to an achievement. Some students focus on what they will achieve, not within a game, but after the class or even at the end of the academic year; their major interest exists in the real world. Another type of extrinsic fun is related to the relationship with classmates or friends. Some students find it more fun to do activities with classmates or friends in gamified classes. Though

“most students can be active game players who try to achieve the goals of the class by successfully completing assigned mission.”

they play a game as a class activity, they are still considering real world relationships outside the game, not just relationships between game players. As social beings in the real world, they are influenced by real world relationships, and their behaviors within a game are the results of their consideration of such relationships. As social beings in the real world, student engagement and interactions within gamified instruction can be applicable and meaningful in authentic contexts.

Individuals with sincerity and conatus

Students are sometimes mistaken for having a lack of motivation and engagement. In response, some educators say that they want to apply gamification to their classes to motivate or engage their students. However, students should not always be viewed



The Roche School (LW),

as unmotivated or disengaged. Such a viewpoint will lead to completely different results in designing a gamified class. One of these unexpected results is the incongruity between gamification mechanics, interactions, learning contents, and learning objectives. The incongruity might include excessive dependence on gamification mechanics, poor quality of learning content, meaningless interactions between players, and misunderstanding of the objectives of the learning activities implemented through gamification. To prevent such incongruity, educators should view their students as individuals with sincerity and conatus. While many students are ready to actively enjoy class activities, performance problems may lie in lesson design or facilitation. Students may simply adapt themselves to the classes with such problems. In a gamified class, most students can be active game players who try to achieve the goals of the class by successfully completing assigned missions. During the gamified class, they acquire the knowledge and skills required to accomplish the targeted goals. They try to correctly interpret the feedback on their actions and decide what to do next. Even without a teacher's instruction, each student can learn by interacting with the game elements and the other students in the class. Students in a gamified class are individuals with sincerity and conatus.

A gamified class design based on these three perspectives will support the cognitive development of students in ways that students can experience fun, as well as engage in self-directed and active learning. Some educators may be concerned about students who are easily distracted or show passive attitudes. However, in gamified environments, students will naturally engage and collaborate with other learners as game players. Lastly, by using the three perspectives as a lens to view students and their characteristics, educators will have the basis to begin formulating plans for gamified instruction in which students meaningfully learn while enjoying the learning experience.

Bibliography

Sangkyun Kim, Kibong Song, Barbara Lockee, and John Burton, *Gamification in Learning and Education: Enjoy Learning Like Gaming* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2018), 27-28.

Shelley E. Taylor, "The interface of cognitive and social psychology," *Cognition, social behavior, and the environment* 1 (1981): 189-211.

Susan Fiske and Shelley Taylor, *Social Cognition*. 1st ed. Topics in Social Psychology. (New York: Random House, 1984).

Korhonen, Hannu, Markus Montola, and Juha Arrasvuori. 2009. "Understanding playful user experience through digital games." Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Designing Pleasurable Products and Interfaces, Compiègne, France, October 13-16, 2009. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.586.7146&rep=rep1&type=pdf>



Barbara B. Lockee, Ph.D., is Professor of Instructional Design and Technology in the School of Education at Virginia Tech. For more than two decades, her research and teaching activities have focused on the intersection of instructional design and distance education. Dr. Lockee is Past President of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, an international professional organization for instructional technology researchers and practitioners.



Kibong Song, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Practice in the School of Education at Virginia Tech. He has worked as a performance and learning solution expert in corporates and higher education institutions.

He has published books and articles on learning environment, talent development, and e-learning evaluation method. His current research interests include intelligent tutoring systems, gamification, electronic performance support systems, e-learning, and knowledge and information organization. He earned his Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Instructional Design and Technology from Virginia Tech.



JEFF SHAW

Innovating in Dark Times

In life we sometimes see positivity and hope emerge from times of challenge or great trial. In 1818, Baron Karl von Drais of Baden, Germany patented the design for a two-wheeled Laufmaschine, or “running machine.” It consisted of two in-line wheels beneath a seat and handlebars and was propelled by the rider pushing off the ground with his feet.

Also called the “Draisine,” the device was created not out of fancy but necessity. He was looking for a substitute for the horses that had starved to death in the recent volcanic winter, caused by the eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815. This invention inspired other manufacturers in England and France, who created their own two-wheeled conveyances, calling them velocipedes or “dandy horses.”

In the face of adversity Baron Karl von Drais of Baden embraced his spirit of innovation and exploration to develop the first type of bicycle. Had the eruption of Mount Tambora not occurred, we will never know if he would have been motivated or inspired to create this remarkable invention.

In these most challenging of times, Scarisbrick Hall School has sought to find ways of reaching out and connecting with children and educators across the globe. The Covid-19 pandemic has reinvented remote learning and upskilled millions of children in the use of technology for learning (as well as magnifying the tech divide). It has also given children from around the world a

common discussion point and means of connecting through the use of e-communications.

In March 2020 Scarisbrick Hall approached the World Health Organization and UNICEF, asking for support with the concept of a Global Classroom. It is difficult to explain how exactly this took place and why a school in West Lancashire was able to engage with global leaders, however, I believe that we were in the right place at the right time with a suggestion that no one else had tried (or even dared to suggest).

When speaking to the team at WHO and UNICEF, we suggested that it would be wonderful if we could put children at the forefront and give them the ability to ask questions of Dr Tedros live. The answer was, yes, that would be a great idea. In that moment we had volunteered to organise a global event where children would be able to ask questions live to the Director General of WHO. Probably the largest such event ever undertaken.

The goal initially was to raise awareness of Covid-19 and to put the voice of the child at the forefront of these discussion. The response was one of support and recognition that in many countries, children were confused and distressed about the pandemic and the concept of The Global Classroom could help support this.

To cut a long story short (many video calls later), what was an idea quickly became a viable project with Microsoft Global supporting the initial event through their Teams Live Event feature. On 5th May 2020 Scarisbrick Hall School duly broadcast live to the world with the first Global Classroom. Guests included: Dr Tedros (Director General WHO), Henrietta Fore (Executive Director UNICEF), Samuel Eto'o (FIFA Legend and World Cup 2022 ambassador) and HRH Prince Khaled of Saudi Arabia (Saudi Sports for All Foundation). This one-hour live broadcast which invited 193 countries to join, unified the voice of children in this challenging Covid-19 pandemic. What was amazing is the world tuned in to watch.

“We as educators have a wonderful opportunity to take this moment to innovate and improve our strategies to suit pupils’ skill sets and moreover their needs for the future.”

After the success of the first event we were keen to make sure that it was not just a one-off. The second event continued in June with the theme of “One Global Planet” where leading academics including Dr Van Kerhove (WHO) and Dr Mac Farnham (Smithsonian) presented alongside award winning artist Jason Mraz. With the global coverage of the first event a unique partnership with WHO and UNICEF now expanded to include: Smithsonian, National Geographic, BMG and Penguin Books creating one of the largest ever platforms for knowledge sharing and dissemination.

As well as the main event, Jason Mraz also stayed online to give a seminar to forty lucky pupils on singing and songwriting. Dr Mac Farnham also gave an extended seminar on Covid-19 and viral transmission. An amazing unforgettable experience for all.

The third event in July focused on mental wellbeing “One Global Mind” and attracted over a million viewers from around the world. Bear Grylls, Lynsey Stirling, Dr Tierney Thys, and a whole host of superstars, including Lady GaGa’s mother, Cynthia Germanotta, came together to raise the profile of mental wellbeing in a practical and relevant way. The most recent event in September looked at our human body. The school welcomed leading fitness experts from NEOU, academics and authors as well as holocaust survivor Ben Lesser.

The next event was on November 20th where Scarisbrick Hall put the spotlight on World Children’s Day. Our key partners Disney, Sir Captain Tom Moore as well as author Chris McDougall joined us as we explored how arts support wellbeing as well as connecting generations of people.

In The Global Classroom, children from around the world (including the most deprived areas) are able to ask questions live to leading figures. These broadcasts shattered the boundaries between the hierarchy of the world and young people, irrespective of their socio-economic background, giving a voice to all. The event has now reached over 2 million children across the world and we aspire to expand this to include global seminars and teacher symposiums.

We have learnt that through the use of technology, we can unify our global community of learners and allow all of our children to gain a wider global perspective. Throughout this process, I have also learnt that no matter how great online learning can be, it will never fully replace the ability of a school and indeed a teacher to create a culture of learning and high moral values.

There is no doubt that we are at the dawn of a new age for education, one where technology will play a significant role. Our experience has shown me that e-learning and connecting cultures can play a role in allowing our pupils to gain a truly global perspective, removing them from the bubble that they often sit in. They, as digital natives, already operate in complex globally interconnected social bubbles that are often built on poor moral values and driven by consumerism. Perhaps the role of the school is to give them digital opportunities that enrich their lives and show them how technology can be enhanced to empower and inform future generations.

All of the materials and resources from the events can be found at www.theglobalclassroom.com.



Jeff Shaw is the Headmaster at Scarisbrick Hall School. He has been a Headmaster for almost 10 years and is Chair of the Independent Schools Association (ISA). Prior to this, he has held senior positions in a number of schools (state and independent) as well as a senior lectureship at university. Throughout his career he has undertaken research and innovation across all areas of education including work with international schools and in particular international education systems (working collaboratively with the Department for Education).

Jeff is an active Team Inspector for the Independent Schools Inspectorate and also Compliance Inspector for the past five years. He has chaired the Membership Committee at ISA and has been Area Co-ordinator for the North of England. As a Headmaster he has enjoyed considerable success by more than doubling the role of his present school, receiving two national awards and delivering substantial site development and renovation.

Above all else, Jeff sees moral values and integrity as an essential part of education.



The Pointer School (LS)

STEPHEN MCKERNAN

Inspection Myth Busters

I'm non-selective, so I can only be Good at academic achievement.

FALSE! Non-selective schools can be Excellent.

The issue of non-selective schools thinking that they can only meet the Good descriptor is something that has been concerning us in the ISA Inspections Committee for some time. This is not accurate and has been confirmed to be the case by ISI. There are many examples of non-selective schools achieving Excellent in academic achievement, including my own school. All schools whether selective or not can achieve Excellent in Academic Achievement as often as they do for Personal Development.

It is not good enough that non-selective schools think it is to be expected that they can easily achieve Excellent at Personal Development but not in Academic Achievement. The onus of course is always on you as a School to demonstrate the progress of all pupils' groups given their starting points, along with demonstrating the standards your pupils achieve in standardised tests and extra-curricular areas. It's not up to the inspectorate to magically find the excellence in a short visit that covers so many areas – the responsibility is on the School to show why you are excellent. Do you and your staff have an 'excellent' handle on your pupil data and can you easily show how you meet Excellent according to the descriptors?

Be prepared to demonstrate your pupils' successes (get this prepared well in advance of the inspection and as an ongoing culture within the school) and be more up front about the pupils'/ school's achievements. There is no place for humility when it

comes to demonstrating to an inspection team why you are Excellent. Show the inspection team how well you support pupils for their next transition point and explain how the destinations your pupils move on to show your school to be Excellent in terms of how you have prepared them for the next stage of their educational journey.

Finally, and most importantly, have you got the stories to share of how you have transformed the achievements of pupils who came to you very far behind and are now outperforming even when compared with your outrageously ambitious expectations. That would be Excellent!

I should aim for Good so to seem humble and the inspectors will upgrade me. FALSE!

Why would an inspection team upgrade you to Excellent if you only considered yourself Good? Humility as mentioned before, is an important and valued trait but not when you are communicating the Excellent progress your pupils are making along with defending the very hard work of your staff over a continuous period of time. You are the staff representative to the inspection team – don't let them down!

If you declare yourself to be Good, then inspectors will surely never aim to find Excellent evidence. Yes, there may be the very odd occasion when they upgrade you – but don't hold your breath! Again, get an intimate knowledge of the evidence base required to show you are Excellent.

Start to find out where the gaps are that keeps you at Good and as a team, have it as a weekly standing item – finding and

meticulously documenting where and how you are Excellent. Prepare a Sharepoint site and forensically populate with your team all the reasons and evidence as to why you are Excellent. Then transfer the impact of your provision on your pupils and how this has led to Excellent progress, onto the ISI Portal – put more on there than you can imagine, let the inspection team make an Excellent judgement on your school, BEFORE they arrive.

Good is simply not good enough and it's not good enough that we don't declare ourselves Excellent and show clearly how we have met those standards in line with the EQI indicators that are helpfully and clearly laid out for us in advance. Ask your parents in surveys why you are Excellent, ask your pupils and then gather the evidence well in advance as you won't have the time when the inspection team arrive. Go to your SEF now and change Good to Excellent then spend your time showing why!

My school is obviously Excellent – I don't need to prepare.

FALSE! The EQI process is about understanding, analysing and documenting why what you are doing generates Excellent academic attainment and personal development.

This is the classic story of when a school feels they are excellent and feels that their parents think they are excellent. The inspectors will surely feel the excellence in the air or in the atmosphere! Surely, they will be amazed by our facilities and our wonderfully behaved pupils! Unfortunately, this thinking still exists.

Once upon a time this might have helped secure the top grade in inspection, but as we know the EQI framework is about you knowing how to understand and generate what Excellent means. What is your school's self-evaluative culture like, do you really know? Have you an intimate knowledge of pupil data, do you know what your last parent or pupil survey indicated. Or would you be shocked by the surveys that could come in from parents when an inspection is announced. Act now!

We don't have much money or resources, so can never be Excellent.

FALSE! Excellent teaching and learning can lead to excellent progress. Work carefully through the criteria and prove it.

Thankfully there are schools that have state of the art facilities in every area of school life, but our inspection framework is rigorous enough to declare when Excellent is not met in these schools,

because the progress and sustained development of all pupil groups is not be met to the standard of Excellent.

While it might wow our prospective and existing parents and of course every school wants the very best in facilities, the proof of the pudding is in the progress the children are making, the breadth of their educational experience and their success and achievements at the individual, group and school level, through their wide participation in extracurricular areas and success in scholarships and their destination schools. The inspection framework focuses on 'pupil outcomes' not the granite on the refectory servery. The teachers in your school are greater than any state-of-the-art facility, they are the ones that will demonstrate to an inspection team if the school is worthy of Excellent - shiny sports hall/posh dining rooms or really not required to get Excellent! So, get to work asap on detailing all the reasons and the evidence base for the excellent teaching and learning that goes on in your school. Start today!



Stephen McKernan has been a Head for over sixteen years both in the Maintained and Independent sectors in Ireland and the UK. He has been Headmaster of St Edward's Prep School since 2011 which has secured successive Excellent inspections. He serves as an EQI and FCI Inspector for ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate) and is National Chair of the ISA Inspections Committee.



Saint Nicholas School (E)

How to achieve Excellent for Academic Progress in a semi-selective school.

Our journey to success in preparing for ISI EQI started immediately after the Compliance visit in November 2016. This had been a little earlier than predicted and I was relieved to know that our procedures to ensure we are ever-ready for the phone call had paid off.

ISA have always been brilliant at providing timely advice helping Heads to be prepared and we have devised a strong termly and ongoing system which has really helped in providing reassurance that we are compliant and that everything is easy to find. In 2019, the phone call came a week earlier than my prediction and other schools have had similar experiences.

My first step was to familiarise myself with the new documentation and particularly the Framework Criteria. I attended an excellent ISA course in January 2017 on Outstanding Teaching and Learning led by John Medicott which focused on these, which gave me fresh ideas and a clear objective to work on with staff back at school. Changes in our lesson observation practice were made immediately and INSET on self-assessing the EQI Grade Descriptors helped all staff to be aware. John visited St Hilda's in September 2019 to provide an excellent morning's INSET on the same theme, which inspired staff and timed nicely for the EQI visit a month later.

Key areas were to ensure that planning had clear signposting for SMSC, SEND and extension, which as well as improving our delivery assisted the inspectors in finding clear evidence. Although we have a measure of selection many of our girls arrive in Nursery and Reception where there is none, so our high levels of academic achievement are testament to much hard work and progress achieved in our data – where our analysis also proved vital – however this is not enough to achieve 'excellent'. The overall 'picture' gained during the inspection must be consistent with it. Our Development Plan was revised to reflect the criteria, and staff in each year group and department provided an overview of each category, which was then collated and passed to inspectors, enabling them to complete their considerable task more easily and certainly kept things on a positive footing!

Preparation is key and water-tight systems vital to success. Always ensure that Safeguarding, incidents and complaints records are well-kept (preferably online) and easily accessible, and that assessment results are uploaded to the ISI Portal in good time. This was praised by the RI and meant that when the phone call came we felt ready, and there wasn't undue panic to find anything.

All the best!



Dan is Head at St Hilda's in Harpenden where he has been in post since 2015 and previously as Deputy since 2010. He is Area Coordinator for London North and has always highly appreciated the advice, warmth and collegiate feel of ISA. St Hilda's EQI inspection was in October 2019 achieving 'excellent' in both categories. The School is proudly mixed-ability in a competitive local market where academic entry requirements are high. The School has a measure of selection from Year 3.

As a Headmaster of a school where all children have a Special Need, many with Speech and Language difficulties, it is important for pupils to understand that they own the qualification they are taking in order that they can achieve their best. We ensure that parents realise that they have as much responsibility as the school to ensure their child works well and that we rely on their support and understanding of expectations during their time at the school. We offer face-to-face or online consultations at any time so that we can address any issues that we may have. Communication is the key. Parents can contact me directly and we respond to parents on the same day, even weekends, which reduces their own anxiety.

We believe the personal development is key to our pupils' success and we work hard to increase our pupils' confidence and trust. We let everyone have the opportunity to perform on stage and in school teams. We allow everyone to guide at Open days in entirely their own words. We re-build their confidence and that has a knock-on effect for subjects and examinations. We quite simply say to everyone 'Have a go'. Parents love it and are 100% supportive to the school.

Colin Parker, Headmaster at Egerton Rothesay, non-selective school in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire.



Braeside School (LN)

Contact for ISA Area Committees

EAST ANGLIA

Chair and Asst AC	Clare Ogden
cogden@ahs.me.uk	01775 724 733
Area Coordinator	Pauline Wilson
headmistress@ursulineprepwarley.co.uk	01277 227152
President	Paul Spendlove
lindsay@greenblade.plus.com	01728 688 043
Secretary	Anita Barclay
abarclay@norwich-school.org.uk	01603 728 430
Treasurer	David Bell
david.bell@woodlandsschools.co.uk	01277 233288
Sports Coordinator	Noel Smith
smith@alleyn-court.co.uk	01702 582553
Sports Rep Head	Rupert Snow
head@alleyn-court.co.uk	01702 582553
Arts Coordinator	Dominic Tomalin
tomalin@catscambridge.com	01223 314431

LONDON NORTH

Chair	Helen Stanton-Tonner
hstanton-tonner@hollandhouse.org.uk	01442 822315
Area Coordinator	Dan Sayers
dsayers@sthildasharpenden.co.uk	01582 712307
Assistant Area Coordinator	Amanda Campbell
head@ahsprep.co.uk	020 8504 1749
Secretary	Sue Belej
sbelej@oaklandsschool.co.uk	020 8508 3517
Treasurer	Emma Gowers
emmagowers@thegowerschool.co.uk	020 7700 2445
Sports Coordinator	Jonathon Barradell
sports@thegowerschool.co.uk	0207 700 2445
Sports Rep Head and Ass AC	Amanda Campbell
head@ahsprep.co.uk	020 8504 1749
Arts Coordinator	Melissa Cowie
MCowie@lyonsdownschool.co.uk	020 8449 0225

LONDON SOUTH

Chair and AC	Phil Soutar
head@rosemeadprepschool.org.uk	020 8670 5865
Vice Chair	Lawrence Groves
lawrence.groves@stfaithsprep.com	01304 813409
Secretary	Kevin Samson
KSamson@buckswood.co.uk	01424 813813
Treasurer	Dominic Price
d.price@mertoncourtprep.co.uk	020 8300 2112
Sports Coordinator	Jack Hallas
jack.hallas@pointers-school.co.uk	020 8293 1331
Sports Rep Head	Tony Padfield
padfieldt@elmhurstschool.net	020 8688 0661
Asst Sports Rep Head	Robert Francis
headteacher@westlodge.org.uk	020 8980 2978
Arts Coordinator	Anne Saul
annesaul@steephill.co.uk	01474 702107

LONDON WEST

Chair	Clare King
head@westburyhouse.surreysch.uk	020 8942 5885
Area Coordinator	Jonathan Hetherington
jhetherington@morehouseschool.co.uk	01252 792 303
Asst Area Coordinator	Helen Chalmers
h.chalmers@hemdeanhouse.net	01932 220930
Secretary	Graham Spawforth
graham.spawforth@ditchampark.com	01730 825659
Treasurer	James Wilding
jt看@clairescourt.net	01628 327700

Sports Coordinator	Matt Humphrey
matthew.humphrey@luckleyhouseschool.org	0118 978 4175
Arts Coordinator	Joel Wareing
jow@clairescourt.net	01628 411 470

MIDLANDS

Chair	Lawrence Collins
head@hkschool.org.uk	01562 850204
Area Coordinator	David Preston
davidp@arnoldlodge.com	01926 778050
Asst Area Coordinator	Penny Ford
penny.ford@burtonhathow.co.uk	01522 274616
Secretary	Chris Lofthouse
isamidlandssecretary@gmail.com	0116 270 7648
Treasurer	Andrew Atkin
isamidlandstreasurer@gmail.com	0116 270 7648
Sports Coordinator	Neil McCollin
neilmccollin@princethorpe.co.uk	01926 634200
Sports Rep Head	Robert Duigan
robertduigan@crackleyhall.co.uk	01926 514444
Arts Coordinator	Rebecca Harrison
head@stdominicspriory.co.uk	01785 814181

NORTH

Chair	Judy Nairn
nairnj@bwslive.co.uk	01617 941463
Vice Chair and AC	Jeremy Duke
schooloffice@highfieldpriory.co.uk	01772 709624
Assistant Area Coordinator	Amanda Kirby
amandakirby@cundallmanor.org.uk	01423 360200
Secretary	Dan Machin
dmachin@qe.org	01423 333300
Treasurer	Mike Jones
enquiry@prentonprep.co.uk	0151 652 3182
Sports Coordinator	Adam Jackson
jacksona@scarisbrickhallschool.co.uk	01704 841151
Sports Rep Head	Kevin Sartain
info@beechhouseschool.co.uk	01706 646309
Arts Coordinator	Jacqueline Reeder
jacqueline.reeder@greenbankschool.co.uk	0161 485 3724
Arts Rep Head	Malcom Johnson
malcolm.johnson@greenbankschool.co.uk	0161 485 3724

SOUTH WEST

Chair	Richard Milner-Smith
richard.milner-smith@moylescourt.co.uk	01425 472 856
Area Coordinator	Dionne Seagrove
headteacher@torwoodhouseschool.co.uk	0117 973 6620
Assistant Area Coordinator	Craig Wardle
cj.wardle@hotmail.co.uk	0117 977 7218
Secretary	Oliver Scott
headteacher@stjosephscornwall.co.uk	01566 772 580
Treasurer	Craig Wardle
cj.wardle@hotmail.co.uk	0117 977 7218
Sports Coordinator	Liz Brown
headmistress@thenewschoolexeter.co.uk	01392 496 122
Sports Rep Head	Ben Hilton
headmaster@stpetrocs.com	01288 352 876
Arts Coordinator	Roy Winspear
roy.winspear@moylescourt.co.uk	01425 472 856

2020 highlights

Design a t-shirt competition

The ISA T-Shirt Design Competition ran during the month of November, pupils worked to a brief in creating a sporting t-shirt that represented the ISA values. Pupils designed the images for the Limitless t-shirt which will be used as prizes for our National competitions. Look out for information on the next competition to show off your awesome graphic design talents by creating a one-of-a-kind t-shirt.



RGS Dodderhill - Eva R

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ATHLETICS

(U9-U18 M/F), National Finals
Manchester Regional Arena, 14 June 2021

EQUESTRIAN

U9-U18 (M/F), Open
Princethorpe College, 29 May, 30 May
& 3 June 2021

FOOTBALL

North (U11/U13 F), Open
Queen Ethelburga's, York, 04 May 2021

South (U13 F), Open

Lingfield College, 04 May 2021

South (U11 F), Open

Saint Nicholas, 05 May 2021

GOLF

(U7-U16+ M/F), Open
Worksop College, 21 June 2021

GYMNASTICS (TBC)

(U9/U11 M/F), Open
Adcote School, 09 May 2021

PE AND SPORT CONFERENCE

University of Nottingham, 06/07 May 2021

TENNIS

(U13/U15 M/F), Open
Rugby School, 12 May 2021

ULTIMATE FRISBEE (TBC)

(U13/U15 M/F), Open
Rugby School, 12 May 2021

ISA Athlete of the Term

The ISA Athlete of the Term Award is an exciting opportunity for us all to recognise those outstanding achievements being made by your school pupils. We've seen and heard of some wonderful success stories over the last few months, and we would like you to help us celebrate these moments. Please go to the sport section of the ISA website for more information.



ISA Athletes of the term
WINNERS AUTUMN 2020

Jessica, Red House School

- Championship status in both netball and football with girls 2 years her senior
- Online trainer for her school and club with video tutorials during lockdowns
- U17 Leeds Rhinos Development Pathway

Daniel, Oakfields Montessori

- Talented and exceptional scholar athlete
- ISA national finals qualifier
- Extremely likable, talented and dedicated individual

www.isaschools.org.uk

ISA Big Channel Challenge

Level Water is challenging your students to collectively swim the distance of the English Channel in spring 2021. That's 22 miles. 35 kms. 35,000 metres. 3,500,000 cms.

By encouraging each student to set their own goals and contribute to the school's total distance you'll see the miles clock up quickly. Can you even swim back from France? There's no limit on the distance your school can swim, so keep going and see how far you can get! Depending on facilities, schools will either fit this into existing swimming lessons, organise a special challenge evening, or make additional time available for pupils to work towards their total. There will even be prizes and trophies to win!

Last year Tettenhall College swam 150 km, the same as crossing the channel 4 times! Eveline Day School completed the challenge at a one day swimming gala with staff and parents getting involved too! St Hilda's School, Harpenden raised £1228 by asking each student to swim for 30 minutes.

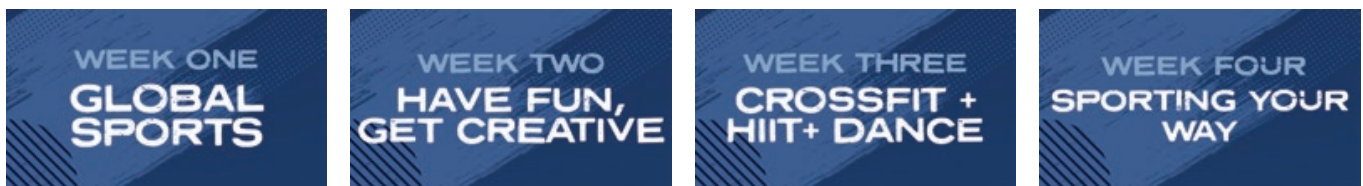
For more information visit www.levelwater.org/big-channel-challenge-2021

ISA hosted its inaugural virtual "Limitless Skills Series" during the month of November 2020. The virtual event was created to be an inclusive, fun, and engaging national campaign for ISA pupils across the UK to get active. Utilising the cutting edge video-based platform powered by TopYa!, the Series is meant to be a new way to engage today's children, who are always using digital platforms on mobiles, tablets, and computers. We wanted to transform their time spent on-screen into time spent being physically active. The Series ran for 4 weeks, with 10 new themed challenges provided every week. High profile athletes provided by Sports for Schools opened and closed each week with an inspirational video. The four athletes were: 1. Jonny Paterson - GB Paralympic Footballer 2. Sam Oldham - Olympic Gymnast 3. Kareena Cuthbert - Commonwealth Hockey Player 4. Amy Smith - Olympic Swimmer

Children of all ages joined the challenge, upon submission of their best performance video they received personal coaching feedback from the team of experienced virtual coaches. They earned points for each video submitted which helped them climb leader boards and win prizes provided by Limitless Kit and Sports for Schools. If you would be interested in an athlete coming into your school and providing a whole school inspirational day, please email isasport@isaschools.org.uk, or call 01799 610 189 for more information.

Congratulations to all schools and pupils that took part, we hope you enjoyed the series.

#WeAreLimitless



2020 Limitless Skills Series!
#WeAreLimitless



Christmas Banner Competition 2020

Congratulations to CHS Nursery, of Colchester High School on their wonderful winning entry for the ISA Christmas Banner Competition 2020. Well done to all who took part.



Despite the unpredictable whirlwind that 2020 presented us all with, ISA Arts Members' Schools were still creating and innovating within the arts community, producing some truly wonderful work throughout it all. Your enthusiasm has not dwindled, and we are very grateful for everyone's ability to adapt and to still seize the opportunity to participate in our events and competitions.

This ISA National Art Finals 2020 has been postponed to this month and will be little different, with the exhibition being held entirely online. The results will be announced early April. As ever, the standard of the artwork is incredible, and we wish the best of luck to all the participants.

A huge thanks to the ISA Area Arts Coordinators for their hard work. We are very much looking forward to what is ahead, with plenty more arts opportunities to get involved with.

Comic Strip Competition 2020

Well done to everyone who took part and congratulations to the winners xxx (name on second proof), you can view all the winning pieces on the ISA website.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ESSAY COMPETITION

Entries Open: OPEN NOW

Deadline: Thursday 25 March 2021

FILM AND DIGITAL ART COMPETITION

Entries Open: OPEN NOW

Deadline: Monday 10 May 2021

MUSIC COMPOSITION COMPETITION

Entries Open: OPEN NOW

Deadline: 30 April 2021

SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUE COMPETITION

Entries Open: OPEN NOW

Deadline: Wednesday 3 March 2021

EASTER EGG COMPETITION (EYFS/KS1/KS2 ONLY)

Entries Open: Monday 1 March 2021

Deadline: Tuesday 23 March 2021

HANDWRITING COMPETITION (EYFS/KS1/KS2 ONLY)

Entries Open: Wednesday 17 March 2021

Deadline: Thursday 24 June 2021

COVER DESIGN COMPETITION

Entries Open: Tuesday 20 April 2021

Deadline: Thursday 8 July 2021

Visit the ISA Arts webpage to submit your entries and to see the full ISA Arts calendar 2020/2021 with more opportunities for your pupils. <https://www.isaschools.org.uk/arts>



Claire Court (LW) - Sam Robertson, Stop Chop - 1st place KS1&2



Kensington Park School - Pressian Nedialkov, Healthier path - 1st place KS2&3



Lycée International de Londres - Daisy Smart, M.P.J - 1st place KS4&5

Follow us on Twitter @ISAartsUK and Instagram @isaschoolsarts



@ISAARTSUK



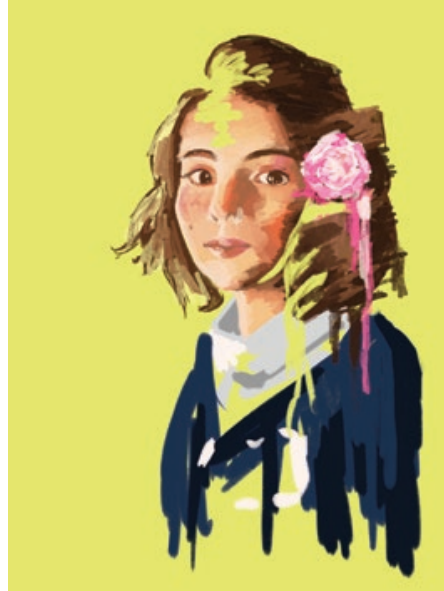
ISASCHOOLSARTS

ISA Film and Digital Art Competition - winners 2020

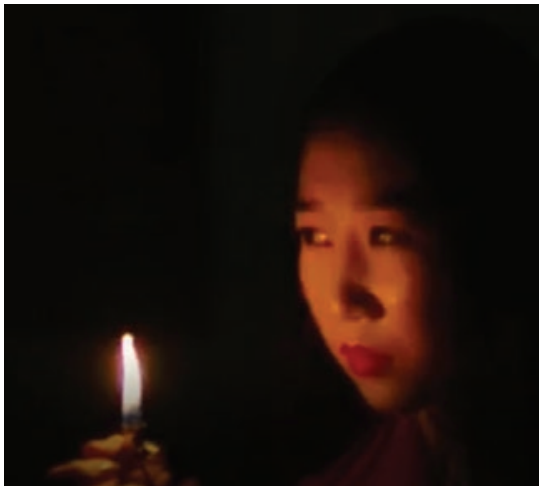
Well done to everyone who took part and congratulations to the winners Normanhurst School, Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate and Radnor House Twickenham, you can view all the winning pieces on the ISA website.



Normanhurst School (LN) Sydney Grant, The Crow and the Deer - KS3 1st Place Computer Animation



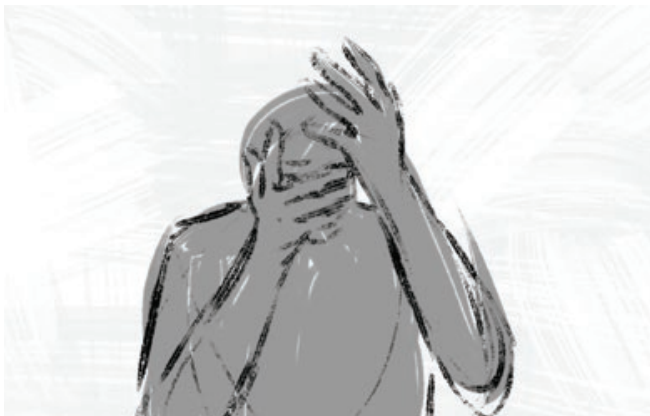
Tianni Lu - Milenna - Westonbirt School - KS4 2nd place Digital Art



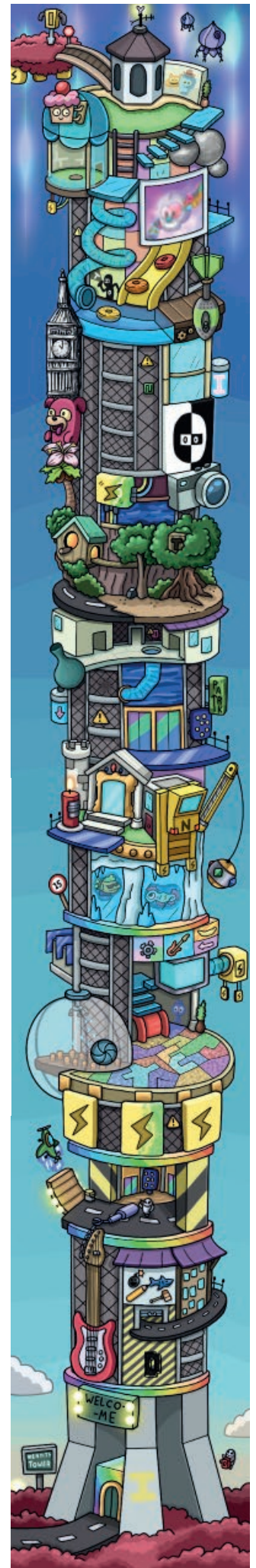
Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate (N) Tiffany Gao, Revenge - KS5 1st Place Short Film



Holland House School (LN) Caitlin Cheeks, Birds - KS1 2nd Place Digital Art



New Hall School (E) Chloe Chan, Longevity Noodles - KS5 2nd Place Computer Animation



Radnor House Twickenham (LW) Jude Wreford, Life Tower - KS4 1st Place Digital Art



Helping your environment deliver results throughout the year



With over 50 years experience in enhancing outside space, Fordingbridge work collaboratively to design & build inspiring canopy structures for educators.

Let us help you create the perfect weather protected space.



Proudly working with Independent Schools to create inspiring spaces

www.fordingbridge.co.uk | T: 01243 55 44 55 | E: info@fordingbridge.co.uk

FORDINGBRIDGE
inspiring design • build