

Life lessons

Julian Astle says schools need to be bold to prepare children for the 21st century

Amanda Spielman speaks to Matthew Taylor about the substance of education

Reema Patel argues for greater public engagement in decisions about the economy



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“THERE ARE INSPIRATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERS OUT THERE WHOSE DECISIONS ARE SHAPED NOT BY THE GOVERNMENT’S AGENDA, BUT BY THEIR OWN SENSE OF MISSION”

JULIAN ASTLE, PAGE 10

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“THIS JOURNAL SEES THE RSA OFFERING A VISION FOR FUTURE SCHOOLING”



MATTHEW TAYLOR

One of the consistent themes of the RSA during my time here has been a commitment in education policy to what can be described as robust progressivism: we tend to oppose traditionalist views, but at the same time challenge our own side to be self-critical and rigorous. This is not an easy balancing act.

A decade ago, we were in the midst of promulgating our Opening Minds curriculum. This was a thoughtful and idealistic project that built substantial support in schools and among teachers. However, over the years we learnt more about how the curriculum was being implemented and regretfully concluded that it was hard to reconcile with the expectations placed on schools by government. Furthermore, in schools that lacked exceptional skills and commitment, Opening Minds too often failed to deliver on the high hopes of its authors. Another initiative – an explicit response to Michael Gove’s regime at the Department for Education – was to develop a charter of progressive education beliefs that aimed to act as a tool of clarification and mobilisation. Although this failed to live up to our expectations, it did lead to the creation of the Whole Education network, which is still thriving today.

This journal, and particularly the piece by RSA’s head of education Julian Astle, sees the RSA once again seeking to grasp the initiative in offering a vision for future schooling.

There are a hundred definitions of progressive education (itself a term than many find unhelpful). To make that a hundred and one, my interpretation has had four key elements. First, an emphasis on the education of the whole child and of all children rather than just the academic development of the more able. Second, a preference for forms of pedagogy that explicitly seek to engage children in the learning process rather than seeing them primarily as recipients of handed down knowledge. Third, a view that schools and other parts of the education system should not be isolated institutions accountable only upwards to regulators, but learning resources richly connected to

local communities and wider society. Fourth, that we should, as far as possible, enable (connected) institutions and professionals to use their own judgement in providing the best education they can.

The good news is that I see us still adhering to the RSA’s progressive principles. As well as in Julian’s article, those values are reflected in different ways in pieces by Peter Hyman and Ju-Ho Lee. The more challenging part of our message is that some of the ways we have tended to think about how to achieve these goals – particularly when it comes to pedagogy – do need critical review. This review is provided by Julian in his essay, *The Ideal School Exhibition* (www.thersa.org/idealschool), which, like Dylan Wiliam’s piece, looks at the implications of educational and scientific research for the way we organise schools and teach students. Meanwhile, Tim Blackman argues in the context of higher education that, sometimes, the needs of society should take precedence over the perceived self-interest of individual institutions.

As Julian argues, the real enemy of educational excellence is not the different values and methods of school leaders. It is the general tendency reinforced by system incentives for schools to teach to the test in order to please the accountability regime rather than truly seeking to fulfil the learning potential of every child. Perhaps I am being naïve, but I see in Julian’s approach the foundation for a new consensus, one that might start to overcome the tired divisions of the past. If we did, as he insists, design a school system based on maximising the scope for mission-driven leadership, there would still be arguments and there would still be failure. But overall, surely, our schools would be more creative, exciting and enlightening places.

With our brand, range of expertise, commitment to real world change, hands-on experience through our own Academies (see the pieces by Kayla Williams and Nicola Beech), and, most of all, with our over 6,000 Fellows listing education as their chief interest, the RSA has the potential to bring urgently needed clarity and ambition to these debates. Whether or not you agree with everything we say, I do hope our Fellows will help us grasp this opportunity. ■



RESEARCH

CULTURE CLASS

Pioneering RSA research aims to determine how different arts and cultural learning approaches boost primary school pupils' academic achievement, confidence and creativity. This major study into arts and cultural learning will commence in September 2018 as part of the RSA's Learning About Culture project.

As well as building a stronger evidence base, the programme is designed to improve how schools and cultural organisations use evidence to maximise benefits of arts and cultural activity.

This is the largest education study undertaken by the RSA, involving 8,000 pupils in 400 schools across England, who will take part in five randomised control trials. Wider research will investigate how arts-rich schools get the most out of their arts and cultural activity.

Fellows can get involved in the programme in three ways. School leaders and teachers can take part in trials that will begin in primary schools across England in September. If your school would like to register to take part, please get in touch using the email address below. Additionally, if your primary or secondary school uses cultural learning to achieve successful outcomes for your students, we would like to hear from you.

Arts practitioners and teachers can take part through the Arts Council Bridge Organisations, which are helping the RSA to build regional networks of practitioners and teachers committed to finding ways of building capacity to collect, understand and apply evidence to practice.

School governors can join the network of 'creative link governors' being developed to support and champion the arts and cultural learning within schools and commit to interrogating the impact of the approaches used. If you are currently a governor of a school and interested in finding out more, please get in touch.

Contact us at culturallearning@rsa.org.uk



DIGITAL

CITIES OF LEARNING

The Cities of Learning project will be launched in 2018 with the aim of piloting a place-based, mass-engagement programme to bring together cultural institutions, further education colleges, higher education institutions and schools, community groups and businesses to develop a city-wide culture of learning.

Building on a model pioneered in the US and previous RSA research, *The New Digital Learning Age* and *A Place for Learning*, the pilot will develop a digital platform to connect learners with opportunities relevant to their passions.

In partnership with Digitalme, Further Education Trust for Leadership, City & Guilds, UFI charitable trust and local anchor organisations, the RSA will explore how to bring this initiative – developed through a co-design programme in Plymouth, Brighton and Greater Manchester – to life in the UK.

On the back of this work, the RSA released *Cities of Learning* in the UK in October, creating a resource that city leaders can use to develop their own initiatives. A digital demonstrator was launched at the same time to showcase what a *Cities of Learning* platform might look like once developed next year. The platform uses open digital badges, which create a new shareable currency for valuing learning.

Cities of learning aims to narrow opportunity, achievement and skills gaps and drive more inclusive places. By bringing together individuals' passions with city priorities, the *Cities of Learning* project will unleash the creative potential of our cities.

Find out more at www.thersa.org.uk/citiesoflearning

SAVINGS

SELF-EMPLOYED RETIREMENT

RSA Fellows will be asked for their ideas about how to bolster retirement security for the self-employed as part of a new RSA project. With support from the online marketplace Etsy, the project will crowdsource innovative ideas to complement wider research.

The number of people who work for themselves has grown by 40% since 2000, but RSA research shows that just 23% of self-employed people make contributions to a private pension scheme, compared with 61% of employees. Their pension pots also tend to be smaller. Those closest to retirement in the 55–64-year-old age bracket have £85,500 saved on average, around half the amount stowed away by those in salaried work.

Several solutions to this pension shortfall have been put forward. One is to create a form of assisted enrolment, whereby the self-employed would be nudged to opt in or out of a scheme at the point when they complete their tax return. Another idea is to ask the self-employed to pay a higher rate of Class 4 National Insurance, which would be immediately channelled into a private pension of their choosing.

But pensions need not be the only way of preparing for the future. Earlier this year, an RSA report argued that the Lifetime ISA could be made more attractive to the self-employed by allowing for reasonable withdrawals at times of need, such as during a period of illness or business disruption.

■ *If you have a solution – whether it is a technical fix, a behavioural nudge or an entirely new service – please get in touch with project leader Benedict Dellot by emailing benedict.dellot@rsa.org.uk. The findings will be published in a report early next year.*



ARTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

EDUCATION ACTS

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Partition of India, which saw around 15 million people displaced and one million lose their lives. A play written by Sudha Bhuchar, *Child of the divide*, is uniting diverse audiences of all ages and faiths in a conversation around the lost narratives of children who lived through Partition.

There has been a collective desire among the diaspora communities to examine their legacy and gather testimonies from survivors who witnessed Partition. This urgency has translated into many emotive BBC radio and television programmes, including Anita Rani's compelling *My Family, Partition and Me*.

These personal stories of a collective wound stirred Canon Michael Roden and other senior clergy, as well as Professor Sarah Ansari from Royal Holloway University, to set up The Partition History Project (PHP) to campaign for the teaching of Partition in British schools, with a view to more positive interfaith relations through a shared compassionate narrative.

Child of the divide, which premiered in 2006 in a co-production with Tamasha and Polka theatre, is inspired by Bhisham Sahni's short story, *Pali*, and has a growing following. In 2016, Sudha teamed up with PHP to put the play on in St Mary's Church, Hitchin, to school audiences with accompanying lesson plans. This pilot was evaluated and endorsed by race equality think tank the Runnymede Trust and has informed this year's timely revival and launched theatre company Bhuchar Boulevard.

Child of the divide is centred around a young Hindu boy, Pali, whose fingers slip from his father's hand amid the violent upheaval, thus changing his destiny for ever. Taken in by a childless Muslim couple, he is given a new name and a new faith. When his real father comes to claim him, Pali must decide who he is: the Hindu boy he was born to be, the Muslim boy he has become, or simply a child of the divide.

To get involved in the RSA Performing Arts Network, email Jackie Elliman at Jackie.Elliman@rsa.org.uk



EDUCATION

THE IDEAL SCHOOL EXHIBITION

A new essay will shape the direction of the RSA's education work for years to come; work that Fellows can influence and engage with through the Innovative Educators Network. *The Ideal School Exhibition*, published in November, is the culmination of a year of consultation and tells the story of a dozen inspiring schools that are driven not by the demands of the government's accountability system, but by their own sense of mission. These schools are bucking the growing problem of schools narrowing their focus and teaching to the test in the effort to clear thresholds, hit targets and climb league tables.

The essay is designed to ignite a debate about how and why we educate children and, according to its author Julian Astle, is directed at two audiences: "First, politicians and policymakers; we want to persuade them that the educational costs of the school accountability system, which has performed an important role over the last 25 years, now outweigh the benefits. The risks of reform are lower than the risks of inaction."

The second audience for the essay is much broader: all those who govern, lead or teach in schools and want to escape the 'education-by-numbers game' so that their school can focus on the substance of education instead of the proxy goals of tests and targets.

If you accept the need for accountability, but share our concerns about the current system, the RSA is keen to hear from you. To take part in the debate, join the RSA's Innovative Education Network at www.thersa.org/innovative-education or simply leave a comment or suggestion at www.rsa.org/idealschool.

For the full essay, visit www.thersa.org/idealschool



INTERNATIONAL

NEW RSA ANZ DIRECTOR

Philippa Duthie has been appointed director of RSA ANZ, having occupied a number of strategic roles in the Australian network over the past five years. Philippa brings with her extensive knowledge of the not-for-profit and social change sector, and has previously worked in higher education and for the Queensland government.

Philippa is looking forward to driving the RSA's social change agenda in Australia and New Zealand. Her work will focus on building the RSA's presence and capacity in the region, brokering strategic partnerships and supporting regional networks and events. She plans to explore new ways for ANZ Fellows to connect, both with each other and globally, while also collaborating with the RSA's global research agenda in the areas of inclusive growth, the future of work and citizen engagement.

COUNTRYSIDE

COMMISSION CHAIR APPOINTED

Sir Ian Cheshire, chair of Barclays UK, has been appointed as chair of the RSA Food, Farming and Countryside Commission, which was launched in November to grow a mandate for change post-Brexit, engaging the public, businesses, academics and advocates to inform recommendations for policymakers.

"I am delighted to be working with Sir Ian, who has been recognised for his leadership on sustainability in business," said Sue Pritchard, commission director. "We will be able to combine the RSA's cutting edge research and critical thinking with serious and creative citizen engagement, on some of the most pressing questions of our time."

Stay up to date with the Commission at www.thersa.org/ffcc

EVENTS

CATCH UP ON THE CONVERSATION

Unmissable online highlights from a packed public events season, selected by the curating team for your viewing pleasure!

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"The run happened before my broadcast!" Ten years after the financial crash, famed journalist **Robert Peston's** reflections on breaking the Northern Rock story are a fascinating glimpse into the inner sanctums of the media, politics and banking.

Watch now: bit.ly/RSAPeston
#10yearsafter



How can we reinvigorate public trust in institutions? And when were you most untrustworthy? Sharing economy guru **Rachel Botsman** and Bank of England chief economist **Andy Haldane** put each other through their paces with a challenging and often hilarious mix of personal and professional questions.

Watch now: bit.ly/RSABotsman
#RSAtrust



Our most valuable personal commodity is our attention, and yet we give it unthinkingly. Winner of the inaugural Nine Dots Prize, **James Williams'** profound and deeply thoughtful meditation on the perils of the digital age will be genuinely life-changing; if you let it!

Watch now: bit.ly/RSAWilliams
#RSAdigital



We pay a significant personal price for our national security, but is it too high? Journalist **Glenn Greenwald**, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his Snowden revelations, made his first and only UK appearance since his partner was held at Heathrow under controversial terror legislation in 2015.

Watch now: bit.ly/RSAGreenwald
#RSAdemocracy

...in LEDCs. Despite all of this, the use of fuelwood remains especially in countries with large populations (diagram C). ... shows that, in many African countries, almost all the family uses comes from burning wood.

...estimated 2.4 billion people are living in rural areas. Much of this is in the rural areas. As population increases, the demand for fuelwood increases. This leads to deforestation as living trees are cut down for firewood. This has serious side-effects:

- Removing trees leads to soil erosion because the roots hold the soil in place. This is a serious problem. The area has become a desert.
- As trees are removed, the soil becomes dry and the areas start to grow the Sahara Desert.
- As wood becomes more scarce, people are forced to find it. In some areas, men and women, are finding it difficult to find wood when that time of day.
- There are personal safety issues. In some areas, people are finding it difficult to find wood when that time of day.
- In urban areas people are finding it difficult to find wood when that time of day.

...to these problems. The loss of trees leads to soil erosion because the roots hold the soil in place. This is a serious problem. The area has become a desert.



Investigate

...or people you know, use fuelwood for cooking? ... try to find out where it comes from and plot the information on a map of your local area. ... plot the forest area. ... which could most easily be used as a source of biomass.

...deforestation for fuelwood in West Bengal, India. ... modern part of West Bengal state has, over the years, become a serious problem. The area has become a desert. ... a number of different reasons. Many have been cut down for fuelwood. ... Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan ... areas start to grow the Sahara Desert. ... the wood is an easy way to make money. ... they also need it for their own use. ... men and women, are finding it difficult to find wood when that time of day. ... money for their families. ... is from state-owned forests. ... little effect in cutting down trees. ... 7,000 tonnes a week. ... income in 10 per cent already small family incomes in the region (figure F).

...the loss of trees leads to soil erosion because the roots hold the soil in place. This is a serious problem. The area has become a desert. ... have a lot of mouths to feed. ... have to travel further and chop the trees far away from houses. Sometimes there are guards. If they catch me I'll be fined - or worse. ... The weather is changing and the soils are less fertile as the soil is not so fertile. Surely this can't be because of what we're doing to the forests?



- Read through Rashid's story (figure F).
 - Explain why he feels forced into selling fuelwood when he knows it is wrong.
 - What do you think will happen if he stops?
 - What would you do in his situation?

TEACHING FOR FREEDOM

With liberal democracy under threat, schools need to take brave decisions about what they teach children

by Julian Astle
 @JulianAstle

Watching the evening news, I find it hard to believe that less than 30 years have passed since history was supposed to have ended, or, to be more precise, since the Berlin Wall fell and American political scientist Francis Fukuyama wrote his famous essay *The End of History?* In it he announced that the 20th century's ideological battles between East and West were over, that Western liberal democracy had won, and that a new era of progress and peace had begun. That was 1989, the year I left school.

This year's school leavers will head out into a more turbulent and dangerous world. Economic security is threatened by the advent of the intelligent machine. And national security is once again a key public concern, with the terrorist threat level never falling below 'severe', rising tensions between Russia and the West risking a new cold war, and North Korea threatening nuclear war.

Even if our worst security fears prove overblown, the fact remains that we live on a dangerously overheating and densely populated planet where flooding and drought, conflict and persecution, and vast inequalities of opportunity and wealth have displaced 65 million people and created a migrant population greater than that of Brazil. Amid the backlash against this unprecedented movement of people from poorer to richer nations, liberalism is in full retreat, while nationalism, sectarianism and protectionism are on the rise. As a species, our ability to overcome our fear of the 'other' – to transcend our hardwired instinct to tribalism – is once again being severely tested.

Across the democratic West, those students who walk out of the school gates for the last time next summer will have to find their way in societies that are being transformed by the liberating

but profoundly destabilising forces of globalisation. Societies that, in the wake of the deepest economic slump since the 1930s, are now turning in on themselves over issues of culture, identity, belonging and belief.

As citizens, they will have to weigh the costs of joining or turning away from an increasingly shrill and polarised public debate, dominated by the deliberately offensive and the easily offended. The former emboldened by the anonymity of the online echo chamber, the latter protected by 'trigger warnings' and 'safe spaces', with the struggle between them throwing up new challenges to the most precious but fragile democratic freedom of all: free speech.

In a post-truth age when 'alternative facts', 'fake news' and invented conspiracies are used to pollute the information space and undermine the very notion of knowable truth, those who enter that debate will need to stay a safe distance from both cynicism and credulity by learning to interrogate competing claims. They will need to make reasonable judgements not just about plausibility, but about motivation, correlation and causation, knowing what to attribute to malign intent and what to incompetence or chance.

At a time of angry populism, when the integrity of democratic institutions is questioned, they will need to know the difference between an 'enemy of the people' and a judge or legislator discharging their constitutional duty.

In an era of identity politics, when people are all too often judged not, as Martin Luther King once urged, by "the content of their character" but by the colour of their skin, their sex or by any number of other innate or inherited characteristics, the class of 2018 will need to decide for themselves what good, if any, is likely to come from placing the group, rather than the individual, at the centre of our public discourse.

At a time when elites and experts are widely derided, young people will need to identify their own thought >>

JULIAN ASTLE
 IS THE RSA'S
 DIRECTOR
 OF CREATIVE
 LEARNING AND
 DEVELOPMENT

“WHEN FREEDOM IS THE GOAL, EDUCATION IS THE SOLUTION”

leaders and their own champions of quality and truth to help sift the sublime from the ordinary, the profound from the trivial and the authentic from the derivative.

In our multicultural, multifaith societies, which are struggling to settle on the core, non-negotiable values that bind them, the class of 2018 needs to learn to live and let live without ever lapsing into moral relativism; to understand both the value, and the limits, of tolerance. They will need to weigh competing rights, balance mutually exclusive freedoms, and reconcile apparently incompatible world views and, when compromise cannot be reached, to settle their disputes peaceably within a framework of democratically determined, impartially applied laws.

When Islamists and far-right extremists are willing a violent clash of civilisations, young people will need to know how to resist their provocations without shrinking from the battle of ideas that will have to be fought between enlightenment and bigotry. And they will need to keep sight of the fact that the front lines of this unavoidable battle run through, not between, nations and religions.

Most importantly of all, they will need to learn that all of this will be more easily achieved if we can rediscover our civility, generosity, empathy and humour, the diminution of which has always accompanied the rise of man’s worst ideas and most dangerous ideologies.

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

This poses a challenge for all of society, but particularly for our schools, which are charged with passing on society’s norms, customs, culture and values, and where children are socialised. As the American psychologist and educational reformer John Dewey put it: “Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife.”

Anyone who doubts the connection between liberalism, democracy and education need look no further than contemporary Hungary, a country that has elected as its prime minister a man who promised to build an “illiberal democracy” knowing full well that, as *The Times*’ Philip Collins put it: “Liberal democracy comes as a pairing and anyone who disparages the first, threatens the second.”

But what Viktor Orbán also knows, and his actions over the seven years since his election reveal, is that an enlightened liberal democracy depends for its very survival on education. Which might be why, in contrast to the global trend, he has sought to restrict, rather than expand, the educational opportunities available to Hungary’s youth, cutting education budgets at every level, lowering the school leaving age from 18

to 16, reducing the number of young people going to university, appointing powerful chancellors to exert political control over the country’s higher education institutions, introducing a new, highly nationalist curriculum in schools and, earlier this year, introducing an apparently technical regulation, the effect of which is to close or move the Central European University, which since the collapse of communism has stood as a beacon of openness, independence and academic freedom.

The lesson could not be clearer. When authoritarianism is the goal, education is the problem. When freedom is the goal, education is the solution. But how do we educate for freedom? What sort of schooling will enable a young adult to fully grasp freedom’s value, understand its vulnerabilities, recognise its enemies and commit to its defence?

What kind of schooling will give our young people the wisdom and courage to make judgements, moral, intellectual and aesthetic, and the wherewithal to join what the English philosopher Michael Oakeshott referred to as “the great conversation of mankind”? In short, what kind of education will prepare them, not just to write a good exam, but to live a good life?

There are many plausible answers to this, but the status quo plus an hour of civics is surely not one of them. For this is a question that, once asked, leads inexorably to a fuller, richer, more expansive account of education’s purposes and character than that which underpins our current, technocratic, highly instrumentalist education debate.

That debate, of course, both reflects and drives what is happening in our schools, too many of which are narrowing their focus to exam results and hollowing out their teaching at the very moment when, as a society, we need them to do the opposite. To understand why this is, we need to understand the workings of the school accountability system: the primary cause of our current malaise.

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS

Unlike Viktor Orbán, the architects of England’s accountability framework are driven by the best of intentions: to improve educational standards. And it is important to acknowledge that the accountability system has had a positive impact on standards. That was clearly shown by researchers at Bristol University, who compared the performance of English and Welsh schools after the Welsh Assembly’s decision to abolish performance tables and found the latter lagging behind.

But that does not tell even half the story. Yes, in high-stakes, low-trust systems where, if targets are not hit or thresholds cleared, trustees and governors can lose their schools and



headteachers can lose their jobs, what gets measured tends to get done. But what of those things that do not get measured and therefore do not get done? And what about the way in which things get done; the tactics some schools feel compelled to employ, the games they are incentivised to play, to get their performance numbers in the right place?

In descending order of seriousness and ascending order of prevalence, these tactics and examples of gaming include: outright cheating in exams, or over-marking teacher-assessed modular exams; manipulating the admissions system to get more high-performing pupils on roll and excluding or, more often, ‘managing out’ other pupils to get low performers off roll; steering pupils towards easy-to-obtain qualifications of little interest or value; narrowing the Key Stage 2 curriculum and foreshortening Key Stage 3 to prepare pupils for high-stakes tests; focusing on subjects that count, or count double, in performance tables and on pupils who are close to the pass/fail borderline, to the detriment of statistically less ‘valuable’ subjects and students. Most pervasive of all is the practice of ‘teaching-to-the-test’ in which pupils are taught only what is likely to be tested and in ways that respond specifically to the demands of the test. Over the years, the government has sought to address each of these problems by tweaking the system. But this is the bureaucratic version of the ‘whack-a-mole’ fairground game. No sooner has an abuse been identified and closed down than a new one pops up somewhere else. The rules may change but the game goes on.

Apportioning blame for ‘gaming’ (or, as it could equally be described, for responding rationally to the system’s perverse

incentives) is far from straightforward considering the intense pressure school leaders are under. But most people would, I think, agree that the greatest culpability rests with those who write the rules of the game, rather than those who are forced to play by them.

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

The good news is that there are some inspirational school leaders out there who refuse to play this bureaucratic education-by-numbers game; leaders whose decisions are shaped, not by the government’s agenda, but by their own sense of mission.

These educational missionaries are a different breed. They recognise the need for transparency and accountability to ensure money is well spent and children well taught. And they understand the importance of exam success for their pupils. But they also recognise there are lots of things a good exam grade does not tell us about the student who achieved it, such as whether the knowledge they have acquired is superficial or temporary, as is likely to be the case if they have been intensively ‘taught-to-the-test’.

What is more, the missionary knows that exam success tells us little about a pupil’s ability to put their education to use; to work with others, in real-life situations, under time pressures, while learning from, and not being disheartened by, mistakes, showing initiative, spark and leadership. They know a good grade does not tell us whether the pupil enjoyed learning the examined facts, or learning in general, or whether, having passed the exam, they are determined to keep on learning, fuelled by a sense of curiosity and wonder. And they >>

“IN THE END EDUCATION IS GOAL DRIVEN, AND THOSE GOALS ARE ROOTED IN VALUES”

fact and baseless assertion, which is a gift to populists and other false prophets: “Without knowledge, critical thinking is redundant. Knowledge plays a key role in debating with – and hopefully changing the minds of – those who hold racist, bigoted and ultimately false beliefs. Without some knowledge, some acceptance of facts, we’re just people with different opinions shouting at each other. And it is knowledge of a subject that allows people to think critically about the divisive and cynical claims made by populists.”

This dispute over knowledge and skills is just one of many fascinating points of contention in the debate about how to prepare young people for adulthood. Even the nature of that debate – whether, considering the complex challenges of the 21st century, it is highly timely, or, considering the constancy of human nature, it is in fact timeless – is itself contested. And because so much of that debate is values based and goal driven, it is not there to be ‘won’. Rather, it is part of the wider conversation of mankind, the unending dialogue between the dead, the living and the yet-to-be-born, into which our children must be inducted.

That is the educational conversation the leaders of mission-oriented schools are engaged in. And that is the conversation the RSA intends to host and contribute to in the coming years. It is a conversation to which every teacher who despairs at having to talk about tests, targets and tactics should consider themselves warmly invited.

For this conversation to flourish on a large scale, there must be a loosening of the accountability system’s vice-like grip on our schools. We must arrive at the point where institutional failure can still be identified and tackled, but where the majority of schools have the space and the freedom to pursue their own mission.

Government will only step back if schools are ready to step up, however. Which is why any relaxation of external constraint must be accompanied by a step-change in the way schools drive their own standards, with practice increasingly informed by research and evidence. That is why the changes proposed in *The Ideal School Exhibition* – to assessment, to admissions and exclusions, to the use of performance data, to the role of Ofsted, and to the way in which we identify and support failing schools – are aimed at everyone at every level of the system, not just the politicians in Whitehall.

The aims of those changes are to free headteachers from having to choose between their school’s interests and those of their pupils by ensuring the two are aligned; to get classroom teachers focused on the curriculum, not the exam specification, so we test what has been taught instead of teaching what will

be tested; to get examiners to make tests harder to teach to and to reward genuine quality rather than coached responses; to get Ofsted to balance the pressures of the accountability system by looking at how, as well as whether, a school has met its performance targets; to get government and the inspectorate out of the business of defining excellence and focused solely on identifying failure; and to ensure the actions of policymakers and regulators are more supportive and less punitive.

And behind all these aims is one overriding objective: to help those who lead and teach in our schools reclaim ownership of their institutions, their profession and their practice. Only then will we have a system that not only prepares our young people for exams, but prepares them for life. ■

Read *The Ideal School Exhibition* at www.thersa.org/idealschool

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION PAPER TALKS

Breaking into the creative industries is notoriously hard, particularly for young people without the right connections. Social enterprise Paper Arts helps under- and un-employed young people in Bristol get a foot on the ladder by providing knowledge, mentoring and training. “It’s really about helping young people who need the support and confidence to see themselves with a career in the creative industries,” says CEO Simone Kidner FRSA.

The organisation’s latest initiative is a series of inspirational workshops and lectures called Paper Talks, designed to encourage creative entrepreneurship. “Led by industry experts, the talks aim to actively engage young people from ethnically diverse inner-city communities alongside working professionals to participate in discussions and gain fundamental education in the power of creativity in enterprise,” explains Simone.

The project recently received a £2,000 RSA Catalyst grant, which will be spent on developing a programme of high-quality speakers. Paper Talks will run until June 2018, with five talks and five workshops covering topics from urban planning to working without hierarchy.

■ *Fellows are welcome to get involved as speakers or to attend the events. For more information, email simone@paperarts.org.uk or alexis@redbrickhouse.org.uk*

TRAVEL WARNING

With the social, economic and environmental impact of travel changing, is it time to reassess our relationship with holidays?

by Susan Barton

Holidays are supposed to offer quality time away from the stresses of everyday life. They are not only an opportunity to experience different things in a different place, but also provide a psychological benefit as something to look forward to and back on with happiness. Yet, throughout history, the pleasures of holidays have been accompanied by drawbacks, and as our wings have spread, the impact of those downsides has become more complex.

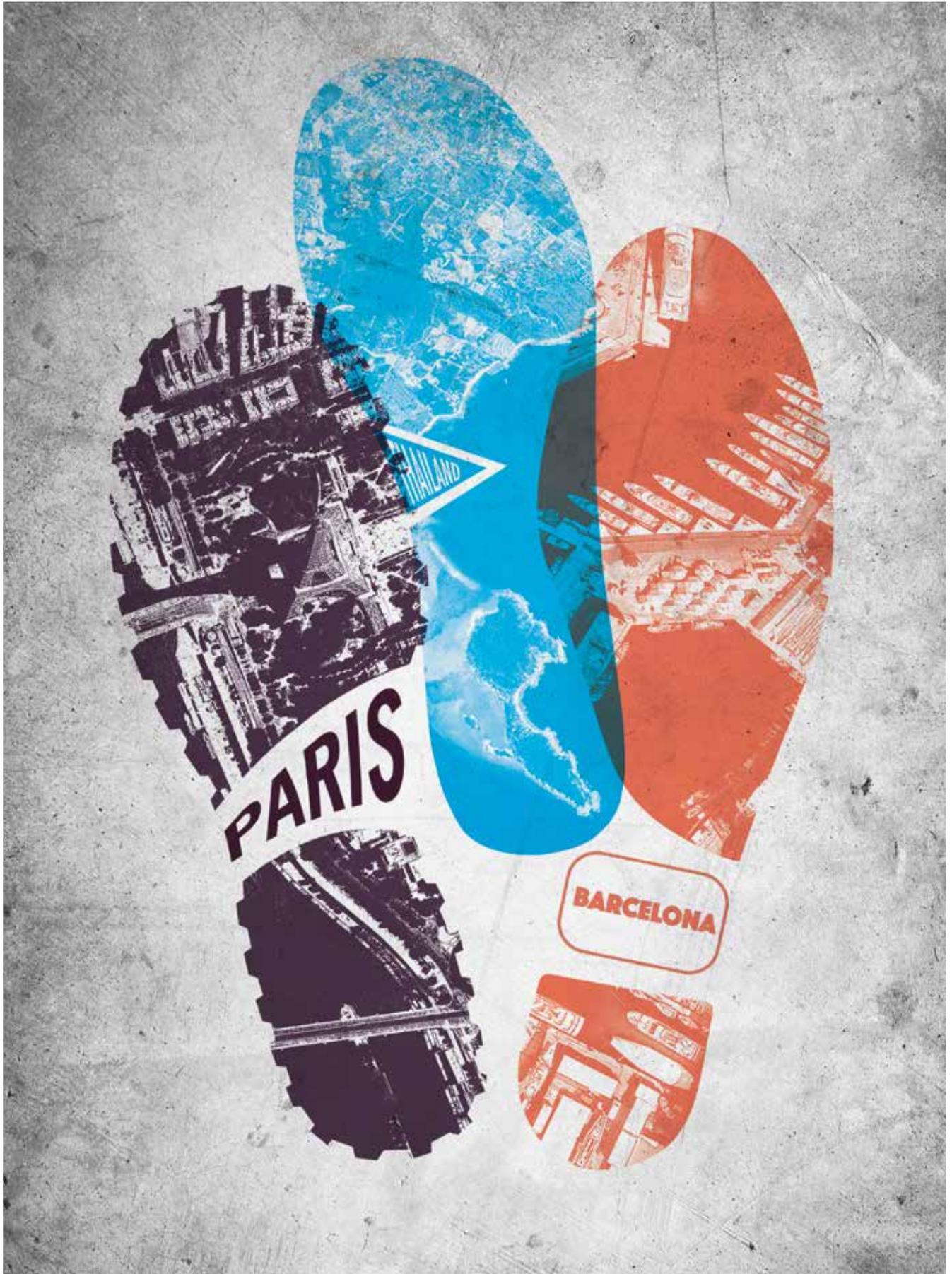
In the days before holidays with pay, legislated for in 1938 thanks to a long campaign by trade unions, ordinary people could face destitution during the annual shutdown of their workplace. From the late 19th century, some people, notably in the Lancashire cotton industries, were fortunate enough to be able to join holiday savings clubs to cover household expenses while they were away and have enough left to pay for a few days in Blackpool. But even this group might return home completely broke until the next payday. This continued to be true for many low-paid workers even after holidays with pay became common.

Going on holiday represented a considerable investment and also a gamble. What if it rains every day? This could cause misery for 20th-century families staying in boarding houses, where they were not allowed indoors at all other than during meal times and to sleep. Indoor activities, such as end of pier shows, could take up a considerable chunk of their spending money. Holiday camps, offering

all-inclusive accommodation and entertainment, were a solution to this from the 1930s. Butlins, Pontins and Warner were the most famous, but there were and still are many others, including caravan parks and campsites. Some independently minded people wanted their own, private holiday home; somewhere just for them. By the 1920s all manner of ramshackle constructions, such as redundant railway carriages, upcycled ships' boilers and sheds, converted into beach chalets began to appear along the coast between resorts. Thankfully, planning laws now control coastal development in the UK.

Travel abroad, formerly only for the wealthy, leisured class, became accessible to middle- and some working-class people from the 1960s, with the innovation of back-to-back flights and hotel block-booking by tour operators lowering prices. British government restrictions, language barriers, concerns about foreign foods and budgeting all ensured the popularity of package tours booked through a travel agent. Just as people no longer had to dream of visiting foreign destinations, so the places they longed to see began to alter. In Spain, tour operators enticed people living on the coast to sell their land for hotel building, which in a few years eradicated former fishing communities, replacing them with superimposed resorts such as Benidorm, Torremolinos and Lloret de Mar. At the same time, restrictions on overseas spending meant costs had to be kept to a minimum, favouring companies specialising in cheaper holidays. This formula was repeated elsewhere with identikit resorts around the Mediterranean. >>

SUSAN BARTON
IS AN HONORARY
RESEARCH FELLOW
AT DE MONTFORT
UNIVERSITY



“HIGH DEMAND FOR HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION IS PUSHING UP RENTS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS”

Liberalisation of the travel industry by the 1980s saw the dawn of an age of mass tourism, in which almost anyone could at least aspire to a holiday abroad. As over the previous century, better-off people moved to more exclusive resorts, enhancing the status of some destinations at the expense of others that acquired a down-market reputation. Package holidays began to be looked down upon, while travelling independently to places ‘totally unspoilt’ became a mark of status. Villas and apartment complexes began to fill in the gaps between resorts in the most sought-after destinations. Planning controls have been introduced in a belated attempt to control building and protect the environment, but parts of the world are ravaged by uncontrolled development as the constant search for new experiences and destinations continues.

PROBLEM PASSENGERS

Today, sustainability in the environmental, economic and social sense is a massive concern. Crowds of tourists flocking to the world’s popular destinations are changing their very nature. People seeking to get away from it all are travelling further and further away to formerly remote places, such as Thailand or tropical islands, accompanied by many other like-minded travellers from the developed world, on planes emitting greenhouse gases. Not wanting to forgo any of their luxuries, they are introducing pollution and problems of waste disposal to countries without adequate infrastructure to deal with it. For example, as a small island nation, the Seychelles is particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels and land scarcity, but lacking recycling facilities, all its rubbish goes to landfill sites. The Maldives, too, is struggling with waste management. In this group of coral islands, lying barely two metres above sea level, there is an island reserved for rubbish shipped out from the country’s 105 tourist resorts. The rubbish dumped on Thilafushi now towers 15 metres above its formerly unspoilt lagoons, with rubbish washing up on other beaches.

Tourism does of course have positive effects too. It plays a major role in many economies around the world, accounting for 10% of global GDP in 2016 and 10% of employment, directly and indirectly. This has made a huge difference to living standards for some poorer communities, although for some, any economic benefit, much of which is leaked overseas (up to 80%

in the Caribbean) and not reinvested locally, has to be balanced with social dislocation among local communities.

This is also a problem in developed countries. The high demand for holiday accommodation is pushing up rents and living costs for local residents in the most popular destinations. Anti-tourism protests have broken out across Europe as locals demand that tourists stop invading their cities. Demonstrations, sometimes accompanied by violence and vandalism, have taken place during 2017 in Bilbao, Barcelona, Palma, Venice and Dubrovnik, where the old town’s population has fallen from 5,000 in 1991 to only 1,157 today, but nearly 800,000 passengers disembarked there from cruise ships last year. UNESCO has recommended that just 8,000 people a day be allowed inside Dubrovnik’s medieval walls, but for some locals even this is too many and they have called for a daily limit of 4,000. Venice, too, sees its water polluted by docking cruise ships and it has considered restricting the number of tourists who can visit each day. In many places it can be argued that tourists contribute to the economy, but when they arrive by cruise ship, most spending takes place on board, delivering little economic benefit to the places visited. Yet those places still have to cope with the waste and pollution from massive ships’ diesel engines.

The choices made by holidaymakers can play a big part in creating a sustainable tourist model. When deciding which travel company to use, they can check for environmental and responsible tourism policies that demonstrate sustainable management and maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits. For example, does the tour operator pay a living wage to employees, thereby helping reduce poverty in the wider community? Tourists themselves must show consideration to the places they visit by trying to minimise rubbish, particularly plastic waste. Practices such as removing packages from products brought from home and not using plastic bottles or bags all help. If you must bring them, make sure you take them home again. Conserving water, reducing energy consumption and using public transport are other ways of reducing environmental impacts. Buying locally made souvenirs and eating in local restaurants boosts local economies, directing money to the community rather than big companies overseas.

Just as the impact of mass travel on communities and places is raising serious concerns, our individual experience of holidays



is also changing. Holidays are now seen by many as a necessity rather than a luxury, piling social pressure on top of the financial hardship stemming from stagnant wages.

WEARY TRAVELLER

The way we go about planning our holidays has also added new anxieties during the 21st century. Budget airlines, online booking, price comparison websites and, more recently, web platforms such as Airbnb have made holidays cheaper, but also introduced a tyranny of choice. How much luggage do travellers need to take? Should they pay extra to book a suitcase into the hold of the plane or might they get away with hand baggage? Have they remembered to check in online before going to the airport or will they have to cough up for the privilege of doing so at the desk? Travellers face long queues at airport security while their personal belongings are checked and frequently delayed flights cause even more frustration.

The threat of terrorism is also now very real. Horrifying attacks in popular leisure and tourist locations mean that constant vigilance is required even when relaxing. The chances are nothing will happen to you, but who knows where terrorists might strike next? Many previously popular destinations are now off limits to tourists because of war, conflict and terrorism.

Meanwhile, technology means that even on holiday, people can still be contacted by employers and may be expected to keep up with emails while supposedly getting away from it all. Even if not used for work, technology has created a need in

some people to be photographed looking happy in an exotic or interesting location for the benefit of their Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat profiles.

So will all of these issues inhibit people's enthusiasm for travel? So far it does not seem to have done so. Despite these worries, 56% of Britons took a holiday abroad in the year to August 2016. The number of British tourists increased between 2015 and 2016, after a slump in 2009 following the financial crash. In 2006 there were more than 69 million trips abroad, a level not reached again until 2016. However, domestic tourism, including city breaks, is now the main driver for growth, perhaps reflecting some of the concerns raised. Families with small children took the most UK holidays, rebranded as staycations, with 26% taking more than four breaks a year.

With so many on the move, it is easy to forget there are still people who do not go on holiday at all; 14% in 2016. This proportion shows little change since the 1960s and even the 1930s, with growth coming from those taking several holidays in a year. Charities, like the Leicestershire Children's Holiday Centre in Mablethorpe, are still needed to send children who may never have seen the beach on a seaside holiday.

Perhaps tourists need to reassess the real reasons they go on holiday: to relax and enjoy quality time with family and friends, or just enjoying peaceful solitude. These things can be done anywhere, at the marvellous British coast or countryside or even in their own back garden or local park, and do not necessarily have to involve a journey halfway round the world. ■

DRAMA SCHOOLS

Grange Hill shocked viewers with its honest portrayal of childhood. But what mirror would it hold to society today?

by Phil Redmond

It was almost 40 years ago today, to paraphrase a line from the Liverpoolian canon, that I finished the scripts for a new children's drama series and the BBC started production. While we were hopeful, at the time neither myself nor the BBC thought the show would run for 30 years. Nor that it would be watched by 80% of the UK population. Nor that it would set off a controversy unheralded in the annals of broadcasting as it became a touchstone for teenage rites of passage. That series was, of course, *Grange Hill*.

With distance and hindsight, I can now accept that it changed television and understand its success and controversy. First, it was relevant to its audience. It focused on the one thing almost everyone has to endure in life: school. Whether in special measures or on the playing fields of Eton, the structure of life at school remains remarkably similar. Travel to and from, the exchanges between lessons, assemblies, registration, lunch, detention and the perennial bullying, from staff and peers alike. The latter is probably the most useful lesson of all. Bullies are always just around the corner, or trolls never more than a few screen swipes away.

Second, although fictional, it was as close to reality as we could manage. At the time, it seemed, to both myself and the BBC, that it was just another good idea, so the media storm that grew around it took us a bit by surprise. Whether it came from angry parents, teachers' unions, or questions in the House of Commons over whether the BBC should air this sort of subversive propaganda, I kid you not, the overarching complaint was that British schooling could not be as bad as depicted. That noise was soon drowned out by the kids themselves: the intended audience.

The ratings just kept increasing, forcing policymakers to take a closer look and discover that our fictional school was not typical: reality was a lot rougher, more violent and a lot coarser. *Grange Hill* was, after all, on the BBC. However, it was holding up a mirror to our policymakers, which was, and still is, the easiest way to court controversy. Shake the tree, attack preconceptions, challenge the status quo.

The programme was at its most successful and popular when dealing with the real issues teenagers faced trying

to navigate their way from childhood to adulthood. Issues such as teachers' brutality, students protesting about uniform or demanding student councils, alongside discussions around first bras, periods or dyslexia. There was none more successful than the Zammo drugs story, which ran over two years, depicting his decline into addiction and, with the help and support of his friends, his eventual recovery. The aim was to counter the simplistic anti-drugs policy of drugs bad/you die, and to highlight the fact that while many people can find themselves, for whatever reasons, at such a low ebb that they turn to drugs, help can be found.

CRITICAL SUPPORT

By the time we did that storyline, many of the original critics, having gazed into the mirror, were now avid supporters of the programme, realising that it spoke to the very people they themselves were failing to reach. We worked with SCODA (Standing Council on Drug Abuse) and linked to the global Just Say No campaign, which was championed by Nancy Reagan. As has so often been the case through history, the subversive propagandists were invited for tea at the White House.

Grange Hill's success in reaching its intended audience was not because it was about education, but about school and how it evolved through each changing generation. Whether it was a unitary comprehensive, merged community college or specialist media school, it did not focus on the content of the curriculum but on the latter stages of the socialisation process. It looked at how society grooms children into becoming active citizens, and how that remains a constant as society itself shifts. Anxieties over peer approval, first dates and appearance remain constant.

Childhood extends the longer the incarceration in the school system lasts. The concept of childhood was probably invented by the 1870 Education Act, which laid the foundations for state education, setting out a framework that delineated life as pre-school, school and work. Once work began, childhood ended. Then, as now, the demand was for a more highly trained workforce to cope with the increasing demands of higher technology. The more complex work has become, the longer the schooling has extended, so it is now, perhaps, more difficult to determine the threshold at which childhood ends and adulthood

PHIL REDMOND IS A TV PRODUCER AND SCREENWRITER WHOSE CREATIONS INCLUDE *GRANGE HILL* AND *BROOKSIDE*



begins. Depending on where you look across our legislative framework, it could be 12, 14, 16, 18 or 21.

In creating *Grange Hill* I was undoubtedly influenced by my own background – I attended one of the first comprehensive schools – but also by returning to higher education as a so-called mature student. There, I discovered *Deschooling Society* by the Croatian-Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich, who suggested that all we need to do is teach children to read, write and learn. Attach that to the work of education adviser Sir Ken Robinson, who has long proposed that formal education kills creativity, and we may start to understand why we appear no nearer to resolving the perennial question: what are we educating for?

If *Grange Hill* were still on air today it would play into the debate by becoming a free school supported by the business community. The kids would be given lunchtime access to media labs, robotic engineering workshops, 3D printers and hydroponic

pods, while the school's canteen would operate as an organic community resource, all aimed at encouraging cultural digital entrepreneurship. In other words, it would remain a touchstone for the modern #ROBOTS4ALL world. It would explore and challenge the perennial question about the purpose of formal education by depicting the alternatives. It would have its dotcom teenage millionaires coping with hundreds of thousands of followers, while showing how to deal with trolls, the dangers of online grooming, sex abuse and synthetic legal highs. Dating, music and fashion apps would also be in the mix.

That sort of touchstone series would still be relevant, and it would highlight the one thing Illich did not have in his sociological toolkit: the internet. Today, he might be thinking about teaching children to read, post and Google. But then again, childhood would probably end a lot earlier, and where would be the fun in that? ■

THE RIGHT RESULTS

Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman talks to Matthew Taylor about how the inspectorate can engender a strategic shift in schools so that good grades do not come at the expense of a real education

🐦 @amanda_spielman

TAYLOR: Ofsted has just celebrated its 25th anniversary. What are your thoughts on the evolution of the organisation over that period?

SPIELMAN: We worked up a corporate strategy and pulled together a few bits and pieces for the 25th birthday, and as we looked back at old strategies we noticed that the idea of being a force for improvement has recurred fairly regularly. There is a surprising amount of consistency. Although superficially things have changed quite a lot at different points, deep down the thing that really drives inspectors, that makes people want to work here, has not changed very much.

Over my 15 years in education, a very large part of the conversation has been around structures. The academy model in particular, and the shift away from local authority control towards multi-academy trusts, has been huge. And it still is; we're in a partially completed transition and it's not entirely clear quite what will happen as policy evolves. The other part of the conversation has been around the substance and what happens in the classroom, but this hasn't had as much airtime in the past few years. What really happens and is it what was intended? Is it what adds up to a really fantastic education for every child?

TAYLOR: You raised these issues in your recent speech at the Festival of Education, from which people seemed to take the message that we've got to go back to what schooling is really about, that it isn't just about exams and grades.

SPIELMAN: We've had a qualification-based system in this country for over 100 years. And that can sometimes take us away from remembering that a qualification and a grade – they're not

AMANDA SPIELMAN IS CHIEF INSPECTOR OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SKILLS, OFSTED

bad things at all, a few people have said I'm anti-testing and I'm not – are the reflections of education, not the education itself. It is quite easy to get a little too far into what it is that will get the child the grade, rather than thinking about how much history we want them to know. We lose sight of the fact that the curriculum is the thing that defines what it is we want people to come out of school knowing, and able to do in the wider sense. I'm trying to get this focus not just on grade outcomes, but on the substance that should be there. That is part of what having an inspectorate should mean.

TAYLOR: Implicit in that is a suggestion that there may be better and worse ways to achieve the same outcomes. So you could look at two schools achieving the same grades and outcomes, but there would be one school that was doing it in a way that was richer than another school.

SPIELMAN: Absolutely. You now have an immensely full flow of data coming out of schools in test results, in all the other information that's captured. What we can do is to look at the 'how'. How is this school achieving that and what are the wider pieces; the stuff that data and test results don't necessarily pick up? Does it add up to a full education that fulfils what the school sets out to deliver? Does it stack up with the grades you see coming out of it; does it look like the real deal?

TAYLOR: So how does Ofsted then speak to that idea of a richer notion of education? Because the tendency is to think that your role is there to identify when things are going wrong and intervene. You're suggesting that part of your role is also about saying to schools that are doing perfectly well that they are not doing so in the most ambitious and richest way possible. >>





SPIELMAN: We've never formed our judgements just off the back of results data from a school. We do have that flexibility to look at a similar set of grades and say: one school is reflecting something you'd really want and the other one is all about finding the easiest set of qualifications or giving people the most possible help with coursework. Our inspectors are all teachers with leadership experience in schools, so during an inspection they should be able to kick the tyres enough to get a sense of where a school is on the spectrum from full education through to thinned out. Inspection, at the end of the day, is human judgement about whether the pieces are coming together to make something that's as good as it should be.

TAYLOR: I'm aware that a broad strategic shift is actually accomplished through small, incremental changes, but it does seem to me that the strategic shift that you're describing is quite profound. Because while in any system there will be brilliant people who make things work regardless of the system, if one talks about the average, my experience as a governor is that permissible gaming is rife. When I say permissible I don't mean egregious cheating, I just mean governing body meetings where a lot of time is spent discussing the kinds of

interventions that enable people to avoid falling into certain categories, and not a great deal of it is about the things you think schools should be talking about: what is our mission, what is our purpose, do we know that our children are really loving learning?

SPIELMAN: Coming out of school loving learning is not what I see as the system goal because education is 14 years for most children; you should learn a lot in that time. So when people say that our goal is to create a love of learning, that should be a side effect of educating really well; it's not the goal in itself. But you are absolutely right, conversations can very quickly slide into the data and how are we going to get the data better? I would like the conversation in every staffroom and every governing body meeting to be about the education, not about the data.

TAYLOR: And how do you bring that change about?

SPIELMAN: There's no explicit change to the inspection work yet. At our inspection conferences we've talked about curriculum and we've started our inspectors thinking more

about curriculum, but that's it. The next new framework won't be introduced until 2019. But we've had something like 40 survey visits to schools, and of course I've been talking about it publicly. A lot of people have told me that there is already a knock-on effect and that schools are starting to talk about this. I was with somebody who is director of primary at one of the big multi-academy trusts only last week and she said that this is what our schools ought to be talking about and they're starting to do so. So this is one of the ways in which Ofsted influences the system that stops far short of giving a judgement and saying, this is good, this is outstanding. If we have this ability to get people talking about and discussing the things that really get to the heart of education, I genuinely believe that's got system value in itself.

TAYLOR: How important in this conversation is the way we undertake assessment itself? Arguably, the way in which we assess pupils is done in a way that leads to a focus on successful completion of the assessment task, rather than the broader knowledge of the field.

SPIELMAN: Sometimes we ask the same test to serve a lot of different purposes in the system. GCSEs were originally just about providing curriculum and end-stage measurement for individual children. They are now also used as tokens in performance tables and accountability measurement for schools, which is a very different thing. Assessment is right for its purpose and when you have multiple purposes you always have some trade-offs. So you have to understand the trade-offs and make sure that you make the right ones. The worst thing is if you design a test for one purpose and use it for another, because then you will definitely end up with a world bent out of shape. So the new GCSEs, for example – and I spent five years as the chair of Ofqual, so I've been pretty closely involved with them – I genuinely think they have been designed with a clearer recognition of what they're going to be used for and will get less bent out of shape than previous iterations.

TAYLOR: Is it implicit in your vision that we need to slightly loosen the relationship between the way in which we assess pupils' attainment and the way in which we assess schools' performance? That GCSEs for secondary schools, as you say, do both things at once and that's what raises the stakes so much on that particular moment. So, for example, school governing meetings focus so much more on that year group than the rest of the school.

SPIELMAN: There are pros and cons. It is genuinely difficult and this is why I think Ofsted's role is important

as a counterbalance, because we know that we are quite a powerful lever on school behaviour. My hope is that we can provide the right balance in the system to make sure that the overall weight of incentives on the school helps to keep people focused on the real interests of children. Schools are only as valuable as the children they turn out.

TAYLOR: If one were slightly turning down the volume of exams and grades as the ultimate determinant of whether or not a school is successful, what are the things you would want to turn the volume up on?

SPIELMAN: The curriculum, the substance of education. It's what you learn that really matters. There's a piece of research I've quoted a couple of times that really made me think hard a few years ago, at the height of the equivalence boom. Everybody was saying, this is how you help disadvantaged children; if they do this qualification and that qualification and get really good GCSE points then they can go into further education and Bob's your uncle. Well, the research used data from the British longitudinal study and captured information on people's subject choices at age 14 and related those to the whole life course. It showed that subject choice was extraordinarily important to how successful people had been in life. And, yes, I know that the information will have flowed through most directly in financial terms and I accept that incomes aren't a total proxy for everything, but, nevertheless, after controlling for childhood family income and socio-economic background and so on, the choices that people made at 14 were powerful predictors of their futures. People who at that age had taken the humanities, the languages, the hard sciences – what are characterised as the EBacc [English Baccalaureate] subjects – were the ones who had the advantage.

There was an old-fashioned school of British essentialism that came from the 19th century, the idea that it doesn't matter what you study, just as long as you study some things really in depth, that will prepare you to do anything in life. That's how we ended up regarding classics as being as good a training as anything else, and why we were so late to start educating significant numbers of people in science and technology. But if you look at research, it says the essentialist model doesn't actually hold, so there are dangers in giving everybody totally free choice and saying it doesn't matter. Actually, there is a core set of subjects that do give people the best choice. A curriculum that is really well designed, with the right core, and the right enrichment and extra-curricular pieces on top – so that people not only get this core of real learning, but can use it and have the interest and appetite to go on developing – that is educational nirvana. ■

ANATOMY OF LEARNING

A rounded education builds on knowledge to foster character and creativity. But what does that mean in practice?

by Peter Hyman
 @PeterHyman21

Talking Points is a technique devised by Neil Mercer and Lyn Dawes at the University of Cambridge as a way of encouraging what they call “exploratory talk”. You give an audience a series of statements (crucially, statements rather than questions elicit a stronger response as you have a gut reaction to them). In pairs, people go down the list at their own pace and start discussing the ones that they are provoked to talk about. So here goes: 10 talk points, some of which will hopefully spark a reaction.

1. Judge a school not just by exams but by the beautiful work crafted by pupils and how interesting they are in a conversation.
2. Empowering knowledge is more important than just knowledge of the powerful.
3. Head, heart and hand must be in balance for a decent education.
4. We must stop treating teachers like cogs in an exam wheel.
5. Speaking should be given the same status as reading and writing.
6. Headteachers should be the Head Teacher. And increasingly they're not.
7. There is no trade-off between knowledge and skills; we need powerful learners who develop both.
8. Creativity in all its forms should be right at the heart of a school.
9. Contrary to received wisdom you can teach character; you just have to be clever about it.
10. If you want to develop school culture, make a drama teacher your first appointment.

PETER HYMAN IS
 CO-FOUNDER AND
 HEADTEACHER OF
 SCHOOL 21

These 10 statements provide a clue to the new direction that is needed in education and speak to a growing movement of people who want change, who are eager to move beyond the sterile polarisation between traditionalists and progressives for the soul of the education system.

School is, for too many young people, neither enjoyable and fulfilling in its own right, nor a powerful enough preparation for the exciting yet dangerous world they will enter. The high-stakes hoops and hurdles that must be navigated to pass exams are now so intense for both teachers and pupils that little else really matters. Policymakers and politicians think that the harder exams introduced this year raise expectations about what pupils can achieve, but they are in fact doing the reverse. They put a ceiling on the extraordinary learning that could happen if schools were freed from the imperative of teaching to the exams.

There needs to be a reckoning, a restatement of purpose and values; a rebalancing of what matters. We need a different kind of education, one that combines deep thinking (head); growth, character and dialogue (heart); and an ability to solve problems, generate ideas and engage in the world (hand). School should be, above all else, a place of learning in all its expansive complexity: learning how to think, learning how to live, learning how to create. That is what we are trying to achieve at School 21 – a school for four to 18-year-olds in Stratford, East London – because we believe that an education across all three domains of head, heart and hand is the route to a fulfilling life.

For the ancient Greeks, this triad was called the Trivium and was made up of grammar, dialectic and rhetoric. Each had its importance. Each needed the other. Knowledge is so much poorer without curiosity or application. Dialogue >>



“SCHOOL SHOULD BE A PLACE OF LEARNING IN ALL ITS EXPANSIVE COMPLEXITY”

and debate is the route to honing arguments and finding greater truth, but lots of talk with no knowledge is merely hot air. Performance, the way of demonstrating learning, brings people along in support. So what might this kind of education look like in practice? What big changes would it require for how schools are run? And what would it mean for the role of the teacher?

THE HEAD

This element is about thinking and knowing. It involves developing the toolkit of an agile learner so that pupils can think deeply, question the world around them, be curious and love scholarship. It is about the excitement of knowledge and what can be done with it as students stand on the shoulders of giants and learn about the most significant literature, scientific discoveries and events of the past. But it is so much more than that; it is about making that knowledge resonate. It is the percussion of knowledge, not the monotone of its disaggregated parts, that starts to create meaning.

This is where traditionalists oversimplify the purpose of education. If it were as clear-cut as cramming people with Matthew Arnold’s “best that has been thought and said” from the past, then the task of education would frankly be easy. But that is only ever part of the task. Knowledge is not power, it is potential power. You need to do something with it. We need to use the best of the past to shed light on the present and in turn help shape the future. Three bodies of knowledge are fundamental to this process: the canon from the past, the roots of people’s identities in the present and the great challenges of the future, whether they be artificial intelligence, genetics or migration. This in combination is the knowledge that empowers young people to change the world.

As individuals, we need to develop a lot of knowledge about a few things, moving from novice to expert, and also know a little about a lot so that we have cultural literacy, an idea made popular by ED Hirsch, and a passport to the professional world. It is also important to remember that most of the learning we do in life is neither academic nor school based. Young people all over the world are learning to animate, cook, knit, do magic, skateboard or play the guitar by watching people on YouTube. We prioritise a narrow conception of academic knowledge at our peril. It results in too many young people being cowed and dismissed by school.

Ensuring that young people are developing this depth and breadth of knowledge requires some signature policies. First and foremost, schools should offer a secure grounding in the basics of literacy and numeracy; all else flows from this. High-

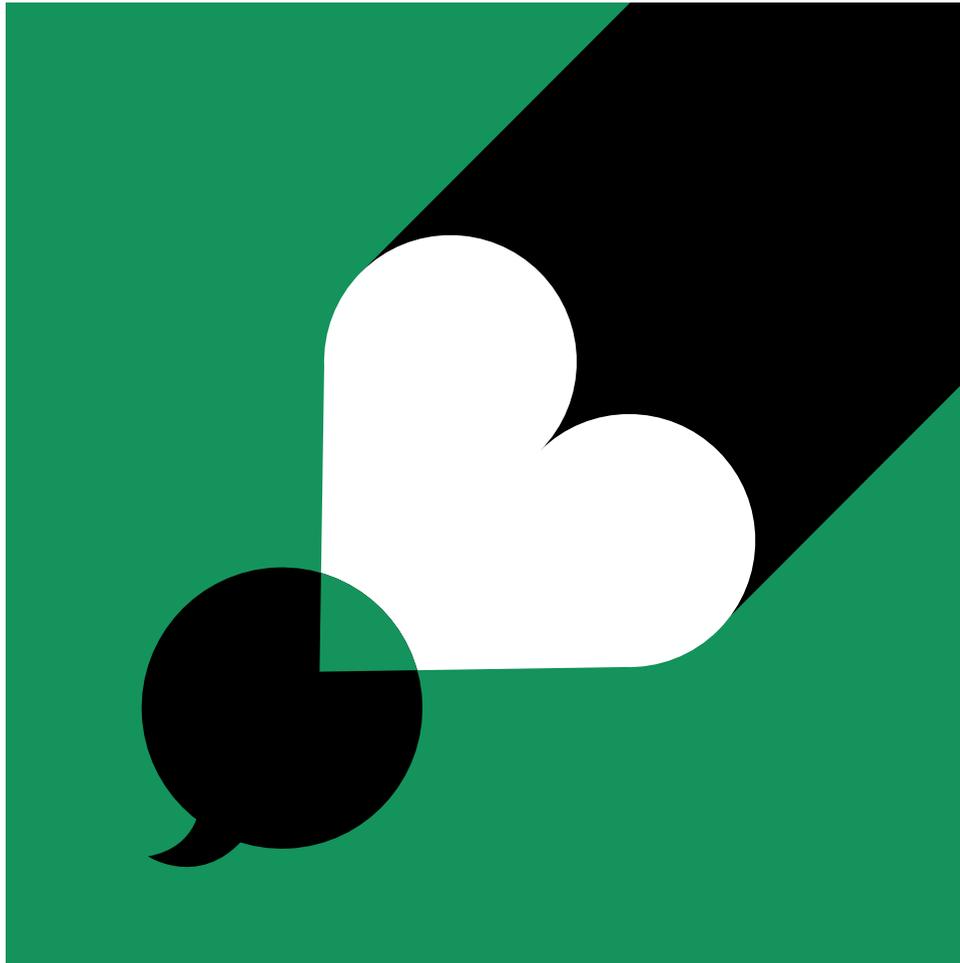
quality subject disciplines are also key, and pupils should be taught the different ways of thinking of the scientist, historian, mathematician and philosopher. Inter-disciplinary work that involves one or two subjects coming together in powerful combinations, such as in STEM projects, are another essential policy. And young people should have opportunities to undertake research on areas they are passionate about. Finally, bespoke courses that bring together knowledge in interesting ways, such as a course on big ideas and great texts, which we are developing at School 21, are important.

THE HEART

Life is hard for many young people, particularly those whose family dynamics mean they have encountered major upheaval, trauma or abandonment at an early age. For some it requires huge willpower to wrestle free from the shackles of family upbringing; for others it can be equally painful making sense of the multiple layers of identity involving gender, sexuality, race, place, class and body image. Piled on top of those challenges today are the cancer of social media, the smothering embrace of peer pressure and the increasingly addictive task of consuming overwhelming amounts of media.

As young people grapple with these challenges, they rely on their mental strength and emotional resilience. The roots of that strength and resilience are embedded in the story we tell ourselves as individuals. We all have an internal monologue, or what American executive coach Tracy Goss calls a “winning strategy”. That winning strategy is really a coping mechanism. It is our *modus operandi*, the way we confront difficult situations. Do we respond by avoiding them or do we lash out and blame others? The task for us as educators (and parents) in these formative years is to help young people construct a narrative that allows them to make sense of who they are, to construct a view of the present and the future that is not hobbled by damage from the past. The charity Youth at Risk, which does great work with the hardest-to-reach young people, calls this ‘the stand’. It is a statement of who the person is; not their goals, but the essence of what they are about and what people can expect of them.

This is difficult territory. There are some who believe that this is too complex and too risky for schools to get tangled up in. Others, in a blinkered way, say it is a distraction from the real task of cramming people with knowledge. Our experience is that it is essential work, particularly in an area of high deprivation. Self-knowledge, developed in a profound and layered way is surely as valuable a residue from years of schooling as is the traditional subject knowledge we spend so much time on.



We build out from the individual to the community. Teachers of the ‘heart’ are skilled at building what performers call ‘an ensemble’. One way to achieve this is to nurture what Cambridge educationalist Robin Alexander has labelled the “dialogic classroom”, which centres on high-quality, skilfully structured talk. Perhaps the biggest single change that would enhance social mobility and transform the dynamism of schools is taking talk seriously. At School 21 we have attempted to elevate speaking to the same status as reading and writing. In partnership with academics at Cambridge University, we have developed a framework focused on the four interlocking elements of oracy: physical (how you use your body and voice), cognitive (how you make an argument, question, analyse, respond and listen), linguistic (how you use a range of vocabulary, idiom and expression) and social/emotional (how you respond to others and read an audience). The oracy framework shows quite how sophisticated talk can be when you analyse it and break it down into its constituent parts.

In our experience, high-quality talk unlocks so much in school. It deepens learning and understanding in the classroom, helps students resolve conflicts and gives them the confidence to articulate their ideas. Armed with the ability to

communicate skilfully, young people can develop powerful learning. Signature practices and changes to the way we run schools can help develop an education for the heart. They include making assemblies interactive and filled with talk, so that students wrestle with big ideas and moral questions; enabling all students to give a speech without notes from an early age; creating small coaching groups (tutor groups) where teachers and students build deep relationships; one-to-one coaching where students develop their ‘stand’ or personal story; and training all staff in sophisticated oracy techniques, with many opportunities to use them in a range of contexts, such as giving tours, vivas, pitching ideas and Socratic seminars.

THE HAND

When we talk of the ‘hand’ we think of creativity and problem solving, but also of doing and making. The world is filled with roles and jobs that require a subtle blend of expertise and entrepreneurialism. Creativity should not be given as treats to pupils, as so often is the case: a day off timetable here, time off for good behaviour there, after days of grinding through the drudgery of the ‘real’ stuff. It needs to be woven into the fabric of the school. Creativity is a way of being and a >>



way of thinking. It is what, historically, Britain has excelled at. In breathlessly sprinting to catch up with countries we perceive to be superior, we risk losing the essence of what they see in us: the ingenuity that powers both our Nobel Prize-winning track record and our dominance of Hollywood.

For an education that is whole we need to develop our sense of discernment, aesthetics, capacity to make music and design products. We need the widest possible opportunities to feel that sense of ‘flow’, made famous by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

One way to do this is to give young people the chance to create work of value to the world, to lift learning out of the exercise book. There is an important principle, forgotten by many who champion traditional teaching: if you lift the lid, the artificial ceiling imposed by short lessons and rigid teaching methods, and give students the chance to do something meaningful, then they will achieve things you never thought possible. To give a few examples: our Year 9s have used their knowledge of maths to

successfully campaign against a concrete factory that was going to be built on the Olympic site. Year 7s used science knowledge to produce fact files that are now being used by residents to save local habitats.

Again, there are some signature policies that would help develop an education for the hand. Holding an exhibition of beautiful work every term that is open to the community and experts, where students have to justify the work they have done, is one example. Another is to get all students to compile a portfolio of their best work and judge them on it using a viva. Giving students the chance to work in real-world projects outside school is a powerful way of reinventing the often superficial work experience and giving students the chance to balance head, heart and hand. Equally, schools could engineer interdisciplinary work so that students understand how subject disciplines can enhance each other, or use design thinking methodologies so that students build the skills to solve problems to a client brief.

“WE NEED TO CREATE A NATIONAL PLAN TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILLS IN EVERY CLASSROOM”

An expansive education such as I have described is hard to deliver. It requires a different kind of teacher. The head, heart and hand methodology requires time and trust if it is to work. Extra time for teachers to collaborate and plan, and trust in teachers to develop the kind of intellectual, layered, reflective practice that is so necessary.

A NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR TEACHERS

At School 21 we look for teachers with four attributes that are crucial to our philosophy. First, teachers with a mission and a strong sense of values. Second, craftsmen and women who think deeply about their work and wrestle with the evidence, the ideas and the complexity of teaching. Third, multipliers: people who are not only passionate about their own learning but are motivated by helping others grow and develop. And fourth, pioneers: teachers willing to expand their repertoire and find new links between head, heart and hand.

Just as we want our pupils to be powerful learners, we want and expect the same from teachers. Teachers need a diverse repertoire, they need to be subject specialists, coaches, project designers and experts in how pupils learn and how memory is increased. The evidence suggests many teachers stop improving after a few years and find a teaching method that they stick to. Yet what we need is a repertoire of strategies to make learning more powerful. At School 21 teachers in the primary phase, for example, wrestle with several pedagogies: maths mastery, phonics, story-telling, oracy techniques and real-world learning. This is demanding and requires lots of training, practice and reflection.

This kind of rounded education undoubtedly helps students to develop the resilience, agility, knowledge and thinking to perform better under the current exam system. But for it to really have impact, it requires the assessment regime to be pared back and be less high stakes so that headteachers and schools feel free to promote a more expansive education. We need more accreditation and support for a fuller portfolio of student successes.

There are strong signs that Ofsted is moving in the direction of measuring head, heart and hand equally, which would have a hugely positive impact. But, to see this kind of innovation on a large scale, we need government backing and money for new models of schooling that promote different approaches

to learning and the curriculum. And if we are serious about social mobility, we need to create a national plan to develop speaking skills in every classroom and school in the land.

If these changes were set into motion, a more rounded education would be unlocked to the benefit of all society. The education of head, heart and hand is about setting up three interlocking conversations. A conversation that asks people to wrestle with big ideas. A conversation about what it is to be human. And a conversation that asks what is your highest form of contribution. These three conversations represent an education that has a fighting chance of not only being enjoyable, but of preparing young people for a life of learning, growing and making the world a better place than it is today. ■

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

CRISIS CLASSROOM

Darren Abrahams FRSA is one part of an innovative duo who drove a double-decker bus to the Jungle refugee camp in Calais to start a school. While there they focused on responding to the immediate needs of refugees, with language and cooking lessons. “We use a co-constructed methodology,” explains Darren. “We come in with an idea, then the learners take us in the next direction.” Since the camp closed, they have focused on refugees settling in cities. “We’ve developed a pop-up classroom, which we’ve trialled in Brighton and Tuscany.” In cities, Crisis Classroom works on skills specific to local economies. But it also helps alleviate social isolation, as Darren, who has a background in trauma therapy, explains: “Crisis Classroom acts as a third space for people to meet, because we’re finding that it’s very hard for refugees or migrants to integrate within the local community.”

Crisis Classroom, which recently received £10,000 in RSA funding, is in the process of establishing a sustainable hub in Brighton, developing partnerships with other organisations that are working with refugees, training their staff and volunteers.

Darren’s background as a trauma therapist informs Crisis Classroom’s methodology, both for educating refugees and those who teach them.

View from the top

A typical day at work for principal Nicola Beech

Ipsley CE RSA Academy is a middle school for pupils aged nine to 13 and serves an economically disadvantaged community in Redditch

7.30am: I arrive at school in a good mood; I have to, as staff and children pick up on any negativity immediately. Consequently, my drive to work involves singing along to the radio or, when extra sustenance is needed, a classic 80s CD. This isn't the time of day for politics! Once I've made my coffee, I am available for office drop-ins until my first meeting at 8am. While the children are our priority, staff welfare is critical and it's important to know of any issues or concerns that may be making a colleague's working life more challenging.

8.00am: Every day starts with a senior leadership briefing; it's how we make sure that the school runs smoothly. Once the briefing is over, I go out on duty until the start of the school day for pupils at 8.35am. Being able to greet children as they arrive is one of the highlights of my day and while they may think it's a friendly gesture, what they don't know is that we are also using it as a way of checking that they are okay: an unexpected change in appearance, a packet of crisps masquerading as breakfast or a refusal to reply are all important clues about a child's wellbeing. Spotting them this early in the day means we can respond quickly.

9.00am to 3.15pm: Once assembly is over, my typical day could easily be filled with a combination of meetings, financial analysis, document writing and responding to emails. But I'm a teacher first and foremost. I still teach

or support, especially in English, as much as is possible; the buzz from seeing a child's lightbulb moment never fades.

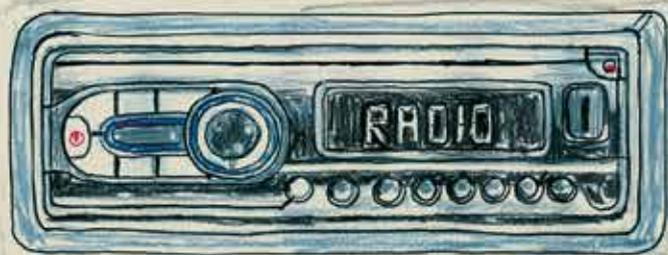
As principal, I am privileged to see the full picture of a child's learning across the school and I am proud that, as an RSA Academy, that means all pupils still have a broad curriculum including performing and creative arts delivered by specialists. One child gives me a Cluedo card they've made where I'm one of the suspects!

3.30pm: After saying goodbye to children and chatting with parents at the gates, it's a quick walk to Arrow Vale RSA Academy, our neighbouring high school. I worked at Arrow Vale for several years before moving to Ipsley and it's always good to see old friends again.

Staff from both schools are having a training session on supporting young people's mental health through a year-long project led by the RSA. It's a great opportunity to chat with other colleagues facing the same challenges, often working with the same families. This shared approach means there's a better chance our work will impact on the wider community we serve.

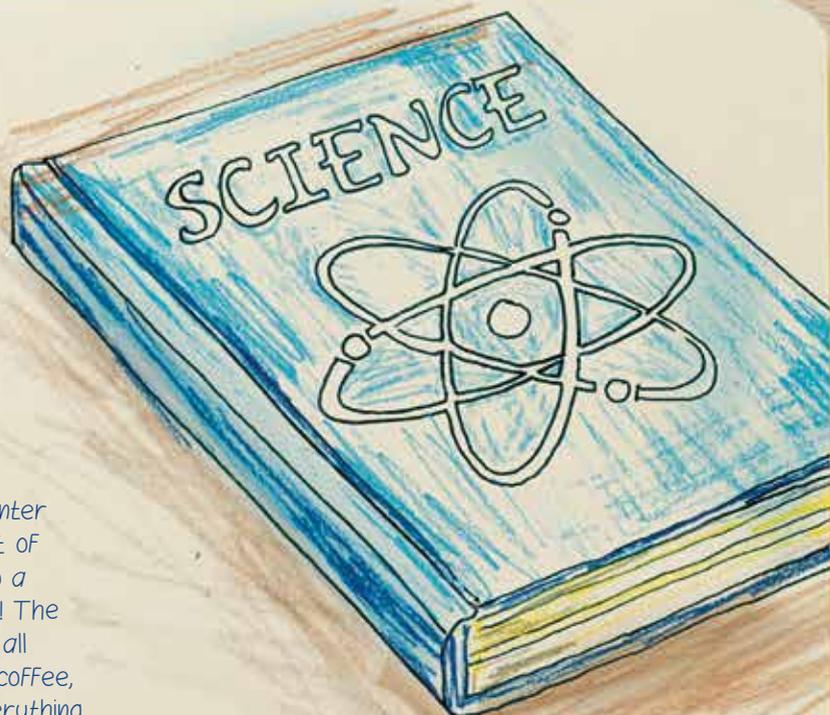
6.00pm: I leave school and spend the 10-minute drive reflecting on the day and hoping that my husband has started dinner! I know I will probably need to catch up on some paperwork later, but I will at least be able to do it dressed in my pyjamas and sat on the sofa; it's not really work then, is it?

It's just another manic Monday...."



Start of term

A day in the life of newly qualified teacher (NQT) Kayla Williams



7.30am: As I arrive at school, it is obvious that winter is coming; it is grey and dreary with a bit of a chill in the air. Despite this, there is also a buzz about the place; the first day back! The students will be arriving soon enough, and all the teachers are racing around, drinking coffee, sorting seating plans and making sure everything goes perfectly on the first day after the long summer holidays. Arriving back at school as a science NQT, I feel a lot more confident in my own ability, having been given excellent training at Whitley Academy through the RSA during my PGCE.

8.10am: Standing in a queue for the photocopier is not too common, but I guess today everyone is pulling out all the stops. I take this as a good opportunity to catch up with colleagues about their summer holidays. One of my favourite aspects of working at Whitley Academy is how supportive and friendly the staff are. This is something I have experienced in all the RSA schools I have visited.

8.50am: Standing eagerly outside my lab, waiting for my new Year 9 class, I am full of anticipation. Will they enjoy my lessons? Will they listen to me?! A steady stream of students start to arrive at my door; they look sleepy but keen enough. They file in and I introduce myself and get them seated. So far, too easy. The class listen, complete the work, have group discussions and behave beautifully for a double lesson. By break time I am equal parts relieved and a bit stunned. One girl also thanked me for the lesson and told me that she enjoyed it.

1.30pm: I have survived until lunchtime and now I am gearing up for the first lesson with a high-ability Year 11 class. I am not quite sure what to expect. How quick will the pace need to be? Are they eager or arrogant? With the starter on the board, the pupils enter the lab and get going. They start to discuss what the differences are between genetic and environmental variation. Usually with group work I find that the pupils are easily distracted and not focused on discussing what they are supposed to. However, in this class they are getting straight into the debate and coming up with some really good and valid points.

3.10pm: At the end of the day, as the students are leaving, they are cheery and happy that they have finally finished their first day back at school. I must admit, I feel the same way. I sit at my desk and contemplate how it went; all my classes have been lovely today. Is this just the first day back? Are my classes just full of the nicest children? Maybe. But, on the other hand, maybe I have come back to school with more confidence, more self-belief and a bit more respect from the children I am teaching. Only time will tell!

Whitley is an RSA Academy that supports the RSA's vision for social justice and equal opportunities

ECONOMICS ANYONE?

The financial crash increased calls for a fundamental rethink in the way we talk about and run economies, but is our decision-making any more inclusive today?

by Reema Patel
🐦 @ReemaPatelRSA

The Queen captured the public mood in the UK when, in the wake of the economic crisis in 2008, she asked a roomful of economists, “Why did nobody see it coming?” The crash marks a turning point in the history of economics. Since then, a welcome reassessment has been taking place of the goals and purpose of the economy, driven by the understanding that economics as a discipline should be in service to citizens. The watchwords of this new phase include ‘inclusive growth’, ‘shared prosperity’, ‘behavioural economics’ and ‘wellbeing economics’. All of these concepts, in their different ways, confront previously held orthodoxies that economic success must be measured exclusively in terms of GDP growth, or that progress can be reduced to wealth creation without wider concern for social and environmental outcomes.

It is in this context that the RSA embarked on its Citizens’ Economic Council, to explore ways of democratising national economic policy. Our recently published interim report argues that current economic practice still largely lacks three features: transparency, legitimacy and accountability. These three features together make up a democratic deficit in economics.

First, there is the problem of transparency about the political implications of economic decisions. This lack of transparency is supported by the assumption that ‘real’ economic thinking is restricted to the domain of ‘experts’, and that there is no need for citizen voice on economics. This is compounded when simple concepts are wrapped in complexity and jargon, concealing many political trade-offs and choices that are legitimately the domain for public dialogue and participation. >>

REEMA PATEL
IS PROGRAMME
MANAGER FOR
THE RSA CITIZENS’
ECONOMIC
COUNCIL





Second, there is a lack of legitimacy in economic decision-making caused by the dominance of technocratic systems, as well as the exclusion of citizen voice. This has resulted in the rise of populism and the revoking of the ‘social licence’ of policymakers and economists. Underlying much of this is a decline in trust. The Edelman Barometer of Trust (2017) reported a global implosion in levels of citizen trust in policymakers, companies, politicians and economists in 2016. Meanwhile, Oxford Dictionaries declared the international word of the year to be ‘post-truth’. There is mounting evidence that politics and democracy itself need to change; nowhere is this more apparent than in the field of economics. The sheer rate of change – seen in environmental degradation, globalisation, rising levels of migration and the effects of automation – has contributed to many citizens’ sense of economic insecurity, increased levels of distrust and a perceived loss of control. The Leave campaign’s slogan ‘take back control’ sought to exploit those very concerns. When 2.8 million British ‘non-voters’ (those who had never before voted in a general election) turned up at the ballot box, voting to leave the European Union despite a widespread consensus among economists and policymakers that a remain vote would be in the UK’s best interests, it revealed an enormous disconnect between citizens and ‘experts’.

Third, declining accountability has resulted in an economic framework that is less creative, less connected to, and less able to respond to people’s lived experiences of the economy and our collective social problems. Accountability describes the responsiveness of our institutions to citizens, which is clearly lacking at the moment. We heard during our Economic Inclusion Roadshow that economic policy has considerable influence and impact on the day-to-day lives of citizens; for example, the way

interest rates are set has had a profound impact on the cost of living for many of the people we spoke to. Despite this, there have been limited efforts to engage citizens in economic decisions, which are often made ‘behind closed doors’. As a consequence, policymakers often find themselves subject to fierce public scrutiny and criticism as controversial ideas face a public backlash and in some cases – such as the Conservative Party’s recent proposals for changes to social care funding – a forced reversal of economic policy. This ‘decide, announce, defend’ model of decision-making can end up costing more, while also damaging the legitimacy of politicians and policymakers.

A DELIBERATIVE JOURNEY

We need to move towards a more virtuous circle of good public engagement and participation. The RSA Citizens’ Economic Council has worked in an experimental way to better understand how legitimacy, transparency and accountability for both economists and citizens can be strengthened through innovative participatory techniques. Drawing on deliberative models that have been used by organisations such as Involve and The Democratic Society in the UK, MASS LBP in Canada and the New Democracy Foundation in Australia, we sought to understand better the potential such processes have to strengthen citizens’ influence over economics.

The Citizens’ Economic Council engaged 54 people on a journey through national economic policy over five days. We then worked with more than 50 economists, media commentators, academics and policymakers to co-create a national charter for a citizens’ economy. This was supported by Roadshow workshops in some of the areas most ‘left behind’ by economic policy – Port Talbot, Glasgow, Oldham and Clacton-on-Sea – on people’s experiences

“THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE APPETITE FOR GREATER PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS”

of the economy. The workshops explored intergenerational issues and specifically engaged with people from ethnic minority communities, young people in schools, LGBTQI people and disabled people. Throughout, our work has been underpinned by an extensive stakeholder engagement strategy. We have connected grassroots findings with national media, policymakers, RSA Fellows and academics, crowdsourcing ideas in response to policy challenges identified by participants.

WILLING PARTICIPANTS

Despite low levels of trust, and in some instances, profound levels of exclusion, many of those we worked with became fully engaged with the process and said they felt empowered by having the opportunity to gain a better grasp and understanding of economics. Our experience suggests that there is a considerable appetite for greater participation in economic discussions when these are made relevant to people's lives. In turn, this seems to strengthen people's sense of power and willingness to participate in other civic initiatives.

Citizen engagement on economics has enormous potential to strengthen the legitimacy of economic decision-making, but there is a need for significant reform in the way participation is done if we are to realise this potential. We propose that organisations such as the Bank of England, HM Treasury and other government bodies (including those of the devolved nations) instate deliberative, advisory citizens' councils, citizen juries and citizens' assemblies. These would bring together experts and citizens when complex decisions are made about issues with a high level of public interest; for example tax policy, government budgets or setting monetary policy and interest rates. Deliberative processes should not just be limited to government. Large companies can use them to understand and respond to their stakeholders in a way that is more upstream and democratic. By way of example, the RSA will be engaging citizens on the ethics of artificial intelligence in 2018, in partnership with Google DeepMind, through citizen juries.

But we recognise that the adoption of advisory councils alone is not sufficient. It is also important to create the right conditions in which they can thrive. To this end, we propose that the government creates a code of practice for effective public engagement and participation, recognising the sheer range of engagement approaches that can empower citizens; for example, participatory budgeting, citizens' reference panels, citizen juries and co-production methods. At its core should be engagement and participation practice that extends beyond simple consultation towards approaches that are more deliberative, promote dialogue and allow sufficient time and space for policymakers to respond to citizens' views.

To make this possible we also propose the creation of an expert resource centre on inclusive and participatory economic policy that

would support government departments, non-departmental public bodies and publicly funded organisations, including the Bank of England. It would be modelled on a similar programme funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Sciencewise, which offers public bodies support in participatory policymaking relating to science and technology issues. Both the code of practice and expert resource centre would also work in cooperation with the existing international Open Government Network, which engages civil society in creating a more open and transparent approach to government across the world, and build on those ambitions set out in the Civil Service 2012 reform plan.

It is clear that we stand at a crucial crossroads. We can either ignore the populist signal and the democratic deficit at the heart of our economy, trapping us in a vicious cycle of distrust and instability. Or we can build a legitimate, transparent and accountable system that brings the much maligned 'expert' and citizen together to shape a fairer economy. ■

Find out how to join in at: www.rsa.org.uk/citizenseconomy

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

LIBERTY KITCHEN

Prison might not be the first place you associate with the term 'street food', but Janet Boston FRSA is finding that it can transform the lives of people inside. Her social enterprise, Liberty Kitchen, provides prisoners in London's Pentonville with practical skills and a path to employment on release.

The programme starts with participants working alongside the Liberty Kitchen Chef to develop and prepare a streetfood menu, which ultimately encourages them to create their own recipes. Inspirational tuition from Dhruv Baker, 2010 MasterChef winner, has helped that process along, says Janet. "He has shown them that coming up with a recipe isn't complicated, which has really built their confidence."

The core aim of the organisation is to extend prisoners' thinking about what they can do. Each week a business lesson is delivered by a collaborating organisation, which ultimately leads to an NVQ in enterprise. "They've developed their own ideas about what kinds of businesses they might want to start when they leave prison," explains Janet. Working on the Liberty Kitchen stall is also an option after release, helping with reintegration into society and challenging stereotypes on the outside. Liberty Kitchen recently received a £10,000 Catalyst grant from the RSA, which has enabled it to employ a dedicated chef for a pilot programme.

CRITICAL CONTEXT

Research can guide teachers, but it cannot determine what will work in their classrooms

by Dylan William
 @dylanwilliam

In debates about whether education is a profession, one issue that is often raised is the extent to which there is an agreed knowledge base. In medicine, for example, there is a broad consensus that antibiotics are ineffective in treating viral infections. While doctors frequently prescribe antibiotics for viral infections, the fact that they are roundly criticised for doing this suggests a fair degree of consensus that the practice is inappropriate.

In education, on the other hand, there does not seem to be any approach to educating students that commands the support of the majority of practitioners. For some, this means that education is what philosopher Thomas Kuhn called a ‘pre-science’. Education may not be a science now, but once we can agree on concepts, procedures and methods for finding things out, then education will take its place alongside physics, chemistry and biology, and produce ‘reliable knowledge’.

For others, the nature of educational processes means that reliable knowledge is impossible: there will never be a ‘best’ way of teaching anything, so research is a waste of time. Some teachers may be more effective than others, but knowing about research cannot make teachers more effective.

As well as being unhelpful, both of these extreme positions are in fact incorrect. While educational research can never tell teachers, leaders and policymakers what to do – the situations they face are too varied and complex – it can suggest which practices are likely to have the greatest benefits for their students, and which are likely to be less effective. However, even where such guidance is supported by the preponderance of evidence, it is important to note that it may not be applicable to all situations. As a result, teachers, leaders and policymakers need to be critical consumers of educational research.

Over the last 30 years or so, as governments have sought ways to

improve the achievement of young people in schools, many countries have searched for ‘what works’ in education. The logic is attractive. If only we could figure out what the most effective policies and practices are, we could implement them in every school and college. However, in reality, moving from research to practice is extremely challenging. The issue of class-size reduction provides an illuminating example.

LEARNING FROM RESEARCH

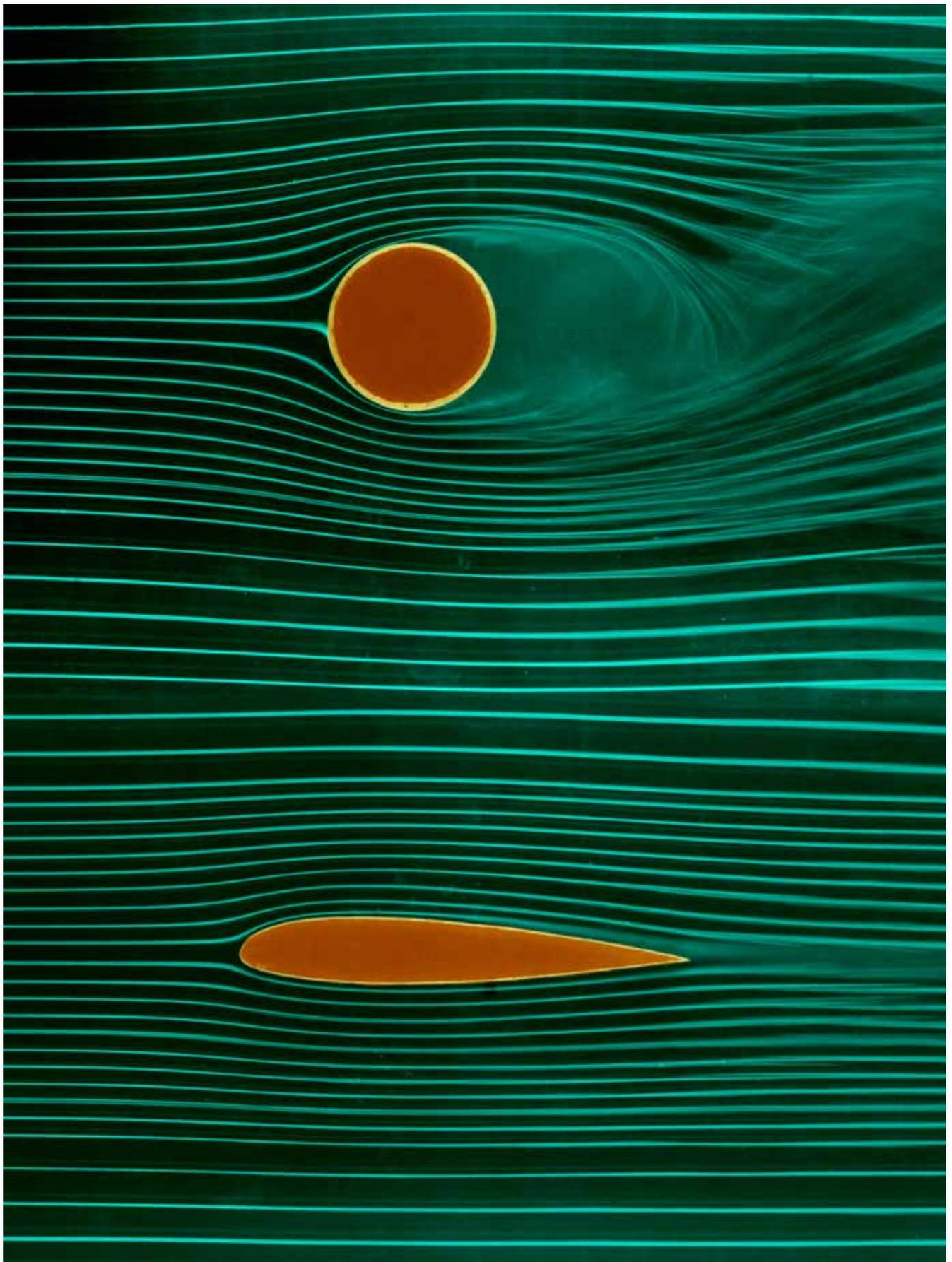
Class-size reduction is a very expensive way to improve student achievement. To figure out whether such a step would provide good value for money, we would need to find out how much extra achievement we would get. This was the logic of the Tennessee Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) study, described by Frederick Mosteller – one of the last century’s greatest statisticians – as “one of the most important educational investigations ever carried out”. Groups of 50 students were allocated, at random, either two teachers, three teachers or two teachers with teaching assistants.

The results seemed clear-cut. Students in the smaller classes did better, and the effects were particularly pronounced for students from disadvantaged minorities and students with lower educational achievement. Follow-up studies also showed that the benefits of smaller classes were maintained when students returned to larger classes.

However, subsequent analyses found that the students were not, in fact, randomly allocated to classes. At least some of the observed effect was caused by higher-achieving students being allocated to the smaller classes, possibly due to more engaged parents finding out about the study and pressing for their child to be allocated to a smaller class. More seriously, even if we accept the results of the STAR study at face value, it is far from clear whether the same results would be obtained in a different context. The STAR study involved 76 schools, 330 classrooms and 6,500 students, requiring only 50

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“RESEARCH SUGGESTS GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING, HOW THEY ARE APPLIED IS A CREATIVE TASK”

extra teachers for the experiment. It seems plausible that it would be possible to hire an extra 50 teachers who were as good as those already employed. But this seems a lot less likely in an area where recruiting teachers is difficult. Indeed, as was discovered in California in the 1990s, where the supply of teachers is limited, class-size reduction programmes can actually lower student achievement if the quality of teaching drops. So a local authority would need to take a view about the adequacy of teacher supply in their area before adopting such a policy.

The research on class-size reduction also shows that the effects tend to be greater for younger children than older ones. Many have therefore concluded that, even though it is expensive, the policy works in primary schools but not in secondary schools. Yet, most studies do not analyse the support given to teachers in changing their approach so as to take advantage of the smaller classes. Because teachers in primary schools spend a great deal of time working with individual students, a smaller class means each child gets more time. But in secondary schools, where teachers spend a greater proportion of their time working with the whole class, the benefits of a smaller class are less obvious. After all, a teacher lecturing a class of 20 is not that different from a teacher lecturing a class of 30, or indeed 300. In other words, the fact that most studies of class-size reduction with older students find small, or even zero, effects does not mean that class-size reduction cannot work. If teachers are given support in developing methods of teaching that are only possible with smaller groups, we might get a different outcome. Educational research can only tell us what was, not what might be.

Similar issues arise in all areas of education. The research on whether we should group students by ability for certain subjects, such as mathematics or modern languages, shows that the highest achievers tend to benefit, while the lowest achievers lose out. Since the gains for the highest achievers tend to be smaller than the losses for the lowest achievers, the net effect of ‘setting’ is to lower student achievement slightly. However, while this is a reasonable summary of the research that has been done, it does not mean that it is the whole truth.

Teachers who are more effective on average (in the sense that their students make more progress) actually benefit lower-achieving students more than they do high-achieving students. So when more effective teachers are allocated to

higher-achieving sets, the students who would benefit most from better teaching are less likely to get it. While the available research evidence shows that grouping students by ability is a bad idea, a policy of grouping students by ability, but allocating the most effective teachers to the lowest-achieving students, might be highly effective.

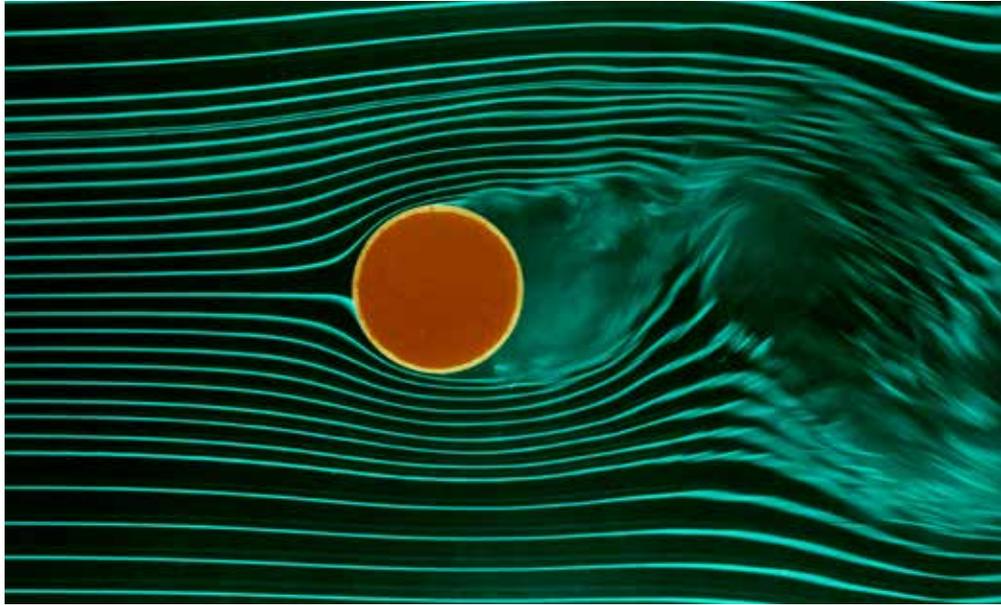
Conversely, even when ideas are strongly supported by research, implementing them effectively can be difficult. The Education Endowment Foundation’s Teaching and Learning Toolkit suggests that providing students with feedback is one of the most cost-effective ways of increasing student achievement. And yet, the most comprehensive review of research on the effects of feedback (by Avraham N Kluger and Angelo DeNisi) found that, while feedback did on average improve performance, in 38% of cases it lowered performance. In other words, in over one-third of cases, learners would have been better off without the feedback.

Kluger and DeNisi pointed out that hardly any studies of feedback looked at how students reacted, not least because this makes research messy, requiring the quality of the relationship between the giver and receiver of the feedback to be factored in. And they found that, even where feedback is effective in the short term, it can have adverse long-term effects if learners become dependent on the criticism. Without an understanding of when feedback works, mandating more might result in lower student achievement.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

What, then, is the appropriate role for educational research? First, it points out that certain kinds of initiatives are unlikely to be effective. In such cases, unless teachers and school leaders have very strong evidence that their context is significantly different from the contexts in which the research was carried out, they would be well advised to invest their energies elsewhere. A good example here is the popular, but almost certainly incorrect, idea that if students are taught in a way that matches their preferred learning style, they will learn more. As psychologist Hal Pashler’s wide-ranging review of the research concluded, “If classification of students’ learning styles has practical utility, it remains to be demonstrated.”

Second, educational research can provide quantitative estimates of the likely benefits of educational interventions, which can be compared with their costs. Rather than asking,



‘What works?’ we should be asking, ‘How much does it work?’ and ‘At what cost?’ Big effects may not be worth pursuing if they cost too much to secure. And very small effects may be important if they are inexpensive to implement. One example is the READY4K! text messaging system, which regularly reminds parents of educational games they can play with their pre-school children. While the impact is modest – about one extra month of progress – the intervention costs only around \$15 per child.

Third, careful theory building in education research can clarify the circumstances in which interventions are likely to be successful. In the case of class-size reduction, the quality of additional teachers is a crucial factor to take into account, while in the case of feedback, it is important to understand how to help students use feedback productively. With good theories, we can move from ‘It works sometimes, and it doesn’t work other times’, to ‘It works when the following conditions are in place’.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, educational research can focus teachers’ professional development on changes that are likely to have the greatest impact on learning. The work that Paul Black and I have done on formative assessment over the last 25 years provides one example, but there are other areas, such as social and emotional aspects of learning, that show considerable potential.

Perhaps most exciting is that many teachers are using findings from cognitive psychology to change the way they plan and teach. For example, psychologists have known for many years

that learning is enhanced when practice of a particular skill is spaced out over a number of sessions rather than done in a block, and teachers are responding to this research. Students and teachers want learning to be easy, but as psychologist Robert Bjork has shown, learning tasks are more effective when they create what he calls “desirable difficulties” in learning. Most recently, John Sweller has shown that students can be successful in completing learning tasks, and yet fail to learn anything because their mental resources are overloaded.

The important point in all this is that, although the psychological research suggests guidelines for teaching, how these guidelines are applied in designing and carrying out teaching is still fundamentally a creative task. The research provides guidance about what to do, and also what not to do, but when teachers take research findings and apply them in their own practice they are, essentially, engaged in producing new knowledge, albeit of a distinct and local kind.

Those who argue that educational research has nothing to say to teachers are likely to waste a considerable amount of time innovating in ways that do not benefit their students. Those at the other extreme, who focus on ensuring that practice is based on ‘what works’, will find that no educational initiative can be implemented in the same way in every school. Adjustments need to be made, but they need to be made by people who understand the research so that the initiatives do not suffer what Stanford education professor Ed Haertel called “lethal mutations”. Teachers, leaders and policymakers all need to be critical consumers of research. ■

DRIVING SKILLS

The Republic of Korea has been working to ensure that its high performance in education league tables translates into real-world results

by Ju-Ho Lee

When I was minister of education, science, and technology between 2010 and 2013, then-US President Barack Obama praised the Korean education system. I was embarrassed because I was in the middle of pushing for reforms, asking teachers and administrators to make drastic changes. I focused on vocational high schools, which had continuously deteriorated after their glory days of the 1970s, in part because of an emphasis on academic achievement in Korean society. That academic focus has driven Korea's economic success for decades, but it has also led to some graduates being overqualified and a mismatch with the labour market. In order to turn around failing vocational schools and impart a sense of status on these institutions, the Korean government launched the very ambitious Meister High School Initiative. The programme was successful in changing perceptions, and Meister Schools are viewed positively by attending students, unlike the failing vocational schools of old.

Our launch strategy was pivotal to the success of Meister Schools. High-level industry experts, including former CEOs, were invited to lead the new schools as principals, and they made huge contributions to strengthening ties with industry. They helped to overhaul the curriculum, offering new high-tech majors, such as LED lighting, new media content, robotics and software. Companies invited teachers to receive long-term, in-house

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training, expanded recruitment contracts for students and donated expensive machines and facilities for student practice. The Meister Schools triggered a cascade of positive changes across the education system. Universities are now offering job-first, degree-later programmes to students, which has helped to direct young people towards employment opportunities without cutting off the opportunity for academic success. Other vocational high schools have shifted their focus to preparing students for employment, rather than blindly advancing to university, and career counselling in secondary schools has also been strengthened.

This challenge of ensuring vocational studies have status is an issue faced by many policymakers. Korea's approach relied on a big media campaign. A newspaper coined the phrase 'The new age of high school graduates' in reference to the spike in employment of Meister and vocational school graduates, and changing recruitment practices, which started to shift from degree-based to competency-based criteria. The government soon picked up the phrase and ran with it. Moreover, a major broadcaster, KBS, started a programme in 2012 involving an open contest between graduates of Meister or vocational high schools whereby major corporations scouted for new recruits.

Another area where I encouraged schools to innovate was in the pedagogies needed to nurture 21st-century skills, including creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication. It is widely known that Korean students are at the top of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests in reading, mathematics and science. But high



“KOREA HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT MONEY ALONE DOES NOT PRODUCE BETTER RESULTS”

PISA rankings can mask poor performance in the broader skills needed for life and work in the 21st century. Korean teachers are heavily dependent on rote learning and memorization when they teach, and on multiple-choice tests when they assess students. I helped to start an admissions officer system at universities through government subsidies. We had expected that if university admissions officers could select students based not only on test scores but also on interviews, essays and teachers' qualitative assessments, then teachers would be encouraged to change their practices. However, teachers turned out not to be as proactive as private tutors in adapting to the new university admission policies.

My experience has taught me that a top-down approach alone is not enough to make positive changes in classrooms. After I rejoined academia, I started, with my colleagues at the KDI School, a bottom-up programme whereby teachers at several schools were trained in the new pedagogies of project-based learning. We did a very interesting experiment based on behavioural economics, asking students to donate for public good. We found that students taught by teachers who were trained in project-based learning donated significantly more than other students. This provides empirical evidence that social capital could be increased by changes in the pedagogies of teachers. The hope is that small changes in classrooms will trigger a positive change among all Korean teachers, just as the 49 Meister High Schools galvanised the transformation of the whole education system.

Our experience has also shown that the ranking of schools is an area where policymakers need to tread carefully. I was a member of the National Assembly before joining the Lee administration in government. As a lawmaker, I made a lot of efforts to pass the Education Information Disclosure Law because I believed that student performance data at each school should be known to the public. Otherwise, one could not identify the schools that had problems and improve the performance of the whole education system. The law made it mandatory for every student to take national standardised tests at 6th, 9th and 11th grade from 2009. Due to strong concerns from the teachers' union, the information we gathered through the system has been used only to provide assistance, not to punish under performers.

Schools with high proportions of below-average students were given more funding so that they could offer tutoring classes that catered to the needs of students who were lagging behind. All costs associated with hiring more assistant teachers and purchasing more teaching materials were subsidised for schools with a high number of under-performing students. One recent

article in an academic journal showed that the Korean system of accountability based on national standardised tests is superior to the No Child Left Behind Act in the US, mainly because Korea used the information to help struggling schools. However, to my regret, the accountability policies failed to take root, as the test at 6th grade was abolished in 2013 and tests at 9th and 11th grade were given to only a sample set of students from 2017. The major concern behind the reversal of the accountability policies was that they could exacerbate the problems associated with a test-oriented education system in Korea. I do believe that Korea should figure out how to hold schools accountable based on the qualitative measurement, such as the performance assessment.

CRAM SCHOOL

As a way of increasing financing for education, Korea adopted the Education Grant Act in 1971, linking a certain percentage of the national tax revenue to the education budget. That percentage increased from 13% in the beginning to 20% in 2010. Now the total government spending on education is equivalent to 4.5% of GDP. However, tuition payment by households adds another 2%, and private tutoring expenses add a further 2% of GDP, resulting in a total spending of 8.5% of GDP on education.

Yet Korea has demonstrated that money alone does not produce better results. Spending on private tutoring does not lead to learning outcomes in Korea. Many students do 'advanced study' at cram schools with private tutors during vacation periods or even at weekends. This means they do not pay attention to teachers in the classroom because they have already learnt the lesson from private tutors. This could be related to the marketing strategy of private tutoring institutions, which are designed to ease the anxiety of students and the parents of those who are registered, and increase the worries of those who are not. There are numerous studies showing that private tutoring does not lead to improved academic performance in Korea. One empirical study shows that increasing the self-study time of high school students improves test scores more significantly than increasing private tutoring time.

Korea's academic success has created some unique challenges and it is time for a more drastic second round of education reforms to create a new generation of learning geared towards the 21st century. As the former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown – and now champion of education – said in the preface of a 2016 Education Commission report: “It is education – our ability to plan and prepare for the future – that gives us hope.” ■



21ST CENTURY COFFEEHOUSE

Fellows have shaped the evolution of RSA House since it first became our home in 1774. We want to continue this legacy in 2018 when we develop a space fit for a 21st century enlightenment

by Oliver Reichardt
🐦 @OliverReichardt

In 1774, only 20 years after the RSA was founded, we moved into our present home at 8 John Adam Street, a bespoke building designed to house the society. Over the years we acquired the adjoining buildings to create the RSA we know today.

In the 18th century, the house became known as a place where the great innovations and ideas of the day were showcased, drawing in crowds for live demonstrations of inventions such as the telephone and the extendable fire ladder.

We are still proud to play host to groundbreaking new ideas, and recently we have been looking back to our roots to consider the kind of environment that powers original thinking. Fellows have always been at the heart of the RSA, and it is people coming together to discuss, debate and share ideas that has driven its success. Indeed, it was founded in a coffee shop by 11 people coming together to do just that.

Our redevelopment of the Great Room and ground floor in 2012 was a success, enabling our events and lectures to be better shared around the world, leading to over 180 million views of our videos to

OLIVER REICHARDT IS DIRECTOR OF FELLOWSHIP AND EXECUTIVE LEAD FOR THE HOUSE DEVELOPMENT

date. In 2018 we plan to revamp two floors of RSA House, this time focusing on the social spaces. The area for eating, drinking and discussion will be increased, and there will be a small amphitheatre where our networks and others can debate and share ideas. While always looking to the future, we also want to bring out some of our history so that we can be inspired by many of the great achievements of the past.

This development is not just for London Fellows. Our research has found that Fellows from outside the capital use the house just as much as those who live in the city, whether they are in London for a meeting, or visiting from abroad. And our financial projections show that we will make a positive return on our investment, allowing us to spend more on achieving our mission around the globe. The starting point for this redevelopment, nearly two years ago, was feedback from Fellows in a survey highlighting the need for better spaces in the house to meet and converse. We are delivering on that feedback, and we hope that the new development fulfils your ambitions when it opens in July 2018. ■

You can find out more about the plans for the development at: www.thersa.org.uk/coffeehouse

THE COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITY

A higher education admissions system based on the comprehensive school model would enrich the learning experience for all and counter privilege

by Tim Blackman
 @TimJBlackman

In this era of mass higher education, our universities are under greater scrutiny than ever before. Reports now frequently question the value for money of a degree, and whether more young people should be opting for shorter vocational courses or apprenticeships. The quality of teaching has come under question too. The new Teaching Excellence Framework is meant to counter-balance the priority many universities have given to attracting research funding, awarding gold, silver and bronze medals based on teaching quality assessments. However, the biggest story lies behind these headlines.

Mass higher education has transformed British society but has also divided it. There are marked differences between graduates and non-graduates in earnings, social values and voting behaviour. Graduates themselves are sifted into universities and jobs with very different prospects. The huge expansion of higher education has preserved the advantages of students from the most privileged family backgrounds by sorting them into highly selective universities demanding the highest entry grades – mostly the self-styled ‘leading’ universities in the Russell Group – whose graduates tend to monopolise the best jobs and highest pay. Students from less privileged backgrounds, who are more likely to achieve lower grades at school or college, have to study elsewhere if they make it to higher education, often at the ex-polytechnics, which are shunned by their more privileged peers. The mechanism for this sorting is academic selection, given that the highest grades at school or college are generally achieved by pupils from the richest families. For many of those students, selection by

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universities is nothing new because they have attended a selective school. But for most young people, often with good grades, this degree of selection is new. Most university applicants are from comprehensive schools, where they have mixed with peers of different backgrounds and abilities.

This all changes when they enter higher education. The best universities are commonly regarded as those requiring very high entry grades rather than those where the quality of teaching means students with a range of grades can succeed. The effect has been to create a class-stratified and class-stratifying sector: the very reason why selective secondary education has largely been abandoned. In secondary and further education it is widely recognised that the best learning environments are those where people of different abilities and backgrounds mix and learn together, and where the expectation for teaching is to add value.

The vast majority of good schools, as defined by value-added progress measures, are comprehensives. But areas where comprehensives have to contend with selective schools see the average attainment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds fall, while high-attaining pupils do no better attending grammar schools than a good comprehensive. Highly selective universities have the same effect. We need to reimagine our universities as comprehensives, not just to help create a more inclusive society, but to create learning environments that work better than separating students by social class and ability.

Research shows that learning, creativity and problem solving benefit from identity diversity because of the different perspectives and heuristics that social and cultural variation engender, which opens minds and catalyses innovation. While some of this just happens in diverse student communities, it is most effective when teachers use identity diversity as a resource.



The same happens with mixed-ability classes; good teachers use the classroom variation to leverage how peer-to-peer learning adds further value to their own expertise.

Yet, the most academically selective universities largely filter out this diversity to create homogenous learning communities, impoverishing their learning environments and those of the less selective universities. Furthermore, these highly selective institutions are required by the Office for Fair Access to spend many millions of pounds a year finding and supporting a small number of high-achieving pupils from low-income families to meet their access targets, with a negligible effect on social mobility. They could instead reduce their entry grades and diversify their intakes.

POLICY CHOICE

A reimagined access policy for higher education would set targets for diverse student bodies in every institution. Various admission mechanisms could be used to achieve this, such as quotas for different entry grade ranges and lotteries to manage excess demand. A move away from the UK's current expensive residential system of living away from home for higher education would enable catchment areas and feeder schools to be used, as with secondary education.

The new policy would be aimed at some redistribution of applicants across most institutions. Universities that are highly selective at the moment would need to recruit more students at lower grades and institutions that are currently less selective would need more students at higher grades. This would mix abilities, class backgrounds and ethnic identities. A financial levy linked to each institution's grade profile could drive the policy, instead of the current system that requires institutions

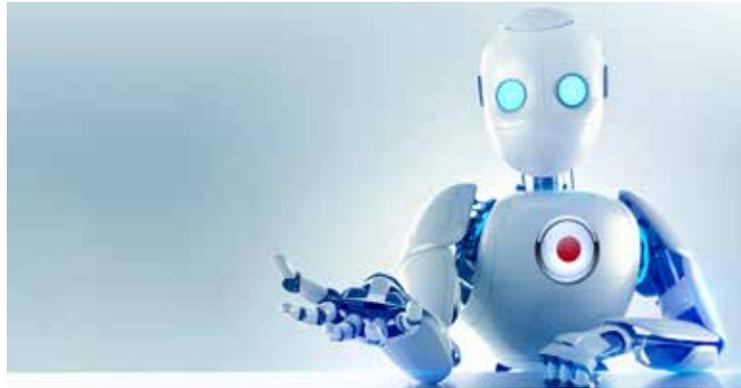
charging above the basic level of tuition fees to spend part of their additional income on projects to widen access. The levy would redistribute funds from highly selective to less selective institutions until they reach an appropriately balanced profile.

Some may argue that aiming for a place in a highly selective university motivates young people. But the social and educational costs are the same as for the largely discredited 11-plus, and its abolition has not reduced aspiration.

Others may argue that less well-qualified applicants would not be able to cope with degree courses in highly selective universities. These, however, are largely the same courses as in other universities. While retention and completion would become more of a challenge, denying students with lower prior attainment the benefits of being taught alongside other students is not justified because a minority may not succeed. In fact, evidence about good mixed-ability teaching in secondary education suggests more of that minority would succeed.

Another objection to comprehensive universities is that research would suffer because it demands 'bright' students. While some students may want to be taught in a research-intensive environment, many are more interested in expert teaching and a good graduate job. Research funding is now concentrated in a few universities. These could simply be designated research universities for those students who want to study where research, and not teaching, is the main focus. Academic selection could be retained, simply because less effort and expertise are devoted to learning gain.

However, most universities should be teaching-and-research comprehensives, focusing on developing the learning gain of a diverse profile of students in the vibrant learning environments engendered by that diversity. ■



ADAPTING TO AI

Japanese society has fewer reservations than its Western counterparts about automation, which it sees as a solution to its problems

by Tania Coke and Tony Greenham

Automation pervades Japanese life. It is considered normal to place your dinner order via touchscreen, to press a button to run the bath at a pre-set temperature or to be served custom-made ice cream in a shop by a robot.

Emotionally, the idea of existing side by side with machines and artificial intelligence (AI) is perfectly acceptable in Japan. There are, in fact, strong reasons to be grateful to robots, which played a key and vital role in the clearing up of the radiation at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant, for example.

Japan's attitude to automation is part driven by its history as the world leader in robotics and part driven by socio-economic forces. A shrinking labour force due to an ageing population means that Japan is less worried about machines replacing human jobs. Overall, relative to the West, the debate about the ethical implications of artificial intelligence is rather subdued. This is what the RSA's Director of Economy, Enterprise and Manufacturing, Tony Greenham, came to better understand during a recent trip to Tokyo, hosted by RSA Fellows. The visit was designed to gather global intelligence for a new project that the RSA and DeepMind are developing to consider trade-offs in the use of AI. The project, which launched in October 2017, will engage citizens in these trade-offs and aims to guide a range of cross-sector organisations on how AI can be harnessed.

So what ethical concerns do people in Japan have relating to AI? The impact of a reduction in human contact is one. Japanese scientists are currently

TANIA COKE IS THE RSA JAPAN CONNECTOR; TONY GREENHAM IS THE RSA'S DIRECTOR OF ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND MANUFACTURING

developing robots to provide care for elderly people, for instance by helping to turn them over in bed. However, in a country where a third of the population is over 60 years old, there is a strong argument that elderly people – potentially more than other age groups – have a real need for human contact in their daily lives to maintain a sense of belonging and wellbeing.

The mind-body problem is another concern. In an increasingly digitised and automated world, where algorithms may replace cognitive processes and robots do most of the work, the impact on the human body and spirit is as yet unknown. Japanese society prizes generations of physical and emotional intelligence built up over the centuries and stored in our bodies. The extent to which humans are designed for and can flourish in a more sedentary lifestyle is highly debatable in Japan, as it may be elsewhere in the East.

Despite these philosophical concerns on the ethics of AI, ultimately, in Japan there is a refreshing optimism about the potential of technology. Much of the talk has been about how automation can complement human abilities, enhancing the experience of work and the scope for creativity. With one of the highest levels of life expectancy in the world, there is also recognition in Japan that the 'learn-work-retire' formula of the post-war period simply has to change. *The 100 Year Life*, co-authored by RSA Fellow Lynda Gratton with Andrew Scott, has really captured the imagination in Japan. The book argues that if increasing longevity is to be a blessing rather than a curse, we need to radically restructure our approach to lifelong learning and our work-life balance, which is something AI can help with. ■

NEW FELLOWS

VICTORIA SOLWAY



As deputy headteacher and director of teaching and learning at the British International School (BISS), Shanghai, Puxi, Victoria

is responsible for designing the school's curriculum and leading the creation of new pedagogies.

Her approach centres on fostering creativity. "The most natural learning occurs in the early years setting. Here, children navigate their environment unencumbered by educators' concerns for their progress or attainment," she explains. "Driven only by their innate curiosity of the world around them, they explore concepts and test hypotheses, creating solutions to the real-world problems that they encounter. This irrepressible drive for learning and discovery is the epitome of the ideal learning environment and it is this paradigm that we pursue for all children throughout the curricula that we create."

With a background in inclusive education, Victoria is particularly interested in science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) education for young women. Indeed, BISS Puxi recently invested in state-of-the-art STEAM centres in both its primary and secondary schools.

Victoria hopes to collaborate with other RSA Fellows and to contribute to the conversation about learning.

RIAZ SHAH



Seven years ago, EY partner Riaz was at a business function when he met Adnan Jaffery, a charismatic 29-year-old banker who wanted to change the world for the better. They became good friends but later that year Adnan got ill. "In his hospital room, he asked me whether I'd fulfil his wish to open a free school that would massively impact the lives of children living in disadvantaged areas of London," says Riaz. "I agreed, even though I knew nothing about schools. He died a few days later from a rare form of cancer." Riaz kept his promise, working with a group of teachers, education specialists and professionals to create One Degree Academy, for 4-18-year-olds in Enfield. Last year, Riaz took a sabbatical from EY to ensure that the school opened in September.

"We're going to prove that, despite being in the sixth most deprived area out of 300 in the UK, and with just state school level funding, we can achieve outstanding results with these children," explains Riaz. This will be achieved through a combination of personalised learning using technology, inspirational teachers and a strong connection to business and the community; for example, all of their students do an hour of community service each week.

Alongside this work, Riaz is also a board member of Bright Ideas Trust, which helps 18-30-year-olds set up businesses, and sits on Harvard Business School's Alumni Board.

IN BRIEF

Here are a few more Fellows who are working to drive social progress:

Simon Buckingham Shum is professor of learning informatics at the University of Technology Sydney. He works at the intersection of research and teaching, breaking ground in the use of data. He is also co-founder of the Society for Learning Analytics Research, which creates dialogue among researchers, educators, policymakers and vendors.

Candice Satchwell is a reader in education and literacies at the University of Central Lancashire. As principal investigator on the Stories to Connect project, she works with disadvantaged young people to tell their stories to the wider community, with the aim of increasing empathy and understanding.

Andy Palmer is group chief executive officer at Learndirect. Throughout his career, which has included a period on the board of Ofsted, Andy's focus has been on ensuring that everyone, young and old, has the skills and capabilities to achieve their ambitions.

Michelle Cox coordinates the Associate Degree Programme in Theatre Arts at the Barbados Community College, and is president of the Caribbean Network of Art Presenters. She is also a director and playwright whose work focuses on Caribbean theatre and gives a voice to the marginalised.

YOUR FELLOWSHIP: ENGAGE WITH THE RSA IN FOUR MAIN WAYS

1 Connect online:

Search for Fellows online at our new website. Visit www.thersa.org/new-website for details of how to log in. You can also follow us on Twitter @theRSAorg, join the Fellows' LinkedIn group and follow our blog at www.thersa.org/blogs.

2 Meet other Fellows:

Fellowship events and network meetings take place across the UK and are an excellent way to meet other Fellows. Visit our website to find an event in your area.

3 Share your skills:

Log in to the website to update your Fellowship profile and let other Fellows know about your skills, interests, expertise and availability.

4 Grow your idea:

RSA Catalyst offers grants and crowdfunding support for Fellow-led new and early-stage projects that aim to tackle a social challenge. Visit the Project Support page on our website.

Explore these and further ways to get involved at www.thersa.org



REBEL

Convention needs to be challenged and that process shouldn't stop after we leave school

by Toyah Willcox
 🐦 @toyahofficial

I haven't done too badly in life. At the last count I've co-written and recorded approximately 30 albums (three of which went platinum), written two books, been in about 15 feature films, 40-odd stage plays, built a property portfolio and had my legs made the same length (that hurt more than all the previous achievements). But getting to this point required mastering the art of civilised rebellion.

I had to be rebellious as a child because I was fighting for my identity against a system I could never fit into, falling behind each day at school and being considered too physically ungainly to conform to femininity. I was born with a twisted spine, one leg longer than the other, a clubfoot, was severely dyslexic, most probably dyspraxic and was affectionately referred to as 'hop-a-long' by my own family. Fifty-nine years ago these ailments were considered a life sentence. My mother spent the first 11 years of my life refusing to let surgeons remove my lower right leg, thank goodness.

When I became really famous in 1981, I received a letter from the sheriff of Willcox, a small town in Arizona, asking why so many tourists were coming to his town asking the post office to stamp their postcards with two stamps, one for Willcox, the other for Toyah, the neighbouring town. My mother had no knowledge of these places. Toyah was an incredibly rare name when I was born in 1958 and she claims to have named me after a ballet dancer. As a child, the rarity of my name made me feel noticed for the right reasons.

Two teachers saw potential in me. They realised my thinking was visual,

TOYAH WILLCOX IS
 A SINGER, ACTOR
 AND AUTHOR

so I was given extra art time, directed the school plays, designed the posters and learnt opera; yes, opera! All the time at school I made my mark, pushing against everything I couldn't tolerate.

My only foray into politics was in 1972, when the then minister of education, Margaret Thatcher, was visiting the school to talk to parents, teachers and pupils about her plans for the future. The morning of her visit I snuck five alarm clocks past security and the police with sniffer dogs and hid them under the school stage, set to go off at two-minute intervals from 3pm, when her speech was due to start.

The excitement I felt as we all obediently marched into the assembly hall was immeasurable. Mrs Thatcher stood up and started her speech promptly at 3pm. The first alarm clock went off; she ignored it. Then, two minutes later, the second alarm clock kicked into life. Being a true professional she ignored that too. By the time the third alarm clock sounded, everyone turned and looked at me.

If I had today's technology at my fingertips back then my rebellion would possibly have been a lot more far reaching. But with brilliant rebels in the world – from graffiti artist Banksy to DoNotPay founder Joshua Browder, who helps people appeal parking fines – we are presently in good hands.

For me, I will continue my rebellion at ground level, hopefully reminding people that education does not stop at the school gate, age is just a number and we should live life fully until the end, never give up on our dreams and, above all, keep resisting convention! ■

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