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ETON
COLLEGE

EDITORIAL

Iro Konstantinou | *Editor*

COVID-19 has changed the way we live, work, socialise, learn and communicate. In the early days of 2020, if someone had predicted that millions of children would stay away from school for weeks – not during planned holidays – and exams would be cancelled, they would not have been taken seriously. Yet this was exactly the reality that students and teachers found themselves negotiating. The consequences of this situation are already beginning to be evident, although it will probably be months, if not years, before the full extent of the impact of lockdown, school closures and cancelled exams can be fully understood.

Some of the consequences have undoubtedly been detrimental to large numbers of students and schools; however, this issue also wants to consider some of the potential positive outcomes of this disruption. Being forced to step away from what one knows so well allows time for reflection and an opportunity for resetting. We felt it was important to add to the wider dialogue and debates about what this resetting can look like and contribute to the process of reflection: both on the purpose of education, and on how we can ensure that wider educational inequalities, which became stark during the pandemic, can be addressed. We recognise there are no quick fixes, and a lot of work needs to be done which goes beyond the pages of a journal; however, we hope that these articles by students, teachers and educators can provide stimulus for thought and even for action.

Eton is looking to the future and hopes to play a part in advancing our understanding of how state and independent schools can usefully collaborate. Tom Arbuthnott outlines Eton's New Social Vision, while Catherine Whitaker and Clare Matheson provide two examples of how this is already being realised: through the EtonX platform and the Thames Valley Learning Partnership (TVLP). We hope that the work done through EtonX and TVLP will be scaled up and will contribute to the educational common good.

ETON IS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE AND HOPES TO PLAY A PART IN ADVANCING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW STATE AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS CAN USEFULLY COLLABORATE

The issue is divided into four parts:

Part one looks at the impact of school closures, cancelled exams, and the backlash that followed various governmental decisions. The authors outline the newly formed movement Rethinking Assessment which is gaining momentum and support. They discuss why it has considerable potential to change the way students are assessed, and the impact that these changes would have on the curriculum. Another article discusses the purpose of education and argues for why our current system is not fit for purpose. This section concludes with two articles from students about their views on the current state of education based on their experiences.

Part two focuses on wellbeing. The authors provide practical steps for how schools can incorporate wellbeing into the curriculum and school culture. They offer examples of schools that have implemented school-wide interventions and give a roadmap for renewal for teachers and educators to reflect upon next steps. By looking at concepts such as positive psychology, permaculture, academic resilience, self-knowledge and flourishing, the authors provide readers with strategies for embedding wellbeing into their practice.

Part three studies and also problematises educational technology and its uses in the classroom. COVID-19 forced many schools to move their teaching online; the authors question how technology can aid teaching and learning, but also how at times it can hinder them. The section includes articles which ask questions about the impact and value of technology and provide examples of good practice and avenues whereby technology can be a force for positive change.

Part four includes research and opinion pieces by teachers, practitioners and educators who reflect on their areas of teaching, pedagogy or discipline. By conducting research, they analyse how students reacted to distance learning and synchronous/asynchronous activities. They discuss sport, professional inquiry, teacher identity, and school leadership. They reflect on the lasting impact of COVID-19 upon education and their own practice, and how they and their students have perceived the current events.

These articles - whether research, reflective accounts, or opinion pieces, drawing upon numerous areas and disciplines - all invite us to pause and to reflect on our practice and our understanding of education. Few events in history have brought such rapid changes in the way we operate and conduct our lives. Perhaps, as the articles in this issue suggest, this is a time to act upon the saying that 'we should never waste a good crisis'.

A CHANGING EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE:
ETON'S FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Tom Arbuthnott | *Deputy Head (Partnerships), Eton College*

On Saturday, May 2, 2020, Eton's Head Master launched a forthright new initiative. Entitled the 'New Social Vision', Simon Henderson's message fundamentally restated Eton's commitment to the wider educational commonwealth and, in particular, to closing the educational gap at a time when it had been significantly widened by the impact of coronavirus.

The Head Master's announcement comprised four major commitments. First, Eton would extend its number of 100% bursaries to 10% of the school population – approximately 140 boys – by 2025. Second, we would restate and extend our offer to all UK-based state schools to use EtonX self-study courses for free. Third, we would form partnerships with 11-16 schools and other youth organisations. And finally, we would look to establish further free schools on the same basis as the London Academy of Excellence (which we co-sponsor) in the Midlands and the North of England.

All of these initiatives have made great progress in the months since May, and it has been genuinely delightful how warmly all these initiatives have been greeted by our wider constituencies. As the Deputy Head (Partnerships), I find myself overseeing one of the biggest expansions of Eton's outreach and partnership programmes in the school's history – which reconnects Eton with its history as an educational foundation of connecting with local communities. We will leverage our human and cultural capital in order to make a demonstrable difference to the lives of disadvantaged students across the UK – while, at the same time, strengthening the mothership and enriching our lived experience at Eton as staff or as pupils.

Financial aid is an incredibly important part of what we do – not just because we are in a position to be able to offer transformative life opportunities to young people, but also because of the way in which this builds a much more diverse and inclusive school community, stronger for the range of perspectives that it contains. We have had our best field ever for the post-16 Orwell Award this year, with boys applying from all over the UK, from Swansea to Sunderland, and Norwich to Taunton. While we have not been able, alas, to bring the boys to Eton for them to explore boarding for themselves, we will run a fair and consistent selection process online, aiming to bring twelve outstanding boys into the school for September 2021. There are also changes afoot with our entrance processes at 11+, which will help us to bring deserving recipients of financial aid into the school.

Our offer of free self-study online courses through the EtonX platform has also been a signal success. In the first iteration of this, during the summer term 2020, over 200,000 codes were issued to potential students from across the state sector, and we received some really positive feedback on the impact that these courses had on young people and their confidence. It is no real surprise that 120,000 Year 11 students registered – making EtonX courses available to approximately 20% of British 16-year-olds. We decided to build on this success by making more courses available to more year groups in a repeated offer in 2020-21 – this, again, has been met with enthusiasm, with over 75,000 codes issued so far. We will continue to promote these courses this year, not least to careers advisers in the state sector. We will be mapping the courses against the Gatsby benchmarks which will really help to see how they can support the building of soft skills by young people across the country.[1]

With luck, the government will open up a new application round for new free schools in January 2021, and we aim to be in a good position to put in a bid. To this end, we have been conducting a very detailed feasibility study over the course of the summer, aiming to identify where in the UK a project of this kind might have maximum impact. We have looked at GCSE results, A Level results, the local economy, transport links and population density, along with a number of other factors, and the results are fascinating. We will feature this research in a future edition of this journal.

Writing in October 2020, the New Social Vision project is now underway. I am convinced that it will change the game in terms of cross-sector partnership working, making a real impact on the closing of the attainment gap in the UK. As the various articles in this journal are debating the potential changes of education post-COVID-19, it is vital that Eton engages in these discussions at the school, community and national levels. It is through partnership and communication that our aims will be achieved and we are proud to be part of the changing landscape of the education system.

[1] https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/gatsby-benchmarks

EDUCATION POST-COVID:
THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

Clare Matheson | *Thames Valley Learning Partnership Coordinator*

The Thames Valley Learning Partnership (TVLP) is an equal partnership of state and independent schools. It currently consists of eight secondary-aged schools in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, and the Borough of Slough.

We aim to provide collaborative and informative experiences across a range of subjects, while also ensuring staff across our schools are able to network and exchange views and information.

Schools and other educational organisations have been desperately trying to keep pace with the ever-changing situation, adapting to meet the needs of students and staff where possible.

For the relatively new organisation that is the TVLP, that only appointed a coordinator in September 2019, this has taken many forms. From listening to colleagues across our schools, and having open and honest discussions with other school partnerships across the country, a number of measures were immediately implemented. These included:

• The creation of a TVLP Coronavirus edition newsletter in March 2020, providing a list of free online learning resources for those with internet access, and details of mental health charities and organisations targeted at young people.

• Rearranging events and meetings to take place online (where possible), rather than cancelling these.

• The creation of a new TVLP YouTube channel, so recorded events and educational talks could be made publicly available for students and staff to access at school, as well as at home.

• The introduction of new, reactive activities including the successful poem/short story/poster competition which focussed on the theme of 'Hope'.

• Working with The Tony Little Centre for Innovation and Research in Learning at Eton College to deliver staff CPD webinars on the topics of student resilience and independent learning skills (available on our YouTube channel).

In September and October, cross-school support has continued in a number of ways, including:

• Adapting our 2020-21 Events Programme to reflect the likelihood that UK Government social distancing restrictions may remain in place for the duration of the academic year.

• Opening up live career and subject-specific webinar talks to students and staff across all eight TVLP schools and making recordings of these available for access at a later date.

• Setting up a Pupil Premium network across TVLP schools to look at ways we can provide additional support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds (who, in many ways, have been the worst affected by the impacts of COVID-19).

• Introducing COVID-19 open discussion sessions in our other staff networks, giving colleagues the opportunity to discuss ideas and learn from each other.

Yet while these are positive changes, it feels like so much more needs to be done.

• Undertaking more interactive events, where students from different communities, ethnicities and wealth backgrounds have the opportunity to engage with each other in a meaningful and positive way seems a long way off, like happened at the TVLP's Make A Change environmental event in March 2020. Moving events online via platforms such as Zoom, delivers mixed outcomes and isa poor replacement for physical social interaction. However, until normality can resume this is better than cancelling events altogether.

• Increasing awareness and access to TVLP activities, and promoting our social media channels to increase our pupil follower numbers is another challenge and one we are determined to improve upon.

• Effective and targeted sharing of much needed expertise, knowledge and resources across our independent and state schools too must also be a focus, both now and post-COVID.

SCHOOLS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN DESPERATELY TRYING TO KEEP PACE WITH THE EVER CHANGING SITUATION, ADAPTING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND STAFF WHERE POSSIBLE

It is certain that, in time, there will be lessons we can all learn from the actions schools and partnerships like the TVLP are currently undertaking. We must encourage, listen to, and value feedback and suggestions from educational professionals, not least teachers and support staff who are on the front-line dealing with the impacts of COVID-19, day in and day out.

Being an equal partnership of six state and two independent schools, the TVLP is well placed to help facilitate all of the above and more with the support of colleagues.Coronavirus has posed many challenges for myself as TVLP Coordinator, as well as for our schools, yet many of us have learnt new skills as a result. For me, that includes being able to host online meetings and webinars, to managing a YouTube account and video editing. These are things which, along with our combined wider knowledge, contacts and resources, can improve the accessibility of our educational, co-curricular, and personal development partnership activities. Education will eventually return to some form of n ormality for many of us, yet we should use our strengths, common goals, varied resources and expertise as a partnership, to improve upon what 'normal' is and what it will be post-COVID. Surely, we owe it to those hit the hardest during this pandemic, as well as to society as a whole, to support each other and build upon our strengths, bringing our schools closer together to start levelling the playing field.

Useful links

TVLP YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGV1uFOEmKXDKX540O6jQew

TVLP's Make A Change environmental event, March 2020. A report on this event can be viewed on our website: https://tvlp.org.uk/news

BEING AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP OF SIX STATE AND TWO INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, THE TVLP IS PERFECTLY PLACED TO HELP FACILITATE ALL OF THE ABOVE AND MORE WITH THE SUPPORT OF COLLEAGUES

COVID'S IMPACT ON THE ADOPTION OF VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS

Catherine Whitaker | *CEO, EtonX*

Adoption of technology in education before COVID was always a gradual process. Technology investors keen to 'disrupt' education in the same way they had transformed other sectors such as travel or retail found that education was more resistant to change for its own sake. Was there any need to substitute the experience of a live teacher physically in front of a group of students?

Then suddenly, and with not much warning, the COVID crisis forced school leaders and teachers all over the world to find quick solutions to keep lessons going. Estimates vary as to how quickly the COVID crisis has accelerated the adoption of education technology for teaching: 5, 10 or possibly even 15 years. But for the most part, the tools used to bring teachers and students together online were video conferencing software, designed for meetings between adults.

If COVID had been a brief crisis, schools may have been able to forget the trials of the 2020 spring and summer terms, returning to business as usual with perhaps a few converts continuing to experiment with live online learning. But the ongoing nature of the crisis and the feeling that schools should never again be without a plan for closure – whatever the cause – means that we are entering an interesting phase of contemplating whether the tools used in extremis at the peak of the crisis are really appropriate for education.

This is a question that the team at EtonX had been working on for several years pre-pandemic. In 2017, when we decided to focus on producing courses for the development of soft skills, we looked around for virtual classroom software that would allow students to have meaningful interactions and as valuable an experience as they would in a physical classroom. Having looked at all the options at the time, we concluded that we would need to build our own virtual classroom.

The reasons were that – as many teachers experienced during lockdown – video conferencing tools do not effectively replicate the classroom experience in several respects. Firstly, all schools have safeguarding as a top priority. As anyone who has experienced 'Zoom bombing' knows, running a class online can be significantly less secure than in school. The EtonX Virtual Classroom therefore has a raft of safeguarding features which ensure that students are safe, and these are backed up with safeguarding policies and procedures modelled on Eton College's own.

Secondly, we felt that the teacher needed to be in control of the experience in the same way she is in a classroom. Teachers in a virtual classroom should be able to manage the classroom – deciding who comes to the front, who is invited to talk, what media are on display, how the room is arranged. Learning is more likely to happen when the students are not in a free-for-all situation.

The EtonX Virtual Classroom also differs from most of the technology used out of necessity during COVID because we have integrated it into a learning management system. Teachers can therefore create and disseminate course materials and ensure that all learning happens within the same online environment.

Having developed our technology for our own use, as lockdown hit we were approached by other education providers who wanted to use a 'white label' version of our technology to deal with school closures. Our first client was the British Council which had to shut its global network of English language teaching centres in a wave from East to West, from Hong Kong to Colombia. We helped over 60,000 of their students to access courses online. Now that many of these centres have reopened, the organisation has found that students, parents and teachers have become more acclimatised to online learning and acceptance of blended learning with some learning online and some face-to-face is much higher. We are continuing to host their courses on our technology in a more sustained way post-lockdown.

With thousands of teachers worldwide having taught online, many for the first time, edtech companies like ours are able to draw on this huge collective pool of experience to understand what works best. Just as businesses are learning from the pros and cons of having a remote workforce remote, so we can begin to look at what technology can allow schools to do which may not have been possible before.

We have found that while virtual classroom technology still has a way to come, there are advantages. For example, there is no 'back row' in a virtual classroom. Every student can face the front and see and be seen by the teacher in a way that is physically impossible 'in real life'. A teacher moving students into virtual breakout rooms can be absolutely sure that there is no listening in to, and stealing of ideas from, another group. This can mean there are more diverse ideas to discuss in any plenary session. Teachers can bring students back to the main room at the click of a button rather than cajoling students who may be stuck in a discussion, whether on topic or not, meaning there is more time for that plenary session. Every interaction can be recorded, and revisited if required.

For school leaders, virtual classes open up new modes of operating by connecting students in different locations. It is a way of strengthening partnerships with other schools, whether in the same network such as a MAT or a chain of international schools. Subjects such as Russian or Latin could be offered even if there are only a couple of candidates within each school in a network. For independent schools, online teaching is a way to enrich their outreach work as Eton is doing through Eton's New Social Vision programme and has done during lockdown through offering our courses for free to state school students.

With the chaos of the initial phase of the pandemic over, technology providers can respond to the lessons learnt during it and ensure that virtual classroom technology evolves to be more suited to the demands of secondary teaching.

FOR SCHOOL LEADERS, VIRTUAL CLASSES OPEN UP NEW MODES OF OPERATING BY CONNECTING STUDENTS IN DIFFERENT LOCATIONS

HOW LOCKDOWN HAS CHALLENGED OLD ORTHODOXIES

Peter Hyman | *Director, Big Education*

One of the effects of the tumultuous events of the last six months is that some of the orthodoxies in education in England have been challenged in profound ways. The settlement of the last 10 to 15 years is beginning to break down, and something more expansive and exciting is beginning to emerge as leaders and teachers feel emboldened to spread their wings.

1. The summer exam fiasco has put rocket fuel under an already growing unease with our flawed assessment system.

The shambles of exams this year has shone a light on something that most who are close to education already knew – our exams system is not fit for purpose. It skews priorities, produces a lot of stress for pupils and teachers, results in a third of pupils being labelled failures and does not satisfy universities, colleges of employers, all of whom think it is not measuring the stuff that really matters. That is why there is a growing movement for change and www.rethinkingassessment.com is one attempt to provide workable solutions to the thorny issue of how we create an assessment system that truly values the strengths of every child.

2. The vast inequalities exposed by COVID has given new impetus to efforts to level the playing field.

Lockdown has revealed the work that still has to be done to deal with glaring inequalities that still mean that equality of opportunity is a long way off. Evidence seems to suggest that nearly a million children were without proper access to the internet and devices to learn on. The failure to sort out free school meals at the start produced real hardships for thousands of families. The exams fiasco penalised the poorest students the most. This cannot and must not continue. Whatever the solutions to disrupted learning this year, and school reform in future years, those who face the most challenges must be front of mind.

3. Lockdown has exposed once and for all the narrowness of an education that focuses almost exclusively on a 'knowledge' curriculum.

I have yet to meet a single teacher who does not believe that subject knowledge is important. It's just that many believe that focusing on this for the vast majority of school time narrows the education young people receive, and excludes the richness of other types of learning and other vital skills. COVID has brought this sharply to life.

For both parents and teachers, lockdown has amplified the point that young people need more than the next school worksheet. Well-being matters just as much, as does creating, doing, making, and undertaking physical activity. All of these things go into the development of a human being – a breadth recognised in the early years of school but then slowly but surely removed as children get older. More than that, it is students who have been taught powerful learning habits that have done the best during lockdown. Those who could think for themselves, know what to do when stuck, organise their own time - in other words the opposite to being 'spoon fed' – were least fazed by not being in the classroom. This renewed emphasis on what we call a balance of head, heart and hand I believe will continue post lockdown.

4. COVID lockdowns make a mockery of the belief that technology is a waste of time and money in education.

Before COVID, I was told that there were six, yes six, civil servants in the Department for Education who were in charge of all things digital. That's out of nearly 7,000 civil servants. So, in contrast to almost every big organisation in the country, who over the last decade has focused time and energy understanding the implications of technology for their sector, politicians, and some supporters within the education sector, often for ideological reasons, have deemed this unnecessary. This folly has been upended by COVID. Technology has been used badly in schools for years because leadership has been poor. It was never going to be a panacea, never going to replace a teacher, but what it could do – and this has been highlighted during lockdown – is become a way of a) creating communities of practitioners, b) curating powerful resources, c) giving students the chance to shape their own learning, d) make the running of school systems including data handling more effective, e) unlock thorny issues including better forms of assessment. For all these reasons there is a hope that technology can finally now form an important part of future education strategy being harnessed to support teachers and students in their quest for great learning.

There will be some who cling on to the old orthodoxies; that is of course why they have become orhtodoxies. But there are powerful coalitions of people wanting to use this important moment to rethink how schools are run and start to provide something a bit more empowering both for the students we serve and for the teachers who are engaging once more with the higher purposes of the profession.

REASSESSING ASSESSMENT

Al McConville | *Director of Learning and Innovation, Bedales*

The global events of 2020 have thrown issues around school assessment – public exams in particular – into stark relief. Commentators have rightly railed against the disproportionate impact of 'the algorithm' on the least advantaged. Yes, these issues have been exacerbated by COVID, but the truth is that these issues are not new. Every year a norm-referenced algorithm is applied to exam results. The principle of comparable outcomes means that a third of students are destined not to achieve a pass grade from the outset. There is always a disproportionate effect on the least advantaged.

The over-crammed curriculum on which tests are premised is an annual problem, too. Dylan William has recently described a content-heavy curriculum as 'immoral' and Howard Gardner has called 'coverage' the 'greatest enemy of understanding'. Testing of heavy-laden syllabuses causes coverage-frenzy right from the outset, and damages deep learning.

Another issue is the reliability of grading which varies wildly even in a good year: Ofqual's own 2018 research shows that around 50% of grades may have been wrongly awarded in some subjects (Griffiths, 2020). The new Head of Ofqual, Dame Glenys Stacey recently gave evidence to the Education Select Committee, acknowledging that public grades were only 'reliable to one grade either way'. And yet life-changing opportunities hang on them. Access to the next level of education, or other pathways, continues to be determined by a string of letters and numbers which fundamentally cannot be trusted.

Moreover, accountability structures both within schools and from outside of them give undue weight to these exam results as the primary metric of a school's success, mostly because they're 'measurable' and easily reducible to graphs. This leads to a variety of unintended consequences.

Teachers can easily find themselves under pressure to 'teach to the test' rather than range around their or their students' passions, since their performance will be appraised accordingly. Depending on the culture of the school, it's all too easy for the classroom experience to have the spectre of 'terminal assessment' woven into it because this, not authentic engagement with the subject matter, is the valued outcome, and everyone knows it. Instrumentalism trumps learning for its own sake.

Exam-only assessment inadvertently rewards a narrow range of skills – speed-writing, cramming, 'exam technique'. These are over-emphasised to the detriment of broader developmental goals for the reasons above. From an increasingly young age, the main business of school is preparation for exams. Schools reluctantly but inevitably work backwards from that which is prized at the point of departure, and conform their strategy to the 'desired' final outcomes: 'good' A Levels as currency for 'good' higher education destinations.

All this cannot contribute to the educational or broader flourishing of our young people, nor of our teachers or schools. Whether young people like it or not they are thrust into a Darwinian struggle for competitive advantage almost from the outset. They're competing for the scarce resource of a 'good' pass. Teachers are competing for the scarce resource of a positive 'value added' score – another algorithmic imposition that takes small account of distinctive features or circumstances of the child in front of them, extrapolating as it does from 'average' performance by other pupils in years gone by. A warped assessment system, red in tooth and claw, has contributed very significantly to the loss of proper perspective on the purpose of education, and can be considered a factor in the reported unhappiness of our young people relative to other countries.

TEACHERS CAN EASILY FIND THEMSELVES UNDER PRESSURE TO 'TEACH TO THE TEST' RATHER THAN RANGE AROUND THEIR OR THEIR STUDENTS' PASSIONS, SINCE THEIR PERFORMANCE WILL BE APPRAISED ACCORDINGLY

Perhaps I over-characterize; but not much, I think.

Many schools work hard to redress a structural imbalance caused by assessment strictures and broaden the experience of their young people. But it's an uphill struggle for many.

A new movement launched in September 2020 calls for a serious re-evaluation of assessment structure in UK secondary schools. 'Rethinking Assessment' is a group of educationalists who believe that we need to work towards a broader approach to assessment. Its key principles can be summarised as follows:

1. 'An assessment system should recognise the full range of a young person's strengths.' So, why not celebrate and reward skilful public speaking and presenting, or collaborative skills, as much as the ability to master content and shape it to the demands of an exam?

2. 'A broad curriculum should underpin the design of any assessment.' So, first work out what sorts of experiences and learning we want young people to have, and then work out how best to validate it, rather than gearing curriculum around what is easily accessible by exam.

3. 'There should be no fixed pass rate for standards so every child is given proper recognition for meeting the criteria.' In other words, norm referencing should not dictate a mechanistic and potentially artificial distribution of grades. If students fulfil the criteria, they should pass, and not be blocked by algorithms. And maybe they should be allowed to take the test at a point when they're ready, and not just because they've hit a certain age.

THERE SHOULD BE NO FIXED PASS RATE FOR STANDARDS SO EVERY CHILD IS GIVEN PROPER RECOGNITION FOR MEETING THE CRITERIA

4. 'Assessment should be useful for all pathways, whether college, university, or direct employment.' We're too fixated on the idea that as many people as possible should go to university, and that fixation is reverse engineered into the entire student experience, which is totally inappropriate for many. A perceived hierarchy of HE institutions becomes a competitive and motivating factor in a student's school life for years, whether or not there is any real value in the perceived hierarchy.

5. 'All young people should leave school with a useful and fair representation of their strengths.' A string of grades tells you nothing about a person's character or developmental journey. There are ways of reliably reporting on these things already in existence.

6. 'Schools should be judged on the full range of their educational provision and not only on a narrow set of exams.' The idea of a balanced scorecard is an interesting one. There is a tendency only to value those things which are measured; and whilst that's not necessarily right, it's the way that the world works at the moment, so we could try and measure all the things that we believe are valuable, from co-curricular activities to service activities.

7. 'We should learn from the best assessment practices in the UK and across the world.' This last one is particularly rich in possibilities. There is a promising and imaginative variety of assessment practice around the world in which more than just exam prowess is valued.

The movement is gathering momentum. I recommend it to you. www.rethinkingassessment.com

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RETHINKING ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOLS:
WHY GCSE HAS BECOME IRRELEVANT AND WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO TO HELP

Bill Lucas | *Professor of Learning and Director of the Centre for Real World Learning, University of Winchester*

Across the world schools, districts, states, countries, consortia, NGOs and international bodies are rethinking assessment. There is a growing sense that most public examinations, especially in secondary education, don't examine the right things. The wider capabilities and dispositions wanted by employers such as creativity and collaborative problem solving are largely absent. Important aspects of the development of character, resilience and social and emotional learning are missing and important aspects of practical and applied learning are almost entirely overlooked.

Recently a group of us, a few of whom are writing in this Journal, are intent on creating a movement to rethink the way we do assessment in schools in England.

The inequity, unreliability and costliness of GCSEs

In the Age of Twitter and Facebook the idea that a third of sixteen year olds in England should be written off as educational failures on the basis of a series of paper and pencil tests taken in hot school halls and crammed into one summer month is palpably ridiculous. More precisely, in 2019, 67.1% achieved grade 4 or above (compared with 66.6% in 2018) (gov.uk., 2019). In other words the exam is effectively designed only to pass two-thirds of those who take it, rather than having criteria for achieving a pass as in Royal Schools of Music exams which have clear criteria for achieving a pass, merit or distinction in any instrument. Such exams are also taken when students are showing that they are ready and likely to achieve the necessary standard.

After much hemming and hawing, GCSE exams did not happen in the UK this year. Instead an algorithm was used which combined teacher estimates and historic school and subject data and a strange mutant ingredient that nobody from Ofqual could explain. The algorithm's combination of ingredients turned out to be a toxic one and as a consequence a further change of policy meant that the GCSE and A level grades awarded this year were those arrived at by teachers.

The percentage of students receiving grade 4 and above in GCSE increased by 8.9% this Summer (Ofqual, 2020). On the face of it this increase in the success rate of students is the kind of grade inflation that will confirm to proponents of exams like GCSE that teacher grades are unreliable. But the evidence is not quite so clear-cut. When the Education Select Committee interviewed Dame Glenys Stacey, former head of Ofqual, (Parliament, 2 September 2020) she told MPs that exams 'are reliable to one grade either way'. In other words if you get a 4 grade at GCSE it could equally have been a 3 or a 5.

In fact evidence shows that reliability of grading, when examiners are involved, varies wildly even in a good year. Ofqual's own research (Ofqual, 2018) shows that some 50% of grades at GCSE are typically wrongly awarded in some subjects, an unreliability of some 11%. Even if it could be shown that teacher awarded grades were 'unreliable' or inflated by 8.9%, this would still be within the bounds of 'normal' unreliability.

Lastly, GCSEs do not come cheap. According to the Exams Regulator, 4,664,250 GCSE certificates were awarded in 2017-2018 at an average cost of £37.30, amounting to expenditure of £173 million overall.

In short GCSEs are unfair, unreliable and unaffordable.

Learning from the rest of the world

Given that with COVID-19 it is highly likely that GCSEs will not rely solely on examinations and are likely to have to take into account teacher judgment more explicitly and, potentially, to use coursework, now is a good time for schools to explore some of the many promising alternatives to GCSE from England across the world. Here are just three examples to whet your appetite:

1. Create your own Character Scorecard

You may well have your own approach to explicitly developing young people's character in which case this year is a perfect opportunity to try some of these assessment tools. You could start with the VIA Institute on Character Inventory of Strengths (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – VIA 24 character strengths

Using the VIA questionnaire[1] you could track the development of whichever of the 24 strengths seem most appropriate to you at the beginning and end of each term, using this data to help you reflect on the degree to which your activities are developing the character attributes you are seeking.

The KIPP Character Scorecard which focuses on zest, grit, optimism, self-control, gratitude, social intelligence and curiosity, is another good repository of resources developed with Angela Duckworth's Character Lab.[2]

2. Adapt the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) for use in key stage 4

The EPQ, equivalent to 50% of an A level, is an opportunity for students to undertake an extended project with guidance and support from staff. Its assessment takes the form of, for example, a musical or dramatic composition, a report or artefact backed up with paperwork or an extended piece of writing. The Warriner School[3] among others has already adapted this kind of approach to key stage 3, so we have a proof of concept at 11-14 and at 16-18. Now all you need to do is develop something to plug this gap. You could look at the National Baccalaureate for England's focus on three elements at key stage 5 – core learning + personal project + personal development programme – and adapt this to key stage 4.[4]

3. Go digital

To start thinking digitally imagine scouts/guides + badges + tech with a dash of Duke of Edinburgh's Award thrown in. Whether you are seeking to capture 'academic' or 'character' strengths, you may want to find out about digital badges. These are ways of 'micro-credentialing' aspects of any capability or competence. The Open Badges movement has come a long way in making such assessments reliable and useful.[5]

You may want to go further and develop digital portfolios for your students. Many school online systems have the functionality for each student to develop and curate their own e-portfolio.

Or you could dip your toe into the world of comparative judgment. Comparative judgement assumes that people are better at making comparisons between pieces of work than at making absolute judgements about quality. No More Marking has developed software for teachers which you can try.[6]

This article gives a flavour of potential innovations in assessing young people in ways which could be more expansive (valuing all of their strengths), more formative (providing feedback to ensure better progress), fairer and a lot cheaper than GCSEs. There are many more examples schools can learn from on the Rethinking Assessment website.

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[1] https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register#youth
[2] https://characterlab.org/playbooks/
[3] https://www.thewarrinerschool.co.uk/ks3extendedproject
[4] https://www.natbacctrust.org/about-the-nbfe/
[5] https://openbadges.org
[6] https://www.nomoremarking.com

EDUCATION POST-COVID: BOHUNT EDUCATION TRUST LEARNINGS FROM LOCKDOWN

Phil Avery | *Director of Education, Bohunt Education Trust*

The Comrades Ultramarathon in South Africa is a challenging, exhilarating mix of history, hills and hurt over 89km. Twelve hours after the starting gun fires, the finish is closed by security guards. Brutally, if you aren't over the line you don't complete the race. As the critical moment approaches runners collapse, cry and make difficult decisions about whether to help others and risk their own finish.

The race we make our children run in secondary schools is in some ways even more devilish. Unlike Comrades, our exam regime is not criterion referenced. Pass marks are decided after the event, and our version of closing the finish line means about 32.1% of our students must fail in each subject; it's not only about your performance, but the order in which you cross the line.[1] Not knowing when the finish line will close fundamentally changes the nature of the competition. The Comrades race sets clear standards, high expectations, requires excellence, encourages collaboration and is an inspiring day out; our exam system fosters individualism, competition, anxiety and, for many, disengagement.

Across the schools within the Bohunt Education Trust, lockdown provided us a window into the impact our system has on young people's motivation towards education from bi-weekly surveys, in collaboration with ImpactEd,[2] completed by over 4,000 of our students:[3]

- Approximately 10% of our students dropped out of the 'race' the moment lockdown started and, despite repeated, increasingly strong exhortations to re-join, we got few of them back. They were neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated.

- A further 25% or so of students were doing enough to not get in trouble, but no more. They were extrinsically, but not intrinsically, motivated.

- There was an increased gap across nearly all metrics between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged:
  - A third of our students have neither a quiet place to work nor strong routines for home learning; the disadvantaged are over-represented in this group.
  - Students' well-being increased during lockdown, but not for disadvantaged or SEND students (where it decreased by approximately 3-5%).
  - Students' self-reported persistence declined during lockdown; the rate was faster for disadvantaged students.

How can we design an education system that gives everyone the opportunity to succeed and seeks to grow the percentage of students intrinsically motivated by education? Firstly, we can ensure we have a system that allows all to succeed if they perform well enough. However, this on its own will not create intrinsic motivation.

The meta-theory of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) suggests that mastery, autonomy and connectedness to others are important. Each of these can be unpacked further within the field of education, making the area of motivation complex. For example:
- Mastery: Weiner (1985), using attribution theory (what we think causes our successes or failures), concluded that the perceived cause of success or failure is as significant to motivation as the actual cause. Indeed, Hattie (2018) places self-reported grades as the second most influential factor (after collective teacher efficacy) on student achievement with an effect size (Cohen's d) of 1.33 (above 0.4 is significant). To help with motivation, educators need to move students' focus on to factors they have influence over (controllability) and to give them ownership over improving the situation (locus).
- Autonomy: novices know less and think differently to experts (Chi, Feltovich & Glaser, 1979), so we cannot just allow students free choice, otherwise they may well choose inefficient, misleading approaches towards learning. It is for this reason that discovery learning has been challenged (Kirschner, Sweeler & Clark, 2006). However, it is possible to give students choice whilst still guiding their approach.[4]
- Connectedness: 10% of children have a clinically diagnosable mental problem (Green et al, 2005). Designing our education system to help students find purpose, meaningful work and their tribe (Hari, 2019) will help prevent mental health issues.

To the above factors should be added purpose. Pink (2009) suggests that purpose will increase intrinsic motivation and Hari (2019) suggests it will help with mental health; moreover, there is a need for new ideas at intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal and planetary levels (Hannon, 2017). The world of work is changing and we need an education that moves us towards sustainability (Sterling, 2004), but the deepest learning in our schools is rarely found in exam classes (Mehta & Fine, 2019). For example, Teach the Future are a group of students who want to repurpose the education system around the climate and ecological crises.[5]

[1] For an overview of the definitions and arguments related to criterion-, norm- and cohort-referenced assessment, see the following blogpost: https://rethinking-ed.org/is-everyone-ok/

[2] See www.impacted.org.uk

[3] For ImpactEd's second interim report on the impact of lockdown on education, see: www.shorturl.at/cfEN7

[4] A look at motivation in the classroom can be found in Issue 3 of the Eton Journal for Innovation and Research in Education (June 2020): 'The role of self-determined choice and realistic aspirations in academic motivation and achievement', by Amy Fancourt.

[5] See www.teachthefuture.uk

So what does this mean for our education system? I am not sure that we are quite there yet with a solution. Lockdown has yielded such interesting and useful insights into the needs of those students which we are not currently meeting, and we need to continue our research, particularly qualitative research, of groups identified through the quantitative data. We then need to discuss whether approaches already shown to be successful could be scaled and, if so, pilot them. For example, portfolio approaches such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, broader approaches to assessment and accountability that avoid Campbell's Law (the observation that once a metric has been identified as a primary indicator for success, its ability to accurately measure success tends to be compromised) (Koretz, 2017) such as the International Baccalaureate, and approaches that build the connectedness of schools with their community (both human and ecological) such as the John Muir Award and the Active Citizenship Award.

To talk of assessment and system change seems ambitious, but the new Rethinking Assessment movement (www.rethinkingassessment.com), which is discussed extensively in this issue and is backed by groups of MPs,[6] seems timely. Now seems the right time to reassess, rethink and move forwards in a different, more purposeful, broader direction.

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[6] https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/oct/08/tory-mps-back-ditching-gcse-exams-english-school-system-overhaul

To finish

Below is a piece of artwork by one of our students (Lily, Year 10, The Petersfield School) who was responding to a challenge to express what lockdown meant to her creatively. The larger the head the more recent the thought. Her most recent thoughts seem to be of health, life and light – was that a comment specifically on lockdown or on an unlocked curriculum and a reduced accountability system?
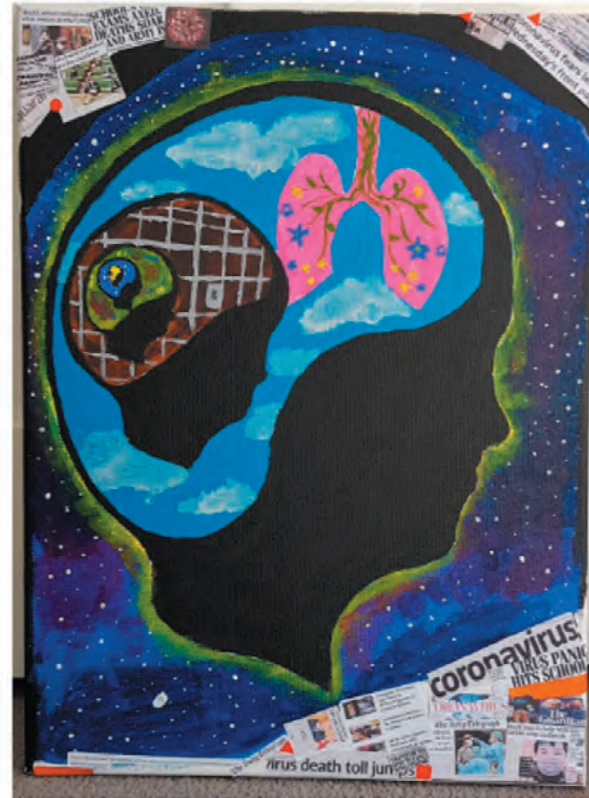
OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM IS UNFIT FOR PURPOSE:
WHAT WE CAN DO TO CHANGE IT?

Victoria Bagnall | *Co-Founder and Managing Director, Connections in Mind*

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Access to education is a universal human right (UN, 1948) and in many countries the concept of compulsory education has led to the use of fines and police involvement to enforce strict rules about school attendance. Whether you believe that education is something that can be 'enforced' in this way, or whether you believe that it is the natural blossoming of the human mind, participation in school-based education has become an international norm. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the essential role that schools play in society, as well as the huge discrepancies in the provision between the state and private sectors. All stakeholders are now desperate to see our children return to and stay in school and many see education as a social panacea, with schools, rightly or wrongly, as the only place in which 'education' can be delivered. Indeed, school-based education has become such an obsession, that we have lost focus on why we educate young people. The pandemic has only served to accentuate this lack of direction. Our education system, patched together over many years, now fails to deliver what young people need.

We argue that not only is our education system now unfit for purpose and therefore the time is ripe for change, but also policy and policy makers are not best placed to lead education or such change in the future. We will start by outlining what we believe to be the purpose of education before highlighting how the current system is not fit for this purpose and then address the elephant in the proverbial room – the role of policy and policy makers.

THE COVID PANDEMIC HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE ESSENTIAL ROLE THAT SCHOOLS PLAY IN SOCIETY, AS WELL AS THE HUGE DISCREPANCIES IN THE PROVISION BETWEEN THE STATE AND PRIVATE SECTORS

What is the purpose of education?

Ask anyone why we educate young people and you will invariably get an answer which fits into three broad categories. One of these is normally autonomy: developing skills in young people to help them live independently and control the course of their lives (Dearden, 1975). Another key purpose of education is seen as competence: developing the skills or knowledge to execute life's tasks and deal with our environment successfully (Dewey, 1916). Relatedness – the need to have close relationships and belong to society – is also rated by most stakeholders as essential (Deci and Vansteenkiste, 2004). Educational philosophy continues to debate the details of such purpose, and this debate is beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, self-determination theory of education, which incorporates the three pillars of autonomy, competence and relatedness, is one which has wide approval (Niemiec and Ryan, 2009) and seems to speak to the core needs of societies worldwide despite cultural differences. As such it will form the basis of our argument.

Starting with competence, we wonder how many educators reading this article could claim that education truly equips young people with the skills and self-confidence to execute life's tasks successfully? How can an education system with its roots in the industrial revolution truly prepare young people for modern life (Robinson and Aronica, 2009)? Dewey first mooted this point in the late 19th century, yet here we are in 2020 returning to classrooms with 'rows of ugly desks placed in geometrical order' in which 'listening' and 'dependency of one mind upon another' is paramount (Dewey, 1899). Key life skills in 2020 include managing our personal well-being, being a self-starter at work, planning and cooking healthy food, keeping a household budget, managing time effectively, assessing our own and other people's risk when it comes to COVID-19 exposure - and so the list goes on. In 2017 an All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education determined that, 'There is strong evidence from the business community that the education system is not delivering the skills they require in the sufficient quantities.' Some may argue that many of these skills can be a byproduct of the current education system for those who engage well with the system. For example, a mixture of Maths and IT skills could help you to maintain a household budget. But for those who struggle to learn in the school environment due to individual differences and neurodiversity, the nuances of this form of personal development are likely to be lost. This is compounded by a lack of intrinsic motivation when pupils whose natural drive is dulled by conformity to the assessment system cannot see why learning certain parts of the national curriculum, will be helpful to them in the future (Jeffrey & Karabenick, 2018). Surely it would be beneficial for our students and our society that these skills be explicitly developed and measured, rather than by some proxy far removed from the desired outcome. For us, our education system does not deliver on its purpose of competence.

Autonomy, which overlaps considerably with competence as one needs to be competent in order to have autonomy, in our view fares no better. Let's examine how our current system fails to develop autonomy in two key ways. First, we need to look carefully at the current system in the UK where, because of the way schools are measured and therefore funded, educators scramble to get the results in the traditional subjects (Leckie and Goldstein, 2009) at the expense of those subjects which can add dimension to personal development and creativity. Further, because of the sheer volume of knowledge which is tested, educators are forced, for the most part unwillingly, to do this by 'spoon-feeding' young people the knowledge they need to know to get the required grades (Nunan, 1996). When they leave school, many learners do not have the self-study skills needed for academic autonomy (Nuffield, 2006). Secondly, it is widely recognised that young people need self-confidence, self-awareness and a sense of agency to be successful in life. Failure to achieve this, particularly during adolescence when the brain is still developing, has been proven to be linked to the initiation of mental health challenges (Dumontheil, 2016). However, we are currently experiencing the worst mental health crisis in young people, especially relating to anxiety and depression, since records began (NHS Digital, 2018). This is not to take away from individual schools and educators who are doing their best to buck the trend, rather to be clear that the system is not fit to achieve the purpose of autonomy, and even mitigates against it, and therefore must be changed.

When we get to relatedness, despite the measures for education and to a large part the curriculum being solely rooted in academic success rather than personal development, many schools actually do a fantastic job of developing relatedness in our young people. Sexual health awareness, stewardship, community projects and more address this core purpose, but is that enough?

Additionally, why is this important work squeezed into the undervalued PSHE/co-curricular timetable? Why is more time not allotted (Ofsted, 2007)? Perhaps because it is not measured and therefore not seen as valuable? Given that schools play such a pivotal role in society, more of the timetable should be devoted to relatedness, to building a sense of belonging, to the skills of empathy, response inhibition, and forgiveness which underpin meaningful relationships. It is useful to consider the social implications of such a focus. As of yet, the education system is failing to deliver on the core purpose of relatedness too.

How did we end up here?

We believe that the answer lies in the leadership of education in our country. Since 1839 (National Archives) the government has been in charge of education in the UK when it first began to fund elementary schools with the purpose of educating the population for work in factories and administrative work. Since then, subsequent governments have used education policy reforms to win votes and further their political and personal aims. However, this leaves education open to the shifting priorities of political parties and their political agendas, putting people with limited experience or expertise in education at the forefront of decision-making about education. Worse, changing these decision-makers in reshuffles means that 'The period since the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act, vesting control of the curriculum in the Secretary of State, has seen twelve individuals hold the post; Their average time in office is just over two years' (Anderson, 2014). Real change takes years to accomplish and requires true expertise and dedication to the cause. Why is it presumed that politicians are best placed to lead education? What qualifications or track records do the politicians have for such important roles - how effective have they been in the past? We only have to look at the recent exams results fiasco to answer these questions.

Where to next?

Many educators we speak to are resigned to the status quo and ask what precedent is there for change. We are often reminded of the late 1990s when after a calamitous period of financial uncertainty the government gave the Bank of England operational independence over monetary policy and freed it from 'political influence' (Bank of England, 2017). Since then the UK has benefitted from world-class economic management by experts, which has allowed the UK to weather financial challenges relatively well. We wonder how the UK education system would fare should world-class educators be in charge of education planning, design and implementation for the long term?

We hope that this article has prompted more questions than it has answered. We do not profess to have a formula for what the future of education should look like, who should lead it or who should design it; but we are passionate in our belief that the current system is unfit for purpose and must be changed. We also believe that dedicated education professionals are the only viable leaders of education in the future. They have been ignored, overruled and undermined by the government for too long and deserve not only a seat at the reform table but to chair it, lead it and drive it. We want to act as a catalyst for that change so that we can see the empowerment of professionals, leaders and employers in the field of education. We also want to give a voice to the students themselves and their parents to voice their discontent, to start talking about change and to discuss possible solutions. We encourage all those interested in getting involved in the discussion to join us by registering their opinions on the future of education at www.evolvingtimesevolvingminds.org. We have a unique opportunity ahead of us: let's not waste it. We owe it to our young people, ourselves and the future.

WE WONDER HOW THE UK EDUCATION SYSTEM WOULD FARE SHOULD WORLD-CLASS EDUCATORS BE IN CHARGE OF EDUCATION PLANNING, DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE LONG TERM?

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EQUALITY AND POST-COVID EDUCATION

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When COVID-19 struck, most private schools seamlessly transitioned online; most state schools were not so fortunate. A UCL study claimed that over 20% of students were getting by with less than an hour of work a day (UCL News, 2020). Even more dangerously, the more disadvantaged the school, the worse off their students were doing. While 57% of secondary school students at a private school had live lessons every day, only 16% of working class children and 30% of middle class children had them (Cullinane and Montacute, 2020). The Centre of Economic Performance suggests that a four-week school closure is the equivalent of moving an average child into the bottom 30%. COVID-19 has served to heighten the very inequality that many educators have fought so hard to rectify.

The generation after the Second World War is known as the 'lost generation'; our generation will be known as the same unless there is significant investment to reduce the pre-existing inequality that has already been made far worse. The impact on the most advantaged students has been softened by the exemplary curricula created by elite schools; those who were less fortunate were unable to receive the same advantage. Even schools who tried to lessen the negative impact of school closures on their students were hampered by the fact that access to digital devices for online lessons was limited for many children. There has been a complete absence of equal access to resources that is necessary for providing the equality of opportunity that our society should care so much for.

With the results day fiasco, before the government's U-turn, the stage was set for the most disadvantaged to be left in the lurch again. The students who had defied the odds were turned into deflated numbers, because students from their schools do not normally achieve such high grades. The brightest were told they were not good enough, and ultimately going to be unable to succeed, as A's slipped to B's and university offers slipped out of their hands. Fortunately, the government reversed their policy, but the remnants of educational inequality remained.

A term might not seem so much in the grand scheme of things. After all, it is only a period of three months or so. But crucially the effects of such a long time with inadequate or lacklustre teaching is a lot more damaging than it might seem at first glance. In the sixth form, a term is almost 20% of your total preparation for your end-of-school exams. COVID-19 has cut off the learning process and forced collaborative teaching to become an online lecture room, destroying the creative nature of the classroom and discussion that springs from it.

Besides, as we try to grapple with the prospect of lockdown after lockdown, the very fact that the schools in one area might be forced into lockdown, costing the children which reside in them three weeks of schooling, while others continue risks creating or exacerbating inequality even more, as preparation for exams and schooling can effectively be

put down to luck. For example, should schools shut in the areas of the North of England where the government recently decided to implement localised lockdowns, the groups of children affected are unlikely to do as well as those who can still attend school. Since in some of these areas students already do less well, lockdowns risk exacerbating existing inequalities.

Despite the harms of COVID teaching and lack thereof, there is still reason for optimism: both online teaching and fixes in the educational system could help to help minimise some of the issues outlined in this article.

The rise of online teaching in particular has risen to astronomical levels, with EdX and coursera seeing a rise in their viewership, as well as top universities opening their doors (virtually) to all who wanted to enter, creating many more courses than are usually available for the general public for free. In fact, the most notable 'MOOC' (Massive Open Online Course), CS50 (which is also Harvard's introductory computer science course), recently added live Zoom sessions with the Harvard professor who runs it and has now allowed the general public to sign up to take part in the sessions. Over 2 million people have taken the online course, and anybody can sign up for either virtual office hours or for the live lessons themselves. This trend, which sprang from the lockdown, can very easily carry on into the future and provide opportunities for everyone to access varied courses for free.

Fixing another big issue, namely exams, can also help with lessening inequality. The wholescale removal of exams, replaced through other more holistic methods rather than a set of grades that have been so tainted by past events might allow for a fairer way into university or other avenues.

COVID-19 has meant that the most disadvantaged in society before the crisis have only become more disadvantaged. But instead of merely returning to the status quo, we can instead attempt to improve equality in education. Through the mass removal of exams and the creation of alternative systems of assessment, such that exams that filter out private school children from the rest of society can instead be properly holistic, and the increase in online education which has meant that from my bedroom I can now be taught about calculus or the third Reich, we need to improve an already unequal system rather than just returning to it.

I am undoubtedly in a position of great privilege. But no matter what one's situation, we always have a moral duty to contribute to improving and questioning aspects of society, especially those that are unfair. The current system of inequality benefits people like me going to elite schools. There needs to be a change. This change should not be the easy way out, but the right thing to do. COVID-19 has undoubtedly brought numerous huge problems but has also opened an opportunity for us to build a better future. Our generation, and every other future generation deserves it.

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COVID-19 HAS MEANT THAT THE MOST DISADVANTAGED IN SOCIETY BEFORE THE CRISIS HAVE ONLY BECOME MORE DISADVANTAGED

[1] As outlined by the Rethinking Assessment articles in this issue

A QUICK FIX? THE REAL PROBLEM IN THE BRITISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Education has many features. One of these is power dynamics, which can be seen in the teacher-student relationship. A key element of this relationship is the respect desired from both parties. The definition of respect is to 'show consideration' for someone or something (Collins Dictionary, 2020). Granted, it is not always possible for both parties to receive respect in this relationship, but the onus should be on the teacher to maintain correct boundaries and, at a minimum, keep the respect present on their side. This is because the teacher has automatically assumed the more knowledgeable and authoritative role, and so has more responsibility. Above all, the system that this relationship is formed under also needs to provide respect to some extent; it is the ultimate body that has allowed the teacher-student relationship to form, and so has the maximum authority.

However, in the British education system, that respect is often lost when it comes to showing 'regard or consideration' for atrocities committed under the British Empire, or respecting that Black History did not begin at the enslavement of Black people, and much more. British education is refusing to respect anything more than what makes people feel comfortable and allows them to ignore the deeper issues – from the curriculum to the staff composition. As the body with maximum authority in this situation, British education should aim to maintain this respect. Without this acknowledgement of history, you have young Black students like myself becoming angry and confused, as we are often talked about the importance of education; but if it is something so important, why does education not talk about everything? Why does it not mention the good, the bad and the very ugly? This refusal to acknowledge non-Eurocentric history leads to a disconnect from the education system, as many students are angry about the lack of non-Eurocentric history. Ultimately, this means many students no longer positively identify with education, resulting in a damaged quality of learning, which reduces their future potential. The disregard of the 'dark side' of British history can lead to ignorance, and is seen in the lack of non-British history on the national curriculum. Non-British options are often being noted as an 'or'/ non-compulsory option (Department of Education, 2013). Some may ask why Britain should choose to teach any form of history other than its own; however, as an imperial power that colonised many nations and profited from their resources and labour, Britain has a duty to these nations to explain its part in their history.

This conversation about British history and acknowledgement of non-British history begins in education but continues far beyond it. A recent example was seen in the criticism of the use of the song 'Rule Britannia!' for the BBC Proms. The use of the song was criticised in the media as the context to the song provides a cruel irony. The second line of the song says,

'Britons never will be slaves'. In the mid eighteenth century when the song was written Britain was enslaving people. Another recent example of this respect being lost – perhaps arguably it was never established by the systems in power – is Oxford University delaying the publishing of diversity reports in the peak of the Black Lives Matter movement earlier this year (White, 2020). The institution of Oxford University refused to acknowledge its role as a place that has been predominantly White for centuries, in student and staff body: only 22% of students are BAME and the remainder are White (University of Oxford Admissions, 2020). However, the failings of the education system are not simply in the category of race. It could be said that there is a rapidly growing class bias in education. Now, more than ever, the issue of White boys from working class backgrounds is being focused on. Oxford and Cambridge had less than 3% of White boys from a working-class background in 2019 (Busby, Education News, 2019). Fewer working-class White boys are progressing into higher education, and this could be because of a lack of support in secondary education or a sense of not 'fitting in' in higher education which can lead to indifference towards higher education. The education system is an early form of preparing children for the future: we become book smart, and some are labelled high achievers, whilst others are given low expectations to meet. In this sense, school can be viewed as a microcosm of the real working world. However, this is about more than intelligence or lack of intelligence. 'Underachievers' are labelled by a system that does not understand them. Rather than acknowledging a student's non-academic skills from early on and therefore providing a less academically rigorous route, students are given less attention and opportunities, or their preferred way of learning is not appreciated. Psychologist Howard Gardner discussed education and the different forms of intelligence in his work on multiple intelligences (cited in Denig, 2004). Gardner mentioned what is understood to be a conventional or mainstream idea of intelligence and proposed his theory of multiple intelligences. In this, Gardner explained that students do not have to measure up to the general ability of being intelligent; rather their innate qualities are nurtured into their own form of intelligence, meaning a more positive learning environment (cited in Denig, 2004).

Students branded with the label of 'underachiever' are followed by negative language which affects their behaviour, something perfectly captured in Paul Willis' book *Learning to Labour*, and still seen in classrooms in 2020. In some cases, this is due to an underlying bias towards the labels used to describe students – a bias that is not always obvious or recognised. The bias means that students who are perceived negatively by teachers are disciplined, assessed and placed in sets against a different standard than that applied to their peers (Busby, Education News, 2018).

Recently, this has become a bias targeted at white working-class boys and Black Caribbean boys, which consequently makes them two of the most underachieving groups in UK education (Busby, Education News, 2018). This emphasises the several biases present in education: gender, race, heritage and class all come into play. Furthermore, before the A-levels results day it was said that this year's Centre Assessed Grades system due to coronavirus could negatively impact Black students, on the basis that grades for many Black students are under-assessed due to, in this case, racial bias (Akpan, 2020). We see here that education is failing the people it is supposed to care about the most: the students. In light of the A-level results incident, where many students from state schools were downgraded, we can clearly see that class (and the identifiers which intersect with it, such as race and heritage) has been used to form a bias by a 'mutant algorithm', as it was students from state schools whose Centre Assessed Grades were pushed down the most (Poole, 2020).

In order to tackle this issue, we must work towards eliminating unconscious bias. One way this could happen is through training courses for teachers at all stages and more diversity in teacher composition. In UK government funded schools, there are approximately 85.9% of white teachers (more than the working age population), compared to 0.7% of Asian or Other teachers (Workforce and Business , 2020). Another important issue in education and many other branches of society is the use of language. The use of the acronyms BAME or BME reduce the issues that each race faces. For example, although the University of Oxford has 22% of BAME students, only 3% are Black students (University of Oxford Admissions, 2020). These statistics mislead students from each area of BAME into believing that they are well represented and can feel included, when in reality, 'BAME' is the grouping of every non-white person together. Terms such as BAME are also restrictive as they do not allow people to search and investigate the deeper problems within each race. Within Black people in the BAME term alone, Black Caribbean students and Black African students and other Black students have different issues. For example, Black Caribbean students have a lower GCSE attainment than Black African students (Education, 2019). The reason behind this can only be known when individuals are viewed beyond the category of BAME. Furthermore, the focus on BAME people as the only group who should be represented differently in statistics minimises issues of White working-class boys failing to progress into higher education.

Education also falls short when, as mentioned earlier, it fails to raise awareness and educate about more than Eurocentric history and education. Teaching Black history as the inception of slavery makes Black children be seen in a negative way, as their history is instantly viewed as one that is intertwined with suffering, lack of freedom and domination by White people. Therefore, Black History needs to be taught as more than Black people being enslaved in America; and when that is taught, Britain needs to acknowledge the part it played in the slave trade.

Ultimately, in order to move forward and give students a more positive experience in education, appreciating students' experiences and needs should be front and centre. Children will feel more represented in places where they feel represented in experience and appearance, as it can be hard to aspire to do something that you have never seen someone like you do. Many of my peers and I feel the same way. This shared feeling is us calling for a more inclusive and representative teaching body, calling for more student opportunities for ethnic minorities and other groups that miss out on prospects. We are calling for our issues to be addressed and given proper care and attention. Finally, we are calling for a reform in education that allows us all, no matter who we are, to be heard and seen.

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A ROADMAP FOR RENEWAL: HOW CAN SCHOOLS RESPOND TO LOSS AND REBUILD LIFE FOR OUR COMMUNITIES POST PANDEMIC?

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Professor Barry Carpenter (2020) has written powerfully about the need to build a recovery curriculum for students and staff. He argues that the 'thread that runs through the current lived experiences of our children is one of loss.' The five losses identified he believes will cause a rapid erosion of the mental health state of our students. We consider these losses to involve the following:

Routine: such as the start of the school day, the ritual of packing a bag, travelling to school, arriving at your classroom, the five day week.

Structure: such as when and how you learn, when to eat, when to sleep.

Friendship and Social Interaction: such as being together, identity affirmation, a sense of belonging, the everyday use of language.

Opportunity: such as the powerful knowledge that schools can impart, experiences that take students beyond their status quo, skills and networks to access the next phase of education.

Freedom: such as the time and space to be themselves, the sense of control.

The loss of friendship could feel like a bereavement for many of our children, and the lack of routine could see anxiety levels amongst young people rise. Reports have suggested that domestic violence increased by 24% in London alone during the Spring lockdown and many families have been forced to rely on foodbanks for the first time. Many more of our children will have experienced trauma since being in lockdown, therefore any recovery curriculum must address the fact that lots of children have not returned to school 'ready to learn'. This necessitates an approach in which welfare and well-being form the foundation to any curriculum.

However, despite the many ongoing losses, we cannot forget the extraordinary innovation that has taken place over the last five months. Teachers have embraced working in new and interesting ways at pace. The use of technology has been used more efficiently to enhance learning than ever before. How can we retain this innovation once the school gates reopen?

To help navigate the return to our settings in a way that recognises the need to focus on providing a 'big education', we designed a 'Roadmap for Renewal' which we hope will be useful to other schools. This toolkit is meant to generate productive conversations and help shape a bolder vision of education. Dr Carpenter identifies five levers of recovery: relationships, community, transparent curriculum, metacognition and space. These have shaped the questions we ask and possible examples schools may wish to adopt when designing and delivering a holistic return which addresses the multiple needs of the school community. We all should play our part in building back better. In Hannah's school, the toolkit has been used to shift thinking away from 'catch up' and towards using time in the first term to rebuild confidence and efficacy in students. They will be learning English, Maths and Science, but Heads of Department are planning sessions which build on what students already know and which utilise low stakes formative assessment to identify where their teaching should be focused. Tutors are undertaking training in 'coaching conversations' with students and beginning the day with 'check-in circles.' Space for students to talk is central to our successful return.

Leaders are busy making plans which respond to the losses caused by COVID. One of the biggest losses in the end may be if we come out of the other side of this unchanged at all. For the measures to rebuild learning can also be the very same measures which renew the education our children receive in the medium-to-long term. We hope our Roadmap for Renewal acts as a living document within schools – not just for the immediate future but as the landscape continues to change over the next year or two.

ALL Students and staff will need some holistic recovery.		**RESET for SAFETY** Routine, Structure	**RECOVER for WELL-BEING** Friendship and Social Interaction	**REBUILD for LEARNING** Opportunity, Freedom
Tier 1	**Questions**	1. What logistical concerns need to be addressed to maintain safe social distancing? And what does this look like for all subjects? i.e practical subjects where learning space is not 'defined' by desks. 2. What new procedures might we need to carry out effective medical attention to staff/students? 3. What new routines will we have to practise? 4. What visual illustrations could we add around the school to reinforce new habits? 5. How do we communicate with staff and students? 6. How can we encourage a feeling of safety amongst staff, students and parents? 7. Are there any new roles needed now to accommodate safety procedures? 8. How do we go about establishing expectations of school life with students? 9. What are effective ways to manage 'unstructured' time (break/lunch) in schools? 10. What adjustments do we need to make to ensure students have some physical freedom and space for expression?	1. How do we know what staff and students are feeling and their welfare? 2. How do we use the information we gather about how people are feeling and their welfare? 3. How are parents'/carers' views/concerns included in informing what will happen upon return? 4. In what ways can we recover the relationships we've built with students and their families? 5. In what ways can we support students to recover relationships with their peers? 6. How do we maintain a sense of community or cohesion with those who are in school and still at home? 7. What pedagogical frameworks will facilitate teaching with compassion? 8. How will we celebrate together? 9. How can we foster strong collaborative teams amongst staff from a distance? 10. How can we best support staff to manage any trauma experienced by students and staff? Do we have robust policies and training in place?	1. How do we create and use a shared language that heals the sense of 'lost' time and knowledge? 2. How do we coordinate work for students who are still learning remotely and for students on site? 3. What training will be required for staff engaged in online or distance teaching? 4. How do we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students? 5. How can we enhance collaborative and dialogic curricula and pedagogies on return? 6. What need is there for an alternative/transition curriculum? 7. How do we assess where students are and what they understand in school and remotely? 8. How do we recognise and reward the learning that has taken place during lockdown? Is there a way this can be 'validated' in some way? 9. What can effective and meaningful extra curricular provision look like? 10. How do we keep the lockdown innovation that is good for learning?

ALL Students and staff will need some holistic recovery.		**RESET for SAFETY** Routine, Structure	**RECOVER for WELL-BEING** Friendship and Social Interaction	**REBUILD for LEARNING** Opportunity, Freedom
Tier 1	**Examples**	• New guidelines for social distancing, stickers on the floor, new signage, sanitiser for each classroom, outside assemblies. • Creative use of outside space to allow students to feel close at a distance. • Communicate clearly with students and parents/carers about what the focus of the initial weeks back at school will be. Informal, as well as formal communication may be appreciated, such as recorded videos to children and young people showing what school will look like on their return. • Update behaviour policy with a coronavirus addendum. • Use the values of the school (which students and staff will be familiar) to communicate new processes and procedures. • Give each rule and expectation a name, so they're easier for students to understand and remember. This could be as simple as the '2-metre rule' so that students remember to keep their distance from each other and staff. • Use the 'now and next' approach to guide each class when they come back. Encourage teachers to slowly reveal activities to students in chunks, rather than overwhelm them with a daily or weekly timetable initially. • Start each day with a carefully planned activity which builds familiarity and safety. Focus on activities that will rebuild trust and relationships between students and staff. safety. Focus on activities that will rebuild trust and relationships between students and staff.	• Record and respond to well-being data. Good examples to collate information about how young people are feeling include: the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Health Scale, and CAMH's The Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire. • Co-create a Charter for Learning - new routines and boundaries can be discussed and agreed to provide reassurance to allow children to process the importance of new regulations. • Well-being risk assessment for staff. • Modelling optimism and encouraging students to see the strengths and coping skills they have. Encouraging them to notice acts of courage and kindness will help develop a sense of personal efficacy for the future. • Developing activities/lessons that focus specifically on friendship, emotions, and recovering from loss. • Talk as the preferred pedagogy - assessments that get students to express their thought processes while doing a particular task and/or creating a culture where students are encouraged to talk about their feelings. • Whole school (online) training about how to answer questions students are likely to raise. • Whole school training on trauma management. Elevate child protection procedures and ensure existing policies take into account the changed landscape.	• Remove the immediate pressure of 'catching-up' on curriculum knowledge and instead think about a curriculum that enables children and staff to feel safe and secure in a school context and re-engages students in learning. • Support the movement to decolonise the curriculum and create space for anti-racist learning. • Curriculum delivered as a rolling programme, or for extended or repeated phases, to accommodate a graduated return of students. • The purpose and practice of assessments may need to change in light of school based priorities. • Teachers are encouraged to make all expectations clear, break tasks down to subsets and provide supportive and clear feedback during and after each subtask. • Acknowledge successes and provide explicit feedback on what has been achieved. • Teachers should verbalise their metacognitive thinking ('What do I know about problems like this? What ways of solving them have I used before?') as they approach and work through a task. • Issues of performance review suspended • Set time aside for teachers to build on their bank of recorded lessons. As these could provide a useful learning resource for absent students/cover lessons in the future.

SOME students and staff receive focussed school based interventions, personalised to their needs.		**RESET for SAFETY** Routine, Structure	**RECOVER for WELL-BEING** Friendship and Social Interaction	**REBUILD for LEARNING** Opportunity, Freedom
Tier 2	**Questions**	1. In light of what we know about the disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19, what implications does that have for our students and staff - with particular reference to BAME staff? 2. Are there staff/students who cannot return for a lengthy period of time? 3. What can be done to enable staff to work flexibly? 4. How do we train staff in new roles or procedures on a rolling basis? 5. What if some students are unable to adhere to the new routines for safety?	1. How can schools identify students and families who may require more support at this time? 2. How are parents' views/concerns included in informing what will happen upon return? 3. Have there been bereavements within the school community? How can you find out? How will you provide support around this? 4. How will we support staff who have experienced bereavement or other trauma? 5. How do we support staff who have substantial or increased caring responsibilities?	1. How do we effectively identify learners who have fallen behind and what is the response? 2. Are there any additional services the school can draw upon to help close the knowledge gaps? 3 In what ways can motivation and aspiration levels be increased for 'disengaged' learners? 4. How can we equip students to support their peers? 5. How can we use student experiences of this global shift to help develop their ability to learn independently?
Tier 2	**Examples**	• One to one support around routines. • Support with sleep routines. • Meet with family to explore issues and agree targets to work on. • Flexible start/finish times. • Working from home in non-contact periods if possible. • All staff meetings to be conducted online.	• Offer Art / Music therapy sessions. • Use of garden/green space to help with the healing process. • Create safe space for students who are feeling anxious to withdraw to. • Encourage children and young people to share their stories about ways in which their community helped each other. • Have more than one caring adult in the room to be available for additional support or work with children and young people in small groups. • Have a bereavement policy in place. • Taxi/liftshare budget for those reliant on public transport.	• Use solution focused conversations to find out about these. (Asking with interest, 'what are you good at? And what else?' and if possible deepening the conversation: 'When you are at your best what are you pleased and proud to notice about yourself? What does this tell you about what you might be capable of?') • School based mentoring to develop students' metacognitive knowledge of how they learn—their knowledge of themselves as a learner, of strategies, and of tasks—is an effective way of improving pupil outcomes. • Provide a place to calm down such as a 'peaceful corner', where children or young people take time out in a quiet place to regain composure and reduce stimulation.

A **FEW** members of the school community may need a longer and deeper recovery period. This would be facilitated by multi agency support.		**RESET for SAFETY** Routine, Structure	**RECOVER for WELL-BEING** Friendship and Social Interaction	**REBUILD for LEARNING** Opportunity, Freedom
Tier 3	Questions	1. In light of what we know about the disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19, what implications does that have for our student and staff base - with particular reference to BAME staff? 2. Are there staff/students who cannot return for a lengthy period of time? How will they be kept in the loop and supported? 3. Who will have overview/ responsibility for students who are not on site?	1. How will we know when a young person's mental health has become a barrier to them being able to function? 2. How do we gather parent experience and views on supporting their child? 3. Do we have knowledge of and links with external organisations who can provide expertise and support for students and staff? 4. What are the best ways to ensure information exchange with multi agency partners? 5. In what ways can motivation and aspiration levels be increased for 'disengaged' learners?	1. How do we effectively identify learners who have fallen behind? 2. How do we discuss 'catching up' with students? Are we building their confidence whilst talking to them? 3. How do we respond to learners who have fallen significantly behind? 4. Are there any additional services the school can draw upon to help close the knowledge gaps? 5. How can we use student experience of this global shift to help them identify their strengths?
Tier 3	Examples	• Phased reintroduction for students who need time to adjust. • Maintain small group teaching for a longer period if required. • Allocate a precise part of the school where for the student to be based.	• Offered counselling from CAMHS/ PlacetoBe. • For families: Family conferencing. • Regular check ins with staff who are struggling and signposting to other services if required. • Training and information sharing about vulnerable students. • Consider workload reduction / phased reintegration to face to face contact.	• Focus on what has been learnt and build on that – asset based approach. • The strategy of 'Stop, Think, Do' is a good mantra for teachers. Stop and think about what the behaviour might be communicating, were these patterns of behaviour evident previously or could they be a reaction to recent events and a result of painful memories being stirred up? • Respond calmly and clearly. These children and young people need to be aware that their behaviour has consequences however they require patient teaching, reminders and clear boundaries and expectations that are repeatedly explained in different ways and enforced consistently. • Respond to the underlying emotions rather than the behaviour.

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AN OPPORTUNITY TO RE-THINK AND RE-SHAPE EDUCATION

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The COVID-19 pandemic has shown both the cracks and the strengths and bonds in our society. It has highlighted that there are huge disparities in access to learning, far too many children are safer at school than at home, and schools have a huge part to play in helping children develop in ways that go far beyond academics. The pandemic has also shown the importance of and human capacity for compassion, co-operation and adaptability, amongst many other strengths.

These character strengths are essential to a flourishing society and underpin Positive Education, which is built on the principle that education should support well-being, character development and academic achievement (IPEN UKEurope, 2020).

Research shows that putting effort into well-being and character development in education, rather than undermining academic achievement, supports and enhances it (Rodeiro, Bell and Emery, 2008; Waters, 2011; Public Health England, 2014; Adler, 2016; Seligman et al., 2019). Academic learning is merely one element of the broader human growth for which schools provide the space and opportunity. As we move beyond the initial COVID-19 crisis into a post-COVID-19 era, we must not fall into the trap of narrowing the curriculum in order to catch up. We must, instead, ensure the curriculum is broad and flexible enough to foster interaction, co-operation and positive relationships, to allow children to explore and develop their character strengths, to be compassionate, brave and adaptable.

The COVID-19 pandemic will be with us for some time yet. We are learning to live, teach and work differently. In what has been dubbed the 'new normal', a whole school approach to Positive Education is needed more than ever. My Learn and Flourish ('LeAF') Model of Whole School Positive Education (Figure 1; Roberts, 2019, 2020) covers elements ranging from embedded and explicitly taught character and well-being curricula to community engagement and school and national policy. In this article, key elements of this model will form the basis of an exploration of how education can support the needs of children and society in a post-COVID-19 world. It is my hope that educators and policymakers will grasp the unique opportunity presented to us by the challenges we are facing, in order to re-think and re-shape education so it allows children to flourish during their school years and beyond.

Why Positive Education?

According to Seligman et al. (2009), the thing parents want most for their children is well-being. The main aspect teachers love about their job is making a difference in children's lives and helping them reach their potential (Education Support Partnership, 2018, 2019). Yet, for the most part, education favours academic achievement over and above well-being.

By following IPEN's 'double helix' model (IPEN UKEurope, 2020), Positive Education ('PosEd') aims to strike the right balance, proposing that well-being and character development should be intertwined with academic attainment. In my LeAF model (Figure 1; Roberts, 2019, 2020), I extend the definition of well-being to include mental health and include the importance of staff mental health and well-being in schools. Thus, I propose that the aims of PosEd are to promote the well-being (including character development) and mental health of staff and pupils alongside academic achievement.

During my latest virtual book launch panel chaired by Andrew Cowley (Cowley et al., 2020), Dan Morrow, former CEO of the Woodland Academy Trust and soon-to-be CEO of the Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust, described this beautifully: 'Well-being, academics and character are like three sides of a triangle and they need to be held in supportive tension to ensure the child, family or staff member at the centre of the triangle isn't outside by some reductive accountability or some need to put a tick in a box'.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us why, more than ever, we need to ensure that schools provide a supportive environment that promotes mental health and well-being alongside their academic purpose. They have an opportunity now to embrace a learning environment that promotes not only resilience but also the possibility of post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2004).

Figure 1:

The LeAF (Learn and Flourish) Model of Whole School Positive Education

(Roberts, 2019, 2020)

What can be done?

External Factors

Schools do not exist in a vacuum. They function within a wider context of complex socio-economic factors, national and international events (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic) and national and local government policy.

My LeAF model is underpinned by 'policy', as represented by the 'fertile soil' (Roberts, 2019) which PosEd grows on. The need for government policy to underpin the work schools do in supporting staff and student well-being is highlighted across the literature on PosEd and character education (Lopes et al., 2013; Arthur et al., 2015; White, 2016; World Government Summit, 2017; Seligman et al., 2019). Governments around the world now have a choice to make: Do they reverse to an education system geared towards exams or do they take the opportunity to support a broader education for societal flourishing?

Teachers, school leaders, other educators and academics have a role to play here, too, by continuing to provide evidence (see also the 'evaluation' element of the LeAF model, represented by the trunk of the tree) of the value of well-being based systems, operational practices and teaching.

Internal Factors

Taught and Caught Well-Being Practices

Despite the restrictions that COVID-19 places on schools' physical environments, or perhaps because of these restrictions, it is crucial that school leaders and teachers consider the positive or negative impact a school environment can have on well-being. It is still possible to create a welcoming, positive physical environment while ensuring that a school is as COVID-safe as possible. Well-being and character development can also be 'visible' in other ways – through a school's culture and ethos, via role-modelling by teachers and school leaders, and by a school's interactions with and support from their local community. These are ways in which well-being and character development behaviours can be 'caught'. They can also be taught implicitly through subject lessons (e.g. by exploring the resilience, courage or character strengths of key scientists, historical figures and literary characters) and explicitly by delivering a well-being and character curriculum in school.

Many schools were already doing this prior to the COVID-19 pandemic – I shared examples from around the world, in a variety of settings, in my latest book (Roberts, 2020) – so there are plenty of excellent models in the UK and beyond that

teachers, school leaders and policymakers can follow and adapt to their settings. We owe it to an entire generation of children and adolescents to get this right. Targeted interventions, in addition to broad whole school approaches to support mental health and well-being, are recommended across the literature (Lopes et al., 2013; Public Health England, 2015; Stirling and Emery, 2016; Seligman et al., 2019). Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that – either within schools or through referrals to external agencies as appropriate - we support those children and staff who have specific needs, so that they can be well enough to learn and flourish.

Training

If we want teachers to deliver well-being and character lessons and include these in their subject teaching, they need relevant training (Berkowitz and Bier, 2005; Arthur et al., 2015; Waters et al., 2015; Morgan, 2017), both through continuing professional development and in their initial teacher training. Additionally, the Education Support Partnership (2018) recommends that there should be compulsory guidance on the mental health and well-being of teachers. After all, how can teachers do their jobs to the best of their abilities, under difficult circumstances, and support children's flourishing, if they are languishing themselves? We need to support them with training on how they can look after their own well-being and mental health.

Time to take action

No article can fully cover how and why PosEd is so essential now more than ever, and how to practically implement this, particularly when it concerns a whole school and systemic approach. I do hope, however, that this article has planted a seed for teachers, school leaders and policymakers to begin or continue their PosEd journey.

Educators and policy-makers now have a unique opportunity to be courageous and rethink education in order to re-shape it into a system that is more flexible, more resilient and fit for purpose. I hope they will now embark on this courageous journey to change education for the better and sow the seeds for children to flourish and for society to develop the kind of humanity COVID-19 has shown us hopeful glimpses of.

It is my hope that, one day, we will not need to refer to 'Positive Education' and 'character education', as these practices will be so embedded, so intrinsic to educational settings, that we will simply refer to 'education' and know that this involves an equal and balanced intertwining of academic achievement, character development and well-being.

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EDUCATORS AND POLICY-MAKERS NOW HAVE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO BE COURAGEOUS AND RETHINK EDUCATION IN ORDER TO RE-SHAPE IT INTO A SYSTEM THAT IS MORE FLEXIBLE, MORE RESILIENT AND FIT FOR PURPOSE

CLASSROOM WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Our experience of 2020 will likely most be remembered for the global pandemic of COVID-19. Whilst the primary concern at the start of the pandemic was for the physical health of people, as the year progressed reports of a second pandemic relating to mental health and well-being became prominent, especially amongst children and adolescents. When children returned to school it was publicised that many have experienced increased anxiety and stress related to the virus, school closures, social distancing, and loss of structure. The digital well-being community, Kooth, reports that the effects of COVID-19 on adolescents are demonstrated by an increase in sleep issues (161%), loneliness (63%) and self-harm (27%) compared with the same period last year.[1] In addition to the current situation, it is well documented that as many as one in eight 5-19 year-olds have at least one mental health disorder (NHS digital, 2018). Whilst there have been many initiatives recently to improve the services that treat them, there is still a large gap between those who require help and those who go on to receive it (Young Minds, 2019). In fact, only one in four children with a diagnosable mental health problem receive the help and intervention they need (Young Minds, 2017).

Ask anyone what they hope young people today should feel and the majority would probably say that they want them to be happy, confident and content. The irony of schools is that this is not what is 'taught'; rather, children are taught how to achieve success through acquiring knowledge and showing discipline. There are some good examples of schools tackling well-being as a whole school approach (Furlong, Gilman & Huebner, 2014) and helping young people to boost their well-being and their mental health, just as they do with physical health (Boniwell & Ryan, 2012). However, in the current climate and global pandemic it may not be possible for schools to ensure that well-being is a priority. Minor changes, however, could enable schools to begin to think about managing well-being with some positive results.

What is Positive Education?

St. Swithun's were interested in the Geelong Grammar School model of 'positive education' (Morrish & Seligman, 2014) and how early intervention in mental health difficulties could serve as a proactive approach rather than reactive.[2] Geelong Grammar School's contribution to positive education has been phenomenal and they have led the way in helping schools consider alternative models to building the resilience of their pupils. As a school, we were initially sceptical and wondered how a model of positivity could change pupils' attitudes and help them develop good mental health.

[1] https://xenzone.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CYP_Infographic_110620-CSE_V5.pdf

[2] Positive education is the application of the principles of positive psychology into educational practice. The principles can be applied into curricula or co-curricular activities, or even through a whole school approach

The idea that moving away from normal lessons and taking non academic subjects is quite radical, however like Geelong we took the leap into considering well-being in the curriculum, and have not regretted it. Geelong Grammar School have found a way of incorporating positive psychology (Oades and Mossman, 2017) into their education system in order to decrease depression in young people and enhance well-being and happiness, and their results are impressive. They suggest that schools wanting to replicate the model adapt the framework accordingly, and take aspects of it which they believe will work in their environment.
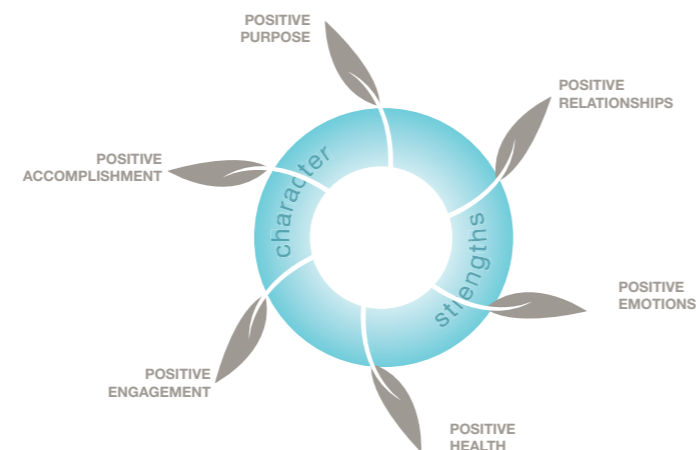

Fig 1. The model for positive education, Geelong Grammar School [3]

Geelong Grammar School's model embeds positive psychology throughout the entire school: all staff members participate in the training program to learn about positive education, how to apply it to their work, and most importantly how to use it in their personal lives. The model for positive education is visually depicted as six leaves coming together with a circle that is supported by character strengths, with flourishing as the core (fig. 1). The leaves represent the six domains of positive education or those things that are 'taught'. Each domain has a set of skills and evidence-informed concepts. Underpinning the domains are character strengths which act as the supporting pathways to the domains (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Character strengths are important for personal well-being (Niemiec, 2018), and play an important role in a person's positive development (Wagner, Gander, Proyer, & Ruch, 2018). Introducing character strengths to young people is critical to helping them understand themselves, others and their world (Toner, Haslam, Robinson & Williams, 2012). Schools are very good at celebrating specific talents, e.g., music and sport, but are less good at identifying the character strengths which enable

[3] https://www.ggs.vic.edu.au/Positive-Education2/Model-for-Positive-Education

individuals to achieve these successes. Geelong embeds character strengths in everything they do, and reverses the focus on worries and difficulties, celebrating the good in each person instead. Learning about and teaching character strengths enables students to be connected and does not focus on a conversation about problems and challenges. When done well, it can turn strengths into habits (Waters, 2017).

Positive Education at St. Swithun's School, Winchester

At St Swithun's School, we began our positive education journey in 2017. We felt that, unlike the Geelong model, our pupils would benefit from a 'bottom up' approach, with Year 7 pupils receiving the greatest input. This was partly in response to the statistics about mental health issues becoming more prevalent by the age of 13 (Hollinsley, 2018; Missed Opportunities, 2016). Our aim was to help pupils understand what makes them feel good and how to do good which, in so doing, shows them how to make the most of their lives and flourish. We achieved this by focusing on two key concepts within the curriculum, optimism and resilience.

We began teaching our positive education curriculum in September 2018. Our pupils (years 7, 8 and 9) now have between 30 and 60 minutes of positive education lessons each week across two terms. Our vision for the future is that all girls will have the exposure to a positive education programme enabling them to move forward through their life with the right well-being skills needed to live positively. A key element of the Geelong model is to include parents to develop a consistent approach. We send termly interactive newsletters to parents outlining what we have covered with the girls and suggest activities that they could do with their daughters as follow-up at home. Those parents that engaged with these reported some quite powerful conversations and experiences.

[1] An independent school for girls aged 3-18

What have the impacts been?

Our evidence on the impact of the new curriculum is qualitative and quantitative. Qualitatively, we have noticed that many of the pupils are more reflective, more self-aware and have a better understanding of who they are and how to cope with adversity. The following quotes are from pupils:

- It's helped me to be more thoughtful to others
- I tried the kindness ripple for a day and it made me feel happier
- It's helped me deal with stress which sometimes can be overwhelming
- It's opened my mind and made me see things differently
- It's helped me get stuck in and not be afraid of asking questions
- I have learnt how to get past a negative time
- I have learnt to not doubt my strengths

One depiction of kindness as a result of the programme resulted in Year 7 girls writing good luck messages to Year 13 girls before their A Level exam and delivering the letters to them personally. This was especially powerful for both the Year 7 and Year 13 pupils. Quantitatively, we have data from all students on a measurement of well-being ('EPOCH') at two time slots, 7 months apart. Data illustrates improvements across all domains in two cohorts (Years 7 and 8), although the increase is not statistically significant (in part perhaps due to low numbers).

A KEY ELEMENT OF THE GEELONG MODEL IS TO INCLUDE PARENTS TO DEVELOP A CONSISTENT APPROACH.

What can schools do to introduce positive education to their curriculum?

Not all schools and education settings can commit to the positive education model proposed, whether that be the Geelong model in its entirety or even what we have achieved at St Swithun's. There are however, some less complex ways of introducing positive education into schools which are based on a positive psychology framework. These ideas are not a full programme but may help promote a positive education curriculum and understanding to pupils and staff.

• Feedback from teachers to pupils about the specific strengths a pupil has been seen to use can help promote discussions about character. For example, rather than saying they have done a good job, a teacher may wish to comment on the fact that they saw the pupil had persevered despite difficulties.

• Teaching aspects of positive education across year groups can encourage a school-wide approach to kindness and forgiveness. For example, suggest that classes start with a 'kindness ripple' throughout the school, where pupils look out for others in aspects of their daily life and how they may help people. They can then leave kindness calling cards to assist people in knowing that they have achieved a random act of kindness.

• Use tools (such as an online strengths tool or character survey) to identify pupils' and teachers' character strengths. Once identified, pupils can complete a number of tasks which identify how they have used their own character strengths, when they could use them more, and those which they could develop further. Character strengths allow pupils and teachers to not only focus on academics but also consider aspects of their personality performance in classes which can lead to higher levels of happiness and productivity.

• Create a form book or class book in which pupils record what is 'awesome' about their school on a week-by-week basis. Pupils can then reflect back on what other people have observed in moments when they may be struggling to help turn around negative thought patterns.

• Help pupils to identify the range of emotions that we feel by focusing on positive emotions and the benefits of these. Discuss how evolution plays a role in our experience of negative emotions and how we wish to experience more positive emotions. It can be very powerful to explain in form or class time the positive benefits of positive emotions on our well-being and to explain research on happiness.

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LEADING PUPILS TOWARDS SELF-KNOWLEDGE

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Despite the fact that the UK education system has many highly dedicated and professional people doing an outstanding job in difficult circumstances – especially now – there are aspects of our current systems that are causing widespread concern both within education and outside it.

A chorus of voices is arguing that our current system for pupil assessment is no longer fit for purpose, for a number of reasons.[1] One of these is the argument that although UK schoolchildren are among the most assessed in the world, the knowledge and cognitive abilities that they learn in school, and the qualifications they receive if they are successful, are no guarantee that they possess the wider skills, attitudes or self-knowledge that are known to be important contributors to success in later life (Heckman and Kautz, 2013).

This is partly (but only partly) an argument about employability. The Confederation of British Industry has been making the point since the 1980s that the skills and knowledge that young people learn at school and university do not match what employers actually want (CBI, 2019). An evidence-based inventory of the skills young people need to be taught to prepare them to thrive professionally prepared by Mungo Dunnett, head of a leading research company into the independent schools sector in the UK, suggests that to succeed in the workplace young people need to be taught to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses; to be reliable, conscientious and persistent; to be adaptable, proactive and purposeful; to show optimism, resilience and dedication; to communicate well; to ask for help when they need it; to learn to say 'No'; to know how to balance priorities and manage workload; to be socially competent and sensitive to context; and to show appropriate humility (Dunnett, 2019).

These skills and dispositions are not just cognitive: they are also affective and behavioural. Mainstream schooling currently privileges cognitive learning, especially in academic knowledge, over affective learning and self-knowledge. Arguably, pupils who excel in their studies at school and at university might develop elements of this inventory such as conscientiousness and persistence, albeit in very specific areas; however, it is quite possible for a pupil to excel academically without learning many of these skills, with potentially damaging results for that pupil's long-term success and happiness. There is a risk that academically successful pupils become 'fragile thoroughbreds'.

Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google, has said that, 'We rarely employ straight A students. What we've discovered over the years is that their field of knowledge is too narrow and they haven't developed as people. We find that they just can't cope with life, and they cause endless problems and frictions. We like to choose students who are bright, but broad, with character. The thing is, if somebody's intelligent we can teach them the skills we need – and the skills they learnt at school will probably become outdated anyway. But what we can't do is teach them to be rooted'.[2]

The implications of such a lopsided educational experience extend far beyond a pupil's employability. The age-old question, 'How we can teach young people to flourish?' has in recent years taken on a new urgency. Mental health problems among children and young people are rising alarmingly. Rates of depression and anxiety among children and young people in the UK have doubled in 30 years, and 75% of mental health problems start in adolescence (DfH and DfE, 2017). In 2017, the most rigorous study of its kind found that 12.5% of 5 to 19 year-olds and 16.9% of 17 to 19 year-olds in England have at least one mental disorder. A follow-up report by the same group in 2020 shows that during COVID these trends have only become more acute (GOV. UK, 2020).

Schools are on the front line for providing solutions to these complex problems. Among these grim findings is one that gives cause for hope: if problems are picked up early, outcomes are good. Successful strategies include offering counselling, tackling stigma around mental ill health, creating a culture of openness, and training teachers to recognise the signs of anxiety and depression early. Schools can teach pupils how to use social media healthily, how to recognise signs of depression in themselves, and how to take a proactive approach to maintaining their physical and mental well-being.

[1] See the articles by Alastair McConville, Peter Hyman, and Bill Lucas in this journal issue. See also this recent open letter in The Times from the leaders of Rethinking Assessment (rethinkingassessment.com): https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rethinking-assessment-mutant-exam-system-is-failing-our-children-svwkzvx7n

[2] Quoted on Most Likely to Succeed: https://youtu.be/iez92IQUHdc

Can we do more to teach young people how to look after their happiness and well-being? There is an emerging science of 'human flourishing', drawing from many disciplines. Closely linked to 'happiness' and 'well-being', 'flourishing' in the research literature refers to people with high levels of positive emotions who function well socially and psychologically. The Human Flourishing Program at Harvard – one example of many worldwide – has developed 'a measurement approach to human flourishing, based around five central domains: happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships'. 'If I wanted to predict your happiness,' says Harvard Professor of Psychology Daniel Gilbert, 'and I could know only one thing about you, I wouldn't want to know your gender, religion, health, or income. I'd want to know about your social network – about your friends and family and the strength of the bonds with them.'[3]

There are also some very useful sources of expertise about how to teach life skills outside academia. Elke Edwards, who for over twenty years has trained high-level leaders in the corporate sector and has worked with the top leaders at 40% of the FTSE 100 companies, is now bringing her expertise into schools so that young people can acquire the skills they need to succeed in life, professionally and personally. She argues that:

'both formal and corporate educations have massive gap: a lack of life skills. The impact of this deficiency is being seen at an individual, organisational and a societal level. Organisations in every sector are struggling to identify leaders with the credibility and capability to do the job in front of them; while schools and universities are struggling to equip students with the necessary skills to create lives that are right for them and look after their well-being'.[4]

Her interest is not utilitarian, focused on employability skills per se, but in wider human potential. Edwards defines 'life skills' as those that:

'enable you to know who you are; why you think and behave the way you do, and how to change this if you want to. Life skills give you the tools to understand what puts you in your element, how to build authentic trust-based relationships, and how to have effective conversations in any situation. How to take 100% ownership for your behaviour, your actions and the impact you have; and how to stay mentally, physically and spiritually well while you do it. These are the skills that enable us to lead our own lives successfully and form the foundation for how we lead others successfully. These skills currently don't exist within our formal or corporate education systems. This needs to change'.[5]

Education systems can be highly resistant to change, but this summer, because of COVID, far-reaching, rapid changes suddenly became unavoidable. There is considerable pressure on schools to get 'back to normal' as soon as possible to make up lost ground. This is understandable, and in the short term it is necessary; but in the longer term, merely returning to the old normal would be regrettable. COVID gives us a rare opportunity to change some of our established paradigms. We need to reflect on whether we have got the balance right in teaching the various kinds of knowledge that young people need in order to thrive, both at school and later. Knowledge of academic disciplines is already established as centrally important. Self-knowledge is increasingly seen as highly important for human flourishing. How well do schools currently teach the latter? What will be the lifelong impact on pupils of failing to acquire this form of knowledge?

The English word 'education' derives from the Latin 'educare' meaning 'to bring up or teach', a definition close to a modern view of what schools do. Intriguingly, 'educare' is related to another Latin word, 'educere', which means 'to bring out or lead forth'. To prepare young people for an uncertain, changing world we need both to teach them the knowledge that has accrued through the generations and how to draw upon their own inner resources.

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[3] Interviewed in the Harvard Business Review Jan-Feb 2012 issue: https://hbr.org/2012/01/the-science-behind-the-smile
[4] Email to Jonnie Noakes, June 2020.
[5] Ibid.

EMBEDDING ENQUIRY AND THE PRINCIPLES OF PERMACULTURE IN THE CURRICULUM

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When thinking about what education should look like post-COVID, it seems likely there will be a wide variety of vital interventions that need to be developed to help children catch up on academic gaps or missing skills following a long period of lockdown. There are also many schools, local authorities and private organisations excellently promoting a 'recovery curriculum' designed to support children's return to school, focused on their emotional and mental well-being following the wide range of losses they may have experienced during the lockdown (Carpenter, 2020). There are also, however, wide-ranging, fundamental discussions emerging about the role and shape of traditional education models in a post-COVID, climate-emergency society. These are important discussions that certainly need to be addressed and this article proposes some possible curriculum solutions which could help to build a greater resilience for the future – for individuals, communities and society in general.

Before 'normal' teaching and learning can take place again, schools will definitely need to consider children's immediate emotional and mental well-being. In addition to the different types of loss outlined by Carpenter (2020) experienced by children during the lockdown, early data shows that it also created a complicated situation where the measures taken to protect physical health have caused the symptoms for people suffering from poor mental health, including children, to worsen during lockdown (Veer et al., 2020). Some children will have experienced a very stable home life during lockdown, but for others life will have become less stable or chaotic. All children's experiences and views on the lockdown period will be unique. During the pandemic we have all been part of the same storm, but each of us is in an individual boat, with our own story of survival, adaptation, transformation, loss or inertia.

It needs to be also recognised that no longer is the acquisition and reproduction of knowledge and the narrow 'teaching to the test' curricula enough for our society to be resilient. We believe that long term resilience for individuals and society should incorporate the integration of philosophical and ethical thinking throughout curricula, and in particular the four types of thinking - Critical, Caring, Creative and Collaborative - central to the Philosophy for Children ('P4C')[1] (Lipman, 2003) and Communities of Philosophical Inquiry ('CoPI') pedagogical approaches (McCall, 2009).

Philosophical enquiry and facilitation strengthen teaching, learning and assessment and have been proven to increase children's cognitive levels, particularly in maths and reading, as well as many other wider abilities – primarily, children's ability to solve problems, collaborate with each other, think critically and care about the quality of their interactions and relationships with others. For example, The 2015 EEF

Efficacy trial (EEF, 2015) of Philosophy for Children, carried out by Durham University, showed that pupils made between two and four additional months of progress in reading, maths and writing as well as improvements in their confidence to speak, listening skills and self-esteem following their regular involvement with philosophical enquiry. Philosophical teaching and learning is a pedagogical approach and not an 'added extra', as developing a critical and enquiring mind should be central across subjects. It can also usefully support the work of the education sector to meet the Ofsted (2019) requirements for schools to enable children to become 'responsible, respectful and active citizens' who have more skills to shape their lives in a sustainable and fulfilling way, as well as 'developing pupils' confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy'.

Philosophical thinking puts pupils' personal development at its heart and has the potential to take children to a level of understanding where knowledge and facts are combined with the ability to reflect and reason, which can help enable children to 'make a significant difference to the kind of society in which we are able to live' (Cam, 2006). Therefore, when school leaders actively integrate communities of philosophical enquiry into their teaching, learning and assessment strategies they can enable young people to develop the skills, knowledge and character necessary to achieve academically in the short term, and in the longer term to lead happy, resilient and fulfilling lives, taking greater care of themselves, society, communities and the planet.

Building on this, we would like to suggest that long-term individual resilience is only really possible if measures are taken to ensure that our communities are also more resilient. The recent call for volunteers by the government during lockdown followed by the overwhelming oversubscription of volunteers showed that there is huge potential within communities to take greater care of their own people. Schools could build on this potential by creating opportunities within the curriculum for children to know how to build positive, resilient relationships and help others in times of need. Building on stronger local communities, it could be argued that the next significant issue of our time, for which we need creative, critical, caring and collaborative thinkers, is the need to re-examine the relationship humans have with the planet and its resources. The climate emergency will only be tackled through whole systems thinking instead of solely relying on one-off initiatives. We believe that the principles and ethics of permaculture would allow schools to weave creative, critical, caring and collaborative thinking into real actions that will tangibly improve the futures of our pupils, their communities and the planet. The twelve principles and three ethics of permaculture, developed by Bill Mollison (1988)

[1] http://www.philosophy4children.co.uk

and David Holmgren (2011), are below and although their roots are in sustainable agriculture, they can be applied to all aspects of human life and can be applied by school leaders to have a lasting positive impact on well-being and resilience for individuals and the whole school ethos.

The Principles of Permaculture

1. Observe & Interact
2. Catch & Store Energy
3. Obtain A Yield
4. Apply Self-regulation and Accept Feedback
5. Use & Value Renewable Resources & Services
6. Produce No Waste
7. Design From Patterns To Details
8. Integrate Rather Than Segregate
9. Use Small & Slow Solutions
10. Use & Value Diversity
11. Use Edges & Value The Marginal
12. Creatively Use & Respond to Change

The Three Ethics of Permaculture

1. Care for the Earth
2. Care for Others
3. Only take a Fair Share

By adopting and applying the principles and ethics rooted within philosophy for children and permaculture we can make the transition from being dependent consumers, vulnerable to change, to becoming responsible producers and resilient, active citizens with high-level thinking skills. There is a virtuous cycle to be achieved here, where this approach, based around a greater sense of community and sustainability, has the potential to transform pupils' well-being, building the resilience necessary for them to move forwards, promoting as they do their deeper understanding of sustainability and its relevance to all of our futures. So instead of tinkering around the edges with curricula in a post-COVID age, we support Berry and Orr (2001, p 9). Berry speaks of 'The Great Work', where humans remake their presence on earth – including how they provide themselves with food, energy, materials, water, livelihood, health and shelter. Orr adds that 'we must build authentic and vibrant communities that sustain us ecologically and spiritually and for this challenge we need a generation equipped to respond with energy, moral stamina, enthusiasm and ecological competence'. We believe that this is the moment for educators to assert their experience and understanding of young people to create the curricula and ethos which they believe will genuinely allow their pupils and teachers to develop as resilient and active citizens where academic performance and emotional well-being are in balance.

In conclusion, we urge and strongly support school leaders who take this opportunity to re-invigorate education's potent and positive role in building societal and individual resilience, instead of simply returning to a system that is disproportionately focused on testing and the symbolic capital of results. A new resilience curriculum developed and delivered within strong communities of enquiry is now necessary. This is one that focuses on developing individual well-being and agency through dialogue and critical thinking, as well as strengthening the sustainability of communities through collaboration and care for each other and the planet.

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ACADEMIC RESILIENCE AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN EDUCATION AFTER COVID-19

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To be resilient means to be robust and adaptable in the face of adversity – the ability to 'bounce back' quickly from difficulties. Students, educators and educational institutions require a great deal of resilience to cope with and recover from the enormous impact the pandemic is having on education. We all need to be as psychologically and physically resilient as we can be; and institutions need much 'organisational resilience' to continue adapting to the ongoing significant changes education is having to make.[1]

There is an additional type of resilience that many students require, especially right now. Research on resilience in the context of education refers to a specific kind known as 'educational' or 'academic resilience'. This article offers an explanation of what academic resilience is and why it is important. The article suggests that it is especially important now, given the huge challenges COVID-19 has raised for education, and that the future of education would benefit from more research in this area and increased focus on developing academic resilience in students.

What is academic resilience?

Academic resilience ('AR') is a student's capacity to overcome acute or chronic adversities in academic settings that could constitute major impediments to their academic success (Martin & Marsh 2009, p. 353). Academically resilient students are those who maintain 'high levels of achievement, motivation and performance despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly in school and ultimately dropping out of school' (Alva 1991, p. 19, quoted in Martin & Marsh 2009, p. 355).

AR was posited to provide a context-specific form of resilience that could be studied in research on resilience (Cassidy 2016, p. 1). It is a construct made up of several measurable components. Research suggests that five factors are significantly correlated with and significant predictors of AR, all of which are character skills or dispositions: self-efficacy; a sense of control; effective planning skills; perseverance; and low anxiety. Studies show that resilient students are 'high in self-efficacy, persistence, and planning, and low in anxiety and uncertain control' (Martin & Marsh 2006, p. 276). On the basis of these, two leading researchers on AR, Andrew J. Martin and Herbert W. Marsh (2006) propose what they call a '5-C' model of AR, where AR is a construct made up of those five factors:

1. self-efficacy (which they also term 'confidence');

2. co-ordination (i.e., planning skills);

3. a sense of control;

4. composure (i.e., low anxiety);

5. perseverance (which they also term 'commitment') (ibid., p. 267).

While Martin and Marsh describe these as 'factors' (loc. cit.), all of these can be understood as character skills or dispositions which can be measured and developed. Interventions that aim to develop AR would, therefore, fall within the purview of character education – although not exclusively. The 5-C model suggests that interventions aiming to develop AR should focus on increasing students' self-efficacy, sense of control, perseverance and planning skills, and reducing their level of anxiety (ibid., p. 277).

While all five of the above character skills or dispositions are significant predictors of AR (ibid., p. 273), studies suggest that some are more significant than others. Anxiety is the strongest, as a negative factor – that is, a lower level of anxiety correlates with and predicts higher AR (ibid., p. 274). Self-efficacy is also particularly important. 'Self-efficacy' is the belief we have in our own abilities, specifically our ability to meet the challenges we face and successfully complete the tasks we need to (Akhtar 2008; Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Research suggests that,

• self-efficacy is 'an important contributory factor for resilience' (Cassidy 2015, p. 8, based on studies by Hamill 2003 and Martin & Marsh 2006);

• self-efficacy is an important characteristic that distinguishes resilient and non-resilient students aged 16-19 (Cassidy 2015, p. 3, based on a study by Hamill 2003);

• where students have positive beliefs about their self-efficacy, this 'is likely to contribute toward increased resilience' (Cassidy 2015, p. 8);

• 'academic self-efficacy' is correlated with and is a 'significant predictor' of academic resilience (Martin & Marsh 2006, p. 277).

Significant research findings concerning self-efficacy are that differences in how individuals perceive self-efficacy 'have often been shown to be better predictors of performance than previous achievement or ability' and seem 'particularly important when individuals face adversity' (Cassidy 2015, p. 3; Cassidy 2012). In one study, students with higher self-efficacy reported significantly higher AR (Cassidy 2015, p. 8). The development of self-efficacy in students should therefore play an important role in interventions that aim to develop AR. This has formed an important part of some interventions (e.g., Cassidy 2015 and Martin & Marsh 2006).

[1] For a useful definition of organisational resilience, see the British Standards Institution's overview: https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/our-services/Organizational-Resilience/

To be sure, there are few academic experiences that we could say, without some attention to context, require AR in order to recover from them quickly. Those that we may be able to say require AR with little attention to the wider context are experiences such as expulsion or suspension from school, changing school multiple times, moving to a new school in a new country, or a student feeling like they have repeatedly significantly underperformed in exams during a long exam period. But for the vast majority of academic experiences, we can only understand the way in which they may affect a student through attention to the wider context – that is, through attention to factors such as evidence of a student's academic abilities, their character, the presence of any special educational needs, and particular events that may be taking place in their personal lives that may impact their academic success.

Taking this point into account allows us to draw two conclusions about AR. First, an adequate understanding of a student's level of AR or the experiences for which they may need AR requires attention to a wide set of factors concerning and information about the student, in academic and pastoral domains. Second, AR could be needed by any student during their time in education. A student may have an excellent academic record yet be experiencing chronic adversities in their personal life which could cause a major impediment to their academic success. Or, a poor test result could be crushing to a student who has never received anything other than good results, and could thereby cause a major impediment to their academic success if they have never learned how to bounce back from what they may perceive as a major failure. A common academic experience such as receiving a poor grade in a test or a piece of homework could require AR if it constitutes an acute adversity for a particular student, given their circumstances, which could cause a major impediment to their academic success.

It should be noted that AR is important throughout all educational levels and at the professional level. Many academics require AR to recover from experiences such as repeated paper rejections from journal submissions, often delivered alongside acerbic criticism which is sometimes scathing.

Why is academic resilience important?

Resilience is a character strength that is likely to positively impact a person's health, well-being, performance and achievement (Cassidy 2016, p. 2). The development of resilience in students has been recognised as a vital component of character education. Resilience has become a staple part of character education programmes offered by some schools in recent years. Wellington College, for example, has taught resilience as a timetabled subject since 2006.[2] Resilience occupies a prominent place within school inspection frameworks. The UK school inspection bodies, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), identify resilience as one of the character traits they monitor when assessing schools' provision of personal development for pupils.[3] Studies show that resilience is associated with increased quality of life, well-being and functional capacity in times of adversity.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESILIENCE IN STUDENTS HAS BEEN RECOGNISED AS A VITAL COMPONENT OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

Studies also show that,

- resilience is a significant predictor of the degree to which students cope at university (loc. cit., based on a study by McLafferty et al., 2012);
- there is a positive relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement (Cassidy 2016, p. 2, based on a study by Fallon, 2010);
- the increasing vulnerability to mental illness among university students 'implies low resilience in coping with academic stress and change' (Cassidy 2016, p. 2).

Those research findings concern resilience in general. With regard to AR specifically, studies suggest that AR is a strong predictor of self-esteem, enjoyment of school and class participation (Martin & Marsh 2006, p. 277).

Students need to be resilient to adapt their methods of learning, studying or working in the face of academic challenges or setbacks in order to improve. This will often require Academic Buoyancy (AB) rather than AR. It is difficult to say which is the more important skill to develop in students: while AB is a skill needed more of the time by greater numbers of students, the consequences for those students who lack or have a low level of AR are greater if they encounter experiences where they need to effectively adapt to academic challenges and adversity. It may also be the case that a lack of and the need for AR is greater among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is not yet clear whether the development of AB supports the development of AR, or vice versa. It is also not clear how AR is connected to other types of resilience – for example, to what degree and in what ways being highly psychologically resilient would make a person academically resilient, or how the development of AR could develop psychological resilience generally. Moreover, it is not clear how AR and AB relate to certain other character skills – such as grit, motivation and determination – or where it would fall on a web of types of resilience in relation to other character skills. Research in this final area could build upon Martin and Marsh's 5-C model. All of these are important questions on which future research in this area will hopefully shed more light.

[2] See 'Character can and should be taught in school, says Hunt', BBC News, 12 February 2014: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-26140607

[3] See Ofsted's *Education Inspection Framework* (2019), §28, p. 11 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/801429/Education_inspection_framework.pdf) and ISI's *Inspection Framework* (2017), p. 13 (https://www.isi.net/site/downloads/1.1%20Handbook%20Inspection%20Framework%202018-09.pdf)

A great deal of resilience is needed by all students and educators to get through the pandemic and to recover from the huge impact it has had on education. Many of the experiences students have undergone or will endure during this time could constitute acute or chronic adversities which may have significant negative impacts on their academic success. It will take a long time for education to fully recover from and adjust to the changes that it has had to make this year. Education after COVID-19 will be substantially different in many respects. Developing students' AR can improve their chances of academic success and support their well-being. It can also help to prepare them to cope with and recover from adversities that risk constituting impediments to their academic success. AR is, therefore, particularly important in education right now. Understanding what exactly academic resilience is and how to best develop it are important areas where more research and studies are needed. The future of education could benefit from more research on AR and increased focus on developing AR in students.

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ENGLISH IN THE INFORMATION AGE

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I was given my first email address in the final year of secondary school, something that was ahead of its time for a 17 year old. It wasn't particularly useful, though, as the only people I could write to were my father at work and a couple of people I knew who were at university. When conducting research projects at school, the only place I could find information at the time was in the school or public library, where I scrabbled to find scraps of information buried in encyclopaedias and outdated tomes. Even when I was at university, where I typed my essays on an electric typewriter with a minuscule screen, everything still had to be printed and all the resources I used were on paper. Does this mean I was a child of the 1960s? No - I graduated in the year 2000.

How humans access information and work has transformed in the last 20 years in a way that we often forget, and those radical changes are still very new. So, we can be forgiven for perhaps needing more time to assimilate the implications of living in the Information Age.[1] Interestingly, however, the impact of COVID-19 means that we have been given a clearer insight into such things. As an English teacher, I had become increasingly troubled in the past few years: why do students still handwrite essays at secondary school? Why do we shun reading on screen at school when we do so much of it elsewhere? Why do we require students to memorise texts for exams? What happened to coursework or the oral components of GCSEs? Why do we no longer teach media in any meaningful way for the English Language curriculum? Why (dare I write this as an English teacher?!) do we worry so much about spelling and grammar, when in everyday life we use tools that do it for us? Now, in September 2020, I think I've got some clearer answers.

The stranglehold of the syllabus

We have increasingly felt that we were constrained by external exam syllabuses in terms of being able to choose an appropriate range of texts to teach our older students. While I'm as much a fan of the nineteenth century novel as any English teacher, I fear that the single novel we spend two years studying for GCSE kills a love of literature and language (Lough, 2019) in a significant number of our students. We are also not teaching them about the wealth of digital texts and 'texts': if the Exeter University English Department studies films[2] as part of what they count as 'texts' why can't we do so in secondary schools? If the media has such online sway over us, why shouldn't we study social media, online news and podcasts? Certainly, it feels like this is the moment we should call time on the two English GCSEs as an entire nation, and instead expand the possibilities of studying and creating texts of all types as well as empowering schools to determine what texts they think are appropriate for their community.

[1] https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/95568

[2] http://www.exeter.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/english/english

Calling time on pen and paper?

Another shibboleth of my subject is how children write. We adults live in a world where we have open access to a range of writing and reading tools - pens and post-it notes, laptops, tablets, phones, e-readers and devices which can record our words and actions with alarming clarity. If English is the study of how language works, surely we need to give our young people access to those same tools? Currently, I am forced to set handwritten work for students preparing for GCSE and A Level essays even though I do all of my extended writing on computer: all the proposals I write, all my emails, all my reports, everything of any length is done electronically and this is the world we are sending our young people into.

Surely, we should be actively teaching our students to learn the techniques of composing text on screen rather than forcing them to practise a skill which, once learned at primary level, is no longer appropriate for writing of any significant length? Things may be new and unfamiliar to us as teachers, but we should explore the way that word processing and even voice recording can empower us and fire up our ability to communicate. While there are few differences between the marks achieved by those who type versus those who handwrite in the abstract, declining handwriting clarity does have an effect on the outcomes for students (Mogey et al., 2010). Handwriting notes may help learners retain knowledge better than typing it, but extended writing on paper should be quietly phased out (Mueller and Oppenheimer, 2014).

Paperback writers

The final piece of the jigsaw is how we teach reading in the 21st century. Here, I might surprise some readers in my espousal of the paper book. For texts we want to interact with at a deeper level, the experience of reading a paper book enriches our understanding (Fabr, 2013). The three-dimensionality of a printed and bound ream of pages allows students to engage with reading in a richer way than on a screen. That said, e-readers work really well for students who have reading difficulties, and the tools that are available to students of English when studying an online text are increasingly powerful. We also read a tremendous amount of text online and so we should be actively teaching these skills and discussing which is the most appropriate medium for each type of text and context in which we are reading it. We also have to remember how our particular tastes as teachers have often been developed in a radically different era. I have successfully made the transition to reading a newspaper online, but many of my colleagues still hold on to newsprint, smudges and all, as it is how they have learned to connect with media writing. We should be wary of making decisions about texts based on our own preferences. Like so many paradigms, a blended approach is certainly the way we should be going for the foreseeable future.

Working in an independent school which chooses to exercise its independence for the good of its students is such an exciting experience as an educator. We are free to think beyond conventional paradigms in so many aspects of what we do. Indeed, we have been exploring possible changes to our Middle School curriculum for more than two years now. The current crisis, while painful for our current students, gives us the impetus to forge ahead with those ideas for reform and I look forward to teaching English in a way that truly serves the young people I work with, and working on wider reforms that better reflect the paradigm in which we live.

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IT'S TIME TO RESCUE THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM

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Many in education are not letting a good crisis go to waste. What Anna Hogan and Ben Williamson (2020) have called the 'new pandemic power networks' (a coalition of Big Tech, global education companies, multilateral organisations like the OECD, national governments and investors) have successfully capitalised on the crisis to advance long cherished plans to reshape education.

Reshape how? By 'disruption' in many forms, but above all a massive increase in the use of technology: more hardware into schools and the hands of learners; more software in the form of curriculum 'content'; and ever more sophisticated and ubiquitous measurement systems, providing up-to-the-minute student tracking and other data analytics.

The economic incentives are significant (efficiency savings for funders; new markets for providers) but the disruption is sold on its educational merit: that new times call for new paradigms; that more digital education will better prepare students for an AI and automation dominated future; and that technology will allow students to learn in their own way at their own pace.

As an archetype for the way such disruption will occur across the sector, and how it will be legitimised, consider the case Pearson made for the 'flipped classroom' at the height of the pandemic,

'[A flipped classroom] means that instead of using your class time to explain a new topic or idea, you can spend your contact time on helping students with the practical application of their new knowledge. Moving direct instruction outside class time also means that you can focus on making the classroom a dynamic learning environment, with lots of opportunity for differentiated instruction. And there are lots of benefits for students, too! Instead of being passive recipients of knowledge, they will become active participants in their own education.'[1]

Why this vision should be resisted

Taking the description above as the summary of a forthcoming pedagogy, a day in the life of a student might look as follows:

- She will consume instructional online content on her own (both inside and outside school) via lectures, live and pre-recorded classes, documentaries, worksheets and online textbooks.
- She will then enter the 'dynamic learning environment' of the classroom for group activities such as project-based learning, class discussion and collaborative learning.
- Her teacher will prescribe the content, facilitate the group learning and correct misunderstandings.

[1] The Flipped Learning Global Initiative summarises thus: 'Flipped Learning is a meta-strategy because it's a framework that creates the class time for all other instructional strategies from project-based learning, inquiry learning, game-based learning, mastery learning, makerspaces, and the myriad other active learning strategies.' https://flglobal.org/flipped-learning-3-0

- Meanwhile, she will have frequent summative and formative assessment in digital form.

This vision, buffed up by corporate marketing departments or for the main stage at TED, has much seductive power. Given the resources of the coalition pushing it, and the incentives they have for doing so, it is hard not to imagine such an education becoming the norm for all but the most affluent in the not-too-distant future. What's not to like?

Let us leave to one side concerns around data privacy or a creeping privatization we might see in giving a Microsoft or a Google the free run of the nation's classrooms, though these would be sufficient grounds for the utmost reticence. The vision can be resisted on its own educational terms.

Knowledge has been devalued

The most promising feature of such an education is its intention to put the onus back on the student. The problem of intellectual passivity has beset state and private schooling alike for decades. However, there is little in the above to suggest that this would be solved - and that is chiefly because the importance of knowledge has been downplayed.

Though they still dispute how it is taken in, most educational researchers now agree that a broad and deep knowledge base is the sine qua non for almost every conceivable educational goal, from exam success to well-being, creativity to critical thinking.[2] The education vision of the disruptors fails in the main because its pedagogy does not help its students partake of this knowledge.

This is partly on principle. Most of those in the coalition have either bought wholesale the idea that knowledge now resides at the click of a button and so one topic is as good as any other for the purposes of an online lesson; or they more assertively avow a 'learning to earning pipeline' in which so-called '4 C' employability skills (creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration) trump the teaching of knowledge. The result is a suite of online learning materials that are knowledge-lite: dreary pabulum that even the most idealistic publisher cannot imagine will awaken a child's active engagement.

Even more avowedly 'knowledge-rich' pre-recorded content, such as those lessons put out by Oak National Academy in the pandemic, fails the child's appetite for knowledge. Lessons are flooded with teacher talk, illustrated with PowerPoints of Google images and bullet points, stymieing a child's attempts to assimilate knowledge for himself. They are better than lessons containing no knowledge but, like them, the knowledge is often too bitty, too pre-digested, relying on teachers

[2] Daisy Christodoulou and E D Hirsch, why you can't just Google it; Daniel Willingham, e.g. his striking quote against group work: 'memory is the residue of thought'; 'Why Knowledge is Important', 'Critical Thinking - why is it so hard to teach?'

to use the force of their own personalities to stimulate flagging interest (hard to do outside a traditional classroom).

When it comes to classroom time, the absence of knowledge in the favoured forms of group work and project-based learning will only degrade knowledge further.[3] And the ever-increasing reliance on metrics to feed into the tyrannical LMS means that every educational act, large or small, will be assessed, giving the message to the student that nothing is worth learning intrinsically.

The great promise that digital reforms allow children to learn for themselves is thus undermined in its execution. Given that it also hooks the young mind on the dubious lure of the screen, forestalling the development of attention and keeping children forever in Nicholas Carr's 'shallows', it could be argued that the reforms present not so much a missed opportunity as a genuine educational threat.

Flipped classroom 2020

What the future needs is a reboot of the Flipped Classroom that reconnects it to Sal Khan's great promise of almost ten years ago when he talked of a resurgent autodidactism made possible by the internet.

Given the importance of knowledge, the emphasis has to be - to twist Pearson's dichotomy above - that instead of being passive recipients of education, students will become active participants in knowledge.

What would this look like? Let's go back to my day in the life

- The child reads the section of a book; if she cannot yet read, she has it read to her, either by a teacher or via audiobook. Why a book? More than any other medium, it is knowledge in its best form for digestion: ideas, clothed upon by fact.
- The books should span a wide and deep curriculum but must be chosen judiciously. They must be 'living', literary or narrative in form, not a textbook. Presented in vivid form, knowledge connects with the child's curiosity and is easier to remember.[4]
- After an interval (a few paragraphs for younger or weaker students and a few pages for the stronger) she will then narrate to the class in her own words what she has assimilated from the text. Her mind has digested the passage and, through saying it back, made it her own.

This is the crucial difference

- The teacher would then invite other children to add any missing details, or correct any misunderstanding. If required, the teacher would also add his own enthusiasm to warm the subject with the heat of his own interest. However, it would be hoped that the knowledge would be its own reward. Then the lesson continues onto the next section of the book.

[3] 'Why minimal guidance during instruction does not work: An analysis of the failure of constructivist, discovery, problem-based, experiential, and inquiry-based teaching' – summarised here – https://researched.org.uk/2018/07/06/research-that-changed-my-teaching-2/

[4] A good example of what I mean is Arnold Foster's History of England, suitable for Year 7: 'Caesar was not the man to leave this new country unexplored and unconquered. In the year 55 B.C. he collected eighty ships and 12,000 men upon the other side of the Channel, close to the place where the town of Calais now stands'.

- For older children, written narrations would swap in for these oral 'narrations' to develop writing ability. Likewise, as children acquire more knowledge they would be given more opportunity for both verbal and written analysis, plus class debate, on what they had assimilated.
- Because knowledge is its own reward, assessment would be careful not to distort the learning of knowledge to the ends of passing exams. End of term assessments would therefore be:
  - viva voces on what had been learned through the term;
  - a review of recorded narrations through the term;
  - written compositions marked by Comparative Judgement.

A number of additional points and benefits of this approach suggest themselves:

- Technology can be used in the audio recording of narrations so that children can build up a store of what they have learned, and listen back to them. It would also allow some parts of the learning to be done at home.
- Spaced-repetition algorithms, such as those underpinning the likes of Anki, could be used to remind teachers and students of topics covered earlier in the term, prompting recap narrations in the aid of long term memory.
- Investment is directed towards books, the ultimate renewable resource, more than technology. Screen time would be diminished and children's attention would be well trained by such a methodology.
- There is nothing to stop this method being introduced from a young age. Aside from maths and grammar, I would propose that the majority of a child's education in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 (ages 7-16 for non UK readers) is thus conducted.

In all the coverage that schools and young people received in lockdown, the subject of reading was notable for its absence. Where were the national reading competitions, the schools celebrating the amount that their children had read in 'unprecedented' levels of unsupervised time? If there was any coverage of reading, it tended to point to alarming decline rather than the power of reading to inform and sustain the growing mind (Anderson, 2020). By allying reading to technology in appropriate ways, a new conception of the Flipped Classroom could help children make knowledge a part of them, and so let a nourished, vitalised and serviceable generation of autodidacts soar.

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AMUSED TO DEATH: WHY WE DON'T NEED MORE TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM POST-COVID

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One of the more dispiriting voices in education of late is from techno-futurists who see the current pandemic as an opportunity to double down on unevidenced calls for a technological revolution in education despite a stark lack of evidence. Those of us who work at the coalface should resist the Silicon Valley narrative at all costs and protect students from the often disastrous effects of technology that so often prevent them from attending to what is truly important.

Writing in 1985, Neil Postman made the interesting observation that of the first fifteen U.S. presidents, many of them could walk down the street without being physically recognised yet they would be instantly identifiable by things they had written or speeches they had delivered. Today the opposite is true.

Postman saw 1980s America as a world that celebrated the transient and the superficial, where the power of the written word as a space to formulate and expand on complex arguments gave way to impressionistic understanding and surface engagement. He claims the 19th century was the apogee of human thought where the act of undistracted reading in particular represented 'both their connection to and their model of the world'. He saw the advent of mass entertainment TV in the 1980s as a tipping point characterised by an over-saturation of information to the point of total distraction:

'Information is now a commodity that can be bought and sold, or used as a form of entertainment, or worn like a garment to enhance one's status. It comes indiscriminately, directed at no one in particular, disconnected from usefulness; we are glutted with information, drowning in information, have no control over it, don't know what to do with it'.

What's remarkable about Postman's dystopian vision is that it was written before the advent of the internet. The dizzying amount of information now produced daily would have been inconceivable to him, yet many of its stupefying effects would have been instantly recognisable. If TV was having this effect on adults 30 years ago, what impact is the internet having on young people today?

An important study (Revizza et al, 2017) on student use of technology has shown that students who have access to the internet in the classroom are being distracted away from learning in any kind of meaningful way. Students who used laptops in lessons voluntarily logged into a proxy server which monitored their in-class behaviour and researchers found that 'the average time spent browsing the web for non-class-related purposes was 37 minutes. Students spent the most time on social media, reading email, shopping for items such as clothes and watching videos' (Michigan State University, 2016).

An essential point to make here is that an adult using the internet is not the same as a 15-year-old using it. Most adults have developed schemas of knowledge that allow them to navigate the great highways of the internet, identify subtle exits, negotiate fruitful side-roads and avoid potential dead ends. Asking kids to 'research a topic on the internet' is like dropping a five-year-old on a motorway and expecting them to find their way home on their tricycle.

An older friend of mine, who is a history teacher, remarked to me recently that it was about 15 years ago that students who were asked to write assignments on Martin Luther King started handing in essays on the American civil rights leader who nailed 95 theses on a church door in Wittenberg in the 16th century and subsequently led the Protestant Church movement until his tragic assassination in 1968. Simply unleashing kids on the internet with the vague justification of '21st century skills' is not just largely ineffective but a dereliction of duty.

Many techno-evangelists cite the vague concept of 'creativity' as a justification for the internet in our classrooms, but as Andrew Keen (2007) presciently pointed out more than ten years ago, as 'truth' becomes a relative term, not only is real creativity threatened but the wider implications for society are perhaps far more concerning:

This undermining of truth is threatening the quality of civil public discourse, encouraging plagiarism and intellectual property theft, and stifling creativity. When advertising and public relations are disguised as news, the line between fact and fiction becomes blurred. Instead of more community, knowledge, or culture, all that Web 2.0 really delivers is more dubious content from anonymous sources, hijacking our time and playing to our gullibility'.

In a recent *New York Times* opinion piece, Darren Rosenblum noted that when teaching a unit on what he thought would be the engaging topic of sexuality and the law, his attempts to provoke discussion with his students were met with a 'slew of laptops staring back' at him. He subsequently appealed to students not to bring laptops and created what he felt was a more human connection which in turn led to a better environment for learning:

'Energized by the connection, we moved faster, further and deeper into the material: Laptops at best reduce education to the clackety-clack of transcribing lectures on shiny screens and, at worst, provide students with a constant escape from whatever is hard, challenging or uncomfortable about learning' (Rosenblum, 2007).

And that's the thing about learning: it should be hard. It should be initially challenging and uncomfortable in the short term in order to be effective in the long term, but the ubiquitous and pervasive nature of Web 2.0 internet has produced some disturbing effects on young people. As Simon Sinek recently pointed out, there are some worrying trends in the millennial generation, who are often characterised by chronically low self esteem (facilitated, he claims, by failed parenting strategies, among other things) and now look to approval from Facebook and Instagram to fix their lack of self-worth rather than human interaction, and exhibit behaviours that are profoundly addictive in nature.

It's a bleak view of the future, often described as dystopian; but for Neil Postman, there is an interesting distinction between the dystopian visions of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Huxley's *Brave New World*. The former portrayed a bleak vision of oppressive state control in the form of 'Big Brother', which sought to actively ban expression and limit human agency; however, in *Brave New World* there is a far more horrifying phenomenon at work:

'In Huxley's vision, no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think. What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one'.

Technology has afforded us some incredible opportunities for education, such as comparative judgement[1] or the JSTOR Shakespeare digital library,[2] and there are some good examples of purposeful, well structured environments.[3] But, increasingly, we are suffering from what Sartre called 'the agony of choice' as we become more and more connected to the 'Internet of Things'. Allowing kids to browse the internet in a lesson and then expecting that they will work productively is like bringing them to McDonald's and hoping they'll order the salad.[4]

Techno-evangelists have sold us the internet as a form of emancipation, freeing us from the 'factory model' of education (de Bruyckere, 2017) (despite the fact the evidence for this is thin) but often technology in education seems to represent a solution in search of a problem that actually gets in the way of learning. Perhaps the most liberating and empowering thing we can do for young people today is to create a space for them where they can read the great works of human thought undisturbed and without distraction, for at least a short while.

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[1] For example see No More Marking https://www.nomoremarking.com/

[2] http://labs.jstor.org/shakespeare/

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HOW DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY CAN ENHANCE LEARNING:
SOME PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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As teachers, we have found ourselves in uncharted territories, working in a hybrid environment where we have had to skillfully manage the pupils in the classroom while simultaneously monitoring those who are continuing to be educated at home. With 'distance learning' and 'remote learning' being current buzzwords in education, how can we harness technology to support the progress of all our learners and increase our own efficiency?

I have conducted research, getting feedback from both teachers and pupils about their views on how technology can be used to support learning. With the explosion of innovation in education technology from big firms such as Microsoft and Google, I was interested to find out what tools and techniques actually made a difference to pupil progress or increased the efficiency of staff time.

In September 2019, my school launched a one-to-one device scheme to Year 9 pupils, with the aim to expand to the whole school in January 2020. This process actually began in May 2019 with a roll-out of devices to staff, supported by training and continuing professional development. Many pupils at key stages four and five were already using devices for the majority of their work and staff had begun to utilise Microsoft digital resources throughout their teaching. As a school we already had a core of departments who were trailblazing the way forward, testing and adapting their digital pedagogy. Over the course of the school year 2019-2020, I conducted feedback interviews with pupils and staff, as well as tracking and monitoring the progress of pupils.

The advice below can be applied to any of the most common platforms currently being used, including Microsoft Teams and OneNote, Google Classroom, or a Moodle or similar virtual learning environment ('VLE'). If your school already has Microsoft Office 365 then it is likely that the apps for Teams and OneNote are available to you. What is important is that across a school, one single technology is agreed rather than a disjointed smorgasbord of options that risk confusing both staff and pupils. The only requirement is that both staff and pupils can access resources online, whether this be through a phone, tablet, laptop, or PC. It does not suppose that all pupils will complete all work digitally; traditional pen and ink can be used effectively alongside digital technology.

Digital teaching and learning – best recommended practice

1. Have a departmental policy on how digital teaching and learning is going to be used

Many departments in my current school have created a policy that suits their subject and reflects the outcomes they desire of the pupils. Creating standard working practices across a department ensures that all pupils (and parents) are clear about the expectations of that subject and how they are expected to work. Simple questions such as, 'Where are the resources from today's lesson?' and 'Where can I find the homework task?' can be answered simply and straightforwardly if there is a uniform approach to how information is stored and presented, and how work is completed and uploaded.

2. Organise your class resource from day one and ensure that you are using the known topic headings that link to the scheme of work, book or specification

Whether using Teams, OneNote, Google Classroom or a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), it is essential that you ensure that the setup and layout of the information you are sharing with your classes is clear and related to the units of study. Pupil feedback on this issue was very strong.

'If it's well organised with topics and chapters it's easier to work with' (Year 11 pupil).

'I really like it when the teachers put the different topics in clear sections' (Year 9 pupil).

Make it clear throughout your department how information is going to be presented and, again, have a uniform approach. This makes it much easier for the pupils to help each other and not constantly have to contact you for support.

3. Create sections and pages and distribute these to the students so their work is organised in the same way

In most online learning environments, there is the ability to distribute work to the pupils. In Microsoft Teams, Microsoft OneNote and Google Classroom you can send presentations, worksheets, and other pages directly to the whole class. If there is differentiated work, this can be sent to individual pupils quickly and simply. This supports all pupils with their organisation and understanding of what is important, in the same way you might conduct folder checks or make sure worksheets are stuck into an exercise book. Doing this in most apps also means that when you wish to review their work it is much easier to find and provide feedback. One of our teachers of psychology reported that this was,

'Great for pupils with SEND and their support teachers too. Materials/worksheets/homework etc. never gets lost. The pupils can access them at any time, and this saves them emailing me with various requests etc'.

4. Put all content on the lesson resource page, including PowerPoints, worksheets and videos

Linked to the two previous points, all content should be stored in one place for pupils to find. Pupils often find it very difficult to organise their work digitally as it is unlike having paper in a folder or book. Ensuring that all your teaching resources are shared online supports their progress and is appreciated by the pupils.

'I find it helpful when the teacher already puts the PowerPoint and sheets on the OneNote in my section beforehand' (Year 8 pupil).

'It is really useful in English when the teacher is annotating a poem so we can see what she is writing on the teacher version, if we fall behind' (Year 10 pupil).

5. When writing board notes, make sure these are added to the online lesson resources either by writing directly on OneNote (or a similar app), or by inserting them from the whiteboard as an image (pupils can help with this)

Ensuring that lesson content is recorded and shared with pupils is especially important for any pupil who is learning remotely. This point is very much linked to in-class teaching methods. There is no need to have fancy technology and SMART boards. Simply using the tools provided by the mainstream VLE's for uploading images to the pages of content will do.

When lesson notes are added/amended on the board, ensure this is captured and added to the resources. Using a tool like OneNote means that the writing can go directly on to the page and automatically be kept with the other lesson content. If you use a whiteboard then taking a picture of the board and uploading has the same impact. Again, OneNote has tools to do this very simply and can even be done by the pupils to help.

6. Create pages containing the requisite basic content for students to make notes, annotate and highlight

This final point is only relevant to those who are using digital platforms for all pupil work. Most platforms allow pupils and teachers to make their notes online and upload them in real-time. The value of having the correct notes recorded from a lesson is immeasurable. Pupils who have inaccurate notes, are missing notes, or have no notes at all from a lesson stand much less chance of learning the lesson's content than those who do. By providing the basic information for pupils, we not only eliminate unnecessary note-taking but reduce cognitive overload and support all pupils by providing the correct information. Gaps should be left for them to add to or enhance the content. It is also good to have a 'teacher version' in the content library which you can add to as an exemplar or for those who

may have missed the lesson. Using a teacher version also means you can model good practice for the class and provide a copy to any pupil who missed the lesson completely.

'[By using a digital platform] I am able to provide the basic notes along with a range of additional resources. This means that the students need only focus on their learning rather than the recording of the basic notes. I encourage the students to elaborate their notes with additional information to help develop their understanding.' (Deputy Headteacher & Teacher of Geography)

One of the most insightful elements of this research has been the feedback from the pupils in interviews and focus groups. The guidance given above comes directly from them, as well as the staff. However, what was most interesting was that the ways that staff presented information was not always the best way for the pupils to view it. As teachers, it is vital that we get the feedback of our pupils not only on their progress and learning, but also on how we are presenting information for them to learn best.

Useful links and resources

Microsoft Education Centre, courses: https://education.microsoft.com/en-us/courses - A range of easy to follow courses, created by Microsoft, to introduce how to use their products in educational settings.

Google for Education, Teacher centre https://edu.google.com/intl/en_uk/teacher-center/products/classroom/?modal_active=none

EVALUATING THE BLEND OF SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS TEACHING IN A MEDIA AND SENSORY RICH WORLD

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The heuristic experience of virtual schooling required teachers to blend synchronous and asynchronous learning. In many ways this showcased a valuable legacy for a post COVID-19 education. A blended learning environment engenders immersive and knowledge-rich learning as well as skills of student autonomy and metacognition (Stein and Graham, 2020). Ofsted have announced that when inspections resume in January 2021, the focus will be partly on blended learning and specifically on schools' provision of a mix of on-site and remote education (GOV.UK, 2020). This article draws on my experience teaching online during lockdown at Eton College and survey-based research I conducted with Eton students as well as teachers from the maintained and independent sectors. It aims to evaluate how asynchronous and synchronous teaching can contribute to improved efficiency, engagement and collaboration. It also considers heightened educational inequalities in the UK and the suitability of educational technology once normality resumes.

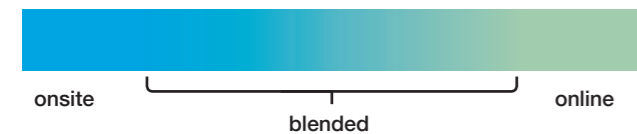## The theory behind blended learning

Orientation to Blended Teaching

Figure 1: A spectrum of technology-enhanced teaching or learning Adapted from Stein, J., & Graham, C. R. (2020). Essentials for blended learning: A standards-based guide.

Blended learning is an umbrella term for the convergence of teaching activities across face-to-face and online platforms (Graham, 2006) (Figure 1). It augments the teacher's role towards also being a constructor of complementary tasks based on engagement, efficiency and flexibility. Many argue for the transformative potential of blended learning in education (Halverson et al., 2012). Stein and Graham (2020) state that the mixing of synchronous and asynchronous interaction is among the most important concepts related to blended learning. Synchronous learning refers to interaction with instructors and peers in real time (online or face-to-face) while asynchronous learning occurs in students' own time and predominantly in digital spaces. Notably, blended learning theory rejects simply replicating onsite activities online, and warns against schools merely seeking a 'digital facelift' (Campbell and Groom, 2009). Blended learning emphasises maximising the benefits of both modalities - the classroom and web, only drawing on technology if and when it proves an effective tool.

In the recent Teach First panel entitled 'Building on the Home-schooling Legacy to Revitalise Learning' (July, 2020), practitioners discussed how demands placed on schools have driven pertinent change involving technology.

Ladi Greenstreet, Head of UKI Accenture Ventures, stated that,

'In medicine, technology allows humans to have more time to be human [and to] show empathy, understanding and creativity. That's what we want; where technology allows teachers to have more time to do their job properly'. Echoing this point, Daisy Christodoulou from No More Marking reiterated that 'technology should certainly not act as a substitute or replacement for teachers'. Remote schooling is undoubtedly no replacement for the shared experience of in-person learning, but efficiency, adaptation and crisis-proofing is key to teaching pupils' resilience for the future, said Cassie Buchanan, CEO Chartered Schools Educational Trust.

The limitations of blended learning

Moore's (1993, 2018) theory of 'transactional distance' is based on the premise that students experience a psychological and communications gap in the online environment. Digital interaction is the norm in social media for Generation Z. Yet it is questionable to what extent engagement and student satisfaction can be achieved in blended work. Moore (2018) notes that it is 'widely presumed that students and teachers know intuitively how to make knowledge collectively' and emphasises the need to appreciate that 'learning time does not automatically equate to learning' (Stein and Graham, 2020).

Mathew Hood, principal at Oak National Academy, reveals data across a study of 16 million lessons taught to 4.5 million pupils (Teach First Webinar, 2020). Positively, students that made it more than three to five minutes into an asynchronous lesson were more likely to get through to the end. Scoring high marks on a topic test is also correlated with engagement. This shows how targeting early drop-off in lessons through motivation and encouragement is essential.

Learners growing up in our technology-imbued environment have been referred to as 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001). Pupils are not only highly skilled in the use of some new technology, but also expect it to be available in most aspects of their lives (Stein and Graham, 2020). Despite this assumption, over 25 million households in the UK used mobile data as their main internet source during lockdown. This is typically more costly than broadband, meaning that many families who do not have broadband at home are in fact spending more than others. In New York City, Apple and T-Mobile joined forces to provide discounted tablets in April 2020, and other internet providers have been encouraged to lift data caps. The educational attainment gap is wide and the pandemic has highlighted how the technological divide severely impacts less privileged families.

Blended learning: a teacher's perspective

Eton's 'virtual school' used contextual factors and blended learning to successfully design lessons and ensure continuity in teaching during lockdown. Asynchronous teaching is the farthest from traditional classroom teaching, but for many in the UK this became a full timetable and whole curriculum experience for many months.

To demonstrate, the following is an example of my teaching experience in a series of four blended, synchronous and asynchronous lessons. These have since been edited and honed to provide a useful tool for virtual or normal time. A summary is also shown in Figure 2.

Examples of Synchronous and Asynchronous Tools

Synchronous

- Classroom teaching / web conferencing e.g Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet
- Allocated time with live groups or individual chat with teacher available online / open door policy

Asynchronous

- Screencasting, voice and video recording for explanation and feedback
- Breakout rooms (Zoom)
- Microsoft Teams discussion boards
- Nearpod
- Google classroom/Google Forms
- Essay prizes
- Home learning / extra work / homework

Blended

- Synchronous class debate followed by independent research and student posts on Teams. Blended learning here goes beyond the time and physical constraints of synchronous classroom teaching.
- Peer Instruction – teacher-nominated peer leaders allow the more able to teach others and encourages collaboration. For example, Sage and Scribe (Kagan) and 'phone a friend' are where some students take on the teacher role. Elected team captains can also report issues and questions, even becoming a 'co-host' on Zoom, helping to overcoming tech problems.
- Nearpod – asynchronous app replacing lesson content using virtual reality, quizzes and weblinks.
- Seneca Learning – preloaded, self-marking and specification-based questions. The platform uses AI to identify pupil's learning gaps, build a digital footprint and help achieve mastery in homework.
- Google Escape Room – gamified collaborative teamwork and/or independent self-marking assessment using Google Forms. Google Classroom and Google Docs also widely used – predominantly in the state sector.

Figure 2: Summary of tools used from March-July 2020 for virtual schooling

Lesson 1: Topic Introduction and Discussion (Blended)

This lesson is live, and ideally face-to-face. Sharing ideas in critical debate allows students to engage in 'sensory-rich' interpersonal development, building empathy and community through shared experience (Stein and Graham, 2020). The lesson ends with the teacher posing an open-ended statement or exam question, on an online platform such as Microsoft Teams. For homework, students continue their study asynchronously, reflecting on others' posts, and researching and editing a thoughtful response. Pupils who were unable to contribute in class have the chance to formulate their ideas using new evidence gathered from their research. The use of asynchronous tasks opens up time for teachers. Assessed and non-assessed work can be clearly categorised and the emphasis can be placed on human interaction between peers and teacher. Screen-casting videos, explanation, and voice recording over PowerPoint also offer great asynchronous intervention tools for homework, helping students to develop mastery.

Lesson 2: Nearpod (Asynchronous)

This is an excellent asynchronous learning tool which can be used to replace lesson content. Questionnaire feedback from students was positive, for example: 'Nearpod is engaging, you can do it at your own pace and I found the weblink and video interesting. I failed the quiz though, so went back to do it again'. Despite this, the premium account is costly and the app is counterintuitive, so it can be time consuming to create lessons.

Lesson 3: Peer Instruction (Blended)

In research at Harvard University, Eric Mazur (2013) ties together elements of empathy and collaboration using quizzes and peer leaders. Applying some ideas from this research in Zoom, I often used breakout rooms, student co-hosts or gamified tasks - such as messaging a student a keyword, which they would then describe to the group in the style of the board game *Articulate!*. Google Escape Rooms (essentially a Google Form made by the teacher) also acted as an assessment tool and, with the aim of collaboration, students completed the escape room together (although at the time were physically apart). These can be assimilated on both virtual video platforms and in the classroom.

Moore (2018) cites artificial intelligence (AI) as an international trend in education. The Seneca Learning platform uses AI to 'learn' an individual's strengths and weaknesses, adapting accordingly. Student survey responses were extremely positive about Seneca learning for homework (mentioned 19 times), as was teacher agreement on the ease of pre-loaded, self-marking, specification-based questions. My experience with Seneca Learning led me to believe that it enabled students to take ownership of their learning path and fostered opportunities for metacognition due to the platform's capacity to make visible a student's digital footprint (Stein and Graham, 2020). In education, an example of metacognition is the process where pupils identify their learning gaps and make plans to address these gaps in the future.

Lesson 4: Essay (Synchronous)

Students completed a timed essay based on the online discussion from Lesson 1. Marks and detailed feedback were given in a synchronous lesson. Using Microsoft OneNote, their work can be shared to the whole group (from the teacher's screen), enforcing accountability on pupils' engagement. The possibilities of peer assessment and model answers were available here and, importantly, individual and group feedback enables light competition, grade tracking and metacognition.

Evaluation

I conducted my own questionnaire-based research with year 12 and year 10 geographers at Eton College, collecting 42 student responses and with 5 teachers at a range of schools in order to gather first-hand experience. I used Google Forms and the questionnaires consisted mostly of open questions such as, 'What were your initial thoughts when school became distanced?'. Answers were coded into positive and negative statements. Notable results included the following:

• Seneca Learning mentioned positively nineteen times (largely by year 10) and negatively four times;

• Nearpod was highlighted as a wholly positive asynchronous tool and voice-over videos had seven positive but thirteen negative mentions. The aim was not however, to rate platforms against each other but to see where different strategies could be integrated into usual teaching practice.

Overall, the survey showed that blended learning does 'extend beyond the needs of the average student, and provide additional instruction or remediation for students' (Stein and Graham, 2020). Conversely, limiting factors of technology, distance and disengagement severely constrain the success of blending asynchronous and synchronous lessons. Many teachers use Microsoft Teams, for example, as an open discussion board for class questions and one-to-one chats. This reduces email traffic and speeds up the feedback loop for checking and intervening, but only if students engage with it fully. Moreover, as Geoff Barton (2020) states, it is ultimately still the 'human stuff that matters in education'. It is crucial that socialisation, friendships, rewards and sanctions take place synchronously and in the physical school spaces.

It is also worth remembering that technology is simply a tool. Neil Selwyn points out that in education, one needs to 'steer clear of assuming that any digital technology has the ability to change things for the better' (Selwyn 2011, p. 33). In the main, online learning can only be successful if face-to-face relationships are built beforehand. Teachers are also confronted with the cognitive overload caused by split attention, for themselves and pupils (Bower et al., 2014). The unsurprising and much commented on experience of lockdown was procrastination. One student questionnaire stated, 'I thought virtual school would just be holiday with a little bit of work … It is so hard to motivate yourself and there are so many distractions'. It is essential that students develop digital habits that contribute to success week after week. Furthermore, issues of cyber security will remain and an over-reliance on technology may be a disaster waiting to happen.

Conclusion

In the short term, a takeaway from school closures is that education, like all sectors, must build in resilience to make learning crisis-proof – most likely by blending technology and face-to-face interaction. The 'great remoting' will be short-lived but has provided a catalyst for the transformative power of blended learning and, in particular, a legacy of synchronous and asynchronous teaching. Technology has a myriad of drawbacks and the physical, social and developmental spaces of schools are indispensable and should be protected (UNESCO, 2020). But, we must also be prepared to vary course design to create successful learners and help realise the potential of 21st century education (Campbell and Groom, 2009).

The ratio of synchronous to asynchronous, and online to offline should be up to individual teachers and there is no one-size-fits-all. We are, however, obliged to consider how affective factors, such as crisis, digital media, learner experience, metacognition and autonomy can be central to knowledge-rich learning. Where blended approaches are more intentionally designed than synchronous counterparts, learning outcomes will be improved. Her Excellency Sahle-Work Zedwe, president of Ethiopia and Chair of the International Commission on the Futures of Education, declares that 'COVID-19 has the potential to radically reshape our world, but we must not passively sit back and observe what plays out' (UNESCO, 2020).

THE RATIO OF SYNCHRONOUS TO ASYNCHRONOUS, AND ONLINE TO OFFLINE SHOULD BE UP TO INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS AND THERE IS NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

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DISTANCE LEARNING CAN BE SOCIAL LEARNING

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Just as lockdown began, the former Master of Wellington College, Anthony Seldon, remarked in the *Guardian* that, 'Home-schooling will be the biggest educational experiment in the history of education, with little or no research to guide us about what works' (2020). This may have been an exaggeration, but his comment stayed with me. At the end of a term of teaching through distance learning, I set the same survey for each of the classes that I teach. I wanted to review with them their experiences and to see what could be learnt from the experiment that we had taken part in.

There were 49 completed surveys from four different classes across three different age groups. The questions were framed to help me to assess the validity of some of my hunches. They were also designed to encourage some metacognitive thought from the boys which would be of benefit to them. Even though I had not established what the students' initial expectations had been, I believe it was still valuable to understand what they thought of the experience in retrospect.

In this article I have selected quotations from the surveys to help to evidence what I found to be instructive feedback about my teaching and their learning. Some broader lessons can also be inferred about the distance learning curriculum at Eton College. Most of the boys wrote a considered paragraph after each question. The quotations below have not been edited to improve punctuation or syntax.

Has your learning experience been better or worse than you expected? What, if anything has surprised you? Please elaborate.

Of the 49 responses, 43 said that it had been better. Most of the boys chose to focus on their experience of the lessons taught through the Zoom conference platform. My Year 9 and 10 classes had one of these a week; my Year 12 classes had two a week. Each lesson lasted 50 minutes.

The most interesting comments to me, and the most frequent theme that emerged, was that many boys felt that the Zoom lessons were very similar to being in my classroom before lockdown. Many of the boys also emphasised the additional benefit of having fewer distractions from peers sitting next to them. Five boys in Year 9 and five in Year 12 made this point. It was also noted by more than one boy in Year 12 that he was 'pleasantly surprised by the ease of being able to contribute and have discussions/build on ideas of other people in virtual class'.

There were a few reflections which showed how the experience had not been better for boys; though fewer in number, I think these are just as instructive. The following comments from Year 12 boys speak for themselves:

'Worse personally because it is more intense and you digress from the subject matter less therefore it becomes more tiresome. Also, staring at a screen all day sitting in the same place takes the enthusiasm out of the subject and learning experience especially when like me you are on a kitchen table with 3 other people in the room most times.'

'I believe that my learning experience has been worse […]. One reason for this is my lack of concentration due to the situation of staring at a screen for hours, coupled with the temptation to access the internet.'

The following two comments from younger boys also emphasise what they were missing physically and psychologically:

'Surprised how much of a difference a change of scenery and walking to each lesson helps. For large periods of the day, I was instead just stuck inside'.

'Because of the sheer bombardment of zoom meetings in all subjects. Not only is it not as fun, but I find it much more draining and tiring to look at a computer screen for the whole day'.

What have you learnt about your own ways of learning that you didn't understand before?

In answer to this question, a number of the Year 12 boys wrote about their experience of discussions that we had held. I found this helpful feedback. I had encouraged them to share their thoughts with each other through Zoom, in a way that developed into a sustained discussion. I set out at the beginning of the distance learning period to make the Zoom experience as social as possible. This was something that I had learnt was an important objective to include in the pedagogy from training in distance learning teaching that I had undertaken in 2014 with The Global Online Academy. It was also reiterated through a number of other online authors as teachers began to deliver lessons during lockdown. In trying to stimulate the boys to discuss directly with each other, I encouraged them to keep their video channels open whilst I closed mine and retreated behind a screen with just my photograph in it. Here are two comments on this:

'Through the discussion sessions that we have had, I have learnt that I retain information better when I hear it from a discussion... I am now interested in doing more discussion learning for a better learning experience.'

'I have learned that the method of learning about an area of the subject and then doing a group discussion in class, without necessarily your guidance at times, has broadened and helped my learning.'

Another point that I inferred was that before lockdown my presence in the physical space of a classroom could inhibit their discussions, as they would often look to me to confirm their thoughts through my body language or commentary. As I withdrew from their virtual space, they became more confident in occupying it with their thinking.

From the younger boys, these two comments illustrate how different individuals identified different types of motivation in their learning:

'it has taught me I can be a lot more independent in my learning and that I am able to just do things to better that subject which at school I wouldn't necessarily do by myself as I would ask for a teacher for help or ask how could I do something better rather than find a way for myself.'

'I have learnt that I learn and respond much better in an academic environment (classroom, library), than in other places (my dining-room) …I also learnt that I enjoy being around others physically whilst learning, because it creates a sense of competition (for me anyway), which makes me want to work harder. On my own, I'm not very motivated.'

What has been your favourite 'lesson'/experience in studying history/art history with me this half? What have you valued the most?

The answers to this are perhaps less interesting to a broader community and the question was posed so that I could see if the boys' responses acknowledged my attempts to be creative with Zoom as a medium. However, the following from three of my year ten class are worth commenting upon:

'My favourite lesson was probably the one where we discussed the toppling of statues. This is because I genuinely believe that we had a really interesting discussion as a class, and differing opinions were presented, which allowed me to have a greater understanding of the arguments and claims made on both sides. I valued the notion of discussion the most, as I think especially for a Zoom call, we had a really good discussion…'

'I valued the last lesson, where we talked about Black Lives Matter, the most, because it gave me a fresh perspectives that I had not had before, and because it relates, or at least feels as though it relates, to the present more immediately than other History topics…'

'I most valued our lesson on black lives matter where we just chatted from the heart…'

I infer from these quotations that the boys valued attempts to make lessons as social as possible. This shows that distance learning can still be made to feel like an emotional, ethical and urgent experience.

What do you think could have been better/different? Why would that have helped you more?

The responses to this differed widely. Some asked me to adapt my teaching, which echoed observations that had been made about my teaching in the physical classroom: two boys asked for a greater use of the Zoom whiteboard so that I could emphasise to them key concepts that were discussed. Most of the critical comments were directed towards the design of the online curriculum. Boys believed that greater consideration could have been made towards the collective body of study that each boy was asked to engage with:

'I have sometimes found it hard to know what I am meant to be doing for homework just because I receive a million emails a day and firefly tasks, the information often just gets lost. Especially because we aren't at school so our thoughts aren't always on school'.

'Certainly at the beginning of the term, I was getting way too much work and a lot more than I was used to getting at school'.

'I think that one part of Eton Virtual [the online curriculum] that could have been better was the total amount of work. I think that the teachers that 'developed' Eton Virtual presumed that we would have far more free time than at school, something I don't think has been the case. I think that academics/EW [homework] along with extras (e.g. EtonX,/community engagement etc.) has led to me having less free time than at school'.

Some boys did indicate that they expected the Zoom classes to be different from their normal classroom experiences, but they were surprised in a good way how it was possible to make their learning social. Some boys were prepared to say that they also thought that their learning had improved, with some feeling that their writing skills had noticeably developed. There was also the belief that distance learning can be designed to create a fulfilling form of social learning.

SOME BOYS WERE PREPARED TO SAY THAT THEY ALSO THOUGHT THAT THEIR LEARNING HAD IMPROVED, WITH SOME FEELING THAT THEIR WRITING SKILLS HAD NOTICEABLY DEVELOPED

I also infer that the distance learning could be improved by greater oversight of the whole curriculum and colleagues' approaches to it. For the younger students, lots of Zoom lessons created a level of cognitive load that became exhausting. This also had an impact on some teachers' potential to deliver effective lessons towards the end of a day.

An observation can be drawn from the way that colleagues approached the problems set by lockdown. The AI intelligentsia believe that teachers are hesitant and reluctant to adapt education to AI machine learning systems because they are not flexible in their approaches to teaching. However, I witnessed many colleagues adapt quickly to the cognitive load of using new technology which might suggest that they can be flexible. They responded to the need to learn how to use new technology, driven by wanting to be competent in serving students. Teachers' reluctance to adapt to some tech models may be based on an understanding of a system that has a complexity which is underestimated by those interested in AI platforms for education. Many of those tech entrepreneurs would also like to see the distance learning model embedded within the education sector, but even Bill Gates has come to acknowledge that this is not as satisfactory as the experience that students have in a built environment, in which students' learning in the classroom benefits from their interactions with their peers outside of it.[1] There also remains an extreme inequity in the distance learning model, whereby a significant proportion of students still have no access to the technology, a reliable WiFi service and a dedicated learning space, and this problem hasn't improved since PISA identified it in 2018.[2]

This September I shall be undertaking another educational experiment, asking boys to sit physically distanced at desks in a grid pattern. They will be expressing their views to the backs of each other's heads, looking to me at the front. This is not how I would choose to set-up my classroom space. The challenge will be to make this as effective a learning experience as that achieved during lockdown.

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I WITNESSED MANY COLLEAGUES ADAPT QUICKLY TO THE COGNITIVE LOAD OF USING NEW TECHNOLOGY WHICH MIGHT SUGGEST THAT THEY CAN BE FLEXIBLE

DIALOGUE, NOT DEBATE: HOW PHILOSOPHY SHOULD HELP US TO BE COMPASSIONATE AS WELL AS CRITICAL

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Philosophy is notoriously an academic bloodsport. It is renowned for its intellectual rigour, for being combative, and for seeking to destroy oppositional arguments in a relentless quest for the truth. Such intellectual swordsmanship is often both impressive and intimidating. It is these features of philosophical argumentation that may be seen in debates.

In a debate, competitors are rewarded for making as many points as possible in a short space of time, for providing evidence for their claims and defending their position, regardless of the counterexamples thrown their way. Quick thinking, confidence and a willingness to speak articulately and loudly are some of the qualities required for victory. Yet, are these among some of the best attributes that support truth seeking? Are these the dispositions of a virtuous person and a democratic citizen?

While philosophers have a great reputation for analysis, argumentation and problem-solving (despite always being able to come up with counter-arguments to their own and every other position tabled), they don't have the best reputation in terms of 'plays well with others'. This occurs when the goal of philosophy is to win the argument, at any cost. Much like in debates.

There is work being done by philosophers and philosophy departments to change this culture. And this is happening not solely because of social movements and university pressure to make the staff body and texts more inclusive, for instance by seeking diversity and gender balance. (Note: academic philosophy is overwhelming male, white, and middle class. Only 25% of employed academic philosophers are women and even less are ethnic minorities.) There is growing work in the area that highlights how such an environment, with its homogeneity and competitive style, likely restricts efforts to gain knowledge and wisdom because it excludes other voices and experiences from the conversation. This epistemic consideration is in addition to moral and ethical questions about inclusivity, equity, diversity and opportunity.

A moral agent, someone who is seeking to practise virtuous habits, may desire truth and honesty while also endeavouring to be compassionate and courageous. It is not just that being 'good' is a nice thing to do, or that the virtuous will be rewarded in the afterlife, but, as Aristotle claims, practising the virtues and cultivating virtuous dispositions means you are more likely to lead a flourishing life. This is because we are social creatures who must find a way forward together. Moral agents should be reasonable and appropriately compassionate to others. We should consider and critique alternative points of view.

In his 2019 book, *Vices of the Mind*, Quassim Cassam describes epistemic vices as blameworthy character traits, attitudes, or ways of thinking that obstruct efforts to gain, keep, or share knowledge. Some examples of these that we must take care to avoid include arrogance, closed-mindedness, and dogmatism.

This makes sense: if we are arrogant, close-minded and/or dogmatic, we are less likely to consider alternative points of view or evidence that contradicts our own position. In this way, we may miss important information or facts that assist us to better form a justified true belief, or understand an idea, concept or theory.

What is noticeable, perhaps, is how a debate, one of the traditional modes of philosophising with others in a verbal manner, can easily slip from 'seeking truth' and 'reasonable disagreement' to 'point scoring' and 'winning'. If the goal is to win the intellectual competition, epistemic vices may be playing a role in supporting victory on these terms. One is more likely to win a debate if they are quick, loud, doggedly fixated on their own argument and aggressive in dismantling the ideas of their opponents.

Unfortunately, if this is the way philosophy is exclusively practised, then it will likely exclude important voices and information - ideas that not only represent the multicultural and diverse society in which we live, but also those voices that have historically been marginalised and ignored. There is not a lot of room in debate for slow and careful thinkers, for those whose background, culture and experience differs from those comfortable with confident displays of bookish learning, or those who find it difficult to express themselves in the ways dictated by this tradition.

Importantly, what is also minimised on the 'philosophy as debate' picture are epistemic virtues – the virtues of open-mindedness, intellectual humility, listening charitably to others, and moral virtues such as compassion. If we want to improve the cultivation of epistemic and moral virtues, we need to reconsider the way we teach philosophy pedagogically, in educational institutions.

One suggestion is to move away from philosophy as debate and instead return to the idea of philosophy as dialogue. The dialogical method of practising philosophy is as old as Western philosophy itself, going back to Ancient Greece and the Socratic method. It is a pedagogy centred on questions and answers, designed to seek wisdom. (Note: seeking wisdom also involves 'knowing thyself', which requires time taken for reflection.) A dialogue, like a debate, involves more than one person. In this way, philosophy is communal, it is social.

Dialogical pedagogy is an ideal accompaniment to the renewal of philosophical interest in virtue ethics and the corresponding educational focus on character education. If education is aimed at helping students to live well, which includes having knowledge and being able to flourish, then educators need to encourage epistemic and moral virtues. Better still, educational spaces must be used in such a way as to facilitate the habituation of such dispositions.

It is possible for teachers of philosophy to encourage truth-seeking while also being mindful of being inclusive, compassionate and respectful. We want young people to learn to be reasonable, but we also want them to be ethical. Furthermore, if students are to better understand the world they live in and the ideas and theories with which they are presented, then it is vital they are able to adopt different perspectives, not simply assume one automatic way of looking at the world.

In order to gain and share knowledge, students must cultivate morally and epistemically virtuous habits. This is because meaning-making is a social endeavour. We do not learn about the world on our own. Philosophical dialogue in the classroom aims at discovering shared meaning, with students building upon the ideas of others and seeking to understand different points of view. When taught in this way, philosophy can be collaborative and not solely competitive.

Careful listening is more important than ever, as groups of people are screaming in public spaces because they have not been heard for such a long time. Listening to minorities and trying to understand those whose experiences differ from our own is not just about being ethical, caring, or respectful. It is also about learning things we do not already know.

Miranda Fricker argues we must recognise that 'epistemic trust might have an irrepressible connection with social power, or that social disadvantage can produce unjust epistemic disadvantage'. We trust those who look and sound like us and this bias is an epistemic vice when it means we distrust those who do not resemble us in certain ways. Fricker coined the phrase 'epistemic injustice', which refers to a failure to appropriately attribute knowledge to others based on their identity (e.g., the police are less likely to believe the testimony of a black person). Not only does this do wrong to the person by not attributing appropriate knowledge to them, but it diminishes our epistemic agency when we fail to consider the information offered to us by this person (or group).

In order to be better epistemic and moral agents, we must practise listening to multiple points of view, engaging with them charitably, and critiquing with kindness. Certainly, the study of philosophy pits ideas one against the other in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses. But the way we do this matters – whether we engage in dialogue or debate makes a difference – because pedagogy can either support us to really listen and learn from the perspectives of others, or it may instead reward epistemic vices.

It is often said we want to educate the citizens of the future to be critical thinkers. Clear and critical thinking involves carefully considering the salient features of an argument and seeking evidence to support the most reasonable conclusion. Making an informed decision involves thinking through various positions. It is not easy to weigh up complex factors, and if we endeavour to think things through together, in groups, we are more likely to converge on the better ideas and stronger arguments while defeating weaker theories. This is even more likely when the group holding the discussion represents a diverse mix of people.

Yet if debating sees the loudest, quickest and most confident voices win, these voices are not necessarily defending positions that are right, fair, true or wise. By using the pedagogy of philosophical dialogue, where the goal is shared meaning-making, students are more likely to listen charitably and build upon the ideas of others, not simply tear them down. They are more likely to reflect – rather than simply wait for their turn to speak. In this way, philosophical dialogue may promote the epistemic virtues and moral virtues required to gain knowledge and live well as flourishing citizens in a democratic, multicultural society.

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PANDEMIC AS 'DISORIENTING DILEMMA': TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING AND SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES IN EDUCATION

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If the coronavirus pandemic has taught us anything, it is of course that there are aspects of life we simply cannot control, no matter how much we endeavour to do so. After a spell of distance learning lasting from mid-March until the end of June, we have now been back on site at school, as we had hoped to be, since the 10th of August. With numerous measures and restrictions in place in line with strict regulations, we wear masks in almost all classrooms and when moving about the school buildings, and adhere to suitably distanced seating arrangements in work areas and the cafeteria, and we follow one-way traffic systems on staircases. This is the only way we can safely return to our school buildings, and all the students and teaching staff I have quizzed on this are more than happy to comply in order to experience live teaching on campus once more.

This is not to say that distance learning was a disaster in any way, shape or form. By means of a carefully orchestrated combination of video conference lessons and independent learning by students, my students and I were able to achieve what I believe was a very impressive level of commitment, (digital) interaction and progress. Like so many teachers the world over, I found myself adapting my usual approach to the new situation. The (virtual) classroom became more 'flipped' than ever before, with students completing preparatory tasks before our live sessions. This typically involved learning vocabulary, reading chapters in our literature texts and sometimes completing grammar exercises. During homeschooling, students read articles from the press ahead of discussions, researched facts and figures, watched TED talks, and worked together virtually to prepare posters and video clips. Forced by the social distancing safety measures imposed by the virus to adapt our teaching and learning strategies, we did so at breakneck speed and soon established a new way of working together.

And then, just as we had settled in to the then 'new normal', everything looked set to change again, with a June return to school on the cards. Ultimately it proved impossible to resume our standard timetable again on site, and instead we spent three weeks working according to a hybrid model, with half classes involved in on-site practicals and staggered half days with individual classes in those rooms big enough. This change in circumstances set me thinking about what that return to school would, could and should entail. Our school leadership team made a point of encouraging us to look at the positives of home schooling and eliciting views from both teachers and students on what aspects we should seek to retain once on-site teaching resumed.

For me it was clear. I wanted to help students retain and further the extensive competencies they had developed in independent learning. We are a selective state school preparing 15-19 year-old students for the Matura, the Swiss equivalent to A Levels, and the vast majority go on to study at tertiary level. Though independent learning strategies have long been fostered at our school, it was during home schooling that they really came into their own, in my view, and it is this positive that I most wish to hold on to.

Adapting my teaching for online and remote delivery proved an exercise in professional development and reflection, involving me as it did in my very own learning journey. I read widely in areas pertaining to social learning theories during this period and found that the concepts of self-determination ('SDT') and transformative learning ('TL') and the related critical reflection processes all informed both my materials and task design and the planning and execution of my online teaching.

Self-determination theory and how it can inform teaching

SDT is a wide-reaching theory of human motivation focused on people's innate psychological needs and growth with application in learning-informed fields, including family life and education (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The theory considers how far individual behaviour is self-motivated and self-determined, examining the motivation behind decisions made without influence or intervention from outside.

Usefully for educators, among others, SDT proposes three central intrinsic needs pertaining to self-determination which can help us understand why and how people pursue goals, these being competence (in which an individual aims to control an outcome and to master a skill, knowledge area or attitude), autonomy (in which an individual seeks awareness, agency and harmony in his or her life), and relatedness (in which an individual seeks to interact and join forces with others) (Deci & Ryan, 2000 & 2002).

Deci and Ryan (2000) argue that 'a direct corollary of the SDT perspective is that people will tend to pursue goals, domains, and relationships that allow or support their need satisfaction. To the extent that they are successful in finding such opportunities, they will experience positive psychological outcomes' (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 230). Furthermore, research shows people have generally more effective and healthier learning experiences when autonomously motivated (Deci & Ryan, 2012), which is more likely when they 'are mindful and take interest'

(Deci et al., 2015, p. 113). Lastly, it is worth noting that motivation can spread among people through 'social contagion', spreading through interaction (Wild & Enzle, 2015, p.143), a finding which certainly speaks for (digital) interaction and exchange on tasks and materials.

These are, of course, invaluable insights for anyone involved in education. For me, it means looking to trigger intrinsic motivation in my students. It is worth noting that SDT is not in fact concerned with how much motivation an individual has, but rather with what kinds are 'operative' (Deci & Ryan, 2012, p. 114). This can be achieved by choosing appealing topics and materials, which might also result in motivating a learner with low overall motivation for my subject. Establishing where student interests lie is of critical importance, as this kind of diagnostic information equips teachers to meet and hopefully even exceed student expectations. In the best possible scenario, this process can result in extrinsic motivation becoming internalised because an individual ultimately finds intrinsic motivation in an extrinsically motivated activity.

While it is easy to understand how external motivating factors such as exams can demotivate students, rewarding students can perhaps surprisingly also be counter-productive insofar that this reduces intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 2001, p. 1). Deci et al. (1999) explain this by noting that 'Using tangible rewards to enhance intrinsic motivation has a paradoxical undermining effect because it thwarts people's need for autonomy' (Deci et al., 1999, p. 115). Developing my awareness of SDT during homeschooling resulted in me paying even greater attention to constructing engaging tasks and creating appealing and thought-provoking materials in which students often had either a choice of task or of submission format. Liberated for a period from the requirement to grade student performance, I was able to focus on formative rather than summative feedback, something which impacted positively on motivation for many students.

Transformative Learning and how it can shape teaching

It was while studying adults involved in further and higher education that Jack Mezirow, the originator of TL, recognised that through reflection, adult learners do not just apply prior ways of learning to new scenarios but are instead forced to open up to new perspectives in order to understand change, a shift in perspective he termed 'transformation'. If they were encouraged and supported in their exploration of a so-called 'disorienting dilemma', Mezirow ventured, it would be 'impossible for individuals to revert to the old perspective' (Baumgartner, 2012, p. 101). Their minds would have been opened up to new attitudes in education and life.

Learning more about Transformative Learning (TL) in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, I soon realised that the pandemic itself was serving as a 'disorienting dilemma' for very many individuals. Though the theory originated in the context of studies in adult education, the 15-19 year-olds I teach and who find themselves on the cusp of adulthood are currently experiencing exactly the kind of unsettling situation that forces them to question and sometimes to re-think their attitude and approach to education, just like their teachers. As a student, how can and should I best organise my learning in homeschooling? How can I ensure that I am able to participate actively? How can I measure my progress? As a teacher, how do I transfer my student-centred classroom work to an online setting? How can I ensure that my students have sufficient opportunity to ask questions? How do I successfully combine the demands of live online delivery with provision of materials and tasks for preparation and follow-up?

As Fleming (2018) points out, it is with the support of an educator who encourages critical engagement with a disorienting dilemma that students can develop the mindset necessary for critical reflection and related discussion, an exercise which will ultimately be sound preparation for participation in democratic processes in later life (Fleming, 2018, p. 129). A teacher who promotes socialisation and interaction (even when limited to a virtual setting) helps students to emulate the best of the on-site classroom in a digital setting, as does peer support.

Why I will continue to be guided by principles of Self-determination Theory and Transformative Learning in a post-COVID-19 future

The shift to exclusive distance learning for a short period, alongside the possibility of returning to school in a hybrid mode, and the ultimate return to on-site teaching with restrictions recently supplied me with my own disorienting dilemma. During homeschooling it became more important than ever for me to review my instructions to students extra carefully to ensure they were easily understood and I needed to keep an eye on student participation in online tasks. I continued to examine my planning for efficiency and efficacy, trying out various flipped classroom setups in order to ensure sensible distribution of tasks for independent work and to guarantee an optimal focus on co-operative and collaborative learning in online interactions. Having to undertake this journey into the unknown involved extrinsic motivation, as I knew I had to deliver but I was reassured to find myself intrinsically motivated as well, taking every opportunity both to read and research in the fields of digital methodology and pedagogy and to learn from experts through webinars and other online training sessions, as well as exchanging with other educators confronted with this same disorienting dilemma.

Reflecting on my teaching and learning journey so far during the pandemic, I find I agree with Brookfield's (2000) observation that adult education has evolved to the point where it is no longer enough to meet people's predetermined learning needs but instead that it should 'transform their very way of thinking about themselves and their world' (Brookfield, 2000, p. 141). It certainly holds true for me that I have been forced to review and question the pedagogical beliefs and the teaching practices I have adopted during the course of nearly two decades in education, and have thus been on my own journey in adult education and professional development. I also believe that my young adult students have embarked on a similar journey and are emerging more resourceful and motivated for it.

Gymnasium Liestal. Photo credit: Reto Derungs.

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TEACHER IDENTITY AND CARE IN EDUCATION FOLLOWING COVID-19 MEASURES IN THE UK

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Teacher identity and care in education during COVID-19 measures in the UK

Friday 20th March 2020 saw the general closure of all schools in the UK as a response to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic. Although certain children, such as those of key workers, were still permitted to attend school, the majority of school-age children did not physically attend school on a day-to-day basis for the rest of the academic year. Many schools made a shift from face-to-face teaching in a classroom to teaching through online platforms. That is not to say that all schools were able to provide online content, which was due to some extent to socioeconomic discrepancy. Much discussion was had by Teaching Unions, the Department for Education, and Local Education Authorities about the form and expectations of online delivery. Despite this, the quality, type and amount of online provision varied greatly, ranging from live online synchronous lesson delivery, asynchronous videos and live chat rooms, to simply emailing worksheets to be printed out and filled in by hand.

This paper focuses on those teachers who were able to engage in some form of online interaction within the context of a virtual and entirely altered school experience. Although work has been conducted into online learning since the advent of the world wide web, the situation faced by many thousands of pupils and teachers as a result of the lockdown due to COVID-19 is different. It is therefore worth considering the implications of this as the school system has found itself facing the long-term effects of this new educational paradigm.

Academic and pastoral aspects of education

Even before the education system was faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, a somewhat artificial distinction could be found between the academic and pastoral aspects of education. Although schools generally acknowledge the interdependence of these two areas, often each area is run as a parallel but separate stream, with each having its own chain of leadership and accountability. Such a division between the academic and pastoral aspects of education gives only a poor facsimile of what really goes on in schools. Any division or separation between these two aspects of pupil life is at best artificial and misplaced, and at worst destructive and detrimental to a child's education. It is accepted that they are interdependent and complexly linked (Marland, 1980; Best and Robbins, 1983; Power, 1991). However, the sudden move to online learning seemed to polarise the two areas, or at least treat them as entirely separate types of provision.

Although they were undoubtedly doing their best in difficult circumstances, some schools seemed to provide only academic content with pupils finding themselves in a situation where they were simply expected to absorb reams of information. Yet, other schools seemed to have pupil well-being as their main focus and in some of these instances, traditional academic activities were put to one side. It is worth reflecting upon the meta-message that these two approaches might indicate: either, the 'real work' of school is knowledge acquisition to be assimilated through pupils being kept busy with tasks; or, alternatively, a message suggesting something akin to it being possible to put 'proper learning' to one side in order to help with children's well-being, with the intention that schools would pick up the 'real learning' when children returned. It was as if the major aspects of school life beyond the provision of educational material became secondary or seemed to slide out of focus.

An integral part of teaching is developing a relationship between teacher, pupil, and content. However, as a result of lockdown, teachers almost imperceptibly moved to find themselves occupying a position in which they were curators of educational content, becoming almost Siri-style assistants to online educational activities. On top of this, some pupils struggled to remain visible due to problems with connectivity and issues with hardware. This was exacerbated by there being fewer natural points of personal interaction. Those of school age were thrown into a starkly different dynamic that could not help but affect pupils' interactions with one another and change the way teachers were able to care for their pupils. The potential for developing a positive relationship between teacher, pupil and content was invariably impacted and the relationship that ensued changed or diminished.

The rapid wholesale adoption of technological tools to educate during lockdown saw a rise in task-based activity, the focus being generative rather than reflective, and this ultimately changes the perception of the role of teacher. This was further exacerbated in some schools through the use of a form of business rhetoric such that education came to be framed purely as a product or deliverable. The unintended consequences of this will be explored below.

Teacher Identity: Teachers as Learning Administrators and Curators of educational content

'Teachers' identities' refers to the ways that teachers think about themselves and their classroom roles. Such an identity is 'based upon the core beliefs one has about teaching and being a teacher that are constantly changing and evolving based upon personal and professional experiences' (Grier and Johnston, 2009, p. 59). Pupils play a central role in the development of their teachers' professional identity (Proweller and Mitchener, 2004). Therefore, the changed nature of teaching and teacher-pupil interactions during the lockdown period will have had an impact upon teacher identity.

Biesta (2004, 2009) highlights that education and teaching in the age of accountability and standards are understood through the language of production. During the lockdown, a model of teaching developed whereby teachers *produced* tasks for pupils to complete, with the focus being on the task as opposed to learning. This model of education perhaps resonates with many working in the fee-paying school market. Following lockdown, there was a sense in which schools had to justify charging fees although pupils were no longer physically present. It is hard to put a price on teaching or separate it out as a specific element or percentage of what takes place in a school. Some schools slipped unwittingly into a business rhetoric, with stakeholders expecting to see a product they had paid for – education – delivered. A narrative resulted where the teacher had to prove that something had been taught, as opposed to the focus being on pupil learning. Pupils and teachers perhaps found themselves to some extent caught in a narrative of content generation thus perpetuating the underutilisation of technology (Blake, 2000), eschewing the contemplative for the functional.

Who cares?

Broadly, care is being responsive to the particular, situated, needs of the other (e.g., Noddings, 2013). The good teacher normally cares for pupils effectively through interaction, discussion and debate, not solely through providing activities and tasks. The content of care is a necessary function of the situation. The problem with the task-based model of online education that has embedded within it a rhetoric of 'deliverables' and 'proofs' of teaching, is that it denies the importance of the 'other' in order to learn; in this case, the pupils. If there is minimal interaction between teacher and pupils due the former being required to curate and create content in order to 'show' that a topic has been taught, then the latter are unlikely to have their particular educational and affective needs responded to.

Classrooms are at their best when they can create a feeling of a group of people learning together (Crosnoe, 2011; Flook et al., 2005; Roeser et al., 1996). An emphasis on group activities, co-operative and collaborative learning stresses that the educational process occurs through the active participation of pupils and teachers in an [online] environment that facilitates peer interaction, evaluation and cooperation (Hiltz & Wellman, 1997). Although emotional support and friendship sometimes accompany these activities, they are rarely the focus or part of the intended learning objective. This mattered less as there were many interactions with a wide variety of people in quotidian school life, something that lockdown has changed dramatically. This change necessitates a radical rethinking of how online teaching systems are used. Attention must be paid to teaching in such a way that content is not separated from the interpersonal. This is particularly important given continued social isolation due to localised lockdowns and the ongoing issues caused by COVID-19 infections.

Conclusion

The rapid wholesale adoption of online teaching methods as a response to the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown brought a number of different challenges to schools. Returning to the meshing of the pastoral and academic when providing care for pupils is key, whether they continue to be educated online or offline, moving away from a business rhetoric with the meta-message being that education is a commodity and finally, teachers should be empowered to foster caring relationships with their pupils both on and off line, as it is the relationship between teacher, pupil and content that forges deep learning.

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WINNING AT SCHOOL SPORT:
BEYOND THE COVID CRISIS

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The landscape of school sport was shifting significantly before the COVID crisis had occurred. A perfect storm of factors had combined to undermine the foundations of this prominent area of school life. Many activities traditionally associated with boys – such as rugby, football and cricket – were under unprecedented threat from a combination of safety concerns, exam clashes and changing parent and pupil attitudes to time demands, especially during the summer term. Many maintained schools long ago abandoned contact rugby, reflecting the Rugby Football Union's position that this should not be compulsory in education. Others have introduced greater programme variety in the hope of sustaining engagement amongst pupils uninspired either by outdoor games or by competition. The number of teenage girls involved in team sports has always trailed the statistics for boys, and the trend is continuing downwards. Research shows that the number of pupils – both boys and girls – participating in traditional team games in the independent sector reduces significantly in each school year (see graphs 1 and 2). Other factors have also contributed to the decline of competitive games: the assumed honour of selection for school teams is being questioned, with many schools struggling to win consistent commitment of pupils and parents to school matches, especially on weekends and at distant destinations.

Netball Participation in Day Schools
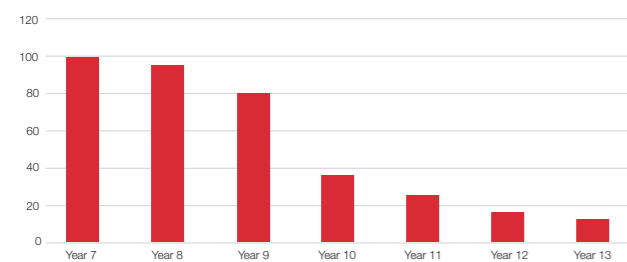
Percentage of boys in each year group playing contact Rugby Football

Year Group	Day Schools	Day/Boarding*	Boarding
7	94	80	
8	82	72	
9	46	64	94
10	38	55	90
11	31	48	73
12	28	35	55
13	27	34	50

*Defined as a school with at least 25% pupils boarding and at lerast 25% day

Graph 1. Research conducted by the Professional Association of Directors of Sport in Independent Schools

Graph 2. Research conducted by the Professional Association of Directors of Sport in Independent Schools

Facilities for physical activity in all sectors have mushroomed in the last 20 years. The bulk of this investment, however, has been for indoor games (sports halls, swimming pools and fitness gyms), all of which provide attractive alternatives to outdoor sports in the British winter. The legacy concept of the Sports Council of the 1970s, 'Sport for All', has been surprisingly enduring – but also exposed as inaccurate. 'Sports', meaning competitive activities, were never for all: more people of that generation came to shy away from team games than came to love them. The programme was entirely meritocratic, with the best athletes getting a significantly higher quality experience. Recollections of 'Cross-Country' – amazingly an expression still prominent in the lexicon of school sport – stir few fond memories, even amongst the most athletic pupils. The negative school experience of many current parents contributes to an inter-generational resistance to active lifestyles.

Also significant is the demise of compulsion, and the emergence of choice. Alternatives to traditional games are wider, and offered earlier in a pupil's school career. The aim is to improve participation, though an unintended consequence is to erode the number of pupils remaining involved with extracurricular competitive sport. This is compounded in some schools where timetabling, resistance to weekend activity, transport difficulties and shifting staff priorities create additional problems for the operation of inter-school competition. Those schools which have managed to survive the demise of compulsion and maintain a critical mass of willing participants have done so by building a culture of commitment and expectation. The biggest challenge for all schools operating significant programmes of sport is the retention of pupils in these activities from year to year.

The traditional coaching workforce has also been eroded. Most boys' and co-ed schools were dependent upon the willing participation of classroom teachers, in sufficient quantity and quality. In many sectors, this is no longer the case. Attempts to incentivise participation through payment have met with mixed success. Sports coaching in schools is now a much more mixed economy. Specialist PE teachers are still the core of most provision, but are supplemented by sports coaches (full and part time), graduate assistants and, sometimes, parents. The establishment of the PE Premium in state primary schools stimulated the emergence of an entire industry of coaching companies, of widely varying standards, keen to encourage hard-pressed schools to outsource their provision for all aspects of physical activity.

These difficulties have led to a revisiting of the purpose of PE and School Sport. The historic prominence of competition meant that the quality of a school's sports programme was simplistically correlated with the size of the trophy cabinet.

The highest performing schools currently compete at a better standard than ever before. Investment in resources, including specialist coaches (and promising players) has established an elite group of schools who consistently dominate national competitions. They provide a pathway to vocational sport, albeit for a tiny number of pupils. However, this has been accompanied by a pluralisation of the success criteria of physical activity in schools. Retention, engagement, physical well-being and lifelong participation are coming to accompany competitive triumphs as the legitimate aims of sports activity in education.

Where are we now?

The COVID crisis has accelerated the need to turn to sport for more than the competitive element. The summer season of 2020 did not occur, and serious questions surround what may be possible in the autumn. No one knows what the legacy impact of this will be on participation rates in affected activities (principal amongst which are cricket and rugby) going forward. A term without Saturday sport may lead some pupils and parents (as well as staff) to lose the habit, and develop competing interests. It has also provided a development possibility – one that some schools have embraced more enthusiastically than others. Whilst some have seen the potential temporary absence of inter-school sport as a threat to the status quo, others have recognised an opportunity to devote resources and creativity to other initiatives. These include the potential for seasonal shifts (e.g. playing cricket in September), but the biggest possibility is in building innovative programmes to more robustly deliver physical well-being.

Alongside initiatives for physical health are legitimate aspirations that physical activity could impact positively on the mental well-being of children. More schools are making concerted efforts to include more children in sport and other physical activities, seeing physical health and lifelong activity as ambitions for all their pupils. The Youth Sport Trust is pioneering a Recovery Curriculum aiming to restore the health and physical literacy of pupils to pre-crisis level. Many independent schools are re-visiting their PE curriculum, separating it further from school sport, and establishing a health and well-being focus. The more enterprising are adding leadership education and mental skills to this as well. Schools are starting to look more carefully at what they are really trying to achieve through their programmes. The more forward-thinking, having clarified what they are trying to achieve, are then building programmes and allocating resources in pursuit of these goals.

The current pandemic has provided an opportunity to stop, pause and re-boot physical activity in schools. Few schools had a programme that was genuinely fit for purpose before the crisis. The opportunity to reflect, without the constant pressure of the competition programme, has presented the possibility of establishing something that is both improved and more relevant. There has been an unprecedented sharing of ideas across the sector. Post-pandemic physical activity will include many of its historic strengths – including a resumption of inter-school competition – but will add to them new priorities which can impact positively upon all pupils. Some schools are eagerly pursuing improvement and see the current restrictions as an unprecedented opportunity. Others are unsettled by the uncertainty and desperate to return to the comfort zone of what they recognise. The latter see only threat in the current situation.

There have been few winners during the pandemic. Schools can use the opportunity to enhance their provision and to adopt an inclusive approach, aimed at impacting upon all pupils. Beyond skills and tactics is a new approach which also values healthy, active lifestyles and the development of personal character. Those who do so will have found an additional, and more enduring, way of winning in school sport.

AUTHENTIC EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP:
THE LEADERSHIP CHARACTER TRAITS NEEDED BY SCHOOL LEADERS TO SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATE THEIR SCHOOLS THROUGH THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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The COVID-19 pandemic which continues to engulf the world has altered the lens by which leadership in education has, and continues to be, viewed. Educational leaders have had to act with speed, creativity, flexibility and with courage for the greater good of others. Nancy Koehn in her Virtues and Vocation webinar, Character and Leadership in Crisis, argued that COVID-19 is a 'long-term crisis' which requires a 'rising' within leaders.[1] Crises, argues Koehn, are like 'greenhouses' with some leaders 'rising' and others 'falling away'. Those leaders who 'evolve' and recognise the 'moral seriousness' of the current crisis will draw on the leadership character traits of 'resilience, self-discipline, courage and empathy' and, in turn, evolve their 'character'.

With the physical separation which has resulted from lockdown and the subsequent closure of schools in the UK it has been a time to reimagine leadership and to recognise that leadership has had to take place at all levels of society as individuals embrace the challenge within their own context and respective societies. Educational communities have required those in leadership positions to provide, at short notice, clarity and vision in terms of learning and curriculum requirements, health and safety guidelines, and training and resources in order to be able to define learning solutions that will allow their schools to flourish in times of uncertainty.

To support the school community and wider stakeholders, school leaders have drawn upon a toolbox of 'intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and inspiration' (Fernandez and Shaw, 2020). The coronavirus pandemic continues to present a serious and immediate adaptive challenge for educational leaders. Although leaders have a crucial role in the response of institutions to crises, in reality the role of school leaders in establishing a culture of trust, collaboration, and shared leadership prior to a crisis will have had a more significant influence on the ability of institutions to withstand, and respond efficiently, during a time of crisis (Kezar, Fries-Britt, Kurban, McGuire & Wheaton, 2018).

The need for authentic distributed leadership

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has tested educational leaders like never before but what is emerging from this period is an ever-greater need, and importance for, authentic distributed educational leadership. The traits needed by educational leaders since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 broadly align with the authentic educational leadership literature: traits such as empathy, compassion, courage, transparency, adaptability, self-reflection, generosity, honesty, creativity, wisdom, humility, open-mindedness, gratitude and trust. For the continued effective navigation, both through the current crisis and the uncertain global waters which lie ahead, there is an increased need to shift the narrative away from schools being led by a 'charismatic school leader acting alone' (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001) and towards leaders who demonstrate authentic distributed leadership.

For schools, and the education sector more widely, to effectively take such a journey there needs to be a greater prevalence of both individual and institutional 'robustness' (Heffernan 2020). The need for such robustness requires leaders to recognise and be willing to evolve their own character. Leadership at its core is about character (Gini and Green 2013) – specifically, 'character attuned to its ethical responsibility to others'. The 'ethical responsibility' to others has been magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic with a need for schools to be underpinned by authentic systems of 'shared leadership' enabling 'local' decision-making (Kezar & Holcombe 2017). This 'shared' or distributed leadership has been fundamental in attempts to provide continued educational provision, particularly through the transition to online learning, during the COVID-19 lockdown period in the UK. Distributing leadership responsibilities is more effective than other leadership approaches in a crisis (Berjaoui & Karami-Akkary, 2019) and leaders who have successfully drawn upon the their 'adaptive' capacity (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001), with a courage to disrupt long-standing patterns of behaviour (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020), have been particularly effective from an 'agility', 'innovation' and 'collaboration' perspective.

Successful 'disruption' and embracing of distributed leadership within schools has been underpinned by a culture which is built on 'Psychological Safety' (Edmondson, 2018), with leaders drawing on the leadership character traits of humility, curiosity and empathy. Leaders have needed to show emotional stability and emotional intelligence and have had to 'place the interests of others above their own from a servant leadership perspective' (Doraiswamy, 2012). 'Tough empathy' allows leaders to offer personal and professional support on a human level (Goffee and Jones, 2000). This has required, and continues to require, a giving of the human spirit and such a leadership approach has required the key 'pandemic virtue' of generosity (Serazin, 2020).

There is significant alignment here with Bier et al's (2020) conceptual framework of servant leadership and corresponding professional development program for Assistant Principals in the United States, presented at the 2020 Jubilee Centre Conference.[2] Their model is built around Van Dierendonck and Patterson's (2015) model (see Figure 1) but applied to a school leadership setting:
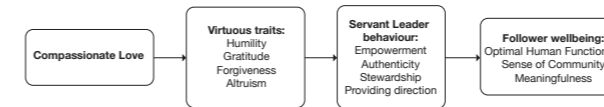

Figure 1. Compassionate love and servant leadership, conceptual model

The Assistant Principals' leadership development program is focusing on virtues which have their roots in Fig. 1: Forgiveness, Courage, Humility, Gratitude and Hope. These virtues have been decided upon by asking, 'What does it mean to flourish in the context of aspiring and/or practicing 21st century school leaders?'.

Where there has been clarity of communication and 'direction' by the respective leader, in terms of both vision and values, to all organisational stakeholders, coupled with authentic distributed leadership, schools have been able to navigate the changing educational landscape more effectively. This has allowed more authentic interactions with others through self-reflection and adjustment, thus improving students' lives and learning within the given educational context (Walker & Shuangye, 2007). Making connections with people at all levels of the institution during a crisis allows the leader to be 'truly transformative and the collaboration to be meaningful' (Fernandez and Shaw, 2020). This, in turn, strengthens bonds and to be 'repaid in full' once the crisis passes (Kezar et al., 2018).

Huge uncertainty remains in the UK and an authentic distributed approach to educational leadership will make schools more robust and adaptable for the uncertain years ahead. In her 2020 book *Unchartered*, Margaret Heffernan is firm in her belief that in order for organisations to be as 'robust' and adaptable as possible they need to foster a culture of open-mindedness with the 'freedom to transcend hierarchy':

If we want to map the future, we start by acknowledging that we don't know it all, that everyone can contribute but no one knows what we will find. With simple language, an absence of power and entrenched interests, alertness to weak signals and small insights, we start to delineate the contours of what lies ahead.

Having the courage, compassion and bravery to distribute leadership authentically within schools will foster an underlying robustness which may enable, in exceptional times, school communities to flourish, grow and adapt to the ever-changing educational landscape. The COVID-19 crisis has, and continues to show, that those leaders who display the characteristics of authentic educational leaders, have been more effective in navigating the unchartered educational and societal waters. As we emerge as a country from an unprecedented period in our history I would argue that the need for authentic educational leadership has never been greater.

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[1] See 'Reimagining Education: Character & Leadership in a Crisis with Nancy Koehn': <https://youtu.be/jx5Sm0UCR5E>.

[2] For information on the conference, see <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/2854/conferences/virtues-and-the-flourishing-life/>.