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Issue 52

# UKEd Magazine

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## AIMING HIGH IN EDUCATION



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## From the Editor

The educational conversation often is focused narrowly within the school gates. Some educators learn from the best practice from school and educators located in the UK, or at best, the English speaking world. But there is a whole world of ideas out there, and each country has started from educational roots unique to that culture, history and traditions of the country. These are natural experiments which everyone should be watching and learning from.

While many ideas work specifically because of the culture or school system, most good ideas can be adapted and used across the world and improve the learning of students everywhere.

In this issue of UKEd Magazine we discuss what we discovered from our investigation of the education system of Moscow, and we share the innovations and ambitions of the Russian capital to be among the best education systems in the world.

The city authorities are providing unprecedented funding and investment into education, with schools collaborating with higher education institutions and businesses, an alliance and vision which has been spearheaded by the Moscow City mayor.

This partnership and the improvements that have been made in recent years was celebrated in August at the Moscow City Forum - an international gathering of educational

thinkers, leaders and organisations looking to showcase the best of education in Russia and beyond.

We have distilled the best of the Forum and the Moscow educational system into our special feature, plus our usual collection of inspiring and insightful articles from contributors from the UKEdChat community.

Martin Burrett  
@ICTmagic



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## 'Geek Girl' gamers are more likely to study science and technology degrees

Girls who play video games are three times more likely to choose physical science, technology, engineering or maths (PSTEM) degrees compared to their non-gaming counterparts, according to new research from the University of Surrey.

The study, funded by the British Academy and published in the journal *Computers in Human Behaviour*, found that 13-14 year old girls classed as 'heavy gamers' – those playing over nine hours a week – were three times more likely to pursue a PSTEM degree compared to girls who were non-gamers.

It also found that 100 per cent of girls in the study who were already in PSTEM degrees were identified as gamers. However, the same could not be said for boys where a similar amount of gamers existed regardless of degree type, leading to thoughts that boys experience far less pressure to conform to the video gamer stereotype if they were studying a PSTEM degree.

Read more at [ukedchat.com/?p=45108](http://ukedchat.com/?p=45108)



## Limiting children's recreational screen time to less than 2 hours a day linked to better cognition

Only one in 20 US children in the study met the full recommended guidelines on recreational screen time, physical activity and sleep.

Limiting recreational screen time to less than two hours a day, and having sufficient sleep and physical activity is associated with improved cognition, compared with not meeting any recommendations, according to an observational study of more than 4,500 US children aged 8-11 years old published in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health journal*.

Taken individually, limited screen time and improved sleep were associated with the strongest links to improved cognition, while physical activity may be more important for physical health.

However, only one in 20 US children aged between 8-11 years meet the three recommendations advised by the Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines to ensure good cognitive development – 9-11 hours of sleep, less than two hours of recreational screen time, and at least an hour of physical activity every day.

The study found that US children spend an average of 3.6 hours a day engaged in recreational screen time.

Read more at [ukedchat.com/?p=44830](http://ukedchat.com/?p=44830)



## Early intervention is better for children overcoming reading difficulties

A University of Alberta education researcher who achieved dramatic results with early assessment and intervention to help Grade 1 and 2 students with reading difficulties says there's still a chance to help these students in Grade 3.

George Georgiou, a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, along with his collaborators Rauno Parrila at Macquarie University and Robert Savage from the University College of London, started working with 290 Grade 1 students from 11 Edmonton public schools in 2015-16.

The group trained undergraduate and graduate students to assess students' reading abilities and provide appropriate interventions, such as intensive phonics and matching of the newly learned correspondences with words in children's storybooks, to help them improve their reading.

By doing so, Georgiou and his team reduced the number of students who continued to struggle in reading to just seven.

Read more at [ukedchat.com/?p=45090](http://ukedchat.com/?p=45090)



## Children found capable of using the 'wisdom of crowds'

Children, like adults, can improve their response to difficult tasks by the power of group work, new research led by the University of Bristol has found.

The 'Wisdom of Crowds' is well documented in adults, but previously children were thought to lack the social and cognitive skills to make effective group decisions together.

The study, published today [Monday 24 September] in *PLOS ONE*, evaluated the habits of 219 pupils from schools in the South West of England between the ages of 11 and 19 revealing that in fact, pupils as young as 11 years possess the skills necessary to 'crowdfund' knowledge in order to decipher the correct answer.

Participants were asked to guess the number of sweets in a jar individually and then after discussion, to give a group answer. The researchers looked at how the children used their original guesses to come to a final group answer.

An international team of scientists led by Dr Christos Ioannou from the University's School of Biological Sciences found that the children reduced their estimation error after group discussion.

Read more at [ukedchat.com/?p=44803](http://ukedchat.com/?p=44803)





## Stop teaching kids how to be happy, says education expert

A leading educational psychologist is urging schools to stop thinking of wellbeing as another subject to be taught. Instead, she is urging them to create healthier schools where students naturally develop wellbeing and a love of learning.

Dr. Helen Street, an Honorary Research Fellow with The University of Western Australia's Graduate School of Education, has released a new book, *Contextual Wellbeing: creating positive schools from the inside out*, which offers a practical framework for building a healthy, equitable social context in schools.

Dr. Street said schools and colleges around the developed world were doing more than ever before to support the mental health and wellbeing of their students but the latest research revealed that one-sixth of pre-teen and nearly a quarter of adolescents worldwide were experiencing distress.

"While schools are trying to get it right when it comes to helping support their students, even their best efforts are just not working well," Dr. Street said. She believes the problem lies in the existence of unhealthy school contexts.

Read more at [ukedchat.com/?p=44946](https://ukedchat.com/?p=44946)



## How schools can optimise support for children with ADHD

New research gives the clearest guidance yet on how schools can best support children with ADHD to improve symptoms and maximise their academic outcomes.

The study, led by the University of Exeter and involving researchers at the EPPI-Centre (University College London), undertook a systematic review which analysed all available research into non-medication measures to support children with ADHD in schools. Published in *Review of Education*, the paper found that interventions which include one-to-one support and a focus on self-regulation improved academic outcomes.

Around five per cent of children have ADHD, meaning most classrooms will include at least one child with the condition. They struggle to sit still, focus their attention and to control impulses much more than ordinary children of the same age. Schools can be a particularly challenging setting for these children, and their difficulty in waiting their turn or staying in their seat impacts peers and teachers. Research shows that medication is effective, but does not work for all children, and is not acceptable to some families.

Read more at [ukedchat.com/?p=45112](https://ukedchat.com/?p=45112)



## A Majority of Teens Have Experienced Some Form of Cyberbullying

59% of U.S. teens have been bullied or harassed online, and a similar share says it's a major problem for people their age. At the same time, teens mostly think teachers, social media companies and politicians are failing at addressing this issue.

Name-calling and rumour-spreading have long been an unpleasant and challenging aspect of adolescent life. But the proliferation of smartphones and the rise of social media has transformed where, when and how bullying takes place. A new Pew Research Center survey finds that 59% of U.S. teens have personally experienced at least one of six types of abusive online behaviours.

The most common type of harassment youth encounter online is name-calling. Some 42% of teens say they have been called offensive names online or via their cellphone. Additionally, about a third (32%) of teens say someone has spread false rumours about them on the internet, while smaller shares have had someone other than a parent constantly ask where they are, who they're with or what they're doing (21%) or have been the target of physical threats online (16%).

Read more at [ukedchat.com/?p=44832](https://ukedchat.com/?p=44832)



## American girls read and write better than boys

As early as the fourth grade, girls perform better than boys on standardised tests in reading and writing, and as they get older that achievement gap widens even more, according to research published by the American Psychological Association.

"The common thinking is that boys and girls in grade school start with the same cognitive ability, but this research suggests otherwise," said David Reilly, a doctoral student at Griffith University and lead author of the study published in *American Psychologist*. "Our research found that girls generally exhibit better reading and writing ability than boys as early as the fourth grade."

Reilly and his colleagues analyzed information from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a nationally representative data sample of standardized test scores from more than 3.4 million students in the fourth, eighth and 12th grades in the United States over a span of 27 years.

While the tests showed that girls, in general, scored significantly higher than boys in both reading and writing in the fourth grade, that gap widened further in eighth and 12th grades, and the difference was far more substantial for writing than it was for reading.

Read more at [ukedchat.com/?p=44756](https://ukedchat.com/?p=44756)



## EVERY SCHOOL NEEDS A SCHOOL LIBRARY WITH A SCHOOL LIBRARIAN

By Elizabeth Hutchinson

I love school libraries! Well you would, I hear you say, you're a librarian. My love of school libraries is not about being able to work in a room in a school with a lot of books, or my ability to sit and read books all day (I wish) or even being able to play with the bleepy scanny thing (that is one of the many names for the book issue scanner). Nor is it my love for school libraries based on sorting out photocopier jams, or peeling the plastic from yet another laminator jam, or being called the library lady, shelf sorter or any other name that teachers or students can think of when what they are looking for is the librarian. Joking aside my love of school libraries is their ability to support and create literate, independent learners and this is why teachers should love them too.

We are living in strange times where it is normal to hear about another school library closing due to lack of use (we have the internet so why do we need books?), librarians removed due to lack of support (what does a school librarian do anyway?) and all in the name of saving budgets. I would understand this if every school across the country felt the same but this is not the case. Some schools are increasing their library budgets for stock, spend money on refurbishing their libraries and employing not only library assistants to organise the day to day running of the library but also a professional librarian to work alongside teachers. The difference between these two scenarios, as far as I can see it, is the lack of understanding about how a well stocked school library with a professional librarian can impact student attainment and support teaching and learning, so how has this happened?

I imagine that if you are a teacher born in the 1990's you will have gone through school at the time my own children did, when the internet became commonplace in school. Teachers at the time seemed to stop encouraging the use of the school library as much. My children were repeatedly being told to come home and click to find the answers to their homework and I am sure you were too. There seemed to be very little need to use the school library at all, especially if you were a parent who had enough books at home for your child to read and were lucky enough to have a set of encyclopedias. I can hear my children moan now as I made them look in the encyclopedia before I would help

them find what they needed online. My children were lucky, although they didn't think so at the time, but what if you didn't have that support at home? There was no conversations about evaluating the information found or giving credit at school and this skill has slowly been lost over time.

Fast forward to these children now becoming teachers. In teacher training there is very little said about school libraries if anything at all (I know this because two of my sons are now teachers and neither heard anything about school libraries as part of their courses). Most of the research done at university level is online and then teachers are expected to somehow know and understand the role of the school library and the librarian. Ask any teacher if they think a school library is important the answer would be yes but ask them how they use it to support teaching and learning, the response would be different I am sure. This is a worrying problem because if teachers don't really understand how the school library can make a difference to themselves or their students, the gap between the schools that do have and those that don't will increase.

### Why do schools need school libraries with professional librarians in them?

With literacy levels currently at a worrying level we know that children who are surrounded by books and people who read, read more, and the more children read the better they do at school. If children are not getting the example from home they should be seeing teachers engaging and talking about reading. A well stocked library with a professional librarian is known to increase literacy levels in children (National Literacy Trust, 2018).

### Apart from improved literacy what else can you get from a well stocked library?

Many teachers link the school library to English, I agree it is an easy connection to make but why should the English department get access to lots of resources when other departments are struggling for budgets? Every department in a school should be working with and benefiting from the school library. A library budget is not for the library it is for the whole school. Do you as a teacher know what resources are available from the library for your subject? If not the next time you pass the library go in and ask. Most school librarians are desperate to work with

all departments but struggle to find out what teachers need because you are always busy and who has time to answer emails? Give them a few minutes of your time and you may find that you have access to more than you thought.

### Is it all about resources?

No! School librarians are information specialists so you have access to someone who can co-teach information and digital literacy within your classroom. Is the thought of trying to teach about fake news/misinformation worrying? Would you like to use Hangout, Padlet or Flipgrid to have an international collaborative lesson but don't have the time or know where to start? Should your students be using online resources but you are not sure, what is available or how to guide them to finding what they need? Do you need to teach about referencing and plagiarism and although you can teach it you would like to try something new. The school librarian can do all of this and so much more!

### What can teachers do about this?

If you have a school library with someone working in there it is about building relationships. Go and have a conversation with them. Find out what they can do for you and your students. As a librarian working alone in a school it can be almost impossible to talk to every teacher to explain how they can support so I would like to encourage teachers to be proactive. If you don't ask you don't get.

If you are a teacher who has no-one working in your library start asking the questions. Do you have a local Schools' Library Service that can fill that gap if the school can't currently afford to employ someone? Is there a budget for your school library and how is it being spent? A room full of books does not make a library unless schools are encouraging its use and keeping it up to date. Teaching was never meant to be a do it yourself job and the school librarian is there to support you and your students so next time don't walk past, walk in and say hello.

Elizabeth @Elizabethhutch is Head of Schools' Library Service in Guernsey, a Chartered librarian and Fellow of CILIP. She came runner up in the 2016 LILAC Information Literacy Award, is an international presenter and published author.







## CAN WE ALL BE 100%... 100% OF THE TIME?

By Laura George

It's the 100% attendance award debate. Firstly, now I have waded head strong into the tide I am going to back track a bit and retreat to the shallows for a bit of a paddle. I don't really want to discuss individual schools and if they do the 100% attendance awards at the end of the year and if it is strictly right or wrong (I teach RS, I spend most of my days playing Devil's advocate being neutral on the fence!) or if it is better to adapt for individual needs. I see the merit in both sides of the argument. What I do want to discuss is what it tells us (and in turn our pupils) about what is important in life and the damage I feel it MAY (depending on how it's managed) cause.

I am under little impression that if England's educational inspectors were not looking at attendance as a big factor that 100% wouldn't be such a big thing (a bug I have against OFSTED) and may not get as big celebration at the end of year (I know it would be celebrated, as it should, but maybe not to the degree). So why do we do it?!

Attendance is important, but only at the extremes that it may cause an issue or a problem for learners...

and every learner (as we well know) is different. I would prefer to see good interventions and aid for those who struggle rather than an iPhone given as a prize at the end for 100% attendance for one pupil picked out of a hat (I worked in a school that did this).

But what does it mean for what we teach our pupils? My concern is that it teaches pupils that work is more important than well-being. When we only celebrate those at the top (and at times only one of those at the top whose name happened to be drawn from a hat) we are saying that if you took a day off because you were sick, then you have done something negative.

Isn't that what is wrong with the traditional UK ideas towards work? I find so often now that work gets prioritised over the important things in life in the UK that just doesn't happen in other countries that have a higher level of population well-being. I just worry that we are keeping this unrealistic focus as work being more important than anything else...and I don't think it's healthy.

If you are ill and need to recover/be ill, stay home. If you are struggling

mentally, seek help and take time off. If you have a sick child, look after them. If your child has a one off important play at school and they will be looking out for you in the crowd, go. I think we should encourage this as a nation...not the "100% no matter what" mentality. Obviously, if it is not possible, do what you can. But employers, society and schools should be promoting health and well-being 'as well as' good attendance.

I have worked in schools that also did the 100% award for staff and it did not go down very well with those who had different valid reasons for not having the 100% If we as adults can feel this imagine the pupils that might be in this case too (especially if it were a parent/doctor who said they had to stay home).

So maybe what I am saying is, celebrate good attendance, even perfect attendance. But maybe also celebrate those who look after themselves and promote well-being too. The ability to strive for the best but know when to quit, and when that is better for mind and body.

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Laura George **@Mrs\_Educate** is a teacher of 7 years who has worked in both the state comprehensive and grammar school sector. Now working at an independent Prep. school.







## EXCITING LEARNERS ABOUT EDUCATION



## Изучение образования в Москве

## Exploring Moscow Education

As a new school year dawned for young Muscovites, the UKEd Magazine team were given special access to educational leaders and thinkers pushing to make Moscow an international centre of excellence in education. We discovered a joined up approach to pull the resources of government, higher education institution, business, educators and the community to improve education together with learning resources and learning opportunities at both school and home.

We also spoke to ordinary educators and about their experience and their outlook on education in Moscow and across Russia more broadly. We also sat in ordinary classrooms and saw children in their learning environment. There is a real sense of momentum and optimism for the future of education in Moscow, and a real belief that the world can learn from their experience. Hear more about that in the UKEd Podcast.

We also showcase the best of the Moscow Global Forum: City For Education exhibition.

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# Moscow Special Feature

## Learning in Moscow

### Classroom Practice

In the UK professional development courses are often held in less than optimal environments. Aging council facilities with wafer thin walls and/or windows with the obligatory brown carpets and pink wall paint. Alternatively, you may have been packaged off to a central school for training which has specially earmarked the spare 'You wouldn't catch me teaching in that room' classroom.

In Moscow we discovered that training often takes place in purpose-built facilities which emulate the classroom experience and provide an environment conducive to learning. The UKEdChat team visited one such facility in central Moscow which had been designed to train and assess teachers and also provide a place for students to study and try practice exams.

These spaces can be used by any teacher or student in the Moscow school system and there are specialist rooms for Russian, languages, the humanities, science, computing, engineering and more. The spaces we visited were packed with an impressive array of equipment which we were told (and also viewed for ourselves) are present in most schools within Moscow.

Moscow is currently introducing a teaching 'MOT' where teachers are assessed in basic pedagogic knowledge and subject developments, and these spaces would be used to 'up-skill' any gaps that were found.



### Real Classrooms

Classrooms in Moscow, at first glance, are similar to those found in the UK and elsewhere. There are desks, teacher tables, storage, e-whiteboards and computers. However, one difference that the UKEd Magazine team noticed is that the classroom walls were not decorated with resources or pupils' work as they often are in the UK. Instead there may be a painting or photo in a frame, but in every classroom we viewed, there would be little else. However, in the corridors, stairwells and other communal area the walls had pupils' work, portraits (including a prominent portrait of Mr Putin in the entrance of most schools





## Viewing MOSOBR TV

Learning doesn't just happen in school, and to this end the Moscow government has helped to create MOSOBR TV, and television station for teachers, learners and families where the content is largely created by teachers and learners. This 24/7 educational channel can be viewed via TV, online or via the app and aims to keep schools, pupils and the wider community up to date with educational news and developments across the city and country, but also gives additional support to learners with teachers and peers creating videos on curriculum content to help everyone learn better.

These videos are collected, edited and stitched together into coherent television shows.

The channel also creates its own programmes, including shows where educators across the city are given the opportunity to question leading politicians and educational leaders about what is happening in their school system. There are also regular news bulletins throughout the day. Other programmes include Special School Projects, Thank a Teacher, The Daily Interview and Open Academy. This last programme showcases lessons from top academics and scientists.

The UKEd Magazine team toured the studios and were interviewed and included in a broadcast. See the 2nd news item at [uked.chat/mosobr](https://uked.chat/mosobr)).



we visited) and quotes from famous people, encouraging educational slogans and information boards.

Some schools have a daily uniform, while others didn't have a uniform for day to day learning, but many schools have a more formal uniform which is worn on special occasions and these often looked like military uniforms.

However, children are similar all over the world and the chatter and giggles that could be heard between lessons could have come from children anywhere in the world. Indeed, apart from these small differences and the Russian writing, each site was a modern, European school which would not look out of place in the UK.





## Moscow Global Forum: City For Education

The Moscow Global Forum is a relatively new annual celebration of education in Moscow, across Russia and of education across the globe. This year, the Forum attracted speakers, exhibitors and visitors from across the world and took place over four days at the end of August. Officials announced that this year's event had a record 100,000 visitors.

The event began with a lavish opening ceremony and light show. Following this, the Mayor of Moscow, Sergey Sobyanin (pictured below), welcomed delegates. He acknowledged that the most important component of education is the teachers and their skills. He remarked that the profession should be respected and cared for, and workloads should be evenly distributed. Moscow children have a special knowledge day each year and concludes by thanking local teachers for their work and commitment.

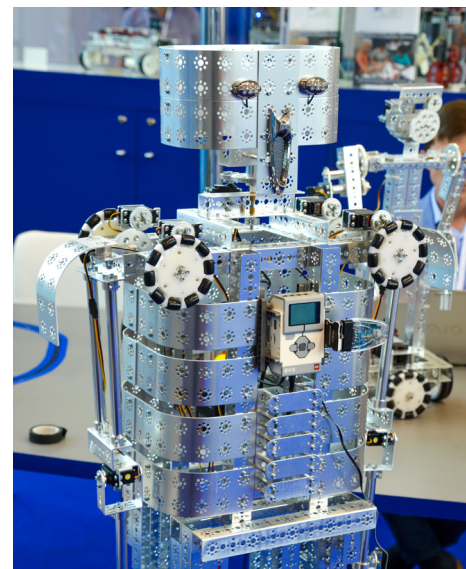
Following Mr Sobyanin's opening comments, he hosted a teaching award ceremony to celebrate some of the many talented teachers of Moscow.

Unlike some other events, there is a focus on getting the community involved and many of the visitors consisted of children and their families trying some of the resources which will be used in their learning in the coming year, and the interactive nature of the stands reflected this. Many of the



hands-on activities used technology, with many stands showcasing the learning opportunities of virtual reality. Engineering and electronics were also popular attractions. See our favourite innovations and learning resources on page 14. There were also many international educational companies, such as Microsoft, Lego, Promethean and many others exhibiting at the forum.

At the end of the first day we were able to interview the Minister of the Department of Education of Moscow, Kalina Isaak Iosifovich. He said that he felt that Moscow had taken some of the best ideas and innovations from around the world and infused







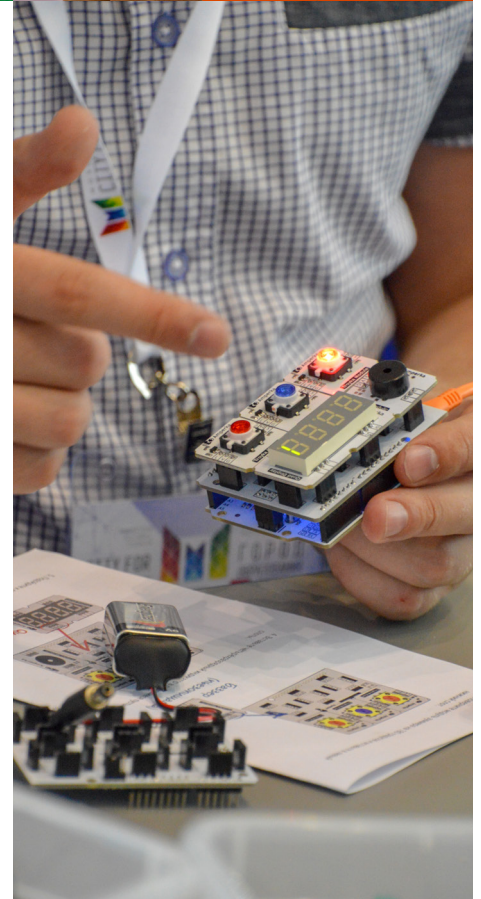
these with Russian culture and local needs to create something special and unique. We asked whether Moscow had something to teach the rest of the world about education, to which he replied that he wouldn't presume to tell others how to teach and educate, but he invited the world to see the successes that are happening in Moscow and learn from each other.

Throughout the four days there were discussions and talks in the halls and lecture theatres. For example, in a panel debate between seven international speakers about the needs of 21st century learners, there was a lengthy discussion about balancing the role of technology with resilience and creativity, and how these can and will interact more in the future as the Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence, along with the Internet of Things to change the skill set of pupils and workers of the future.

A unique element of the Moscow Global Forum was that much of the news coverage was being collected and processed by secondary-aged pupils. In collaboration with MOSOBR TV (see page 11) these pupils were interviewing politicians, exhibitors, attendees and even the UKEd Magazine team. Their recordings were then edited by other students in their own fully equipped press office completely autonomously without assistance from adults.

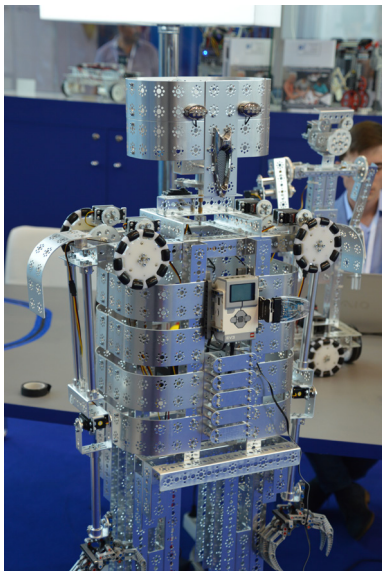
On the final day the Forum closed with a cultural extravaganza with ballet from the Bolshoi Theatre, a performance from the Moscow State Circus, singing and dancing from the children of Moscow and the launch of the International World Skills competition.

Listen to our interviews and coverage from the Moscow Global Forum in our podcast at [uked.chat/podcastmoscow](https://uked.chat/podcastmoscow).

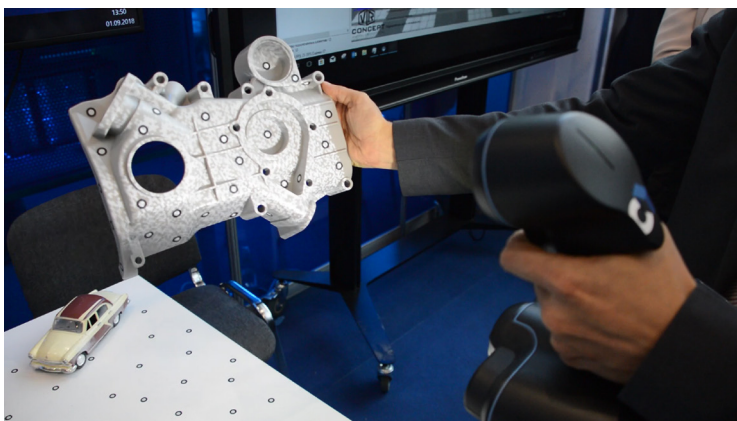
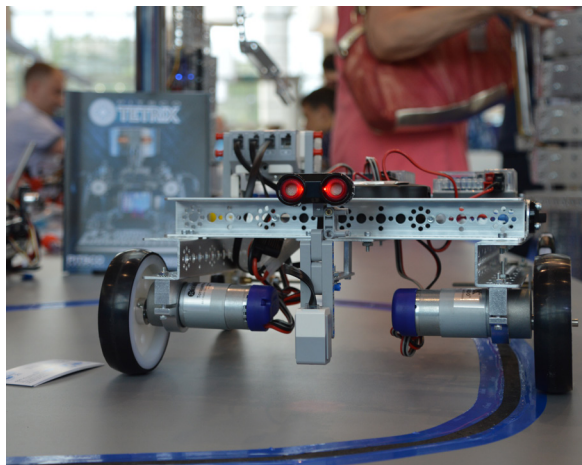




## Innovations From The Forum



It was refreshing to see the robots from RoboClass. Often educational robots are impenetrable plastic toys, here the challenge is that students must put together themselves and which components go where. Only then can pupils programme them.



This hand-held 3D scanner is an amazing piece of kit for creating digital copies of objects in a virtual reality environment. It uses lidar technology to map out the shape of objects down to fractions of millimetre and show a 3D digital version on the screen, which users can manipulate and change and then even 3D-print. A desktop version of the scanner can create a 3D scan of an environment, meaning that users can capture a true-colour 3D scene of anywhere and use virtual reality to walk through it. Imagine that in your creative writing lessons!

Most virtual reality experiences require the user to wear gloves or use controllers to manipulate virtual objects. However, in this setup the user's hands are being tracked in real-time with cameras and sensors on the goggles, allowing this user to pick up the virtual purple eggs with their own hands, try like in real. This is another step to make VR a more intuitive experience.



Who needs a whiteboard?! This projection of a wizard is being projected on a thin stream of water vapour giving the illusion that it is being projected in free space. The character is animated and the viewers are gleefully putting their hands through the image and watching it interact as the sensors detect their movements.



# Moscow eSchool

Probably the innovation which will have the most impact of learning is the Moscow eSchool platform, a new encompassing resource for teachers and pupils to use both at home and school. It has been developed by the Moscow City government and it is being rolled out across the city and in many other locations across Russia.

Firstly, the platform contains all the learning resources needed to teach the curriculum. It has detailed lesson plans, resources and e-textbooks which teachers can use as a template and adapt to their needs. Teachers can remix lessons, add their own elements and upload these to the cloud for other teachers to use.

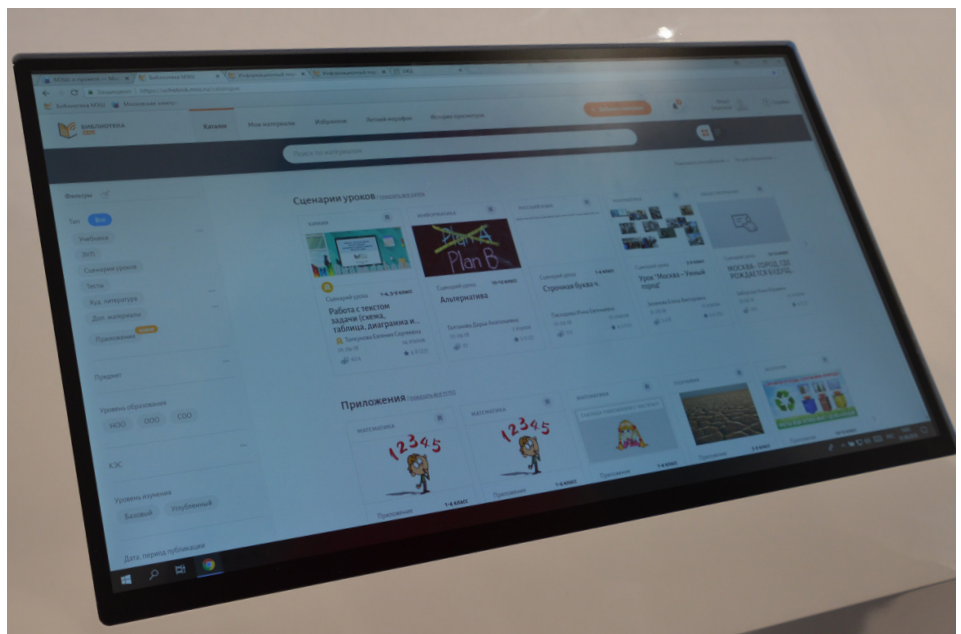
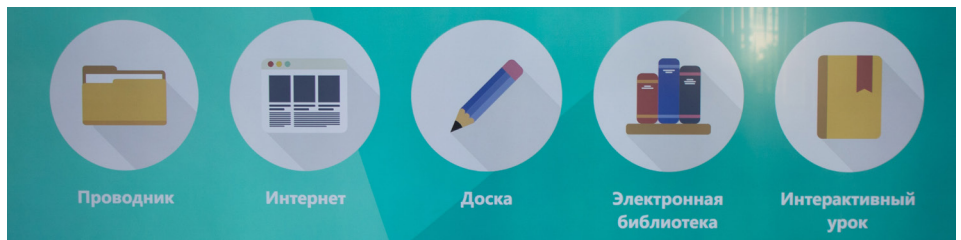
There is an assessment feature which teachers can use to create assignments and quizzes which can be graded automatically.

But pupils do not need to wait for teachers to allocate lessons. They can undertake independent learning and access the materials, including videos and audio lessons on many subjects themselves so they can learn at their own pace, or recap on areas where they need additional support.

The system contains an automatic register system which uses NFC tags in the students ID cards and scanners at the school gate to know if they are on site.

Not only is the platform free to all schools and pupils, but to promote usage teachers are being given cash rewards for using the system as it launches, which 'power-users' being given considerable sums if resources that they upload are popular which other users.

The system launched with the beginning of the school year and at that time the app was at the top of the Russian Apple App Store chart with tens of thousands of downloads in just the first few days.





# Moscow Special Feature

## First Day of School

The first day of school is a special day for Russian children and the community. As the school day begins crowds gather in public squares and parks with pupils wearing their formal uniforms. With bouquets in hand, the pupils reunite with their classmates and teachers after the summer holiday and line up in their classes behind a placard with the class name. At the ceremony witnessed by the UKEd Magazine team in central Moscow, the children danced, sang (pictured bottom right) and fathers ceremoniously carried their children to their teacher (pictured bottom right).

Speeches followed from the school leadership and a matching display from the Russian equivalent of the scouts. This ended the ceremony and the children said goodbye to their parents and were lead by their teachers to their school a few minutes walk away.

At the school the first morning is given over to games and fun, with excited children (and teachers) gossiping about their summer break. It is only in the afternoon when lessons begin and formal learning resumes.







Visit [mathvember.com](https://mathvember.com) to find out more

Mathvember is a month-long celebration throughout November of the magic of mathematics for primary schools.

From 1 to 30 November 2018, primary school teachers and maths leads will be able to access free tools, tips and lesson ideas created by teachers and the experts from the education team at Maths-Whizz. Each resource is specifically designed to make maths fun and encourage pupils to think differently about the subject.

Dr Junaid Mubeen, director of education at Whizz who is a research mathematician and Countdown champion said, "When children see that maths is not just about symbols and procedures, but a powerful system for thinking and solving problems, something magical happens. Their engagement increases and so does their achievement."

"Teachers know this better than anyone and during Mathvember, they will be able to access all the lesson ideas and maths problems they need to add some sparkle to their lessons and get pupils excited about maths."

Daily maths problems that teachers can use in class will be announced on social media channels using the hashtag #mathvember throughout the month and there will be competitions with the chance to win hundreds of pounds worth of resources for pupils.

The month will culminate in a webinar entitled Making Maths Magical – how to enthrall your students with maths. (Head to [uked.chat/mathvember](https://uked.chat/mathvember) for details and how to sign-up for free). It will cover maths tricks that are sure to amaze your students and details of how to make use of

simple materials to create rich, physical tasks that allow students to experience mathematics with all their senses. The webinar will be held on Wednesday 28th November at 4pm and hosted by Dr Junaid Mubeen and Fiona Goddard from Maths-Whizz in partnership with the team at UKEdChat, the teacher-led online community promoting best practice. A download featuring tips for teachers will also be available.

Teachers wanting to find out more or to sign up for details of what content will be available during the month of November should visit [www.mathvember.com](https://www.mathvember.com) or follow @MathsWhizzTutor on Twitter or Facebook.





## CONTINUOUS PROVISION BEYOND EARLY YEARS

By Beth Sleet

Even to the untrained eye the differences between an Early Years classroom and other classrooms around a school are clear to see. But in the small village school on the Norfolk coast, in the East of England, where I work the distinction is being blurred. Early Years principles are being used to shape both the classrooms and curriculum in Years 1 and 2 and are being introduced up to Key Stage 2 this academic year.

### The back story

September 2017, fresh faced and ready to start a new year, I was confronted with another 'new' I hadn't anticipated - continuous provision in Key Stage 1 to be used for the teaching of the broad curriculum. Dazed and slightly bemused, I tentatively made my first attempts at teaching this way. A year on, and I can't imagine teaching the broad curriculum any other way.

### The whys?

A lot of teachers I meet on courses and from other local schools all have the same moans and groans: workload, a curriculum which can appear dry upon first reading, and an assessment system which is in turmoil, drill down and you end up at the children who are being put through this system. Nevermore has Ken Robinson's 'Changing education paradigms' been more relevant. Without the teachers who question the systems in place and try to find ways around them, we would just be pumping children out of schools with the same knowledge, and most probably, a strong dislike for school and learning.

With this in mind, my school decided to try and find another way of engaging children and allowing them to learn about the objectives from

the broad curriculum, but in a manner that is meaningful to them.

And that is where the use of continuous provision in KS1 started...

### Classroom changing rooms

When you take on something like continuous provision, it changes the way you as a teacher thinks and, as I discovered, the way your classroom looks.

Little did I know that the success of teaching in this way would rest heavily upon the provision within the classroom. And having a range of resources to hand both enhanced to support the coverage of the objective but also open resources which could be used by the children to develop their learning in ways unplanned for by the adults.

As we are not an EYFS classroom and don't own any of the beautiful shelving units that can be seen in many EYFS classrooms up and down the country, we had to think about how we could allow the children access to as much of the classroom as we could. This involved taking out a lot of class sets of resources you may use once in a blue moon, taking doors off cupboards to create open shelves and lessening the amount of furniture in the classroom. And filling them with well-presented easy to access resources.

This took lots of time and consideration. Unfortunately, it was not sorted at the click of the fingers as we had to contend with the more formal mornings which the room had to be set up to allow to happen and then be changed as quickly as possible for the less formal afternoons. Once we started to see the benefits for the children, the loss of half of our lunch time setting up the room became worth it.

### Play vs curriculum objective coverage

Many pre-conceived ideas of continuous provision is play, play and more play, so we did develop the expectation that the children were using the enhanced provision to show their learning and take it deeper.

The children started their session with teacher input about the objective and success criteria were shared so they knew what was expected. The children were then allowed to use the resources around the classroom to respond to the objective taught. As long as they were responding to the taught objective, they could use the resources in whatever way they saw fit.

Within a short space of time, children could be heard around the classroom challenging one another. One such dialogue took place between two boys, both of whom were reluctant writers and readers.

Child 1: "What are you learning with the LEGO?"

Child 2: "Nothing, I am just playing"

Child 1: "This is not the time for playing with LEGO. You should be showing your learning, you are not going to grow your brain if you play all the time"

Child 2: "OK, well shall we work together to build a castle which we can label and take a picture of?"

As much as there were dialogues of this nature happening very naturally around the room between the children there were, as is often the case, the more reluctant learners or the "flitters" as I termed them who would access the enhanced provision around the room in very short unfocused bursts.



Considering we were relying heavily on adult observations of the children's learning, including characteristics of learning as a means of assessing curriculum coverage and understanding the "flitters", became a real issue.

How could I, as their teacher, say they had a good understanding of the curriculum objectives when they had looked at all the provision for a few minutes at a time? For these children, a structure had to be provided by the adults to scaffold their responses so in most cases this was a now and then arrangement, one adult directed the other chosen by the child.

#### **Meta-cognition in continuous provision**

Just to clarify what I mean by meta-cognition I use the EEF definition of "Metacognition and self-regulation approaches aim to help pupils think about their own learning more explicitly, often by teaching them specific strategies for planning,

monitoring and evaluating their learning."

I can hear you saying, "but how can the children do this when they are working within a free choice environment using resources both provided and available?" That is where our characteristics of effective learning come in. When we introduced the continuous provision aspect of the children's learning we developed characteristics of effective learning progressing from those used in EYFS. These were used for both assessing the children but also to support their meta-cognition.

The characteristics of effective learning cover how the children could display their knowledge, how they can regulate their emotions within a group or when they make a mistake, to also looking at how they are going to complete a project through planning what to do and what they need.

These were well documented by the adults with the children's

observations in their learning journeys and often the children didn't realise what they meant. Towards the end of the year we started to develop the use of learning powers, which were initially used alongside maths but covered the characteristics. These enabled the children to start to identify how they were learning and approaching the provision.

The dialogue around this element was less natural than that around what the provision was used for. This is the next step for us in the development of this approach to make sure it is having the biggest possible impact on the children's development of learning and also skills within independently responding to the taught curriculum objective.

Beth Sleet @**ManicSleetTeach** is a Year 2 class teacher in Norfolk, She is PWP, RE, Science and Computing lead in school. Read her blog at [manicsleetteach.wordpress.com](http://manicsleetteach.wordpress.com)

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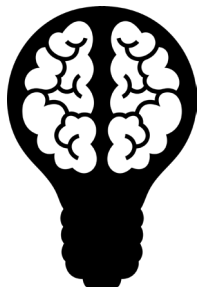
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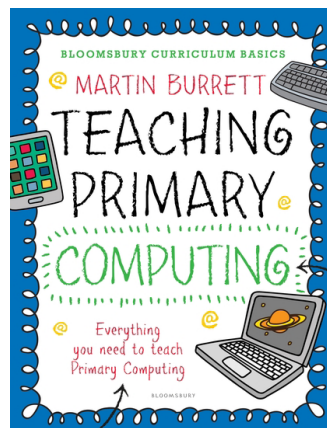


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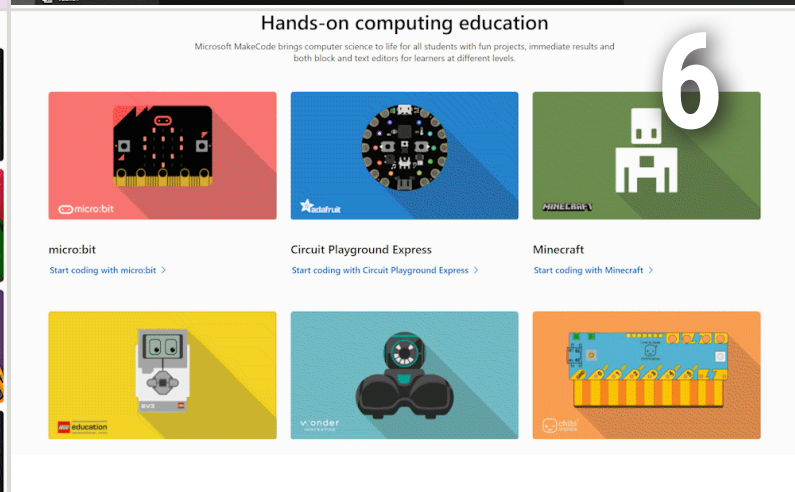
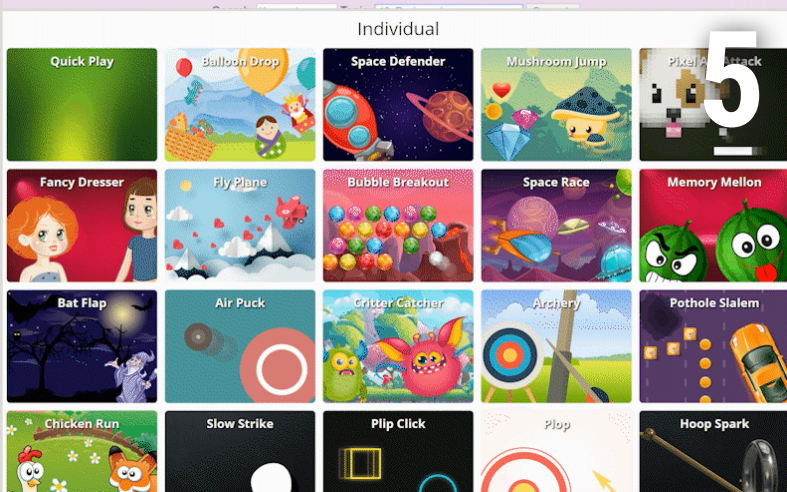
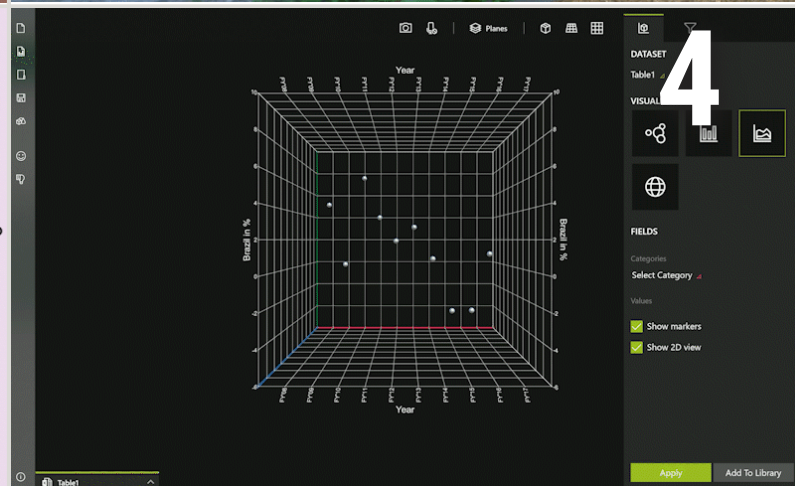
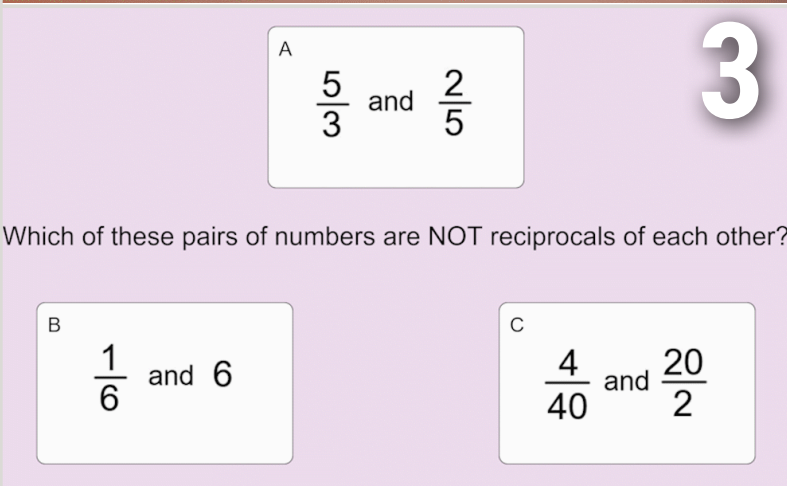


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## LOTUS BLOSSOM

By Jo Bullen

Isn't it always the way that the simplest ideas are the most effective? We can spend hours making worksheets, preparing PowerPoints and banging our heads against brick walls in our desperate attempts to make it stick. A simple idea which works and has multiple uses is the Holy Grail of teaching tools.

Enter lotus blossom diagrams. They sound a bit arty and a bit maths-y, but they're great for helping with the nebulous concept of language analysis. And they're easy to use even when the photocopier is on the blink.

Put simply, a lotus blossom diagram is a three-by-three grid which gives students the opportunity to explore a word or phrase in greater detail. If it helps, it bears more than a passing resemblance to a noughts-and-crosses grid, but let's be honest – lotus blossom sounds a lot fancier.

The idea is that a word, phrase or idea can be placed in the middle and 'exploded'. Students write associations and thoughts in the eight boxes around the edge which can then be further explored in subsequent diagrams. There are similarities with a mindmap, but the very specific number of boxes to fill can make it more manageable

<i>erratic</i>	<i>cute</i>	<i>floppy ears</i>
<i>friendly</i>	<b>spaniel</b>	<i>soft</i>
<i>lap-dog</i>	<i>gun-dog</i>	<i>loyal</i>

for less able students, as well as challenging students to push their thoughts further and consider things from another angle.

I've used the concept successfully when looking at A Midsummer Night's Dream. Whilst students often rightly identify suggest that Helena's claim that she is Demetrius' 'spaniel' shows she puts herself beneath him and that she is a little pathetic at this point in the play, a lotus blossom diagram is a great chance to explore that noun further. Asking students to specifically hone in on the connotations of a spaniel often raises some interesting ideas, such as them having floppy ears and being soft! Perhaps not the most useful comments, but when they've got this out of their system, they've usually still got a good few boxes to fill. We might be able to consider a spaniel's historical purpose – gun-dogs to retrieve game from the field – or what their modern status as rather pampered lap-dog. Those who own a spaniel might even suggest the somewhat ditzzy nature of the breed. By now, the diagram is usually fairly full.

It's then a case of refining the associations. Floppy ears and being soft can usually be discounted at this point as I ask students to contextualise their ideas, but the idea that Helena is professing her loyalty to Demetrius and her intention to do everything for him offers fresh insight into the relationship. It's even possible to unpick that idea that she is abasing herself in front of him by exploring the relationship between human and dog, and the specific behaviour of a spaniel, possibly linking this to the perceived intelligence of women at the time. Suddenly, students have

a wealth of ideas to consider from one word, enabling them to write, as so many exam boards urge, 'a lot about a little'. Such a diagram can be completed quickly, with no preparation and with just a pen and a piece of paper, meaning that this can be used with any text as necessary.

They're also a great way to get students to produce a summary of a text in their own words. Particularly complex words or phrases can be placed in the centre and they can work through them individually or collaboratively, considering which synonyms best capture the same meaning. This was invaluable under the old GCSE specification when students were tested on their ability to precis a text which usually had two or three words of which they needed to demonstrate their understanding. A quick scrawl in the corner of the page and students can make a far better attempt at a task like this.

Finally, such a tool can also help students to develop their own writing. So often, we urge students to 'use more ambitious vocabulary' or 'be more descriptive' and then end up with arbitrarily chosen adjectives littered randomly across the text. Far better to get students to consider a specific word, selecting eight synonyms or associations which

<i>ink</i>	<i>funeral</i>	<i>night</i>
<i>tar</i>	the <b>black</b> dress	<i>midnight</i>
<i>sad</i>	<i>dark</i>	<i>evil</i>



might help them to develop some imagery: 'The black dress' might then become 'The funereal gown' or the 'The midnight-black dress', phrases which immediately create an atmosphere.

As with any tool, lotus blossom diagrams require practice and discussion. The more frequently you use them and talk students through the process, the more likely they are to internalise the process, until you might just hear – as I did one day – 'Miss, can I lotus blossom this?' It's also a tool which can be used independently and collaboratively – in fact, it thrives on students working together in small groups or as a class, as each association may just spark off another idea. I suspect it's even possible to take the diagrams far enough that connections can be made between quite disparate starting words: who hasn't found themselves going round in one big circle when playing word association games, after all?

However, the greatest strength of a lotus blossom diagram, is the structure it provides for students who may otherwise struggle with exploring language. I've found even some of the weakest students can come up with associations with the root phrase, whilst the limited boxes and the fact that not everything has to be ultimately relevant frees them to experiment and feel confident in their own ideas.

It truly is one of the simplest bits of kit I've come across as a teacher, but one which I return to time and again with every age and ability range I teach. I'm sure it must have uses beyond those I've outlined and even beyond my subject, so if there's one thing you try this term, make it a lotus blossom diagram.

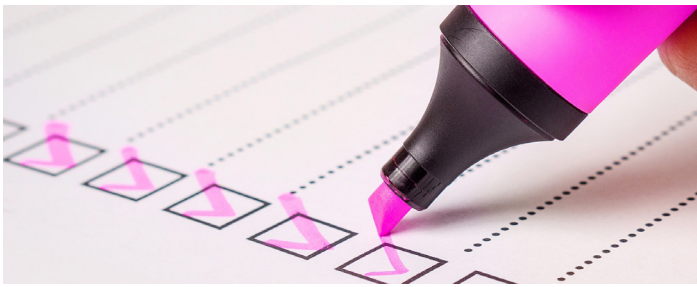
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Jo **@JoBullen1** is an English teacher and subject leader, writer and blogger. Read her blog at [jobullen.journoportfolio.com](http://jobullen.journoportfolio.com)





# In Brief



## Checklists Make Personal Learning Possible

When you want to move from class based teaching to personalised learning, there are phases. Maybe you start with station rotation? Maybe you work with digital recall and reflection tasks for some students while you have direct instruction with others. Want to take the next step? Hello checklists ... to engage and empower real student self directed learning, start building checklists. You can use hyperdocs or a regular doc. You can use bullet points or a slide show. What's important is to be specific with learning outcomes and indicators that are observable along the way. Want to really reach every kid? We need to use good instructional design to offer students choice in path, pace and place. A good checklist can help students visualise these choices. And, free you up to be more engaged in one-to-one coaching and instructional feedback.

@klundstromatvrg Superintendent - Stockholm, Sweden

## Encouraging Creative Expression Within Assignments

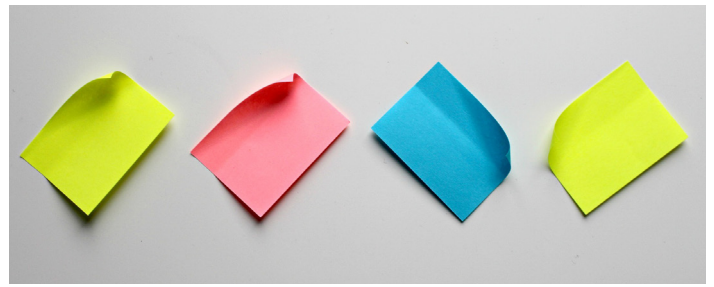
Students are often asked by their teachers to research and write about other literature as they learn new material. When and where are students provided with the opportunity to utilise their creative minds? Can we instructors differentiate rubrics by asking students to incorporate art or creative writing to demonstrate learning?

I found that offering options to either create a poster, film a video, or write a poem about a certain topic can serve as the fuel needed to spark interest toward potentially mundane tasks. This autumn, I asked students to complete a project including world flags with the corresponding countries and capital cities. One student in particular asked to design a poster incorporating her artistic abilities.

As the deadline approached, the student became nervous about finishing on time, so much so that she sheepishly asked for an extension on the assignment. Rather than accept a less-than-complete poster, I granted her request.

The final day of the term, she brought in TWO, magnificently-coloured posters. I was extremely impressed with her work, and she was beaming with pride. I decided that providing students with freedom to express themselves in a creative, artistic way can build confidence and re-ignite a love of learning.

@RTBCoaching Maths Teacher - Evans, Colorado, USA



## Making Learning Sticky

Making learning 'sticky' is the ultimate goal for all teachers. Over the past few years I've experimented with different ways of making learning stick for my pupils. Here's a quick summary of the top three strategies I employ in my English lessons:

- Anecdotes and Storytelling: when introducing new vocabulary I often integrate it into a story about everyday life to contextualise the meaning and make it stick!
- Repetition, repetition, repetition: referring back to old material when introducing new concepts acts as a 'learning anchor', pinning new ideas onto older ones and allowing pupils to make links and connections.
- Making it relevant to them: making the content relevant by asking pupils to consider the links to their own worlds and own experiences allows the learning to become more meaningful and again contextualises the new learning. It also simultaneously strengthens teacher-pupil rapport!

@teacherfeature2 Deputy Head of Curriculum - London

## What Can I Offer As A Governor?

I joined my first primary school governing body when I was 21 and working as a Head of Year in a secondary school. It's been a fantastic opportunity to understand how schools operate and to connect with teachers, leaders and people within school communities. At 22, I was voted in as vice-chair before joining a secondary governing body and becoming vice chair there too – experience is good but not essential - it's about how much you want to learn and be involved and I guarantee you'll have something to offer.

Being a governor will develop a huge range of the skills you need to be efficient in schools – data analysis, communication, leadership and so much more. I won't pretend you don't need to invest – you will need to read documents, attend training and meetings and visit the school but if that doesn't sound like some of the best professional development you could get, at any stage in your career, I don't know what does. I was a better Head of Year for my time as governor and I am a better teacher now for it too. I stepped up as a trustee this year and I'm excited to continue to develop – if you think you could offer some of your time to support a school/trust, and develop yourself too, then maybe looking into governance is your next step.

@connoracton Teacher - Leicester

