

Learning To Fly

The JRCS Teaching and Learning Magazine—Issue 3, September 2016

Welcome from the editorial team!

Welcome to the new edition of Learning to Fly, our Jo Richardson Community School teaching and learning magazine. Last year staff at JRCS worked relentlessly to ensure the best outcomes for our students and we are delighted that, in so many different areas, the school achieved outcomes that exceeded anything we have achieved before.

The KS5 and KS4 results were excellent and, in several areas, were the best the school has ever achieved. At KS5 many of our students gained the highest grades of A*, Distinction* and A. We are proud that several of our students are planning to start undergraduate courses at Russell Group universities in September, including medicine at Kings College, London. At KS4 we achieved wonderful results in terms of 5A*-C including English and maths – 63.8% of our students achieved this measure, up over 5% on last year! Moyin Adetoye achieved a first in the history of the school, getting 10 A* grades and we look forward to welcoming her and our other Y11s to the sixth form next year.

Success was not limited to our exam results; two of our innovative literacy programmes at KS3 were extended and continue to make a real difference to literacy outcomes in year 7, 8 and 9. Lexia and Right to Write both had hugely successful years. A summary of the impact of the programmes and priorities for next year can be found on p.8 and p.3.

The school also went from strength to strength in other areas: our SMSC provision continues to be outstanding and we recommending checking out 'SMSC Matters' which is available on the school website. The school website itself was another achievement last year, allowing us to communicate with our wider school community more quickly and easily than before. In the areas of exclusion and attendance the school also continued to reduce teaching days lost and got more students into more lessons.



As we look forward to the 2016-17 academic year our teaching and learning targets are broadly consistent with last year:

- Supporting disadvantaged students
- Challenging the most able
- Making sure that exercise books contain well-presented challenging work that is task marked
- Embedding the school's KS3 "Life After Levels" policy (read about LAL on p.6)
- Successfully implementing the new KS4 and KS5 exam specifications

The most significant change to the school this year is the shortening of the school day on Wednesdays to allow for focused professional development time for teaching staff. Academic research as well as feedback from our staff consistently identifies a lack of time to work together as one of the greatest barriers to staff developing the quality of their teaching. Wednesday afternoons will be time for staff to work collaboratively to develop the brand new lessons needed to deliver the new GCSE and A-Level specifications, standardise and moderate, work on the quality of marking and feedback, reflect on opportunities to watch each other teach and, generally, to devote time to making sure that students get the best learning experience possible.

So, welcome to the new term, enjoy reading this edition of Learning to Fly and let's make 2016-17 even more successful than 2015-16!



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Right to Write

Sam Cocksworth signs off as Right to Write Coordinator with this article; we welcome Katie Smith into the role starting from this September!

First of all, a huge thank you to everyone that has played a part in supporting students to produce some really excellent folders this year. They should be as proud as we should of the impressive array of work that they have completed. This academic year has seen the Right to Write project rolled out from a trial with just Year 7 to a full Key Stage 3 project, where pupils in all three year groups have completed a pride piece in almost all of their subjects.

Here are some examples of the projects we have seen this year:

How does Van Gogh's self-portrait reflect his life and circumstances?

Why did William win the Battle of Hastings?

Olympics, was it worth it?

The Waste Debate.

The History of British Theatre and Genre.

Geographical Approaches to Population Policy.

An Evaluation of the Properties of Resistant Materials and Joining Processes.

How are Women Represented in Much Ado about Nothing?

Should Cannabis be Legalised?

Explore the Origins of WW1 and the historical controversy surrounding the role of Germany.

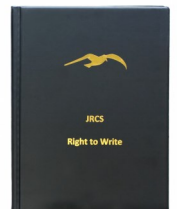
Recently we did some student voice with a range of students on Right to Write. Feedback was overall extremely positive and students continue to be proud of the work they are producing. Whilst the benefits of Right to Write were clearly noted across all subjects, students particularly praised subjects which allowed them to write creatively. Most students felt that R2W gave them a chance to explore new and exciting ideas, particularly in more practical lessons where students are not accustomed to the theory of the subject. Students also voiced that some subjects prepared them extremely well so that the drafting process was easier than they had expected.

In the future, students would like to see more creative writing projects as they feel the subjects that have given them this freedom have been more enjoyable. It might also be worth noting that some students would like the literacy code to be applied more consistently across all subjects and this is something which may be worth revisiting at the beginning of the next academic year. Additionally, students who completed their projects early have requested an extension or challenge as they believe that this will help to push them even more.

Moving forward, we would like to focus on encouraging the enthusiasm for the project by introducing new rewards, particularly for the current Year 8s who have seen the full benefits of R2W so far. We would also like to introduce the idea of a R2W competition where winners would be rewarded with a golden pen or folder. Other new features next year might include a checklist in students' folders so that we can monitor which students consistently struggle across all departments, and a spill-over Right to Write Intervention for students to catch up with the drafting process. Finally, due to some difficulties in getting Right to Write Projects finished, we are looking to establish an earlier deadline for completion of projects.

Now for what you've all be waiting for... Every year we ask students to vote for the colour of their Right to Write folders (apart from our new year 7s, who always just get "Sad Banana" (or "black" in anyone else's language)). This year our new year 9s have unanimously chosen "Cirrus" (a delicious light blue) and the new year 8s have chosen "Cherry" (a luxurious red)! Thanks once again to form tutors, Heads of Year, Teachers, Co-educations, Heads of Department, Cohort Managers and McInerney for helping make this year a great success with Right to Write.

Last year's R2W folder colours. Only 'Sad Banana' has made it onto the list for this year.



The Economist

In June The Economist ran a series of articles focused on international developments around improving the quality of teaching. Here we reprint two of them, check out www.economist.com for more of their writing on education.

We offer discounted issues to students; if your pupils are interested direct them to the Business and Economics Department.

How to make a good teacher

What matters in schools is teachers. Fortunately, teaching can be taught

Jun 11th 2016 | From the print edition

FORGET smart uniforms and small classes. The secret to stellar grades and thriving students is teachers. One American study found that in a single year's teaching the top 10% of teachers impart three times as much learning to their pupils as the worst

10% do. Another suggests that, if black pupils were taught by the best quarter of teachers, the gap between their achievement and that of white pupils would disappear.

But efforts to ensure that every teacher can teach are hobbled by the tenacious myth that good teachers are born, not made. Classroom heroes like Robin Williams in "Dead Poets Society" or Michelle Pfeiffer in "Dangerous Minds" are endowed with exceptional, innate inspirational powers. Government policies, which often start from the same assumption, seek to raise teaching standards by attracting highflying graduates to join the profession and prodding bad teachers to leave. Teachers' unions, meanwhile, insist that if only their members were set free from central diktat, excellence would follow.

The premise that teaching ability is something you either have or don't is mistaken. A new breed of teacher-trainers is founding a rigorous science of pedagogy. The aim is to make ordinary teachers great, just as sports coaches help athletes of all abilities to improve their personal best. Done right, this will revolutionise schools and change lives.

Quis docebit ipsos doctores?

Education has a history of lurching from one miracle solution to the next. The best of them even do some good. Teach for America, and the dozens of organisations it has inspired in other countries, have brought ambitious, energetic new graduates into the profession. And dismissing teachers for bad performance has boosted results in Washington, DC, and elsewhere. But each approach has its limits. Teaching is a mass profession: it cannot grab all the top graduates, year after year. When poor teachers are fired, new ones are needed—and they will have been trained in the very same system that failed to make fine teachers out of their predecessors.

By contrast, the idea of improving the average teacher could revolutionise the entire profession. Around the world, few teachers are well enough prepared before being let loose on children. In poor countries many get little training of any kind. A recent report found 31 countries in which more than a quarter of primary school teachers had not reached (minimal) national standards. In rich countries the problem is more subtle. Teachers qualify following a long, specialised course. This will often involve airy discussions of theory—on ecopedagogy, possibly, or conscientisation (don't ask). Some of these courses, including masters degrees in education, have no effect on how well their graduates' pupils end up being taught. What teachers fail to learn in universities and teacher training colleges they rarely pick up on the job. They become better teachers in their first few years as they get to grips with real pupils in real classrooms, but after that improvements tail off. This is largely because schools neglect their most important pupils: teachers themselves. Across the OECD club of mostly rich countries, two-fifths of teachers say they have never had a chance to learn by sitting in on another teacher's lessons; nor have they been asked to give feedback on their peers.

Those who can, learn

If this is to change, teachers need to learn how to impart knowledge and prepare young minds to receive and retain it. Good teachers set clear goals, enforce high standards of behaviour and manage their lesson time wisely. They use tried and tested instructional techniques to ensure that all the brains are working all of the time, for example asking questions in the classroom with "cold calling" rather than relying on the same eager pupils to put up their hands. Instilling these techniques is easier said than done. With teaching as with other complex skills, the route to mastery is not abstruse theory but intense, guided practice grounded in subject matter knowledge and pedagogical methods. Trainees should spend more time in the classroom. The places where pupils do best, for example Finland, Singapore and Shanghai, put novice teachers through a demanding apprenticeship. In America high performing charter schools teach trainees in the classroom and bring them on with coaching and feedback.

Teacher training institutions need to be more rigorous—rather as a century ago medical schools raised the calibre of doctors by introducing systematic curriculums and providing clinical experience. It is essential that teacher training colleges start to collect and publish data on how their graduates perform in the classroom. Courses that produce teachers who

How to make a good teacher, continued

go on to do little or nothing to improve their pupils' learning should not receive subsidies or see their graduates become teachers. They would then have to improve to survive.

Big changes are needed in schools, too, to ensure that teachers improve throughout their careers. Instructors in the best ones hone their craft through observation and coaching. They accept critical feedback—which their unions should not resist, but welcome as only proper for people doing such an important job. The best head teachers hold novices' hands by, say, giving them high quality lesson plans and arranging for more experienced teachers to cover for them when they need time for further study and practice.

Money is less important than you might think. Teachers in top of the class Finland, for example, earn about the OECD average. But ensuring that the best stay in the classroom will probably, in most places, mean paying more. People who thrive in front of pupils should not have to become managers to earn a pay rise. And more flexibility on salaries would make it easier to attract the best teachers to the worst schools. Improving the quality of the average teacher would raise the profession's prestige, setting up a virtuous cycle in which more talented graduates clamoured to join it. But the biggest gains will come from preparing new teachers better, and upgrading the ones already in classrooms.

The lesson is clear; it now just needs to be taught.

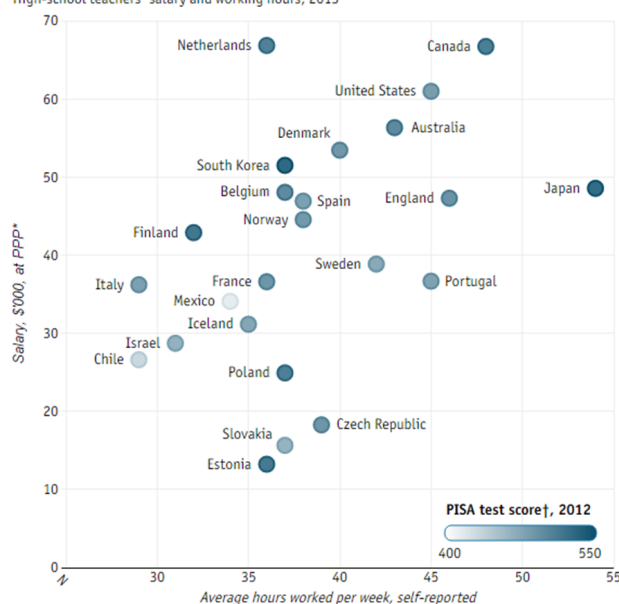
Do shorter hours or higher wages make better teachers?

ATTRACTING bright, motivated people into teaching is a struggle in many countries. Low pay is often blamed, especially when it is combined with long working hours. The difficulties of teacher recruitment, one argument goes, is why pupils in some countries do so poorly in school. But data from the OECD, a club of mostly rich countries, suggest that—at least for educational outcomes—neither hours nor pay matters much. Japanese and South Korean pupils are neck-and-neck near the top of the PISA rankings of 15-year-olds' literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge. Their teachers are paid about the same, but put in vastly different hours: a whopping 54 hours per week in Japan, compared with 37 in South Korea. Pupils in Estonia, which has the lowest-paid teachers in the group, do better than those in the Netherlands, where teachers' salaries are five times as high and hours just the same. Even when GDP per person is taken into account the Netherlands is unusually generous to teachers, and Estonia unusually stingy.

So what should teachers who want more free time and better pay do? Those from two-thirds of the countries in the group would benefit from moving to the Netherlands (the others would have to work longer hours after such a move). Portuguese teachers could cut their working day by more than three hours if they moved to Italy, while seeing their salaries clipped by a mere 2%. British teachers who, like most of their compatriots, balk at the idea of learning a new language have options, too. Moving to Canada would bag them a 41% pay rise; to America, 29%; or to Australia, 19%. Only those plumping for Canada would have to work longer for the extra money—by just half an hour a day.

Teaching assistance

High-school teachers' salary and working hours, 2013



Life After National Curriculum Levels

In May 2013, the Secretary of State announced: ‘as part of our reforms to the national curriculum, the current system of ‘levels’ used to report children’s attainment and progress will be removed. It will not be replaced.’

At JRCS we have taken our time to consider the implications of this change in government policy and this year will be moving to JRCS ‘Life After Levels’ (LAL).

Before the 2013 announcement we had been moving away from using national curriculum levels in classrooms as part of our desire to promote a growth mindset in our students. The decision to remove levels completely was, therefore, in keeping with our educational philosophy.

We have developed a system that puts a focus on the knowledge, skills and understanding that underpins each unit of work for students. At the end of each unit of work students will be assessed and the staff member will use one of five terms to describe how well students have mastered that knowledge, skills and understanding. The terms can be seen in the table below along with the expected outcome at the end of KS4 should students continue to work at that level.

Students are set a target for each year but it’s important to note that this is the minimum that we expect them to achieve, we want students to reach their target and then feel empowered to go beyond it.

The knowledge, skills and understanding which will be covered in each unit will be laid out in an orange milestone sheet which will be stuck into books at the start of each unit. At the end of the unit teachers will go back to it and identify what students have done well and what they need to do to improve.

We will be using assemblies and form-time to explain the new system to students in the first couple of weeks back at school and the Christmas reports to parents will feature the new statements.

Statement	Descriptor	Translation to GCSE grade (old)	Translation to GCSE grade (new)
Foundation	Developing a foundation of the basic content / skills / understanding in this unit	G	1
Emerging	Securing a foundation of the basic content / skills / understanding in this unit	E to F	2 to 3
Developing	Able to demonstrate some of the content / skills / understanding in this unit	D to C-	4 to 5
Secure	Confident in the majority of the content / skills / understanding in this unit	C+ to B	5 to 6
Excelling	Fluent in this unit, working beyond the core content / skills / understanding in this unit	A to A*	7 to 9

An NQT's guide to JRCS

Olivia Draisey

Progress (TS2) is a word you will hear a lot, mentors will ask “how are you ensuring student progress”, Sean Christie will ask “are you making good progress towards the teaching standards” and finally, you will ask “how can I make sure I am making the progress I want”. So, perhaps it is time to consider what progress means, how to make progress and why we are so focussed on making it.

You are now taking your next steps of progression and you have chosen the perfect school for this. Across the year you will undergo an NQT programme that will allow you to progress by exploring all areas of school life. The programme will allow you to see: the progress made in the LSU with students who need to re-evaluate their behaviour (TS7); the teaching and learning in other departments and by other teachers; CPD sessions on teaching techniques or curriculum developments (TS3) and the progress in the ARP with students whom thrive on consistency (TS5). The programme ensures you great personal progress by providing you with **professional relationships** who can advise you on effective student progress.

The ability to **draw on the advice of others** is a great skill for an NQT (TS8) and a great way to build your knowledge base and of course, progress. JRCS and the NQT programme are designed to encourage collaboration, as a school we are all working together to maintain our positive and safe school environment (TS1). Behaviour can be a challenge, but this battle can soon turn to war if you won't accept the help of others. Heads of year, departments and SLT are all poised and ready to escalate and resolve issues. You will not, I'm afraid, start and already have earned student respect. It takes time and they need to know that you won't let them do as they please to hinder theirs and others progress.

In light of managing behaviour there is an additional criteria to allow progress following a behavioural challenge and this is for you to **show that you care** (Part Two). The students that we have here often need to



know you care about them as an individual as well as their assessment grade (TS6). At JRCS we have fantastic avenues of support - the mentoring room, pastoral assistants attached to each year group, the LSU, SDD, safeguarding, inclusion and even student buddy systems. To ensure that these are used effectively and to guarantee positive teaching and learning, all teachers have a role in caring, listening and directing students to those equipped to help. Detentions are designed to be a punishment but they also allow time for relationship rebuilding – sometimes this is more effective for behaviour management than any time sat in silence. This builds rapport, **respect** and most importantly, trust to allow lessons to continue without animosity and again, ensuring progression for all.

This is going to be quite a year, so here is my closing advice. **Enjoy it**, take the time to enjoy being part of the NQT group, make a WhatsApp group to rant about bad days/boast about good days and use it like an online CPD to share good (and bad) practice! Sometimes this group of people can be most effective in teaching and learning as you are all fresh from your training, eager to progress and bursting with new ideas to trial – use this to your advantage. Join the D of E scheme, get out on lunch duty, meet people, volunteer and just make sure that you are giving yourself the best chance of success here at JRCS. Welcome to the family, #ACHIEVE

Lexia Review

Becki Simpson, Lexia Coordinator

The Lexia Learning programme has been run for a second year at Jo Richardson. This report will be reviewing the successes of Lexia, in particular the changes that were made this year to the running of the programme.

Successes

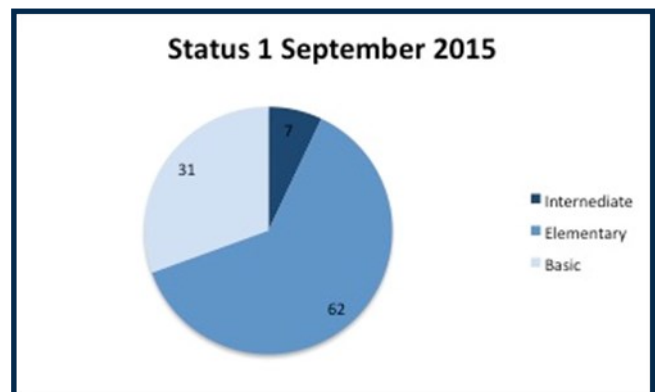
When students start Lexia at the beginning of the year they are asked to complete a placement test, so they can start the programme somewhere within the five levels of Lexia that suits their capabilities. Their progress through the levels is then monitored through the year by placing them in one of three skill sets – basic, elementary and intermediate. When comparing last year's year 7 cohort (Intake 2015) with the year before (Intake 2014) their starting points in the programme were almost exactly the same as each other, with 31% starting in the basic skill set, 62% in elementary and just 7% in intermediate.

The amount of progress Intake 2015 year 7s made through Lexia from September 2015 to July 2016 has been great; they have also made a lot more progress when compared to the Intake 2014 year 7 cohort.

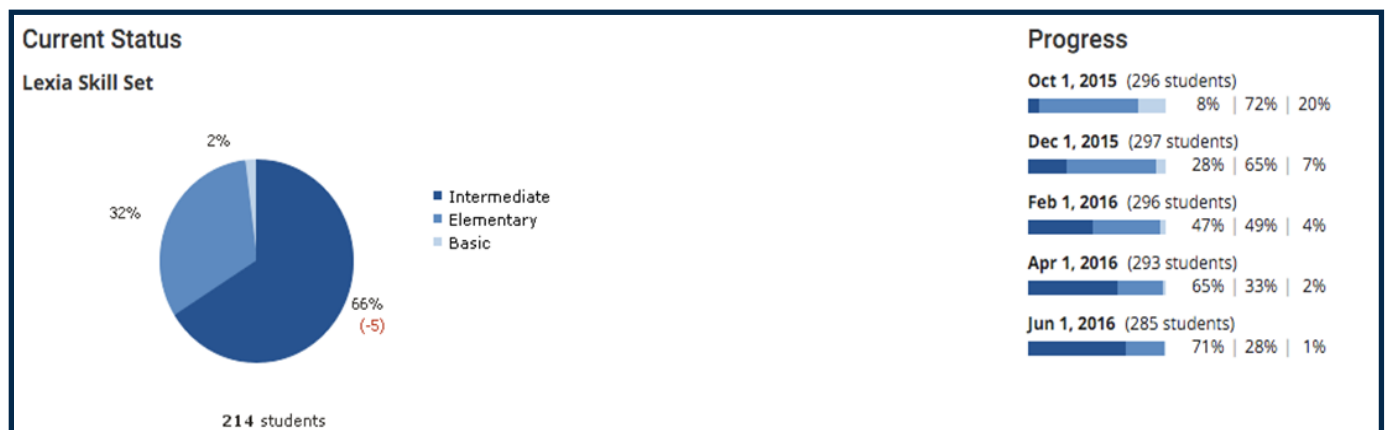
- The percentage of students in the cohort in the basic skill set has decreased by 30% to just 1% - the previous year this was 2%.
- The percentage of students reaching the top skill set has increased from 7% to 71%, compared to 53% the year before.
- 28% of students completed Lexia fully, compared with 15% the year before (82 students of 296 last year, compared with 35 students of 240 the year before)
- Average time spent on the programme has increased, with some students having spent as much as 638 minutes in a week on the programme – well over their 60 minute a week recommendation and a massive improvement on the 30-40 minute a week usage time reported in June 2015.

These positives may be down to a number of things that have been changed this year, including:

- A reward system put in place for students, which included certificates, interform points, LOCs, a badge for completing and a draw for lakeside vouchers at the end of the year.
- Home usage of Lexia has increased.
- Intervention was put into place with students that were identified as having not yet passed a level by February.
- The profile of Lexia has been raised throughout the school.



The chart above shows the starting points of the Intake 2015 Year 7 cohort. Below is an analysis of the same group of students at the end of their first year at JRCS. Dark blue indicates students in the highest band, "Intermediate" - light blue indicates students in the lowest band, "Basic". There was a significant movement of students from "basic" to "intermediate".

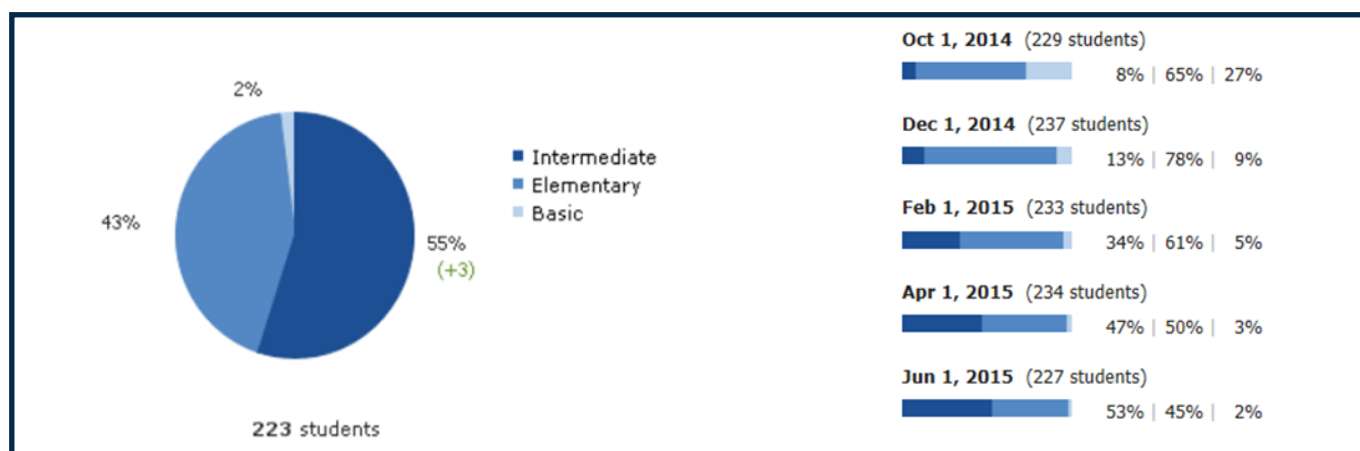




Another change this year has been the trial of the follow-on programme from Lexia, Reading Plus. This is designed to continue pushing the top end students that might finish Lexia relatively quickly. Reading Plus focuses on important skills such as speed of reading and comprehension from increasingly larger amounts of text to improve their literacy skills. The text they read also becomes less story-based and more fact-based. Students that had completed Lexia this year were still enthusiastic about the sessions and about improving their literacy, so a two-month Reading Plus trial was put into place with the students that had finished Lexia. The trial was too short a time to test and re-test students on Hodder, but overall student voice was extremely positive and said

that they would definitely want to carry on the programme. After the success of the trial, Reading Plus will now be used as the follow on from Lexia to continue to push our top end students.

Lexia will continue throughout the 2016-2017 academic year during AM registration, after school and within English lessons for year 7s and 8s. The increase in student progress on Lexia during the 2015-2016 academic year was fantastic, to ensure this continues to grow the positive changes, particularly the reward systems, will continue and develop. In addition to this, a reward system will be designed for the new Reading Plus programme with the hope to maintain student motivation and progress.



The chart above shows an analysis of the 2014 Intake Year 7s at the end of their first year at JRCS. Comparing this to the chart at the bottom of the previous page it shows that the Intake 2015 Year 7s finished their first year at school in a stronger position than the 2014 Intake.

A Good Read—Book Reviews

A good read – reviews of educational publications

Keeping on top of educational publications can be tricky given the stress and workload of term time. We have spent some of the summer having a look at a few releases and there's a brief review below. Should departments wish to, they can purchase copies for staff in their departments.

Lessons of Hope: How to Fix Our Schools,

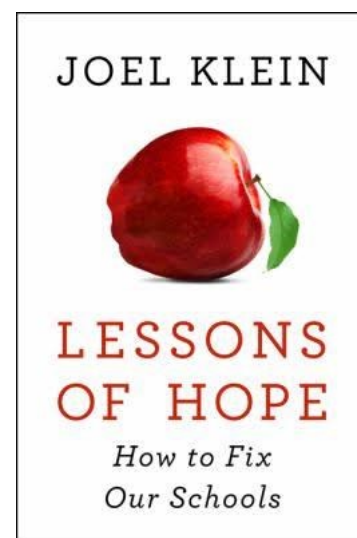
by Joek Klein

Overview

In this revealing and provocative memoir, the former chancellor of the New York City schools offers the behind-the-scenes story of the city's dramatic campaign to improve public education and an inspiring blueprint for national reform.

In 2002 New York City's newly elected mayor, Michael Bloomberg, made a historic announcement: his administration had won control of the city's school system in a first step toward reversing its precipitous decline. In a controversial move, he appointed Joel Klein, an accomplished lawyer from outside the education establishment, to lead this ambitious campaign.

Lessons of Hope is Klein's inside account of his eight-year mission of improvement: demanding accountability, eliminating political favouritism, and battling a powerful teachers' union that he felt determined to protect a status quo that didn't work for kids. Klein's initiatives resulted in more school choice, higher graduation rates, and improved test scores. The New York City model is viewed in America as a standard for meaningful school reform. But the journey was not easy. Klein faced resistance and conflict at every turn.



Why read? Although the book deals with the American educational system, which is very different and has its own unique challenges, it's a fascinating story of the challenges of driving radical educational reform at governmental policy level.

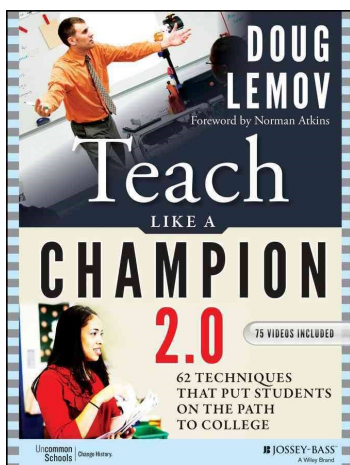
Teach Like a Champion 2.0: 62 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College / Edition 2

by Doug Lemov

Overview

Teach Like a Champion 2.0 is a complete update to the international bestseller. Over 700,000 teachers around the world already know how the techniques in this book turn educators into classroom champions. With ideas for everything from classroom management to inspiring student engagement, you will be able to perfect your teaching practice right away.

The first edition of *Teach Like a Champion* influenced thousands of educators because author Doug Lemov's teaching strategies are simple and powerful. The new edition includes:



Over 70 new video clips of real teachers modelling the techniques in the classroom

A selection of never before seen techniques inspired by top teachers around the world

Brand new structure emphasizing the most important techniques and step by step teaching guidelines

Updated content reflecting the latest best practices from outstanding educators

Why read? With the sample lesson plans, videos, and teachlikeachampion.com online community, as well as dozens of specific teaching strategies that can be embedded into lessons this is an incredible resource, definitely worth a look.

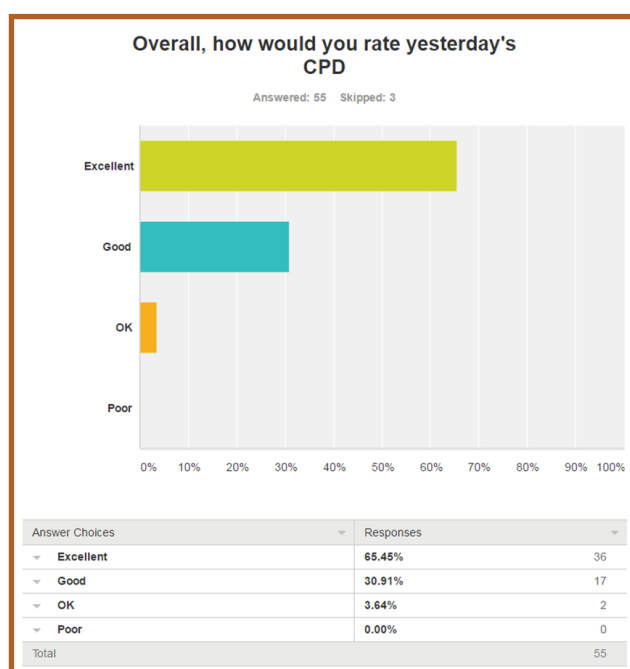
CPD – reviewing last year and planning the year ahead

Last year saw the school offer nearly a dozen twilight sessions as part of the CPD programme. Some of the training was whole staff, such as the Prevent training offered by Pete Greene from Scotland Yard. Many of the other sessions were given over to departments to work on their teaching and learning and curriculum development. We also developed specific task marking sessions to run with departments that want to improve their formative feedback.

Last year also saw the return of colleagues offering workshops on a range of different teaching and learning topics including questioning, setting challenging enquiry questions and developments from the JRCS Teaching and Learning Group. Staff signed up and attended these workshops over two CPD sessions. We want to thank the people who ran these sessions as the feedback was uniformly positive.

“Class Dojo”
Blogs
Challenge Boards
Challenge and differentiation in book work
“Kahoot”
Questioning
Task marking
‘Lesson study’ programme
Teaching Squares
Supporting SEN / ARP students
Coaching
“Go Figure”

The workshops offered by colleagues this year and some of the feedback from staff collected on Survey Monkey



This year we are delighted to have time set aside each week on Wednesday afternoons to focus on enhancing our teaching and learning and curriculum offer. We are currently planning the programme of sessions up to Christmas; lots of the sessions will be given over to departments to help implement the new GCSE and A-Level specifications, to embed the changes at KS3 moving to Life After Levels and to work on developing teaching and learning strategies to get the best out of our students. We will also be running a separate programme for our NQT+1 teachers. We are also pleased to announce that following the success of the programme this year, we will once again be offering colleague led workshops, alongside workshops led by outside facilitators.