



T&L Times

Edition 6

Welcome

Welcome to our first newsletter of Term 4. With a new term fully underway we share with you a quote about refocussing ready to go again.

“You don’t get results by focussing on results. You get results by focussing on the actions that produce results”

Mike Hawkins



RIT Reflection

Does having a good teacher matter? Evidence would suggest that the quality of the teacher at the front of the classroom is key. However what happens if a pupil ‘clicks’ with a particularly poor teacher and makes accelerated progress over the year? On the other hand what happens if a pupil does not click with a ‘good’ teacher and then goes downhill over the year? Is it down to the teacher to adapt their style to meet the needs of the learners in their class or is that no matter what a teacher does they may not just click with every member of their class?

If you have a moment maybe discuss this with a colleague or even in your staff meeting.

Super CPD

With a new term comes new opportunities to take part in high quality CPD. This term we look at some of the CPD available this term on the RIT CPD menu:

<u>Provider</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Other information</u>
MTSA	HLTA training	9/6 and 10/6 and 8/7 £645
New Horizons	Mastery of the Knowledge Based Curriculum	26 th March 2020
Retrieval Practice		
Medway Community Healthcare	Introduction to speech sound development and cued articulation	19th March £150
TT Education	Challenging Pupil Behaviour	23rd April £299 + VAT

If you wish to book any CPD then see your school CPD lead



Perfect Podcast

This week we recommend to you the Teachers' Podcast with Claire Riley.

The Teachers' Podcast provides additional support to teachers. Whether it's ideas to be used in the classroom, listening to the perspective of someone else in school or just being able to relate to the challenges other educators face, each episode delves into a key topic within education with a guest. Developed in association with Classroom Secrets and hosted by Classroom Secrets' MD, Claire Riley, the podcast is available via all podcasts providers and is also available on YouTube.

Episodes already broadcast are:

Introduction	The impact of marking on teacher Workload	Supporting children with EAL	Getting reading and writing right	The journey of an author
Saving teachers from grammar in the 2014 curriculum and becoming a school leader	Reading, writing and spelling in schools	Experiences teaching abroad	The Power of Play	Importance of Children's wellbeing
Finding a love of education in EYFS away from classroom	Technology in the classroom	Inspiring books	What good leadership looks like	Life / Work balance as an NQT
Resources and their impact on Life / work balance	Taking learning bigger than the classroom	A reading inspired Curriculum	The power of outdoor learning	Safeguarding with stories
What budget cuts really mean for teachers and their pupils	How to make reading in your school rock!	Continuous provision in year 1	School leadership and the curriculum	Life / Work balance as an SLT
Reading in schools	Being chair of governors under 30	Growth Mindset	Finding balance	Embedding Vocabulary
Headship in an academy and the effects of budgets	Reading for comprehension and Emotional dexterity	I-Pads in the classroom	Behavioural issues and SEMH schools	Supporting new teachers.
School websites are a window for the world	Writing for children	Surviving the new Ofsted framework	Talking about teaching anxiety	

Look out in our future editions for some more podcast recommendations

Teaching Team Talks

Welcome to our second section on Teaching Team Talks.

Our second contributor is **Adeleke Oteju (A.O)**

A.O is the Assistant Head at Rivermead and brings a wealth of experience to his role including working in the USA for a large part of his career. His area to share comes from his Masters study and focusses on

Effective Personal Learning

If you have any further questions related to this article or would just be interested in finding out more then A.O can be contacted via Rivermead at:

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Effective Professional learning



If you are like me, I have found informal professional discussion over tea, coffee, staff room hubs and group discussions during formal trainings as highly effective as a three day training course. The idea of continuing professional development can often be misconstrued by education practitioners as attendance at courses and school CPD days, and often to meet national requirements with decisions on participation often being made on an opportunistic basis, which can be a demotivation for change. As outlined by Day's definition, (cited by Rose and Reynolds, 2007) Professional development is a combination of all planned and intuitive learning experiences aimed at having direct or indirect betterment to the individual, team or school, which has an impact to the quality of education in the classroom.

Professional development for teachers needs to be a collaborative effort involving a community of learners where evidence of best practices are identified and shared. (O'Connor et al, 2015) It should seek to improve particular student outcomes in an academic or wider area. It should improve practice translating into improved pupil outcomes. (DoE, 2016) As evidence indicates, a unilateral one day activity that is lacking proper expertise input, robust evidence, professional collaboration and expert challenge, and well thought sustainable strategies has a very low chance of impact on teacher practice on pupils' outcomes.

Digestible Documents

We all hope that we are positive all of the time but what happens if we are surrounded by staff who may not always be so positive. We look at a blog which investigates this very area:

Actively cultivating positive emotions is essential in a school environment. But how do you work with staff who don't look on the bright side of life? John Dabell discusses.

Schools can be stressful places that make Frankensteins of us all and breed negative thinking and toxicity. When left unchecked, the moans and groans can become embedded in a school's culture and quickly become part of the fabric. This negativity and stress can also be contagious and passed onto children so it needs to be addressed quickly.

One of the habits of effective teachers is being a positive force around the place; positive pedagogues make an enormous difference to the wellbeing of their school.

But it is an unfortunate fact of life that not everyone is happy. Some teachers are not great adverts for teaching and make lousy recruitment ambassadors because they've lost that lovin' feeling. For various reasons, they have become jaded, bitter, angry and frustrated and they are energy vacuums.

No one wants to work in a toxic environment and it might be tempting to allow teachers who have lost their mojo to just fizzle out, but this would be reckless and irresponsible. They have a lot to give. School teams must support each other and that means helping colleagues to repair, rejuvenate and find their form again.

Teachers who display negative behaviours have had their wellbeing hijacked. They had zing and buzz once and need help to get it back. Sometimes all they need is a gentle nudge to find their teaching passion again. Oth-

ers require more drastic interventions, careful mentoring and stacks of support. 'We first'

If you have one or two members of staff chipping away and always complaining, it can drag a place down as they can normally recruit new members quite quickly.

The determination and tenacity to never give in to negativity is key and changing our communication style can make a huge difference to the cultural identity of a school. 'We first' is important because the focus is on everyone and not just the pupils. Everyone matters and everyone has to participate, contribute, and learn in an atmosphere of 'us' and 'can do'.

Forget the usual gripes and focus on the good in the next staff meeting. Give staff the following question to answer.

'Recall an example of inspiring behaviour that you witnessed by a colleague. Describe the situation and its impact on you, the team, and pupils.'

As a team, listen to what each member of staff says. Get positivity on the agenda and never let it get away. Happiness loves company – persistent complainers who vent their spleen are not welcome.

Creating a healthy collective focus, a collaborative culture and cultivating accountability are key. The DNA of a school can be seriously damaged by those who do not invest in collaboration and relationships.

Yoga is not the answer

Why someone behaves negatively can be a complex cocktail of personal and professional issues. On a professional level, the underlying causes of poor teacher wellbeing are usually related to high workload and stress.

School leaders might attempt to support their staff with cakes in the staffroom, mind-

fulness activities and yoga sessions but as Mark Esner (2019) says in his book, *Teach Like Nobody's Watching*, 'These kinds of activities might be the icing on the cake, but if the sponge is rotten, the icing does little to make it more appealing.'

If school leaders can address workload issues, such as marking and meetings, and help teachers manage their time then they might be able to enjoy some lunchtime samba.

As Ross McGill (2019) says in his book, *Just Great Teaching*, 'To get the best out of teachers, we must strip teaching back down to its basics to allow our staff to focus on the areas of their job that really make a difference.'

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No moaning

Schools have 100's of policies, covering every aspect of school life but there is one important policy missing. This policy is essential and one policy that will benefit staff and students, promote health and wellbeing, and improve the whole school system: a 'No negativity policy'.

The customs, norms, standards, and behaviours of a school define its character and they must reflect positivity. If the atmosphere of a school is positive, then people like being there and want to be there.

Of course we are entitled to voice how we feel but not as gossip, tittle-tattle, back-biting and petty comments. A place can become toxic very quickly if things are said and passed off as 'pressure' or the 'end of term'. Having a policy that says our school is a no moan zone is crucial because without one we aren't being 'professional'.

A 'No negativity policy' makes a school a happier

place by making sure that people think twice about what they are saying and the impact it can have. It should incorporate challenge so that when people start to complain, they follow a process by speaking to someone confidentially about their concerns and not out in the open in a staffroom or playground.

The school's code of conduct also relates to staff and a good one will say that staff should seek support from their line manager about positive action. If you are the person complaining all the time then be self-aware and check your own behaviour and language. Look for the good things that you and your school are doing and speak about these instead.

Find your fizz

One of my favourite resources to conveniently leave in the staffroom is *Of Teaching, Learning and Sherbet Lemons* by Nina Jackson.

This book is packed with practical advice and is a great reminder of what teaching and learning means. It encourages us to press pause and think about what we would miss if we weren't teaching. It encourages us to reflect on who we are and what amazing value teaching adds to our lives.

We can point colleagues in the direction of resources that might help but sometimes a school can only do much. They may need to access professional help and counselling. The Education Support Partnership offers a free 24/7 helpline service to help you find a way forward.

And finally...

Sometimes, negative teachers come to realise that they are just in the 'wrong' school for them. It can be a horrible experience to realise you just don't belong but making positive steps to get out is sometimes the best option to get you back to being that positive teacher again.

Sometimes though, it might be a case of moving temporarily and teaching elsewhere for a short while. Outward looking schools share staff by allowing colleagues to