



T&L Times

Edition 15

Welcome

Welcome to our second Teaching and Learning newsletter of Term 5. As we get to the point where maybe we are feeling a little tired, it is about keeping going and pushing on to the end of the term. It is clearly evident being in our schools and speaking to our leaders all of the hard work and great experiences which are going on.

Our gaps are being really well identified and curriculums adapted to meet those needs.

Even if you are not directly teaching our learners; remember you are still making a massive difference. From that friendly word to our learners as they come through the reception area through to making sure they are safe at lunchtimes and making sure the buildings are clean and ready to work in. Thank you as always for all you do!



Quick Kagan

Having looked at a range of Kagan strategies this year; we take a slightly different approach in this edition and look at an article by **Nancy Barile, Award-Winning Teacher, M.A.Ed.** on the reasoning behind why we feel as a Trust that Kagan strategies are so useful an addition for the classroom.

Kagan cooperative learning is built on a single tenet: engagement. When students are engaged and motivated, "learning sticks." In a Kagan classroom, *all* students must be engaged and accountable. There are, however, an overwhelming number of Kagan structures which you can try out.

Full Participation Is the Driving Force

At first glance, this cooperative learning technique seems like traditional group work, but there's a major difference: It's impossible to hide in a Kagan classroom because each student must "participate frequently and approximately equally." Traditional teaching can lead to an ever-widening gap between high and low achievers, and the Kagan method aims to close that gap.

This model assumes that most teachers utilize direct instruction and then turn to the class for a question-and-answer portion. Usually, a few students answer the questions while the majority of the class remains disengaged. Kagan cooperative learning ensures that every student is actively involved.

Research on Kagan cooperative learning supports findings of "improved academic achievement, improved ethnic and race relationships, improved social skills and social relations, and increased liking for self, others, and school." Since these are goals for most schools, I thought it was worth exploring.

Teachers are expected to implement Kagan Structures, which, according to the company website, are "instructional strategies designed to promote cooperation and communication in the classroom, boost students' confidence, and retain their interest in classroom interaction." Teachers aren't expected to stick with one Structure for learning; they can pick and choose the activities that will engage the different learning styles in their class.

For more information on Kagan Strategies then please contact Mark Nolan (Assistant Head at Rivermead) at

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Teaching and Learning Talk

Each week our Teaching and Learning leads in our schools are sharing with you something which they think will help you to develop Teaching and Learning This week we have a contribution from **Louise Kennett**, who is the Deputy Head at The Marlborough Centre

Are we valuing regulation for learning?

At the Marlborough Centre we are exploring the use of a curriculum called SCERTS. This is a curriculum based on Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Supports. It places emphasis on the evidence that a child needs to be able to understand communication between themselves and others and be readily understood as well as being able to be calm with the help of others as well as develop self regulation strategies. The curriculum looks at developing these skills in complete harmony with the Transactional Supports (what the teacher/support staff are actually doing/supplying) interwoven into targets.



The inclusion of emotional regulation as equal importance to communication is so important and the evidence around the embedding of regulation activities throughout the day shows benefits cumulatively for calmness in both children and adults. In any curriculum offer in our schools it is worth thinking about how often we are building in time across the day for our 'unregulated' learners to have support in mutual regulation with a trusted adult as well as tracking how they are progressing with self regulation strategies. Activities such as breathing techniques, construction play, sensory play, deep pressure, singing, quiet time, mindful colouring could be used as a more cumulative preventative for some children rather than as a reactive strategy to 'dysregulation' where often it is coupled then with an escape from a work demand/ classtime perhaps. It is also worth a moment of time thinking about the fact that the activities that a child may find 'regulating' will differ when used to maintain calm rather than to calm a crisis moment. Think about the last time when you were enraged/upset – what worked to calm you? Did you need others (mutual regulation) or were you better at regulating yourself (self regulation)? Were you able to focus on everything that someone was saying to you at the time? Even children who can process information well when calm may not be able to process to the same level when in crisis. Mutual regulation in a crisis can even involve the explicit use of reduced/simple language by supporting adults.

Take Away Thoughts:

Could you have a 'regulation' five minutes as a class at the start of each lesson/session?

Could you put together a 'calm' box in the classroom for free access?

Could you include regular regulation to any behaviour plans as a preventative measure?

Could you talk with the child and their family to find out more about what works for them to regulate?

Are you helping any staff in your room/team to stay regulated themselves so they are better able to support children (especially those in crisis).

Super Support

This week we look at a really useful checklist from 'the Key' for middle leaders to help get your subject in line for the new academic year.

Area of focus	Tasks	Notes
Do you need to re-clarify the role and expectations?	Speak to the headteacher and/or the senior leadership team to: - Clarify line management arrangements and how often you'll report on the impact of your leadership in the new year - Determine whether you need to review how much leadership time you should have for action planning, work scrutiny, lesson planning support, lesson observations, learning walks, pupil voice, etc. You should review how effectively you used planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, and leadership time, during the year to meet the demands of your role	Use this space to make a note of any findings or next steps after carrying out the task
Do you need to update your subject leadership file?	Review and update your subject leader file, particularly information on the following: - The strategic direction and development of the subject - Monitoring teaching and learning - Leading and managing staff - Efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources - Subject policies/statements (if appropriate) - Subject budget Refer to the school monitoring schedule, does this match up with your evaluative responsibilities. Consider how you will prove your effectiveness as leader	
Is the budgeting process clear?	Speak with your school business manager to confirm: - Your understanding of your school's budget spending procedures - When budgets for subjects will be set - The budget allocated to your subject You should ensure that you take ownership for your budget throughout the year	
Is your strategic direction for the year clear? Have you reviewed your priorities?	Discuss and understand priorities in the school improvement plan (SIP) that relate directly and indirectly to your subject. Action these priorities or adjust them to meet changing needs Complete a subject self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvement Use the SIP and your self-evaluation to develop or review your subject action plan with clear actions, timelines, success criteria, resources needed and evaluation Brainstorm and record your own creative ideas, tasks to complete and ambitions now. Refer back to these thoughts in the new year and review your priorities accordingly	
Are you setting high standards for teaching and learning in your subject?	Have you set a clear view of standards in the subject by <u>analysing</u> data and monitoring reports for the subject? Do you need to review these?	
Planning continuing professional development (CPD) and meetings	Have you conducted a skills/subject knowledge audit for you and your staff? From this: - Schedule time for staff training (one-to-one and group sessions) to share ideas and address gaps in practice - Decide what, if any, CPD you need	

Do you have a clear vision for your subject and model high standards?	Using the teachers' standards as prompts: • Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils • Promote good pupil progress and outcomes • Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge • Plan and teach well-structured lessons • Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils • Make accurate and productive use of assessment • Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment • Fulfil wider professional responsibilities	
Auditing and refreshing resources	Audit stock and resources for the subject and replenish stock. Plan cross-curriculum links	
Seeking support	Look to others, inside and outside the school, for support in your leadership role and to test your ideas	

Digestible Documents

This week with what would have been the Key Stage 2 test week we look back on our fond or not so fond memories of these tests

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, goes the old saying. Well, two years after we last saw Sats undertaken in earnest, nobody seems to have grown that fond.

Indeed, social media is full of teachers celebrating the absence of the tests from this first full week of May. In fact, Year 2 teachers must be finding themselves with hours of time to spare, given the usual burden of administering paper-based tests to groups of seven-year-olds.

But maybe there are a few glimmers of fond memories to reminisce about. Mind you, for those of us who have been around a while, it's always galling to hear teachers announcing that they remember a particular reading text or maths problem ...from when they were in Year 6.

No Sats this year – but it wasn't all bad

But that aside, surely it's worth a trip down memory lane to see if there aren't some positive thoughts to be found in this Sats-free year?

English tests

I think it's probably safe to say that no one looks back on 2016 with rose-tinted spectacles. Indeed, there are plenty still scarred by the "warthogs milling around in bewilderment" and the monuments to someone's distant ancestors.

But, before that, there were happier times in the reading test. Just the year before, we were treated to guide dogs and lady-birds. And there's many a Year 6 teacher who still remembers the earthship, or Sharon, the long-distance lorry-driver, or the wonderful biography of Evelyn Glennie.

And I'm sure some schools are still using the volcanoes pieces as part of their Romans topics today. That said, maybe the less said about "Caves and Caving in Davelly Dale", the better.

Writing tests

It's hard to believe that it's a decade now since we said farewell to the writing test. And while we might have celebrated at the time, I'm not persuaded that we're any better off in these days of the wretched writing assessment framework.

We are, though, at least saved the boredom of reading endless short writing test papers about "my favourite meal" or vacuous descriptions of "a busy place".

In fact, I have to concede that it's hard to find a gem among the coalstones when it comes to writing tests. I will confess, though, to always having a fondness for the "How to look after a miptor". Even after all this time, you'll still find 25,000 Google hits for "miptor".

Maths tests

It's hard to get nostalgic over a bit of arithmetic, or some geometry, but even here there are a few lighter moments. For a start, Chen, star of many a maths question over the years, has become quite famous, even during his/her enforced absence.

I also happen to miss the delightful lady who did the old mental-arithmetic recordings – although not the trauma of finding enough working CD players for the test itself.

Similarly, the mathematics fans among us will all have favourite questions from over the years. I've always been fond of questions with pineapples and mangoes, or how long a koala sleeps for. But I've still not quite recovered from the fried egg-style Venn diagram.

Michael Tidd is headteacher at East Preston Junior School in West Sussex. tweets [@MichaelT1979](#)

Sixty Second CPD

Put a pin in it: Self-focus

Have you ever found yourself overthinking an incident that happened at work? Have you gone home and not been able to settle due to the worry and anxiety that it has caused you? When an interaction bothers you way past home time, it can leave you feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and anxious. Try the '**put a pin in it**' method to move on.



1. Set aside 15 minutes to reflect on the incident.
2. Think about what happened that led you to feel disheartened. Jot it down in one sentence.
3. Ask yourself why this bothered you so much. Write this down in one sentence.
4. Ask yourself what you will do next. Think of three steps. Write them down, one sentence per step. Include any stakeholders that you might need to involve.
5. Read the steps over to confirm you're happy with the action you intend to take.
6. Fold the piece of paper and leave it in your coat pocket for tomorrow.
7. Distract yourself for the evening by engaging with friends, your favourite TV show or a great book, knowing that you will handle the situation at your next opportunity.
8. If your brain returns to the thought, allow yourself to reread your action plan and tell yourself it's all in hand.

Why it works

Research has found that rumination is a significant contributor to depression and anxiety. Trying to block out something that is bothering you without planning your next steps is unlikely to be successful. Instead face your worry, reflect on it and then put a pin in it until you can take positive action.

Top Tip

Talk it over with a friend or colleague, if possible, by limit yourself to five minutes.

Perfect Podcast

#1 - The New Teacher Hotline

Aimed at NQTs and those in the first stages of their careers in education, this is an extremely helpful podcast that offers advice on dealing with bad behaviour, organisation and structuring lessons, and preparing for observations. The episodes are hosted by the author and education expert Glen Moulton, who has over 30 years of experience in the public education industry. Presenting with Moulton is the award-winning teacher and author of 'Rookie Teaching for Dummies' Mike Kelley. Recent guest interview episodes also include appearances from Candy Shively, director at the TeachersFirst.org teaching resources website and New York State Teacher of the Year, Rich Ognibene.

So if you're an NQT or teaching assistant looking for some extra help developing your teaching skills, take a look through *The New Teacher Hotline* archive for some helpful tips and ideas.

To access this great podcase then

[CLICK HERE](#)

