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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to volume three of the Birmingham City University (BCU) Education Journal Magazine (EJM) and the second edition of this academic year. This edition contains ten articles from a variety of sources, ranging from students, ex-students, academics and teaching professionals.

This edition sets a milestone for the journal, as this edition contains our 100th published article (in fact, it also includes our 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th and 105th too!). I hope you will join me in celebrating the success the EJM has had in publishing colleague's works and displaying what our students, teachers and academics are currently researching.

Today's topics fall under, as always, the three areas of enquiry within the BCU partnership, current enquiry and individual scholarly activity. Within the partnership, we have four articles ranging across perceived stress levels of early career maths teachers, how questioning can impact creativity, exploring the use of zero tolerance behaviour policies and work being undertaken with the school games. Current enquiry includes articles around the use of a thematic curriculum in physical education, statutory assessment and the impact to curriculum, and using effective feedback in an early years setting. Finally, our third chapter showcases work on STEM, a phenomenological approach to inclusion, and finally a piece around challenging the boundaries of our professional responsibilities as educators.

I hope you find this edition interesting and hopefully it inspires you to contribute an article for a future edition.

Best wishes

Grant Huddleston

Our aim

Our aim is to help support practice across our partnership schools and promote enquiry and research. We welcome contributions from students, teachers and academics who wish to make a positive difference to teaching and learning and believe they could help develop and support other's practice. We aim to support new and experienced writers to submit their work so that we share a variety of perspectives.

Our goals
- Showcase the excellent work our BCU Students produce
- Allow an opportunity for those interested to publish their work to promote positive development and reflection across our partnership schools
- Promote confidence and competence to write for an education publication
- Promote interest towards research and enquiry

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How to contribute

Anybody wishing to contribute an article for consideration should email their draft to **BCUEJM@bcu.ac.uk**

You do not need to decide which chapter you wish your article to appear, but you can indicate this if you wish. Please ensure you follow the house style. Final decisions on publication are made by the editorial board. You can submit as many articles as you wish. If the editorial team have received a large number of contributions, your article may be held for later editions.

House style

When submitting an article for consideration, please aim to follow the subsequent house style:

- Documents must be submitted in Word in font Calibri, size 11, with 1.5 line spacing.
- Include your full name and role/school – this will appear under the title.
- Any web links given should be accessible by the reader and not sit behind passwords or paywalls.
- Word count is expected to be 500 to 3000 words "all in" (including references lists).
- Acronyms and abbreviations must be written in full the first time they are used in each article; thereafter the abbreviation may be used, e.g. "The special educational needs and disability co-ordinator (SENDCO) is … "
- UK English should be used, e.g. "…ise" endings instead of "…ize"
- Numbers one to ten written in full; thereafter numerical (e.g. 28 pupils aged nine completed… etc.)
- Double speech marks for direct speech or quotes; otherwise single speech marks
- Please use the Harvard referencing system (where applicable – we can support with this if necessary).

Please note that the editorial team will amend the final copy to suit our house style. You will receive a copy back if any major changes have been made for you to proofread.

RESEARCH PAPERS

ENQUIRY AND SUPPORT WITHIN THE PARTNERSHIP

Perceived Stress in Early Career Mathematics Teachers

Helen Lowther – Senior Lecturer in Secondary Mathematic Education

Perceived stress refers to an individual's feelings or thoughts about how stressed they are at any given time (Crandall and Perrewe, 1995). Stress is a factor that affects job satisfaction (Collie, Shapka, and Perry, 2012) and, consequently, retention rates (Phillips and O'Connell, 2003). In June 2018, a House of Commons report highlighted that 21% of all new teachers in 2014 were not recorded as having jobs in the sector in 2016 (Foster, 2018). With recruitment figures for mathematics teachers at 17,500 for 2020, this means that approximately 3,500 mathematics teachers will leave the profession after two years (Foster, 2018). The report also states that retention rates increase with age and experience (Foster, 2018). Stress is a factor that affects job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012), and greater classroom stress equates to lower job satisfaction (Klassen and Chiu, 2010) and leads to burnout and staff turnover (Ryan et al., 2017).

This study takes three groups of mathematics teachers who are all in their first three years of teaching and assesses their perceived stress levels to determine if there is a significant difference. Recently qualified teachers are expected to have less perceived stress as retention rates increase with age and job stress is a factor in job satisfaction (Foster, 2018, Collie et al., 2012). A significant difference in the perceived stress scores between teachers who have differing numbers of years of experience is expected. Previous research has investigated the teaching profession as a whole rather than focusing on early-career mathematics teachers.

Method

Participants
Participants were all current or past trainees who studied for a PGCE in secondary mathematics. 10 participants in the following categories were surveyed: Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) student teachers; newly qualified teachers (NQT) who were in their first year of teaching; and recently qualified teachers (RQT) who were in their second year of teaching. In each category, five males and five females were surveyed. The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 41 years (M = 26.87, SD 4.2 years). The whole cohort was asked to participate, and the first five responses in each of the categories were taken.

Materials
The perceived stress scale was used to measure the perceived stress of the participants. The scale consists of a 12-item self-reported questionnaire with a 5-point Likert response scale ranging from never to frequently. (Cohen, Kamarack and Mermelstein, 1983). Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) found that the perceived stress scale is the best for measuring stress and has good internal consistency, $\alpha > 0.7$. This is considered the minimum required for internal consistency (Lee, 2012). This questionnaire collects quantitative data and does not explain why or how stress is perceived (Coolicon, 2014).

Design
An independent design was used. The independent variable is the number of years teaching at one of three levels: PGCE, NQT, or RQT, and the dependent variable is the perceived stress scale (PSS). There were two main confounding variables: training providers and schools. In order to limit this, only participants who trained with Birmingham City University (BCU) were eligible. Different schools might affect the perceived stress of the participants. However, no school was large enough to have all the participants. Hence, multiple schools were required.

Procedure
The participants were invited to take part in the survey via a text message service. Each group of participants had their own group chat where information regarding their course is discussed. The survey was advertised there, and participants were invited to read the information sheet. This was a practical way to contact potential participants as it is already an established form of communication between the university and students. A link to the questionnaire was sent via the messenger service, consent was sought, and then participants could complete the questionnaire. At the end, there was a final debrief for participants to read. The survey was completed remotely on an electronic device such as a mobile phone.

Ethics
The British Psychological Society (BPS) has four main ethical principles: respect, competence, responsibility, and integrity (The British Psychological Society, 2009). Below is an outline of how this study adheres to these principles.

The privacy and confidentiality of the participants must be respected. To protect the privacy of participants, who has access to the data collected must be limited to the bare minimum. This extends to confidentiality by not allowing the data to be linked back to the individuals involved (Sieber, 2012). In order to ensure this, all questionnaire submissions were completed anonymously.

All participants were required to give informed consent. Ensuring informed consent meant the participants were informed about all aspects of the study, as well as the fact that participation is voluntary. All participants were informed of their rights in the study, the procedure that would take place, the expected length, and confidentiality (Nijhawan et al., 2013). This allowed them to decide freely if they wanted to participate (Nijhawan et al., 2013). An information sheet was given to all participants, which was written in an accessible language and could be easily read by participants who are not familiar with psychological language. (Hewitt & Cramer, 2016) All participants were made aware that they could withdraw at any time during the questionnaire and have their data removed from the study. Only participants who were legally

competent could take part (The British Psychological Society, 2009). Consent was sorted from the education department and the Health, Education, and Life Sciences faculty at BCU. The university has responsibility for the wellbeing of its students past and present, so any research conducted under this umbrella must be approved by the university.

By being mindful of the privacy and confidentiality issues, obtaining informed consent, and ensuring participants can self-determine, this shows respect towards the participants in the survey. (The British Psychological Society, 2009)

All the participants were debriefed after the study. Debriefing, as defined by Bickman and Rog (1998), involves both the researcher and the participants. It is an opportunity for participants to ask the researcher any questions they may have had, as well as for the researcher to explain the research that had occurred.

In order to show integrity, the researcher remained honest and accurate, avoided conflicts of interest, and maintained professional boundaries. Steneck (2006) states that trust is important in any research project, and if one individual breaks this trust, it impacts the whole of the profession, not just the individual study. As the researcher taught on the postgraduate course, a conflict of interest had to be avoided. In order to do this, the whole cohort was invited, the questionnaire was kept anonymous, and it was made clear that participation was voluntary. The participants were not offered anything in return for their participation. (Hewitt & Cramer, 2016). Professional boundaries were kept by using the university messenger chats rather than contacting the students individually.

In this study, there was no use of deception. However, the hypothesis was not given, but the participants were informed of the nature of the research. Allowing the participants to know about the nature of the study could lead to performance bias (Howitt and Cramer, 2016).

Results

30 participants took part in the study. The mean age in years was 26.87 (S.D. 4.2) with a range of 23–41. Age was non-normally distributed, with a skewness of 2.183 (SE =.427) and a kurtosis of 5.285 (SE =.833).

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics the mean perceived stress score for each year of training. The PGCE scored lowest for perceived stress.

Statistic	PGCE	NQT	RQT
Mean PSS	18.4	23.3	21.3
Std. Deviation	3.836	2.406	3.831
Std. Error	1.213	0.761	1.212

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Stress Score by job (PGCE, NQT, RQT)

Descriptive statistics (Table 2) shows the mean rating for each sex. Both sexes scored have a similar mean, but the males had a larger standard deviation.

A one-way (job type: PGCE, NQT, or RQT) between-subjects ANOVA revealed that job type had a significant main effect (F

Statistic	Male	Female
Mean PSS	21.13	20.87
Std. Deviation	4.422	3.42
Std. Error	1.142	0.883

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Stress Scores by sex (Male, Female)

$(2, 27) = 5.177$, p.05). The effect size (partial eta2) of.277 revealed that the number of years spent teaching mathematics accounts for 28% of the variation in stress scores. A post-hoc Bonferroni comparison revealed that the PGCE had significantly lower stress scores than the NQT (p=.05), with no significant differences between the PGCE and RQT (p =.207) or the NQT and RQT (p =.608).

An independent t-test (Sex: male, female) showed no significant effect of sex of the participants (F(1,28) = 1.280, p >.05). Males scored higher on the perceived stress score (mean = 21.13, SD = 4.422) than females (mean = 20.87, SD = 3.42). The mean difference between conditions was 0.26, and the 95% confidence interval for the estimated population mean difference is between -2.69 and 3.22. The difference between conditions was not significant, according to an independent t-test: t(28) = 0.185, p >.05, d = 0.07.

Discussion

The overall aim of this study was to determine if there was a significant difference in the perceived stress scores between teachers in their first three years of teaching mathematics. The results show there is a statistically significant difference between the perceived stress scores of the PGCE and NQT, with the NQT being higher. This increase in perceived stress might be the result of additional teaching hours in the second year. It increases from a 50% to 90% timetable between the first and second years. This extra teaching along with the removal of a support teacher who is present in all lessons during the first year might explain the increase in stress levels (Department for Education, 2018). From the Job Demand-Control-Support model (figure 1) we can see this may shift from the low demand – high control job towards the high demands – low control job between the first two years which would result in an increase in job stress during this time (Dewe, O'Driscoll, & Cooper, 2012).
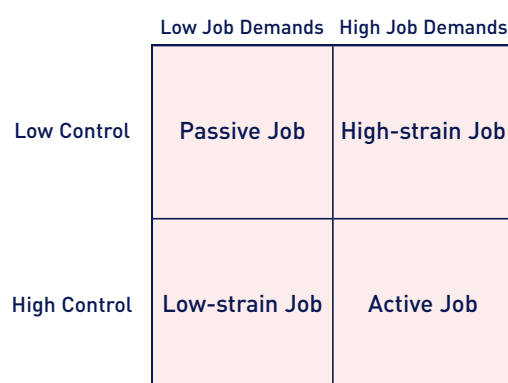

Figure 1: Job Demand-Control-Support model (Dewe, O'Driscoll, and Cooper, 2012, p11)

This peak in stress levels so early in the teaching career could explain why 21 percent of new professionals in 2014 left the profession within 2 years (Foster, 2018). To help prevent this from happening in the future, increasing the workload from 50% to 90% over the second year and phasing out the support of the other teacher may help reduce the peak in stress levels (Department for Education, 2018).

This study found that males had a higher perceived stress score, but it was not significantly higher. According to the Person-Environment Fit Stress Model, employees who are well-matched with their work environment experience less stress (Dewe et al., 2012). As females make up 62% of the teaching work force in secondary schools in England (Department for Education, 2015), they might feel more comfortable in the job, so their stress levels are lower. In America, Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that females had higher levels of workload and classroom stress compared to males. Ages, schools, and sample size could have affected the results compared to Klassen and Chiu's (2010).

Several limitations were noted in this study. Firstly, the ages of the participants were not normally distributed and had a positive skew. Only three participants were over the age of 30. This might be due to 51% of trainee teachers being under the age of 25 (Department for Education, 2017). In future research, a stratified sample could be taken to have a more representative sample. As the House of Commons report stated, age was a factor in retention rates (Foster, 2018). The age of the participants could affect the perceived stress score, with older participants having lower scores.

The sample size was small. 10 participants were in each group. Increasing the sample size and including other training providers would provide more data that has greater validity. There are also other confounding variables such as school type (academy, grammar, state, or private), which could also affect the perceived stress of the teachers. A larger sample or stricter criteria would mean different school types could be compared instead of just focusing on one particular variety. These participants' perceived stress scores are limited to a single number. There is no qualitative data that would find out why they might be stressed and what factors are affecting their levels of stress.

The next stage of this research would be to see if the study's results can be replicated using another sample of participants. This study could use another training provider and a larger sample size. If significant levels of stress were discovered in various years, determining what causes the stress and taking practical steps to reduce it would benefit the general teaching population and, hopefully, reduce the high turnover in the first few years.

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Questioning The Demise of Creativity within the Current Educational System

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Preliminary Literature Review

As early as 1991 – when the 'Robinson Report' officially published their 'national strategy' for a 'creative education' – there has been a constant, ever burgeoning field of study surrounding the role of creativity in the classroom, and for the teacher (NACCCE, 1991). Since then, the central role of creativity within the classroom has truly cemented itself. In fact, a powerful indicator for the growing status of creativity in academia is the present deluge of pedagogies, papers, reports, and research surrounding this often under-appreciated area in the classroom. In 2022, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) identifies "creative thinking" as a key indicator of ability and performance in school. The authority and influence of PISA lends a substantial weight to the arguments for creativity in schools in England. The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999) argued that nurturing creativity was essential to the process of providing and motivating the diverse talents of all children within education. Similarly, The School's White Paper report (2001) attempted to raise the status and importance of creativity by pledging increased provision for creativity enrichment (DCSF, 2007). Arguably one of the most ambitious schemes for promoting creativity – in 2002 the Arts Council England worked with over 1 million children and 90,000 teachers across England for their "creative partnerships" initiative. More recently, one of the most thorough and broad ranging research papers detailing creativity in schools was published: The Department for Children, Schools and Families, together with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) submitted a 'Joint Memorandum' that explicitly urges the Government to increase the status of creativity across the curriculum to support our young people (2007). Clearly creativity is valued within academia and the educational field – across numerous reports words such as 'status', 'importance', and 'value' are echoed often.

The Difficulty of Defining Creativity

Creativity in its essence refuses singular demarcation and definition. McCallum believes that defining creativity is "complicated" as it has "many meanings" both varied and at times even contradictory (2012:1). Indeed, preliminary research immediately brings up multiple meanings, definitions, and explanations due to its abstract nature. The Oxford English Dictionary defines creativity as "inventive, imaginative, original ideas as well as routine skill or intellect" (2022). Kinsella and Fautley describe creativity as "a spark of an idea" (2017: vi). One of the earliest recorded mentions of creativity occurs in 'A History of Dramatic Literature' (1875) which describes creativity as a "spontaneous flow". Whilst Jeffrey and Craft (2003) acknowledges that creativity "should be an artistic event" not something "without emotions". Undoubtedly, 'creativity' is both essential to embrace within the classroom, and impossible to define completely. However, across the broad spectrum of definitions, there seems to be a core ideology existing: creativity as a **process**. As a spark, or flow, or event which should be exciting, imaginative, and innovative.

The Impact of Creativity within Disadvantaged Schools

Recent research has begun to explore how creativity has possibilities to improve attainment, confidence, self-deprivation, and mental health issues **specifically** in disadvantaged schools. Government funded research by the DCMS (Parliament.uk, 2007) has posited that creativity has possibilities to offer 'fresh starts', higher attainment, and improved self-confidence to students in disadvantaged schools. Similarly, Baker (2014) notes how creativity can have "a long-term positive effect on pupils' life chances, *particularly* for children from disadvantaged backgrounds". Creativity can have a much greater potential impact in disadvantaged schools in comparison to greater affluent schools. Baker's research has found that social context has a great impact on the aspirations of pupils: "aspirations are shaped by 'place' and broader social contexts outside the family and school" (2014:538). His study recognises how low aspirations are disproportionally found in geographical areas of high deprivation and socio-economic challenge (Baker, 2014). Creativity is a readily available tool to closing educational attainment gaps and increasing levels of social mobility and confidence in these areas. The DCMS found that students who were offered opportunities to work creatively were more motivated and had higher aspirations for the future (Parliament.uk, 2007). A further analysis of school data revealed that young people who are known to have attended creative workshops outperformed their peers in the same schools to a statistically significant extent across all three key stages. In fact, in a recent study across 24 schools, data found that children described as 'more creative' were often less anxious (Fancourt, 2019:30). Furthermore, partaking in creative activities in the classroom is believed to be associated with lower risks of social and behavioural maladjustment during adolescence (Fancourt, 2019:30). For England's disadvantaged schools then, creativity can absolutely have the potential to have a wide-ranging positive impact on students – such as

attainment, confidence, mental health, anxiety, and even social and behavioural maladjustment.

Creativity in the Educational System

With such a breadth of positive impact then, is creativity both valued and promoted by our English National curriculum? Whilst the new English National Curriculum claims that creativity is part of their core concern (DfE, 2013), former headteacher Colin Harris believes the Government have created "an education system which is determined to drive out of every individual any ounce of creativity" (2017:2). Rufus Norris, director of the National Theatre, sees "an education policy that is deliberately squeezing creativity out" (2018:7). Similarly, Maisuria outlines how creativity is being destroyed by "government directives since the Ruskin speech in 1976, all aiming to introduce provisions of standardisation, centralisation, and vocationalisation of education" (2005:141). The publication 'Creativity in a Crisis' seems to unite all these opinions when it writes that there is, currently, "a profound state of alarm about the creative condition of the experience received by our students in schools" (2018:2006). If the demise of creativity is being felt on a visceral level by teachers, creatives, and pupils alike, then both an awareness of this crisis, and a determination to protect and encourage creativity within the classroom seems uniquely crucial for our current educational field. Whilst it may seem overwhelming – and the onus should not solely lie on teachers alone – creativity is in a crisis, and through joint effort and dedication, this can be rescinded before the damage is too irreparable. This is not an imploration to only English teachers – to use the Government's own words: "creativity should extend right across the curriculum" (House of Commons, 2008) – it is the responsibility of all teachers across all subjects to embed creativity into their practice, curriculum, and into their students. I believe all teachers should find this endeavour both vital and exciting when looking to the future of an educational system we are proud to teach.

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Is introducing a zero-tolerance behaviour policy the best decision for your school?
Georgina Williams – Student, School of Education and Social Work

"'Zero-tolerance' refers to behaviour management strategies that seek to punish all offences severely, no matter how minor" (Ward, 2008). These policies began in the USA as a response to weapon violence. Their popularity has snow-

balled, and they are becomingly increasing common in schools in the UK, although are sometimes renamed as the 'no-excuses method' in the UK. The increasing uptake of this strategy has led to a noticeable rise in the number of fixed-

term exclusions issued within schools in England. Data from the DfE shows that there were 352,454 suspensions issued in 2020-2021, a rise from 310,733 in 2019-2020. (Department for Education, 2022a; Department for Education, 2021).

Given the rising examples of zero-tolerance policies being used in schools, you may be unsure as to whether such a policy is worth pursuing within your educational setting, and what the impacts of doing so could be. There is reasoning both for and against the introduction of these policies, which I will look at in this article, to help you decide whether a zero-tolerance strategy is the best option for your setting.

Many schools implement a zero-tolerance policy because there are positive effects, including the clear standards it sets, the standardisation of consequence delivery, and the way in which it prepares students for the world beyond school.

One of the most convincing arguments for a zero-tolerance behaviour policy is the clear standards that it sets for teachers, for students and for students' families. This is in line with the Department for Education's guidance which states that "A clear school behaviour policy, consistently and fairly applied, underpins effective education. School staff, pupils and parents should all be clear of the high standards of behaviour expected of all pupils at all times." (Department for Education, 2014: 8). Consistency in the classroom relates to a 'steady, unchanging follow-through on the routines, policies and procedures and consequences you have established.' (Fulton, 2019). If a zero-tolerance policy is applied fairly and consistently, all students, and their parents, will know what is expected of them and understand that any misbehaviour, no matter how minor, will land them in trouble. Therefore, students are less likely to push boundaries or commit low-level disruption, in turn improving both their own learning and the learning of others in the class.

Additionally, in the interest of fairness and consistency, zero tolerance policies remove any room for favouritism. "No matter who a child may be affiliated with, no matter how high their grades are, they will not be exempt from the rules of the school. Zero-tolerance leaves very little wiggle room for any sort of negotiation." (APECSEC, 2015). This fairness is favoured by many, especially those who feel disadvantaged by other discipline methods.

When implemented fairly and consistently, zero-tolerance policies can also create a safer learning environment for all students as it provides an effective deterrent for students considering misbehaviour. Skinner (1953) notes that the notion of deterring future misbehaviour is central to zero-tolerance strategies, and that the impact of potential consequences on misbehaviour is defining characteristic of effective punishment. The level of deterrence that a zero-tolerance strategy provides is arguably crucial in ensuring a safe classroom for all students and providing a space where the most effective learning can take place. Although many argue that this is a crucial aspect of zero-tolerance policies, Bickel and Qualls (1980) noted that schools with high levels of suspensions and expulsions generally had a less satisfactory school climate. All educators aim for a positive and satisfactory school climate, so, whilst this study was conducted in 1980 and focused on schools in Colorado, USA, so may not be entirely relevant to schools in the UK today, it nonetheless highlights just one of the potential issues with zero-tolerance policies.

A third positive aspect of zero-tolerance strategies is the way

in which they prepare students for the real world. In schools, and as teachers, we are always trying to prepare our students for their life beyond school, whether this be through providing opportunities for work experience, the importance of following instructions, or opportunities for socialisation. One way in which zero-tolerance behaviour policies can prepare students for real life is in relation to the criminal justice system. Today, the legal system emphasises zero-tolerance policing strategies. Launched in the early 1990s, zero-tolerance policing was based on rigorous enforcement of the law (Wakefield and Fleming, 2009) and involves the law enforcement clamping down on all minor criminal activities. By teaching students that their actions have consequences within school, we are preparing students for the harsher consequences they may be forced to face further down the line if they do not learn from their actions now.

However, many researchers, such as those working for the American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, argue that zero-tolerance behaviour policies have more negative effects than positive, as they have failed to achieve the goals of an effective school discipline system (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008: 860), and it is important that you, as educators, are aware of these before implementing such a regimented policy.

One of the most common arguments against a zero-tolerance policy is that every student is different, so how can we possibly discipline them using a 'one size fits all' approach. Walker reasons that "A strict zero-tolerance policy has a "one size fits all approach" and doles out the same mandatory punishment for bringing a plastic knife to school as bringing a gun to school." (Walker, 2009: 2). Of course, this is a rather extreme example in the UK, as guns are not commonplace, but it does highlight the point well; how is it fair to punish all children the same, regardless of their deviance?

Issuing detention after detention, exclusion after exclusion, does not fix the problem. In my own professional practice, I have noticed that many of the students who are punished as part of zero-tolerance are repeat offenders. They do not learn from punishment, and they fully expect to be given them. In some cases, they even want to be sanctioned! I have seen, and taught, students who misbehave purposely, with the aim of being removed from a lesson that they do not want to be in. I would argue that this shows the inefficiency of a zero-tolerance policy and highlights the fact that a zero-tolerance policy can even go as far as to encourage bad behaviour.

Additionally, much misbehaviour stems from deeper issues relating to student wellbeing, which harsh punishment will not fix. "Much student misbehaviour is rooted in deep-seated socio-economic, family-related issues. Merely punishing the child regularly could not possibly begin to resolve these issues." (Ward, 2008). One question that Cassidy and Jackson (2005) raise in relation to this is whether "schools are further punishing students who are already marginalized and experiencing pain, through … subjecting them to zero tolerance policies that apply the "letter of the law" but do not give sufficient allowance for the person or the context of the behaviour." (Cassidy and Jackson, 2005: 449). In 2020-2021, the suspension rate for students with special educational needs was over four times that of students without special education needs (Department for Education, 2022a). It cannot be coincidence that these students are more heavily disadvantaged by such a policy, and educators should be aware that they are being disproportionately affected by such hard-line approaches.

Naomi Fisher (in Parker, 2022), a clinical psychologist, even states that zero-tolerance behaviour policies are having an increasingly negative effect on students' well-being and mental health. Many of the young people that Fisher sees are anxious about, or stressed out by, zero-tolerance behaviour policies. They struggle to cope with the shame and anxiety that comes with getting into trouble for minor things such as tapping their pen on the desk or speaking out of turn, even if they are just trying to ask a question.

Whilst it is up to schools to develop specific behaviour policies they wish to implement, there is national guidance regarding behaviour and discipline in schools and the ways in which these policies are developed. The key points of this guidance are that headteachers, proprietors and governing bodies must ensure they have a strong behaviour policy which is consistently applied, includes the use of rewards and sanctions, and promotes good behaviour, self-discipline and respect (Department for Education, 2014). Updated guidance in 2022 further solidifies the ways in which schools should respond to both good and bad behaviour (Department for Education, 2022b). This guidance is in place to ensure that the conduct of pupils is appropriately regulated and that all schools have a basic foundation to work from. Whilst a zero-tolerance policy does meet the criteria laid out by the department for education, there are also alternative policies which equally meet the criteria and which may be better suited to your school. Ward (2008) disagrees with zero-tolerance policies but does believe in "rigorously applied discipline structures". He writes that we need behaviour systems which "are based on a sense of justice and individual worth" (Ward, 2008).

I believe that is it is important that you, as educators, are aware of alternatives to zero-tolerance policies. One such alternative is the 'Ready to Learn policy' which was first developed by Henbury School (Grant, 2022) but has since become popular in many schools, although is sometimes named differently. 'Ready to Learn' encourages students to take responsibility for their actions and gives them a chance to rectify their behaviour. This system means that students who are not 'ready to learn' such as those who are off-task or who have forgotten equipment will receive a warning. They then have the opportunity to correct the problem. If a second warning is received, the level of sanction increases, usually to a detention. After a third warning, the level of sanction increases again to being removed from a class or isolation (Grant, 2022). This policy can be beneficial as, like zero-tolerance policies, it eliminates the risk of favouritism and sets clear standards whilst still allowing for minor misdemeanours to be corrected and students to learn from mistakes.

From their own professional practice, all educators will understand the need to cultivate healthy and positive relationships with students, and these often need to be backed up by positive reinforcement. Compassion will have a much greater effect on a difficult child than any punishment. It can improve how interactions and relationships are perceived (Samaritans Cymru, N.D.), thus promoting trust and forgiveness, the kind of qualities we are all aiming to instil in our students (Ward, 2008).

Given the evidence and research outlined above, I hope that having read this article, any educator will be in a better position to understand the impact of zero-tolerance policies. In some schools, the impacts of such a policy may be exactly what is needed, but just as a one size fits all approach to behaviour does not fit all students, such a policy does not fit all schools.

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The benefits of collaboration to develop health, education and wellbeing outcomes across educational institutions utilising the School Games Programme

Hannah Reed – School Games Organiser, Hall Green School and PhD Student at Birmingham City University

I believe that collaboration between two or more parties can have outstanding successes. A collaboration project in Colorado (Colorado Digitisation Program) has nurtured a collaborative program between different cultural heritage institutions including libraries, museums, historical societies and archives throughout Colorado and other states in an effort to provide access to the written and visual records of Colorado's history, culture, government and industry (Bailey-Hainer and Urban: 2004). At a conference in 2004 (IMLS Web-Wise) Joey Rodger from the Urban Libraries Council stated *"One, two, three, four - who are we building it for? Five, six, seven, eight - if it makes sense, collaborate!"* he further stated *"In our minds, it always does."*

Similarly, Croghan (2007) highlights that collaborative working can influence the health and wellbeing outcomes of children and their families which supports local needs. In September 2017 Dr Irfan Khawaja Programme lead for the new Physical Education and School Sport course and a School Games Organiser collaborated on a project that enabled Birmingham City University's teaching and learning strategy of 'Practice-led, Knowledge applied' to be enhanced through working alongside the School Games programme. The idea being that the students at Birmingham City University had an opportunity to develop their skills with real life participants (that weren't their peers) for real life experience. This meant that the School Games opportunities to local schools could be increased as the students provided an additional workforce to help deliver events, whilst also enhancing the module content within the course. Birmingham City University could also provide the facilities (in most cases) meaning that this approach was cost effective and was ultimately a 'win, win' for all involved. Since 2017 to the current day events and festivals are arranged between the Central Sports Partnership at Hall Green School and Dr Irfan Khawaja, Rachel Black and Craig Newton supporting the student's courses at Level 4, 5 and 6, whilst also supporting the outcomes of the School Games.

The School Games itself is a programme funded by Sport England and overseen by the Youth Sport Trust (YST) and has a mission 'to put physical activity and competitive sport at the heart of schools and provide more young people with the opportunity to compete and achieve their personal best' (yourschoolgames [online]: 2023). The School Games is delivered by School Games Organisers (SGO's) 3 days a week who support local schools at a local level. SGO's also work with Active Partnerships at a county level creating an annual calendar of competition and events. The School Games has evolved since it was created in 2006 (refreshed in 2010) and now has 5 outcomes which SGO's and schools alike try to meet:

1. To maintain and grow school engagement in the School Games and their delivery of 60 active minutes (per day).
2. To create positive experiences to ensure physical activity and competition provision is designed to reflect the motivation, competence and confidence of young people and has clear intent.
3. To have a clear focus on secondary and in particular transition points (Year 2–3 and year 6–7).
4. To create positive experiences that support character development of young people.
5. To advocate to key stakeholders how the School Games makes a meaningful difference to the lives of children and young people, including supporting schools to engage and educate parents (yourschoolgames [online]: 2023).

Keeping these outcomes in mind alongside the ongoing and current research from Sport England (2020) and the Youth Sport Trust Impact Report (2021) which highlighted that 3.8 million children do less than the Chief Medical Officers (CMO) guidelines of 60 minutes per day of physical activity and the fact that 1 in 4 children in year six were classed as obese with

2020/21 seeing the largest increase in childhood obesity (Childhood Measurement Programme, cited by Youth sport Trust, 2021 [online]) specific targeted events have been created to support young people. The YST Impact Report (2022) also highlights that 2.2 million young people are active for less than 30 minutes a day. So in an effort to tackle these ever increasing worrying statistics Table 1 provides examples of what events have run and why.

The following table (table 1) shows a sample of events that support all outcomes of the School Games and compliment programmes of study at Birmingham City University which have run in collaboration with the SGO at Hall Green School and The Department for Physical Activity, Birmingham City University.

Event and target group	Event first established	Event Intent
Year 7/8 Girls Active Festival	2017–2018	This event builds on Sport England's 'This Girl Can' campaign established in 2015. Targeting those girls who are the least engaged in school. This could be pupils with low self-confidence and self-esteem or who shy away from participating because of their perceived abilities.
Year 7/8 Boys Active Festival	2017–2018	This event replicates the model used for girls, but ensures equity amongst genders. Targeting those boys who are the least engaged in school. This could be pupils with low self-confidence and self-esteem or who often shy away from participating in school PE lessons due to due their perceived abilities.
Year 2/3 Girls Fundamental Skills Festival	2017–2018	Developing the fundamental skills (agility, balance, co-ordination) in young children. This event takes a multi-skill approach and also aims to support children transitioning from KS1 to KS2.
KS2 Active Numeracy and Literacy Festival	2018–2019	Developing basic literacy and numeracy skills using physical activity as the driver. The aim is to make lessons at school more active which helps schools work towards achieving the CMO guidelines for physical activity.
Year 3/4 Motiv8 Festival	2019–2020 (before Covid-19)	Targeting pupils in year 3/4 who are low in confidence and possibly ability and who lack motivation in PE lessons.
Year 5/6 Gifted and Talented Festival	2019–2020 (before Covid-19)	An event to develop the skills of the most able pupils in school. This event should push the pupil's abilities beyond what they might experience in school.
Year 10/11 GCSE, BTEC support sessions	2019–2020 (before Covid-19)	This event is aimed at supporting pupils who are on a PE related qualification that aims to support their knowledge and understanding of a specific topic linked to the syllabus they are studying. Content is advised by the schools attending and this could take a practical or theoretical approach i.e support around playing badminton or better understanding how levers in the body work.
KS3 Tchoukball Festival	2021–2022	An event designed to engage the least active pupils using a sport they may not have done before an effort to improve engagement levels of pupils in PE.
KS2 Multisport SEND festival	2022–2023	An event to develop the skills and confidence of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. According to the Activity Alliance cited in the Youth Sport Trust Impact Report (2022) 72% of disabled children report feeling lonely and left out, compared with 36% of their non-disabled peers which highlights there is an increased need for events and festivals that target this group of children.

Table 1

Where we are now

The number of events on offer to schools has increased as demand has increased (especially post Covid where there is an ever increased emphasis on health and wellbeing). The variety of events on offer to schools has also increased due to the School Games outcomes and by clearly defining the intent of an event i.e to support those with low self-esteem. From September 2017 to the current day the Central School Games area based at Hall Green Secondary School in collaboration with the Department for Sport and Exercise at Birmingham City University have run 69 events and involved 21 primary schools, 1 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), 2 Alternative Provision Schools (AP's), 1 Special School and 21 secondary schools (PRU's, AP's and secondary school opportunities are opened up city wide by liaising with other SGO's from within Birmingham). In total 2569 pupils have taken part in the events. A complete list of engaged schools are included in table 2 below.

Primary	Secondary	Other (AP's, PRU's and Special)
Adderley Primary School	Ark Boulton Academy	City of Birmingham School (Primary Phase)
Al-Furqan Primary School	Ark Victoria Academy (Secondary Phase)	Fox Hollies Special School
Alston Primary School	Bishop Challoner Catholic School	New Ways School
Audley Primary School	Bordesley Green Girls School	The Reach School
Blakesley Hall Primary School	Bournville School	
Conway Primary School	Cockshut Hill School	
English Martyrs' Roman Catholic Primary School	Dame Elizabeth Cadbury School	
Greet Primary School	Hall Green School	
Holy Family Catholic School	John Willmott School	
Ladypool Primary School	King Edward VI Balaam Wood	
Marlborough Primary School	King Edward VI Sheldon Heath	
Montgomery Primary Academy	Lordswood Boys School	
Oasis Academy Blakenhale Juniors	Moseley School	
The Olive School, Birmingham	Ninestiles, An Academy	
Parkfield Community Primary School	Selly Park Girls' School	
Regent's Park Community Primary School	Small Heath Leadership Academy	
Starbank School (Primary Phase)	Starbank School (Secondary Phase)	
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School	Swanshurst Girls School	
Washwood Heath Academy (Primary Phase)	Turves Green Boys School	
Waverley School (Primary Phase)	Waverley School (Secondary Phase)	
Wyndcliffe Primary School	Yardley's School	

Table 2

Table 2 shows the list of engaged schools from September 2017 to March 2023 (to date). Please note some schools will have attended more than 1 event.

What the schools say:

The feedback from schools has always been of a positive and complimentary nature, the anecdotes below highlight this:

M. Williams, Fox Hollies Special School.

"Thanks Hannah - ours really enjoyed their day and had a great time, so thanks to you and the students at BCU!"

T. Cross Waverley School

"Just wanted to say a big thank you for putting on this event, our students loved it! I had some great feedback from the staff that went. Please let me know if you have any pics and if you have any dates in mind for future events."

D. Hadley, City of Birmingham School.

"Just an email to express my gratitude and appreciation for Friday. It was truly a great experience for our pupils, with many successes. They were all talking about it on the journey back and were really pleased to be showing off their medals on return. Unusually they were fairly settled on return with no real incidents. (Usually some of our pupils find the end of things difficult.) We look forward to the next event we are involved in."

N. Folbigg, Regent's Park Community School.

"Our pupils loved the motiv8 festival on Friday. I mean loved it. They all enjoyed the ball skills, the range of activities, they thought the students were great. Everyone one of them asked when the next event was on and could they come. One boy said I never knew I could even play basketball and now I'm shooting hoops! Thanks again. Brilliant"

What the students say:

Caitlin Carnegie – 3rd year Secondary Physical Education, Birmingham City University student

"It's been really lovely collaborating with my peers and the students in my cohort and getting to know what it's like to teach different ages and getting to know peoples strengths and weaknesses from within the cohort and changing on the spot what you're going to be practicing. I think it's really beneficial. I've really enjoyed it basically and I think it has been really good but I wish there could have been more put on (if that's possible) to create more links within teaching and coaching. It's been nice working with the coaching cohort and getting to know things from their perspective (teacher's v coaches). Having time to practice and try things; different strategies (teaching strategies), and thinking if I do it here and I mess up here I've got all my lecturers around, I then think I can put this on in placement and see how it works there."

Replicating the collaboration

This work can be easily replicated across different subject and faculty areas and events could be delivered using local schools as a resource to improve the quality and variety of delivered material to university students. The School Games Organisers will continue to collaborate to allow for the best possible experiences of all involved, evolving events where there is a need. Each school (similar to Physical Education) will have a lead for that subject, so it is a case of liaising with the right person in that school i.e. literacy leads for English workshops or science lead for science workshops to aid in the collaboration process.

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• YourSchoolGames (2) (2023).[online]. Available from https://www.yourschoolgames.com/about/who-we-are/

Useful websites

• www.sportbirmingham.org
• www.sportengland.org
• www.youthsporttrust.org
• www.yourschoolgames.com

CURRENT ENQUIRY AND PRACTICE

Using a thematic curriculum in Secondary Physical Education
Aliya Levene – Year 3 BA hons Secondary Physical Education with QTS, Birmingham City University

Physical education (PE) has the ability to enhance students' physical and mental abilities (AfPE, 2018), yet, when the curriculum is focused primarily on performance, as in a more traditional approach, the purpose of the subject can be over-looked. For many years, the traditional PE curriculum seen in many schools has placed sport at the centre of their PE curriculum, "with an unbalanced emphasis upon team games" (Capel, 2007). However, research shows that once students leave school, participation in team sports decreases, with most adults (age 16+), taking up walking for leisure and different fitness activities (Sport England, 2022). As a result, some schools have opted to adopt a thematic curriculum, which aims to develop all three domains of learning by providing students with a wide range of opportunities and activities, challenges and meets the needs of every student, and emphasises progression and attitude above performance and ability. A thematic curriculum "is driven by 'big ideas' rather than subject-specific content" (Wiseman, 2017), and in PE, the sport acts as a facilitator, rather than the driver, guiding all students to the final destination (PE Scholar, 2022). Not all students are going to become professional football or cricket players when they leave school, as a traditional curriculum would appear to promote, however, the skills learned through a thematic curriculum can be used and applied to any environment and setting, benefiting every student that studies at that school.

In a thematic curriculum, each year group has a core focus, such as personal development, that is divided into concepts, like the value of PE, self-worth, creative movement, and fulfilling potential; the number of which varies depending on the school, and students. Since the driving force is the focus, the concepts can be taught through any sport or physical activity, using whatever pedagogy the teacher believes is most effective. For example, creative movement could be taught through dance or netball, for example, using a guided discovery approach (Mosston, and Ashworth, 2002). It is important, nevertheless, that each focus follows on from one another and builds on key skills that students in each year group will most likely need to work on.

The prospect of developing a whole new curriculum can be overwhelming; however, there are schools that have already implemented this curriculum model and have received positive feedback that you can contact, as well as examples online that you can alter to meet the needs of your school. I had to construct my own curriculum for one of my assignments (See Figure 1), which was influenced by PE Scholar (2022). I took their focuses and concepts and replaced and moved them around to suit my own vision and beliefs.

PE should, in my opinion, prepare all students for life after school and reflect the reality of real life as much as possible by providing meaningful experiences to which they can relate to. Society is constantly changing, and if we want our students to succeed in today's world, we must keep the PE curriculum up to date. As a result, I developed this progressive curriculum to help students gradually develop their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities.

The justification and thinking underpinning my concept curriculum is simple. In Year 7, students are just beginning their secondary education. They are likely to encounter new ideas and rules, which is why their year is focused on settling them in and exposing them to the fundamentals, as well as expanding their knowledge and awareness of physical activity. Students in Year 9 are discovering themselves, and physical exercise is often put on the backburner. It is critical that we change their mindset while we still have the opportunity and show them that physical activity doesn't have to be competitive, but rather about their participation. Finally, students in Year 11 are preparing for their GCSEs and applying for post-16 education opportunities. This can be a stressful period, and it's evident from my interactions with these students, that PE isn't always a priority. So, during the year, we need to educate them on the significance of being active for life and provide them with opportunities to participate in activities that are easily accessible outside of school, either independently or with friends, such as Zumba, which they are more likely to participate in once they leave.

Given the high level of competition for jobs, apprenticeships, and university places, why not teach students about leadership, communication, and teamwork to help them stand out and be an efficient and competent member of society? The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on students' mental

Year	Focus	Scheme of Work Concepts			
7	Exploring physical literacy	Knowledge & Understanding	Motivation	Competence	Confidence
8	Exploring personal development	Communication	Resilience	Emotional Intelligence	Intra-personal skills
9	Exploring character development	Sporting values	Problem solving	Power of positivity	Redefining competition
10	Exploring leadership skills	Effective teams	Attitudes & Behaviours	Self-reflection	Fulfilling potential
11	Being Active for Life	Health & Wellbeing	Dealing with stress		Remaining active

Figure 1: My thematic curriculum

health (Children's Commissioner, 2021), with 1 in every 6 having a probable mental disorder (NHS Digital, 2021), so let's teach them about health and wellbeing, resilience, confidence, and attitudes and behaviours, so they'll be better equipped to handle difficult situations. As a result, when students finish core PE at the end of Year 11, we as PE teachers can confidently say that we have made a difference and taught every student something they can use and value later in life - let's make PE meaningful!!

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Since the emergence of statutory assessments, has the broad and balanced curriculum been eliminated?

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Since the emergence of statutory assessments, it should be considered whether the broad and balanced curriculum has been eliminated. This issue is of central importance as the need to provide an inclusive curriculum where all subjects are taught, is enshrined within the Education Act (2002), as well as being recommended in the Cambridge Primary review (2009) and the Rose Review (2009). The national curriculum also promotes the advances of teaching an inclusive curriculum; the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils will prepare them for opportunities and responsibilities of later life in society (DfE, 2014). Despite this, it has been discovered that little consideration has been paid to executing such curriculum. Primary data findings and supporting literature, revealed the hypothesis that the curriculum has become maths and English driven as a result of statutory assessments and lack of subject and curriculum knowledge. Herewith, the prioritisation of raising attainment and progress within 'core' subjects has led to the abandonment of science and 'foundation' subjects. The intention of this paper is to remind scholastic stakeholders of educational aims and the significance of delivering a comprehensive curriculum.

Literature Review

The national literacy and numeracy strategy (DfES, 2011) was published in response to the 'PISA shock' (Baird, 2011) and was in operation between 1997 to 2011, yet this strategy was no longer statutory by 2011. Nevertheless, this publication intended the clear statement of elevating maths and English above all other primary curricular areas. Thus, suggesting education is a political activity, deciding which subjects should be incorporated within the national curriculum; what they entail, and the quantity is decided by persuasion of political parties including the government (Catling, 2017). However, education is rarely agreed on, different perspectives and justifications circulate, implying education is controversial (Usher, 2019).

The national curriculum states "every state-funded school must offer a curriculum, which is balanced and broadly based" (DfE, 2014:5). Thus, meaning, providing children with the skills, knowledge and understanding through all subjects to develop informed individuals, is a significant entitlement (Cornerstones, 2017). More specifically, foundation subjects provide a range of benefits, which contribute to a child's success, wellbeing, and lifelong learning. Design and technology, physical education, art and design, and computing can facilitate skills (especially fine motor) development, enhance creativity and the ability to express themselves in a technological enhanced world (Tsangaridou, 2021). The importance of teaching history, geography, languages, and religious education is valued by Eaude's (2017) philosophical perspective, asserting that humanities are vital in holistic development as they allow pupils to comprehend other people, become thoughtful, empathetic, and critical citizens. Arguably, music inducts children into socialisation and supports children to become creative, individual thinkers (APPG, 2018). The wider curriculum has a key role in preparing children for changes occurring in modern day life (Bourn, 2016) and reflect Dewey's (1938) seminal argument, claiming that foundation subjects do more than determine current ideologies, endeavours, and community,

they supply meanings in terms of which life is esteemed and criticized.

Accountability, performance, and statutory assessments

Regardless of the dearth of official guidance, accountability and assessment have become the driving force in planning and timetabling. This is reflected in the programmes of study where core subjects have detailed expectations in comparison to the foundation subjects, which are restricted to limited pages (DfE, 2014). Nevertheless, it should be noted that although science seems to have a place alongside maths and English, Ofsted (2019) have identified a shortage of curriculum time for teaching science; occurring when there is an over-focus on English and maths. Moreover, the Ofsted (2015) inspection framework included foundation subjects within the phrases: 'work across the curriculum', 'non-core' and 'other subjects', implying less significance and value. Saliently, Carter's review of the initial teacher education (2015) reveals that history and religious education are not featured at all and there is one mention of geography. Suggesting that stakeholders are facilitating the lack of importance within teaching and learning of foundation subjects for trainee teachers and encouraging teaching to test.

Research showed headteachers were reluctant to instruct teachers to invest time into foundation subjects, because Ofsted 'swept' over these subjects but focused on core subjects in depth (Barnes, 2017). In addition to this, they found that limited schools, devote time to it, have a heavy workload and are not able to execute lessons efficiently. Similarly, Butt et al (2017) investigated the disappearance of the balanced curriculum, discovering teachers were preparing for testing, especially in the final years of primary school. These findings are indicative of schools focusing time on the areas that are tested rather than subjects, which are not easily measurable, resulting in loss of curriculum breadth (Butt, 2017). Instead, intentions are achieving accountability and performance statistics rather than providing children with a comprehensive education. Furthermore, Usher (2019) questions how standardised testing adds to a child's learning, arguing they can be deemed as inaccurate measures of progression. Irish educational policy identifies ranking pertaining to standardised testing and child's personal use of economy-based language is a concern (NCCA, 2016), highlighting the concept of linguistic habitus. The language enclosed within examinations are like those of middle-class families, catering for a bourgeois education system (Eivers, 2008). Implying, children from middle class backgrounds have higher chances of succeeding, as opposed to children with disadvantaged backgrounds who are not exposed to this language. Arguing the case of why prioritisation of maths and English is occurring within schools; ensuring all children, regardless of their background, are familiar with language used within assessments.

Teacher subject and curriculum knowledge

Teachers must be confident to deal with questions and be able to provide opportunities for children to learn across the curriculum (DfE, 2011). Butt et al (2017) argues that concerns of focusing on literacy and numeracy has resulted in a loss of teacher expertise in foundation pedagogical approaches and the confidence this brings. A study outlined that curriculum knowledge requirements, hinder the agency of how the curriculum is implemented within their class; teachers balance the priorities of each subject in the curriculum based on aims, age expectations and the content of subject knowledge (Alvunger, 2021). Moreover, Poulter (2021) also stresses that if

subject and pedagogical knowledge is not secure, teachers may avoid certain subjects, hindering the quality of teaching and children's academic and personal progression.

International comparison tests (PISA, 2012) outline the marginalisation of the humanities and arts in most education systems. The issue of continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities, for trainee teachers should be delved into. CPD is focused on a maths and English driven curriculum, neglecting the foundation subjects (Young and Muller, 2016). If teachers have poor pedagogical and subject knowledge, they may avoid teaching subjects they lack confidence in. This in turn has a negative effect on children's progression and rights to experience a high-quality education. Butt et al (2017) express that they are worried about the next generation of primary teachers, who may have not had the opportunities to teach foundation subjects on placement, observing dominance on core subjects instead (Poulter, 2021) and perpetrating the issue further. It is highly significant that teachers exhibit strong subject and pedagogical knowledge, as acknowledged in teacher standard three (DfE, 2011), as this enables confidence and provision for high standard teaching and learning. Thus, demonstrating the necessity and relevancy of this theme and the continuous cycle that may ensue if it is not tackled.

Methodology

The chosen primary research method was an anonymous questionnaire. The survey was administrated by an online link that was emailed to participants for them to access and decide consent. Leading and ambiguous questions were avoided to minimise research bias (Bartram, 2019). Bartram (2019) identifies merits of using this research tool; with issues of time and chief among them, questionnaires allow a large amount of data to be collected quickly from busy trainees.

The selection of participants was based on 'criterion sampling'. Invited participants met the criteria of being a BA Primary Education year three or full time and part time PGCE students. All the trainees obtaining experiences ranging from early years foundation stage to year six. This method of sampling can provide an important qualitative component to quantitative data as well as identifying weaknesses in a system and investigating ways for improvement. Male (2016) conveys the importance of recognising the sampling method is open to criticism and this should be considered when analysing results and drawing on conclusions. A critique of criterion sampling is the invited participants, who decide not to take part contribute to an unrepresentative sample of the target population (Walliman, 2018).

Ethical considerations remained paramount throughout the inquiry following the BERA guidelines and literature to ensure ethics were at the forefront of my mind;. anonymity, consent, the right to withdraw, beneficence and non-maleficence were all adhered to (BERA, 2018; Huangy, 2020). Ethical approval was gained by submitting an ethics form to the ethical review manager along with the participant information form, access letter, and a participant consent form, which was then distributed to the target population before they participated.

Findings and data analysis

To analyse the data, graphs, tables, and statistics were utilised to accumulate quantitative data to show numerical responses and similar trends and patterns in qualitative responses. This data was used to compare and contrast prior literature, documented in the literature review.

Theme One: Accountability, performance, and statutory assessments

The findings convey the highest number of hours foundation subjects were seen taught in a day was two and a half hours, two hours being the majority answer, and the remaining answering one hour. 30% of participants that held this view said it was about right and 70% said it was not enough. Similarly, a unique result for one of the PGCE's answered foundation subjects were taught four hours a day.

The minimum number for maths and English was two hours, and the maximum being three hours taught a day. 43.3% of participants said that this was 'too much' time and 56.6% said it was 'about right'.

Majority of participants (16) saw science taught one a week for one hour as opposed to three participants seeing it taught three hours. These three participants (10%) stated that this was about right, one participant (3.3%) stated it was too much and 26 participant (86.8%) said it was not enough.

The above findings contribute to the debate of core subjects being prioritised over foundation subjects. The hypothesis is proven that most trainee students saw more hours of core subjects being taught than foundation subjects. However, one result contradicted other responses and literature (Barnes and Scoffham, 2017), highlighting that foundation subjects are taught four hours a day. This opposing result was surprising as the remainder of the findings portray the lack of emphasis, time and effort given to foundation subjects rather than a curriculum which is equally shared. Yet, questions may be raised to why this prominent finding may have occurred: what does this look like in school? Perhaps, these respondents were placed in schools in affluent areas. Suggesting, schools which are 'outstanding' may have maths and English documented at a high standard are not in challenging circumstances to increase attainment. Consequently, allowing them to implement the foundation subjects into the curriculum, because they do not need to 'catch up'. Alexander (2016) states attitudes surrounding the primary curriculum is that foundation subjects are seen as 'desirable but inessential'. This is resonated in the responses received. The findings support the idea that, trainee teachers and experienced teachers should be educated on the importance of foundation subjects to challenge these views and adopt a broader view which advocates for equal time for subjects.

Moreover, a high percentage of qualitative responses received from participants who taught in a year two and/or year six curriculum highlight the common theme of preparing for statutory assessments, accountability, and performance purposes. These findings are cohesive to current research and findings (Barnes and Scoffham, 2017). From recent experience in a year six class, I witnessed the wider curriculum disappearing due to a heavy focus on Maths and English, which dominated the timetable and often foundation subjects were missed due to continuing core lessons in the afternoon. However, a very small percentage of responses contradict these findings, stating that the curriculum remained broad and strict with foundation subjects being allocated to the afternoon and core subjects in the morning. Although this may be the case, this could also suggest teachers use the morning when children are more focused, to allow information to be transferred to the short time memory versus the afternoon when they may be more tired and less likely to retain information as noticed when on placement. Furthermore, the mainstream view was that participants agreed core subjects have a higher assessment focus than foundation subjects.

Theme Two: Significance of teacher subject and curriculum knowledge

16 participants said they were either 'neutral' or 'not confident' as opposed to 14 participants stating they were 'somewhat confident' in their subject and curriculum knowledge.

80% of participants articulated that their class teachers gave them more autonomy over teaching foundation subjects rather than core subjects. However, some said equal precedence was given, implying class teachers were conscious they had the correct subject and curriculum knowledge to deliver core subjects effectively.

The data presented above collectively illustrates that all participants are either neutral or confident to some extent. This contributes to research presented in the literature review which recognises the importance of secure subject and curriculum knowledge to produce a breadth of curriculum (DfE, 2011; Butt et al, 2017; Alvunger, 2021). This was elaborated in the additional comments where some trainees documented that their confidence was mainly attributable to their attendance within university based taught sessions rather than guidance and in service training in school. These findings relate to concerns acknowledged by (Butt et al, 2017); arguing teachers are not equipped with enough CPD on foundation subjects. From personal experience, I have noticed throughout the three placements completed, I have not attended a staff meeting or training day focusing on a foundation subject/s but experienced several Maths and English exploring pedagogy and assessment.

The findings also highlight trainees were given more autonomy whilst teaching foundation subjects rather than core subjects. Teachers wanted to make sure trainees had secure subject knowledge and were confident in teaching before letting them take control. Although these findings confirm those reflected in Alvunger's (2021) study, they further emphasise the importance on core subject knowledge only. This was revealed in a qualitative response: "for the foundation subjects, as long as the children were doing something related to the subject then that's all that mattered". Thus, indicating that teaching within the foundation subjects was open to creativity and interpretation rather than strict rote teaching and learning. This may also outline that schools are mainly concerned with high subject knowledge for core subjects but fail to encourage the need for providing high quality teaching for foundation subjects. From the data it shows trainees are being taught in an instructional way, the importance of delivering equality of each subject is vastly emphasised but when they attend schools, it is emphasised less (Usher, 2019).

Conclusion

The emerging trends and patterns show that a clear emphasis is placed on statutory assessments linking to high-ranking performance and accountability purposes and the lack of strong subject and curriculum knowledge is evident. Teaching training frameworks should be stricter with schools to ensure trainee teachers have had a wide range of experience and develop their confidence in observing, teaching, and assessing foundation subjects. In addition, the emphasis on teaching to test is having an effect on children's entitlement to experience a comprehensive curriculum so this phenomenon should be addressed and evaluated by stakeholders. To further improve

this study, triangulation could be utilised and approaching different Universities in England can broaden the findings. In conjunction with, identification of where the participants were situated to gain a wider perspective of the areas that were and were not providing breadth of curriculum. It has been made clear foundation subjects face strong competing pressures for time and professional development; but this research does not focus upon other factors affecting the delivery of a balanced curriculum. Lack of resources, teacher attitudes and funding can be addressed in a cohort study over three years to show stability and validity.

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Building the capacity to provide effective personalised feedback to students in the early years setting
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The practice of early years (EY) personalised feedback and its elements, which targets students between the ages of four and six, lays the groundwork for students to feel safe, capable, and have a clear sense of what they will do next. It also teaches students how to adapt to change and overcome obstacles with confidence. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007, p. 6), effective feedback addresses three questions: Where am I going? How am I going? How will we proceed (feed forward)?

1. Unclear learning outcomes impact feedback in an early years (EY) setting
Feedback is typically either general or compliment-focused, and occasionally it includes jargon that is incomprehensible to young EY learners. During my observations in an EY setting, I frequently encountered teachers' criticisms that didn't show enough empathy for their students. The learners' development or future success didn't seem to be considered in the feedback. It wasn't specific enough for the students to benefit from it. But according to Durlak et al. (2011), before implementing useful ways to provide feedback, educators and the learning environment must work to be well-positioned to support students' emotional growth.
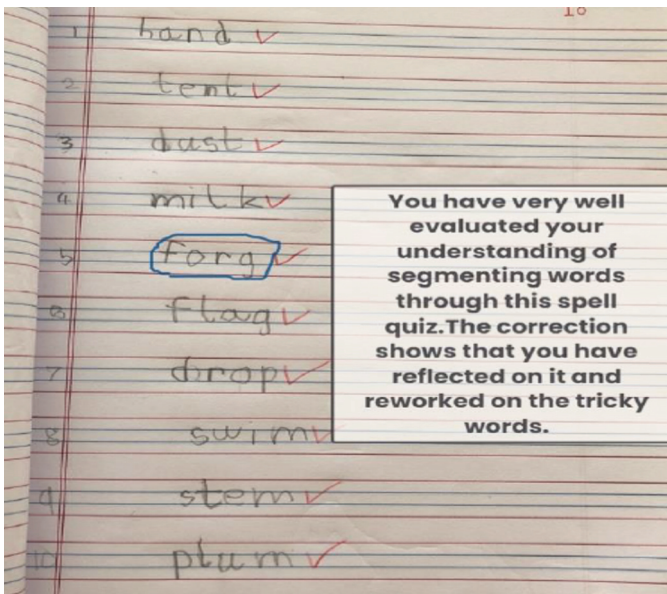

Figure 1.1: Screenshot of feedback

This evidence (Figure 1.1) illustrates the minimum standard of input in EY feedback and is typical of that which some teachers provide. The instructor had orally given her class of five-year-olds a spelling test based on consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant words (CVCC). The teacher wanted to evaluate students' spelling, listening abilities, tolerance for sitting still, handwriting, and letter formations. She wasn't specific about her evaluation objectives, though. Her feedback suggests she was evaluating too many things at once: it neither reflects the objectives she planned to evaluate, nor concentrates on a single subject. This is an illustration of the kind of feedback teachers provided to EY students, but Chall (1983) states that written feedback is inappropriate for five-year-olds as reading is still an emerging skill at this stage. Feedback needs to cater to the child's level.

2. Specificity upon a particular focus area leads to clarity
The teacher who provided the feedback in Figure 1.1 wanted to assess listening, spelling and handwriting, but she could have had one focus area such as first spelling, then handwriting, and then listening skills. She circled the incorrectly spelt word forg and could have written the correct spelling of the word (frog) and given the student scope for practice or revision. Wiggins (2012) suggests that the teacher could also have given more feedback by speaking to the student, since feedback acts as a bridge between learning and teaching and conversations are powerful for EY children.

To feed forward in a one-to-one setting, the teacher could have clarified the concept, such as 'I want you to tell me, what is the vowel sound in this word?' and offer support like, 'let us say the sounds in frog and touch the letters as we say them.' The teacher needs to balance praise and scope for improvement. For example, she could have said, 'great work Sonali, I can see you are spelling almost all your words correctly. Make sure your vowels come after the fr blend and sound it out again.' Feeding forward can offer support by giving the child guidance to practice the learning further.

3. The role of praise
Praise is an important part of feedback as long as it informs the child about what they should continue doing. If it does not, young children tend to attach value more to their work rather than to their effort. Children can be growth-oriented and see their ability to learn improve with time and effort, and Dweck (2020) urges educators to understand that praise tends to overlook the true capability and merit of what the student has accomplished and assigns appreciation for work that reflects only some specific abilities.

4. Clarifying teachers' perspectives on the definition of feedback
To begin any reflective practice around EY feedback, it is important to know how educators define feedback. Mcleod (2018) suggests that questionnaires are tools that can effectively measure behaviour, opinions, preferences and intentions of subjects more quickly than other methods. Using the questionnaire shown in Figure 2.1, I was able to gather five EY teachers' understanding of feedback.

Figure 2.2 shows that teachers used words like 'improve', 'understand', 'appreciate', and 'performance' to describe the meaning of feedback. I then further enquired on methods of feedback: the survey indicated that most feedback was informal, focused on academic development, and through rubrics based on predetermined learning outcomes. However, praise-based feedback lacked specificity and much of the feedback was too complex for the child.

5. Setting up collaborative teacher discussions to learn effective feedback strategies
To grow pedagogical awareness, the first step is to have a professional development workshop. According to Ko et al. (2006), professional development workshops often fail to bring about changes in teacher practices and improvement in student
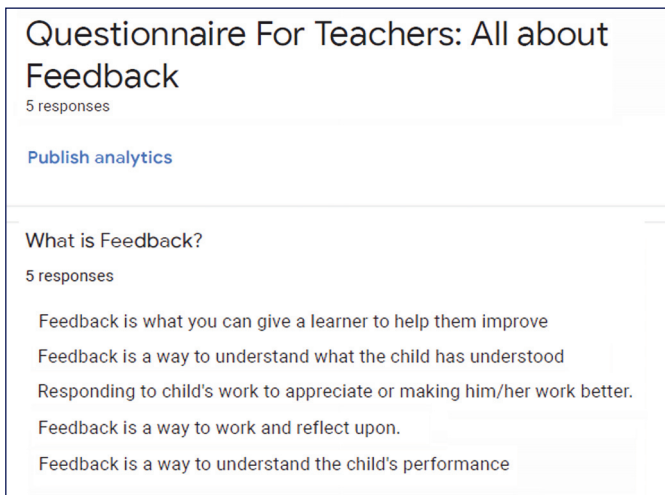
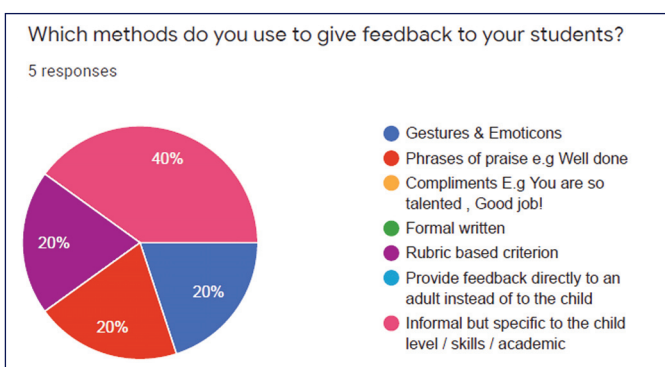Figure 2.1: Teachers's definitions of feedback

Figure 2.2: Methods used by teachers to give personalised feedback to the students

learning; hence, it is better to adopt a more conversational approach. For any new process to succeed, teachers require time to study, reflect, collaborate, and deliver lessons of quality. Villegas-Reimers (2002) alerts us to an important paradigm in teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD): it is based on a constructivist approach rather than a transmitting model. Teachers remain active learners in their approach towards assessment, observation, and reflection. Moreover, Dignen (2014) states that communication is the most effective tool available for CPD. Therefore, I wanted to design CPD interventions through an egalitarian approach rather than a hierarchical one. Teachers were given a self-directed project to research on the topic of feedback and then shared their findings.

6. Finding effective feedback strategies for EY learners
Keeping teachers involved through conversations in CPD aimed at keeping their morale high by making them feel validated. Below are a few excerpts from conversations with teachers:
"Feedback is very useful, builds confidence, shows the child what to do but I use well done. I need to be descriptive – tell the child what he did well, and you can do better if you do this. I am a lot more regular in academics but when it comes to skills, we comment on projects and say you are helpful. I am here to learn what more can I say to give better feedback."
(Teacher One)

"Expectations of high-quality work is also important and I expressed that this change in thinking happened after viewing the impactful video The Story of Austin's Butterfly."
(Teacher Two)

The Story of Austin's Butterfly by Berger (2016) demonstrates that expectations of high-quality work from students are crucial to developing children's growth mindset. Multiple drafts of work with specific feedback can enhance the quality of work, especially if the feedback is two-way. Two-way feedback is described by Tan et al. (2018) as dialogic: it helps clarify misunderstandings and makes the learning outcomes and expectations clear to the students. Alexander (2020) believes that a dialogic approach stimulates students' thinking, cultivates their ideas, evaluates their arguments and empowers them to be lifelong learners developing towards democratic social engagement. When one speaks to another person, two fundamental things need to take place: the person needs to know that they have been understood, and Dignen (2014) emphasises their need to feel that what they said had some form of value. Setting up collaborative teacher discussions to share their learning about effective feedback strategies was built on this premise. It also helped me fulfil my ethical promise of not using my position as the Head of School to impose any of my personal beliefs on the teachers. Rather, we built a respectful atmosphere of mutual learning. One key takeaway for me was the need to provide scaffolding to teachers in the classroom, to help keep them focused on giving effective feedback. Therefore, I decided to introduce the idea of a toolkit, built collaboratively with the teachers.

7. Toolkit to give effective personalised feedback
The exercise of building the toolkit to help teachers give effective feedback was based on learning that teachers understood the importance of questioning and feedback. Since this was a relatively new area, I realized that certain scaffolding would be necessary in the initial stages, since giving specific, growth-oriented feedback can be challenging when in the classroom and not previously accustomed to this practice.

We based the prompt tools on a common pattern of initiation: a question asked by a teacher, with the student's reply considered as feedback. This followed the two-way conversational model, as outlined by Tan et al. (2018). The stage where the teacher then reflects on the responses given by students encourages teachers to see:
• What students learnt;
• How a problem is solved;
• Students' clarity of knowledge;
• Students' understanding through feedback.

The tool therefore contained question prompts to ensure that the teacher was asking questions to draw out responses from her learners. I noticed that when using these questions, one teacher was showing confidence and being adaptable, asking a combination of questions and giving the learner cues. At times, the student was reluctant to answer. The teacher was patient and providing cues helped the student to respond. The teacher then just needed to redirect. This led me to believe that we can check for understanding through questions. Teachers can help students think for themselves by giving prompts that guide instruction. The main component of providing feedback is ensuring that a student is given prompts while answering questions. Miller (2015) says that verbal, gestural and visual cues can attract a learner's attention. Even an error on paper can be highlighted, causing students to think how they might fix the error. It is important that teachers maintain patience and do not provide the answer in a rushed manner.

Teacher Three showed a surge of confidence while practicing effective questioning as a precursor to effective feedback:
"*A questioning tool for students' ideas and responses were unique which was personalized and not regulated because of the open-ended questions asked. I definitely find that this tool gave me the confidence as I now know that these back-and-forth conversations are feedback itself and not just a one-sided comment or input on a worksheet. When compared to my previous feedbacks which were vague and did not lead to any clear action, I find this conversational tool beneficial...*" (Teacher Three)

Teacher Four expressed how the development of feedback was equally reflective:
"*The specific feedback provided to me is itself motivating me to plan better, more and something new to do for the child's learning in terms of competency building using the questioning tool. I have learnt that our timely inputs and specific comments are kind of feedback and should be done during the learning process instead of at the end. This is helping us to be more specific rather than only praise...Thank You.*" (Teacher Four)

8. Teacher reflections

During my observations I saw the teachers allow the students' experiences to guide their understanding of the stories they had read. Teachers gave the students an opportunity to vocalise their understanding and through two-way feedback interactions were able to assess understanding. Murray (2016) says teachers can improve and change their practice if they collaborate and reflect together. Jiang and Zheng (2020) describe collaborative reflection as considering teacher emotions and relationships while promoting learning. Although they should never completely relinquish control, teachers should always be prepared to offer the essential supports, frameworks, and supervision, especially in groups with young children (Vaughn, 2018).

While the EY teachers continue to praise their children, they are now conscious of praising the effort, and not the work. They commented that the feedback tool served as a reminder and scaffold in this regard. Sharing a new strategy called TAG (Tell them, Ask them, and Give a suggestion) indicated their intrinsic motivation to learn more strategies and their buy-in to improve feedback methods.

The EY team holds the view that personalised feedback is the best way to provide the right direction in teaching, extend children's learning, and bring excellence in work. Personalised feedback can be provided in academic settings as well as in encouraging improvement in socio-emotional skills.

9. Conclusion

The main aim of this experiential research was to examine the kinds of interventions that could be used to change the current system of feedback in an EY setting, and to provide appropriate training to enable teachers to give personalised feedback. I found myself in the complicated position of aiming to change teachers' dispositions to enable them to change their students' dispositions. Measuring student disposition with young EY learners is challenging, but a genuine effort has begun. In past professional development, my programs have often been ineffective because I used a top-down hierarchical approach, programmes were one-sided, and I never followed up with teachers with interventions, observations, conversations or further training on the same topic. In this process, I learnt how professional development makes way for personal self-development. Feedback remains a complex pedagogical process for us; however, we are unpacking aspects of it one at a time. I have concluded that whether teachers or students, we all learn by doing. Continuously practicing and observing each other is the best way to learn (Meiers, 2017). This is what is required for high achievement. Reflection is the best way forward for teacher improvement.

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INDIVIDUAL ENQUIRY AND SCHOLARSHIP

Random musings on education instruction applied to a STEM subject

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Introduction

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects such as biomedical sciences present new challenges and hurdles, when designing teaching and lesson plans compared to other disciplines. This problem is further compounded when the pathological sciences themselves can be different entities. There is no 'one-size fits all model,' each discipline must have its own laboratory design, field sessions, incorporate up to date and modern technology as well as relevant research into all relevant teaching sessions, furthermore activities should be correlated to the profession. There are numerous methodologies available (Bybee 2010), which can be used to address these learning issues. However, such activities must be shadowed and supported by the science of learning and instruction.

Certain domains of learning and its effects (such as behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism), have been identified (Gagne 1985) and linked with instructional strategies and techniques (Dong et al., 2021; Ertmer & Newby 2013), undergraduates are considered as adults, so self-directed and andragogy applications can be applied (Blondy 2005: Merriam 2001) with cognitive load theory (van Merriënboer & Sweller 2005; van Merriënboer & Kester 2014), however one has to reduce the extraneous cognitive load, manage the cognitive load, take into account the instructional design of the teaching plan (Mayer 2005; Pass et al., 2020) and raise awareness of the germane load (Endres& Renkl, 2015), without disrupting the learning experience. In the field of medical education multimedia learning is a vital tool and is readily associated with research based cognitive theory, especially, when large amounts of complex information need to be managed (Mayer 2021). This helps to stop the over exposure or overloading the visual and auditory processors of the learners and results in a matrix of evidence-based principles for an instructional design which can be used for scientific principles (Mayer 2021.)

Merrill 2002, described the five principles of instruction that promote learning, with the inclusion of the science of instruction, an effective design of instructional material can produce a favourable cognitive response resulting in positive learning outcomes. Instructional design models such as the Dick and Carey model, Kemp Design Model (Ibrahim 2016) and the four component instructional design (4C/ID) model (van Merriënboer 2002) all produce the relevant phases (analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation), at varying levels of instructional complexities, and can be incorporated into a model already in use or used as a tool on its own.

4C/ID model is favoured in STEM pedagogy, it is a behavioural approach in designing instruction which can be used in planning for complex topics. However, this model is not always suitable when an easier framework can be used, such as the ADDIE Model (Frerjean et al., 2019; Marcellis et al., 2018; Maggio et al., 2015) or a pre-mastery model, such as the Bloomer model

(Akpan 2020). On occasion, this model can be used as a preliminary tool to determine instructional materials for a subject which later requires a more complex model. On this hypothesis, an instruction learning framework was developed to assess the knowledge obtained and retained over 2 inter-linked microbiology modules at level 4 and level 5. I first used an ADDIE model (figure 1) as a framework for the cohort to understand the topic antibiotic resistance, for example a discussion on *"mobile genetic elements in the spread of antibiotic resistance and virulence traits between bacteria."* Would first require the fundamental understanding of bacteria, therefore a model such as ADDIE would be ideal for this type of learning outcome, the learning theory is further expanded later, within a more complex instructional model, (figure 2), a 4C/ID instructional method.
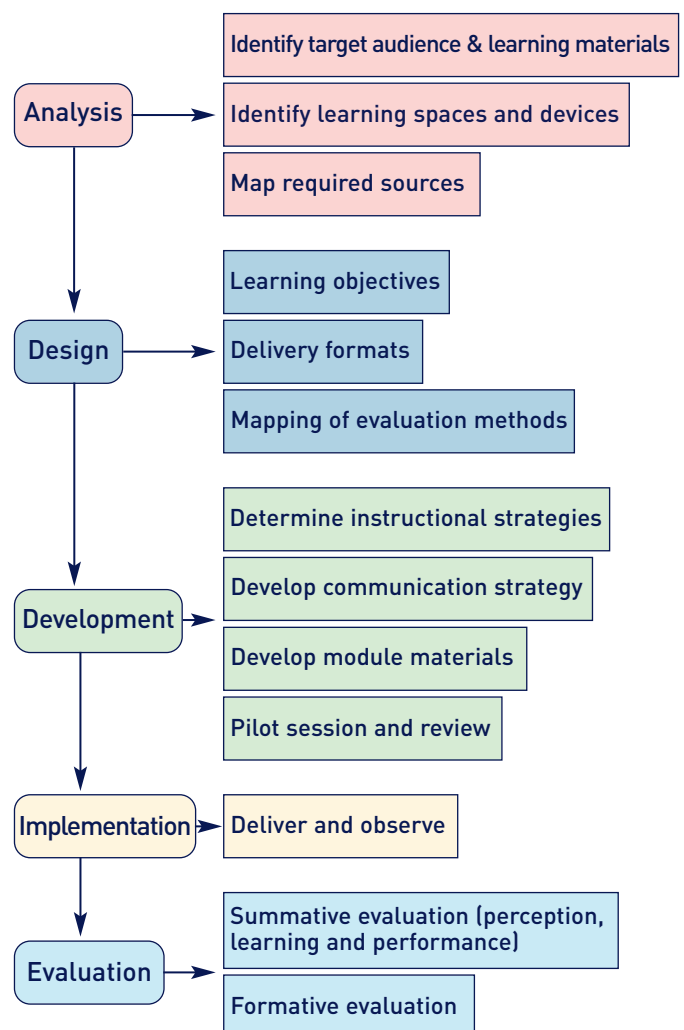

Figure 1: Analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation (ADDIE) model phases and the steps during each phase for basic bacteriology at undergraduate level 4
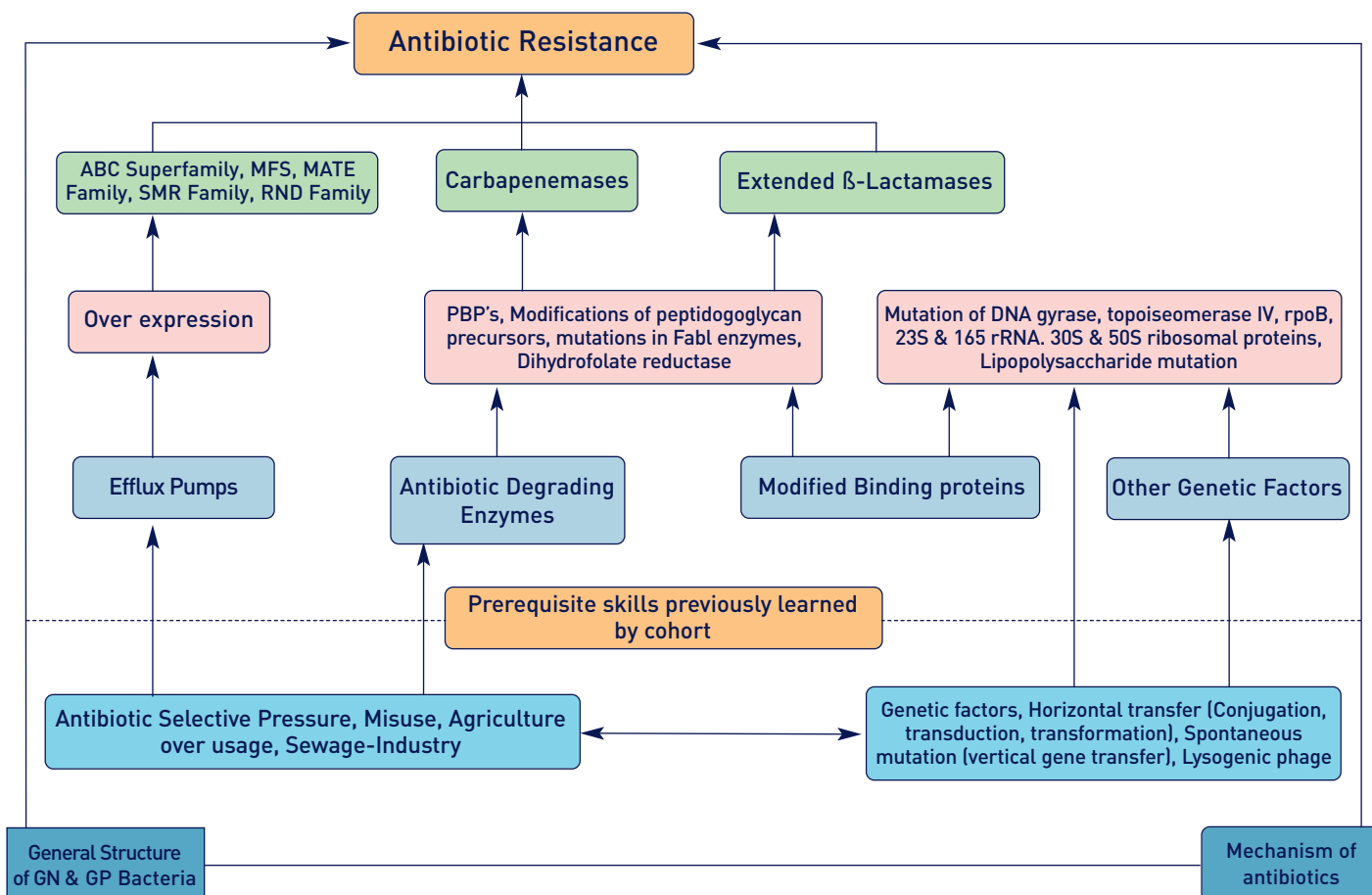
Figure 2: Instructional analysis: The topic of antibiotic resistance by identifying the main subtopics, subskills, and prerequisite skills

Different teaching methodologies were employed for both, pre-mastery and instruction models, for example, problem centred tasks focusing on real world events (for example, antibiotic testing of pathogens to determine a resistance bio-gram), were undertaken as a laboratory session and mechanisms behind resistance were reinforced with lecture or workshop materials. The tasks would become more complex as the learners progressed through the module promoting individualism and self-directed learning. Furthermore, self-learning materials, multimedia instruction and appropriate training of equipment and orientation was available to members of the cohort, to prevent overloading and promote instruction to any who lacked foundational knowledge (Geng et al., 2019). Module learning objectives for L4 / L5 Microbiology modules were already stated in measurable terms and readily translated into the instruction models, especially the 4C/ID model, aiding the learners next step in understanding complex information and produce a higher understanding of the subject matter (Persky, and Robinson 2019). The assessments at both L4 and L5 correlated to the learning objectives and were assessed accordingly, for example, low-medium cognitive skills such as understanding and applying skills to ´identify an unknown organism through biochemical tests´ to high cognitive skills, which were evaluated through a ´poster presentation of a designed pathogen´ at L4 to ´designing a diagnostic flow chart for microbiological exacerbations of a respiratory disorder´ at L5.

Reflection

The 4C/ID instruction model does lean heavily towards a constructivist approach with features of instructivism that complement each other, I favour this model of instructional design because it encompasses the student into complex learning through the introduction of simpler skill sets (creating learning activities for teaching complex topics), for example, Phenotypic differences in antibiotic resistance between bacteria is further expanded to include intrinsic and extrinsic factors and these learning skill sets are transferred through laboratory and classroom pedagogy. The above models were implemented, with varying degrees of success, all students responded well to the ADDIE model at L4, illustrating adequate retention of foundational knowledge however a certain percentage of the cohort, could not apply that knowledge any further at L5 through the 4C/ID model regardless of supportive material available for them.

After performing a mapping of the instruction design and myself, I tried to determine why a certain percentage were not engaging with the subject matter. I came to these conclusions; The model itself is heuristic in nature and is easily compounded by errors or biasness from the instructor, for example, I had to redesign the instructional materials for primary learning tasks and secondary supportive information several times because the information provided was too complex or not easily understood. I also didn't fully appreciate how the learners would react to the 4C/ID learning environment, for example, they are novices to the model too, it was highlighted to me ´some self-directed learning tasks were too demanding, and they couldn't fully understand the concepts.´ I believe, I may not have provided sufficient support or material for certain learning tasks (for example, not providing an instruction example on how to systematically approach a topic), resulting

in a negative impact on their cognitive processing capacity. In the future I will adapt the 4C/ID model to suit particular elements of its instructional design, for example, ask the learners to be more pro-active with the supportive information provided, design a flipped classroom so the learning is student centred.

As novices to the 4CD/ID, mistakes have been made, that experienced designers may not have made, (reflecting upon my reflection), I could conclude, as a module team, we may not have fully developed the understanding of educational theories and or the role of science instruction within them, regardless, the overall evaluation has been favourable and for the majority of students, the instruction model a success, demonstrating that learners can independently take control of their learning when appropriate learning methodologies and instruction are available. Educational theories teach us, without an effective developmental framework learning processes, the transference of complex skills will suffer resulting in poor learning experience and environment (Artino and Konopasky 2018; Carr 2016), moreover, selecting only one type of teaching methodology to deliver all teaching sessions limits learning outcomes, designing an educational experience on complex subject matters and relaying that knowledge to students goes beyond power point presentations.

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A phenomenological approach to inclusion: prioritising textual analysis and lived experiences

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The paper puts forward the argument that there is the need to engage with Phenomenology, as an investigative tool for educational research as it offers a crucial strand in the methodological milieu for qualitative research. It enables the researcher to probe and decipher possible understandings from participant's data in a research activity. There are ambits to its use. These are the posers – How do we understand the need to construe a document that has been generated, or analysed against, or with? And what value should we place on a person's narrative and the interpretations deducible? The phenomenological inquiry interweaves both the conceptual and non-conceptual, the argumentative and evocative (Manen, 2006), it extends the debate on possible misunderstandings and gaining reliable meanings and further enhances the criticality element in research. The plurality of perspectives would also arise from the construction that has been given to it (Miriam, 2007). This means developing questioning that revolves around the value we place on a person's sense of experience and what it means to them, the interpretation they give. To dig deep into the interpretations, one could ascribe to that perspective of lived experience, the story of the story through their lens, how they tell an event or narrate what happened, all of which is non-negligible and would form the basis for critical analysis. There is a growing consensus of the need to go beyond the surface in qualitative researching of viewpoints, to analysing the meanings in more depth, to handle any obscurity or blur inherent (Robinson, 2015).

There is the doubt however, whether Phenomenology can work on its own, or whether it is better effective when it benefits from a cluster of methods fit for qualitative analysis. The idea of a mixed method which brings in a quantitative aspect, may be an elongated dimension to the debate (Hodkinson and Macleod, 2008; Burgess, 2008), but a triangulated bag may allow the researcher to explore how a focus group with a constituent opportunity for participants observation, can in tandem allow for views to be heard and stories noted which could form the basis for analysis; also, the possibilities for thematic analysis of emerging themes of interest and itemising carefully the implications of the findings. Phenomenology allows for bringing incisive understanding to a concept and adopting a level of criticality in our approach to extrapolating the issues (McWilliams, 2010). Deconstructing meanings from embodied perception is possible through this method, as it allows dealing with lived experience (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). To even perhaps, finding out the experience from which the participant speaks whether one of expertise and the implication of that (Silverman, 2004). The need for authentic and reliable data pre-empts the need to be mindful of the sourcing, participant details, and ensuring the analytical and ethical framework is equally factored in.

In applying this method to understand inclusion for a group of learners studying in a college or Higher Education setting in a law context, one would first hear first-hand their general viewpoint, stories and lived experiences, policy opinions, and gather observation notes, of which the qualitative data engendered then forms a solid base for analysis. Are there emerging themes in the texts and experiences? Is there an additional layer of reflection in contemplation of time of events? How can we construe the opinions of experts and demonstrate how our data matches with existing body of academic work on inclusion in a range of categories, and the policy shifts and tensions. Of note, and some caution however, Max Van Manen points out phenomenology may not be effective as a diagnostic or prognostic tool, being that it does not give access to figuring the problems, mental state of an individual, as psychologist would, but allows for meaning to have structures that helps us understand the significance of human phenomena as fear, anxiety, and even grief (Manen, 2016). In essence it allows us to ask, is there poetry to a person's words with undertones, or are there cases when we take the words for its meanings? It's that awareness and sensitivity that is needed (Grover, 2010). It sets the structure to gain the meanings and to explore the inherent meanings as well. How we use it is key, I suggest utilising it as part of a multi-prong strategy can enhance its effectiveness for textual and lived-experience analysis. I suggest as a teacher and researcher there is need to be aware of the relevance of the views of our learners in formal education, the evidence for that, and canvass that engaging with a method that enables the decoding of the import of those range of perspectives can enhance one's pedagogy and the quality of education being delivered to credibly meet requested needs than assumed set of preferences, in the long-term.

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The spaces in-between

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This 'think-piece' is in response to the reflections of an educator and developing researcher in the aftermath of the first UK COVID-19 lockdown. My own research is exploring the lived experience of pastoral educators in a sixth form college during this challenging time and is influenced by the works of Lefebvre in looking at ideas about Space (Lefebvre, 1991) and Rhythm (Lefebvre, 2004) whilst also acknowledging changes in how technology has shaped sixth form pastoral practice during this time. This piece represents a particular aspect of my research, that of liminal space. I hope, as a piece, it opens educational spaces for further debate and critical reflection to challenge the boundaries of our professional responsibilities as educators as well as acknowledge areas of discussion that can develop practice and support practitioners.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing global pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This novel virus was first identified from an outbreak in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019. Attempts to contain it there failed, allowing the virus to spread to other areas of Asia and later worldwide (World Health Organisation, 2020; Zhu et al, 2020). On the 20th of March 2020, after the announcement of a national lockdown, England's schools and colleges were closed to all students other than key workers' children and those deemed vulnerable. By 31st March 2020, schools and colleges in 170 countries were closed as a result of COVID-19 (World Bank, 2020). These decisions affected over 1.5 billion students around the world and over 11 million school and college students in the UK (UNESCO, 2020; Department for Education, 2020). Stay-at-home mandates and lockdown restrictions increased work from home (WFH) practices during the first UK COVID-19 lockdown. This was an order from the UK government that restricted movement of a population and was a mass quarantine strategy for suppressing or mitigating a pandemic by ordering residents to stay and work from home except for essential tasks or for work in essential businesses. While WFH offered many benefits (such as working from home in order to reduce infection, being able to spend more time at home, and possible work flexibility), navigating work in non-traditional contexts were a challenge. This lockdown forced many educators to embrace remote working and in many educational sectors like in sixth form college, educators were made to work from home, a must rather than an option and with students at home, educational practice took place online. This resulted in a sudden and radical disruption to the usual routines and interpretations and uses of space. I have never been more aware of personal space; the houses we are confined to, the two-metre-distance we maintain, the proximity of urban living, feelings of isolation and the impact that WFH had on educators supporting students. Both educators and students needed to adjust to the new spaces and patterns of working and even though the spaces were familiar they were also unfamiliar, strange and uncertain when in the context of online WFH practice.

A change of space and routine

Change came fast and as humans we tried our best to adapt accordingly. "Two metres" and "no mixing with anyone from another household" were such powerful ultimatums in redefining our personal space and our physical connections with others and redefining and challenging our natural human instincts to connect with others. The physical spaces we occupied at home were now even more meaningful not just for the occupant but anyone else living with them, with intense moderation and scrutiny in spaces everywhere else outside this setting, with fines being issued for breaking the rules. We had to consider our proximity to others in an unnaturally mindful way and, as the weeks passed by and lockdown loosened its grip, our perception and interpretation and reflections of personal and working space had extended and evolved.

Lockdown redefined personal and working space in a plethora of ways. These two spaces in fact could be seen as collapsing in on itself during this event, occupying both spaces and turning into something new. WFH could appear to encapsulate the ultimate collapse of the private and public spheres (Habermas, 1989). It could also be seen as a liminal space, transitional and in-between, eventually expecting that we would return eventually to the 'old' ways and spaces of working.

The transitional spaces to be explored – The Liminal

The concept of liminal space emerged from the Latin word 'limen' meaning on a threshold or at a boundary and evokes a period of time/space that is 'in-between' typically during an individual's usual routine (Turner, 1974), or rite-of-passage (Van Gennep, 1960). Van Gennep's theory states that this period of liminality is transitory, temporary and can be an anxious time where, for example, known norms, behaviours and identities are suspended thus giving way to uncertainty. Such a concept could be applied to the exploration of spaces in education.

For the most part, the spaces explored in education are designed, defined and frequently managed; they focus on spaces such as offices, staffrooms, meeting rooms, class-rooms, lecture halls and sports facilities (for example, Baldry, 1999; Middleton 2014; Chugh and Hancock, 2009; McElroy and Morrow, 2010). However, little attention has been paid, particularly within organisational studies to the liminal spaces of the workplace in education, these are spaces that are transitory, temporary (acknowledging temporality) and in-between. Lifts, doorways, stairwells, the photocopy room, the changing room, toilets, cupboards, temporary office

spaces such as in a mobile or shed, working from a vehicle, and in the case of the focus of this developing study, working from home temporarily during the first UK COVID-19 lockdown. These are examples of liminal spaces and such spaces have been neglected in many studies in the examination of workspace (Shortt, 2014), yet these are spaces that are used and experienced most days in most organisations – these spaces are everywhere and constantly used. It seemed that during the first lockdown, all educators were required to enter a liminal state of some kind.

Liminal space is defined here as a space that is on the 'border', a used space but not necessarily normalised, a space that is somewhere in-between the front stage/backstage; a space "at the boundary of two dominant spaces, which is not fully part of either" (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 238); it could also be a temporary transitionary space where things happen. The "no man's land" (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 239) feature of liminal spaces are that of uncertainty, where anything can happen (Turner, 1974). Beech (2011) argues that anxiety and feelings of social separation are some of the negative psychological consequences that may be experienced by those who spend extended periods of time in a liminal 'state' that is uncertain. Liminal spaces are nonetheless in direct comparison to dominant spaces; those spaces that are clearly defined by mainstream uses (such as the usual office and desk space, a classroom, meeting room, etc) that characteristically have clear boundaries and where the practices within them are interwoven with social expectation, routines and norms and clear legal guidelines (e.g. health and safety, safeguarding, fire drill guidelines, dress code). Using Dale and Burrell's assessment of the organisation of space, liminal spaces are thus alternative to the unambiguous, clearly defined spaces of organisational life, and "imply alternative organisation" and radical difference and change of usual spatial activity (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 233).

Usual liminal spaces in the workplace of a sixth form college were lost during the UK first COVID-19 lockdown and these areas were as important as being sat at a work desk. Working on site before the first UK lockdown I would find myself occupying several in-between areas, and in reflection these spaces played an important role in maintaining human connection and for wellbeing. For example, leaving my desk for a moment at 11.35am on a break to get up, move around and reflecting on my lesson as I walk down the long corridors greeting students and colleagues along the way I head to the staff kitchen to make a coffee, catching up with a regular colleague who I usually find making a cup of tea. There's the usual moment to ask how each of us are and catch up on our analysis of the recent Premier League football results and talk about teaching and learning. Usually during the time in between my afternoon lessons, I head to the photocopy room to collect my copies, and because it is on the way I walk through the courtyard outside leading back to the corridor where my classroom is. These liminal spaces were positive moments to distract and decompress away from the work, to think and reflect.

However, WFH in lockdown presented liminal spaces that were uncomfortable to navigate. Leaving my laptop in the living room at 11:35am meant walking for 5 seconds and opening the French doors to the kitchen where another family member was working at a laptop with a headset. It is a reminder of the work I am about to get back to. I cannot engage in conversation as this family member is working, I

navigate up the stairs to gather some papers from the study room that is occupied also by my child on a headset with a tablet a reminder that my own students are waiting online ready to be taught in a few minutes. Although there are people in the household, there is a feeling of workplace isolation during the working day when WFH. My phone buzzes with a notification that my online lesson is about to start soon. I also receive an email notification from my laptop in the living room that can hear from upstairs. As I return downstairs the doorbell rings, I head through the hallway to the porch, put on a mask and gloves and collect a parcel laid on the doorstep whilst the delivery man stays 2 metres away. As I get back to the laptop, I'm already hit with a multitude of sounds alerting me to new information from several different platforms. I am now swamped with several emails, messages on MS Teams and comments that require a response. This is strange, and uncomfortable (these could be emotional liminal spaces), I am operating in these liminal spaces, but I am at work, in my own home, but it feels that I am neither at work or at home, it is unusual. This experience also raises the liminality of self and identity- am I working from home as a teacher supporting students only or am I also a father and husband supporting my family at home whilst at work. This liminal space of identity can be "unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition…. lacking clear boundaries"– the person is in a "constant state of displacement" (Anzaldúa, 2002: 1).

Technology and liminality

The residue of these liminal spaces remains through the increased use of digital spaces that are still used to support students (e.g. MS Teams, virtual parents evening, virtual open days), and the remnants in the home, the memories of delivering and receiving online CPD training in my living room, the extra office chairs and laptop charging cables I see in the spare room. I am reminded sometimes when I switch on my laptop, the same laptop that was the virtual portal to interact with others, and provided a digital liminal space that allowed students and myself to engage and interact at a time when very little human contact was possible. It felt that educators were putting the fundamental quality of humanness in education through a very digital process in which the speed of change and transformation was challenging.

WFH prompted accelerated spatial changes that were catalysed by the pandemic and by the advancement of technology. Although technology in education was always there and there are many online ways to engage, it was made clear during the lockdown event that the term classroom, at least in its traditional sense, and at that moment, could no longer encompass where learning took place. It demonstrated clearly that the space in which learning takes place is no longer just physical; it is virtual as well. Virtual space could be defined as any location where people can meet using networked digital devices. Virtual space could be understood in its widest sense, referring not just to synchronous, highly interactive functions (such as chat on MS Teams, interactive online quizzes) but also to asynchronous functions such as e-mail and discussion threads.

Unlike physical spaces, virtual spaces come and go quickly, they are upgraded or replaced by new software and hardware, there is a liminality about digital spaces, they are temporary. They can be spontaneous as well as deliberate, synchronous or asynchronous, it has its own rhythmicity. Humans and their relationships within virtual learning spaces can shift rapidly. Humans can also multitask, "inhabiting" more than one

virtual space at a time and therefore could occupy multiple digital liminal spaces simultaneously; something that educators had to attempt to do WFH.

Concluding thoughts – Reinventing practice?

This last year, has, in multiple ways, forced us to reassess the space we take up in the world and in education and the value of that space. Our living and work arrangements as educators, the quality-of-life personal space affords us, how we use or relinquish our personal space to protect and educate ourselves and others have all taken on new, or elevated meanings. Liminalities are not simply a rite-of-passage only as Van Gennep (1960) proposed. Thinking of liminalities as multiplicities or twisted liminalities that cross time and spaces (Carlson et al, 2020) may be a more accurate reflection of how we engage with these spaces in reality. We may also in the future ask the question of whether WFH practice is still a liminal space, that is, is it still transitional and in-between, or has COVID-19 led to the reinvention of educational practice and produced a 'new normal'? Like the traditional classroom, educators and leaders have an opportunity to rethink and redesign these non-classroom spaces to extend learning environments. Leaders, however, must also consider how educators operate in WFH circumstances and in non-physical workplace spaces whilst also acknowledging what may be lost when operating in these ways. Such considerations would have implications for staff training and support. I look forward to sharing more on the spaces in-between as my research into the lived experiences of sixth form pastoral staff during the first COVID-19 lockdown develops and evolves.

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