

Welcome to *SecEd's* NQT special edition. The next eight pages offer a range of advice for NQTs as they approach the end of their first term. To begin, **Chris Keates** looks at the entitlements and support that all NQTs should be receiving...

Supporting all our NQTs...

recognise that they need support, encouragement and working conditions which enable them to gain appropriate experience in their first school placement.

Many NQTs are positive about the support they receive during their induction year, but unfortunately not all have positive experiences. Some schools fail to provide the statutory entitlements.

Too many NQTs face excessive classroom observation with no feedback or constructive comment, and others are allocated classes of pupils who are known to exhibit extremely challenging behaviour, even with the most experienced of teachers.

It is important that these concerns are raised and addressed at the earliest possible stage. For example, supportive and developmental observation, which includes meeting with the observer prior to the lesson to discuss the focus of the observation and receiving verbal and written feedback afterwards which highlights all the positives observed and constructively details the areas for development, can make an enormous difference to a successful outcome to induction. But it is the quality, not quantity, of classroom observation which is important.

The NASUWT has a wealth of experience in successfully supporting NQTs in addressing a range of concerns, but by far the most overwhelming issue raised by our members is excessive workload. Bureaucratic marking and assessment policies, data-driven target setting and administrative burdens are the challenge for even the most experienced teachers.

I am proud that the NASUWT has moved to address this through our campaign to empower teachers to resist these unprofessional impositions which do nothing to enhance teaching and learning.

I am also pleased that as a result of the NASUWT presenting ministers with our detailed research on workload, combined with our action and lobbying, we secured Ofsted clarification guidance which dispels the myth peddled in too many schools that Ofsted requires a specific type of lesson planning and marking system.

The NASUWT was also instrumental in forcing the government to recognise the problem of excessive workload by establishing working groups to look at lesson planning, marking and data collection. The three reports from the government's working groups contain many useful recommendations that can be used to challenge unacceptable workload-intensive practices in schools and should be on every teacher's reading list.

Newly qualified, and indeed, experienced teachers should be aware that triple marking is not required and there is no evidence that it aids pupil progress or raises standards. There are no requirements for marking of a particular type or volume. There is no need to plan within an inch of your life. It is planned lessons, not lesson plans that are required. Weekly or daily plans should not be a routine expectation. Longer term planning should start from schemes of work provided by schools, not from blank sheets of paper. There is



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As the end of term edges closer, NQTs are approaching this first key milestone in their induction year. So far there will no doubt have been the rewarding highs of being instrumental in children and young people making progress, demonstrating why teaching is one of the best and most satisfying of the professions. There will also have been the growing realisation of the intense demands and challenges of teaching.

The experience NQTs have in this first and crucial induction year is extremely important and it is for this reason that successive governments have recognised the need to put statutory provisions in place which are specifically designed to ensure that the induction year provides a structured and supported introduction into the profession. These provisions include:

- A reduction in timetabled teaching, in addition to the contractual entitlement of a minimum of 10 per cent guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment time.
- Teaching only the age range or subject for which they have been trained.
- An induction tutor or mentor.
- Not routinely to have to teach classes or children with especially challenging discipline problems.
- Teaching the same class(es) on a regular basis to establish a routine and a rapport with pupils.
- Receiving regular feedback and support on progress.
- The right to be given early warning of any perceived problems or difficulties with progress.
- Professional and timely communication about judgements on performance.

These induction entitlements are designed to continue the process of developing the skills and expertise needed to become a great teacher.

The experience in this first and important year should be one where good schools will harness, use effectively and celebrate the enthusiasm, energy, commitment, new ideas and talent that NQTs bring to the role.

The best schools recognise the importance of growing and supporting new teachers, and most importantly,

no requirement for lesson observations to be graded. If Ofsted no longer grades lessons, no school should either.

Evidence makes clear that assessment burdens are one of the biggest causes of excessive workload, particularly as schools have sought to address the removal of national curriculum levels. Every teacher knows that good assessment is essential for effective teaching and learning. However, this should not lead to bureaucratic and wasteful tracking and record-keeping requirements that distract teachers from concentrating on teaching.

This is why the working groups were clear that formative assessments are for the teacher to support the pupil, not to provide reporting for schools. Formative assessment data should not be collected. On summative data, the working group was clear that such data should not be collected more than three times per-pupil, per-year. Requirements to produce mountains of lesson plans, deep mark every piece of work, constantly collect, analyse and input data should therefore be challenged.

While it is understandably daunting for new teachers to stand up for their rights and challenge poor practices in schools, it should be remembered that without these rights and entitlements it is much more difficult for teachers to provide children and young people with their entitlement to the highest quality of education.

The NASUWT will support NQTs and continue to

campaign for them and all other teachers to be recognised and rewarded as the highly skilled professionals they are, and for them to have working conditions which enable them to focus on teaching and learning.

The union has a network of support for new teachers and provides comprehensive advice and guidance. Our NQT induction planner, free to members, guides NQTs through the induction year giving useful prompts, tips and advice. This is complemented by a programme of professional seminars for NQT members.

At a time when there is a crisis in teacher supply, employers and governments cannot afford to fail to nurture new talent in the profession. It is a precious resource. Schools should recognise how valuable NQTs are and ensure their professional needs are met. **SecEd**

• *Chris Keates is general secretary of the NASUWT*

Further information

The reports of the Workload Challenge working groups (DfE, March 2016) can be found at:

- *Eliminating Unnecessary Workload around Marking:* <http://bit.ly/2olNzUo>
- *Eliminating Unnecessary Workload around Planning and Teaching Resources:* <http://bit.ly/2olPKr1>
- *Eliminating Unnecessary Workload Associated with Data Management:* <http://bit.ly/1TXdDeU>

As term one comes to a close, **Dr Bernard Trafford** picks out some of the Teachers' Standards that NQTs might focus on in the new year...

Meeting the Teachers' Standards...

prepared and on top of every lesson from day one. And there were all those school routines to get your head round. But you've done it. So pat yourself on the back.

So what now? As an NQT, you'll be thinking about the formal induction process and meeting those eight Teachers' Standards:

- 1 Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils.
- 2 Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils.
- 3 Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge.
- 4 Plan and teach well structured lessons.
- 5 Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils.
- 6 Make accurate and productive use of assessment.
- 7 Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.
- 8 Fulfil wider professional responsibilities.

Some key things to think about now might include Standard 3, which of course includes showing a commitment to your CPD. It's about seeing where you need to improve your professional knowledge, understanding and practice and, where necessary, taking steps to address your needs.

It is about learning the job, and learning on the job. Your mentor, induction tutor, head of department, however the role is shaped or shared, should be helping you there, observing lessons and talking through what they see. Don't be afraid to ask for help. In terms of your wider development, at this stage, watching a couple of experienced colleagues may be more useful than attending a course out of school.

Then there's classroom behaviour (Standard 7). Every new teacher has moments with difficult groups. Most experienced ones do, too. Don't believe the old lag in the staffroom who claims never to: it's likely that, either willfully or blindly, they've stopped noticing.

Sometimes it takes humility to admit you're

struggling: finding the courage to seek help is invariably rewarded by reciprocal honesty from colleagues.

Part of Standard 8, is "developing effective professional relationships with colleagues". This is vital, because collaboration between teachers is central to what we do. This is all about a reflective and collaborative profession and the constant, shared quest for improvement and progress.

To be sure, you'll come across teachers so amazing that you despair of emulating them: but you have much to share, too. Your struggles with introducing new topics or assessing progress are as valid as everyone else's, and you bring a fresh view. Moreover, I've always reckoned that the best ideas in teaching are imitated (shamelessly nicked) and adapted to suit one's own particular context: aim to be both a lender and a borrower.

Another key point for many NQTs, and of relevance to achieving many of the Standards, is whether you make optimal use of the assistants you have in the classroom. Possibly not – yet. Research tends to demonstrate that teachers in general don't use assistants well: it's yet another area to share and collaborate on. Why not ask the assistants you work with whether you get the best out of them?

You must also have a "clear understanding of the needs of all pupils" (Standard 5), and so you may want to increase your understanding of SEND issues and of applying pupils' Individual Education Plans.

I am sure there are other areas that you, in discussion with your mentor and managers, have identified for improvement in the new year. But don't beat yourself up. You're only 11 or so weeks into full-time teaching, with much still to absorb. By contrast, if you feel that you're safely on top of some aspects, leave them as they are for now, and move on: there's enough else to do.

One final point that might be looming large right now – with a likely crop of reports to write and/or parents'

evenings to negotiate – is working with parents. This includes "communicating effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and wellbeing" (Standard 8).

Make sure your supporters and guides help you in this vital area. Every school has its own culture and its peculiar way of working with parents: and, let's be honest, actual practice may not operate quite as stated in the printed policy.

If you're writing reports, don't set every class a test (which you then have to mark) so you have something to report on. Trust your judgement, and your knowledge of your pupils: they'll be more reliable than figures in a spreadsheet, in any case.

Try to do all of this thinking now. Don't leave it until Christmas, when you need to take a break and relax. If you need help or opportunities to learn, ask your mentor, induction tutor, head of department. They're there not merely to check that you're doing what's needful, but to support you: demand that help!

Above all, though, remember that Rome wasn't built in a day, and that great teachers are made, not born. Remind yourself of the good bits, the things you're pleased with, and don't dwell on your mistakes or failings. Don't allow end-of-term pressures to make you skip those activities – running, singing, playing hockey or whatever – that you do to maintain your health and sanity: you'll need those qualities more than ever in these last few weeks. You're doing a great job: stick at it, and good luck! **SecEd**

• *Dr Bernard Trafford is a writer and educationist, a former head and past chair of HMC.*

Further information

Teachers' Standards, Department for Education, July 2011 (updated June 2013): <http://bit.ly/1MAWT7n>



The art of planning lessons is a key challenge to master for the new teacher, both from the point of view of work/life balance and effective teaching practice.

Matt Bromley advises

This article is about planned lessons not lesson plans. I do not advocate spending your evenings and weekends writing detailed pro forma. Life's too short and you need to strike a work/life balance if you're to survive your probation.

Although a lesson plan may help you in your NQT year (a written plan can be something to lean on in the hurly burly of the classroom), having a lesson plan does not equate to teaching a well-planned lesson.

Indeed, the more detailed a lesson plan is, the less likely you are to deviate from it. And yet the best teaching is fluid, it responds to the here-and-now circumstances of the classroom. The best teachers, meanwhile, are attuned to the dynamics of the classroom: they know when the pace is too fast or slow, when pupils are bored or stuck, when, in short, the lesson isn't working and it's time to rip up the plan and wing it.

So hear this: do not lock yourself away with your teacher planner, writing reams of notes about what you intend to teach and how you'll differentiate, about how you'll embed literacy and numeracy, and utilise ICT, and promote fundamental British values, and... well, you get the idea.

Instead, spend some of that time assessing your pupils so you know where the gaps in their knowledge are and – therefore – where to pitch your lessons. Spend some of that time writing big questions that will pique pupils' curiosity, promote deeper thinking, and inspire independent learning. And spend the rest of the time relaxing and switching off.

One final caveat: when you engage in lesson planning activity, think not "what will pupils do in this lesson?" but rather "what will pupils think about in this lesson?" – and perhaps "what do I need pupils to know by the end of this lesson?"

If you do the former, you'll likely focus on activities and tasks, on time-filling, and then on resource-creation. You won't focus, or focus sufficiently, on what pupils will learn. And that's dangerous because pupils only learn what they are made to think about and they only think about what they actively pay attention to.

It's easy to divert pupils' attention onto the wrong things – such as on what a poster should look like rather than on what content should be included – or overload the limited space in their working memories by getting them to pay attention to too many things at once – like how to conduct independent research and report its findings as well as on the facts being researched.

Only once you know what pupils will think about and therefore learn should you consider what they will do. And when selecting learning activities, you should decide on the best – which is to say most expedient – way of getting them to encode new information.

Sometimes this will be through the artful use of direct instruction – simply telling pupils what you need them to know. Sometimes, it will be through the modelling of excellence, deconstructing and reconstructing examples of the finished product. And sometimes it will be through classroom discussion and debate, fuelled by great questions.

Supporting cognition

When planning lessons, then, we need to ensure that pupils will know something at the end that they didn't know before, and/or be able to do something they couldn't before. We also need to ensure that they will be able to apply that knowledge and/or those skills at a later time – such as in an exam – and in a range of different contexts. This requires a complex cognitive process that, broadly speaking, occurs in four stages: Attention, Encoding, Storage and Retrieval.

1, Attention

There are two main types of attention:

- 1 Goal-oriented attention is gained through motivation, curiosity and other self-driven forces and is retained through intent.
- 2 Stimulus-oriented attention is gained through the sensory stimuli that surround us (our response to sights and sounds) and is retained subconsciously, thus over-riding our goal-oriented attention.

These goal-oriented and stimulus-oriented attention-grabbers operate at the same time and our ability to regulate them, i.e. to stay focused on our goal-directed attention and limit the influence of our stimulus-driven attention, is one of the keys to learning.

2, Encoding

When we are exposed to new information we process



it then attempt to connect it to existing information. We try to assimilate new knowledge with prior knowledge in an attempt to provide a context within which to make sense of it.

The richer – sensorily and emotionally – the new information is, and the deeper the existing information is engrained, the more strongly new information will be encoded in our long-term memories. We can infer from this that effective learning is the result of two things:

- 1 Multi-sensory and emotional experiences – the richer our sensory-emotional experience of new information, the more deeply we will encode it. For instance, if we are made to feel something, we are more likely to encode new information. So rather than tell pupils something, let them see it and feel it. Making ideas concrete makes them more credible.

“When you engage in lesson planning activity, think not ‘what will pupils do in this lesson?’ but rather ‘what will pupils think about in this lesson?’”

- 2 Contextualised information (prior knowledge) – when we have previous experience of something, we can encode new information about it more effectively and more richly.

Keene and Zimmerman (1997) say we should teach pupils to make three types of connections: to connect new information to their own experiences, to other information they've studied, and to the wider world.

3, Storage

Memories fade away if they are neglected but can get stronger with repeated use. Making new associations with prior learning strengthens our memories because the number of connections we make influences the number of times memories are revisited, which in turn influences the length of time we retain a memory.

When we connect different pieces of information with each other, we retain them for longer, because we retrieve them more often. It follows that the more often we connect what we are teaching today to what we taught previously, the better the information will be learnt. Equally, the more we connect what we're teaching today to contextual information the better our pupils will learn.

4, Retrieval

Roughly, we forget half of the information that enters our working memories every hour, and two-thirds of the information we process disappears every day. But

there are things we can do as teachers to help our pupils retrieve important information more easily.

One is to plan learning in such a way as to allow purposeful practice, which is to say the opposite of cramming. Rather than focusing on one topic for a long period of time and never returning to it again, purposeful practice focuses on each topic for a shorter period of time, but returns to it several times with increasingly lengthy gaps and in-between studying other topics.

In practice, this means we should plan opportunities for our pupils not only to revise information they have previously learnt, but to re-organise that information by writing about it or talking about it. Our pupils will forge new connections if they retrieve information from long-term memory and re-encode it with new information.

Learning outcomes

Once we are clear about how learning happens, we need to set out what we expect pupils to learn in each lesson or sequence of lessons. One way to do this is to write and share learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes – and indeed shorter-term task instructions – must be specific. Learning outcomes and the criteria against which pupils will be assessed must be joined-up.

The assessment criteria must also be shared with pupils before they embark on a task and, ideally, pupils should be involved in agreeing that success criteria. A class discussion about "what a good one looks like" not only makes it clear how pupils will eventually be judged, it also ensures that pupils take ownership of the task and have a vested interest in completing it to the best of their abilities.

The assessment criteria should allow for a degree of creativity and flair and not be too prescriptive, and feedback should be formative, focused on what pupils need to do to improve, rather than summative and final.

Once the learning outcomes have been articulated, pupils should be able to answer the following questions:

- What do I have to understand by the end of this lesson/unit/module?
- What am I expected to produce in order to demonstrate my understanding? What will that understanding look like in practice?
- What knowledge/skills should I currently possess or will I need to acquire in order to meet the assessment criteria and demonstrate my understanding?
- What resources and assistance will be available to help me?
- How does the work I am doing today relate to what we did previously?
- How will the work I am doing today help me to meet the final assessment criteria?
- What aspects of today's and future work demands the most attention?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses in my current performance? What can I do to improve?
- How will my final work be assessed?

A word of advice: sharing learning outcomes and assessment criteria does not mean that every lesson must start with a set of objectives scribed on the board which pupils have to copy down. In fact, it definitely does not mean this. Lessons are artificial blocks of study not a complete learning sequence. Not every lesson, therefore, needs to start with objectives and there is

nothing to be gained by getting pupils to copy verbatim from the board. Rather, the direction of travel should be shared with pupils when you begin a new topic or module, then periodically repeated and reinforced.

How to write learning outcomes

Learning outcomes should be measurable statements that articulate what pupils should know and/or be able to do by the end of a lesson or sequence of lessons. The best learning outcomes are pupil-centred rather than teacher-centred, and are specific and measurable, thus providing a means of determining the content, organisation, and assessment of the lesson or topic.

Learning outcomes can help pupils to acquire foundational knowledge and can improve their short-term retention, as well as improve higher-order cognitive processing such as the application of knowledge and the transferability of knowledge, not just its initial acquisition. The best learning outcomes can actually shape what pupils learn because when pupils are clear about what they're expected to know they can direct their attention towards those ideas or concepts.

Once you've written your learning outcomes, check their validity by asking yourself these three questions:

- Does this learning outcome identify what pupils will be able to do after the lesson?
- Does it focus on specific and concrete actions and will I be able to observe that pupils have achieved the outcome? Is it clear to me how a pupil's achievement of the outcome will be measured?
- Does the outcome align with the level of knowledge expected of pupils at this stage?

How to share learning outcomes

Sharing the learning outcomes at the start of a lesson or sequence of lessons is an important element of direct instruction, because knowing the learning outcomes in advance helps pupils to practise metacognitive skills and to become more self-regulated.

Having clear learning outcomes helps pupils to narrow their focus to the most important knowledge and skills, and outcomes can help pupils to organise their notes, track their progress towards meeting the outcomes, and improve their self-study.

Perhaps the most important aspect of sharing learning outcomes, though, is checking that pupils understand them. To be certain of this, it's important to engage pupils in class discussion. For example, you may ask pupils what they think the learning outcomes mean. You may ask how they will know that they've achieved the learning outcomes and why they think it's important to do so. You may also ask pupils how the learning outcomes relate to what they've previously learnt. [SecEd](http://bit.ly/2zXqzZA)

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Further reading

SecEd's The Process of Learning series by Matt Bromley (Autumn 2017) features 10 articles focused on how pupils best learn and how we can boost memory and recall skills through our teaching practice. Download the series as a free pdf at <http://bit.ly/2zXqzZA>



Creating rules in your classroom

Creating effective classroom rules is key to good behaviour. **John Dabell** offers some pointers

Classroom management should be kept simple, minimalistic and down to the bare bones. Things don't need to be complicated, just a simple set of rules and consequences that are easily memorable.

If rules are to be remembered then they have to be clear, coherent and above all simple. And select your rules wisely because more rules doesn't always equate to better behaviour.

Some teachers like to create rules together with their class. The idea is that if students have a greater hand in rule-creation, they may better relate to the rules and comply more often.

Student voice is important, but when it comes to rule-making, teachers – to an extent – do need to take charge and say what's what and what's not. I think that all students respond to an established structure with clear boundaries for behaviour from the outset, because having clearly specified rules helps everyone know what they are supposed to do.

Here are the rules

Michael Linsin recommends that every class has just four rules and the same four rules. In his book *The Classroom Management Secret* (2013), he articulates these as follows:

- 1 Listen and follow instructions.
- 2 Raise your hand before speaking or leaving your seat.
- 3 Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- 4 Respect your classmates and your teacher.

These rules have been chosen because Linsin considers them to cover all bases in relation to behaviours that can potentially obstruct learning and the enjoyment of class life.

Note too that positive rules encourage positive interactions, while negative rules promote confrontation and punishment. The rules above convey meaning effectively, efficiently and positively. They are straightforward and precise.

Linsin also recommends that we adopt the same three consequences. These are simple, clear and coherent:

- First time a rule is broken: warning
- Second time a rule is broken: time-out
- Third time a rule is broken: letter home.

In keeping with the need to be positive about rules in your classroom, some colleagues in fact dislike the use of the words "rules", and prefer instead to rephrase them as "goals"; this is more positive in itself. For example: "Our class goal is to be respectful to our friends."

Rules or goals, the choice is yours – but personally I am more inclined towards using rules, as this translates to other areas of life where rules are explicitly stated and not written as targets.

Consistency rules

The problem is always uniformity. Some schools struggle to achieve institutional consistency because although they may have a well-intentioned behavioural policy, there can be a chaos of rules if classes all have their own domestic house rules chugging away in the background. So remember, class rules are the school rules, plain and simple. You can't have systems within systems.

There is no doubting the effectiveness of having just a few rules and consequences that everyone knows like the back of their hand, but can we go one step further and simplify them even more?

One possible way to do this is to follow what some schools are already doing – they've got it down to just three words that also double-up as school values: Ready, Respectful, Safe. Could this work in your classroom?

The RRS message is certainly simple and it encapsulates pretty much everything you need a school and its population to be. The idea comes from Pivotal Education and is one I've seen in a few schools now (see <http://bit.ly/2zk2L5V>).

The RRS message needs a bit of unpacking but essentially these are core behaviours and school-wide expectations that embody the four rules of Michael Linsin. You could couch this differently and say Respectful, Responsible and Cooperative. Whatever message you decide to go for, then this need to be visible – so that the message acts like a motto and is hard to dislodge.



Image: Adobe Stock

Ten tips for creating classroom rules

- 1 Have students unpack your school's rules/learning principles as a starting point and explore what they stand for and how they will affect learning and progress.
- 2 Live the rules, values and vision – don't just laminate them. Demonstrate what expected behaviour looks like and what it doesn't look like by acting out the rules cause and effect style. Teach the rules and identify specific expectations relevant to each rule. Let them role-play examples of rule-following behaviours.
- 3 Be crystal clear on what the rules are and what the consequences will be if they are not followed. Emphasise that there are no exceptions and that everyone should expect to be treated exactly the same.
- 4 Don't advertise your rules as "golden rules" as this implies that there are probably half a dozen silver and bronze ones too. The rules are the rules, they don't need gold-plating.
- 5 Assume nothing – if you talk about the rules on day one don't expect your classroom management plan to be embedded. This is a daily commitment and needs reinforcing term-by-term to ensure there is no slippage. Teach (don't preach), model and continuously practise real examples of what you expect of students. Check for understanding and

don't assume they know it. Student compliance to the rules is tied into their ability to readily recall and recite the rules – so test them!

- 6 Have great expectations and communicate your ambition for everyone to succeed in their learning without interference from anyone.
- 7 Be absolutely consistent and transparent. Once the rules have been set in stone there is no deviation or relaxing. Students want clear-cut command, not wishy-washy uncertainty. Consistency will fuel equality, strengthen trust and feed positive relationships.
- 8 Focus on learning and show students that you care and want them to do well. Look for the positives rather than being obsessed with what can go wrong.
- 9 Support expected behaviours using a wide variety of positive reinforcement messages. Make these frequent, dynamic, genuine and enthusiastic.
- 10 Build a culture of achievement and intrinsic motivation. Explain the benefits of rules and why it is important to accept that keeping them doesn't or shouldn't involve a tangible reward.

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Workload and behaviour are the two common challenges for an NQT. **Julian Stanley** offers some advice and support

Being an NQT is undeniably tough. No doubt you will have experienced an incredibly steep learning curve since September. As the end of your first term nears, you are likely to be feeling increasingly exhausted.

The first thing to remember is that you are certainly not alone. But remind yourself of how far you've come in such a short space of time. You will have already learnt, through trial and error, many of the basic dos and don'ts and started to put some foundations in place. If you're wondering how you'll manage to get to the end of this term, let alone the year, do not fear. This is the year for further learning and consolidation.

If you're struggling and haven't managed to put a framework in place, lay down some basic rules and boundaries for yourself, in and out of the classroom, to keep yourself mentally and physically healthy and robust.

Two of the most common challenges we hear about from NQTs are coping with the workload and also learning to deal with difficult behaviour.

Behaviour

Feeling under-prepared and ill-equipped to manage disruptive behaviour is a major frustration for new teachers, but it is something that everyone will come up against in their career. It is a barrier to learning and can easily threaten the health and wellbeing of teachers.

In our 2017 YouGov health survey, 32 per cent of teachers who had experienced physical and mental health problems told us that their symptoms were related to problems with student behaviour.

The two biggest NQT challenges

What's important to know is that there is much advice available to you, through your mentor and other colleagues who have had similar experiences. There are also plenty of guides and helpful videos online, many of them free.

Te@cherToolkit is one great source of tangible, solution-focused advice (see further information). Its excellent "five-minute behaviour fix" offers top tips for getting behaviour right:

- Practise your policy and keep it simple.
- Always be consistent.
- Make rules visible. Consider displaying them in the classroom.
- Explain the reasons for your decisions and make a fuss.
- Do not escalate too quickly.

Elsewhere, remind your classes of relevant rules before a potentially disruptive activity, or if you are aware of something brewing. This can drastically reduce inappropriate behaviour.

Use your body language and your most essential tool – your voice – to clearly assert your dominance. Non-verbal looks or gestures (moving over to where you can see something may be brewing) can be very powerful, too.

Get one thing right before moving onto something else. If you think you need a different strategy, think about what you do currently. Managing behaviour is not just about responding to inappropriate behaviour, it's about creating the conditions that will encourage positive behaviour.

Our popular downloadable guide *Managing Pupil Behaviour* is highly practical and full of tips and suggestions to address disruptive behaviour. Just remember that any strategy you choose needs to work for you: be robust and be clear.

Workload

Most NQTs are very likely to find the workload overwhelming by this stage. As we move into winter this can be exacerbated by ill-health, and while the festive

season can bring much cheer, it can also add pressure when you feel overloaded.

Friends and loved ones may find it hard to understand why you are giving so much time to the job. One NQT who contacted us, Helen, was facing these problems, but is now being more realistic to avoid burn-out. A key step for her was making sure that she now has a night to herself each week.

Breaks are an important aspect of both time management and wellbeing. Taking breaks can ensure we are able to work at our maximum capacity. Staying at school longer to mark papers or working through a lunch break are not the best use of your time if you are extremely tired.

One of the best routes to preventing burn-out is setting boundaries, just like Helen. Try to leave work in the workplace, if not every day then on a number of designated days during the week.

If you've had a stressful day and are anxious about something, set a boundary by allowing some time to talk about your concerns but once you reach a pre-decided time boundary, then stop. Don't continue to talk or worry about the situation for the rest of the evening.

Crucially, set a self-care plan. Spend some time thinking about what you could find restorative. This could include the following ideas:

- Exercise and tracking how much you've done.
- Keeping track of your eating and ensure you are eating well.
- Spending time with family and friends and people whose company you enjoy. Again, set a boundary of time to talk about work with others and then move on to other topics.
- Tech detox! Have nights where you don't check email and leave your phone away from your bedroom.
- Making art, music, gardening cooking – any creative hobby is an important aspect of self-care.

Use your mentor effectively

Throughout all of this, don't be afraid to ask for help. Your mentor is there to support and guide you and

establishing a good relationship and contact time with them is pivotal to a successful year. You should expect scheduled time together and the more you prepare for these meetings, the more control you'll have to get what you need.

Discuss your needs and concerns so that your mentor clearly understands what they are and be open to advice and constructive feedback. If you aren't getting the support you need, think about a different approach to get this or talk to your head of department or school head if needs-be.

Words of experience

We recently spoke to a group of retired secondary school teachers who offered the following two key pieces of advice in terms of self-care: first, accept that you're never going to finish that to-do list, and second, make sure you have a life outside school.

Above all else, don't be too hard on yourself. You can't possibly get it all right from the start. Get one thing right before moving onto something else and, as you prepare for your first end of term break, take stock and congratulate yourself on getting here!

Our free helpline is available 24/7 to discuss any worries or concerns you may have. Our expert counsellors support thousands of teachers at every stage of their career every year.

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• *Julian Stanley is the CEO of the Education Support Partnership.*

Further information

- For help or advice on any issue, contact the Education Support Partnership's free 24-hour helpline on 08000 562 561 or visit the website (where you can also find a range of free, downloadable guides, information and support): www.edsupport.org.uk
- *Managing Pupil Behaviour*, Education Support Partnership downloadable guide: <http://bit.ly/2ommpQj>
- Te@cherToolkit: www.teachertoolkit.co.uk



School leader **Emmanuel Gyan-Bediako** offers this year's NQTs some advice on surviving their first year while maintaining their wellbeing and work/life balance

It is nearly a term into the induction year already. The transition from the training year to the induction year is such a massive jump, no wonder we sometimes hear complaints of burn-out.

The expectations change – more lessons, more classes including exam groups and possibly more demanding groups; the demands of school duties – break and lunchtime, parents' evenings, and the list goes on.

However, year-on-year NQTs successfully complete the induction and head into the teaching profession to embark on their career as a fully qualified teacher. Despite the pressure, the NQT induction year is the opportunity to consolidate all the good practices from your training year.

So how have others done it over the years? How do you get through the NQT induction year?

The Teachers' Standards

It may seem obvious, but getting to grips with the Teachers' Standards is important as these outlines any judgements that will be made about you as a practitioner. It is a basic requirement to meet all the standards in order to be called a teacher. It is therefore imperative to track and evidence how you are meeting each of those standards.

Prepare your pupils for the future

Great teachers can have a hugely positive impact on a young person's life and future. As teachers, we need to be able to inspire, motivate and help children and young people to achieve their potential. This means creating an environment and a relationship in which the children in your care will develop both academically and socially.

As a subject teacher, you must ensure that your teaching enables the children to make good academic progress and that your role-modelling offers pastoral care that contributes to their social development. You must lead by example. Practise what you preach and preach what you practise.

This very interesting paragraph from an article I read recently says it all: "If you want to be a great educator, you must connect with your pupils and reach them on multiple levels, because the best teachers are committed to their students' wellbeing both inside and outside the classroom. By forging strong relationships, educators are able to affect virtually every aspect of their students' lives, teaching them the important life lessons that will help them succeed beyond term papers and standardised tests." (Teachers Change Lives: <https://teach.com/what-teachers-change-lives/>)

The teacher-student relationship must be founded on mutual respect. Be careful however about the level of relationship – remember you can be friendly but you are not a friend.

Put aside some 'me' time every week where we can just be ourselves. This won't just happen. As a busy NQT, you'll probably need to plan your downtime as you'd plan a lesson

Become a master of time management

Time management is an eternal struggle for teachers. In your NQT year your workload increases dramatically. Whether you are teaching, marking, honouring pastoral commitments, or delivering extra-curricular provision – you are busy. My advice to stay on top of things:

- Work to meet deadlines. Do not procrastinate. Once you've lost the time it is difficult to regain control.



Wellbeing and work/life balance in your first year

- Plan your days beforehand. Having a strategic plan that categorises your activities into priorities will enable you to carry out important ones first and others later.
- Schedule specific times for planning, marking, professional development, and so on. Consider including these in your teaching timetable so they become set in stone. However, it is no good having a schedule if it is not followed. If you don't stick to your plan, ask yourself why and try to address it.
- Develop opportunities to share resources or plan together with colleagues. Arrange times with your mentor, subject leader or colleagues where you can sit together to plan common lessons or exchange resources.
- Seek out resources online – there are many available and a lot are free. Do not attempt to re-invent the wheel.

When you plan your time well, even the most mundane tasks are more enjoyable. Enjoyment breathes new energy into what we do and you will project that positivity in the classroom.

Avoid burn-out

Enjoying a good work/life balance will seem impossible at times if you are a teacher. Getting the balance right and clearly dividing your time between work activities and personal and leisure activities is extremely important for your mental and physical wellbeing. Children will benefit more from you if you are not burnt out.

Seek out advice online. See later for a few recommended links, including to Chris Hunt's 2013 article in the *Guardian*, which offers 10 stress-busting tips and is a must-read. He suggests that we need to put aside some "me" time every week where we can just be ourselves. This won't just happen. As a busy NQT, you'll probably need to plan your downtime as you'd plan a lesson.

If you feel things are getting too much and you have stress or anxiety, you must seek help immediately. Talk to your mentor, line manager, other NQTs and other colleagues. They may be going through something similar, or might have done so in the past. The remedy is right next to you. Talk to someone.

Stress ultimately leads to a shorter fuse in the classroom, and will have a negative impact on your pupils if it isn't addressed quickly. If you're starting to feel the pressure build up, make sure you:

- Get enough sleep and exercise.
- Remember you don't have to respond to requests and emails immediately. Set time aside each day unless something is urgent.

- Shift your technology focus at home. The SmartPhone has the tendency to become the second office. Beware. Find something else to do.
- Know your limits and stick to them. Remember, there is work to be done and it can be done SMARTER.

If you feel things are getting too much and you have stress or anxiety, you must seek help immediately. Talk to your mentor, line manager, other NQTs and other colleagues

Reflect, Recharge, Respond

Reflect: This is possibly one of the more difficult things to make into a habit, but it is vital that you make time to look back on lessons and identify what worked and what didn't, and how it could be even better. If something didn't work, interrogate why. I recommend setting a particular time of day or week where you focus on reflecting. Fridays are ideal as you can review the week and plan for the one ahead. Keep a diary of your reflections. Teachers' Planner is a good one for keeping instant lesson-by-lesson records.

Recharge: Make some time to regain your energy. The demands of the teaching day are very energy-sapping, but don't stay up all night marking – recuperate and be fresh for the students.

Respond: Now you have had time to reflect and recharge, it's time to put things into action. What can you do immediately, and what are the longer term goals? This cycle of reflect, recharge and respond can result in effective and efficient practice as it helps you to become a reflective teacher who responds to the issues you identify.

Use the people around you

There are times when it feels like you are on your own. This should not be the case as it is a collective responsibility to educate our children. If you feel like you're struggling, or want to develop yourself, speak to someone.

- Talk to colleagues, both experienced and inexperienced. You always learn something from someone, irrespective of their level of experience. If unsure, ask.
- Observe others. Find out who the outstanding practitioners are and make time to observe them. This should be both within and out of subject area. If you find something useful, try it in your practice. It may be the missing piece in the jigsaw puzzle.
- Value and use feedback. Always see the best in feedback given to you and draw positives out of it. The people giving you feedback may have seen something that you don't.

This article is by no means the answer to a perfect induction year. It is an accumulation of ideas and advice from my personal experiences as a teacher, a former NQT, a middle and now senior leader (once with past responsibility as an induction tutor).

Most of all, remember – be kind to yourself. Look after your needs and you'll be in a much better position to look after your pupils.

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• Emmanuel Gyan-Bediako is an assistant headteacher at Arena Academy in Birmingham and a graduate of the 2015 cohort from Ambition School Leadership's Future Leaders leadership development programme.

Useful websites

Useful websites and articles as recommended by Emmanuel include:

- Time management tips for teachers: www.teachhub.com/time-management-tips-teachers
- 10 sensational tips for managing your time as a teacher: <http://bit.ly/2iLML60>
- The work-life balance basics: 10 stress-busting tips for teachers, Chris Hunt, *The Guardian*, June 2013: <http://bit.ly/2B7OsBM>
- 25 tips to reduce teacher burnout: www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/25-tips-reduce-teacher-burnout

Ambition School Leadership

Ambition School Leadership is a charity that runs leadership development programmes in England to help school leaders create more impact in schools that serve disadvantaged children and their communities. Visit www.ambitionschoolleadership.org.uk



Having a 'chatty class' can be a tricky low-level behaviour challenge for teachers. **John Dabell** offers some advice

An excessively talkative class can be disruptive and exhausting and allowing students to freely talk and without permission is certainly a slippery slope.

At the same time, at the heart of a pupil's learning and a teacher's repertoire is talk. Robin Alexander in *Towards Dialogic Teaching* argues that "talk is arguably the true foundation of learning". But, while championing the role of oracy is important, not all types of talk are welcome or appropriate.

Constant chit-chat is the "bane of my life" for many a teacher and does need to be curbed. The problem is that some students need little or no invitation or encouragement to talk.

Chatty class syndrome is a real-life classroom management issue. It's also a serious problem because, left unattended, it tears at the fabric of your class and the right of all pupils to work without interference. Students who chat indiscriminately to each other and you are out of order. It is also an affront to your authority and chips away at your wellbeing if mismanaged.

However, at the same time, you don't want a class that is afraid to speak or a class that is silent and dull. So what do you do? Well it might be easier to start with three approaches that I would advise against...

1, Carrots and sticks

There are plenty of ways to reward good behaviour, such as stickers, smileys, beans in a jar, tokens, merit points and certificates – but they do come with a class health warning: they can make a situation worse.

Although these strategies "work" as quick-hit wins, they don't actually do students or us any favours in the long-term. In the book *Best of the Best: Feedback* (edited by Isabella Wallace and Leah Kirkman, 2017), Professor Barry Hyman makes the point: "Although apparently positive and benign, these extrinsic reinforcers are little symbols of manipulation, designed to ensure compliance or to compensate a child for doing something that their better selves might have chosen to do for other reasons, such as intrinsic motivation or even altruism. Incentives end up being an exercise in the administration of power. Intrinsic motivation to learn is the casualty."

2, A signal or a word

Some teachers try respond signals and having "a word" instead. They use a secret word to let their class or particular individuals know that they have pushed it too far. This can be any word you want: calypso, Pringles, trampoline, meerkat, marshmallows, etc, and when said or written down it is a signal to quit the chatter and get back on task. The problem is, some students want to hear the word and so play up to it.

3, Countdown

If things are getting too much and talk is not focused on learning then you can use a simple timer to get minds back into learning mode. There are various downloads and apps you can use to set a time by which all students should be quiet. The music from the television show Countdown is well-known and a fun way of resetting the atmosphere of the class, although again students can play up to this and deliberately chat so they can get their daily hit of music.

There are other ways...

Lots of teachers don't use these ideas because they don't go far enough and because they still allow for idle talk to live and breathe – for the sound wave cycle to continue: loud, quiet, loud, quiet...

Be more Michaela

In my view, Michaela Community School (MCS) in Brent has got it bang on. Pupils at this outstanding school do very well because they know how to be successful learners and have exemplary attitudes to learning.

Ofsted reports that the behaviour of pupils is outstanding – they behave responsibly, are highly self-disciplined and "they follow the school's conduct guidelines conscientiously so that lessons run very smoothly and without interruption".

So can we learn from what MCS does? Their expectation is that students work in silence unless they have been asked to answer a question or work with a partner. MCS does not ask classes to "work quietly", because this is too ambiguous – they remove this ambiguity and expect silence unless asked otherwise.

As Jonathan Porter says in *Battle Hymn Of The Tiger Teachers: The Michaela Way* (edited by Katharine Birbalsingh, 2016): "Most pupils like this. They recognise what people have recognised for centuries: that it's easier to concentrate when there aren't people chatting next to you."



Dealing with 'chatty classes'

"Our autistic pupils revel in it. For them, the ambient noise in their primary schools made concentrating very difficult indeed."

We can all be more Michaela by removing any haziness and letting students know where they stand when it comes to what is expected of class life: silence should be expected unless the teacher has asked for talking and everyone puts up their hand before speaking – no-one stands in the way of learning.

Stemming from Doug Lemov's book *Teach like a Champion* (2010), all MCS teachers consistently use the phrase "3-2-1, SLANT" in lessons. This stands for: Sit up straight, Listen, Answer questions, Never interrupt, Track the teacher.

All students sit facing forwards with their arms folded when they are not writing in their books and not a second of lesson time is wasted. Students know that "talking stops learning".

Go back to square one

If we are going to be more Michaela then it's time for some tough love. Teachers who complain about their talkative classrooms, talk as if they have nothing to do with it, but the reality is that the teacher decides when, how much, and how often students are allowed to talk.

Using the power of proximity can often be enough to stop students from non-stop talking. Move yourself into a student's space and stand next to them. You don't even have to say anything

In all likelihood you haven't followed your own classroom management plan. If things have slipped, the contract has been broken and you haven't held your class accountable. As Michael Linsin says in *The Classroom Management Secret* (2013): "Wherever there is weak or semi accountability, behaviour, respect, and kindness take a nosedive."

It is not a nice feeling but all is not lost: accept failure with dignity, recalibrate and move on. Waste absolutely no time in getting back to basics and re-establishing what you said on day one. Talk the talk and walk the walk by modelling each of your class rules and consequences. Consistency is the key but for whatever reason you have opened the door and let certain behaviours get in. Once a bit of chit-chat is allowed to survive unchallenged, nattering can become the norm and students start to push other boundaries.

Be super clear with your students and set the bar high so that they know when it is acceptable for them to talk and when they should be working silently or listening carefully. Set clear limits, communicate those limits and don't bend the rules for anyone.

Your high expectations can't slide. If students see you let a rule slide for one person, things soon snowball.

Jump in

The second anyone decides to strike up a conversation with the person sitting next to them, extinguish their flame immediately and back it up with a consequence. If you don't jump in and pour water on a conversation, other students will jump in and join the party.

If the rules have been explained and everyone knows them then there are no excuses, so accept no nonsense early doors. Bolt the door to low level behaviour before minor becomes major.

Dealing with any talking swiftly is all important, so what do you do? Michaela teachers use the following pre-emptive reminders (see the MCS Behaviour Policy for more):

- 1 Silent non-verbal: hand signal, eye contact, facial expression, shake head, sharp pause.
- 2 Unnamed: "We're tracking. Just waiting for 100 per cent. We need one person ... and 100 per cent."
- 3 Named: "David, we listen so we can learn. Thank you."

Quiet management is in your hands, but mostly in your face, how you stand and where you stand. Some teachers can employ a stance and stare that stops everyone in their tracks. There are no words used, just body language. Not everyone can pull this off, so what do you do instead?

Using the power of proximity can often be enough to stop students from non-stop talking. Move yourself into a student's space and stand next to them. You don't even have to say anything and just your presence around them can soon encourage silence.

Don't talk

Sometimes we can be our own worst enemies by pressing the self-destruct button. You might have clear boundaries in place, set a class off on a task and then end up interrupting them with talk of your own because the silence feels uncomfortable. Hold back and resist the urge to pitch in with comments – let them get on with it.

When a class is settled don't rock the boat. You can still work with individual students and groups but keep a quiet voice and try not to micromanage by hovering like a helicopter.

Make them accountable

Students have to take charge of their own talking patterns and learn when it is the right time (and not the right time) to speak. Encourage students to exercise self-control and police each other by using positive peer pressure to your advantage. Explicitly teach the skills needed for active listening and focusing on work amid disturbance. Challenge students to spot specific learning behaviours when they happen in the classroom.

Model oracy

Cut the chat and focus on oracy. Students need opportunities to talk so we need to systematically teach oracy and plan plenty of time for quality talk. How? Another outstanding school we can learn from here

The second anyone decides to strike up a conversation with the person sitting next to them, extinguish their flame immediately and back it up with a consequence

is School 21 in Newham. School 21 makes oracy "a moral cause" and elevates speaking to the same level as reading and writing to support higher order thinking. They have worked with the University of Cambridge to develop the four strands of oracy: physical, cognitive, linguistic and emotional. These support students in learning to talk with real impact and help them focus on the quality of their talk. This Oracy Framework is something we should all be aiming to copy and paste in our classrooms (see further information).

Keep the pot full

Make sure that students are kept busy and always have something to occupy them that matches their ability level. Those that finish first without enough to do will soon turn to someone else for a chat. Students engrossed in their work seldom find time to chat about Eastenders, and if they want to then they know that class time isn't the time to do it.

And finally...

If your class is getting on top of you then it is time to get on top of them – it's always possible to press reset.

Adopting a no-excuses style of classroom management doesn't make you a dictator, or send your class into a downward spiral, resenting you for laying down the law. Quite the opposite – students know you mean business, they know what the limits are, and they know they will spend their time in your lessons learning. As the government's behaviour tsar Tom Bennett says, teachers need to be "the top dog"; we need to show them that we're in charge.

Further information

- Michaela Community School Ofsted report (June 2017): <http://bit.ly/2zuChTh>
- The Michaela Community School Behaviour Policy can be found at <http://mcsbrent.co.uk/policies/>
- School 21's Voice 21 project: www.school21.org.uk/voice21

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Giving timely and effective feedback to pupils is a key factor in successful teaching and a development priority for all new teachers.

Matt Bromley advises

The open loop: Improving feedback

To help pupils learn, we need to provide them with plentiful opportunities to practise, receive feedback, reflect, and then act upon that feedback. This is called the open loop because it spins endlessly: practice, feedback, reflection; practice, feedback, reflection; ad infinitum.

Every skill can be improved and perfected by performing it repeatedly but not all forms of practice are equal. We learn most effectively when we engage in what Anders Ericsson calls “purposeful practice”.

Purposeful practice is about struggling in certain targeted ways – placing artificial barriers in the way of pupils’ success in order to make it harder for them to learn something initially. In other words, we slow our pupils’ learning down and force them to make mistakes because this will ensure they operate at the very edge of their abilities.

Practice

We should set pupils a target just beyond their current ability but within their reach – in what Lev Vygotsky calls the “zone of proximal development” and what Robert Bjork calls “the sweet spot”. This spot is – Bjork says – the “optimal gap between what (pupils) know and what (they’re) trying to do ... When (they) find that sweet spot, learning takes off”.

Only by repeating learning and by doing so in a range of contexts, will pupils increase the storage strength of the information in their long-term memories. The better the storage strength, the more pupils’ knowledge and skills will be readily available.

Repeating learning – the very act of recalling prior knowledge and skills from long-term memory – also improves pupils’ retrieval strength. The better the retrieval strength, the more easily, quickly and efficiently are knowledge and skills recalled from long-term memory and brought into the working memory where they can be used.

Practice tasks should have well-defined, specific goals, be focused, involve feedback, and require pupils to get out of their comfort zones because, if they don’t push themselves beyond their comfort zones, they’ll never improve. Getting out of their comfort zones means trying to do something that they couldn’t do before. In this respect, the secret of effective practice is not to “try harder” but rather to “try differently”.

Feedback

Once pupils have practised their learning, we need to ensure they receive – and produce – information about what they have mastered and what they still need to practice.

Feedback should redirect the pupil’s and the teacher’s actions to help the pupil achieve their target. Effective feedback addresses faulty interpretations, comments on rather than grades work, provides cues or prompts for further work, is timely, specific and clear, and is focused on task and process rather than on praising.

Feedback works best when it is explicit about the marking criteria, offers suggestions for improvement, and is focused on how pupils can close the gap between their current and their desired performance. Feedback does not work well when it focuses on presentation or quality of work.

Feedback can promote the growth mindset if it is as specific as possible, focuses on factors within pupils’ control, focuses on factors which are dependent on effort not ability, and motivates rather than frustrates pupils.

Self and peer-assessment can prove effective strategies – particularly so if we want our pupils to become increasingly metacognitive in their approach to learning – because these strategies: give pupils greater responsibility for their learning, allow pupils to help and be helped by each other, encourage collaboration and reflection, enable pupils to see their progress, and help pupils to see for themselves how to improve.

But self and peer-assessment need to be used wisely and pupils need to be helped to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to assess and give feedback (because research suggests 80 per cent of the feedback pupils give each other is wrong).

It is, therefore, well worth investing lesson time to help pupils improve their self-assessment skills because research suggests that, when done, it can increase pupils’ achievement.

Ultimately, though, the only useful feedback is that which is acted upon – it is crucial, therefore, that the teacher knows the pupil and knows when and what kind of feedback to give, then plans time for pupils to act on the feedback they receive. For example, DIRT – “directed improvement and reflection time” – is a great



use of lesson time and helps to condition pupils in the drafting and re-drafting process, as well as getting them used to responding positively to feedback, to learning from their mistakes, and to improving through a process of trial and error.

If the act of reflecting and acting upon feedback is a task usually left for homework then it sends a message to pupils that feedback and the act of redrafting are not important. What’s more, the process of improvement is hidden away rather than placed centre-stage in lessons where the teacher can identify progress and celebrate it.

Delayed feedback

According to Professor Dylan Wiliam, feedback after a test that includes the correct answer increases pupils’ capacity to learn because it enables them to correct any errors in their work. The critical mechanism in learning from tests, Prof Wiliam argues, is successful retrieval. However, if pupils do not retrieve the correct response after taking the test and have no recourse to learn it, then the benefits of testing can be limited or indeed absent altogether.

As such, providing feedback after a retrieval attempt, regardless of whether the attempt was successful or unsuccessful, will help to ensure that retrieval is successful in the future.

Feedback is important after any type of test, but it is particularly important after pupils have taken a recognition test, such as a multiple-choice quiz or a true/false question, because in these situations pupils are exposed to incorrect information in the form of the false options.

Another important consideration, according to Prof Wiliam, is when to give feedback. Conventional wisdom – supported by studies in behavioural psychology – suggests that providing immediate feedback is best. However, recent experimental results have shown that delaying feedback might be more powerful.

In one study, for example, pupils read a text and then either took or did not take a multiple-choice quiz. One group of pupils who took the quiz received correct answer feedback immediately after making each response (immediate feedback); another group who took the quiz received the correct answers for all the questions after completing the entire test (delayed feedback).

One week after the initial session, pupils took a final test in which they had to produce a response to the question that had formed the stem of the multiple-choice question (in other words, they had to produce an answer of their own rather than selecting one from a list of options). The final test consisted of the same questions from the initial multiple-choice quiz and comparable questions that had not been tested.

The study found that taking an initial quiz (even without feedback) tripled final recall relative to only studying the material. When correct answer feedback was given immediately after each question in the initial

quiz, performance increased by another 10 per cent. However, when the feedback was given after the entire test had been completed, it boosted final performance even more. In short, the study concluded that delayed feedback led to better retention than immediate feedback.

Reflection

As well as providing pupils with time to respond to feedback, they also need time to reflect on their learning. Reflection might involve pupils rethinking their understanding of important ideas, perhaps with the teacher’s guidance. It might involve pupils improving their work through revision based on self-assessment and feedback. It might involve pupils reflecting on their learning and performance.

Effective feedback addresses faulty interpretations, comments on rather than grades work, provides cues or prompts for further work, is timely, specific and clear, and is focused on task and process rather than on praising

With big ideas and questions being central to well-planned lessons, it stands to reason that taking a linear path through curriculum content (teaching it once then moving on) is a mistake. After all, how can pupils master complex ideas and tasks if they encounter them only once?

Therefore, the flow of a sequence of lessons must be iterative, pupils must be made fully aware of the need to rethink and revise in light of current learning, and the work must follow the trail back to the original big idea and learning outcome.

Once pupils have received feedback on their work

and rethought their ideas, we need them to engage in metacognition – in other words, we need them to take ownership of their own learning, making improvements but also reflecting on how successfully they have learnt and what skills they need to practise further.

This means developing the capacity to self-monitor and self-adjust as needed; to proactively consider what is working, what isn’t, and what might be done better. In order to achieve this, we need pupils to engage in some form of self-evaluation, which means teaching them how to take stock of what they have learned and what needs further inquiry or refinement.

In practice, this means that pupils need opportunities in lessons to self-monitor, self-assess, and self-adjust their work, individually and collectively, as the work progresses. We can do this by:

- Allocating five minutes in the middle and at the end of a lesson in order to consider: “What have we found out? What remains unresolved or unanswered?”
- Asking pupils to attach a self-assessment form to every formal piece of work they hand in.
- Including a one-minute essay at the end of an instruction-based lesson in which pupils summarise the two or three main points and the questions that still remain for them (and, thus, next time, for the teacher).
- Asking pupils to attach a note to any formal piece of work in which they are honest about what they do and do not understand.
- Teaching pupils to evaluate work in the same way that teachers do so that pupils become more accurate as peer reviewers and self-assessors, and more inclined to “think like teachers” in their work.
- Starting lessons with a survey of the most burning questions pupils may have. Then, as part of the final plenary, judge how well the questions were addressed, which ones remain, and what new ones emerged.
- Leaving the second half of a unit deliberately “open” to allow pupils to frame and pursue the inquiry (rather than be directed by the teacher) based on the key questions that remain and clues that emerge at the end of the first half.
- Getting pupils to develop a self-profile of their strengths and weaknesses as learners at the start of the year whereby they consider how they learn best, what strategies work well for them, what type of learning is most difficult, and what they wish to improve upon. Then, structure periodic opportunities for pupils to monitor their efforts and reflect on their struggles, and successes, and possible edits to their own profiles.

SecEd

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Last year's *SecEd* NQT diarist is now in their second year of teaching. We asked them for their tips for this year's NQTs...

Your NQT year is in full swing by now. Hopefully you will be settled and happy in your new school and by now the staff and students should have stopped looking at you as if you're an intruder.

Enjoy that feeling of belonging. Remember what it was like when you were a student teacher? When it always felt like you were in the way or struggled for respect because you were "just" a student teacher? Take a moment now to remind yourself of how far you've come. You are a qualified teacher.

A year ago I was in the same position, about to reach the end of my first term as a qualified teacher. Here follows some advice based on my experiences last year.

Workload

I am sure you are already used to your full timetable and cannot believe how long you used to spend preparing lessons in your PGCE year. It can still be daunting though, especially when the marking builds up.

If you're lucky you'll be at a school where lots of things are already planned and schemes of work are all fully resourced and ready to go. If you're not, you're probably incredibly stressed all the time. Don't suffer in silence. The chances are that if things aren't already planned, there will be other people in the same position. Ask your colleagues if they have any resources or if they want to split the workload and plan it together. They may even have a resources budget for emergencies too – that's always good to know about.

The other thing that really helped me through the workload in my NQT year was my marking timetable. My head of department sat down with me at the beginning of the year to help me make it and it completely transformed my organisation and marking strategy.

The timetable meant that I knew exactly when I could take in a class's books and have enough time to mark them before their next lesson. I even identified on the timetable the best lessons for setting homework.

Relationships created this year will last

The relationships you form with students in your NQT year will follow you. Make a good impression this year. That doesn't mean you need every kid to like you, but they should respect you.

That's not to say that if you have a few students who cause you a real headache, they will always be a nightmare – students grow up and mature. But if



Advice from the second year

‘The relationships you form in your NQT year will follow you. Make a good impression this year. That doesn't mean you need every kid to like you, but they should respect you’

you get your classes into good routines and follow through with rewards and punishments, they will remember.

For years to come they'll know that your lessons are not the ones they are lazy in, they'll know that it's not worth "forgetting" their homework, and they'll know that they can't just talk through your lessons.

Not only will your current students know it, but they will tell their friends. Next year when they get their timetables on the first day, they'll see your initials and their friend will say "oh they're nice but strict" or "oh, they're good but you can't mess around". Trust me, my form group were nattering

on like that for 30 minutes on the first day. Your reputation will precede you. And if you have any problem students now, ask for help with them – ask your head of department to step in if needs-be, and make sure they remember you as the teacher who didn't let them get away with it.

Grow your network in the school

It's not only your relationships with the students that will affect your time at school. Getting to know as many staff as possible will also help you in ways you could never imagine.

My biggest tip would be to grow your network. It could just be about smiling at everyone in the

corridor, sharing some small talk in the queue for tea, or replying quickly to someone's email asking for a favour. If people recognise you as someone who is happy and willing to help, they will be a lot more willing to help you.

Schools are often described as horribly political, with staff quarrels and rumours hijacking most staffroom conversations. This is a little dramatic, although it can be like that at times. My advice is to stay out of it. It may seem obvious, but it's so easy to get dragged into a conversation where you suddenly find yourself inadvertently bad-mouthing someone or engaging in rumour-spreading.

Whether it's for a trip you want to put on, that last-minute photocopying you desperately need, or that information you need about a student, if other staff know you and like you, they will be an invaluable resource when you need their help.

Above all else, enjoy your NQT year – and when Christmas does arrive, relax and give yourself a well-earned break.

• The author of this article was SecEd's NQT diarist last year and is now in her second year of teaching as a teacher of citizenship, RE and humanities at a school in England.

As the Christmas break approaches, this year's *SecEd* NQT diarist reflects on their first term at the chalkface – the highs and the lows

Looking back on my first term as an NQT, I am considering the highs and lows that I have experienced since beginning my first teaching post.

Fortunately, the positives have far outweighed the negatives, and I am progressing towards being the best teacher that I can be. However, there are areas of my practice that I need to develop further if I am to reach my full potential.

My greatest achievement since beginning the role has been the building of positive relationships with both my students and colleagues. I have experienced very few serious behaviour problems in the classroom, and I believe that this is the result of the high expectations that I have set and constantly reinforced.

I feel that my students are making good progress and are enjoying my lessons. This is due to the atmosphere of mutual respect that exists between me and my classes, and I hope to nurture these positive relationships as the year progresses. During

One term down, two to go...

my ITT year, a senior colleague told me that no teaching can take place until behaviour is under control. I am pleased that I have established a harmonious working environment early on.

I also think that I have made a good impression with my colleagues. I have been given a lot of support by fellow teachers and associate staff, which reflects the community values of the school. I hope that I can return the favour by being a dependable, hard-working and conscientious colleague.

I am committed to fulfilling my wider school responsibilities. During the first term, I have organised a residential trip to Krakow and Auschwitz, begun training to become a Duke of Edinburgh expedition leader, joined a behaviour management working group, and begun working with colleagues and students on the renovation of the school's memorial garden.

This has been very rewarding, and it is a great opportunity to get to know students that I do not teach, as well as colleagues from other departments.

Elsewhere, I have enjoyed teaching subjects outside my specialism and I am thrilled that the majority of students in my English and geography classes have made progress since the start of the year. Every lesson in these subjects is a challenge for me, but I am becoming ever more confident in my ability to deliver the curriculum to a high standard and am proud of my achievement so far.

The head of English and I have discussed the possibility of me picking up more English classes next year, and I am hoping to carry on teaching my year 9 group of boys during their GCSEs.

A key area for development is the quality and consistency of my marking.

During my first formal observation, I was criticised for the lack of meaningful marking in my year 11 students' books. The weakness of my marking led to a negative judgement during my first observation, despite the fact that the rest of lesson was a success.

‘I do not feel that I have mastered differentiation yet, and am continuing to develop my skills in this area’

This was a difficult lesson to learn, but I am now glad that it happened early in my NQT year. The shock of receiving a "limited" judgement for my marking made me realise just how crucial this element of teaching is. I have worked hard since to ensure my marking is both regular and purposeful.

Due to my background working with students with SEND, I am passionate about ensuring that

every child is able to access the work that is set. However, I do not feel that I have mastered differentiation yet, and am continuing to develop my skills in this area.

I think that my use of targeted questioning has improved greatly since qualifying as a teacher, but I need to focus on ensuring that all of my resources are appropriately differentiated. Fortunately, I have excellent support from teaching assistants, who have gone out of their way to suggest strategies to ensure that my SEND students are able to engage fully with my lessons.

I am still struggling to get the work/life balance right. I am so tired by the end of the week that I will often let weekends go by without socialising, and this has had a negative impact on my relationships outside school.

Although they understand the seriousness with which I take my job, a few friends have admitted to feeling neglected in the past few months and I am determined to address this as the year progresses. My friendships are very important to me and I cannot allow my commitment to the job to interfere with these relationships.

Overall, my first term has been a success. I am excited to come into work each morning and am thoroughly enjoying the job.

I will keep reflecting upon and honing my teaching practice, and I look forward to seeing where this year takes me.

• Our NQT diarist this year is a teacher of history at a comprehensive school in the North of England.

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