

Learning to Succeed



A world of experiences outside the classroom



Students should be pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone, a real challenge which they may not have previously thought they could achieve.

Contents

Introduction	1 - 2
1. Every Child Matters	3 - 12
2. Moving outside the classroom	13 - 20
3. The performing arts	21 - 28
4. Becoming citizens	29 - 36
5. Languages abroad	37 - 42
6. A global community	43 - 48
7. Opening eyes to the world	49 - 52
8. Converting reluctant learners	53 - 58
9. The view from the top	59 - 64
10. What about the risks?	65 - 68
Conclusion: the global classroom	69 - 70
Acknowledgements	71

Our greatest gift must be to take all children where they did not know they could go and to enable them to succeed in spite of the difficulties they may face on their journey through life.

Introduction

We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.

- DFES 'Learning outside the classroom'

If learning to succeed is tough, teaching someone to succeed is even harder.

But as we all love a challenge the purpose of this book is to share best practice from some acclaimed teachers who have been there and done it. Now I'm no teacher, but I've been involved in the development of many thousands of young people and I believe the secret lies in a process, a journey of personal development...

In Alice in Wonderland, you may recall Alice asked the Cheshire cat for directions and he told her that if she didn't know where she wanted to go, she could take any road she liked as they were all sure to take her there.

The point is that before anyone can start working towards success, they need to have established what success is; they need a goal. But not just any goal will do if we are to feel genuinely successful when we accomplish it.

Giving our young people the opportunity to experience such a journey, to help them set challenging goals and the confidence and support to go and get them will create a generation with a positive attitude to risk. Without risk, there is no challenge.

Without challenge there is no effort and without effort there is little reward (whether emotional, financial or developmental) and little chance of success.

This book is inspired by, written by and dedicated to those people who have helped our young people to believe in themselves and to acquire taste for success, teachers.

Charles Rigby

Founder
The Challenger Trust



*All young people have the opportunity to **maximise their potential** through outdoor learning. We provide this through; delivering the best outdoor education training in the field, assuring every project is unique and a high customised experience and evidence of delivering tangible benefits and outcomes are supplied.*

Since 1998 The Challenger Trust has been working in some of the most socio-economically deprived areas of the UK. We help young people to raise their aspirations, learn lifelong skills and improve their educational and employment opportunities. Our innovative projects and progressive courses give those at risk of becoming NEET alternative pathways to success.

Over 100 schools and 40,000 young people have benefited from our work with the trust. We run accredited outdoor educational programmes to help young people to raise their aspirations, develop the skills required to be life-long learners and improve their educational and employment opportunities. We have participated in national debate in the field of outdoor education, and contributed c.£1M toward activity for deprived children in 12 years. Through our existing partnerships we have links with worldwide business organisations, local authorities, academies and all types of schools who commission our courses.

The Challenger Trust model is to provide the universal benefits of outdoor leadership and development training through experience. Each personal development programme has a core learning theme which is progressive and possible, and we continuously seek collaborative approaches to extend the scope and effectiveness of our work. Many of these programmes can also be linked to other appropriate awards and projects such as Duke of Edinburgh.

Every child matters

Grandmothers who had been sucking eggs all their lives were nonetheless delighted to learn that the government had achieved another intellectual breakthrough...

... when they pronounced that “Every Child Matters”. No good teacher has ever believed otherwise.

The challenge, however, - and this was the justification for the publication under that title - was to translate the principle into practice. There are few schools that do not proclaim among their aims and objectives the fulfilment of the potential of every pupil. But how is it done? This is the question which relates to the whole process of learning, in the classroom or outside it.

Phil Beadle, who was named as Teacher of the Year in a secondary school in 2004 and appeared in the TV series, “The Unteachables”, takes us back to basics by making the very important point that the first requirement is to create a learning environment, whether inside the classroom or outside it, in which both teachers and learners understand each other and discover together that success can be achievable. Phil describes how he and a class of very under-achieving boys managed to get there together.

In my twenties I knew a highly intelligent man. He was learned in subjects of which I hadn't heard and could put on an effortless pastiche of Samuel Beckett whilst in his cups. He was articulate, cultured and he had ideas. Boy, did he have ideas! Thousands of them. I'd listen rapt as he spoke, idea after fantastic idea torrenting out of him. A waterfall of visionary words.

He never actually implemented any of them, of course. They remained ideas. The last I heard of him, he was living in a tent. The moral of this story is that any idiot can think of a thousand good ideas before breakfast. A successful person will do one of them.



Thinking about doing, when you could actually be doing seems to me a good way of ending up living in a tent

Daniel Goleman, whose book 'Emotional Intelligence' has transformed some of the ways we define the criteria for being successful, lists five competencies he regards as vital for success. They are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill.

I have never really had cause to analyse what exactly it is I do with the children with whom I work. I'm not the kind of teacher anyone would ever base a teaching manual on, particularly in terms of being 'reflective'. Thinking about doing, when you could actually be doing seems to me a good way of ending up living in a tent. But I'm happy to take a rare moment of reflection here.

The biggest challenge I have faced in my teaching career was in a school in a depressed area of London. Boys do less well than girls in my subject, English; and I was entrusted with two classes of boys who had been somewhat euphemistically labelled as being 'at risk of under-achievement'.

In truth the period of risk had long since past, and, by the time they came to my door they were all seasoned over-achievers in the realms of under-achievement.

The girls in the year group together with those boys who weren't deemed 'at risk' studied together in other teachers' classes, tranquilly devoting themselves to learning, whilst I and 60

teacher-eating psychos fought long pitched battles in which the teacher would always come a very poor 61st.

The first term was hellish. The second term less so. By the end of the two years the DfES, as it was then, were making videos of the boys, there were awards flying around and every visitor to the school was taken to meet this startling group of mature, intelligent, charming young men diligently and passionately engaged with their versions of Elizabethan sonnets.

We won - eventually, by a country mile - but how did we win?

We didn't revise for exams: we trained for them. We became a team fighting other people's stereotypes and expectations of us.

First of all, we looked at ourselves.

We sat in circles discussing and owning up to our faults, taking ownership of our behaviour. We were homophobic, sexist, had dodgy role models: most of us had been seriously affected by the fact that our fathers were no longer present in our lives, and some of us didn't pay enough respect to people who were different from us.

Then, we tried to change the things we could. We identified what it was we were crap at, and had the bravery to do something about it. Rashid's handwriting, Burv's spelling, Greg's temper. We were honest with ourselves and with each other about the stuff we needed to work on. And when we'd made a success we celebrated it together. If Rashid had managed to write a sentence in handwriting that you didn't need Mr. Magoo glasses to decipher, we'd take time out to congratulate him. We'd create special moments at the end of a lesson to applaud each other's achievements, we'd stand at the front of the class to receive claps and congratulations if we had earned them.

We had a look at why we wanted to do well. It's all very well and good parents and teachers telling you that your school work is important, how this year is the most important year in your lives and all the rest of the lies that the education system tells children each and every day, but they have to work out why education is important to them for themselves. We looked at our lives, and the excuses we made to justify our over-achievement in the field of under-achievement, and we got shot of them. We didn't revise for exams: we trained for them. We became a team fighting other people's stereotypes and expectations of us.



“No student should miss out on the opportunity to travel and explore. As part of the TUI Student portfolio which provides students with the opportunity to gain new experiences outside the classroom environment, The Challenger Trust develops student skills in unison with the educational framework.”
Ian Finlay, Managing Director, TUI Travel PLC - Student

We looked at each other and found stuff to like.

We'd use each other as character studies in writing exercises, developing our abilities in description at the same time as we honed our skills in recognising the good in each other.

And when we found stuff we liked we'd tell each other about it. We realised that, as a group, we are only as good as how we treat our weakest member. So we helped each other to learn, and in doing so, found we learnt best that way.

Most of all though, we got off our arses and did stuff. There's no point looking at the beast and thinking how big it is and what an awful beating you're going to take.

You've got to get in there, take him on and be proud to lose. Because, for every time you've had the guts to fail, you'll learn something; and in every defeat are the seeds of future victory. As the aforementioned Samuel Beckett once said, **“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.”**

Phil Beadle was working in a secondary school. **Susan Ward**, winner of the National Teaching Award as Outstanding New Teacher of the Year in 2006, demonstrates, in a piece she calls, “The Victory Lap”, how the same kind of thinking works in the primary environment.

Imagine you are driving along a country road late at night. You turn a corner and are confronted with a huge fallen tree that's blocking the road. Your mobile has no signal and you haven't seen another car in the last hour...

Do you...

- (a) **Turn back - you'll have to find another way to get to your destination.**
- (b) **Get out and examine the tree and see if there is any way you could move it.**
- (c) **Put your head on the steering wheel and cry.**

You are probably already scanning these (and other) options in your mind right now, favouring one perhaps, weighing up the pros and cons of each scenario. You are reasoning, hypothesising, predicting, estimating, considering, investigating. In other words you are engaged with what I call 'learning: the verb'.

You are actively using all the learning skills you possess to tackle a problem. This thought process is so automatic that as adults, it is easy to forget that these are skills children learn, in the same way as they learn how to read and write.

The 'learning tool kit' that allows you to come up with a plan for getting around a fallen tree is the very same one that helps a child learn to write his or her own name, count to ten, ride a bicycle, and later, make his or her relationships work, get his or her dream job and become a happy, healthy adult. So how do we give our children this tool kit? What exactly is in it and how do we help children build one? These are some of the questions I'd like to look at through the context of the primary school.

The Big Learning Buy-In

If you were to make a wish list of all the things a successful learner has, what would come at the top? Confidence would be very high on my list.

A confident learner is a successful learner - someone who can cope with the hugely emotional process of really deep learning. A learner with the resilience to keep going, even when the challenge seems overwhelming. Basically, someone who would go for option (a) or (b) in the example above, and not immediately decide upon (c).

Creating a classroom that thrives on and rewards confident learning is central to every teacher's mission to enable children to succeed. It is important to set out your stall with the children from the start of the school year and make your 'learning pitch'.

The advertising industry is based upon the process of pitching a concept to consumers and encouraging them to 'buy in' to the product on offer. I would argue that the job of a teacher is to make a pitch that encourages children to 'buy in' to learning. No one is suggesting that a flip chart of yearly projections is necessary, but children deserve to know what all the big fuss is about learning and why as teachers we're always banging on about it. Understanding what great learning is and what their role is within it also makes it a million times more likely they will want to engage with it.

This can be achieved in lots of different ways appropriate to age and stage and some of the best approaches are the most simple:

- Talk about learning in the present tense: say, 'This is brilliant learning', not, 'You have learned this brilliantly'. It helps to reinforce the idea of learning as an active, exciting, magical process that each pupil has control over.
- Get the children to help you make a class motto that encapsulates what they can expect from their time at school - ours is, 'It's All About The Learning!'
- Have a 'mistakes are magic' policy - make it clear to pupils that mistakes are a positive step on the journey towards new learning. Capitalise by encouraging pupils to examine and assess their mistakes and find a way through them - double the learning!
- Keep learning high profile - use your wall space to display learning targets the children have helped to produce and build in the time to review these regularly.



The confidence gap

It's all very well delivering an all-singing, all-dancing learning pitch but if children lack confidence, they will fail, no matter how academically successful they might appear.

Learning to succeed is not measured in how many qualifications a person attains or what their grades are - it's measured by what they do when they hit a sum they can't do or a word they can't spell or they find a tree across the road in the middle of the night. Being a successful learner is about knowing who you are and what you can do and drawing strength from that.

Successful learners think 'I'm finding this hard right now but if I try X or Y then that will help me work through it. 'I know I'm up to this.' Imagine if every pupil had this kind of self belief! But why shouldn't it be that way?

As teachers we are given the awesome responsibility of helping children see how amazing they truly are and showing them the endless possibilities open to them.



There is no doubt that a great learning pitch is an important part of this, but there are lots of ways of making your pupils feel valued, important and special:

- Greet your children personally during the register, e.g., 'Good Morning, Holly, Good Morning Neil'.
- Ask how they are and when they tell you actually listen! Follow up is always good - if a child tells you they're starting swimming lessons next Thursday night remember to ask how they got on when you see them on Friday morning. Basic courtesy, but amazingly powerful.
- Sing songs to help children talk about their feelings and become 'emotionally literate'- I love Fischy Music resources. (www.fischymusic.com)
- Get your children to help you make Class Promises that everyone signs up to - my favourite with my current class is 'Look after each other's feelings and be a good, happy team'.

This is in no way an exhaustive list and probably the most important thing to remember is that you set the tone - if you show that you are a respectful, considerate and confident learner then the children will naturally adopt this as their own norm.

It is vitally important that we remember that learning doesn't stop when the children walk out of the classroom door, it just changes shape.

Learning outside the box

Some of the best learning happens nowhere near the classroom.

School trips, the playground, the home environment, even the walk to the school office on a message can provide amazing chances to learn and grow. As teachers, our role is to ensure we recognise and optimise these opportunities and incorporate them into the learning to succeed methodology. Environment is everything for children (especially very young ones) and the effect a change of environment can make is often startling; every primary school teacher has been struck at some point by how a very shy child can be a banshee in the playground (and vice-versa!). It is vitally important that we remember that learning doesn't stop when the children walk out of the classroom door, it just changes shape.

Great teachers cash in on this environmental learning - here's how:

- Extend the class values and culture of respect into the playground - a playground- buddy system is a great way for children to learn how to mediate their own and each other's feelings positively.
- Plan 'mini, medium and mega' class trips. Mini trips are small scale and designed to pep up existing learning and provide a change of scene. You could visit another classroom or have a lesson in the playground on a sunny day. Medium trips require a bit more planning and will probably provide the basis for extending

existing learning - a nature walk in the local park or a road safety walk along the High Street. A mega trip is the big, all out, once-or-twice-a-year spectacular! They don't have to be a nightmare, but they do have to be meticulously planned. A mega trip might be used to start new learning, extend or consolidate existing learning or (most likely) be a mixture of both.

- Use your community - bring the real world in and invite guest speakers to your classroom. Don't just stick to the usual suspects and only have the local police officer, minister and school nurse. Approach local business owners, the councillor, the lifeguard from the local pool, war veterans. Scan the local paper and if someone local has done something interesting, get them to come and talk to your kids about it! Find people with a story to tell and encourage your children to ask questions - you'll be amazed by the response.
- Use the parents. Supportive, keen parents are a teacher's best friend and they can help you help the children learn in a million ways other than just supervising homework. Keep them in the loop at all times (grumpy parents tend to be the ones that don't know what's going on or why) and they will be able to back- up, reinforce, extend and develop learning opportunities outside the school environment.

Getting It Right

Successful, happy learning is not a hit or miss affair.

You can carefully craft your pupils' learning environment and tailor your own teaching style to help every child succeed and when they do, you'll be mesmerised.

One of my favourite personal experiences of this is a child who, after a long struggle to understand the concept of multiplication, finally had his 'eureka!' moment and grasped the idea of adding multiple sets of the same number together. After a beat of silence he cocked his head to one side, looked at me and said, "Victory lap?", before jogging round the room punching the air to the roaring applause of his classmates.

This, for me, is a big part of our job as educators - to make the learning process high profile and encourage our children to engage with it in as many ways as possible.

Finally, an anecdote that I think encapsulates why we do what we do to help children succeed.

A four-year old in my class who was learning to write the letter 's' commented that it was like writing a '2' backwards. 'Yes,' I said, 'I suppose it is - that's really great learning'. 'I know,' he said, 'All the learning in my brain is starting to hold hands and my heart's feeling happy - I think I could do anything if I just tried my best.' Can't say fairer than that.*

*** This really did happen.** Talking about learning and brain development using concrete descriptors- building bridges, holding hands, branches of a tree, etc. - gives even very young children a means of investigating and owning their journey through learning and gives them a vocabulary to use when talking about it.

This, for me, is a big part of our job as educators - to make the learning process high profile in the classroom and encourage our children to engage with it in as many ways as possible.

When this happens, children are happy learners - and have the language to tell you that they are happy learners, regardless of age.

Moving outside the classroom

Phil Beadle's experience showed that confrontation with the most difficult challenges triggered an examination of the fundamental assumptions of teaching.

Nowhere is this more true than in a special school. Peter Wright's long experience in special education earned him the National Teaching Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2005.

He believes that achievement outside the classroom is every bit as important as conventional learning. Indeed, the former frequently serves to stimulate the latter.

Teaching is a unique and privileged profession; we have the chance to touch and influence the future in a way few others can. Schools can have a profound influence upon individual students through the quality of the relationships and learning experiences they provide for their pupils.

This is especially true when working with pupils with special needs, where positive learning experiences are crucial to their motivation and self-esteem and where learning to succeed is about far more than just academic success.

As a headteacher, for over 25 years in a school for pupils with moderate and complex learning difficulties, I became increasingly aware of a common and worrying characteristic of many of our pupils. They did not consider themselves to be competent learners and all of them had experienced social, emotional and educational failure in the mainstream setting.

For them to be educated successfully a different perspective was needed. Success could not be measured solely by the number of pupils who returned to mainstream, but by the difference we made to each individual. We needed to redirect negative self-perceptions and engage all our pupils in meaningful and positive learning experiences and social opportunities so they could become independent adults.

Our task was daunting. Our students ranged from 5 to 16 years in age and demonstrated a wide range of social and behavioural as well as cognitive difficulties. Our younger pupils would often have little concept of personal safety or the need for routines.



If we wish to get the best for our pupils we must continue to seek to challenge as well as to support them.

They would be unable to sit and listen as members of a group or to work for only very short periods, perhaps no longer than one minute at a time.

Many of our older pupils had experienced social problems in addition to their learning difficulties and often displayed inappropriate behaviour stemming from loss of self-esteem and peer rejection.

For our pupils to succeed, they needed to experience new and flexible learning opportunities adapted to their behavioural as well as academic needs, with regular monitoring of progress towards relevant and realistic targets.

Our school offered a new direction for our pupils, one where positive relationships were central to our ethos, where academic rigour and challenge were expected yet pupils felt safe and engaged.

The school was once described as having an atmosphere of “purposeful calm” where pupils were actively involved in their academic and social development, a place where, perhaps for the first time, they could share responsibility for the choices they were asked to make and feel valued as active members of their school community.

Truly “inclusive” education is about fully engaging the child in educational experiences in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, irrespective of the setting or the level of need.

Our pupils had a right to thrive rather than just cope. The traditional curriculum model does not fully address their needs and so we developed additional learning opportunities and experiences that would recognise and celebrate achievement and success in pupils who had seldom experienced it.

She had only been allowed to be a cloud in her last school. She was so confident and visibly happy to be up there tonight. I am so proud of her.

We established regular opportunities for recognising and celebrating pupil achievement across the whole school so that all pupils felt fully involved in the process.

National accreditation through Sportmark and Activemark Awards for Primary and Secondary Sport and Artmark Gold for our creative studies enabled pupils to realise that their achievements were something special. Our extensive programme of Work Experience was very well supported by local employers.

Our weekly Assembly was a significant moment for staff, pupils and parents.

Every term, each class would present an Assembly to the whole school on a wide range of issues. Parents would be invited to attend and would enjoy refreshments at the end. This enabled them to chat informally to staff and other parents whilst also ensuring that they were engaging with their child's school.

Such assemblies could celebrate the culmination of a class Art project or the success of a residential week using visual images of the exciting activities of canoeing and rock climbing.

Certificates would be awarded to pupils achievements, enabling staff and pupils to celebrate success in all its guises, from a child's first swim without armbands to a senior pupil's very successful first work experience placement.

Popular awards for Art were the "Work of the Week" and the "Masterpiece of the Month" which were displayed in the foyer for all visitors to see, a very powerful confirmation of a child's success through the recognition of others. Such was the quality of the work that pupils were commissioned by the LEA, who purchased works for display in the Council House.



Their 3D paper sculptures were the centrepiece of the Arts Week display in the Central Library.

We recognised the benefits of involving the pupils in challenging but positive experiences away from the classroom.

Our regular dramatic productions and in particular the Christmas concerts were very special features of the school year, when pupils surprised their parents - and themselves - by what they could achieve. Every child in the school was involved, often practising in their own time and I vividly remember one parent in tears at the end of a concert thanking me for making her daughter such an important part of the concert.

“She had only been allowed to be a cloud in her last school. She was so confident and visibly happy to be up there tonight. I am so proud of her”.

A structured programme of residential experiences enabled all pupils to have the opportunity to be independent of their parents, many for the first time. This proved equally popular with parents as many of them appreciated this period of respite from the pressures the family often experienced at home.

Youth Hostels were frequently used by our younger pupils whilst older pupils undertook more challenging activities both at a local Watersports Centre and on their annual residential week in Wales, where they enjoyed activities including orienteering, canoeing, sailing, abseiling and potholing.

In the same way, children with challenging behaviour quickly learn, when hanging on the end of a rope, to listen to advice and accept that they are in no position to rant and rave in such a precarious position!

The impact these experiences had upon pupils, who were so often used to failing in any new task, could be seen on their return to school where a new self confidence emerged.

They had conquered a fear, surprised themselves in completing physically challenging tasks, been noisily congratulated by their peers, had photographs of themselves half way down a vertical cliff, been soaked to the skin under a waterfall, yet could not stop smiling throughout it all as “Sir” took their picture to show Mum.

Pupils with special needs seldom acquire skills in a straightforward developmental order and, particularly for pupils with ASD, their “islets” of ability suggest a high level of intellectual understanding that is not matched by an ability to apply those skills to other contexts. The child may function above the level expected in one or two areas, but will generally perform significantly below his chronological peers in almost everything else.

Pupils with learning difficulties learn best when all of their senses are engaged and stimulated.

It has long been recognised that physical, tactile, whole body experiences are vital for pupils with cognitive difficulties, whose poor spatial awareness and perceptual motor skills are a constant barrier to effective learning.

Children whose sensory development is impaired may be perceptually “blind” as their neural pathways which receive, analyse and organise visual stimuli are damaged or undeveloped. Literacy, for example, is an essential skill for successful inclusion in an adult society and is often regarded to be a visual or auditory skill alone.



Our greatest gift must be to take all children where they did not know they could go and to enable them to succeed in spite of the difficulties they may face on their journey through life.

Reading, however, involves the integration of other sensory channels to a greater or lesser degree and kinaesthetic experiences are essential if these senses are to be integrated.

Controlling a canoe on open water or understanding which hand will release the rope during an abseil are kinaesthetic experiences which simply cannot be dynamically replicated within a classroom. Yet the skills required in these situations directly relate to and complement those classroom tasks of reading and writing. Sequencing letters to form a word or completing actions in the correct order require the same sensory processes.

These concepts need to be practised in as many different ways as possible if they are to be internalised so they may then be performed on demand.

In the same way, children with challenging behaviour quickly learn, when hanging on the end of a rope, to listen to advice and accept that they are in no position to rant and rave in such a precarious position!

Given that many behavioural problems are rooted in poor self-esteem and undeveloped social awareness, taking part in an activity where success has involved team work, cooperation, supporting and relying on others, enables these youngsters to acquire a new sense of self worth.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award for pupils in Year 10 has enabled them to gain accreditation through worthwhile activities which encourage the development of new personal skills as well as making a social contribution to their local community.

Through supporting local elderly people with their gardens and shopping, one Year 10 boy realised that he had skills which he could develop at college. His successful work experience placement at his local garden centre further guided his choice of direction after school and he has now gained employment at a local golf club as an apprentice groundsman.

Our active involvement with the Special Olympics movement had the most significant and positive influence upon the whole school, it engaged the largest group of pupils in regular out of school activities.

Weekly training took place after school and pupils were regularly involved in both regional and national events throughout the year in both athletics and swimming.

Pupils regularly participated in competitions involving more than 35 weekends each year and often this meant pupils competing in different events at different venues in the same weekend. This could not have been achieved without the incredible support of the staff. The effect on the students of being members of the team has been so powerful and the response of the whole school to the medals they won has been so positive that their commitment has never been questioned.

Five pupils gained selection to the national training squad and went on to represent England all around the world. The school was so proud to have no less than five national champions in athletics and cross-country as pupils and friends.

One pupil, **Andrew**, competed in countries as far apart as Sweden and South Africa where, at 17, he gained eighth place in the World Learning Disabled Games Cross-Country and was the first European to finish. As a young man with ASD, his greatest problems in the classroom stemmed from the impact of the secondary behaviours he displayed.

Although present in many other children, the consequences are particularly problematic for this group because they have significant problems with social interaction and emotional empathy. These behaviours are often described as ritualistic, compulsive and resistant to change yet, in Andrew's case, they were able to be used positively. He focussed so intently upon his training that the negative behaviour in the classroom and around the school reduced considerably. His obsessive behaviours did not disappear; for example, he would analyse the performance times of his race competitors, compare them with his own and then enter each race already "knowing" where he would finish.



“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away.”

H.D.Thoreau

It was only as he became older that the notion of tactics could be introduced and he could then consider having a race plan, but his considerable haul of medals remains stored in strict chronological order and may only be looked at in his presence.

Another pupil, **Katie**, was a very vulnerable youngster with global learning delay and low self-esteem. She became so positively motivated by her sporting success that she went on to gain Silver and Bronze Medals in the Special Olympics World Skiing Championships in Japan only losing the gold medal place to the reigning World Champion from Canada.

Andrew and **Katie's** subsequent visit to Assembly to show the whole school their world medals and the sense of pride their peers had in seeing their friends being so successful, indeed famous, was a most humbling and heart warming experience for everyone present. The resultant increase in pupils wishing to join the school Olympics Squad clearly illustrated the “Can Do” ethos that now existed throughout the school.

Our primary responsibility, as teachers, is to provide our children with experiences that will equip them with the social, emotional and practical skills necessary for them to be included in society for the rest of their lives and not just whilst they are at school. We must celebrate the achievements of all our pupils, however varied they may be and in whatever way is most appropriate for them.

If we wish to get the best for our pupils we must continue to seek to challenge as well as to support them.

The performing arts

Outside the classroom is not one place. There are many different places and a wide variety of experiences to be explored.

Matthew Oakes, Outstanding New Teacher of the Year in 2006, teaching in a Performing Arts College, believes that the curriculum and what goes on outside the classroom are so inextricably linked that one cannot see the join. For him, music can be a catalyst for learning.

There are many skills that students are required to learn in many different subject areas, but how do we link within subjects to develop the key skills and those skills essential for life? Music is an easy and accessible way to develop these key skills and not just in the classroom.

If you ask the majority of music teachers, I am sure they will agree, that the main reason for coming into the job was to share the passion they enjoyed when they were learning and performing music, to be able to give something back to the musical world and to develop the students' musical intelligence. To be able to offer children this experience is something very special.

Modern learning theory tells us that each person has a preferred learning style, and this underlines the importance of personalising a child's education within each and every lesson. Music can play a key part in a child's development and in the acquisition of life skills.

Curriculum based music obviously lends itself to providing a wide variety of opportunities for children to personalise their learning to their preferred learning style, whether musical, mathematical, kinaesthetic, interpersonal or any other. Music can support them all.



What they all have in common is the opportunity for young people to discover things about themselves, about others and about the wider world, things which may serve to unlock the door to successful learning.

A simple example would be a task I set to a Year 9 group in the run up to Christmas: In groups, compose your very own Christmas jingle. You must also market your jingle through advertising your product and creating a CD cover.

This simple exercise required students to develop inter and intra-personal skills as well as to rehearse and perform their creations. This also combined cross-curricular activities, such as media studies and art, in advertising and marketing their product.

Students were able to develop their skills on their own instruments, which they might have been learning outside the classroom context or to focus on new instruments.

They used mathematical skills to count beats and bars and some groups, who preferred a kinaesthetic approach, also added a dance with their final piece as well as lyrics, written by a student with a high level of literacy.

Lessons like this build on the three main areas of musical education: knowledge, understanding and skills in composing; performing and listening; and appraising. They form part of structured learning using the concept of scaffolding across an individual lesson, a unit of work, a year or even a key stage.

Music lessons also require students to develop group skills as well as independent thinking skills, supporting their growth both emotionally and socially. Through working with others, children automatically gain in confidence and self-esteem as well as developing their sense of belonging to a group.



Music education is not restricted to the classroom.

The majority of students involved in extra-curricular musical activities tend to achieve higher test and examination grades, not because they are favoured by their teacher, but perhaps because they are possibly more emotionally intelligent to the music studied within lessons and have a higher level of rehearsal and performance skills. They are thus able to access the creative parts of their brain more quickly than those who have no extra involvement in music.

Extra curricular activities do not necessarily promote different skills but they do extend those already developed within the curriculum. There are additional skills which are particularly relevant to students who might wish to follow a career path into the performing arts.

As a Performing Arts College, we are able to involve students in productions, performances, exhibitions and showcases, where they are able to explore what life would be like in a professional theatre. They are able to access different aspects of the theatre world, from theatre management and technical support to lead roles and solos.

Each area, whether on stage or off, is taken equally seriously and, through work with staff and co-professionals, students have the opportunity to explore their different roles and develop as part of a team.

The sense of accomplishment gained from involvement in just one of these projects can offer every student a fantastic boost in confidence as well as important life skills such as time management and organisation. In the long term, their acquired skills may have enabled them to achieve economic well being too, one of the main strands of the Every Child Matters Agenda.

“It made me more mature because I saw people older than me acting younger. (pause) It was rewarding to know that we had made a difference. (pause) It made me think.”



From being creative in lessons, developing ideas, persisting with those ideas, rehearsing, working with others and independently, students have the opportunity to develop emotionally and socially, and to access their preferred learning style in every opportunity in which they become involved, both in and out of the classroom.

Robert Barber, who won the School and the Community Award in 2003, vividly illustrates **Matthew Oakes'** thesis with his own poignant example, which demonstrates how Drama can not only transform the lives of the students who take part but also profoundly influence those who witness it.

As many teachers know, taking their students outside the classroom affects not just those students but the people whom they meet in the world outside school.

Matt was musing on his experience of performing at a special school in a piece of Forum Theatre on bullying (see above). This was a part of his work experience.

We do not know precisely what it was that Matt was made to think about as a result of his performance but the tone of his voice revealed a sense of his having been moved. This was one of those life forming events that we, as educators, seek out for all our students.



He was, after all, engaged in acting, a performance art that by definition brings the performers out of themselves.

The school play or musical is renowned for providing high emotion. Weeping parents and grandparents muttering words such as 'I can't believe my little... could do that', or, 'I saw someone else on the stage', or even, 'they were so professional, so confident', and so on.

Anyone who has had the privilege to direct a school production will be familiar with such amazement. Of course this admiration is a commentary on the remarkable achievement of the performer. It is there for all to see and all to admire. It is true that Matt had experienced something of this, but there was more.

The performers in "**Grease**", for instance, will feel fantastic as they perform the well known rock tunes, elastic dance set off by bright, tight 50's costumes and glossy makeup. Their family and peers will gasp at the transformations; be amazed by the unfamiliar personae of those so familiar but a few hours before.

Much of the entertainment is just that: how those we know can, through rehearsal, commitment and daring, transform themselves.

Anyone who has had the privilege to direct a school production will be familiar with such amazement. Of course this admiration is a commentary on the remarkable achievement of the performer.

This feat gives great kudos to the performer. The rehearsal process is hard and demanding. Inevitably confidence will grow and social maturity develops.

Becky, who regularly performs in school and local theatre groups, speaks eloquently of her love for theatre:

“There is a sense of a team which has been built through regular meetings doing something we love, then there is the challenge of the performance that we all conquer.”

Much of this could be applied to Matt's experience, though the elaborate elements of set, costume, lights, and makeup were missing. However his reflections suggested that a greater shift had happened for him.

There is no doubt that the school production is a powerful tool in education. Confidence, achievement, challenge, teamwork and discovery are all there in every measure for the daring and timid alike. But what happens when young performers are playing to an audience who have a role in making the outcome, an audience who have the power to change and shift the way a character behaves?

Such is the stuff of Forum Theatre, the style that Matt had toured in the summer of 2007 to both secondary and primary schools as well as the special school.

The experience of Matt and his fellow actors moved beyond developing confidence in the face of a challenge, to understanding unfamiliar mindsets that demand attention, respect and recognition.



This performance was in two parts. The first was a short devised piece on bullying. The play finished at a point of bloody tragedy perpetrated by the bully.

Then the second part, driven by the audience, rewound the events of the play to find a better outcome for the victim. The response in the special school was, as one might expect, outspoken uninhibited and very direct. The clear sense of right and wrong was powerfully put and those playing the bullies were left in no doubt of their wrong doing as the lines between actor and character became blurred.

The audience debated what should happen to the bullies; scenes of the play were re-enacted and the victims of the bullies were given a voice and made safe through the advice and direction of our audience.

At one point a boy stepped from the audience and took over, interviewing the characters and laying down his moral judgement. This boy had, until that day, been unable to attend a performance all the way through, because of his loathing and fear of applause. Indeed he had started watching from an adjoining room but had gradually crept into the main hall to see and hear better.



“I worked with people with special needs who expressed opinions that were surprising to me... I never realised that they had such thoughts.”

For him on that day the importance of the issue in the play overrode any dislike or fear of applause, a great step for him.

He returned to his new place within the fold of the audience to applause that he not only accepted but enjoyed, as he had found a solution to bullying with our actors, to the delight of his peers.

It was only once we had returned to our own school that it became clear that this performance had also had a profound effect on our troupe. They all knew that they had affected the lives of others but in so doing they had been changed.

“They opened my eyes to a whole section of society.”

“Performing there was sheer joy.”

The elation of the young performers, marked by rapid talk, tears and laughter, was significant of discovery about self and their world. There was a clear sense that these young people were never going to be quite the same. They had worked closely as a team to produce a finely honed performance of a tragedy. Character and plot had been explored, they had suffered and triumphed in rehearsal and then gained the ‘glory’ of performance.

Finally their play and their characters had to relive the past and change at the behest of special people with special ideas in a special school.

A performance had changed lives.

Becoming citizens

Margaret Olive's contribution to learning outside the classroom at Ringwood School helped her to win a Teaching Award for Enterprise in 2006.

She tackles quite a different aspect of learning. She took responsibility for Citizenship in the curriculum and reasonably concluded that there is no better way to discover what a citizen is than to be one.

In the process, as she reveals, her students even explored the way in which they themselves were being educated - and told their teachers all about it. Margaret's concluding statement is a very modest summary of the wonderful ways in which a wide variety of activities have enabled her students to learn to succeed.

An important aspect of education is to help young people to succeed in different ways, by exploring and developing their diverse talents and skills. Experiences, both in and out of the classroom, can provide the impetus for lifelong learning. At Ringwood we believe that students should undertake a variety of experiences. Enrichment days and a host of annual and one off events widen the horizons of our students.

Each year group engages in a day off timetable to develop skills and knowledge beyond a subject approach. With a focus on community, Year 7 students spend their day looking at their town and this involves examining the results of a 1000 strong questionnaire which is sent out annually to all age groups in Ringwood, as well as interviewing on the day over twenty five members of the local community. Interviewing skills are discussed and role plays used before the visitors arrive.



The year group, divided into ten constituencies, plan and run an election campaign, culminating in hustings and a lunch time secret ballot.

The work which students engage in during the day is of interest to the local council. Last year students produced a tree with three coloured leaves: green for the things they would miss about Ringwood, red for any negative aspects of Ringwood and yellow for the things they would like to leave as a legacy for future generations.

One Year 7's work on their community day linked wonderfully with an opportunity which arose in the shape of a Hampshire 'Futures Competition'. Year 10 students were given the opportunity to think about and discuss their views on their local community. Initially the students had to make a short film to put across their ideas.

This secured them a place in a final where they had to make a live presentation and were up against five other schools. For the final they were also to look at what they thought might happen to their community by 2020.

The students wrote a script as though they were presenting a local news show called 'Spotlight on Ringwood'. In a stage set up as a news desk they presented news about the town, present and future. Their presentation had to involve a multimedia element and so they made a series of films which they used as links between the studio and outside cameras. They also included studio interviews. They won £250 for the school.

The mayor and other local figures attended the presentation as guests and the students repeated their presentation in the Town Council AGM later in the month.

Annually, Year 8 takes part in an election day, which aims to allow students to take on a variety of roles within the election system. The year group, divided into ten constituencies, plan and run an election campaign, culminating in hustings and a lunch time secret ballot. Later in the day the ten newly elected MPs are on a panel of 'Question Time', with the remainder of the year group as the audience. When there is a general election, the whole school takes part in a 'Y Vote' day.



A group did research and found out about the five goals which have to be met. They conducted a local survey to find what local people thought about the issue.

A group of 16 sixth form students take part in a student parliament in the House of Commons. Last year the motion was, 'This House believes that the UK's future energy needs will be best tackled by increasing the use of nuclear power'.

Taking part were three other sixth form groups who all adopted the conventions of speaking in the House and made the day fascinating and memorable.

Those sixteen students were then engaged back at school to help organise the Citizenship Foundation's Youth Parliament competition, with Years 10 -13, which involves deciding on a motion and role-playing a debate in the House. The debate is filmed and we then send the film to be judged for best front/backbencher.

Last year our local MP met the group and explained the necessary formalities of parliamentary debates and one of our students won a digital video camera for his part in the film.

Following a Year 9 Citizenship Day, called Think Global/Act Local, students wanted to arrange a meeting with the Town Council to discuss why Ringwood was not a Fair Trade town. A group did research and found out about the five goals which have to be met. They conducted a local survey to find what local people thought about the issue.




A meeting was set up with a council committee, to which students took a presentation booklet and samples of cakes and biscuits made at school with fair trade products.

After fighting their corner, a sub committee was formed and they have continued to meet up with the Town Council each month to work towards achieving the five goals which will allow Ringwood to become a Fair Trade town. The council and students planned and held a special event in the town to coincide with Fair Trade fortnight.

Each year a **M.U.N.G.A.** (Model United Nations General Assembly) is held for Year 10 students. The year group is divided into eleven nations, some more and some less economically developed.

During the morning the country groups research their country and look at specific issues: World Poverty, HIV and AIDS, Child Refugees and Child Labour. They examine the format of resolution statements and in the afternoon the whole year are involved in the passing of UN resolutions.



I think it is important to have a 'voice' because it allows your views and the opinions of others to be portrayed to a wider community

We believe that it is important for students' views to be heard beyond the school gates and so a number of committed students meet monthly as part of a Forest Youth Connect group, others as part of the Hampshire County Youth Council (*with one student elected to that body*) and recently we had a Year 12 student elected to represent the New Forest & Test Valley area as a member of the UK Youth Parliament.

Some of these students applied for a Youth Opportunities Fund grant to finance a scheme of their own making.

"I don't think that young people always realise what they can achieve" believes **Katie Nuth**, one of our students involved in FYC, HCYC and YOF. Katie was the real driving force behind the successful bid to organise Democracy Day, hosted at Ringwood School, with staff and students from twelve other schools. Katie and her team engaged the Solent People's Theatre to include events such as political speed-dating, where 235 town and district councillors and local MP, **Desmond Swayne**, were put through what they all agreed was an amazing experience.

At a local level we have a student who is a junior member of the Chamber of Commerce and another who sits on the local Festival Committee. **Natalie Lelliott** says, "I think it is important to have a 'voice' because it allows your views and the opinions of others to be portrayed to a wider community". Involvement with the Town Council over Fair Trade led to eight students becoming Student Advisers to the council.

The Council's Clerk, **Terry Simpson**, said, " Ringwood Town Council may be the first council in Britain to involve students in such detailed discussions, particularly in decision making committees. Councillors understand better the needs and aspirations of young people and make better decisions". Among the outcomes of the Student Advisers' work have been a specialised gym for youngsters aged 8-16 and funding for an under-18s night club.

At district level students attend an annual 'Shout About' event where they are able to discuss issues which are important to young people. This again provides our students with the opportunity to meet up with students from other schools, but also people in a position to bring about change. During each school year there are opportunities for students to take part in the Hansard 'Heads Up' on-line debates on pre-released issues. Students log on at any time and join in debates with students around the country.

In a similar format students can become involved in iNET on line debates which link students around the world looking at a variety of issues. Some of our Year 9 students last year prepared a paper and a PowerPoint presentation to be some of the stimulus material for the iNET debates.

Students take part in 'Your Future in Europe', at the Palais des Congrès in Paris. This long weekend involves a focus on what Europe can offer students. A variety of well known speakers (last year Boris Johnson and Charles Kennedy were among those on the platform) engage students in thinking about current affairs in Europe. Two of our students were successful in a bid to join the Global Young Leaders Conference and spent twelve days in New York and Washington during the summer with an amazing itinerary. One of them reported that the experience had changed her outlook completely (see below).

We involve our students in a variety of competitions which promote team work.

One annual event is the Citizenship Foundation Bar Court competition. Sixth formers are totally absorbed in preparing for the Bar Court national mock trial competition. It is an innovative way to learn about the judiciary, the best way to learn about any system being to take part in active role-play. The competition factor adds to the excitement and meeting like minded students adds to the challenge. Students spend weeks preparing two cases to prosecute and defend, with a barrister coming in to assist with the finer points of court etiquette. Cases have been heard at Winchester and Portsmouth Crown Courts.

One student won the award for the best court reporter on the day which is an extra part of the competition.

"I learned that leadership isn't about showing people what they can do; it's about showing people what they can change. I learned that the future is about hoping for something better, not about fearing failure. I learned that you shouldn't look outside yourself for the leader. I learned a lot about politics but even more about people."



Recently an enterprise competition, 'The Edge', allowed some Year 10 students to make a film to submit for judging. Using 'The Apprentice' approach, they showed why their group had the edge.

Winning a BT competition three years ago provided part of the funding for a school radio station which is live each day at breakfast and lunchtime and has been a source of entertainment and a great communication tool.

Students have had opportunities to work with local celebrities, to conduct interviews, to act as ambassadors for the studio with visits by other schools and to feature on local TV. BT also provides a challenge in the form of the schools' version of 'Question Time', in which we got through the local round and were able to produce the 'real' show in London.

The English Speaking Union 'Mace Debates' proved popular and sparked an initiative for some sixth-formers, who had taken part, to run a debating group for Year 9 students.

Jon Beale said, "Debating in public, in a formal atmosphere, has greatly helped to enhance my ability with regards to public speaking and interaction. Also, I feel that my ability to take notes 'on the go' and improvise has improved significantly".

The Holocaust Education Trust each year helps to sponsor two students to visit Auschwitz. Following pre-and post-visit seminars, the two students prepare a presentation to give to assemblies in school to coincide with Holocaust Memorial Day in January.

The presentations are then submitted for judging and three times our students have been called to give their presentation to invited guests of the Holocaust Trust in the Houses of Parliament.



Twice our students have won this event, one pair attending a winners' event in Lancaster House and the other pair in the home of Jack Straw, then Foreign Secretary. One student continued these studies at university.

Seeing students as co-constructors in their education experience has led to involvement in a variety of ways. As part of our school Assessment for Learning initiative, we developed the 'Learning Walks' and 'Learning Talks' student dialogue groups, who investigated learning and teaching in our school.

Each of the three schools hosted a visit which involved sitting in lessons, looking at marked work, walking the site, interviewing the head teachers and was followed up by delivering their findings at a staff INSET day.

Students also accompany staff to Specialist & Academies Trust meetings and one group prepared a Student Voice presentation to give at a SSAT conference. Students are also engaged in our Hub School for Deep Experience awarded by the SSAT. This involves staff and students from 18 schools looking at the curriculum and new technologies.

The demanding activities which our students have experienced outside the classroom have helped them to mature, to take on more responsibility for themselves and their community and to have greater aspirations than they would otherwise have had.

Many have been helped in making their career choices and all continue their learning after they have left us, whether in higher education, training or employment, thus laying the foundations of lifelong learning, the key to success in the 21st century world.

Languages abroad

The ability to communicate is central to a successful adult life, but to be able to do so only with those who speak the same language is a major limitation in a global society.

The English are notoriously bad at languages, but Mike Ullmann, Secondary Teacher of the Year in 2005, is living proof that it doesn't have to be like that. At Hockerill Anglo-European College, his classroom practice is reinforced, not just by visits to countries where the taught languages are spoken but also to developing nations where language learning is backed by cultural and social challenges.

Hockerill Anglo-European College is a state day and boarding school in Bishop's Stortford. It is a Language College, Music College, Training School and Leading Edge School but is most of all a College which has taken a series of calculated curricular risks over the years which collectively have helped it to become a very high performing institution.

In 1994 the school nearly closed and the emphasis was clearly on survival. However, out of the ashes was born a new school which, initially, owed much of its success to language work and specifically to the newly-formed Bilingual Section.

History and Geography through French seemed a tall order for a school still finding its feet but Hockerill met the challenge and soon the success of the Section was attracting the attention of the outside world. Only the use of the target language in the classroom – no exceptions to the rule were allowed. Of course constant use of the target language leads to spontaneous talk in lessons and natural banter and the upshot of that is confident, articulate linguists and confident, articulate students.



All of this started from the risk we took, those many years before, to attempt something different, to stretch our students and to give them challenges to which they rose, because that is what we expected them to do.

Success in languages needs to be disseminated. As part of our excellent connections with the University of Nottingham School of Education we embarked on a Training School initiative using Teaching and Learning Observatories. In 2000, when this began, videoconferencing was in its infancy.

We piloted various forms of conferencing - observing trainee teachers, watching good practice from Hockerill, face-to-face discussions and mentor sessions.

Then we funded other schools and institutions in the UK, Belgium, France, Romania and now Rwanda so that the network would grow and so that successful and progressive language teaching and teaching through a foreign language could be observed around the globe.

“The most meaningful experiences languages can offer.”



We are determined to give the students what they are entitled to and that includes extended exchanges, study visits and work experience in Years 10 and 12.

Being a Language College of risk-takers, deciding to go for the International Baccalaureate for our entire sixth form from the start seemed to be the obvious thing to do with the compulsory language component.

At the time the IB was virtually unheard of, so the decision was a brave one. Now we are inundated with curious visitors frustrated with the A-level system and seeking a viable alternative a little in the Tomlinson mould but with more of an international emphasis.

Another curricular innovation was to introduce the Middle Years Programme of the IB which embraces the same philosophy of the IB with its focus on holistic education, communication and intercultural awareness and carefully interwoven five areas of interaction. Although only in its second year we are once more setting an agenda for change.

The IB is such an exciting, dynamic programme – simple yet highly effective. As well as studying six subjects, there is a Theory of Knowledge component, a 4000-word extended essay and CAS - 50 hours of creativity, action and service.

The opportunities presented by CAS are vast and were at the origin of our two outstandingly successful overseas projects – one in Romania and one in Rwanda. People have asked me why these two countries? Here too we went for the unusual, the challenging and the linguistically and culturally enriching.



Two countries which have known traumatic pasts and which strike a chord with the British, two countries with major economic difficulties and huge challenges but with exciting prospects. We have completely renovated the interior of a Special School in Iasi, North Eastern Romania and continue to send students there on an annual basis. We also run exchanges with Romania and, from 2007, with Rwanda.

This most recent partnership has been received with great excitement at Hockerill where we are now about to engage in a full curricular project.

With 18 trips and exchanges a year, Hockerill again is bucking the trend. In a society where schoolchildren are wrapped in cotton wool and health and safety fears deter teachers from organising overseas trips, we refuse to prevent our students from engaging in the most meaningful experiences languages can offer. Nothing can improve language skills more than being immersed in the authentic context where the language is spoken.

We are determined to give the students what they are entitled to and that includes extended exchanges, study visits and work experience in Years 10 and 12.

We offer students these fabulous opportunities and they sign up in increasing numbers. Working in a Belgian baker's shop or in a German primary school at the age of 14 toughens up our students and gives them the unique experience of sampling life abroad in a truly authentic context.

The impact these ventures have on them is huge from the linguistic, cultural and social points of view. Working in a Romanian Special School or interacting with our Rwandan partners in Gisenyi or helping in one of the literacy classes we support in the Rwandan countryside are rich life-transforming experiences.



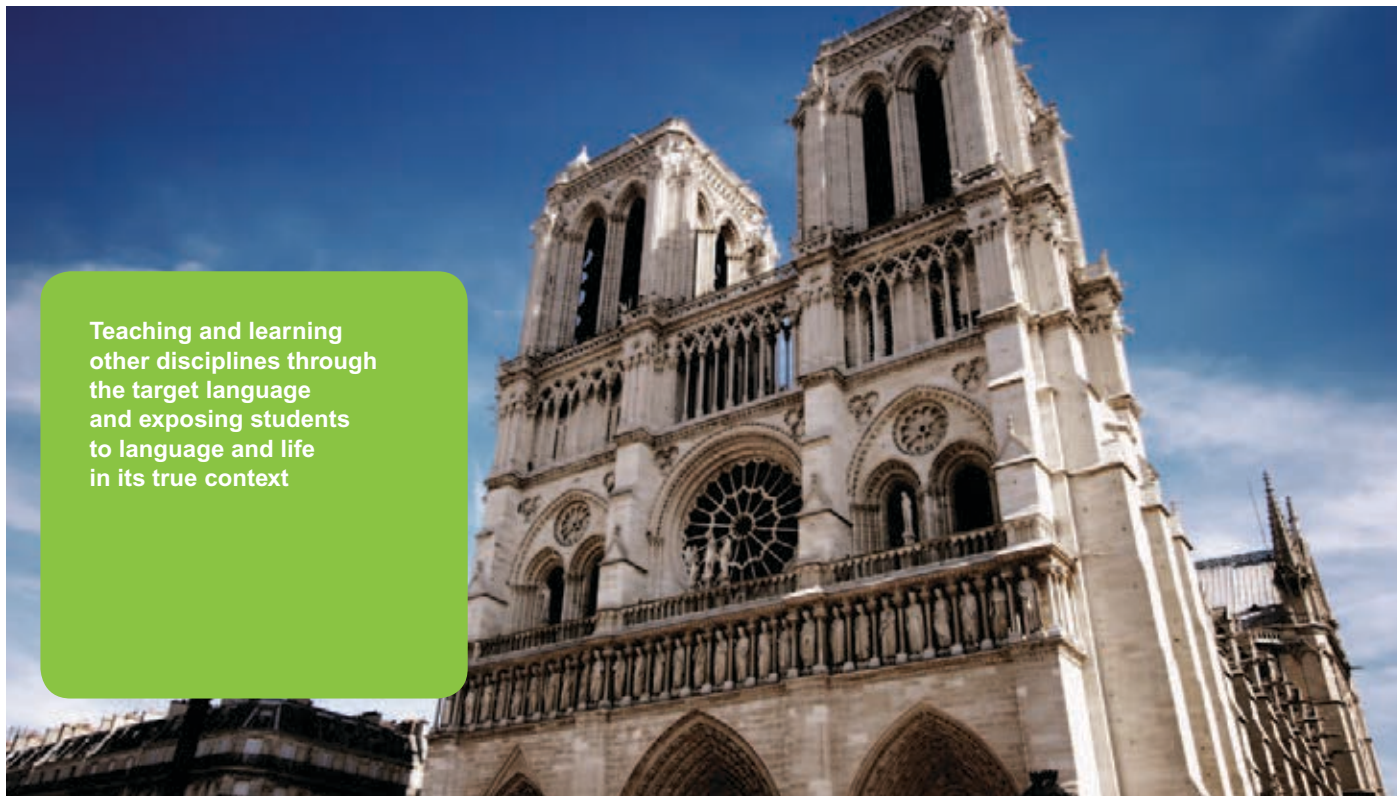
In Rwanda, relationships are formed as huge numbers of students from our partner schools swarm round our youngsters day in, day out chatting and exchanging e-mail addresses.

Our students see with their own eyes the high standards achieved in Rwandan schools without all the modern gadgetry which we enjoy. They see true motivation, a thirst for knowledge and excellent behaviour in conditions which we could never accept.

With classes of 50 or 60, a schedule which includes 5 hours private study a day starting at 05.30, a boarding set-up with 2 staff for 1000 students and girls' boarding accommodation where 80 share a former classroom on the basis of two per bed, our students receive a stark lesson on the disparity between rich and poor.

But what a challenge and what an experience and what an impact! On our visit in 2007 we were invited 14 at a time into 8 Rwandan homes to sample their wonderful generosity.

I remember 43 people in one room as all the friends and neighbours of our hosts wanted to come and meet the Western visitors. So often I heard the comments from our own students such as: "We are so poor culturally compared with what we are seeing and experiencing!" Our values are turned upside down as our students cope with the emotional effects and rethink their life priorities.



Teaching and learning other disciplines through the target language and exposing students to language and life in its true context

Our Principal regards these experiences as the best opportunities we offer at Hockerill. They take the students outside the classroom, expose them to exciting challenges and push them to their intellectual, cultural, physical and emotional limits.

That is our objective and the results are life-changing. We are a global school with a truly global curriculum and we shall never regret embarking on such an exciting programme.

Since day one at Hockerill I have striven to push three things in particular, all of which are frowned upon in many quarters - teaching and learning in the target language, teaching and learning other disciplines through the target language and exposing students to language and life in its true context by purposeful trips and exchanges and global challenges.

This has now permeated into the Hockerill culture and is at the root of what we stand for. There has been wonderful support from the senior leadership team, staff, parents and students.

The College is now a top performing school and we are proud of the contribution languages have made to put it there.

The challenge is there for all schools and the best time to take on the challenge is now!

A global community

At Villiers, there are 57 nationalities and 51 languages and that is just the first challenge they face.

The diversity of schools requires a diversity of approaches.

Villiers High School in Southall offers a sharp contrast to Hockerill. In the latter, there is a largely homogeneous population, mainly white, with English as their first language. At Villiers, there are 57 nationalities and 51 languages and that is just the first challenge they face.

The headteacher, **Dai Jones**, Headteacher of the Year in a Secondary School in 2006, believes that a school which is international in the classroom can do no other but be international outside it too. The use of modern communications technology opens up a wealth of opportunities.

First, the statistics: Villiers School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive with 1200 students. 99% of the students come from ethnic minority backgrounds: 55% Asian Indian, 16% Asian Pakistani, 8% Somali, 6% other African, 3% Afghan, 3% black Caribbean and the remaining 9% a mixture of Albanian, Iranian, Iraqi, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi and Polish. 22% arrived as casual admissions, 14% have refugee or asylum-seeker status, mobility is high and there are a number of 'looked-after' children.

Census figures reveal that students live in an area of multiple deprivation. 34% are eligible for free school meals.

“We feel connected.”



Students have arrived from some of the most troubled and war-torn parts of the globe. Many were confronted with subjects and teaching and learning styles that they had never encountered.

Attendance is a good 93% and would be higher except that a number of students take two weeks holiday in term time.

In 2005 Year 11 were predicted to get 9% A-C Grades at GCSE; that cohort achieved 56% A-C grades at GCSE.

Once essentially an all-Asian school, we now have staff and students representing our diversity of nationalities and languages. Students have arrived from some of the most troubled and war-torn parts of the globe. Many were confronted with subjects and teaching and learning styles that they (and their parents) had never encountered.

Female students arriving from the Taliban regime in Afghanistan had never been to school. Some were labelled as “Freshies” or “AIDS carriers” and had to cope with ignorance and resentment within the school and outside it, against a background of hysterical and unsupportive articles in the tabloid press.

Some saw them as a threat to the stability of the school, but, in reality, they were a catalyst for developing a truly meaningful and relevant curriculum, giving students a voice within the school and making our national curriculum international.

As a result, staff and students have to have a knowledge of other cultures and systems and beliefs. They learn to see diversity of language, culture and race as enriching, not threatening and to acquire the skills to function successfully in a global environment.

The school has engaged in project work and activities which have enabled students to research their own communities, in London and in the United Kingdom and to reflect on these projects and activities with 14 partner schools located all over the world.

Many of our international partner schools are using projects to develop the English language skills of their students and staff.

This also offers us the opportunity of developing the English language skills of our own students, in company with a real and often questioning audience.

English skills are important in all subjects and there are significant gaps for many of our students. Some homes for example are devoid of newspapers, magazines and books in English and, in the age of the internet, mobile phones and satellite TV, some students' home lives are completely English language free.

In developing the knowledge and use of academic and vernacular English, the school worked with the British Council's Socrates programme, participating in numerous projects with schools abroad.

A project on 'teenage lifestyles' with partner schools in Italy and Germany raised complex moral dilemmas around issues such as social justice, sustainable development, human rights and interdependence.

A project with Polish and Turkish partner schools on idioms and proverbs led to useful and interesting discoveries about student knowledge in all three schools.

Staff and students who visited partner schools became truly reflective about their teaching and learning experiences. The necessity of developing language skills in this context also raises levels of self-esteem.

We have also designed and produced project work through links with the British Airways Community Learning Centre. We jointly devised a drama, "Migrating Swallows", which focused on the plight of teenage refugees in the United Kingdom.



“What’s it like to live under the Taliban?”

“What happens when you leave your country because of war?”

“ What’s it like living in London?”

This won a Diana, Princess of Wales Award and was indirectly responsible for our sending students to attend the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony in Oslo, where one of our refugee students addressed the Peace Prize Youth Conference on refugee issues.

We have regular link- up debates with our partner school in Kolkata, India. Providing our students with international experiences, either real or virtual, extends and enhances our curriculum. Students in our partner schools quite naturally pose questions such as: “What’s it like to live under the Taliban?” “What happens when you leave your country because of war?” “ What’s it like living in London?”

These questions are neither prurient nor provocative, simply the normal dialogue between teenagers experiencing and sharing different lives.

In the last seven years, 35 staff and hundreds of students have had access to experiences and adventures abroad. We have created a “New World Garden” at Chenies Manor in Buckinghamshire, liaising with a school in Boston USA for advice on foodstuffs imported from the Americas to Tudor England. The Boston School now visits us every April.

We have sent football teams to tournaments in Belgium and Norway. Students take part in an International Robotics competition in Annapolis, USA every year. We worked with the Specialist Schools trust to devise a play based on AIDS/HIV issues called “Love Sick”, which won a drama award in Kosice, Slovakia.



We have annual foreign language exchanges with France, adventure holidays in Spain and Italy and the south of France and regularly receive school groups and visitors from all over the world.

The most recent being from, China, India, The Czech Republic, France, United States, Slovakia, Norway and Denmark.

The school feels part of a global community. We feel connected. We make comparisons, we share information, we learn from one another. Some projects run smoothly, such as redesigning the school uniform with help from a school in Milan, others encounter political problems: our turban and scarf wearing students can participate in our French exchange but, because of their head coverings, they can't enter the French school.

We (try to) explain cricket to the Turkish and learn handball from the Norwegians. Every October, we organise an International Student Conference for 14-17 year olds, to provide them with an opportunity to discuss contemporary issues that they have identified. Last year the topic was Climate Change/Global Warming. As a result of the conference Year 8 students were engaged in a Dance/Media project based on climate change.

Our links with the Cape Farewell organisation resulted in one lucky pupil sailing to the Arctic to examine the effects of climate change at first hand.

Teenagers cry out for unconditional love, nurture and structure.

The conference provides excitement and relevance. It combines learning with making new friendships.

As many of our students can neither travel outside the United Kingdom or host foreign visitors we strive to offer a variety of opportunities at home.

- We have a thriving Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Award Scheme, which has allowed our students to see some beautiful parts of Britain, learning new skills and experiencing some thrills.
- We have links with schools in Liverpool, Cardiff and Rochdale.
- We have worked with London schools on a number of projects, including one called "Heartbeat", which involved Year 7 students researching ecological issues and fundraising to save the Great White Shark.
- We worked with the Royal Opera House Covent Garden to create a Bollywood opera called "Turandot-Ji."
- We worked with leading British fashion designer Margaret Howell and actress Jemma Redgrave to produce a "Refugee Fashion Show."
- We had master classes in rugby from the London Broncos, which resulted in a refugee student from Iraq joining the England under-16 training camp.

- A group of Year 9 and Year 10 students took on tour their production of a play called "Teens on Heat and the Profits of Doom", which was commissioned to examine global warming.
- Students have organised photographic exhibitions and art exhibitions at the Royal Geographical Society, The Nehru Centre, Hamilton House and Pittshanger Manor.
- Students have come up with imaginative ways to raise funds for charitable organisations in the UK, Malawi, Sudan, India and countries affected by the tsunami in 2004. Two students received Diana, Princess of Wales Awards for their efforts in this area.
- The annual school activities week is designed and organised by a team of year 10 students.

The school uses all these projects and activities to address the attitudes and behaviour of today's young people. We seek to challenge them in thought provoking ways, highlighting responsibility versus indifference and inclusion versus discrimination.

We take them on a journey of self-discovery and discovery of their world. We aim to offer young people access to activities, experiences and adventures that can make a real difference to them.

We expect a change of environment to impact on them, to make them more self-sufficient, to be more emotionally independent. We want to allow them to discover skills and aspects of their personality that they never knew they possessed and to create opportunities for profound, life-changing, learning experiences.

In an age when adults are perhaps naturally cautious in giving young people the freedom they crave, these vital developmental opportunities humanise relationships with teachers and allow students to bond with their peers and to improve communication skills. In the process, they make broader demands on themselves and, in consequence, develop new skills.

We believe that it is no coincidence that levels of achievement in school have been raised. The emotional, exciting reaction to these experiences allows students to connect better with the school curriculum and the school environment. Teenagers cry out for unconditional love, nurture and structure. A school that builds in opportunities for students to discover the sources of their ideas and allows for exploring new ideas in a creative exciting way, embraces teenage needs.

They learn that they need to learn, they learn how to learn and they learn to succeed.

Opening eyes to the world

My perspective on teaching was changed irrevocably.

Extending the curriculum beyond the classroom is only one route to providing students with experiences which change their lives and revolutionise their attitudes both to learning and to their own future directions.

Claire Davidson, who won a National Teaching Award in 2004 for School and Community Involvement, is one of many teachers who have seen what well-planned and carefully structured expeditions overseas can do.

In June 2001 my perspective on teaching was changed irrevocably. I undertook a short haul expedition to Morocco with fourteen students from Ridgeway School in Devon.

Having organised lots of outdoor education trips, I was already aware of the enormous benefits of getting our students out of the classroom. However I had no idea just how life-changing this particular experience would be for all involved.

Our particular trip, organised by The Challenger Trust, involved a nine-day expedition to the Atlas Mountains where we would be attempting to reach the 4,000m summit of Mount Toubkal. Given that some students were only thirteen years old, this would be no mean feat. In actual fact, we never made the summit.

At 3,100m it became apparent that some of the students were too tired to make it, whilst others had barely broken into a sweat. This could have caused the most enormous friction. After all, we had spent the best part of two years preparing for this very moment and now we had to turn back.



“We don’t want to go if we can’t all go. I think it’s been really hard for some of the party and they’ve done brilliantly. Let’s head back.”

I feared a backlash. I thought about how much this trip had cost my students and about all the fundraising and training we had done.

I braced myself, expecting to have to step in and play the diplomat. To my complete and utter shock the three boys in the group who had breezed the climb shrugged and said simply, “We don’t want to go if we can’t all go. I think it’s been really hard for some of the party and they’ve done brilliantly. Let’s head back.” My jaw gaped and you could have knocked me down with a feather! Allow me to give some background on one of these individuals:

Amongst our party was a fifteen-year-old boy whose experience of school had often been extremely negative.

He could be confrontational, angry, thoughtless and sullen. He had often graced my office, as his Head of Year, with his presence, head always down, body language always closed. He would neither look me in the eye nor account for his often aggressive confrontations with various members of staff. I had even begun to wonder if we would lose this child before he even had the chance to get on the plane to Morocco. Many of my colleagues thought me foolhardy to consider taking him.

However, during the week I watched him literally reinvent himself. I began to wonder if I had a changeling on board!

The phenomenal change in his demeanour moved me immensely and is something I will never forget.

He gradually became aware of his natural ability on the mountain. He was strong, quick and very capable.

He bonded with our Mountain Leader on day one and witnessed some of the very academic girls on the trip struggle - the sort of girls he would normally never have had much to do with. He began to talk to them and then to me.

He began to laugh more and then help those in need. When one of the students went down with heat stroke, he offered her his supply of water and tended to her. I watched in amazement at his transformation.

He started to take an interest in the Moroccan culture and talked at length with our Berber guide who taught him how to wear the 'shal' (headscarf). He arrived back at Heathrow Airport wearing it and the next day at home taught his young nephew how to tie it.

In short he went from strength to strength as his confidence grew. He suddenly realised he was one of the strongest members of the group and that his Head of Year was perhaps human after all! In turn, we played to his strengths by getting him out of the classroom and allowing him to excel. He is a classic kinaesthetic learner for whom sitting at a desk for five hours a day was a form of torture! It didn't suit him or his style of learning.

On the mountain, however, his presence was crucial to our success and he was delightful company. The phenomenal change in his demeanour moved me immensely and is something I will never forget.

As an English teacher, this is something I have puzzled over long and hard: how do we bring kinaesthetic learners on board in a 'desk-bound' subject? I still don't have the answers, but in 2005 I was lucky enough to have lunch with the late Ted Wragg at the Teaching Awards ceremony and discussed this matter at length with him. At the time he and **Phil Beadle** had just finished filming a series for Channel 4 about similar types of students.

Like me, he felt that 21st century education still has a long way to go and is ripe for a revolution.

In the meantime, I have tried to address it through active links with foreign schools (in Malawi, New Zealand and South Africa) and organise as many exchanges and expeditions as I can.

Children learn by doing and seeing first hand. The follow-up four-and-a-half week The Challenger Trust expedition to Malawi and Zambia in 2004 allowed fifteen youngsters to work as a team, trekking 42km across the Mulanje Plateau, white-water rafting down the Zambezi River and renovating a school in Dzalanyama, Malawi.

The latter led to a seven-week trip the following year, during which time four post-16 students helped my husband and me build a dormitory and facilities for eight homeless girls at the same school. In 2005 another seven students returned alone to project-manage the building of a second dormitory.

They were only eighteen years old at the time.



Engaging the interest of the student has also helped to contextualise their learning, and I am convinced that this has a direct impact on their achievement too.

Those young people have all gone on to succeed academically and professionally. Their confidence, ability to show initiative and team work skills are phenomenal.

Teaching remains for me one of the most important professions of all. I love my work in the classroom and the students often inspire me. However, I could never have guessed just how much I would also gain from taking young people out of a familiar environment and giving them the experience of witnessing and becoming immersed in other cultures. It has been the most enriching period of my entire career and something about which I remain absolutely passionate.

Of course not all students can go on expeditions, which is why I also work Internationalism into much of what I do in the classroom.

Young people are immensely interested in the links we have with other schools. It has brought their education to life, enriched them and made my job all the more fascinating. Engaging the interest of the student has also helped to contextualise their learning, and I am convinced that this has a direct impact on their achievement too. I have a lot for which to thank The Challenger Trust. They began something which Ridgeway School has allowed me to grasp wholeheartedly.

I could never have guessed the unexpected and wonderful directions it would take me in or just how much it would transform my skills and working relationships in the classroom.

Converting reluctant learners

The success or failure of reluctant learners is very much bound up in the external guidance and support they receive.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the role of education outside the classroom in addressing the problems of those who are most resistant to the whole process of education.

Phoenix School in West London was one of the first of many schools, deemed to be “failing”, to be turned round by outstanding leadership. The Head, **Sir William Atkinson**, who is also Vice Chairman of the Teaching Awards Trust’s National Panel of Judges, is in no doubt about the importance of experiences outside school in introducing disaffected young people to the idea that they can succeed.

In 2007 the English education system is more than ever driven by the imperative to ensure academic success for as many students as possible. To this end the Government has established a formidable array of school, LEA and national targets, supported by a rigorous system of monitoring and quality control. Success cannot be left to chance or the vagaries of personal dispositions. In a global economy, success equals national survival.

In a recent speech **Sir Digby Jones**, former Director General of the CBI and minister, stated in relation to the challenge of globalisation ‘India is ready to eat our lunch and China our dinner’.

“We always pushed each other much further than we thought we could go.”



We must, therefore, educate our young people to have the skills and spirit to succeed in facing these challenges.

In school, teachers quickly recognise those for whom success is almost a birthright and those who will only achieve success through consistent application, external guidance and encouragement and a good 'dollop of luck'.

Students who can be categorised as 'reluctant learners' usually experience a low level of overt support and guidance from the home. Indeed, their socialisation may have contained a number of adverse modelling influences, both inside and outside the home, leading to confusion of appropriate goal orientation.

Students who experience this state of confusion are not able to operate easily within the dominant value system of the school and as a consequence sometimes infringe the written rules of behaviour. The success or failure of reluctant learners is very much bound up in the external guidance and support they receive.

For the majority the school will be the key influence for their future success. Schools catering for these students need to put in place a wide range of formal and informal learning experiences that go beyond the national curriculum and the timetabled school day.

Students, whose commitment can best be described as marginal, need to be convinced that success is possible for them and that they have the necessary ability and talent to achieve beyond their expectation. This process requires both concrete actions as well as constant verbal reinforcement.



Students who are insecure and possessed of self-doubt can all too easily overreact to disappointment or a relatively small reversal of fortune.

There appears to be in some, an inbuilt disposition to return to a kind of 'default' position where life is more relaxed and the direction of travel is with the main flow: no need to stand out, no need to invert the dominant local value, no need to be different. This 'threat' is ever present during the early and mid years of struggle. These young people have to recommit and rededicate themselves to the struggle almost on a daily basis.

Positive support and challenges from teaching and non-teaching adults is crucial for these young people. Opportunities must not only be found to encourage success and achievement during lesson time but also during the informal curriculum time.

Outstanding and excellent teachers who are passionate about realising the potential of their students play a central role in helping young people to learn to be successful. Learning to be successful is a process that can be taught and therefore learnt.

For a number of these youngsters success will not be found in the first instance in the classroom but rather in situations where learning is less formalised but still structured, i.e. field trips, adventure training and expeditions.

In my experience the achievement of learners of all kinds is significantly enhanced by exposure to outdoor activities. For many students their first experience of well-planned and properly resourced residential trips can be a catalyst for a complete turnaround in behaviour and attitude.



For some the expedition is their first time out of their home environment, away from their 'comforts' and 'certainties'.

My involvement in out-of-school activities has given me extensive first hand knowledge of the benefits that can and do impact on the lives of those involved.

It works just as well for the shy, retiring student as for the assertively confident non-conformist. Students on these trips, usually of five days or more, embark on a personal journey that often leads them to question their attitude, behaviour and approach to life. For some the expedition is their first time out of their home environment, away from their 'comforts' and 'certainties'.

Very often they have not only to confront and deal with new experiences and expectations but also to do so without the peer group 'props'.

They have to rely increasingly on their own resources which can and often do lead to deeper self-knowledge.

On these trips, students undertake tasks that under normal circumstances they would never get the opportunity to perform. Tasks, which if presented in their own environments, would most likely be dismissed as too much hassle and bother. The home environment tends to act as a restraint on experimentation, creativity and personal challenge.

Although a single residential experience, or even more than one, will not necessarily transform an individual, it is certainly true that many students have been influenced to the point where they are prepared to take a long hard look at themselves and in the process question some of their previous beliefs.

We are all better than we know; if only we can be brought to realise this, we may never again be prepared to settle for anything less.

Last year, a group of Year 10 students from Phoenix High School took part in a five day residential expedition to Wales which demonstrated many of the benefits associated with these activities.

Three of the students made the following observations:

When I found out that my Year group had the opportunity to go, I jumped at the chance because I had heard of it before and really wanted to experience the once in a lifetime moments. I really and truly, on the whole, loved the trip. The team members were nice and we always pushed each other much further than we thought we could go.

My favourite activities had to be trapeze and camping. The reason for this was that on both I was scared, I said I couldn't do it or I said to myself I wouldn't do it and in the end managed to do them which was a major accomplishment.

Every time we had to do something related to heights e.g. high ropes, trapeze and the expedition I would have always thought they were things I would never do even if you paid me. Yet somehow my team leader said that I could do it and I tried and I did it. Therefore when I finished doing the activities I had a large sense of achievement.

Things I learnt about myself were:

- I'm a leader (I found myself teaching with the instructor)
- I can do a lot more than I think I can
- 'Can't' should not be in my vocabulary
- When I try and push myself I get a lot further
- I can achieve anything I want if I set out to get it
- I'm not a person who settles for second best

Now my attitude to school is better than it was before and I can always push myself physically and mentally. Writing essays to me is much easier than climbing a mountain so I found myself saying to a friend 'If I can climb a mountain, surely I could write an essay and get an A+'. The trip also taught me that saying you CAN'T do something is never true until you try.

The whole experience made me learn to appreciate things more, and to never doubt my ability to do anything. I also learnt that it is better to work as part of a team than on your own, you can achieve more when you work together.

Another student wrote:

When I arrived, I was wary of what was ahead of me. I was happy when I was told who were the people in my group because I was with people that I don't usually socialise with, so the whole experience was new to me. I enjoyed the trip because I learnt that it is vital to be able to work in a team:

T - Together
E - Everyone
A - Achieves
M - More

I also learnt that you can do a lot more than you think you can.

The best experience for me was the expedition. We had to walk for a total of eight hours over a mountain. We had to carry all of our equipment and cook our own food. The hardest thing was putting our tents up. When I started to walk up the mountain, I was sick and complaining to go home. It was only with the help of my team leader Gemma, Mr Miller and my team that I was able to complete the expedition. I doubted myself at the beginning, but I was exceedingly pleased with myself at the end. This is something that I thought was impossible until I completed it.

The trip made me realise that in a team, I naturally take the position of leader. I also enhanced my ability to work in a group and to listen and contribute ideas.

The main things I learnt were:

- being able to listen and being able to communicate and express yourself freely are key things!

A third student wrote:

This experience has really influenced my attitude to things and my behaviour in school and at home. I have learnt to appreciate things more and I have also learnt to try my very best to do exercises I have been set to do, even if I think I cannot do it. So from now on I would put what **Kurt Hahn**, the co-founder of Outward Bound said at the back of my head so that when I am doing the wrong thing, I will remind myself of his words;

"We are all better than we know; if only we can be brought to realise this, we may never again be prepared to settle for anything less."

For these students and many others like them, learning beyond the classroom is both a powerful and cost-effective means of empowering young people to take control of their lives and in the process enjoy higher levels of success.

The view from the top

S - trive
T - ogether

C - hallenge
Y - ourself
R - ealise
E - veryone can
S - ucceed

Learning outside the classroom may take place on the other side of the world. It may also happen, just as effectively, on the school playing field.

It is the quality of the experience which makes the difference. **Brian Lightman** is the Head of **St. Cyres School**, Penarth, in the Vale of Glamorgan and, in 2007-8, he was President of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL).

He shows how learning outside the classroom should form a key element in a whole school approach to a truly balanced curriculum and how clear leadership from the top can ensure delivery.

The first thing I did after taking up the post of headteacher of St. Cyres School in Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan was to initiate a discussion involving all members of our school community about the vision we had for the education we wanted to provide.

Not surprisingly this very enjoyable conversation focused heavily on all of those activities which go beyond the formal curriculum prescribed by government. We talked about how we can enable every child to succeed at something and how we can help all of them to achieve their potential.

From this arose a **mission statement** (above) based on the name of the school.



Employers need the kind of right brain thinking which enables employees to do lots of tasks at the same time, process context rather than text and synthesis rather than analysis.

The vision that this summarises has provided a focus for everything we do and has been a driving force in trying to find opportunities for all of our students to achieve their objectives.

That is no small challenge in a large school whose intake includes a particularly wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds and a particularly large number of children with additional learning needs including physical disabilities.

There has never been a time when it has been more important to enable young people to develop a wider range of skills and qualities than schools have traditionally offered. The American writer, **Daniel Pink**, has highlighted the risk of preparing them for the world of work we have known and not for the one they are going to live in when they leave school:

‘We need to prepare kids for their future, not our past.’

He argues that the kind of emphasis on logical, linear and rational thinking that has traditionally characterised our curriculum is no longer enough. Instead employers need the kind of right brain thinking which enables employees to do lots of tasks at the same time, process context rather than text and synthesis rather than analysis.

The biggest priority for us, he argued, should be to develop creativity in our learners - the ability to even find and invent solutions to those problems that we have not yet identified.



In order to meet this challenge no single solution can provide all of the answers. Consequently the vision I have summarized underpins the whole of our curriculum planning.

Under the umbrella of the Welsh Baccalaureate, which is part of the core curriculum for our 250 strong 6th form and a growing number of Year 10 and 11 students, these kinds of skills are built into the curriculum. Opportunities to develop them are incorporated into every GCSE and A-Level subject.

That means for example that more than 300 of our students formally commit themselves each year to community service activities and achieve up to level 3 accreditation in six key skills.

We provide a very broad programme of opportunities including one-day and longer residential visits, activity days where the curriculum is suspended for a day and large numbers of after school activities across a whole range of areas. One hopes that the new diplomas in England develop in a way, which enable a similar approach to drive curriculum planning.

Like many schools, we face the problem that many projects, such as our residential activities and The Challenger Trust's overseas expeditions, have been difficult for some of our pupils to fund.



It is always a concern that our otherwise very inclusive approaches might not give adequate opportunities to a significant number of our students.

In discussion about a particular year group, many of whom fell into this category and who also presented social, self-esteem and friendship issues, the idea of the Learning to Lead Award with **The Challenger Trust** was born.

The project is based on a simple concept. It provides Key Stage 3 students with a range of experiences and new skills such as taking personal responsibility, handling risk, communicating effectively and building self-confidence and self-esteem.

It operates at three levels, with The Challenger Trust staff leading the activities: bronze level is one-day of local or school-based activity consisting of team-building and problem-solving tasks; silver level is a two-day residential involving a range of outdoor activities; gold level is a five-day trekking or river expedition.

The Challenger Trust worked with a charity, **The Challenger Trust**, to help make this accessible to less advantaged young people. We offered bronze and silver level activities to the entire Year 8 - more than 200 young people. The bronze day held on our school site was fantastic.

The entire year group spent the day on the school field taking part in a carousel of activities such as using a set of planks of different lengths to cross a set of 'islands'. Attendance was 95% and the students thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Everyone took part, including all our disabled children. What particularly interested me was to see how some of this group grappled with the communication that had to take place. In contrast to many of the other activities undertaken within our curriculum the pattern of achievement was in many cases a complete reversal of what can be observed in the classroom.



Many individuals who had too rarely experienced success in the classroom displayed leadership skills which put some 'high achievers' to shame.

The important point was that everyone took part on an equal basis.

I remember watching one student who had been quite disaffected and had often come to my attention over behavioural matters. Working in a group with three students who are certain to achieve a set of As at GCSE she was visibly in the lead coordinating, instructing and praising her team for getting things right: 'Don't do it like that, Darren! Look this is what we need to do. Give me that plank, Becky! Now put that one there, Amber. Well done everyone!'

I had never seen her in that situation before. Conversation with the group afterwards confirmed that she had not enjoyed that kind of success or been seen in this kind of light by her friends and I am certain that this was a defining moment in her school career.

In the summer term we offered the silver level award to the same cohort. For a range of reasons, largely related to clashes with other end of term activities, numbers were lower but nobody was excluded on grounds of cost. Interestingly, and to our pleasure, a number of the students who took part in this 3-day activity in the Brecon Beacons were precisely those who had not previously had such an experience.



We hope that they will move on to the Duke of Edinburgh Award or an international expedition.

Activities like climbing, hiking, jumping into freezing cold streams and canoeing all required them to take risks and operate way outside their comfort zones.

As one of our teachers, **Helen Williams**, said: "It was great to see pupils out of their comfort zone and being challenged by some activities that they may not have done before. It was a lovely end to the year and pupils I teach who went on the trip are still 'raving' about it."

We see these activities as part of students' progression through school. We hope that they will move on to the **Duke of Edinburgh Award** or an **international expedition** as the apex of a pyramid of activities on offer.

In terms of outcomes the benefits of this approach are much more difficult to measure quantitatively than the usual set of indicators. Some of the most telling results are noticed simply by walking around the school, observing relationships and listening to students talking about their experience of school or confidently giving presentations to their peers and visitors to the school.

Other more measurable results include the virtual eradication of permanent exclusions and the fact that the percentage of children leaving us with no qualifications has dropped to around 1%.

The true measure however will be ten or twenty years down the line when we see what kind of adults, citizens and employees we have produced. Of course these kinds of measures of a successful education service take far longer to assess than the lifetime of any government.

This is why the ultimate responsibility for nurturing and valuing them has to remain with us as professionals.

What about the risks?

For many teachers, however, risk education still tends to be about what is immediately necessary in the classroom to comply with health and safety regulations.

There is no way in which young people can be totally protected from risk and, even if it were possible, it would not be a good idea.

Learning to recognise risk, to assess it, to take it properly into account in planning one's actions and, ultimately, to live with it, is a vital part of a rounded education.

Nevertheless, the element of risk involved in any activity outside the classroom has been too often seen as a deterrent to schools and teachers from arranging such important experiences. Controlling the behaviour of children outside the relatively safe environment of the classroom and sometimes deliberately allowing them to take part in something which might be a bit more risky than writing notes in an exercise book, has too often been seen as a step too far.

Fortunately, as the contributors to this publication have demonstrated, there have been many teachers who have refused to be put off and have insisted on proving for their students the enhancement to their learning that can only happen beyond the school gates.

So strong has the counter-pressure been, that one organisation has been set up which positively promotes a culture of positive risk-analysis and risk-taking in our schools. HTI (Heads, Teachers and Industry) has launched **Go4it** and HTI Chief Executive, Anne Evans, sets out its aims and objectives.

Headlines that proclaim ‘Head bans conkers’ and ‘School cancels sports day because someone might lose’ may present a distorted picture of reality and incense many school leaders, but they symbolise a society that has become increasingly risk averse.

Our country’s future economic success and social well-being depend on creative, enterprising, responsible and highly skilled risk-takers. Many school leaders know that life is a risk-filled, competitive environment. They know they have a critical role to play in fostering the next generation of innovators and wealth creators.

Equally, many feel constrained and disempowered by red tape, bureaucracy and legal frameworks that seem to militate against promoting a culture of innovation.

Why take a risk with any activity that involves risk, when there are reams of forms to be filled in and the spectre of litigation and negative publicity if things go wrong? Where is the praise or recognition for the many schools that are doing wonderful work in cultivating enterprising attitudes through the curriculum, sport and extra-curricular activities?

This is why HTI has decided to take action and create a powerful incentive for schools to foster the skills of innovation in pupils that are so vital to our country’s future success: risk-taking, self-belief, optimism, ambition and a can-do attitude.

Go4it is a five-year culture change initiative aimed at supporting, assessing and rewarding schools that demonstrate a risk and innovation-positive culture. Culture change is complex and takes time, but it is achievable. Look at the success of the ‘no-one forgets a good teacher’ campaign and of the Teaching Awards in raising the profile of the teaching profession and countering negative attitudes.

HTI has long campaigned for young people to understand risk.

It was through a series of stretch assignments we facilitated for teachers to work with the Health and Safety Executive that risk education became part of the National Curriculum. We have also spearheaded other innovative initiatives, such as a drama-based resource to improve risk awareness and management skills in work experience students.

Risk education is about more than health and safety, more than a single facet of school life, more than guidance on how to avoid litigation: it is about instilling a general ‘can-do’ attitude towards all the diverse challenges and opportunities associated with contemporary life in a global economy and society.

Go4it reinforces this bigger picture view of risk and its centrality to innovation development in individuals, schools, businesses, society and the economy. It will comprise an intensive, media-supported campaign to raise awareness of risk and innovation, and an awards scheme that gives high profile recognition to schools that can demonstrate a commitment to promoting a culture of creativity, risk-taking and adventure for learning.

So what does a Go4it school look like? Cotton Wool Kids, our most recent Issues Paper authored by former CBI director-general and UK skills envoy Sir Digby Jones, highlights three schools that most definitely fulfil the Go4it criteria.

- **Crosshall Junior School** in Cambridgeshire tries to counter our national anxiety about risk by creating situations and opportunities for children to stretch themselves by taking risks in a supported environment that enhance their learning, as well as develop their entrepreneurial and leadership skills. A specific example of this is the school's 'independent learning passes' scheme. By demonstrating responsibility and accountability through three levels, children can earn the 'freedom of the building', which means that they can go anywhere and do anything they like in their free time. Often they choose to spend that time 'teaching' younger pupils, which fits very well with the school's ethos of exploiting the potential of children as teachers, not just learners. Equally, headteacher **Julia Elliott** believes there is plenty of scope for teachers to learn from pupils, particularly their facility with new technologies.

- The school leadership teams of two new Academies to replace **Chalvedon School** and Sixth Form College and **Barstable School** have created an inspiring 'Vision for Learning', which blends delivery of the National Curriculum with delivery of an Enterprise Curriculum in a way that excites and motivates each pupil to achieve their personal best. Their proposed timetable could not look more different from the traditional, prescribed school day.



These schools all demonstrate exactly the sort of culture Go4it wants to promote and reward: a commitment to developing a spirit of adventure in pupils during school hours and through extra-curricular activities; a 'no fear of failure' ethos

- **John Martin**, headteacher of multi-award winning **Castle Hill Junior School**, stresses the important role of teachers in taking children along a journey from failure to success, unsure at the outset whether success would be reached. He cites the example of a wonderful group of children in his school who 'couldn't' sing. Their disappointment following a poor performance at a local music festival prompted the school leadership team to risk trying to turn their failure into success. The following year, after a great deal of practice, that same choir enjoyed first place at the festival. This example of risk-taking emphasises the more subtle, but equally important, risks that teachers constantly confront.

and where staff and pupils embrace the fact that they can learn from mistakes, innovative teaching and timetabling, where skills of critical thinking and problem-solving underpin all learning; a passion for 'freeing' pupils to discover the excitement of learning, rather than trapping them within a prescribed curriculum; an understanding of the bigger picture that is driving the need for culture change reflected in strong links with local communities and business.



How does it work and what do schools get out of it?

The **Go4it** accreditation process parallels that of Investors in People, in that it will be renewable every 3 years. Schools are required to provide a portfolio of evidence to support specific criteria and attend a half-day interview with an independent assessor.

The tangible reward for achieving **Go4it** status is an innovation-inspired trophy and certificate to display in the school foyer, but it will be the cumulative and measurable impact of growing numbers of participating schools over the long-term that will lead to the culture change the initiative seeks.

Our ultimate goal is for **Go4it** status to be recognised by teachers, local communities, government, parents, employers and pupils as the definitive symbol of a school not only committed to providing an education for life, but to empowering young people to take control of their lives and futures to the benefit of society and our economy.

Taking a risk may carry responsibilities and it may not immediately lead to success, but it is undoubtedly the route to progress. It's time to Go4it!

Conclusion

The global classroom

Today, the range and variety of opportunities available to young people outside the classroom is very much greater and more closely related to their needs.

The editor, John Sutton, reflects on an educational journey and looks forward to an exciting future.

My first real experiences of learning outside the classroom were appearing on stage in school productions, although whether discovering a talent for portraying the drunken butler, Stephano, in "The Tempest" was a suitable preparation for life, I am not sure. It certainly helped to build my self-confidence and it still stands out in my memory.

As a young teacher, I visited mainland Europe for the first time in my life, with a party of boys on a school trip to Belgium. Looking back on that nearly fifty years later reminds me just how far we have come since then.

Then, a school trip was like an adult package tour, only cheaper, but, even so, it opened the eyes of the youngsters who took part to the fact that there were people in the world who got on very well without speaking English and living in places which did not look a bit like home.

Today, the range and variety of opportunities available to young people outside the classroom is very much greater and more closely related to their needs. In particular, there are now many more opportunities to take part in activities which not only increase their awareness of a world other than their own but also present them with personal challenges which develop their skills, attitudes and self-confidence.



As this book has shown, such opportunities exist on their own doorsteps as well as on the other side of the world and experiences thus gained create motivation and enthusiasm for personal development.

Scarcely a day passes when we are not reminded that we live in a global society. If we are to enable young learners to flourish, they must learn what that means and how to succeed in it.

The classroom in which this is learnt cannot be a comfort zone of bricks and mortar - or nowadays of steel and glass - but is the world itself.

This book, which is just a sample of what is already being done in our schools, shows what can be achieved by committed teachers to make education in the global classroom a reality.

Acknowledgements

During fifty years of involvement in education, I have enjoyed many fulfilling and exciting experiences, many of them outside the classroom.

As a teacher and head-teacher, as President and then General Secretary of SHA (now the Association of School and College Leaders), as a Trustee and member of the National Judges Panel of the Teaching Awards Trust, I have had the privilege of seeing in action many fine teachers, whose devoted professional commitment has been to secure the best possible life chances for those they have taught. Editing this publication has been an opportunity to put a spotlight on all that they have done. The contributors to this book are representatives of all that is best in the teaching profession and I am grateful for the trouble which they have typically taken to tell us how they have helped their learners to succeed in the global classroom.

John Sutton CBE

I must also thank Charles Rigby, the founder of The Challenger Trust, for his vision in commissioning this book, Chris Gallant for his encouragement, Stephanie Herrmann for her valuable help on this project, the Teaching Awards Trust and HTI for their support and assistance, and Rupert Sharp for his splendid typographic treatment. **March 2009.**





the Challenger trust Head Office: Unit 8a, Hatton Technology Park, Warwick, CV35 8XB
+44 (0)1926 678491 www.challengertrust.org

If learning to succeed is tough, teaching someone to succeed is even harder. This book is inspired by, written by and dedicated to those people who have helped our young people to believe in themselves and to acquire taste for success, teachers.
