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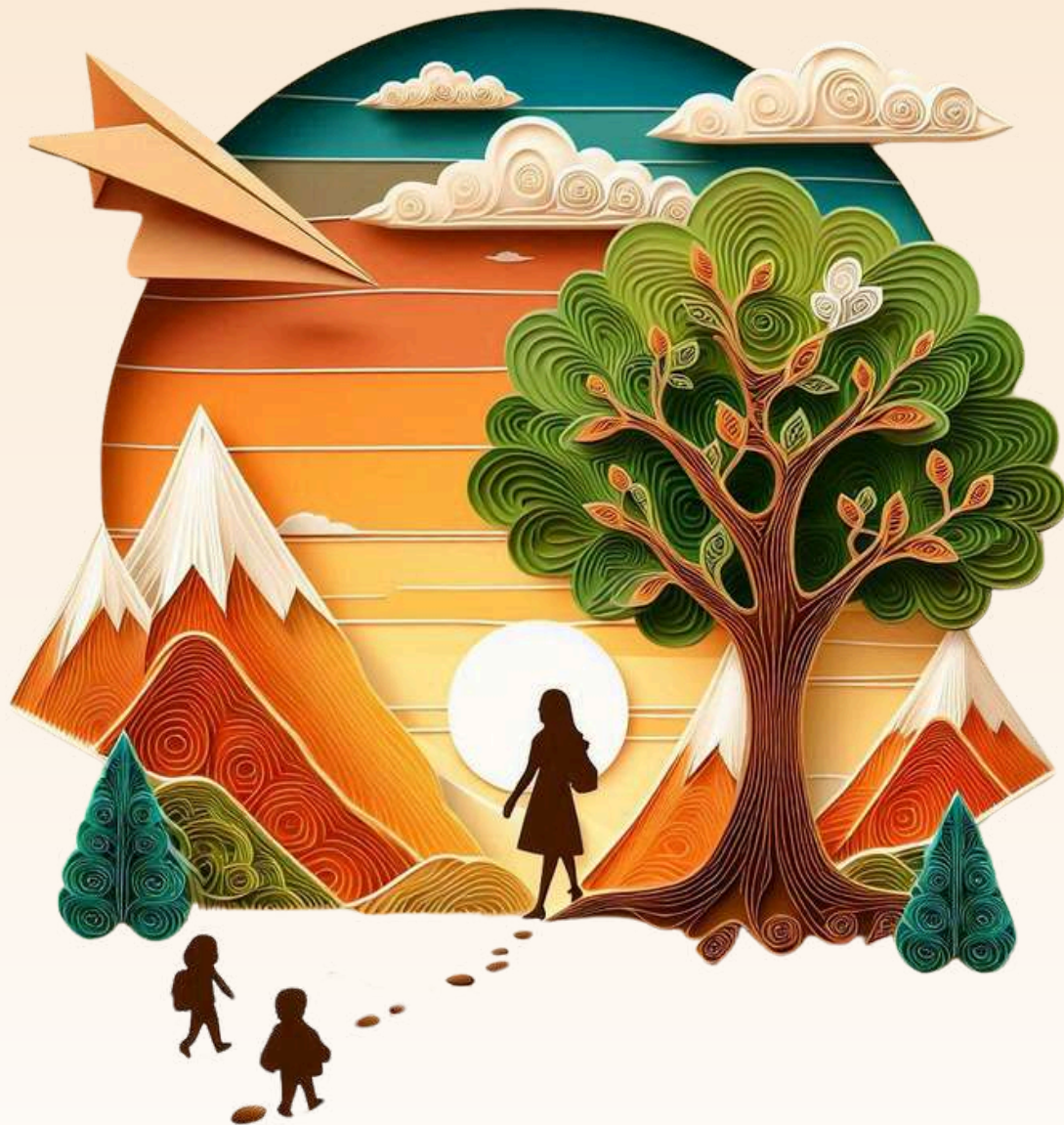
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And to the teacher within us all!



The Secret of Class Management: LEAD WITH AUTHORITY, TEACH WITH ENGAGEMENT

Tom Simms

Class management is a pillar of quality learning environments and an essential skill for great teachers. Productive classrooms are made up of many things, such as a comfortable environment and a good rapport between teachers and students. However, one of the most important aspects of a first-rate learning space is class management. Managing a class means establishing rules and routines, maintaining students' focus, and ensuring a great learning experience. Effective class management comprises three key components: **authority**, **consistency**, and **engagement** — each vital for creating a thriving classroom atmosphere.



Authority

COMMANDING RESPECT WITHOUT RAISING YOUR VOICE

Establishing authority is the first step in class management. Teachers must command respect and show that they are in charge. Without authority, students may become disruptive, leading to a poor-quality learning environment. Being authoritative in class does not always come naturally to some teachers, especially those new to the profession. However, with the right practice, educators can gain confidence and cultivate a commanding presence.

When establishing authority, it is important to remember that it starts with the teacher. Educators should look professional, stand up straight, and make eye contact with their students to show they are self-assured and in control. Teachers should also speak in a strong, confident tone. They should not shout or raise their voice, as this will foster pupil resentment. However, teachers must be able to communicate clearly and effectively.

One of the most important aspects of authority is setting rules and expectations for the class. Rules

guide students' behavior and help ensure a safe and productive class. A few good examples of classroom rules are Listen well, Raise your hand, Sit still, and Show respect. It's good to have these rules written on the board and drill them with students at the start of each class. It can also be helpful to ask concept questions on the rules. For instance, the teacher could ask a student 'what happens if we don't listen?' The teacher could also ask students to provide examples of respect in class.



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Along with setting rules and expectations, another crucial aspect of authority is disciplinary measures for disobeying those rules.

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Along with setting rules and expectations, another crucial aspect of authority is disciplinary measures for disobeying those rules. It is not pleasant to punish students, but they need to know that bad behavior has consequences. When students misbehave, the teacher should remind them of the rules and give fair warnings. However, if the bad behavior continues, the teacher must be able to take action. One of the tips that many teachers find effective is punishing the entire class. For example, if one student misbehaves, everybody has to stand, or the class stays for a few minutes at break time. This method works well, as students will want to avoid peer resentment.

Ongoing misbehavior will need harsher methods, such as break time and after-school detentions. Though punishing the whole class is usually effective, with persistent troublesome behavior, teachers should take firmer measures against the main culprits. Individual troublemakers may need to be singled out and dealt with separately. In this case, the teacher should raise the issue with the principal. Then if there is still no improvement, the school must address the parents.

Rules must be clear, and action against breaking them must be firm. However, as well as disciplining undesirable behavior, it is equally important to provide positive reinforcement for good behavior. For younger students, teachers could reward better-behaved students with stickers, theme days, and five minutes at the end to draw on the board. For older students, verbal praise, positive letters home, and early breaks would be far more effective. Recognition for their efforts is essential as it keeps students motivated.

Consistency

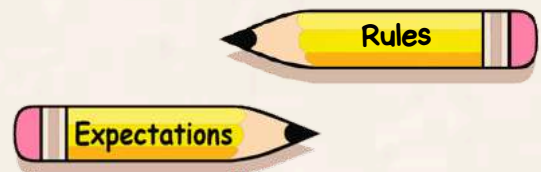
THE SECRET TO KEEPING STUDENTS ON TRACK



The next step in cultivating class management is consistency. Once routines have been established, teachers must stick to them throughout the school year. Inconsistency can weaken an educator's authority, leading to class management issues. It is important to ensure students know what is expected of them and what they can expect from their teacher.

As with authority, consistency starts with the teacher. Educators must continue to look professional, follow through on what they say, and maintain a commanding presence. Another key aspect is to remain fair. As the school year goes on, teachers may find they have a better rapport with some students than others. However, teachers should ensure all students are treated the same without favoritism. Fairness helps them feel respected and equal to their peers, which is essential for maintaining a well-behaved class.

As with other routines, the teacher must uphold the same rules and expectations. Along with concept check methods to ensure students understand class rules, disciplinary measures must continue to be enforced. Techniques should only change if they have proved inadequate or begin to lose their effect over time.



While upholding the rules and discipline methods, positive reinforcement must remain consistent. Ongoing recognition will ensure students continue to work hard and behave well in class. However, it can be better to offer different rewards sometimes. For instance, if a teacher only offers verbal praise or stickers for good behavior, students may lose motivation. So teachers should switch things up with something new, such as class prizes for a change. When students or classes have performed exceptionally well, teachers could provide something extra special, such as class trips.

Regardless of approach, consistent rules, expectations, and positive reinforcement remain important in class management. These give students an understanding of how to behave where the boundaries are. Consistency fosters a positive learning environment, prevents conflict, and promotes better unity in class.

Engagement

THE KEY TO CAPTIVATING AND INSPIRING STUDENTS

The final touch to class management is engagement. While teachers must remain authoritative and consistent, they must also be charismatic figures who can deliver captivating lessons. An engaging classroom experience keeps students focused, stimulated, and better able to grasp lesson content. It also minimizes distractions, prevents disruption, and helps them get the most out of their lessons.

“An engaging classroom experience keeps students focused, stimulated, and better able to grasp lesson content”

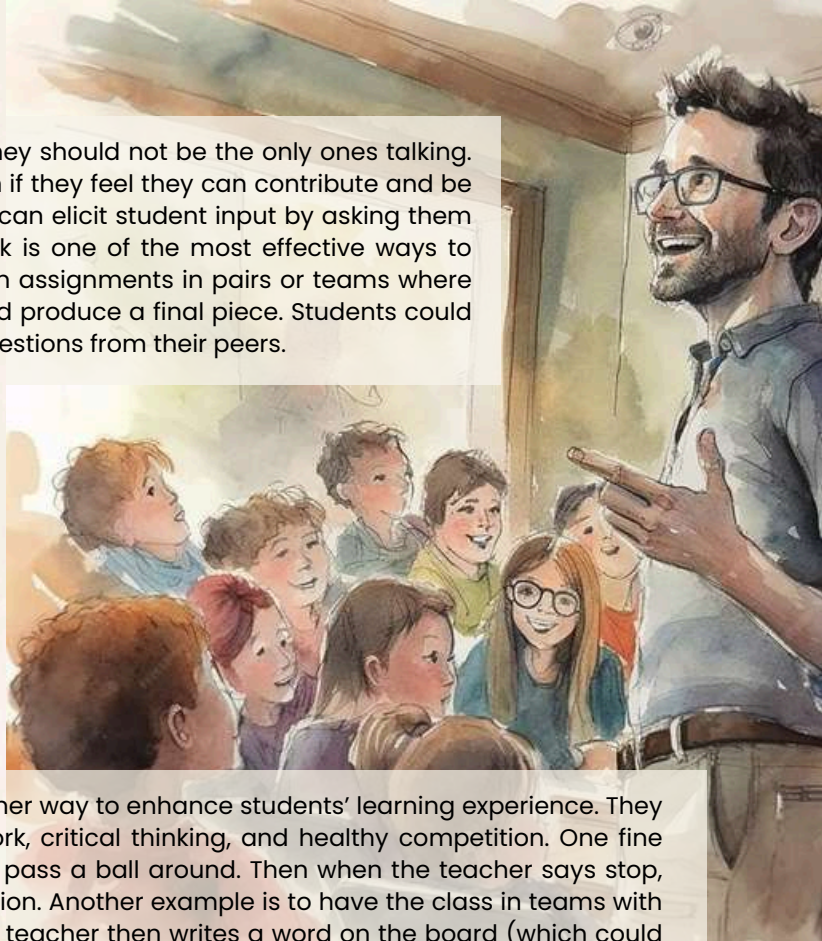


One aspect of engaging lessons is public speaking. Being a teacher is similar to being an actor. The classroom is the stage, and the students are the audience. Much like an actor keeps their audience entertained, teachers must use good voice projection, and remain articulate and enthusiastic.

Teachers must be effective communicators but they should not be the only ones talking. Students are more likely to engage with the lesson if they feel they can contribute and be involved. While teachers may lead the class, they can elicit student input by asking them questions and prompting discussions. Group work is one of the most effective ways to promote student dialogue. Students could work on assignments in pairs or teams where they will have to review topics, compare ideas, and produce a final piece. Students could then present their work to the class and answer questions from their peers.

Along with public speaking, another element is effective lesson planning with plenty of materials. Teachers can prepare flashcards, slides, and other visual aids to enhance students learning. Visuals can help with comprehension and provide a better understanding of different concepts. Teachers can apply other techniques, such as using real-life examples and including students' interests in the lesson. Students will find schoolwork far more engaging and easier to understand if it is more relatable to them.

Activities such as games and challenges are another way to enhance students' learning experience. They make lesson more interesting and foster teamwork, critical thinking, and healthy competition. One fine example is a game called Hot potato where they pass a ball around. Then when the teacher says stop, the student holding the ball has to answer a question. Another example is to have the class in teams with one member from each standing at the front. The teacher then writes a word on the board (which could relate to the lesson topic) then students have to help their team members guess it. The first student to guess right will get a point.



ADAPTING MANAGEMENT TO ANY CLASS

While applying class management techniques, it is important to remember that no two classes are the same. Every class has its own dynamic, composed of different personalities, so teachers may need to adjust their approach accordingly. For example, teachers will need to remain strict in difficult classes, but for better-behaved ones, they can take a more relaxed approach. Students in higher-ability classes can have more challenges, and for those of lower ability, teachers must be patient and keep things simple.

After establishing rapport with their students, some teachers may ease down on some class management measures. They may soften their tone, use less voice projection, and ask fewer concept questions when drilling the rules. However, they must remain an authority figure. While students must have a good relationship with their teacher, they must remember that the teacher is in charge.

Class management can take time to master, but understanding these components will ensure a quality learning environment. Though there may be setbacks and challenges, teachers must remain patient, persistent, and unwavering. With the right attitude and following the correct steps, teachers can take charge in any classroom. Effective class management will stand educators in good stead throughout the school year and their careers.



Tom Simms is an experienced educator and freelance writer based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Since relocating there in 2017, Tom has taught English in schools, language centers, and online, gaining valuable insights into diverse learning environments. With a passion for writing, he has recently expanded into freelance work, penning articles on travel, history, and education.

STEP INTO CLASS, TAKE THE LEAD,
AND DELIVER A GREAT LESSON.

10 ways to Get Retrieval Practice **Wrong** – And How to Get It **Right**

Prof. Dr. Carl Hendrick



Retrieval practice is an incredibly powerful way to learn anything but it's easy to get wrong. I'm seeing a lot of schools mandating retrieval practice in every lesson but often it is not having an impact. When done correctly, retrieval practice can enhance long-term learning and retention, but getting it wrong can lead to shallow learning, frustration, and diminished outcomes. To ensure this valuable technique truly makes a difference, here are **10 key points** to help you avoid common pitfalls and maximize its impact.

1 NOT PROVIDING ENOUGH CHALLENGE, ESPECIALLY INITIALLY

Giving quizzes, where the first retrieval is very soon after learning, can create the "illusion of competence" where students recall easily on that first attempt, but later performance suffers. The initial retrieval needs to be sufficiently challenging to be effective. Easy retrieval often involves retrieving information based on superficial cues or associations, rather than engaging in deeper, more elaborative processing. This type of shallow processing can lead to memories that are fragile and easily forgotten. When retrieval is effortless, the brain doesn't need to work as hard to retrieve the information. Evidence suggests that this lack of effortful retrieval can result in weaker encoding of the memory trace, making it less durable over time.



Source: Internet

FAMILIARITY IS NOT THE SAME AS UNDERSTANDING 2

Similarly, retrieval practice can lead to fluency, but fluency doesn't always equate to understanding. Teachers should be wary of the "fluency illusion" and use retrieval practice in conjunction with other methods to assess genuine comprehension. This is similar to how we might recognise a song we've heard many times without necessarily understanding the lyrics or the musical structure. Recognising that a problem is a quadratic equation is not the same as being able to solve it.

Two key things to bear in mind:

Shallow Processing: Fluency can be achieved through rote memorization or shallow processing, where students focus on remembering isolated facts or procedures without connecting them to underlying principles or applying them in new contexts.

Context-Dependent Memory: Our ability to retrieve information is often influenced by the context in which we learned it. If retrieval practice always occurs in the same context (e.g., using the same type of questions, in the same classroom setting), students may develop a false sense of mastery because the retrieval cues are always present. However, when they encounter the material in a different context (e.g., on an exam, in a real-world application), they may struggle to recall or apply the information.

3 USING RETRIEVAL PRACTICE PRIMARILY AS AN ASSESSMENT TOOL

While retrieval practice can provide valuable information about student learning, its primary purpose should be to enhance learning, not just to measure it. When retrieval practice is used solely for assessment purposes, it can create anxiety and pressure, which can be detrimental to learning, especially if it's high-stakes. Retrieving information from memory actually strengthens it, making it more likely to be recalled in the future. This highlights the active nature of retrieval practice and its potential to solidify learning.

NOT SPACING RETRIEVAL PRACTICE 4



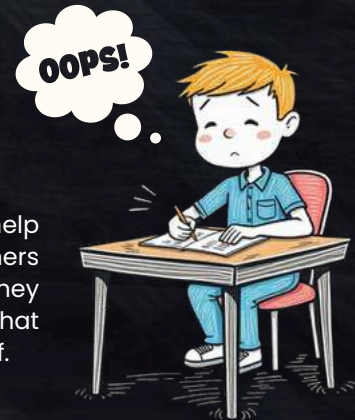
Like initial learning, retrieval practice is most effective when it's spaced out over time. Frequent, short quizzes or retrieval activities over time are more beneficial than a single, lengthy review session right before an exam.

Bjork & Bjork (1992) distinguish between two types of memory strength: **retrieval strength** (how easily information can be accessed at a given moment) and **storage strength** (how well information is consolidated into long-term memory). Spaced retrieval practice strengthens both types of strength. When we retrieve information after a period of forgetting, it's more effortful, and this effortful retrieval leads to greater storage strength, making the memory more durable. In other words, in order to remember stuff long-term, we need to forget it in the short-term.

In other words, in order to remember stuff long-term, we need to forget it in the short-term.

5 NOT USING ERRORS AS A LEARNING EVENT

Errors are valuable learning opportunities, and retrieval practice can help uncover them. Rather than simply marking answers as right or wrong, teachers should encourage students to analyze their mistakes and understand why they made them. The point of retrieval practice is not so much to find out what students have learned but to actually be a process of learning in and of itself.



NOT CONNECTING RETRIEVAL PRACTICE TO CURRICULUM 6

Retrieval practice should be meaningfully integrated into the curriculum and aligned with learning objectives. Randomly asking students to recall facts without any context or purpose is unlikely to be effective. (Stop getting random kahoots off the internet).

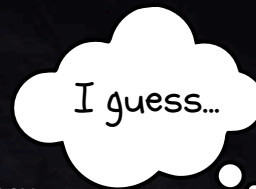
Two main reasons why this is a problem:

Lack of relevance and meaning: When retrieval practice activities are not clearly linked to the curriculum or learning goals, students may perceive them as irrelevant or busy work. This lack of perceived relevance can decrease motivation and engagement, making it less likely that students will invest effort in the retrieval process, which is essential for its effectiveness.

Ineffective encoding and retrieval cues: Our memories are not like video recorders; we don't store information in isolation. Instead, we encode information in relation to its context and meaning. When retrieval practice activities lack context or purpose, the retrieval cues are weak, making it more difficult for students to access and make sense of the information. The key point here is that learning is about making multiple connections between items of knowledge not disconnected recall of isolated information.

7 IF YOU HAVEN'T TAUGHT IT, WHAT ARE THEY RETRIEVING?

While there is some evidence that pre-testing students on content they have not yet encountered can be beneficial, it's easy to get wrong. If students are randomly guessing to 'get the right answer' then this is unlikely to lead to long-term learning. **Also retrieval practice can strengthen existing knowledge, even if inaccurate:** When students retrieve information, it strengthens that information's representation in memory. This applies to both accurate and inaccurate knowledge. If students retrieve a misconception during practice, it can solidify that misconception, making it more resistant to change.



While there is some evidence that pre-testing students on content they have not yet encountered can be beneficial, it's easy to get wrong.

8 USING ONLY RECOGNITION-BASED RETRIEVAL

While recognition tasks (like multiple-choice questions) can be helpful, relying solely on them can limit the effectiveness of retrieval practice. Free recall (asking students to retrieve information without any cues) and short-answer questions generally require more cognitive effort, leading to greater learning. **There is a continuum of difficulty between recognition and recall:** Accessibility of information exists on a spectrum and some information is highly accessible and readily comes to mind (like the capital of one's home state), while other information, though known, requires more effort to retrieve. Recognition tasks, by providing cues, make the retrieval process easier. While this can be helpful for reinforcing learning or assessing recognition of specific facts, it doesn't require the same depth of processing as recall.

9 FAILING TO EXPLICITLY TEACH RETRIEVAL STRATEGIES

Teachers may assume students inherently know how to effectively use retrieval practice. However, retrieval is a skill that can be improved with instruction and practice. Teachers should explicitly teach students different retrieval strategies. Retrieval practice isn't limited to simple quizzes or flashcards. It encompasses a variety of strategies that require different levels of cognitive processing and can be adapted to different learning goals. Teachers should explicitly introduce students to these various strategies, including:

Elaboration: Elaboration goes beyond simple recall and encourages students to explain concepts in their own words, provide examples, make connections to prior knowledge, and explore relationships between ideas.

Creating concept maps: Concept maps are visual representations of how different concepts are related to one another. Creating concept maps requires students to actively organize and connect information, leading to a deeper understanding.

CREATING HIGH-PRESSURE RETRIEVAL SITUATIONS 10

Retrieval practice is most effective when it's low-stakes and stress-free. High-stakes tests, while sometimes necessary, can trigger anxiety that interferes with retrieval and reduces the learning benefits. When students consistently associate retrieval practice with high-stakes assessments and the fear of failure, it can create a negative feedback loop. Students may start to avoid challenging tasks or learning opportunities that could lead to errors, hindering their overall academic growth. **Frequent, low-stakes retrieval practice is key.** Make retrieval practice a regular and integrated part of instruction, but with low or no stakes attached. By frequently engaging in retrieval practice, students become more comfortable with the process of retrieving information, and it becomes less daunting.

To truly harness the benefits of retrieval practice, educators must approach it with intention and care. Recognizing and addressing the common pitfalls ensures that this technique goes beyond surface-level recall, fostering deeper understanding and stronger memory retention. When retrieval practice is thoughtfully integrated into lessons, challenges students appropriately, and maintains a low-pressure environment, it becomes a powerful method for promoting long-term learning.

Avoiding these missteps will help elevate retrieval practice from a routine classroom activity into a cornerstone of impactful, lasting education.

Reference

Bjork, R. A., & Bjork, E. L. (1992). A new theory of disuse and an old theory of stimulus fluctuation. In A. Healy, S. Kosslyn, & R. Shiffrin (Eds.), *From Learning Processes to Cognitive Processes: Essays in Honor of William K. Estes* (Vol. 2, pp. 35–67). Erlbaum.



Prof. Dr. Carl Hendrick is a professor of evidence-informed learning and teaching at Academica, focused on connecting research with classroom practice. With 18 years of experience as a secondary English teacher, he holds a PhD in education from King's College London and co-authored two acclaimed books: *How Learning Happens* (with Paul Kirschner) and *How Teaching Happens* (with Paul Kirschner and Jim Heal).

Based on the 2 award-winning books 'How Learning Happens' and 'How Teaching Happens', Prof. Dr. Carl Hendrick and Prof. Dr. Jim Heal designed the online training course *How Teaching & Learning Happens*. This online training course directly addresses this challenge by equipping educators with evidence-based practices and insights from the science of learning.

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ASK

THE EXPERTS

Welcome to **Ask the Experts**, the ultimate column dedicated to professional development in the field of education. In this dynamic and ever-evolving field, continuous growth and learning are paramount. In each issue, we explore the most commonly asked topic by interviewing invited experts for their insights, experiences, and strategies.

EduVerse: Welcome to the exclusive *Ask the Experts*, where we dive into the most exciting and transformative topics in education! Today, we're turning the spotlight on a subject that's more relevant than ever: teaching teenagers in today's evolving educational landscape.

We're beyond excited to introduce two trailblazing educators who are redefining how we connect with and inspire teens in the classroom. First up, we have **Teresa Bestwick**, a seasoned teacher whose hands-on experience with teenagers has shaped her insightful and effective teaching approach. Her career is a mix of tough challenges and rewarding breakthroughs, making her an expert in guiding educators through the ups and downs of teaching teens. And joining her is **Fiona Mauchline**, a once-disenchanted student turned passionate educator. Fiona's creative strategies and personal journey from disengaged learner to inspiring teacher have made her a standout voice in the field.

Together, these dynamic educators co-authored the must-read book *"Teaching Teenagers: Unlocking Potential in the Young Adult Classroom."* This comprehensive guide is packed with actionable strategies and fresh perspectives to engage and empower today's youth.

In this exclusive interview, Teresa and Fiona will share their wisdom on navigating the complexities of teen education, tackle the latest trends and challenges, and reveal their bold vision for the future of teaching.

EXCLUSIVE

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL AS A TEACHER OF TEENS

with TERESA BESTWICK and FIONA MAUCLINE



Fiona Mauchline has been a dedicated educator in English Language Teaching (ELT) since the late 1980s, focusing on training primary and secondary teachers since 2000. A prolific writer and editor, she specializes in materials for secondary students, adults, and exam preparation. Co-founder of EVE: Equal Voices in ELT, Fiona champions equity in education through workshops and webinars across Europe.



Teresa Bestwick is a teacher, trainer and author based in southern Spain. Her ELT passion nowadays is teacher development and she runs two online communities for ELT professionals and is on the board of TESOL-SPAIN. Her non-ELT passions are identifying plants and early-morning walks.

Can you share your personal journey and experiences in education, particularly your work with teenagers? What drew you to this age group, and how has your perspective on teaching them evolved over time?

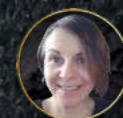


I started teaching French in the late 1980s, but moved into EFL early on, when asked to take on a Polish teen 'nobody could teach'. We got on like a house on fire after two classes. She stuck with English; I stuck with teens and ELTs. The late 80s-90s were boom years for teens in language academies, so a lot of my teen-teaching was inevitable. I guess my passion for the age-group is less frequent, perhaps because ELT people seem to prefer adults or primary, which in terms of where research is focused, are generally afforded more prestige.

After some years specialising in teen-teaching, I moved into writing coursebooks for secondary (though also for adults), and resource books. From there into teacher training and lecturing, initially on MAs in TESOL. I liked the intellectual stimulation of the MA classes, but I missed the 'normal' classroom. I was lucky enough to be invited to change university, so now I'm back lecturing and teaching 18-23 year-olds.

While I also have other areas of interest such as vocabulary, materials writing, emergent language, and the learner-centred classroom, one eye remains on secondary (including CLIL). Teens are such amazing people. They have the dreams and hopes of children without the restricting mindsets of most adults. Some teens have been damaged by experiences, but they can be repaired and given wings. They're willing to believe in you, but also in themselves if you show them how.

I love how you describe teens as having the dreams of children, without the limiting mindsets that adults often have. It really makes them stand out. What about you, Teresa?



As with most people working in an after-school language centre in Spain, when I came here twenty years ago, I was given a whole range of levels and ages and I feel it took me a long time to identify who I particularly enjoyed working with. As a new teacher, I enjoyed working with different age groups (that's not to say I always enjoyed particular classes!) but it wasn't until I'd been teaching for about five years that I really 'got into' working teens. It was around that time that I started doing conference presentations and veered more towards ideas for that age group rather than younger learners or adults. To be honest, I really wish I knew then what I know now about how to support teens better within the classroom - I think I would talk to them more on an individual, personal level to find out about how best to help them.

1 It's great to hear how you've grown into teaching teens, Teresa! So, what are some of the most memorable or impactful moments you've had while teaching teenagers? How have these experiences shaped your approach to teaching?



The really good and the really bad moments stick out, as they so often do!

But perhaps one of the most impactful moments was when a learner surprised me. I had quite a challenging, unmotivated group and each week I would ask one of them to find a video in English and prepare three comprehension questions about it. The group got quite into the activity and it became an enjoyable stage of the lesson when they could share what they'd found. One learner in particular was very demotivated and so he was the last to volunteer to find a video. When he came into class for the next lesson, he typed in the title of the video on YouTube and my immediate concern was that the video he'd chosen was going to be highly inappropriate. But he promised me it wasn't and I decided to trust him. It turned out to be a really good video, which I've actually gone on to share with others and the activity (which I picked up from a colleague) made it into the book on page 84! So, I guess my takeaway from this is to give learners the opportunity to surprise you.



Grease is a musical film released in 1978, set in the 1950s. It follows the summer romance between two high school students, Danny Zuko (played by John Travolta) and Sandy Olsson (played by Olivia Newton-John). After a brief summer fling, they unexpectedly find themselves at the same high school. The film explores their struggles to navigate their relationship amid peer pressure, social expectations, and teenage life. It features memorable songs, energetic dance numbers, and themes of love, friendship, and the challenges of adolescence. The movie has become a classic and is often associated with the music and culture of the 1950s.

And trust them, right? Fiona, your journey from a demotivated student to a passionate teacher is quite inspiring. Can you tell us more about how your past experiences shaped your approach to teaching teenagers?



Until I left university, I insisted "I'll never be a secretary or a teacher."

A *secretary* meant typing and dictation - very unappealing. But teachers were a loathed species. (One exception: my mother). Weirdly and completely by chance, I started teaching the day after graduation.

I went to a school for 'high achievers'. In that context, I was mediocre (even my surname sits mid-alphabet, my birthday mid-school-year), and had my mediocrity thrown in my face by a system where, for example, exams were returned in order of grade from best to worst. Imagine twenty-six 13-year-olds, one after the other, getting more upset as they were called to the front of the class to receive their marked exams. A great feeling for some, but really demoralizing for others. I also remember that whenever I came top, one teacher treated it as a fluke, or a lucky accident, and congratulated the student who came second instead. There was also the teacher who consistently mocked my (and others') surname. But there was normal teen-anxiety too: I still recall my fear of giving an 'uncool' answer to 'Did you like **'Grease'**?' in front of my classmates.

How did this shape my approach? Firstly, when I wanted to find a way to motivate a teen group who'd lost all belief in their ability to speak English, let alone pass exams in it, I reflected. Hard. I spent time with the teen me, and wondered what it was that had made me such a disengaged student, what I'd been kicking back against. Then I did the opposite. It worked. So, I kept reflecting and also, more importantly, started to research to see if it was luck or if I could learn more and apply that too. I have now spent over 20 years researching - reading, reflecting, talking to teachers, listening to students, still teaching, and I'll never lose interest. My teen and young adult students are wonderful people - I have friends in their 40s who were students of mine all those years ago, and I still 'love' each group (and they love me, thankfully).

2 Wow, it's amazing how deeply you care about understanding and supporting these teenage students. Speaking of challenges, I'm curious - can you share a specific situation where you faced difficulties with a group of teenagers? How did you handle it, and what did you learn from the experience?

I overcome most challenges by being kind, fair, honest about who I am, how I feel, and what behaviour I will or will not accept. When a group accepts you as a group member - bearing in mind EVERYONE has a role and yours is 'teacher', 'supporter', occasional 'mediator' and importantly 'role model' - challenges are easier to address.



NEVER TELL TEACHERS THEY'VE GOT A 'DIFFICULT GROUP' AT THE START OF A SCHOOL YEAR - IT COLOURS THE WAY THEY TEACH.

In over 35 years, I've only had one genuinely difficult teen group. I've had groups who'd been labelled 'different' by others, but I guess my mindset was different. My 'difficult' group was actually a nice group with two loud, rude, very demanding, spoilt members with disengaged parents. I made the mistake of focusing too much on those two instead of giving attention to the students who deserved it. I thought I could "reach" them. The turning point came when I lost my patience and yelled in class for the first time. After that, I shifted focus away from the attention-seekers and to their group-mates, who ended up doing very well. I'm still in touch with some, 20 years on. The lesson? Life's not a movie. We're not Michelle Pfeiffer or Robin Williams. But we CAN change 95% of the lives we touch. It also taught me that we'll solve most challenges by noticing what a teenager really needs. Sometimes that means an understanding of grammar, or of how to access their imagination, but sometimes it's your time, or boundaries and rules. We need to observe, listen and be receptive from day one to be proactive. I use so much energy in class - mental and physical - so keeping a tight hold on health, diet and mood are key.

What's your thought, Teresa?



As much as I would love to say I had a challenging group and I really made it work, as Fiona said, most of our classroom experience is not the stuff that Hollywood films are made of. These films sometimes portray the teacher as the only one who can reach those individuals, a lone ranger of sorts on their own mission, single-handedly reaching out and connecting to their learners. However, one thing I've learnt when faced with challenging situations in education is that it's OK to ask other people for help - ask your colleagues for tips, talk to the academic management team about possible strategies, get the parents involved - the more support you can get, the better.



... it's OK to ask other people for help - ask your colleagues for tips, talk to the academic management team about possible strategies, get the parents involved - the more support you can get, the better.

Teresa Bestwick

3 Absolutely! It's so important to ask for help. In your experience working with teenagers, how do today's teens compare to those from previous generations? What are some of the key differences or similarities in their behavior, challenges, and learning needs?



Teens don't change, at heart - only what they have access to does. Years ago, they probably had more face-to-face interaction in life - with parents, grandparents, and so on - but less access to information, so teachers were the 'knowledge providers'. Now, they have the internet in their pockets in some schools, and certainly from as soon as they leave the school gates, but face-to-face interaction is declining. Teachers need to provide interaction - speaking, listening, seeing body language. Empathy fully develops in adolescence, but exposure to visual cues is essential; the online world takes this away. Bullying has always existed and been particularly cruel amongst young people, but it spreads more easily online. Increased empathy training would also help counter that. However, while older people often say 'Teens were more or less bla bla in my day', the truth is that we know more now, but teenagers haven't really changed much, unlike adults.

ASK THE EXPERTS

I completely agree. Technology has advanced significantly over the past couple of generations, but so has the science behind learning, in addition to our awareness of interpersonal relationships and our awareness of the self. All these factors have encouraged us to think about how we can make the education system better and although there is still a lot to be done, I'd like to hope that the education system is meeting the needs of more of its learners now than it did in the past.



4 What about technology? How do you think technological advancements are shaping the way teenagers learn and engage in the classroom? What role should technology play in the modern classroom?

Initially, we used *slide-rules* in Maths, but in my pre-teens, calculators arrived. Parents were concerned. I can still calculate in my head, and certainly on paper. Because my teachers knew when a calculator would support my learning and when it wouldn't. The same is true for today's tech. Teens engage in anything they find engaging. And they'll focus for as long as that thing – or that teacher – engages them. Teens hooked on games or phones may miss the dopamine rush when in class, but if a task is engaging, stimulating, meets emotional and intellectual needs as well as syllabus one, that craving disappears.



As for shaping the learning, teens have little use for example the ability to write letters, so teaching them to interact with a chatbot or write a report is perhaps better suited to their future. But teen brains haven't changed much, and their developmental needs remain the same: They need problem-solving activities. They need low-anxiety learning environments. They need emotional and sensorial triggers. If tech is used to meet some of those needs, but in a way that supports skills mastery, not just focusing on performance or scores, it's playing a worthwhile role. For the record, I use learners' phones in class, as well as Youtube. I don't use AI, because as yet, it's not accurate or ethical enough, and I need to model behaviours.

Speaking of platforms like YouTube, social media has made today's teenagers grow up in an incredibly connected world. How can educators effectively integrate social media and digital tools into their teaching to enhance learning?



I think the first question for educators is, 'What does this tech bring to their learning?' We need to take a critical look at the tools we need to take a critical look at the tools we use to really assess how they are benefitting the learning environment and what impact they're having on the students. Teachers need to remember as well that although the term 'digital native' (which I hate!) is often used, learners will still need training to get the most out of any tools we introduce them to. And I think there is a danger of overwhelming learners with tech and associating it with engagement. I remember a few years ago, when Kahoot first became popular in the classroom, a teacher commented that she heard students say, "Not another Kahoot!" – personally, I like to go back to old-school activities in the classroom as it's actually something new for the learners.

5 In what ways can educators address the diverse learning needs and preferences of today's teenagers, especially considering different backgrounds and experiences?



We need to keep up-to-date, for example, with SEND-appropriate practices and cognitive science. Focusing too much on "learning preferences" can lead some teachers into a 'nature not nurture' zone, classifying students in ways proven misleading. Learning preferences are more closely related to nurture or habits, which, when non-beneficial, can be changed. The ideal I approach, though, is informed eclecticism, where teachers use a variety of strategies tailored to their students' needs. As for backgrounds and experiences, a teacher needs to find out anything that might support or hinder learning. Again, ears and eyes are our greatest tools in this process.

FLASHING BACK

SPOTLIGHT
EDTECH
MOVING BEYOND
DECORATIVE TOOLS

Picture this: you find yourself sitting at the back of a classroom, observing a lesson where the teacher has incorporated a plethora of technological tools and gadgets. The interactive whiteboard is aglow with vibrant colors, the students eagerly tapping away on their tablets, and the room is abuzz with the sounds of digital engagement. However, it appears to be an impressive and technologically advanced learning environment. However, as you keenly observe, you can't help but notice that something seems off. Despite the impressive array of EdTech tools, they seem to be nothing more than mere distractions, failing to serve their intended purpose.

In this scenario, the allure of EdTech is undermined. The teacher has embraced the latest gadgets and software, hoping to enhance the learning experience and engage students in exciting ways. However, as the lesson unfolds, it becomes evident that the excessive use of technology is not enhancing the effectiveness of the tools, but rather, they seem to be serving as a distraction.

This situation serves as a reminder that the true effectiveness of EdTech cannot be measured by its mere presence or the flashy nature of its implementation. Rather, its impact lies in the ability to facilitate active learning, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. It prompts us to question the necessity of using EdTech at all times and encourages us to reflect on whether it is genuinely enhancing the student learning journey or simply serving as a distraction.

In today's rapidly evolving world, educational technology (EdTech) has become increasingly prevalent in classrooms worldwide. From interactive whiteboards to online learning platforms, these tools promise to revolutionize teaching and engage students in exciting new ways. However, amidst the promise of EdTech, it is crucial to reflect upon its true effectiveness and question whether it is merely serving as a decorative addition to lessons.

The promise of EdTech: Enhancing teaching and engaging students

EdTech tools, ranging from interactive whiteboards to personalized learning experiences, offer the promise to foster student engagement and promote deeper understanding. These technological tools can make classrooms more dynamic, interactive, and inclusive, catering to diverse learning needs, styles, abilities, and backgrounds, and providing students with active participation in their learning process, gaining hands-on experience that facilitates retention and comprehension.

The schools that I used to work for, a large English school with over 50000 students, hosted the largest trend for transition 4500 face-to-face classes to online learning and students were undertaking with this new learning and...

Read more about
Neurodiversity in
EduVerse Newsletter 1,
published in July, 2023.

Click or scan

So listening and observing are key, right, to understand each student's background and experience? This brings us to the next question: How can educators create an inclusive classroom environment that respects and values the diverse identities and experiences of all teenagers?

This is an area which I feel deserves a book all of its own – and even then it would be impossible to cover everything. For a long time education has had a one-size-fits-all model and if you didn't fit the model, you were the one at fault. While our awareness of the diverse educational needs and identities of learners is developing, the training and support for teachers is lacking. There are some wonderful educators developing resources to better support teachers and learners so when you identify a particular need, again reach out to colleagues or look online for suggestions. However, the first step comes from developing a classroom which accepts everybody for who they are, and the section of our book on building rapport aims to foster that respectful, open classroom environment. As Fiona mentioned before, developing empathy in and with our teens is key.



6 In what ways can educators prepare teenagers to be responsible and skillful citizens for the ever-changing future?

By giving them responsibility. Negotiating behaviour contracts. Designing student-led activities and projects that use 'social contagion' positively. Teenagers, particularly aged 15-19, respond well to topics or projects that allow them to decide how they can positively change the world. Such tasks are empowering, meaningful, memorable, and therefore very effective. Find meaningful contexts for target language: instead of 'What are you wearing?/I'm wearing brown trousers,' which they can see..., discuss images of potentially wasteful fashion catwalks compared them with sustainable fashion, find out the origins of garments and their environmental impact like he's wearing trousers from India and a sweater from Japan'. Ask them to design ethical outfits like 'he's wearing trousers from our village and sweater from goodwill'.

In addition, think about how to develop their soft skills. We've already talked a little about how communication is changing and the importance of developing empathy and emotional intelligence so I would also add here teamwork and leadership skills. Help learners see how to manage conversations, how to collaborate with others, how to take on feedback – these are the types of skills which will continue to be valuable in the workplace and in society.



“
Teenagers, particularly aged 15-19, respond well to topics or projects that allow them to decide how they can positively change the world.

Fiona Mauchline

7 Fantastic points! Giving responsibility and fostering their soft skills. Moving on, what are some emerging trends or approaches in education that you believe will have a significant impact on teaching teenagers in the near future?

The obvious answer is AI and platform-based learning, with the teachers' role changing to that of monitor. The problem with this is that it means looking at yet more screens instead of reactive faces. In language learning, it implies a reduced ability to cope with twists and turns in conversation and probably a dominance of an 'idealised L1 accent' over local pronunciations. In teenagers, that will also remove English from the realms of 'ideal L2 self', making it detached from the teens' reality.

Moreover, we are increasingly living in a performance-driven world where success is measured by immediate rewards. It is a 'performance goals' world – with gaming and Duolingo-type apps providing the dopamine hits of 'levelling up' and 'top scorers'. But performance goals don't lead to long-term learning, despite being motivating in the short term. So we risk a generation of few people with mastery of skills. They will, I suspect, be quicker thinkers than us – but with eye-strain...

ASK THE EXPERTS

Oh, AI – another area of education which deserves a book of its own! I wonder how AI will affect assessment and how that will feed down through educational tiers. Already at university level, educators are re-examining how they test knowledge and this will have an impact on secondary education as well. The benefits and drawbacks of standardised testing have been discussed over the years, but maybe now AI will force us to identify a better way of evaluating progress and assessing knowledge.

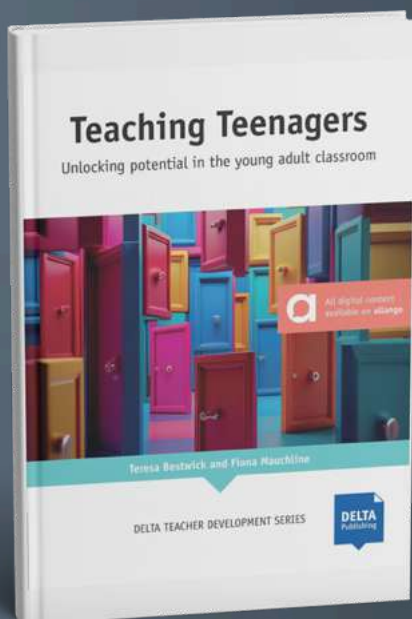


8 It sounds like AI presents both opportunities and challenges for teenagers today. Now, you both co-authored the book “Teaching Teenagers: Unlocking Potential in the Young Adult Classroom”. Could you explain what inspired you to write it and what is in the book?



I've wanted to write this book for years. My students, trainees and the teachers attending my conference talks have been the greatest inspiration, seeing their response to the activities I've tried out and shared, and to the tweaks I've made to my teaching since digging deep into the areas of neuroscience, cognitive development and motivation. I've known Teresa since she was a trainee – one of the, if not THE, best trainees I've ever had – so having followed her professional journey and seeing what an inspiring teacher she still is, it all fell into place.

Aaah, you know how to make me blush! But I completely agree that the inspiration comes from years of being inspired – attending conferences, talking to colleagues and learning from the wider ELT community online. It was so nice when writing the book to reflect on all the ideas I've picked up over the years and I've actually gone through and added a reminder of where the ideas came from in my copy.

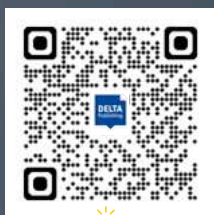


These ideas make up the main bulk of the book, Part B. It's divided into seven chapters, looking at different types of activities. For example, Chapter 1 looks at some self-reflection activities for our learners, whereas Chapters 2 and 3 have activities which are more focused on their interactions with classmates. Then there are activities for working with course materials, study strategies and ideas for projects and working with various media.

I imagine that's the section of the book that teachers will flick through the most when they're looking for inspiration. However, Parts A and C are also worth taking a closer look at. Part A talks about what's happening during this developmental stage and suggests strategies to help teens learn more effectively. Then Part C offers some tips for dealing with the challenges of working with teens, plus a number of activities teachers (of any age group, really) can do to reflect on their practice.

Oh right! I notice that Part B of the book is packed with practical activities for teaching teens, which will be very beneficial to teachers. Could you highlight one activity that is particularly effective in addressing the needs of modern learners?

Order the book here:



Click or scan



Hard to pick, so I've chosen two. The 'students-as-teachers' activities utilise technology in a meaningful way, while empowering students. As the activities require students not only to understand but teach, they choose how to express and, at the cognitive level, to store the information. When teaching, they may rephrase, paraphrase, self-correct, etc., which adds to the learning. It's also enjoyable.

If there is one key takeaway that you hope teachers will walk away with after reading 'Teaching Teenagers,' what would that be?



Teens' learning success is in the teacher's hands. Be the best teacher you can be. Even on bad days. Student motivation is largely up to you, so remember it's a process – the teacher starts with their choice of activity and maintains it during the task, but needs to remember that reflection lets students see progress, which keeps them motivated.

For me, the challenges section in Part C is a way of assuring teachers that they're not alone, and although the suggestions we've added to deal with each situation won't be a silver bullet, hopefully it will encourage teachers to investigate and try out other strategies. For all the time we spend with others when we're in the classroom, teaching can feel like quite a solitary profession so reach out to others: ask for advice when you're facing a challenge, but also share the ideas that work and build your professional learning network whether it's just within your school, within the local educational context or online.



— “ —
It's an old cliché, but love what you do and be willing to share that passion with others.

Teresa Bestwick

FINAL THOUGHTS

What is your vision for the future of teaching teenagers? How do you hope education will evolve to better support and prepare them for their future?



We need generations of great, discerning thinkers, who aren't fooled by 'shiny appearances'. Only education can give us that. Wise use of technology, keen visual literacy and critical thinking, creativity, empathy, teaching the subject but also the whole person. Generation Alpha needs to be tolerant, environmentally aware, averse to conflict both online and 'IRL' (in real life). They need to be kind and compassionate, valuing cooperation over competition. We also need informed, supportive HUMAN teachers. So, teachers, get ready to rock.

What final piece of advice would you give to educators who are passionate about working with teenagers and want to make a positive impact on their learning experiences?



It's an old cliché, but love what you do and be willing to share that passion with others. Teens especially need authentic role models and that's not to say that your passion for education will turn them into passionate learners, but showing that you want to be there, that you want to help them learn and that you want to get to know them as individual humans, not just learners, will help. I wish I could have given myself that advice twenty years ago.

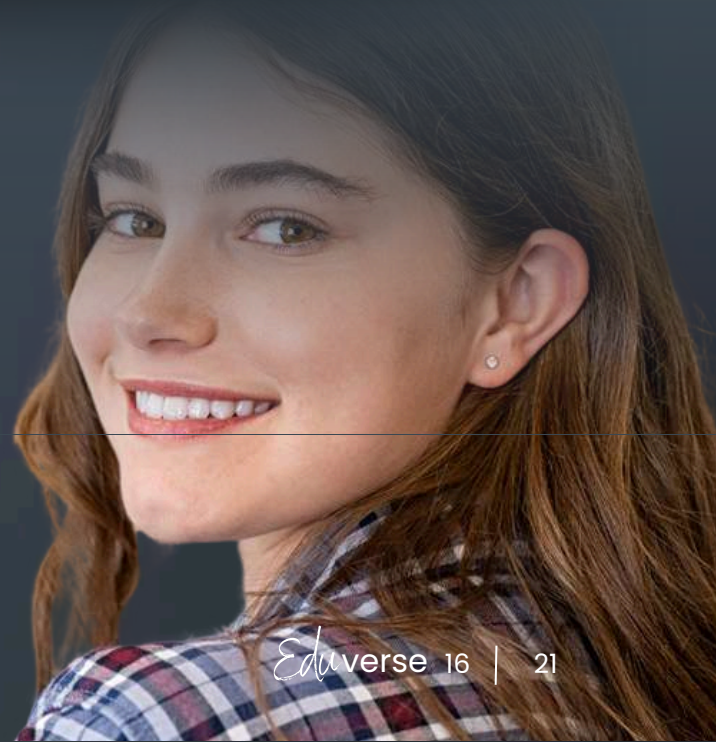
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Teens are eager to learn:** Despite stereotypes, teens want to learn and can be surprisingly receptive when teachers approach them with respect and understanding.
- **Technology is a tool, not a solution:** While technology can be a valuable tool in the classroom, it should not replace human interaction and face-to-face learning.
- **Focus on soft skills:** Equipping teens with communication, collaboration, empathy, and critical thinking skills is essential for their future success.
- **Be kind and compassionate:** Show your students that you care about them as individuals. Fostering empathy and kindness is just as important as academic achievement.
- **Passion and growth mindset:** Both Teresa and Fiona emphasize the importance of a teacher's passion and willingness to learn and adapt. Their journeys showcase how educators can continuously improve their approach to teaching teenagers.
- **Building rapport is key:** Creating a respectful and open classroom environment is crucial. Listen to your students, show empathy, and build trust to foster a positive learning experience.
- **Diversity and differentiation:** Recognize the diverse backgrounds and experiences of your students. Tailor activities and approaches to address individual needs.
- **Relevance and engagement:** Activities should be relevant to teenagers' lives and interests.
- **Collaboration and reflection:** Don't go it alone! Seek support from colleagues, share ideas, and reflect on your practice to continuously improve.

— “ —

**Teens' learning success is in
the teacher's hands.
Be the best teacher you can be.
Even on bad days.**

Fiona Mauchline



Welcome to **In the Verse**, your go-to column for curated education articles and news from across the internet. We'll sift through the digital realm to bring you concise summaries, keeping you informed and inspired. Join us as we navigate the vast sea of online resources and uncover the latest in educational innovation.



What's trending in education innovation and why it matters for the future of work

Education innovation isn't just happening in one place or one format—it's global, and it's coming at us from all angles. Let's dive into some of the big trends making waves across the world and what this could mean for the future of work.



12 strategies to motivate your child to learn

This article explores some of the proven strategies for motivating children and encouraging them to learn. Implementing them will help your child or student discover the joy of learning.



How adaptive teaching enhances expertise

Neuroscience can help teachers make better decisions in the classroom by understanding how the brain learns and responds to emotions. This article provides practical tips and reflection questions for teachers to implement these principles.



A new definition for equity in education

The article highlights the importance of personalized learning and holistic support for achieving equity in education. Schools should focus on meeting the individual needs of all students to ensure their success.



How much do students really read?

Students are turning to YouTube, podcasts and ChatGPT-crafted summaries rather than actually reading. Professors are unsure how to adapt. The article explores reasons for this shift, including shorter attention spans, ineffective reading instruction, and the pandemic's impact.





**Five months into the school phone ban:
Here's how students are finding it**

New Zealand's school cell phone ban is sparking debate. While some students find it beneficial, others say it's restrictive and hard to enforce. The ban aims to improve focus and academic performance, but its effectiveness remains a topic of discussion.



**Libraries for schools:
How your library can boost wellbeing**

Explore how school libraries can support students' mental health by offering a safe space, emotional support, and activities that promote well-being, making them vital resources for schools.



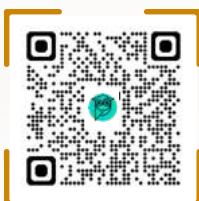
10 key trends in instructional design

For instructional designers, eLearning professionals, and anyone involved in creating educational content, this reading provides valuable insights into current trends and technologies that can enhance learner engagement and effectiveness in training environments.



Putting student discourse to work in the classroom

Looking to foster critical thinking and collaboration in their classrooms? Explore practical strategies and tools for implementing student discourse to deepen student engagement and promote academic conversations in this manual.



10 tips for teachers to tackle september

Even though it's already October, this article provides timely tips for teachers to stay motivated and energized throughout the academic year. It offers practical advice on organization, student engagement, and fostering a positive classroom atmosphere.





THE 2024 GLOBAL CLASSROOM PAIR-SHARE PROJECT

Connecting Classrooms, Bridging Cultures

Linda Egnatz and Wioleta Anteck

A global learning innovation

Global Classroom Pair Share is a three-month project enabling classrooms from all over the world to collaborate around monthly themes, completing activities and sharing their work with one another. This innovative initiative connects classrooms around the globe with a shared focus on learning languages and improving students' proficiency, exploring new cultures, and discovering new places.

What's new in the 2024 cohort?

The 2024 3rd Cohort of the Global Classroom Pair-Share has once again redefined the boundaries of global education. This edition brought together 63 classrooms and over 700 students across 15 time zones to use their second language skills to interact. **Additionally, for the first time, the 2024 Cohort introduced free professional development for teachers, setting it apart from previous cohorts.**

The focus of the 2024 Cohort was **'Be a 21st Century Multilingual'** and it incorporated the *Framework for 21st Century Learning*, the *World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*, and the *Understanding by Design Framework*. The free resources, coupled with high quality training provided a completely free way to connect classrooms around the world and enabled students to share their thoughts, ideas and perspectives on a given topic or learning activity.

As with the first two editions of the project, teachers were paired for three months with a classroom from another country to complete tasks on their students' level of language proficiency. The program facilitated both real-time and asynchronous student interactions, allowing for flexible and diverse methods of engagement. This collaborative approach made learning more engaging and relevant, motivating students to become more aware of their responsibility for language learning and improving their proficiency level.

Click or scan the QRs for more info about the 3 frameworks.



Activities to boost language and cultural skills

Activities for the cohort were created using multiple filters, each designed to grow student language skills and cultural knowledge. Teacher pairs could select an activity that matched their students' language proficiency level and interests. To qualify for inclusion, each activity had to meet multiple criteria. First, each project had to prompt learners to meet the performance descriptors for a specific Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) language level. Next, it had to include the three Communication Goals (Interpretive, Presentational, Interpersonal) from the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, as well as one or more of its five focus areas: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The "Backward Design" model was used for lesson planning, and both creation of each project as well as how it was shared included a variety of ICT tools expanding both students' language and technology skills.

The project made available a specially curated collection of resources and tools for participating teachers. This selection included materials aimed at enhancing student language proficiency through project-based learning and supported the professional development of language teachers worldwide. Participants in the 2024 Global Classroom Pair-Share were offered free professional development opportunities. These sessions focused on helping them effectively utilize the provided resources to improve their curriculum design and better assist language learners.

CEFR rubrics were provided to empower students to evaluate their own progress and set proficiency goals. Coaching and training was also available to teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of how language skills are measured. All the materials are available on the project's website and free to use for the general audience.

Global recognition for teachers and students

In May, the *Global Seal of Bilinguality* organization recognized 44 teachers from 20 different countries who successfully completed all three months of the Global Classroom Pair-Share program. This initiative engaged a diverse group of teachers working in primary and secondary schools as well as university educators, along with their students. Activities were carefully planned to suit different proficiency levels, from A1 to C1. Participants were required to use the language they were learning to complete the tasks, which for most was English. However, participants from English-speaking countries also used Spanish, Chinese, German, and French. This multilingual approach highlights the inclusive nature of the program and its commitment to linguistic diversity.

Every teacher who completed the 3 month program was eligible to receive 3 free STAMP for CEFR tests (or any other STAMP test) donated by Avant Assessment, Oregon, USA, an international company delivering sophisticated online computer-adaptive language proficiency assessments in more than 45 languages. The STAMP for CEFR test measures A1 to C1 general proficiency in all four language skills for English language learners. The test changes in real time to adapt to the language ability of the user in each skill – listening, reading, speaking, and writing – and provided teachers with comprehensive score reports that included leveling-up strategies for each test taker.

In addition to students, teachers were also provided an opportunity to test and measure their own proficiency across the four skill areas. Each teacher and student who tested had the opportunity to qualify for the international Global Seal of Bilinguality certificate. Those at the B1 level or higher in each skill earned a Functional Fluency level certificate, those who tested at the B2 level or higher in each skill earned a Working Fluency level certificate, and anyone who scored at the C1 level or higher in all four skill areas earned the Professional Fluency Global Seal of Bilinguality certificate. The impact of the program's focus on leveling-up language skills was clear. Certificates at one of the three Global Seal of Bilinguality's tiers were issued to participants from Chile, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, India, Iraq, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey, and the USA.

The value of global connections

The Global Classroom Pair-Share project goes beyond traditional language learning. It fosters collaboration, communication, and social interaction, providing students with engaging opportunities to use their language skills. Tools provided students with actionable feedback on how to achieve their language goals and enrich their vocabulary. Various Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools made the activities fun, encouraging creativity, and inspiring new ideas. The resulting collaborative projects were shared giving students a true global stage to shine. A strong focus is placed on making students aware of their role as global citizens.

Participants expressed immense appreciation for the opportunities provided by the project. Students were excited to meet new people and explore innovative ways of learning, while teachers praised the program for its ability to connect classrooms worldwide and empower both educators and learners.



The Global Seal of Bilinguality certificate, earned only through qualifying scores on an approved test, has been issued in 57 countries. A Global Seal of Bilinguality is immediately verifiable. With three proficiency tiers, it is stackable, so participants can continue to level-up to a higher level certificate. It is portable and digitally shareable so recipients can easily add their certificate to a C.V. or LinkedIn profile, share it on social media, or send it to an employer or university. The certificate celebrates their accomplishment, but also provides them with a variety of ways to leverage their documented skills.



Project activities



The third cohort of the Global Classroom Pair-Share has shown to be a groundbreaking initiative in global education. By linking classrooms worldwide, providing free training to teachers, and encouraging students to become global citizens, the project has made big improvements in language learning and cultural exchange. Participants continue to praise its positive effect on personal growth and academic success, making it a highly valued program in globalized learning.



Wioleta Antecka is the European Operations Coordinator at Avant Assessment and serves as the Global Director of the Teacher Pair-Share Program. With 17 years of experience teaching English, she has a deep commitment to language education. Originally from Poland, Wioleta has successfully led numerous international collaborative projects, fostering the development of students' language skills across borders.



Linda Egnatz serves as Global Seal of Bilingual Executive Director. She is the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL-NCLIS) President and a Member of both the Bilingualism Matters Advisory Board and Heritage Language Global Think Tank. Egnatz is widely published and has received multiple awards in the field of education.

PODCASTS

LEARNING ON THE AIRWAVES

Dr. Le Dinh Bao Quoc

In today's digital age, learners are increasingly immersed in a world of screens, instant gratification, and on-demand content. These characteristics have fundamentally changed the way we consume information and learn. To meet the evolving needs of modern learners, educators must explore innovative tools that align with their preferences and learning styles.

One such tool that has gained significant traction in recent years is the podcast. Podcasts, originally conceived as digital audio or video episodes, have evolved into a versatile medium capable of reaching a broad audience, fostering engagement, and supporting learning in diverse contexts. Their ability to adapt to the demands of today's learners makes them a valuable asset in the educational landscape. But could audio, a seemingly outdated format, be the secret to transformative learning? Could their growing role in education enhance teaching, learning, and professional development?



Le Dinh Bao Quoc, Ed.D., with a Doctorate in Education, boasts 20+ years in ELT. He founded Pro.Ed Education Solutions, offering school consultancies. Author of "The Art and Science of ChatGPT in Education," he highlights EdTech's role in enriching teaching, learning, and educational practices. Research spans EdTech's impact, teacher growth, and educational management and leadership. Dr. Quoc is acknowledged by LinkedIn as a Top Educational Leadership Voice in 2024.

PODCASTS - FROM ORIGINS TO MODERN FORMATS

A podcast is a series of digital audio or video files that can be downloaded or streamed over the internet, often released as a series of episodes focused on specific topics. The term "podcast" was coined in 2004 by Ben Hammersley, blending "iPod" and "broadcast." While podcasts were initially tied to Apple's iPod, they are now accessible on a wide range of devices, including smartphones, tablets, and computers, and have grown into a diverse medium. Although many shows remain audio-based, more podcasters are incorporating video to reach audiences on platforms like YouTube and social media (Breitman, 2023).

Podcasts possess several key characteristics that make them appealing to a wide range of audiences. According to Medialooks (2023), podcasting has become popular due to its niche content, convenience, intimacy, and user engagement. Unlike traditional broadcasting, podcasts cater to specific topics of interest of unique communities, offering listeners specialized knowledge and insights. The convenience of listening to podcasts on-the-go and the intimate connection between hosts and listeners contribute to their popularity.

Several popular platforms host and distribute podcasts to the listeners, including **Apple Podcasts**, **Spotify**, and **Youtube**. Many educational institutions and organizations have their own podcast platforms, offering content related to specific fields or subjects.



(Some popular podcast platforms)

Podcasts can be categorized into several types based on their content and format:

- **Audio Podcasts:** The most common type, featuring purely audio content. Examples include interviews, lectures, storytelling, and discussions.
- **Vodcasts (Video Podcasts):** Podcasts that include video components, often used for tutorials, demonstrations, or visual storytelling.
- **Enhanced Podcasts:** Podcasts that combine audio with additional visual elements like slides, images, or links, providing a more immersive experience.
- **Screencasts:** Podcasts that capture a computer screen's activity, often used for software tutorials or demonstrations.

PODCASTS AS POWERFUL TEACHING TOOLS

Podcasts, as teaching tools, offer numerous advantages that align with the traits of modern learners, promoting a more dynamic and engaging educational experience. Their accessibility, flexibility, and engaging nature make them well-suited for a variety of educational purposes.

▶ Enhancing subject understanding

Podcasts can simplify complex concepts, breaking down challenging topics into engaging discussions. Teachers can use podcasts to present new material or supplement classroom instruction with expert interviews and real-world examples. History teachers can use podcasts to bring historical events to life through first-hand accounts or interviews with experts, while science teachers can use podcasts to explain complex scientific theories or discuss current research findings. This multimedia approach enhances comprehension, making learning more relatable and accessible for students of the New Age.



Click or scan

Take the podcast *Revisionist History* by Malcolm Gladwell as an example. This series explores various historical events and figures, challenging conventional narratives and offering new perspectives. Podcasts like this can be used to spark critical thinking, deepening their understanding of the subject.

▶ **Fostering engagement and motivation**

In today's digital age, it is crucial to meet learners at their comfort levels. The conversational and informal nature of podcasts can significantly increase student engagement and motivation. Unlike traditional lectures, podcasts can create a more relatable and engaging learning atmosphere, making students feel more connected to the content. Research shows that when students are engaged in their learning, they are more likely to retain information and develop a deeper interest in the subject matter. For example, the podcast *TED Talks Daily* features short talks on a wide range of topics, from science and technology to social issues and personal development. These talks can be used to inspire students and expose them to new ideas and perspectives.



Click or scan

▶ **Encouraging creativity and collaboration**

Podcasts encourage creativity and collaboration among students. Assigning students to create their own podcasts fosters teamwork and communication skills as they work together to plan, script, and produce their episodes. This hands-on approach not only enhances their understanding of the subject but also allows them to express their ideas and perspectives creatively. Moreover, the process of creating podcasts can develop valuable skills in research, critical thinking, and digital literacy.

Podcasts can also be used to encourage student creativity and communication. Teachers can assign students to create their own podcasts, allowing them to explore topics of interest and develop their communication skills. Additionally, students can work together to produce episodes, fostering teamwork and problem-solving skills.

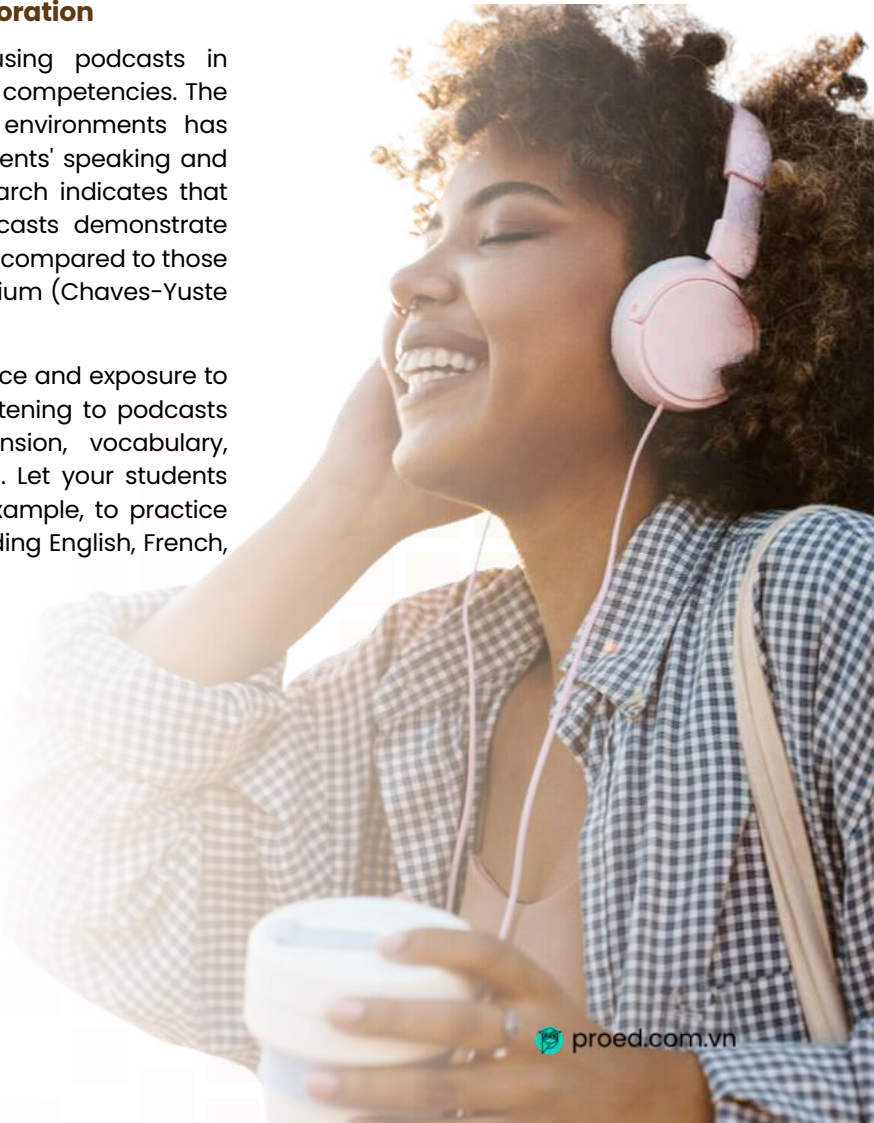
▶ **Encouraging creativity and collaboration**

One of the primary advantages of using podcasts in education is the improvement of linguistic competencies. The integration of podcasting into learning environments has been shown to significantly enhance students' speaking and listening skills in language learning. Research indicates that students who actively engage with podcasts demonstrate noticeable improvements in their oral skills compared to those in control groups who do not use this medium (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023).

Podcasts provide authentic listening practice and exposure to diverse accents and dialects. Students listening to podcasts can improve their listening comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall language skills. Let your students give *Coffee Break Languages* a try, for example, to practice their language skills in 10 languages, including English, French, Spanish, and Japanese.



Click or scan



PODCASTS AS A DYNAMIC LEARNING RESOURCE

Podcasts also serve as a versatile and dynamic way for learners to engage with educational content. Their unique features and accessibility make them highly effective as a learning resource for students, offering flexibility, convenience, and opportunities for independent and social learning.

▶ Learning on the go: Flexibility and convenience

In today's digital age, it is crucial to meet learners at their comfort levels. The conversational and informal nature of podcasts can significantly increase student engagement and motivation. Unlike traditional lectures, podcasts can create a more relatable and engaging learning atmosphere, making students feel more connected to the content. Research shows that when students are engaged in their learning, they are more likely to retain information and develop a deeper interest in the subject matter. For example, the podcast *TED Talks Daily* features short talks on a wide range of topics, from science and technology to social issues and personal development. These talks can be used to inspire students and expose them to new ideas and perspectives.



▶ Cultivating social awareness

The fact that podcast topics cover everything for any specific community makes podcasts the potential resource to raise social awareness for learners, such as critical cultural and social issues, or global challenges aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many educational podcasts focus on issues such as inequality, poverty, climate change, and education, fostering a sense of global citizenship among students and encouraging them to think critically about their roles in addressing these global issues. For example, podcasts like *SDG Talks* are dedicated to educating learners about the progress and challenges of the SDGs, broadening students' horizons, enhancing their understanding of global issues, and fostering actions, empathy, and responsibilities among students.

▶ Promoting independent learning

Podcasts empower students to take control of their learning by offering the flexibility to choose what topics they explore, when they engage with content, and how they approach the learning process. With access to a wide variety of information and diverse perspectives, students can use podcasts not only to deepen their understanding of subjects for assignments but also to gain insights into potential career paths or explore personal passions. This exposure widens their knowledge base and enhances key skills such as critical thinking, research, and problem-solving, while also nurturing curiosity and fostering a mindset geared toward lifelong learning.

The ability to make these choices cultivates independent learning habits, which are vital for academic success in higher education and professional development in the future.

▶ Promoting independent learning

Podcasts leverage students' comfort with digital platforms, aligning learning with the way they naturally consume media in today's digital age. This familiarity makes podcasts an effective and engaging tool for education, as they seamlessly blend with students' daily interactions with technology.

Many podcasts encourage active participation through features such as online communities, social media conversations, and additional resources like transcripts, reading lists, or interactive content. This interactivity allows students to engage with the material more deeply, sparking critical thinking and analysis while enhancing their digital communication skills. Such engagement can promote collaboration and discussions that go beyond the classroom, fostering a sense of community and collective learning.

PODCASTS FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: CPD ON DEMAND

Podcasts have become a valuable tool for educators and professionals looking to engage in continuous professional development (CPD). They offer an efficient and flexible way to stay updated on industry trends, learn from global experts, and promote innovation and best practices, all while fitting into busy schedules.

▶ Staying ahead with the latest trends

Podcasts bring educators to a continuous flow of information on the latest educational trends, innovations, and research. By tuning in, they can stay up-to-date on emerging technologies, curriculum updates, and new teaching methodologies. These podcasts help educators keep their strategies relevant and effective. Many podcasts also explore topics like AI in classrooms and remote learning, equipping educators with the knowledge to adapt to digital-age teaching.

▶ Learning from global experts

Imagine how rare or difficult it once was to hear a world-renowned expert speak on a specific topic. Now, with podcasts, it is much easier. Podcasts offer educators direct access to insights from top experts across various fields, breaking down geographical barriers. From renowned researchers to thought leaders and fellow educators worldwide, podcasts bring a wealth of global knowledge and perspectives straight to listeners, enriching their understanding of the education landscape.

▶ Building a community of support

Podcasts can foster a sense of community among educators, providing a platform for sharing experiences, challenges, and solutions. Many podcasts, such as *EduVerse PD Podcast*, have accompanying online communities where listeners can discuss episodes, share resources, and support each other in their professional growth. This sense of belonging is critical for educators, particularly those working in isolation or small schools.

World's First Edu Podcast
hosted by AI



Click or scan

▶ Encouraging practical innovation

Listening to innovative practices and creative solutions can encourage educators to adopt new strategies in their own teaching. Podcasts can be a source of inspiration and motivation for educators to experiment with new ideas and approaches. Some podcasts feature stories of innovative practices, inspiring educators to make a positive impact on their students' learning.

▶ Convenient, Time-efficient learning

With podcast, educators can engage in professional development during downtime—whether commuting, exercising, or doing household chores—making it easier to fit learning into busy schedules. The audio format allows for multitasking, enabling educators to continuously learn and grow without sacrificing other responsibilities, making it easier to fit CPD into their daily lives.

8 PODCAST CHANNELS FOR TEACHER CPD



EdSurge



Cult of Pedagogy



Harvard EdCast



Truth for Teachers



Edview 360



Teach Me, Teacher



10 Minutes Teacher



EduVerse PD

LIMITATIONS OF PODCASTS - CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

While podcasts offer numerous benefits for teaching and learning, they also come with several limitations that educators and learners should consider to enhance the effectiveness of podcasts as educational tools, ensuring that they complement and enrich the learning experience rather than hinder it.

✘ Limited interactivity

Podcasts are primarily a one-way medium, which can limit interaction between the presenter and the audience. Unlike in-person lectures or interactive online classes, podcasts do not facilitate real-time discussions, questions, or clarifications. This lack of interactivity can hinder deeper engagement with the content.



Educators can complement podcasts with interactive online forums or social media groups, like Facebook, where listeners can discuss episodes, ask questions, and share insights to enhance learning.

✘ Information overload

With the vast array of podcasts available, learners may experience information overload, making it challenging to discern which resources are relevant or credible. The sheer volume of content can also make it difficult for educators to filter and select high-quality podcasts that align with their professional development goals.



Educators can curate a list of recommended podcasts based on credibility, relevance, and alignment with educational goals. Collaborating with colleagues to identify and share quality resources can also help streamline the selection process.

✘ Potential for bias

Podcasts can reflect the personal biases of the hosts, which may influence the content and perspectives presented. Without careful curation, listeners might be exposed to one-sided viewpoints, limiting their understanding of diverse perspectives and critical issues.



Educators should encourage critical listening practices among students. This can include discussions about the host's perspective, inviting guests with diverse viewpoints, and recommending multiple podcasts on the same topic to provide a well-rounded understanding.

✘ Accessibility issues

Not all podcasts are designed with accessibility in mind, which can create barriers for learners with disabilities. For instance, the absence of transcripts can make it difficult for deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals to access the content.



Educators can advocate for and utilize podcasts that provide transcripts or closed captions. Additionally, creating supplemental materials, such as summaries or discussion guides, can enhance accessibility for all learners.

Not all students or educators have access to the necessary technology or internet connections to listen to podcasts. This can create barriers to access and equity in education.



Collaborate with local organizations such as libraries or community centers to provide access to computers and internet connectivity for students who may not have these resources at home.

✘ Accessibility issues

While many learners find podcasts engaging, others may struggle with motivation, especially if they do not see immediate relevance to their learning goals. Some individuals may find it difficult to remain focused during audio presentations, leading to disengagement.



Educators can enhance motivation by connecting podcast content to real-world applications and encouraging active listening strategies. For example, assigning reflective journaling or discussion activities based on podcast episodes can help reinforce learning and maintain engagement. Combining podcasts with other learning activities or using podcasts as a supplement to other instructional methods can also be a great practice.

Podcasts have emerged as a powerful educational tool, offering a versatile platform for teaching, learning, and professional development. They cater to the characteristics of today's digital learners—providing accessible, flexible, and engaging content that encourages independent exploration and social awareness. As educators and learners navigate the vast landscape of knowledge, the insights gained from podcasts can drive innovation and foster community within the education sector. However, it is important to recognize that podcasts are not a one-size-fits-all solution. They have limitations, and educators must be mindful of these challenges and develop strategies to address them. Only then can embracing the power of podcasts ultimately lead to richer learning experiences, better teaching practices, and a more informed community of lifelong learners.

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- Medialooks. (2023). Broadcasting and the rise of podcasting: An evolution in digital audio. <https://medialooks.com/articles/broadcasting-and-the-rise-of-podcasting-an-evolution-in-digital-audio/>



EduVerse is excited to launch its podcast channel **EduVerse PD Podcast**, an innovative and groundbreaking professional development experience designed to empower educators in an innovative and accessible way.

This podcast series explores **cutting-edge educational trends**, shares **practical classroom techniques**, and dives deep into **EdTech innovations** and the role of **AI in education**. Our goal is to provide you with actionable insights that you can apply immediately in your classrooms, enhancing your teaching and empowering your students.

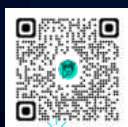
Their dynamic chemistry and vast knowledge make every episode not only informative but incredibly engaging. These AI hosts have been designed to bring the best in education directly to you, making complex ideas accessible and exciting.

What truly sets this series apart? It's the world's first podcast hosted by not one, but **TWO brilliant AI co-hosts, Andy and Liz!**



With his roles as an Edtech specialist and education futurist, Andy is passionate about driving inspiration and sparking engaging conversations on current educational trends and practices.

As Andy's dynamic co-host, Liz brings a fresh perspective and a unique blend of technology and education to our show. Liz's motivational voice, fueled by her passion for learning, captivates our listeners and makes her an indispensable member of our team.



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Welcome to our monthly **Classroom Techniques** column, where you can find practical teaching techniques that can be implemented in your classroom right away. Whether you're a seasoned professional or a new teacher full of enthusiasm, this column is designed to supply you with new ideas every month to improve your classroom performance.



GAMES TO HELP STUDENTS MASTER DESCRIBING THE UNKNOWN



Why is describing without knowing the exact word an important skill?

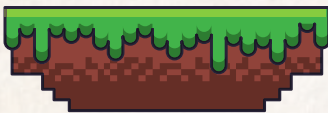
The ability to describe something without knowing its exact name is vital as language evolves with new words. This skill helps students express themselves clearly despite limited vocabulary, enhancing communication, fluency, and creativity. It also promotes adaptability and problem-solving, making it essential for real-life interactions.



1 Mystery object

Materials: A bag filled with random objects.

Activity: Students take turns reaching into the bag, feeling an object without seeing it, and describing it to their classmates, who try to guess what it is. They must use size, shape, texture, or function without naming the object.



Drawing descriptions 2

Materials: Blank paper, pens/pencils.

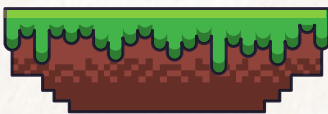
Activity: One student describes a hidden object or image, and the rest of the class draws it based on the description. Afterward, compare drawings with the original image to see how accurate the descriptions were.



3 Pictionary with a twist

Materials: Whiteboard and markers.

Activity: Like classic Pictionary, but the student drawing can only describe the object by using abstract shapes and lines rather than recognizable features. The rest of the group guesses based on their description.



Describe it in action 4

Materials: None

Activity: Students describe an object based on what it does or how it works rather than its appearance (e.g., "It's something you use to talk to people far away" = phone). This focuses more on function than form.



5 20 questions

Materials: None

Activity: Think of a word and write it down secretly on the board with something to cover it, and the rest of the class asks yes/no questions to figure out what it is. The teacher can only answer with "yes" or "no." Reveal the word after the class guesses the word.



Picture It! 6

Materials: A set of images with complex or unusual items.

Activity: Provide students with images and ask them to describe what they see to their peers without naming the objects. Classmates guess what the image represents based on the descriptions.



7 Guess the sound

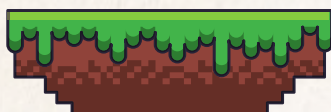
Materials: A sound effects app or audio clips.

Activity: Play a sound (e.g., a cat purring, a door creaking) without showing students the source. Ask them to describe the sound and its possible source without using specific names. For example, instead of saying "cat," they could describe the sound as "soft, repetitive, and something small vibrating."

Password 8

Materials: List of words, whiteboard

Activity: Divide students into two groups. One member from each group stands at the front with their back to the board, where a word is written above their head. Teammates give hints for 20-30 seconds until the person guesses the word or time runs out. The team with the most points wins.



9 Headband guessing game

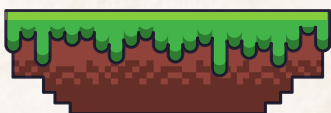
Materials: Headbands or sticky notes with words on them.

Activity: Similar to the Password game, each student wears a headband with a word on it that they cannot see. Their partner must describe the word without saying it directly. The goal is to guess the word as quickly as possible.

DIY sculpture descriptions 10

Materials: Playdough or modeling clay.

Activity: Pair students up. One student sculpts an object (without letting the partner see) and then describes it in detail. The partner must recreate the object based solely on the description.



Some tips for students to express when they don't know an exact word!

Refer to the British Council article for tips on how students can express ideas when they lack the exact vocabulary. Sharing these tips before the game will enhance its effectiveness and save time!

SCAN



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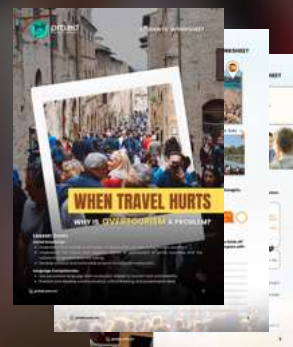
LESSON OF THE MONTH

Welcome to the **Lesson of the Month** column, a dedicated space in our EduVerse newsletter where we bring you insightful and engaging English Language Teaching (ELT) lessons. Whether you're a seasoned ELT professional or a passionate new teacher, this column aims to provide you with a monthly dose of inspiration and practical ideas to enhance your classroom practice.



STUDENTS' WORKSHEET

STUDENTS WORKSHEET (7 PAGES)



WHEN TRAVEL HURTS

WHY IS OVERTOURISM A PROBLEM?

Lesson Goals

Social Knowledge

- Understand the concept and impact of overtourism, as well as the factors causing it.
- Understand the status and negative effects of overtourism in some countries and the actions that governments are taking.
- Develop creative and actionable projects to mitigate overtourism.

Language Competencies

- Use persuasive language and vocabulary related to tourism and sustainability.
- Practice and develop communication, critical thinking, and presentation skills.


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1


TEACHER'S GUIDE (5 PAGES)



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 **TARGET LEARNERS**
Teens & Young Adults
(B1 - B2 level)

 **DURATION**
120 minutes

 **PREPARATION**
Classroom technology
(Smartboard, projector)
Project materials
(large-sized papers, pencils, crayons,...)

Maximize Learning:

THE POWER OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Characteristics and benefits of differentiated instruction in foreign language education

Strategies for personalizing learning to diverse student needs

Sample practices of differentiated instruction in foreign language classrooms



Ms. Gülbin Özdemir

*Award-winning EFL Teacher
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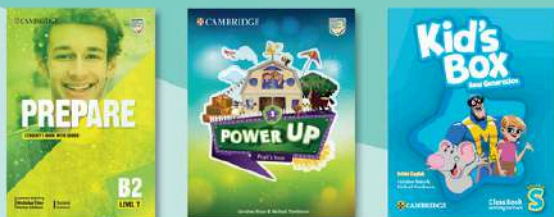
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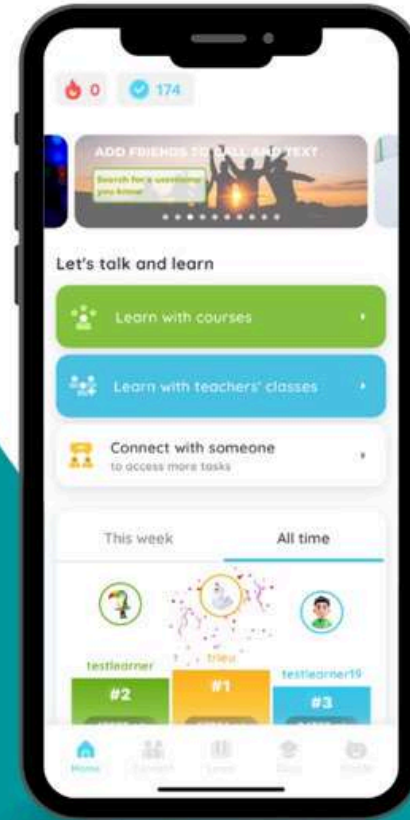
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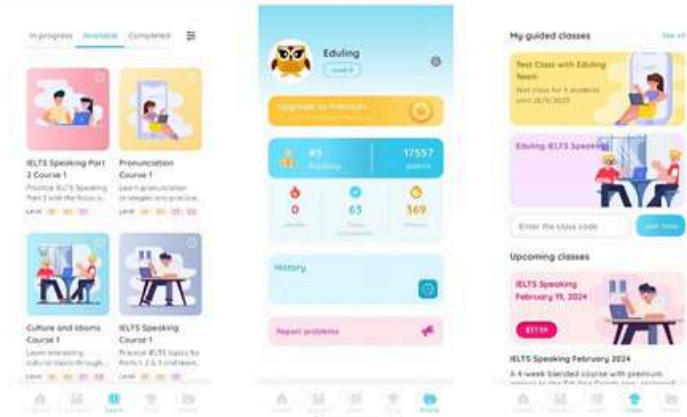
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Our LinkedIn community serves 88,000 teachers daily. We also provide individual lesson resources through TpTs.

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ELT Buzz aims to provide English language teachers around the world with essential information about the profession and inspiration for their own classroom teaching and professional development.

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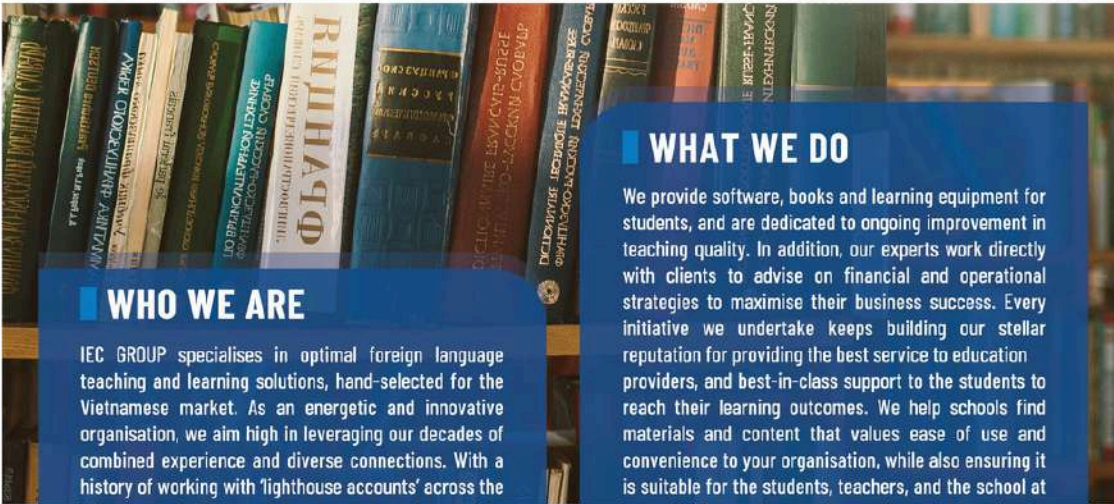


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WHO WE ARE

IEC GROUP specialises in optimal foreign language teaching and learning solutions, hand-selected for the Vietnamese market. As an energetic and innovative organisation, we aim high in leveraging our decades of combined experience and diverse connections. With a history of working with 'lighthouse accounts' across the industry, we help innovate new systems and materials, elevating the industry through enhancing teaching and learning quality.

WHAT WE DO

We provide software, books and learning equipment for students, and are dedicated to ongoing improvement in teaching quality. In addition, our experts work directly with clients to advise on financial and operational strategies to maximise their business success. Every initiative we undertake keeps building our stellar reputation for providing the best service to education providers, and best-in-class support to the students to reach their learning outcomes. We help schools find materials and content that values ease of use and convenience to your organisation, while also ensuring it is suitable for the students, teachers, and the school at large. With our deep understanding of education in Vietnam, we can help you build models that integrate everything together in the process.

OUR HIGHLIGHT PRODUCTS



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VOICES



Emily Bryson; Gary Falzare; Chia Suan Chang; Lewis Lansford; Christian Lee; Daniel Barber; Marek Kicirkowiak



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CONTACT US



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TeachLearnSpeak



Judy-Ann Green

Judy-Ann Green is an award-winning educator and leader whose impact spans across three continents. Recognized globally for her exceptional contributions to education, she has been honored with prestigious accolades such as Teacher of the Year, Outstanding Educator, and the Race to the Top Award for Outstanding Educator. As a distinguished speaker, writer, literacy coach, school visitor, author, curriculum designer, and professional development expert, Judy-Ann Green has proven herself to be a formidable force in education. Her innovative approach and unwavering dedication makes her a prominent figure and a driving force in shaping the future of learning.

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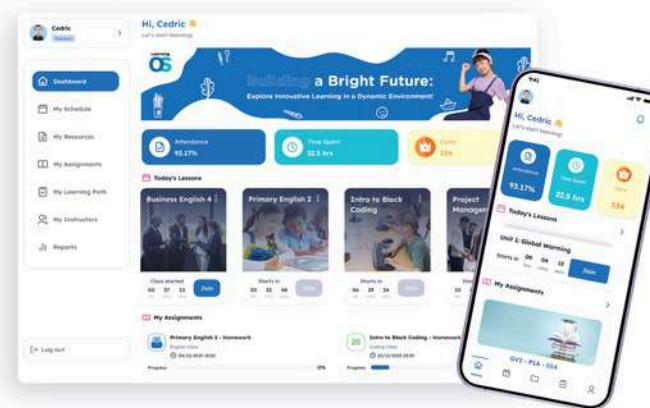
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ABOUT NAM PHUONG CENTER

Nam Phuong English (NPC) was established in 2015, as an educational institution specializing in providing high-quality language teaching programs for students of all levels. With the core values of "heart - mind - prestige", NPC is proud of its professional staff and teachers, working towards sustainable development with the philosophy of "happy learning experiences could only be created by happy teachers".

COURSES

NPC offers English courses for learners from children to teenagers, students, workers, certificate courses, exam preparation (VSTEP, IELTS, TOEIC, Cambridge YLE, ...) and English for Business.

MISSION

Create happy learning experience boundlessly.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The working environment is youthful, enthusiastic, dynamic and friendly. The staff are **qualified, highly creative** and **open-minded**. Support and create conditions for staff to improve their language and professional skills. Always listen to feedback and opinions from staff.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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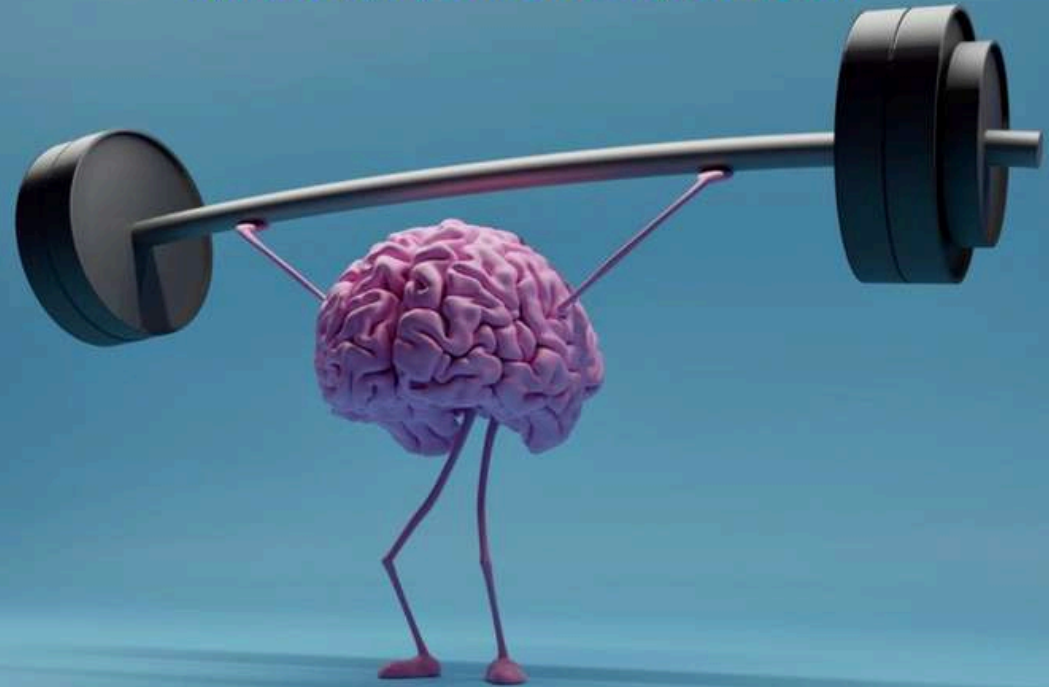
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TYPICAL PARTNERS



SIGNATURE PRODUCTS

KIDSENGLISH & LANGUAGE HUB

are two of Vietec's most groundbreaking education solutions. These strategic projects are implemented in synchronization, providing the best English learning opportunity for learners throughout Vietnam, including areas with limitations in technology and human resources.



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- One of the first three English programs approved by the Vietnamese MOET.
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- Exclusive multimedia learning materials
- Continuous lesson through and through from in-class learning to in-app self-reviewing.
- Pronunciation practice with AI.

Language Hub

- **LEARNING CONTENT:** The digitalized version of the copyrighted American Language Hub series from Macmillan Education.
- **PLATFORM:** A complete system that includes both content and learning management, developed by Vietec.
- **APP:** An exclusive mobile learning app for students.
- **LATEST TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS:** AI, Big data, cloud computing systems, and so many more.

1 focal theme

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CMS
CONTENT
MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM



LMS
LEARNING
MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM

MLA
MOBILE LEARNING APP

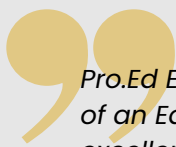
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