

"Career-change teachers are a huge benefit to schools, bringing a wealth of industry experience and confidence. It's brilliant news that schools all over England have access to Now Teachers."

**Sir Mufti Hamid Patel,
Chief Executive
Star Academies**

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This edition of Now Teaching and many more useful resources are available to you in the Now Teach Staff Room.

Visit: nowteach.org.uk/qts-staff-room

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NOW TEACHING

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**How career change
changed me**

Spotlight on: mental health

**The future of flexible
working in schools**

Welcome
to your
Network



NOWTEACH **NOWTEACH**



Contents

Welcome to Now Teaching	3	Cohort conversation	12-13
Dates for your diary	4	Network voice	14-17
NT Annual Conference	5	Partner perspective	18-19
NT Top 10: Getting ready for September	6	EdHistory: from post-war to the present:	20
Now what?	7	Flexible Teacher Talent: The future of flexible working in schools	21
How career-change changed me	8	Back to school!	
Spotlight on: mental health	9	What to do before your first day	22
Starting again	10	Day in the life	23
Best part of the job!			
NT Recruitment Team and you	11		

WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH



Whatsapp: We have groups for all cohorts, Subject Hubs and Parenting. If there's anything else you'd like to see, contact your Programme Manager.



Website: You can find resources and recordings of previous sessions in our online Staff Room, just go to nowteach.org.uk and search "staff room".



Tent: Sign up to our networking platform Tent to connect with your fellow Now Teachers. <https://nowteachnetwork.tent.software/login>

If you have any issues accessing Tent, please contact rob.lloyd-jones@nowteach.org



Social Media: Connect with us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter.



Book a call: Remember to book a call with your Programme Manager, we're keen to support you with the tricky things but also to celebrate your achievements both big and small.

A letter from your Network Steering Committee

Welcome to Now Teaching!

Whether you're starting in school in September, have been with us since the very beginning of Now Teach, or are somewhere in between, you're a member of the largest community of career-changers. And the Now Teach Network is a network for life.

We want to see the Network be a member-led and owned community, where we support each other to thrive as career-changers in teaching, using our collective voice, skills, experiences, and networks to improve practices at school for students, teachers, parents, and school leaders alike.

Earlier this year, the Now Teach team asked us to form the first Network Steering Committee, to take up the challenge of helping to build this Network. We said yes!

As your Network Steering Committee, our purpose is twofold;

1. To serve as a conduit for the experiences and preferences of Network members. This means we'll be engaged in listening to and learning from you
2. To advocate for the power of the Network, helping to drive engagement

Between us, we represent different cohort years, subjects, geographical areas and experiences. We're looking forward to meeting you over the year, at events, and at the forthcoming Now Teach Annual Conference on August 24th. You can read more about what's coming up at Now Teach on pages 4 and 5.

Now Teaching is a space for us to share our experiences, learn from each other, explore the power of our Network and hear from industry experts on education and career-change.

As your minds turn to September, remember that we, your Network and the Now Teach team are all here to support you. Now Teach is a young organisation, but there's strength in our numbers. We're looking forward to meeting you soon. Good luck!

Anne-Marie, Clare, David, Jo, Macrui, Matt, Polis and Wendy.

 **Got ideas about your Network? Get in touch:** network@nowteach.org.uk

THE NETWORK VISION AS CREATED BY NOW TEACHERS:

The Now Teach Network is a community of teachers who bring collective skills and experiences from a diverse range of sectors into schools and classrooms. We are brought together by Now Teach, a charity

which exists to attract and recruit experienced people to change career and stay in teaching. We strive to augment young people's access to superb education and inspire them through our experiences of and

exposure to the real world. We want to help them to be ready for work and life after school. We want to bring our understanding of other workplace practices to the education sector to enrich and support the school system.

AS THE NETWORK TOGETHER WE:

- ▲ Enable and support one another to thrive as career-changers in our teaching and to navigate our new lives in schools and classrooms; we will celebrate, commiserate, telling our stories and building supportive relationships.
- ▲ Solve problems together, pool what we learn - our ideas and practices - to help each other become the best teachers possible.
- ▲ Work together to fully harness our skills, experiences, and networks from our old careers to our new ones for the benefit of the students who need it most.
- ▲ Use our collective voice, skills, experiences, and networks to improve workplace practices at school for teachers, parents, and school leaders alike.

Dates for your diary

Whatever your cohort year, we have a packed schedule of events for you this term. Pens at the ready - what's coming up at Now Teach?

AUTUMN TERM

QTS - these events are for our incoming cohort 2022, designed to support you in your first year of training.

ECF - these events are for cohort 2021, designed to complement the Early Career Framework and support you in your first year as a qualified teacher.

Network - these events are for all Now Teachers and will focus on connection, collaboration and harnessing your collective impact as career-changers, in line with the Network vision.

Our **core** events address key areas of development we know are important to ensure career-changers become excellent teachers.

Our **extra** events will cover a particular topic in more detail.

Our **surgeries** are designed to be led by teacher issues. Classroom experts will be on standby to offer solutions and strategies.

Our **hubs** will allow for collaboration between teachers with a common interest, e.g. subject area.

September:

15th QTS: Teach Meet (core): Welcome to Teaching

Welcome to your new career, the Now Teach Network and the world of education.

21st ECF: Teach Meet (core): Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

A session on teaching students with a wide range of needs.

26th Network (surgeries): Classroom Surgery 1

Bring your questions and challenges for discussion.

October:

6th QTS and ECF: Teach Meet (extra): Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Building inclusive classrooms.

11th Network (surgeries): Classroom Surgery 2

November:

3rd QTS: Teach Meet (extra): Wellbeing

Join Kat Howard, author of *Stop Talking about Wellbeing: A Pragmatic Approach to Teacher Workload* for a session filled with practical advice for protecting your wellbeing. Read more about Kat's work on page 10.

15th QTS: Teach Meet (extra): Behaviour

Approaching behaviour in your new careers.

19th Network (surgeries): Classroom Surgery 3

30th ECF (core): Workload and Wellbeing

With one year under your belt already, looking after your wellbeing can slip to the back of your mind. Join us for a session on managing your workload and wellbeing in your second year and beyond.

December:

1st Network (hubs): Subject

Spend time with a subject specialist and your fellow subject Now Teachers.

7th Network (extra): Christmas Social

Join your Network for a bite to eat and a drink as we celebrate the end of term.



For future events, keep an eye on your emails for our monthly round ups. Or reach out to us at events@nowteach.org.uk

NOW TEACHING

Conference

We love bringing experienced, successful people into schools but on 24th August, our focus will be on bringing the Network together ahead of the start of term.

QTS		ECF		Network	
10:00	Registration and refreshments				
10:30	Welcome to Now Teach Katie Waldegrave MBE & Lucy Kellaway OBE				
10:45	What to expect in your first year Terri Slater				
11:45 - 12:00	Lunch	Registration and lunch			
13:00	Managing relationships and feedback Kat Howard, Dwain Brandy Haili Hughes and Anne-Marie Lawlor (Now Teacher)	What to Expect in ECF Cat Scutt MBE, Diane Klusch (Now Teacher), Carol Simpson (Now Teacher)		Network Masterclass	
14:00	Break				
14:15	How to Thrive: Wellbeing and time management Dr Emma Kell, Vincent Neate (Now Teacher) & Katie Norris (Now Teacher)	Network Knowledge Chris Wilson, Oli de Botton, Katie Waldegrave, and Network SteerCo			
15:15	Break				
15:30	Ask Me Anything Layla Paydar (Now Teacher), Glenn Evans (Now Teacher). Chaired by David Butler (Now Teacher)	Network Knowledge cont			
16:30	Break				
16:45	Welcome to the Network Katie Waldegrave and Network Steering Committee				
17:00	Keynote with Doug Lemov				
17:50	Closing				
18:00 - 20:00	Social with keynote speaker Mouhssin Ismail				

The Now Teach Annual Conference will welcome our new cohort of trainees with a focus on preparing for your training year, managing relationships, wellbeing and workload. It's also an opportunity to bring together our newly qualified Now Teachers and those in the Network who have been teaching for 3+ years, to think big about the future of a member-led network and your collective impact.

We're thrilled to be welcoming some of education's most influential people including Dr Emma Kell, Kat Howard, Cat Scutt MBE, Chris Wilson and an extended keynote from Doug Lemov. We want you leave inspired and prepared for September, and a reminder that you're not alone - the Network is here to support you, alongside your Programme Manager.

Wednesday 24th August - Mary Ward House, London. Take a look at the schedule below.



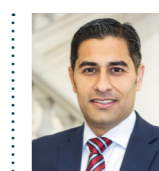
Cat Scutt MBE is Director of Education and Research at

the Chartered College of Teaching. In addition, Cat has been a member of the Department for Education's Teacher Career Progression Expert Group and EdTech Leadership Group. In 2021 Cat received an MBE for services to education.



Dr Emma Kell has over 20 years' experience as a teacher

and leader in UK secondary schools and is a qualified Performance Coach. Emma has completed a doctorate on teacher well-being and parenting and is the author of *How To Survive in Teaching*.



Mouhssin Ismail is the Principal of Newham Collegiate

Sixth Form, set up in East London to offer Outstanding A-level provision. The school currently sends on average 95% of its students to Russell Group Universities. Mouhssin is also a career-changer, having started his professional career as a Lawyer with Norton Rose Fullbright.



Doug Lemov is author of *Teach Like a Champion*. The book is now in

its 3.0 edition and has been translated into multiple languages. He also trains educators via Uncommon Schools a nonprofit that manages public K-12 charter schools in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York.

NOW TEACHING

THE NT TOP 10:

Getting ready for September

The first few weeks in school can be a shock to the system - whether you're stepping foot in the classroom for the first time or returning from the summer break. How do Network Now Teachers set themselves up for success?



Catherine Sampson, Cohort 2019: Make life's chores easier - arrange for a grocery delivery for instance, make sure you always have a freezer full of food so there's always something to eat without too much work.

Charles Allen, Cohort 2021: To trainees, focus on your teaching and your learning. With your experience you will see loads of possible process improvements and be left thinking, "why are things done like this?" Don't get involved. This year is about you!



Emma Caplin, Cohort 2019: Always have a starter or settler as it gives students something to do immediately, but more importantly gives YOU time to set up PowerPoint, take the register and get the resources ready. Especially useful when moving classrooms all day!

Diana Klusch, Cohort 2019: Make sure that you are on friendly terms with the support staff in school (IT, facilities, cleaners, reception). A bottle of wine or a box of chocolate or biscuits and a nice word go a long way. You will always need them and sometimes they can be a life saver.



Simon Carnegie, Cohort 2017: However long you've been teaching, get your timetable, print it out in colour, credit card size, laminate it and hang it on your lanyard. Takes a while but makes me feel like I have things under control. And gets envious glances from colleagues (or at least I think they are envious!)

Emma Barker, Cohort 2017: If teaching now - get your resources tidy and into folders - this alone will help you feel in control. You don't have to work on the content - just have your laptop tidied.



Zed Holmes, Cohort 2018: My top tip is to stay fit. Eat healthily, work out, sleep well and get in the best shape of your life because come September you will need every ounce of your energy to just keep your head above water!

Roger Crouch, Cohort 2021: Don't be a perfectionist when it comes to lesson planning: focus on how you want students to progress within the lesson.



Anki Holden, Cohort 2021: If you're training, don't compare yourself to other trainees. Some things will come naturally to others but not to you, and vice versa. Teaching is one of those things that you get better at the more you do it and experience can't be faked or made up. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you feel you're drowning and want to give up. You've got this.

Ricardo Pineiro Vicente, Cohort 2020: Prioritise having very clear and timely entry and exit routines in the classroom. For entry: my students walk in silence to their desk, open their books and work on their starter. For exit: my students need to pack away in silence, stand up behind their chairs and leave row by row. These routines facilitate teaching and learning. ●

Now what?

Your teaching, classroom and career-change dilemmas answered.



Senior Programme Manager, **Charlie Higgins**, and Programme Manager, **Joseph Farmer**, talk through some common first term problems.



"I'm going into school for the first time in September. How will I remember everything and how to be a good teacher?"

Charlie: You won't! At least not at first. And that's okay. Try to avoid perfectionism or setting yourself up to fail by having too high expectations of yourself. There's an awful lot to learn and navigate, so take it one bit at a time, ask lots of questions and get comfortable with getting things wrong. You'll get such a lot of feedback in that first year from lesson observations. Everyone will have an opinion on what you're doing. So, you need to be okay with receiving feedback, acting on it and making changes.

Joseph: Yes 100% - it's important to hold your ideas lightly when you go into a school. That doesn't mean hold your principles lightly, but your preconceptions of what teaching would be like. Allow yourself to be guided by feedback.

Also, if you can make a mistake, but not let that mistake throw you, your students and colleagues will always respond well. When I first started teaching, I once walked into a classroom I thought was empty and found a class I wasn't expecting to see! So, I've definitely got things wrong, but if you approach these mistakes with

"No one is expecting you to be phenomenal all the time because no teacher is."

a sense of humour and can get things back on track, you'll probably get to grips with things a lot faster than if you strive for perfection every time.

"I'm worried about flying solo in my ECT year. I've only just got to grips with teaching someone else's classes and now I'm going to have my own. It seems like a big jump from last year."

Charlie: It's important to remember that you've been recruited by your school because you have the potential to be a brilliant teacher! No one is expecting you to be phenomenal all the time because no teacher is. Everyone has ups and downs and challenges, but fundamentally, you're there because your senior leadership team believe in you. You've got lots of tools in your backpack from last year and from your previous career you can draw on too.

Joseph: I think there's also a lot to be said for having your own class! You get to guide the culture from

day one, set your expectations and build relationships, rather than trying to fit into someone else's classroom. You'll probably find that things are even smoother than last year. And if they aren't at first, remember it's in everyone's interest for you to succeed. There's a lot of support available to you.

Charlie: And there's no shame in asking for help! Reach out to your school, speak to your mentor, speak to other Now Teachers. Speak to us. We can offer coaching as well, from wellbeing to careers coaching.

"I've been teaching for 5 years now; I'm wondering what's next? I don't really want to move up in the traditional sense, but I feel I'm stagnating. I sometimes find it hard to relate to younger colleagues keen on climbing the ladder."

Joseph: As an aside, often when you speak to teachers who are climbing the ladder, they'll tell you they spend less time actually teaching, which is why most people get into the job in the first place!

If you feel you're stagnating, speak to your school about opportunities for learning. Maybe there's an opportunity for you to take on teaching another subject or to do something whole school? Your Programme Manager can also arrange career coaching too as part of our support for you.

Charlie: Yes, and you could take a look at the new specialist and leadership NPQs. As our Network grows, get in touch with the Steering Committee about how you can share your experience with others, run sessions on things you've done in school or want to do amongst critical friends.

The question around younger colleagues is an interesting one. As is school culture generally. It can often be about what school is the best fit for you. I'd suggest accessing some of our coaching offers to help you unpack that, and to think about relationships with others, how you manage those and the type of school environment that you would thrive in. ●

How career-change changed me

In her own words and those of her colleagues and family, how has Jo's life changed since training to teach?



Jo Young, English, cohort 2020, was recently awarded a bronze Pearson National Teaching Award for "Outstanding New Teacher of the Year"

The main thing is how much happier I am. I feel job satisfaction in the real sense of the word. It can be tiring, it can be hard work, sometimes it can even be upsetting. At the end of the day though, I genuinely do go home thinking "I've done something meaningful and worthwhile today." And I didn't feel that in any other career I've had.

This will probably surprise people, but my work-life balance has changed for the better! When I worked in Egyptology, I would get swept up in research and be working until 11 at night. When I worked in marketing, there was always more that could be done, and because you're working to profit margins, it can feel as though the work never stops. Emailing clients on weekends, on the way to the shops, or even when you're ill. That just doesn't happen now. I feel much more autonomous in that I manage my own workload. It's my choice whether I spend some time chatting to colleagues in the staffroom and then have to work a bit of the evening, or whether I really crack on in the day and then spend time

with my daughter in the evening.

I do think about work in terms of, how will I get that point across or what should I do in that lesson? But I don't take it home in the same way I used to. Of course, I think about my students outside of school and I hope they're okay, but it's just not the same as when you're in an industry worrying about whether you're going to get promoted or if a client's happy or not. I can leave some of my work at work, which is really nice.

Before I started, I worried that I would find it hard to relate to 13 and 14 year olds. And that's something that's surprised me a huge amount. I was in the park the other day, and a group of boys were being a bit boisterous, nothing terrible, just being silly, but I could see they were making another child a bit uncomfortable. So, I went over and had a little chat, and asked them to tone it down. My friend couldn't believe it! And a year ago, I wouldn't have done that, I would have wanted to, but I wouldn't have had the guts. Now I know that teenagers aren't scary at all, they're just people, like you and me, trying to find their way in the world. ●

THEY SAY...

Alex (Jo's daughter, age 8):

"You are happier now and you work hard but you smile about it. And you tell me about school which makes me look forward to secondary school."

Angus (Jo's husband):

"Changing careers has allowed Jo to find a happier balance between work and family life. She isn't less stressed (secondary kids are no picnic!) but the rhythm of teaching suits her better and she finds a job well done more satisfying personally than she did in corporate life."

Vickie (Jo's mentor and Head of Department):

"Teaching hasn't changed Jo; she's brought who she is to teaching. Which is a great thing!"

Larayne (Jo's mum, age unspecified!):

"You have found your niche, and you sound more content than you ever have."

SPOTLIGHT ON: mental health

We're focusing on mental health this term. Where can you develop your knowledge to support your students' mental health, and how should you focus on your own as you progress through the term?

Now Teach Mental Health Hubs

Vincent Neate, maths, cohort 2019, facilitated Now Teach's first mental health hubs last term. Here, he reflects on the experience so far and invites you to sign up next year.

"The mental health hubs came about after a group of us did some "time to think" training with Place2Be and wanted to carry on the conversation. We wanted to develop an increased awareness of student mental health and make sure we were creating an environment in our classrooms that would make things better, not worse, for them. We've only been piloting the hubs so far, but feedback from attendees has been really positive. We meet for an hour once a month, Zoom, and have a structured conversation about student mental health.

We share ideas and resources, or we might talk through a particular situation anonymously and ask for advice. When you train to be a teacher, there's a lot of academic content about mental health in schools, but often once you get into the classroom it's all forgotten. We're trying to focus on practical experience, exploring where things have gone well and where they haven't and what we can learn from both situations.

We're not a group of mental health experts and we don't pretend to be – but we've all found there to be a huge benefit to sharing experiences in confidence with colleagues. It's a cliché, but a problem shared and all that!

We'll be re-starting the hubs again from September and would love more participants – it's on a first come, first served basis, and we limit the numbers so we can have a really engaging discussion. If you'd like to join us, please let Caroline know at:

caroline.cook@nowteach.org.uk"

Looking after your own mental health

Programme Manager, Caroline Cook, shares her top tips:

Make time to do things that nourish you. Whether that's reading a book, making it to the pub with colleagues or friends on a Friday after work, going for a walk or attending your child's sports day, it's important to do things that make you feel good.

Don't be afraid to say no to taking on extra responsibilities. It's important to protect your time and therefore your wellbeing, as Kat Howard says in her article on p10: "No one is going to judge you for saying you don't have time!"

Find an ally in school, or outside, but someone who you can be totally candid with about how you're feeling – someone you can share the whole truth with, that can also be your Programme Manager, they've heard from lots of Now Teachers over the years. There will be tough days, but if you've got someone you can talk to about how you're feeling, they'll become a lot more manageable.

One of the ways we're able to support you is through connecting you to a wellbeing coach. If you're beginning to feel overwhelmed, reach out to us and we can put you in touch. When you're immersed in the day to day of teaching, it can be easy to feel burdened by the number of tasks in front of you. We can help you with prioritisation.

And finally, celebrate the small wins! You're starting something totally new to you, anytime it goes well is a cause for celebration. ●

VINCENT AND CAROLINE'S RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Place2Be - A children's mental health charity with 25 years of experience. Lots of resources and opportunities for training. <https://www.place2be.org.uk/>

Teen Tips - Take a look at their wellbeing hub, webinars and workshops. <https://teentips.co.uk>

Education Support - The only UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff. <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>



Kat Howard, Director of the Teaching School Hub for the David Ross Educational Trust, on her career change from finance to teaching.

“You don’t have to say yes to everything!”

Before teaching, I worked for the Royal Bank of Scotland Group as Area Director for the North West. I was involved in the opening of their flagship branch in Manchester and had strategic oversight of eight branches in the region. I worked closely with HR to lead the recruitment and retention strategy across the organisation.

But after seven years in finance, I started to feel a bit jaded. When you’re working for a private organisation, ultimately, you’re working to create profit for them, and I didn’t find that very rewarding. I started volunteering with an organisation called “Right to Read”, going into primary schools to support in-school reading. And it quickly became the best part of my week. I left finance, took a year out to travel and then attended Warwick University to train to be an English teacher. Having attended a school that had pretty low expectations around both curriculum and behaviour, I wanted to be a part of something that would challenge the disadvantage gap. It shouldn’t be a lottery for children in terms of where they go to school.

Now, I’m the Director of a Teaching School Hub in North and North East Lincolnshire. These hubs are designed to provide a “golden thread of professional development for teachers and leaders”. We do a lot of thinking about the point of induction. For early career teachers,

it’s that two-year induction period, but we also think about leadership, developing specialist expertise and ongoing training for teachers.

When I first came into teaching, as an English newly qualified teacher and then in leadership roles, there was synergy between those roles and my role in finance. Now, I almost feel like I’m back where I started. A great deal

“My advice to Now Teachers, at whatever stage of their careers, would be to focus on mastering your classroom practice.”

of what I do is support leaders to select the right professional development for their staff and their school’s priorities. If we want to think about the retention crisis, then we need to focus on continued professional development. That way, we won’t just be recruiting great people in year one, but supporting them to continually develop throughout their careers.

Something that surprised me about teaching, is how hierarchical schools are. It takes a while to get to grips with when you’ll feel autonomy in the classroom, and where effective decisions are going to be made by school leaders that may influence your own classroom practice.

I wasn’t expecting the fluctuations of the year either. If you speak to a teacher in September, they’ll be having a completely different experience than if you spoke to them in June. It’s so important to develop an awareness of this as a teacher. When I worked in finance, if I’d finished a big project, I might book a Monday off and have a spa day. Obviously, you can’t do that in teaching! It’s much more about anticipating workload and pinch points and being aware of your own energy levels. And the longer you teach, you become more aware that you don’t have to say yes to everything! Nobody’s going to judge you for saying, “you know what? I don’t have time.”

My advice to Now Teachers, at whatever stage of their careers, would be to focus on mastering your classroom practice. I wasn’t the most effective English teacher I could be until the third or fourth time round of teaching a particular text or a unit. That’s when you really understand how something lands in the classroom.

Take some time to find the school that’s right for you too. Think about whether you’re in a school that aligns with what you think the purpose of education is. Is it to deliver a highly academic curriculum? Are you looking for somewhere that’s really going to develop student experience? Everybody’s trying to do the same thing in different ways, it’s about finding the right fit for you. So, make time to go to schools, talk to teachers, to students and try different school settings. Make sure you’re in a position where you can make an informed choice about your next steps. ●

Kat is the author of the bestselling book [Stop talking About Wellbeing: A Pragmatic Approach to Teacher Workload](#). Join her in November for a [Teach Meet on wellbeing](#).

Find Kat at www.saysmiss.wordpress.com and on Twitter [@saysmiss](https://twitter.com/saysmiss).

“It’s one of the best parts of the job!”

WORDS: AMI GOODALL



Garry Honey, science, Cohort 2022, will be training to teach in September. Here, Now Teaching catches up with Garry and NT Recruitment Advisor Jo Lane. For the Recruitment Team, it’s more than a numbers game. But how do we work with our Now Teachers? And what’s their experience of working with us?

Garry, why did you decide to change career?

Garry: I used to work as a neuroscientist. My area was understanding brain function to develop drugs for people with psychiatric conditions and I loved it. But when I turned 50, after 30 years in one job, I wanted a change. I wanted something with immediate impact. The most important job I’ve ever done is being a parent to two wonderful kids. I was very much involved in their education at home. I’m combining my love of science and with my love of teaching, so this next step seemed the obvious choice.

Jo, what’s your favourite part of the recruitment process?

Jo: Hearing stories like Garry’s! I think all of us in Recruitment love hearing why people want to retrain. So many of our candidates want to give something back, and to make a difference to the lives of young people. That’s something I really believe in as well.

I’ve only ever worked in education, so when I see people with such rich backgrounds, different experiences and skill sets entering the teaching profession it’s exciting! It makes me think about the impact they’re going to have on their students. It’s one of the best parts of the job.

Garry, was there anything in particular that Jo helped you with?

Garry: The personal statement and the interview. I’ve prepared countless presentations over the years, but there were two key differences here. In an industry presentation you’re disseminating information, and hopefully giving the company confidence that you know what you’re talking about! It’s very different in teaching, where you’re transferring knowledge. In the classroom, you need to be sure that your audience has learned something not just passively absorbed information. The other difference is the audience; children are bringing a lot less context and prior knowledge to the lesson! Jo helped me to communicate in this very different style than I was used to.

Jo, what do you like about preparing people for school interviews?

Jo: I love it when people are asked to deliver a presentation or a lesson. I enjoy coaching them through the process on a 1 to 1 basis. As Garry said, I can help candidates see how presenting in front of a class is different from presenting in a previous career and give specific feedback.

Garry, is there anything about starting to teach that you’re apprehensive about?

Garry: I don’t know if I’ll be good at this. I hope so, and I’ve invested a lot of time and effort to make sure I will be. But this is a job where if I don’t perform well, it’s not just me that will feel the consequences, but the kids too! Teaching isn’t something you do on a whim, and I have done a lot of preparation. But given the implications of failing, I think it’s normal to feel a little apprehensive.

Jo: That’s natural but I’m confident you’re going to do really well if your interview presentation was anything to go off!

What are you most looking forward to?

Teaching kids who feel education isn’t for them. There are kids who will have strong parental support, are motivated to learn, and able to do so. For them, even if I’m an average or even terrible teacher, they’ll thrive. I’ll feel a real sense of accomplishment and impact if I can get through to the other kids, the ones with more challenging backgrounds or attitudes to education.

Garry, what would you say is the biggest benefit of Now Teach?

Garry: You know, initially this was just me thinking, should I? Should I become a teacher? I’ve really no idea! Without Now Teach I’d be sending an application out into the ether and thinking, is this appropriate? Are they going to laugh and say “you’re kidding me, right? You do realise you’re over 50, you know?” To be able to find a whole community of people who also thought that it would be a good idea was validating! And then there’s that support network that’s going to help guide you through it, not just through the application, but afterwards too. ●

Know someone else interested in career-change? Tell them to email Now Teach Career-Change Advisor Rachael Kaykobad at rachael.kaykobad@nowteach.org.uk

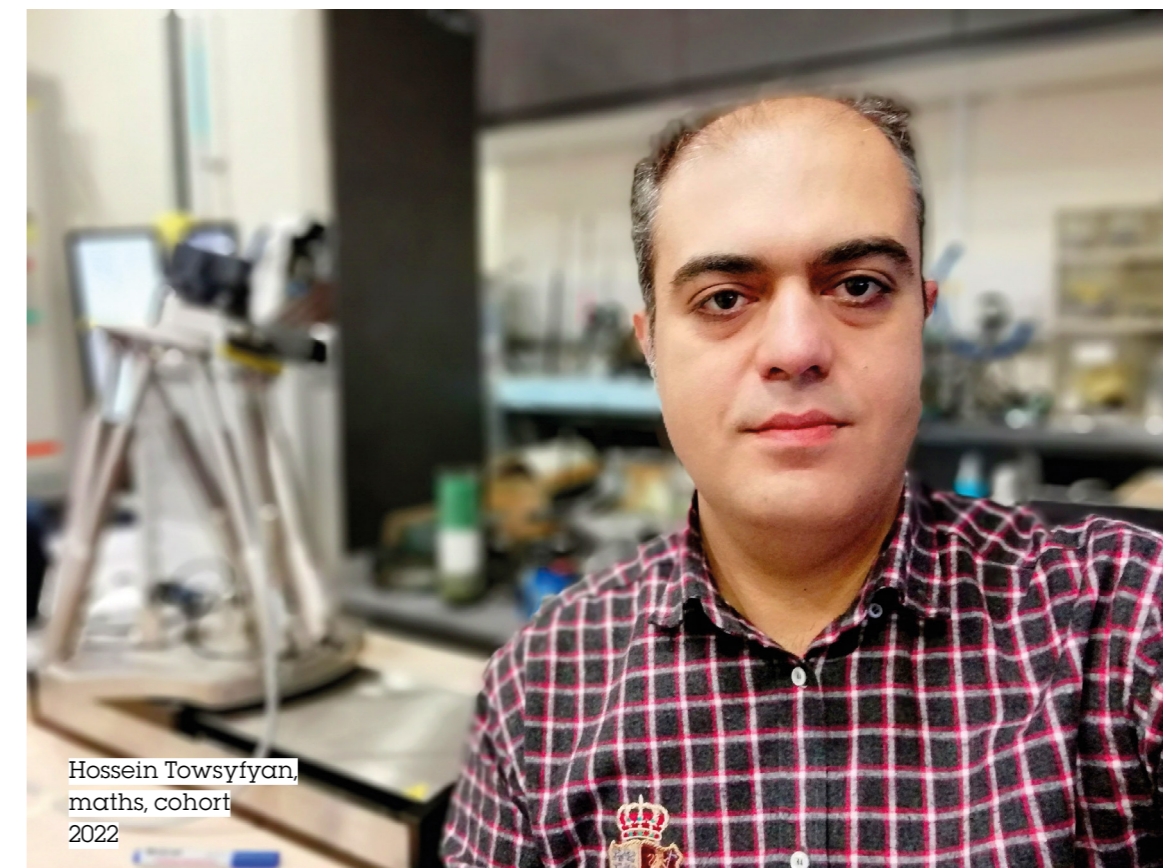
A cohort conversation

“Try not to sweat the small stuff!”

WORDS: LARA STANLEY



Jonathan Shaw,
physics, cohort
2017



Hossein Towsyfyian,
maths, cohort
2022

Hossein Towsyfyian worked as a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Southampton before deciding to train to teach earlier this year. He'll be starting a PGCE in Leeds in September. Jonathan Shaw, on the other hand, made the leap when Now Teach first started, almost five years ago. He trained in London with Ark Teacher Training and now teaches physics, at a maths and physics specialist college. Here, the two Now Teachers get to know each other and discuss their plans for next year.

Why did you decide to change career?

Jonathan: In 2017, I was running a commercial property company, which I still run two days a week, but I had sold another business, and I was slightly underemployed. I was probably stretching 3-4 days' work into 5 days. I was a bit bored if I'm honest.

I read Lucy Kellaway's article in the Financial Times, saying she was leaving to train to teach and inviting people to come and join her. Remembering all those relatives over the years who'd said I would make a good teacher, I filled in the Now Teach form. Seemingly before I knew it, I'd had two interviews and was offered a place training with Ark. At the time, I thought I'd give it a year and see where I ended up. Now it's 2022, and I'm still here!

Hossein: I'll have to go back a couple of decades... My love of maths started with my dad, who was a maths teacher – I grew up reading maths books and was really surrounded by it. I took this forward into my degrees, both of which were in mechanical engineering. I moved to the UK in 2013

and did a PhD which I loved, followed by more research. After a while though, I felt something was missing. I wanted to do something fresh, with more tangible impact in my daily life. Considering I had taught a little before and my family background, I decided it was time to retrain.

Jonathan: That love of a subject really resonates with me and has been something that's surprised me about teaching! I did a physics degree, but by the time I'd graduated, had fallen out of love with it. But going back into school, I've remembered why I liked it in the first place. I've really enjoyed the opportunity to try and enthuse a new generation about physics. Hossein, you'll have all this to look forward to!

And what are you both looking forward to about September?

Hossein: I'm really excited to actually go into school and start my first placement! I don't know what to expect really or how those first weeks will look, but I can't wait.

Jonathan: Before we even get there, I'm really looking forward to A-Level results day. Because of Covid, this will be the first class I've seen through to a public exam, so I'm very keen to see how they do and hopeful that they get the results they're looking for. And then in September, I'm looking forward to a slightly easier year than last year! This is my second year at my new(ish) school, and I'm looking forward to doing it all again – but hopefully without the inevitable mistakes that you'll make in your first year anywhere.

Hossein, how do you think your previous career is going to influence who you are as a teacher?

Hossein: Well, I have a degree in engineering, and most of my studies have been related to it. So, I think that deep subject knowledge is going to help me massively. I really want to inspire people to love maths. More than that though, I have worked with so many different people, in lots of different settings, and I hope to use those experiences to benefit my pupils. I can tell them about job opportunities, university applications maybe even point them in the direction of work experience opportunities. I want to encourage my students to follow their talents, and really follow what they love in their futures.

Jonathan, how has your life changed since changing career?

Jonathan: I'm a happier person, I'm a more fulfilled person and I'm just more engaged. I'm not coasting anymore without learning very much. I became a beginner at something, maybe I should stop calling myself a beginner soon, but I do still feel like one! It's been a huge thrill though, to start learning again. I recently changed schools too, to kind of “up” the level again. Now I only teach A-Level, which is a huge challenge, but an invigorating one.

Hossein: I'm keen to teach A Level eventually too – Jonathan, do you think there's anything I can do in my training year to put myself in a good position for that?

Jonathan: There's no easy answer here but I think it

definitely helps if you're teaching a shortage subject or if you'd be up for teaching one as your second subject? Physics teachers are in high demand, and I bet with your mechanical engineering background, you could take that on as well.

Otherwise, ask your school to teach some higher levels in your training year, volunteer to do some A-Level intervention session or maybe try some high-level tutoring too. I'd caveat that though with a warning – be aware of your bandwidth! You don't want to take too much on, especially in that first year.

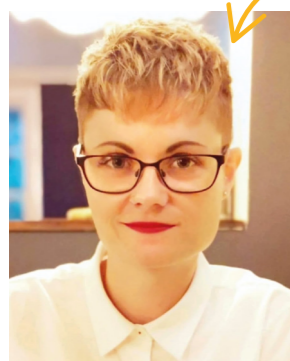
Jonathan, any other advice for Hossein as he enters his first year in school?

Hossein: Yes please – anything is welcome!

Jonathan: Something that's really stuck with me from my training year is the idea of cognitive overload. When you're learning something, there comes a point when your working memory is overloaded and you can't remember anything else. In teaching, that can happen very fast. There's so much being thrown at you, teacher names, student names, school rules, how technology works and where things are in the building. You can't take it all in and you will forget half of it. I remember feeling completely overwhelmed. My advice is to accept that feeling! Know that it's coming, realise that most things can wait. Try not to sweat the small stuff.

It's a bit like driving – when you first start get in a manual car, you think you'll never be able to manage everything, but it soon becomes second nature. Stressing about the little things isn't going to help, and the longer you do it, the more things will fall into place. ●

“I’ve been able to blossom - I couldn’t do that in the British Army anymore”



Ash Percival-Borley, history, Cohort 2021, on how her career in the Army has shaped her as a teacher and her experience of being in school so far.

AS TOLD TO LARA STANLEY

After joining the British Army at 19 years old, Ash served in the Royal Army Medical Corps for 13 years. In 2021, Ash left the military and trained to teach history, a subject she has loved since childhood.

I had a really varied career in the Army and feel incredibly lucky to have done what I did. I worked with so many different people, from the Italian Airborne Division to the Afghan National Army. But after 13 years of going here, there, and everywhere, I was looking for a bit of stability.

Towards the end of my army career, I took on a variety of instructor roles, from being a chemical warfare instructor to a weapons instructor, to training recruits. I was the “scary” person taking civilians and making them into soldiers within three months as part of the Common Military Syllabus, (basic training!) Sometimes I pull that persona out in the classroom – but not often, thankfully!

It was these roles that made me think teaching should be my next move. As well as instructing my recruits, I was looking after them pastorally too. I felt a huge responsibility towards them, to make sure that not only were they good soldiers, but good people too. I would get emotional at their final pass off parades; they’d be in their smartest uniforms, introducing me to their parents and talking about what I’d taught them. I think I fell in love with teaching there and then. I realised it was my vocation.

They can touch the past

For me, it was always going to be history. I’ve loved it since I was a little girl - I come from a family that debates the merits of the Spitfire vs the Hurricane at Christmas! I joined the Army as almost my own ethnographic study in what it means to experience war and combat. I wanted to experience what my grandad experienced, or his father before him. I love bringing history to the kids I teach now, especially when it’s history of war. There’s understandably a big disconnect between the reality of the battlefield and what’s shown in films and computer games.

I try to introduce some realism into the classroom - I’ll tell them a story from my army career if they get their work done on time! I’m also very much a props person! I wore a helmet and army tunic for the first part of a lesson on Dunkirk, ordering the kids around as if I was their platoon sergeant and them soldiers on the beaches! I brought in a gas mask when we were looking at medicine in the trenches and told them about when I had to wear one for two days – A really awful time! I think my students feel a real connection with history because I’ve experienced war. They feel like they can touch the past a little bit. And that’s my absolute favourite thing, if I can help them connect to the past, then I’m doing my job as a historian.



“I set the expectation at the start of the year that we’re on a learning journey together, I might be the leader, but we’re on the same team.”

A “why” behind the “do”

In the British Army, you live by the Army’s core values; Moral and Physical courage, Discipline, Respect, Integrity, Loyalty and Selfless Commitment. I’d never be able to forget them to be honest, they were drilled into me. One I share with my students is Respect. I set the expectation at the start of the year that we’re on a learning journey together, I might be the leader, but we’re on the same team. On that journey, we have some core values that we all need to stick to. I don’t think I would have done that if I hadn’t been in the Army. But it’s so helpful in managing behaviour. Suddenly, it’s not me saying “don’t talk!”, it’s me pointing out that we’re breaking the values that we agreed on together. My students like that there’s a “why” behind the “do”.

I’ve been drawing on my army experience when it comes to careers too. I did a big presentation on what it’s like to have a healthcare career in the British Army. We looked

at all the different jobs you can do, nurse, doctor, medic, radiographer – all sorts of clinical roles. Before the session, most of the students had no idea that these jobs existed outside of hospitals, so it went down well. Really, anything you can do in the NHS, you can do in the Army. And they definitely need you. I think it’s so useful for schools to have someone with a bit of insider knowledge when it comes to careers; there are so many jobs out there, it can be impossible to explain them all to your students.

A blending of two halves, historian and veteran

Something I love about working in schools is that if you have a historical speciality, as lots of us do, your school will lean into it. It makes you feel really involved in school life and valued. One thing I was missing about the Army was the traditional ceremonial side. Then on Remembrance Day, my school asked me to lead assemblies. I wore my uniform for the day, and it just blew the kids minds. It was a really special day for me.

After the war in Ukraine began, I volunteered to run some assemblies explaining the situation. When I was in Afghanistan, I worked for NATO and so I understand its formation and purpose. I drew on that and looked at the history between Ukraine and Russia, the geography, and the reasons for animosity. For me, it was a nice blending of my two halves, historian and veteran. I had to bring them together to try and help the kids understand the situation, as like everyone, they were worried. They were also seeing a lot of misinformation on TikTok, so we spent the second half of the assembly thinking about information critically. It was challenging, and I had to work on it for a few days - It’s a lot of information to distil into a short space of time! It was so worth it though, it’s important to me to teach my students to be critical and analytical – and this is also skill of a good historian.

Look at what you love and what you enjoy

If you have an idea for something just suggest it to your school. Look at what you love, what you enjoy, what you’re passionate about, and you’ll find something. There’ll be a club somewhere you can join or start and a school that will support you. Once you start it, the momentum will keep you going, and you can keep building on those early foundations. If it’s going to develop the kids and you have a good reason for doing it, I think any school would say “yeah let’s try it”. I would add though, that you need to be disciplined. I have to check with my mentor that I can do certain things, make sure my marking is done, and be quite diligent with my time. There’s so much you could do, it’s important to know when to say no.

I’ve found schools to be so good at being creative and real “yes” environments, they want to develop you and to support you. While I am proud to have served my country, teaching has allowed me to blossom, and I couldn’t do that in the army anymore. ●





Bridging the gap between the world of work & education

WORDS: ROBYN GREENLAND

Former law firm partner, Khasruz Zaman, joined Now Teach in 2018 and now teaches maths at Harris Boys' Academy in South East London. For two decades he worked in the city as a Corporate Lawyer and devoted a significant amount of time to mentoring and supporting young people from diverse backgrounds, particularly those under-represented in the legal profession.

Khasruz was inspired by Now Teach to take this further and decided to change career to become a teacher – aiming to continue supporting young people to flourish, realise their potential, and make the most of the opportunities that they have.

“I see my role as building bridges between the world of work and education. My purpose now is to help young people from all backgrounds to have a more equal chance to succeed in life.”

Motivations to teach

Khasruz decided to switch to teaching while at the peak of his career, instead of waiting until closer to retirement. He believed he could make a difference, especially in schools where a large proportion of students are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Born in Bangladesh and having moved to the UK at the age of eight, he needed to learn a new language and

adapt to a completely different environment. Khasruz attended a “failing” comprehensive school in Smethwick (Birmingham), but still saw this as a golden opportunity to achieve, especially when he compared it to the prospects of his contemporaries back in Bangladesh.

“I see myself as having been very privileged to have had such opportunities, which provided me with strong foundations for adult life. And I expect to be able to draw on my personal life experiences to build a strong connection with students.”

Creating opportunities for students

When Covid restrictions were lifted, Khasruz organised assemblies at his school with guest speakers from different industries, and for groups of students to visit workplaces. Assemblies were available to entire year groups with speakers from top law firms and banks. Khasruz's headteacher and colleagues were hugely supportive of these initiatives and, for example, allowed students to miss timetabled lessons to accommodate the speakers' schedule, ensuring the children could benefit from these opportunities. He tells us that “there's always a noticeable buzz in the corridors after there's been an assembly with a guest speaker, or a trip to a workplace.”

Barclays and Norton Rose hosted interactive sessions where the students could negotiate deals and value assets, alongside talks from their employees. Khasruz explained that visiting workplaces in the City and interacting with people from different backgrounds challenged the narrative of ‘but we don't belong here’, and helped students realise that they are welcome and can aspire to work in places like those.

“If employers are serious about diversity, they need to go beyond the immediate people they're trying to recruit. They need to make a bigger contribution to nurturing and developing the wider talent pool.”

The firms and industry professionals involved in this work spoke highly of the experience, especially enthused by the student's curiosity and probing questions: “It was fantastic to have your students with us. So talented and clued up on the business world! I hope that after this and your other visits across the city, that they feel encouraged to consider careers like Finance and Law - they are capable of being real highfliers.” - James Trevelyan, Co-Head, Corporate Development at Barclays
Head of Corporate Development at Barclays, John Sandhu, commented on one post encouraging other employers to get involved: “It was a pleasure to welcome your Y10 students, a successful visit, the first of many, I hope. I couldn't agree more about the need to find better ways for talented and driven young people to have an equal chance to succeed in life, regardless of background.”

Khasruz urges employers to help break down barriers

“How Now Teachers are transforming the world of education by breaking down the barriers between schools and the world of work.”

by interacting with school students early on – to inspire them to want to work with them: “If employers are serious about diversity, they need to go beyond the immediate people they're trying to recruit. They need to make a bigger contribution to nurturing and developing the wider talent pool. If they engage with secondary school children, it can set those students on a different trajectory and have a much greater longer-term impact.”

Promoting Now Teach in the media

Switching jobs at the peak of his legal career caused a stir in the industry and attracted interest from business and legal magazines. The Telegraph followed his journey – curious to whether Now Teach would take off or not, to which Khasruz proclaimed: “4 years on and I am still here. My motivation has always been to encourage social mobility; to break down as many barriers as possible, and to open doors for young people. By engaging with the press, we can highlight why it's important for society.”

Khasruz has also written an article on race and diversity, which was published in The Independent, as well as featuring in The Telegraph, emphasising the impact teaching has had on him: “Until you're doing it for real, it's impossible to fathom just how massive it can be. My identity has changed.”

He regularly posts articles on LinkedIn, talking about his teaching journey, his students' career experiences, and important topics such as racism and the national shortage of teachers.

Khasruz is passionate about social mobility and is a powerful advocate for improving the way schools work and operate. What is the purpose of education, and how well do we prepare young people for the world after education? How can schools adapt the way they teach to equip young people with the skills that they will need to succeed?

When speaking about the future of Now Teach, Khasruz said he would love to see the press report on: “How Now Teachers are transforming the world of education by breaking down the barriers between schools and the world of work.” This is something Now Teachers are uniquely able to do.

As a result of using his voice as a Now Teach media champion, he would like to see all young people from all backgrounds have the same prospects and have a more equal chance to succeed in life: “Within my school, I'm aiming to be an active and influential voice championing diversity and social mobility and, with the support of my colleagues and wider network, I want to make sure that talent from all backgrounds can thrive.”

Long term, Khasruz aims to support the talent pool – young people – to flourish all the way to the top: “We should be supporting them to be better equipped to meet the needs of future employers and the needs of society.” ●

“There is so much potential for career changers to take on key roles within education”

AS TOLD TO BECKY HOWARD

I never set out to be a teacher originally, but I absolutely love my role and my school. I can't ever see myself doing anything else and I strongly feel the more people who can discover what a brilliant profession teaching is, the better. It isn't just graduates straight out of university who make great teachers, so when I first heard about Now Teach and their focus on career-changers I thought, “what an excellent idea.”

Discovering the Now Teach difference

At the time, I was working in an Ark school, so was asked to be on an interview panel for some of the very first Now Teach cohort back in 2017. My initial impression of the organisation was extremely positive. I thought it showed real respect for the profession.

During that first year we had two trainees in our school and as I was head of science, I mentored the science teacher. He'd come from a career in the City, and that experience was fantastic in changing my perspective on mentoring and developing teachers. As a senior career-changer, he was really interested in the underlying systems behind how schools run and understanding all the moving parts. From my experience, the Now Teachers I worked with were really interested in the framework of running a school,



WILL MACKINTOSH is Principal of The Forest Academy in Redbridge, North-East London. He's been involved with Now Teach since the beginning. He shares why Now Teachers are valuable in the classroom and why he wants more career changers in key education roles.

the organisational structure and hierarchies. That's not normally the sort of thing you talk about with a trainee straight out of university!

Now Teach has attracted people into teaching who have brought a wealth of skills and experience from outside the classroom. I think there is so much more potential for career-changers to take on key roles across the education sector.

Valued experience needed in education

I remember having a conversation with Katie [Waldegrave] about the

fact that Now Teach have close to 3500 expressions of interest each year, but only a small fraction of those ends up starting the teacher training programme. That tells me that there are large numbers of talented people who are interested in working in education and who could add so much to the sector.

The recent Education White Paper set out the government's desire to 'move towards an academised sector'. Within schools and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), there are an incredible array of roles both within and supporting education.

Career-changers could take on a range of roles instead of being teachers: such as careers careers leaders, to taking roles in finance, human resources, operations and exam management. All these positions are vital for schools, incredibly rewarding and really varied. Those with experience in other sectors have a lot they can add.

Opening up opportunities

Having people like Now Teachers recruited into these roles – people who understand what it means to have had a career outside education – would make a massive difference. I'm really keen on helping Now Teach expand out their offering to include many more roles in education.

It's still early days, but we are having conversations about starting a pilot scheme around this. It would be great if we could work with Now Teach to get these other education vacancies in front of experienced people looking to change careers. Watch this space. ●

“Working on the cutting edge of a system, what's more exciting than that?”

We have partnerships with 120 schools and training providers. We were excited to add the Developing Teachers, Schools and Academies (DTSA) in Derby to that list this year.

Lara, Now Teach: Can you tell me a little bit about your background?

Deb: Of course! So, as you know, I'm based in Derby – all the way out in the regions! My full-time job is Director of DTSA. It's a multi-faceted organisation, but one of our areas is Initial Teacher Training and Education (ITTE), which is where our partnership with you lies. We also run the Science Learning Partnership (SLP) for STEM Learning UK for the DfE.

Right at the very start of my career, I was a politics and sociology teacher. From year one though, I've been working with trainees. In my first year, I had a trainee shadowing me as I'd just qualified. Later, when I became a head of department, I was always interested in having trainees in the classroom. I moved into higher education when we moved to the Midlands. Sometimes people ask me why I stopped teaching, but I don't feel like I ever have! I've just started teaching different audiences. Andragogy rather than pedagogy.

In fact, I've trained a lot of mature students over the years, and it is different than working with younger trainees. That's the thing about Now Teach, isn't it? You're taking these people who already come with a skill set. They've led meetings, line management, even something as simple as getting up and going to work day after day, and the day after that! In many ways, they've got a massive head start here. They need



DR DEB OUTHWAITE

to learn the craft of teaching, but the other stuff should come naturally.

Lara: Absolutely. I know that alongside leading the DTSA, you're also a fellow of the Institute of Educational and Social Equity (IESE). It sounds like quite a different role from your “day job”, what does it entail and what drew you to it?

Deb: I really think what our founder, Professor Paul Miller, has done is groundbreaking. He's created an academic institute, the IESE, made up of fellows with different specialties and areas of expertise, reading, writing, publishing about Equality, Diversity and Inequality (EDI) issues. At the same time, we're also running workshops, facilitating sessions, doing online consultations, and trying to get people to think about what EDI in the workplace actually means.

So often, people pay lip service to EDI issues and then they're swept under the rug. I think we need to be able to talk to teachers in a way that empowers them to have conversations about EDI in their own classrooms. I'm lucky to be able to work with a lot of school leaders to support them on this through working with the IESE. Bringing a higher priority to EDI issues is paramount to me and working with the institute allows me to do this. It's also an opportunity to join wider conversations addressing systemic EDI issues in our society and try to change how they can play out in the future.

Lara: That's fascinating. I'm sure lots of Now Teachers reading this will be curious as to how they could learn from or become involved with the IESE, what would you suggest?

Deb: Engage with us! We run an annual conference – attend! Take a look at our website and see if we're hosting any upcoming speakers that take your interest. A lot of people come into teaching thinking that they want to make a difference, what's harder is to think where you're going to make that difference, why and how? We're trying to provide some practical avenues for those questions. Saying this is something we need to focus on, this is how you can talk to your students about race or gender for example, asking how you could do something differently, both on an individual classroom and a systemic level. It feels like working on the cutting edge of a system, and really, what's more exciting than that? ●

Find out more at: <https://instituteforequity.ac.uk/>



John Blake, Director for Fair Access and Participation at the Office for Students and former Now Teach Director, explains how education policy has evolved since the war.

England built its state-schooling sector largely free from central oversight. To the minds of English policy folk, too much central control was something the French or Germans might do, and such continental practices got you authoritarian regimes with a penchant for war. Instead, England's education system was built firmly upon local control.

The post-war selective school system was the outgrowth of pre-existing local structures, although some areas (both Tory and Labour) turned early to comprehensive schools—single institutions for all students above 11; often driven by financial considerations (one school is cheaper than two) as much as educational ones.

For much of the next twenty years, education continued with few of the ferocious fights we now see daily. Central government signed the cheques and teachers decided the curriculum. Assessment was a matter of university entrance, not school leaving—even at grammar schools, many students left without qualifications.

Doubts that any form of selection for 11-year-olds could be fair or equitable steadily undermined the selective system, but it was national politicians' perception of growing "progressivism" in education that launched the real fights. In a 1976 speech, Labour's James Callaghan demanded that the government be allowed to walk in the "secret garden" of school management and curriculum.

His government was done-in by wider political currents, but Margaret Thatcher was determined to break the school system she inherited, instituting a National Curriculum with regular testing and increased parental involvement and choice over schools. In 1992, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) was born and inspection became a key tool of school improvement.

Wider battles over the shape of English society were also fought in schools. The Warnock Report of 1978 rejected the

A very brief history of post-war education policy in England

horrendous phrase "educationally sub-normal" and ushered in "inclusion" for those with Special Education Needs. But Thatcher's government firmly resisted certain other societal changes. Section 28 of the Local Government Act barred "the promotion of homosexuality" in schools and would not be repealed until just before the turn of the millennium.

New Labour arrived prioritising "education, education, education"—and indeed, invested millions in schools, including big boosts to teacher salaries. But central control was not surrendered, in fact, it grew. Labour allowed schools to be built outside the LA arrangements that had governed almost every school since 1944. These "City Academies" in turn birthed multi-academy trusts.

The 2010 Coalition agreement put Michael Gove into the DfE. A new curriculum, re-endorsing the value of academic subjects, arrived in 2014, promising "powerful knowledge" to all young people. Academy numbers exploded, and new trusts of such schools were formed. Critics contended the curriculum was too narrow and excluded creativity and personal growth, the structure of the system too rigid and insufficiently democratic. Half a dozen Education Secretaries later, those arguments continue.

The biggest post-Gove change is "the golden thread" – a single, integrated training pathway from initial teacher education, the Early Career Framework and then career-long professional development. Re-accreditation of teacher education providers has brought conflict between government and universities, but still the project continues.

Occasionally, well-meaning people insist politics should be taken out of education. But the reality is that education is profoundly political. Schools and their staff have the power to shape young people for good or for ill, whether they intend to or not. It is no surprise that battles are fought so determinedly over what happens in our schools. Education is the foundation stone of our future, and it is worth debating and contesting. ●

IMAGE CREDIT: ALAMY

NOW TEACHING

"Small changes that have a huge impact on the wellbeing of staff"

Flexible working is often trending on LinkedIn, but what's happening in the education sector, and what does it really mean? We meet Lucy Rose from Flexible Teacher Talent (FTT) to find out more.

FTT is an organisation that supports teachers who want to work flexibly. Founded by Lucy and Lindsay Patience, after they met on a Teach First Innovation course, the organisation advocates flexible working in schools, provides guidance to teachers seeking flexibility and conducts research.

Lucy and Lindsay were inspired to create FTT after having their first children. Lucy says, "your life totally changes, and so you're asking your manager, 'is it possible to get a bit of flexibility?' Most of the time, the answer was no – or something to that effect!"

Lindsay and I were looking around for part time leadership posts, and there just weren't any advertised. We realised we were coming at the problem from the same angle and decided to set up FTT. We'd also both realised we were at risk of becoming a statistic. 6000 women aged between 30 and 39 leave teaching each year which is the second biggest group of leavers after retirees. We wanted to continue teaching but needed to make it work for us."

The organisation carried out a small pilot study into schools that had adopted flexible working policies, and immediately saw the impact. "There was an instant reduction in cost of supply, staff absence days and general sickness, as well as increased rates of retention. Interestingly, where schools were mentioning flexibility in their job adverts, they had a much wider field of applicants" says Lucy, adding "there's

a fairly new school in the North West that we often cite, whose headteacher has been a real champion of flexible working. She's employed people who have an interest outside of teaching. So, they might work four days a week teaching art and design and spend one day working as a graphic designer. The school is in a traditionally difficult area to recruit in, but it gets huge interest in any vacancies now!"

It might seem as though this reality is a million miles from where most schools are currently, but the move towards flexible working is gaining momentum. In the Department of Education's (DfE) 2019 recruitment and retention strategy, flexible working was highlighted as one of four key areas of focus. Recently, the DfE selected eight schools to be flexible working ambassador schools in each region of the UK, with a remit of sharing best practice in their areas.

The pandemic also boosted the movement towards flexible working in education, as schools were forced to totally rethink their teaching and learning practices. "Overnight, things that had always been seen as impossible, became possible" says Lucy. She gives the example of working from home. Pre-pandemic, this just wasn't done in education, now, some headteachers are moving towards giving their senior leadership teams half days from home, to catch up on their admin work. "Flexible working doesn't always mean 'part-time' and in fact, I think it does the movement a bit of a disservice to always use that as an example, it can mean lots of different

creative ways of organising time" says Lucy, adding "it's often about small, incremental changes that have a huge impact on the wellbeing of staff, like finishing early to go an exercise class."

Ultimately though, "the biggest single factor affecting whether a school will take on flexible working is the opinion of the headteacher" says Lucy. So, FTT spends a lot of time trying to convince headteachers on a 'hearts and minds' basis, before backing up their arguments with research and policy level discussions. "Our agenda is to make flexible working so commonplace in the system so there's a real understanding of how it works and the benefits it can bring to schools" Lucy adds.

It can seem daunting to submit a request for flexible working, especially if you're the first person in your school or department to have done so. "Talk to your team and your middle managers before you go to the headteacher. Lead with 'this is how I see it working', 'are there any problems you can foresee?' If you can come up with a solutions-based proposal, it's more of a case of your headteacher rubber stamping it, than having to think about how it would work" says Lucy.

She adds "in the future, employees are going to demand flexible working more and more, and schools will have to change with the times. But it would be good if we can help them get there before they're pushed!" ●

Find out more at <https://flexibleteachertalent.co.uk/>

NOW TEACHING



Back to school!

How to prepare for your first day

Emily Weston is a Year 6 Teacher at Lea and Gardson CE Primary School in Wiltshire, who has worked in both primary and secondary schools.

Preparing for your first day back at school after the summer holidays can be a daunting thought, whether you're an Early Career Teacher (ECT) getting ready for your first day, a teacher joining a new school, or a returning teacher. Through working on my blog 'Teaching Isn't B&W', I often get asked by my peers, both new and experienced teachers, how to emotionally and practically prepare for a new term. Here are a few of my best tips for preparing for that first day back.

Getting in the zone

If you are an ECT or a teacher starting at a new school, make sure you map out your first day so you know both the school's location and exactly how you will be getting there. I like to get to school a little earlier than usual on my first day back to give myself a chance to go for a walk to clear my mind and shake off any jitters.

The summer holiday period can be an important time to take stock of where you are in your career and

potentially start planning for your next role, whether that be climbing the ladder in your current school or starting to plan an external move. If you're thinking about your goals for the academic year and a new job is one of them, then visit Teaching Vacancies. This is the governments' free and easy to use job listing service that 80% of schools have signed up to. You can create job alerts so you're notified as soon as a vacancy which meets your criteria goes live, including location, job title, education phase, working pattern (flexible hours, part-time) and ECT suitability.

Familiarise yourself with your lesson content

At secondary school, your timetable, classrooms and students might be hard to predict, but you can always rely on your knowledge of the subjects you teach. With this in mind, run through all your lesson plans the night before so they feel fresh in your mind and you'll feel in control while teaching. However, whilst lesson planning is important,

don't fall into the trap of over-planning and spending time on small details. Aim to be as flexible as possible. Adjusting your approach as you go is part of the process.

Have an early night

This is definitely easier said than done and it's easy to fall into the trap of staying up late trying to make sure everything is ready to go before the morning. Give yourself some time to prepare the night before but start winding down a couple of hours before you head to bed.

Remember, your first day or first day back should be a day of excitement, as you set yourself and your students targets to achieve throughout the rest of the year. There will never be a 'perfect' first day, and things will likely go wrong. Embrace the mistakes. ●



Read Emily's blog at: <https://teachingisntbw.home.blog/>

NOW TEACH PROGRAMME MANAGER ROB LLOYD-JONES ADDS:

For those who are entering school for the first time in September, it will be natural to feel excited and nervous as you enter a new career and environment. As well as new challenges, there will be lots of rewards in working with young people, as Peter

Watson, cohort 2018, French, told Now Teach: "I love the kids - they are so funny. They are utterly hilarious. They're very inventive people."

To Now Teachers who are returning to classroom - September is a great time to take stock of how far

you've come! Becky Clark, cohort 2018, maths, put it well when she said: "To see yourself from where you were to where you are now, it's a long journey but it's such an effective one. Think about how you were feeling this time last year and how

far your teaching practice has come from then."

Remember, however you're feeling, we're here to support you. Reach out to your Programme Manager, connect with your Network on TENT and come to our events.

A TEACHER'S LIFE:

Edwige Nlassa, Physics Teacher

We follow one of our Now Teachers through a typical working day - from getting up to lights out.

AS TOLD TO BECKY HOWARD

5:30am - Alarm goes off

'I have an early start, but like most habits, once you get into a routine, you get used to it! I teach at the Harris Academy Riverside in Essex, which is about 30 minutes via public transport from my home in South Ockenden. I'm saving for a car, so hopefully soon I'll have a shorter commute. I'm not a coffee drinker - in fact, I can't stand it - so I'll have a cup of tea instead before I leave.

'I get to school about 7am, which gives me plenty of time to prepare for the day. One thing I've learned as a teacher, is that being organised is the number one thing I can do to make sure my day goes smoothly. During this time I like to tidy up my classroom, open the windows and feel a breeze while listening to slow, chilled music to get me focused. I chat with colleagues, too - it's good to socialise and not isolate yourself.

9am - First lesson of the day

'Depending on the day, I have a different teaching timetable, but the first lesson is always at 9am. At Harris, we have only four periods, but each one is 1.5 hours long. I think it works well, because it means you can have a calming start with the students, plus time to cover plenty of content. So far I've taught Key Stage 3 students plus year 10, but from September onwards I'll be teaching A-levels, too. I'm really looking forward to that because it will be a challenge - something new to master!

'I love teaching physics because it means I can use my degree. I studied engineering and then did a Masters but found it difficult to get a job in that field. I ended up working as a careers advisor, which was good but I felt a bit stuck. Not only does teaching enable me to work with my passion, but I can help students progress in the subject. Lunch is at a different time each day: sometimes I'll bring my own stuff in and sometimes I'll grab something from the cafeteria. They do nice sausage rolls and pizzas there - as well as fresh vegetables, of course!



4pm - Head home

'School finishes at 3.40pm Monday to Thursday, and I'll leave at 4pm. Once I'm home, I like to prepare for the lessons I'm teaching the next day or week. I always try to help my students understand Physics concepts better and address the myth that it's one of the hardest subjects! Every class is different, of course, but to address those barriers, I have to think about using different teaching techniques to reach them.

'There are so many ways to underpin their understanding - whether that's less text on slides, more diagrams, using practical examples, the list goes on - but the most important thing is to be energised and adaptable to get the students engaged.

5:30pm - Evening wind-down

'To relax in the evening, I'll either go out with friends, or more than likely, watch Netflix! I enjoy any series that incorporates science and escapism, such as Gotham, the origin story of Batman, Bruce Wayne. I'm also a fan of movies like X-Men, Avengers and Transformers: as a scientist, I love wondering whether these worlds could exist or not.

'I go to bed a lot earlier than I used to - around 9pm. I've learned that I need a lot of sleep to feel energised for work in the morning. I have tried going to bed later, but it really doesn't work! ●