



asociación
de profesores de
secundaria de navarra

aps

BOLETÍN

INFORMATIVO nº 10

aps

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Curso 2016-2017

Junio

1.- LA CITA

Las convicciones son esperanzas

Bertolt Brecht.

2.- GESTIÓN SINDICAL. CAMBIOS EN APS

De cara al próximo curso 2017-2018, se modificarán la junta y los delegados de APS. Estos cambios se ratificarán en una próxima asamblea general.

Las dos personas liberadas en la sede serán:

- **Javier Álvarez**, profesor de Educación Física en el IES Ochoa de Olza y
- **Margarita Bermejo**, profesora de Lengua y literatura, en Modelo D, en el IES Iturrama.

Continuarán como delegados o/o enlaces sindicales:

- **Raúl Martínez** (Biología; Modelo D).
- **Juanma Ruiz** (Educación Física; IES Valle del Ebro).
- **Mariángeles Duerto** (Lengua y literatura; IES Navarro Villoslada).
- **Blanca Puente (Biología;** IES Tierra Estella) y
- **Pili López** (Educación Física; IES Sangüesa).

3.- ARTÍCULO RECOMENDADO

In Praise of Knowledge

Claire Stoneman. Swanshurst School. Birmingham.

“My praise shall be dedicated to the mind itself. The mind is the man and the knowledge of the mind. A man is but what he knoweth.”

Francis Bacon (1561-1626), *In Praise of Knowledge*.

I always felt sorry for knowledge. Over recent years, no one has taken too much notice of it, languishing at the bottom of Bloom's Taxonomy. Often the poor relation to its flashier, seemingly more attractive cousins evaluating and creating, knowledge took a back seat, with the echoes of many an excitable teacher-trainer and CPD leader ringing in its ears: "Move up Bloom's Taxonomy quickly – the pupils need to analyse and synthesise!", "Don't ask so many knowledge-focused closed questions!", "Get the pupils to think more – you can't do that at the bottom of Bloom's Taxonomy!". And yet, without boring, staid old knowledge, the taxonomical pyramid becomes a flimsy house of cards. Knowledge is the bedrock, the foundation. And is anything but boring.

What I'm arguing here has not been particularly fashionable in educational circles in the last ten years or so, where the Wacky Races dash to the top of the taxonomy in a progress-anxiety-induced lesson was de rigueur; teachers were "wary and weary of knowledge" (Daniel Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School?*, p.26) for a number of reasons. But without knowledge, pupils simply cannot analyse or evaluate. Willingham is clear: factual knowledge must precede skill (Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School?*, p.25). I tend to agree with Joe Kirby, "The curriculum was eviscerated of extensive, rigorous knowledge, and classrooms had become fact-free zones." (*Battle Hymn of the Tiger Teachers*, p.17). Classrooms may not have completely become fact-free zones, but they had become a sort of knowledge no-man's land, where telling pupils facts and information about your subject was almost a dirty word: "Let them discover! Facilitate! Talk less! And don't forget to engage them! Wrap that poetry analysis up in a pass the parcel activity! Remember your kinaesthetic learners will want to move when learning!" The pedagogy touted in the late noughties was seductive, and goodness knows I was taken in at points: I spent many an hour crafting *Bullseye* plenaries with my much-coveted magnetic dartboard (utterly self-indulgent on my part – it was a chance to play the theme tune and pretend to be Jim Bowen at the oche under the guise of "But I have kinaesthetic learners!"); and I wasn't averse to a CSI-themed persuasive writing lesson either, complete with yellow crime-scene tape (never mind that most of my class didn't have a clue who Brass or Grissom was, but

that's another blog). It took a while to get myself out of what I thought was a necessity to make activities 'relevant' or 'engaging' – but thankfully the Damascene moment happened before I'd even read Willingham, "Trying to make the material relevant to the students' interests doesn't work." (*Why Don't Students Like School?*, p.63). Funny that – what, not even a 1980s darts show hook that the children have never heard of? Why ever not?! I'm actually pretty embarrassed to say it, but it became more and more apparent to me that, yes, pupils need to know things, and not wrapped up in some sort of guise, or as Carl Hendrick puts it far better than I, a "troubling belief that you somehow need to 'trick' kids into being interested in things, that they couldn't possibly be captivated by Shakespeare, Henry VIII or Newtonian Physics without first having it go through the filter of their own immediate interests." (Carl Hendrick, 'Why Fads and Gimmicks Should be Resisted in the Classroom') So, there. I've said it. Kids need to be told stuff sometimes. And not through some kind of facilitated, experiential, VAK-soaked osmosis. Knowledge shouldn't be a dirty word. It's vital. We ignore knowledge at our peril.

Thankfully, knowledge now appears to be in the ascendant, with an emerging army of teachers and school leaders reminding us of its importance. But what does this look like in our day to day teaching, or our leadership of teaching as middle leaders or senior leaders? At Dame Elizabeth Cadbury School, we have focused particularly on memorisation and retention-based strategies to enable Year 11 to remember what they need to for their exams. Many of our pupils will have up to 22 examinations over the next few weeks, with a vast array of concepts, terms, vocabulary and quotations they need to learn. Some of our faculty leaders developed knowledge organisers this year, a now pretty well-known tool that "specifies, **in meticulous detail**, the exact facts, dates, events, characters, concepts and precise definitions **that all pupils are expected to master in long-term memory.**" (Joe Kirby – *Pragmatic Education* blog – my emphasis). Knowledge organisers enable pupils to begin to move from manual to automatic; they specify everything they need to know at the start of a unit of work, so pupils are embedding knowledge in long term memory rather than cramming at the end. This year, we are only just

developing this at Dame Elizabeth Cadbury, and want to develop it with all year groups, but the photo above is an example from Joe Kirby (Year 7 knowledge organiser on apartheid in South Africa).

Summer Turner describes the process of knowledge organiser building in her fantastic blog entry, 'Knowledge Organisers – facts not fads', "Distilling all of this information requires a ruthlessness that I've found has made me think more deeply about my subject than ever before. Essentially you are **selecting the most powerful and purposeful knowledge, which you view as foundational to understanding and engaging with the unit of work** (in my case, the text(s) we are studying)." (my emphasis). As teachers, through knowledge organisers, we can identify the foundation of knowledge pupils are required to know to enable them to really apply, analyse, evaluate and create. Knowledge empowers and enables. Without knowledge, the house of cards comes crashing down.

How else might this work in the classroom? One of our other strategies are frequent low-stakes or no-stakes testing and drilling as starter activities. As Daniel Willingham states (*Why Don't Students Like School?*, p.107), "...it is virtually impossible to become proficient at any mental task without extended practice." Just like expert sportsmen and women or expert musicians, becoming proficient means practice. And more practice. And some more. We therefore encourage faculties to run starters as drills, where pupils have to remember key scientific concepts, or specific German vocabulary, or quotations from *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, for example. The drills then become a habit. No-stakes or low-stakes takes away the potential fear from pupils, so they become used to them every lesson, or every other lesson, and they remember the knowledge they need to. Drills have become a key feature of our Year 10 and Year 11 English Literature lessons. Teachers use incremental gap-fill exercises that remove more and more words until pupils can write the entire quotation from memory. And the pupils really enjoy it. They *like* remembering the quotations, and incrementally improving. Of course, the next step is application and analysis. But they can retrieve quotations from memory from the entire

expanse of the *Jekyll and Hyde* novella, or from *Macbeth*, or from the fifteen Power and Conflict poems. Incredibly useful and important, as it frees up our pupils' ability to think more effectively. As Willingham states, "Our goal is not simply to have students know a lot of stuff – it's to have them know stuff in service of being able to think effectively." (*Why Don't Students Like School?*, p.48)

We also look for ways to enable knowledge retention within the main body of a lesson. Lemov's much lauded "Cold-Calling" from *Teach Like a Champion* is one that colleagues will be very familiar with. The strategy works best when the teacher has embedded it as a habit within lessons, so pupils are used to it and expect it, enabling teachers to check for knowledge and understanding effectively and systematically at any time, keeping pupils on their toes. In addition, "Call and Response" (Lemov: *Teach Like a Champion*) is also another favourite that is starting to move beyond its usual domain of the MFL classroom, and is a great way to enable pupils to engage with knowledge retention. When the teacher asks a question, the whole class calls out the answer in unison, enabling reinforcement of the knowledge. Easy to implement and powerful in lessons when used in combination with drills and cold-calling. To conclude, I commend The Learning Scientists to you, cognitive psychological scientists interested in the science of learning and memory, and who have many fantastic evidence-based resources on their website. At Dame Elizabeth Cadbury, we have only relatively recently become familiar with their work, and we're looking forward to hearing them speak at ResearchED, Rugby, in July.

Their website is <http://www.learningscientists.org/> You can find out more about Summer Turner's and Joe Kirby's work here: <https://ragazzainglese.wordpress.com/> and <https://pragmaticreform.wordpress.com/author/joekirby/>

And remember: knowledge isn't a dirty word. And also – it's probably best not to try and wangle *Bullseye* into a lesson. It doesn't work. No, honestly, it doesn't. Now where did I put that speedboat...

4.- NOVEDADES

V Publicada en el BON la resolución definitiva del Concurso de Traslados. [Aquí](#).

V Publicada en el BOE convocatoria de plazas de profesores en secciones bilingües de español en Centros educativos de Bulgaria, China, Eslovaquia, Hungría, Polonia, República Checa, Rumanía, Rusia y Turquía para el curso 2017-2018. Plazo de presentación de solicitudes: Del 6 al 20 de junio, ambos inclusive. [Aquí](#).

