



ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

December 2025





Meet Our Team



Sarah Granville
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Lisa Hilliam
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Henry Sauntson
SCITT Director



Deb Wilding
Senior Programme Manager



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Senior Programme Manager



Directors Welcome

Nadolig llawen everybody!

I have spent the past year trying to learn Welsh on Duolingo, for no other reason than – as Edmund Hillary said about climbing Everest – because it's there.

However, the process has been insightful for a number of reasons; the programme uses a lot of techniques we currently ascribe to 'effective pedagogy' - lots of small, low-stakes quizzes, multiple retrieval opportunities and lots of spaced and interleaved content – I have thoroughly enjoyed it and do feel like I'm getting better every day. It reminds me that learning is far from straightforward – it is complex, slow, non-linear and often challenging – but it is rewarding.

Later in this newsletter there is an opportunity to read an abridged version of a piece I wrote recently regarding changes in the landscape of teacher education and development, and as ever I would welcome your views and opinions; one size fits one, and everything comes with a context.

Since September we have had a number of interesting experiences at Teach East, and we are preparing carefully for next year when we officially regain accredited status for QTS; this will provide us with a whole host of opportunities and challenges, and we are very much looking forward to it – I think I speak for the team here when I say that!

Speaking of 'team', I wonder if it is a corny coincidence that both 'Teach' and 'East' contain over 50% of the letters in that word? It certainly cannot be denied that Teach East is a huge team effort, with that team scattered across the city of Peterborough and its surrounds – our curriculum and our training and support is underpinned by all of the fantastic work of our school-based mentors and Induction Tutors, as well as those who come to the training rooms and deliver sessions for us; everyone involved in the programme is a teacher educator, and should be proud of the work they do!

I wish you all the very best for the festive period as you take a well-earned rest and break, and we all look forward to strengthening partnerships and collaborative working with you in the coming months.

Cheers to you,
Henry





Imogen Sawers Secondary Initial Teacher Trainee 2025-2026
 Art
 Main Placement: Stanground Academy

Reflections on my first term

Why did you decide to train to teach?

I joined the Teach East course with little classroom experience but a lot of passion for my subject of Art. I felt that I could positively impact children's lives by sharing my knowledge, so that more children can experience the power of the subject.

How have you found your first term on the course?

Overall, I have found my first term challenging but extremely rewarding. This course requires consistent reflection before, during and after each day, but also at a wider level, reflecting on progress from the beginning to now.

Has anything surprised you?

I am surprised by the amount of confidence gained, both professionally and personally. Meeting new people, a range of working environments, visiting other schools and showing up each day for the students has developed a determination to keep developing my practice, learning from those around me.

Best teaching moment so far?

My best teaching moment came the day I am writing this passage. There is a student who would not contribute to the lesson at the start of term and shut down instantly. Today, they completed their colour wheel in one lesson, while others needed two, and to a fantastic standard. I was so proud of them! When reflecting, I believe that the constant praise and positivity each lesson towards this child has allowed them to come out of their shell. They told me today about their love for the subject. Ultimately, I will reflect on this moment for time to come and remember this is why I teach.

Most difficult teaching moment so far?

From the perspective of a practical subject, there can be many different mishaps that you plan for to prevent them. However, sometimes you must do the lesson and adapt where needed to realise possible errors in a plan... To put it simply, I had not planned sufficiently enough my packing away rules and expectations when using paints. As you can imagine, chaos swiftly ensued, as Year 7 students did not know how to wash up. Of course they don't! I had assumed that they would know how to clean palettes, water pots, paint brushes, and even cleaning the table. I had to very quickly adapt my teaching by pausing and explaining the process to ensure that the classroom would be ready for the next lesson, but I had made it very difficult for myself. However, I learnt so much from this experience, and after a discussion with my mentor, I decided to create a more structured packing up routine, giving students different jobs each week so they can work together efficiently and clean the classroom meeting my high expectations.

How have you found working with your mentor?

Working with my mentor has been a true highlight of my experience so far. I have a set 'weekly meeting' with my mentor to discuss progress, roleplay ideas and generally touch base. However, due to the art department being close knit, we are constantly in conversation, bouncing ideas around and reflecting on the teaching practice. Having a strong connection with my mentor has allowed me to test out new theories learnt in my core training and subject days while receiving constructive feedback to better my teaching for the students.

How do you find your subject training?

I have subject training every other Friday, and this has been a fantastic opportunity to meet with other art teachers, both experienced and in training, and learn from them. We have been learning how to demonstrate and teach practical skills, for example mono and lino printing, skills that are now solidified in my teaching toolkit.

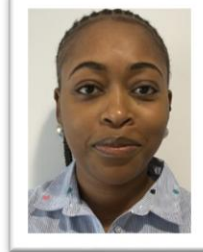
How are you feeling about your contrasting placement?

I am looking forward to my contrasting placement in January. I am excited to get stuck into a new exam board, learn from more expert teachers and work within a different school community.



Top tips for anyone embarking on teacher training?

My top tips for anyone embarking on teacher training, especially if they have no prior experience, is to jump in feet first. So far, I have learnt most by doing, reflecting and adapting and so get stuck in. Try early on to form connections within multiple schools, especially on ITaPs when you visit a range of them, as that will help with the job hunt later. Finally, try your best to be a sponge. Soak in every lesson observation, formal feedback and teaching time in the classroom, as it all goes by so fast.



Aryal Lessie Primary Initial Teacher Trainee 2025-2026
Key Stage 2
Main Placement: Leighton Primary School

Reflections on my first term

Why did you decide to train to teach?

I decided to train to teach because it is something I feel genuinely passionate about and a career I know will give me long-term fulfilment. I love helping children learn new things and watching the moment when something finally clicks for them. That sense of curiosity and confidence growing in a young learner is incredibly rewarding. My favourite quote from American academic, Linda Darling, 'Teaching is the profession on which all other professions depend' really resonates with me because it shows just how meaningful our impact can be.

Before starting my training, I felt a mixture of nerves and excitement. I knew I was stepping into a demanding but hugely rewarding profession, and although I wasn't sure what to expect, I was eager to begin the journey.

How have you found your first term on the course?

The first term has been eye-opening. I hadn't realised just how much detail goes into every part of teaching. From safeguarding procedures, to the depth of planning, to understanding children's developmental needs, there is far more behind each lesson than many people realise. I've gained a real appreciation for the skills and decisions that teachers make daily to ensure that every child is safe, supported and able to learn.

Has anything surprised you?

I've been surprised by how quickly each school day goes. There is always so much happening that there's rarely a moment to feel bored, and no two days ever look the same. Before starting, I worried that I might find the days long, as I did in some previous roles, but teaching is the complete opposite. It's fast-paced, full of variety and constantly engaging.

Best teaching moment so far?

My best moment so far has been when a child trusted me enough to share some personal information that had been affecting their wellbeing. I followed the appropriate safeguarding steps, and it reminded me how important our role is in children's lives beyond academic learning. The fact that the child felt safe enough to come to me showed that I'm building the kind of positive, trusting relationships that make a difference.

Most difficult teaching moment so far?

One of the challenges has been realising how much I need to relearn myself, in order to teach confidently. I thought I remembered the basics of subjects like maths, but teaching it effectively to six- and seven-year-olds requires a much deeper understanding. I've had to revisit concepts and ensure I can break them down step-by-step, which links strongly to Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, particularly the importance of modelling and guided practice.

Favourite teaching strategy, teaching theory or teaching guru?

A strategy I've particularly connected with is retrieval practice. I've noticed how powerful it is when children revisit prior learning in quick, low-stakes ways. It improves their confidence and strengthens their long-term memory. This aligns with cognitive load theory, as it helps children store essential knowledge so they can focus on new learning without becoming overwhelmed.

I've found our core Friday training sessions extremely valuable, especially the session on adaptive teaching. It helped me understand how to scaffold learning appropriately so that every child can access the lesson in a way that meets their needs. The practical examples and modelling have already made a big impact on how I plan and support different learners in the classroom.

How have you found the new ITaPs?

I've found the ITaPs incredibly informative. The focus on behaviour for learning has been particularly helpful. Seeing how clear routines, consistent expectations and positive reinforcement create a calmer learning environment has shaped how I approach my own teaching. The session on questioning was also really powerful. I've learned how open-ended questions, think-time and checking for understanding can deepen learning and uncover misconceptions.

How are you feeling about your contrasting placement?

I'm excited to experience a contrasting placement because I know every teacher brings their own style, strengths and approaches to the classroom. It will give me a wider perspective on the profession and help me continue developing my own practice.

How are you finding the PGCE?

I'm finding the PGCE helpful because learning the theory behind teaching helps me make sense of what I see and do in the classroom. For example, understanding theories like scaffolding, modelling and metacognition has helped me put purposeful strategies into my daily practice, rather than just doing things without knowing why they matter.



Top tips for anyone embarking on teacher training?

My top tips are to be flexible, open to learning and willing to give everything your best effort. Teacher training requires resilience and reflection, but it is also incredibly rewarding. Ask questions, take feedback positively and remember that every challenge helps you grow into a stronger teacher.



Shuib Nadeem Secondary Initial Teacher Trainee 2025-2026
 Mathematics
 Main Placement: Arthur Mellows Village College

Reflections on my first term

Why did you decide to train to teach?

Teaching is something I've always enjoyed doing and felt I was naturally good at. I have done some tuition and sports coaching, however, I would still say teaching is a career path I did not expect to be in. My original goal was to be in a more office-based job but, I don't think that was suited towards my skill set. The government bursary has meant that I have been able to make the transition to the sector and, so far, I have enjoyed the opportunity and looking forward towards the next term in my contrasting placement.

How did you feel before you began your training?

I felt genuinely excited to start. My previous few jobs made me feel that I was stagnating. Teacher training has allowed me the opportunity to go in a direction more meaningful for me.

How have you found your first term on the course?

Honestly, it has been a lot easier than I expected. I thought I might have struggled more in planning and delivering lessons. However, I found myself picking up lessons and routines at a good pace. I have been given the time to slowly build up that confidence in my teaching. Additionally, I have developed a really good routine and found the weeks going past quickly. However, one area I found more difficult is building that relationship with students. I felt I was so focused on teaching the content, I neglected that area. I see that as a key goal when I move to my next placement.

Has anything surprised you?

I would say how quick the lessons feel when I'm teaching. I often find myself running out of time and overplanning what I can cover.

Most challenging teaching moment so far?

Behaviour management is something I feel like all trainees have some sort of difficulty with at first, including myself. I also find it tricky to have a good flow in my explanations, when I have to keep stopping to address behaviour.

Another area would be 'the curse of knowledge'. I have had a few lessons where I expected students to know more than they did. This can then make it hard to follow the lesson plan and require a lot of adapting on the spot. Especially if it's a lesson later in the day as you can easily just lose the class' interest and I have to revisit things the following.

How have you found the ITaPs?

I found the second ITaP on Questioning really useful. Many of the concepts of questioning I have not thought about before. It definitely made a more significance difference than I expected in the way I now approach questioning. Especially the use of probing questions, and how it can help build a class discussion. Additionally, better wait time so students can have enough time to process their answers.

Seeing different schools in day 3 and 4 was highly beneficial. Not only with the questioning focus, but the environments and ethos of different schools was really interesting to see.

What is your career teaching dream?

In the next few years, I like the idea of teaching A Level maths and further maths, which will give me the opportunity to expand my knowledge further and challenge myself. My long-term goal is to always make some progress year on year. I like the idea of having more responsibility to make more of a difference. I wouldn't say there is an exact role in mind, but aslong as I feel like I'm progressing, I'm happy with that.



Top tips for anyone embarking on teacher training?

- With the actual teaching part, just act confident. Even if you might not always be, just the impression that you know what you are talking about makes a big difference in lessons.
- Making sure to spend the first few weeks observing carefully and familiarising yourself with the class and names makes a big difference to when you begin to take over the teaching - especially with how much students trust and respect you.
- Keep on track with all of the work for the course - the weekly reflections and observations etc. It is so easy just to leave it until later, but that's when work can feel like its piling up, especially with the PGCE.
- The idea of taking work home is something that can really be avoided as long as you spend your time at school efficiently. Of course, that will change when you have more lessons, so just make the most of it, so you don't get overwhelmed early.



Henry Sauntson Director of Teach East SCITT

The following is an edited version of Henry's recent blog on the TDT Didagogy report. The full article can be read on the Teach East website.



Didagogy – the teaching of teachers

Why did you become a teacher?

What are your core values and beliefs?

What do you believe is the purpose of education?

These are questions I would ask of any teacher, but especially one who has a role in the education of other educators; what do you truly believe about what you are preaching? In his Satires, the Roman poet Juvenal coined the phrase 'quis custodiet ipsos custodes?' ('who will guard the guards themselves?'). Juvenal's point was to raise questions about power, oversight and accountability in society, but we can perhaps extrapolate the idea to teacher development – who educates the educators? And, perhaps more pertinently, HOW and WHY do we educate the educators?

Thanks to the work of the Teacher Development Trust, we have a new word: didagogy – the discipline of teaching teachers, and the study and practice of how teachers learn most effectively (TDT, 2025). We already have pedagogy – the teaching of children, and andragogy (courtesy of Malcolm Knowles) – the teaching of adults, but we need something more. Hence, didagogy, drawn from the Greek didaktikos, meaning 'apt to teach'. With a new term comes a new identity – a clear distinction between standard adult learning and the teaching of adults to become teachers specifically. A shared language is vital for all – shared understanding through shared vocabulary avoids the Tower of Babel. As the report states, 'The word didagogy creates the space for a more nuanced understanding that helps us think and talk with precision about the specific discipline of teaching teachers. Didagogy acknowledges the complexity of teacher learning and, by having a term to reference, it recognises the importance of a clearly thought-out, research-informed, and practice-driven approach to teacher education. Naming this discipline is the first step in elevating its status, enhancing practice, and expanding the knowledge base.'

The creation of such a term injects new energy into the world of teacher development – the crafting of practitioners for the most challenging of professions; Lee Shulman himself once stated that 'teaching is impossible', but still we try. Like Samuel Beckett's (the playwright, not the main character from Quantum Leap) oft-repeated maxim – 'Ever tried? Ever failed? No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better' – teaching is about trying. Trying every day to help pupils quell the tyranny of the urgent and achieve success – the progressive realisation of the worthy ideal.

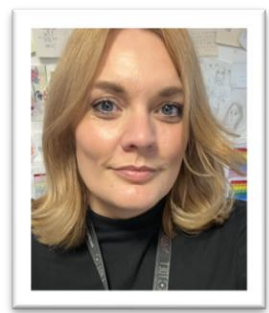
In their report, TDT reference Comenius' Oath, taken by teachers in Finland. Such an oath elevates education beyond the boundaries of mere compliance and adherence to technician, reductive statements and places it on a higher plane; teaching as a profession cannot be codified, so it must be exalted. It calls also to mind the need for a moral and ethical dimension in the educating of educators, beyond the restrictive bounds of performativity. When working in initial teacher education we are faced with the challenge of supporting and developing someone who has to combine the roles of teacher and learner – they are learning to teach at the same time as teaching to learn, and so often there is an irony inherent in the fact that we use seemingly poor pedagogical methods – long sessions, lots of listening instead of doing, dense slides and reading materials – to instruct as to what makes good pedagogy; cognitive load, anyone?

The TDT report outlines very succinctly that CPD is viewed as a 'transactional process' far too often – sessions, inputs, workshops et al; such an approach assumes that 'learning is linear from input to impact', at the expense of acknowledging that teacher professional learning and development is highly complex. The report calls to attention conditions for teaching, practices of teaching and, in my view most importantly, teacher identities.

Teachers are more than mere technicians, reliant on procedures and practices drawn from codified knowledge in a set of statements; they have the right to develop ethical deliberation around those matters that constitute 'school life', and consider the human qualities and capabilities they wish to nurture in those for whom they provide learning experiences.

As the TDT report says, 'effective didagogy involves working with teachers to shape learning, helping them understand their own beliefs and drivers and creating explicit opportunities for reflection and improvement'.

Didagogy is more than just a new term or a fresh look; it is a moral imperative, an ethical debate and a call to arms.



Spotlight on: Holly Wilson

Training year: 2020 - 2021

Queen Katharine Academy

Teacher of English and Teacher Development Mentor

Think Piece: Re-centring the teacher in professional development

As soon as we step into the school building, our minds (and sometimes our bodies to be first in line at the photocopier!) accelerate with the velocity of an F1 driver. We race through the school year, switching up gears in preparation for data drops, navigating the corners of accountability pressures, making a quick pit stop in the data of mock results before speeding off towards the GCSE and A level finish line. In an environment that demands constant acceleration, it's no wonder that teachers can burn out. In a profession driven by the pressures of student outcomes, slowing down and placing the teacher back in the centre of development cycle is not only helpful – it's vital.

It comes as no surprise that sometimes the pace of teacher development is often pushed to match the speed of the system. However, the more I have learnt from both my NPQ in Leading Teacher Development, mentoring ECTs, and now as I step into a new role as Teacher Development Mentor, I realise the importance of slow, deliberate and precise practice. Schools' professional development models should be designed with teachers in the centre – not the periphery – if meaningful and sustainable development is to be made.

Research consistently shows that high quality classroom teaching is “pivotal in improving children’s outcomes” (Effective Professional Development | EEF). So rather than overwhelming teachers with multiple developmental targets, we should put our foot on the brakes and focus on a precise area that can be rehearsed, reviewed, and refined over time. This model of development signals to professionals that depth over speed is valued and honours the cognitive reality of how an expert is truly formed – mirroring the science of learning that we apply to the lessons we design for our students every day.

As ITTs soon graduate into ECTs, stepping into the driving seat of their own classrooms, it's important to remember that, despite the speed of the teaching world, teaching is not a race to be won but a craft to be shaped, one deliberate, focused habit at a time. And for those of us stepping into roles supporting teacher development the same truth applies – our role is to create the conditions in which our colleagues can grow with confidence. By placing the teacher in the centre of a slow, deliberate development cycle, we build a profession that people want to stay in – and a culture to be proud of.



"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."
- Richard Steele

Recommended Reads

Take a look at our top tips for a little stocking filler ☺



Henry's Pick – an Education Classic!

Thinking, Fast and Slow – Daniel Kahneman

One of the most influential books of the 21st century: the ground-breaking psychology classic - over 10 million copies sold - that changed the way we think about thinking.

'There have been many good books on human rationality and irrationality, but only one masterpiece. That masterpiece is *Thinking, Fast and Slow*' *Financial Times*
'A lifetime's worth of wisdom' Steven D. Levitt, co-author of *Freakonomics*



One for our treasured mentors

Responsive Coaching – Josh Goodrich (2024)

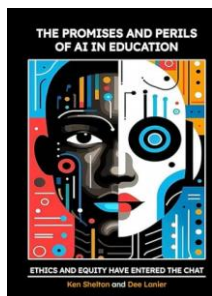
"Practical, wise and research-informed, this outstanding book will help you build a mental model of instructional coaching, grounded in the science of learning. It combines research in cognitive psychology and motivation with practical coaching experience to identify key strategies for effective coaching. For those whose work involves helping teachers to become the best versions of themselves, it will be indispensable."

Doug Lemov



Teaching Walkthrus Tom Sherrington and Oliver Caviglioli and others!

Teaching Walkthrus are an excellent companion for mentors and their trainees or ECTs, offering visual step-by-step guides to essential teaching techniques.



The Promises and Perils of AI in Education: Ethics and Equity Have Entered The Chat (2024)

'A beacon of knowledge for anyone navigating the evolving terrain of educational technology for educational transformation. Dee and Ken's insightful work not only illuminates the path towards equitable AI integration but also empowers us to lead with activism and ethical foresight. Remember WE ARE THE CULTURE WE CREATE, and this book is a must-read for those eager to embrace AI's potential while championing diversity and inclusion in education.'

- Jornea Armant, Head of Community Engagement, Microsoft Learning



Christmas Quiz!

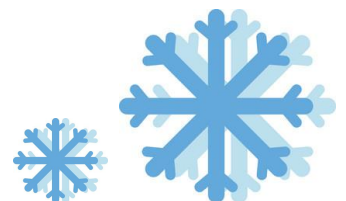
Test your general and pedagogic knowledge in our Christmas themed quiz! (answers on the next page)

1. How many gifts were given in the song 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'?
2. Before coca cola changed it, what colour was Santa's suit?
3. Australia has a popular Christmas dessert called, 'White Christmas'; can you name the ingredients – a point for each correct answer!
4. Who sang the titular song *White Christmas* featured in the popular 1954 film?
5. Christmas Island is a real place which belongs to which country?
6. Who wrote the poem, *'Twas The Night Before Christmas*?
7. How many points does a snowflake have?
8. In the film *Home Alone*, how many brothers does Kevin have? Can you name them?
9. In which year did Mariah Carey's famous Christmas classic get released?
10. In which country is it tradition to eat KFC for Christmas dinner?



Can you unscramble the education themed anagrams?

- 1) HIS SNIPER CLONERS PINES (11,10)
- 2) EMOTION CAN TIG (13)
- 3) TUT NOVICE CHRIST STORY (14, 6)
- 4) TAG PIE (6)
- 5) MOM LET MERRY NOG (4,4,6)
- 6) GO EDGY PA (8)





Christmas Quiz: Answers

1. 364
2. Green
3. Coconut oil, dried fruit, desiccated coconut, rice bubbles
4. Bing Crosby
5. Australia
6. Clement Clarke Moore
7. 6
8. 2 – Buzz and Jeff
9. 1994
10. Japan



Anagrams:

Rosenshine's Principles

Metacognition

Constructivist Theory

Piaget

Long Term Memory

Pedagogy

