**SECONDARY NEWSLETTER – Autumn 1 2022**

Welcome back – I hope that you had a pleasant summer and that you are returning refreshed and ready for the year ahead.

There is something about September and the start of the academic year – that anticipation of making a fresh start (even if for many of us it is largely in familiar surroundings and with people we already know). You may have a new role; you will undoubtedly have new classes and there will inevitably be new challenges. If you are new to science teaching then the Science Learning Partnerships are your local curriculum hubs and can provide science support including CPD.

Routines are important – both for you and your students – so take the time to think about what is most important to you and how you will embed this. However, as with all habits, they take time to embed them – so don't expect overnight success and do persevere with what matters.

I found that having a few, non-negotiables worked best – along with explaining why, which helps to get buy in. I am aware that many of you will already know and be doing this, probably almost subconsciously; however, for new staff and early career teachers it might be worth sharing some top tips early on.

At the start of every year, it is common to hear educators making resolutions and looking for ways to be (even) better. This blogpost from @LeadingLearner, suggests 5 papers that educators should read starting with the Great Teaching Toolkit: Evidence Review by Coe et al. The paper identifies 4 priorities for teachers who want to help their students learn more, and the blog post includes an easy to access summary (taken from the paper). I think this could be very useful checklist for individuals and departments alike.

This summer saw the first set of external exams for three years. I hope that you and your students felt that the outcomes were fair, even if not always what was expected. Ofqual's blogs helped to set the context for this year's results, with reminders of the adjustments made to recognise the impact

of the pandemic and explanations around grading. As teachers, we will no doubt be analysing the information and using it to inform our planning and it goes without saying that grade comparisons to 2020 and 2021 will have limited value (since we are not comparing like with like). Comparisons are inevitable, but are they useful? Lisa Clatworthy shares her thoughts in this EiC post.

So, what are the results headlines?
The move back to 2019 standards has begun, but results for 2022's GCSEs were higher than the midpoint for 2019 (and this will have an impact on next year too). There's more detail on subjects and grades in the fft blogs on A-level and GCSE (searchable by subject). One thing that did interest me was the difference between the provisional and actual entries for the sciences (compared to other subjects). As you carry out your detailed analysis and plan your intervention, remember that t we are here to support you with our head of science networks and other subject specific CPD – so do get in touch if we can help.

There is still much discussion around education recovery and narrowing the gap. I have been in education for more than 25 years now and seen various initiatives come and go. I wholeheartedly agree with Alex Quigley that we should not abandon the long-held priorities and here he discusses the importance of teaching academic vocabulary. Whilst this post is not a science specific one; the importance of reading, writing and talking is referenced in the Ofsted research review for science and I have had many a conversation about literacy levels limiting students' access to exam questions and more.

I am going to keep the resources section brief this time but here are a few suggestions:
The IOP has done a lot of work into gender and behaviour patterns and has produced this poster 10 inclusive teaching tips for teachers, which would be an excellent reminder or visual prompt.
Philip Harris has collated a set of Chemistry blogposts including some ideas for open evenings. They also have biology blogposts which includes this on climate change inspired activities. The RSC has a selection of resources on the same topic (plus sustainability) here.

If you haven't used Catalyst Magazine yet, then I really would recommend it – each issue features a selection of articles including information about STEM careers and is ideal for finding application stories. There are also teaching notes for some of the pieces to help you understand how to incorporate into the curriculum.

If you haven't yet joined the STEM Community, then why not make this the year that you do? There are special groups for early career teachers – the Early Career Club – 11-19; as well as discuss biology, discuss chemistry and discuss physics plus careers, clubs and cross curricular, in addition to the community noticeboard section. It's an ideal place to ask questions of others in the same situation as yourselves and access the expertise of other teachers.