

THE MAGAZINE FROM ATL, THE EDUCATION UNION

# Report

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## Welcome

KIM KNAPPETT,  
ATL NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Welcome to the October issue of *Report*. I imagine many of you are looking forward to the half-term break as the good intentions you had at the start of the term have morphed into piles of marking, rushed lesson planning and never-ending meetings.

When I started as ATL president I laid out my themes for the year: time, talk and trust.

I want all education professionals to reclaim their time and to use it to do the tasks that have significant impact on the students they teach. So much of our time is taken up with tasks that have little or no relevance to our work in the classroom or recording that we have done things.

I also want us to talk – we are often so busy that we make do with a snatched conversation when passing in a corridor or standing by the photocopier but education should be a collaborative profession and we need to create the space for meaningful conversations with our colleagues where we share ideas and support each other.

Finally, I have a clear message for those in Government and others outside of the education professions who seek to constantly create new policies for us to follow. Have the courage to listen to us and to trust us – we have the best interests of the children and young people at heart and we know how to teach them. Read more about this in our feature on page 10.

*Report* is the magazine from ATL,  
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Website [www.atl.org.uk](http://www.atl.org.uk)  
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*Report* is produced and designed for ATL by Think Publishing,  
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Tel 020 3771 7200 Email [info@thinkpublishing.co.uk](mailto:info@thinkpublishing.co.uk)  
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Think

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IN BRIEF

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For GDST teachers and support staff

## ► INDEPENDENT DEALS

As the sole union recognised by the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), ATL has successfully negotiated a cost-of-living increase of 1.5% for all 3,400 teachers and support staff working in GDST independent schools. It has also negotiated a new pay policy with greater emphasis on performance for 1,700 GDST teachers and some senior support staff.

In addition, ATL and the other recognised unions have reluctantly accepted a one per cent rise for staff at United Learning's 12 independent schools and 34 academies.

# Trade Union Bill's agency worker plans 'flawed'

**The Trade Union Bill being debated by Parliament this autumn risks both children's safety and the quality of education, and would lead to excessive control of employees' working lives, ATL has warned**

ATL highlighted its concerns about the bill in its response to a Department of Business, Innovation and Skills consultation in September. The legislation would mean employers could recruit agency workers to cover for strikers, would set a minimum of 40% of all eligible members voting 'yes' before action could take place, and would see restrictions on peaceful picketing and protests and other unnecessary red tape.

Adrian Prandle, ATL's director of economic strategy and negotiations, explained: "The proposals on and justifications for agency staff are flawed. Removing rules that prohibit the use of agency workers to cover duties of employees taking action undermines the rights of hard-working public servants, whose jobs may be threatened by the stretched circumstances schools and colleges find themselves in."

ATL is also concerned supply agencies would not have the capacity to fill all the posts. In the case of rapid industrial action, this could result in the hasty recruitment of agency staff – and ATL questions if these workers could be Disclosure and Barring Service checked in time. The Government also makes a false assumption that agency workers will be able to maintain a given service if there is widespread strike action. "Supply teachers fulfil a difficult and challenging role, and, as well as their professional abilities as teachers, require the skill and ability to

maintain order – it is a challenge to deliver high-quality education in these circumstances, and this will be even truer if supply teachers are expected to replace an entire teaching staff with limited support and handover," said Mr Prandle.

He also questioned why ordinary people's workplace democracy would be restricted by a 50% turnout base, when political elites do not face such barriers to election, and said the 40% support criterion applying to newly defined 'important services' – including education from reception to Year 11 – is "arbitrary and cumbersome".

The Trade Union Bill also appears at odds with the Government's anti-red-tape and bureaucracy stance. "This highly political bill takes disproportionate action to diminish the rights of ordinary employees in schools and colleges up and down the country. As a union with no party affiliation and with a track record of using strike action only as a very last resort, we are dismayed to be caught up in this legislative action," Mr Prandle said.

"If the Government believes industrial action has too big an impact on the country, then it should make proper effort to seek to resolve these issues in the public sector before disputes reach that stage – setting a good example for localised and private-sector employment relations."

## Squeeze on pastoral care

More than a third of members are spending up to four hours a week following up pastoral issues with their students outside of timetabled work, an ATL survey has found.

More than four in 10 members (42%) who took part in the poll said there is less timetabled time for pastoral care compared to 10 years ago.

One member, a Year 2 teacher, said: "My teaching assistant and I used to have time to talk to children, greet them and monitor concerns. We are now expected to go straight into lessons. The day is tightly timetabled and

rigorously monitored, even patrolled on some days, so there are no 'corners' of the day for talking to children. PSHE lessons have also been squeezed out by the focus on literacy and numeracy. Behaviour is getting worse."

Another member told us: "Teachers are so incredibly busy that sometimes students' issues and concerns are not dealt with as soon as they should be."

Meanwhile, a fifth of those who took part in the survey said they spend more than four hours a week performing pastoral duties – with the majority (77%) having received no

training and simply learning from experience. Just 21% said they had been trained in the pastoral side of the teaching role.

ATL policy adviser Suzanne Beckley said: "Pastoral care is vital for student well-being and should not lose out to the focus on assessment and preparation. We would like the Government to recognise this, and ensure funds are there to support schools to consider the whole child, which is time for teachers to talk to their students and consider how they are, rather than having to squeeze numerous tasks into a short registration timeslot, leaving little opportunity to focus on their well-being."



**“IN TOO MANY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, STAFF HAVE BECOME ISOLATED BY ‘BUSYWORK’”**

## Time to trust

**New ATL president Kim Knappett says the Government must trust teachers and ensure they have the time to do the tasks that actually help students learn**

Speaking at the ATL president’s reception in September, Mrs Knappett, a secondary science teacher of almost 30 years, spoke to politicians, education experts and journalists about the importance of what she called the ‘three Ts’ – time, talk and trust – in education.

“We need to reclaim our time. We need to stop doing things that have little or no effect on the pupils we teach and start to prioritise our own time to do the tasks that have a tangible impact on students. In too many education institutions, staff have become isolated by ‘busywork’ and the fear that Ofsted, performance measures and league tables have created. In the past, when you had a challenging pupil in your class you

chatted informally over a cup of tea with colleagues and shared ideas about how to get the best from that pupil,” she said.

“Now, once more, teachers and students face yet another set of changes to GCSEs and A-levels. We haven’t had time to really get to grips with the best way of delivering previous changes, and yet again teachers across the country are trying to prepare lessons based on new systems that no one really seems to understand.”

Mrs Knappett also explained how, when she started teaching, teachers were trusted to do what they knew was best for the enquiring minds in their care and were free to try new and different ways to get across a concept students struggled

with and “go off on a tangent, slow down or speed up, depending on the class in front of them”.

She continued: “Now we have rigid schemes of work, assessment schedules that mean there is no time for learning to take place before we test pupils again, and marking policies that demand comments in three or more different colours. If something is not written down and recorded, there is no evidence it was done, and schools believe Ofsted needs to see the evidence. A teacher’s word is no longer regarded as sufficient.”

Mrs Knappett concluded: “I urge those who make the decisions to give us the time to do the work that matters and most benefits our pupils. Give us the space and time to talk to share concepts, to solve problems, to develop new ideas. And most of all, trust us – the education professionals – to know what is best and let us get on with the job. We can, and do, make a difference.”

## Uncertain prospects for post-16

ATL believes the future for sixth form colleges looks bleak after news that more than two thirds have been forced to drop courses as a result of three funding cuts imposed since 2011. ATL has also expressed its concerns over a Government review of the post-16 sector. The annual Sixth Form Colleges Association funding impact survey revealed that almost all leaders (96%) are either extremely concerned or concerned about the financial health of their college, while more than a third (36%) said it is either extremely likely or likely their college will cease to be a going concern by 2020.

Nansi Ellis, ATL assistant general secretary, said: “Forcing sixth form colleges to withdraw courses in modern languages and STEM subjects is illogical at a time when employers are desperate for entrants with these skills. How can the Government seriously expect economic growth over the next five years without funding these vital areas?”

The results came just after the announcement of a Government review of post-16 education and training institutions through a series of area reviews taking place between September 2015 and March 2017. Its aim is for there to be larger but fewer post-16 colleges and institutions by amalgamating the “best of provision” to create centres of excellence, specialisation of routes and universal access to post-16 learning.

Ms Ellis said: “We recognise the need for a review of FE, but do not think specialist colleges are the answer because they would narrow young people’s training options. The Government needs to recognise any large-scale restructuring of FE would require external help and support, because experienced leaders have been haemorrhaged following the recent budget cuts.

“The area reviews, together with the massive budget cuts, are a double whammy

that will reduce the size and flexibility of the FE sector and spell disaster for hundreds of thousands of young people and adults.”

In September, ATL wrote to Nick Boles, minister of state for skills, outlining concerns about the review.

Members worried about the way the review is affecting their college, or who have heard of provision changing due to proposals deriving from the area reviews, should contact ATL’s national official for the post-16 sector, Norman Crowther, at [ncrowther@atl.org.uk](mailto:ncrowther@atl.org.uk).

Joining ATL and having an ATL rep at your college to ensure your voice is heard in any discussions that arise is more important than ever at this time of uncertainty – any colleagues not in a union can join at [www.atl.org.uk/joinonline](http://www.atl.org.uk/joinonline). If there is no ATL rep at your college, you can elect one – find out more at [www.atl.org.uk/rep-zone/be-our-rep/new-reps.asp](http://www.atl.org.uk/rep-zone/be-our-rep/new-reps.asp).



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Ray Amoss spoke for ATL in support of the motion on the funding crisis in FE

## ATL at the TUC

ATL and the NUT hosted a joint fringe event at the TUC Congress in September, entitled 'Will the current education system deliver skills for the workforce of the future?'

More than 80 delegates attended the event, where ATL general secretary Mary Boustead said that "in the UK's deeply divided and unequal society, poverty and inequality interact to compound disadvantage and to place artificial limits on the educational achievements of poor children and young people.

"We need joined-up thinking, adequate funding and coordinated educational provision across schools and further education to tackle the skills deficit in the UK," she concluded. "We are not seeing evidence of that thinking yet."

Also on the panel, James Meadway, chief economist at the New Economics Foundation, said that, even in the face of technological advances, the most important skills will be much as they always have been: the ability to understand arguments, the ability to think critically, and the ability to act thoughtfully.

In the main hall of Congress, Mary Boustead also spoke for ATL in a motion composed with the NUT calling for protection of our education system. "The sad truth is that the Conservatives have no strategy to improve educational standards," she said. "Their only solution is to convert all schools into academies, but this is coming under increasing scrutiny

from, among others, the Public Accounts Select Committee, the Education Select Committee and the Sutton Trust because, clearly, it is not working."

She concluded: "But now I think the pot is coming to the boil. If the Government does not act soon, it will face a perfect storm of teacher shortages, shortages of school places for pupils, and schools simply running out of money."

Elsewhere, ATL's new president Kim Knappett proposed the motion on education and poverty to highlight the impact of poverty on children and young people, in particular on their cognitive development, school outcomes and future employment prospects.

Lead member for FE Ray Amoss spoke for ATL in support of the motion on the funding crisis in education, highlighting the plight of the FE sector, which has been hit particularly hard by funding cuts.

ATL vice-president Shelagh Hirst spoke in favour of the motion emphatically rejecting the introduction of the Trade Union Bill, which was described as "an uncompromising and unnecessary assault on the rights and freedoms of British workers".

ATL's Niamh Sweeney spoke in support of the motion for improved services to prevent child sexual exploitation, which called for a national campaign to raise awareness and an education programme in schools around healthy relationships and the right to say no.

## TTIP QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Following an emergency motion on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) at ATL's 2015 Annual Conference, ATL has joined with other unions to create a series of frequently asked questions and a leaflet on the campaign to say 'no' to the deal.

TTIP is a trade agreement currently being negotiated between the EU and the US which aims to reduce 'barriers' to trade in goods or services. ATL members' fears about what TTIP may mean for education are exacerbated by the fact that the negotiation is being undertaken behind closed doors. See [www.atl.org.uk/ttip](http://www.atl.org.uk/ttip) for more information.

## Backing creativity

ATL has joined a campaign to reform the EBacc and help keep creativity in schools.

The Bacc for the Future campaign has been set up in response to Government plans to make it compulsory for every secondary school pupil to take maths, English, sciences, languages and history or geography. This excludes creative subjects and could force music, design, art, dance, drama and other creative subjects out of schools, despite there being no published evidence to support the choice of subjects included in the EBacc.

For more information and to sign the petition, see [www.baccforthefuture.com](http://www.baccforthefuture.com).



## ATL welcomes levels report


ATL welcomed the Government's report on assessment without levels but said it was regrettable it had been produced only after schools have had to start implementing the policy.

General secretary Mary Boustead said: "The report of the Commission on Assessment Without Levels offers useful, frank and honest guidance to teachers and school leaders about the use of assessment in schools, and the challenges of developing strong assessment policies and procedures.

"But it is regrettable this report has faced such a long delay in publication. We hope the Department for Education will quickly make decisions about how the Commission's recommendations will be implemented so that teachers and leaders get the support they need to deliver an excellent education to all children."



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# Wales

DR PHILIP DIXON

## Is it 'last orders' for GCSEs?



**THIS YEAR'S GCSE** results were on a par with those of 2014, which was welcome news given all the changes that have been introduced to date. If you work in a secondary school or FE college, then you will no doubt be familiar with yet another change to the specifications for a number of GCSEs this year, most notably the introduction of an 'extra' GCSE maths paper to be sat by most students.

On the exams treadmill, it's difficult to stand aside and wonder whether we need these qualifications at all. In an age where most youngsters proceed on the

education and training path, is it sensible to spend this amount of time and effort in this way?

Those are the thoughts, not of some trendy left-wing academic, but of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Lord Baker, the man who introduced the national curriculum and GCSEs in the first place. When the CBI says that we are the "oddballs" in Europe and calls for GCSEs to be scrapped, and when former education secretary Kenneth Baker hopes they will "wither on the vine", then something seismic is happening.

ATL, of course, has questioned the future of the GCSE regime for some time. It's good that we're being joined in the lobby. There's obviously quite a lot of work to be done before GCSEs could be abandoned. But before we get on the exam treadmill again it's good to pause and ask some basic questions – and even better if we can get our politicians to pause and do the same. The National Assembly elections next year give us an opportunity to do just that.

# Northern Ireland

MARK LANGHAMMER

## Why teacher-driven CPD is the answer in the current climate

**THIS YEAR'S** Regional Training Unit August summer school fell victim to funding cuts, estimated at £50,000. For over a decade, around 2,000 teachers attended this popular annual event. Teachers could meet, network and receive training, learn from experts and share teaching techniques, all without the term-time cover costs. Many teachers said the summer school had a major impact on how they taught.

A 'sign of the times' loss, one might think, but what happened next was more interesting. Teachers themselves, coalescing around a teachmeet group, organised something in its place. Using their summer holidays to invest in their own professional development, #NIEdcamp arose.

Topics covered in the camp included classroom leadership, e-safety, helping pupils with dyslexia, pastoral care and effective science teaching. The camp was attended by some 350 teachers and, by all accounts, it was a successful day – see [www.niedcamp.org](http://www.niedcamp.org).



The point made by #NIEdcamp is one ATL has made for some time – that in austere times, teacher-driven CPD is more likely to have traction than top-down, accountability-driven CPD offered from the centre. As Dr Carmel Gallagher, registrar of the General Teaching Council, who co-sponsored and helped organise the event, said: "The day succeeded, with a real buzz. The immense value of investing in the continuing professional development of teachers was there for all to see. The austerity cuts in education should not affect our greatest resource in the classroom – the teachers."

## Is your rep a winner?

Does your workplace rep deserve recognition for what they have achieved for you or your colleagues over the last year? If so, nominate them now at [www.atl.org.uk/repawards](http://www.atl.org.uk/repawards)

### No rep or contact in your workplace?

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# IT'S TIME TO LISTEN

ALMOST SIX MONTHS SINCE THE ELECTION,  
REPORT EXPLAINS WHY IT'S TIME  
FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO START LISTENING

**FOUR YEARS AGO**, in 2011, ATL produced a stark analysis of what the then coalition Government's changes to education policy could mean for education professionals, parents and pupils. Our publication *The Future of State Education: How everything you value is disappearing* detailed the ways in which education provision in England would be harmed.

"The coalition did not listen," says Mary Bousted, ATL general secretary. "And now, a Conservative administration is continuing where the coalition left off – rushing ahead with the Education and Adoption Bill, which will enable Nicky Morgan to complete Michael Gove's academies and free schools revolution.

"Almost six months into the new administration, it's time to look back at what's happened, and forwards to show how the next four years could bring positive change to education, if ministers would just pause for a moment and listen."

## Teacher training

Four years ago, we said the focus on in-school training – through School Direct and the expansion of Teach First – along with cuts to funding for higher education institution (HEI)-led PGCE courses, and an increase in tuition fees, would lead to a more limited range of courses and teachers entering the classroom without the theoretic knowledge upon which effective professional practice is built. We also warned that pay freezes, pension cuts and increases to tuition fees and student loans would lead to teacher shortages.

The number of new entrants into teacher training has fallen by 17% since 2009-10, and was seven per cent below the number of places needed in 2014-15

We've seen that, as places in HEIs have been cut, places on School Direct have risen. Three HEIs – Anglia Ruskin University, the University of Bath and The Open University – have closed teacher training courses. Others are changing what they offer, with many subject-enhancement programmes – which support teachers when, for example, the curriculum changes – are closing. Because HEIs don't know how many students they are going to get, they can't plan properly.

We've also seen schools, which individually recruit School Direct trainees, failing to recruit their target allocation of places – and they have no obligation to meet their targets. Meanwhile, university departments of education, filling the gap, are living hand to mouth, given trainee allocations, and therefore budgets, are only for a year. As a result, they are unable to appoint staff on permanent contracts.

"Sir Michael Wilshaw pointed out in Ofsted's 2013-14 annual report that the problem is not now one of quality, but of quantity and distribution of new entrants. School Direct has meant abandoning national and regional planning," says Mary. Indeed, the number of entrants fell by 17% from 2009-10, and was seven per cent below target in 2014-15. This translates into 8,000 fewer secondary trainees than in 2009-10, while 2015 teacher census figures show there were 1,050 vacant posts in November 2014, compared with 750 in November 2013.

She adds: "With almost one in five maths and English lessons now being taught by those without

an A-level qualification in those subjects, and 900,000 more children expected in education in England by 2023, the Local Government Association has warned the cost of creating places for these extra pupils could push schools to breaking point.

“We want to see better mapping of trainees, so the Government knows which locations and subjects/ phases have gaps, and better Government planning to fill those gaps. We also want a fundamental review of School Direct to understand whether trainees find jobs, and where, and if they stay in teaching. We also believe in HEI involvement in all teacher training, as part of initial teacher education that includes research, child development and subject pedagogy, and involves practice in more than one school.”

#### Pay and conditions

We said the Government would dismantle the national pay and conditions framework and that this would lead to inequalities, while support staff would continue to be badly paid and workload would increase, contributing to a teacher shortage.

“Sure enough, for all intents and purposes the national pay and conditions framework has been dismantled,” explains Mary. In England and Wales, maintained schools now decide how much to pay teachers between a minimum and maximum statutory figure. ATL and other education unions have jointly produced reference pay scales for schools and their staff. Meanwhile, September

saw a recommended increase of one per cent, yet it is up to schools how and if they implement this. Academies, which have proliferated, are not bound by the national pay and conditions framework when employing new staff.

An ATL member survey during the last academic year showed fewer than half received the rise recommended in September 2014. Worryingly, women did worse than men – overall, 44.9% of members received the rise, but the figure dropped to 39.3% for women, compared to 59.8%

of men. More than half (53.7%) of eligible male teachers progressed to the next point on the pay spine, compared to 37.7% of female teachers. Meanwhile, the average classroom salary fell by £100 in 2013, when the average leadership group salary increased by £500; and the pay gap between teachers and leaders is greater in academies than in maintained schools.

“We want to see a national pay structure reinstated, and for performance-related pay to be transparently monitored to make sure it is not discriminatory,” says Mary. “We also want to see the reinstatement of a support staff negotiating body and for commitments that, when support staff receive the National Living

Wage, it will not be at the expense of decent rewards for teachers.

“Teaching has become a job that is incompatible with a normal life, with an average 58-hour week. Teaching as a profession is monitored to within an inch of its life. Nothing can be done unless it’s been written down, so when the inspector calls there is no piece of evidence that cannot be provided.”

It is now six months since education secretary Nicky Morgan received over 44,000 responses to her Workload Challenge survey. More than half (53%) of the respondents cited accountability and the perceived pressures of Ofsted as the creator of the workload burden. Inspection was also identified as a main driver of workload in the Government’s accountability ‘deep dive’ project. “The high-stakes system of accountability in general, and Ofsted in particular, is driving unnecessary workload at unacceptable levels for teachers and leaders,” Mary says.

“Yet we know the inspection that drives so much of this workload is not raising standards.” Earlier this year, the Public Accounts Committee found that, of schools inspected and in receipt of some kind of formal intervention by Ofsted in 2012-13, 48% improved at their next inspection. Meanwhile, 59% of schools that received no formal intervention also improved.

“While there were positives in the Government’s response to the challenge, it has failed to tackle concerns about inspection as a driver of unnecessary workload. A better system of accountability can lead to better outcomes for students and remove excessive workload for teachers and leaders, and so we want an independent review of Ofsted’s reliability and validity,” she says.

You can see ATL’s *A New Vision for Inspection in Schools* at [www.atl.org.uk/visionforinspection](http://www.atl.org.uk/visionforinspection). ATL is part of joint union talks with the Government on workload and we are also putting together a resource to help you monitor and tackle your workload, and will be running a survey to find out more about members’ workload – see [www.atl.org.uk](http://www.atl.org.uk) and future issues of *Report* for more details.

#### Curriculum, qualifications and assessment

We said the curriculum would become more split between the ‘core’ and the ‘rest’, would increasingly be knowledge-based and that vocational education would be sidelined. “And indeed this has happened,” explains Mary. “From September, all state-maintained schools were expected to deliver a new national curriculum to all key stages – although academies, free schools and independent schools remain free to develop their own curricula.

“Opposition to the initial plans for this curriculum was widespread, and we welcomed significant changes to it, including spoken language skills being included in English and more world history included in history. Despite this, the new curriculum →

“TEACHING HAS BECOME A JOB THAT IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH A NORMAL LIFE, WITH AN AVERAGE 58-HOUR WEEK”



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is still not fit for purpose and there has been little acknowledgement, and no time allocated, for the mountain of extra planning required to introduce it.”

We are also seeing a squeeze on time for creative, practical and vocational learning, disadvantaging students whose skills and aptitudes lie in these areas, and narrowing experiences for those who won't have these opportunities outside school, and creating huge uncertainty for teachers of these subjects. The focus on education for jobs, at the expense of learning for life, leaves too many young people with skills for one particular job, no expertise in continuing their own learning, and nowhere to go even if they wanted to further their education later.

And all this is happening as new qualifications and testing are being brought in. Changes to GCSEs and A-levels have been even more problematic than we predicted, with end-of-course assessment and the new 9-1 grades, and a higher standard for a 'good pass'. There are predictions that 15% more young people will fail these new exams. Nobody understands how this new system is going to work – particularly parents. Next year, they will get reports that they don't understand, based on these new grades. Year 1 phonics tests were also introduced by the last Government, and we now have baseline testing of four-year-olds when they start reception.

“We want a 14-19 curriculum that includes both vocational and academic teaching and assessment, with no national testing until the end of schooling. GCSEs must be reviewed as the school leaving age has risen. We also want to see the removal of baseline assessment and Year 1 phonics testing as a national test, and an end to unnecessary data collection,” says Mary.

#### Academies and free schools

We predicted there would be little local accountability of academies and free schools, and pointed out that the Public Accounts Committee was already forecasting instability of governance and finance. We also said education would become increasingly private, with 'autonomous' schools turning to private suppliers for resources and support, while taxpayers would pick up the pieces for schools that failed.

Mary says: “Meddling with school structures and new school types is a distraction from supporting teacher judgement, autonomy and professional development. It diverts from essential intervention to tackle difficult social issues such as poverty, poor housing and all the other causes of educational underachievement.”

We also pointed out there was no compelling evidence that academies and free schools would raise standards – and this continues to be the case. In July, the UK Statistics Authority said the Department for Education cannot claim a link between academy status and improvement in test results. The same month, a National Foundation for Educational

In the new primary curriculum, there are 87 pages for English, 45 for maths and 32 for science, but only three for geography and two for computing – even though it's a completely new approach to the subject

## “A BETTER SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY CAN LEAD TO BETTER OUTCOMES”

Research report concluded pupil progress in sponsored academies compared to non-academies is not significantly different over time.

In January, the House of Commons Education Select Committee said it was too early to judge whether academies raise standards overall or for disadvantaged children, and that “academisation is not always successful nor is it the only proven alternative for a struggling school”. While last October, a National Audit Office report found informal interventions, such as local support, were more effective than conversion.

Yet, the Government is in the process of passing legislation that aims to turn maintained schools into academies in even greater numbers. The Education and Adoption Bill, making its way through Parliament, would make provisions for schools in England that are “causing concern”. ATL, jointly with the NAHT and NUT, has proposed amendments. “We oppose state-funded schools being run for profit and want to see the restoration of local democratic accountability and local collaborative working to all English state-funded schools,” says Mary.

#### What next?

“Until this Government stops trying to turn its every idea into policy and starts listening, these problems will continue,” Mary explains. “They will exacerbate the problems schools are already experiencing in recruiting and retaining teachers, and do nothing to alleviate the problems caused by the many changes to tests and exams from key stage 2 to A-level. Schools will have to deal with all of these things in an era of less money, increasing poverty for children and families, and cuts to all the support services that pupils need in order to thrive at school.” ■

#### YOU CAN HELP ATL GET THE MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNMENT

- ▶ See [www.atl.org.uk/ofsted](http://www.atl.org.uk/ofsted) for more about our work on Ofsted, including how to pledge to support *A New Vision for Inspection in Schools*.
- ▶ See [www.atl.org.uk/baselineassessment](http://www.atl.org.uk/baselineassessment) for more about the Better Without Baseline campaign, which ATL is part of, and how to lobby your MP.
- ▶ Have your say – join one of our networks, which include early years, primary, secondary, assessment, inspection, curriculum, and pay and conditions – email [mlove@atl.org.uk](mailto:mlove@atl.org.uk).

#### How ATL can support you:

- ▶ ATL will be surveying members about their workload this autumn – look out for more at [www.atl.org.uk](http://www.atl.org.uk). ATL will be producing materials to help you deal with your workload, while continuing to lobby the Government on the causes of workload.
- ▶ See ATL's website [www.acurriculumthatcounts.org.uk](http://www.acurriculumthatcounts.org.uk) for help planning, implementing and evaluating curriculum, assessment and qualification changes.

**"I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED** it's important that working people look after each other and stand up for each other," says Frances O'Grady.

Both her father and grandfather were active in the union movement, her father as a shop steward, and O'Grady has been involved in unions all her working life, first as an active member of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers and then working for the Transport and General Workers' Union.

A campaigner at heart, starting work at the TUC's new campaigns unit in 1994 gave her the opportunity to "get stuck in" on equal rights for part-time workers, better maternity rights, a national minimum wage and exploitation of the lowest-paid workers.

O'Grady's "dream job" was setting up the TUC's organising academy, to train union officials to recruit new members, encourage member activity and run campaigns. "That was really exciting," she recalls. "We needed to start relearning the craft of organising; not just recruiting people, but getting them active, ready to represent each other.

"Something else I know is close to Mary Boustead's and ATL's heart was transforming a series of piecemeal projects into Unionlearn, and growing that into a movement for training opportunities for working people," she adds.

O'Grady recalls the influence of her own school days. "Like a lot of teenagers, I wasn't the ideal pupil," she says. "My history teacher

encouraged me to go to university, which was something I never would have done otherwise. Those teachers who took an interest and said 'you can do it', they had a huge impact on my life. Teaching is incredibly important. We should cherish teachers."

O'Grady spoke at ATL's 2014 Annual Conference, giving her impassioned view that all teachers in all state schools need to be qualified. "It's not the case that anybody can wander in off the street and do that job," she says. "It is a profession you have to learn, and when you see a great teacher you know that's borne of training, qualifications and experience."

She is also extremely concerned about what she sees as the creeping impact of privatisation through the academies programme. "I don't believe the profit motive has any place in the education of our children," she says. "Ultimately, a public service should be accountable to the public. The problem with private involvement is that, ultimately, it's accountable to shareholders.

"The Government seems incapable of understanding that if it wants to improve services, it needs to consider how you treat your workers. For most of us, those workers *are* the service. I know most teachers, TAs and everyone else in education want to do the best they can because they really care.

"If their morale is high, if they're feeling supported and are given

**"I THINK THE LESSONS OF LIFE ARE THAT IF YOU WANT TO BE TREATED FAIRLY THEN YOU NEED TO STICK TOGETHER"**

sufficient autonomy to do their job, then children benefit. If they're feeling put upon, exploited or thinking about leaving, that does not provide a great education. Teachers do an amazing job, against the odds in many ways, but [the Government's approach] can't be good in the long run."

Her views reflect ATL's Shape Education campaign, and she admires ATL's member-led approach and 'debate not demand' negotiating style. Yet she sounds a note of caution about there being several unions in the education arena. "Competition in itself – healthy, comradely competition – can keep us all on our toes," she says, "but we have to remember the basic lessons of trade unionism; there is strength in unity. Our experience is that wasteful competition drags us all down and the more we can work together, in a variety of ways, the stronger we are."

All unions are seeing the need to come together against a focused attack from the Government through the Trade Union Bill. "It's more important than ever that we stick together and have confidence in our values," O'Grady says.

The bill proposes restrictions on the way industrial action is voted for and taken in 'important public services', including education. One main proposal is that 50% of eligible members must vote in a ballot and 40% of the entire eligible membership must vote in favour. Other proposals include restrictions on picketing, providing details of any campaigning activity, and, crucially, the right for employers to bring in agency staff to cover for striking workers, which is of particular concern in education given the need for Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

"We need to protect the right to strike," says O'Grady. "Although we know striking is always a last resort."

# The value of workers

General secretary of the TUC Frances O'Grady tells **Alex Tomlin** why it's more important than ever that working people stick together



To find out more about what you can do to support the campaign against the Trade Union Bill, see [www.tuc.org.uk/tubill](http://www.tuc.org.uk/tubill).

“We’ve also had to learn that some of the skills the pioneers of the trade union movement had, like organising, are even more relevant today,” she says. “At a time when the Government is coming down on the time people have to perform their union duties, it’s even more important that people become active and support each other.

“We have to be a team. Increasingly, it’s not the single super-rep doing everything and if they retire then the whole show collapses. We have a family of roles; people who can do the representative work, but also learning reps helping people to sharpen their skills; health and safety reps increasingly working on well-being – mental health as well as physical; and equality reps, where it’s still a very long way from men and women, black and white, being treated equally at work.”

She adds: “You can try going it alone, but I think the lessons of life, not just the workplace, are that if you want to be treated fairly then you need to stick together. It may sound like a cliché, but the strength of the union depends as much on what the members are prepared to give to the union in time and commitment, as what the union can give to them. Unions are voluntary organisations and reps are the lifeblood.”

However, she believes the rep role has an image problem. “Sometimes we make it sound a bit grim!” she says. “But my experience of getting active was meeting fantastic people, getting a real buzz from it, and developing confidence and skills I never knew I had. At its heart, trade unionism is about friendship between ordinary working people.”

Ultimately, she sees unionism as a powerful force for change. “If you want to change things and join up with other people, then trade unionism is a wonderful vehicle to do that. We should be braver in talking about what we do and our successes. If it wasn’t for unions saying ‘hang on a minute, people have the right to fair pay, a secure job, to be treated with respect at work’, then who else would be saying that?”

On agency workers being drafted in to break strikes, O’Grady says: “It’s rigging the rules against the unions’ democratic right to strike, but it’s also unfair on agency workers, who will be put in the invidious position of having to cross picket lines or worrying they won’t be offered work in future.”

Regarding thresholds in ballots, she points out the Government is reluctant to allow electronic balloting, which would raise voter participation. “The right to protest, to dissent, is a fundamental civil liberty,” she says. “Making that so difficult for people is not healthy for any advanced democracy.”

O’Grady is encouraged that the wider public supports the right to strike. “I think people understand the relationship between an employer and an individual worker isn’t equal and that the only way people can have a voice at work is if they band together,” she says. “We know the vast majority of strike ballots end up with an agreement so it’s not necessary to strike. But the only reason we can get the employer focusing on that settlement is that we could do so.”

O’Grady believes a deeper issue is the value of people’s work. “It’s a terrible comment on a society that

the only way workers can show how valuable they are is by withdrawing their labour,” she says. “We have to remind people wealth is not just created in boardrooms or in the private sector. It’s people’s work that creates wealth.”

O’Grady urges all union members to join the campaign against the bill, from signing petitions to writing to local papers and their MPs, to joining the rally on 2 November.

While much of the research done by the TUC into public attitudes towards trade unions reveals support, there are also those whose first thought about unions is Arthur Scargill and the miners’ strikes. “We still are saddled with some very outdated stereotypes and, of course, the union movement is very different today from 30 years ago,” O’Grady says, pointing out the even split in membership between men and women, and increased numbers of female union leaders.

She believes the media has played a role in negative perceptions of unions, but says the TUC is working to present a more positive image, showing the diversity of the trade union movement, its achievements, and reaching out to younger workers.

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# Supporting colour-blind students

**Kathryn Albany-Ward, of Colour Blind Awareness, on the support colour-blind students need**

**EARLIER THIS YEAR** an ATL member survey revealed just 15% think there are one or more pupils in their setting requiring support with colour blindness. However, statistics show colour blindness affects 450,000 pupils in the UK, which equates to at least one in every coeducational class of 30.

Colour blindness, also known as colour vision deficiency (CVD), can lead to students becoming disillusioned with learning and affect how well they do in external exams. One in 12 boys and one in 200 girls are colour blind.

Common red/green colour blindness is usually an inherited condition affecting ability to perceive colours correctly. Colour-blind people don't just confuse red with green; they frequently experience problems with reds/greens/browns/oranges, with blues/purples/pinks, and with red and black.

Colour is used extensively in the education world, but for colour-blind students, it can be a nightmare. If pupils don't understand some of what is being said, they are put at a disadvantage compared to their colour-normal peers.

## Identifying a colour-blind student

Our studies show that over 80% of pupils in Year 7 have not had their colour vision tested, so most colour-blind students will be undiagnosed. CVD students can sometimes appear slow, distracted

or disruptive. They can miss some teaching points because they are still trying to understand the previous one.

In younger children, look out for:

- ▶ inappropriate use of colour when drawing/painting – commonly purple skies, yellow/green/grey faces, red leaves, brown grass, etc
- ▶ disruptive behaviour/unwillingness/inability to play board games, matching games, some memory games, sequencing
- ▶ mistakes using bean bags/cones, eg running past an 'obstacle'
- ▶ mistakes choosing the correct book for their reading level
- ▶ consistently holding back and watching, then 'borrowing' a colour from a friend and copying exactly where that colour went.

In older students, look out for:

- ▶ inappropriate use of colour when completing worksheets/diagrams
- ▶ unexpectedly poor results from worksheet exercises
- ▶ unexpectedly poor results/inability to interpret sections of web-based homework programmes – such as MyMaths, BBC Bitesize, etc, most of which do not account for colour blindness
- ▶ 'boring' presentations/work lacking colour formatting
- ▶ mistakes in use of colour names in language lessons/homework
- ▶ inability to accurately read litmus

paper, universal indicator and colour changes in chemistry.

Also watch for pupils holding back:

- ▶ in sports, when team colours clash and balls/line markings 'disappear' against playing surface
- ▶ in science practicals/microscope work, light spectrum, diagrams, etc
- ▶ in maths/economics/business studies/geography, due to difficulty interpreting coloured graphs or maps.

## Simple steps to improve your classroom

- ▶ Seat colour-blind children in good natural light, avoiding bright sunlight/artificial light, which distort colour perception.
- ▶ Group and label beads, bricks and other materials according to colour.
- ▶ For books use symbols/labels to distinguish different levels – for young children use pictures as labels, eg 'red' fire engine, 'yellow' banana.
- ▶ Be consistent in descriptions of objects so colour-blind students can learn the colours of individual objects. Avoid confusing names such as mahogany, mauve, etc.
- ▶ Label felt tips, paints, pencils, etc with the name of their colour.
- ▶ Check accessibility of computer-based teaching aids/web pages/worksheets/textbooks – if in doubt photocopy into greyscale.
- ▶ Use strong contrast on whiteboards, avoiding red/green highlighting.
- ▶ Avoid marking using colours/traffic light systems without secondary indicators.
- ▶ Use secondary indicators, eg labels, outlining, underlining, cross-hatching, etc, to differentiate, in place of, or in addition to, colour.
- ▶ Check classroom equipment is labelled, eg on/off switches, especially on technology machinery.
- ▶ In sports, ensure students can differentiate teams and equipment – use blue versus yellow bibs if in doubt.
- ▶ Organise 'buddies' for science experiments, etc.
- ▶ Consult with diagnosed colour-blind students to identify where they might have problems.
- ▶ Remember, a CVD student is entitled to a colour 'reader' for external exams. ■

*Teachers can also be colour blind and experience similar issues in school. For more information, visit [www.colourblindawareness.org](http://www.colourblindawareness.org).*

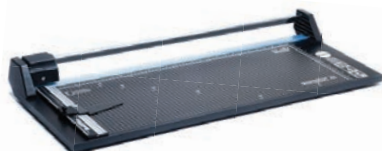


→ The picture on the right shows how a colour-blind child might see numicons



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# Talk-less teaching

Authors and educators **Isabella Wallace** and **Leah Kirkman** explain why talking less can achieve more



**AS EDUCATORS**, we all know what it's like to have a mountain of content to cover with our learners and an alarmingly short period of time in which to do it. Of course, there's an obvious way to convey vast amounts of information and complex concepts to a class as quickly as possible: to *talk*. Talk until you've explained it all; talk until you've answered all their questions; talk until the proverbial cows come home.

However, while no one is going to argue that talking is the quickest method to share information, most of us have discovered that it is often not the most effective way to ensure our learners remember, engage with and embed the information.

You may well have experienced that infuriating scenario where, having explained to your learners (extremely clearly, thank you very much!) exactly what they need to do, you go round the class to discover half simply weren't listening attentively to your instructions. This situation often sees the teacher flitting from learner to learner, delivering another 10 micro-lessons

to re-explain to individuals what they failed to absorb the first time.

'Talk-less teaching' is a mode of teaching that maximises opportunities for learners to contribute to classroom dialogue as well as participate actively in lessons. Learners are encouraged to be self-reliant, self-reflective and proactive rather than over-relying on the teacher or being habitual passive recipients of learning. Too much teacher talk can prevent the teacher from ascertaining the

understanding of learners. If there's one thing that's impossible to do while you're talking, it's monitoring whether every learner is absorbing, understanding and benefiting from that talk.

This way of teaching focuses on the importance of gathering feedback from learners about their understanding and progress during lessons so you can assess the impact of your teaching as you teach. This means a teacher can adapt to the emerging needs of learners as the lesson unfolds. The celebration of learners' own questions, peer teaching and collaborative activities are also key features.

## Celebrating learners' questions

Establish the simple habit of placing Post-it notes on your classroom tables at the beginning of each lesson. Invite learners to use these to note down any questions that pop into their heads about the learning as the lesson progresses. Many feel asking questions is synonymous with 'being stupid', so ensure your learners know 'good

students ask questions'. Try asking the class to share their questions about a topic at the beginning of a lesson. You can stick these to the left of your classroom door and, as a question gets answered, it can be moved across to the right to form a collage of new learning. At the end of the lesson, review the questions that remain on the left-hand side of the door – the ones your lesson didn't answer. This is an excellent tool for informing future planning.

## The walking chocolate bar

Each learner folds a piece of paper into eight sections. They then circulate, finding eight separate people who can tell them something different about the topic, thereby filling each square.

Next comes the debrief part of the activity. Ask learners to tick those squares that are correct and cross out those that were not. You should find that during the collating stage, not only can you correct any misconceptions, but each learner's eight squares will probably turn into 16! Learners will already have made some progress through collecting additional ideas and you will have ascertained useful information about current levels of understanding in your class.

Even those learners who are initially stuck can begin to share the ideas that they accumulate from other learners. Furthermore:

- ▶ Learners who initially assess themselves as knowing nothing about the topic often delightedly discover they actually know several things – once these are teased out.
- ▶ 'Experts' in a topic usually discover something new or are reminded of something they had completely forgotten.
- ▶ As learners attempt to find an idea the other learner has not yet collected, they find themselves reviewing the whole range of facts or ideas that they are accumulating.
- ▶ The class gradually reaches a more common starting point without you needing to do all the talking. ■

*Isabella and Leah are authors of the bestselling guides **Pimp Your Lesson!** and **Talk-Less Teaching: Practice, participation and progress**, and have worked for many years as advanced skills teachers, curriculum coordinators and school governors. They present nationally and internationally on outstanding teaching and learning.*

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Call Morrish Solicitors LLP, ATL's appointed solicitors, or go to [www.atlinjuryclaims.org.uk](http://www.atlinjuryclaims.org.uk). This service is open to members and their families, subject to the rules of the scheme.

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If you are not a member of ATL and would like to join, please contact us on

0845 057 7000  
(lo-call)

# A charter for support staff

ATL's new charter for support staff could help you improve working conditions in your school

**ATL HAS LAUNCHED** *A Charter for Support Staff* to highlight the difficulties facing support staff in schools and to demonstrate how they should be treated.

ATL knows all school support staff play a vital role in education, which is why we have a dedicated support staff national official and the Support Staff Members Advisory Group (SSMAG), and we produce publications specifically for support staff. But, far too often, support staff are not viewed in such a positive light by school management.

ATL's charter is designed to counter this by outlining the issues support staff often face and the ways we believe they should be treated. It was created with the input of support staff members through ATL's SSMAG and two ATL support staff conferences earlier in the year.

The charter has two objectives:

- ▶ to provide an easy-to-use vehicle for ATL members, branches and school reps to raise the issues it addresses with school management, governors and colleagues
- ▶ to act as a working document for ATL support staff members, providing links to further information and advice, and so helping them tackle immediate problems.

The charter addresses the following key areas:

**Pay:** pay levels are too low for the roles and responsibilities held by support staff, and there are gross inconsistencies in pay. ATL argues for a national pay framework for support staff roles.

**Working hours:** support staff regularly work beyond their contractual hours, just like teachers. Schools could not function without the degree of goodwill shown by their support staff, who work a significant amount of unpaid overtime during the

academic year. ATL urges schools to tackle their unpaid overtime culture.

**Job descriptions and contracts:** a written contract of employment is a legal requirement, and a job description should also be provided by any reputable employer. However, ATL sees instances where one or both of these key documents has not been provided, or, where necessary, updated. ATL's factsheet *Support Staff Job Descriptions and Job Evaluation* has more information on this subject and is free to download from [www.atl.org.uk/factsheets](http://www.atl.org.uk/factsheets).

**Training:** support staff are often overlooked when schools organise and fund training and CPD events. ATL argues that all support staff should have a contractual right to high-quality training.

**Violent and abusive behaviour:** support staff are often in the front line of physical and verbal attacks from pupils and many get little or no support from school managers. ATL believes all education staff should be given the same support and protection from abuse and threats of abuse, and that schools should do more to protect their staff.

**HLTAs/cover supervisors:** higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) and cover supervisors are routinely used in an inappropriate fashion, and are rarely compensated when this happens. Indeed, HLTAs and cover supervisors are often used as de facto teachers, but without the rights (and pay) of a teacher. This is wrong.

A new ATL factsheet *HLTAs and Cover Supervisors: Your questions answered* provides more detailed advice and can be downloaded from [www.atl.org.uk/factsheets](http://www.atl.org.uk/factsheets).



We have already heard back from members who have given out copies of the charter to their headteachers, governors and senior management, as well as to their support staff and teaching colleagues, in a bid to improve the working lives of support staff. You can spread the word in your school by:

- ▶ printing off copies and sharing them with your support staff colleagues
- ▶ placing a copy on the school noticeboard
- ▶ presenting a copy to your line manager, headteacher, governors, etc, and asking them to consider its terms.

The charter can be downloaded as a PDF from [www.atl.org.uk/supportstaffcharter](http://www.atl.org.uk/supportstaffcharter) or you can request hard copies from national official for support staff Peter Morris at [pmorris@atl.org.uk](mailto:pmorris@atl.org.uk). And do let us know how the charter has been received in your school – email Peter with updates. ■

**JOIN THE DEBATE...**

- report@atl.org.uk
- @ATLReport
- facebook.com/ATLUnion
- Report ATL, 7 Northumberland Street, London WC2N 5RD

# Redundancy

ATL solicitor **Sharon Liburd** offers a brief guide to the redundancy process

**REDUNDANCY** has become increasingly common in recent years, with falling rolls, budget deficits, reorganisations and amalgamations as well as total closures of educational establishments.

Under section 139 of the Employment Rights Acts 1996, the definition of redundancy is that it occurs where a workplace is closing or where an employer has decided that fewer employees are needed to do work of a particular kind. However, the case of *Packman v Fauchon* (2012) suggests a redundancy situation can arise where there has been no reduction in headcount, as long as there has been a fall in the amount of work required. Here, a full-time employee was dismissed for refusing to reduce her working hours. The tribunal ruled she was dismissed on the grounds of redundancy and was entitled to a redundancy payment.

Generally, only employees who have been dismissed after two years' service are entitled to claim unfair dismissal. However, a redundancy dismissal will be automatically unfair from day one if the selection was made on at least one of the grounds specified in section 105 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, which include a union-related or health and safety reason, pregnancy/maternity leave and asserting rights in relation to part-time/ fixed-term/ flexible working.

The first issue for a tribunal to decide is the reason for dismissal. When considering fairness, tribunals will focus on whether:

- there was any warning of redundancy
- the employee and/or any recognised trade union was consulted
- the selection criteria were objective and applied fairly
- any suitable employment was available to offer.

It is advisable for all establishments to have a written redundancy policy. Consultation should start early, allowing employees and unions to explore alternatives to compulsory redundancies, with a view to reaching agreement. Options could include full-time employees going part time, and inviting volunteers

for redundancy or early retirement. ATL members are advised to participate fully in the consultation and to keep a clear record.

The law does not oblige employers to adopt any particular selection criteria, provided they are reasonable and non-discriminatory. A woman whose post is declared redundant while on maternity leave must be offered any suitable employment that becomes available in preference to other employees; failure to do so will make her dismissal automatically unfair.

ATL believes curriculum need should normally be the main selection criteria and educational establishments should ensure they have an up-to-date skills audit, completed by staff. Selection criteria, scored in points, often include qualifications and training, experience, management needs, extracurricular responsibilities and performance. Criteria may be ranked in importance or given equal weighting. Length of service tends to be used as a secondary 'tiebreaker' where two or more employees have scored the same. Members are advised to retain their appraisal records as well as written positive feedback from line managers and parents. When asked to complete skills audits, members should sell themselves and not assume the employer already knows their attributes.

Concerns are often raised about scores awarded to the employee selected for

redundancy and members are advised to exercise any right of appeal. It is good practice for the employer to provide scores of the other candidates (which can be anonymised). However, unless there is documentary evidence, it is often difficult to persuade a tribunal of unfair selection. Moreover, tribunals do not usually subject the scores awarded to great scrutiny.

A potentially redundant employee must be offered suitable alternative employment that becomes available, taking into account factors such as pay, status, hours of work and location. The offer must be made before the current contract ends. Where the new job differs from the old, the employee will generally be entitled to a four-week trial period (which may be extended by agreement) to decide whether it is suitable, without losing entitlement to redundancy payment. However, the entitlement may be lost where the employee unreasonably refuses an offer of suitable alternative employment.

A letter of dismissal should confirm the date employment is to be terminated, explain how the redundancy payment is calculated, clarify steps being taken to identify any suitable alternative employment, state what support the employer can give, and confirm the employee has the right to reasonable paid time off to look for work. ■

Members with concerns about redundancy should contact ATL using the details on page 21.



# Letters

## Overheard

**ATL members on Facebook respond to the suggestion from former 'superhead' Dame Sally Coates that teachers across the country should deliver the same lessons at the same time in order to cut down on workload.**

**Neal McKnight:** No two teachers ever deliver the same lesson, further to that the same teacher probably never delivers the same lesson twice. This is the biggest load of rubbish I've ever heard. Different pupils = different lesson. Sounds like this superhead may not have delivered a lesson in a while!

**Laura Daniel:** 10 years ago, when I trained, a teacher with almost 40 years' experience gave me a piece of advice. You can never teach exactly like another teacher because you are not them, you have your own personality and you have to find what works for you.

Besides, like us, the kids all have their own individual personalities, strengths and weaknesses. If kids are struggling to understand a particular topic, I like to have the choice to change how I teach it, or to leave it and come back to it later.

If I wanted to just be another robot I would not have gone into teaching. It's our creativity and willingness to constantly develop and adapt to our students that makes the job so interesting and rewarding. Trying to cut down workload by making us a bunch of clones is not the answer! Cut down our workload by cutting out pointless over-the-top form filling and bureaucracy and let us spend more time doing the

bit that is useful: developing ways to inspire and engage students in our lessons!

**Stephen Peacock:** As ever in education there is lots of logic to that but if it was implemented in Britain it would destroy all creativity. I'd be happy to be told what and when to teach things, as long as I wasn't told *how* to teach.

**Stephen Hone:** Okay, let's look at this logically: this would have to be some sort of super-lesson planned to perfection that took into account every different type of student, those with special education needs and the gifted and talented, etc. The reality is it would be impossible to meet all the needs of all the different students!

Children are not bits of metal that you can put in a machine knowing they will all come out the same! They are individuals who have many different learning needs that can only be met through a variety of teaching methods.

**Rachel Hill:** Yes, it would probably ease workload problems. It would also kill off the tiny amount of individuality and child-centred learning we currently have the freedom to inject!

**Anna L K Whitt:** The French have moved on from such levels of control freakery. Oh, and as you no longer have to plan, you no longer need to be a teacher, so you can all be made redundant and replaced with HTLAs. Easy.

**Caroline Milne:** Children might as well stay home and sit in front of a computer.



### STAR LETTER

#### NO MORE NONSENSE

Reading the article in September's *Report* about changing assessment (p12) makes me even more grateful that after nearly 30 years' teaching I am no longer in the middle of all this nonsense. When will people who impose decisions on the teaching profession realise that every fresh initiative not only creates more unnecessary work but also achieves very little? Pupils, parents and teachers would all benefit from brief, crisp comments on pupils' work; lengthy screeds are rarely read or used. Levels were mostly meaningless for subjects such as mine (history) and the new system sounds depressingly equally valueless.

*A Bromley, Clwyd*

#### SEX AND RELIGION

Reading the September issue of *Report* I have concerns about the conflicting views expressed in some articles. There is much encouragement for 'Speaking up for equalities' (p5) and getting involved in the TUC equalities conferences (p27). I would expect no less as it is quite in line with current equality legislation and long-standing international human rights beliefs. However, on page 6 one reads 'Sex ed bill welcomed'; surely this creates a problem, as current legislation on equality requires that religions and beliefs be respected. The teaching of sex education as discussed in this document appears to run contrary to views in many cultures and religions represented in this country.

*Name withheld*

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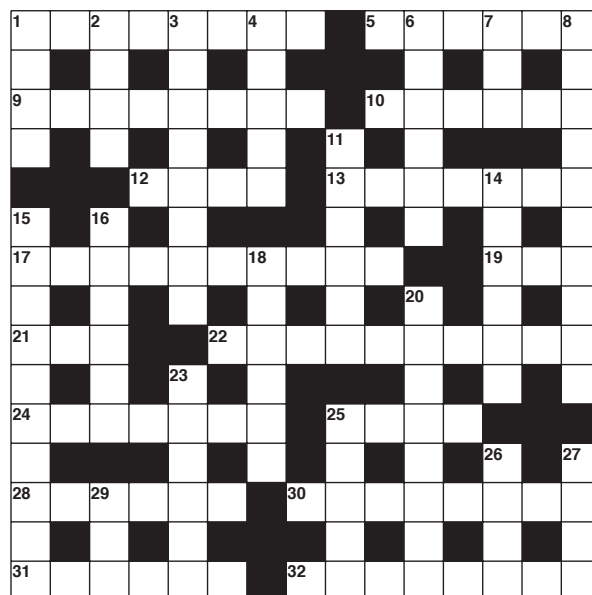
# Prize crossword

## ACROSS

- 1 Meddlesome type in a very active group of governors? (8)
- 5 Fed the fire – desk to break up (6)
- 9 Wild, reckless boy involved in rip-off? (8)
- 10 Chemistry paper? (6)
- 12 Group of Scouts get ready to go on holiday? (4)
- 13 Interrupt with dreadful rude bits – end of joke omitted! (7)
- 17 Chemist has unfortunate cart mishap (10)
- 19 See 31 across
- 21 Boy is somewhat maladjusted (3)
- 22 Perhaps join monthly with no end of copy on this poet? (4,6)
- 24 College restaurant cannot even be abbreviated (7)
- 25 Part of a book by heads of principal academies generates excitement (4)
- 28 Famous physicist went crazy with no backing (6)
- 30 He and I in California, for instance, but don't act straight away (8)
- 31 and 19 across Yes, PC head organised annual school celebration (6,3)
- 32 Part of the university year devoted to abstinence? (4,4)

## DOWN

- 1 Graduate has half of this tub (4)
- 2 Harrison Ford, for example, in Raiders of the Lost Ark (4)
- 3 Carry weapons with sleeves rolled up, we hear! (4,4)
- 4 Penny joined old film company and regularly consumed alcohol? (5)
- 6 Desire for drink – it's HRT treatment! (6)
- 7 Kipling hero among the Eskimos (3)
- 8 Artificial boy I design is not doing as he's told! (10)
- 11 No team turns up, but inventor is there (6)
- 14 Provide latest information about a piano duet, maybe (6)
- 15 They're putting themselves forward for jobs, despite a cap and splint (broken) (10)
- 16 Unmarried girl – blokes go round to help (6)
- 18 Chapel outwardly possesses some comical characters! (6)
- 20 Revised Uni list includes grand for language expert... (8)
- 23 ...and new choir includes Head of English – brave! (6)
- 25 Sounds like calm for a bit! (5)
- 26 Created Dame, unexpectedly (4)
- 27 Many sheets of paper concerning a motorway (4)
- 29 With great sorrow you and I absorb oxygen (3)



## HOW TO ENTER

Send your completed crossword with your contact details to: ATL October crossword competition, Think Publishing, Capital House, 25 Chapel Street, London NW1 5DH. The closing date is 23 November 2015. If you have an ATL membership number, please include this here: \_\_\_\_\_ The winner of the October competition will be announced in the January issue of Report.



## LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTION

**ACROSS:** 9 Afternoon 10 Tango 11 Manet 12 Southpole 13 Decimal 14 Trained 17 Point 19 Key 20 Stage 21 Deficit 22 Besides 24 Nissen Hut 26 Agnes 28 Cross 29 Ninety two  
**DOWN:** 1 Calm 2 Ethnic 3 Arithmetic 4 Morsel 5 Industry 6 Utah 7 Insomnia 8 Tome 13 Doped 15 Assistants 16 Diets 18 Infusion 19 Kitchens 22 Botany 23 Donate

CONGRATULATIONS TO JULY'S WINNER – MICHELLE HIGGS, STOURBRIDGE

# QUALIFICATION REFORM MAY CAUSE A STIR...

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Codes of practice have special legal status. Any Body, such as the HSE, investigating the circumstances of an accident will consult the relevant code of practice as well as the relevant H&S Regulations.

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# IT'S NOT THE WINNING...



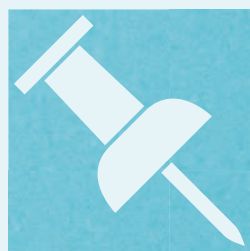
...it's the running, hopping, skipping, dancing, tug-of-warring, teacher gunging, cake baking and generally feeling brilliant about pushing yourself and trying something new to help others that counts.

Sport Relief is back on Friday 18th March 2016. So get a head start and order your free Fundraising Event Pack today at [sportrelief.com/pack](http://sportrelief.com/pack)



Friday 18 March

Sport Relief is an initiative of Comic Relief, registered charity 326568 (England and Wales); SC039730 (Scotland) Photo credit: Gary Moyes.



# NOTICE BOARD

## ATL AND NUT - OWNING OUR PROFESSION

Following the success of the three regional events we held for ATL and NUT members earlier this year, a fourth event is taking place in Bristol on Saturday 12 December.

This one-day conference will bring together education professionals like you to learn strategies and share ideas on the issues that matter most to you. ATL general secretary Mary Bousted will speak alongside NUT deputy general secretary Kevin Courtney. They will discuss how our unions continue to build on the shared vision for education exemplified by our respective election manifestos to work together to strengthen our voice with the new Government.

For more information and to book a place, see [www.atl.org.uk/events/owning-our-profession.asp](http://www.atl.org.uk/events/owning-our-profession.asp).

## NEW PARTNERSHIP

ATL has signed a partnership agreement with Habilitation VI UK. The organisation, formerly known as MISE, is the professional body for registered qualified habilitation specialists and assistants (RQHS or RQHA).

It also holds the register of those habilitation specialists who meet the national standards for habilitation training for children and young people with visual impairments, as well as organising and delivering specialist CPD.

Membership of Habilitation VI UK costs £35 per year. It also holds two national conferences a year and regional meetings in between. Under the terms of the agreement, Habilitation VI UK members will be able to join ATL at a discounted rate. To find out more about Habilitation VI UK, see [www.habilitationviuk.org.uk](http://www.habilitationviuk.org.uk).

## TUC BLACK ACTIVISTS' MENTORING SCHEME

ATL is supporting the TUC's Black Activists' Mentoring Scheme as part of its clear commitment to promote equality for all and to eliminate all forms of harassment, prejudice and unfair discrimination. The TUC race relations committee is working to ensure black workers are properly

represented in the trade union movement and at all levels of its lay and full-time structures, and has established the mentoring scheme as part of its strategy to support the organisation and advancement of black workers within the trade union movement – see [www.tuc.org.uk/mentoringscheme](http://www.tuc.org.uk/mentoringscheme).

An application form for black activists who want to be mentored can be obtained from [www.tuceducation.org.uk/RRcmentoring](http://www.tuceducation.org.uk/RRcmentoring). Applicants to be mentees on the scheme should be nominated by their trade union. A nomination can be obtained from ATL's lead equalities officer Wanda Wyporska at [wwyporska@atl.org.uk](mailto:wwyporska@atl.org.uk).

## ADVICE ON PRESS ENQUIRIES

We are keen to get publicity on ATL's views and what ATL and its members are doing, so try to follow up all opportunities for media coverage. However, if you are contacted directly by a journalist don't be pushed into responding immediately. First find out what they want, why they want it and which publication, TV or radio station they are from.

If you are at all worried about the issue, it is controversial, or you want advice, phone the ATL press office on 020 7782 1589 during office hours or 07918 617466 outside office hours. If we ask you to talk to a journalist we will always give you details and a briefing.

## ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Most teaching staff will be familiar with having to liaise with their local SENCO on what appropriate Access Arrangements (AA) will be required for targeted students in their public exams at the end of each academic year. These requests are then processed and implemented by the exams office on the days exams are to be taken.

The issue that has been raised is the apparent 'spike' in AA requests leading up to an exam period. The problem facing exam office staff who end up lodging the requests with the appropriate exam body is the lack of evidence to support the 'normal way of working' in the classroom.

Reforms last year require all future requests for AA to have a clear evidence trail

and that this kind of assessment of need should be embedded within the usual profiling of students when they enter secondary education and that any requests for AA in future should be driven by teaching and learning.

The Examination Officers' Association, which is affiliated to ATL, is working closely with the teaching community, exam bodies, Ofqual and specialist groups and organisations to provide additional resources to support teaching staff who will need to flag up the whole AA process earlier in their planning.

For further information, see [www.examofficers.org.uk](http://www.examofficers.org.uk) or contact [eo.a.office@examofficers.org.uk](mailto:eo.a.office@examofficers.org.uk) or **0118 975 8552**.

## CPD EVENTS FOR MEMBERS IN THE MIDLANDS

### English and maths week

As part of ATL's Unionlearn fund project we have organised our first ever English and maths week, taking place from 16 to 20 November in the Midlands.

During the week, various CPD twilight workshops will be delivered across the region. These will be suitable for primary, secondary and post-16 teachers. Sessions include: 'harnessing the power of cross-curricular literacy and numeracy'; 'teaching the new mathematics GCSE'; 'don't kill them with SATS'; 'using meaningful contexts to stimulate student interest in learning mathematics'; and 'dealing with the difficult questions in the new GCSE English language'.

### ATL Leicestershire teachmeet

A free CPD event open to all education professionals from across all teaching sectors, regardless of subject specialism, will take place in Market Harborough on Thursday 3 December from 5pm to 8pm.

Teachmeets are informal gatherings of teachers to share best practice, innovation and insight through brief presentations. Come along as an enthusiastic audience member or maybe choose to present and share a two-minute 'nano' presentation or a five-minute 'micro' presentation on a topic of your choice.

For more information about these workshops or to book your place, visit the Midlands regional learning page [www.atl.org.uk/learning-zone/regional-learning/midlands.asp](http://www.atl.org.uk/learning-zone/regional-learning/midlands.asp) or email [atlmidlands@atl.org.uk](mailto:atlmidlands@atl.org.uk).



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A promotional advertisement for SuperStickers Christmas Notepad Gifts. The background is green with a starburst pattern. At the top, it says 'SuperStickers' in a stylized font with stars. Below that, 'Christmas Notepad Gifts' is written in a red, bubbly font. A red 'NEW' badge is on the right. Three notepad gifts are shown: one with a snowman and the text 'Only 25p each', one with a penguin and 'Lots more Christmas gifts online', and one with a Santa Claus and 'Your pupils will love these!'. A yellow starburst at the bottom right contains a discount offer: '£5 off when you spend £20 or more. Use promo code PCAT5 at the checkout online. Offer ends 30/11/15'. At the bottom, it says 'Christmas catalogue out now!' and provides the website 'www.superstickers.com'.

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\*Your free welcome bonus is paid once you reach your first cashback total of £25.00.  
Your cashback will be paid automatically to your registered account each time you  
reach a cashback total of £25.00. ATL Rewards is a trading name of Union Income  
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Use promo code **PCAT5**  
at the checkout online  
Offer ends 30/11/15

Christmas catalogue out now!  
[www.superstickers.com](http://www.superstickers.com)

The advertisement features a green background with a starburst pattern. It shows several Christmas-themed notepads: one with a snowman and the text "Only 25p each", one with a Santa Claus and the text "Your pupils will love these!", and one with a penguin and the text "Lots more Christmas gifts online". A red starburst graphic contains the text "£5 off when you spend £20 or more Use promo code PCAT5 at the checkout online Offer ends 30/11/15". At the bottom, it says "Christmas catalogue out now! www.superstickers.com".

# ATL RESOURCES

## ATL and AMiE Rep Awards 2016

ATL's rep awards are open for 2016, and we invite you to nominate those individuals who you feel deserve recognition for what they have achieved for you or your colleagues over the past year.

Maybe your rep has led a campaign to improve conditions in your workplace. They might have directed members to learning or made your workplace safer. Perhaps they have encouraged groups of staff to get involved in ATL or AMiE – support staff, students, newly qualified or leaders. Or maybe they have helped build membership in your school or college.

Reps can make a difference in a variety of ways. They might be outstanding in any of the following rep roles:

- ▶ workplace rep
- ▶ health and safety rep
- ▶ union learning rep
- ▶ leadership (AMiE) rep.

We have sent a postcard out to all members who have a rep or contact in their workplace, to make it easier to nominate your outstanding workplace, health and safety, union learning or leadership reps. You can also nominate at [www.atl.org.uk/repawards](http://www.atl.org.uk/repawards). The information you provide on the form will be used to judge the awards so you will need to provide specific examples of how your nominee



has made a difference to you and your colleagues.

The closing date for nominations is 1 January 2016. Winners will be awarded £150 and will be presented with a certificate during ATL's Annual Conference, which takes place between 4 and 6 April 2016 in Liverpool. Winners will also be invited to attend ATL's

Conference dinner on the evening of Tuesday 5 April (all expenses paid). All winners will be notified after the closing date. This year's awards are supported by Aviva.

If there's no rep or contact in your workplace, why don't you consider getting involved? Email [organise@atl.org.uk](mailto:organise@atl.org.uk) for more information.

NOMINATE YOUR REP AT [WWW.ATL.ORG.UK/REPAWARDS](http://WWW.ATL.ORG.UK/REPAWARDS)

# LEARNING ZONE

## Behaviour management for NQTs

ATL knows that managing behaviour is one of the biggest concerns for teachers at the beginning of their career, so we offer our NQT members the opportunity to hone their skills and increase their confidence through the 'Behaviour management from day one' course.

This half-day session, especially for newly qualified teachers, focuses on how you establish control of the classroom. You will learn how to redraw the lines and

establish routines that give structure to your classroom. The course will look at how to create a positive culture for behaviour and how your own behaviour directly influences the behaviour of those around you. You will also start to plan for behaviour by writing an intervention script to use in difficult situations. The course is run by behaviour management specialists Pivotal Education.

### Course programme:

- ▶ Learn the importance of emotional control.
- ▶ Shift focus to the 95% of learners who are compliant.
- ▶ Create a positive culture for behaviour in your classroom.
- ▶ Teach routines relentlessly.
- ▶ Plan for behaviour like you plan the content of your lessons.
- ▶ Develop good working relationships with learners.

The course costs just £15 for ATL NQT members and there are sessions throughout England during the autumn term. See [www.atl.org.uk/learningzone](http://www.atl.org.uk/learningzone) for details and to book.



PHOTOGRAPHS: EDWIN STAMP

# A desire to read

Award-winning author **Tanya Landman** says we need to encourage children to want to read to become better people



**WHEN MY YOUNGEST** son started at our local comprehensive, I realised – with something of a shock – that both my boys had gone through primary school without ever having read a whole ‘chapter book’ in class.

When I was growing up, each school day ended with 10 minutes or so when our teacher read aloud to us. We might not all have been fluent readers, but we could all listen. It was the only time when the whole class was engaged, attentive and quiet; the only time when we could all genuinely be said to be enjoying ourselves.

Through my teachers I encountered books I’d never have picked up myself – books I might have considered too difficult or

too frightening to tackle alone. I was pretty much school-phobic for much of my childhood, but I have very happy memories of those reading sessions.

I read to my children at home, but it saddens me that they never had that shared experience at school. They only ever studied book extracts in class – fragmented chunks, taken out of context – and then had to do written comprehension exercises afterwards. So for my two children, who love stories and are both keen readers and writers, literacy was the subject they loathed.

In *Testament of Youth* author Vera Brittain said: “The *desire* to think... must be induced before the power is developed.” I’d apply the same sentiment to reading. The desire to read has to be encouraged before the skill can be taught. And that desire comes from being read to.

Children need books. From the moment a baby’s eyes can focus it should have that wonderful experience of snuggling up with a parent and sharing a book. Growing children need an excess

of books on offer. They need to wallow and bask in the wealth of stories that are out there. They need to discover that books are a pleasure and a joy, a refuge and an escape, a door to different worlds.

I come from a long line of teachers. I know all about the demands of the national curriculum and Ofsted and, believe me, I have no desire to add to the pressure teachers are already under. And yet, and yet... I do think *all* of us need to fight, and fight hard, for libraries and books and the time to read them.

They’re important for three reasons. The first is that stories teach cause and effect; action and consequence. In that sense they are profoundly moral. The second is that they develop the imagination and that’s something we all need, not just those drawn to the arts. Engineers, scientists, our future business leaders; if we’re to progress as a species, we all need to think creatively. Thirdly, reading develops empathy. A book takes a reader into someone else’s head, it shows them the world through someone else’s eyes, it allows them to think ‘what if this was me?’.

Put simply, books make us better people. Teachers, parents, librarians, writers and illustrators – we all need to nurture a love of books. We all need to keep pressing for a library to exist as the beating heart of every school. I know times are tough, and will no doubt get tougher, but in the words of Charley O’Hara, the heroine of *Buffalo Soldier*, “We’re warriors ain’t we? We’ll keep fighting.” ■



[Tanya Landman won the Carnegie medal for her novel \*Buffalo Soldier\*. Her new novel \*Hell and High Water\* is out now](#)



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