

The Joy of Not Knowing

The Joy of Not Knowing takes every aspect of the curriculum and school life and transforms it into a personalised, meaningful and enjoyable experience for all. It offers readers an innovative, theoretical and practical guide to establish a values-based, enquiry-led and challenge-rich *learning to learn* approach to teaching and learning and to school leadership.

This thought-provoking guide provides the reader with a wealth of whole-class, easy-to-implement, malleable, practical ideas and case studies that can be personalised to the vision of each setting, age group and curriculum. It brings together, as a whole-school framework, the strategies that have been shown to have the greatest impact on the practitioner's professional fulfilment and on children's life chances, love of learning, intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm for *wanting* to know. *The Joy of Not Knowing*

- enables schools to launch the academic year with a bespoke JONK Learning to Learn Week that enables every student to succeed across all areas of the curriculum
- develops philosophical, creative and critical problem-solving thinking skills and embraces a multilingual and multicultural approach to learning
- establishes collaborative cultures of thinking, learning and leadership
- informs practice through teachers engaging in action research
- incorporates a values-led democratic approach to school life and to thriving when uncertain
- nurtures school-pupil-family-community partnerships

Designed for school leaders and practitioners at all levels and across all ages, this practical guide shows how all students can thrive and develop the dispositions of successful lifelong learners and global citizens.

Marcelo Staricoff is the creator of the Joy of Not Knowing (JONK) approach, founder

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Preface

In spite of all the work that has taken place in recent years on the nature of the curriculum and the importance of high-quality teaching, we are still some way from a professional consensus as to the nature of effective learning. Much has been written and the evidence base is growing and enjoying increasing confidence and influence. But we still have some way to go. This is not a search for an educational panacea that will solve all our problems about educational performance and securing equity but rather seeking credible models that have grown from practice in schools and have made a demonstrable difference to how teachers teach and how pupils learn. Historically, education has been beset by astrologers when what was needed was astronomers – offering coherent conceptual models and research-informed practice.

If it is true that ‘The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled’, then *The Joy of Not Knowing* is a bonfire. Marcelo Staricoff has produced a resource that is radical and reassuring, challenging and supportive. JONK offers a deeply thought out, integrated and coherent model that focuses on securing optimal learning for every member of the school community but particularly every child. This is a highly inclusive strategy that supports academic success, personal development and building cultural capital. The various strategies are rooted in successful classroom practice and effective school leadership, and there are numerous examples that are reassuring and establish the credibility of the strategies described.

Every aspect of JONK grows out of Marcelo’s professional practice and experience. This book is richly illuminated by examples of pupils’ work, diagrams that explain the key concepts and a wide range of sources to support and validate key ideas. JONK can be seen as a manifesto for profound change or an invaluable resource offering a wide range of strategies to support thinking and learning. It will support teacher research, underpin school leadership and be an invaluable resource for professional development.

It is a significant resource that deserves wide circulation.

John West-Burnham

Foreword

In order to learn something new, we must not know it first

Marcelo Staricoff

This book is the culmination of all that I have learnt, of all the people who have inspired me and of all that has fascinated me throughout my career as a primary school teacher, headteacher, lecturer, author, consultant, Founding Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and, previous to the world of education, a research scientist. The book charts and disseminates how these experiences led to the evolution and creation of the Joy of Not Knowing™ (JONK™) philosophy of education and of school leadership, from its first experimental days in the classroom to its current form, which now embraces all aspects of leading, working and learning in schools (Staricoff, 2013, 2014, 2018a, 2018b).

I was tremendously fortunate that during my first year of teaching, I formed part of a two-year action research project.¹ The project, which was called Flying High (Staricoff, 2001), was originally set up to look at effective provision for what was then termed *more-able children* and funded through the sale of a section of runway at Bristol Airport! The project involved 12 local primary and secondary schools and was led by two national experts, Deborah Eyre² and Lynne McClure.³ Forming part of this research project at such an early stage of my career proved to be very influential and instrumental in shaping my practice and philosophy of education. I started to realise the huge potential that education has not only to motivate learners with the curriculum but also to influence their *enjoyment* of the learning process. The evolution of the project introduced me to initiatives designed to develop students' ability to reason, to think analytically, critically, creatively and philosophically and to master the intricacy of language that drives curiosity and leads to such effective communication. The project gave me the inspiration, impetus and professional freedom to experiment with using these exciting ideas *with the whole class*, to inspire every child and to drive every aspect of the day. I was enthralled by this challenge. The children began to really enjoy *playing* with each idea, excited that we were all *playing* together. It quickly became apparent that we were developing a way of *being* in the classroom that was promoting *intrinsic* motivation, creative thoughts and an enthusiasm for *wanting* to learn.

A further opportunity to build on this work presented itself three years later, at my second school,⁴ as part of a Beacon Project.⁵ The initiatives this time focused on developing a whole-school ethos driven by values, thinking skills, entitlements,

accelerated learning,⁶ philosophy and lifelong learning. The choice of these focus areas was based on the idea of trying to emulate the practice and philosophy of education that underpins Early Years practice throughout the school. The project brought us into a collaborative partnership with the University of Bristol⁷ to look at ways of incorporating the dispositions of effective lifelong learners within the daily routine of the classroom. The project allowed us to work closely with a number of other educational experts: Robert Fisher in terms of thinking skills and creativity, leading to a case study in his book *Unlocking Creativity* (Fisher and Williams, 2004); Roger Sutcliffe, Will Ord and Barry Hymer as colleagues on the Board of Philosophy for the children's organisation SAPERE; James Nottingham, who was leading an organisation set up to raise aspirations in society and education (NRAIS) in Northumberland, UK and who at the time introduced me to the concept of the Learning Pit,⁸ which I have since reinterpreted to encompass the philosophy of JONK; John West-Burnham and his work on leadership and the personalisation of learning; Helen Wilson and David Coates, who were so instrumental in guiding me when engaging in action research focused on Primary Science; Deborah Eyre, who at the time was heading the National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) based at Warwick University and who invited me to form part of the NAGTY Think Tank which worked towards shaping national policy.

A telling observation of this whole-class, values-led, non-ability labelling, thinking skills, philosophical and lifelong learning approach (Staricoff, 2003) to teaching and learning was the passion and freedom with which the children began to frame their thoughts, theories, observations and ideas as questions. There seemed to be an endless richness of collective curiosity in the class. I knew this was working well when I started to realise that, with the majority of the questions they were posing, I didn't know the answer. I remember thinking that in *not knowing* the answer to their questions, it was helping to create a model where the children perceived the teacher as a *co-participant* in the learning. This culture led to another important realisation: everyone, including myself and the many visitors to the class, were starting to feel *safe* emotionally, socially and intellectually, especially when we found ourselves in situations of *not knowing* and *uncertainty*. Collectively, we learnt to embrace these moments of uncertainty and to use them as opportunities for discovery, learning and acquiring new knowledge. Up until this point, we had never realised how exciting *not knowing* could be, especially as we were *not knowing collectively* and at the same time developing a real enthusiasm for *wanting* to know.

The ability for curiosity and questioning to transform the way we view the world is wonderfully illustrated by the message contained within a letter that Scheff once wrote to the Editor of the *New York Times* (1988), in which he recounts how Isidor I. Rabi, a Nobel Laureate in physics, was once asked by his friend Arthur Sackler:

'Why did you become a scientist, rather than a doctor or lawyer or businessman, like the other immigrant kids in your neighbourhood?'

Rabi replied:

'My mother made me a scientist without ever intending it. Every other mother in Brooklyn would ask her child after school: "So? Did you learn anything today?" But not my mother. She always asked me a different question. "Izzy," she would say, "did you

ask a good question today?”

That difference, asking good questions, made me become a scientist!

The JONK approach encourages families to engage with their children in a very similar way, using the school day as an opportunity to formulate questions that inspire children to reflect upon their discoveries, observations, thoughts, reflections, wonder and newly found curiosities that day (F.1):

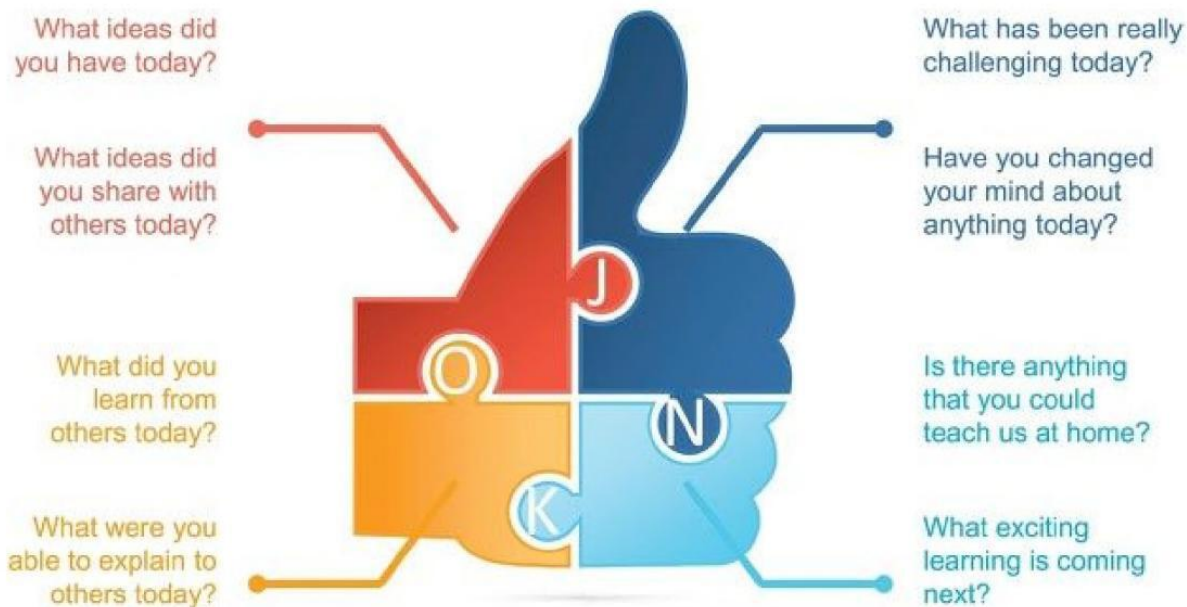


FIGURE F.1 Ideas of Questions to Ask the Children After School

I am delighted that through this book, I now have the opportunity to share what I hope is a rich resource of inspiration, enabling you all to achieve things beyond what you envisaged or imagined possible. The freedom to experiment so broadly in the classroom during my formative years paved the way for what evolved, through senior leadership, headship and many other past and present collaborations, into what is now a whole-school philosophy of education and leadership (Staricoff, 2013, 2014, 2018a, 2018b) being applied nationally and internationally.

At the heart of the JONK philosophy and approach is the desire to create the conditions in schools that, when they act in combination, work towards maximising the influence that schools can exert on children’s life chances and the ability to enable every child to thrive socially, emotionally and academically. It is believed that a child’s life chances are influenced by three main factors, which Groves and West-Burnham (2020) refer to as ‘the three spheres of influence’. Groves and West-Burnham state that ‘successful learning of any type or subject is the result of the complex interaction of these three variables’:

- Personal genetic factors (50%)
- Social and economic factors (20%–30%)
- School (20%–30%)

It is so interesting that these ‘life chances’ determinant factors are so comparable to

the three worlds that Nuthall (2007) describes as shaping the student's learning:

The student's own private world and experiences

The highly influential world of peers

The public world of the teacher

It was during my first headship⁹ that I created the Joy of Not Knowing (JONK) phraseology to encompass the philosophy that underpinned the whole-school approach that we had established. After the fourth year of living within this JONK culture, the school observed a fourth year of year-on-year increases in standards, attendance, first-choice preferences of admissions and an *outstanding* judgement for its very first time.

It was a time of great creativity and collaboration, helping us to develop a wonderful partnership with the poet Roger Stevens, an association that eventually led to the publication of a book of poetry, *Once a Pond of Slime, Poems by and for the Under 5s'* (Bartlett and Johnson, 2012). I used the publication of that book as an opportunity to contribute to the work with a personal poem written to describe the ethos, philosophy and sentiments of the JONK approach.

As a native Spanish speaker, I wrote the original version in Spanish and translated it into English as illustrated in [F.2](#).

Foreword

Un Canto Para Hertford

Aquí me pongo a cantar
Al compás de mi escuela
Con todos los chicos adentro
Aprendiendo tanto cada día
Me toca a mí ser el centro
De toda nuestra filosofía

Alegres y contentos
Los veo siempre a todos
Con tantas ganas de saber mas que antes
Y con tantas preguntas tan interesantes
No hay fin a la curiosidad
Que les surge a esta edad!

Los veo por todo tan interesados
Que es un placer increíble
Nunca se los ve cansados
O discutiendo o peleados
Pero si siempre tan entusiasmados
De tratar hasta lo imposible!

Que la escuela les este dando
Todo para el futuro
Pa'que nada en su vida sea duro
Es lo que siempre voy pensando
Para que puedan siempre disfrutar
De sus vidas, con alegría y mucho pa'cantar

by Marcelo Staricoff
Director.

A Song for Hertford

Here I begin to sing
To the beat of my school
With all the children here
Learning so much day by day
My destiny is to be
At the heart of our philosophy

Cheerful and happy
With a desire to know more than before
With so many interesting questions
There is no end to the curiosity
That emanates at this age!

So interested in everything
That is an incredible pleasure
You never see them tired
Or arguing or feuding
But always so enthusiastic
To attempt even the impossible!

I hope the school is giving them
Everything for the future
So that nothing in life is too hard
This is what I always wish for
So they can all enjoy their lives
With joy and much to sing about

By Marcelo Staricoff
Headteacher

FIGURE F.2 An Example of Using a Multilingual Thinking Approach in School

Above all, I hope that this book offers leaders, practitioners and students the inspiration to experiment in the pursuit of innovation, enjoyment and transformation and of building the motivational cultures of learning in each classroom and school which maximise what James, Renowden and West-Burnham (2013) so wonderfully refer to as 'the enormous potential of education to secure a richer quality of life for all'.

The Joy of Not Knowing™ and JONK™: Reg.: UK00003133651 and UK0000 3133650 respectively

Notes

- 1 Christ Church Primary School, Bristol, UK.
- 2 Deborah Eyre is now the Founder and Director of High-Performance Learning.
- 3 Lynne McClure is now Director of Cambridge Maths at the University of Cambridge.

- 4 Westbury Park Primary School, Bristol, UK.
- 5 Westbury Park Primary School was awarded Beacon Status facilitating funded collaboration, research and dissemination opportunities.
- 6 The Accelerated Learning in Primary Schools Approach (ALPS), Alastair Smith (1996).
- 7 The Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory Research Project (ELLI, Ruth Deaking-Crick, 2006).
- 8 James Nottingham is now the Founder and Director of Challenging Learning, Ref.: Nottingham, J. (2017).
- 9 Hertford Infant and Nursery School, Brighton, UK.

Introduction

It is because we are in a position of not knowing that we have the opportunity to learn

Marcelo Staricoff

The Joy of Not Knowing™ (JONK™) is an innovative philosophy of education that enables *all* individuals to flourish by creating the conditions that remove the worry and anxiety usually associated with *not knowing* or finding things difficult and by replacing them with a *love* for learning and an enthusiasm for *wanting* to learn and to know.

The JONK approach is intended to act as a *way of being* and a *way of life* for schools. This book has been designed to provide educators with an enjoyable and *practical* source of principles, strategies, systems and ideas that promote a lifelong love of learning, teaching, collaboration and leadership at all levels, including the students as leaders of their own learning and as instrumental voices of the school's strategic leadership teams. The ideas are all based on real-life scenarios, and the book uses a wide range of worked examples and case studies to illustrate how practitioners and leaders across the educational and social-economic landscape have interpreted, adapted and incorporated the range of aspects that make up the JONK approach.

The book ensures that each chapter is rich in practical and easy-to-implement ideas, explaining the theory and rationale behind each one and making each one exciting for all: student teachers, newly qualified teachers, early career teachers and experienced practitioners. The book also describes each of these ideas from the strategic perspective of senior leaders and headteachers and offers step-by-step guides to how they can be introduced, implemented, embedded and sustained as part of the whole-school planning and development infrastructure.

The aim is for the reader, at all stages of their career, to use the ideas in the book as an opportunity to *play professionally*, adapting, developing and personalising them according to personal contexts. The *professional and playful* approach that JONK promotes uses as its root the investigative, child-centred and inquiry-rich pedagogy of *Early Years education* and applies it in a way that inspires students of *all* ages and practitioners and leaders across all roles and phases of education.

The non-prescriptive nature of the JONK philosophy allows schools to create *bespoke* versions of each of the ideas presented, in line with their own educational ethos and philosophy and in a way that *builds on* existing practice and helps schools to achieve their next steps.

The JONK whole-school philosophy of education and leadership is defined by six

interlocking *ethos- and principles-driven* domains illustrated in [Figure 1.1](#):

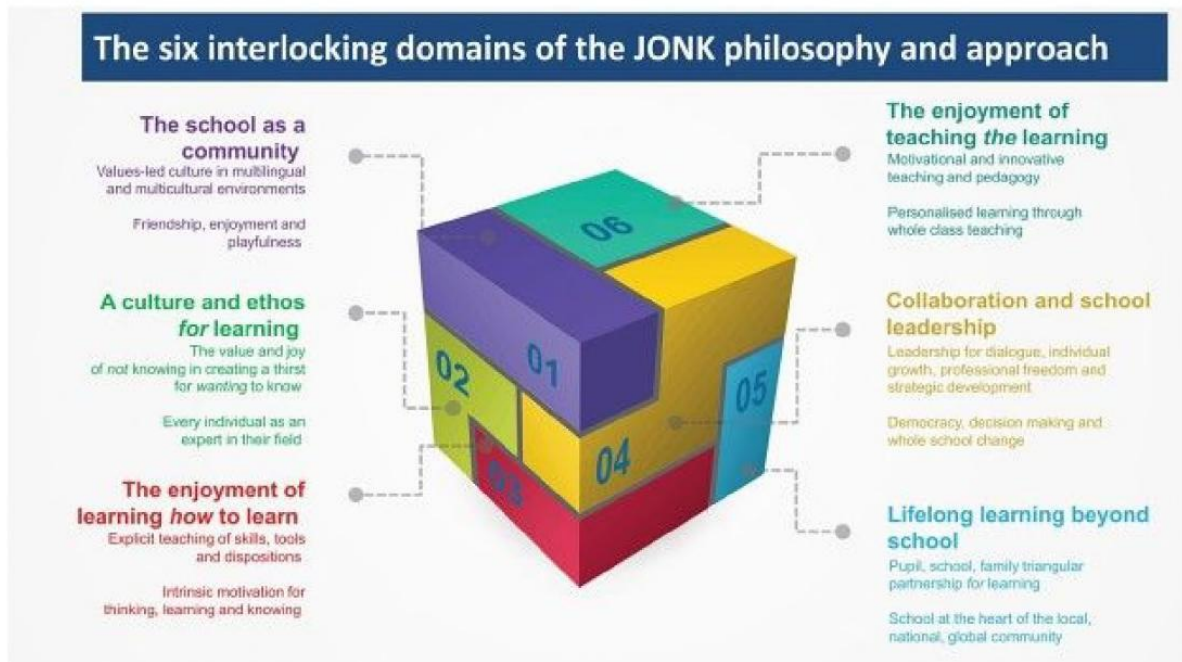


FIGURE 1.1 The Six Interlocking Domains of the JONK Philosophy and Approach

The six interlocking ethos- and principles-driven domains give rise to the JONK whole-school approach in practice. [Figure 1.2](#) lists the components that facilitate each of the six domains to be incorporated as part of the school's infrastructure and that, when translated into practice, mirror the sentiments encompassed within Albert Einstein's quote, when he stated that 'I never teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn'. Within this quote, Einstein encompasses and summarises wonderfully the ethos of education, the purpose of educational establishments and the value that educators bring to the learner.

A CHAPTER GUIDE TO THE JOY OF NOT KNOWING PHILOSOPHY, APPROACH AND WHOLE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE														
Key to content in each Chapter														
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11														
ETHOS	The school as a community	A culture and ethos for learning	The enjoyment of learning how to learn	The enjoyment of teaching the learning	Collaboration and school leadership	Lifelong learning beyond school								
PRINCIPLES	Schools as microcosms of society Friendship, enjoyment and playfulness	Values-led culture and environment The value and joy of not knowing	Explicit teaching of skills, tools and dispositions Intrinsic motivation for learning, thinking, knowing	Motivational and innovative teaching and pedagogy Personalised learning through whole class teaching	Leadership for professional freedom, dialogue, growth Democracy and collective whole school change	Pupil, school, family partnership for learning Schools at the heart of community partnerships								
THE JONK APPROACH THEORY INTO PRACTICE	<p>JONK Community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Values-led vision and ethos 2. Learning to learn culture 3. Motivational enclosures 4. Research-led pedagogy 5. Collaborative partnerships 6. Enrichment opportunities <p>Every individual as an expert in their field</p> <p>Classrooms and schools as communities of enquiry</p> <p>Bilingual and multilingual thinking in multicultural classrooms and schools</p> <p>Families Thinking Together in Playgrounds</p>	<p>JONK Culture for learning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Values 2. Vision 3. Children's Rights 4. Lifelong learning dispositions 5. Global sustainability 6. Community links <p>Enjoying not knowing, improving learners, developing enthusiasm to want to learn</p> <p>JONK Model of Learning and Thinking (MLET)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exceed before learning 2. Exceed to learn 3. Exceed whilst learning 4. Exceed whilst knowing 5. Exceed to know 6. Exceed to keep learning 	<p>Education, culture and the Learning to Learn Week (L2LW)</p> <p>Critical, creative and philosophical thinking at school</p> <p>The bespoke Learning to Learn Week:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Models of Learning 2. Creative thinking 3. Visible learning 4. Philosophy 5. Lifelong Learning <p>The Thinking Skills Starters</p> <p>Philosophy and a philosophical approach to thinking, learning, the learning objective and curriculum</p> <p>The Lifelong Learning Dispositions</p>	<p>The inclusive pedagogical and learning environment:</p> <p>The Model of Excellence, Enrichment and Enjoyment (MEEE Model) versions for teachers and headteachers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Previewing 2. Motivating 3. Modelling 4. Engaging 5. Encouraging 6. Playing Intellectually 7. Feedback 8. Metacognition <p>Pupil version of MEEE Model:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lets get excited 2. Lets have a go 3. Lets grow our minds 4. Lets think back 	<p>Research, enquiry teams and evidence informed practice</p> <p>Pupils as learning leaders</p> <p>Multi-professional school improvement teams</p> <p>The School's Development Plan</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Priority 1</td> <td>Priority 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Priority 3</td> <td>Priority 4</td> </tr> </table> <p>The Pupil version of the School's Development Plan</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Priority 1</td> <td>Priority 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Priority 3</td> <td>Priority 4</td> </tr> </table> <p>Pupils as philosophy leaders</p> <p>Headteacher challenges and democratic change at school</p>	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	<p>The learning and thinking at home open-ended challenge based approach</p> <p>Critical, creative and philosophical thinking skills at home</p> <p>Lifelong learners, contributing successfully to society as individuals, learners and global citizens:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creative thinking 2. Critical curiosity 3. Meaning making 4. Strategic awareness 5. Learning relationships 6. Resilience 7. Changing and learning <p>Illustrative case studies</p>
Priority 1	Priority 2													
Priority 3	Priority 4													
Priority 1	Priority 2													
Priority 3	Priority 4													

FIGURE 1.2 A Chapter by Chapter Guide to the Whole of the JONK Approach

Figure 1.2 also acts as a colour-coded reference guide and road map that encompasses the whole of the JONK approach. The diagram demarcates for the reader the chapter in which each of the initiatives that underpin the six interlocking ethos and principles of the JONK approach is introduced and described.

The philosophy of the JONK whole-school approach is captured visually for the learner by the *JONK Models of Learning*. It is in the discussion of these models that children are provided with a very special sense of *learner emotional well-being*, as the models illustrate for them how the learning process evolves and how the school nurtures every child's expertise to enable them to thrive with every opportunity at school, beyond school and throughout their lives.

The JONK approach is founded on the belief that this learner emotional well-being is created when children *feel* equipped with all they need to succeed – emotionally, socially and academically. For this to be the case for every child, the JONK approach dedicates the first week of every academic year to a JONK Learning to Learn Week, which is used to *explicitly teach* the children *how* to learn successfully, *how* to establish a collaborative and inspirational culture *for* learning and *how* to contribute to this culture for the benefit of all, both within the classroom and throughout the school.

The JONK approach is designed to adapt to individual contexts by embracing and celebrating the uniqueness of every individual and of every school and by creating *values-led* and *personalised whole-school learning and social cultures* that enable every individual to thrive. Robinson and Aronica (2015) highlight the importance of establishing personalised learning cultures in schools as a way of achieving *transformation* in education. In their book entitled *Creative Schools*, they state that:

We are in a position as never before to use our creative and technological resources to transform rather than reform education. We now have limitless opportunities to engage young people's imaginations and to provide forms of teaching and learning that are highly customised to them.

John West-Burnham, in his article entitled 'Leadership for Personalised Learning' (2010), also describes the benefits of establishing a personalised learning culture, describing it as:

A strategy focusing all of a school's resources to ensure that the potential of each learner is realised by ensuring that the learning experience is appropriate to them personally and that they are able, with support, to decide what they learn, how they learn, when they learn and who they learn with.

JONK creates a personalised learning culture by establishing a wealth of values-led and challenge-rich initiatives that accompany each of the six principal domains as depicted in [Figure 1.2](#). At the heart of this personalised approach is the belief that all children have the ability, capacity and potential to succeed when the learning is personalised in terms of motivation, provision and support. This ethos of high expectations and aspirations for all makes it possible for every opportunity and every challenge to be offered to all, bypassing the need to base provision on predetermined judgements of individual ability.

The benefits of a *challenge-for-all*, non-ability grouping-based approach to teaching and learning have been evidenced particularly eloquently by the works of Deborah Eyre (1997, 2001, 2011, 2016) and the Creating Learning Without Limits Project (2012):

In the Policy Exchange paper entitled 'Room at the Top, Inclusive Education for High Performance' (2011), Eyre argues that:

More pupils than we previously thought have the potential to perform at the highest levels – that is to achieve advanced levels of cognitive performance – and that the way to secure this is to create a system that expects significantly more from more pupils. The consequence of such an approach will be to raise the performance of the whole system, more surely than through any specific structural or pedagogical reform.

In *Curriculum Provision for the Gifted and Talented in Ordinary Schools* (2001), Eyre and McClure support a challenge-rich approach for all, commenting that:

Where teachers have focused on planning to create challenge for the most able/gifted pupils, they often then choose to make the task available to a wider group of children... In pedagogical terms the challenging tasks require more 'expert behaviour' or 'higher order thinking' and lead to higher levels of attainment but are also intellectually stimulating and likely to be highly motivating regardless of a child's ability level.

The Creating Learning Without Limits Project (2012) grew from the work of the Learning Without Limits Project (2004) and was a collaboration between the University of Cambridge and the team from the Wroxham School in Hertfordshire. Their premise was very inspirational as they set out to explore:

The wider opportunities for enhancing the learning capacity of every child that become possible when a whole staff group works together to create an environment free from the limiting effects of ability labels and practice.

The key findings of the Learning Without Limits and Creating Learning Without Limits Projects led to the publication of a series of books (Hart 2004; Swann, Peacock, Hart and Drummond 2012; Peacock 2016) which the reader is referred to as part of the suggested reading list that supports the pedagogical principles described throughout this book.

The *democratic* way of life and culture for learning that the JONK approach thus establishes allows all individuals to become ‘co-participants’, ‘co-contributors’, ‘co-creators’ and ‘co-enactors’ of the school’s strategic thinking. The JONK democratic view of the child and of the school’s social and learning matrix has parallels to the philosophy that inspires the Reggio Emilia approach. Lorio (2016) states that:

The Reggio Emilia schools are part of a public system recognising the fundamental rights of the child and the welfare of children and families as well as valuing democracy and coparticipation of educators, children, teachers, and community.

The whole-school JONK ethos establishes a values-led culture for learning and acts as the precursor of *effective understanding* and of the ability to assimilate *new knowledge*. The way that the application of these concepts can be maximised as part of daily practice is the central theme that defines the ethos and work of Project Zero, an organisation founded in 1967 by the philosopher Nelson Goodman at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Project Zero refers to the conglomerate of these concepts as ‘teaching for understanding’. The JONK teaching and pedagogical Model of Excellence, Enrichment and Enjoyment (MEEE) has been designed to ensure that ‘teaching for understanding’ forms an integral part of every aspect of the teaching and learning process.

The research carried out by Project Zero educationalists postulates that learning and understanding are *consequences* of thinking. A visual representation of this hypothesis is offered to the reader through the JONK Model of Learning and Thinking, which illustrates how learning and understanding are indeed the consequence of thinking and are part of an interrelationship that encompasses thinking, learning, understanding, knowing and *not knowing*. The importance of thinking in the learning process is a feature that runs throughout this book, and the reader is provided with a variety of strategies that have been specifically designed as part of the JONK approach to nurture and develop children’s creative, critical, analytical and philosophical thinking across every area of the curriculum.

The values-driven, thought-provoking and discussion-based nature of the JONK

approach develops learners who are intrinsically motivated to *want* to learn. Intrinsically motivated cohorts of learners (students and practitioners) constitute the JONK currency that provides schools with their ‘collective thinking, learning and societal capital’. JONK defines *intrinsically motivated capital* as what is achieved *in addition* to what anyone may have expected or imagined possible. In other words, JONK is based on the idea that intrinsically motivated learners will use the learning opportunities offered to them in a playful way and thus take the learning *beyond* the limits of its original intention.

The JONK Learning to Learn Week instils a deep sense of intrinsic motivation in all learners from the *outset* of each academic year by explicitly teaching children *how* to enjoy thinking beyond their comfort zone, embrace uncertainty and challenge and thrive as inquisitive and independent lifelong learners. The JONK Learning to Learn Week also establishes a classroom culture where the teacher is not perceived solely as the expert who imparts knowledge, but more as the expert who motivates and creates *the conditions* that inspire them to *want* to learn and to *keep* learning beyond the boundaries of what was set.

The importance of this *co-participant of learning* view of the adult and child is very well described by David Wood in his book *How Children Think and Learn* (1998), in which he states that:

When we help a child to solve a problem, we are providing conditions in which he can begin to perceive regularities and structure in his experience. Left alone, the child is overcome by uncertainty and does not know what to attend to or what to do.

It is fascinating that in this quote, Wood refers to the dangers of being overcome by uncertainty. The whole of the JONK approach was developed to stop this from ever being the case for learners and the approach achieves it by *always* making the learner feel *comfortable* with uncertainty as they realise that uncertainty is not only a prerequisite of *new* learning but also something that they are equipped to overcome, even if sometimes we are in situations where uncertainty seems to be the only certainty ahead. Sacchs reinforces the importance of feeling comfortable with uncertainty in his book *Unsafe Thinking* (2018), where he states that ‘teaching ourselves to be comfortable with a bit of discomfort gives us a far better chance of changing habitual patterns and opening space for new possibilities’.



SUGGESTED READING

It is very interesting, when considering each of the elements and principles that make up the JONK approach to education and school infrastructure, to cross-reference these to the research findings that accompany the all-encompassing Cambridge Primary Review (2010) and that were published in the book *Children, their World, their Education: Final Report and Recommendations of the Cambridge Review*.

This book uses the terms *students*, *pupils* and *children* interchangeably as all the ideas presented can be adapted to any age group. The same can be said for the use of *teacher* and *practitioner*; the intention is that all adults feel able to consider and apply each of the concepts within their own role.

The chapters are structured to include, at regular intervals, opportunities for reflection, dialogue, research and growth in the form of points for discussion, illustrative case studies and ideas for further reading.



DISCUSSION OPPORTUNITIES



CASE STUDIES



SUGGESTED READING

Following this Introduction, [Chapter 2](#) launches the book by introducing the principles and philosophies that underpin the JONK approach and offers a guide to how the JONK philosophy can be introduced to the class in a way that often transforms their perception of education, school and learning and of themselves as individuals. The chapter offers a series of JONK models that focus on the different stages of the

learning process and on how children can use their metacognitive thinking skills to move from one stage to the next. The chapter also considers ways in which the concepts of thinking, learning, knowing and *not* knowing can be discussed with the class and ends by offering a model that encompasses the interrelationship of these four concepts as part of the overall process of learning.

Chapter 3 introduces the concept of schools as microcosms of society and demonstrates how a values-led approach to education helps schools to create whole-school cultures *for* learning which enables the community to appreciate the value of school and education and to live convivially whilst learning and thriving emotionally, socially and intellectually. The chapter describes the constituents that make up the JONK school culture for learning, which are represented by whole-school sets of values, children's rights, lifelong learning dispositions, global sustainability and community links. The chapter describes how the principle of the JONK Headteacher Challenge approach allows each of these characteristics to be sourced as sets of words for the school by engaging the whole school community in a process of democratic change.

Chapter 4 introduces the concept of 'the eight areas of influence' which make up the teaching, pedagogical and leadership JONK Model of Excellence, Enrichment and Enjoyment (MEEE). Three different versions of the model are described for use by teachers, headteachers and pupils. All three MEEE models have been developed by using the principles that research and experience have shown to have the greatest impact on children's learning: *previewing, motivating, modelling, engaging, encouraging, challenge, feedback* and *metacognition*. The chapter illustrates how each of these areas can enrich and support the teaching and learning experience for all students, nurture the professional expertise of all staff and help to encompass, from a leadership perspective, every aspect of school life and help to establish a whole-school, intellectually playful, action research-driven, risk-taking, collaborative infrastructure. The chapter also introduces the concept that *all* staff are *experts* in their field and active participants in the school's *multi-professional teams* that drive each of the priorities of the school's development plan. Also introduced in this chapter is the concept of pupils as *learning leaders*, who are elected representatives from each class that work alongside the school's senior leadership team, providing student voice to the strategic decision making of the process. The chapter illustrates how the learning leaders contribute to school development by interpreting the school's development plan and creating their own *pupil version* of the plan.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the principle that underpins the idea of schools launching each academic year with a bespoke JONK Learning to Learn Week (LTLW). The chapter explains how the LTLW can be established so as to be able to *explicitly teach* children *how* to succeed as individuals and learners and *how* to equip them with all the tools, strategies and dispositions that they need to succeed – emotionally, socially and academically. The chapter describes the principles and methodologies that enable schools to incorporate a personalised LTLW as part of their yearly cycle and introduces the five central themes that define the LTLW: models of learning, creative and critical thinking, visible thinking and learning, philosophy and a philosophical approach to the curriculum, and the lifelong learning dispositions. Although the LTLW principle was developed as a tool for schools, it can be equally valuable to adopt in higher and

further education or within any establishment that has learning at the heart of its ethos.

Chapter 6 acts as the *practical backbone* of the JONK approach. It provides a comprehensive detailed and practical guide to how to introduce the class to each of the initiatives that make up each of the days and themes of the LTLW. The chapter begins with an invitation for teachers to start the LTLW and the academic year by engaging their class in a discussion about the meaning and purpose of education, which the chapter suggests can be driven by making a number of fascinating comparisons between the worlds of education and architecture. This conversation is followed by an exercise that makes it possible for the teacher and students to design their classroom in a way that maximises engagement in learning for everyone. Using an active learning approach, the students are then introduced to the principles and philosophies of the JONK approach demonstrating the value of feeling at ease with not knowing and ensuring that every child feels they are an *expert of learning*. The chapter then considers possible activities for each day of the LTLW, accompanied by a number of case studies that illustrate the versatility and impact of these initiatives in practice. The chapter concludes with ideas for reflecting on all aspects introduced during the LTLW and with the facility for every practitioner to be able to plan, design and incorporate a personalised LTLW as part of their yearly routine.



SUGGESTED READING

Chapters 5 and 6 act as particularly useful reference points for *student teachers, newly qualified teachers and early career teachers*. These chapters contain a wealth of practical and easy-to-implement ideas that establish a motivational, challenging and inspirational learning environment in the classroom. The chapter entitled 'Gifted and Talented' (Eyre and Staricoff, 2014) in *Learning to Teach in the Primary School* (Cremin and Arthur, 2014) provides a very interesting guide that explains how each of the principles is introduced as part of the Learning to Learn Week and how they become incorporated as part of the daily teaching and learning routine of the classroom.

The book continues by dedicating chapters to discussing in detail the main principles introduced during the LTLW. The open-ended 'Thinking Skills Starters' take centre stage in **Chapter 7**. This chapter shows how the concept of the Thinking Skills Starters can have such a transformational impact on children's motivation, creative thinking and *perception of education and school*. The chapter describes how the daily routine that the Starters promote can be used to enrich all aspects of the curriculum, and through the idea of 'Thinking in Playgrounds', the same concept can be used to help the whole family enjoy *thinking together* before and after school.

In **Chapter 8**, the reader is introduced to the wonders of philosophy and to how a philosophical approach to teaching and learning across the curriculum nurtures and

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