



The Abacus

Issue 001: Monday 17 January, 2011

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(See P2.)

BAC TO BASICS

The English Bac will be awarded to pupils who achieve at least grade C in English, maths, a humanity, a language and either two separate sciences or the combined double science exam.

The Government is concerned that existing tables can encourage schools to offer pupils "soft" subjects instead of a broader academic education. But heads have complained it is unfair to introduce the new measure without giving schools adequate warning. They fear it will leave vulnerable schools in disadvantaged areas open to unfair criticism and lead to other subjects being neglected as schools chase the new benchmark.

"There is a real risk of narrowing the curriculum for the most able as well as those who thrive on practical rather than classroom-based learning," explains Brian Lightman, ASCL general secretary.

There has been controversy over the content of the Bac since education secretary Michael Gove announced it in September last year. Only history and geography qualify as humanities, prompting complaints about the omission of religious education. Mr Gove told MPs last month he accepted there was a "debate" and that some thought the definition of humanities was "too narrow".

Mr Lightman said the Government should have waited for the curriculum review before introducing the Bac. "You don't tweak the curriculum by reviewing the performance tables," he said. "That is the tail wagging the dog."

The Department for Education has said it will review the Bac's "precise definition" for next year's tables but that it "wouldn't expect to remove any of the qualifications" already included. The existing 5A*-C GCSE including English and maths measure will remain and has Mr Gove's backing as the "most important" measure of school performance.

Adapted from the TES



KEY DATES

31st January: The inter-placement program at the Institute begins at 09:30 with QTS Standards review.

07th February: Deadline for handing in the MCP assignment (12pm).

08th February: Tutor group reps meeting. 4pm in Room 814

09th February: Subject reps meeting.

TRIED AND TESTED

Pre-starter tip: play a (relevant!) short video clip as the pupils enter the room: they're then all amazing silent and ready for you to talk when it finishes! I discovered this by accident when doing a boys v girls reaction time data investigation using a clip on YouTube about a female formula one racing driver's reaction time!!! **XM**

SOCIAL NEWS:

Hi All,
Hope you all had a good Christmas break and are enjoying your last few weeks at school. Ok, let's arrange a social...Monday 7th February at 3.30 in the SU to celebrate handing in MCP!
Also, something to think about...how can you step through a piece of A4 paper? **AB**

LATEST JOBS:

- King Solomon Academy
- St Olaves Grammer School
- Harris Boys Academy
- Riddelsdown Collegiate
- Ashmole Academy
- Hampstead School
- Queensmead School
- Holland Park School

HEAD-START

This week: advice on job applications and interview technique taken from a lecture by Ms C. Sydenham, M.Ed - Head, Ellen Wilkinson School.

In previous years the TES and its myriad recruitment sections would arrive with a thud as Schools tried to fill September positions, but the progressive streamlining of the publication reflects the increasingly tough employment market in which head teachers can receive as many as 40 applicants per vacancy. A strong application and good interview technique are more important than ever.

Application

- Ensure the application arrives on time, has correct spelling, punctuality and grammar, and, preferably, is word processed.
- Address all aspects of the 'Person Specification' (effectively the list of requirements which the applicant needs to address) but this does not need to be achieved through the use of bullet points; it is much more appealing to receive a cohesive piece of writing.
- Relate experience to skills with specific examples.
- Regularly use the name of the school you want to apply to, and explain why you want to apply there. (Be especially careful if you edit applications for different schools with the 'find and replace' tool).
- 'Late entrants' may have an advantage which could lead to extra pay but you need to explain why it is relevant and a bonus.

Interview and observation

- Ask questions if necessary to ensure you are fully prepared for the lesson- this is key.
- Think about what you can say to demonstrate different criteria from the person specification- your performance will be marked against these.
- Jot down the questions you faced after the interview- this will come in useful for future interviews
- Ensure the appropriate individual is listed as your referee – the Head of SE1 is unlikely to know who you are!!!



CHARITY SUPPORT

If you would like to arrange a charity event at the end of the course or raise the profile of a sporting event or fundraising activity you are planning outside the course, please [send an e-mail](#) including the name of the charity and explaining what any funds raised from the course would go towards. **RD**

Inaugural Edition

Welcome to the first edition of *The Abacus*. The main aim of this newsletter is to provide a regular educational update tailored for our PGCE course in order that we can keep informed of developments while we are at our second placements. The content will vary but ideally will contain a mixture of; articles from the educational press, puzzles, teaching tips, personal accounts and opinion, useful resources, job seeking tips, and important details and deadlines relating to the course.

In order for this to succeed, we need contributions from across the course, so please send any ideas/ suggestions/ write-ups to your tutor group rep.

In the mean time, I hope you enjoyed your induction to SE2 and look forward to seeing you back at the Institute. **RD.**

PUZZLE – 'Stop @ 4'

This might help to keep the class busy for a few moments. Listed below are a few examples of the mappings for different numbers. What is the mapping?

0 → 4 → 4 ...

1 → 3 → 5 → 4 → 4 ...

12 → 6 → 3 → 5 → 4 → 4 ...

50 → 5 → 4 → 4 ...

123 → 24 → 10 → 3 → 5 → 4 → 4 ...

2,005 → 18 → 8 → 5 → 4 → 4 ...

Answers next time. **RD**

NOTES:

