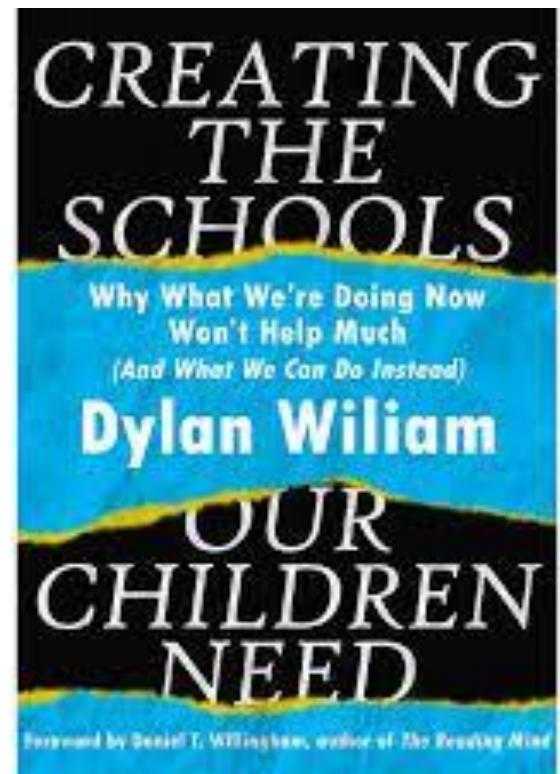


# Creating the Schools Our Children Need

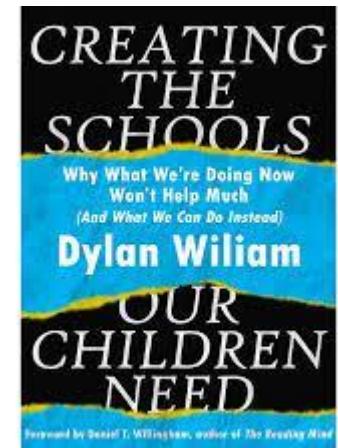
Autumn Term 2018

Presentation (by Dr. Robert Massey)  
& discussion notes

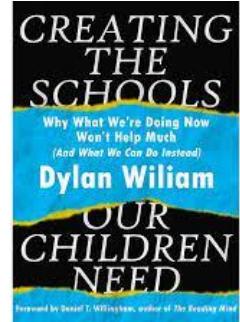


# Who is Dylan Wiliam?

- Him and his music
- Presentations: Dylan Wiliam's slides are always available from his website on [www.dylanwiliam.org](http://www.dylanwiliam.org)
- Formative assessment and Assessment for Learning
- Our starting point: Journal Club. A culture of teaching improvement.

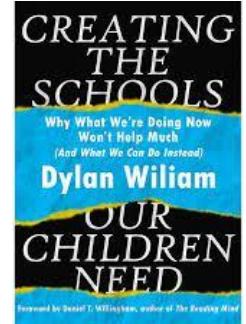


# What is he arguing?



- Ch. 8 Moving forward: 'We need to stop looking for the next big thing and instead focus on doing the last big thing properly.'
- Ch. 9 Curriculum: '...what really separates those with high and low level performance is the content of long-term memory, and this is why curriculum is so important in schools.'
- Ch. 10 Knowledge-rich curriculum: 'The major purpose of education is to enrich what students have in long-term memory in order to make the use of short-term memory more powerful.'
- Ch. 11 Improving teachers: [Ausubel] 'The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him or her accordingly.'
- Ch. 12 Learning Environment: 'There is indeed no limit to what our teachers can achieve if we support them in just the right way.'
- Ch. 13 Putting it all together: "If we rated all teachers on a scale with 0 being the very worst and 100 being the very best, the margin of error is at least 60 points.'

# What do we make of it?



- Is he better at telling us about what doesn't work rather than what does? What does *that* tell us?
- There is much he doesn't include/develop eg Ericsson's emphasis on mental representations of success
- Embedding a cycle of Formative Assessment (short-cycle) is likely to be very effective
- DW places a good deal of emphasis on variability and inconsistency of practice...
- His work is rich and merits further discussion and argument

# Main threads of our meeting

- **The ‘knowing-doing gap’:** in the journey from the research lab to the school, things can get lost. Teachers often know what they should be doing, but they are not always doing it consistently.
- This led us onto considering: **is there a culture of self-improvement in the school?** Richard Smith reminded us of an INSET a few years ago on coaching, which generated a lot of enthusiasm and positivity, but where has it gone? This led onto a discussion about **coaching circles and squares**, to ensure that there is a variety of perspectives. Perhaps we’re looking at coaching the wrong way around – the idea is to ask people to come into your own lesson and ask people to help you to improve, rather than being told that you need to improve.
- **Look before you leap:** schools need to look at not just *what* works – but *how well* it works and at *what costs*. Lots of research will produce a result – but is it statistically significant? Will it work in the school’s own context? A result can be significant but not important. Local context is *all* (this is a consistent theme throughout Wiliam’s book. Comparing apples with apples is difficult. Many educational innovations work in small-scale settings but when rolled out on a wider scale are much less effective. *Should BGS be engaging in its own action-research, applying research to our own setting and systematically reviewing the results?* There are lots of little experiments going on in our classrooms – it would be wonderful to share the results of these small experiments.

# Main threads of our meeting

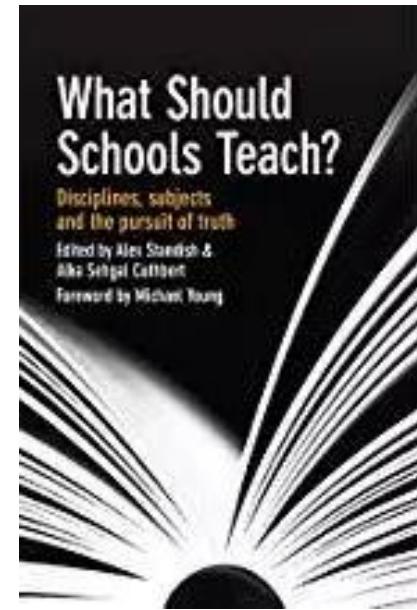
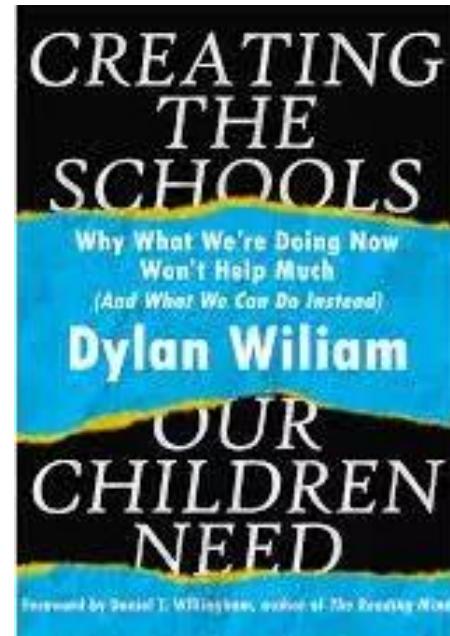
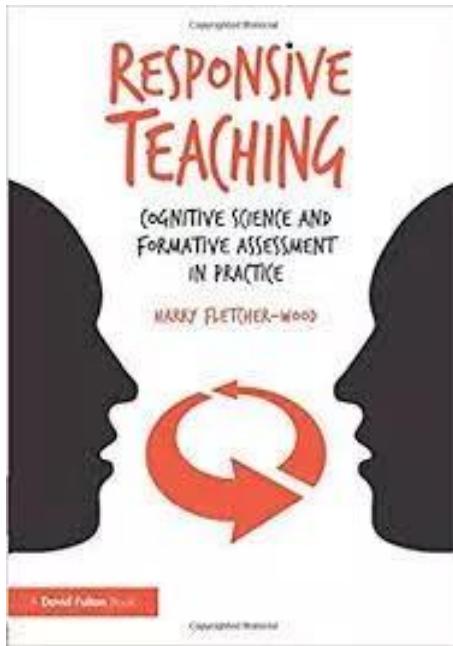
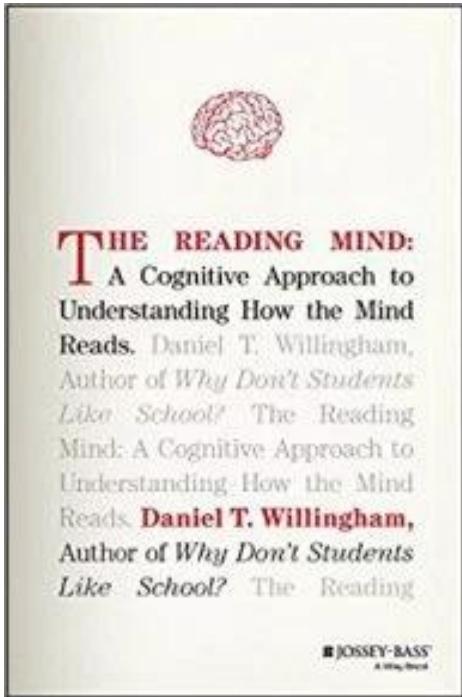
- **Skills are not transferable:** this chimes with Daisy Christodoulou's book that we looked at last year. Skill is discipline-specific. 'The idea that students can learn skills in one context and apply them in another is attractive but essentially wrong.' Memory, too, is context-specific: memories are easier to retrieve when in the same space in which they were learnt.
- **A 'knowledge-rich' curriculum:** there is often a problem with cognitive overload in teaching students (although 'chunking' can help here). Wiliam argues that students need to strengthen their long-term memories to make our short term memories more powerful. *This is why curriculum is so important in schools.*
- **The benefits of interleaved retrieval practice:** Spacing out learning – or 'interleaved retrieval practice' – works. Learning happens in the struggle to remember something. 'Regular, frequent practice testing does actually improve student achievement.' Andrew Nalty uses the 'forgetting curve' in class to *explicitly* remind his pupils about the need for interleaved retrieval practice, testing pupils not just on what they have just learnt, but what they learnt a month ago, a term ago, and a year ago.
- Furthermore, **using more frequent, lower-stakes testing** is perhaps more likely to make pupils respond to formative feedback. The idea is that this should reduce stress and improve well-being.

# Main threads of our meeting

- This led us onto discussing **our marking and use of purple pen**. Robert asked: how do we feel about not taking in marks? Pupils get stressed about having to give in their marks, so should we be avoiding this in some cases? Also, should we as teachers be looking at the purple pen – at the efforts to correct and refine - rather than the grade itself? Writing a pupil's target in purple pen and asking them to write it at the top of the *next* page has worked for Sophie Robinson. Paula Lobo has made use of whole-class feedback sheets, which can be helpful for some classes.
- **The need to balance 'direct instruction' with some 'enquiry-based learning'**. Or else we risk throwing out the baby with the bathwater. There is a big difference between the idea of an 'exam factory' and 'enrichment'. We have to do some enquiry-based learning, in order to prepare students for university. There is a time and a place for 'independent learning.'
- This led us onto considering whether **we need to revisit the BGS lesson checklist?** To what extent does this checklist reflect current thinking in education? Should there be a consultation on the BGS lesson checklist? Are we all agreed on what makes a brilliant teacher or lesson? *Perhaps some lessons should include different things for variety, and so there should be a 'scheme of work' checklist instead?* Journal club members agreed that there are lots of different ways to make an outstanding lesson. It's wonderful to have lots of different ways of teaching and all of these ways need to be celebrated.

# What are we reading next?

## Books suggested for 2018-2019



# How does Journal Club work?

- **Everyone is welcome**. Members include classroom teachers, Heads of Department, language assistants and members of SLT, from across Infant, Junior and Senior schools. **There is always cheese and biscuits.**
- We read extracts from one book (or one journal article), per term – **so we only meet once a term at 4.15-5.15**, just after the half-term holiday, to allow some holiday time for reading. You are still welcome to join Journal Club even if you can't make every meeting.
- We select texts to be read in future meeting by **voting**; members are encouraged to bring ideas for new texts for us to vote on.
- We **take it in turns to present and chair the meeting** (but you will never have to do this if you don't want to!) After the presentation (which summarises the main threads of the text), we then have a discussion about the research that we have read. It is always fascinating to hear other people's experiences from across the school and how that matches up to the research we have all read.
- Paula then writes up the minutes, **which are disseminated to all teaching staff in the Weekly Bulletin.**