Mission: impossible?
Motivating teens and preparing them for Cambridge exams

Ian Wood
Today’s objectives

Understand how the teenage brain works! (or doesn’t)

Show how student-centred communicative activities can engage teens and help them excel in their exam

Show how Gold Experience motivates teens

Look at the 2015 First for Schools specifications
The teenage brain
The teenage brain
Who said this?

‘Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders and love chatter in place of exercise; they no longer rise when elders enter the room; they contradict their parents, chatter before company; gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers.’

Socrates, 350 BC
‘Teenagers have all this energy. We can do so many things, just ask us. But I will tell you why we don’t do the dishes... It’s because at that point in time it’s not important for us to have clean dishes in the house. We will just do them later.’

Eva-Maria Salikhova, (then) 19
Author of the first parenting book by a teenager
The teenage brain
everyone is looking in to it...
The teenage brain
but what have they found?
The teenage brain
but what have they found?

Growing a Grown-up Brain
Scientists have long thought that the human brain was formed in early childhood. But by scanning children's brains with an MRI year after year, they discovered that the brain undergoes radical changes in adolescence. Excess gray matter is pruned out, making brain connections more specialized and efficient. The parts of the brain that control physical movement, vision, and the senses mature first, while the regions in the front that control higher thinking don’t finish the pruning process until the early 20s.

Gray matter becomes less dense as the brain matures.

- More dense
- Less dense

Age: 5

Adolescence

20

The teenage brain is a challenging teaching process due to heightened risk-taking, poor impulse control, and self-consciousness. It is in a state of work in progress compared to the decision-making, planning, self-awareness, and empathy of adults. Child and adult stages are contrasted, illustrating the development and learning process.

- Child stages:
  - Decision making
  - Planning
  - Self-awareness
  - Empathy

- Adult stages:
  - Heightened risk-taking
  - Poor impulse control
  - Self-consciousness
  - Work in progress

A challenging teaching process
Whatever...
Self-conscious...
Poor impulse control...
Belonging...
Crave variety
Tired...
The teenage brain
The teenage learner

- seeks meaning and relevance
- worries what others think about them
- is egocentric
- craves independence
- has opinions
- needs help to plan
- seeks novelty and sensation

- PERSONALISE
- GROUP THEM
- BE CREATIVE
- GIVE CHOICE
- GIVE THEM A VOICE
- STRUCTURE TASKS
- PROVIDE VARIETY
The teenage brain
Engagement and motivation

- PERSONALISE
- GROUP THEM
- BE CREATIVE
- GIVE CHOICE
- GIVE THEM A VOICE
- STRUCTURE TASKS
- PROVIDE VARIETY

Relevant material
Opportunities to talk
Variety of media
Different groupings
Achievable tasks
Sense of challenge
Opportunities to talk

2. Do you do any subjects that aren’t here? What are your favourite subjects?

6. Do you think a lip dub of your school is a good idea? What would you like to show in your school? Can you think of a song you would like to use?
New Exams course for Teens
The most engaging experience in teaching exams to teens

EXPERIENCE - ENGAGE - EXCEL!

Coming 2015
Relevant material
Read on

3 Read the article on page 27 about a school in Northern Ireland. Match the headings (1–5) with paragraphs (a–d). There is one extra heading.

1 What is a lip dub? ☐
2 The story and the music.
3 A great idea.
4 Fun for everyone.
5 Making the lip dub.

Skill

Don't choose an answer just because the paragraph has the same word. Read the whole paragraph carefully.

4 Read the text again. Are the sentences (1–6) true (T) or false (F)?
1 People talk on a lip dub. ☐
2 Stephen Robinson is a PE teacher.
3 Friends is the name of a British TV programme.
4 More than 1,000 students made the lip dub.
5 Students and adults were in the lip dub.
6 The students loved making the lip dub.

Sum up

5 How do you make a school lip dub? Use these words to help you.

You use a digital camera.

add music to the video choose a song
dance and sing film different places in the school
tell a story use a digital camera

Speak up

6 Do you think a lip dub of your school is a good idea? What would you like to show in your school? Can you think of a song you would like to use?
Opportunities to talk
Variety of media

**Teens' Daily Use of Communications Media**

June 2012

- **Text**: 68%
- **Visit a social networking site**: 51%
- **Use email**: 30%
- **IM**: 19%
- **Text chat in an online game**: 12%
- **Headset chat in an online game**: 11%
- **Use Twitter**: 11%
- **Video chat**: 8%
- **Write/comment on a blog**: 6%
- **Visit a virtual world**: 5%

*Source: Common Sense Media*
Variety of media

Welcome to Our School

You are going to watch a lip dub of the Friends’ School in Lisburn, Northern Ireland. What and who do you think you will see? Watch and check.

1. Do you do any subjects that aren’t here? What are your favourite subjects?

2. Choose the correct answer.
   1. As the beginning of the video, some students are going home coming out of school.
   2. The lip dub involved nearly one hundred thousand pupils.
   3. PE teacher Stephen Robinson made the lip dub with ex-pupil producer Matthew Good.
   4. Stephen saw a great lip dub video on YouTube from Canada/Columbia.
   5. The aim of the lip dub was to help students find a happy place of theirs.
   6. The students had the filming experience with professional/unprofessional.

3. Did the students enjoy the lip dub?

4. Project
   Work in small groups. Imagine you are going to make a lip dub about your school. Decide where you want to film and who is in it. Think of some music you can use. Make a poster of your ideas and present it to the class. You could make a video of each presentation and decide who has the best idea.

   Where? The science lab, the common and the sports field.

   Who? Students, teachers, the people who work in the school.

   When? You want to use... because...

Gold Experience, A2
Different groupings
Different groupings

To start

Write the title of this unit on the board: We love school. Ask students to express some other possible opinions about school, e.g. We don’t mind school, We like school, We don’t like school, etc.

Ask students to jot down a sentence describing how they feel about school. Students now need to find someone who has a different opinion from them. Students work in pairs or small groups to discuss their opinions with a partner.

Conduct class feedback. How do your students feel about school? Encourage them to give reasons for their answers, boarding any new vocabulary which comes up.

Gold Experience, A2 + teacher’s note pages
Achievable yet challenging tasks
Achievable yet challenging tasks

Carefully staged tasks

Exam tips to help guide students

Cambridge exam style tasks from the start

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Read on

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Gold Experience
What are the components?
Print package

For students

Disc with Audio & Video

For teachers

Teacher’s online resource materials:
- Teacher’s notes
- Photocopiables
- Class audio
- Testmaster

Print TB also available
Class audio CDs also available
Digital package

For students

For teachers
Blended package

For students

[Images of Gold Experience materials for students]

For teachers

[Images of Gold Experience materials for teachers]
Practice element

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Language review
- Key online for teachers

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Language review (tests)
- Skills practice
- Skills tests
- Instant feedback
- Gradebook
What changes in the 2015 *for Schools* exams?
Cambridge English: *for Schools*

- **Who are they for?**
  “primary and secondary school students” (ages 11-15)

- **Which exams are covered?**
  **Key** for Schools (KET / A2)
  **Preliminary** for Schools (PET / B1)
  **First** for Schools (FCE / B2) – updated in January 2015

- **What’s the difference between *for Schools* and general?**
  Very little. The level is the same. The format is the same. The topics and contexts are appropriate for school students.
# Key changes: First for Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current exam</th>
<th>2015 exam</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td>5 papers</td>
<td>4 papers</td>
<td>Joined Reading &amp; Use of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading &amp; Use of English</strong></td>
<td>1 hr 45 mins 72 items</td>
<td>1 hr 15 mins 52 items</td>
<td>Shorter texts Fewer items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Compulsory letter Optional set text Includes story 120-180 words</td>
<td>Compulsory essay Set text &amp; story in for Schools only 140-190 words</td>
<td>P1 genre = essay Fewer options in (main exam) P2 Longer output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td>P1 questions recorded P2 1 or 2 speakers P3 5 items, 6 options</td>
<td>(very minor changes)</td>
<td>P1 no audio questions P2 monologue only P3 2 more distracters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td>P3 based on pictures</td>
<td>P3 based on text prompts</td>
<td>Part 3 now word spider, not pictures</td>
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</table>
Motivating teens in class: Summary
Preparing teens for exams
Mission: impossible?

Teaching teens – a summary:
- Know what you’re dealing with – the teen brain IS different
- Challenge and engage teens – they want to prove you wrong
- Teens won’t see your point of view – because they can’t
- Shake it up – don’t let it become predictable
- If it’s important, you’ll need to keep repeating it
- Teens are subject to sleep deprivation – how would you feel?
- Teens have opinions – let them express them (it’s an exam task)
- Use different media – especially THEIR media
- Teens prefer to do stuff than learn stuff – exams are SKILLS based
- Exams are about planning – the teen brain doesn’t do planning
Any questions?

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