Pedagogy Matters: Episode 22 Transcript

Hello and welcome to the latest episode of the Pedagogy Matters Podcast. The Purposes podcast is to bring the force from key topics of conversation in relation to learning teacher, to discuss to breakdown aspects of practice and provide snippets, advice and guidance as to how to integrate these into our daily practice. Today I'm delighted to be joined by Johnny K Jones and expert in the world of All Things English or Mass. Johnny good afternoon. How are you? Hello, Sir. Very well, how are you? Yeah great thanks. Not bad for a Friday afternoon now it's an interesting take recorded podcast,

but it will hear more committed.

So let's go, yeah.

So I think for the benefit of the listeners.

Kind of both in Scotland and elsewhere

across UK bit of background.

About yourself if you don't mind in

terms of what's your journey been

to kind of get where you are now.

Yeah,

of course I'll cut out the bit of being born.

Going to primary school and

go straight to the.

The the professional focus I was

qualified as a secondary school English

teacher and what feels like a very

long time ago eventually ended up as

a as a head of English in a secondary school,

and then I sort of have an opportunity

arose at the college that had

actually been do as a younger man

as head of English and maths,

or went for it.

Garth had a very successful couple years and held a similar position at another college before eventually

learning, and assessment.

ended up as head of teaching,

Newcastle College so fairly fairly varied and some very interesting and exciting opportunities along the way, thankfully.

That's fantastic is coming.

I know we we,

we spoke quite a lot about no

vocation education more broadly,

but also English maths.

And that's really the purpose

of today's conversation,

really is to shine A light on.

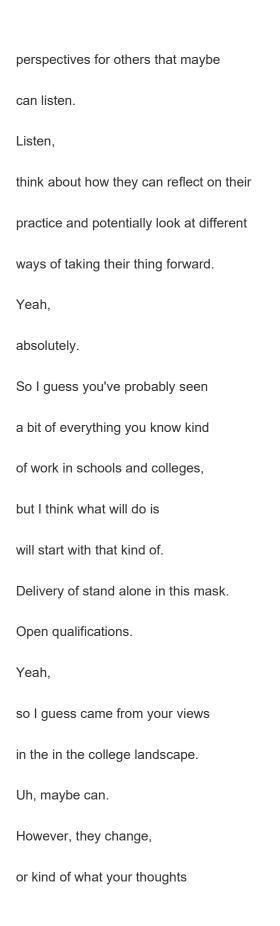
I guess what your views are,

what your thoughts are,

what your experience has told you

in to provide some some hints,

tips,



are on kind of where,

where have you seen that done?

Particularly well and kind of water?

The water commonality is there.

Yeah,

I mean I would say certainly this

even within the last few years

the standard is is improving and

I think you know, as you say,

there's a greater understanding

of what's required.

There's more collaboration between

people within departments, you know.

I think in in those worst case

scenarios where we see silos where

perhaps you know different levels,

different qualifications,

and you know, staffeld service.

Different areas of the curriculum

and maybe not on each other,

and I think that's certainly the

barriers around that are being removed, and I think you know different

speaking to each other nationally.

colleges within regions are

There's more of a more of a

forum of debate and discussion.

Now you know,

people recognize and have a really good

understanding of what their local,

regional, and national challenges are,

and there's a lot more conversation

which I think is fantastic.

I think certainly that you know

a collaborative practice of,

you know,

make sure you've got a a very

engaging curriculum.

And that suits the needs of all

students are certainly think they

have to call my heck of a long way.

But I think for me,

I think a lot of college is a lot of a lot of you know leaders. A lot of managers, a lot of teachers are perhaps looking at what they're doing and and realizing that actually then maybe don't so much and what you need to do is just focus on the basics and get the basics right. Keep it simple. Keep it so that there's that. That line of communication between vocational areas between English and math stuff between students between parents between guardians and. All stakeholders know you know what they need to do, how they need to do it, and and you know how we're going to get there.

So it's really.

the basics very,

Just keep it simple and just do

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very well.
No,
I think it's response that I'm gonna
come pick on a couple of those,
and I think the first,
but they've been identified really
is going to clarity of of rules and
keeping things really, really simple.
And you're right now.
Fe colleges and kind of Scotch college.
English colleges.
They're very complex beasts and often,
yeah,
I'm gonna say it's easy for things
to get lost in the long grass or
or kind of lost in translation.
So I think the first point they're
gonna pick on there might well
be back by clarity of information
and keeping things really simple.
So I guess what are your thoughts
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around that in terms of let's focus on a lecturer perspective from now? No terms of kind of working with their cohort of learners? What are you? What are you? Thoughts, tips or views there to kind of weird that the students? Yeah, yeah. Well, I think. You know it's it's a very, very complex based FET colleges, and rightly so. I mean, some of these organizations dealing with tens of millions of pounds in unique that they need to be a complex beast to make sure that the right things are happening at the right times from a number of perspectives. Whether that's you know basic compliance teaching and learning achievement,

whatever it is, I think for me it's

having that overall vision that

overarching vision of you know this

is this is how we approach things,

not just from the perspective of of

compliance and data and planning,

but also of an ethos innovision.

These are the things that will go

on to do and This is why we're going

to do them and everybody within the

organization knows what those things are.

You know, there's you trim the

fact there are no process.

There's no policies, no actions,

no projects.

There's nothing there that doesn't add

to a positive outcome for students.

Whether that is a qualification

or whether that is just being

able to do things very much more

in a sophisticated manner.

Then you called a year ago.

So I think where we look at planning,

making sure whether it's tight

enough so that.

Everybody's got a general picture

of what they should be doing and

when they should be doing it,

but lotion off that individual LEXIS

can do that with their own flavor in

their own way in their own style.

In it, you know,

really simple example and make

a lesson are my,

you know,

present that lesson and it's it's

a fantastic lesson.

I might give that exact same

plan into you and you struggle to

present that lesson and vice versa.

And I've seen that and we all have,

so making sure there's a framework in

place for planets and people know what

they're doing when they're doing it.

Basic timelines there for everybody to see.

We all know there's going to

be a mark On this date.

We all know there's going to be

these key events throughout the year.

Whether that's as I say,

an assessment or whether that's a,

you know, a swim enrichment in sport,

which means loads Jones.

I'm going to be there,

so not just in English and math,

but everywhere,

and I think also that tracking and

assessment again is as simple as possible

to put the the individual lecture

is a feeding into that bigger system,

so you have lectures,

feeding and maybe they would definitely

get IT department who then reported. Head of department so that you have all the view in oversight of what you need to know. Matter what your perspective is. It's kind of holding a little bit on kind of the classroom practice now, so individual lectures, so actually it all kind of fits in. And I know a lot of kind of practice. You identified there, it sounds really simple, but that's the most effective elements. You know. It's in terms of those effective routines, right? A lot of the anecdotal feedback I've kind of heard of from speaking to lecturers speaking students at times is that English and math is harder to teach because straight

where there's a negative stigma from because why we gotta do this? Again, I'm not very good, but I've done this at school. I've done this elsewhere so guess what? What are the thoughts of what are the tips there for a lecturer for a teacher? They think right? How can help in their build that and develop those routines or behaviors with their students? What are your thoughts around that? Yeah, I mean, I think it's there's obviously the bespoke English or math stuff, but there's also. That you would say is good practice everywhere, so I went very high standards. Doesn't matter what you're teaching. If you've got very high standards. If you're fair. If you've got empathy,

if you can break things down so you know we're sort of worst case, isn't, you know, we've had the discussion. You hear this. They should know that they should know how to do that. Yeah, well, they don't to teach them. It's not about you. Sort of, you know should have. This should have that. Just break it down. I think also from an English and math perspective, aligning yourself with you know the ethos and values of the curriculum area and working closely with them, you know. Can you get involved in induction processes? Can you do it? Really brief presentation in vocational areas and just let students know

that you've got a close relationship

where they had a construction with

construction lectures that you

understand what the challenges

are contextualize and properly.

And and not sort of,

you know,

putting important crossword in the

middle of a of a construction lesson

and saying that that's in bed,

and vice versa, not, you know,

thrown around a couple of

construction examples.

Actually working with construction

staff and in your hair,

dress and stuff to properly embed

and get those top tips in there.

So for me,

I think the basics of those

high standards and, you know,

be empathy for your students.

Make sure that you're breaking down the barriers and sort of chunking where you need to, and differentiating to their level. And despite what you think there should be or where. You know the national curriculum might say there should be. And I could really build some kind of point that that's been discussed quite a bit this year, but I guess it's always been relevant. Special finish mass is around a really effective initial assessment, no? But but I'm talking here. Yes, you might do the college based approach, but I think more than ever now, but also missed message. But now more than ever, it's really important that individual with your cohort you do a very

thorough in depth initial assessment. Really disagree. I think it again. Well, it's a tough one because it depends what your definition of Thor it is. I think you know any initial assessment where you are assessing them sort of broadly across the skills that they are going to need to be successful, and having seen that assessment you will have a you know, a solid idea of what strength areas for improvement and what the next steps are. Personally, you know, think about it, just me. Days in a school where it's at times you know that other transition week from your 60 year seven and you know you'd be asked to spend the full week

asking them to do a mock assessments.

I'd get more out of a 5 minute

conversation with him on the door.

Then I walked out within an hour mark.

Assessment and I think similar.

I think that there is absolutely

a place for the, you know,

the the more formal the computer based

initial assessment that you know a lot

of colleges as a mandatory step up.

But I think also, as you say,

you've got about that time that snapshot

at the beginning of that first lesson,

and but it you know it can't be an

hour and a half mock because again,

you want my standards and you

don't want students coming out

with a GCSE exam or an assessment,

whatever that may be in the summer,

then coming in to win this essman.

Then coming into your lesson

and doing another assessment, we've gotta break away from that, you know, heavy sort of really in depth, massive lengthy and it's gotta just be low stakes. But high impact. Absolutely welcome back purpose. What's up? Let's do this. You gotta do some with it and grace. We absolutely right. That kind of first four to six weeks of a when academic session, right? Yeah, last thing I do is just kind of break students down by doing assessment after assessment for assessment. In your rate, that conversation, or something that can really help you build that relationship with the students is is. Is more impactful than anything else.

Yeah,

and by no means am I saying and you know, stop doing initial assessments and just have a chat with him and just that. There are many components and we have to get a holistic viewpoint and I'm going to discussion and just, you know, watching what they can do and watching their interactions within the first session builds up that picture. Serious and remember a former principle man. Kinda identify, look, we're not teaching them as well, making students literate numerous, and that's absolutely fine. And that's kind of what we need to do. You know, it's not a stand alone part of their their study, it. It's not absolutely fundamental part in right there in terms

of the communication across our college across different areas. But I always go back to the individual action. What can you do and what scholars will hate me for saying this, but I still regard Southgate when he came up with the merger. The term he used was on the process. Yeah, and that's kind of what we can do is actually we can own our own space with our students. You know, some of those points that you mentioned. There are particularly key in the ones that really draw back. I was still going I mentioned is keep it really simple. Yeah, look at your curriculum and say you know we're doing this on

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this day is going to help young
people that win prove it's going
to help children to improve.
Its going to help any.
No apprentice apprentice is to improve,
and if the answer is no,
you either gotta scrub or it is
or you've got to put a follow up
in there so that it's valuable.
So as you'll see initial assessment.
If you just, you know, take it.
You doing it sits on the shelf.
Is is it useful?
No, so you either gotta scrub it or
you've got a planning some activity
where you analyze what is being
produced and you put some actions in place.
Whether that is,
you know, an intervention,
whether that is you know,
an adaptation of your curriculum,
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you've got to do something with the

numbers that you're constantly harvesting.

And that's it.

And there's been a lot of research

again across a piece around a key

thing for English and maths delivery

and success within the gold sector is

what repeated practice do you agree?

Disagree what your thoughts are on that.

And I I have these discussions

often with I've got,

you know I've got a few friends or work

in primary school and they're telling me,

you know,

a lot of a lot of different things

have come out over the years around.

You know times,

tables or basic rules right away,

but a year six or the end of primary,

or even in the middle school rote learning.

Always works and I think it is our

job to make rotllan interest in what I call Gorilla Rote learning. As long as the students don't know it's rote learning, I think that's probably the way to go. If they come in and say no, we're doing this again. You've lost them, so I think making sure with it, yes, there's repetition, but it is engaging and it is, you know, differentiated in it is creative enough that the students don't realize it, because let's have it right. When you're in a recent position, or your import 16, they should hopefully be no. New content. There shouldn't be any new content, so all of it is repetition.

So I think the trick that's a good practice in post 16 is that the students don't realize this. And that's where it comes back to, you know. I guess my partner can affect initial assessment because it will make a really simple nurses. In that case, let's say in English as twelve blocks of learning or 12 things that learners should be able to do if its initial assessment really effectively identify student is great at six of those, but needs to focus on you there six, then that could have tales are kind of Lesson plan. Our strategies with learners to focus on those areas on that theme, stuff, workloads are. It's a huge challenge right now.

It always has been, but because of

kovid because of different processes,

different challenges.

An evolution of College in

terms of systems, approaches,

and so on and so forth and less time.

I guess technology may help to

solve some of those time issues.

Yes, other strategies as well.

So I guess for English and math teachers

will listen to this sides must.

What do you thought around

that in terms of what?

Again, what tips or what advice might

you have around approaches to to

either being more efficient or using

technology to support efficiency?

It's exactly the same as is the other.

I think what we've got to see is,

you know, as you know,

technology is is no magic bullet,

and if it's sort of it, it is likely the technology and the the most useful and that sort of best technology. It's just going to supplement the things that you would do in any way that was successful and don't get sucked in by the gimmick. Don't have you know, sort of, you know, you recognize your reference in 12 apps and you know 15 different YouTube channels. Keep it simple, use it as supplement. The good practice that you've. Already got, so again, we know low stakes quizzes work really well. Set up on Microsoft forms. Set it up on Google Classroom itself. Marking it does something that you were already doing, but take the workload off yet if we're introducing,

I mean,

you know some of the gimmicky elements.

Where were you know trying to

crawl bar too many things in your

gonna make it too complex and

it just isn't going to happen.

So use technology to supplement the

quality practice that you already had.

It goes back to that magic word again.

Purpose it supposed to do that again,

if you're not gonna use it, don't do it.

It's not gonna add value.

Don't do it,

but in the same breath is that

there's a lot of things out.

There's been a huge amount of

development or last 18 months

more so than last ten years that

might allow that increased levels

of efficiently efficiency.

Rather, that's that reduce your workload.

But again, it's about the purpose of how it fits. But I know again different approaches taken by, but by lectures in the past have been country throughout their curriculum and look at the actual work or not. We teach what I need is goes back to what you were saying before. Put the cut of the car. It's and again, as you say, it's if there's, you should never, ever, ever me. You should never, ever, ever introduce anything that is either not going to replace what you've already got. I am all cut down on workload in the long run because even if everything, no matter if you know if it will overtake something introduced at the

beginning will be a little bit of

extra work as long as it

makes something else obsolete.

So whatever you bring in

should get rid of someone else.

Absolutely, and what I would say is I got it.

It takes a statement to do this,

but we've got the technology available

now and almost called you Microsoft

Teams or or chemical crash room.

Or actually there's an abundance

of online materials out there or

materials create or last 18 months

where you Mabel developing mixed up.

Approach students here as well in terms of

tayrona across whatever it is that you feel,

key concepts that you need to do

is to progress with for their mass

delivery of their English delivery,

where you can kind of the same for students

to their as long kind of building quizzes.

So overtime come back that sustainability point you just mentioned there. Yeah, there's some huge opportunities where. You can actually collaborate as you just alluded to again. With others in your college or outside of your college. Because we're all teaching the same aspects of mass, the same aspects of English. But yes, I want to make a relevant to our students, but there's a huge opportunity there to do something that takes a bit of time to invest in, but will save us a lot of time in the long run. Well, I think this is this is the positive. I mean, you know, offset research paper recently, and there's there's been others.

Government white papers have come out of

reference to a paucity of research in FA.

I think that in itself is slowly changing,

so access the reset and don't just stick to.

You know, further educational.

Post 16.

Well, we're looking at assessment.

It doesn't look massively different

secondary schools and middle schools or

primary schools look for those key tenants.

Look for the, you know,

the elements,

the pillars that are telling

you what works and what doesn't,

use that to guide your practice.

'cause I think where we talk about

tech you know you get.

You get people in education or just

think if I buy 40 iPods that will fix

a problem and things will improve.

But what are you going to do with the iPod?

What is it you know you going?

Any specific apps?

Is there a specific purpose to that

or do you just think getting you know

getting a laptop and or fix a problem?

Because unless you've got as you say.

The purpose,

but unless it replaces something else,

it warned.

That's it only draws back to the federal

standard application of pedagogy,

which is kind of what the top or all along.

Throughout this their podcast series.

Really, yeah,

education is made more complex by

lots and lots of things and this

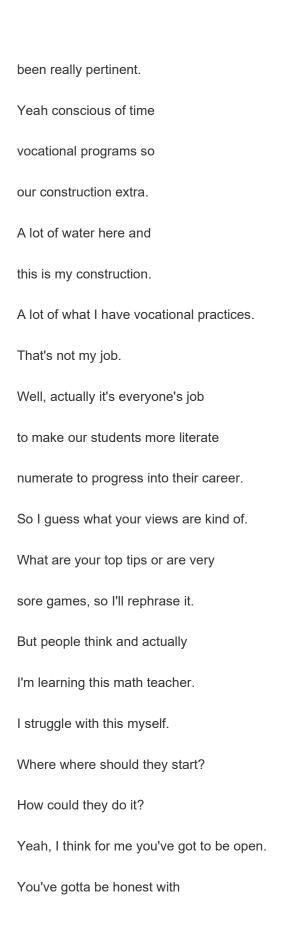
is meant to be a criticism answer.

Oconus practitioners reflect and think,

yeah, what difference can we make?

You know everything that you said.

Then let's go 20 minutes have



yourself about your own level, and I think you've got to find a way to identify what that level is. Whether that is you know and you know, again, you don't have to do this, but you know as a as a construction lecture is not sure where your level. Could you sit down and do that same initial assessment? It's running 25 minutes. Give you a really quick idea or what you need to work on because you know, we talk about that's not my job. We've got a professional accountability and you've got a professional responsibility to improve yourself as well as your students. And if you're not. Where you need to be for English and maths, that's fine, but it's not fine to do nothing about it,

so I think identify what your own level,

what your own standard is.

I think you've got to work with your

English and maths practitioners and

for me it's it's about consistency.

So if we're in construction,

you know there's there's a there's,

you know we're building something

that requires trigonometry to

make sure it doesn't fall over.

And how is that being thought

'cause lightly they've been taught?

The students are being taught it one

way in secondary, maybe three or four,

depending upon how many teachers,

the Adam,

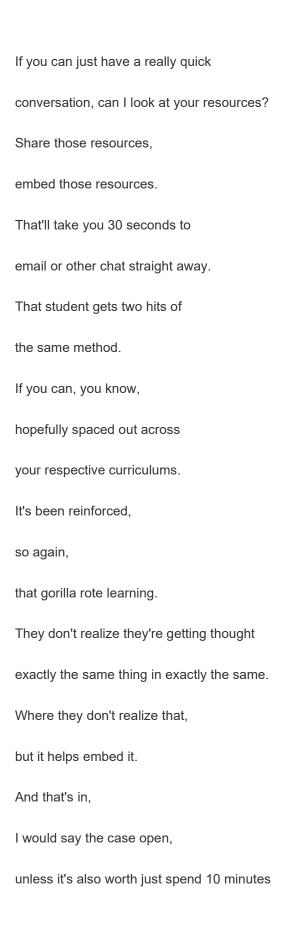
what the ages of those teachers were then.

Getting taught at a different

way from the post 16 practitioner

and then another way again with

the construction practitioner.



from flat on your cooking with Alaska.

12 weeks I think.

Actually,

where did I teach mass?

'cause like what lectures are

surprised that firstly is is how much

they they teach English must natural

part of their program absolutely

kind of key terms and spellings and

definitions. You know, that's a starting

point definitely and signposted.

And and there's you know there

is the rote learning and again,

you know they don't have to be a sort of,

you know, two day conference where

we all we all along through a

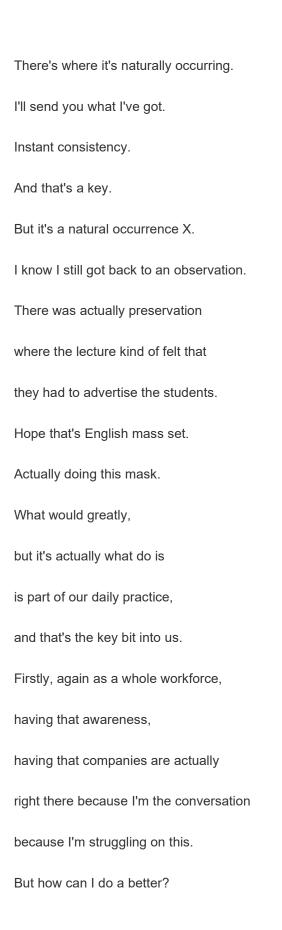
hotel somewhere it put a call in,

you know got it go to the cafe.

You bring this game online

and I'll bring a pen, right?

There is where it's naturally cared.



But the third and most important, which is where you get the hook with the students, which is rather vocational expert. I'm going to have a slight advantage sometimes. Dennis mask. Standalone lectures. His students are there for construction of the applicator, their fair and beauty. Think about how. What's actually really needed within the workforce within the industry and draw back you know, and again the things that I think too often we refer back to the, you know, the levels and the programs and the courses and the qualifications. If again that construction example, you know, I'm I'm going to ask

you as a student in the lecture, how long do you think that'll take that math? His estimation, number, time, quantity. You know if there's any sort of conversation going on, any form of message being communicated that English, and maybe actually think of it less as math and English, and think of it more as literacy and numeracy. Absolutely right now. And that's really it. That's an exercise. And like I said, I don't block people who listen to this to do that is to spend even just 10 minutes. I drive home or walking the dog or however you listen to actually what we wear have a. Made my students more literate,

more numerous this week or last week. Got actually little hope that all were short on time, but the one example I always go back to that helps people realize this is, you know, we talk about ********. Let's talk about you, know qualifications. If you think back to being to nine or ten years old and you've got across the road, you've got to estimate wind speed. You've got to estimated car speed. Estimate the people around you. You know many, many variables, how quick you will need to be, how much you may need to improve or quicken your pace. Overcast comma you do all of those calculations as a sort of seven eight 910 year old.

In a fraction of a second and then
going to see is a 16 year old
after you know 10 and 12 years of
education within you know schools and
colleges also outside with parents,
carers, guardians.
We're friends you do these.
You know constant calculations.

You do that a fraction of a

second and it's a 16 year old.

You can't do long division it's it's

just practice habits and behavior.

That's what comes back soon now.

It's really,

really interesting points and we

have to follow up with another

conversation at different time.

And Johnny I must say what

you've done really well.

We've got 25 minutes without mentioning book.

We couldn't finish this without kind

of sharing this with with with kind

of people are listening to this.

It's obviously you've got a wealth of

experience you know with English and mass,

and obviously you've got it ended up on

end up, not finish journey completely.

Yes, the next upgrade journey is

being developed book, so just work.

We share a lot about what that is,

where that came from and about the former.

Yeah, ended up,

do you know something out on?

But yeah, so I think it was just it was.

It was roughly the first lockdown.

I was head of English and math department

at the time and actually because

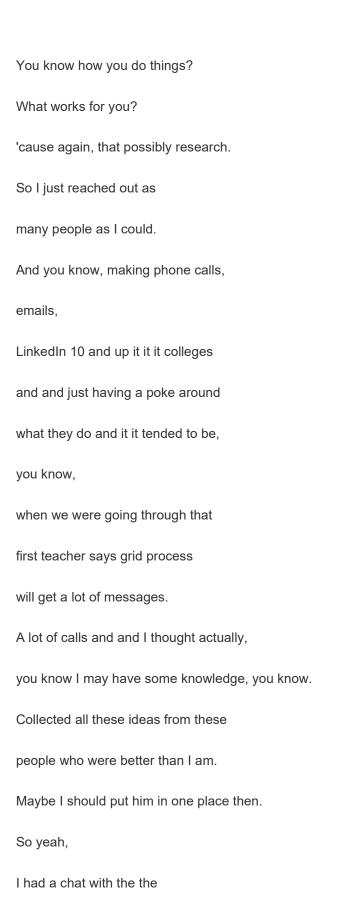
I came in from secondary schools.

I'll sort of put myself out there

and said during the beginning

of the journey in FA,

you know I need a bit of advice here.



wonderful people at McGraw Hill. They were happy for to, you know. Move forward with it and and brought it over that summer and so yeah, improving maths and English in further education. Practical guide was sorted and released in June this year. Fantastic and I'm going to spend my my well, my hard earned pennies on that Johnny. What would I find? What's within that? Is it kinda is a wide range of strategies, ideas for potential solutions. Therefore for individuals in the workforce, yeah, well, it's it's. It's pretty much. I mean it's a it is just that it is that practical guide for people at all levels, so there's there's so much in there for for lectures. 'cause as you know,

as I was ahead of English and math

are still made sure that I thought I

thought it was important that you know,

it was visible that I was doing that.

And also for me to understand

personally what the challenges

were that lecturers were facing.

And what the solutions could be,

sort of trial and myself.

So there's there's so much in there around,

you know, quick wins in in cutting

workload while getting really,

you know, massive impact in assessment.

There's a lot in there about

behavior management.

There's elements in there for for middle

and senior leaders around organizing a

curriculum around timetabling around,

you know the policies and strategies that

you need to put in place and put again,

also motivating staff,

motivating students so you know soft
skills as well as getting your curriculum
right and getting your pedagogy right so.

Really, for me,

entire sort of college experience,

I wanted it to encompass the

no matter what level of staff was involved.

No, that's fantastic.

Johnny and I have read it and it's

a real fantastic snippets in there

and just some ideas in the cable

is it makes you think and that for

me is fundamentally that we deal

with in further education is it's

that perspective of others which

we can use and reflecting.

Actually how can is that relevant to me?

Help me.

He's up to inform my work moving forward

and this is a great starting point.

So yeah,

I I certainly recommend listens to
to take a look at that and have
a read of if it's a interest.
But John Friday afternoon generally
thanks very much for your time.
No, it's it's been a very,
very quick half an hour.
Will be loads,
loads of ideas and topics and
snippets and ideas of we've got
practice and like I said,
I hope it's going to be refused to do lists,
so thanks very much and cheers
for joining us. Real pleasure.
Thank you man,
thanks.