

## YEARS SEVEN - TEN (ages 11-14) *Page in preparation*

Preamble: The most fertile of years – so long as GCSE doesn't start early (but that's all in the old paradigm!). A time when teaching functions change with the rise of the teacher / tutor, etc. Some of the detail below transcends the boxes (one of the difficulties in dealing with the subject chronologically), especially those involving specific subjects.

### Under discussion:

- the shape of the day (later start, two halves, academic core and selected studies
- The makeup of subjects and subject bands
- Ethics and philosophy
- The make-up of the curriculum and specific changes within subjects

### Academic:

'The years of opportunity for the greatest changes in curriculum'

*"... any curriculum that you design is going to be ten times better than what someone will design for you. You don't have to do that rote, prescriptive thing."*

-Tara Westover, who never attended school until 17 years old now with a PhD from Cambridge

*"Personalised learning is the future of education"*

- Years 7 - 10 are the years of opportunity when students should be exposed to a wide range of subjects, from history of art to engineering
- The curriculum is overloaded and this is an opportunity to strip it down and to rebuild, rather than continuing to add and subtract according to fashion

- These are the years of opportunity when the arts and music should be at the heart of learning along with the environment, a combined humanities programme, languages and ethics and values.
- Technology will continue to underpin learning with coding. Teacher training, but the focus will be on the targets (ie what do we expect students to know and be able to do when they leave school)
- Many schools have already launched new programmes in these four years Latymer Upper School's new innovative learning strategy that encompasses a global curriculum through which all Year 7 and 8 pupils study coding, computer science, Mandarin and Spanish, and a "global goals" course for Year 9. Yet this is old hat, (my own prep school was teaching Mandarin and Spanish by 2004) but shows how schools are making do by parachuting new courses into the curriculum and overlaying it without implementing
- Schools will offer blended education

#### Assessment:

*'Trust teachers, don't use education as a political football, stop obsessing over measurement and inspection, and teach kids how to learn not what to learn. It is not about Academia and exam achievement.'*

Finnish delegation to their UK counterparts

Subject Modification: Regardless of wider changes, within traditional subjects, there is a need for change in emphasis and in content taught:

(a) Mathematics: Most of the high school mathematics curriculum is, 9th century Indo-Vedic mathematics—save calculus and statistics. But mathematics didn't begin with Pythagorus and end with Newton. Should we not be teaching Mathematics in its cultural context as well? How many teachers know of the mathematician, Aryabhata even though millions of high school math students intersect his discoveries when they explore

trigonometry or quadratic equations. Why do we not reference his work? When did we ask in reference to AI, which parts of what we teach in Mathematics are still important and which are not? Because it is illogical that what and how we teach doesn't need to change.

(a) History: I have long railed (and written) about the paucity of British history in the curriculum that relates to the Empire – something I evidenced from the Chalke Valley History Festival recently. The fact that our students are taught virtually nothing about Europe or the EU since the way in any other than an adversarial voice showed in the ignorance displayed in the Brexit debate. Trying to negotiate trade deals with India without showing some acknowledgement of our shared history, and not teaching about the economics and politics of the empire leaves children ignorant of their history, the story behind immigration and our shared history. History should change perceptions when the perceptions are wrong: for instance, our children learn little about China except that it poses an existential threat when the truth is the reverse, as the Chinese will tell you, citing the Opium Wars and sacking of the Summer Palace demonstrate. Our history should tell us about our past as an island nation, but for the last five hundred years, the period that coincided with the rise of Britain having the largest empire the world has ever seen, the empire should sit at the heart of our history curriculum. (see appendix a)

(c) Geography: Geography is grounded in the environment and environmental issues and conservation and, more latterly, sustainability. Sustainability, how our planet can survive along with its flora and fauna is not embedded in its curriculum, so while palm oil and deforestation can be topics covered, we are not so good at linking them into the wider eco-sphere. has gone some way to taking on issues about. The word geography (the study of the earth), needs to be interpreted in the active voice and look at the effects of fossil fuels, climate change etc

following the model that economics needs to align itself with  
(below)

(d) Economics: The teaching of economics or the science that deals with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, or the material welfare of humankind. (appendix b)  
The trouble with a definition that **focuses on** the academic study of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services is that it is largely divorced from any impact on the environment or depletables. The compelling case made by Rostrom et al is of an *'environmental ceiling consists of nine planetary boundaries beyond which lie unacceptable environmental degradation and potential tipping points in Earth systems. The twelve dimensions of the social foundation are derived from internationally agreed minimum social standards, as identified by the world's governments in the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Between social and planetary boundaries lies an environmentally safe and socially just space in which humanity can thrive.'* It is wrong to think we can keep making economic decisions that don't consider these planetary boundaries and the teaching of economics needs to change accordingly.

(appendix c)

Social:

*"The most stunning change for adolescents today is their aloneness. The adolescents of the 90s are more isolated and more unsupervised than (their predecessors .. . not because they come from parents who don't care, or from a community that doesn't value them, but rather because there hasn't been enough time for adults to lead them through the process of growing up."*

Patricia Hersch *A Tribe Apart*

- and the bad news for parents that the period of adolescence, once around 14 – 19 is now seen more accurately as 10 – 24 years

Appendix (a) Chalke Valley History Festival – extract – from  
'Empire? What Empire?'

'My enthusiasm was somewhat dampened, however, when I read the programme and did a quick survey of the more than 120 sessions. The results make disappointing reading for those like me who want to see the Festival, as we wish for our history curriculum, to reflect our full history, not just parts thereof. While no doubt there are reasons for the programme being as it was (and speakers with something to sell are the easiest group to attract), it is time to consider a little engineering.

The most popular subject was, inevitably, the two world wars with the number of talks on the subject totalling some thirty four. General studies of war and warfare accounted for another sixteen sessions while social history (trees, clothes, bread and magazines) accounted for another sixteen talks. English History up until to 1485 accounted for twelve sessions, 1485 – 1689 accounted for a mere three (the Tudors apparently being given a year off) and the period from 1689 to 1900 another two sessions. Twentieth century UK accounted for another six talks, (including three on Brexit), the ancient civilizations of Rome, Greece and Egypt six also; the histories of other countries (nine) biographies (sixteen) which completed the list apart from those that I lumped into a section called 'General.' (A History of Birds, Wine and War etc) numbered eight.

Oh, there was one other section. The British Empire from 1600 until the present day. Let's see. Yes, I found one. Lizzie Collingham's 'The Hungry Empire: How Britain's Quest for Food Shaped the Modern World.' A wide-ranging culinary journey explaining how some of the food we crave reached our plates and satiated our palettes.'

(b) Another definition is 'the branch of knowledge concerned with the production, consumption, and transfer of wealth.' This sits outside the traditional idea of *production distribution and consumption of goods and services* as such production exist only on

paper or the internet. Nor does it fit the description of improving the material welfare of mankind; to the contrary a very small number of people benefit and quite likely to the detriment of mankind.

### Appendix (c) The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries (2017)

