

Volume 1

Oct. 2021

TeachBetter

Professional Development Insights
for Teachers in China

In this issue:

Welcome to TeachBetter - p2

TeachBetter in Review - p3

PD Survey Results - p5

The Hidden Head - p8

Leadership Interview - p10

Teacher Toolkit - p11

Ideas Board - p12

Save the Date - p14

Ask the Agony Aunt - p15

What is QTS? - p17

Big Ideas Watch - p18

TeachBetter returns - p20



问创
VENTURE



Welcome to TeachBetter

Foreword by Julian Fisher,
Cofounder of Venture Education

Teachers are incredible. I was talking with a non-teacher friend recently trying to explain the profession and the best I could do was ask: "when you have to deliver an engaging presentation for clients, how long do you spend preparing?" Her answer: "a couple of weeks." My response: "Teachers deliver four or five of those every day to arguably the most demanding audience on the planet."

Teaching is exhausting, intense and unpredictable but it's also the very definition of the word "impact." Because each one of those young minds is forming beliefs and attitudes about the world and teachers get to make sure the young people in their care move forward positively, confidently and filled with curiosity and compassion. It doesn't matter where or what you teach: you make a difference. Thank you.

So... what's this newsletter all about? Put simply, it's a short, practical and, we hope, interesting termly resource for teachers who want to hone their craft, learn new ideas and teach a little better.

We'd love feedback, ideas and input from you, so please go to the final page if you want to get involved. And please register for the next series of TeachBetter: our January theme is sustainability and we have some really intriguing workshops!

Happy Halloween!





TeachBetter in Review

In October, Venture Education launched TeachBetter, a series of free online webinars for teachers in China.

With over eight hundred registrations, the response from the community was fantastic, and we received great feedback for the webinars which were led by:

- University of Nottingham Ningbo China
- Buckingham International School of Education
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Manchester



A wide range of teachers:

32%	Secondary School Teacher
24%	Primary School Teacher
16%	Pre-K Teacher
15%	Education Management
8%	Other
5%	University Teacher/Lecturer

While our top three cities were not *that* surprising...

162	Beijing
116	Shanghai
40	Shenzhen

...we also had people register from further afield!



"Attending the webinar series has reignited my interest in professional development as I feel that after my PGCE I have stagnated a little. Re-engaging with others and benefiting from the enthusiasm and professionalism of your trainers and other participants has encouraged me to pursue professional development going forward and I'm looking into MA programs."

Sean Healy, Chongqing BI Academy

"Laura Barritt and Tracey Smith from Buckingham delivered powerful speeches on our roles as teachers and the importance of setting boundaries, leadership, and having high expectations in the classroom. I am fortunate to be studying with them online at the University of Buckingham as I pursue my PGCE while simultaneously working in China, and I would recommend the course to anyone thinking of furthering their teaching skills and credentials. Thanks to all the speakers and great job, TeachBetter!"

Teacher Li, Hangzhou World Foreign Language School

"Really inspiring, really varied and really thought-provoking. Have been working on a plan to change the way I approach observations after Shanker Dutt Batt from UNNC's dynamic rundown of how to make them really count - will let you know how it goes! Thank you TeachBetter - I can safely say these have been the most useful webinars I have attended this year."

High School Teacher, Beijing





PD Survey Results

We asked 100+ teachers in the TeachBetter community about PD in their schools. Here are the results:

Which forms of PD does your school use, support or encourage?



Which do you personally believe are the most effective?

- #1 Training courses and workshops
- #2 Studying for a qualification or accreditation
- #3 Observation and shadowing
- #4 Mentoring
- #5 Online courses/webinars/podcasts
- #6 Peer group exchanges
- #7 Self-reflection, personal reading or research
- #8 Attending exhibitions and conferences
- #9 International exchanges



3-Minute Analysis

It's interesting to see here how closely the two lists align. Perhaps this means respondents are broadly happy with the provision from their schools. Or perhaps it means that the sorts of PD at the top of the list are the ones we are most familiar with, because we have the most access to them? The higher position of online courses on the first list, and accreditation on the second, we suspect has something to do with their relative costs!

International Exchanges

We also couldn't help noticing that international exchanges came bottom, both in terms of what schools are actually doing but also that teachers believe they are the least effective form of professional development. With that in mind, we thought we'd share some relevant research on their efficacy.

Visits: Going overseas to learn about another education system. This could include school visits, lesson observations, shadowing, etc.

Teaching: Ranging from one-week placements to a year long sabbatical, teaching in another country can dramatically increase an understanding of a different country's youth, society and approach to education.

Training: Undertaking a short course or a full degree in an overseas country allows for a deeper understanding of education.

Online: There are increasing opportunities to engage with overseas countries online, from roundtables, discussions, webinars and workshops to one-to-one peer exchange.

Domestic: Within any country, there are a variety of different educational approaches; many of which may be termed international. If you're a non-Chinese teacher in an international school in China, how much time have you spent in a Chinese public school?

In 2007, PricewaterhouseCoopers produced an independent study on improving school leadership for the UK's Department for Education and Skills. This was highlighted by the OECD in their own report who stated:

"Traditional CPD activities do not seem to respond to the needs of today's leaders and the need for more innovative approaches is being highlighted. Innovative approaches to CPD for school leaders include secondments into business and other sectors, cross-sectoral mentoring programmes, international exchanges, and study or research opportunities, work-shadowing other school leaders in different contexts and tailoring CPD to sector specific needs (PwC, 2007)."





University of
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Develop as an educator

with the University of Nottingham Ningbo China

Online qualifications for
international educators

Cambridge PDQs
7 months

Masters Degrees
12 months/24 months

Bespoke teacher training
Flexible scheduling



Scan to
find out more


BEIJING FIELD STUDIES

Field trips for international schools for students
Grades K-8 with a subject focus of history,
science and the natural world.

Our field trips...

- Encourage students to observe and interact with their natural environment.
- Foster confidence, collaboration and problem solving skills.
- Are aligned with the International Baccalaureate and UK National Curriculum.
- Provide an outdoor education entirely in English.
- Are led by an international team of trained exploration guides and educators.

 bfs@ventureeducation.org

 Please scan the QR code
for more information





The Hidden Head

Ever wondered what your school leaders are really thinking?

In this regular feature, we ask a different anonymous head of a school in China what they think.

When interviewing potential teachers, what warning signs put you off hiring?

With borders closed and teacher supply more complex than ever, I have been surprised by the sloppy and perhaps arrogant approach of a minority of candidates recently, simply assuming schools will employ them because we are desperate. It is such a pity when this happens because a candidate who would otherwise be highly employable has shown a character which gives me pause to employ them. Although we are in challenging times it is not the case that schools will take anyone. It is important candidates remain professional, engaging and focused in interviews.

There is certainly a premium for some roles at present, however, candidates need to make it easier for school leaders to justify higher than usual packages by demonstrating their potential value for their whole contract not simply during the current crisis. Heads will always be wary about letting a staff member into the staff room who could potentially unravel years of good work creating a positive staff culture. Teachers are the heart of any school, being confident is fine, but arrogant or sloppy is a red flag every single time.

Got a question for a Hidden Head? Contact Mary at mary@ventureeducation.org





Leadership Interview

Michelle Stroman,
Director, Professional Learning
Dulwich College International



DULWICH COLLEGE

| INTERNATIONAL |

德威国际学校



Dulwich College International is a family of leading schools, with six Colleges and two International High Schools across Asia. It also enjoys a sister school relationship with Dehong.

What does an average day as a teacher entail?

First off, there is never an average day for a teacher. Every day is different, because children are emotional barometers. Every moment of everyday, a teacher must read people and make hundreds of micro-decisions. In a couple of hours a teacher can go from introducing a new concept, to welcoming a new student, to collaborating with a colleague, to leading a parent workshop, all under the watchful eye of the clock. Immense pleasure and intense pressure often walk side by side during an average day in the life of a teacher.

It seems like teachers talk more about professional development than a lot of other professions. Why do you think this is?

The pace of change in our world continues to accelerate and we have a responsibility to our students to make sure our pedagogy and practice stay relevant. For a teacher, professional learning is critical and ongoing, and is embedded in how they regularly explore, collaborate, and reflect. Professional learning is also a key component of wellbeing for our teachers. It is the opportunity to take time for themselves and connect with colleagues – to reflect, re-energise and innovate.

"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them" says Malvolio in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. Is this true for teachers?

Teaching requires a complex combination of traits, knowledge, and skills in an ever-changing world. Few are "born great" because it is a learning profession, both for them and their students. Through dedication and commitment some "achieve greatness" in their impact on others. Many have "greatness thrust upon them" by appreciative former students in the years to come.





“Teaching requires a complex combination of traits, knowledge, and skills in an ever-changing world.”

What advice would you give to teachers just starting out that has always proven useful to you?

With such high expectations and responsibility, teachers can be their own toughest critic. But as people, one of our most important strengths is our ability to establish meaningful connections with others. At Dulwich, we have the benefit of a large network of like-minded, supportive colleagues who I have had the pleasure of working with, learning from, and feeling supported by. So I would encourage teachers just starting out in their career to reach out to their network and take part in the professional learning opportunities available to them, to establish friendships and support growth.

How do you create an environment where teachers can grow?

We put people at the heart of everything we do. Most recently, we have innovated our teacher recruitment process through a partnership with Pulsifi, which uses AI to uncover people’s potential. Candidates who apply for English-language teaching roles with us can take a talent assessment that enables them to learn about themselves, their strengths, their working styles. We then use those insights to develop personalised professional learning programmes for successful candidates. Click to find out more:

<https://www.dulwich.org/careers/find-your-career>



Teacher Toolkit #1- the Hot Seat!

In this series, we share some tried and tested tools you can adapt to your planning.

Hot seating is a great 15-25 minute activity for exploring almost any topic and encouraging empathy in learners. This activity requires learners to take on the role of someone else, and then, in character, answer questions from the rest of the group. It allows learners to see problems and ideas from completely different perspectives, to better understand different stakeholders in organisations, and to engage with the performing arts. It can also be a powerful way for learners to swap roles and understand perspectives other than their own in conflict-resolution. For some Halloween fun, why not try casting a monster or ghoul, and have them give their side of the story!

MATERIALS

Required

Paper
Pen

Optional

Hot-seat cards
Props (wigs, crowns, etc.)

Prep

Choose 1-5 people (or countries, elements, art implements, etc.) and fill out the hot-seat cards with the name of one role on each.

#1

Introduce learners to the different roles you chose before class. Select one learner from each group to play each role. Hand out one prepared hot-seat card to each selected learner.

#2

Give actors time to develop their characters by reflecting on different aspects of their character; for example, their feelings, hopes, dreams, daily experiences and how this character would respond to different questions.

#3

Meanwhile, the rest of the learners in each group brainstorm questions to ask the character from their group.

#4

Call the actor to the chair (hot seat) in the centre of the room and hand them their character's prop.

#5

Start the hot seat by inviting the actor's groupmates to ask them questions. The actor in the hot seat answers each question in character. When the group has finished asking their questions, invite the rest of the learners in the room to ask the actor questions.

#6

At the end of the conversation, thank the actor and welcome the next actor to the hot seat.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How easy or difficult was it to play the role?

Do you have a new perspective on the character or topic?

Why do you think the actor chose to portray the role in this way?

TIPS

First time hot-seating? Choose a confident learner to act first!

Quieter, more reflective learners can also really shine in the hot-seat.

Don't focus too much on the voice, accent, pitch, etc. It's not Shakespeare!



Ideas board

We asked a range of teachers what ONE activity or approach has most changed their practice this term. Here is a selection of our favourite answers.

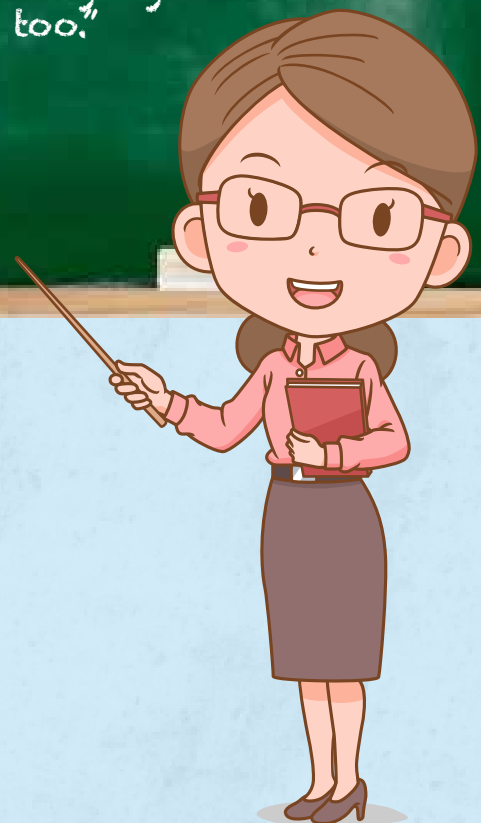
"It's gotta be getting the students to interview themselves (if confused try looking up 'Ayode on Ayode'). Giving them free reign to take their narrative wherever they please, it's a great way to get them to open up."

"One-minute journals at the end of each lecture where students would write anything (question/ reflection/ feeling/ comment/ criticism/ suggestion) based on the three hours we had together. They'd know only I would read it and no one else. What comes out in these one-minute journals is what we often miss or can't imagine. It's awesome, try it out!"

"Having the kids lead an activity. They surprise me with their initiative and creativity."

"Workflow sheets for independent group work - a simple grid with 3 columns: the task, who is doing it and how long they think it will take. It told me who did what, and who was adept at wriggling out of responsibility. By the third time, the kids were learning about this too."

"Slowing down."



One-Week Chinese Immersion for Teachers



Keats School in Kunming

20 hours of intensive Chinese language classes (specifically for teachers) + 5 excursions in Kunming



Designed for:

Teachers of all language levels who want to improve their Chinese on a spectacular holiday in beautiful Kunming (the City of Eternal Spring)



Price:

7000 RMB (including food, accommodation and airport pickup)



Contact/Registration:

info@keatschinese.com



Topics covered:

- ▶ Chinese in the classroom
- ▶ Communicating with Chinese colleagues
- ▶ Sharing progress with parents



Dates offered:

Sunday, Dec. 26 - Saturday, Jan. 1
Sunday, Jan. 23 - Saturday, Jan. 29
Sunday, Feb. 6 - Saturday, Feb. 12

ANCIENT PATHS HUANGSHAN & THE VILLAGES

BESPOKE
Travel Company

RESTORE, RECONNECT, LEARN



A winter getaway featuring some of the country's most thoughtfully restored boutique hotels, Ming dynasty architecture, gorgeous countryside, UNESCO heritage villages and of course, China's most inspiring mountain range. This is a private tour you can take alone or with a small group of colleagues/friends anytime

From 4,945–9,383 RMB/person depending on group size and length of trip. Scan QR for full itinerary and pricing.

* Conde Nast Traveler
China Specialists

* China Social Impact
Award Winners

* 11 years organising
immersive, educational trips
for executives and senior
staff in China



Save the Date

Here are 7 events or courses for teachers taking place in the coming weeks. Click an event to find out more!

NOV 2 What do Ethical Practices with International Students Look Like? - Webinar (10pm)



NOV 9 The Rise and Rise of Research in China: What Does it Mean for China and the World? - Webinar (10pm)



NOV 13-27 Learning Design and Teaching for International Educators - online course



NOV 16-18 THE Teaching Excellence Summit Hybrid event, Tianjin



NOV 30 Understanding Human Functioning & Enhancing Human Potential (...) - webinar (5am!)



DEC 3 Behaviour and Classroom Culture Change - webinar (FOBISIA schools only)



JAN-MAR A101: Introducing the Principles of Assessment - Online Training Course

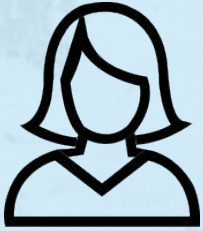


Cambridge Assessment International Education

Professional Development Centre

Do you run any courses, webinars or other events for teachers in China?

If you would like your event to be featured in next term's newsletter, contact mary@ventureeducation.org



Ask the Agony Aunt

Your questions and worries answered

I want to work in an international or private bilingual school, but I don't have time to do a PGCE around my work schedule... what can I do?

First, talk to your current employers about your schedule – there may be more wiggle room than you think, particularly if you pursue an online PGCE course, (though these are not always accepted by national visa requirements so it's important to research your chosen context carefully).

If there's nothing they can do, it's worth looking for other options. For a 'PGCE-lite', consider the Cambridge PDQ, a shorter modular course which introduces many of the core ideas and practices of a PGCE. There are a number of PDQ centres but UNNC are currently the only providers in China accredited to offer an entirely online version of the qualification. There are also a wide variety of masters' degrees in education which will often help to advance your career as well as being very interesting in their own right: if considering a UK route, we recommend starting with the wealth of information on masters' courses at www.ucas.com.

Some schools also offer support through Assessment-Only QTS, a route for teachers with a degree and teaching experience to gather and accredit evidence that you are doing the job to the standard of a qualified teacher – the latest information from the UK government on this can be found [here](#).

For the truly time-pressed, there is a great new short course which will cost just 4 hours of your time and wow future potential employers, proving beyond a doubt that you have the drive and energy to invest in your professional development independently – it's called TeachBetter, perhaps you've heard of it?

For research on a range of educational topics including teacher training in China, please [visit our website](#).

Have a burning question? Send it in via mary@ventureeducation.org and our Agony Aunt will answer you in the next issue!



BUCKINGHAM INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Training Teachers Across The World



'The aim of teacher training is to develop teachers who are going to achieve a great deal with every pupil they teach and who are going to enjoy the job.'

Professor Barnaby Lenon CBE
Council Member,
Buckingham International
School of Education

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- ◆ Postgraduate Diploma in Mentoring
- ◆ The National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCO)

TEACHING QUALIFICATION

- ◆ PGCE - Online
- ◆ Assessment Only QTS



LinkedIn



WeChat

www.bise.org | info@bise.org

MA DEGREE COURSES

- ◆ MA Education (Fully Online)
- ◆ MA Education (Teaching and Learning)
- ◆ MA Education (Evidence Based Practice)
- ◆ MA Education (Leading Sport in Schools)
- ◆ MEd Educational Leadership and Management
- ◆ MA in Residential Education



PRACTICAL CHINESE MEDICINE

IN THIS 6 WEEK ONLINE
COURSE WITH 15 HOURS OF
INSTRUCTION YOU WILL:

- ◎ Know how and why to practice Eight Pieces of Brocade, an authentic Qigong routine
- ◎ Learn 20 basic TCM herbs for seasonal health and minor ailments
- ◎ Understand Qi, Yinyang and the Five Elements in Chinese Medicine and Culture
- ◎ Diagnose your physiological and psychological five-element types
- ◎ Be able to apply TCM Dietary principles to enhance energy and improve symptoms
- ◎ Learn 12 key acupressure points and manual techniques to activate them

Designed for:

Teachers living in China who want to learn practical applications of traditional Chinese medicine and the essence of the philosophy behind it.

Each Week:

- ◎ 90 minute recorded class
- ◎ 60 minute live class
- ◎ Short reading

Live Class Time:

Wednesdays 8-9PM (Nov. 17-Dec. 22)

Price

RMB 3,800

Taught by Dr. Shelley Ochs,
TCM Physician at Beijing
United Family Hospital

- ◎ Beijing resident since 2007
- ◎ 20 years of clinical experience
- ◎ Official lineage-holder in traditional acupuncture



Scan the QR code to register

Contact us: ross@kaivalyacollective.com





What is QTS?

And how do I get it?

There was a bit of discussion in the TeachBetter WeChat group this month about QTS. Here is a quick definition and a run-down of how to get it.

Qualified teacher status (QTS) is a legal requirement to teach in many English schools, but it is also increasingly recognised in a range of international settings as a viable teaching qualification – including as an alternative to PGCE.

There are three main routes into achieving QTS:

- applying to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) – this is primarily for those with existing teaching qualifications from any of the following – the EEA, Gibraltar, Canada, Switzerland, New Zealand, USA.
- undergoing an assessment to demonstrate you meet the standards for QTS (with no further training needed)
- completing a teacher training course, such as a PGCE in England, and a subsequent year of teaching.

To qualify for the second route, you should first have a minimum of 2 years' teaching experience, a first degree from a UK or non-UK university, and a standard equivalent to grade 4 in GCSE English language, mathematics, and for most teaching jobs, science.

There is more information about the assessment only route through in this edition's Agony Aunt column. For any further information, your best bet is the [UK Gov website](#).



Big Ideas Watch

Invitational Theory

What is it?

Invitational theory posits that dynamically welcoming, non-coercive school culture is key to a happy future. It divides schools into 5 domains for self-reflective improvement: people, place, policies, practices, and processes.

At its heart, Invitational Education is an imaginative act of hope that explains how human potential can be realized. It identifies and changes the forces that defeat and destroy people. Invitational Education is designed to create and enhance human environments that cordially summon people to realize their potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor.

William Purkey

Best bits

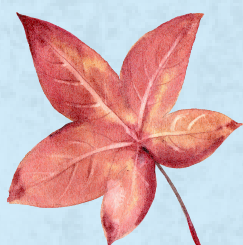
The '5 Ps' offer a useful taxonomy for systematic school improvement, with a particularly nice recognition of how important the physical environment is for shaping the way we behave towards each other. There is also a nice focus on limitless human potential, empowerment and buy-in from everyone.

Reservations

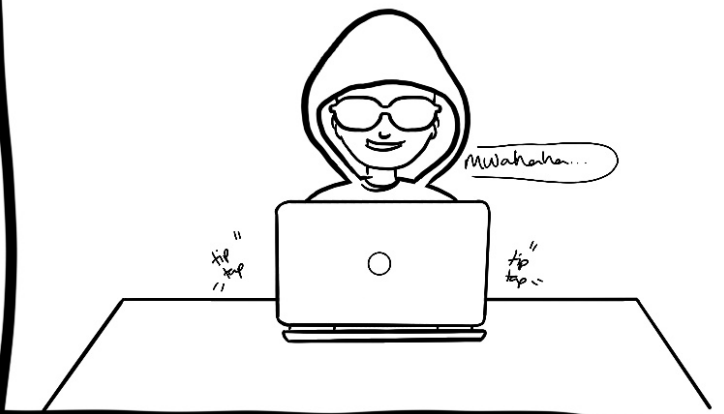
The founding document, while interesting, has spelling mistakes and a lot of self-referential citations from other work by its founders, making it feel just a little flimsy.

Venture Verdict

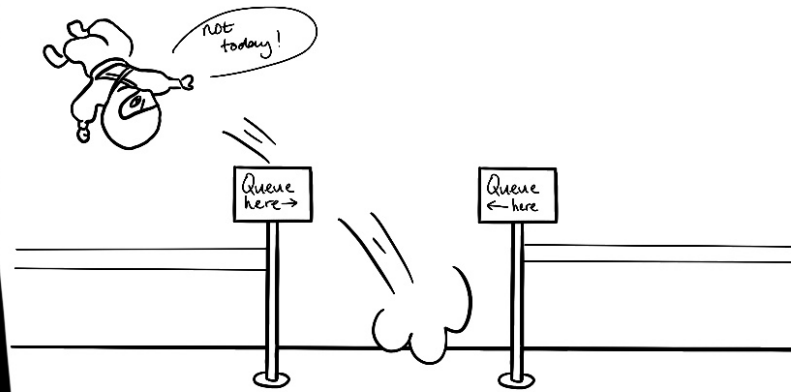
Worth exploring but a little underdeveloped as yet.



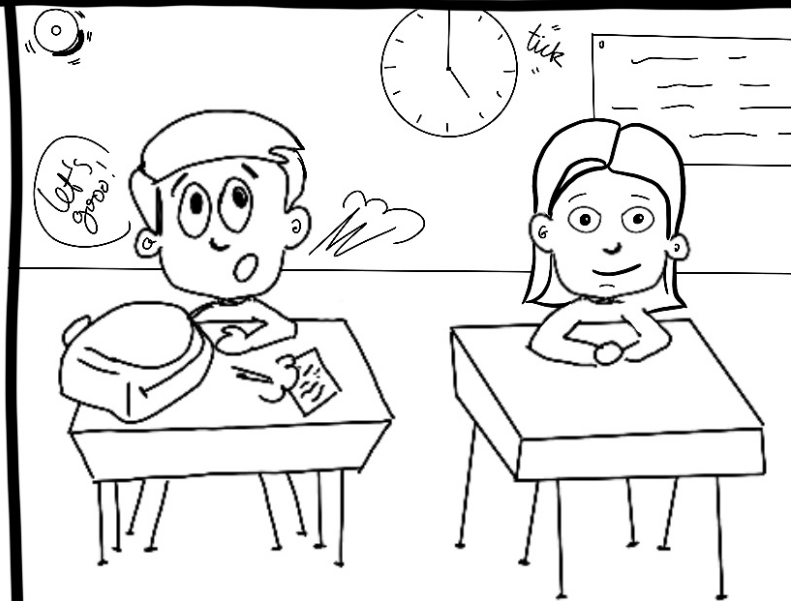
STUDENTS FINDING WAYS
AROUND THE SCHOOL
INTERNET BARRIER...



STUDENTS ENGAGING
NINJA-MODE TO DODGE
THE CAFETERIA QUEUE...



STUDENTS ENGAGING
SUPER-SPEED AS SOON
AS THE BELL GOES...



STUDENTS WHEN YOU
GIVE THEM A SIMPLE
HOMEWORK TASK...





Free online workshop series for teachers in China



TeachBetter

< Sustainability >

SUSTAINABLE LITERACY

4 Jan

Education in
Motion

CULTURAL HERITAGE

6 Jan

University of
Nottingham Ningbo
China

FOOD ETHICS

11 Jan

University of the
West of England
Bristol

OUTDOOR LEARNING

13 Jan

Queen's
University Belfast

Register for free!

5-6pm China Time

✉ mary@ventureeducation.org



University of
Nottingham
UK CHINA MALAYSIA



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

Would you like to contribute to the next issue of the TeachBetter Newsletter in January?

If you have an event to share, a question for our Hidden Head, Agony Aunt, or anything else you think we might like to include, please contact: mary@ventureeducation.org



Venture Education is a UK-China educational consultancy that supports the continued growth and empowerment of quality education in both countries. This includes research, market entry advisory, business development, partnerships, and mergers & acquisitions.



[Follow us on LinkedIn](#)