

Jones Saunders Education

School Improvement - Bespoke Curriculum

The Science of Teaching and Learning

Education Consultancy Portfolio

We work with school owners, leaders, and teachers to design coherent curricula, strengthen classroom practice, and develop practical systems for supporting learners. Each engagement begins with the school's priorities and connects advice with implementation.

Simon Saunders

Senior Education Consultant

My particular strength is writing curriculum from scratch: translating a school's educational vision and chosen standards into detailed, backward-designed schemes of work, with vertical progression across year groups and horizontal coherence within each year.

My international experience includes founding and directing schools across Asia and the Middle East, leading an IB continuum school, and responsibility for a school community of more than 1,200 students and approximately 120 teaching staff. This experience informs an approach that considers classroom practice, school leadership, and the demands of implementation.

Curriculum frameworks

Bespoke programmes; English National Curriculum; Cambridge; International Baccalaureate; New Zealand; Common Core; AERO; NGSS; Singapore; Ontario; and K-12 curriculum planning.

Leadership and delivery

Mark Jones serves as Chief Executive Officer. Simon Saunders leads the education consultancy offer as Senior Education Consultant. Support is delivered primarily online from Thailand, complemented by agreed on-site workshops and advice visits.

Curriculum Design and Teaching

A coherent curriculum makes the intended learning clear and gives teachers a usable route towards it. We can create the curriculum, progression maps, assessment framework, and practical schemes of work, or address an agreed part of an existing programme.

Backward design

We begin with what learners should know, understand, and be able to do. We identify the evidence that will demonstrate achievement, then plan learning sequences, teaching, practice, and opportunities for application.

Vertical and horizontal alignment

Vertical alignment sequences knowledge, vocabulary, concepts, and skills across year groups and school phases. Horizontal alignment coordinates expectations across parallel classes and subjects within a year, with purposeful connections that preserve the integrity of each subject.

Schemes of work teachers can use

Schemes of work can specify prerequisites, intended outcomes, teaching sequences, assessment opportunities, key vocabulary, resources, and learner support. Their level of detail is agreed with the school so they support implementation and informed professional judgement.

From explicit teaching to guided inquiry

Simon's approach connects clear explanation and modelling, structured practice, checks for understanding, and purposeful inquiry. The degree of guidance responds to learners' prior knowledge and readiness, helping them apply secure knowledge and skills with increasing independence.

A considered educational approach

Simon brings knowledge of Siegfried Engelmann's Direct Instruction, cognitive science, and the science of learning and reading, alongside an understanding of Piaget, Jerome Bruner, Montessori education, and IB approaches. Engelmann's specific Direct Instruction model is distinguished from the broader use of explicit teaching.

Curriculum Architecture in Practice

Selected example from a Grade 5 integrated Humanities and Science unit

The Fence That Sent People to the Factory

This nine-week unit connects enclosure and rural change with ecological models and scientific reasoning. Its design preserves distinct disciplinary knowledge while planning connections between History, Geography, Science, reading, and communication.

An endpoint that shapes the sequence

The planned endpoint is an analytical presentation and viva supported by historical and scientific evidence. Learners are expected to distinguish the two kinds of evidence, explain their reasoning, make a balanced judgement, and acknowledge a limitation. Earlier teaching and assessment prepare those demands.

A selective view of the learning progression

Foundations: establish common rights, ecosystem components, and precise disciplinary vocabulary.

Application: interpret records and models, compare consequences, and distinguish evidence from conclusions.

Synthesis: construct and defend a judgement, supported by cumulative assessment and reflection.

A traceable connection between outcome and evidence

Selected objective extract: "Explain how enclosure created gains for some groups and losses for others."

Selected objective extract: "Compare how enclosure affected landowners, tenant farmers, labourers, and cottagers."

These objectives connect substantive knowledge with comparison and judgement. The wider unit assigns objectives to weekly teaching and evidence products, making the relationship between curriculum, instruction, and assessment visible.

Progression within and beyond the unit

The plan identifies Grade 4 knowledge for retrieval and maps selected science objectives towards later Cambridge Stage 7 learning. Within Grade 5, it coordinates reading, language, Humanities, and Science while distinguishing historical explanation from scientific investigation. This demonstrates planned progression and integration at unit level.

Selected objective extracts and a condensed overview of the planned curriculum. Full progression maps, assessment materials, and teaching resources are omitted.

Explicit Teaching and Guided Inquiry

Selected lesson example from the same Grade 5 unit

Reading an enclosure award and map

The lesson builds on earlier teaching about enclosure and land rights. It introduces a specific disciplinary demand: matching written allocations to map features and recording what changed. The plan pairs explicit teaching with supported application.

First establish the knowledge and method

The teacher explains key vocabulary, models how to read and annotate a teaching map, and demonstrates how to connect a written allocation with a numbered plot. Checks for understanding and correction moves address likely confusions before independent output.

Selected teaching extract: "How do we match the award to the map?"

Expected response: "Match a written allocation to its numbered plot on the map."

Then guide learners through application

Learners apply the modelled method to a labelled teaching representation, match allocations to plots, and annotate changes to access and rights. The teacher checks their reasoning and corrects errors. The independent output makes the taught knowledge and disciplinary method visible.

Support is built into the design

The unit specifies prerequisites, vocabulary, modelling, controlled writing, expected responses, checks, and correction moves. It also builds towards later, more independent judgement, rather than expecting unfamiliar content to be discovered without preparation.

Evidence has boundaries

The selected lesson distinguishes a teacher-created representation from an authentic primary source. Across the unit, learners practise identifying what evidence states, what may be inferred, and what it cannot establish. Scientific models are also treated as representations with limitations.

What this example demonstrates

The design connects explicit instruction to guided application through a shared objective and a visible evidence product. The paired lesson structure makes the transition reviewable; the amount of guidance is a design decision to be adapted to learners and context.

Selected and condensed for portfolio review. Full teaching scripts, source materials, tasks, assessment instruments, and answer keys are omitted.

Professional Learning Across a Semester

Selected examples from an 18-week professional development sequence

This planned programme schedules two 40-minute sessions each week. It connects professional learning with the curriculum and assessment calendar, pairing focused development with clinics, implementation planning, and later review.

Learning followed by practical decisions

Selected session pair

"CFU: eliciting evidence from every student"

"Interpreting responses and choosing the next teaching move"

The pairing moves from gathering evidence to deciding how to respond. Its practical focus is the relationship between checks for understanding and the teacher's next action. A later review revisits what worked and which approaches produced misleading evidence.

Connecting assessment with the next unit

Selected session pair

"Using student data: identifying secure and fragile learning"

"Data-to-action clinic for Unit 2 planning and reteaching"

The sequence places this work after the first unit's assessments. Teachers are expected to connect evidence with planning and reteaching. Later sessions compare patterns across units and revisit support provision using newer evidence.

Assessment standards developed together

Moderation and comparative judgement sessions are scheduled around assignments and research projects in both units. The programme also includes examination design and preparation, research integrity, and preparation for oral explanation and defence of evidence.

Professional learning that returns to practice

Topics recur with a review purpose: evaluating support provision, reconsidering checks for understanding, improving research questions, and strengthening evidence-based explanation. This makes implementation and reflection part of the planned sequence.

What this example demonstrates

The programme demonstrates the design of sustained professional learning linked to teaching decisions and assessment milestones. It gives a school a structure for developing practice over time, with opportunities to apply and revisit learning.

Two session pairs are reproduced; the remaining programme is summarised. The full schedule and workshop materials are omitted.

Learning Support Informed by Evidence

Selected example from specialist starting-point tools

These mathematics and executive-function tools inform individual support planning. They connect evidence about a learner's starting point with teachable targets, support decisions, and progress review.

Record the conditions as well as the response

Selected guidance extract

"Record exact responses, prompt level and task conditions. A check mark without independence information is insufficient."

The design distinguishes independent performance from responses achieved with adult support. Staff record what learners can do alone, what enables access, and which skill needs teaching.

Investigate the barrier before selecting support

The mathematics module separates conceptual understanding, calculation, language, representation, and recording. The executive-function module asks staff to consider inaccessible academic demands and environmental conditions before interpreting behaviour as an attention or organisation difficulty.

Turn observations into a reviewable plan

The handoff identifies a first target, a baseline measure, support to test, and the person responsible. Mathematics planning also specifies intervention frequency and progress checks. Review decisions are tied to observable evidence.

Check retention and application

Selected progress-check extract

"Include unseen transfer and delayed retention where relevant."

This requirement looks beyond success on a practised item. The mathematics tool asks whether learning is retained and can be applied to an unfamiliar example, with independence recorded.

Maintain access while developing independence

The mathematics handoff asks how learners will access grade-level thinking while a prerequisite skill is taught. The executive-function handoff asks what measurable evidence will justify reducing prompts or adult checks. Support is therefore designed to be reviewed and adjusted.

Selected guidance and a condensed overview. Full checklists, prompt scales, recording forms, and pathway criteria are omitted. No individual student information is reproduced.

Support Tailored to Your School

Assessment and data use

Designing and reviewing assessment; connecting internal and external evidence; using comparative judgement; and developing manageable tracking processes that inform teaching, curriculum decisions, and learner support.

Reading across the curriculum

Supporting phonics, vocabulary, morphology, and appropriate texts across age groups and subjects. Helping teachers recognise the reading demands of their subjects and plan the instruction learners need to access them.

Learning support

Designing Learning Support programmes for SEN, EAL, and learning gaps, including identification, scaffolding, interventions, accommodations, and review. Helping schools use evidence to assess learners' needs and the response to support.

Professional development

Tailored programmes based on the school's needs, drawing on the science of teaching, learning, and reading. Workshops can be linked to planning, coaching, document feedback, and implementation reviews.

School improvement and readiness

Working with owners and leaders to clarify direction, prioritise improvement, and agree a realistic level of support. Focused visits can include workshops and accreditation readiness advice within the agreed scope of expertise.

Ways to work with us

Per project for defined deliverables. **Per hour** for targeted advice or review. **A fixed monthly fee** for an agreed programme of work. **A retainer** for reserved availability and continuing support. Scope, access, timing, and fees are agreed before work begins; travel is agreed separately.

Discuss your school's priorities

An introductory conversation helps establish the school's needs, intended direction, and the amount of support required.

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