

What Teachers Tapped This Week #7 - 30th October

Another week, another set of results...

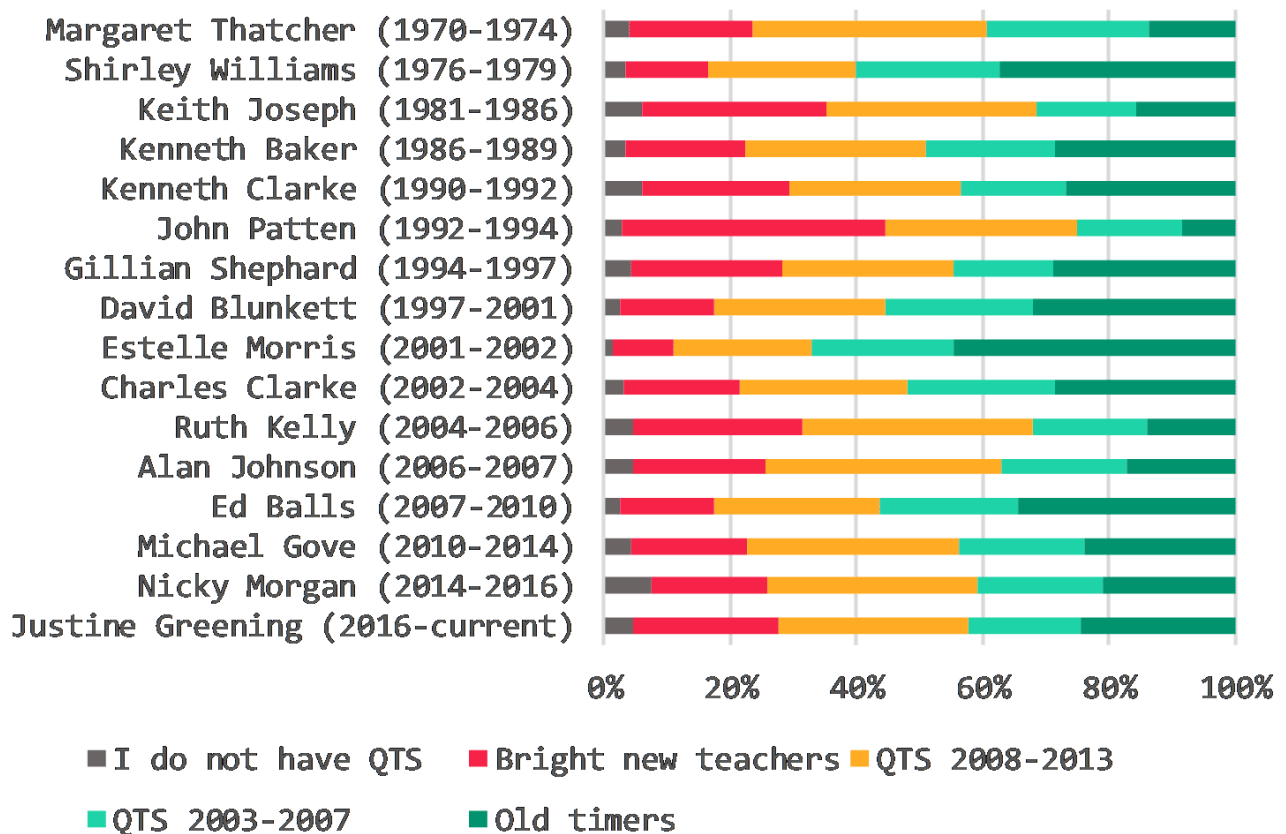
And boy did you make us work for this one! <https://giphy.com/gifs/family-guy-fox-family-guy-foxtv-3o6ZtaiPZNzrmRQ6YM>

What we thought would be a fun half-term quiz on education secretaries turned out to be a full-on lesson in random variation! How so? Read on...

1. Why randomly guessing questions is okay ?

As this was Teacher Tapp's first half-term we didn't know how many of you would keep answering questions. Do parents switch off during the holidays? Would the 3.30pm habit die off? We had no idea! Instead of asking Very Important Questions we therefore decided to run a tournament on the best education secretary, ever. From within the Teacher Tapp team, Laura spends so much time thinking about education secretaries she might one day write a book on them. Becky has strong views (often negative) on every Secretary of State from Blunkett onwards. Alex is sympathetic with his teacher friend who told him this week: 'I literally don't give a **** who the education secretary is!' We hear you... it seems many of you are closer to Alex than Laura on this! Many Teacher Tappers wrote to us and said they either didn't care or didn't know who was the best education secretary. Some people were so bothered by the question they didn't even take part! In particular we heard this concern a lot: <https://twitter.com/MissRKS2/status/923557532840464384> But here's a cool maths thing: if people genuinely choose randomly then the way maths works means the random-pickers spread out evenly across the options. Because of that, it doesn't actually affect the results at all. The random noise is cancelled out. What if people aren't really picking randomly, though? That's okay too! Opinion questions can only ever flag the answers people are most attracted to answering. In doing so, the opinions of the person answering are revealed. Answer selection can be for varied reasons. We know some panellists looked things up on Wikipedia (hurray, more nudged learning!). Others picked names they recognised, or an education secretary someone told them was a good one. In each case, it doesn't matter. Opinion surveys don't weight answers by your expertise. They are just trying to get an indication of what you think, even if it isn't based on much.

Plus by forcing everyone to answer we were able to create THIS beast:



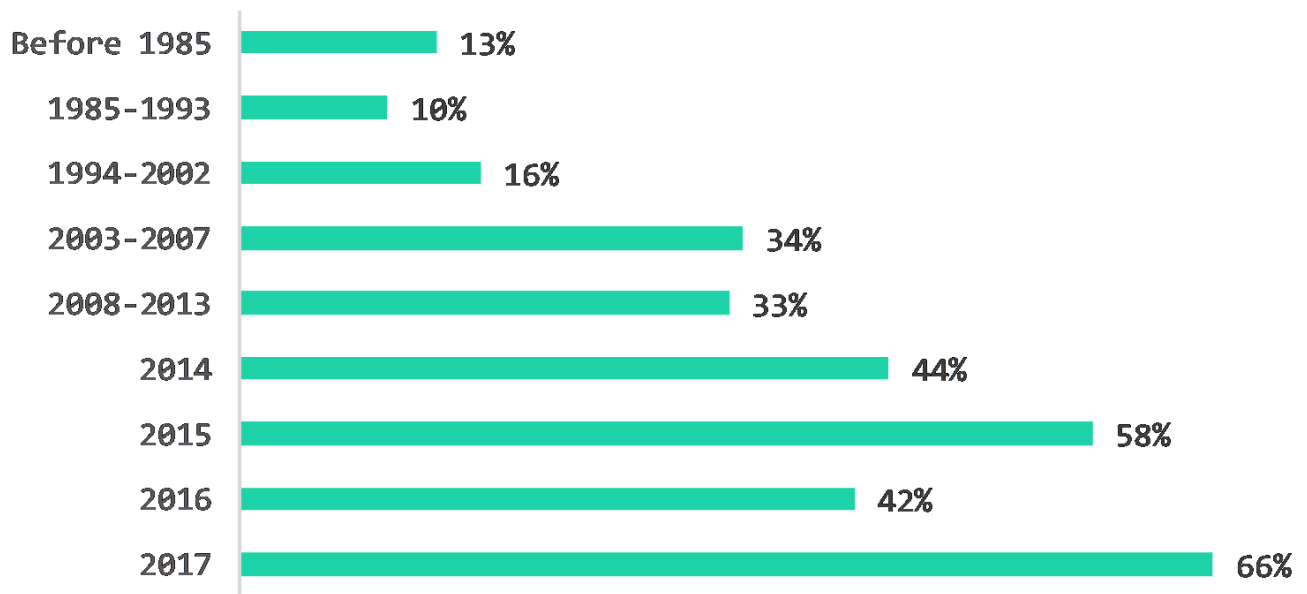
That's right! We separated the answers to see if teachers who qualified since 2014 (red) picked different education secretaries compared to those who qualified before 2003 (dark green). As you can see from the graph, some education secretaries had big differences in popularity across the generations. For example, newbie teachers were much more likely to pick John Patten - who is widely regarded as one of the worst education secretaries - than did old-timers. This probably reflects a lack of knowledge on the part of the younger group. Congrats go to David Blunkett who won the final run-off vote. He gets the education secretary crown. But remember: it was just a bit of fun!

2. 'Train-and-stay' is a new trend

While the Teacher Tapp panellists were distracted googling their favourite education secretaries, we asked a series of straightforward questions last week about teacher training. For example, we asked what year you achieved qualified teacher status (QTS) and if your first post-QTS job was in a school experienced during training.

When we did some analysis, we discovered trainees are increasingly staying in the school where they gained QTS:

Did you take your first post-QTS job in a school you experienced during training?



Why? In part, the change is due to training programmes such as TeachFirst, which require participants to stay in the same school for their first year after qualification. Other on-the-job routes, such as the GTP, also gained loyalty from trainees who had often worked in the school previously as a teaching assistant.

What the figures show is that schools which are NOT training people to get QTS will likely find it harder to recruit new teachers. (As the new teachers are sucked up by the ones where they train).

This doesn't mean your school should run out and sign up to School Direct. Taking PGCE students on placements can work too. But it's definitely worth thinking about how your school can get some trainees in the door and hang on to them where possible. If nothing else, it'll save your recruitment costs.

3. Is teaching incompatible with parenthood?

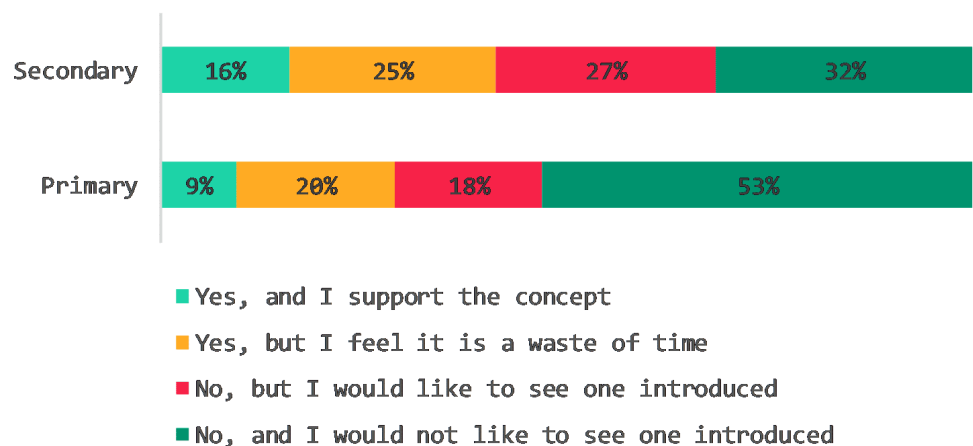
Most teachers like children. It helps with the job. But how easy is it to teach children all day and then look after your own in the evening? One of the things we are interested in looking at via Teacher Tapp is the impact of the job on family life. So how many of panellists have children?

These are the figures from last week. Just over half (54%) had children. Almost half did not (46%). In Understanding Society, the UK Longitudinal Household Survey, just over half of the working population say they don't have children. So our panellists are slightly more likely to have offspring than expected. That said, a teacher on twitter flagged that half-term might not be a good time to ask this question, as parents may be less likely to answer during hols. We don't know if this is true. We will rerun the question in future to see if we get a similar percentage. If we do, then we'll know our half-term sample is roughly representative and doesn't exclude parents at a higher rate than non-parents. If the numbers are way off, then we will be careful about asking questions related to parenting during half-term. This is one of the amazing things about Teacher Tapp: it keeps getting smarter as we go along.

4. Homework contracts: Should your school have one?

A small finding from this week highlighted the difference in sentiment between secondary and primary schools when it comes to homework contracts. Homework is always contentious and we have a number of questions scheduled on it. But first we looked at parents signing contracts and found...

Does your school ask parents to sign a homework contract?



A. Teachers in schools that did have homework contracts typically didn't like them

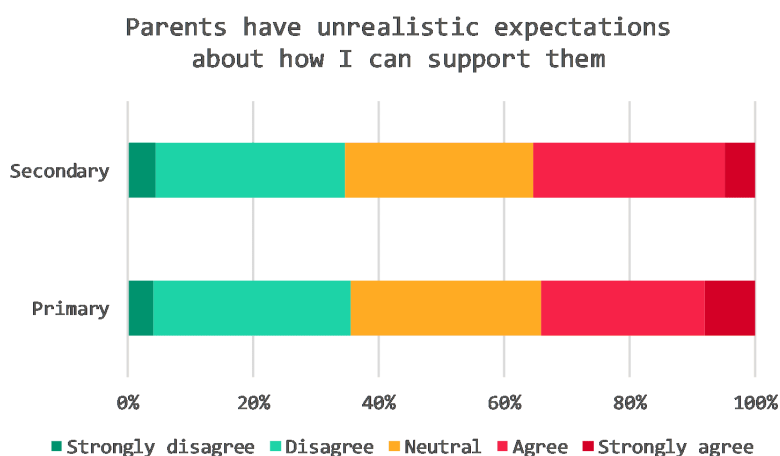
In primary schools, twice as many teachers felt it was a waste of time as felt it was useful. In secondary schools, slightly more teachers supported the contracts, but they were still outnumbered by those who thought it was pointless.

B. BUT lots of teachers in schools that do not use homework contracts would like them introduced

Among secondary teachers, there was a fairly even divide between those who did and did not want contracts introduced. At primary, the overwhelming feeling was that they should not be introduced. It is interesting that so many secondary teachers wanted contracts even though opinion is against them among those who know better. A classic case of the grass looking greener elsewhere?

5. Parents have similar expectations across primary and secondary

On Teacher Tapp we often talk about the differences between stages but, sometimes, both schools face the same pressures! A quirky little finding this week is that around the same percentage of parents have unrealistic expectations in both primary and secondary schools. In fact, the results are uncannily similar!



Hence, if you thought you could sack off parent pressure by changing age-range -- you'd be wrong!

6. As ever, we learned that you loooooove the daily tips! So here's last week's links...

- [How to convince someone when the facts fail](#)
- [What is dyslexia?](#)
- [Teacher learning and delivering CPD](#)
- [Helping struggling readers](#)
- [Intelligence](#)
- [Whole class feedback and workload](#)

7. Finally, as term is starting back, if you want to share Teacher Tapp with colleagues and help it get even smarter then...

Please do use these materials at staff briefings, CPD sessions, your children's birthday party, at bus shelters, etc...

- A [colourful powerpoint](#) (with script)
- [PDF version of the 5 slides](#)
- A 1-page [black-and-white easy-print](#) set of instructions

Right folks, that's it for another week. Enjoy Halloween! Try not to have nightmares. Have beautiful data-filled dreams instead. <https://giphy.com/gifs/monday-mondays-work-week-3o7aD3c6THpxCfrGOA> *** Enjoyed this post and want to join our Teacher Tapp panel? Sign up via the [iPhone App Store](#) or the [Android App Store](#). You can also check out more at www.teachertapp.com