

The
Economist

EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION

IMPACT REPORT 2018-19

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LETTER FROM CEO



Emily Evans
Chief Executive
The Economist Educational Foundation

We're committed to measuring our impact as rigorously as possible and learning from what we find. We're excited to share our 2019 impact report, which summarises what we learned from assessment data, surveys and interviews with teachers and students during 2018-19.

Our vision is for inspiring, well-informed, open-minded discussions about current affairs to become common in state schools and between schools in different communities. As this year's report shows, these conversations have a significant impact on young people's critical thinking and communication skills, as well as building essential knowledge and confidence.

By regularly taking part in such discussions, students in our Burnet News Club programme make 150% more progress than their peers in reasoning ability and confidently speaking up about the news.

This report also shows that we took another step towards our vision by doubling the number of young people that we work with. The Burnet News Club now reaches over 2,000 students in non-selective state schools every week.

We work in close partnership with schools so that we can listen and respond to what teachers and students need. This report includes perspectives from the students and teachers, showing what they value about our work and bringing to life some of the stories behind the impact data.

As well as growing and enhancing the impact of the Burnet News Club, we also published our news literacy framework. It helps teachers to develop their students' news literacy by rigorously defining, teaching and measuring step-by-step progress in the relevant skills. This is part of our strategy to support many more schools by offering new, alternative resources and programmes. We look forward to reporting more on this next year!

If you are interested in finding out more about what we do then we would love to hear from you. Email us at foundationteam@economist.com.

SUPPORTERS

We'd like to say a big thank you to our supporters, who make our impact possible.

Supporters for the 2018-19 school year were:



BANK OF ENGLAND



ABOUT US

WHO ARE WE?

We are an independent charity that combines *The Economist's* journalistic expertise with teaching know-how.

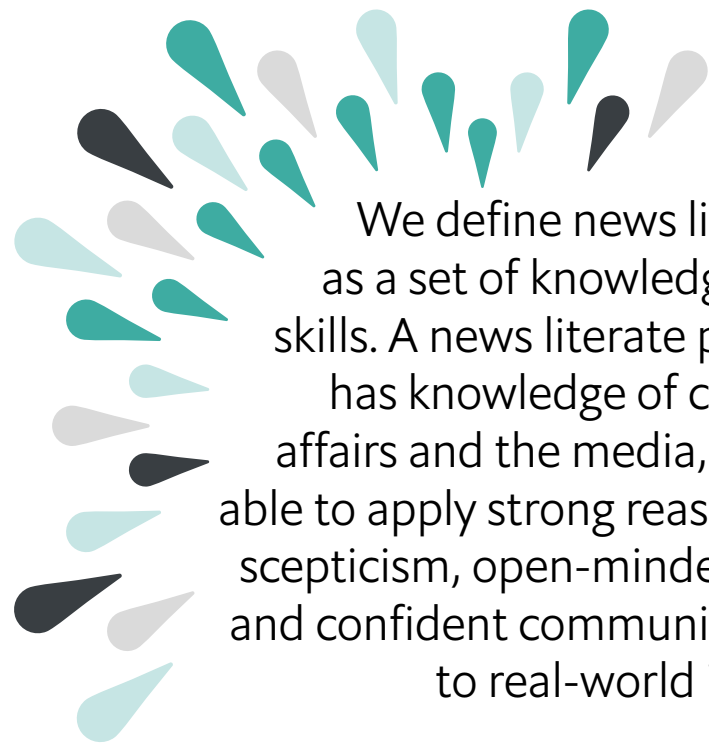
WHAT DO WE DO?

We develop young people's news literacy by enabling inspiring discussions about current affairs in schools.

- We work closely with schools by training and supporting teachers and providing them with educational news content and resources.
- We publish young people's opinions on the news and give them a real audience of peers and global topic experts.
- We facilitate discussions between schools in different communities, with different perspectives on the issues.

Discussing the world's big questions is a powerful way to develop young people's critical thinking and communication skills, and give them the knowledge and confidence they need to apply those skills to the news.





We define news literacy as a set of knowledge and skills. A news literate person has knowledge of current affairs and the media, and is able to apply strong reasoning, scepticism, open-mindedness and confident communication to real-world issues.



WHY DO WE DO IT?

News literacy matters more than ever.



76%

OF TEACHERS

we asked said news literacy is extremely important.



75%

OF 9-15-YEAR OLDS

we asked said that it's very important for young people to learn about the news.

Digital media:

News literacy is needed to discern the truth in an age of misinformation, disinformation, one-sided debates and missing context in the media.

Political uncertainty:

Too many people are profoundly affected by issues they have little power to change. News literacy gives young people more control over their future, by empowering them to make informed decisions – and have their say – about issues affecting their lives.

WHO DO WE PRIORITISE?

Our priority is to work with young people from low-income backgrounds, as they have fewer opportunities to develop news literacy even though they have the most to gain from having it.

THE HEADLINES

Our core programme, the Burnet News Club (BNC), doubled in size to reach

2,000 STUDENTS

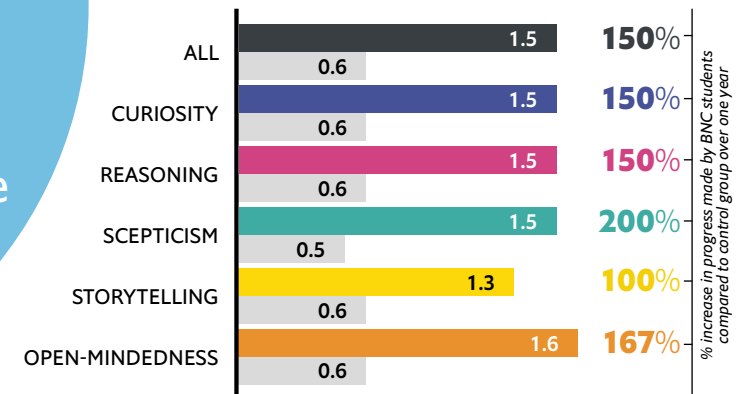
We trained over
200 TEACHERS
across the UK


We launched a unique new online platform, leading to a

23% INCREASE

in online discussions about the news between young people in different communities around the UK

BNC students made
150% MORE PROGRESS
than their peers in news literacy skills





100%


OF TEACHERS

said their students became more knowledgeable about the news because of the Burnet News Club

96%

OF TEACHERS

rated our news content and teaching resources as excellent



News conversations went GLOBAL

Our free news literacy resources were downloaded more than

6,000

TIMES



Nampa High School
USA

Ricarda-Huch-Gymnasium
GERMANY

British Council School
SPAIN

Dante Alighieri – Sicily
ITALY

St Hilda's College
ARGENTINA

Skellefteå
SWEDEN

Ilse-Löwenstein-Schule
GERMANY

Lauder Athens Jewish Community School
GREECE

Napoleone Colajanni
ITALY

Westall Secondary College
AUSTRALIA

Burnet News Club



THE BURNET NEWS CLUB (BNC)

The BNC is our core programme. We give teachers all they need to run a weekly school news club.



**Multimedia
news content**



Teaching resources
For weekly classroom sessions



**Teacher training
and support**



The Hub
The BNC online platform where
students' work is published



**Engagement
with leaders**



BNC Live
An immersive one day news event

2018-19 BNC COHORT



2,000+
STUDENTS



80
SCHOOLS



28
STUDENTS PER
CLUB ON AVERAGE

40%

of students were
pupil premium eligible

A FURTHER 21%
of students had a special
educational need or
were significantly
underperforming academically

23%

of students had **English**
as an additional language

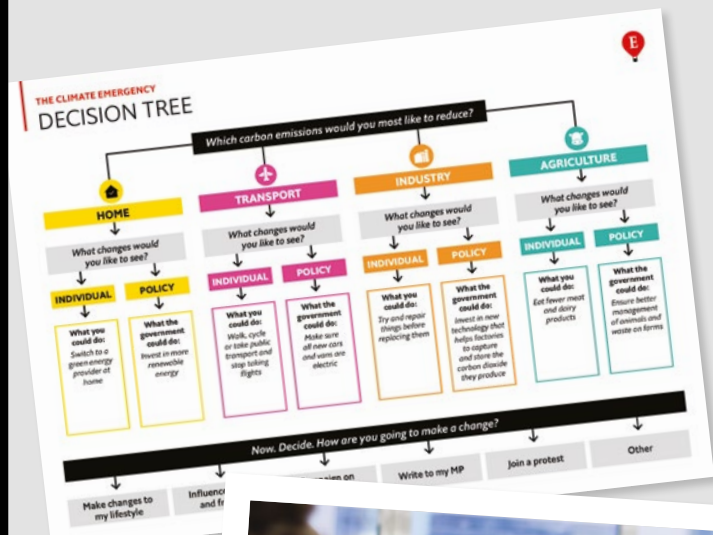
71%

of this cohort are continuing
with the club for 2019-20!



A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

**YEAR 7 STUDENT
THE RUTH GORSE ACADEMY**



**IDEA 1:
CHANGE HOW
BANKERS GET PAID**

**IDEA 2:
SAFER
LENDING**

Banks should not lend money to people who might not be able to pay it back.



I have really enjoyed my whole experience with BNC. I got to focus on one issue at a time and discuss the topics with my fellow pupils, so I really felt I got a deeper insight into all the issues we've covered so far - much more than I would normally do if I was skimming over the news.

The BNC has thankfully opened my eyes to become a lot more curious about issues around the world.

One of the most important things I've learned is to engage, listen and understand the opinions of others even though their views may differ to mine.

Brexit was one of those issues that did just that. However, it was also the issue that frustrated me the most because I discovered people were forming opinions based on lies from both sides of the argument. The Brexit issue actually pushed me to dig so much further, so much it really tested all my BNC skills to the max, especially my scepticism!

The biggest enjoyment I got from BNC was reading other people's posts and discussions and I have learned so much along the way.

Another great positive is knowing that other young people (BNC members at least) do not want to be ignorant and are willing to seek out the facts to become more informed, knowing when to be sceptical but also willing to accept the truth when evidence presents itself.

A lot of young people do care. You can see that just by reading the posts and comments- and thank goodness for that!





Impact

The Burnet News Club is proven to significantly develop young people's news literacy: the knowledge and skills needed to understand what's really happening in the world.

100% of teachers say the BNC has a positive impact on students.

But what does this impact look like?

IMPACT

A growing number of young people are having regular, in-depth discussions about the news.



2x

THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE

took part in the BNC this year, meaning that the BNC reached 2,000+ students across the UK.



23%

INCREASE

in online discussions on the BNC Hub, our platform that brings together schools from different communities to share perspectives on the news.



84%

OF CLUBS

met at least once a week; a 14% increase on the previous year.



4 OUT OF 5

TEACHERS

said that because of the BNC, students were having significantly more conversations about news outside of BNC sessions.

When the Brexit march happened a lot of parents spoke to me about how knowledgeable their children were about Brexit because of the BNC and said they'd had discussions with them about the issue.



IMPACT

Students became more knowledgeable about the news.



91%

OF STUDENTS

said they are more knowledgeable about the news because of the BNC.



86%

AVERAGE STUDENT SCORE

in the end-of-year BNC quiz.



100%

OF TEACHERS

agreed.



96%

OF TEACHERS

said the BNC has a positive impact on students' overall literacy



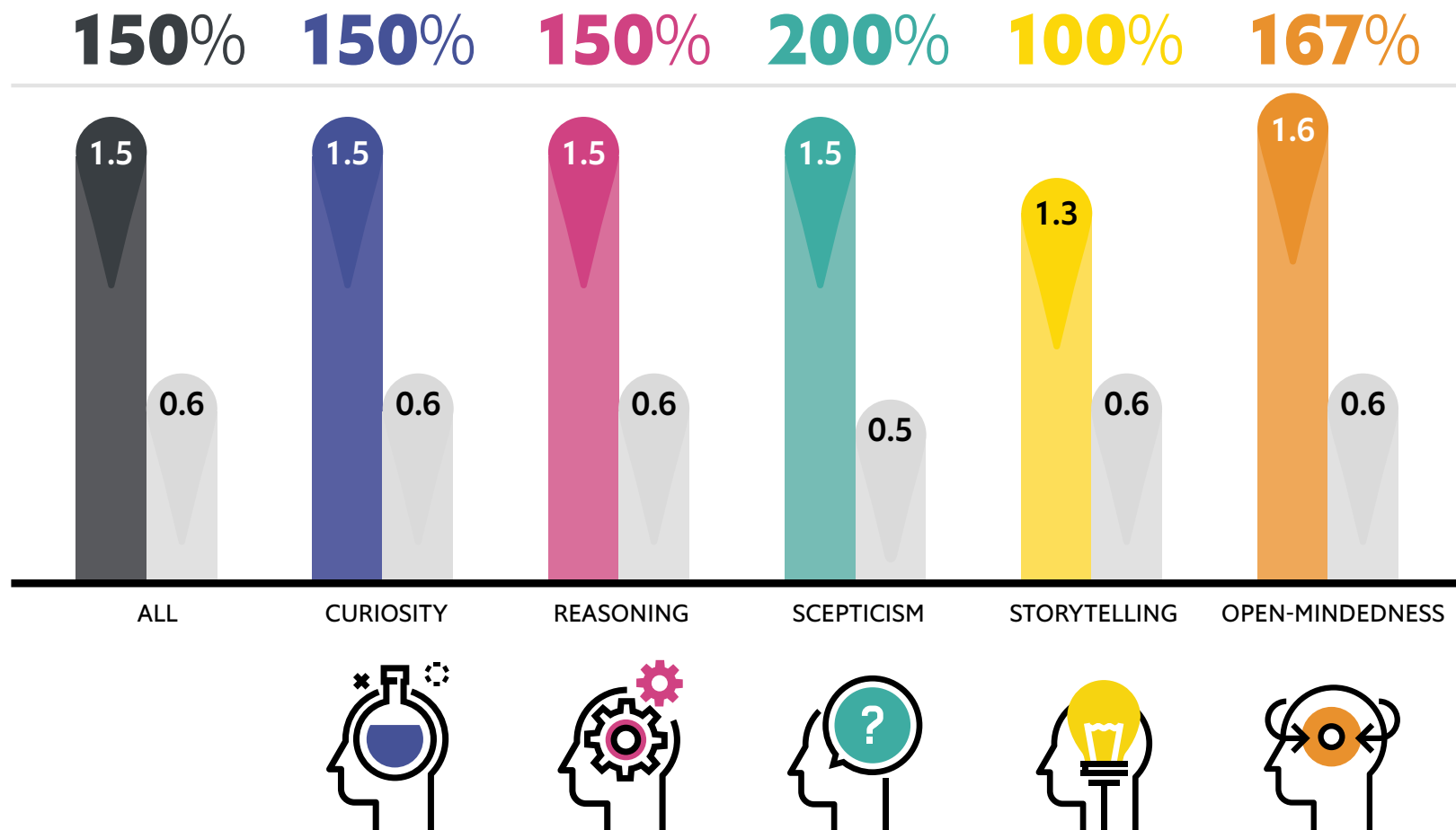
The Burnet News Club opens your mind to issues that you would rarely come across within school and the curriculum. It allows you the time to discuss, examine and work through the issues. I now look at the news in more depth.



IMPACT

BNC students made significantly more progress in news literacy skills than their peers.

% increase
in progress made by BNC
students compared to
control group over one year



IMPACT

Students became more confident talking about current affairs.



92%

OF TEACHERS

say there has been a positive change in their students' confidence.

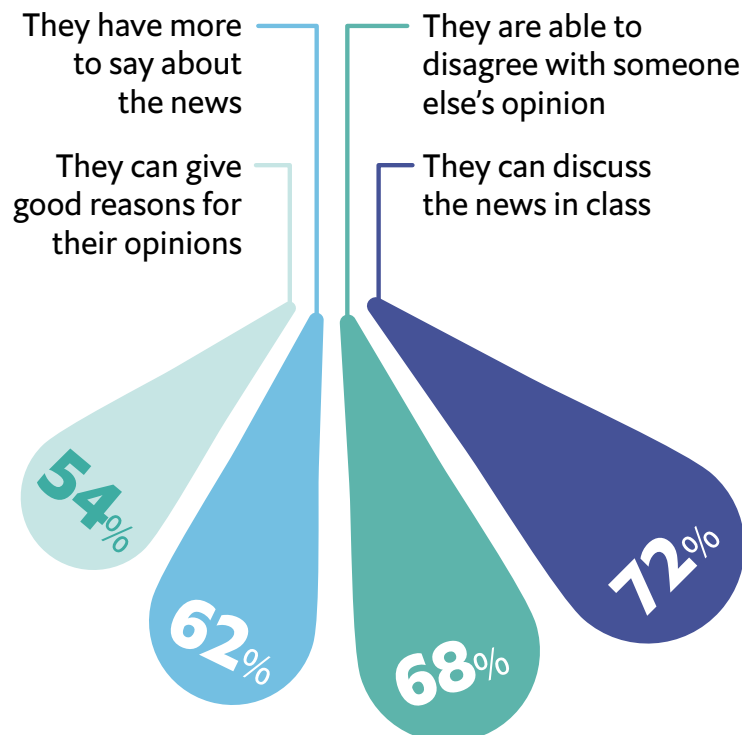


2 OUT OF 3

STUDENTS

told us they talk about BNC topics at home with their families.

Students said the BNC made them more confident because...



Children have a chance to speak out and make a difference to the world. In other walks of life, we do not really have the opportunity to say what we mean and are overlooked by adults.

In the club, I feel that we can say what we believe. This has made me feel important to society and given me the confidence to publicly speak such as performing an assembly.



STUDENT

HOW DID WE ACHIEVE THE IMPACT?



We provided high-quality teaching resources.

We provided step-by-step guides for the weekly classroom activities and all the resources needed to deliver them.

96% of teachers said our teaching resources were excellent.

100% of teachers said the BNC was good value for money.



We supported teachers to effectively implement the BNC.

We worked in close partnership with each school to help them to implement the BNC in a way that worked for them. We provide training and year-round support to give teachers the confidence, techniques and practical activity ideas they need to bring current affairs into their classrooms.

96% of teachers felt supported throughout the year.

44% of schools embedded the BNC into their curriculum. This is a **50%** increase on last year.

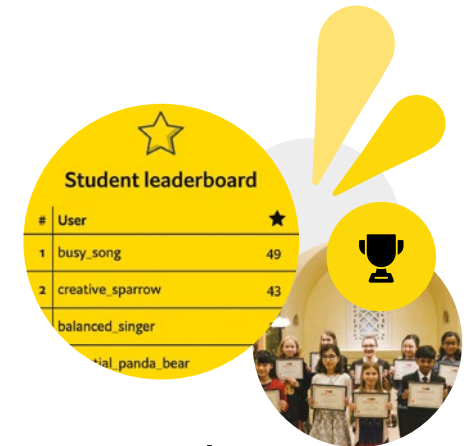


We gave students a real audience for their opinions on the news.

We publish their views on the BNC Hub, and we facilitate discussions on the Hub between schools in different communities.

Economist Foundation staff teachers gave feedback and recognition to students over **1,200** times.

22 leading global experts were invited onto the BNC Hub to answer students' questions, from policy-makers and business leaders to activists and explorers.



We gave students recognition for their progress.

When students show strong news literacy skills on the BNC Hub, they're awarded a star. This leads to competitive student and school leaderboards!

We held our annual Burnet News Club Awards Ceremony at Buckingham Palace, and students had the opportunity to present to a prestigious audience.

A TEACHER PERSPECTIVE

A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER



I started running the BNC three years ago with my year 5 class.

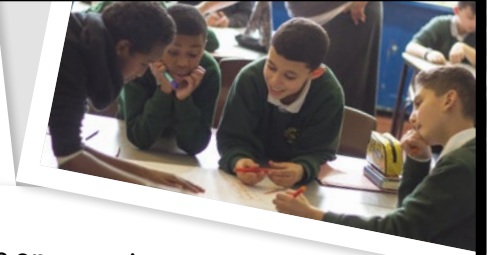
They developed such a great sense of ownership over it that they raised the funds for the second year themselves, in three weeks!

In the second year we ran it across all of year 5 and 6. Teachers made space for it in their curriculum time...because it hits targets of speaking, listening, engagement and oracy.

Now there is an expectation when you get to Year 5 you will be involved in BNC. The children are so engaged, motivated and value being able to discuss the big subjects.

The programme engages and extends the most able, and it is a relief to those children who might struggle to put their ideas down on paper and who are sparky and intelligent, because it is not a written outcome every time. They can speak and film each other, and they can respond through pieces of art or a poem.

Because of the club, they're more articulate, they justify their points more readily and that carries across into other subject areas. It's also great for the children who don't have the same cultural capital as other children do because they would otherwise never be exposed to these topics.



Since the issue on veganism, so many children have either gone vegetarian or meat-free on Mondays. Our students are advocating for themselves and for the school on issues they find important in a way that leads to them speak up- such as writing to the local council. The BNC is preparing them to be outspoken, upstanding citizens!

One child is working with a speech impairment, and although she contributed at school, she would make her statements quite short. This is a girl who was worried if people would agree with her if she shared opinion. She is at the bottom end of age-related expectation and has a special educational need. The BNC empowers her to get involved. I can see her using higher level vocabulary, her ideas are more structured and thought through, and there's a better chance of her retaining a train of thought from beginning to end. She has really benefited from it.

Before doing the BNC, students felt they needed permission for the right to have opinions on things. I was just talking to a child this afternoon and she feels that thanks to the BNC she can say things without being judged. She said "I now have the courage to say something without worrying whether people will agree with me."



TEACHING

The BNC also supports great teaching.

Delivering weekly BNC sessions enables teachers to regularly practice evidence-based teaching approaches for developing students' critical thinking and communication skills through discussions.



88%

OF TEACHERS

said running the BNC improved their teaching.



93%

OF TEACHERS

rated our training as excellent.

Teachers say the club...

Provides high-quality teaching resources

72%

Gives them ideas for teaching activities beyond the club

76%

Models techniques to facilitate discussion

76%



It has helped develop my questioning skills as a way of facilitating open-minded discussion.



SPOTLIGHT: BNC HUB

We launched the BNC Hub, a unique online platform, in September 2018.

Students use the Hub to publish their opinions on the news, join teacher-facilitated discussions with peers all over the UK and engage with leading topic experts.



70%

OF STUDENTS

tell us experts helped them to understand issues in the news.

They also take part in competitions and receive recognition for making progress in news literacy skills.

Teachers use the site to track their students' progress and access resources and support.

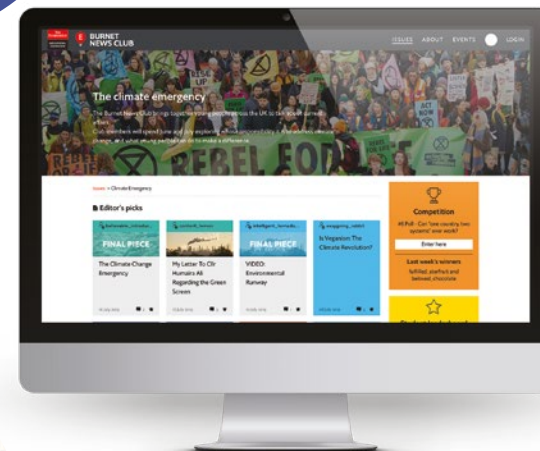
We wanted the new Hub to encourage deeper conversations between young people and for their interactions with experts to support richer understanding of big issues.

Since launching the new Hub, there has been a 23% increase in online discussion about the news between young people in different communities around the UK.

The new Hub is great and so much more comprehensible for teachers and students than last year.



TEACHER



In class I am a quiet person and don't often share my views. On the Hub I can say what I think without being judged. Everyone is welcome. It lets me express my opinion and most importantly, it gives me the opportunity to see other people's perspectives. Writing to others and receiving replies broadens my mind and the knowledge I have about the news.



STUDENT

SPOTLIGHT: BNC LIVE

BNC Live was an event that brought together schools from across the UK in an immersive, unfolding story about a debate in the news.

Teachers in schools across the country took a group of their students off timetable for the day, and we streamed a series of fictional films into all the classrooms at the same time.

The characters in the films explained key arguments in a topical debate. After each film, teachers led fun activities to stimulate critical thinking about the arguments and students used the BNC Live online platform to discuss their ideas with other schools across the UK.

We presented the story as if it was happening at that moment, to give the students a taste of the 'high-stakes' excitement of watching a news story as it unfolds.

To help immerse students in the story, we posted props and resources to the schools, like surprise envelopes to open and posters that also appeared in the films. We showed fictional news bulletins filmed in the real ITV News studio with Alastair Stewart. Throughout the day, Alastair and the actors called the schools 'in character' to chat to the students.

At the end of the day, the schools cast a UK-wide vote to decide how the story should end, and saw the consequences of their choice for the characters.

This will undoubtedly have a profoundly positive impact on students, building confidence and scepticism in their studies and life.




100%
OF TEACHERS
rated the day
as excellent.



SPOTLIGHT: THE GLOBAL CONVERSATION PILOT

In 2019 we launched the Global Conversation, a six-week online discussion between schools all over the world about a major news story.

We provided schools in countries around the world with teaching resources and multimedia news content about the story: the proposed border wall between the US and Mexico.

Using the resources, teachers facilitated lively classroom discussions every week for six weeks, to develop students' knowledge and ideas on the topic.

After each of the classroom sessions, students used the BNC Hub to share their opinions in a discussion spanning nine countries and four continents.

The Global Conversation takes the Burnet News Club approach to developing young people's news literacy. Students build knowledge, reasoning, healthy scepticism, open-mindedness and confident communication by debating news stories in depth with peers.

By giving young people exciting opportunities to exchange perspectives with peers in different countries, we aim to further develop their open-mindedness and their confidence communicating ideas to people who see things differently.



*Thank you for
the opportunity my
students have had to
expand their knowledge of the
world... [this contributed] to
their development as human
beings who must share the
world with people from
different cultures.*

GLOBAL TEACHER



What's
next?



LOOKING AHEAD

We aim to expand our impact beyond the Burnet News Club programme by offering schools some alternative, lower-commitment and more flexible ways to benefit from our news literacy education expertise. This year we began testing some of these new activities and we look forward to reporting on their impact next year.



FREE RESOURCES

We began providing free teaching resources. In 2018-19 these were downloaded **6,000** times. If each download reached one class, then the resources have potentially reached **120,000** young people.



TEACHER TRAINING

In addition to training Burnet News Club teachers, we trained a further **155** teachers to develop their students' news literacy through inspiring discussions about current affairs.



STUDENT WORKSHOPS

We ran workshops for young people, using lively discussions about a major news story to develop the students' critical thinking and communication skills.

NEWS LITERACY FRAMEWORK

We created a framework to help teachers to be rigorous in teaching news literacy and measuring their students' progress.

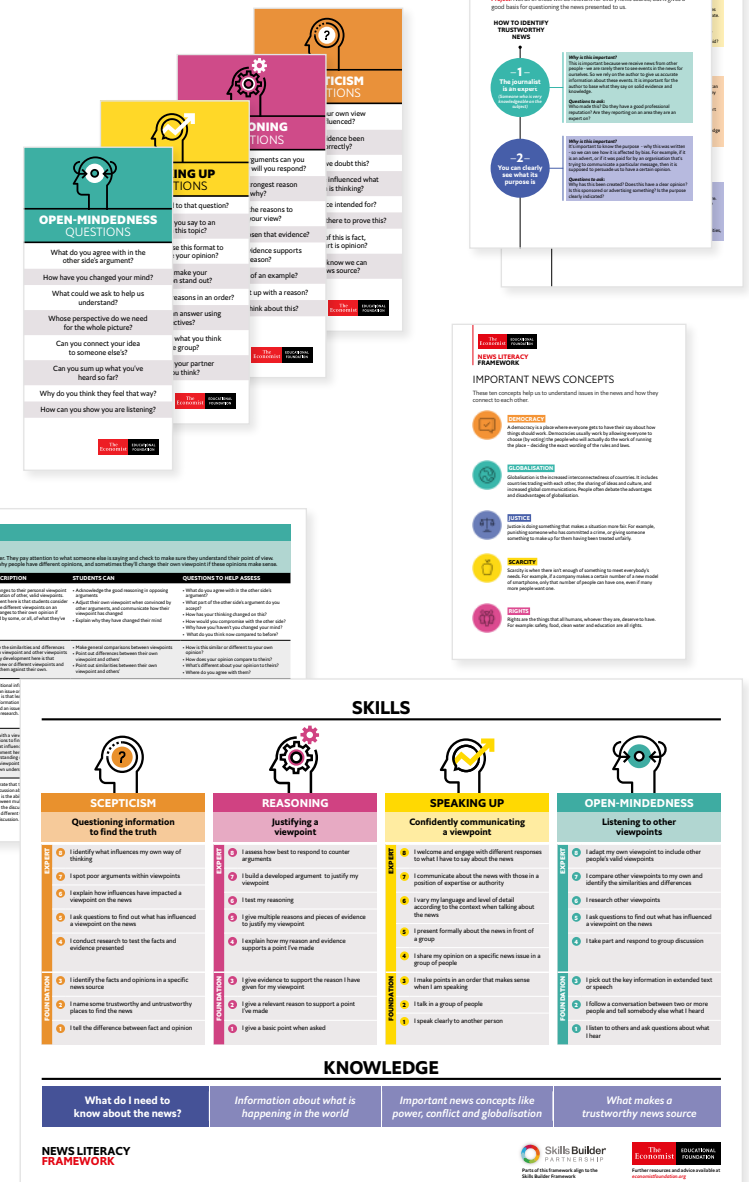
Teachers can use this flexibly with whatever news literacy programmes or organisations they choose to work with. We hope this will allow lots of schools and organisations to use it.

It outlines the knowledge and skills needed to engage with the news, and allows teachers to assess ability levels from 'foundation' to 'expert' so they can work out their students' starting points and track whether they are improving over time.

It also allows teachers to see whether young people are behind or ahead of where they need to be. It maps ability levels against what's expected of young people in KS2 and KS3 across the curriculum.

It's supported by a toolkit of free resources.

The framework is based on our expertise and extensive consultation with other experts in education and journalism. It is aligned to the Skills Builder Framework.



Skills Builder
PARTNERSHIP

We are a Skills Builder Partner

NEWS LITERACY
FRAMEWORK

What do I need to know about the news?

Information about what is happening in the world

Important news concepts like power, conflict and globalisation

What makes a trustworthy news source

Skills Builder
PARTNERSHIP

Further resources and advice available at www.skillsbuilder.org.uk

TYPES OF DATA COLLECTED

DATA SET 1 Feedback forms from teacher training We received feedback from 100% of BNC-trained teachers.	DATA SET 5 School club visits by our staff throughout the year We visited 20+ clubs to see them in action.
DATA SET 2 Student online surveys at the end of the school year 240 students completed the online survey.	DATA SET 6 Video interviews with students and teachers We conducted interviews with teachers and students in six BNC schools over the year.
DATA SET 3 Teacher online feedback forms at the end of the year 25 teachers completed the online feedback form.	DATA SET 7 Quantitative online data We collect data from the BNC Hub to track the number of posts and comments from students, Economist Foundation staff and topic experts.
DATA SET 4 Skills tracking excel sheets completed by teachers We collected skills assessments for 378 students. We also collected skills assessments from a control group of 22 students who did not take part in the BNC.	DATA SET 8 Knowledge quiz 100+ students completed a multiple choice knowledge test on the BNC Hub.

If you want to see our data in more detail, please contact us at foundationteam@economist.com.

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