

OUTSTANDING TEACHING

ENGAGING  
LEARNERS

ANDY GRIFFITH  
AND MARK BURNS



THE OUTSTANDING  
TEACHING SERIES

## PRAISE FOR *OUTSTANDING TEACHING: ENGAGING LEARNERS*

There are many outstanding teachers ... and some of them are recognised. Most teachers would seek to be the best they can in order to help the pupils that they teach become the learners we would want them to be. This book will help teachers to bring together the art, the science and the craft of teaching. Andy and Mark have managed to distil the work they do alongside teachers on their course programmes into print in a way that is readable and practical: no mean achievement! It is a book full of suggestions, ideas and techniques which are grounded in a coherent outlook on what makes outstanding teaching. It will help with inspection ... and it is much more. Reading this book will shed light on the work we do in classrooms and the way we engage with youngsters – and will also make us think about the very purpose of teaching.

**Mick Waters, Professor of Education at Wolverhampton University**

Steeped in the real-world exigencies of classroom life, yet also respectful of the theoretical models that underpin high-quality learning, this is an admirable book. Being much more than another compendium of engaging lesson ideas, *Outstanding Teaching* relates these hands-on ideas to a conceptually neat framework for promoting outstanding teaching and learning. Joe Renzulli taught us that hands-on needn't mean brains-off, and it certainly doesn't here. The authors have distilled their years of experience in and around classrooms into an easily-accessible and usable text. When motivation meets empowerment, shift happens. This book will generate shift.

**Barry J Hymer, Professor of Psychology in Education,  
Education Faculty, University of Cumbria**

Cutting through the complexities of the classroom with a well-evidenced and researched set of level performance descriptors (ones which Ofsted would do well to look at), Andy Griffith and Mark Burns provide themselves with a platform on which the rest of the book is based. Each chapter offers an appropriate balance of research and practical tips, meaning that not only are you working with ideas that generate outstanding learning in the classroom, but that you will also understand why they work – so you can go on and develop more ideas yourself. The encouragement given to reflect on your own performance as a teacher is well supported with numerous techniques and strategies, with the reader getting a sense that the authors have benefited themselves from reflection in their own classroom and therefore are justifiably passionate about how this helps achieve excellence. And it is that commitment to excellence that perhaps is the overriding tone of the book. So whilst the authors point out that there are no money-back guarantees if outstanding learning is not the outcome as a result of reading this book, I doubt very much that anyone will need a refund. Quite the opposite. They will be recommending it to a colleague. Just like I have.

**Jim Smith Senior Leader and Author of *The Lazy Teachers Handbook***

The magic of this book is the motivational way in which it is written. Teachers cannot fail to be engaged by its down-to-earth style. The instant classroom tips which professionals can gain are evident on each and every page. I especially liked the FAQ sections and the direct links to additional information in each chapter. All teachers want to motivate, inspire and challenge young people. This book provides tips and skills to enhance every teacher's classroom practice. A great and practical read!

**Anne Pontifex, Headteacher, St John Bosco Arts College**

*Outstanding Teaching* reflects Andy and Mark's views that all teachers can be enabled to improve with the right support and guidance that is tied to clear criteria that allows them to see how to move forward. The strength of the book comes from the number of strategies that are included, alongside real-life examples that can support classroom teachers in engaging students. To learn, students have to be engaged – this book gives a route map of what engagement is, what it looks like and the strategies needed to achieve it. Teachers need to do this before anything else, such as learning and progress, can happen in classrooms – this is what makes this book a valuable tool to classroom teachers.

**Ian Young, Principal, Rainford High Technology College**



ENGAGING  
LEARNERS

OUTSTANDING TEACHING

ENGAGING  
LEARNERS



THE OUTSTANDING  
TEACHING SERIES

ANDY GRIFFITH  
AND MARK BURNS



Crown House Publishing Limited

[www.crownhouse.co.uk](http://www.crownhouse.co.uk)

[www.crownhousepublishing.com](http://www.crownhousepublishing.com)

First published by

Crown House Publishing  
Crown Buildings, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, Wales, SA33 5ND, UK  
[www.crownhouse.co.uk](http://www.crownhouse.co.uk)

and

Crown House Publishing Company LLC  
6 Trowbridge Drive, Suite 5, Bethel, CT 06801-2858, USA  
[www.crownhousepublishing.com](http://www.crownhousepublishing.com)

© Andy Griffith and Mark Burns 2012

The right of Andy Griffith and Mark Burns to be identified as the authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2012.

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under current legislation no part of this work may be photocopied, stored in a retrieval system, published, performed in public, adapted, broadcast, transmitted, recorded or reproduced in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of the copyright owners.  
Enquiries should be addressed to Crown House Publishing.

Crown House Publishing has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue entry for this book is available  
from the British Library.

Print ISBN 978-184590797-6

Mobi ISBN 978-184590825-6

ePub ISBN 978-184590824-9

Edited by Nick Owen

Printed and bound in the UK by  
T J International, Padstow, Cornwall



# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Foreword	ix
Introduction	1
What do we mean by engagement?	3
Why we use levels	3
Icons throughout the book	6
<b>1 Why Aren't These Kids Engaged?</b>	<b>  9</b>
What's in this chapter for me?	9
Flow: The <i>only</i> theory you need for high engagement	10
The six foundations of flow	13
Tasks are appropriately complex and challenging	13
Teacher input is as minimal as possible	15
Students have the necessary learning skills	16
Goals are clear and worthwhile	17
Feedback is given immediately	18
Tasks are intrinsically motivating	19
FAQs	20
In a nutshell	21
For more information ...	21
<b>2 That Was Great – My Brain Hurt</b>	<b>  25</b>
What's in this chapter for me?	25
What's the thinking behind this chapter?	26
What do we mean by differentiation?	27
Learning Grids	28
At which levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are they working?	30

	Practising a skill	30
	Differentiating Learning Grids	34
	Making links	34
	Exam preparation	35
	Homework tip	37
	Generating ideas	39
	Learning Grids and concept mapping	39
	Trump Cards	40
	Trump Cards in assessment for learning	43
	Tarsia	44
	FAQs	48
	In a nutshell	49
	For more information ...	50
3	<b>Miss, Can We Stay and Finish This?</b>	53
	What's in this chapter for me?	53
	What's behind the thinking for this chapter?	54
	What do we mean by motivation?	55
	Extrinsic motivation: 'The flying board rubber approach'	55
	The place for extrinsic motivation	55
	Intrinsic Motivation: 'The inside out approach'	58
	The eight triggers	60
	Trigger 1: rapport	62
	How to build rapport	63
	Trigger 2: competency	66
	How to build competency	67
	Trigger 3: curiosity	70
	How to build curiosity	71
	Trigger 4: imagination	73
	How to build imagination	74
	Trigger 5: relevance	75
	How to build relevance	77
	Trigger 6: challenge	78
	How to build challenge	79
	Trigger 7: choice	81
	How to build choice	82



- Trigger 8: fun | 85
  - How to build fun | 86
  - FAQs | 87
  - In a nutshell | 90
  - For more information ... | 90
- 4 **Sir, I Really Enjoyed That Lesson** | 93
  - What's in this chapter for me? | 93
  - What's the thinking behind this chapter? | 94
  - What do we mean by play? | 95
  - How do I build play into my classes? | 95
    - Clear rules and expectations | 96
    - Warming students up to play | 97
    - Playful ways to get attention and allocate tasks | 98
  - How to use play to get your students to reflect on their learning | 99
    - 3-minute motivators | 100
    - Playful questioning | 103
    - Memory games | 106
  - How to use play to get your students to express their learning | 107
    - Quirky 'understanding performances' | 108
    - Classic games | 111
    - TV show formats | 112
  - How to use play to get your students to be open to sharing their learning and their mistakes | 114
    - Rewarding mistakes and errors | 114
    - Modelling playfulness | 115
    - Using humour | 116
  - FAQs | 118
  - In a nutshell | 120
  - For more information ... | 120
- 5 **Is This the Same Class as Last Term?** | 125
  - What's in this chapter for me? | 125
  - What's the thinking behind this chapter? | 126
  - The key reasons for students' low engagement | 126

The journey from level 3 to level 1	130
Training your students to cope with 'being stuck'	130
Teaching students universal truths about thinking	133
Even in the most extreme circumstances a human being can still choose his or her actions	134
The mind can have a powerful liberating influence on our potential but also a powerful limiting influence too	135
Each person creates their own thoughts and they can change the way they think	135
Training your students to do their best	136
Descriptive phase	136
Effort levels	137
Training your students to work as part of a group	139
Always start with the end in mind	140
Whole class guidelines	143
Using teamwork rubrics	144
The evaluation wheel	145
FAQs	146
In a nutshell	147
For more information ...	147
<b>6 I Know How To Get Outstanding Now!</b>	<b>  151</b>
What's in this chapter for me?	151
What's the thinking behind this chapter?	152
How can I change my teaching to move engagement levels up?	154
Talk, talk, talk	156
Consensus	156
Marketplace	158
Learning jigsaw	159
Modelling the learning	160
Performance skills: Body language and rapport	161
Backward planning	162
Conclusion: Are we ready to change our mindset?	165
FAQs	166
In a nutshell	167
For more information ...	167

Appendix 1: Tuckman's Group Development Model | 169

Appendix 2: Teamwork Rubric | 172

Appendix 3: DVD Self-Reflection Questions | 177

Bibliography | 181

Index | 185



# FOREWORD

I believe that through high-quality training input, teachers and school leaders will improve, and the impact this produces will be felt directly in the classroom through the improved performance and better life chances of the pupils we serve.

Outstanding Teaching started life in Osiris Educational in 2005 as a direct response to the requirements of Ofsted and the feeling that better teaching should lead to enhanced outcomes for all pupils. We felt at the time that whilst learning was ultimately the responsibility of the learner, better teaching had to be the responsibility of the teacher and, as such, all teachers and teacher leaders. Such a direct relationship and the fact that there was already an Ofsted judgement in place to attempt to grade it, offered a strong, recognisable entry point.

Andy Griffith and Mark Burns have been key players in our success and I value and love their work and contribution. Since 2005 they have been in and out of schools, working with teachers at the 'chalk face' to develop this amazing body of work. This is not a personal odyssey of what can be made to work in classrooms, but rather a highly practical guide to what works in classrooms and it is referenced to the very latest Ofsted guidance. This approach is proven through teacher observation, academic research of their work and the feedback of 10,000 teachers who have experienced the Outstanding Teaching training Andy and Mark have delivered.

At the heart of the search for Outstanding Teaching came a number of questions:

- Is it possible for all teachers to teach at an outstanding level?
- Can all schools become Outstanding?
- Do all pupils deserve the right to be taught in Outstanding Schools?

Teacher by teacher, lesson by lesson and pupil by pupil they have begun to work out not only 'yes' to all of the above but how exactly it can be made to happen.

In this, the first of a series of books that demystifies Outstanding Teaching, Andy and Mark unpick pupil engagement as the very bedrock of teacher improvement. Sure, behaviour management is important, but by engaging all pupils in learning, behaviour improves

automatically. The reverse is not true. If a teacher, wishing to improve, first focuses on engagement as the number one element, the journey to outstanding begins.

For aspiring teachers, Andy and Mark have made this journey very easy and highly practical. The illustrations in the book and the pages full of activities to use and adapt immediately in your classroom are original, super engaging and timely. They are not a list of top tips from spouters, but are well-researched, progressive and developmental, pedagogical and practical, and great fun for teachers and pupils alike.

I am very proud to put my name to this, the first in the Osiris Outstanding Teaching Series.

**Stephen Cox, Founder and MD, Osiris Educational**



# INTRODUCTION

It's always a good feeling when you bump into an ex-pupil who positively acknowledges you. If they do take the trouble to talk to you we guarantee they won't say something like, 'I've really missed seeing you write up your lesson objectives' or 'I loved the way you differentiated your worksheets'. When an ex-pupil remembers you fondly it will be because you engaged them with their learning and helped them in their lives. We're confident this book will support you to make you and your teaching much more engaging and memorable.

It's a challenging time to be a teacher. Wage freezes, job cuts, league tables, Ofsted, a curriculum overly focused on teaching knowledge and students who present ever more complex forms of resistance to learning. Nevertheless, many teachers still find the job a rewarding one because, unlike so many other professions, we really can make a difference to the lives of others.

It's also a challenging time to be a student. Demonised by the media, molly-coddled by parents and spoon-fed by teachers, they face a world riddled with problems, not least ever more brutal labour markets and increasing global uncertainties.

Yet despite these challenges there are reasons to be cheerful. How teachers are trained is becoming more 'evidence based', squeezing out a lot of the fads and quackery that have blighted our schools in recent years. And despite some surveys to the contrary, we know that teaching is still a profession that many of those on the outside still look up to with admiration and even awe.

Over the last five years, we've been delivering teacher training to thousands of teachers in primary and secondary schools around the country. In particular, we've undertaken extensive work with more than 750 teachers (as of July 2012) in a series of Outstanding Teaching Training Interventions (OTTI). This has provided us with the opportunity and privilege of observing and videoing over 2,000 lessons. In all the many outstanding lessons we've observed, there have always been four common and essential and interdependent

ingredients. We refer to these as 'The Big Four'. Increasingly we are referring to them using the acronym FACE.

- one **Feedback:** From a teacher perspective, learning needs to be structured to provide opportunities for the teacher to get frequent feedback on the progress of the learners. It's this feedback that informs the direction of the rest of the lesson and all future planning. From a student perspective, as learners move through the education system they need to become increasingly adept at judging the quality of their learning against success criteria and then applying effective strategies to constantly improve the quality of their work.
- two **Autonomy:** Lessons need to be structured to reduce teacher talking time, thereby providing the 'oxygen' for learning to take place. Students need space and time to consolidate, extend and deepen their understanding of what they have been taught. To do this students need to have the knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits (KASH) to learn effectively not just from their teacher but also from other sources including their peers.
- three **Challenge:** Without challenge there can be no progress; but challenge needs to be differentiated in order to appropriately stretch all students at their different levels of ability.
- four **Engagement:** Without engagement nothing else is possible. It provides the glue that binds all the previous elements together. Engagement is characterised by a sense of *flow* – a profound sense of being fully absorbed by whatever it is you're doing. Without this deep kind of engagement it will be very tricky to get students to step up to the challenge of learning. Engagement is essential if they're to become more independent in their learning, develop the confidence and courage to give themselves and each other quality feedback and rise to the challenge of stretching themselves to the limit. For teachers, engagement is the starting point of everything. It's the fertile soil that enables sustainable learning to take root and flourish. Without it the paper aeroplane designers will have a field day! And it's on this element of the Big Four (FACE) – engagement – that we'll focus in this book.

Our Big Four also corresponds closely with another oft-quoted source, Professor John Hattie's seminal work on teacher excellence.<sup>1</sup> The results of his work are very clear: teachers can make the most significant difference to a student's learning, but it's only the truly expert teachers who can do this.

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Hattie, *Distinguishing Expert Teachers from Novice and Experienced Teachers. Teachers Make a Difference: What is the Research Evidence?* University of Auckland, Australian Council for Educational Research, October 2003. Available at [https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/docs/pdf/qt\\_hattie.pdf](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/docs/pdf/qt_hattie.pdf) (accessed 12 June 2012).



For students to make progress they have to go beyond their current knowledge, skills or mindset. Do you provide sufficient strategies for your students to stick with complex problems?

Negative mindsets are a serious block to effortless learning. Think about ways to challenge your students to frame their thinking in more positive ways. Help your students understand that we all generate our own thoughts and we can choose to hold on to them or let them go.



Try one of 3B4ME, stuck boards, help desk, wonderwall or teach your students some universal truths. Give it at least four weeks and see how the *norms* for independence in your class have changed.

## TRAINING YOUR STUDENTS TO DO THEIR BEST

In your teaching do you value effort as well as achievement? Many teachers say they do, but when they properly analyse their teaching they realise that they could do much more to get their students to try harder. Not everyone can get top marks for a writing assignment, so creating an environment that also rewards those who try the hardest means that encouragement, progress and improvement are at the very heart of your teaching.

### DESCRIPTIVE PRAISE

Descriptive praise is one of the most powerful tools to encourage your students to make more effort. Every time you notice students doing something well, give them descriptive praise. This simply requires you to describe accurately back what you saw him or her do and then explain clearly how they will benefit from the action they took. It sounds straightforward but it's notoriously hard to do. We've all heard the advice that we should offer four times as much praise as criticism, but few teachers can maintain that level of positivity. Nevertheless, when we do it, it can transform students' engagement.

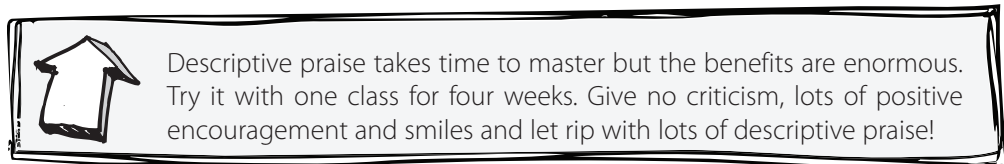
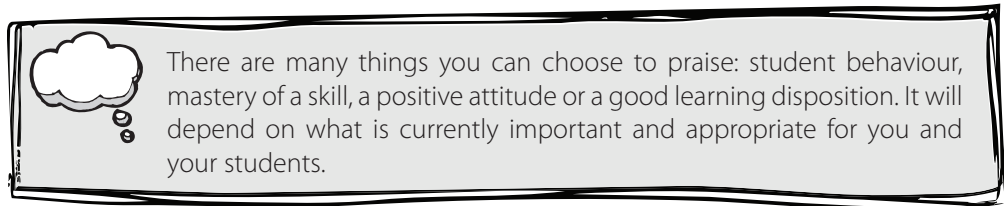
To praise descriptively, find a positive action an individual or a group has taken. Describe back to them what they did. This could be how they behaved, how they studied or how



they interacted. Don't eulogise or judge in any way. Merely describe as accurately, simply and succinctly as you can exactly what they did.

Now add one further sentence describing the benefits of this action for themselves and others, for example:

- I noticed the way that you listened to other people's views before giving your own. That makes them more willing to listen to your views and improves the quality of conversations.
- You sat still for that entire activity. That made it much easier for the other students to include you.
- I saw that you didn't give in during that entire problem. That kind of persistence encourages the rest of the group to get to the answer.



## EFFORT LEVELS

Another way of getting your students to make more effort is to be clear about the differences between trying a little bit and trying a lot. Why not experiment with 'effort levels'? These can help students realise that they alone are responsible for the effort that they put in.

The beauty of effort levels is that they remove any delusions that students might have about whether or not they really are trying hard. When you ask students to try their best it

will mean different things to each one. Effort levels allow us have classroom conversations such as:

---

Teacher: What level of effort are you working at Alison?

Alison (after a pause to read levels): Probably level 4 Miss.

Teacher: What can you do to get to level 2?


---

Effort levels and descriptors can usefully be accompanied with imagery and metaphors to make it more fun and engaging. For example, level 7 effort could equate to a white belt in karate, whereas level 1 would compare to a black belt. No doubt you can find many other metaphors that would be appropriate to the interests of your students. Effort levels put responsibility for personal effort onto the student themselves. When students get to co-create and agree on these levels and their accompanying metaphors, they can be even more powerful.


<b>Effort level</b>	<b>Effort descriptor</b>
Level 1 (Excellent)	I am working as hard as I possibly can. I am working as hard as I do when I am doing my most enjoyable pastime.
Level 2 (Very good)	I am trying very hard and pushing myself to be better. It's not quite my very best effort but not far off it.
Level 3 (Good)	I am trying pretty hard when working but not as hard as I do in other subjects. I am taking a degree of pride in my work.
Level 4 (Satisfactory)	I generally participate in learning activities and I do what I am expected to do by my teacher. I do not go beyond anything that I am asked to do either in class or for homework. I use the minimum amount of effort to get by.
Level 5 (Mediocre)	I make some effort some of the time but only when I have to. I am punctual most of the time but I need frequent reminders from my teacher to stay on task.

Effort level	Effort descriptor
Level 6 (Poor)	I rarely make any effort. I regularly turn up late to the lesson and rarely have equipment (e.g., a pen) that I need with me.
Level 7 (Very poor)	I make no effort at all in lessons. I never arrive on time or have equipment (e.g., a pen) with me.

Note: You can download effort level descriptors to use in your classroom at <http://osirise-educational.co.uk/outstandingteaching/resources>.



- Do all your students understand the same thing when they are asked to 'do their best'?
- Can you think of a metaphor that your class might buy into which links in with the effort level descriptors?



Experiment with effort levels for one of your classes. Give some time to linking the levels to a metaphor and talk through it with your class. Try it for a few weeks and see if your students start to work harder.

## TRAINING YOUR STUDENTS TO WORK AS PART OF A GROUP

Engagement Levels 1a and 1b describe the characteristics of excellent learners as:

- Students accept one another and are comfortable to express themselves, take risks and ask questions.
- Students take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.



Osiris Educational is the UK's leading independent provider of professional development for teachers.

Osiris believes that every child should receive a world class education. Helping teachers in their continuous development is the crucial step to achieving this. We work at the forefront of innovation in education providing pioneering, challenging and effective training solutions.

More than 200 presenters work with Osiris Educational to help teachers improve their ways of thinking and their approaches to teaching.

Some of the most renowned trainers from across the world work with Osiris Educational including: Professor John Hattie, Professor Barry Hymer, Bill Rogers, Professor Sonia Blandford and Professor Viviane Robinson.

Our 5 crucial paths to CPD training cover everything from Early Years through to Key Stage Five.

#### **Day Courses:**

- Leadership and Management
- Teaching and Learning
- Pastoral and Behavioural
- SEN and Gifted and Talented
- Curriculum
- Ofsted

#### **In-School Training:**

- Early Years
- Primary
- Secondary

#### **Teacher and Leadership Programmes:**

- Outstanding Teaching Intervention
- Leadership Away Days
- Osiris Leader Programme

#### **Conferences and Keynotes:**

- Leading Speakers
- Key Issues and Policies

#### **Fast Updates:**

- Twilights
- Policy Briefings

**OUR EXPERT CPD ADVISORS WILL FIND THE  
PERFECT TRAINING FOR YOUR NEEDS**

Call the team on **0808 160 5 160** and they will advise you on the best training for your school's requirements and budgets.

# THIS BOOK IS ALL ABOUT HOW TO BE AN OUTSTANDING TEACHER AND HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS

In an era when responsibility for exam results lies with teachers and not their students it's time to redress the balance so that students take more of the responsibility for their learning. A class can be skilled and motivated to learn without a teacher always having to lead. Engaging learners in this way unpicks intrinsic motivation, the foundation that underpins a productive learning environment and helps to develop independent learning.

*Outstanding Teaching: Engaging Learners* is based on five years of intensive research, through Osiris Educational's award-winning Outstanding Teaching Intervention programme, during which the authors have so far trained more than 750 teachers to teach over 2,000 lessons in schools nationwide. This book is packed with proven advice and innovative tools developed in these successful, outstanding lessons.

Written in the humorous, thought-provoking style with which they both teach and train, Andy and Mark aim to challenge all who teach, from NQTs to seasoned professionals, to reflect on their day-to-day practice and set an agenda for sustainable improvement.

"Reading this book will shed light on the work we do in classrooms and the way we engage with youngsters – and will also make us think about the very purpose of teaching."

**Mick Waters, Professor of Education at Wolverhampton University**

"To learn, students have to be engaged – this book gives a route map of what engagement is, what it looks like and the strategies needed to achieve it."

**Ian Young, Principal, Rainford High Technology College**

"*Outstanding Teaching: Engaging Learners* offers a balance of research and practical tips, meaning that not only are you working with ideas that generate outstanding learning in the classroom, but also that you will also understand why they work."

**Jim Smith, Senior Leader and author of *The Lazy Teacher's Handbook***

"This book provides tips and skills to enhance every teacher's classroom practice. A great and practical read!"

**Anne Pontifex, Headteacher, St John Bosco Arts College**

"The authors have distilled their years of experience in and around classrooms into an easily-accessible and usable text."

**Barry J Hymer, Professor of Psychology in Education, Education Faculty, University of Cumbria**



Andy Griffith is the co-creator of the Outstanding Teaching Training Intervention (OTTI) and is a director of Malit Ltd. He has helped teachers and whole schools move up to Ofsted's Outstanding grade by offering practical advice and getting teachers to try new ways of working with their students. Andy has won a national training award and has written and consulted for a number of organisations including LEAs and Comic Relief. [www.malit.org.uk](http://www.malit.org.uk)



Mark Burns is a leading trainer with Osiris Educational and a director of Malit Limited and has a wealth of experience from his twelve years of teaching. He contributed significantly to the development of the Outstanding Teaching Training Intervention and his work with both individual teachers and schools has helped them move up Ofsted levels. This work has been recognised by Ofsted as well as being shortlisted for the TES Awards. [www.malit.org.uk](http://www.malit.org.uk)



THE OUTSTANDING  
TEACHING SERIES



Crown House Publishing Limited  
[www.crownhouse.co.uk](http://www.crownhouse.co.uk)  
[www.crownhousepublishing.com](http://www.crownhousepublishing.com)

Education Teaching skills and techniques

ISBN 978-184590797-6



9 781845 907976