

## **EPQ New Practitioners virtual Q&A**

**Hosts:** Dr Richard Penny (Learn with US Transition Officer, University of Southampton), Sarah Rainey (Senior Education Engagement Officer, University of Leeds)

**Participants:** Jennifer Obaditch (Head of Curriculum, Business, Economics and Projects at AQA), Dr Mark Nolan (EPQ Co-Ordinator for South Wilts Grammar School)

### **Introductions**

**RP:** Welcome everybody, my name is Dr Richard Penny I work at the University of Southampton on the EPQ support programme with 'Learn with US' transition. This is going to be the 'new practitioners' online conference replacing the EPQ conference that we would have had in real life. I'm going to be one of the two people posing the questions today, and I'm joined by three very knowledgeable, and experienced EPQ support people, so I will hand over to them to introduce themselves.

**SR:** Hello, my name is Sarah, I am the Senior Education Outreach Officer at the University of Leeds. My job mostly focuses on developing the taught skills EPQ support programme alongside my colleague Matt Elliott. We've two fantastic speakers here today, Jennifer Obaditch and Mark Nolan and I'll let them say a little bit more about themselves.

**RP:** If you want to go first Jennifer that would be great.

**JO:** I'm Jennifer Obaditch, I'm head of curriculum for Business, Economics, and Projects at AQA. My role is to lead and support on project qualifications, and in this case I'll be focusing specifically on EPQ. I manage the specification and support network we have for projects. I have a team of people at AQA who run our projects team, run our NEA advice. My role is to help teachers, co-ordinators, and supervisors implement the EPQ specification, so that students get the best experience of the EPQ and of course the outcomes at the end for them in terms of results that are valid.

**MN:** I'm Mark, I run the EPQ at South Wilts Grammar School in Salisbury; I have done for five years. I am also a history teacher and I have a role at school to do with curriculum at a whole school level.

**RP:** Brilliant, thank you both of you. Just to explain how this will work for people watching, we will run for about 45minutes to 1 hour. We are going to start with a couple of short introductions for both Jennifer and Mark, which will give two valuable perspectives on starting the EPQ, for new practitioners or new coordinators. This will be a mixture of advice from two perspectives and then we will move into the question and answer section, made up of questions we have received via email or forms. I'd

be happy to invite Jennifer to start her presentation, I will be sharing Jennifer's presentation so, once that's on the screen, which it should be now, if you'd like to begin Jennifer and just give me a nudge if I don't move the slides along quickly enough, and we can get started.

### **Presentation One**

**JO:** Great, thank you Rich, well I'll try and keep this short and sweet. This is for new practitioners so, I've popped a whole load of links and resources at the end of this presentation, and I'm sure Rich and the team will be sharing it on their websites. If you could move on one, please Rich.

### **Slide 1**

**JO:** So, this slide to me represents what EPQ is all about. When we talk about EPQ we are talking about an independent, research-based, project qualification; It's all about research and process to deliver an outcome. Which is the fantastic thing about EPQ, and what we are asking students to do in an EPQ is choose an area of interest which stretches beyond their current course of study. We are looking for them to draft a title, and aims for their project, which is formally approved by the centre. We are looking for them to plan, research, and carry out their projects, deliver a presentation and provide evidence of all stages of their project development and assessment. What I try and do with this diagram is illustrate that for me at the heart of the EPQ is independent research, and that independent research and the whole EPQ process is supported by taught skills that underpin the EPQ, because it provides students with the skills to develop their project. Coming out of the independent research we've got three pieces of evidence that AQA look for when looking at a completed EPQ. We are looking at the production log, we are looking at the project product -that's the outcome of the research, (that could be 5000word written report, or artefact with a shorter written report), and we are looking for the student who presents the findings of their EPQ and also tells us about their project journey in the presentation, so this is what we mean when we talk about EPQ.

### **Slide 2**

**JO:** So, I've tried to drill this down into four top tips for new practitioners. Knowing EPQ: it seems pretty obvious, but really getting under the skin of what EPQ is and what it isn't is crucial for new practitioners to the EPQ. Planning: I can't over emphasise the need for planning for coordinators, supervisors, and also to support your students in their planning. Communicating about the EPQ to all the key stake holders involved. And the final top tip is making use of all the support available for EPQ, and I'm going to talk briefly through each of these four tips today.

### Slide 3

**JO:** The first tip is 'Know the EPQ'. Know what EPQ is and what it is not. One of the real common errors we see a lot with EPQ is, students want to take on EPQ because they want to make something or write an essay. They are very much focused on the final outcome of the EPQ, rather than what EPQ is in terms of that project process and independent research projects I've mentioned previously. As a new practitioner to EPQ make some time to get to know EPQ, go on to the AQA website (other boards will have similar facilities) and download a few EPQ projects, read through those projects, get to understand what the production log looks like, how it's used, how it's filled in, how it's an essential tool for the EPQ journey. Have a look at some project products, look at what a good artefact looks like, look at what a good written report looks like, have a look at some good presentation evidence, and have a look at the availability of taught skills.

There's a brilliant range of taught skills programmes available. On future learn for example, AQA provides support in terms of taught skills and there's lots of material out there in terms of our quick guides and textbooks, which you should give you some sense of what taught skills should look like. Understanding the EPQ is an independent project, and it's about the full project journey, not just the project outcome. Access training; we've got free training available in terms of standardisation, so, knowing the EPQ standard. We've got supervisor and coordinator training and a new training course for EPQ artefacts, so, have a look at the training available and make time to use the training, and attend the training. We've got virtual online training courses available now, as well, so, get yourself trained. Knowing the role of the production log, I know we will talk a little bit about the production log throughout this session, but the production log is the key backbone of an EPQ, so, understanding how that fits with EPQ and how students, supervisors, and coordinators should be using it to document and evidence the EPQ journey, is really essential.

### Slide 4

**JO:** If we could move on to the second tip: planning. Planning is crucial; we talk about EPQ as being an independent research project and at the same time we are looking at 16year-olds taking on the EPQ, so, it's not going to be truly independent. One of the coordinators I work with talks about it being a blended research project, we are supporting students in their planning, so they can manage the project themselves. For new practitioners planning is essential and making the time to do that upfront when you are looking at how you are going to run your own EPQ programme. Planning taught skills across the EPQ curriculum and making use of the blend of taught skills resources available. Planning

your timetable, now at AQA we have two hard deadlines, so this links to the third point in terms of planning your deadlines, we have a 5<sup>th</sup> of November submission date for our November series and we have a 15<sup>th</sup> May submission date for our summer series. We don't dictate or direct any other deadline days, so a really top tip from me is to look at those hard AQA deadlines, and work backwards from those, planning your own internal centre deadlines, and breaking down the deadlines to support your students. Giving them deadlines where you want them to achieve certain aspects of the production log, where you want them to achieve certain aspects of their project product, where you want them to have achieved developing or delivering their presentation. Figure out your own deadlines, what works for your team, what works for your timetable and curriculum, and the final thing here is planning file management. How are you going to manage the production log bouncing back between the supervisor and student? How are you going to help your students manage documenting drafts, documenting resources they found that useful? Lots of our EPQ centres use Project Q which is a fantastic resource to use. Many schools will use google docs, I know that schools are using facilities such as teams to manage dialogue and communication between supervisors and students, so looking at how you are going to manage files and manage progress across different individuals involved with EPQ is crucial. It can really help avoid the headache later of multiple files and different version numbers flying around your system. If you plan well that's going to help your students and their planning.

#### Slide 5

**JO:** So, let's move on to the third tip; Communication. EPQ is different to other qualifications, it's student led and so communicating that upfront to the key players in the EPQ can be incredibly helpful. I'm looking at the third bullet there; parents and carers. When I ran EPQ in schools I always communicated really clearly, and early to parents and carers about what EPQ is and what it isn't: setting the role of their child and the EPQ, setting out the role of school in EPQ and setting out the role of the deadlines we set, so, making sure those people that are supporting youngsters in EPQ, are well aware of what the programme involves. Communicating with your supervisors, if you happen to be a coordinator and communicating with your students. Providing regular updates, it can be as simple and old as a notice board with all the relevant deadline dates, taught skills sessions, hints and tips for resources, where to find help, how to arrange meetings with your supervisors. I used to do a regular Friday email of updates on where students should be in their EPQ. If you are using virtual facilities

such as teams a forum can be used, but make sure you set out how you are going to communicate and update your students and supervisors to help them stay on track.

**Slide 6**

**JO:** Use support; I have never come across a more engaged, enthusiastic and helpful group of professionals as EPQ coordinators and supervisors. They are fantastic to work with and incredibly willing to provide support to new practitioners. So, accessing support and asking all those questions that are bubbling away in your head about the imminent launch of your EPQ programme, or taking on the new role as an EPQ coordinator or supervisor. There are lots of local network groups out there: teacher forums, Facebook has a fantastic EPQ teacher group and I'm sure that there are many others out there that we can recommend. Of course, the University of Leeds and Southampton are great sources of support and guidance on EPQ. Talk to your local university, I'm sure your local university will have facilities of support for EPQ outreach. AQA provides a projects team to support EPQ, and we also have EPQ advisors, who can advise on things like project proposals, presentations, and implementing a taught skills programme, so do look out for support. You can always contact AQA and we can signpost different support structures to you. Accessing and using support is the final top tip from me for new EPQ practitioners.

**Slide 7**

**JO:** I've left this slide in and it's building up to the available support AQA provide, as I said, hopefully these slides will be shared by team after this session today. We've got a whole list of support available there, and the final build here is to the projects at AQA email address, and that single email address can direct you to all the support listed here. Finally, I'd just like to say, I'm looking forward to the question and answer section, and being able to answer some of your questions. Good luck with launching and running your EPQ programmes in your schools. Thank you.

**RP:** Thanks ever so much Jennifer, that's really valuable! I do think a lot of help when it comes to planning the EPQ is precisely what you've done there, a lot of how you've broken it down, so the way you break it down makes it easier or harder to plan. I think that's a really good way of looking at it, and we will come back to that during the question and answer section, thank you. So, secondly in terms of presentations, I'd like to invite Mark Nolan from South Wilts Grammar School. He's an EPQ coordinator and a very experienced practitioner, who is also going to give us some top tips. I understand you've got your presentation Mark, so if you are able to share that, that would be perfect.

## Presentation Two

### Slide 1

**MN:** I've taken a similar approach, a kind of top tips approach, but these are all based on my experience of running the EPQ in schools. I guess perhaps we could think of these as things you might want to think about if you are right at the start of your EPQ organisation journey, you might want to think about these as slightly medium-term priorities in some cases. Firstly, I think one of the biggest things that has had impact for me is getting the session on the timetable. When I first picked up the EPQ it was done by ad-hoc supervisory meetings and that never really quite worked. I then made the argument that it was time to get timetabled blocks, where students are in groups with a specific teacher, at a specific time. It still sort-of runs as a supervisory model, it's just we know where everyone is meant to be at what time, and we can gather attendance details. You can actually do this manually, (which is one way that it's easier to make the argument that it should be on the timetable), once everything else has been organised, if you know who your supervisory staff are and you know who your students are then you can match them manually by looking at when they are both free. So, getting it on the timetable has been massively valuable in our setting.

Secondly, we also run a calendar year rather than an academic year programme. We work intensely on the project from Christmas of year 12 to Christmas of year 13, that's the time in which it's timetabled for students. That obviously means in the run up to Christmas year 12 you need something for the students to be doing and we use the future learn course that Emma Thompson, Rich Penny and the Southampton crew developed which has been very valuable. I also run centralised skills sessions for students in that time period. Also, a calendar year, not an academic year, has been really helpful to us in terms of retention, when you start looking at how many people who begin the course actually finish it, we certainly had quite a significant drop off in the days before it was on the calendar and running into year 13, now we have a much better completion rate, more like 75% than something much lower. So, those are kind of organisational things.

### Slide 2

**MN:** In terms of intellectual content of the EPQ, I tend to think that three is the magic number. So, whenever we are dealing with a substantial question, (which you will always find in the EPQ), it needs to be a research project sized question. Students need to be helped to chunk that down, and I generally try to communicate through supervisors and directly to students, that considering how to break your research topic down into three sections will give you a good balance between:

manageability, intellectual coherence, and between the range and the depth of material. This is one of the early tasks that I get students to work on. Once they've got a question in place, how are they going to break it down into these thematic chunks, because one of the big dangers with a research project is we will try to bite off more than we can chew, and that it will lose a bit of coherence, lose a bit of focus. By moving towards a thematic approach, we avoid the problem of a research narrative if you like, where what comes up in the written work is a sort of description of how material has been found rather than what the material means, and that links to my fourth point.

### Slide 3

**MN:** This is something I've developed over a couple of years, thinking about how to enable students to capture their research materials. When you are doing a research project of this size it's going to get unwieldy, there's going to be a lot of things in play and pulling stuff together into a table like this really helps to organise things. You can see in this left hand column, we have the bibliographical details (hopefully fairly complete) of the resources used and then you can see in this example three columns, each one relating to one of those three big ideas that this person has chunked their question into. This is a neat way of capturing things because it's completed horizontally, so during research the students work their way down and down this table, but, once they have made their notes in the table it is then read vertically. When you come to write up your research, that has come out of this process, instead of thinking of it as being discrete arguments, you are looking at it as interconnected thematic blocks. That really helps to emphasise that what we are looking for in research review is an analysis of the literature, for those connections and comparisons between ideas, not just a description of how you found what, and in what order. This for me has been a big thing, in terms of impacting how students have been able to interact with and use the research that they have done.

### Slide 4

**MN:** Then the most sort of theoretical thing, which I think has a big impact on the shape of projects and how they are going to work through how effective they are going to be is thinking about the epistemology (about the theory of knowledge). What academic discipline are you stepping into in the question you are phrasing? The EPQ is basically, like theoretically, an empty vessel and it can be made to fit with any academic discipline, but it really gains a lot of its credence from interaction with that academic discipline, so, making a question effective right from the outset is really crucial. I've started to think more and more that teaching students about how to phrase things in an active way, that does not exactly step aside from some of these epistemological knowledge problems, but that helps to

mitigate them.

The example that I always give is science based dissertations, so, we could ask ‘to what extent is vaccination an affective protection against disease?’ and that’s a fairly science based question, but the epistemology (the theory of knowledge) that science has would necessitate you to do lots of experimentation on that, in order to prove a perspective, However, if we phrase it in a way that’s a lot more directed, that’s kind of pointing the theoretical backdrop of the question at something else other than science, like for instance if we ask, ‘should vaccination be compulsory’. It allows students to engage with all of that scientific knowledge, but actually the question they are asking is going to be much more answerable in a way and much more answerable in a format that really lends itself to the types of thing the EPQ wants us to do; looking at multiple perspectives and kind of weighing them against each other. That’s a complex one, but it’s something I’ve thought is very important at the level of framing questions and getting success out of them.

#### Slide 5

**MN:** Then finally I would just double down on the engage with the resource’s advice, there are lots and lots of things out there you can use. University outreach, which is fantastic, there’s lots of online courses, undergraduate study skills resources, I’ve used: Flinders, University of North Carolina, Harvard. You can get access to a lot of research through the internet: Google Scholar, on JStor you can sign up for a free account and get access to some things, PubMed is really useful for getting access to science based medical research. These four books across the top here are ones that I use quite regularly to help supervisors in particular with dealing with the problems that people might come across in managing a research project like this. I’ll leave it there, and I’m happy to share these slides and leave that available if people want them.

**RP:** That’s brilliant, thank you very much mark. That’s great, it’s great to hear tips from the inside as well, certainly a teacher’s point of view, and I think certainly that last point – the word answerable is really important when it comes to questions. A question that can be asked is not necessarily a question that can be answered, and what is a good question to ask is not always a good question to answer.

#### Question and Answer

**RP:** That’s brilliant, thank you both of you, we will move onto questions, just to keep things moving along. Sarah, would you like to ask the first question and we will kind of take it as we go from there.

**SR:** Absolutely.



Question: How many learners can one teacher supervise and mark the work for, what is the recommended workload?

**JO:** Thank you Sarah. Tricky one to answer this because, there are a whole set of variables behind this, and it depends on the set up you have in your school. I'm sure Mark could chip in as well from his experience in school; as Mark said timetabling EPQ is such a valuable thing to do. In your ideal set up you'd have time in your timetable that your supervisors would have protected to work with their EPQ students, and of course it depends on how much time is available for the supervisor to use. There's no hard and fast rule about how many students each supervisor should have. We see examples from schools where supervisors have many students, they might have up to ten students, but they've got time on their timetable to do that. Crucially they've got time towards the backend of EPQ to get the marking and moderation done. What supervisors find and feed back to us, is that the work is variable across the school year. At the beginning of EPQ it's quite intense because you are supporting, coaching, and guiding your students as they start their EPQ, and helping them understand what is expected of them. Then the workload can get smaller as the students get involved in their EPQ, and they might just have check-ins with their supervisors.

However, the marking and moderation workload towards the end is large, so things to consider when you are allocating students to supervisors are: how much time are you willing to give them on the timetable? This will dictate the number of students a supervisor can manage. Are you able to access more time at certain parts of the year to support supervisors? For example, could you ask to take supervisors off their timetable for a day, to do marking and moderation as a group? Is there time available, when students are on study leave that EPQ supervisors can have protected so they can work on marking or moderation? There's no hard or fast rule, but it's taking a look at the time available and the crunch points in terms of pressure that supervisors may experience. I wonder if mark has anything to contribute there as well.

**MN:** Yeah, I think that's very good advice, the reality of it is, that in school you kind of get what you are given in terms of time. EPQ is not anybody's priority when the timetable comes in. I think we generally manage it at somewhere around about 10-12 students, per hour, a week, on your timetabled block and I think that generally is manageable. I think the point about marking and moderation is very true, there is that time pressure and as far as possible I take the majority of the moderation on myself, and I have one other person that takes on responsibility with that who is a senior leader. Be as

generous as you can be. If you are timetabling it yourself you can spread the load in a way that you think is reasonable

**RP:** That's great.

**Question** – Should co-ordinators partner supervisors to students based on particular topics? Whether supervision should be related to the student's topic area and what are the pros and cons related to that?

**JO:** We get asked this a lot. The answer we give helps support the supervisors advise and guide their students, but not over direct them. The advice AQA will give on this is to avoid partnering students with the subject expert in their project proposal. The reason for that is that we are looking for the student to lead on their EPQ, and do the work themselves. If we think about the assessment objectives (linked to AQA) – A02 Using Sources assessment objective – talks about students selecting and critically engaging with their research. The problem is with a student working with a supervisor who is an expert in the field, is that is very tempting for the supervisor to give the students a set of books which are perfect for you to use with your topic. Go away and read those. And that prevents the student from doing their own research and finding out. If you partner a student with a supervisor who is not a subject expert, they are more likely to go on that adventure together and seek out the sources of information. But what we want to do is put the student in a situation, where they are leading their own research and project development. If the supervisor is not a subject expert, they are not able to over guide the student. That is what AQA would say on the issue.

**MN:** I think that is very good advice. And that's what I also thought in response to that question. For me organisationally the timetable takes priority over expertise anyway. You end up allocating according to time. Yes over guidance is a danger, and I would rather the supervisor was confident in advising the student to think through the problems of the question. To look through things on the internet, and be open to discussion. Rather than have the subject expertise.

**RP:** Great, thank you.

**Question:** How do you manage balancing the other commitments in your role? Alongside being a co-ordinator or a supervisor.

**MN:** That is hard. There isn't a magic time tree, unfortunately. It does come back to that question of time heaviness. This is about specific tasks to do with the EPQ such as marking and moderating in

particular. I think general good practise, such as the way I have organised it with it being on the timetable and throughout the calendar year that is the best way to mitigate some of those pressures. If you get it on the timetable, you do have the protected time. In particular for those that are senior leaders there is a lot less change that their time is taken up by other things. If you submit at Christmas of Y13 that gives you a significant window of 5 months to do the marking and moderating. We have submission at Christmas and our own internal deadline at March. Then, further internal moderation after that. Those type of organisational things can help you win a bit of time. One of the things that lockdown has taught me is that using things like video resources like Teams and Loom can allow to get a lot of the planning done early, and that will help lessen the pressure, I think.

**RP:** Great, thank you

**Question:** How do you communicate the value of the EPQ? What do you do to help students either begin the EPQ or stick with the project once they have started with it?

**JO:** I think recognising the value of the EPQ can be quite different between the different individuals that are taking the EPQ. Students may often be engaged with the EPQ, because they see the carrot at the end – in terms of UCAS points and writing about their EPQ in their personal statements/ university interviews. We know as teachers teaching in school that the real benefit is the project journey, and developing the skills that they can take to university or working life. What is crucial is linking the EPQ to university aspiration for students. Informing students that the hard offers they get from universities such as Leeds and Southampton will be reduced (in some cases) if they complete an EPQ. Another way to hook students is talking about UCAS points, personal statements and interviews. Parents are also often very supportive of the EPQ, in terms of the qualification helping give their children the edge in terms of progression.

I think retention is always a challenge for the EPQ. As Marc has mentioned, the EPQ is never the top priority. I would love the EPQ to be a fantastic foundation for all subjects across the school. But the EPQ is always going to be competing with other courses at A-Level, and other vocational courses students are following. A really key observation I make, due to my background teaching in schools, is that buy in from senior management at school is essential. This is in terms of the position of the EPQ within the school. If they are supportive of the EPQ this has a significant impact of student and parent perception of the EPQ. When I see retention rates higher than average, I normally see senior leaders that support the EPQ, and support youngsters when they are completing their projects. We know that

every student will get to the point where they will struggle to cope with the demands been place upon them. This is when the senior leadership support is essential. I'm not sure if Marc has anything else, he would like to add to this.

**MN:** Having the back up of senior leaders does matter to perceptions of the EPQ. I also believe past testimonies from students such as the experiences of students who have used their EPQ grade to help get them into university. This can help with motivation to study the EPQ. Going back to the time crunch thing, the one downside is that if you are a new practitioner considering a structure working from Christmas to Christmas is that there can be a time pinch with other coursework deadlines set around this time.

**JO:** That is a really important point Mark, I am glad you mentioned it. This is in regards to when planning your EPQ deadlines that you look at what else is happening for students at that time. This is really crucial. Asking colleagues when their coursework deadlines are, and when the mock exams are is really important for students.

**SR:** They are both really helpful answers.

**Question:** What taught skills do you feel students need the most for the EPQ?

**JO:** It is really based on what students bring to the EPQ. AQA intentionally does not prescribe a specification for the content of the taught skills element of the EPQ. Because the first thing you will be doing is some diagnostic (not formal) testing to look at what skills the students already have to bring to the EPQ. Then designing your taught skills programme based on the information you have about the students. If you are focusing on the four assessment objectives for the EPQ (linked to the AQA specification) then A01 is about planning, A02 is about research, A03 is about synthesising that and brining it together, and A04 is reflecting on the project process. Planning skills and project management skills are really crucial. Where students can fall down is that they make a wonderfully, beautiful project plan but actually then don't follow it. It is about helping students get a bit messy. It's getting students to look at their project plan and cross out certain bits when they realise, they have a mock exam or other work to do when they have planned to do their EPQ.

The actual research skills are about the foundations of the EPQ. It is about helping students have the awareness of the sources of research to help them discover information (such as using GOOGLE). It is about helping them understand good research practice and using appropriate research sources for

their information. There is an idea that students feel like they need to just use academic books and journals for their EPQ. In fact, some students are doing very practical artefact type EPQs so in those cases instruction manuals or video sources can be just as useful and appropriate for them. Report writing skills is another skill that we see students need when they come into sixth form. Also, when they are about to write their report that critical engagement is crucial that needs addressing.

**MN:** Referencing is an important skill. Students recognise that referencing is something that they have to do. It is important for students to recognise why referencing is so vital for the EPQ. Yes, it does avoid plagiarism which is a bad thing. It is also that referencing demonstrates the legitimacy for the ideas we are putting forward. It allows people to retrace your steps in your research. It helps us understand your ideas, and to hold them to account. I will now go ahead and talk about disciplinary literacy which is a big thing of mine. It is about reading in that critical way. It is about the student stepping to an argument that is going on, and trying to work out how it fixes together in the context of their discipline. The EPQ can be a great space to have those discussions on how arguments can be made. For example, what makes a good argument? How can you justify a claim in the scientific or humanities topic that you are engaging in? That is a complicated and not very tangible skills. I do think it is one that the EPQ can help to foster.

**RP:** One final question from us.

**Question:** How useful is it to use exemplars? Both A\* projects and lower grades. Do you think it is a useful way to show students what an EPQ project looks like? How would you introduce those to students?

**JO:** I think exemplars are crucial in demonstrating the standard for the EPQ. I mentioned in my presentation earlier, that looking through exemplars of different EPQ grades is one of the most useful things a teacher can do in terms of understanding what an EPQ looks like. It is really challenging to do that as well. We are not talking about a set of course work that is lots of different examples which answer the same question. Every EPQ is unique. Looking at exemplars that teachers can look at in regards to the assessment objectives is crucial. It is also students to see them too. One of the challenging things is appreciating that the EPQ is not about the essay or the artefact at the end of it. It is about the project journey. When I was a coordinator for the EPQ, I always had a few exemplars dotted around the classroom for students to have a look at. To see what an A\* looks like or to identify a particular skill used such as solid referencing or critical engagement. Show the students a grade E

project and get students to compare and contrast this to a higher-level project. Asking them to look at the production log, the decision making or what the evidence looks like when comparing. Helping students to appreciate that using the production log is a useful tool for them, rather than an administrative burden. This can be a tricky thing in a classroom situation, so exposing them to examples and what a completed EPQ is great. I did also used to get students who have done an EPQ previously pop back to the school (if they could) and talk to Y11 about their projects. You then have a peer talking through their project.

**RP:** That is great. Before you start Marc, can I also ask when you would introduce exemplars to your students? Is this something to be done early or at different stages of the EPQ journey?

**MN:** Exemplar work can give that framework of quality that Jenifer was talking about earlier. This is massively important in knowing the rules of the game if you like. I think the timing issue that you mentioned Rich is really important to me. I want models/examples that reflect the stages of the process if you like. In general, I share models with supervisors. I have a massive file that I give to supervisors at the start. This has model work, and extracts from books which were on the last side of the presentation. It has a lot of reference material for supervisors in. I then communicate to them when they might bring in exemplars into the classroom from the file. I have research reviews that are perhaps not the highest quality, that are D or C borderline grades. In order to illustrate some of the shortcomings of that. Also, I show better models that have moved on during that space and time. I came up with a progression model. To show students what a typically less good research review would look like and this is typically what it would look like if it had improved and met more of the characteristics of the assessment objectives. I would like students to see parts of the work they are working on at the right time. In order for them to have the basic framework in place to see a good research review is helpful in applying some of those lessons to their work. As Jennifer said all the EPQ projects are different. It doesn't mean that you can universally use them.

By curating that I have created a situation where I have some typical pitfalls and typical good work covered. That we share through supervisors at a specific time. I also think that really high-level projects can be a bit intimidating. Not everyone is going to achieve to that level. It can be counter-productive if we show examples of work that have gone way beyond full marks. There is a care in choosing them. The longer you run the EPQ the more of a bank of examples you have got. Model work for me is very important as long as you add it in at the right time. As long as you transmit to the students through their supervisors.

**RP:** That is brilliant. Thank you every so much to both of you. I think that was full of really clear ways of thinking for new practitioners and some excellent practical tips. I will add both of your PowerPoints to this video. That will be the end of this new practitioners' talk. We hope it has been useful. We hope you can find the other available talks useful as well.

**ALL:** Thank you. Bye.