

NURTURING BRILLIANCE

National Senior Stretch

2025

For Years 10–13

BIG IDEAS FOR BRIGHT MINDS

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About



Welcome to the Senior Stretch Study Day 2025!

Are you academically able and ambitious? Are you in year 10 or above? Join us for Thriving Minds Senior Stretch 2025 and embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery, innovation and intellectual growth.

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

– W. B. Yeats

ABOUT SENIOR STRETCH

Ignite the fire of intellectual growth with Senior Stretch, a revolutionary event designed specifically for more able students, who yearn to explore the vast and captivating realm of interdisciplinary knowledge. Senior Stretch is not your everyday classroom programme. Instead, it's a journey where students engage at a conceptual level, exploring interdisciplinary ideas to expand their intellectual capacities and ignite a passion for the pursuit of knowledge.

This study day is not about memorising information. We work at the conceptual level to explore intellectual foundations and equip students with a deeper understanding. It's about taking an interdisciplinary approach to the fundamental ideas that underpin our understanding of the world, ourselves, and others. We bring to you the kind of intellectual stimulation previously only experienced by the students of Oxford and Cambridge.

We bring Oxbridge to you.

Remember, knowledge is power. Ignite the fire within you and let Senior Stretch guide your way towards a future that's as brilliant as your mind.

London



Tues 4th March 2025

Bloomsbury Baptist Church,
Shaftesbury Avenue
10:15–15:45

[View Map](#)

Oxford



Weds 5th March 2025

Oxford Town Hall,
St. Aldates
09:45–15:15

[View Map](#)

What to expect

Keynote Speakers: Engage with renowned experts and visionaries who will share their insights on unlocking your potential.

Peer Networking: Connect with gifted students from diverse backgrounds, exchange ideas, and forge lifelong friendships.

Discussions: Participate in thought-provoking discussions on contemporary issues and global challenges.

Critical thinking and Problem solving: Explore new ideas and develop strategies for real-world challenges.

Programme

Explore Quantum Realities: A Journey Through Quantum Realms

Professor Mark Harris

Prepare to be captivated by an illuminating talk led by Professor Mark Harris, a distinguished physicist and scholar, as he delves into the intricate world of quantum physics. 'With a rich background in physics and a multidisciplinary approach, Mark will navigate through the complexities of quantum theory, examining some of the most outlandish claims made on its behalf about physical, non-physical and even spiritual realities. During this engaging session, Professor Harris will unveil some of his own cutting edge research, shedding light on how quantum mechanics challenges and enriches our understanding of reality, human experience, and philosophical thought. By pushing the boundaries of conventional perception, the Professor will invites us to explore the depths of the quantum realm and its profound impact on our perception of reality.

Don't miss this opportunity to unravel the mysteries of quantum physics alongside Professor Harris. Join us for an unforgettable journey into the heart of quantum reality.

Oxbridge Interview Questions

Julie Arliss

Oxbridge interviews are known for their academic rigour. Practising these questions helps more able students refine their critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills, which are valuable for overall academic growth. Challenge yourself, expand your knowledge and develop valuable life skills by exploring this genuine Oxbridge question, 'Does a Snail Have Consciousness?' Surely this is one of the most difficult questions in the Universe! What is consciousness, how do we identify it and how did it evolve? Embark on an incredible journey into your mind, where you'll acquire the skills, confidence, and adaptability essential for exceptional achievement.

Discover the Psychology of Unconscious Biases

Dr Chris O'Neill

Ever wondered why your brain clings to bad experiences but lets good ones slip away? Join us for an engaging talk on "The Psychology of Unconscious Negative & Positive Biases" and uncover the secrets of how our minds work. Explore why one bad experience in love or money can outweigh four good ones, and how just one "rotten apple" can spoil the whole bunch. Learn why "jerks," "slackers," and "downers" can drag down a group's performance, whether at school or work. Plus, find out why most people think they're better than average, even when they're not. This eye-opening session will give you a deeper understanding of your own mind and how to harness its power for positive change. Don't miss out on discovering the hidden forces that shape your thoughts, feelings, and actions!

Shakespeare: Humors and Appetites

Mike Grenier

An inter-disciplinary look at how Shakespeare viewed the body, and our appetites.

Shakespeare's characters are dynamic representations of the interplay between body and mind, rooted in the humoral theory that associates emotional states with bodily fluids. Hamlet's melancholia, driven by black bile, leads to profound introspection and tragedy, reflecting modern understandings of depression. In contrast, Sir John Falstaff embodies a hedonistic approach to life, celebrating joy and indulgence. Falstaff's appetites highlight the importance of laughter and pleasure as coping mechanisms, illustrating that a balance of emotions—both melancholic and joyful—is vital for mental well-being.

Mike Grenier will integrate real-life experiences with literary analysis, making Shakespeare's insights accessible and relevant. This is a unique opportunity to delve into the complexities of human psychology and emotional well-being. Students will not only enrich their understanding of literature but also gain valuable life skills that promote mental well-being and personal growth.

Debate: The Rise of Veganism: Health Trend or Moral Imperative?

Step into the riveting debate as we unravel the multifaceted nature of veganism. Is it truly about the status and well-being of animals, or simply a trendy lifestyle choice endorsed by celebrities and influencers? Is its popularity driven by genuine health concerns, or merely a desire to follow the crowd on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok? Should our dietary choices be solely based on personal preference, or are there profound ethical considerations pushing us towards a plant-based diet?

Engage in this thought-provoking discussion, where every perspective, whether deeply invested or casually curious, adds richness to the dialogue. Challenge assumptions, foster critical thinking, and navigate the intricate landscape of dietary choices in today's ever-evolving world. Your voice matters—join us and let your insights shape the discourse.



Speakers



Julie Arliss — Julie Arliss is an outstanding educator dedicated to nurturing brilliance through a holistic approach. At Thriving Minds, she equips talented students with essential tools to cultivate critical thinking, analyze complex problems, and innovate. Her philosophy encourages questioning the status quo, exploring new ideas, and developing real-world solutions. Emphasizing mentorship, Julie ensures students benefit from the wisdom and support of inspiring educators, fostering not only academic excellence but also compassionate, socially conscious individuals.

Julie is a Farmington Scholar at Harris Manchester College, Oxford and coordinates major projects for the Ian Ramsey Centre, including a \$3.6M initiative in Central and Eastern Europe, and various outreach programs for schools. As the Founder and Head of Academy Conferences, she has reached over 30,000 students and 4,000 educators across the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. Julie's notable projects include "Accelerating Insight" and "Philosothon Expansion," funded by the Templeton foundations.



Professor Mark Harris — Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion Professor Mark Harris is a distinguished physicist and scholar. Known for his groundbreaking discovery of 'spin ice' with Steve Bramwell, Mark has left an indelible mark on the field of magnetism, with over 6,000 journal articles published since their 1997 breakthrough.

After an illustrious career in physics, Professor Harris broadened his academic pursuits to include the humanities, blending his scientific expertise with spiritual and philosophical inquiry. Now the Andreas Idreos Chair in Science and Religion at the University of Oxford, he directs the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion.

Professor Harris' research focuses on the implications of quantum physics for the humanities, exploring how modern scientific advancements influence our understanding of human experience, spirituality and philosophy.



Dr. Christopher O'Neill — Dr O'Neill is a fellow of Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford and is a polymathic thinker. He is a psychologist, registered psychotherapist and trained counsellor. He initiated the large-scale MYRIAD research project in Oxford University investigating resilience and well-being in young people. He has forty years' experience of working with students and staff in schools and is an exceptional educator.



Mike Grenier — is an esteemed educator and advocate of the Slow Education movement. Mike studied English Literature at Oxford University and holds a PGDE from Edge Hill University. With a notable tenure as House Master at Eton and his current role as Deputy Head, Mike has firsthand experience in the transformative power of education. He passionately argues against the corrosive effects of micromanagement in children's lives, akin to the philosophies behind the Slow Food movement.

Mike founded the UK Slow Education movement in 2012, emphasizing deep, meaningful learning and strong student-teacher relationships. He champions a reflective approach to education, urging us to reconsider our haste in teaching. Mike's work extends to various state schools in the Thames Valley through Eton's outreach programme. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from a pioneer in educational reform and discover the benefits of a slower, more thoughtful approach to learning.



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Registration



REGISTRATION

Early Bird Registration (until 30th October, 2025): £35.00
Regular Registration: £37.50.

One teacher place is free with every 12 student places.

HOW TO REGISTER

Visit our website at [Thrivingminds.org](https://thrivingminds.org) to register online or download the brochure. For inquiries, email us at headoffice@academy-ltd.com

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Connect with us on social media using **#GiftedStudentConference2025** to stay updated and interact with fellow attendees before the conference.

DON'T MISS OUT!

All our sessions are led by outstanding gifted educators, renowned for their ability to inspire the brightest minds. Over the past few years Thriving Minds thought-provoking events have reached over 30,000 students worldwide. Our past students have been inspired, worked independently, and progressed quicker. And now, you have an opportunity to be a part of this intellectual revolution.



“Outstanding education is the compass that guides us towards the limitless horizons of knowledge and empowers us to navigate the complexities of the world.”



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