



Getting it wrong

The targeting of misconceptions is seen as a critical skill for science teachers. Science as a subject has a vast potential for misconceptions to establish themselves early on; and then make achievement in science almost impossible. But how can misconceptions be effectively targeted? In this article, **Hazel Bennett** offers some essential advice and guidance

Science is an important part of the core curriculum. It is a fascinating, but difficult, subject and requires a depth of knowledge and understanding in order to be taught well. Primary school teachers who do not possess a science degree often find themselves teaching science topics that they have not been taught themselves. I have been in this situation and am acutely aware that it is extremely difficult to teach on the limit of my own knowledge. When we find ourselves faced with an unfamiliar topic, it is important to study it well in advance and read more than we need to know, because, if we are developing inquiring minds, there will be pupils asking questions beyond the scope of the lesson.

Unfortunately, science in the hands of a non-specialist can lead to errors in teaching. The situation is made worse by the fact that some primary science textbooks are not wholly accurate and pass on misinformation which is difficult for both teacher and pupil to unlearn later. So what are the misconceptions?