



The Centre for the use of Research and Evidence in Education

E-NEWS

CUREE E-NEWSLETTER: July 2016 Bumper End-of-Term Edition!

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The Philippa Blog

Over the 24 hours following the seismic shift in the social and political landscape that was the referendum vote, I had the good fortune to be learning to build the future with over 200 school leaders and teachers at three very different events. First, at 8.30am there were the amazing school leaders of all the schools in Camden. Later that day, 28 school leaders and teachers including someone about to train to become a maths teacher after a career in the city (yay!), turned up in a remote lecture hall at 4.00pm on the last day of The Education Festival and some even stayed on afterwards to talk about what they were going to do with what they had learned! On the Saturday, undaunted by the rain and the news, 150 teachers and leaders came together at ResearchED Rugby to work without distraction on our core business, teaching learning and school improvement. Full marks for focus people!



The vote revealed so many divisions in our society, none more troubling than those between older citizens and the young people who are the focus of our service and commitment. We asked ourselves, in different ways, what could be done to create understanding across these divides and to heal those rifts? One priority obvious to all of us is to promote and nourish collaboration and listening. Enjoyment of collaboration is the hallmark of the best of new practices; and the research is pointing increasingly to its importance in securing coherent and effective learning experiences for young people. The CPDL research highlights for example, the way shared risk taking and reciprocal vulnerability speeds up the trust building we all need to manage the challenging emotions involved in

professional learning and school leadership (www.curee.co.uk/node/3187). The research about gaining and sustaining momentum in school improvement points in that direction too; towards the importance of building coherent learning experiences for vulnerable young people and the role of collaboration and collective efficacy in achieving that (see Gaining and Sustaining Momentum piece below). What feels good, for once, does you good too! So across the first few post Brexit hours we all got stuck in to learning together, whatever the state of our inner dialogue, to focus hopefully on our children's futures. In those first few hours after the referendum, it was a privilege and also steadying to have the opportunity to work with so many talented and committed professionals!



By the time you read this, Primary schools will have the results of this year's SATs and be saying goodbye to their year 6 pupils. The inherently socially exclusive reading test has been followed, as so many of us predicted, with reading results very significantly behind those for writing/GPS. What I wonder are Year 7 teachers to make of that? Nonetheless I have seen some truly awesome year 6 lessons this year - I've seen pupils' grappling confidently with applying a simply astonishing array of technical grammatical knowledge - and, in response to the enthusiasm of their expert teachers, relishing their technical

knowledge. The cross phase moderation I am hearing about between year 6 and 7 teachers is going to be especially important this year in making sure we build on this! On which positive thought can I wish you all a great summer holiday!

Philippa Cordingley

The School-Led System – what have we learnt and where is it going?

For two years CUREE staff and associates been delighted to play a part in supporting the development of the school-led school improvement system in the West Midlands. That particular role - Teaching and Leadership Adviser (TLA) - comes to an end this month as the sponsor, National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), is closing down the service. As my colleagues, Jill Wilson and Pauline Smith, and I wrap up final reports and hand back the infuriatingly slow Government IT kit, this is a good time to reflect on how the school-led system has developed in that period and to think about what might happen next. Although the TLA role has ended, CUREE and its team are still here and keen to support colleagues in teaching schools, multi-academy trusts and individual schools as they work to provide the best possible futures for their pupils in very uncertain times. That support could include action to address the underperformance of vulnerable pupils which is a widespread issue across the region.

Read the full blog on the CUREE website!
(<http://www.curee.co.uk/node/3282>)

Paul Crisp
Jill Wilson
Pauline Smith



Holy Rosary – Celebrate Good Times

As the third year of CUREE's ongoing collaboration with the Holy Rosary Teaching School Alliance in Sefton, Merseyside draws to a close, the annual celebration event is rapidly approaching. These events, while remaining opportunities for professional development first and foremost, always provide a wonderful opportunity to escape from the bustle of the day-to-day and spend a few hours concentrating solely on some inspiring and intriguing examples of teacher practice and inquiry. CUREE colleagues are currently in the process of providing commentary on written case studies of teacher practice, conducted with the support of a Research Route Map. As always, the

end products of this process are fascinating and compelling, and well worth taking a couple of hours out of the day for. If you want to find out more about working with CUREE to use Route Maps to support high quality teacher inquiry, email Gillian Sheail (gillian.sheail@curee.co.uk) or Bart Crisp (bart.crisp@curee.co.uk).

Bart Crisp

New Zealand Community Maths is in Coventry!

With great anticipation Dr Roberta Hunter (Bobbie) is reprising her visit to CUREE to update us on the amazingly successful Community Maths work which exemplifies the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) on mathematics. Many of you will already be familiar with the BES Programme through Helen Timperley's and Viviane Robinson's BES on CPD and School Leadership and Student Outcomes. The Community maths programme has been focussed particularly on developing mathematical thinking and communication by relating mathematics to children's lives beyond school (<http://bit.ly/1Uqv3jL>).



Back in 2014, CUREE explored with Bobbie the way in which the Community Maths approach could be integrated into current, researched approaches to closing the gap for vulnerable pupils. We thought it fitted particularly well with the very specific and structured version of Research Lesson Study that we had been piloting as part of the Closing the Gap: Test and Learn pilot that year (www.curee.co.uk/CTG). Now we have an opportunity to hear Bobbie's news since then... and so can you!

Bobbie will be here in Coventry on 9th August and we are hoping that once again some of the amazing colleagues from the outstanding Willenhall Community Primary school who have been using Bobbie's research and approach as part of their R&D will join us. They made it last time despite this happening over the summer!

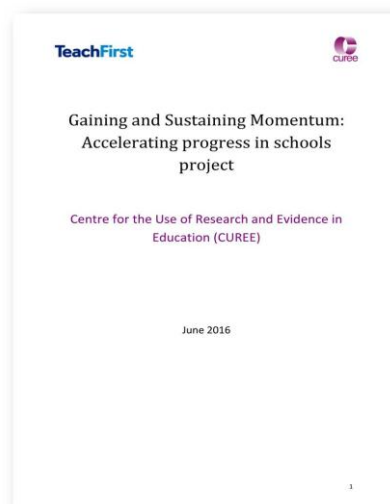
For an insight into Bobbie's collaborative approaches to solving mathematics see nzmaths.co.nz/mathematics-inquiry-communities, doing maths' is looking a little different these days...

For more information on this full day workshop, contact Joe Askew (joe.askew@curee.co.uk) or sign up using the online form (<http://bit.ly/29hXNh4>)

Gillian Sheail

Gaining and Sustaining Momentum for Vulnerable Pupils

We have been excited to share our new research about schools seeking to gain and sustain momentum for vulnerable pupils. It is a follow up to our earlier research about exceptional and strong schools working with our vulnerable communities. Like the earlier study the evidence points to some real surprises- about the dangers that lurk under a focus on consistency and on pockets of excellence... It has been exciting to work with groups of school leaders to make sense of the results; to hear them saying "ahh now I think about it, this makes perfect sense". One school leader came up to me after the workshop at the Inspiring Leaders conference looking as though she had been crying –so I was pretty alarmed. Happily she said they were tears of joy; the research had helped her see her new and very challenging school afresh and also to have much greater confidence in her judgments. Taking this learning forwards needs to be done in partnership with school leaders, so we could not be more delighted to be doing this together with ASCL's team of talented experts. You can find the research and my first blog here



(www.curee.co.uk/node/3272) and details about how your school could benefit from the research here (www.curee.co.uk/node/3279).

Skein Momentum is a diagnostic and development process which enables schools where progress has stalled to gain or regain momentum. Delivered by a partnership of CUREE and ASCL, it identifies several key building blocks to help school leaders ensure that all the core activities in their schools are working together and heading in the right direction. Contact Gillian Sheail (gillian.sheail@curee.co.uk) for more information

Philippa Cordingley

Paul Hamlyn Foundation – Teacher Development Fund



Curee is delighted to be taking a leading role in this new initiative funded entirely by PHF. The key objective of the Fund is to provide Continuing Professional Development and Learning (CPDL) to help teachers embed learning through the arts in the curriculum. It involves schools in all four nations of the United Kingdom making use of their skills, knowledge, confidence and ability to make connections between the arts and different aspects of learning. The focus is on school-based projects with an emphasis on the primary phase, working with disadvantaged and/or vulnerable children and supporting professional development and learning approaches involving teacher enquiry. After CUREE undertook extensive research commissioned by PHF, we were able to advise the Foundation about a framework and approach to the CPDL and the operation of the Fund that will help bring learning through the Arts to over 4,000 primary pupils. This year is a pilot and 7 partnerships have been awarded significant grants totalling a million pounds. We are helping PHF to manage the new fund, ensuring it will make a lasting to change to teachers' practice. We are providing formative evaluation too, to help the pilot as a whole and individual projects refine practice in the light of progress across the programme as a whole and in individual projects as the work evolves and to inform decisions about the future of the Fund.

Andy Goodwyn

Lincolnshire Heads are Celebrating Their Achievements with Peer Review

As the term draws to close Lincolnshire Schools are celebrating the achievements of their Peer Reviews and exploring the findings they've made. As the process draws to a close we can all reflect upon an intensive and rewarding few months during which the participating Headteachers have engaged with the complexities of Peer review in the context of their day-to-day leadership of schools throughout the region. We have had the pleasure and privilege of working with 48 leaders in three cohorts



over several months, giving us the opportunity to hear about many of the excellent practices and interventions which impact their pupils' learning. We have been deeply impressed with the quality of the reports, with evidence of depth in engaging with the data, of growing depth and confidence in their colleagues or trios, of thoughtfulness in relation to their judgments and that their conclusions are genuinely rooted in the evidence, not just in their intuitive responses. This is far from the end of our relationship with the leaders of course, and we look forward to working further with the participating schools in the Autumn term.

If you would like to know more, get in touch with Joe Askew (joe.askew@curee.co.uk) or visit our website for information about our upcoming Peer Review CPD Programme (www.curee.co.uk/news-and-events/workshop-programme-summer-2015).

Gillian Sheail

Can Further Education be a Self-Improving Evidence-Informed Sector?

Months ago we were asked by RSA, sponsored by the Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL), to write a short but 'provocative' think piece on how the FE and Skills sector might become a 'self-improving system' (www.curee.co.uk/node/3284). The weeks go by and life carries on so it was a pleasant reminder to see our essay brought together with seven others under the collective title of *Possibility Thinking: Reimagining the Future of Further Education and Skills* (<http://bit.ly/29iVC9g>) and to take part in its launch at RSA House on 5 July. It was a lovely setting, a distinguished crowd and panel of notables chaired by Matthew Taylor with his full 'Moral Maze' assertiveness. We took an essentially optimistic view of FE's long term future, as the extract reproduced below illustrates, as did the other essayists (though all were writing before the "Brexit" vote).

FE's fortunes have waxed and waned over the decades and the sector's perceived lack of political salience (compared with, say, schools or universities) can encourage a feeling of being the poor cousins. But fortunes change, and the sector will, in due course, be recognised again as the most efficient means of generating the quantity of skilled people the country needs – but is currently apparently unwilling to pay for. Self-help and self-regulation were proffered by one government but then snatched away by a different one now nearly a decade ago. But what was then an innovation is now the zeitgeist. The sector and its leaders need to dig in for the long haul and begin investing now in developing for themselves the culture, the systems and the institutions that will underpin a sustainable self-improving system.

We make a number of recommendations but these are for another article. The important one here is about improving the supply and use of relevant research and evidence about teaching, learning and assessment. There is growing recognition beyond the sector of the dominance of research about *demand* – the labour market – and the lack of research about its *core* business – the support of education, training and the development of skills. Conversations are happening in a lot of different contexts. For instance, while speaking at a symposium on the role of research organised by Eton College (yes, *that* Eton), Philippa met fellow speaker Geoff Petty, former FE teacher and Guru to teacher trainees and CPD leaders across the sector for generations. Also participating were David Godfrey (of Farnborough Sixth Form College and now at UCL Institute of Education) and Jane Overbury (Executive Principal of Christ the King Sixth Form College) both of whom flew the flag for evidence informed practice in the sector – David had led very successfully on this at Farnborough (with help from a CUREE Route Map).

We are hampered in the FE system by a paucity of high quality research on effective approaches to teaching and learning located in the sector. There is an expanding body of very small scale practitioner research which dances to different (academic and practical) tunes. This grows mainly out of programmes supported by the Education and Training Foundation who have also attempted to strengthen the knowledge base in the key areas of English and Maths. These efforts have been limited by the usual short-termism of government funding which demands instant answers and instant results. The recent education White Paper held out the promise of funding for more rigorous research in the sector and we are looking forward to some announcements about this either side of the summer break.

The sector has an advantage over schools in having a set of professional standards which make specific and coherent reference to standards such as “Maintain and update your knowledge of educational research to develop evidence based practice” and “apply theoretical understanding of effective practice in teaching, learning and assessment drawing on research and other evidence”. The challenge in our essay was about ensuring this highly professional approach to the core business is similarly understood and enacted at leadership levels. Dame Ruth Silver of FETL echoed the point (one we make in our essay) that FE and Skills’ leaders are first and foremost **leaders for Learning**. We see some green shoots of this in a few appointments following strategic mergers where posts of leaders of teaching and learning are being created on the executive team. Let’s hope that area reviews, funding challenges and the looming consequences of Brexit do not stifle this promising development

Paul Crisp

Effective Mentoring and Coaching... From Cardiff to London!

We were delighted to be involved in the recent Oxford University Press conferences in Cardiff and London, and delighted too with the responses from delegates who were engaged with Philippa’s presentation – ‘CPDL that works for pupils as well as teachers; evidence based tools for embedding high quality coaching’. Philippa began by outlining the key differences in mentoring specialist and peer (co) coaching and the link with our recent report – Developing Great Teaching - A review of the evidence about Continuing Professional Development and Learning (www.curee.co.uk/publication/developing-great-teaching-review-evidence-about-continuing-professional-development-and-).

We know about assessment for learning for students and pupils, but what about teachers? Philippa tackled that head on too, with strong evidence about the benefits of aligning this with coaching and mentoring, built on the National Framework developed by CUREE (www.curee.co.uk/resources/publications/national-framework-mentoring-and-coaching). Opportunities for practice via animated scenarios and tools were well received and delegates responded with some insightful and engaging questions. The session was also recorded as a video, which you can view on the CUREE website (www.curee.co.uk/node/3286)



For information about our Effective Mentoring and Coaching resources and programmes, please contact Gillian Sheail (gillian.sheail@curee.co.uk).

Gillian Sheail

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