



July 2014 ENewsletter

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Still Spring in the high pastures of the Gran Paradiso National Park

The Philippa Blog – “Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful”*

Assessment is definitely in the air. A very focussed conference (Assessing the Way Forward) on 24 June, for all Yorkshire and Humber schools that wrestled determinedly with systematising and framing assessment, helped me pull some pretty disparate threads together. There was a stimulating presentation from Professor Jong Zhao at the thoughtfully branded (see below) **Inspiring Leadership Conference** with such provocative sound bites as *“Taking tests is simply an expression of conformity”*, *“in focussing on Pisa we are racing to the past”*, and *“We should stop fixing children’s deficits to build on their talents as entrepreneurs and creative people”*! (Twitter will help you find more - [@PhilippaCcuree](#) and [#ILConf2014](#)) The cliché is right. The system’s need to see things at scale means we value what we can measure at scale and the art form of systematic measurement is not well advanced. A point reinforced in the amazing, two hour tour de force from Benjamin Zander, conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, warning about limiting expectations with measurement thinking. You can get a flavour of this via his TED talk: www.ted.com/talks/benjamin_zander_on_music_and_passion#t-73550.

Despite the challenges, observing, analysing and supporting progress are fundamental to learning. Professional learning that helps teachers and their leaders do this in increasingly fine grained, generative and detailed ways benefits teachers as well as pupils. But what does this really mean? Perhaps it is easiest to understand what assessment practices that meet Professor Zhao and Benjamin Zander’s challenges look like in effective early years contexts. Remember, for example, how quickly and deeply early years’ practices developed when the EYFS requirement that all EY

practitioners become expert in micro observing learning as the basis for in-depth assessment was introduced?

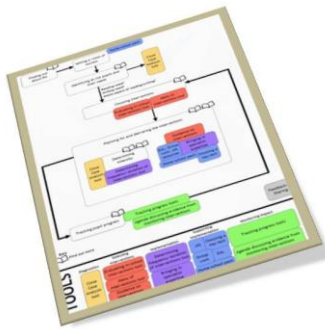
But effective, sustained and fine grained assessment for learning is easier to describe than to do. See, for example, Marshall and Drummond's study of how far the full potential of AfL is being used in practice (<http://pbscienceenquiry.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/rredp133-150.pdf>). This study found that in only about 20% of classrooms were commonly used AfL practices being used, for example, to shape the next step in learning. This isn't because teachers don't want to do it; it is because it is complicated and teachers and leaders need tools to make it work on a sustainable basis for large numbers of pupils. We have been blown away over the last two terms by the progress teachers and leaders tell us they and their most vulnerable pupils are making through the "Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy" and "Research lesson Study, for the Closing the gap" programmes we are running as part of the Test and Learn school based research programme. Focussing on pupils who are really here in name only (RHINO) and skilled disappearers on the one hand and close case analysis and making skilled choices from a menu of high impact literacy interventions on the other, put formative assessment centre stage for both teachers and pupils during the development phase and created a great springboard for working with the most vulnerable pupils during the trial. We are waiting with bated breath for the test results! Watch this space...

And have a restful and pleasant summer too!

Philippa Cordingley
Chief Executive

**Measure For Measure – W Shakespeare*

Breakthroughs in Literacy – trial shows 6 month boost in progress



Response to Intervention: Breakthroughs in Literacy is a combination of professional learning and resources to help teachers undertake close case literacy analysis for their most vulnerable pupils. It provides a menu of very specific, high impact research-based interventions for teachers to choose from to respond to the needs that emerge. It also gives them evidence to inform their judgments about when to use interventions in whole class, small group and 1:1 settings and fast feedback loops to adjust this. Named leaders act as champions and ambitious

and inspiring holiday activities for pupils raise expectations for everyone.

The initial, EEF funded, randomised control trial for year 6 ran over 6 weeks in the final half term last summer in partnership with AFA 3S. Though it produced good results for pupils, the trial was 'spoilt' because of technical problems with the control group tests in the last three days of term. So we have carried on with the work even though it isn't formally part of the trial. This year, the activities took place over a term, all the tests were conducted successfully – and the results for a group of 195 pupils are in!

- The 'gain' - the difference between the test scores before and after the intervention - gave an effect size of 0.73. This suggests that *three months* of RTI could have an impact equivalent to **9 months progress in one year for your most vulnerable pupils**;
- Of course, pupils progress anyway so we compared the attainment of the RTI groups with similar groups of Year 6's last year following their normal programmes, *not* RTI. The RTI pupils this year achieved an effect size of 0.51 greater than that of the non-RTI pupils. This

suggests that one term of RTI could be having an **impact equivalent to 6 months' additional progress**.

These are very promising results – well above [John Hattie's](#) threshold of 0.4 - which suggest that RTI: Breakthroughs to Literacy could be very powerful approach to tackling the most intractable literacy problems. The programme is now being trialled at greater scale as one of the seven interventions within the ground breaking [Closing the Gap: Test and Learn](#) project. The final tests are taking place right now and we should have the results analysed over the summer. But in the meantime schools are saying, for example, that “progress for our most vulnerable pupils is outstanding”.

At Curee we have gained so much in developing the resources and supporting both groups of teachers and school leaders - hearing the enthusiasm, seeing the commitment and professional learning applied to the most vulnerable of learners has been a privilege. So we are keen for this programme to be available more widely and are offering it as part of our [autumn term CPD programme](#) - [click here](#) to find out more.



Whose Vision is it anyway? The Role of Governors

“The Buck Stops Here” was famously the motto on the desk of US President [Harry S Truman](#). The staff in most schools would probably think that the rightful place for this sign was on the head teacher’s desk – but they would be wrong. Actually, the buck stops with the *governors* and the Coalition Government has re-emphasised and reinforced role of governors as “key strategic decision makers and vision setters”. The recently revised [Handbook for School Governors](#)

identifies the No 1 **core function** of the governing body (GB) as:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Better data (such as the Ofsted [data dashboard](#)) have helped the GB be more effective in its scrutiny function. But, how are we doing with ‘vision setting’? Are we avoiding the “bicycle shed syndrome” , being drawn into discussion of something trivial because it’s easier to understand than the big, important stuff. Are we getting the right information at the right time to enable us to contribute to the formulation of strategy and not just rubber stamping the fait accompli of our expert senior staff? Read [my blog](#) for more on this and a few questions to help governors and senior leadership teams keep the governors firmly focussed on strategy and vision – and out of trouble when Ofsted next drop by.

Paul Crisp is Managing Director of CUREE, a National Leader of Governance and Chair of Governors of President Kennedy (Academy) School. As an NLG, he provides coaching and other support to Chairs of Governors and undertakes reviews of governance. He can be contacted at paul.crisp@curee.co.uk or on 024 7652 4036

[>>more](#)

Where next for teaching and supporting post-16 English and maths?

CUREE’s recent research for the Education & Training Foundation in partnership with EmCETT provides a fascinating window into how maths and English teachers and their leaders are thinking about the new level 2 challenges. The full report should be out soon but here are a couple of insights that emerge when we explore these data with evidence we are surfacing from our SKEIN for FE visits:

- Practitioners who’d experienced the Maths Extension Programme (MEP) really valued it and

were enthusiastic about something similar for English

- Practitioners have a 'can do' attitude to rising to challenges which, unsurprisingly rises with an increased awareness of their students' starting points and in-depth subject knowledge. But..;
- Structured peer/developmental observation and collaboration through "ideas exchanges", forum meetings and collaboration via team teaching, peer planning and mentoring really help colleagues persist through challenges – but aren't nearly as frequent as they would like. They are going to be particularly important in embedding L2 maths and English in vocational contexts
- Middle and senior leaders are less confident than their colleagues not least because they have more involvement in recruitment and managing the logistics and funding of the kind of professional learning and support that so many people see as being urgently needed.

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Film supporting learning



The British Film Institute (BFI) wants to help you use film to enhance your teaching and your pupils' learning. More and more teachers are using film resources in their everyday practice, and are often delighted with pupil progress. To help the system continue supporting learning through film we need to know from you how you use moving image resources or how you would like to use them, via our online survey. The link for the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F8XGZVJ>. It will just take a few minutes to complete. We can offer a

summary of the survey findings plus links to our free, downloadable resources if you leave us your email address within the survey.

If you would like to know what your students think about how film does or could help learning, email us (Deanna.coles-jordan@curee.co.uk) for the links to our student surveys. We can then send you your school's results and, later, the national profile.

Thank you for your time and thoughts!

Schools are coming back for more Route Maps!

With the big push on research informing practice, schools and colleges are finding that the quick and easy access to research summaries and enquiry tools through a Route map on their VLE is really helping teachers develop their practice. We are delighted that schools are coming back for a second generation of Route map lines to maintain momentum next year. For example Weydon school tell us that:

"When people spoke about the impact of action research in the past I always thought, sounds impressive, but expect the reality is very different! How wrong I have been. By ensuring that some of the difficulties of action research were addressed at Weydon and through the use of the CUREE route map we have some outstanding outcomes which are having a massive impact on delivery in the classroom. The staff are saying it is the best CPD they have ever had and this they attribute this

to be given time to collaboratively plan and observe practice.”

A sample Route map can be accessed via our website at: <http://www.curee.co.uk/block-content/route-maps-sample>

They seek us here, they seek us there....

The hallowed CUREE halls are even more hallowed – that is to say sepulchral – at this stage in the year as we are all out doing fieldwork in schools and colleges, speaking at conferences and exhibitions or running training events – or sunbathing while pretending to do the above (“No they’re not!” ED).

We are also increasingly busy tweeters and bloggers so follow us at any or all of the following ‘social media’ locations



Paul Crisp

CUREE Ltd

We’ve started collecting some [Twitter ‘stories here](#)



Here are some of the places you might find us either side of the summer holidays:

8/9 th July	Sutton Trust Higher Ambitions Summit
16 th July	RTI Celebration Day
17 th July	Grand Curriculum Designs Celebration Event
10-13 th September	Sweden: Teacher Competence and the Teaching Profession Symposium (organised by the Wenner Gren Foundations and The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences)
23-25 th September	BERA
25 th September	East Midlands Lesson Study Annual Conference
7 th October	The Quality Education for All Challenge (Cambridge)
21 st October	Northern Ireland SCOTENS: Always Teaching: Making the Journey Conference

And just to show what busy boys and girls we’ve been, here’s what we’ve been up to in the last few weeks:

4 th June	A piece for South Korean TV at President Kennedy School
6 th June	Warwickshire Deputy Head Teachers Conference
11-13 th June	Inspiring Leadership Conference
12 th June	Challenges in conducting randomised control trials in real world settings –ESRC seminar at DfE

18 th June	School/University Partnerships workshop
21 st June	University of Sussex, keynote at Teacher Research Conference
24 th June	Assessing the way forward conference in Leeds, Closing the Gap and panel session
30 th June	Teachers Development Trust celebration event in parliament
2 nd July	Launch of Centre Forum Report with Rt Hon. David Laws MP
3 rd July	A New Direction – Arts Education Research Discussion
3 rd July	Round Table (organised by UCU and Education and Training Foundation) on classroom observation in further education

The new FE and Skills Teacher Standards

CUREE is pleased to see that the new professional standards for further education and skills teachers place a significant emphasis on practitioner research so we have been active in responding to what this means for the sector. The twenty new standards are succinct but intended to give teachers in the sector a greater voice and autonomy to make positive changes to student learning. Philippa Cordingley and Anne Groll attended the launch event hosted by the LSRN in May, and Anne has since been blogging and contributing to the Institute for Learning's latest article in InTuition magazine. Anne commented in the article that "the 2014 standards link research and professional practice as two halves of the same coin, so that professional learning is informed by a critical evaluation of evidence" (InTuition Issue 17 Summer 2014). Read more at <http://www.curee.co.uk/new-professional-standards-%E2%80%93-worth-one-side-paper-they%E2%80%99re-written>. The 2014 Professional Standards can be found at: <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/programmes/professional-standards/>

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