



The Centre for the use of Research and Evidence in Education

E-NEWS

CUREE E-NEWSLETTER: June 2015 Edition

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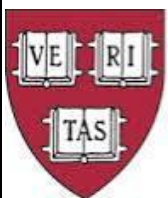


The Philippa Blog

The summer term has so far been an extreme of temperatures.

Tulips and azaleas and temperatures of 90 degrees Fahrenheit in

Harvard followed by Autumn gales in England. What has remained constant throughout is the priority given by everyone to teacher quality. I was in Harvard as part of the leadership team of a new States wide project focussed on teacher quality.



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

In addition to an intense leadership day with leaders from the big professional associations and foundations, policy makers, universities and charitable foundations, I had the privilege of participating in a 3 day Design Thinking

“convening” to ensure that whatever the project does it is understood and focused through the lens of teachers themselves. What was fascinating was the discipline of breaking off every 40 minutes to test our thinking and ideas as they emerged through the design thinking protocols with a member of the panel of paid teacher users, freed for the day to be our critical friends. Better still was the discipline and privilege of presenting our ideas and just listening silently to their responses and then reflecting on them at length. Now that was a serious generator of more user centred development!

What was puzzling was the invisibility of school leaders in both the leadership and design convening sessions. I kept on checking whether this was a misinterpretation on my part - but no. The received wisdom

was that change in America would normally be approached at District, School Board and teacher levels. On the other hand - most of the teachers I met as critical friends were immediately aware of the dangers of trying to provide support without buy in from the Principal! A very interesting stimulus for noticing how far we have travelled in this country. Our nascent "school led system" is only possible, of course, because of the intense investment in school leadership over the last eighteen years.

But it was an interesting challenge too. I am thinking hard about how often we do or should get to listen to or see classroom teachers as critical friends and drivers of change unfiltered though lens of the school. It is also making me very glad to be part of the development of support for the College of Teaching by working with Subject Association leaders on the issues and principles the college will need to explore in developing new professional standards and setting this in the context of how other countries and other sectors, including the Further Education sector, in this country approach this. I am also really looking forward to launching our new, TDT funded review of research reviews about continuing professional development and learning for teachers in the House of Commons next week. It has some new things to say about what does- and doesn't work in organising professional learning for quality for teacher, for pupils and for schools!

The Inspiring Leadership Conference 2015

Kicking off on Wednesday 10th June the conference will cover real depth and breadth, with themes including innovation, leadership, partnership, development and technology and much more, across keynote speakers, master-classes and workshops. Delegates have an unrivalled opportunity to meet their peer group, share experience and exchange views, ideas and crystallize what they will take back in to the workplace.

Inspiring Leadership
Conference 2015
10 – 12 June ICC, Birmingham

We shall be at exhibition stand 55, please do come and say hello.

The RSA

Philippa spent an amazing day at the RSA with the Pears Foundation and the research and CPD team from The Centre for Holocaust Education at IOE UCL on 2nd June. You can see the lunch time lecture and introduction to the report plus a lively conversation between Kevan Collins from EEF, Philippa, RSA fellows and participants in a symposium [here](#). Explore the Centre's approach to research here <http://www.holocausteducation.org.uk/research>



Dr Kevan Collins
Chief Executive of the
Education Endowment
Foundation



Philippa Cordingley
CEO, Centre for the Use of
Research and Evidence in
Education (CUREE)

Defending QTS in the Battle of Ideas



Toward the end of the month Philippa will be attending the Festival of Education and taking part in a debate with Toby Young, discussing whether, in the modern internet-enabled world, there is still a need for mandated qualifications of teaching.

The Festival of Education, taking place at Wellington College in Berkshire on 18-19th June, will bring together a diverse range of education practitioners, researchers, thinkers and enthusiasts to celebrate and explore developments and thinking across the field. As part of this exciting event, Philippa has been invited to engage in what will no doubt be a lively and stimulating exchange of ideas with Toby Young, the journalist and co-founder of the West London Free School. The topic under discussion: are teacher qualifications really necessary?

Philippa's contention will be that, while the internet is a phenomenally helpful tool in every teacher's arsenal both for instruction and their own learning, the evidence-base around what makes for truly transformative, exceptional teaching clearly demonstrates that there is more to teaching than subject or even pedagogic knowledge. To achieve a system which can genuinely help every student who passes through it through the consistent application of effective teaching, there is a compelling case that we should continue to support qualifications as a marker of well-trained teachers. We look forward to seeing you there!

Supporting Action Research

This month we were delighted to build on our relationship with the Girls Day School Trust (GDST) - a network of 24 independent girl schools by supporting their aim to develop an action research culture across the trust so that initiatives to raise achievement are based on established best practice.

Over 30 teachers from 21 schools in the network began the day by exploring the evidence base underpinning research/enquiry-based CPDL and were introduced to a range of resources which could support them undertaking an teaching and learning enquiry focused on improving outcomes for their students. The feedback from the teachers consistently commented on how much they value the opportunity to meet and work collaboratively with a group of colleagues, their delight in finding accessible summaries of research to inform their practice and support their planning as well as the chance to have some time and space to talk in some depth about teaching and learning issues and ways to improve practice. Common themes for enquiry include explorations around the use of technology, promoting more independent work, increasing student's ability to persist in the face of challenge as well as some subject specific focus.

Demand for this form of facilitation is increasing and in many schools we provide on-going support after such an event through the provision of either a bespoke or off the shelf route map. Consequently the summer term is populated with several writing workshops where we support teachers in the writing up of the practitioner enquiry projects undertaken through out the year. These are particularly enjoyable events for us as we get a chance to see and celebrate the professional learning that we have in a small way supported.

In the Pipeline: A Route Map for Maths

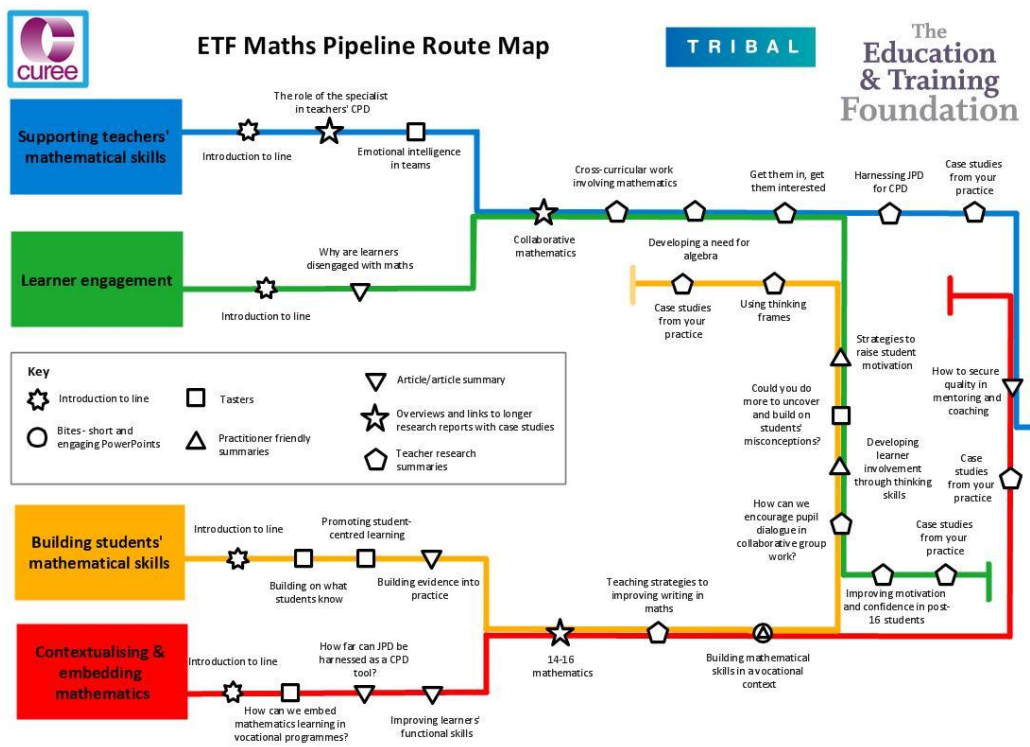
CUREE is continuing to produce research route maps both for purchase off-the-shelf and to-order. The range of topics covered in these resources continues to expand, and they remain a popular and effective means of incorporating research evidence into professional development.

CUREE has created a lot of new Route Maps in the past months – off-the-shelf, bespoke and some special purpose. We have, for instance, recently completed a route map for the Maths Pipeline project (run by NCETM for the Education and Training Foundation) which draws on research both about effective teaching and learning approaches for maths and research into the importance and effective execution of contextualising learning (and going further to truly embed teaching in the real world) for learner engagement.

Several vocational areas will benefit from the project, including hairdressing and beauty therapy, construction and built environment, hospitality and catering and health and social care. The project also includes delivery in secure settings. Our partners at Tribal have been working directly to provide training to maths specialists and vocational tutors, and their trainers can now use the Route map as a sustainable resource to support teachers deliver maths. We are now busy organising a webinar to introduce the Route map, and are hoping for some lively debate about some of the hot topics in vocational maths!

We are currently working on several more bespoke route maps covering a similarly diverse array of topics. In addition to these, we have also recently completed a route map exploring the research around supporting literacy both in English and other subjects, and there are versions tailored for both primary and secondary teaching available for purchase from our website. If you are looking to improve the research basis of your literacy strategies across all departments, give them a try!

For further information on Route Maps contact Bart@curee.co.uk



Teaching School - Modelling CPD evaluation for Alliance

We have been delighted to work with Belgrave St Bartholomew's Academy. Our Skein visit identified some impressive strengths in the Teaching School's CPD and also highlighted next steps including using a debriefing process to ensure that its own teachers reap the full benefits of the many visits from other schools.

As the leader of a large alliance Belgrave St Bartholomew's was keen to model evaluation of its CPD and open to considering how they could gain the most from the support that they offer others.

The impressive strengths identified through Skein included :

- a strong commitment to and investment in CPD.
- the appointment to the SLT of colleagues responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E). They have implemented a developmental triangulation review process which involves carrying out observations, reviews of pupil work and consultations with children. Feedback and support is given to individual colleagues. This supports the identification of CPD needs and contributes to the evaluation of CPD
- numeracy and literacy meetings which are used to let colleagues know about new developments and to provide support in experimenting with new practices.

Whilst celebrating its successes Belgrave St Bartholomew's was keen to identify how it could strengthen CPD in ways that will lead to improved pupil progress. By considering practice against evidence-based benchmarks CUREE made a number of recommendations including building on existing coaching to include opportunities for peer support within school and:

- wrapping a collaborative professional learning debriefing process for pairs or trios of Belgrave colleagues around visits by teachers from other schools. Belgrave operates an open door policy. An important next step will be considering how it can use a debriefing process to ensure its own teachers benefit as much as visiting teachers and leaders.

We were impressed to work with such a forward thinking teaching school. Belgrave St Bartholomew's were pleased with the [Skein process and report](#) and are now planning ways to take the recommendations forward as well as working with CUREE to evaluate one of their popular courses through our QR service.

To find out more about Skein please don't hesitate to contact [Rebecca Raybould](#). To find out more about QR please contact [Natalia Buckler](#)

Getting with the Zeitgeist – devolution and the leadership of education

Four FE colleges in different parts of England explored strategies for leading the local education system in preparation for greater devolution to city regions following the model started in Greater Manchester. Through the lens of various leadership methodologies (but particularly Design Thinking) our college leaders worked with key stakeholders to flag the opportunities, the challenges and some ways forward

Government's plans for the "Northern Powerhouse" around Manchester include devolving centrally managed powers and budgets – including education – to the city region. This is expected to be followed quite quickly by other regions. Our project, funded by the Education and Training Foundation, focussed on capturing key features of sector leadership geared to responding to the emerging local leadership agenda and, at the same time, testing how and/or whether leadership methodologies had anything to contribute. The approach to the project was evidence-based co-construction: the research team worked in partnership with college leaders, co-constructing the distillation of local work and the exploration of the leadership methods.

Researching the future is conceptually and practically challenging particularly when carried out in four months against the backdrop of uncertainty of an imminent general election. Everybody involved is to be congratulated on engaging in this conceptually difficult work so responsively. We used some methodologies for leadership to provide some structure and tested three – [summarised here](#).

This was a wide ranging study, despite the short time frame, which did not actively set out to reach general conclusions – but we found some anyway!

- The 'leadership models' were genuinely useful in focussing effort but the most relevant was Design Thinking
- Stakeholders recognised the importance of information, advice and guidance but wanted a much broader concept of it which included important aspects of employability
- Participants recognised that the new devolved world only worked through partnerships and that these needed a 'reservoir of relationships established through sustained engagement, shared purposes and experience of working together on real projects
- Links at governance level were rare but could cross organisational boundaries and break down silo thinking

We understand that the Foundation is intending to launch the report at an event in July. Let [us know if you would like to be notified](#) when the report is available

Supporting the School-led System – what have we learnt?

After nearly a year of working with schools in our Teaching and Learning Adviser role, we've got a better understanding of the lie of the land in school to school support. A highlight is the continued willingness of leaders and their colleagues to help their neighbours – often at considerable cost. Another is the growth of research and evidence based practice admittedly from a very low base. Still worrying is the patchy quality of much of the CPD on offer and the significant number of schools working in isolation hoping that they can get by on their own. Teacher recruitment continues to be a challenge especially in the shortage subjects and we still have to solve the conundrum that schools have close recruitment by the end of the summer term, just when potential specialist teacher trainees start thinking, albeit belatedly, about a career

Three of us in CUREE ([Paul](#), [Lisa](#) and [Jill](#)) have been working for the last year as Teaching and Leadership Advisers (TLAs) for the NCTL. acting as a kind of 'field force' for the College across our area - the West Midlands south of Birmingham - we have spent much of our time travelling around the patch meeting heads of teaching schools, School Direct directors, newly appointed heads and many others. We have worked with newly designated teaching schools helping them to flesh out their action plans and with more established teaching schools wanting an informed external critique of their strategy. A lot of our time has been spent helping School Direct (SD) providers maximise their recruitment strategies (and sorting out quite a lot of individual queries). School to school support has been the third key feature of the year with two rounds of focussed funding where we helped system leaders put bids together, supported them through the process

and then assisted in the assessment process.

At the beginning of the year, almost everything about this process was new and everybody was simultaneously figuring out how it all worked. As we approach the end of the year, we can see some things have changed, some features of the local system are very encouraging and some aspects remain work in progress:

- a major objective was to encourage and support schools to work together in a number of sub-regional and local settings. We are pleased to see SD providers working together in local networks sharing information and looking for opportunities for joint activity. One of those was the very successful local teacher recruitment day and development workshop organised and hosted by Polesworth School. Teaching schools are also coming together right across the sub-region sharing practice and building collaborative practices
- effective school-to-school support depends on those who can offer support linking up with those who need it and doing this in time to head off more drastic post-Ofsted solutions. By the end of the year, we were happy to see good linkages developing between the LA personnel (who are tracking potential problems) and teaching schools acting collectively or through a lead representative. The next step is to fold the support arrangements for academies (linking up with the Regional School Commissioner) into this system
- We have been pleased to spot useful and effective practices in one school or network (for instance, evaluation strategies) and share them with others across our part of the system. There is still work to be done to bring quite a few schools into some kind of collaborative arrangements with others – a problem particularly notable in the more rural parts of our patch
- An issue particularly close to our hearts in CUREE is the extent to which teachers' practices draw on research and evidence. This is also one of the strands of the Big Six objectives of teaching schools. So we were pleased to come across a range of examples of schools systematically building evidence-based practice into strategies. An example of this is the 'Observation for Real' approach used by schools in Coventry and Warwickshire' which uses a version of Research Lesson Study to enable teachers to learn from observation the classroom practices of others. It was also encouraging to talk to at least four schools in our area intending to apply to become Research Schools. These are encouraging signs, but we shouldn't get carried away – we are a long way short of an evidence informed profession
- We need to be similarly subdued about the CPD offer across the system. Whilst there are beacons of good practice out there, the general picture is one of incoherent and duplicated provision with too much of the stand-alone workshop one-size fits no-one model, weakly evaluated. A lot of this stems from the trajectories of school- provided CPD which begins as an in-school programme which is then offered to all comers without much adaptation to the needs of people coming from other schools. This is definitely mission not yet accomplished

Finally there is an important point about teacher recruitment. All the signs are that attracting teacher training candidates is getting tougher particularly in the shortage subjects (STEM, MFL etc). School Direct providers are getting more creative about recruitment and promotion but not enough of them are doing some of the more imaginative things to respond to the problem. So the Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) programme is not used enough despite the fact that it enables candidates without the right subject knowledge to train to teach a shortage subject. Another example - schools (and universities) close ITE recruitment in early July for the understandable reason that their selection process involves candidates interacting with students so, no students, no selection. But a significant proportion of science graduates postpone career choices until after their finals. They enter the market too late to be selected and won't wait a whole year. ITE providers who can offer a selection process into July and August are the winners here.

Fame Comes to Schools Working with CUREE

We were pleased and impressed to schools working on research with CUREE have been featured in TES Research Corner in three of the last four weeks

Following the successful implementation / execution of RTI, Johnathan Gunzi of Bentley Wood was pleased to announce that students improved their reading ability and comprehension at an accelerated rate during the period of intervention. Further information can be found [here](#).



In addition to this Jess Brownhill, a Spanish teacher at King Edward VI Sheldon Heath (KESH) Academy in Birmingham reported increased engagement, ability to learn, subject knowledge and confidence in respect of her year 8 Spanish pupils following the use of independent study. Concerned that students were finding KS4 demanding and at a danger of becoming disengaged with the subject she, along with support from CUREE developed a methodology to get students independently researching a topic relating to Spanish culture with the aim of making a presentation to the class following two weeks of independent study. As a result Jess reported that engagement, coupled with subject knowledge, confidence and ability to learn had markedly increased. A copy of the full article can be found [here](#).

Furthermore, [RLS was also featured in Research Corner](#). In an attempt to get staff at Samuel Whitbread Academy to engage in their own research and explore aspects of their work in a group setting David Hall set-up a school-wide RLS programme. The results were a success, with one teacher commenting that the RLS programme led to better planning and more sharing of ideas". This was reinforced by Assistant Principal Dave Goode who added RLS had definitely contributed to the schools evolution from a model of top down performance management to an individual-led, enquiry based system of professional development

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