



December 2012

Harnessing Knowledge to

Christmas

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Review of 2012 – keep calm and carry on!

I am a big fan of Christmas; I love all the buying presents, seeing friends and family, goose, stuffing[#], reruns of Morecambe and Wise and all the rest. But I recognise the stress embedded in the lead up to it for many colleagues and the extra squeeze on that precious and rare commodity – time! And there is more than enough sad and challenging news from home and abroad too. So this very brief Christmas e-news contains some rare good news about our education system, a small amount of updating on parts of our work and some important new research on chocolate, procrastination and the impact of inclination on perceptions*

Here are some of the recent events that have brightened my year:

- The well deserved success of Willenhall Community Primary school (where I am a governor); 63% fsm and Outstanding on every count in a recent OfSTED visit. OfSTED thought they were just satisfactory last time. I knew they were so much more. The point is not the OfSTED grading, but the fantastic work going on in the school – although the recognition is very welcome. I am so very proud to have played a small part in helping this deeply committed community of learners (both staff and pupils) on the way.
- Recent evidence from international studies from important and credible sources challenges the doom and gloom merchants as we show below.
- Every step we take, in partnership with Achievement for All in developing “Response to Intervention” based support for helping year six pupils make an effective transition to secondary and succeed in Literacy, makes us believe this is a really a) powerful approach and b) a very excitingly targeted project
- A TV show that's fundamentally about learning difficult new skills in challenging circumstances (yes.. I'm afraid I do mean Strictly) has its biggest following yet and the final promises to be keenly fought. Strictly Come teaching anyone?
- .. and to finish off with some of the pointless, amusing or just plain implausible research which only goes to show that education research may not be as poor as some would have us believe!

Have a lovely, indulgent Christmas. See you in 2013

Philippa Cordingley - Chief Executive

For a brilliant apple, coriander, ginger and chilli stuffing – and some excellent advice about CPD – see our [Sauce for the Goose leaflet here](#)

* Not really important at all – but quite amusing



Review of the year - CPD workshops

One of the pleasures of working for CUREE is the variety - reflected in the wide range of CPD activities undertaken this year as we have increased our repertoire of evidence based workshops to teachers, students and support staff across all sectors of education. It has been interesting to see which workshops are most attractive to the different audiences:

- FE and HEI in the 'Growth Mindsets' workshop.
- 'The Springboard for Learning' workshop for support staff ticks the box for FE and Secondary.
- There is a growing interest in the curriculum related workshops especially 'Challenge' amongst Primary schools.
- We are of course delighted as well as reassured that the 'Coaching and Mentoring' options are in demand across the system, as is 'Evaluating the Impact of CPD'.

Find out more about our Spring term portfolio by [clicking here](#) - this offer is very flexible and we are particularly interested in the coming year of exploring with some of you other possibilities for CPD - in particular we are considering offering a training course focused on training teachers to conduct effective evaluations of their initiatives which would include x2 events and inter-sessional coaching support. This is in response to the interest generated from our new 'Evaluation Works' service. Please contact Natalia at natalia.buckler@curee.co.uk if you are interested.

Look out for *The impact of CPD and its role in leading staff and effective teams* by Philippa Cordingley, soon to be published on the [National College for School Leadership](#) website.

United Kingdom comes 6th in Global Rankings

The UK's education system is ranked sixth best in the world, according to a global league table. Pearson's Learning Curve Programme combined performance in international test results (such as PISA) along with literacy levels and graduation rates to calculate an index for each country. As well as ranking performance, the study also highlights the features of successful education systems and concludes that 'there is no substitute for good teachers'. Successful school systems provide relevant, on-going training, give teachers a status similar to that of other respected professions and set clear goals and expectations which they let teachers get on with meeting. Visit <http://thelearningcurve.pearson.com/index/index-ranking> to find out more. [CUREE's report for Pearson](#) can help you in gaining an understanding of the international evidence about high quality professional learning.

Can coaching make a difference to vocational learning?

Previously in our e-news we mentioned a new publication which explores the potential of coaching in vocational learning. The Role of Coaching in Vocational Education and Training has now been published and is available to download from <http://www.skillsdevelopment.org/pdf/Insights-the-role-of-coaching-in-vocational-education.pdf>. Alternatively, you can view it online from [here](#)

CUREE contributed Chapter 2, reflecting on vocational coaching practice. For more information, visit www.skillsdevelopment.org

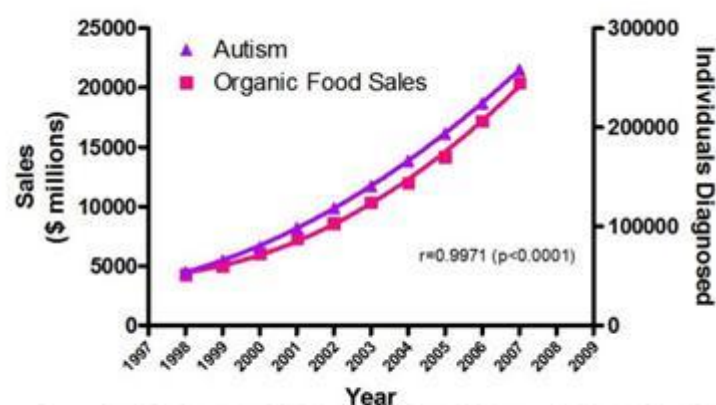
Exciting developments in CUREE's work with AfA

CUREE has worked with Achievement for All (AfA3As) since its early days as an independent charity. We are very pleased that we can now take this further forward with the support of the Education Endowment Fund (EEF), testing and trialing enhancements to the AFA programme using evidence based interventions known as Response to Intervention.

Visit <http://www.curee.co.uk/our-projects/curee-and-achievement-all> for more information.

Dodgy statistics #19 (or 'stuff I found on the internet')

An alleged correlation between organic food sales and autism (note – sources NOT checked)



Sources: Organic Trade Association, 2011 Organic Industry Survey; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), CMB# 1820-0043. *Children with Disabilities Receiving Special Education Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The 'He Would Wouldn't He' Prize or 'I'll procrastinate when I can get round to it'

Those of us who have trouble getting Round Twits, will be pleased to see our natural tendencies enshrined in a theory - John Perry's *Theory of Structured Procrastination*. An Ig Nobel Prize-winner in 2011, the best bit of the 'theory' is where it says that high achievers "always work on something important, using it as a way to avoid doing something that's even more important." Read an earlier article about this [here](#)

Pointless Research Numero Due

Here is an [Ig Nobel](#) winner which seemed to demonstrate that:

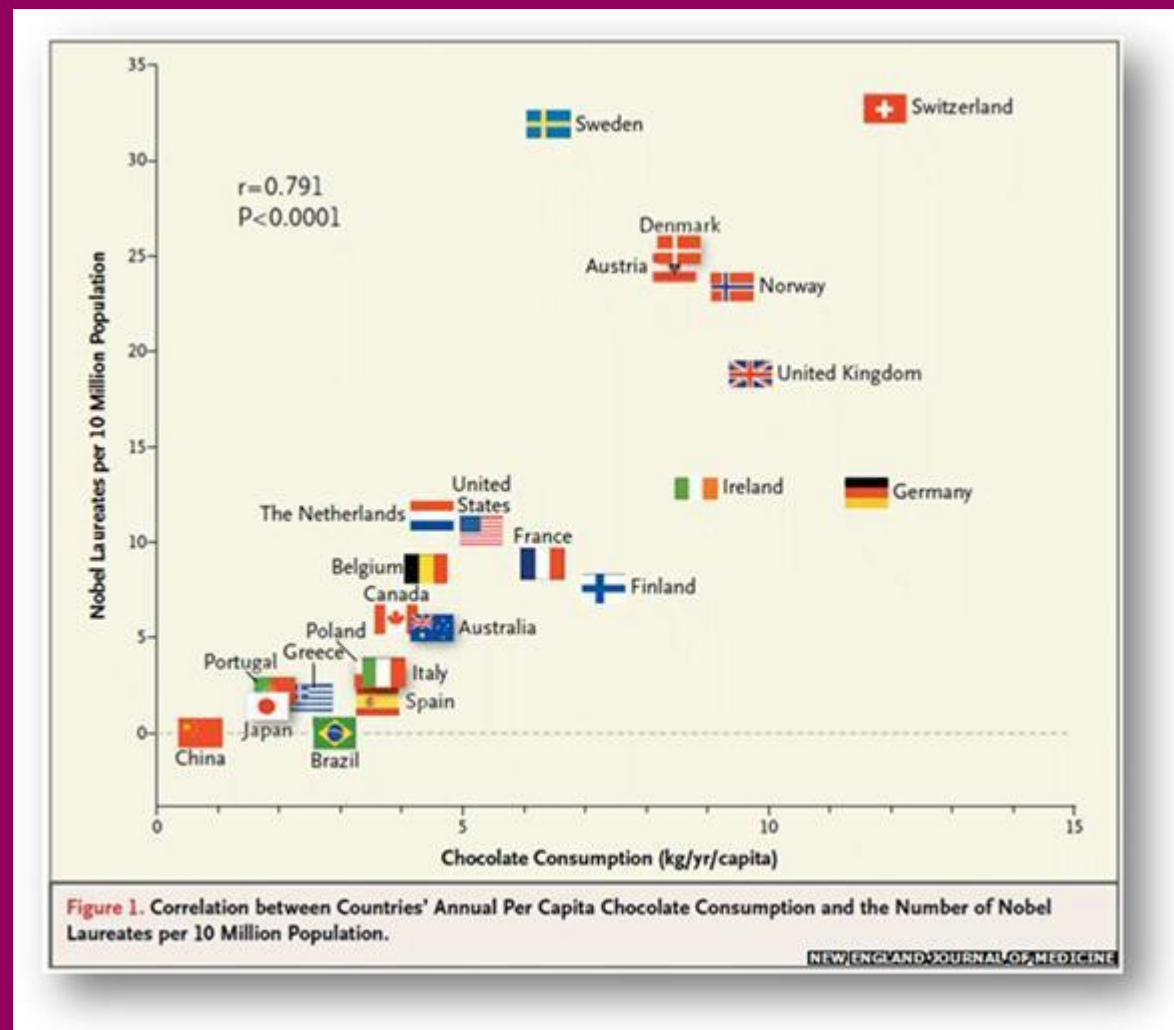
- if you lean over when looking at the Eiffel Tower, it seems smaller and;
- leaning one way has more impact than leaning the other.

The great thing about these research reports is that they are real and in earnest. This one is published in the Journal of Psychological Science ([abstract here](#))

The correlation between chocolate consumption and number of Nobel prize winners per capita

We enjoyed this excellent justification for eating a lot of chocolate this Christmas!

Read the article at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-20356613>



Picture from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-20356613>

So have a very Merry Christmas, eat plenty of chocolate and who knows, that elusive Nobel Prize could be yours!



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