



Christmas 2013 Enewsletter

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A Christmas Carol Philippa

Three cheers for the brilliant KS3 students and their KS4 and 5 leaders at RSA Academy Tipton for their joyful and irreverent Robin Wood (yes, Wood, not Hood) Panto. A brilliant aperitif for festivities to come and a great conversation topic at a very thoughtful international meeting reflecting on the PISA results I attended at the Finnish Ambassador's house. Have you ever tried explaining the core of the pantomime tradition to people from several other countries?

Actually 'pantomime' is a pretty good way of describing the diversity of our education "system" and the rapidity and nature of some recent education developments to international colleagues. Changes to initial teacher education were simply inconceivable to the Finns I talked to - because they see teacher education as being fundamentally about developing practice and theory side by side.

My colleagues at CUREE and I wish you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

Philippa Cordingley
Chief Executive

Work for CUREE

If you like the sound of our work (or even our Xmas descants) you might like to come and sing with us (NB this is a metaphor: we don't have a choir!)—or know someone who would. **We are currently recruiting to two exciting new posts.** Rebecca Raybould is leaving us to start an adopted family. We are thrilled for her and for her new family and will, of course miss her. But we are proud of what she is doing and looking forward to hearing about their adventures in building a family together! It means we are looking for a Senior Research Informed Practice Manager and also a mainstream Research Informed Practice Manager as another young colleague has secured a promotion. We will miss her too but expect out bright young colleagues to go on use the skills developed here to good effect in the wider world as they lay a foundation for their careers. [Here](#) is the job description.

The Weirder World of Research

CUREE prides itself on its familiarity with current research. An inevitable by-product of this is that occasionally we come across some rather strange findings. So we doff our caps to the winners of the [2013 Ig Nobel Prize for Improbable Research](#). Particular respect must go to Masateru Uchiyama, Xiangyuan Jin, Qi Zhang, Toshihito Hirai, Atsushi Amano, Hisashi Bashuda and Masanori Niimi for their tireless work investigating the effect of listening to classical opera on heart transplant patients - who are mice!



RLS

We were very excited this week to meet and work with the 50 or so teachers and leaders involved in the Research Lesson Study to Close the Gap pilot programme for a second time in a fortnight. All the participants had carried out at least one research lesson within the short gap between the first and second training sessions and arrived replete with videos, pupil surveys and work, ready to debrief their shared learning in the light of evidence.

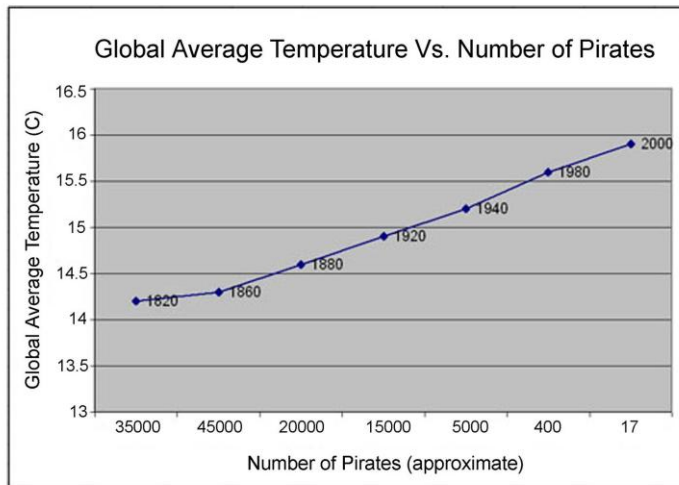
Working within school teams and sharing experiences across schools and phases everyone



was equally fascinated, and sometimes concerned about what they were learning about the experiences of the RHINO (Really Here In Name Only) pupils who we are focussing on in the training phase. What we especially value is their willingness to wrestle with us in balancing the tensions between things that are crucial to RLS and to closing the gap. Everyone is trying out approaches and refining them through a sequence of research lessons and debriefing. But some schools will be trying out an approach which is centred around research-based literacy interventions and others are exploring approaches developed within the schools and by the teachers. Watch this space to see what we can learn about both ways going forward.

Correlation vs Causation- A Case Study

STOP GLOBAL WARMING: BECOME A PIRATE



WWW.VENGANZA.ORG

One of the hardest parts of research at scale is determining with sufficient confidence what the causes of an observed change are. A common mistake is to presume that correlation must mean causation. Enjoy this illustration of the risks in this approach, whilst reflecting on the importance of diversity and the many perspectives it can give rise to.

From the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster

News from CUREE

ETF

Within the past 3 months CUREE has been slaving away on proposals for new work. So we are delighted to announce that we are working with the newly-created Education and Training Foundation to design and implement an evaluation Framework for the ETF's work underpinned by what we know about what makes a difference in education and training. CUREE will be working hard to bring our experience and knowledge about planning and carrying out illuminating and cost-effective evaluation in a broad variety of different areas. If your organisation is interested in working with CUREE to get a concise, clear picture of how its professional development or education/training is doing and how it can improve, email natalia.buckler@curee.co.uk.

SKEIN's Silver Anniversary

OK – we haven't actually been running our SKEIN service for 25 years but this is a milestone month in the life of SKEIN, as we are now finalising the report of our 25th SKEIN review. It also marks the 4th SKEIN report CUREE has done for an FE College, and the first FE College SKEIN review following our trial of it in collaboration with the 157 Group.



[SKEIN](#) is CUREE's CPD evaluation service for schools and colleges. Based on the best international evidence about effective CPD, we will provide you with an evidence rich multi-dimensional review of where your CPD is working, and recommendations for development; we know that OfSTED have accepted SKEIN reports as evidence about commitment to rigour and determination to avoid complacency in schools that have chosen to share them with inspectors. For more information, contact Natalia Buckler at natalia.buckler@curee.co.uk, or phone 024 7652 4036

Invest in effective professional development and learning

We know that the quality of teaching is at the heart of all school improvement – and we know what forms of CPD can produce big benefits for teachers and students. You might find this checklist helpful in considering the depth and quality of professional learning over the next two terms. Are you?

- Using of specialist expertise especially via research evidence -and
- Peer support and professional dialogue rooted in evidence from trying out new approaches
- Learning to learn from looking – focused enquiry/ observation skills
- Using aspirations for pupils as a starting point
- Developing theory and practice side by side
- Developing and using professional learning/enquiry tools
- Giving teachers an active role in their professional learning – (within a table d'hôte menu)
- Using leaders to recognise and model professional learning?

If not, why not invest in one of our workshops which are based on the international evidence about effective CPD? Our core programme is [here](#) or we can easily design bespoke programmes for you.

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NB- CUREE moves offices in January, see our website for details

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