



The Centre for the use of Research and Evidence in Education

E-NEWS

CUREE E-NEWSLETTER: November 2016 Edition

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The Philippa Blog

The start of the new academic year has flown past. In the wider world it feels as though it is only five minutes since the rowan berries were the only red in the landscape but at the weekend I spent a day glorying in Autumn's ubiquitous scarlet and golden hues. The change in CUREE's working world feels similarly rapid. I am trying hard not to get distracted by things that make me see red, like the grammar school nonsense!

What has struck me most about the start of the year have been the growing links people are making between school improvement and Continuing Professional Development and Learning (CPDL). This was a core theme throughout the workshop we held at the RSA for the CPD Expert Group to work with leaders from across the system. The Expert Group wanted to know what kinds of things system leaders want them to do in relation to the CPD Standard. There were lots of ideas around the need to clarify the Standard's position as a significant driver of school improvement and to give it some substance and teeth through;

- an awareness raising campaign;
- illustrations of effective practices; and
- supporting the evaluation of the use and impact of the standard within schools and at system level.



Step one might be to capture the brilliant case studies presented during the workshop. Dawn Rogers from Holy Rosary Teaching school alliance and Kathryn Morgan from Coleshill Heath Junior and Infants School were particularly compelling in the way they brought these issues to life. Dawn offered an impressive account of her schools' evidence-rich approaches to CPDL sustained and deepened cumulatively over time to ensure they contribute coherently and in measurable ways to school improvement. That all the schools in her Teaching School Alliance are now using research route maps (developed by CUREE) to deepen, sustain and evaluate CPD's contribution to school improvement is testimony to the school's ambitious expectations about CPD. Kathryn also brought out brilliantly the way that insisting on depth in CPD whilst encouraging colleagues who have hitherto experienced only a thin diet of instruction and show and tell has paid dividends in turning around the fortunes of several schools and their pupils. You can catch a flavour of the work on the day though [the live streaming of our evening panel session](#) and from the short summary of a case study of Holy Rosary's work from our [Case Study Newsletter](#).



The importance of the links between CPD and school improvement also shone out throughout our follow up visit to Halifax Academy to identify and celebrate progress since our first visit as part of our research about gaining and sustaining momentum in school improvement ([which you can read more about here](#)). The whole school "five to drive" Teaching and Learning policy was the focus of early experiments and Leading Edge practice when we first visited. Now we saw signs that many of its building blocks are being embedded with increasing confidence in almost all subjects, and particularly across the impressive "Accelerator unit" where year 7 and 8 students who are vulnerable have a chance catch up and master core skills and knowledge working with a smaller number of teachers who combine both primary and secondary pedagogy skills. If you missed the launch of this new report and the linked blogs [you can access those here](#). You can also see a [live streamed introductory workshop from ResearchEd 2016](#) here.



Look out for the questions from the floor during the ResearchED session. I was particularly struck by one colleague's comment about just how addictive fire fighting can be; when we see people struggling, the temptation to rush in and help is enormous. The addictive dangers of fire fighting hadn't struck me so clearly before – although we saw plenty of it in schools working hard to achieve momentum. What the

strong and exceptional schools were doing to counteract this was taking serious and structured steps to align curriculum, school and professional development; which helped all colleagues in the school understand and believe in the improvement plan, creating an aligned and therefore virtuous circle of effort helped to make scarce resources go further. Collaborative planning of schemes of learning and

careful evaluation of impact as tools for planning next steps fit with the rhythm and pattern of teachers' daily lives and so are convincing to teachers as driver of effective CPDL as well as school improvement. Aligning school improvement, curriculum development and CPDL is particularly key in a time of externally imposed change; one that increases everybody's sense of direction of professional agency.

Philippa Cordingley

SKEIN Momentum - the CUREE/ASCL School Improvement Service Goes Live



SKEIN Momentum is a diagnostic and development process which enables schools where progress has stalled to gain or regain momentum. Since announcing the new service - which is delivered by a partnership of CUREE and ASCL - at the Inspiring Leaders conference in the summer, colleagues in the two organisations have been beavering away putting together the detail. Consultants have been trained and protocols, documents and tools created or updated. Now the service is a reality and we are all geared up to offer it to schools.

So if you feel that your progress has plateaued, you've lost momentum, then talk to us about how SKEIN Momentum can get you back on the path to exceptional learning experiences and results. Trialled in 26 schools many operating in challenging environments, the SKEIN Momentum system works for you whether you are in measures, are borderline outstanding or any position in between. It is especially relevant to small and mid-size multi-academy trusts and federations.

Want to know more about how the SKEIN Momentum service can help you and your school? Talk to us at ASCL (contact ASCL Professional Development on **0116 2991122** or at pd@ascl.org.uk) or CUREE (**024 7652 4036** or by email at Gillian.sheail@curee.co.uk) or [visit the website](#).

Paul Crisp

Quality Professional Resources for Further Education

The Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) accreditation, offered by the Society for Education and Training (SET), is a means by which Further Education teachers/lecturers can demonstrate that they have completed a demanding programme to demonstrate the capacity to make effective use of skills and knowledge in professional practice. We at CUREE have been delighted to contribute to towards the accreditations continued development through the recently authored 'QTLS Resource Map'.

The latest iteration of the QTLS accreditation is supported by a number of IT aids, including an e-Portfolio and the Resource Map created by CUREE. Working in partnership with SET, CUREE has taken its experience and knowledge of developing materials to make high quality research findings available to and useable by teachers and applying it to the professional standards which underpin the QTLS accreditation. The effect of this will be to provide FE teachers and lecturers with a simple and user-friendly digital resource which allows them to view and use carefully designed resources to explore the evidence behind the QTLS professional standards as they work towards achieving QTLS.

To find out more about the Resource Map or the Research Route Map suite of resources it was based upon, contact bart.crisp@curee.co.uk or call on **024 7652 4036**. To find out more about QTLS, [visit the SET website](#).

Bart Crisp

Newsflash to West Midlands Readers – Help Design New Leadership Programmes!

What's the problem?



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In 2010 there were a total of 450 Executive Heads in England. We don't have accurate figures for the number now but we know there are at least 66 leaders with that or a

similar title in our region alone. Alongside this we see a dramatic increase in the numbers of Deputy Heads being catapulted into headship positions with little notice or preparation. Again, numbers are uncertain but we know of at least 40 in just two of the region's LA areas. Lastly, the TSC regional strategy board recognised the need for some development opportunities for leaders they describe as 'Middle System Leaders' - a group which includes Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) but extends to other leaders doing a similar job (within a multi-academy trust for instance) but without the formal accreditation.

As the number of Heads in charge of more than one school has increased, the role has grown even more diverse. And, in the West Midlands at least, people consulted by the regional Teaching Schools Council felt that they had few opportunities to prepare or develop themselves in the role. Similar issues emerged around the Deputy/Acting Heads. SLEs and other Middle System Leaders needed support beyond the initial induction.

Supporting the development of leaders in the region

So Richard Gill on behalf of the West Midlands TSC submitted a proposal to the National College's 'Targeted Support Fund' to create some local programmes for Executive Head and 'Unprepared Head' development and that bid has been successful. A distinctive feature of these programmes is that they will be co-designed with the intended participants. That exercise kicks off with an on-line survey which in turn feeds in to a number of 'specification and design' invitation workshops in November and December.

What should you do?

So, if you are a leader in the region, and particularly if you are an Executive Head, an Acting Head or a Middle System Leader, please fill out one or more of the online surveys listed below. If you know people in one of those roles, please encourage them to complete the survey. The fuller the response the better we will be able to fit the programmes to the needs. The survey will also give you the opportunity to say if you would like to be further involved in the development process.

Executive Heads – <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ExecHeadSurvey>

Unprepared Heads - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/UnprepHeads>

Middle System Leaders - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MidSysLeaders>

CUREE is working with Kelvin Peel, West Midlands Teaching School co-ordinator and Richard Gill and his regional TSC colleagues in supporting these developments.

Paul Crisp

CUREE Managing Director

(and formerly Teaching and Leadership Adviser West Midlands)

New Faces (could yours be one of them?)

CUREE are thrilled to welcome a new Research Manager to the CUREE offices in the form of Dr Tom Perry, who joins from the University of Birmingham where he also retains the role of visiting lecturer on the MA School Improvement and Educational Leadership programme. Tom has already made great contributions to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Teacher Development Fund Evaluation and the Education International Study into Teacher Professional Identity projects, and all at CUREE look forward to working with him further.



If you have a passion for cutting-edge, research-informed CPDL then CUREE could soon be welcoming you too! Applications are currently open for a Professional Learning Manager/Senior Manager for an enthusiastic, driven individual looking to make a difference in research and evidence led school improvement. ***Find out more and apply here.***

Joe Askew

Contact Us

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