

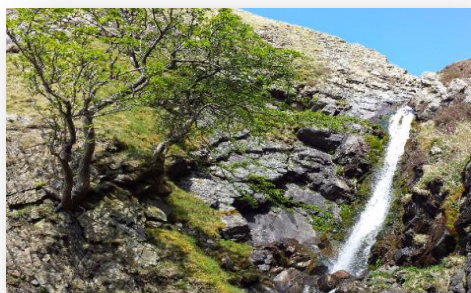


The Centre for the use of Research and Evidence in Education

# E-NEWS

CUREE E-NEWSLETTER: March 2017 Edition

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## The Philippa Blog

March already! January seems to go on forever but then February passes in a flash. And with the welcome emergence of spring flowers we are seeing another flourishing – of evidence informed practice and policy.

So the start of 2017 brought some intense work weaving research and evidence informed practice and policy into school improvement at scale and in partnership with both the **GWE** school improvement cluster in North Wales and with the dynamic **Right to Succeed** Charity and secondary schools of Blackpool. There are a number of aspirations and concerns that these two quite diverse areas share:



- Both organisations are committed to building the capacity of middle and senior leaders to engage with and make use of evidence both from within the school and from wider research.
- Both see the need to complement quantitative data about pupil progress with other, broader and more qualitative forms of evidence.
- Both are determined that any new strategies and approaches being tried should be critically evaluated in relation to the likelihood that they will meet the needs that have been identified and the aspirations that teachers and leaders have for the learning of their pupils.
- Both have identified Champions of innovation (Challenge Advisers, Subject leads and Pioneer Heads in North Wales and Right to Succeed Champions in Blackpool).

We work with Champions and pioneers to identify the teaching, learning and curriculum challenges where engaging in and with research is likely to help teachers and leaders most. We help them explore the research about use of research and CPDL and we are creating interactive, online **Research Route Maps** that colleagues use to personalise support to the teachers and leaders they work with. The Route Maps don't just distil the really useful evidence relevant to their work; they provide micro enquiry tools – drawn from powerful research - which teachers and leaders can use to help them simply and quickly uncover evidence about their own pupils' learning,

trying out something new in a low risk formative way.

You can see from the picture below how immersed colleagues are in the research route maps once they get them. “I get it now” and “ahh now I can see how to make this part of day to day practice” were common responses.



There are some important policy infrastructure differences here, for instance in response to the question “what approaches to diagnostic needs assessment and establishing a baseline from which to evaluate the effectiveness for support for research and evidence based practice work for us in our context?”. In Blackpool OFSTED is a strong and continuing presence and the high stakes accountability system prevails. We have complemented this through our SKEIN Momentum evaluation tool and Right to Succeed’s extensive pupil and school stakeholder evidence, with a series of reports that paint a baseline picture of the capacity for gaining momentum for school improvement. As one head teacher in Blackpool crisply remarked “this report is excellent – thank you very much”!

In North Wales there is an extensive, evidence- rich approach to co-constructing education reform which includes the extensive “categorisation” process that blends evidence about outcomes and evaluation of leadership capacity for improvement through open dialogue between schools and Challenge Advisers. This results in an agreed statement of learning where a school sits on its improvement journey and the kinds of support needed which in turn feeds into School-led, cluster-based school to school support and also, where appropriate, support from the local authority. This is an approach that Andreas Schleicher from OECD was praising extensively in his presentation to all the Welsh Secondary heads last week. “Categorisation” was met with considerable concern and resistance when it started out last year but seems to be emerging as a largely positive process this year. You might be interested to note that in addition to this OECD said that the Welsh government seem now to be in a similar position to that in which Ontario found itself in the early stages of its reforms some ten years ago; a promising precedent. Ontario is famous for its 15 year research and evidence informed approach to education quality – and its success!

Back in England, we are pleased to see the College of Teaching beginning both to generate considerable support from the profession and to begin to put together some practical resources to deliver on its mission including “Enabling teachers to connect with rigorous research and evidence”. The Foundation for Leadership in Education’s Research Council (which I chair) held its first meeting at the end of February reaching a unanimous view that part of its role is to support and provoke interest in and efforts to fill gaps in research into the rapidly changing world of school leadership.

Finally, at government level, we are beginning to see more connections being made between funding opportunities and the new CPD Standard. This will be explicit in the new Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund, announced by the **Secretary of State** in her speech to the Chartered College of Teaching and is implicit in the new specifications for the revised National Professional Qualifications.

My colleagues have put together some more information about some of these developments – and a few others – which are keeping us busy in CUREE. I hope you find them interesting and do get in touch if you'd like to know more.

**Philippa Cordingley**

## Action Learning gets the thumbs up

Who'd have thought that a coaching approach inspired by the Titanic disaster would go down so well with a group of West Midlands schools leaders? The two **leadership programmes** being piloted by CUREE for the Teaching Schools' Council got up and running in February when the first late afternoon sessions were held. Co-constructed with leaders in the region, the programmes emphasise experiential learning. They recognise that the participants already know a lot so the sessions are designed to maximise the way they can support and learn from each other. As well as conventional specialist and co-coaching the short twilight sessions, held every three weeks, use the Action Learning Set methodology to help each 'problem owner' in the Set get to the bottom of a real issue in their leadership role. Each person in the Action Learning Set looked at his or her unique issue but, as you might expect, so common ones began to emerge – for instance, clarity of role definition - from which CUREE has been able to round up some additional relevant resources to supplement the expertise already within the group. We've also lined up some expert contributors to extend the group's existing expertise.



But, you ask, what's the connection with the Titanic? **Reg Revans**, who devised Action Learning Sets, was inspired by his father's exploration of the mystery of the Titanic sinking. His recognition that an open minded and collective exploration of what goes wrong was essential to preventing future failure was further reinforced by his experience of scientists' frank and forensic peer review processes in Cambridge's Cavendish Laboratory. Revans described the weekly seminars there, where to speak one had to confirm that your research was not going as well as you hoped, as somewhere you became skilled in describing "one's very ignorance". He developed the Action Learning Set process to provide an environment in which real

problems could be openly but confidentially explored. His widespread deployment of this process in war damaged Belgium is credited with impacting on that country in the way that **J Edwards Deming** did on Japan.

The Accelerator Heads group meets again next Monday and the Executive Heads group later in the week. If you are interested in participating, the current round is closed for applicants but we are expecting to open recruitment for the next one very soon. Dates are not yet fixed but will begin in June. Contact [Pearce.brannigan@curee.co.uk](mailto:Pearce.brannigan@curee.co.uk) for more information.

**Paul Crisp**

## Using evidence to support school improvement in Blackpool

CUREE have been collaborating with **Right To Succeed**, a charity which aims to eliminate the effects of child poverty and system failure on young people's achievement, as part of R2S' pilot in Blackpool. The aim of the pilot is to demonstrate that a dedicated programme targeting an area experiencing widespread socio-economic disadvantage can have a positive impact at the local level (as opposed to on an individual school basis).

CUREE's role in this pilot is to support Right To Succeed's approach with evidence-based evaluation methods, and providing tools and resources to underpin the work Right To Succeed is doing with schools in the area. The initial visits for nearly all participating schools have been completed and CUREE has developed a Research Route Map to support participating schools and staff. If you would like to draw on CUREE's services either for school

improvement or for accessing evidence-rich resources to support teachers, please [visit our website](#) or get in touch via email at [bart.crisp@curee.co.uk](mailto:bart.crisp@curee.co.uk).

**Bart Crisp and Niamh McMahon**



# RIGHT TO SUCCEED

## GwE North Wales - making a difference through the learning of educators

We at CUREE are thrilled to have the pleasure of working alongside some truly wonderful Subject Leaders and Challenge Advisors in North Wales. Through the implementation of a bespoke Research Route Map and structured CPDL sessions, the team are already seeing exciting results.

This exciting opportunity presented itself after CUREE was approached by the Welsh Government to assist in guiding the learning of educators in North Wales. While being treated to a stunning view of the Welsh coast in Llandudno, the CUREE team were helping two teams, one of Challenge Advisors and the other of Subject leads to:

- develop long term capacity in skills for accessing and using evidence about effectiveness;
- access and make use of research to enhance and accelerate pupil progress and school improvement; and
- evaluate potential strategies and subsequently design implementation that links their own and their students' learning and finally track these results



An initial visit delved into the specific issues faced by the participants themselves and the areas in which they wish to focus their enquiry. This feedback was carefully analysed and used to decide the focus, and thus ensure the bespoke nature, of this Research Route Map. Through the use of this Research Route Map and training sessions based heavily on the research around effective CPDL, the group of Subject Leads and Challenge Advisors are creating their own research enquiry relevant to their specific area of focus.

Having seen the enthusiasm these leaders work with and hearing some of the initial enquiry plans, we know this is going to continue to be a very exciting project!

If you are interested in or would like to know more about our bespoke Research Route Maps, please contact [bart.crisp@curee.co.uk](mailto:bart.crisp@curee.co.uk) If you are interested in any aspect of our CPDL delivery, please contact [niamh.mcmahon@curee.co.uk](mailto:niamh.mcmahon@curee.co.uk)

**Niamh McMahon**

## Research Resources to Support the Chartered College of Teaching

We at CUREE are delighted to be working with the recently formed Chartered College of Teaching. The organisation aims to support teachers to continually develop their knowledge and expertise to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. As a voluntary, teacher-led organisation the College supports professional development, promotes and shares evidence-informed practice, and will recognise excellence. Together with the college, we are using our extensive resource bank to tailor and fine tune research resources that meet their overall objectives and specifications.

The first set of research resources on which we are working cover two initial themes, namely teaching as a learning profession and the role of feedback in assessment. Once completed, these will then be uploaded to The Chartered College of Teaching website for all their active members to use. The College has been consulting teachers about areas of their practice in which they would find future evidence based resources useful.

To find out more about CUREE services in turning research into practitioner friendly resources, please [visit our](#)

[website](#) or get it touch via email at [nariah.francis@curee.co.uk](mailto:nariah.francis@curee.co.uk).

**Nariah Francis and Miranda Bell**

## ResearchED Ashlawn

Following a hugely successful event in the June of last year, CUREE are proud to have been invited to partner with Ashlawn School in Rugby as they host a West Midlands ResearchED conference on the 1st July.

Building on 2016's bustling day of presentations, workshops and speakers (including an opening keynote from the newly appointed Chief Executive of the Chartered College of Teaching, Professor Dame Alison Peacock), organiser Jude Hunton plans to include presentations from secondary colleagues in Maths, English and Science as well as speakers discussing research, leadership, data and behaviour in the education system.



**Dame Alison Peacock delivers a keynote at ResearchED Rugby 2016**

Director of the New Schools Network Toby Young, "Learning Spy" Author David Didau and blogger Tom Bennet have already been confirmed as guest speakers, and CUREE colleagues hope to be featured in what will without doubt be an exciting programme. Stay tuned in to [@researchED1](#) and [@judehunton](#) to find out more as details are finalised!

**Joe Askew**

## New faces and upcoming opportunities

We're pleased to have welcomed a new member to the CUREE team in the form of Niamh Mc Mahon, our new Senior Professional Learning Manager.

Niamh joins us from her previous roles as Learning and Development Manager and Secondary Maths teacher. Niamh's hit the ground running making strong contributions to the Right to Succeed, GwE and TSC Leadership Programmes projects as well helping to coordinate our marketing efforts.

You too could be featuring in the next edition of Enews, as CUREE are currently accepting applications for the roles of Business and Development Manager and Project and Marketing Coordinator. If you're interested in joining our friendly team [find out more and apply here](#).



**Joe Askew**

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