



Newsletter - April 2011

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More Good Teachers

I have just finished reading the Policy Exchange's paper entitled 'More Good Teachers', a review of how we can build a system where we **do** have **all** good teachers. Naturally, the section on CPD interested me greatly as it highlighted the very nature and ethos of the work we do with schools, colleges and other educational providers across the nation. The authors argue that CPD should be at the heart of the strategy for improvement in teaching and learning and that coaching and mentoring for and by practising teachers is the most powerful tool for ensuring a learning culture exists and that teachers continue to become experts in their craft. The paper argues that one off, one day courses have little or no impact unless they are followed up and the learning shared and built upon as part of the strategic aims of the organisation.

This approach is precisely the one we have developed to ensure that the training and development programmes that we offer equip those who attend with the knowledge, skills and tools that they can use to cascade these to others following the training and begin to develop a culture that is built on reflecting on what works well, sharing new ideas and effective resources and developing strategies for creating high quality teaching and learning across the whole organisation.

Current policy embraces the need to ensure we have well trained and talented teachers. Whether the emphasis is firmly on strong subject knowledge, a skills focused learning platform or a thematic approach to learning it is undoubtedly 'how' we teach and 'how' learners learn that will ensure success. A deep understanding of pedagogy, what works well in the classroom, what strategies do lead to progression and achievement for all learners is fundamental. Where there is dialogue and a sharing of ideas through a clearly defined CPD strategy that is linked closely to organisational and individual targets there is a significant shift in performance of the organisation, the teacher and the learner.

Coaching Towards Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Putting coaching at the heart of developing a strategy where the key aim is raising the quality of teaching and learning can and does work. Whether the goal is to remain good or outstanding, aspire to be good or outstanding or return to being good or outstanding in the eyes of OFSTED the secret is to create a culture where teachers talk to each other about the qualities that exude from an inspirational lesson.

Teachers need to learn from each other the skills and qualities that lead to a learning environment where they know how well each individual learner is progressing and how each learner understands how they learn and how they can articulate how they are moving towards achieving and exceeding their own challenging and stretching targets.

Coaching is about reflection and the instinctive desire to share good practice, what works well

and the resources that help to make this happen. Coaching is about experiential learning, seeking answers and striving for continuous improvement. Mistakes are jewels that form the basis for discussion, a motivational dialogue that builds on the learning and the experience and moves the individual towards their own self belief in the pursuance of excellence.

We work with your teachers to:-

- Understand what outstanding means
- Focus on active pedagogy that helps learners achieve their full potential
- Reflect on their own practice and what they know creates a culture of excellence and improvement in how they facilitate the learning process
- Develop a range of coaching skills that will foster a continuous professional development process that is cascaded across the whole organisation

Glynis Frater

Glynis Frater, Learning Cultures

Training events this term - click for more info

- [Harnessing Achievement at Key Stage 3](#)
- [Raising Achievement at Key Stage 4](#)
- [Success Through Performance Management](#)
- [Developing a Foundation Learning Programme](#)
- [From Alpha to Omega – Making Language Matter across the Curriculum](#)
- [Embedding Functional Skills -](#)
- [What Makes an Outstanding Teacher?](#)
- [Maths in Context - Making Curriculum Connections](#)
- [Coaching towards Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Functional Skills - Planning for Success with Post 16 Learners](#)
- [The Effective use of ICT in a 21st Century Curriculum](#)

New for The Summer
Term

[Our Summer Conference](#)

Our Summer Conference – Crossing the Bridge from Key Stage 2 to 3

Following on from our very successful series of events focusing on the transition process from Key Stage 2 to 3 we are hosting a conference to bring together the wealth of ideas and good practice that exists around the country. We hope to attract teachers and their primary transition partners so that they have the opportunity to review their own practice and take away ideas to enhance and improve the process. We have excellent key note speakers and a range of workshops that look at all aspects of the transition process including pastoral support, teaching and learning, curriculum design, data management and induction.

Literacy, Numeracy and ICT

We have three brand new training events linked to improving literacy, numeracy and ICT.

There is no doubt that whatever the new curriculum looks like and however vocational education is shaped to satisfy its current critics ensuring higher levels of literacy and numeracy and greater competence and mastery of complex ICT skills will be high on the agenda. Creating an environment where the responsibility of teaching the core is every teachers responsibility and identifying where the concepts are being put into contexts across every subject is totally compelling and can have a significant impact on improving GCSE English, Maths and ICT scores as well as providing learners with analytical and evaluative skills that can support improved results across all subjects.

We have worked with a number of schools who have developed initiatives that ask department leaders to review the Functional Skills specifications and the Personal, Learning and Thinking skills and develop curriculum maps that show where there are links and duplications and how all teachers can work more closely together to allow learners to see the connections, develop unconscious competence in how they use these skills and become adept at problem solving, creative thinking and learn the skills that help them to become autonomous and independent learners. This has led to the design of three new courses.

Maths in Context

An opportunity for teachers to focus on number and how it is used across the curriculum in all subjects and how to support learners in making connections and develop high level numeracy skills that they can apply in a range of contexts.

From Alpha to Omega – Literacy across the Curriculum

Of course literacy and English language are a part of the whole curriculum, but how often do subjects other than English emphasise the importance of language in providing learners with the tools that lead to successful learning outcomes and improved exam or coursework performance. We look at how to help learners develop a range of skills that will open minds and improve learning.

Designing an ICT Curriculum for the 21st Century

We have some fascinating tools and techniques to help teachers use ICT more effectively as a learning aid. This course is designed to introduce teachers to the real power ICT holds to engage and enable learners.

Foundation Learning

Our current programme of events for teachers who are planning a programme for learners who are not able to achieve even a G at GCSE and therefore working at Entry level or those who are not able to achieve an A* to C and are therefore working at level 1 have been and continue to be well received.

We focus on how to build a really effective curriculum model using the QCF and how teachers and their support staff can weave in the personal, social development work as well as how to best integrate Functional skills. The Foundation Learning Programme is a powerful framework for progression allowing all learners to achieve their full potential.

Embedding Functional Skills – Enhancing Learning

Is literacy and numeracy at the heart of teaching and learning in every curriculum area in your

organisation? If not the chances are come next summer (2012) GCSE results in English and Maths may well fall. The new GCSEs have a functional element attached to them which means that the exams have some very different questions that require the candidate to apply problem solving techniques in a range of unfamiliar contexts and situations.

Functional Skills have been introduced into the curriculum offer from September 2010 and explicitly set out the kinds of skills and learning processes learners need to be able to use number, ICT and communication skills unconsciously in a variety of unfamiliar and increasingly complex situations.

Learning the concepts is most definitely not enough in this new dawn and it is astonishing how few teachers and their managers really understand the consequences of these changes or how easy it is to create an environment where learners develop these skills and teachers can demonstrate good to outstanding teaching and learning. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are all teachers' responsibility. No learning takes place without the use of words and numbers.

Competence comes with practice and opportunities for learners to see the connections between their learning across all curriculum areas. If every teacher has access to the Functional Skills specifications maps their lesson plans and schemes of work to show where they are helping learners practice their skills and highlight to the learner the skills they are practicing and mastering the concepts they learn in maths, English and ICT will have meaning and they will have a far greater chance of being able to apply them in a range of contexts.

Every English, Mathematics and ICT teacher should be clamouring at the doors of subject leaders and asking for support for a fully integrated approach to embedding literacy and numeracy and creating a learning environment that will mean high levels of success in English and Maths GCSEs next summer.

Download the Functional Skills standards at www.qcda.org

Have a look at some sample GCSE maths and English papers and see what I mean

Let us plan your next inset

We can take the strain and put together an INSET package to support teaching and learning. We will work with you to develop a range of themes linked to your school improvement plan. We work with staff to develop a range of coaching skills so that your staff work together to become reflective practitioners who focus on cascading best practice, share resources and develop cross curricular connections. Developing a strategy for school improvement that is driven by the staff ensures a cost effective staff development programme that really works.

Resources

Read the paper 'More Good Teachers' produced by the Policy Exchange and written by Sam Freedman, Briar Lipson and Professor David Hargreaves. Download it from www.policyexchange.org.uk or email info@learningcultures.org and we will send a copy to you.

Visit www.functionalskills.com for some comprehensive help with Functional Skills. They are still here and teachers particularly those teaching Maths, English and ICT need to be aware of how they will be a part of GCSEs next year. We are continuing to host our [Embedding Functional Skills – Enhancing Learning](#) events.

Policy Watch

Opportunities to contribute to the debate on the development of the curriculum for both primary and secondary schools have now closed so I hope you had the time to add your voice to the debate, we certainly did. We will follow keenly the results of this review and how a newly designed curriculum will impact on the service we provide and how we can support educational professionals to continue to deliver excellence in teaching and learning.

At present there is a review of cultural education and the Director of Classic FM Darren Henley has been given responsibility for this piece of work. If you would like to comment or make representations go to www.culture.gov.uk/consultations/8039.aspx You have until 20th May.



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