

## **Next Practice in Communities for Learning: Field Trial Vignettes**

**'Communities for Learning' is the third project in the Next Practice Programme. In it, The Innovation Unit and our partners, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), are looking beyond workforce remodelling and identifying Next Practice ideas which consider new sources of support for children's learning - within and beyond the school.**

The field trials we have chosen to support aim to investigate how a remodelled workforce can further improve the quality of children's learning. In addition, they will explore the implications of these new ways of working for the professional role and responsibilities of teachers.

At this early stage, the role of the teacher looks set to develop in a number of ways; many field trials conceive teachers as choreographers or facilitators of learning, rather than providers of knowledge.

In practice this could mean:

- Teachers will be experts in skills and competencies for learning. They will orchestrate the systematic and progressive development of pupils' skills in negotiation, conflict resolution, collaborative working, and coaching and mentoring. They will make formal and informal assessments of pupils' learning needs, and provide opportunities for transference and application of learning in different contexts.
- Teachers will be lead educators, but often third party deliverers. By focussing on creating equal partnerships between the classroom and the community, they will access currently untapped learning resources within the community, and facilitate intergenerational teaching and learning.
- Teachers will lead disciplined innovation across sectors, learning about, and providing guidance to, other professionals and agencies. Working with cultural partners, they will facilitate and co-lead programmes which create safe environments where discussions can be open. This may lead to the creation of new skilled support staff roles, eg advanced practitioners or Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) for family support.

## **Field Trials**

### **1. Armathwaite School**

#### **‘Learning outside the school’**

This very small school in Cumbria aims to extend their successful ‘skills for independent learning’ programme into the community and extend the school into village halls, pubs and churches.

The field trial builds on the school’s approach to curriculum design, which starts with the National Curriculum, and considers the skills necessary for successful child initiated independent learning. The skills are broken down into three main areas – cognition, personal skills and interpersonal skills. The staff have considered these three main skill areas and decided upon components that make up each area of skill. For example, with cognition they consider creativity, enquiry, reasoning, problem solving, information processing, reflective thinking and evaluation. By establishing a learning development worker and a virtual private network the school aims to take self-initiated learning into the community. This would enable pupils to learn from the community and the community to learn from the school. The intention is that this should not only benefit pupils, parents and the local community but extend to other schools in the wider curriculum.

### **2. Caslon Primary Community School**

#### **‘Community Learning Partners’**

Caslon Primary Community School in Dudley is creating a network of NVQ-accredited Community Learning Partners (CLPs). These CLPs (adults from the community and young people) will work across the local area to support family learning opportunities. The trial aims to see teachers utilised as directors of learning beyond the school.

This field trial involves a new approach to engaging hard-to-reach families in their children’s learning, through setting up learning opportunities based on each family’s particular interests. These families would be supported by CLPs. The project aims to achieve its aims through evolutionary, realistic and achievable steps. The project would involve between 50 and 90 families over the next school year, which implies the involvement of a significant number of adults, children and young people. Although Caslon Primary School is the lead school, this project is a partnership with other schools in Dudley. The CLPs will be drawn from the local community and they will be able to gain additional qualifications through the work they are doing. This will be done in association with local FE colleges. The school already has a strong track record of innovation in relation to the care, guidance and support offered to pupils and their families. The Caslon Community Partnership is already well-established.

### **3. Chalvedon School and Sixth Form College**

#### **‘Skills for life workshops’**

Students at Chalvedon School and Sixth Form College will develop a sustainable scheme within which they may identify and draw on the ‘life skills’ within their community and each other. They will focus on ‘learning how to build relations with a community’ expanding on issues taught in the classroom.

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Sixth form students are to take ownership of curriculum planning, organisation and, in some cases, delivery for the 'Lifeskills' programme. Community partners will play a key role in delivering elements of the programme. Active mentoring and coaching of new sixth formers will take place using second and third year sixth form students. The school is an enterprise school, and this project appears to link well with the school's aim to promote more aspiration with regard to leaving home to learn and attending university. Traditionally this aspiration has been lacking in the area served by the school and the lack of life skills has been seen as a key factor. The school has worked through Aimhigher, for example, to change attitudes and sees this as the next step. The school has a large sixth form of 300 students, so the potential audience is large.

## **4. Creative Partnerships**

## **'Community curriculum'**

Creative Partnerships will facilitate the re-imagining of 21<sup>st</sup> century schooling by the students, staff and parents of six schools in Sunderland. Students will be given a daily budget to spend on an independent, student-led 'learning state'. Schools will draw on community skills to amend the content of the curriculum to reflect the students' ideas.

This field trial involves initially two cultural partners working with Creative Partnerships and some schools in the Sunderland area, building on current good practice. The intention is to involve pupils in creating their idea of a learning 'utopia', developing an existing idea of 'imagine a city' and then analysing the cultural, organisational and learning changes that would need to be put in place to achieve this. Implementing these changes would include challenging the existing pedagogy in participating schools and would involve a major cultural shift. The two cultural partners provide the challenge and facilitation to conduct participative visioning programmes based around a game 'imagine a city'. More can be learnt about 'Imagine a City' at <http://www.imagineacity.org/>. It will be possible to include parents and community members in the exercise and in future to establish a skills exchange system valuing the skills of local community members.

## **5. Ealing Council**

## **'Schools without walls'**

New Branching-out Co-ordinators within each school will develop a parental induction programme as part of pupil registration, and work with influential parents to identify existing and potential skills that could be used in the classroom.

This project is a partnership between Ealing Local Authority and Willow Tree Primary School. It involves teachers at the school working in partnership with parents in the learning process. The aim of the field trial is to establish a real partnership between teachers and parents in order to celebrate and use their skills for the benefit of the pupils. It is hoped that aspirations amongst parents and the wider community will also be raised through their involvement. The work will be led by a Branching-out Co-ordinator', and one of the key areas of learning from the project will be a better understanding faced by teachers as they start to take on what effectively will be a new role.

## **6. 'Eastfeast'**

## **'Growing community practitioners'**

Five schools in Suffolk and Essex will explore the engagement of a community (artists, parents, teachers) in growing food for a feast over a period of a year. They will establish integrated roles for a range of locally sourced community practitioners and providers by testing different learning practices and approaches with the schools.

This integrated approach to curriculum design and delivery will use expertise from the arts community, the local community and the schools workforce to develop Next Practice learning spaces, enabling all to share and co-create new possibilities for learning and teaching. Members of the business community are also sought as partners in the learning process. The field trial develops the work started in 2005 with a year long pilot programme at Aldeburgh Primary School in Suffolk. It also works in partnership with a number of schools in East Anglia, through a sequence of linked but independent creative learning programmes. Eastfeast will consider how to use the key learning from the earlier project to develop new approaches to the Key Stages 1 and 2 curriculum. These approaches incorporate an exploration of how new roles and spaces for learning can enhance outcomes for young people. It draws heavily on new approaches to working with the arts, members of the local community and school staff. Action research and CPD play an important support and challenge role.

## **7. Fyndoune Community College**

## **'Community trainers'**

Fyndoune Community College will establish a community stakeholder forum (police, healthcare, fire and prison services, youth offending groups and major local employers) to play a key role in the Key Stage 4 PSHE specification, careers education requirements and the moral, philosophical and cultural syllabus. The new learning programme will be delivered by community trainers from outside the school, to students employed part-time in local businesses.

Fyndoune College is a hard federation of two schools with one headteacher and one governing body. This field trial has grown from the school's extensive experience of running apprenticeship programmes as part of the commitment to regenerating a local ex-mining community. It encompasses a new learning programme based on three days of taught curriculum and two days working as employees with a local business. In the first year the project would engage sixty Year 10 students from two schools serving two communities. The aim of the proposal is to support Year 10 students from by employing them part-time in local businesses and providing them with the education and skills to succeed in the world of work. The businesses are underwritten by a major local employer who will contribute to the training and quality assurance programme. Teachers will be the 'managers of learning' co-ordinating and working closely with community and business partners as they deliver the entire non-core curriculum as 'community trainers'. Both the Local Authority and the North East Chamber of Commerce are supporting the project.

## **8. St Paul's Way**

### **'Urban village'**

A partnership between Tower Hamlets Council, Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust (PCT), the housing company Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association (HARCA) has envisioned a transformation of the St Paul's Way neighbourhood. Central to the vision of a new St Paul's Way 'urban village' is St Paul's Way Community School, which is being wholly rebuilt under the Tower Hamlets Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. The trial will draw upon the work of the Bromley by Bow Centre as it rethinks the roles of health, youth, housing and education workers in relation to the emerging St Paul's Way campus. Facilitating community engagement between the school and the 'street' will ensure that participants make an identifiable and significant contribution to the creation of a new campus and a new sense of 'place' in St Paul's Way.

## **9. Transatlantic Schools Alliance**

### **'Achievement Culture'**

A two-year partnership between five New York and five London schools aims to involve students and teachers in improving literacy through sharing strategies, approaches and learning in different contexts. This will include joint CPD and co-creation of resources for learning through virtual conferences and face to face communication. The schools involved will engage in collaborative action research, examining issues of mutual concern, relevance and importance (in local and international contexts) and will co-create new curriculum and learning materials. The overall aim of the field trial is to generate knowledge about how different cultures in different contexts can support each other in the creation of an achievement culture and the strategies, practices and ways these contribute to closing the achievement gap.

## **10. Wakefield City MDC**

### **'Family support'**

Wakefield Local Authority will extend knowledge of social work practice to teachers, support staff and headteachers. They will work closely with school communities to tackle the needs of whole families and to develop a newly skilled support staff role that can address social needs in a preventative sense.

This proposal seeks to map the interface between health, education and social care services and to train school staff to develop skills normally associated with social care staff, and through this explore the reality of integrated practice and the potential to engage very hard to reach families. The field trial will enable two schools involved to access a wider range of skills and approaches to support, raising attainment of some of the lower achieving children in the district. It will also enable the school to build relationships between staff working in different agencies by beginning to tackle the different values, skills and approaches across different professions. This project involves training school staff in social action theory, anti-oppressive practice and social work approaches to enhance two schools' capacity to respond to their families. These approaches are intended to empower and give a voice to families who are currently not engaged with the school. The placing of social work students in the schools with practice supervisors will add capacity and model approaches to engaging families to support raising attainment and to overcoming barriers to learning.

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## **11. The Young Foundation**

## **'Studio Schools'**

The Young Foundation will support the integration of two FE colleges in Luton and London into operating businesses largely run by the students themselves. The concept of Studio Schools will start with around 60 disengaged and/or entrepreneurial learners who will be based in a full-time business environment. They will have personalised learning plans that embed formal and professional qualifications, and non cognitive skills in project-based learning.