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in-house



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**INVESTIGATE
INNOVATE
INSPIRE**

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

is a charitable organisation that aims to improve education and learning, and hence the lives of learners, by providing independent evidence to drive excellence in education.

The NFER Research Mark recognises the value of practitioner-led research and endorses the efforts of those who have demonstrated a commitment to practitioner-led research.

From the start, CIM has promoted the use of practitioner-led action research methods. Action research is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist practitioners who would like to use formal research methods to improve their professional practice.

While the interventions' results may not be generalizable to contexts outside the practitioners' environment, they often provide the basis for subsequent cycles of action research, both within and beyond the practitioners' classroom or school. In this way action research provides an invaluable method for understanding which innovations work and why they work. When these interventions and innovations are linked to strategic school development priorities, action research provides a basis for evidence informed assessments of effectiveness and improvement.

Action research has the potential to transform schools into communities and cultures of learners. While all our education professionals share a commitment to student development, they do not have a shared view about, or approach to, the most effective way(s) to address learners' unique challenges. This means there is merit in developing and systematically testing a range of approaches and solutions, and sharing action research findings. Providing the space and support for education professionals to self-direct their professional growth and structured inquiry professionalises teaching, enhances motivation, best addresses the needs of a diverse student body, and drives innovative solutions to strategic priorities.

In March 2017, the Centre for Inspiring Minds was awarded an 'extended practice' Research Mark by NFER, the highest level of recognition that is awarded. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to CIM's achievements over the past five years – and we look forward to supporting your professional inquiry in the future.



Ben and Latifa

Farmer and ethical foods campaigner, Joel Salatin observed that,
[I]n our culture today – our Western, reductionist, Roman, linear, fragmented culture – we don't ask how to make a pig happy. We ask how to grow it faster, fatter, bigger, cheaper, and that's not a noble goal.

Driving much of the learning innovation in schools today is a fundamental rethink of the purposes, outputs and processes of teaching and learning. While most, if not all international schools have placed learners' happiness and self-actualisation at the heart of school ethos, many have continued to focus measurement and reporting on traditional outputs – exam results and university matriculation.

Recently, our four schools developed a shared set of Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLRs). While taking the first steps on our new innovation journey, we quickly realised the implications of this decision for the entire fabric of the school culture. Because the expanded set of learner outcomes included success skills and dispositions not previously addressed in the curriculum or measured by assessments, the changes needed called for professional learning, curriculum review, and new assessment measures, among other important changes.

The connections between re-framing the goals of our education system and re-framing our approach to evidence-informed innovation in teaching and learning began taking on the qualities of something quite big. Although the emergence of these new innovation strands had the potential to be quite joined up, they also had the potential to be overwhelming – crossing a time/scale tipping point and sending teachers and education leaders over the edge.

Of course, this is why it's important to have an understanding of change processes and a plan for managing the stresses and growing pains that are inevitable in a complex system with emergent properties and unavoidable levels of uncertainty.

The work of our school is not unlike the work happening in international schools around the globe. Education has never been an easy undertaking, and now, more than ever, school leaders are compelled to focus more on the difficult questions than on the easy answers. In fact, what may appear to be an easy answer may be a temporary tipping point in a dynamic system, destined to return to a previous state of equilibrium.

Understanding change and coherence making are at the heart of innovation. Knowing what works and doesn't – what to stop doing and what to continue – requires systems thinking and leadership. It also requires an eye on the prize – happy learners who are prepared and inspired to make a difference.

To read the full version of this article or to see what education leaders from around the world are saying about innovation, visit

<https://issuu.com/ecischools/docs/globalinsights4/1?ff=true>

Celebration of learning 04

On Thursday, 18th May, 100 people from across our four schools and colleagues from external organisations joined us for our third Celebration of Learning evening. The event not only gave eight of our research practitioners from across our schools a platform to share their work, but also celebrated the Centre for Inspiring Minds' five-year anniversary.

This year's Celebration of Learning was opened by ACS Board Director, Kathy Harvey, who welcomed the guests and acknowledged five years of CIM. "When the ACS Board of Directors first proposed the Centre for Inspiring Minds more than six years ago," she noted, "we had hoped that it would become a centre of innovation that would capture the imaginations of and inspire both our own community and the wider education community. All of you gathered here this afternoon are an indication that we have come a long way since the Centre for Inspiring Minds first opened its doors in August 2012."

Kathy recognised that it is the research practitioners whose work is at the heart of our efforts to build a research-engaged school culture. She invited the audience guests to think about how the experiences and professional interests of the eight project leaders are similar to their own as they listen to their presentations. She also asked the audience to think about how the presenters may challenge their own thinking about teaching and learning. And she challenged them to think about how they, in whatever role they have in their school, institution or organisation, can use and conduct research to investigate, innovate and inspire.



CIM Project Leader, David Kinsella (above), from ACS Doha, delivers the opening presentation.

Presenters, Dee Tree from ACS Cobham, David Kinsella from ACS Doha, Joanna Preucel from ACS Hillingdon and Ryan Hinchey from ACS Cobham respond to audience feedback.

The Project Leaders presenting this year were:

- David Kinsella, Middle School Humanities Teacher, ACS Doha. David's research topic was "assessing skills and dispositions."
- Denise Tree, Middle School Health Teach, ACS Cobham. Dee's research topic was "evaluating impact."
- Joanna Preucel, High School Learning Support Teacher, ACS Hillingdon. Joanna's research topic was "improving working memory."
- Ryan Hinchey, High School Coordinator of College Counseling, ACS Cobham. Ryan's research topic was "understanding student perspectives."
- Vanessa Tarrant and Denisse Lie-Nielsen, Middle School Language Teachers, ACS Cobham. Vanessa and Denisse's research topic was "understanding students' reactions to learning."
- Karen Axam, High School EAL and Learning Support Teacher, ACS Doha. Karen's research topic was "engaging with linguistic diversity."
- Chris Hupp, Lower School Grade 3 Teacher, ACS Cobham. Chris' research topic was "nurturing ecological literacy."
- Sue Wakefield, Technology Coach, ACS Hillingdon. Sue's topic was 'Understanding technology's role.'

The audience engaged with the presenters using Padlets with the response prompts 'I Like', 'I Wish', and 'I Wonder'.

To learn more about this event visit the CIM website to access a copy of the Celebration of Learning: Celebrating five years, at <http://cim.acs-schools.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Celebration-of-learning-Celebrating-five-years-4-May-2017-FINAL.pdf>



Robert Cody (above), Deputy Head of School at ACS Doha, logs onto the interactive Padlet.



Past Board Chair, David Thomas (right), recognizes former Board member, Jill Rutherford's key role in forming the Centre for Inspiring Minds.

The CIM project proposals for the 2017 -2018 school year, submitted by project leaders in April, were reviewed and discussed by the Heads of School, using a published rubric. The Centre for Inspiring Minds is pleased to announce that they will be working with eight cross-campus project teams, led by individuals from all four ACS campuses.

The 2017 – 2018 projects leaders are:

- **Kristie Sheard**, from ACS Cobham. Kris will lead a team investigation into assessing skills and dispositions with the question, “How can the use of Tessera personalised feedback reports contribute to grade 8 students’ development of skills and dispositions key to middle and high school transition?”
- **Simon Cook**, from ACS Cobham Simon will lead a team investigation into developing aural literacy with the question, “How does the use of non-prescriptive musical prompts improve middle and high school student musicians’ aural literacy?”
- **Tasha Arnold**, from ACS Cobham. Tasha lead a team investigation into understanding teacher transition with the questions, “What are the experiences with transition that educators in international schools encounter? What are the challenges with transition these educators face? What are educators’ perceived needs for transition?”
- **Chris Hupp**, from ACS Cobham. Chris will lead a team investigation to initiating whole school sustainability with the question, “How does involvement in an externally facilitated, multi-school learning community advance our aspiration to “make a difference” by learning about and engaging in whole school approaches to learning for sustainability?”
- **Tania Asif**, from ACS Cobham. Tania will lead a team investigation into assessing technology impact with the question, “How do we measure the impact of technology and ICT use on student learning and attainment?”
- **Nancy Bacsa and Margaret Dean**, from ACS Doha. Nancy will lead a team investigation into co-teaching Reading with the question, “How does co-teaching affect Grade 2 Reading achievement, engagement and enjoyment?”
- **Shelly McClanahan**, from ACS Egham. Shelly will lead a team investigation into engaging with identify languages with the question, “How will the use of native language texts (alongside English language tests of the same works) in Language Arts classes with middle school EAL students improve their vocabulary, class participation, and comprehension of the text?”
- **Mary O’Gorman**, from ACS Hillingdon. Mary will lead a team investigation into developing Math literacies with the question, “How can Science-teaching strategies that build 9th and 10th graders’ data collection, analysis, interpretation and evaluation skills contribute to Science learning outcomes?”

If you would like to learn more about the projects or join one of the project teams please contact the project leader directly, or contact Latifa Hassanali. Find out more on the CIM website, <http://cim.acs-schools.com>

Below are details of just a small selection of the professional development opportunities on offer in London and the South East over the coming months.

Festival of Education

22-23 June 2017

Wellington College, Crowthorne RG45 7PU

Over two days, The Telegraph Festival of Education brings together the very best of the UK's most forward thinking education advocates, practitioners of change, policy makers and educators in one of the leading forums for thought leadership and debate. Among this year's 300 leading speakers from the world will be Sugata Mitra, Hugh Dennis, Terry Waite, Gyles Brandreth, and David Didau.

To register visit the conference website at <http://educationfest.co.uk/>

Research and Development Network Conference

10 July 2017

Institute of Education, London, WC1 0AL

The focus of this year's conference is Lesson Study (Collaborative Lesson Research). The conference features keynotes and workshops from UK mathematics educators and Japanese experts to highlight the key elements of Lesson Study that lead to 'deep teaching'.

Professor Becky Francis will be sharing her research into the issues and consequences of school segregation and Professor Louise Stoll will be talking about how to create learning organisations that nurture lesson study and research engagement.

The Centre for Inspiring Minds is a Research and Development Network member and any ACS staff members attending the event are eligible for the member rate (£70). Please contact Latifa Hassanali if you are interested in attending.

Making Science Sizzle

24 November 2017

Central London

This fast-paced, enjoyable and informative day will help you plan and deliver outstanding science lessons that engage and motivate all learners and put science at the heart of any school curriculum. Expert advice will be given across a range of topics, including: creating outstanding learners in science; the importance of science experiments; developing wonder in your work; writing in science; unlocking the cross-curricular potential of science; practical approaches, strategies and resources to improve your teaching.

To register go to <http://teachology-education.co.uk/science/register.php>

Summer reading 08

If you would like to read about some of the inspiring work happening around the world, the following books have caught our attention. Maybe you would like to add them to your summer reading list.

Didau, David and Rose, Nick (2016). *What Every Teacher Needs to Know About Psychology*. John Catt Publication, UK.

Dufour, Richard (2013). *Cultures Built to Last – Systemic PLCs at Work*. Solution Tree, USA.

Whitman, Glenn and Kelleher, Ian (2016). *Neuro Teach: Brain Science and the Future of Education*. Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland, USA



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