

Inspiring the next generation: Teachers as researchers

Within the Lancaster SUPI we have provided a range of opportunities to enable us to, 'support teachers in their professional development and hence increase their confidence in delivering improved learning outcomes' (objective 4). To underpin sustainability, we have enabled teachers to undertake their own research and learn effective research skills, culminating for some in a PhD. Our approach has evolved in response to emerging opportunities and ideas that have come from teachers and schools.

Teacher research: voyages of discovery

In June 2016, our evaluator Dr Ann-Marie Houghton gave a keynote address at the East Lancashire Inclusive Partnership teacher conference, where she outlined the many ways in which teachers have been engaging in pedagogical research that is enhancing their teaching and learning.

Within Lancaster's SUPI we have offered support to teachers involved in:

- Pupil led research
- Reflective practice
- Action research and evaluation of new initiatives
- Academic courses including PhD study



In addition teachers have worked closely with researchers to gain a greater appreciation of the research process as described in our 2014 case study of a researcher in residence, 'Traps and tweets from Britain to Brazil'. In the past two years, teachers have been involved in the co-creation of a diverse range of

Research in a Box activities, which has supported their engagement in research relating to their subject discipline.

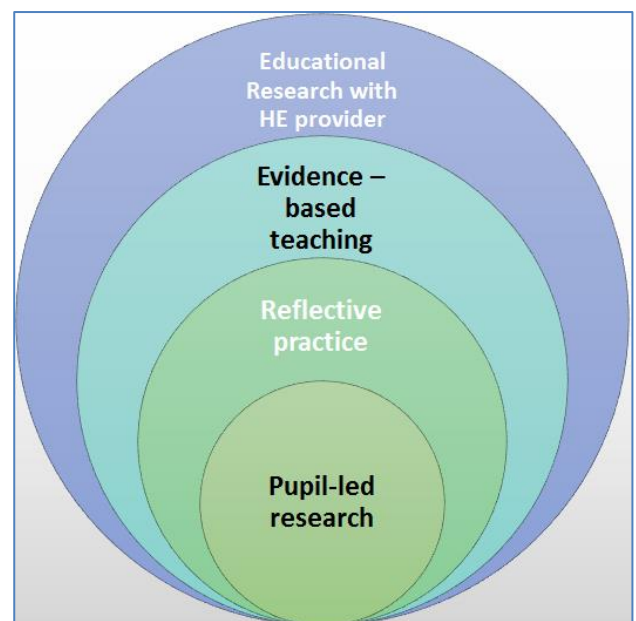
Leading by example and studying for a PhD

Queen Elizabeth School, Headteacher, Alison Wilkinson has championed the research agenda within her own school and that of the other schools in their teaching alliance and within the county. She is one of four staff who have embarked on a PhD with the Department of Educational Research. Although two teachers have since dropped out for personal reasons, the two remaining continue to find the research journey a stimulating and rewarding one. Alison, in a key note address at the Lancaster SUPI celebration (September 2016) spoke passionately about the importance of research within school. With reference to Godfrey's (2016) research on the nutrients of the research engaged school culture, she explained how from a leadership perspective it was vital for leaders to be '*knowledgeable about and involved in research*'. To engage colleagues it was necessary to '*operate and provide a safe environment*'. Bringing about change within the school organisation the QES approach has been to have '*multi-disciplinary teams as well as departments, year teams and support staff all*



TREASURE

- Teachers
- Reflective practitioners
- Evaluators
- Action researchers
- Seeking solutions
- University staff
- Research
- Evidence



Model of research within QES

involved'. Finally, systemic change was dependent upon having 'strong relationships with colleagues in HE'.

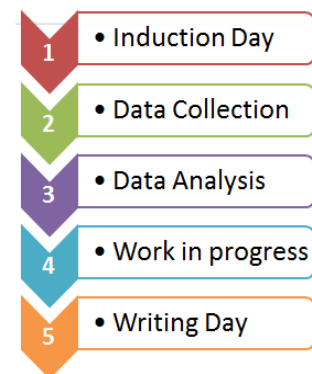
Pupil led research: Enabling teachers to support their pupils with research

In 2013 our case study 'Building student council's capacity to research teaching and learning' outlined how ECR worked with students to undertake pupil led research which was then shared with teachers. This process provided an opportunity for teachers and teaching assistants to observe their students engaging in the research process and to gain ideas for how they might promote similar research projects in the future.

Reflective practice – action research – evidence based teaching

A development that builds on the work we undertook to support pupil led research is the collaboration with the East Lancashire Inclusive Partnership. This SEN teaching school were keen to support their teachers to undertake small scale research to enhance teaching and learning. Seven teachers from three SEN and one mainstream school were given five days 'in-service time' to come and work with the SUPI evaluator and ECR who guided them through their individual studies. The programme included opportunities to:

- meet with other researchers from the department and learn more about their research;
- gain advice from library staff about accessing academic resources and learn more about library facilities that like all teachers they would be able to access;
- learn more about action research and how it complements more informal reflective practice
- gather and analyse a range of data and use this to produce short Action Research Reports (4-8 pages in length)
- disseminate their findings at the East Lancashire Inclusive Partnership Teacher Conference (June 2016)



The writing days provided an additional opportunity for ECR and Teachers to write together using a 'writing retreat' format, with break times allowing ECR interested in teaching to learn more about the nature of school life, and teachers to hear more about the PhD process and the ECRs' research. The conference offered another experience which was very empowering for the teachers as they proudly shared their findings with colleagues.

Teacher Research Reports 2016

TRR 3: Exploring the role of forest schools in secondary schools: a case study (Mutchell, 2016)

TRR 4: The use of a 'real' audience to inspire lower ability pupils to redraft, proof-read and edit writing. (Jones, 2016)

TRR 5: The influence of Work Based Learning within a Post 19 provision on the employability opportunities for SLD learners. (Melling, 2016)

TRR 6: Is therapeutic play a successful tool to aid learning and increase a child's potential within a special needs school? (Duxbury, 2016)

TRR 7: Embedding teacher research into school culture: a case study (Taylor, 2016)

TRR 8: How does involvement in action research help to develop the role of support staff working with pupils with multi-sensory impairment? (Whittaker, 2016)

As one teacher explained, "It has been valuable and a genuine learning experience, often school-based INSET is about training to adhere to school policies and systems, rather than reflecting on how to be a more effective practitioner".

The voyages of discovery by this group of teachers meant they were able to inspire the next generation, with eighteen teachers seeking to be involved in 2016-17.

Although not part of the original plan, it would appear that enabling support for teachers, and an opportunity to work alongside an ECR is offering a new professional development route which is attractive to teachers who may not wish to pursue a leadership and management role, but who are keen to engage in research informed practice.