

# APEX Living Legacies

Stories creating futures



## The Cover Story

Andrew Henon

<http://www.mondaystudio.co.uk/creativityworks.pdf>

In 2009 I wrote the above. Since then the APEX programme has not only done what the Creativity|WORKS project did but moved the work on to include practitioners, teachers, families and a number of organisations as well as children and young people. The cover of, 'Living Legacies: the APEX story and living accounts', shows two images merged. On the left are children of St Aldhelms Primary School, empowered by the lens of a digital camera to face us with expressions full of joy and intrigue.

The central image below taken by Karen Dews is of the screen of a video camera taking footage of the adult learning enquires and living legacy workshop at Fry's. They are merged to create and represent the layers and depth of educational learning that is possible if we apply the approaches and 'Living Educational Theory' at the centre of our practice and as an ongoing motivational life affirming process.

I have merged the images to give a sense of layering abstraction representational of the complex ecologies of learning undertaken through the APEX programme.



Karen's images have been used throughout this book and it is a significant body of work in its own right. This content together with the other images supplied form an underlying supporting visual narrative. Karen's informed, skilled, talented and trained eyes have captured moments throughout the APEX work which are then reinterpreted and re-contextualised alongside contributor's written narratives.

Karen has also contributed with an account later on in the book.

Development

From

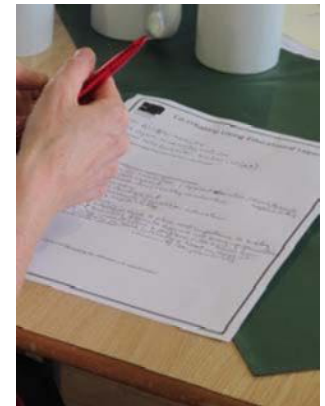
Creativity|WORKS

Socially Engaged Arts

Educational Practice

Art as lived  
experience

Educational Theory



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## CHAPTER 1 Why this book? Marie Huxtable

The spirit of what the APEX Saturday and Summer Opportunity programme has been about is communicated in this 3 minute video. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cu3C1Rk6c8>

The purpose of APEX has been to improve inclusive, gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision, and so enhance each child and young person's abilities to learn to live a loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile life, for themselves and others. When it was known that APEX was to end, a number of people said they were concerned that the relationships and knowledge created during its existence would be lost as a resource and inspiration in the future. This presented me with two questions: 'What are the legacies of APEX?' and; 'How could APEX legacies contribute to improving the educational experience of learners beyond its end?'

'What are the legacies of APEX?' One of many answers I think is to be found in the diverse reflections, learning and experiences of the many people who have been involved, in one way or another, with APEX over the years. Their stories, their accounts of the what, how, and most importantly their why, of the relationships and knowledge they have created, are the resource and inspiration for those wanting to continue to improve inclusive educational gifted and talented theory, practice and provision.

'How could APEX legacies contribute to improving the educational experience of learners beyond its end?'



I am aware of how easily the past can become a straightjacket of the future; this is one of the reasons I have resisted disseminating the numerous pre-packaged answers produced by government agencies, academics and various enterprises. Packages too easily become formulaic in their application and the essence of what was important educationally can be missed, lost or at worst destroyed, in the process. I didn't want any aspect of APEX to become such a package but I was puzzled as to how to bring APEX to a generative conclusion. The work of Andrew Henon and Catherine Forrester, brought together, inspired a thought that has culminated in the production of this book, which I hope provides a creative, and energising answer.

If you have read the cover story you will already have begun to become acquainted with Andrew Henon's work. I have worked with Andrew over many years and had been inspired by how he brought work together in producing Creativity**WORKS**. The second person, Catherine Forrester, introduced me to the notion of living legacies.

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Rationale

History

Summary

APEX Living Legacies

Stories

Futures

Structure

**Self discovery**

**Lifelong**

**Humanity**

**Living Legacies**

**Absence of testimony**

**'They' become 'Us'**



**'What is a Living Legacy?'**

**Catherine Forester**

There are pivotal moments in our lives; moments that can change our direction, our aspirations, our hearts and minds; even our spirits and whoever we construe ourselves to be. One such moment marked the start of my love affair with teaching. I went to train as a teacher to acquire paid work with some status and security in France where I wanted to live.



However, this was the very act that would transform my life. In going to be a teacher I discovered my real, life-long passion and love: teaching – being of service – being alive. This did not happen gradually.

It was as immediate as love at first sight. I simply walked in on my first teaching practice, on my first day, into my first classroom, my first class and, there it was, a sense of being, being present, being now, being vital; combined with an involuntary requirement to reach deeply into my own humanity to work with intuition, understanding, compassion, empathy and love.

Likewise, the story of 'living legacies' encapsulates another pivotal moment. It is the story of the moment I glimpsed my fate foretold in the lives of my contemporaries who, like me, without significant senior position or academic regard, were leaving the profession. Some left readily, time-served, fulfilled, looking towards new horizons but others left heads-low, hearts-broken, spirits depleted. However, what they all shared, beyond the brief handshake of thanks, was the absence of testimony to their professional, academic and personal journeys. Like hands removed from water, they left no lasting imprint that they had been there, experiencing a poverty of indifference and an absence of regard, rather than, celebrations of unique and reflective lives. With the passing of time, and, in my case, the deterioration of health, there was a moment when 'they' became 'us'. This is a moment, at present, that few can avoid. Also, it is the moment where the knowledge game we have grown-up with and imparted to our students, starts to play us.



Recently I met a mature woman undertaking undergraduate research into whether or not feminism had impacted upon the small, rural community structures she lives in. Her research was narrative based. Yet, when I asked her if she would include her own narrative, she laughed nervously, even blushed, and dismissed her own story as 'uninteresting'.



So many of us have struggled all our adult lives to improve the world and in so doing the lives of today's children, tomorrow's adults. To do so we have drawn heavily on external sources of knowledge, insight and reliable generalisation, all too often, ignoring the authenticity and richness of our own experience and resulting 'knowing'.

Yet, in our practice, again and again, theories have been tried, tested, refined and re-hypothesised. Yes, we embody the totality of years of enquiry, study, reflective practice and knowledge chiselled into every aspect of our beings.

Moreover, we practice infused with the conscious awareness that each and every one of our students/participants/clients are exceptional and valuable. However, when we look at ourselves, we dismiss the essential 'I', overlooking our personal connection and unique place in the chain of the 'flourishing humanity' we seek to serve.

A 'living legacy' is the unique testimony of an individual practitioner providing a positive bridge between the past and the future. As I see it, within each one of us, is realised the sum of our past academic, professional and personal knowledge.

The present is the 'sum'. If each sum represented a candle what light of knowledge the totality of these candles could emit from the past to shine for future generations of educators and students. Yet, at present, each 'I' shines separately; alone in the dark of its own extinguishing. So, with the hope of my own 'living legacy', comes the dream that the idea has taken on an independent life that will find expression again and again in the creative and unique legacies of others – including those of today's students, tomorrow's teachers.

**Narrative**

**'Self' Excluded**

**Struggle**

**Insight**

**Authenticity**

**Knowing**

**Negated 'I'**

**Living Legacy**

**Light**



**Passionate teacher**

**Reflective practitioner**

**Lover of education**

**For thirty years**

However, in describing the genesis of the idea, I would deny the very essence of 'living legacies' if I did not acknowledge those who's preceding work nourished the field in which it is seeded. They are legion; all part of the chain of 'flourishing humanity' that connects the loving, hope-filled values, aspirations and struggles across many disciplines and practices.

Some I have only met in reading their inspirational words and I hesitate from naming one over another. Nevertheless, there are three people without whom the idea of 'living legacies' would have been still-born. These are, Professor Jack Whitehead, whose work on 'living theory' parented the idea; Dr Joan Walton, whose work at Hope University Liverpool, guided and 'scaffold' its delivery; and, Dr Marie Huxtable, who adopted it at its public birth in May 2011 at York St. John's Conference on 'Values and Virtue in Practice' and has done so much to nourish its infancy. Their part in the birth and development of the idea highlights what is possible when the light from one candle is supported and strengthened by others.

Passionate teacher, reflective practitioner and lover of education for the best part of thirty years.

You can see a video of Catherine in conversation with Jack Whitehead see <http://youtu.be/jCsuLoo33XA>

## Rationale

The educational relationships, spaces and experiences that APEX are particularly concerned with are those that provide support and opportunities for children and young people to experience the pleasure of:

- Working productively over time in an area of personal interest, enthusiasm or passion
- Recognising, valuing and developing talents, expertise and knowledge as highly as possible
- Creating and offering knowledge they value as a gift to themselves and others
- Recognising, valuing and co-creatively engaging with gifts they and others offer
- Coming to know the person they are and want to be.

APEX is underpinned by educational theories of gifted and talented education that are inclusive and values-based and the belief that everyone is capable of:

- Being an expert in their own learning
- Developing and enhancing talents
- Creating, offering and accepting valued and valuable knowledge of themselves, the world and themselves in and of the world, as gifts intended to enhance personal and communal life-chances, well-being and well-becoming.

APEX has contributed to the realisation of Bath and North East Somerset's inclusive vision of education: 'We want all Children and Young People to do better in life than they ever thought they could. We will give children and young people the help that they need to do this' (Bath and North East Somerset Local Authority, 2005) by providing:

- Saturday workshops and Summer Opportunities for children and young people
- School based support and INSET
- CPD to Masters and Doctoral level
- Learning opportunities for adults, children and young people, e.g., collaborative, creative enquiries
- Web-based access to information, resources and opportunities to develop co-operative learning
- Access to and involvement in local, national and international research communities and networks

These activities are distinct yet inter-related as you will see in the next section on a brief history of the evolution of APEX.

## Rationale

Productive

Recognition

Gifts

Coming to know

Experts

Developing

Creating

Well-becoming

Opportunities



## History

## Diversity

## Orchestrated

## Coordination

## Keeping a balance

## Development

### A brief history of the evolution of APEX

No history has one beginning, one neat storyline and one author. The history of APEX is no exception. As I said earlier stories express the diverse reflections, learning and experiences of the people telling them. Memories are also coloured by the subsequent experiences and current circumstances of the person bringing the past into the present. With that in mind I hope you might find my own partial story of the evolution of APEX, as orchestrator of the development and coordination of APEX in Bath and North East Somerset Local Authority, of some use.

I continue to find the picture I developed for keeping a balance in the development of activity useful.



## Framework for developing APEX

I am not intending to suggest that each activity was developed and then left behind, or the educational value of each can be understood in isolation. Rather, the activities and the efforts I made to improve what I was doing were interwoven and contributed to the complex ecology influencing the progression of APEX.

## Way back when...

I spent a great deal of time as an educational psychologist focussing on what children found difficult until, during the mid 1990s, I became interested in what enables people to grow to be adults able to live satisfying and productive lives making outstanding contributions to society. I began to explore what the field of 'high ability' had to offer to prepare children to live such futures.



The more I explored the subject the more I came to the conclusion that the features of 'high ability', thinking, higher order learning, creativity, and successful learning were in essence the same, and were learnable rather than 'hard-wired'.

I wanted learning opportunities for educators to play with such ideas and the knowledge being created by others, and reflect creatively on educational theory, practice and provision to imagine possibilities of improving their own: opportunities for educational learning that provide the slow burn that transforms practice rather than the quick fix that papers over cracks.

## Frameworks

Complex ecology

Way back when

Learnable

Educational theory

Opportunities

Transformation



## Bureaucracy

## Events

## Leaders

## Schools

## Vocation



After a relentless and increasingly bureaucratic focus on 'special needs', many schools and teachers were eager at that time to refocus on how they might develop their pupils' 'strengths'. So, when I began in 1996 to spread and develop these ideas by running **events for teachers lead by leaders in the field, workshops and INSET**, many schools and teachers enthusiastically participated. There is a continuing influence of these learning opportunities with, for instance, Belle Wallace (TASC), Robert Fisher (thinking skills), David Wray (Writing Frames), Barry Hymer (Philosophy for Children), Ted Wragg (questioning), Guy Claxton (learning dispositions), Jack Whitehead (Living-Theory Action Research) and many more.

School-based practice and provision is only one aspect of the educational experience of children and young people. Many people find their passions for lifelong learning outside of school. Pursuing passions for learning often seems to lead to a person living not only a more productive life but also a more satisfying one. When I thought about people I knew who had found their passions for learning, they pursued them with a relentless commitment and often made a significant contribution to their own lives and that of others in the process.

They often seemed to be introduced to what became a passion, by family, friends of family, a chance meeting, or, occasionally a teacher.

I began to think, about children who do not know about the possibilities that might be their inspirations for a satisfying and productive vocation because they do not have a family member or teacher who offers them the connections or excites their interest.



In 1998 a pilot of **APEX Saturday workshops** was run. I wanted to extend the range of opportunities available for those of school age to: meet and work with others with similar interest and abilities; develop skills; increase their understanding of the variety of possible areas to explore and; work with expert role models.

I also wanted to provide an opportunity for teachers and other adults in the learning community to extend their knowledge and skill in a subject area by working with or alongside a field/subject expert.

The pilot was self-funding which meant some children were excluded. The report enabled money to be accessed from the New Opportunity Fund so children and young people did not have to pay and all could have access. When the funding ceased the local authority stepped in and eventually funded the whole of APEX.



APEX Saturday workshops offered learning opportunities beyond those that a school or cluster can offer and are in the boundary between school and life. Parents have told me how an experience on a workshop has contributed to a career decision of their son/daughter, or given them confidence, or an insight into the relevance of some of their schoolwork, or they have insisted they share their experience, or they wanted to find out more.

Listening to the parents tells me that for some children, the experience of learning in the boundary between school and life has opened their eyes to themselves and possibilities to explore.

Teachers have told me that their pupils have communicated their learning and enthusiasm from the workshops afterwards in school. In some schools, children have had the opportunity to share their experience with other children which has enabled them to move their learning into school. Teachers have also said how they have learned from being involved with APEX, not just increasing their subject knowledge but also developed their pedagogy which has improved their practice in school.

As APEX was developing the government of the day commissioned the Third Report of The House of Commons Education and Employment Select Committee on Highly Able Children (1999). The findings of the select committee were ignored for the most part by the Government, which went on to develop the Excellence in Cities venture and the National Gifted and Talented Strategy which offered challenges and opportunities for APEX. Government funding for 'gifted and talented summer schools' provided the funding for the first **APEX Summer (School) Opportunities** in 2000.

## Saturday Workshops

Opportunities

Subject experts

Beyond school

Learning

Enthusiasm



## Living Learning

### Talents as gifts

### Research



## Dreams to aspirations

To transform dreams into aspirations that are acted on learners have many psychological needs.

One is to be able to imagine themselves living their dreams, which the Saturday workshops and Summer Opportunities have fed. Another is the opportunity and support to behave as the expert they want to become. You do not learn to become a champion cyclist by learning to fall off, you learn by practicing the skills, attributes and attitudes of the expert cyclist you are in the process of becoming.

I could not see how a teacher could support their students in this way unless they knew what it was to be an expert developing expertise in an area of their passion. To enable teachers and learners to experience developing expertise collaboratively in their field of passion collaborative, creative enquiry days were offered.

The first **APEX collaborative, creative enquiry opportunity** was developed and offered in 2004 with Bath Spa University so that educators, as well as their pupils and students, could experience themselves as learners creating knowledge of the world, as experts developing their expertise, and for them to recognise the possibility for improving their educational practice. In practice, this also opened the eyes of many teachers to how far their pupils/students were in advance of the 'diet' they were being offered in their schools, and some teachers began to appreciate their pupils/students as co-learners. Children and young people were also able to see their teachers as valued co-learners who had expertise to offer beyond the limitations of the school curriculum and beyond the confines of the school. The collaborative, creative, enquiry days I have offered over the years for writers, mathematicians, choreographers, scientists, artists and action researchers have all met with the same enthusiastic response from adults, children and young people.



I was concerned to expand the opportunity for teachers to improve their practice by developing their talents, expertise and knowledge as educational gifts: to walk the talk and experience learning that is educational themselves. As a consequence, I asked Jack Whitehead in 2005 to offer modules for a professional Masters programme for educators to learn to research their own educational practice to improve it. Many educators have offered freely the knowledge they have created in their accredited assignments as gifts on:

<http://www.actionresearch.net>

The **Masters/CPD programme continued and developed into an international project: Living Values Improving Practice Cooperatively**, which can be accessed and joined from <http://www.spanglefish.com/livingvaluesimprovingpracticecooperatively/> Jack also began supporting the development of the '**Improving Practice Conversation Café**', which met weekly in the local authority offices.

These have been some of the key activities evolved during the life of APEX and they form the structure for the stories of those who have been part of APEX and those who are now moving us into the future.

**Transferable**  
**Underlying method**  
**Collaborative**  
**Creative**  
**Enquiry**  
**Opportunity**  
**Co-learners**  
**Masters**

## Structure

### Chapters

#### APEX

## Structure of the book

### Chapter 1 Why this book

### Chapter 2 Learning opportunities for children and young people

To enable you to dip in and out of the book we have grouped stories of APEX Saturdays and Summer Opportunities under learning opportunities for children and young people in Chapter 2. There you will find the stories of parents, children and young people, APEX staff and practical details on management.

### Chapter 3 Learning opportunities for educators

The narratives of educators who have been engaged in the Masters/CPD and who have contributed to research and local, national and international educational learning communities are to be found in this chapter.

### Chapter 4 Contributing to and benefiting from the learning of others: individuals, schools, communities and other social formations.

Many of the activities of APEX were concerned with creating opportunities for children, young people and adults to contribute to and benefit from, the learning of others and to improving the educational contexts that schools, organisations and communities provide. The stories in this chapter are by people from many different contexts with a common desire to support the development and offering of talents, expertise and knowledge as educational gifts to make a difference that matters to them. Their narratives and reflections give a taste of the different forms this has taken.

### Chapter 5 Post words

The stories that comprise, 'APEX Living Legacies: Stories creating futures' have been the stories of some of the relationships and knowledge created by people who responded to the invitation to contribute to this book. Most of the stories are yet to be created and shared. The book ends with an invitation to you to offer as a gift, accounts of the relationships and knowledge you have created. In creating and sharing our stories it is hoped that we may continue to improve the experience of inclusive, gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision, and so enhance each person's abilities to learn to live a loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile life, for themselves and others.

## CHAPTER 2 Learning opportunities for children and young people

### Introduction Marie Huxtable

APEX has run Saturday workshops since 1998 and a summer holiday programme since 2000 to provide opportunities for children and young people to 'boldly go' beyond the familiar cognitively, socially, physically, emotionally and personally. These learning opportunities contributed to the development of inclusive gifted and talented educational practice and provision that enhances the unique contribution that we can each make to improving our own and other peoples learning and lives. Many schools used the APEX Saturday workshops and the APEX Summer Opportunities as an integral part of the implementation of their inclusion, personalisation of learning and extended schools agendas. As children and young people grow up they are developing their particular constellation of abilities in one or more areas of endeavour, such as:



- Academic and intellectual
- Expressive and performing arts
- Social, leadership and organisation
- Visual, spatial and mechanical
- Design and technology
- Sport and physical

APEX Saturday Workshops and APEX Summer Opportunities gave learners opportunities to explore and develop talents as gifts with likeminded peers, and adults who had a passion for their area of expertise and an ability to communicate that educationally. They also gave children, young people and adults an opportunity to follow their passions as co-learners and venture somewhere new cognitively, physically, personally, socially and emotionally together.

Teachers as providers and assistants had the opportunity to be the educators they wanted to be, educationally engaging with enthusiastic learners in an area of their own passion, without constraints of the 'given curriculum'. Parents and carers had the opportunity to venture beyond local neighbourhood to extend their knowledge of educational possibilities for their offspring and themselves.

## CHAPTER 2

### Learning opportunities

Children

Young People

Parents

Providers

Assistants

Management





## Video

## Feedback

## APEX Summer 2009

## Unplugged

## Values

## Understanding

## Insight



These videos give you a taste of what the children and parents thought of the APEX Saturday workshops

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzjRR8BIHOU>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwozIPCd8AA&feature=relmfu>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVZeEk8vLew&feature=relmfu>

This 6 minutes video clip is of a group of young people who worked with Vicky Tucker as 'Apprentices Making a Difference' presenting at the end of APEX Summer 2009

<http://tinyurl.com/3lb588z>. They are sharing what they had learned to an audience of about 500, comprising other 'APEX participants', family and visitors. I think the video allows these young people to speak for themselves as to the difference the APEX Summer Opportunity made to their learning and live



A year later a group worked with Vicky on 'Unplugged Bath'. Their presentation shows you the appreciation the young people have of themselves, their talents, themselves as knowledge creators, and their ability and willingness to offer their talents and knowledge as gifts to others.

<http://tinyurl.com/3moff2p> .

These clips are particularly important to me, as they show how APEX has enabled young people to research questions that have brought them closer to understanding their own values and how they may want to make a difference that is important to them in the future. Vicky worked with Jack Whitehead and myself to successfully submit her Masters assignment in 2008:

'A response as to how my involvement with the Gifted and Talented programme initiated by Bath and North East Somerset has made me re-assess my living educational values and beliefs, thus influencing my delivery and provision for the SEBD students with whom I work' accessible from

<http://actionresearch.net/writings/mastermod.shtml>)

She concluded her assignment with, 'Although this particular account has concluded the journey for knowledge and educational influence continues and will continue throughout my life.' I hope the stories by children, young people, parents, and APEX staff, that follow will enable you to gain sufficient insight into the programme to have ideas that will contribute to your own journey.

## APEX memories recalled

I remember doing several APEX courses throughout the years, but the one that stands out for me was one where I did creative writing. By the end of the week, I and all the other children produced a short story to be shared and kept. I remember it the most because I feel I learnt the most from it.

I remember early on in the week, struggling to write a haiku and, with the group, developing my original attempt into the correct format. More than that, I remember the way I was able to work with the other children to do this, with little help from the adult.

It gave us all a chance to learn from each other and develop positive skills like team work, even with a new group of people.

By the end of the week, I had made new friends and shared my own skills and opinions with the rest of the group. It boosted my self confidence too and inspired me to write more when I was on my own at home. I recently found the story again and it made me smile to remember the combination of team work and individual inspiration that produced it.



I remember Marie too.

She inspired me to go on and study psychology and progress through the pathways that I have in my life. She was always positive and encouraging.

I am so glad I was able to participate in the APEX courses and I really feel they have helped me develop into the confident and happy adult I am now.

**Sian-Louise Burnett**  
(APEX alumni, now 23)

## APEX Recollections

Influence

Short Stories

Haiku

New Friends

Team Work

Individual

Inspiration

Alumni



## APEX Memories

People like me

Cooperation

Sharing ideas

Insight

Real world

Fun



## Insights

APEX is something that I will always look back on fondly. I think I must have been in Year 4 when I went on my first Saturday workshop, and I did my first summer school after Year 5. At school I was always the geek at the front, far more interested in mathematics problems than football. I suppose the most exciting thing about APEX was walking into a room full of people like me. People who genuinely enjoyed being challenged and having to think about something in a different way. Now I stand at the other end of education, clutching an offer to read Natural Sciences at the University of Cambridge.

There are a few key values running through APEX that I believe are extremely important, the biggest of which is cooperation. In an exam, or anywhere really in education, copying from someone else is called 'cheating'. If you copy, you're told that you're 'only cheating yourself', and if caught copying in an exam, you're given a score of zero. In life, copying from someone else, sharing your ideas and asking opinions is called cooperation, and it's actively encouraged. In fact, it's not only encouraged, it's absolutely required to be successful.

There's an interesting theory that most of the things that can be discovered without cooperation, have been. Anything new that's being developed, from a new product to a new process for purifying petrol will be the work of dozens of people. Copying someone else's published work, adapting it, adding to it, getting others opinions. Experts from other fields will be brought in. Historical data will be used. A computer model might be developed. The number of people involved in the cooperation that brings about new discoveries is enormous. And yet, you're 'only cheating yourself'. APEX brings a refreshing breath of cooperation to learning. Everything I did at workshops in the past involved questioning, speculating, testing, working with others to come up with new questions and new theories.



This, without my knowing it, gave me an insight into how things happen in the real world. This was fun.

**Luke Barnes**

(APEX alumni)

## Forest Fun Workshop

### Hockley family



My little boy, Peter, is 6 years old and attends Paulton Infants School. We have always joked that Peter should have been born as a scarecrow as he loves to be outside exploring, chatting to himself and seeing just how muddy he can get. From a very early age Peter would go outside to play and be content on his tractor. Peter has had a great start to his education and although he is doing very well he has struggled with some of his sounds, reading and letter forming. It also became very clear that Peter was enjoying the more 'practical' approach to learning. I have had lots of chats with his teachers in both reception and Year 1 and have always looked for methods we can use at home to help Peter at home. We have tried lots of different ideas BUT none of those included a pen or piece of paper. We have made letters from sticks, we have made letter shapes in soil and sand, we have made phonic sounds and watched our breath in the cold air, we made letters move in flour with our sounds, we have even made letters on Daddy

with a hosepipe! Peter has attended APEX courses that have had a very practical nature and this has really suited his learning ability. Peter has loved all the courses he has attended but I think his favourite was Forest Fun provided by Gwyn Harwood. It was a very cold day in April and Peter attended St Julians School in Wellow in his wellies and waterproofs ready to go. The children spent some time in the gardens, a great facility at the school, and they all learnt about the leaves and plants around them. They also learnt about the animals that may come into the garden and how they may live. The children were encouraged to then go and collect various items to help them make a crown and an animal. Whilst creating the animals they were encouraged to create a story about the creature. Peter made a lovely crown with lots of leaves and pieces of stick and was very proud. He also made his own Hedgehog and as you can see from the photograph it is a very fine hedgehog. Peter is able to tell us the story of the hedgehog and how he lives, where he lives, what he eats, who he might meet. I don't want to spoil the story for you but please feel free to go to [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVZeEk8vLew&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVZeEk8vLew&feature=player_embedded)

The poor model hedgehog was run over by a tractor and the clay has tyre marks on it!!!!

As a mum I really do believe that APEX workshops are an amazing way for children to extend their learning. The workshops are different and develop many different skills. Peter has gained an enormous amount of learning from the courses he has attended and he would never have done so had he have been given a pen and piece of paper. The hands on and practical approach of the workshops has really helped Peter to learn and remember some great facts.

## APEX Memories

Exploring

Practical

Learning through  
doing

Learning together

Hands on



## A Parents Perspective

### Diversity

### Go

### Combe Down Primary

### Sadness



***“I was saddened to hear that funding has been cut for the provision of APEX courses.”***

### Chrissie Wild parent

Our two children have attended many APEX opportunities over a number of years and we feel its a real shame that these courses are not going to continue. Both Molly and Sam have made many friends through these courses and have had experiences that they wouldn't have necessarily have had from just attending school. The making of friends made their transition to senior school much easier, as although both children left friends who were attending other schools, it was a delight to them that some of their friends from APEX now went to their same school.

The summer school is just something else. All those workshops running side by side with the culmination of the pupils work on the Thursday afternoon is truly joyful. To see so many children, and their like minded friends, produce such an array of work and talent, is outstanding.

My daughter, Molly, has fond memories of making a teddy bear which she still has from Year 2, and had a great time just this weekend on the Batik course. A year before changing to secondary school, Molly made a friend on the APEX course and four years later she is still friends with her today. Another of Molly's current friends was first met on the Teddy Bear course. Molly would not have made these friends without APEX. My son, Sam, loved the summer school 'design your dream garden' course. This has inspired him to build his own tree house. The wooden tree house has two platforms, sides, a roof, a ladder leading to it, and a pulley system, all made by Sam. He also dug a fire pit which was lovely to sit around in the summer evenings. Sam in particular has made many friends which is sometimes more difficult for boys.

We all enjoy playing the game 'Go' which was one Saturday morning workshop. We enjoy playing games as a family, and this has just added to our repertoire. When my children attended Primary School, we heard of lots of these courses and were able to attend many of them. Molly, who attends secondary school, stopped hearing about the courses from the school and we only heard about courses through direct enquiries. Sam, who attends a different secondary school, also tells me the courses do not seem to be promoted there.

These courses build confidence in children to try something different, meet new friends, and present their work or findings. I am sure some people just assume it's babysitting for kids on a Saturday, or free childcare, but it truly isn't. My children have grown up with APEX and I think its disappointing that this wonderful resource has to come to an end.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7p\\_SG-E0yE&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7p_SG-E0yE&feature=youtube_gdata_player)

***“Apex has allowed me to delivery opportunities to young people who want to try something new”***

**Bini Ludlow workshop provider**

I covered over 5 years a range of workshops that focussed on textiles and graphics skills. I particularly enjoyed how boys engaged in activities which are stereotyped - textiles projects involving making Indian shoes with year 5/6. It was exciting to see how young enthusiastic learners want to learn new skills by conducting hands on activities.

Fashion illustration is taught at ks4 and as a textiles teacher felt these skills could be easily taught at ks2. So I ran a workshop on this and I knew the children could develop these skills just as good as the older students at ks4.

Creating mood boards focusing on key skills needed in the fashion industry by designers to set trends, was well received buy all the students. It was fun talking about colour, patterns and textures. Young people know a lot about fashion that's for sure, but they learnt technical language used in the fashion industry during the session and an understanding of the processes if setting new trends.

Recycling old clothes and t- shirts were popular classes and it was great to see both boys and girls from 9-14yrs ages understand the importance of revamping clothes by using fabric manipulation techniques usually taught at ks4 and 5.

They were excited by their outcomes and were keen to try new skills and techniques. This was one of my favourite workshops. I particularly liked the fashion catwalk at the summer school at the Guild Hall which opened the presentation to the parents.



**Providers**

Hands on

Age was no barrier

Embodied knowledge

Excitement

Challenging

Stereotypes

Young People Know

Recycling

Parents



Summer school

Fun

Trip to Burcott Mill

Traditional Bread

Variety

Spice of life

Authentic cookery

Passion

Following dreams



**Conducting cookery workshop for summer school was brilliant - love food hate waste.**



It was fun watching the children make bread based products that considered carbon footprint and mileage when designing their new products. The trip to The Thoughtful Bread Company and Burcott Mill reinforced how bread is traditionally made and how with only a few key ingredients how so many products can be made such as bread sticks, sandwiches, bread and butter pudding, use of bread crumbs for bulking out products such as meat balls were also taught. Rolling out bread, flat breads, make baps, plaits, various shaped roles was really good fun. I had many students say they loved the workshop and learnt a great deal.

Finally, APEX gave young people opportunities they don't get from school and the workshops allowed them to explore talents which they don't know they have.

I under went my own exploration and realised I wanted to set up my own cookery school teaching young people and adults how to cook authentic Indian food. Much of the food we have on our high street is anglicised and I felt I need to teach people about what is actually eaten in Indian homes.

Sweet Cumin authentic Indian cookery classes teach budding cooks of all ages about spices, what to select, what they do and how to use them with confidence.

Classes suit both novice and experienced cooks who fancy learning new techniques and fancy a challenge to try out traditional recipes from the Gujarat.

I am pleased that I have found my passion to educate the next generation about authentic Indian cookery and I thank APEX for helping me move on and pursue my dreams.

For more from Bini click on [www.sweetcumin.co.uk](http://www.sweetcumin.co.uk)



## The Place In between a reflection on running Art Apex workshops

Shelagh Hetreed workshop provider



Shifting the balance from product to process. For me, the uniqueness of APEX has been the opportunity for both practitioner and participant to share imagined possibilities. The students arrive, eager to learn, focus, absorb and to leave with something new, achieved and different.

For those who learn a new concept, they will take away knowledge, a memory, experience, a potential for something else to evolve from their learning or action.

They can continue through the invitation to post their passion on-line and to demonstrate leadership by presenting to their family, friends or class. For those signing up to a practical session, they have an expectation of leaving with a product of which they will be proud.

Trust is essential and has to be gained quickly. APEX practitioners need to begin with communicating an idea to an unknown group and mould the creativity of each participant in 2 or 4 hours. The 'fruit of their labours', is the product. I am calling the creative process that takes place within this time line 'the place in between'.

The practitioner

Will use their embodied knowledge to plan the half/whole day session. There will be an introduction, a series of practical instructions, a range of creative stimuli, differentiated and an interactive style, to immediately engage the participants, quickly develop a trusting and comfortable climate in which to work and allow time for the practical activity. The skill lies in quickly assessing individual needs and barriers to learning and gaining the trust of every young person. Let us not underestimate the 'big ask' for the practitioner and the courage of the young person for venturing into totally unknown territory and having a go.



Tutor 2012

New experiences

Essential Trust

A place in-between

A 'Big Ask'

Courage

Trust

Creative Stimuli





## The Student

### Enthusiasm

### Preset Ideas

### Self Assessment

### Distance travelled

### Place in between

### Process

### Low self image

### Product

### Expectations

### Shift to process



## The student

Arrives full of enthusiasm and varying expectations, each with a preset idea about how 'good at art' or 'rubbish at art' that they are. To assess their level of confidence in their own skill and ability, I ask them to sign up to a 'continuum' on paper, placing themselves along a line of 'good at art' to 'not good at art'.

They sign again in red pen at the end of the session (see photo right) for them to see 'distance travelled' during the 'place in between' of a 2 or 4 hour workshop. For me, this is the joy of APEX

### Process

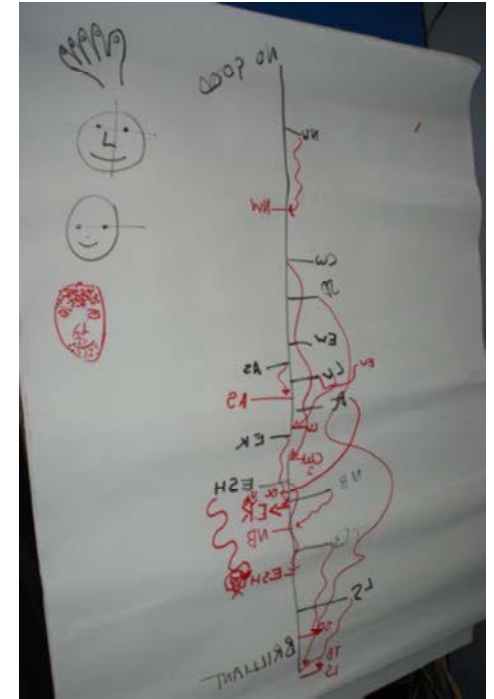
As an art educator, I value the process of art highly. I am sad that children are assessed and assess themselves at a very early point in their creative 'career' as not talented, creative or artistic. This is a travesty.

### Product

I believe that culturally, we are bound by expectations of art being about creating a product to go on the wall, to be hung, to be double mounted and displayed. The judgements are usually made by close adults not through condemnation of 'not good' work but by neglectful selection or silence. Often it is only if the work resembles a Van Gogh, or a Monet or Picasso, something that we have a vague idea about being 'good' art, that work is favoured and displayed. Are we judging with limited criteria? Is there any need to judge? Are we the cause of young minds losing confidence, ceasing to feel that intrinsic delight of creativity because of the messages they receive from us (watch a very young child delight in making marks for the feel, the experience and the joy of creating)? It is sad when a student arrives and wraps their arm around the work being created, checking out their neighbours, to make unfavourable comparisons between the works in progress.

*"The student further discovers the joy of colour and quickly develops his own technique"*

So can we shift the balance to focusing on the process to the 'place in between'? I believe we can.



## Outcome

Somehow, by the end of the day, every participant leaves the room smiling, proud and clutching the fruits of their labour. Oh to be able to really know what each parent thinks when their offspring emerges, holding out their product as evidence of their experience. My groups will emerge with multicoloured wax resist batik on cloth (Exploring Batik), or a sketched copy of a Picasso line drawing (Learning to use your right brain to see shapes and shadows) or on my Secret Garden course, a small plant pot filled only with soil, containing 3 unseen tomato seeds- a leap of faith, an imagined possibility- a vessel full of creative potential.

## The Place In between



On an APEX workshop, the educator and pupil step into the unknown. There will be time for introductions, examples, history, context after which clear instructions, speedy inspiration and practical demonstration are essential. There will be the 'tipping point' the moment when responsibility is gently passed like a breeze when the educator lets go and the participants rise to the challenge. They always do - a small miracle! For me, the magic time is between the tipping point and the finished product, when the imagined possibilities take form and emerge.

## Batik

Context - Indonesia cloth, full of symbolism and ritual. So study the pattern to find the imagery and geometry. 16 'images are found: birds, dragons, turtles, butterflies, flowers, suns, moons etc. Many geometric shapes are named: squares, triangles, spirals, diamonds, crescents, circles etc. 10 minutes have passed and every participant has studied and analysed the fabric lengths and reported back. Skills: hot wax resist requires a new kind of drawing control, trailing hot wax through a copper bowl called the Tjanting. Pupils are encouraged to try a range of techniques. 'Cracking' is popular and 'bleeding' the dyes also gives stunning effects. They have analysed the fabric and are ambitious to replicate these techniques.



*"Taking inspiration from the Indonesian samples he makes the images his own"*



## Outcomes

### Emergence

The place in between

### Tipping point

### Imagined

### Possibilities

### Letting go



## Participants voices

Memorable

Gained

New Skill

Inspiration

Motivation

Challenge

Enriched

Distance travelled



So what do participants say?

In the final round of 'one thing I have learned/ enjoyed today', they say: Learning a new technique; working with others; making new friends; trying out the dyes; controlling the tjanting; seeing the Indonesian cloth.

So what do the participants leave with?

A new skill and a whole glossary of terms, an opportunity to experiment, use trial and error to create the desired effect. They have been motivated, inspired, excited and challenged and learned a little of a culture, traditions and rituals.

*"The student's output is prolific as he becomes totally immersed in 'the place in between' "*

What do they value?

They will value the pieces of waxed and dyed cloth that they rush to show their parents as they leave. This will be the benchmark of a successful APEX workshop.

However, we will all be enriched by our precious time in 'The Place In-between'.



ghs website [www.journeying-ona-course.co.uk](http://www.journeying-ona-course.co.uk)



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Agree to Disagree- being nudged a step forward from your comfort zone

Engaging Young People in Research at APEX Young People Conference July 2012

How can we engage young people within minutes of stepping into a workshop?

How can we communicate to them that research and data gathering can be easy, fun and accessible to everyone and not just for academics?

These were my challenges as I facilitated a workshop with the title

*'Making Creative Contact Quickly'*.

The promise was to demonstrate the simple tools of paper, card and string to engage others and gather evidence for research quickly, as well as enhancing creative thinking and developing the confidence and skills to sometimes lead and sometimes be a co-operative team player. There is just over an hour to not disappoint!

All my workshops require a leap of faith, for those curious enough to have a go.



The session began typically - the group filed in, anxiety on some faces as they quickly find a chair to sink into- seeking security and obscurity behind a desk. Included in the group are some adults from the conference.

I pondered whether this will help or hinder.

The welcome is essential, the facilitator needs to smile, speak confidently, make eye contact, be encouraging and put everyone at ease. The participant's body language is revealing, showing a range of emotions: confidence levels; enthusiasm; motivation or reticence.

**Contact**

**Engage**

**Research**

**Using simple tools**

**Leap of faith**



## Essentials

### Individual

### Nudged beyond comfort zones

### Imagination

### Empowerment

### Sharing

### Reflection



## An essential element for effective person centred active learning is to create a comfortable climate.

Encouragement and challenge are required in equal measure. Each person needs to be nudged forward a step or two beyond their comfort zone. Their motivation needs to remain intrinsic (ensuring that their engagement is for and about them and not shifting to extrinsic to satisfy the adults). This can be communicated from the outset through example and values expressed.

Active learning is about inclusive invitations to engage, to interpret messages, to play with ideas, making sense of information, to contribute - to have imagined possibilities. It is for everyone and can be about anything at all. It is empowering, enriching and enables sharing, exploring and having a voice.

The opening exercise was designed to break the ice, get everyone on their feet and clustered around large prepared sheets. It was the first invitation to them to contribute data about themselves: place in family; house rules; how they spend their spare time - an achievable task that is all about them. The second invitation was to share their thoughts about the exercise. Reflection is an important part of the process. The young people could already begin to see how data collecting is simple and fun.

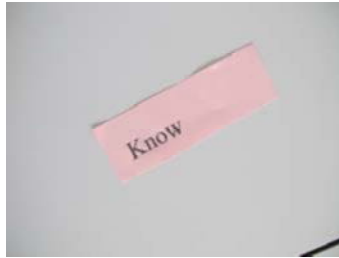
The climate was shifting. It always does. Participants were assured that all contributions would be valued and that they would leave with 3 useful research methods.

The next exercise required more challenge. It was a big leap from the first but was worth the risk. It was 'standing by what you believe' and required each participant to respond to provocative statements by moving to stand by one of 3 cards placed along the ground on an invisible line:

'Agree' 'Not Sure' 'Disagree'

Each theme for discussion was chosen for its relevance to a young audience: e.g. parents should always know where their children are at night; boys are more likely to be attacked than girls etc. The simple instructions were to 'stand by what you believe'. For some, this alone would be challenging enough but they were further invited to give reasons for where they had decided to stand.





## Shifts

Know

Not Sure

Don't Know

OK to differ

Challenged

After just 20 minutes in to the workshop, I observed the body language shifting considerably. There was more eye contact, faces relaxing and contributions began to flow.



The invitation to be participative learners had been accepted. Hopeful anticipation hung in the air.

The 'taking a stand' exercise brought forward opposite views and different opinions.

Some may have changed their views through the process of hearing others or had their beliefs confirmed. They all understood that it was ok to 'beg to differ'. My observation of the adults was that some seemed more persistent in wanting to get their message across. The young participants were now dealing with an extra dimension of being challenged by the adults and to stand their ground. They rose to the challenge.



Finally we moved to the 'Diamond 9', a powerful tool and personal favourite as it easily transfers across any subject and audience. The subject for discussion is 'why do young people in UK drink more than the rest of Europe?'

Step 1 was for all offerings to be listed on the board, Step 2, to split into pairs, Step 3 for us all to select the 9 most likely/ main reasons from the list and each pair document on paper squares.

## Debate

## Ordering process

## Ownership

## Comparison

## Change

## Cooperative

The value of this exercise is that it encourages debate, negotiation, listening skills and co-operative working. Step 4 required the pairs to negotiate the order of importance by forcing the rank order into a diamond shape (1, 2, 3, 2 and 1), the most important reason at the top and least at the bottom of the diamond. The pairs worked entirely within their own experience so had 'ownership' of the decisions. It is always enlightening to see how much knowledge any group of young people will have on a given subject. This workshop was no exception.

Step 5 was each pair teaming up with another. Step 6 was comparing the rankings and discussing differences. This could result in some changing their rank order, in light of discussions. The final step was each group declaring their final rank order and justifying their evidence.



I observed that some of the adults were keen to add to the body of knowledge of the young people present. However, the participant learning was through their discussions with each other.

Person centred learning acknowledges embodied knowledge and draws it out; the adult's role is as facilitator, stepping back while encouraging understanding in the value of the process.

The outcome (the written responses to a question) has been a means to an end. The hour is over and the experience has taken place in 'the place in-between'.

The group are invited to reflect on what has happened for them over the last hour and to each make a statement. Their responses reflect the value of the process they have been taken through.

They can use these simple tools to undertake research but they have hopefully learned the value of learning co-operatively, the importance of having a voice and being nudged a step forward from their comfort zone.



## Ourself as Dancing data. APEX, Living, learning, Relational Dynamics and Life Affirming Energies.

### Shaun and Marian Naidoo

During all of the APEX workshops that we have been involved in we have always been surprised ( although we don't know why) at how young people are fired by their passions enough to want to explore, discover, test out and learn even more. Often they are driven by the very passion that brought them into the room in the first place. What of my learning, and my experience during these sessions? What am I discovering about myself? But more importantly, how is my learning taking place?



I often find that language based on words is for a creative practitioner a rather clumsy tool. Its default position has always been to identify the 'what'. Language forces us to objectify our experience. Yet I am only, 'knowing', of the subjective dynamics that will be informing my behaviour as I place myself into an APEX workshop. I am often relying on my instincts, my capacity to 'see' rather than to observe and my varying degrees of intuition and insightfulness depending on the energies and the quality of the connecting with others. Yes, of course, I prepare – the system demands that I do. I am told to create structure, objectives aims and outcomes. I am told to predict what I think participants will get out of the session. I dutifully fill the gaps offer my

structure and predictions and complete the paperwork. I guess this has a function. It helps to focus. Just before the session starts is the best time to 'see' the energy, the reticent excitement working against each other as people enter the space remaining anonymous, waiting for the structure to start. Then it begins. A dance between people, between I / we and us. Gradually developing greater confidence, increased interaction and bigger risk taking as we/I/us reveal little by little a bit more of our selves. As I reflect on each of the APEX sessions, and as I feedback and discuss with others, it is clearly the 'how do I / we that matters.

So, how do I/we do learning? How does this dynamic affect how we continue to learn and discover in ways that challenge normative thinking. How do I focus on just 'being' so that I/we can bring together the potential for true cooperative learning based on authentic self and creative engagement?

How do we/I engage with others in the process of using dynamic energy to further explore and discover? What am I finding out about how I did? Do I replay my dance (to relive that moment of the present) to see how inclusional and responsive I was when I am reflecting afterwards?

Dancing Data

Trust

Dynamic energy

Inclusional

Responsive





**Knowing of**

**Passions**

**Compassion**

**In the present**

**Narrative**

**Identity**

**Expressing**

**Relating**



I cannot claim to know. This is not who I am or will ever be. I can though be; 'knowing of'. Every dynamic is bespoke, contextualised and dependent on the exchange of energies between individual / s, fuelled with passions and compassions and a need to express those in some way. This dynamic extends the process of knowing while demonstrating expression of I / we in such a way that reaffirms how you are who you are. I am therefore 'knowing' of my experience of others and self while we explore, learn and expressing ourselves together **in the present**, providing a juicy snapshot that will have an authentic life energy (a dynamic energy even). How do I/we after the meeting is over and we are back in our homes reflect and review our experience? It matters not. Just holding that reflection based on that present is enough to be knowing of any learning, enough until the dance starts all over again. Then, new knowing begins. The experience of learning is always more powerful than the telling and manipulation of knowledge, because the experience will always contain our narrative.

We all carry your own story, our narrative. This is never linear or fixed, it is as ever changing as our **identity** is, ways in which we are **expressing** our identities and the **relating** with others that help us to do so. The way that these three aspects of 'knowing' of self interact is continuous and dynamic- they dance with each other. It is what makes us grow a little more.

Pursuing the concrete (normative objectification) is easier. After all it is how we have been socialised. What is harder for us is the abstract the conceptual approach that allows us to explore and discover together. The form provides a safe place to take bigger risks, make quantum leaps....dance your authentic self. APEX offers a space for this to occur. It harnesses individual passions as well as fears in a social context for all to engage connect and express our meanings in a way that helps us explore how we are who we are. It is in the doing of this, fuelled by our passions for self and compassion as we connect with each other that provides a unique opportunity to build our confidence, self esteem and capacity to express our multi faceted, multi dimensional and ever changing self.



A communion of dynamic energy, life affirming energy, that offers the opportunity to connect be authentic play and explore. Can we ask for anything better? This is the true power of engaging in critical enquiry. This is the power of the 'dance'.

## Why do I do what I do Michelle Rochester

Before writing my “Story” I asked others “Why do I do what I do – What has driven me to dedicate my life to helping children”? To my surprise their answers were not the same as mine. This forced me to rethink and reanalyse my motivations and career path. Having experienced a childhood fraught with neglect, abuse and violence and adolescence fuelled with drugs, money and more aggression my story begins with the studying of a Martial Art.

Aikido provided me with a vision for something outside myself, something I could strive for that was not tangible, and something that came with only an internal reward. This practice requires the student to listen, read, analyse the opponent in order to make a defensive move, the ultimate would be to act before the attacker has made the thought to attack. In addition to this there is an element of compassion whereby the student learns how to heal the physical body of others. There is also a meditative element that I still practice today. Aikido helped me believe not only could I do more, I could be more. Since stopping my formal training in Aikido many years ago I continue to watch, read and listen to bodies all around me. Aikido gave me the personal skills I needed to enrol to become a primary teacher. Jaded and overwhelmed with the tediousness of school teaching I was lucky to have found a subject that kept me challenged and engaged – This was when I began to dance! Dance forced me to be even softer, to be able to deal with personal issues, release and express my inner-self in order to be a better person inside and outside of the dance studio.



I studied the movement practice of contact improvisation, the principal is to listen to other movers’ bodies and follow a point of contact and energy. Both these practices are the cornerstone to the delivery of my lessons. 10 years ago I began my teaching practice as a fresh and energetic dance teacher; it was not long before I felt frustrated with having to tackle behavioural issues or waiting for teachers to manage behaviour. Behaviour was getting in the way of my dance teaching! I needed to change my teaching tactics, for me pupils were not getting easier to deal with and some teachers didn’t seem to care that their pupils were not getting the best from an outside professional visiting

their school. I knew it would be a constant battle to address and the issue with the teachers and asking for help with behaviour would be a negative reflection on my teaching skills. I am always up for a challenge and so decided to learn how to tackle behaviour. My first learnt lesson was that I had to look at the whole student, why were they not able to access learning, what were the issues they individually had to face every day? It would appear that if a student obeyed all rules they would be rewarded and if they didn’t they would be punished. I felt there was more to behaviour than that two pinned approach.

## Asked others

Rethink

Aikido

Compassion

Being more

Dance



## Student Led

## The real work

## 1<sup>st</sup> APEX

## Learning ownership

## Kinaesthetic learning

## Facilitation

## No 'Wrong Way'

## Better choices

## Empowerment

## Healing



After attending 2 workshops, firstly one on the Sherborne movement which did not “teach” any movement but very simply used the students’ ideas and developed them into choreography with sound composition. The other being a very creative workshop that focused on the schools curriculum. I felt set to go! If I could listen to the pupils, use their ideas whilst also using the curriculum, it would seem all would be happy.

This is where my **real** work began.

My first APEX Summer School allowed me to trial this person centred approach. I was armed with all my dance, choreographic and lesson tools but I was willing to face a group of eager students and ask them “How can we make a dance about.... how can this particular music influence what we do? How do we know we are successful? These basic questions wove throughout the 4 days of discovery. I felt that this was the beginning my way working. Giving the ownership of learning over to the pupils allowed me to observe and appreciate the learners’ prior knowledge. This is now a tool I always use as it saves time, for instance, instead of asking a series of blanket questions to a whole group in order to establish their prior learning, if we simply get on with a task their prior learning is evident quite quickly.



This was by no means all the answers to tackling behaviour. My main obstacles are: “We don’t want to dance and we can’t really be bothered to learn anything”. So – what do the students and I want if I have to learn? I want to be engage, I want to have fun and if I learn something then what a bonus! This is now exactly how I begin each lesson, with fun activities that explore simply movement but focus on expression, interpretation and teamwork. The value added to a task when we add others is invaluable in my lessons. I now also use the curriculum in a hope that teachers would feel they were learning how to use dance in school and how easy it could be and hopefully address the kinaesthetic learner. I approach the pupil as a whole by listening to their needs and facilitating their creativity and physical skills. The beauty of dancing in this way is that there is no “wrong way”, whilst there are better choices to be made the power of making your own movement in a safe environment is empowering.

Dance is as powerful a therapeutic art form. It has the power to provide a sense of freedom at both a physical and psychological level. It has the potential to be a means of expressing oneself without any boundaries. I believe it can heal people - as it did me.

When I first met J the proximity of another person used to make him react violently. This meant that he was never touched by members of staff unless it was to restrain him to prevent him from harming himself and others. J never smiled; he never talked in response to any stimuli from another person.

The area of work I focused on with J was sequencing. The purpose of this was to extend his concentration, improve his memory and provide him transferable skills in subjects such as maths. After six weeks of working together, moving to the sound of music, encouraged by physical prompting and constant eye contact, J made startling progress. He was able to sit on a mat with me or another dance practitioner, touching hands. Sometimes I would follow his hands but mostly by gently touching them, I encouraged him to follow me until he was able to roll and turn, and make big movements with his body, prompted by my lead. Josh is an incredibly agile boy and has great physical capabilities but these skills had never been channelled or directed by anyone; when J saw an object he simply jumped on it.

In the final session, after working together for six weeks, J was able to roll on a mat with four of his peers, helped by me and two others. Together we rolled him, pushing him backwards and forwards, J began to spontaneously sing: "There were five in the bed and the little one said roll over, roll over". I was moved to tears.

Each week I pushed the boundaries with J and got closer to him on a physical and emotional level by making eye and physical contact. J's concentration span doubled in six weeks of creative movement, for one session a week. I asked a member of staff if J's social skills had improved. The response was "Well, he no longer hits others along the corridor." Other teachers also reported that his concentration, temperament and general behaviour had improved immensely during the day of his session and the days which followed.

J was no longer a threat to others in school at that time.

## Specifics

Change

Learning gradually

Building trust

Concentration

Dramatic shifts



## Inclusion

## Understanding

## Acceptance

## Trust

## Behavioural shift

## Self confidence

## Change



When I first arrived at an Inner –city school in the heart of one of the most deprived areas in the region, JN was consistently being chased or hiding. He hardly spent time in class. Every Monday he would manage to escape capture for over 10 minutes, Monday was his most difficult day. JN would pass me around school for two whole terms and I would always make a point of smiling and saying a cool “alright”. Three terms later of only passing JN as he was making his escape I eventually had the pleasure of him in my lesson., I treaded very carefully, making sure to not look directly at him as he would always have his head low, I took this to mean he couldn’t quite cope with any invasive communication. The first lesson was a success! He stayed for the whole hour, something he wasn’t able to do in class. In the second lesson I used JN as an example of how to execute a particular move. Again I did not make eye contact as I spoke about JN to the rest of the class. Once I had finished I could see out of the corner of my eye JN held his head high and had colour in his cheeks where he was proudly blushing. He stayed for the whole of my lesson and didn’t show any signs of behaviour issues. Each week I would advertise the afterschool club for anyone to join. The third lesson I personally invited JN to come to the afterschool dance club with no expectations.



By the end of term JN was attending 2hrs of dance afterschool and was able to attend the prestigious “Stages” dance event in Bristol. After a fantastic performance with no mistakes but a lot of nerves we sat in the audience for over an hour next to the Mayor. I was as nervous as JN was sat with 2 other boys. I couldn’t foresee the outcome. The boys sat for over an hour in a theatre for the first time in their lives and watched the other schools perform with impeccable behaviour - this made me cry and even more determined to develop the therapeutic nature of my practice. Outside of school JN’s dad began taking him to a movement class on a Saturday morning. I don’t think JN had much contact with his Dad before this and definitely not a regular agreement and yet each week he would pick him up and take him to his class. When it was getting close to the end of year and the end of the funding I asked the teacher, “How was JN’s behaviour in class now?” She replied, “excellent”.

## APEX legacies Sue Rogers

I joined the APEX team 3 years ago. I was not really sure what I was letting myself in for. I had heard words banded around – ‘gifted’, ‘talented,’ ‘enthusiastic’, but didn’t really think about it. I certainly wasn’t expecting it to be the fantastically worthwhile experience that it has turned out to be and I quickly became hooked on it. I soon got swept up with the enthusiasm of the young students who wanted to answer questions, sharing their own (linked) experiences, and wanting to cook the different dishes that were on offer.



I decided to target Years 5 and 6 (I teach KS3 and KS4), so for me, this was a novelty. It meant that I had to rethink my teaching– no National Curriculum to follow and the possibility of teaching completely new lessons, many of which had new outcomes. Even the timing of the sessions has been different – I am used to doing everything in one hour – so a whole morning or afternoon has been a real treat. I have written many different sessions, cake decorating, Christmas and Easter cooking, bread bonanza, healthy eating is cool, cake making - homemade or packet, changing breakfast habits, pasta fiesta, soups homemade or bought, interesting lunch boxes, a batch of biscuits, food for fundraising, fun with fruit, bonfire night food. I have also found another benefit, that I could use many of these new resources for my own school lessons. It

has been a challenge working within the financial constraints, but we have always managed it. The lessons have been time consuming to write and resource, but I have loved doing it.

I have had some common threads running through the sessions, which has linked into my own philosophy of teaching Food Technology – namely healthy eating, developing awareness of the poor quality of many of the products in the shops and above all, designing new flavours and foods.

I am proud of the fact that having done my degree, I worked in the flavour industry designing new flavours and foods and worked on new pot noodle flavours, crisp flavours, soups, sauces and batters to name but a few. Many of these foods were sold in the shops, so I now have a passion for encouraging students to become designers and take risks. I hope that I have inspired them.

**No National Curriculum**

**School**

**Gifted**

**Talented**

**Enthusiastic**

**Years 5 & 6**



## High Standards

### The Buzz

### Confidence

### Competence

Who will know the impact which we have had!



I have been surprised at the standard of practical work and talents of many of the young people – in many cases they have been as good as students at KS3. Students have bonded and often when I have asked them at the end of the session what they have learnt or enjoyed they have told me making new friends, as well as cooking the product.

I have often stopped half way through a session when the students were cooking and listened – the buzz of conversation with newly found friendships was amazing.

It has been great to talk to year 6 students about life in secondary school. Some of them have since joined the school I teach in, and introduced themselves to me...

*'Do you remember when I came on that APEX day and we..... I really enjoyed it, and I.....'*

Interestingly these students are far more confident and competent in my lessons than their peers are who didn't attend the courses. Whether it is the type of student or the fact that they have had this experience, we will never know.

We have awarded use the Chef's Hat award for the best practical work at the end of each session. Each student is allowed to vote for the 'best outcome', in their opinion, after we have discussed the success criteria for the dish. I have given out certificates – I wonder how many certificates are still pinned on notice boards!

Working with some fantastic assistants has made the whole process possible and so worthwhile and I am going to miss it. I hope that I have had an impact on the futures of these young people and their learning experiences, which they can take away and build on and share with others over the years.

Who will know the impact which we have had!



## Some comments feedback from the children

*"We prefer the homemade cakes because they're cheap, fluffy and taste good, but the packet mixes were dry and crispy at the top, they were much more expensive"*

*"It was more fun making the homemade cake because we could ice them easier"*

*"The packet mix rose to high in the middle and if we iced them the icing would slip off that's why we prefer homemade cake"*

*"The packet mix were terrible and they led us to burning the cakes and it also told us to put the oven on a certain temperature which turned out to be too high"*



*"We preferred the homemade because the quality is soft and reliable. We think it is easy to compare because they are so different"*

*"We preferred the homemade because:*

- They were better tasting and softer*
- They were more moist than the packet mix*

*"We prefer the homemade because they are better quality, softer, very reliable, moist and golden yellow which is helpful in business purposes".*

## Homemade is best

Confidence

Articulate

Discerning

Decisive





## Sketchbooks

### Research

### Gathering data

### Time

### Challenge

### Thought provocation



## Using sketchbooks for research. Paula Tew

The images that I have selected are from the session I ran titled “Using Sketchbooks for Research” as part of the Interconnected Learning Youth Conference 2011 with APEX. It was an absolute privilege to spend half a day immersed in this subject matter with a group of young people ranging from the ages of 12 to 16. As a book binder and journal writer who spends a great deal of time researching and investigating techniques and different aspects for my own practice, I love to work with other people, hopefully to help them to think of their own ways to gather data, research and express themselves and their individuality.



What was great about this session was that it allowed time for discussion, artistic activity, exploration and reflection. I was amazed at how much effort the young people put in and (therefore, I hope) got out of the workshop. The session allowed the group to assemble their own books from scratch and then use them whilst exploring the local environment around them. They were encouraged to really look deeply and investigate objects that often go unnoticed in daily life, consider carefully what they were looking at by analysing aspects such as colours, shapes, purpose and use. They were challenged to think about what they already know and would like to investigate further, and encouraged to compile data, questions and thoughts in



order to form potential research enquiries. The feedback from the participants after the session was extremely positive, with one of the boys even attending a subsequent workshop upon the same theme, where he told the group how valuable he had found the concept of working with sketchbooks to gather data, thoughts, and ideas;

*“It is very interesting and really sets off a firework in your mind enabling you to think in a completely different way, by writing an idea down you can then reflect on it and improve. (The workshop is) well worth it, really get’s you thinking!”*

Please see [www.paulatew.co.uk](http://www.paulatew.co.uk)

**I loved every moment of APEX.**

**Nicola Presley**

I have been involved with the APEX scheme since 2006 when I was a co-ordinator for education at a museum in Bath. It was so exciting to teach children and young people in a museum, taking them out of the usual classroom environment. I was so impressed with their enthusiasm and endless questioning that I continued teaching APEX workshops when I left the museum as my academic career began to develop.

For me, APEX represented an opportunity for children to follow their passions, to ask questions that mattered to them, and to develop their own active learning. What I didn't perhaps expect was the effect that APEX had on my own career development and my own interests and passions.

My workshops were always challenging, encompassing subjects from Shakespeare to the hidden history of the city of Bath and rather a lot in between!



Being part of APEX enabled me to become a better researcher – anticipating the thirst for knowledge that the children always demonstrated made me work harder at exploring subjects. It also had a huge impact on how I teach; planning for APEX was often difficult because one could never predict which element of a particular topic which piques the most interest. My workshops became much more learner-led and instinctive which has had a very positive effect on how I lecture to undergraduate students at Bath Spa University. During the final APEX summer opportunity, I was able to bring the students to the University to use the facilities and equipment and give them a taste of higher education.

It was tremendous to see the children, who began the week mostly as nervous strangers, become confident and comfortable in an unfamiliar environment.

I hope that the children and young people I have worked with over the years enjoyed the workshops I facilitated.

**Exciting**

**Out of the classroom**

**Passions**

**Challenging**

**A better researcher**

**Learner led**

**Confidence gained**



Inspiring

Artist

Teacher

Pleasure

Workshops



**Artist, Workshop Provider and Teacher Sue McCann**

*"It has been inspiring to be part of a group that promotes confidence in children, to work cooperatively, take risks, forge new friendships and face new challenges."*



I have had the pleasure to enable  
Sometimes reluctant children  
Daunted by a new situation  
Finish a workshop feeling confident  
Happy  
Motivated  
To find out more.



## Assistants are invaluable additional learning support

### Beth Harding

I have been involved with APEX over four summers. I have always been impressed by the range and scope of activities presented to students, not to mention their enthusiasm and interest.

The originality of their ideas and their willingness to participate have also struck me as a great sign of hope in times of often negative press about young people.

That they - and the staff - are 'giving up' their holiday to attend only underlines what an important project it is, and it's a great shame that it won't be continuing in its present format.



This photo is from our visit to Lacock in 2010, showing the scope of the activities we've taken part in thanks to APEX, not to mention the fun - not just for the students but for the assistants as well, every year that I've been involved.

I have been so impressed with the enthusiasm and interest shown by students.

Strikes me as there is great hope for the future if these are the young people we have coming up behind us...!

## Assistants

Lacock

Range

Scope

Impressive



## Curriculum

## Opportunities

## APEX Machine

## Benefit

## Thank you APEX

## Well worth the effort



## Assisting at APEX Fiona Crockett

I have heard it said that the National Curriculum we deliver today to our youngsters is as broad and as balanced as would fit on to the edge of a razor blade! As a result many schools held weekly or fortnightly enrichment sessions as part of their curriculum. However, many of these fell by the wayside as teachers struggled to keep up with the demands of meeting targets and delivering schemes of work at breakneck speed.

Then, there was APEX the programme which 'plugged the gap' offering activities and experiences for our youngsters which many would otherwise not have had. APEX with Marie Huxtable, Jane Hill, Michelle Sims, Dan Barwise and providers, assistants and Quality Assurance Monitors (QAM's) ran efficiently for many years. Hundreds of students and providers benefited from being 'freed' from the shackles of formal, prescriptive teaching to experiencing fun, freedom to express themselves, socialise and interact in a way that is not always possible in schools.

It is sad that APEX has come to an end but I hope that the joy of learning and the open curiosity developed by youngsters on the APEX courses and the diverse experiences will make a mark on their lives which will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. **Thank you APEX**

## Jackie Clark

To be a part of the APEX group has been very rewarding for me personally and for the students. They have learnt so many things from all the trips we have gone on and from the learning experience in the classroom, also the art of meeting new people from all different schools, communicating and doing tasks as a team. I have learnt many things from my peers and from the children themselves. I have learnt about Bath itself as we went on a tour by the Bath Guides and all the children made a map for other children to use as they walked round Bath. We went on a trip to the sewage works learning about how precious water is to us; even now I turn the water off in between cleaning my teeth! Learning how to cook healthy food full of vitamins and being excited with the learning process! The look in the students eyes when they have finished something to be proud of is very rewarding and well worth every effort we put in.



## Management

### Planning an APEX Saturday Workshop Programme

**Michelle Sims, APEX Projects Manager 2007-2012**

For anyone who would like to continue with the APEX Living Legacy in the form of a Saturday Workshop Programme I thought that it would be useful to have an overview of the model that APEX has successfully developed over the years in developing, delivering and evaluating a programme of Saturday workshops for enthusiastic young learners.

### The APEX Approach



Saturday Workshops have run most weekends for each school year group throughout term time, either in schools around the Local Authority area or other venues such as local Museums or Art Galleries. There was no charge to pupils from Bath & North East Somerset maintained schools. Workshops were usually for a two hour period, although occasionally they ran for a whole day.

The design of the Workshop Programme sought to achieve a balance between school year groups and interest areas, drawing on the strengths, experiences and passions of the bank of Workshop Providers who worked for APEX on a casual basis.

The programme of workshops for a term was publicised a term in advance, and the School's Able Pupil Co-ordinator or Teacher Leading in Improving Gifted and Talented Education, submitted applications via email using an [Application Form](#) excel spreadsheet through to the APEX Support team in Bath & North East Somerset. The pupils for whom applications were submitted were chosen in accordance with their school's Gifted & Talented Policy.

All documents can be found on <http://www.spanglefish.com/livinglegacies>

## Management

### APEX in Practice

Frameworks

Structure

Infrastructure

Administration

Support

Planning

The Approach

Application

## Inclusion Policy

### Fairness

### Places

### Within Safe Parameters



Up to three weeks before the workshop date workshop places were allocated. Workshops were frequently over-subscribed, in which case allocation of places sought to achieve a balance between pupil priorities and needs and fairness between schools.

Initial priority was given to pupils who were at risk of marginalisation, relying on information provided to APEX by the schools identifying individual educational needs. Some would only come if accompanied by a friend. In which case the school applied for a place for the friend who would also be allocated a priority place.

These pupils may have been members of one or more of the following groups:

- Black or a member of a minority ethnic group (BME)
- Eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- Looked after by the local authority (LA)
- Young carers (YC)
- Identified as having a special educational need (SEN)
- Fragile/disaffected/passive compliant learners, who are often invisible (I)
- At risk of not attending school (A)
- The youngest in their year group as they have summer birthdays (Y)
- Rural Disadvantage (RD)
- Priority (P) – details provided by school



The remaining places were then allocated with a view to achieving a balance with respect to gender, and involving pupils from a spread of schools, and the geographical area they represent.

We learned from experience that a number of children and young people do not turn up on the day, despite having been allocated a place. To maximise the use of places we used our experience and regular monitoring to offer more places than the ideal, but with a view to ensuring that if everyone turned up the children would still have a good safe learning experience.

## Running the Workshop

Each Workshop was run by a [Workshop Provider](#), who was supported by a [Workshop Assistant](#), whose role it was to support the Workshop Provider in the effective and safe delivery of the APEX workshop. All workshops were supported by a [Quality Assurance Monitor](#) (QAM). It was the role of this person to be responsible for the smooth and safe running of all APEX workshops being run at that venue on that day, ensuring that the Local Authority's standards and workshop objectives are achieved at all times. Before responsibility for a child can be taken on a workshop the QAM must have received a completed [Parental Consent Form](#) from the child's parents/carers.



Included on this form must be at least two emergency contact numbers, details of any medical issues or allergies that the child may have and the parent/carer's signature to confirm that they agree to the consents detailed on the form. If a parent does not agree to one or more of the consents this must be discussed with the QAM before the parent leaves the child. If the QAM agrees that the child can still attend the workshop unaccompanied the QAM must ensure that the Workshop Provider and Assistant are aware of the arrangement with the parent/carer and abide by it e.g. where a parent does not give consent for a child to be photographed. It was the QAM's responsibility to ensure that all children are picked up at the end of the workshop and leave with the correct parent/carer.

## After the Workshops

Each parent and child was asked to complete an [Evaluation Form](#) and hand it in to the QAM before they leave. Once all children had left, the QAM would review these completed Evaluation Forms with the Workshop Provider and Assistant and gather feedback from the Provider & Assistant. A discussion would take place around whether anything should be changed for future workshops and whether any specific feedback should be passed back to an individual child's school. All registers, forms and completed evaluation forms were then returned to the office where they would be reviewed by the APEX Projects Manager and any appropriate remedial actions taken.

All documents can be found on <http://www.spanglefish.com/livinglegacies>

**Running  
Providers  
Assistants  
Quality Assurance  
Consent  
Evaluation**





## Programme

### Design

### Flow Diagram



## Design of Termly Programme

Select Providers  
Agree Workshop content  
Select venues  
Undertake Venue Risk Assessment  
Agree Risk Assessment with Providers  
Decide timings and year group  
**Responsibility: APEX Projects Manager**

V

## Promoting Programme

Proof check flyers  
Design covering letter  
Distribute programme to schools and other key contacts  
**Responsibility: APEX Projects Manager & Admin Officer**

V

## Applications and Allocations

School submit applications to APEX team via e-mail  
Three weeks before Workshop places are allocated  
Two days before Workshop, final register sent to QAM  
**Responsibility: APEX Projects Manager & Admin Officer**

V

## Day of Workshop

QAM registers pupils and receives Parental Consent Form  
Workshop Provider delivers workshop supported by Assistant  
QAM signs each child out to their parent/carer  
QAM reviews pupil and parent evaluation forms with Provider and Assistant and discusses any issues arising  
QAM and Provider complete their own evaluation form  
QAM returns register and evaluation forms to APEX team  
**Responsibility: Workshop Provider, Workshop Assistant & QAM**

V

## Post Workshop

Evaluation forms reviewed  
Attendance levels reviewed  
Remedial actions taken as appropriate  
**Responsibility: Senior Educational Psychologist & APEX Projects Manager**

## Risk Assessments

Bath & North East Somerset is committed to the Health and Safety of its employees and service users. To this end risk assessments were required to be undertaken and documented for each APEX workshop by the Workshop Providers, and agreed with the APEX Projects Manager.

The [Workshop Risk Assessment](#) was carried out by the Workshop Provider during the workshop design phase. The APEX Projects Manager should be able to consider the content of the Risk Assessment before agreeing to run with a particular workshop. The Risk Assessment was agreed by the APEX Projects Manager at the same time as the Workshop Flyer is approved.



## Risk Assessment

### Workshop

### Context



The purpose of the Risk Assessment process is to be able to identify common workplace/learning environment hazards, evaluate their risk and identify precautions that can be taken to reduce the likelihood or severity of the risk occurring. A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm or injury.

To evaluate the risk, and determine a hazard as high, medium or low you should consider the likelihood of the risk occurring and the severity of the harm or injury if it does.

A risk assessment for the venue was documented and reviewed by the APEX Projects Manager and the venue owner/caretaker.

All documents can be found on <http://www.spanglefish.com/livinglegacies>

## Summary

### Child Protection

### All of the forms

### Duty of Care

### Freedom with Responsibility



## Child Protection & Safeguarding

Bath & North East Somerset is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children and Young People and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Certificate was required for all APEX Workshop Providers, Assistants and QAM's prior to running a workshop.

All adults who come into contact with children and young people in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. The duty which rests upon an individual is to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a child or young person involved in any activity, or interaction for which that individual is responsible. Any person in charge of, or working with children and young people in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally, to owe them a duty of care. If an APEX Workshop Provider or Assistant saw any signs which caused concern, or heard a comment made by a child who indicated the child may be suffering or has suffered abuse, they were directed to refer the matter immediately to the QAM.

It was made clear that it was not the responsibility of the APEX staff to investigate suspected or alleged abuse. It is important that the child is not questioned by various different staff about the concern or disclosure. Rather APEX staff members were directed to record in writing the discussion or observations as soon as possible after the event and pass this information immediately to the QAM. The QAM would then decide whether to refer the observation or discussion to the B&NES Safeguarding Team. For anyone who would like to continue with the APEX Living Legacy in the form of a Saturday Workshop Programme I thought that it would be useful to have an overview of the model that APEX have successfully developed over the years in developing, delivering and evaluating a programme of Saturday workshops for enthusiastic young learners.

All documents can be found on <http://www.spanglefish.com/livinglegacies>



## Haiku

By Jane Hill

First ever Q A M

Cold, anxious, alone.

Doors locked, no phone, oh help!

Lessons for next time?

**Back office support for APEX has been seamless.**

**Debbie Langton, Anne Collins, Deborah Carter, Lynne Collins & Odette Doyle**



The team of dedicated administrative staff has worked behind the scenes for many years processing workshop applications, evaluations, pay claims, budgets and bills. From query to query, adapting, updating and improving systems helping to influence and evolve the programme of APEX.

As summer rolls up work starts on the week long Summer Opportunities Programme and what a celebration event this will be! The administration team is proud to be providing the essential groundwork to make this a success.

Being part of the programme sheds a new light and admin staff members involved see first-hand the enjoyment and achievement of children and students.

## The Team

First ever Q A M

Haiku

Job Satisfaction



Recollected

Principles

Philosophy



## APEX Recollected. Jane Hill APEX Summer Opportunities Manager

*"Please, please can I come in the holiday? I really liked it"*

So commented a girl, who had just spent 3 hours away from her comfortable, primary school in an enormous and strange secondary school with a host of "grown up" girls and a group of adults whom she'd never met before. She had been finding out and becoming part of the latest extension to the APEX "portfolio".

She was one of a group of girls preparing to give up some of their holiday to follow a Government funded course based on APEX principles and philosophy, aiming to boost her learning and basic skills along with encouraging self knowledge and confidence, while really enjoying herself and engaging in a range of exciting and challenging experiences. This, in preparation for transferring from Year 6 to Year 7, with a further aim of obviating the well documented regression which manifests itself in all pupils at this point in their education, and which is especially marked in those who for various reasons struggle with the demands of school.



So how did it all begin? Why did we set it all up? What did we hope to achieve?

For me education has never been about "putting in" knowledge and or skills, it is about the "drawing out" of what is already somewhere within an individual. This is not a new or original idea and certainly a philosophy propounded at least as far back as the ancient Greeks and explored by Plato in his "Republic". The teacher's role is to be a facilitator, enabling pupils to "learn" through realising this power.

Having been involved in the world of education for some 40 odd years, I have always believed that all and especially children and young people learn best in a relaxed, non threatening environment, in which it is possible to express an idea or an opinion without derision; where a child can see and understand the reason for the work; where the work is challenging but with the appropriate support and resources is achievable and satisfying; where original and personal study is valued; where an individual is able to utilise and extend his/her preferred learning style; where progress is recognised and strangely where praise is not easily come by!

As the “Learning Support Coordinator” in a large comprehensive school, back in the eighties, one of my responsibilities was to meet the needs of “The Gifted”, along with regard to the concept of equal opportunities across the school. First of all whom or what was this strange breed of pupil? Was there a definition? Did this mean all round exceptional ability in every aspect and subject on the curriculum? Was it possible to be gifted in just a single subject? Was it about school subject? Then if a definition and agreement could ever be reached, how could or would their needs be met in an equitable way? Then as now it seemed likely that there are those who possess and show a certain way of thinking, who in today’s parlance “think outside the box” and beyond its confines and can think “horizontally” and “diagonally” all at the same time and who are always ahead of everyone’s thinking, who get to the answer without seeming to go through all normal thought processes, who literally know the answer before the question has been asked! They are masters of the hypothesis and abstract thinking.



Marie and I had many a long discussion around these concepts. We were aware that some “hid their light under a bushel”, often becoming ostracised for fear of being teased/bullied because they were perceived as being different. Their fear of being so treated coupled often with inappropriate teacher support and undemanding curriculum provision was our concern.

At the time the Government was propounding that all schools should have a “policy” and must set up of a register to identify such pupils (much as an SEN Register). Although practitioners realised and voiced all the impossibilities and impracticalities of such a strategy, in Bath and North East Somerset at least it did lead to raising awareness in many to the issues and to

the formation of discussion groups and the identifying of staff with responsibilities to identify and ensure that the specific needs of the “Gifted and Talented” were at least given consideration.

Out of all this arose the idea of “APEX”, “Able Pupils Extending Opportunities”, the critical word here being “extending”. There must be many a very able person who recalls completing a raft of mathematical tasks totally correctly way ahead of classmates, only to be given another similar set! This for me is neither extending nor enriching nor is it, in educational terms, “enabling reasonable and measurable progress!”

## Learning Support

Gifted  
Equal Opportunities

Outside the box

Extending

Enabling

Measurable Progress



## Many Hurdles

## Summer School

## Buzz

## B&NES

## Roman Candle

## Inclusion

## Aims met



As Dylan Thomas reflected in “A Christmas Childhood In Wales”, it is always difficult to remember after time, the exact order of events and who was involved. I do recall that there were many hurdles to overcome, not least of which was funding before the first “Summer School” could get off the ground. (Thanks to Government grants.)

Always the aim has been to offer to children and to young people, opportunities beyond school, to enrich and extend their enthusiasm to explore ideas, philosophies and information and to work and share with others of like mind. The workshops, carefully structured and orchestrated, are always challenging and demand personal commitment and involvement. Participants worked at their own speeds, but are constantly challenged to think and go the extra mile. Anyone who has been involved will tell of the “buzz” and intensity of the atmosphere which surrounds the work place and carries beyond this. They will recount the deep and philosophical discussions they have overheard or have participated in and how the participants have had fun and really enjoyed the experience. Parents report how their children never stop talking about what they have found out and what they think.



Bath and North East Somerset’s APEX is about to be laid to rest but it is exploding as a Roman Candle, its stars, sparkles and crackles spreading around the area in all directions and landing in diffuse places, at a number of schools. Communities and local societies look to adopt the concepts, processes and systems in order to put into practice provisions to reflect a wide variety of needs and philosophies. Who knows what lies ahead? It would however appear that we did meet our aims, that there are many young people (and now somewhat older?) who give testimony to this and we can now look forward to new and exciting developments.

I am proud to have been involved, enjoyed and learned so much so much!

***There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries.*** Shakespeare – Julius Caesar Act iv scene iii

*I asked my mother if I was “gifted”. She said she certainly wouldn’t have paid for me!*

## CHAPTER 3

### Learning Opportunities for educators Marie Huxtable

Learning opportunities for children and young people and those for educators are not discrete. For instance, each year we tried to improve the quality of the learning opportunity the APEX Summer Opportunity modules offered. In 2009 Andrew Henon and Karen Dews introduced the providers to using sketchbooks and digital photography for collecting data and developing thinking. They also supported providers introducing the sketchbooks to the children and children and young people to use as researchers during their workshops. The providers variously developed the use of the sketchbooks over the four days. In the last few years we have also introduced into the APEX Saturday and Summer Opportunity programme an approach to research for adults, children and young people wanting to learn to research what is important to them; research not simply to acquire knowledge but to be able to create and offer knowledge that improves learning and life, their own and other people's. This work had its origins when I brought my understanding of the work of Belle Wallace (on TASC, Thinking Actively in a Social Context) and Jack Whitehead (on Living-Educational-Theory) together. You can learn more about Belle's work on <http://www.tascwheel.com/> and Jack's work on <http://actionresearch.net/> and by reading their stories within this chapter.



The contribution APEX made to opportunities for educators continuing their professional development began with organising day events and courses lead by field leaders, such as Barry Hymer, and workshops and INSET. In 2005 this took a step forward when I asked Jack Whitehead to offer a Masters programme for educators to learn to research their own practice to improve it, employing the same educational approaches to learning that they would use in school. Some of the educators, who have and are working on the Masters programme, offer their accredited accounts as gifts to extend

the knowledge base of educators locally, nationally and internationally on <http://www.actionresearch.net>. The programme has evolved and includes, at the time of writing (August 2012), members of an international research project, which can be accessed and joined on

<http://www.spanglefish.com/livingvaluesimprovingpracticecooperatively>.

In this chapter you will find the stories of educators developing their practice and you will find more to inspire on <http://actionresearch.net/writings/mastermod.shtml>.

## CHAPTER 3

### Learning Opportunities

Educators

Masters Programmes

CPD

Research Groups

Local

National

International

Educational Communities





## Educator

### Living Educational Theory

### Action Research

### Living Values

### Core Values

### Principles



## Living an educational theory Professor Jack Whitehead

I am an academic working with practitioners who have a passion for researching their practice to make an educational difference to learning and life. The professionals I work with are in education, health, business, and other fields, nationally and internationally.

I have been involved with APEX over a number of years to support educators and learners developing their talents, expertise and knowledge as life-enhancing gifts. In response to a request by Marie Huxtable I re-established a Masters programme for educators enquiring into their practice to improve it.

This work has evolved and is integrated into a 'Living Values, Improving Practice Cooperatively' research project. The local members of the research group meet weekly and others are part of our virtual community, which can be joined at <http://www.spanglefish.com/livingvaluesimprovingpracticecooperatively>. I also support local authority staff with their Masters and Doctoral enquiries at the 'Improving Practice Conversation Café'. The group is currently affiliated to the Liverpool Hope University Centre for the Child, Family and Society. The educators and educational leaders who are part of these research groups have allowed me to make freely available accounts of their research from my web-site, <http://www.actionresearch.net>, for others to use.



These research stories of individuals show how and why they are making a difference to bringing the imagined possibility of an inclusive, emancipating, egalitarian society into being in the here and now. These are the social values that we can hold ourselves accountable to in creating a society where people can lovingly recognize and value each person's unique contribution and where people can make respectful connections and express an educational responsibility for themselves and towards others. I call these stories in which individuals explain their influence in contributing to the development of such a society, living-educational-theories.

These accounts show a transformational form of continuing professional development in which educational professionals describe and explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which they live and work.

I have also led and supported APEX events and collaborative, creative learning opportunities for: adults, children and young people who are willing and able to help us all understand and improve educational influences in learning; educators willing and able to work collaboratively to improve educational practice and pupils/students wanting to develop their knowledge creating research.

Our active learning together focused on developing and sharing what really matters to each of us and how we might improve our own learning and practice and contribute to the learning of each other. Working cooperatively we developed our values-based practice through improving our skills and understandings of a Living-Theory approach to action research.

Video accounts



I have been encouraging the use of image and video to clarify and communicate a process of bringing researchers' life-affirming ontological values (those values that give meaning and purpose to their lives) and life-enhancing societal values, into being in the here and now.

On Tuesday the 29th May 2012 I videoed an APEX workshop. You can see in the clips expression of these values and how the accounts of individuals are shared and connected with others in an educational space.

The videos enable me to show, understand and communicate how people can lovingly recognize and value each person's unique contribution in an educational process of learning in which individuals are making respectful connections and are expressing an educational responsibility for themselves and towards others.

You can see the whole 3:04:54 hours accessed from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZKn1hIWH0s>

**Part 1** The introduction 10:24 minutes long accessed from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx9ogvF9PtI>

## APEX events

### Video accounts

#### Part 1

### Visual narratives

### Educational Spaces



## Part 2

### YouTube Videos

### Fry's Workshop

### Educational Spaces

## Part 3

**Part Two** is 9:46 minutes long accessed from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhOLLNv3QJk>

At 1.46 Louise Cripps, (Head-teacher, Swainswick Primary School) introduces the 'Valley Added' project, which draws on what has been developed through APEX.

Louise's Masters accounts of her research can be found on

<http://actionresearch.net/writings/mastermod.shtml>.

At 2.42 Councillor Bryan Chalker outlines what he has been doing to make public the industrial heritage of Bath and surrounding area.

At 3.42 Jane Hill (APEX Summer Opportunities Manager) outlines what has been happening to improve the final 'APEX Summer Opportunity' and the transition workshop she is developing for Hayesfield School using APEX principles.

At 5.39 John Whittock, from Norland College, talks about what he has done to introduce the conversation café idea and how it is evolving in the nursery and with staff to enable them to their share talents, skills and action research.



**Part Three** is 23:54 minutes long accessed from: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHzWiU\\_I9U8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHzWiU_I9U8)

It begins with Marie Huxtable introducing the Living Legacies website <http://www.spanglefish.com/livinglegacies> for making connections.

At 3.58 Briony Waite (Young People's Participation Officer, B&NES) updates the meeting with the progress of her plans for the 'Healthy Living' week.



At 5.29 Sheila Crocombe (working with Keynsham Matters and community@67) shared her work bringing exciting mathematics into schools.

At 6.40 Gwyneth Harwood, working with Gypsy's and Travellers, shared her project on dispelling prejudice and a package for vulnerable young people.

At 7.57 Richard Parker (Bath Spa University) outlined a number of projects that he has run including one with young people in-care in school, which was being launched nationally in the House of Lords.

At 11.42 Merryl Elias ('Valley Added' Project) extended what Louise had said about the Valley Added project describing in more detail the self-sustaining, intergenerational and community based nature of the project.

At 16.17 Andrew Henon (Socially Engaged Artist) introduced APEX Living Legacies and this book to facilitate continuing co-operative learning, research and knowledge creation, which carries the hope of evolving a more humane world.

**Part Four** is 34:13 minutes long accessed from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiLJOtQBEuA>

At 9.44 Ian Moody (Hayesfield School) has been exploring how to extend challenge in the classroom for high attaining students.

At 14.19 Richard Barker (Educational Psychologist) who has a passion for helping children learn to read introduced a device he has developed for early readers learning basic phonics.

At 16.21 Andrew Gillan (Wansdyke Play Association) outlined the work he was doing with respect to play and social cohesion for all ages.



**Part 3 Continued**

**YouTube Videos**

**Fry's Workshop**

**Educational Spaces**

**Part 4**

## Part 4 Continued

You Tube Videos

Fry's Workshop

Educational Spaces

## Part 5



At 19.47 William House (Keysham Matters Project) outlined Keysham Matters Project, finding people's passions, building the local infrastructure, connecting people and developing Living-Theory action research.

At 27.54 Bini Ludlow (Sweet Cumin) shared the inspirational story of how she came to set up her new business teaching and sharing her passion for Indian cooking.

**Part Five** is 32 minutes long accessed from:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85pmxprKeYU>

At 16.29 Jane Hill (APEX Summer Opportunities Manager) talked about the organisational issues for the APEX Finale on the 26<sup>th</sup> July.

At 18.38 Bryan Chalker (Councillor and Mayor of Bath) talked about how to 'hook kids on heritage'.

At 20.42 Ian Moody (Hayesfield School) shared a story of a student failing in music lessons who amazed his teachers with the quality of the musical talents he had developed through persistence and determination. Ian learned from his student that no-one knows what anyone might be capable of.

At 24.11 Peter Dickinson (Monkey Business: Art Consultancy) outlined a number of local community-based projects involving schools, colleges and business bringing local industrial heritage alive through art.



## Communication Cafe

The idea for the 'Communication café' arose from the Living Legacies meeting back at the beginning of the year. It combines the 2 aspects of talking to people to share idea/skills etc with the nurturing and action research of our passions/concerns.

We had our launch on the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> June (7-9) at Homewood Park. Nursery, Academic and Administration staff assembled together to listen to an introductory presentation followed by a café style sharing of our passions and concerns but tempered with a 'blend' of Pimms and canapés.

We used a very similar 'sheet' to the one from the Legacies meetings for staff to collect their thoughts.

All staff members were then required to email their focus idea(s) to me by the end of June. These will form their Action Research for the academic year 2012/13.



It was a very successful evening because individuals from all three disciplines actually sat down, for the first time, to talk and share their thoughts together. It was fascinating to listen to the 'voice' of everyone; individuals who have never had the opportunity to express what they feel about, and what they would like to do within, the organisation. However I realised by the end of the evening that this was the easy 'bit'. Now the difficult task of maintaining the enthusiasm and momentum produced from that evening.

**John Whittock**  
Programme Manager  
BA (Hons) Level 6 and Foundation Degree  
**Norland College**

<http://www.norland.co.uk>

**Norland College**

**Communication Cafe**

**Inspired by APEX**

**Conversation Café**

**Sustainability**



## Philosophy for Children

P4C

Self Belief

Personalised Meanings

Understanding Challenging Concepts

Traceable

## Gifted & Talented, Philosophy for Children and APEX Professor Barry Hymer



It was a source of great pleasure to me to be involved in running introductory training courses in Philosophy for Children (P4C) for APEX in B&NES during the first decade of this century.

The values and virtues underpinning P4C are deeply sympathetic to those underpinning APEX, oriented as they are to children and young people finding a way to understanding their own lives and behaviour in relation to others. Many teachers commented on Day 2 of the training how their "traditional G&T" children were initially unsettled by their experience of P4C - as there was no easy route to finding the 'right' answer quickly (unlike many of their classroom experiences).

On the contrary, they learned the need to listen deeply to others, to connect their own thoughts and experiences to others', and to create new and personalised meanings in the process of coming to understand challenging concepts.

I see this process as requiring all the courage and self-belief that APEX, through Marie's overview, has fostered in its determination to breathe new life into the concepts of gifts and talents.

I'm confident that APEX legacy will be traceable long after its formal functions have ceased, and it's been an honour to play a small part in its existence.

See <http://www.barryhymer.co.uk/>

<http://teacherspocketbooks.wordpress.com/2012/02/01/philosophy-for-children-p4c-and-dyspraxiadcd-pocketbooks/>

## Reflecting through the lens of my life experience

**Belle Wallace** Director: TASC International: Thinking Actively in a Social Context

My education fell neatly and very aptly within what I eventually was able to identify as Freire's 'banking' concept, it was a series of acts of: Depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorise and repeat' (Freire, 1998b, p72).

I was a disengaged observer of happenings and incidents that had no relation to my own life; I was not a participant in an interactive learning-teaching process, I was an object to be processed in the ritualistic practice of listening and memorising towards levels of 'academic' achievement.

I survived due to the influence of a singular and wonderful teacher who recognised that I had a talent for writing – with her I received the acknowledgement that I, indeed, did have personal value, that I was a worthwhile emotional and thinking being, alive and searching for meaning, albeit to often ill-formulated questions.



I experienced the glow of excitement that comes from the reciprocal respect derived from active listening and talking: she was in every sense a mentor, the barrier between teacher and learner invisible; the relationship one of loving respect and understanding.

It is to this living learning experience that I attribute the formulation of the direction that my life has broadly followed – to understand and to promote the dynamic processes that bring life, reality, vitality and a sense of personal worth to any learning-teaching interaction.

When my career first began in education, I was fuzzily concerned with the need for learners to feel motivated and enthused by the topics they were investigating; and somewhat blindly aware of the quality of the relationships I was trying to build in order to create rapport and trust. Many of my secondary 'comprehensive' students were described in the staffroom as 'switched off' and 'just counting the days' to the end of term when they would leave.

**TASC**

**Freire**

**Receive**

**Memorise**

**Repeat**

**Search for meaning**

**Reciprocal respect**

**Dynamic Process**





## Relationships

### Switched off

### Naivety

### Paulo Freire

### Philosophy

### Personal life

### Kaleidoscope

### South Africa

### Sabbatical



As a naïve, inexperienced young educator, my first encounter with the writing and teaching of Paulo Freire, crystallized for me what was, until then, only a shadowy formulation in my mind. His writing helped me to clarify what I was trying to achieve, broadly:

- The development of learners' ownership of their learning through the negotiation of relevant problems to be solved in relation to real life understanding;
- The development of dialogue and interaction in the learning/teaching dynamic with reciprocity and equality of teachers and learners as jointly negotiating and constructing meaning;
- The development of learners' self-confidence and independence in decision-making and actions leading to their self-actualisation;
- The mutual respect derived from active listening and talking (Freire, 1998a; Freire, 1998b)

It was this encounter with Freire's philosophy and the dedication of his life to the promotion of equality of opportunity, together with his acceptance of imprisonment and then exile that fired the passionate motivation to search for evidence and experiences that would enable me to justify the principles of a truly liberating education experience for all learners.

Although my personal life path has led me to work in many countries for short periods of time, I spent an extensive and intensive period in KwaZulu /Natal (South Africa) from 1984 to the end of 1998.



Finding myself in a totally different cultural context from that of the UK, the impact of KwaZulu/Natal (SA) was raw, stark and overwhelming: brilliantly vibrant and colourful, socially, emotionally and politically complex and convoluted; a mixture of resilience and submission; a kaleidoscope of despair and hope; and profoundly challenging in its need for change.

This personal life change was almost accidental in that it was not really planned, but arose from an overwhelming personal response to a nation of Zulu people who were excluded within their own country and forcibly segregated in an impoverished, infertile mountainous area euphemistically called their 'homeland'. So an intended stay of one year's Sabbatical leave became fifteen years of personal commitment: these years witnessing the crumbling of the apartheid regime.

The concept of SA education lay firmly within Freire's 'banking' paradigm. Rote learning and repetition characterised overcrowded, ill-equipped, mainly tin-roofed or mud-roofed classrooms that were stiflingly hot in summer and shivering cold in winter. Many teachers were grossly under-prepared both with regard to pedagogy and subject knowledge: moreover, because the traditional Zulu culture promoted a deep and compliant respect by the young for the elders, it was considered culturally inappropriate for students to question their teachers, or even to make direct eye contact. In addition, the group culture strongly encouraged group identity and it was considered inappropriate to draw attention to oneself as an individual.

The school syllabus had fixed and immutable content firmly rooted in a Western paradigm that had little reality for Zulu learners – comprehension topics such as 'defrosting a refrigerator', the geography of Japan, the history of the castles of Europe, the microscopic structure of a hydra, had no relevance or reality for learners living in simple brick or mud huts without electricity and running water, who did not possess refrigerators, had never been outside their community, and who had little or no concept of an island, a mediaeval castle, micro-cellular structure. Regular tests (control tests) were compulsory every few weeks with learners being required to answer questions soliciting facts reproduced in the exact words of the teacher who read from the prescribed text book. Students seldom had a textbook of their own.



This degree of disadvantage and deprivation of opportunity completely overshadowed and wiped out my own early sense of personal alienation in my education, and put my early struggles to survive in a slum in South Wales into a world perspective. Initially, I worked with Zulu pupils to understand their personal strengths and then developed a series of curriculum development projects, based at the University of Natal (SA); the overall project was to last for 15 intensive years.

The aims were to identify the needs of the disadvantaged Zulu population in the then apartheid homeland of Kwa Zulu; to promote self-esteem, independence and empowerment; and to design curricula which were relevant to, and contextualised in, Zulu culture.

The learners had wonderful strengths: strong powers of memory due to their rich oral culture, well-developed group listening and leadership skills; democratic ways of working through discussion and sharing of ideas; ease of, and enjoyment in, co-operative learning; a tremendous motivation to learn as a means of self-development; and a deep and incisive awareness of the political, economic, social, and emotional dimensions within a country wracked by division and inequality.

## Concept

Banking Paradigm

Self Esteem

Empowerment

Curricula Design

Relevant

Contextualised



## TASC

Thinking

Actively

In a

Social

Context

## TASC

The project came to be called TASC: Thinking Actively in a Social Context. Using this framework as a base, with a small dedicated team, we wrote a school series of language and thinking texts for Grade 1 to Grade 12 pupils: *Language in My World*; and for young pupils an additional series *Reading in My World*. My writing had a real living purpose, and it was joyously and exhaustingly all-consuming: it was the first time that African children had books in colour, books that mirrored their reality and interests.

I can recall so many memorable and moving moments: dancing and singing the praise tribute with Zulu teachers at the conclusion of training days; laughing, joking and scrunching together under the thorn bushes for personal toilet; sweating profusely in the hot humid summer heat in tin-roofed classrooms; seeing children respond to creative opportunities with wide open smiles and trusting eyes.



The most poignant moment, perhaps, derives from a particular feedback session in which a group of very able students were reflecting on their progress. One student said, 'I now believe that I belong in my own country, and that I can lead change.' At that, the group of young adults burst into the wonderful close harmony of Zulus singing a round of 'Communication! Oh yes, Communication!'. He is now a national leader promoting change in the workplace for thousands of workers.

The years I lived and worked in KwaZulu/Natal taught me a great deal about joy and laughter despite crippling disadvantage; about love, friendship and sharing although there were few resources to share; about resilience and determination to succeed, surmounting all obstacles; about the rich quality of communication and striving towards a common goal.

On returning to the UK I spent several months at the beginning of 1999 observing what was happening in my local schools and, at the same time, reading the national curriculum guidelines in order to ground myself in the current classroom culture and conditions for teaching and learning.

I found many good teachers trying to 'deliver' a national curriculum that imposed set content and narrowly articulated 'levels' of attainment that had to be achieved or the school would be publicly 'disgraced' and put into 'special measures'. Classrooms had changed – there was far greater evidence of a wide variety of children manifesting 'behavioural' problems and of children experiencing learning difficulties.

Startlingly, there were many classrooms where the learners had grossly underdeveloped first language, and had few experiences of active, formative learning in the home. Teachers reported widespread fragmentation of families and the dramatic increase of carers for children separated from their parent(s).

**Process**

**Gather**

**Organise**

**Identify**


**Generate**

**Decide**

**Implement**


**GATHER AND ORGANISE**  
accessing children's prior knowledge  
**CONCEPT MAPPING**

Children identified aspects of Tudor history that we had covered so far.



**IDENTIFY AND GENERATE**  
Establishing a broad question then focusing on a more specific question

With the aid of a range of Tudor history books, were able to think of questions they would like to answer in a whole class discussion context.



Through discussion children identified what area they would like to learn more about and could think of the best ways to research the topic.

**DECIDE AND IMPLEMENT**  
Graphs diagrams story boards  
fact files paintings music

Considering how to answer the question.  
The variety of ways in which information gathered can be effectively presented.  
Deciding upon a plan or idea to implement.

Through discussion, many ideas of how they could proceed with their work and present their information were thought of. As a whole class, ideas such as poems, dance, drama, newspaper reports, graphs and charts, painting and musical compositions were put across.

Process

Evaluate

Communicate

Learn From Experience

Biography

I asked myself what the real meanings of 'first' world and 'third' world were, and contrasted the material poverty and emotional richness of the Zulu culture with the material affluence and emotional poverty of the classrooms I was visiting in the Midlands of UK.

I set myself the task of sharing the meaning and practice of TASC with colleagues who wanted to know. Now, in the middle of 2012, well over 10,000 classrooms are promoting 'Thinking Actively in a Social Context' and reporting that learners are engaged and motivated because they are creatively engaged in solving problems they identify as important and significant, they have ownership of their learning, and they work collaboratively to support each other in their learning.

**EVALUATE AND COMMUNICATE**

*My plan is to do a dance and to also learn something from it and to have fun while we are doing the dance. It is the best way because if we just stood at the front of the class and just told the story without moving it would be boring for me and for the people watching it.....*

Children could identify their role in their tasks. They were all aware that they knew little of the Tudor period of History before they started their work. The children were very clear of their ideas, but did not always think about possible problems they might encounter by proceeding with their ideas, only really focusing on the positives. They were also very pleased with their final work, and did not offer many ways in which the process of their work and the final 'product' could be improved.

**COMMUNICATE**

Who is our audience?  
What do they need to know?  
What is the best way to present our work?

All children realised that what they did could benefit other children who are learning about the Tudors. They also knew that they had learned a great deal and had enjoyed learning.

**LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE**

Reflect.  
Identify improvements.  
What could be carried forward?

Children have learned from the experience. They have all discovered they can enjoy the process of learning. Children need help to evaluate learning experiences in order to be more reflective about their learning.

Biographical Details:

Belle Wallace is immediate past President of the National Association of Able Children in Education (NACE, UK) and currently Director of TASC International (A Curriculum Framework for developing Problem-solving and Thinking Skills); she was formerly Co-Director of the Curriculum Development Unit (University of Natal, SA) with the brief for developing Assessment Strategies and Curriculum Extension for very able, disadvantaged learners, and training Curriculum Planners. She designed and was senior author of a school language series to redress cognitive underdevelopment in pupils from 6 to 17+ years. Belle has been the Editor of the triennial Journal Gifted Education International since 1981.

Her writing is extensive with regard to curricula to develop Problem-solving and Thinking Skills.

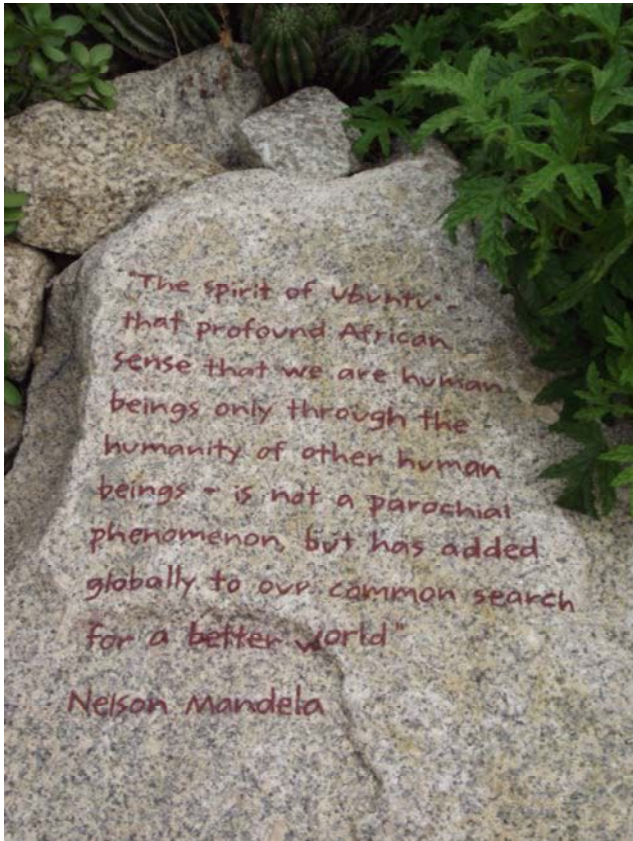
You can learn more about TASC at <http://www.tascwheel.com/belle-wallace>

## CHAPTER 4

### Contributing to and benefiting from the learning of others

#### Introduction

APEX was developed to implement the local authority policy: to increase the opportunities for individual pupils to explore and develop areas of ability to their own and societies benefit. APEX has been concerned with improving inclusive gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision within the local authority in partnership with schools, parents and the wider community.



'Talents' and 'gifts', unlike words such as 'skills', are values-laden. I am taking 'values' to refer to what we hold as important and give our lives meaning and purpose, and 'beliefs' to reflect what we believe to be true.

An important thread of APEX activities has been to contribute to the development of educational relationships, space and opportunities in school and beyond.

These are the contexts within which our children and young people develop their values and come to decide what talents, expertise and knowledge they want to create to offer as gifts through their lives, as their contribution to, as Nelson Mandela has said, '...our common search for a better world.'

This chapter comprises stories and reflections of those who share the inclusive values of the local authority and who are improving educational contexts drawing on their connections with APEX.

## CHAPTER 4

### Contributing to and benefiting from the learning of others

#### Socially Engaged

#### Socially engaged arts

#### Children

#### Young People

#### Educators

#### Collaborative enquiries

## Enabling expression and enquiry

Reflection and documentation

Collaborative

Creative

Enquiry



## Collaborative Creative Enquiry for Artists

### Marie Huxtable

Collaborative, creative enquiries began with four pupils/students with their teacher from five schools working as co-learners with a field expert: to engage learners (young and adult) actively as 'expert' in a field through an enquiry and; to extend teachers in their understanding of promoting and providing for high ability learning and applying that knowledge to classroom practice.

The approach developed as the account of a collaborative, creative enquiry for artists. There were two sessions for a Year 3 class in a local primary school led by Andrew Henon (Socially Engaged Artist) supported by Karen Dews (Photographer) and Marie Huxtable (APEX).

The class teacher, who was also responsible for leading improving gifted and talented education in the school, and her colleague, participated in the sessions as co-learners with the children. The sessions had two aims: to provide an opportunity for children and adults to experience themselves as artists, collaboratively developing talents with an artist, and; second, to provide an opportunity for them to develop their talents as researchers creating, offering and accepting gifts of knowledge of themselves and the world.

The first session focused on participants asking research questions that interested them. Andrew introduced sketchbooks for children and adults to use as researchers to collect data and clarify and stimulate their creative thinking.

He drew on his expertise as a socially engaged artist, living-educational-theory researcher and educator, to introduce participants to new ideas, materials and techniques they could use to develop their talents as researchers and artists.



Participants experimented with charcoal as the oldest material humans have used as artists and researchers recording data and sharing the knowledge they created.



The second session built on the first with Karen introducing digital photography to stimulate creative thinking and as another, and most modern, way of recording data. Many children now have phones with cameras and use various digital devices for storing and sharing their thinking through social media such as Facebook and YouTube.

Participants experimented during the session with both the oldest and newest forms of 'equipment' used by artists and researchers. Karen took groups into the school grounds and encouraged experimentation with the cameras. In the classroom the children worked with their sketchbooks and charcoal.

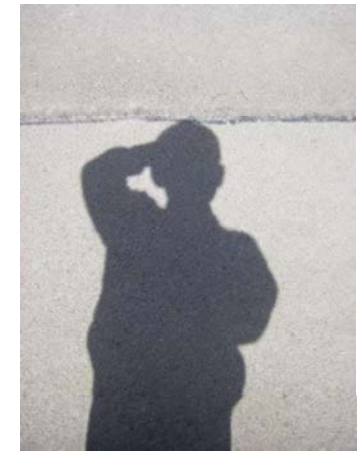
It was noticed that many children were using the charcoal as they would a pencil rather than venturing somewhere new with their learning. Andrew did not want to return to the traditional 'Masters School of Art approach' to present a demonstration that needs to be mimicked, replicated and reproduced by the student: the learner becomes exceptional in one technique but is unable to move on or away from that particular school of activity and or thinking. He searched for a way to create a worthwhile, multilayered, participatory learning environment and experience to encourage the children to be confident in their creativity, make decisions for them selves, create conditions of change, continue learning and have the confidence to contribute the gifts they create to the common good.



## An insight into self and others

Empowered

Learning





**A creative question of enquiry**

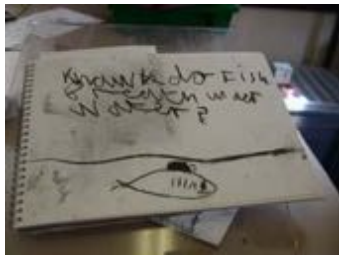
**Increased individual enquiry**

**A co-creative enquiry**

**Group enquiry**

**Social enquiry**

**Below 'How do fish breathe?'**



Andrew encouraged everyone to make their own unique marks relating to and embedded with a question of inquiry, which they would share.

This enabled 34 unique contributions to create 1,156 possibilities of knowledge exchanged between permutations of pairs. What is good for an individual and supporting that individual becomes good for everyone.

Andrew interrupted after half an hour and invited everyone to hold up their work to share their unique marks with everyone. In this simple act he enabled each learner to be affirmed as an artist and creator of knowledge.

Andrew provided a safe public space for everyone to offer and accept the gift of the knowledge they had created. You can see in the photographs the children are so attentive, so full of life enhancing energy, a joyful energy still young and questioning, exploring, curious, inquisitive, attentive and innocently impressionable, absolutely wonderful.



## Collaborative creative enquiry for teenagers and teachers as researchers

Another example of how the collaborative, creative enquiries evolved is provided by the session led by Jack Whitehead (Academic, Educator and Educational Researcher), Andrew Henon (Socially Engaged Artist) and Marie Huxtable (Senior Educational Psychologist, APEX) and documented by Karen Dews (Photographer). The aim was to engaging adults and young people in collaborative, creative co-learning as passionate and progressing researchers constructing their own living-educational-theories and an understanding and expression of values that give their lives meaning and purpose.



This session was based in the Guildhall in Bath. This was so that teachers and young people could enjoy co-learning in an 'out of school' context. 56 students and staff from Wellsway School and Norland College participated along with the 14-19 Adviser and university researchers.

APEX had previously and subsequently run sessions for educators, children and young people as researchers with Jack Whitehead to begin to appreciate an approach to knowledge creating research, which enables people to research themselves in and of the world as they research to improve what they are doing that is important to them.

Jack has developed a Living-Educational-Theory approach to researching questions such as, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' widely used by people in diverse walks of life and which can be used whatever their age. In Living-Educational-Theory research the focus is on questions of importance to the researcher.

The emphasis is on generating knowledge of improving understanding of, 'why do I improve what I am doing', not just how.

Through researching in this way we come to a better understanding of what is important to us, what we do that is effective and our embodied living theory of the educational influence we have in our learning and lives and that of other people. Look on <http://www.actionresearch.net> for more information.

## Co-creativity in collaborative enquiry

### Living Educational Theory

### Inclusionality



## Living creativity

The influence and relevance of enabling, supporting and facilitating individual questions.

## A reflective process

*“What is nothing”* A question asked as part of an individual enquiry



The Living-Theory-Approach to action research is a similar enquiry process to TASC (Thinking Actively in a Social Context) developed by Belle Wallace. TASC is familiar to many learners in local schools having been introduced by APEX over many years.

You can find more details on <http://www.tascwheel.com>

Focussing on the ‘lets tell someone’ and ‘what have I learned’ stages on the TASC wheel enables participants to offer their learning as gifts to enhance the learning of others and their own. Many of the questions that emerged during the ‘collaborative, creative enquiries as researchers’, were often profound and deeply meaningful to the learner, irrespective of age.



The session at the Guildhall illustrates the interconnectivity of people and ideas developed through APEX. For example, Sally Cartwright (Wellsway teacher) had worked with students on their AS Extended Project as a research group in the same way she experiences working with Jack and Marie on her Masters see <http://actionresearch.net/writings/mastermod.shtml>.

The students she had worked with developed insights about this process of research they were prepared to offer as gifts at the session. You can learn more from the video of the students presenting to 14-19 strategy managers <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GK1uLrb7aAsUH>

Andrew introduced sketchbooks as research journals and some of the techniques he had successfully introduced on the collaborative, creative artist sessions. You can get a taste of this by watching a video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mxqCz1BSOEHU> of an APEX Saturday Workshop Andrew ran.

Jack facilitated the day moving participants through the research process by providing, in Andrew's words, 'points of disturbance along a reflective process' so they created different ways of shaping research questions.

Many of the students subsequently spent the following five weeks researching the question they began to formulate on that day and made a presentation to Jack, Marie, their teachers and peers in school. You can see the presentation of one student as an example of what the young people took from the day on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enBOlcGicX4> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAHkhaKxQYs> 'The Wellsway Dance Experiment – Official Video' (2:59 long) to which she refers can be accessed from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyHSyU6Zs1k>

## Collaborative creative enquiry for pupils, students and educators as researchers

The event, 'Making A Difference That Matters In Learning And Lives', provides another example of how the collaborative, creative enquiries evolved. The day ran in the Guildhall with teachers and educators, 8 year olds and teenagers. The active learning together focussed on: developing and sharing what really matters to each of us and how we might improve our own learning and practice and contribute to the learning of each other. We developed our values-based practice through improving our skills and understandings of a living theory approach to action research.

Andrew, Jack, Marie, Simon Riding (Deputy Head, Bitterne Park School Southampton) and Karen Riding (Director of Language College, Parkstone School Poole) led the day. Simon and Karen had worked with Jack for many years first when he tutored them on their Masters and then when he supervised their doctoral research programmes. At this session they introduced how they had developed and sustained collaborative, supportive research communities of pupils and colleagues in their schools. You can read their work on <http://actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>.



Left image of Sketchbook and question  
Is control necessary? Is there such a thing as positive chaos? And if there is? How is it achieved in an out of control world?

Right image of Sketchbook and question. Does systematic academic study reduce independence and motivation to learn?



## Creative questions

Generated by  
children for  
themselves

What are flowers  
made of?

## Complex Questions



## Socially Engaged

### Socially

### Engaged

### Arts

### Practice



## Contributing and benefiting from society and socially engaged practice.

### Andrew Henon I am a socially engaged artist?

In calling myself by these descriptors 'Socially engaged' and 'Artist' I need to describe what a 'Socially engaged artist is, does and believes. I try and adhere to a range of core values and principles in my work that are embodied within my practice. I dedicate the work I create both in process and product for the benefit of humanity and in the public interest to be of public benefit. My work is engaged in social change and attempts to create a better world.

I consider I am an artist in that I do what I do to the very best of my ability. I consider any one who strives to do this as an artist. I see no boundaries in my practice between the educational and artistic endeavour, each are one and the same. I am an educational artist not an art teacher and I will be working with Dr Jack Whitehead and Dr Marie Huxtable on developing work into the future as living legacies of APEX.

I have been engaged with the APEX programme since 2008 contributing to the programme of learning opportunities and workshops. In the process I have been able to move my practice as a socially engaged artist into educational meaning and purpose. It has enabled me to move workshop delivery into a 'Living Educational' experience for both participants and myself and open up opportunities to explore and develop educational practice further. The underlying core values and principles of APEX apply regardless of age, race, ability, disability or background, it is inclusional.

I am interested in complexity from simplicity, layers, change and creativity. We are human beings and as such we create the world around us all the time, changing things, moving stuff around and altering our world. For an artist it is a matter of becoming aware of what we do when we do it and to act with intent and to become conscious of the influence we have to change things.



It was during the APEX programme and the contribution that the programme made in 2009 that became a key element in the development of Creativity|WORKS see

<http://www.mondaystudio.co.uk/publications.html>

The cover of the Creativity|WORKS book was produced at an APEX workshop by Students from Bathwick St Mary Primary School, Artist Workshop with Andrew Henon and photographer Karen Dews as facilitator.

## APEX Workshops

You can see an example of an APEX Saturday workshop I have run for young people on using sketchbooks in research. The four videos give you a taste of some of the workshop.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mxqCz1BSOE&feature=BFa&list=SP43F6158ED7F19DAE>

As an artist and educator it saddens me to think about how 'Art' 'Design' and 'Creativity' is taught within the education system, how it is undervalued and in some cases ignored or derided. Sometimes bad practice influences and encourages bad practice. When children and young people are given photographic images of paintings and asked to copy or replicate them it damages our thinking of what art is.

When sketchbooks are only used as learning journals or finished pieces rather than creative living documents or when children and young people's creativity is shut down for the sake of control or environment conditions. When we say, 'He or she will never be able to do this or that' or, 'They will not understand it', we do our young people and children an injustice and we reinforce poverty of aspiration, spirit and limit the possibility of achievement.

The APEX programme has been 'Inclusional' and based on opening up potential rather than closing it down. It has been a joy to see how people begin to engage in a different way to APEX approaches.

These are the images that form the layers seen in the cover of Creativity|WORKS. They combine different ways of perceiving, recording documenting and exploring the world around us. Principles that are combined with educational values and the life blood of enquiry.



## Workshops

Flawed art teaching

Sketchbooks

Creativity

Layers

Creativity|WORKS



## Intergenerational

## 21st Century Literacy

## Unique

## Individual Specific

## Common Shared



The texts of the future will be multimedia, layered and complex. Using 21<sup>st</sup> century technology. We are now able to capture and communicate what we previously had difficulty expressing or describing in words as text. This requires a new form of literacy with which many of the younger generation are already skilled through their use of, and engagement with, technology that has yet to reach the classroom. At the same time we have an ageing population, many of whom are not at ease with video as text and need to address the perceived generation gap.

We need to bridge that gap please see <http://www.mondaystudio.co.uk/gallery.html> for examples of intergenerational educational practice. This is something that Marie and APEX have striven to create in the development of the programme over the years to include the families and communities in intergenerational learning. Living legacies from APEX <http://www.spanglefish.com/livinglegacies/index.asp?pageid=369456> can be accessed from the website. Where you will see many of the accounts and affirmations gathered together. This provides an opportunity for people to carry on the work of APEX after its end in August 2012.

There will be programmes, projects and events mentioned later in this book that will be carrying on developing the underlying ideas, core values, and principles embodied in the APEX ethos and concept. The context of one overseeing department within Bath & North East Somerset Council is ending. Now there are a number of project partners, contexts, organisations, institutions and venues that are taking the work forward in their own unique ways. In the same way many of the children and young people over the years have gained from being involved with APEX take the work on into different contexts. Some of these contexts are mentioned as the stories and accounts show and tell for themselves. In putting together this PDF 'book' we asked people to submit their own accounts, 'stories' relating to the APEX work.



The invitation was inclusionary for any one of any age or connection with APEX. I have tried to keep these stories as authentic as possible. However due to editorial or safeguarding issues some changes have had to be made. I have tried to ensure that the integrity and authenticity remains, so as to respect people's original, unique and individual voices and enable them to be heard. In this way I think you the reader will be able to relate to the diversity of voices expressed here and perhaps find common and the shared values expressed. 'Living Legacies' PDF is my most recent work of social engagement it marks the completion of a body of work and a point of challenging transition into a creative uncertain, unknowable future and the changes that have to be considered and embraced whilst also reflecting **Andrew Henon**

## Reflections on APEX – now and then

### Karen Dews

Thoughts and memories of my APEX experience

Being a photographer my studio is filled with fractions of seconds



Reflection is part of the game, to thread together a pictorial sentence – for the gallery viewer, the book reader, and the screen watcher As a creative heartbeat for myself to try and make sense of it all.

I first came into contact with Marie in 2009, during the epic community arts project 'creativity works' – it was the year I lost my dad to cancer and speaking from the heart it was one of a handful of things that helped me keep going – art as therapy a salve, a focus.

In a primary school classroom, Marie and Andy were allowing 6/7yr olds to plan their own creative explorations with paper and charcoal. It was an afternoon that had stayed with me, followed by a session with 16yr olds at the Guildhall, this time alongside Jack, Marie and Andy. The creative dig was deeper, led by the students covering every topic under the sun, profound questions and ideas all accompanied by the colour, sketches, mind maps to catch the flow of ideas.

Within the APEX projects I saw a belief upheld that in allowing practitioners to bring their own art into the teaching arena the skies the limit.

Learning becomes  
open top  
pure transmission of energy  
crossroads and roundabout  
the pause and flow

The project finished and I continued on my path as an enabler holding the inspiration from these sessions with me.



Socially engaged

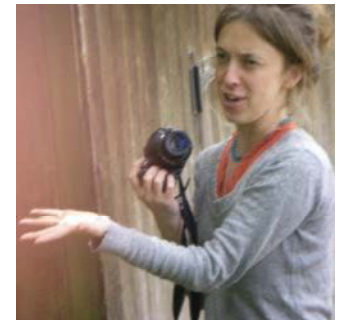
Reflective practice

Photographer Artist

Educator

Integrated practice

The skies the limit





**Difficult times**

**Innocence revisited**

**Stronger**

**Learning**

**Heart is back**

**Looking and seeing**

**Inspiration**



**In 2011 found I'd hit a wall**

I stepped away from teaching and began work at a local nursery, found my smile again thanks to the under 5's and their innocence and naivety, which if we look closely, is actually full of wisdom that can help us all to reconnect with how we live and learn.

In May of 2012 I am re-united with the APEX team and when asked to reflect on my experience realised I'd come full circle. To when I first began my work in the community and the arena of teaching which was at a nursery.

What seems like many moons ago – 10yrs have passed I have walked many roads moving through the age groups?

But recently I thought that I may have forgotten the most important idea – that of 'reflection', when Marie asks 'what will you do next? How can you make this happen? Who can help you make this happen? In the provider conference in May my heart and mind listened and on reflection I am stronger than I think.

I have more understanding of the nursery and how the very early years are vital to ignite young minds and a space to listen to young minds to their potential. Like sponges they will soak up all the knowledge and energy we have the time to give. Yet learning and chances to learn, grow as we do, it is never too late and they will teach me just as much.

Last week I find myself back in front of a room of young people as part of the Knowle West summer programme. I falter unsure of whether I'm ready to take the helm, it is challenging, but my heart is back in the room, we are taking photo's and I am asking the young people to look

It is harder than it sounds something we tend to stop doing when our surroundings become familiar and with me are the voices and inspiration of APEX.

And they take some beautiful images.



So here I reflect again. During the final day of the APEX summer school I asked one girl in the Knit a Squillion workshop what she had enjoyed the most – her answer, the visit to Corsham and the cottage with it's gardens and finding out where colours came from in order to dye the wool and make the paints

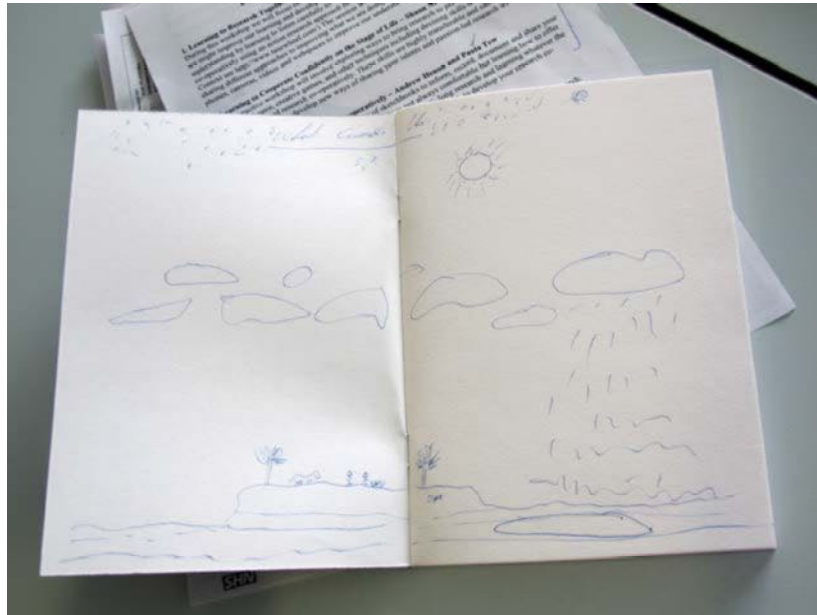
Reflecting

Thinking of colours and returning to the origin

The painter with his brush and canvas, the writer with her ink and nib and parchment, the weaver with her fingers to the wool as it dances with the loom, the photographer with their lens holding hands with the light deciding where the edges lie, the wood for the instrument for the fingers and wind to bring to life, the sculpture with surface and doorways to new skylines, the dancer with the shapes they make in the space they take.

A celebration of place and the collisions that must be made in order for us to create

No man or woman is an island – what connects us all (Jack)



## Reflections

Returning to the origin

What connect us all



**Visual Poetry**

**Contemporary**

**Now**

**Relevance**

**Meaning**

**Purpose**



Aware that nothing exists in isolation, we are intrinsically linked to the people and world around us

In a world chained to commerce it can be difficult to stand hand in hand with your talent, to balance on that high wire of paying bills and making the space and time to create and connect

.....

To take a deep breathe

.....

Get your voice heard

Bang your drum  
Hard and in time to your heart  
Orchestrate your route  
With like minds doing likewise  
A tune appears  
Being brave enough to stand with strangers  
And the beat goes on

Listening to that 'Intrinsic motivation' (Marie)

At times it will crash like storms on the harbour or quiet as a pin drop

Set your mind racing with the possibilities

Across the street there is a buddleia – a weed clinging to the rooftop flowering against the winds wish and the laws of probability

.....

the transformative effect of reflection, refraction and connection

integration, interaction and collision

To carry the torch – to pass it on

Those of us turning our talents outward to inspire and inform others, introducing new languages and shapes to help translate our experiences is deeply rewarding yet deeply challenging and there is a risk of running dry – time must be pencilled in for renewal

Chameleon like to make it through the day – as artist, as student as teacher.  
Revolving on the road to evolution

Open to the changes in the weather, forgiving enough to understand the times where we may have to take a back seat and let others take the stage, that by doing so it will give renewal a chance to shoot

The notion of living legacies, that learning and knowledge is alive and being passed on to each of us is truly inspirational

The spirit of APEX is fluid as the wind I find echoes of it everywhere



## PINKYVISION

"I make art about life."

"Technicolor interpretations of my experience. Explorations of the infinite particular and the iconographic past and present. This moment and how to celebrate it".

"What is sacred to you? What makes your life meaningful? What's next? Remember what you stand for.

[www.pinkyvision.com](http://www.pinkyvision.com)

It doesn't take no wind to make them fly :  
Rik Warren

## Talents

Inspire

Challenging

Rewarding

Open to change

Inspirational

PINKYVISION



## Schools

Peach of an idea



## A Peach of an Idea

**Kevin Lord**

Setting up a programme of enrichment for able children in the Forest of Dean

### Background

Since moving to Bath and Bristol area in 1997 I have been involved on and off in extra-curricular mathematics enrichment activities. Through my links with the University of Bath mathematics department and working in local secondary schools, I became involved in the Bath and Bristol Mathematics Master class Programme presenting workshops to bright year 8 students.

These take place on Saturday mornings both at UWE and at Bath University. In addition I helped organise and present at an annual enrichment day for year 12 mathematics students in South Gloucestershire.



**Maths &  
Computing**

In 2003 I was appointed as assistant head teacher at Wydean School and Sixth Form Centre near Chepstow at the southern end of the Forest of Dean. My role was as Director of the Maths and Computing Specialism, which was a great opportunity for me to help develop mathematics provision in the area and widen my influence over mathematics education. As part of the specialist programme I focused on outreach work and set out to develop community involvement. One of my plans was to establish a programme of enrichment for local children based on the year 8 master class model. However through working with the feeder primary schools it was clear that there was a need for opportunities to extend, broaden and deepen the learning of their more able students in mathematics.

## The initial idea

I wanted to establish a programme for enrichment based on the following principles:

1. The activities should be free to the participating children and so I would try to find external sponsorship for the programme.
2. The children should be recommended by their teachers/schools.
3. The programme should be determined by a “committee” drawn from the participating schools, which would insure that the organisation would be manageable and not dependent on one person, allowing for continuity.
4. The workshops should take place on Saturdays so that parents are responsible for the children rather than their teachers.
5. Teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops to develop their own ideas for teaching.
6. The workshops should take place at a neutral venue or multiple venues so as not to be confused with recruitment activities for Wydean School.



These plans remained unrealised for a considerable time. What I had failed to do was to simplify the scheme. The principles I had set out were for a fully-fledged and established programme, that had sustainability and longevity built in. I had envisaged the final form of the programme without considering the intermediate stages and without these I could not get the programme off the ground. I have learned from other projects that sometimes a more successful approach is to just start doing what you can do without thinking through exactly where it will lead. Once you are underway then you can often see where you could get to, how you should proceed and importantly why you are doing what you are doing.

The justification at first can be simply it seems like the right thing to do, but as you reflect on your progress other outcomes and the potential impact should become clearer.

School

Sixth Form Centre

Ideas

Plans

## Catalysts

APEX Inspirations

Beginnings

SWGaTE



## The catalyst

My children go to school in Bath and through their primary school they were invited to attend Saturday morning workshops organised by APEX. Here was another model for providing a programme of enrichment. As a parent I was able to understand elements of the organisation of the APEX programme and this seemed to fit with many of the principles for the programme I wanted to create. I arranged to meet with Marie Huxtable, the APEX coordinator, to find out more details of the APEX programme in Bath and North East Somerset. She helped me with details of how students were invited on to the courses, funding the programme, the payment workshops leaders together with ideas about the content of workshops. Following this meeting with Marie, I met with my head teacher and was encouraged to make a start.



## The beginnings of the programme

In the January 2008 I organised five mathematics workshops for year 5 children, led by myself, held at Wyedean School. I adapted the documentation from APEX that Marie had shared with me and set up the administrative procedures in school, assisted by the head teacher's PA. Even though this was to be a pilot programme I was keen to ensure that the systems were scalable in readiness for a more extensive programme the following year. I decided on the name for the programme, which was PEACH, *programme of enrichment for able children*. Initially the P was for primary, but I changed this so that the programme could eventually include secondary students. A group of A level graphics students were asked to design a logo for Peach and their teacher completed the finished logo. The initial programme went well. The primary schools suggested improvements to the administration and organisation. The parents and children were very positive in their feedback on the mathematics workshops and gave ideas for other subjects to cover in the workshops. The initial programme was funded by the specialist school's budget, but in order to expand the programme I needed to find other sources of funding.

After the first series of workshops I looked for sponsorship for the programme, contacting the local authority, educational charities, local charities, South West Gifted & Talented Education (SWGaTE) and the local education business partnership, EBP. The EBP put me in direct contact with ASDA distribution centre in Chepstow and they agreed to fund my full budget for the following year of £2000.

## The next phase

The following academic year I was able to offer a wider programme, supported by other colleagues. In total the Peach Programme provided 18 workshops, run over 8 Saturday mornings during the year. The range of workshops was increased to include literacy, music, cooking and art. Also the age range was widened to provide opportunities to children in years 4, 5 and 6.

The 2008/09 programme of workshops consisted of:

Type of workshop	No.
Mathematics year 4	4
Mathematics year 5	4
Basic First Aid year 4	1
Music Technology year 6	2
Food/cooking year 5/6	4
Creative writing year 4	1
Creative writing year 6	1
Photoshop/art year 6	1

Originally the 10 primary schools in the southern part of the Forest of Dean had been invited to participate in the programme. Since ASDA was based in Chepstow I decided to widen the area to include the 6 primary schools in the Chepstow area. However for different reasons none of the Chepstow schools sent children to the workshops. For one school the reason they gave for not participating was that they only wanted to work with the secondary school in Chepstow.

For the year 2008 to 2009 we had 160 different participants from 10 schools in Gloucestershire.

Overall attendance	
8 Mathematics Workshops	134 participant of which there were 58 different children
4 Food Workshops	63 participants of which there were 39 different children
6 Other Workshops	94 participants of which there were 71 different children
<b>Total</b>	<b>291 participants, approximately 160 different children</b>

## What next

Range

Depth

Growth

ASDA Funding



## Feedback

Increased interest

STEM

ASDA Support




Feedback from children and their parents was extremely positive. Here are a few examples of the comments we received.

- *Natasha is thoroughly enjoying these workshops and wishes maths at school was just as interesting;*
- *Yes, fantastic, especially giving the children the opportunity to learn new skills and get familiar with the future secondary school;*
- *Great confidence builder;*
- *The workshop is a very good idea. They are well run and organised;*
- *Any opportunity for additional learning and trying out new skills is an excellent idea, particularly in small groups as in the workshops;*
- *Yes, children like Lewis benefit from more practical life skills;*
- *Matthew loved it and wants more;*
- *Sam has thoroughly enjoyed the maths and hasn't even realised that the 2 hours are up.*


The following year the number of workshops increased again to 23 and I made a link with colleagues at STEM works in Gloucestershire to provide 3 science workshops. The number of participants increased to 347, all from the 10 Gloucestershire primary schools. The project was successful, but I was still concerned about its sustainability and potential for further expansion. There were problems with the dependency on sponsorship from ASDA and uncertainty as to whether the specialist school budget would continue to be used for outreach work.

### Guidance for reserving places and contacting Wyedean

- There are limited places available for each workshop.
- Details of the workshops will be sent to schools at the start of the term.
- Primary schools should request the number of places they would like for each workshop, giving the names and reasons for inclusion (up to a maximum of 4 children per school).
- If a workshop is over-subscribed we will try to share out the places fairly, and then confirm with each school which children have been allocated a place.
- Once we have confirmed the allocation with each school, details should be given to the children and their parents.
- These details include: the letter to parents; the contact information/consent form; and a workshop outline.
- If a child is then unable or does not want to attend, they should return the letter to school immediately and you can then select someone else. Please contact Wyedean if you cannot fill all the allocated places.
- Confirm, via email, to Wyedean the correct names of the children who are coming by Thursday afternoon (prior to Saturday).
- Children can attend more than one workshop, or you may decide to share the experience around a group of children. This is at the primary school's discretion.
- The letters to the children and their parents make it clear that it is their responsibility to drop off and collect their children at the correct times and provide their own equipment, snack and drink.
- After the workshop we will confirm who attended and there will be a certificate sent to the school to acknowledge the children's achievement.
- The children will be encouraged to follow up the workshops by discussing them with their families, friends and teachers.
- We would like feedback from the primary schools regarding the programme.



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## Alternative ways forward

I considered alternative funding through Gifted and Talented initiatives, the Royal Institution and the local authority, but whilst I received some support for my programme, none of these would commit money. In addition I considered approaching the local primary schools about funding the programme through some form of subscription scheme. I was reluctant to follow this course due to the low level of commitment the schools had actually made to the scheme. By this I mean, the schools supported the programme, they saw the benefits that it offered their students and were comfortable with the level of responsibility they had to administer the scheme in their school with parents and children. However beyond that it was very difficult to achieve further commitment in time or help from the primary schools. Each school was asked for feedback, invited to attend workshops, recommend staff to lead or help at workshops and invited to network meetings to plan and develop the programme. I received some feedback and one or two staff agreed to attend meetings but otherwise there was no further support. When personnel at ASDA changed in 2010 the project was under threat. Added to this I was looking for a new position. At a staff meeting in the school I asked if any other colleague would like to take over the role of coordinator of PEACH. I had no replies. This led me to question how I convince others that what I am doing is important not just to me but to others too.



PEACH is a Programme of Enrichment for Able Children in local schools. The programme is part of Wydean School's Community Outreach work that aims to provide challenging and interesting opportunities in mathematics and other subjects. Children are invited, through their schools, to attend Saturday Morning Workshops to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in a diverse range of areas.



Last year we ran a series of Mathematics workshops for year 5 students and another for year 4 students. We also ran Food Technology workshops, where year 5 and

6 children learned to cook a variety of dishes. Thanks to generous sponsorship by ASDA Chepstow and funding from Wydean's Maths and Computing specialism we are pleased to be able to continue the programme into 2009.

This term the programme is more varied with opportunities in mathematics, music, literacy, art and science.



### Workshop Programme : Spring term 2009

<b>SECRET CODES</b> M5 - Mathematics Workshop Year 5 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	7th February
<b>BASIC SKILLS FOR FIRST AID</b> F5 - First Aid/Biology Workshop Year 4 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	7th February
<b>FABULOUS FIBONACCI</b> M6- Mathematics Workshop Year 5 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	7th March
<b>PAINTING WITH WORDS</b> F6 - Literacy Workshop Year 4 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	7th March
<b>COMPUTER BEATS</b> F7 - Music Technology Workshop Year 6 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	7th March
<b>TESSELLATING TILES</b> M7 - Mathematics Workshop Year 5 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	21st March
<b>COMPUTER BLUES</b> F8 - Music Technology Workshop Year 6 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	21st March
<b>WHAT RHYMES WITH ORANGE?</b> F9 - Literacy Workshop Year 6 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	21st March
<b>MATHEMATICAL TRICKS</b> M8 - Mathematics Workshop Year 5 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	25th April
<b>PHOTOSHOP</b> F10 - ICT and ART workshop Year 6 students at 10.15 am to 12.15 pm	25th April

Please note that programme may be subject to changes

### Workshop Leaders

**Kevin Lord** is an experienced teacher of Mathematics. He has run a number of similar enrichment activities for children aged from 7 to 18. He is currently an Assistant Headteacher at Wydean School and coordinator of the Peach programme



**Stuart Motson** is a science teacher at Wydean. He has extensive training in first aid through the Fire Service.

**Brian Ellam** is a teacher of Music and Music Technology, who composes and teaches with Cubase software in purpose-built facilities with students of all ages, including secondary students up to age 18.



**David Holmes** is a writer, poet and broadcaster. He has run a number of creative writing workshops, teaches broadcasting skills for the radio and has had a number of poems and short stories published both in the UK and USA.

**Lee Jarvis** is an experienced teacher of Art and Design, Photography and Graphics. He works with students aged 11 to 18 and specialises in A' Level Photography.

**Clive Pemberton** is the Headteacher at Wydean School and has taught English for many years, developing creative writing skills and writing poetry.

### Workshop Leaders and Helpers Wanted

We always need enthusiastic teachers to work with children from year 2 to year 8 on an enrichment style masterclass on a topic they are passionate about and that the children will find interesting and challenging.

If someone at your school might be interested in running a workshop then please get in touch. We are able to pay leaders for a 2hr 30min session. Alternatively if you would like to attend the workshops, to help and see what the children do, then you are very welcome.

Contact: Kevin Lord, Assistant Headteacher, Wydean  
T: 01291 625346  
E: lordk@wydean.gloucs.sch.uk

## Alternatives

### Important

### Important to others

## Unfulfilled potential

Influence

Active participation

Ownership

Stake holding

Vision

What lasting impact?

## Unfulfilled goals

Some of the remaining funding from the specialist school budget was used to run a scaled down programme in 2010 to 2011. A newly appointed assistant head was asked to continue coordinating the programme. I handed over the organisation and shared the documentation, before leaving the school in August 2011.

Whilst I am very pleased and proud of what I achieved with PEACH at Wyedean School in just 3 years, I am not confident that the project has any long-lasting impact. One of the delights of running the mathematics workshops with year 5 children has been seeing these children when they come to Wyedean in year 7. It is hard to evaluate what lasting impact the PEACH programme has had for the 500 or so children who have taken part in the activities.

Reviewing my original principles for the programme, I believe that I should have worked harder to ensure that the programme fulfilled them all. In particular I needed to involve more people in the organisation and leadership of the project, building on the ideas and skills of others to take the programme further, rather than just relying on my own efforts. This would have helped to build the capacity to sustain the project and enabled more people to become active stakeholders. Connected to this was my inability to encourage primary school colleagues to participate in the actual workshops as leaders or simply as observers. This would have been valuable professional development for the teachers. However I was unable to “sell” this idea.

Finally, because the coordination and running of the programme was largely done by me, rather than a team, if it was to expand further, then it would take up more and more of my time. My plans to open the programme to secondary students, linking with local secondary schools, did not materialise. Again, having contacted all the secondary schools in the Forest of Dean I received no support. Now that I am no longer involved in the programme I can only hope that the ideas for future development will be taken on by others and that they will be able to succeed in generating local support for the project.



## Gifted and talented provision at St Keyna

Megan Morris Lead Teacher for Inclusion  
Adrienne Hughes Head teacher 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010

How do we define what it means to be 'gifted and talented'?

Are we talking about our 'bright' pupils who achieve highly in academic subjects?

Are these the children whose names should be on a Gifted and Talented Register?

That is one way to think about gifts and talents.

Perhaps a more inclusive and wide reaching approach is to begin from the premise that all children and gifts and talents, and that our responsibility as educators is to ensure that all our pupils are given opportunities that:



- Enable them to discover what they are good at and passionate about
- Allow them to explore their talents and gifts
- Engage, stretch and challenge them in a wide range of subjects and learning situations
- Encourage them to develop skills of resilience, independence and perseverance
- Develop their skills and understanding of themselves and the ways in which they and others learn

## Inclusion

Head Teacher

Report



## Year 4

### Gifted & Talented

#### A discussion

#### Making a difference

#### Workshops



A discussion about gifted and talented provision between Adrienne and Megan resulted in us thinking about how we could increase children's engagement with learning, improve their ability to work independently and work on projects that were child initiated.

The Year 4 children had created mind-maps of their gifts, talents, difficulties and passions and this stimulated the discussion too. It had been interesting to see the children's own assessments and reflections, but also illuminating to see how excited they were at having an opportunity to say what they wanted to say about themselves and their learning



Soon afterwards we attended a workshop entitled 'Making a Difference that Matters in Learning and Lives' led by Marie Huxtable, Jack Whitehead, Dan Barwise and Andrew Henon. At Marie's suggestion we took a group of Year 4 pupils with us.

During the morning both children and adults were encouraged to think about what excites them and what they feel passionate about. Each participant was given a high quality sketchbook to use as a planning/thinking/learning journal, and a variety of writing and drawing tools to use.

The children loved this, enjoyed talking about themselves and again we discovered things about their interests, thinking and personal skills that we didn't really know before. The children also loved being 'taken care of' through the provision of lovely refreshments – as well as being related to like adults, listened to and treated very respectfully. It made them feel special.

We tried to get the children involved in leading sessions through sharing what they had done or were doing. Also by working with a small group before each session to plan what we needed to do in order to plan for our learning, decide what we wanted to know, how we were going to find out, reflect on what we had achieved, etc. This was hard to do and involved lunchtime meetings with them. However it was worth the effort because all the children became more confident, were keen to lead discussions and activities, were able to share what they were doing and a natural outcome of this has been that every Thursday lunchtime the children set up the room themselves and prepare their learning environment independently. At this stage we learnt a lot about children's personal qualities:

- Confidence
- Ability to speak in front of others
- Listening skills
- Ability to articulate what they wanted to say
- Ability to remember what they had done



The children in turn were interested to know about our learning as adults and we shared our own planning, thinking and learning with them in a way that established us all as 'equals' in the learning process. They loved this and it gave both them and us a very real sense of learning together.

The hardest part was the next step – letting go and allowing the children to start researching and working on their passions. At this point it felt like everything was out of control, I couldn't keep tabs on what each child was doing, couldn't help all the children who were asking for help, was worried that they were just having lots of fun and not really learning anything at all. On a couple of occasions we stopped to reflect on our learning through self-assessment/evaluation exercises – I'm not sure if that helped me more to feel in slight control again, or the children with learning. I think on reflection that it benefitted us both, because it helped them re-focus their learning and make decisions about what they wanted to do next.

At first we had no clear timescale for the project, and that was both helpful and difficult. Helpful because it meant the children really were learning independently and could take the time they needed to get started (and quite a few make false starts or changed their minds about what they wanted to do).

The children knew they would have to present what they had done – and the first of these opportunities would be through their class assembly. In the last week of term they presented their work to each other.

## What happened next?

Confidence

Communication

Listening

Articulation

Memory



## What the children have learned

### Differentiation

### SEN

### Participation

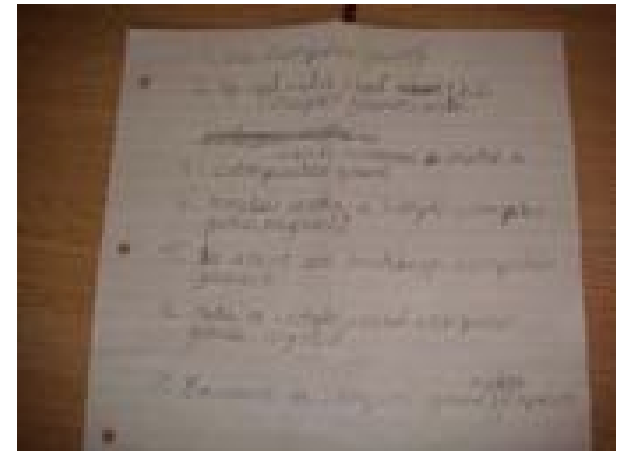
### Inclusion

### True consultation

Some of the children learnt about videoing and interviewing as part of the project. The intention was for them to do more of this and teach each other until all children have learnt videoing skills. A surprising result of this work was discovering that some children were really good at listening to each other and asking questions. Others were good at camera work. Others were good at sharing their skills with each other. What was surprising was that those who were good were not the ones we expected – we learnt more about individual children's strengths. Also, children with SEN have demonstrated qualities and abilities (e.g. confidence to speak to a large audience, ability to interview others meaningfully, create power points with visual and sound effects, create large pieces of text) that have had a powerful effect on their self-esteem and self belief. Other children, who are high achievers but had some social difficulties, have learnt to work with others and have been delighted to put themselves in a helping role and teach others – as well as discovering that there were things they could learn from other children.

In addition the children learnt this from their own reflections and largely uses their own words:

1. ICT skills – especially to do with Power Point, but also combining text and images to make an informative 'learning page', and how to use the internet
2. Factual knowledge about their own and others' topics of interests that learning is fun
3. About themselves and other people – both about personal qualities (perseverance, patience, ability to teach others, to be able to stand in front of other people and not to be embarrassed, to be brave when standing in front of a crowd) and capabilities (that people are different, some people are good teachers, what people are interested in and good at, learn about people because we talk to each other, to talk to the teachers, to like the teachers, we can teach a teacher, some people are good at helping others)
4. How to use a video camera
5. How to research, how to find out things
6. PSHE skills – co-operation, collaborative working, listening to each other and asking questions, to work together in a good way, to be nice to each other, to never give up, to always listen well, to behave yourself, to be good
7. That they are good at things
8. Literacy skills, spelling
9. Science skills
10. How to compose a song and music, how to do magic tricks, how to make a poster, how to make a club



ICT, Literacy and research skills were a real feature of this learning

However the PSHE skills and understanding that were acquired and reflected upon by the children was impressive.

What was really amazing was to observe how they worked with each other, helped each other and shared skills and knowledge. For the first 8 weeks of this project there were no behaviour warnings or sanctions given at all. Since then, one child with challenging behaviour has had to be disciplined, but only on two occasions.

Comments from children that are particularly gratifying include



If you had the chance to support an innovative education project to improve the life chances of children living in one of the most deprived areas of Bath and North East Somerset would you take it?

Please help us by supporting the launch of **THE DISCOVERY PROJECT!**

At St Keyna Primary we are introducing an exciting new learning project with a class of eight year olds. We want to see what kind of **magic** learning will occur when children are given the time and support to follow their own interests and explore the questions which fascinate them. The project is **ground breaking** because it does not follow a traditional model. It capitalizes on the children's own enthusiasm for learning and helps them develop the skills that they need for learning now and in the future. Several teachers are **learning alongside** the children whilst supporting and encouraging them to get **EXCITED ABOUT THE WORLD OF LEARNING!**



- I am good at teaching
- I can learn one little thing from someone and then teach everybody
- Learning myself is fun
- I can co-operate with other people
- I never felt clever at the start and at the end I did
- Even when things are hard I kept going
- I know how to work well with people
- I learnt that other people can help me
- I have learnt that I am a good writer
- I learnt that I am good at learning
- I can do stuff that grown ups do
- I can believe in myself
- I can be more patient sometimes
- I'm really good with research
- I can not be shy in front of people
- I learnt how much people like me
- I learnt how proud people can be of me
- I get annoyed easily
- I know about lots of different things
- I can help other people in their learning

ICT

Literacy

Research Skills

PSHE

Feedback

Evaluation



## Where next?

Deeper learning

TASC modification

Understanding

Time

Trust

Relationships

Respect

Creativity

**We need to work out how we take children's learning further and develop their skills.**

We need to:

- Deepen learning, most children have researched at their level, and some have still not grasped the difference between informed research and their own opinions/beliefs
- Help children to use a process of learning that develops problem solving skills and gives them a framework to use in other situations, perhaps through the TASC approach or a modified version of it
- Help children develop skills of using time, imagination and research opportunities even more effectively
- Try and understand what the processes of learning are and how they are working – so that we can encourage and develop them
- Understand better how we can focus on the learning (and the skills and understanding acquired in that process) rather than the result
- Work out how we can give time for learning, slow learning
- Develop relationships of trust, warmth and mutual respect , between pupils and between adults and children
- How to be truly creative in our approach to learning, seeing mistakes and contradictions as opportunities for creative thinking rather than something to be rectified.



## Developing Effective Learning

### Rob Sandal

Primary School

An account of the application of the TASC wheel across our school's curriculum.

#### Introduction

As a small school we value the opportunities we have to get to know and develop the talents of each of our children individually.



### The Development of our TASC Days

I first came across the work of Belle Wallace at an INSET day organised by Marie Huxtable around 10 years ago. At the time I had been developing my interest in 'Thinking Skills' and the role they could play in developing my practice. I remember feeling very positive about the TASC research that had been presented during the course of the day, and reflecting afterwards with Marie about the potential it represented to deepen my own teaching and the thinking of my learners.

However, as was the case in so many schools, over the intervening years I found I had to put thoughts of developing TASC to the back of my mind in order to meet the demands of an overloaded curriculum. Over the last few years successive government initiatives have offered schools a greater degree of flexibility to develop the personalised aspects of their curriculum. During Term 6 of 2008 I was given the task of carrying out a review of our school's curriculum.

There was a growing feeling within our staff that the National curriculum, as exemplified in the range of QCA schemes, etc, was not effectively meeting the needs of, or sufficiently engaging, our learners. After spending a great deal of time 'Googling' such terms as 'creative' and 'skills based' curriculum, and having a look through the many products available to buy off-the-shelf, I became increasingly convinced that as a school we needed to develop our own model. It was at this point my thoughts returned to TASC, and the potential it seemed to present to provide a framework for the development of our curriculum.

Primary School

TASC

## **Year 5 & 6**

### **Independent Learning Day ILD**

### **TASC Days**

### **Curriculum**

### **Development**

### **'The Buzz'**

I had recently challenged my Year 5&6 class to take part in what I had rather grandly entitled as an 'Independent Learning Day' (ILD). This essentially involved me in explaining to the class that I was giving the day in school over to them. They were to decide what it was they wanted to learn about, who they wanted to work with (up to a maximum of 3 people), and how they were going to present what they had learned. The children were then given the space to organise themselves and plan what they wanted to do. My HLTA (Rosemary) and I were then on hand to provide the children with both a large amount of guidance and resources!

The next day I was very pleased with the positive reaction our day had received from the children and also from the parents, who reported the enthusiasm the children has shown when telling them about their day in school. It was also pleasing for me to feel that Rosemary clearly shared this enthusiasm, and had thoroughly enjoyed and supported the day. As our use of TASC within school has developed, Rosemary's support has proved an essential aspect.

Before the end of Term 6 2008, I introduced my class to the TASC wheel, and presented it as a means to support our learning on another ILD. Initially the children were a little nonplussed towards the wheel, seeing it as an extra thing to do before they could get on with their own research activities! This lead me to reflect that perhaps I had been too keen to focus on the role of the TASC wheel, and continually draw the children back to its role in our activity, at the expense of allowing them the freedom they valued to engage in their learning. Maybe I had been guilty of over-teaching at this point! However I was confident that there was enough evidence to show that the TASC wheel could provide a structure and sound academic framework upon which we could begin to build our curriculum.

Throughout the 2008-09 academic year, I was able to build into my curriculum development plans for the school, a commitment to hold two 'TASC Days' each term. Initially these were limited to our Key Stage 2 classes, but soon developed to include Key Stage 1.

Each TASC day had been tremendously well received by the children, who have given a very pleasing amount of positive feedback about using TASC. I think the most pleasing aspect of our TASC days has been what myself and Rosemary have termed the 'buzz' that is evident around school throughout the day. We have now reached a point where the children are keen to begin planning the focus for their learning, and who they will work with days before we actually reach TASC day. (It can be a humbling feeling when most of the children complain about having to stop their activities in order to go out to break-time in the middle of summer!)

So far our TASC days have taken a variety of forms. Usually the children have been given the freedom to direct their own learning and identify what it is that they would like to spend the day researching. My only limitations for them have been the size of the groups they have worked in, together with the time constraint of having to present their learning to the rest of the class (or their parents) at the end of the day. The TASC wheel has been explicitly presented by me at the beginning of the day's learning, and has been displayed throughout the day for the children's reference. The children then have to fill in a plan for their day's learning in which they identify the questions they wish to answer, together with outlining how they intend to go about the task. From this point onwards the role of the adults in school is to facilitate the children's learning. Some examples of this might be to guide their thinking and planning, offer advice if they are starting to get stuck, redirecting groups if they have lost focus (which happens very rarely!), but mainly we seem to be there to help them access resources from around school and keep track of the time!

The flexibility TASC presents has meant that I have been able to direct the focus of the children's learning on several occasions, without losing the children's engagement, to meet other needs within the curriculum. One example of this was during term 5 2009, when a Thai girl (Fee) joined our school. We were able to focus our next TASC day on Thailand and the surrounding area. The children followed the TASC structure and produced some very interesting presentations. Fee was able to act as an 'expert' within her group, which was very helpful in assisting her to integrate into our school.

Where next?

Having successfully established TASC days across the school and embedded them within the timetable, the question of where we go next comes to mind.

Our work so far has left me with several questions:

- How can we 'deepen' the children's understanding of the TASC model?
- How can we further use the TASC model to deepen the children's thinking and learning? (*Move on from just asking questions and presenting their findings- or am I asking for too much?*)
- The children have clearly gained a great deal of independent learning skills from our TASC days. How can we ensure they are able to maintain and develop these skills?

**Freedom to direct**

**Constraints**

**Flexibility**

**Where Next?**

**Deepen**

**Asking too much?**

**Gains**

**Sustainability?**

Head Teacher

Deputy Head Teacher

MA writings



Joy Mounter

*'We view the landscape as narratively constructed: as having a history with moral, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions. We see it as storied. To enter a professional knowledge landscape is to enter a place of story.'*  
Connelly and Clandinin.1999. p.1

For me this frames the belief that I or the children have a story to tell, one we passionately believe in that forms part of our living values. A story that is on going even when we are not together to support each other, but belief that is embedded in us and was reinforced by child A. They talk about the influence of the in-classroom landscape and the out-of-classroom landscape. The out-of classroom landscape influences and forces the direction of the in-classroom landscape and forms the current perspective from government, school and society.

*'A place filled with knowledge funneled into the school system for the purpose of altering teachers' and children's classroom lives.'* Connelly and Clandinin.1999.p.2

It is this out-of-classroom landscape that I shut out at the door and live my values. Together we have carried out action research, challenging perceptions of children as researchers and the living theories of others, it is now time to open the door and share our research and present it, to contribute to the professional knowledge base of education. Whitehead and Huxtable (2007) discuss working with a living theory approach to the skills, understandings and sophistication not only in creating gifts but also in the child's emerging understanding of their own living values and theories. They highlight the findings of my own research in the child's sense of well being and voice. The confidence to challenge the world around them and believe they can co-create knowledge and present it to the world. And be heard, not listened to, but heard!

*'Through this approach we are working for the individual to learn about, and to develop their living standards. These contribute to their decisions as to how they will develop their talents and what gifts they value and will work to create and offer, to whom and in what manner which will enable them to contribute to their own and other's wellbeing.'*

(Whitehead & Huxtable,2007)



As the children's confidence grew they challenged the perceptions of those around them as being the expert learners. The children wrote to Belle Wallace (2004) and asked if she was going to write another book as they liked her learning theory, but felt their understandings had moved on further than her book.

On YouTube you can watch [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH2-5xexbAQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH2-5xexbAQ)

An extract of the children discussing the changes they felt should be made and how they had worked on them, even making a model. My educational influences on learning and my affirmation of inclusionality with my class is seen expressed in the educational relationship with my pupils as I respond to their needs in relation to their learning. Our 'gift' is for each other and the profession as we freely give our writings as a contribution to the professional knowledge-base.

*'I often find images carry more meaning than words, although I usually need words to communicate the significance the image has for me. I also find conversations with others about images help to develop shared meanings of the values that help to constitute my productive life. I call these shared meanings about embodied values the affirmations of inclusionality and the representation of these meanings, visual narratives.'* Whitehead 2005



Another moment captured on film at the end of a long day for me encapsulates my living values and how learning should feel. For the children it shares their joy and pleasure at the end of a task. For me it shows the relationships within the class, the space I have created and the sense of pleasure at solving a difficult problem as well as the shared pleasure and affirmation from the child watching in the background. It sums up my living values and educational theory, my passion for creating a space enabling children to discover and grow their own as well as my own, gifts and talents.

From this understanding of the theories of others the children's self belief as experts encouraged them to write their own learning theory. This took only a short session to outline and another two sessions to complete. The children clearly show their talent for creating knowledge encompassing their embodied educational values and living theory.

**Writing to Belle Wallace**

YouTube

Beyond what we think

Images

The Joy & Pleasure

Self Belief



**Family**

**Community**

**Health Visitor**

**Sharing**

**Living Boundaries**

**Generosity**

**Fewer resources**

**Contextual change**

**Thursday group**

**APEX**

## Reflections on this last year with Marie, APEX and the Thursday Group.

### Dr Robyn Pound

I feel I am a bit of an interloper in these groups as strictly speaking I am not an educator in a school or studying for academic accreditation. However, that is as far as my apology goes. It is not how I feel in this climate of 'living boundaries' and inclusiveness where everyone is a practitioner with valuable knowledge and a contribution to make in the interest of improving our future (Huxtable, 2012).

I regularly see newcomers relax in the welcome, picking up the challenge of sharing their passion and ending by saying something like, 'I have not talked about it in this way before' and to leave refreshed and buzzing with hope.

Talking about 'it' is a great start but the purpose of APEX and the Thursday group is to develop ideas, living them and sharing them in ways that will be widely understood and influence for the common good.

As a practicing health visitor I returned to talk 'living theory' (Whitehead, 1989) because I too needed refreshment and hope in a time of resource constraints and tightening of boundaries in community health practice.

I wanted to share insights and ways of uncovering them with my colleagues as we grasped the political initiative to reinvigorate health visiting early intervention with children and make the most of our time in the limelight. It would not last for long.

Marie's thesis about living boundaries helped me understand how in times of challenge and increased workload thoughtful practitioners struggle to continue delivering good practice when spread thin.

I observed individuals' boundaries tighten and team relationships, including reciprocity, generosity and trust diminish as we struggled to work quicker (funders said 'increase efficiency and measure outcomes') and protect ourselves from the confusion of knowing fewer resources were reducing effective service.



In the supportive environment of sharing living theories I began to see previously unrecognized contradictions to the values of 'alongsideness' that I claim guide my practice (Pound, 2003). I saw a new value, 'urgency and focus' in getting the job done, interfering with 'light heartedness', 'connecting' with people, 'encouragement', 'accepting differences' and having time for living in a 'process of becoming' that are all aspects of alongsideness. Recognizing this contradiction enabled my discussion with colleagues so that we could all be conscious of keeping values we know are important to the work we do, in the foreground. We could ask:

*How do we continue to value each other through this time?*

The political agenda reframed our working focus, as well as promising an increased workforce, but meantime concerns about what we were responding to *now* were expressed and another question arose: 'who are we accountable to?' As boundaries became more protective in the interests of personal survival it was too easy to act on meeting organisational targets and measurable outcomes even though we know they maybe more sticking plaster than change-promoting for health. By asking three more questions, debate in our team began:

- *Are we accountable to the Department of Health, our local employer and our professional registration, the 'megalith', or are we accountable to the people we serve?*
- *If we act in our accountability to the 'megalith', how does that influence what we do for the needs of the people in front of us and their communities?*
- *What do we think is important for families?*

These four questions are in the air in weekly team meetings and gradually over a couple of months, even with no extra staff, both our commitment to each other and our work satisfaction has improved. Mood has lifted. It is a sign for me that we are probably also more concerned about our families and finding ways to do our best for them when we enjoy what we are doing. Health visitors commonly speak about the privilege of doing our job so the return of this recognition is heartening.

A serendipitous event during last month enabled me to explore alongsideness with a mother and a baby who did not sleep. Ruth agreed to describe her experience of working with me on video. While editing the film for public access on YouTube I clarified a link between the way I support parents' learning when they struggle with babies who don't sleep, and the values of alongsideness which motivate my practice intentions. I had not thought about this before and find using 'alongsideness' as an explanation makes the learning process more understandable for colleagues and parents.

**Alongsideness**

**Supportive**

**Urgency & focus**

**Continue?**

**How?**

**Accountable?**

**Megalith?**

**Important?**

**Families**

**Clarity through watching video**





## You Tube

Alongsideness

Clarity

New contexts

Thoughtful

Invigorating

To view click on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v5kKiYMk2Q>



In a few months I have added significantly to my view of alongsideness in health visiting in new contexts and feel able to continue doing it a bit longer after all. Taking time to think about what I am doing and explore it with others in a climate where it is acceptable to be imperfect but thoughtful is invigorating.

Huxtable, M. (2012) How do I Evolve Living-Educational-Theory Praxis in Living-boundaries? PhD Thesis University of Bath  
Pound, R. (2003) How can I improve my health visiting support of parenting? The creation of an alongside epistemology through action enquiry. PhD Thesis University of the West of England.  
Whitehead, J. (1989) Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, "How do I improve my practice?'. Published in the Cambridge Journal of Education, Vol. 19, No.1,1989, pp. 41-52

## We are all living the legacy of many lives

### Dr William House GP

*“That best portion of a good man’s life,  
His little, nameless, unremembered acts  
Of kindness and of love”*

William Wordsworth

So many times in my professional career as a general practitioner I have seen how important the legacy of a life is. The legacy that matters is alive amongst all those touched by the life that is now ending. But this living legacy is largely unknown to the dying person and often unrecognized by the recipient. Much the same applies to organisations like Apex that collectively provide opportunities for individuals to enrich the lives of others often without recognition or reward beyond their own enrichment. So this story, based on my own journey, is about legacy and the part it plays in making a person – in my case a disobedient but passionate misfit willingly trapped within a staid profession! Along the way many more people and ideas than I mention have left their mark on the person I became, Apex is amongst them. I wish I could remember and understand all of the reciprocal formative influences, but of course this is a hopeless task. Circumstances, events, moments of love and fear, books, poems and essays leave their mark which endures long after the moment itself sinks back into the ocean of nameless experience.

Most of my childhood was spent in a small cottage down a country lane with my opera-singing mother, oil-painting father and flighty pre-war sister. The nearest playmate lived a mile away and there were no after-school or holiday classes – no Apex – though I sang in the church choir for a while. Without computers or mobile phones or daytime TV, I invented my own games. I felt loved and cherished but mostly played alone in the large unkempt garden and surrounding fields. Though lonely at times I was never bored. My school life started late because I suspect my parents forgot to register me; and childhood was peppered with attacks of earache. I was taken to Dr Yelverton Hicks with his waiting room full of people, large dark furniture and enormous books, and his consulting room smelling of surgical spirit and his oddly furrowed brow. I so much wanted to know what the other patients were there for and why they all took longer than me. A year short at primary school, I scraped through the 11-plus exam in 1958 and into the bottom stream of the grammar school. I suspect that my lifelong preference for being with the less privileged started here. I remember the good way the head master, Angus Johnston, handled my rebellious behaviour. Though I read very little (I read very slowly) I did well in science and maths and followed old Dr Hicks in medicine. One university teacher, Lewis Wolpert, stood out for a brief transformative conversation about ideas. Then after a few overworked years in high tech specialist training in hospitals

The legacy of many

Legacy that makes a  
person

The personal story



## A Wildlife Garden

### Humanity

### Frustrations

### Reading

### Research



I turned my back on the elite of the profession and escaped (with relief) to general practice. In 1981 I obtained a partnership in Keynsham and my artist wife, Poppy, and I settled into comfortable family life with two children and two dogs in a small village down a country lane where there was no community life and which, I later realized, recreated my own childhood!

I let sixteen years elapse and celebrated my fiftieth birthday. I had created a wildlife garden full of different habitats, and found a real affection for my patients who taught me so much about the human condition. I believe that with their help I had found a way of being a GP that recognized the humanity of the patient and of my self. I most enjoyed working with those whose problems baffled medical science, for they needed imagination and creativity. I am part of their legacies, and they will be part of mine. I had realized very late that the profession is deeply conservative whilst I am creative and imaginative. I knew my way was very different from the NHS as a whole and this disturbed and frustrated me greatly. Was this a midlife crisis?

I knew I was limited by reading almost nothing and that, slow or not, I must read.

So in 1998 I took a five month sabbatical leave mentored by the professor of ethics in medicine in Bristol University, Alastair Campbell. He gave me a reading list on moral philosophy and I met him every few weeks.

I read books all day long a light dawned every few pages. With each light my excitement increased. I had to catch up on fifty years of reading nothing. After a while I found widely different books of my own to read. One book led to another. It felt like exploring Aladdin's cave. My head was whirling, bursting with books and ideas.

It was as if I had been half blind and could now see. I doubt whether Professor Campbell realizes his impact. I was desperate to share my discoveries – I was in my mid 50s and I felt time was running out.



**I joined a sequence of committees and no one listened to me.**



It was as if I spoke a foreign language! This was the worst kind of frustration. Finally I was offered the chance to work with the community to stem the flood of illness before it reached the NHS: to improve health and wellbeing. In a flash I was again that little boy down the country lane, in a world of love, nature and imagination in which anything was possible. I had already learned that ultimately power does not reside in a committee, or in the leadership of an august institution, or even in the corridors of Whitehall. It resides amongst the people and that is where transformation must happen. But this was 2009, the banks had collapsed, I was 62 years old and had just retired from the practice after 27 years as a partner.

I was drawing my NHS pension. Did I have the bottle to try once more to transform the reluctant, impoverished world?

I put together everything I had learned that might help. Complexity science told me that health and wellbeing emerges when the conditions are right – just as happened in the garden. I also knew I needed to foster a sense of the sacred in a secular, consumerist society: a reason for people to care about themselves, others and the world. I started to meet people who understood, especially within a group of educationalists inspired by Professor Jack Whitehead and including Dr Marie Huxtable who had nurtured Apex from the beginning and now nurtured me. I could see that Apex was about just the transformation I was after, but mine would be for adults as well.



I learned that I needed to understand myself in new ways and it is that which inspired me to write this story. The project is called Keynsham Matters and is part of the living legacy of APEX. I hope you will hear more of this in the years to come.

**Unheard**

**Community**

**Wellbeing**

**2009**

**Sacred**

**Transformation**

**APEX principles**

**Keynsham Matters**



## BRLSI

Open Access

Aspirations Shared

Workshops

Young People



## Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. Paul Thomas

Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution is a registered charity. It exists to promote an interest in the arts and sciences in Bath and the surrounding area and to provide resources for education, research and enjoyment. It acts as a cultural centre for its members and the public and provides a wide ranging programme of lectures, discussions, science demonstrations and exhibitions. Anyone can become a member and anyone can attend its activities.

Because it shared APEX's aspirations BRLSI offered facilities at its buildings in Queen Square and through some of its members provided a variety of workshops and activities. The presence of young people in discreet groups energised those members who witnessed or were part of the various activities which ranged from 'Surfing the Universe' with Richard Phillips, Dr Rodney Hillier and Dr. Steve Kimmins University of Bath and 'Building the Impossible with Brunel' with Jude Harris Nicola Bennet and Paul Thomas to 'The Victorian Magic Lantern Show in conjunction with The Magic Lantern Society and 'Copy Cats' – An introduction to Biomimetics. Two workshops one for primary pupils and one for secondary students led by Professor Julian Vincent, Director for Biomimetics at University of Bath. He reported:



“The workshop, on deployable structures in biology, was based on some simple origami folds which had been developed by the tutor (Prof JFV Vincent, Chair of the BRLSI) and colleagues a few years previously, to analyse the morphology and mechanism of unfolding of leaves from the bud. The original work was published in the biological journal of the Royal Society and is well regarded and referenced by other workers. The students on the course quickly learned the basic concepts and enthusiastically produced models showing different types of unfolding. They also learned about the strange (anticlastic) properties of such folded surfaces, and widened their appreciation of the plants around them, such as beech, hornbeam, blackberry, etc. all of which show this type of folding.”

Parents arriving were drawn in by the excited and very happy pupils and began to take part in the practical exercises themselves. They quizzed the professor on the implications and applications of the models, so much so that it was difficult to end the sessions. Professor Vincent thoroughly enjoyed the pupils' uninhibited approach to learning, the serious fun the workshops generated.

A further part of the BRLSI contribution to the APEX programme was 'Saving the planet', a series of workshops which involved pupils devising a system for inspecting buildings from the point of view of energy conservation, with particular reference to Georgian Buildings. The first session involved discovering the socio historical background to the Georgian period, its architecture and intellectual, social and artistic influences with particular reference to the Bath context. Subsequent sessions looked at aspects of energy conservation and recycling in general and in particular subjecting the BRLSI building to a detailed examination. By applying rigorous observation, recording and analysis the pupils were able to recognize and categorise a series of questions in a systematic way which enabled them to identify a 'tool' for measuring the energy saving effectiveness of the building. APEX students visited the BRLSI Saturday coffee morning to meet members and to conduct a survey about BRLSI members' attitudes and practical responses to the idea of recycling and energy conservation. Students were surprised that a significant number of members practised recycling and energy conservation to a relatively high degree, although the BRLSI building was not at all energy efficient. BRLSI members were most impressed with the polite, serious and conscientious way in which the APEX students carried out their investigations.

There then followed an inspection of the BRLSI Headquarters in Queen's Square. The results obtained were analysed and written up in the form of a report with commendations for action and sent to the BRLSI Management Committee. The pupils also devised a PowerPoint presentation and a representative group of participating APEX pupils used this as a way of presenting their work and findings at a B&NES schools Climate Change Conference organised by Ralph Allen School and held at Bath University. Another group of students used their 'Georgian Buildings tool' to inspect some of the buildings at the university and were impressed with the ways in which the university was already practising energy conservation in the design of certain aspects of the building and its services. They also commented (some were very surprised) at the lack of concern and care in practising energy conservation and recycling on the part of some of the students.

Some of the work and observations from the 'Saving the planet' series found its way in to a workshop and a performance which took place at The Hay on Wye Book Festival, which were devised by a BRLSI member.

Although not directly an APEX initiative two BRLSI members, spurred on by the success of these APEX initiatives undertook, in conjunction with the Royal Institute of Philosophy, a series of seminars for sixth form students in aspects of Philosophy.

See [www.brslsi.org](http://www.brslsi.org) for more details of how BRSLI is continuing to include young people inspired by APEX

## Further contributions

Apex Programme

Queens Square

Saving the planet

Inspired by APEX

Philosophy



## Valley Added

Five Schools

Innovation

Two Pilots

Extended  
Opportunities

Pupil Led

Cooperation

Talents Gifts &  
Resources



## Exciting New Project for the Valley Schools Community in Bath Meryl Elias

The five “Valley Schools” (St Mark’s Secondary, St Stephen’s C.E.V.A. Primary, St Saviour’s Infant and Junior Schools and Swainswick C.E. Primary) are launching an innovative, Community Based Intergenerational Learning Project this year. The project, known as “Valley Added”, will bring together children, young people and adults from all areas of the community to learn from each other and support the local schools and businesses through mutual benefits.

Two pilot events are being planned for the Autumn of 2012, including a range of workshops for children, young people and adults, to be held at St Mark’s School. In the longer term, it is proposed that ‘Valley Added’ is run three times per year on a Saturday, each event comprising a variety of learning opportunities hosted in a Valley School. The learning opportunities may take various forms, for instance workshops, displays, and presentations.

The events will extend the opportunities for learning by working with local businesses and challenging the students to use resources available to them to learn new, real life skills with a lasting impact.

This will include creating marketable products through a Pupil – Led Enterprise, which will help ensure the sustainability of the project. The students from the schools will be encouraged to take ownership of the project from the beginning.

Merryl Elias, School Business Manager and Project Manager for “Valley Added”, said, “We are all very excited about this project, which will benefit the whole community and will look at new ways of educating learners of all ages.



The students will have the opportunity to learn real life skills, and by co-operating with local businesses, will put their learning into context and hopefully inspire them to use their new skills in the future. It will also raise the profile of local schools and businesses and become a high impact, sustainable project for the local area. It is based on the premise that everyone has gifts or talents, even if they don’t yet know it. This project will draw on talents, gifts and resources across the community to inspire learners in ways they never thought possible.”

**APEX is an ICON; an emblem for learning that is truly educational.**

**Nigel Harrison**

APEX has supported education learning since its inception; it has encouraged us to question the assumptions, values and belief systems that have been socialised into us from an early age, to the point where many lives have been enriched and practices transformed. It is an ICON because it supports learning and knowledge creation at the **Individual, Community, Organisational and Network** levels. At the Individual level, APEX has been encouraging all of us to follow our own dreams of better understanding ourselves and the world we inhabit.

Personally, I have been hugely encouraged and supported to undertake a research PhD into my practice as a leader in education, the relationships I form and develop as I carry out my day-to-day job of influencing people. This has led to a better understanding of what I do and how I can improve my influence. For instance, the empathetic resonance that exists in the positive relationships I develop.

It has given me the confidence to move away from traditional forms of representation that cannot fully capture the energy and values that flow between people in those relationships. This can be seen by viewing the first few minutes of the following video clip:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5EWsPcJvGw&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5EWsPcJvGw&feature=player_embedded)

At the **Community** level, APEX has supported various community groups in Bath and North East Somerset. My particular experience is the support for the community of learners within the Local Authority itself. In 2005, Marie Huxtable, Chris Jones and I, started what has become a sustained learning space - a Conversation Café - where anyone could come to discuss what excited them in their work and the relationship between what they did, why they did it and how they did it; we have had Professor Jack Whitehead with us since its inception.

This Café – this sharing and learning space has been sustained to the present date with the full support of Marie and APEX. What takes place in Café and the learning opportunities that can emerge is exemplified in the following video clip.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR8FY8tpJrg&list=UUnRjBfzn9T6gXC\\_QBmWAbJA&index=102&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR8FY8tpJrg&list=UUnRjBfzn9T6gXC_QBmWAbJA&index=102&feature=plcp)

**Local Authority**

**APEX ICON**

**Individual**

**Community**

**Organisation**

**Network**



## **Organisation**

## **Philosophy for children**

## **Inclusion**

## **Hope for the future**

At the **Organisational** level, APEX has influenced thinking at the highest level; in schools it has introduced Philosophy for Children, PASS (Pupils Attitude to School and Self) as well as TASC. Within my aspect of the organisation Marie (APEX) and Chris Jones developed an Action Research inclusion strategy, working with Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, which has had a significant impact on the inclusion of children young people with Special Educational Needs.

At the **Network** level, APEX has been outstanding. Marie has been able to make it possible for all the various and potentially separate aspects of APEX to 'join hands' in finding the common ground between them; to discover that the various parts share common goals and common values of love and hope for the future of humanity. This can be seen in the following video clip:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx9ogvF9PtI&feature=relmfu>

### **Chris Jones Living Legacy**

I have worked with Marie for approximately twelve years. In that time I have seen her 'grow' into her dedication to advance gifted and talented education. I first met Marie when I was a Special Educational Needs Coordinator in a Primary School. Marie was our Educational Psychologist. It was not long after I met Marie that she became responsible within the authority for APEX and whilst she continued for a short time as the school's Ed Psych, it was not long before she was involved in APEX full-time. A few years after that, I joined the Local Authority as an Inclusion Officer, and frequently we had the opportunity of working together. We ran workshops at the SENCO Conferences and particularly memorable was the Creativity Workshop whereby we wanted and achieved a creative space within the workshop.

Within the authority, I have been responsible for the implementation and development of the Bath and North East Somerset Inclusion Quality Mark. As part of Marie's work, she was involved in the development of the Challenge Award and our work has very much crossed over. We have both been involved in the development of inclusive practice, with Marie particularly focussing on the development of gifted and talented education within the authority. We worked very closely with a variety of schools that were focussing on the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Challenge Award and this was an exciting time for us both with one school achieving the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Challenge Award in the same year. It was at that time that this particular school put on a Gifted and Talented Conference which was organised by the pupils themselves with most secondary schools attending. It was very impressive with representatives from a variety of well known companies speaking at the Conference.

## Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM)

The Inclusion Quality Mark has been running within the authority for 7 years. Within this time, I have seen schools develop in their understanding of gifted and talented education and I believe that this is because of Marie's influence. When we assess a school, invariably it produces evidence to demonstrate the work they do in gifted and talented education and frequently, we meet the Gifted and Talented Coordinator to discuss their work within the school. Over the years gifted and talented education has been more and more embedded within schools' practice.



I believe that Marie's influence will continue due to her ongoing commitment and dedication to gifted and talented education. You can see Chris talking about her work at [http://youtu.be/Rds\\_H-FcuR8](http://youtu.be/Rds_H-FcuR8)

## Kate Kemp recalls stories from practice

My understanding of inclusive gifts and talents has been shaped over the years by Marie Huxtable and my Conversation Café colleagues. I am about to embark on my MA dissertation and would certainly not have got this far without the constant encouragement (nagging in the nicest possible way!) of Marie and Jack. Here are a couple of vignettes from my early Conversation Café days and also a quote from the Buddhist leader Daisaku Ikeda, which, for me, encapsulates my understanding of inclusive gifts and talents.

## The Cuckoo Child

So there I was buying some lemon stuff to make my dishwasher smell better when I realised that the woman on the till was the mother of a boy I used to work with several years ago. This boy-let's call him Joe- started refusing to go to school quite early on in his first year at secondary school. He continued to have bouts of school refusal throughout his time at school which culminated in the LEA going to court to seek an Education Supervision Order of which I was the Supervising Officer. Early on in my dealings with him he would usually run off if I turned up at the house or would hide under his duvet. I therefore got to know his Mum quite well as I was often sitting around waiting for him to come home or get out of bed. So after we'd said hello and discussed the merits of lemon dishwasher stuff I enquired, with some trepidation, as to what 'Joe' was now doing.

**Inclusion**

**Quality Mark**

**Challenge Award**

**Commitment**

**Dedication**

**Conversation Café**

**Buddhist teachings**

**The Cuckoo Child**



**Anxiety**

**And there she stood**

**Acceptance**

**Many kinds of talent**

**Your own special  
jewel**

**Unique talent**



My anxiety was due to the fact that, when I first encountered him I had been to his primary school to see if I could get a handle on what was at the bottom of his school refusal. His Year 6 class teacher had some alarming stories to tell about him which included setting fire to letter boxes and running away from home. As I got to know Joe it seemed to me, in my amateur psychologist role, that he had ended up in the wrong family. He was, for instance, very talented at imaginative writing but lived in a house with no books. He was quite a sensitive and anxious boy surrounded by noisy and argumentative parents and siblings. As part of the Education Supervision Order I got him and his family to agree to go and see a family therapist. I also arranged for a tutor to work with him on an individual basis at school gradually reintroducing him back into the classroom. The school got him involved in a production of Oliver Twist and the last I had heard of him, three or four years ago, he had gone onto Bath College to study performing arts.

‘So what’s Joe up to these days?’ ‘Oh he’s doing really well, he’s at Guildford Art College studying theatre design and he’s doing an Open University degree. He’s always in the Bath Chronicle for some Christmas pantomime he’s produced or play he’s written’. ‘So thank you’ she says. ‘My pleasure,’ say I. And truly it is for there are few things more pleasurable than knowing you have made a difference to a young person’s life and, in some small way, helped them find ‘their thing’.

**.....and there she stood**

As I approached the door of the theatre I saw her. There she stood, poised and elegant, welcoming guests to the show. When she saw me she smiled and came over and kissed me on both cheeks. ‘How are you? How great to see you’ she said. I’d last seen her about a year or so previously when I’d taken her and her mum to an admission meeting at a school.

She’d been out of mainstream education for at least 6 months and was very nervous about returning but was quite determined that she was going to make a go of it.

She’d been permanently excluded from her secondary school for persistent rudeness and disruptive behaviour, which had culminated in shouting and swearing at the Head Teacher in the middle of a crowded corridor.

Following the exclusion I had visited her at home to discuss what would happen next and she told me that she had times when she just 'lost it', she didn't know why, but that she had to get back to school as she needed to get her exams as she wanted to become a psychologist. I visited her on numerous occasions over the next few months as we tried to get a school to take her. I helped her Mum write an appeal letter to a school which had rejected her and hand-delivered it to make sure it got there. I felt that I needed to call by regularly just to apologise for the length of time it was taking to get her back into school.

She flourished at the tuition centre and one of the staff there eventually persuaded another school to take her. This was when I had last seen her as she started her final year at school. Whilst at the tuition centre she had got involved in their drama workshops and then had been asked if she would help with drama sessions for children at the theatre.

She clearly had a talent for this and when an apprenticeship came up at the theatre she applied and, out of the 70 or so applicants, was successful. So here she was, telling me about her work at the theatre and how much she loved it. I wished the head teacher of her original school, and the other school which had rejected her, could have seen her, transformed from an angry girl into a confident young woman with a life to look forward to.

*'Everyone has some kind of gift. Being talented does not just mean being a good musician, writer or athlete. There are many kinds of talent. You may be a great conversationalist or make friends easily or be able to put others at ease. Or you may have a gift for telling jokes, selling things or living economically. You may be punctual, patient, reliable, kind or optimistic. Or you may love taking on new challenges, be strongly committed to helping others or have an ability to bring them joy. Without doubt you possess your own special jewel, your own unique talent'* (Ikeda, 2004)

## Following exclusion

Flourished

Drama

Transformation

Confidence

A future



## Breakfast meetings

### Conversation café

### Daunting at first

### A place

### Dynamics

### Animated

### Experience



## Action research meetings and their impact and influence on me

### Lynn Spurrell

I believe I was involved near the very beginning of the Action Research breakfast meetings in what was then Education Services in Bath and North East Somerset Council. I remember the primary group members as Marie Huxtable, Jack Whitehead, Christine Jones and Nigel Harrison. The group is a living entity powered by the perseverance and dedication of Marie and Jack to allow it to change and continue. The group has grown and changed according to its members, the inspiring conversation topics and challenges, the support and conundrums posed by group members.

Initially the group comprised several Educational Psychologists. I personally found this a daunting experience because I felt intimidated; however now that I know some of them better I know that they are, for the most part, just people like the rest of us! If staff and colleagues asked me back then what the purpose of the group was, I found it difficult to give an answer – and, if I am honest, I still do sometimes.

I attended the meetings, which became known as Conversation Café, for a few years and then, because I felt that I was not getting as much from them as I had done I stopped attending the meetings. With hindsight this probably had more to do with my state of mind and personal circumstances at that time than the group itself. I went on secondment to Bath for 2 years in 2010 and when I returned to work in Keynsham, having chatted to the ever-encouraging Marie, I decided to return to the meetings to see how things were going and whether or not I had a place there.

I returned to find a group that was vigorous, very supportive, creative and impressive particularly with regard to academic ability and success. That is not to say that this was previously lacking in the group but that I felt it was more evident on my return. In my mind's eye I picture the group as one of the coloured bubbles in a lava lamp – constantly changing shape, expanding in some areas while contracting in others with slow but incessant shifts in dynamics and appearance indicating that it is a living, animate and vibrant thing.

After discussing a recent 'buzz' experience with the group, the similarities between this experience and my relationship with the group were highlighted to me:

## The Buzz

I recently went on honeymoon to Mexico and had the amazing experience of spending a day with dolphins.

I very much dislike putting my head under water so knowing that I had to spend a good deal of the day in deep salt water with these large creatures was scary to say the least.

Thanks to health and safety we all wore life jackets, wow, and big sigh of relief from me!

To begin with we played with the dolphins, touching them and getting used to them. We also discovered that while they are very social animals and form their own cliques and groups, they are sometimes stropy and uncooperative.

One of the males was so pre-occupied by 2 females in the pool that he kept wandering towards them and being distracted from doing as he was asked by his trainer, and we were told that another female was useless and would do nothing before 1pm, one of the endearing qualities about dolphins is the affinity they have with humans, all of this seemed to be borne out in their personalities too.



An unforgettable part of this day was a “toe-push”. This is when a person lies face down in the water (not at all easy or enjoyable for me), with arms spread out to the side and feet at hip width apart at right angles to the body waiting for two dolphins swim to them from behind.

The dolphins are counted down and approach the person from the other end of the pool; they turn and swim towards the two feet. I felt both dolphins find the correct position on the soles of my feet with their snouts before pushing me fast through the water.

The speed of the thrust actually pushes the front half of the person up into the air. We were warned not to bend our knees because that signals to the dolphins that you want to stop so I was very conscious of maintaining a straight legs position. When the push ended I was exhilarated, what an amazing experience!! Not only had I managed to lie in the water and wait, heart pounding, for the dolphins to come to me, I raised my arms whilst being elevated by them.

## The ‘Buzz’

Lived experience

The ‘Toe push’

Unforgettable

Trust

Amazing

## Action Research

### Journey

### Mirrored

### Intellectual Challenge

### Growth

### Progress

### Applied Memory

## Action Research journey

My journey in relation to Action Research meetings is mirrored by my “toe-push”.

1. I really wanted to do the “toe-push” but experienced huge nervousness about putting myself in the required position to allow myself to be carried along. The significance of going into ‘deep water’ was not lost on me! This was similar to the initial experience of going to a group that I felt ill-equipped to attend.
2. The waiting time; the count-down time waiting for the dolphins to arrive to push me was excruciatingly long, so much so that I had to put my legs down at one point and wiggle about before taking a deep breath and making myself ready again to receive the dolphins; in some ways this mirrors what I felt attending meetings for a time without being sure that they were really useful to me – but at the same time continuing to attend! It also reflects my time away from the group and a growing itchiness to do something intellectually challenging and useful.
3. The slow but driving and powerful push from the dolphins is mirrored by how differently I now feel myself to be in the Action Research meetings. I believe that the Action Research group and my training and practical use of coaching skills are now inspiring me to grow intellectually.
4. The exhilaration of completing the toe-push has not, as yet, been replicated in the same way regarding Action Research however I prefer to think of the latter as a slow climb over a period of time compared to the very short fast push from the dolphins. Over a period of a few months, I am not displeased with my progress.



This is a personal observation of my development and the impact that Action Research meetings have had on my thinking and learning, for example I am now reading more broadly than I have before.

I believe that we are all capable of so much more than we either do or believe we can do.

At times like this I will find it useful to think of the ‘toe-push’.

APEX Heritage and living legacies **Heritage Services**

**Lindsey Braidley, Liz Benington, Liz Milton, David Baker.**

<http://www.leisureandculture/museumsandgalleries/Pages/Museums%20education.aspx>

Bath & North East Somerset Council Heritage Services have worked with APEX for many years at the Roman Baths, Victoria Art Gallery and Fashion Museum. We have created exciting opportunities in special places on a variety of subjects. We have enjoyed printing and collage at the Victoria Art Gallery, intricate hand sewing and fashion design and the Fashion Museum and taking the first steps in being a Roman Baths guide. Often students would not want to leave at the end of the session. We aspire to continue our work in the local community with schools and able pupils and will be looking to develop a programme in 2012/2013 linked to World Heritage.



**Fashion Museum** <http://www.fashionmuseum.co.uk>



With the vast wealth of material on offer at the world famous Fashion Museum, plus the addition of extra summer exhibitions, it has been a pleasure over the years to offer a myriad of topics to children ranging in age from 4 to 14. We have linked historic and modern fashion and fabrics to topics as diverse as architecture, flowers, stitchery, pattern, masks and food. With the extra time that summer school sessions allow we have been able to use external influences in and around Bath to augment the students' creativity. For example, on a floral theme, we were able to observe, sketch and photograph at a local garden centre as well as extensive research in leading fashion outlets in the city.

As the Fashion Museum is housed within the glorious late 18<sup>th</sup> century Assembly Rooms, architecture was a subject begging to be used. One abiding memory is of students creating stunning extreme fashion ideas using drawing and appliquéd fabrics and papers all with the theme of architecture. All the research and development for APEX has extended our practice in many other areas over the last decade and has been a source of huge creativity and pleasure.

**Heritage Services**

**Roman Baths**

**Victoria Art Gallery**

**Fashion Museum**





## Victoria Art Gallery

### Roman Baths

Fun

Enthusiastic

Time to develop

Creative

Express Yourself

## Victoria Art Gallery <http://www.victoriagal.org.uk/>

Entering a big public art gallery can be a daunting prospect for parents and children. Through APEX we have tried to overcome this barrier for lots of families at Bath and North East Somerset's Victoria Art Gallery by giving a warm welcome at the door, a chance to explore, and a place to do exciting things.

As gallery educators APEX has challenged us with the opportunity to explore new exhibitions and our permanent displays with fresh eyes. Our school workshops are designed for large numbers of children and children of all abilities. For APEX sessions we can give the children more time and materials and space to follow their own creative ideas.

Children take our ideas and inspiration from the artworks on display and create something new and something unique. One thing APEX has taught us is that children surpass our expectations and take us on new journeys. The end result of an APEX session is the Victoria Art Gallery full of excited families and amazing new artworks. The children take their art and ideas back to school to share the experience and skills they have learned. The ideas generated by APEX feed into all the other work we do at the Victoria Art Gallery with children and young people.



## Roman Baths

To go to the website click on <http://www.romanbaths.co.uk/>

At the Roman Baths we have looked back into history using the collection as well as studying the site. We have become Roman soldiers, created stunning mosaics and looked at two thousand year old artefacts.

Highlights have included trips through secret tunnels beneath Bath and cracking genuine Tudor codes. We have also studied World War II to create a summer exhibition at the Assembly Rooms seen by thousands of people from all around the world. We have even played Victorian playground games.

I have enjoyed working with a fantastic variety of enthusiastic learners both young and old, creating memories that I hope will last a lifetime and passing on (and acquiring!) skills for the future.



## Roman Baths

Heritage

Code breaking

Variety

Memories

Skills



## CHAPTER 5

### Your stories to help create better futures

#### Marie Huxtable

More than 48 people have contributed to this book.

They have offered their stories freely as gifts to begin to breathe life into living legacies of APEX.

Through their stories you may feel you have got to know a little of the people telling them, the relationships they have formed, as well as the knowledge they have created.

I believe the educational qualities of space, opportunities, practice and provision, is created by people and the relationships between them. So, the living legacies of APEX are to be found within the stories of people and their relationships, as well as their knowledge.

Some people, such as me, have had a disproportionate presence in these stories. That is unfortunate but inevitable: The book was specifically commissioned to contribute to the development of living legacies of APEX and I have had the responsibility of leading the development and coordination of APEX over the years.

There are many stories yet to be told, yours for instance. I hope you will be prepared to be generous and offer your story as a gift to help educational relationships to flourish.

These form the bedrock of improving inclusive gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision for the benefit of all of our children and young people.



## CHAPTER 5

### Afterword

48 Contributions

48 unique specific individual voices

Connect with the common and the shared

## Affirmation

## Contact

## Internet access

## Futures

I believe we should not ask our children and young people to do what we are not prepared to do ourselves. If you draw back from offering your talents, expertise and knowledge as your gifts I hope you might reflect on this piece, often attributed to Nelson Mandela, and be moved to action.

The actual author is Marianne Williamson, 'Return to Love' (1992)

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.  
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.  
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.  
We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?  
Actually, who are you not to be?  
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.  
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.  
We are all meant to shine, as children do.  
We are born to make manifest that which is within us.  
It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone.  
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.  
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

There are places on the World Wide Web to help you make connections and share your learning journeys:

- [www.spanglefish.com/livinglegacies](http://www.spanglefish.com/livinglegacies)
- [www.facebook.com/ApexLivingLegacies](https://www.facebook.com/ApexLivingLegacies)
- [www.linkedin.com/groups/APEX-Living-Legacies](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/APEX-Living-Legacies)
- [www.Twitter.com/APEXLivingLegac](https://www.Twitter.com/APEXLivingLegac)

Further information is also available from

- <http://www.spanglefish.com/mariessite>
- <http://www.actionresearch.net>
- <http://www.mondaystudio.co.uk/>

There are research groups underway you are very welcome to join, such as this one:  
<http://www.spanglefish.com/livingvaluesimprovingpracticecooperatively>

We hope to hear from you - email - [apexlivinglegacies@gmail.com](mailto:apexlivinglegacies@gmail.com)