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Leading Learning: the UFA Newsletter

Empower young people to lead - come to our
conference!

Winter 2010



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Lead Learners Forge Ahead!

Lula Garner reports from Lead learners project regional meeting in Hackney

We're now in the second phase of this exciting project funded by the Children Young People and Families Department to create 24 clubs run by young people for their peers in 5 government regions. The second tranche of 31 Lead Learners were trained at a week long residential in August 2009 at Quorn Hall in Leicestershire, facilitated by 3 National Managers, the Director, the Youth Ambassador and 13 YoUFA Reps. Each school group was accompanied by an adult who will be their supporter during the project. The adults stayed for at least the first 24 hours of the residential learning more about their role and helping the young people to start the design and planning of their activity.



Hard at work during the autumn 2009 residential

Several of the YoUFA Reps had been Lead Learners the previous year and were able to offer invaluable

support and insight into the role for the new Lead Learners by sharing the challenges and successes of their journey. These highly enthusiastic and committed young people not only support the Lead Learners throughout the year by visiting their clubs to offer guidance; co-running Regional Meetings; networking through Facebook and the termly YoUFA News but they're also planning YoUFiesta #2 – a Learning Festival in July 2010 to celebrate all the work that's gone on throughout the year.

We've been delighted that our new team member, Insia Ishaji, in her role as Youth Ambassador has been busy oiling the networking wheels throughout the months since we all met at the August residential. One of her first jobs was to show us old fogies the ways young people prefer to communicate with each other getting us all logged onto Facebook!

Half of the Lead Learners came back together in February at Skinners Company School for Girls, Hackney, for their Regional Meeting (the Birmingham meeting has been postponed to March due to heavy snow in January!) Everyone shared stories of the journey so far using the opportunity of a friendly audience to celebrate their successes and ask for help with some of the issues.

To mention a few of the 14 clubs now running across the country....Our Lady's School in Hackney got off to a flying start in

Empower young people to lead - come to our conference!

Friday 5th March 2010,
Learning & Conference Centre, Nottingham
Places are very limited - register now
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September with a multi activity club to help 30 Y7's make new friends and settle into their new school. Their recent visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood was a resounding success. You may have already heard that we won the NCVYS Young Partners Award; it was the Our Lady's club that the judges went along to assess, leaving it highly impressed at the vibrant leadership shown by Montunrayo, Audrey, Catriona and Christiana. 3 of last year's Lead Learners from Our Lady's are now working as YoUFA Reps in a natural progression for the skills and experiences of these inspiring young women.

Skidders Company School for Girls' had an additional challenge to plan their club around as they have no lower school to work with so they've forged partnerships with two local primary schools to run an Easter club for their Y6's to help with their transition.

Sprowston Community High School in Norwich (in their second year of involvement with the project) have no less than 5 Lead Learner run clubs demonstrating what we hoped would happen in terms of sustainable growth of activities once Lead Learners were up and running in a school. The media clubs run by Rhea, Erin and Bethany have been so successful that almost 80% of their Y9 participants have chosen to sign up for the new Media Diploma (worth 7 GCSEs and 2 days of curriculum time per week) on the back of their enjoyment in the club. Many of them have also left the clubs to run their own for the many clamouring Y7's!

The girls at Sprowston – including Katie and Kim (who are not only YoUFA Reps but also Lead Learners again this year!) are in heavy demand in school being asked to use their experiences to support the training of other Young Leaders (through the UFA School's project which Sprowston's also taking part in), talk to the press and local councillors; assist Norfolk's Partnership Manager with bids for Summer Challenge funding and working with QISS's 'Empowering Young People' project.

"Many pupils develop their leadership skills by taking on roles of responsibility with enthusiasm, such as developing the role of 'lead learners' in conjunction with the University of the First Age. Pupils feel that their voice is heard and their views valued..... Their involvement in the local community is extensive..." Quoted from OfSTED inspection December 2009.

A couple of the clubs in other schools are experiencing some recruitment difficulties exacerbated by poor weather conditions – Lead Learners were generous and thoughtful in offering strategies to try. Ranging from using Facebook groups to remind and encourage attendance for a club that runs on a Monday so no chance to remind folk the day before to remember their kit; undertaking an audit amongst the target group to discover what they really want in clubs; running short taster sessions; leading energisers in assemblies; following up with Q and A sessions in tutor time; using some of the club budget for special treats – trips out, a visiting expert, prizes for full attendance or positive behaviours; awarding

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UFA pens and T-shirts for certain levels of attendance.

None of these clubs would be possible without the dedication, commitment and willingness to give up precious time, energy and resources shown by the noble group of Supporting Adults. A very big thank you from all of us to Elaine, Joe, Lynn, Mike, Vikki, Shauneen, Karam, Matt, Emily, June, Marion. Many of them will tell you what a difference their experience has made to their own learning and practice.

YoUFA Reps' plans for YoUFiestA 2010 look set to make the day one to remember – building on what we learnt from last year's event they've chosen to host it in a large field filled with marquees of all shapes and sizes each boasting an exciting activity for participants to enjoy. There'll be animation, drumming, binbag fashion shows, picture making and big group energisers galore! You can relax in the Chill Out Zone, dance away to the bands or take part in the sports tournaments. They'll be inviting all the current Lead Learners and their club members making for a 200 strong event.

Due to the enormous success of this project we're planning to disseminate the Lead Learner programme more widely in 2010/11 offering Train the Trainer courses along with National Team support and guidance for running your own programme – please contact Lula Garner to discuss your interest.

Challenging the Curriculum!

Westfield Sports College with Business and Enterprise Headteacher, Susan Simmons, reports on the UFA's involvement with revitalising the Y7 curriculum using a competency based model.

"Westfield Sports College have embarked on a partnership with the University of the First Age. A group of our staff, students and Primary Schools will be working together, as a Fellowship, with the UFA to investigate an exciting and motivational curriculum for our College. We



will be using staff and student voice to be able to provide the best possible curriculum for our students which nurtures life skills and competencies to make them better equipped to



Learning is...

This new metaphor was suggested by a young person at the 2009 residential.

**UFA is an iPod, there are so many choices!
Something for everyone, so no one goes without.
There are games (with aims) and things you can
get active to, or just chill out. Everyone's personal
choices are taken into account, and, you can take
it with you at all times!**

succeed." Quoted from Westfield's website (accessed 8/2/10).

Lula Garner (UFA National Manager) has worked closely with Siobhan Kent (Deputy Headteacher) to develop a strong team of 11 staff and 10 young people (Y8-11) through our 6 day Fellowship programme. As ever in UFA Fellowships the challenge for Fellows to meet by the end of the six days was highly ambitious: to co-construct a new Challenge based curriculum for the Y7's to follow one day a week from September 2010.

The usual 'you must be joking' expressions were to be observed on Fellows' faces on Day 1 but this was a group of highly creative staff and students; paired with UFA's notoriously energising and motivating strategies we were confident the group would emerge with lesson plans to cover the whole year's curriculum by the end of the 6 days.

We've just emerged from Day 5 with detailed lesson plans for six half term Challenges:

- Here we go, here we go, here we go! – what is this Challenge business and how best can I learn through it?
- The Seven Wonders of the World – plan a group trip to your chosen 7 wonders to a defined budget and timescale
- Charity Challenge – 6 weeks to raise as much money as you can for your chosen charity to present to them at the end of term
- Westfield Olympiads – plan, run and evaluate a mini-Olympics event for a Y4/5 class including opening and closing ceremonies, awards ceremony and inter-event entertainment

- Fashion's the business – create and market a fashion line

- Sheffield 2099 – explore issues around the built environment to design your version of Sheffield in 2099

Y7's will work through the Challenges in a carousel excepting the first introductory overview Challenge which all will experience at once. Y7's will need to work in small teams to achieve the over-arching Challenges and much of their time will be given over to independent working with staff available to provide support and guidance as needed. Each Challenge will end with a community celebration of some kind with parents/carers and locals being invited to share the celebration.

As ever in schools we've tried to meet as many of the school's development goals as possible – Fellows' reflection will feed into a TLA (Teaching and Learning Academy) presentation; we chose the PLTS model (Personal Learning and Thinking Skills) for assessing Y7's competencies; the Challenges will cover the six cross-curricular dimensions the DCSF want to see rolled out in schools (cultural diversity and identity; healthy lifestyles; community and civic participation; enterprise and entrepreneurship; sustainable futures and global dimension; technology and the media; creativity and critical thinking) and each Challenge will have a moral theme to meet the school's latest OfSTED identified target for more ethical development.

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Teachers are hoping to team teach some of the Challenges as they've enjoyed collaborative working so much. The adult Fellows are so inspired by how engaged and imaginative the Young Fellows have been that they're discussing how to get them back to work as Peer Tutors in the new curriculum.

Meanwhile we're busy planning for Y6's upcoming induction Super Learning Day where all the Fellows will be launching the new curriculum with a fun filled day of challenging activities to sample. We'll let you know how it all goes but we can't wait and everyone wants to be teaching it already!

Student leadership in Manchester

UFA National Manager Sue Barnes reports on the Students of today, leaders of tomorrow programme in Manchester.

The Greater Manchester Challenge



Access Aspiration Achievement

This term sees the delivery of 12 Students of today; leaders of tomorrow National College of Schools and Children's Services (NCSL) student leadership courses in the Greater Manchester Challenge area. The initiative is part of the leadership strand of the work being developed with the 10 Local Authority areas of Greater Manchester.

48 schools have booked to take part at a series 3 day courses held on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Over 700 young people aged 10-15 will be take part in either

a KS2 version or KS3 version of the course which was originally developed by KS3 students in London from 2006-2008. The curriculum covered includes: developing and leading teams, project management, accountability, verbal and non verbal communication skills including presentations skills

and understanding some of the roles that students can take in school and the community. The curriculum is activity based and set in a challenge framework.

The new version of the course for KS2 young people has been developed and piloted by pupils in Leicester ready for delivery as part of the Manchester challenge. It covers similar curriculum areas to the KS3 course is slightly less intense and has more activities with the theme 'developing self'. All courses seek to raise the aspiration, self esteem and confidence of the young people who attend.

"I have learnt to be confident, how to lead, how to introduce myself and what many words mean."

"I have learnt to be a good leader by understanding other people's points of view."

Evaluatuion statements from Students of today, leaders of tomorrow students

Each course works with 4 schools each bringing 15 students. They will be led by a member of the UFA National team or by a member of the UFA Student Leadership Associate facilitators team . The associate facilitators also help in the delivery of the courses and each has attended training on a 2 day course in Birmingham in October 2009.

The 60 students work in small group of 5 within a team of 15. The learning of each fifteen students is facilitated by members of the school staff; all of whom have attended a two day training course. During the courses the young people are encouraged to take over the leading of activities, and feedback from the facilitators. Each student has a high quality notebook to use during the course and a certificate which records what they have covered at the end of the course.

The first set of course took place on the third weekend of January and were very well received by both staff and students who commented not only on their learning progress but about the way the course was delivered.

As well as the Greater Manchester Challenge programme the Students of today, leaders of tomorrow course is being delivered all over the country.

Ashlawn School Derbyshire ran the first course of 2010.

Deputy Headteacher Dan Rosser describes why the programme was right for his school.

Ashlawn School is a large sized, mixed bilateral school in Warwickshire for students aged 11 – 19. With over 1700 students we were keen to establish a new programme of student leadership that would equip, empower and encourage all our students to become leaders. One part of this jigsaw was the participation on the UFA Students of today, leaders of tomorrow programme.

We first came across the course through a UFA case study paper highlighting the exciting opportunities that the course offers for students. It also appealed to us as it brought with it a structure based on the National College's Headteacher Leadership Course. As a school running the new Middle Leaders Development Programme for its staff, this is a model that we also wanted to develop for our students.

The two day course in Januray 2010 was attended by 41 students from Year 7 – 11. The course was led by UFA and facilitated by several of

our staff and our Student Senior Leadership Team.

Students from all of the Year Councils were invited to attend the course. The course itself was incredibly well received with all participants and facilitators highly enthused and positive. The range of theory, practical activities and the opportunity for participants to take an active role in leadership proved to be a very powerful combination. Some of the participants commented:

"I loved it.." Year 7 student

"The best course I have been involved with for years" Staff facilitator

"It has really helped me to develop my leadership skills – I am a leader!"

Following the course, all Year Councils will now use their enhanced leadership skills to set up and run a Year Council Leadership Project within the school. This will provide all participants and their peers with real opportunities to put their leadership skills into practice as they work together to develop the school community.

The Senior Student Leadership Team is also planning to run the course in the summer 2010 for all the Senior Student Leaders at Ashlawn and our primary feeder schools.

Staffordshire Moorlands embraces UFA

writes Jan Polack

Rudyard Lake, near Leek in Staffordshire was the beautiful and tranquil setting for two days of concentrated training and learning for an enthusiastic and talented group of people. Lucy Swinnerton and Melodie Forrester, UFA project workers, requested the training to build the capacity in the area and recruited a diverse group including volunteers, youth workers, TAs and other providers. Although mostly new to the UFA they embraced the underlying principles and values wholeheartedly and left with pledges of commitment to providing a wide range of challenging learning opportunities for the young people of Leek and Biddulph.

(If you were wondering, yes, Rudyard Kipling was named after this place, as his parents met there two years before his birth. So it's not just a recent celebrity trend!)



Jan and the Leek College UFA trainers



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