



# See You



children's<sup>®</sup>  
UNIVERSITY



The national Children's University  
**Annual 2010**

# SeeYou

is published on behalf of CU Trust  
by the national Children's University

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ISBN: 978-0-9561319-3-5

*“There is always one moment  
in childhood when the  
door opens and lets  
the future in”*

**Graham Greene**  
**The Power and the Glory**



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# Welcome to SeeYou...

...the very first national Children's University Annual.

Dr J Sandy Bradbrook



Dr J Sandy Bradbrook  
Chair of the CU Trust

*"I love learning new things."*

Children's University student

Since 2007, when the national Children's University was formally established, we have grown our organisation to become a significant player in the education world and, in particular, in the area of learning outside school hours. Whilst we seek to support children who live in the more deprived areas of the country, our approach is of benefit to all those who participate in Children's University learning activities throughout the UK.

The growth in the number of local CU centres, the development of our national certification, the Passport To Learning of which there are now some 70,000 in use by children in England alone, our quality assurance frameworks Planning for Learning and Planning for Excellence and the development of Learning Destinations with our many partners all bear witness to the success story that is the Children's University.

The independent evaluations by Professor John MacBeath evidence the difference we are making nationally to developments in the learning curriculum, with partner organisations and, most importantly of all, to the lives of many children. The third evaluation report, due to be published in January 2011, will, I promise you, tell a good story about impact on the young people who engage with the Children's University and on their achievements.

Our future plans embrace thoughts about lowering the age of participation to include more family engagement in our learning, enhancing provision for more able children and provide 'next steps' of progression for those children who are already engaging with us. Exploring new and different media and opportunities of learning is also on our radar.

Evidence of our success also lies in this publication. The quality and range of backgrounds and experiences of the contributors to SeeYou tell their own story, as does their motivation for their contributions. As Michael Morpurgo, the first Chancellor of the national Children's University, concludes, they have in common a passion about children's learning and a shared support for what the Children's University has set out to achieve.

On behalf of the CU Trust I should like to thank you as readers for your interest in what we try to achieve on behalf of the tens of thousands of children who choose to engage with the Children's University. It is our job to make things better for our young people and to ensure that learning and all the fun and games it brings with it is viewed and valued as the vehicle to achieving aspirations and fulfilling dreams. Why don't you join us?

Enjoy the read and SeeYou soon!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Sandy Bradbrook'.



# Foreword

Michael Morpurgo

My name is Michael. I write stories and we are here to launch a book. Does that mean we'll be putting it into water and hoping it floats? Well...

When I was approached to become the very first Chancellor of the national Children's University I was uncertain as to the value of my contribution. I thought there would be better people to ask. I still think this sometimes but I am much surer about what I can offer.

I can lend my name to the national Children's University and the fact that I write children's stories – I inhabit the worlds of the grown-ups and of the children. I can speak up for what the Children's University tries to achieve: it tries to connect learning with the answer to the 'why' question – connect children with quenching their thirst for asking, discovering and knowing.

## Key Facts

A significant proportion of learning hours are facilitated through volunteering and mentoring from a range of local partner organisations including the private sector, Higher and Further Education and local community groups and charities.

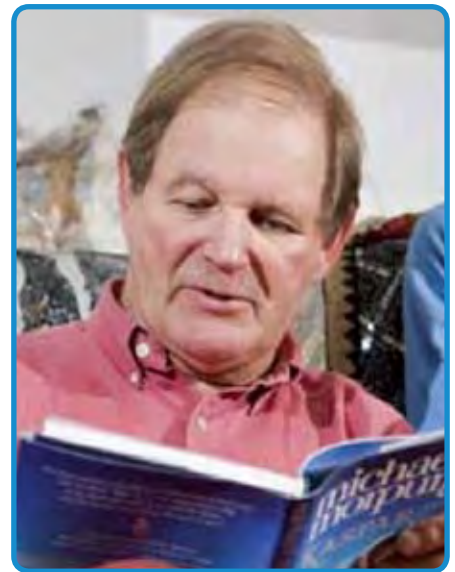
But much more importantly, I believe in what the Children's University is trying to do – "... *Remagicalising learning* ..." – and I want to play a role in its journey. Like so many of us I can offer my part of the jigsaw.

Which brings me to our first Annual. It began some time ago as a newsletter that became a 'viewsletter' because views are more interesting than news. As the number of contributors grew beyond expectation, the 'viewsletter' became a magazine and now it has grown in to an Annual – and as we all know, children and annuals go hand in hand.

We decided to call our Annual SeeYou because at some point we would like to count you among our friends and contributors. The first Annual is for a readership which connects with children's learning by authors whose diverse backgrounds have four things in common: a liking of children, a passion about children's learning, a memory of themselves as children and support for the Children's University.

So if you like children, are passionate about learning and have not forgotten what it was like to be a child yourself, you can help us by encouraging as many like-minded people as you know to read SeeYou and support the Children's University, both nationally and locally.

And next year? We'll be back with another SeeYou, but for a different audience – the clue is in the name!



Michael Morpurgo  
Chancellor of the national Children's University

Michael Morpurgo is an English author, poet, playwright and librettist, best known for his work in children's literature. He was the third person to become Children's Laureate and held the title from 2003 to 2005.

Michael studied at King's College London, and went on to teach primary school pupils in Kent. While he was teaching he discovered his talent for storytelling, stating "I could see there was magic in it for them, and realised there was magic in it for me."

In 1976 Michael Morpurgo and his wife, Clare Morpurgo established the charity 'Farms for City Children', with the primary aim of providing children from inner city areas with experience of the countryside. The charity now has three farms in Devon, Gloucestershire and Wales.

His story 'War Horse' is an award winning National Theatre stage production and the feature film based on the novel and directed by Steven Spielberg is due for release in 2011.

Michael Morpurgo was raised to Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) on 17 June 2006 for services to literature.

Did you know?  
During 2009, 50,000 children took part in 600,000 hours of CU learning in England, our aim for 2010 is to have engaged at least 60,000 children in 700,000 hours.

# Any questions?

Exactly what is the Children's University? Here, **Ger Graus** answers the 15 most frequently asked questions which have been put to him over the last three and a half years - by grown-ups and by children.



Ger Graus  
Chief Executive of the national  
Children's University

## The Children's University – what does it mean?

The clue is in the name, although some people have queried the use of both the words 'Children' and 'University'. What should we call our participants? Children? Pupils? Students? Young people? Can we call our venture a 'University'? It strikes me that sometimes we pre-occupy ourselves so much with semantics that we lose sight of what really matters: quality.

## What does it try to do?

The aim is for children to engage voluntarily with a variety of high quality learning activities, outside school hours. This can range from after-school clubs to museum visits and summer holiday activities. These activities are validated by the Children's University as what we call Learning Destinations, using our national framework, Planning for Learning<sup>1</sup>. Through the use of a Children's University passport we aim to put children in charge of their own learning. It's first and foremost about learning, not teaching.

## Who is it for?

The Children's University is for all 7- to 14-year-olds, although our first priority is those children who need it most. We need to be more imaginative with terminology like deprivation than perhaps we have been in the past. We need to think about deprivation of opportunity, deprivation of aspiration, deprivation of a sense of achievement and a sense of belonging, not just the pound in the pocket. We are trying to help facilitate that sense of achievement through raising baselines and aspirations.

## Why is the age group limited to 7 to 14?

All the research and the anecdotal evidence points to this being the optimum age range.

Children's University participation is voluntary and we felt that this becomes practicable at the age of seven. Secondly, the post-14 market was so congested that it would have been confusing to engage in it. There is something to be said for starting even earlier than seven as this could provide a better route to parental engagement. In many cases, raising the aspirations of parents is at least as important as raising those of the children.

*"I was very proud of being called cool."*

Ger Graus

## What's with the certificates and caps and gowns?

The graduation ceremonies are held at Universities and led whenever possible by Vice-Chancellors or Professors. It is our duty to create a sense of occasion and the University environment engages the children and their parents. We must always remember to celebrate achievement. Certificates, caps and gowns bring pride and a feeling that learning and its achievements are good things to be part of.

## Where does the Children's University fit within a child's educational provision?

The Children's University is at the heart of the curriculum, and by curriculum I mean that which a school teaches and that which it facilitates and signposts as high quality learning during the school day and outside of it. Children can only aspire to what they know exists and the minute children realise for themselves that learning is a satellite navigation system to better places in life, we have pushed open the door.

## How does it work?

A seven-year-old needs to be able to explain how it works so I will let one answer the question on my behalf: "I got this national Children's University gold certificate at the University because I've got 100 hours in my passport from these places where you can learn really well". Or to quote another "Children's University learning is grown-up University learning and you can go on a website called UCAS to find that out."

To me the Children's University is about feeding children's inquisitiveness, about enjoyment, a sense of achievement and optimism. It is about looking up - sunny side up!

## What is the connection between the national Children's University and the local centres?

Nationally we provide a framework for out-of-school-hours learning, for quality, consistency and innovation. Locally it needs to work for the children, so we don't have a one-size-fits-all approach. As long as it works for the children and it is legal, the constitution of the local CU is not important; Universities, Colleges, Academies, groups of schools, charities, Local Authorities, and even sports clubs sign up to the national framework. They are encouraged have their own Chancellor, someone who helps raise the profile and improve the learning opportunities.

## And you provide funding?

Yes. The Trustees award grants for start-up, expansion and management transformation. The latter is particularly key at the moment as new times require new ways of leading and managing. The funding is for twelve months therefore the local Children's Universities need to show their plans for future sustainability.

<sup>1</sup> 'Planning for Learning – A National Framework for Validating Learning' by John MacBeath, University of Cambridge, and Ger Graus, Children's University, 2008 (ISBN 978-0-9561319-0-4)



Graduates in Aberdeen

Did you know?  
The first generation  
Children's University started  
in Birmingham in the  
early 1990s.

**So how much funding is available for a typical local CU?**

It's not possible to give a figure as all groups are different. Funding has to be less than 49 per cent of the total expenditure for that year; the current average is below 27 per cent.

**I want to start a Children's University. What do I do next?**

Familiarise yourself with the website and see what already exists in your area. If there is no current CU presence then pick up the phone and talk to us. We'll explore with you what your plans may look like in practice and pair you with an existing Children's University centre with a similar profile. I don't believe in reinventing wheels – we have enough collective expertise and goodwill to make things happen.

**Do you have a favourite local Children's University development?**

They are all so different and all so good. The Service Children's Education one stands out as it provides a different context for the Passport To Learning. Young people can take part in Germany, Gibraltar and the Falklands and then graduate in Cyprus.

**When you look back over the past three years, what are you most proud of?**

There's so much to be proud of. The number of Children's Universities, 70,000 passports in 18 months, the e-passport development with the private sector, the certificates, the graduations, the happy faces, the evaluations<sup>2</sup>. I was very proud when I was asked to return to Northamptonshire by Ellie and her friends. They invited me back because they said I was cool. I was very proud of being called cool.

**If you could make three Children's University wishes...?**

If I could have three wishes then the first one would be more; more children, more hours, more learning, more quality, more pride, more smiles, seeing more young people understand the answer to the 'why' question.

My second wish is to have an even greater national profile so that the Children's University can become to our youngsters what the Open University is to grown-ups.

My third wish would be better sustainability. A sense that planning is longer term and that there is consensus in our Big Society about what we want for our children, what they want for themselves and how we are all going to get there.

**"We need to remember that children can only aspire to what they know exists."**

Ger Graus

**How would you sum up the Children's University?**

I would quote Dr James Bradburne "... Remagicalising learning ...".

**If you have Any Questions?**

You can contact Ger Graus [ger.graus@childrensuniversity.co.uk](mailto:ger.graus@childrensuniversity.co.uk)

**Diane Hofkins**

**Key Facts**

The CU Trust was established in 2007 when the national Children's University set up office in Manchester.

The national Children's University head office is based in the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the Royal Northern College of Music.



<sup>2</sup> 'Evaluation of the Children's University – First Report', November 2008 and 'Evaluation of the Children's University - Second Report', January 2010, Professor John MacBeath and Joanne Waterhouse, University of Cambridge

*“We’re off to play golf”*



Sir David Winkley and Sir Tim Brighouse reminisce and look forward to a bright future for the Children’s University

It’s a description that comes to mind when meeting Sir Tim Brighouse and Sir David Winkley, the two visionaries behind the Children’s University concept, at the North Oxford Golf Club. In their jumpers and corduroys, they might look to an outsider like a couple of retired dons relaxing into a life of golf, but their minds can’t help whirring with new concepts and blueprints for the future.

The two were key forces behind the whirlwind of innovation that made Birmingham the epicentre of educational change in the 1990s. As Chief Education Officer, Brighouse’s headline achievements included the Birmingham Guarantee, which promised each child a wide set of opportunities such as taking part in a performance, visiting a museum and attending a concert. His commitment and passion, the personal touches through visits and letters, and his ability to inspire teachers and children helped raise morale, aspirations and outcomes.

Winkley remained Headteacher of Grove Primary in the deprived neighbourhood of Handsworth for some 20 years, becoming the first primary Head to be knighted. He introduced philosophy for under-11s, advanced mathematics and ambitious theatrical productions. In 1987 he founded the National Primary Trust (NPT) with the aim of promoting good practice, and the Children’s University became one of its most exciting projects.

*“The original idea came out of a series of discussions with Heads in Birmingham for the NPT,” Winkley explains. “One of its objectives was to get Heads to rethink what might be done, what projects we might tackle.”*

The Children’s University concept took shape at an Indian restaurant in Birmingham, as Winkley and Brighouse began to weave different strands of thought together over dinner. But the main motivation then was what it remains today: to provide opportunities for “children in inner cities who don’t get a chance to test their talents, a chance to find out what they’re good at, and a chance to find out what they’re passionate about”, says Winkley. “It could be anything from Japanese to ceramics.” It bothered them that children were stuck at home with little to do, while school buildings remained frustratingly empty for so many hours of the day and weeks of the year. Furthermore, Brighouse points out, research shows that the attainment gap between rich and poor widens during the summer break.

# Knight visionaries

Under the headline “Crazy enough to succeed” the New York Times explained what makes a great entrepreneur. “A thin line separates the temperament of a promising entrepreneur from a person who could use, as they say in psychiatry, a little help,” it begins. Such people, according to the experts, tend to have attributes similar to those with certain manias, but in a milder and hugely more productive form.

Entrepreneurs love risk, rather than recklessness, and they are not delusional but inspirational. In other words, they are “just crazy enough”.



# ***“The Children’s University will be thriving and will touch the lives of many more children in 10 years’ time, provided those with moral purpose, energy and commitment come in and shape it.”***

**Sir Tim Brighouse**

Some of the thinking was inspired by an independent school’s outreach project. Winkley had been approached by John Evans, the classics master at King Edward’s School, who had been running open Latin classes on Saturday mornings for anyone who wanted to turn up. Meanwhile, Brighouse had been dreaming up the University of the First Age, which was originally intended to be like a Children’s University for lower secondary children.

The first paper presented to the Government in search of funding set out a vision of an Open University for children, says Brighouse. *“And to some extent that’s still the idea.”* The National Primary Trust’s first chair, Michael Brock, had even been present at the founding of the Open University.

The Children’s University began in 1993 at one Birmingham school. It spread across the city, and then in an ad hoc way, all over the country. Sessions took place at weekends and in the holidays and, to help close the gap further, the founders insisted that groups should have a maximum size of 20. *“We employed teachers, tutors and sixth formers for six-week, two-hour sessions,”* says Winkley. As today, there were award ceremonies at the end, with children demonstrating their achievements. And the courses were not traditional school topics. *“There were some really wacky things,”* says Winkley. *“In Buckinghamshire some junior schools developed a stock market.”*

It may have looked like a utopian vision, says Brighouse, but it worked in practice – children came *“in droves”* and there were huge waiting lists. They did not mind signing up for extra ‘education’. This is because they were *“not being told things, but engaging”*, adds Winkley. They were independent, more like students than pupils.

Today, the Children’s University is underpinned by a more coherent structure, it is rigorously evaluated, and its development is strategically planned – but the principles, ethos and the basic feeling surrounding it have not changed very much.

At this point in history, the Children’s University is *“a practical way of putting flesh on the notion of the Big Society,”* says Winkley. All sorts of organisations and companies can get involved. *“We are interested in developing learning, not schooling. There are people who know things – looking after bees or allotments. There’s a mass of talent out there that we don’t begin to touch.”*

But nothing is free, and sponsors are essential. They say that with support from the Sutton Trust and the Department for Education, the Children’s University has really flourished over the past two years; other contributors have included JP Morgan and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

Since 2007, when the Children’s University became a trust in its own right, it has had a very small but extremely efficient and effective management team. *“Private providers like that a lot because they see their money goes straight to the children,”* says Winkley, who is one of the founding Trustees.

But as far as he is concerned, today’s Children’s University is just the beginning. *“My view is, we should see this project as an evolutionary thing.”* First, the number and types of learning spaces and experiences can keep growing. For instance, with support from the Golfing Federation, children could have free golf lessons at clubs such as the one where Winkley and Brighouse play. *“That’s still the first level,”* says Winkley. The second level would entail moving on from the sampling and short courses to much more sustained learning – *“learning to play golf properly, really speaking Spanish.”* This could set a child from Handsworth on the path to the Ryder Cup or a career in diplomacy.

This would be more like the Advanced Learning Centres developed by the National Primary Trust, which provided keen and able youngsters with enrichment in maths, science and English out of school hours. *“We could make much more use of sixth formers and students,”* he says.



Winkley’s third stage would involve *“holding on to children and not losing them, and if necessary mentoring them.”* Helping inner-city youngsters apply to Oxford and Cambridge could be part of this stage.

The work of the Children’s University has always been dependent on a network of Heads and deputies with a *“moral imperative”*, says Brighouse. They believe in the Children’s University as a valuable complement to school and make sure that children from hard-to-reach families get there.

Where will the Children’s University be in 10 years? *“I always think your original ideas end up in different places than you thought they would do,”* says Brighouse. *“I think the Children’s University will be thriving and will touch the lives of many more children in 10 years’ time, provided those with moral purpose, energy and commitment come in and shape it.”*

Today, a new generation is moving in to take the Children’s University forward. *“We’re off to play golf,”* say the knights.

**Diane Hofkins**

## **Key Facts**

- There are now 62 local Children’s Universities in England and Scotland
- There are 20 local Children’s Universities in Wales
- Developments in the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland are also on the horizon

# Sir Robert opts in



Sir Robert Balchin, Pro-Chancellor of Brunel University presides over the West London Academy Children's University graduation. Brunel University is one of the 70 Universities and Colleges partnered with local Children's Universities.

**Sir Robert Balchin has had the ear of education ministers of all political stripes, most recently the current Secretary of State, Michael Gove. Sir Robert is the go-to man for any politician interested in Academies and Free Schools, and this, of course, was the subject of Gove's very first piece of legislation. A forthright advocate of teachers' right to run their own schools, Sir Robert has been at the forefront of the opting-out movement since the early days of the last Conservative Government.**

Obviously he is someone who thinks outside the box, so it should not be surprising that Sir Robert is a fan of the Children's University. Although primary education is not his field, he discovered the Children's University by presiding over one of its graduation ceremonies as Pro-Chancellor of Brunel University.

***"I think as soon as big firms understand what the Children's University does, and the extraordinary benefits there are to children and to society as a whole from children engaging in these activities, I'm sure funding support will be forthcoming."***

Sir Robert Balchin

*"I was hugely impressed by the schedule of outside of school activities of an educational kind that the Children's University requires of its young students," he says. "There are all kinds of programmes going on that are just fun or trivial; the work of the Children's University is fun and enlightening."*

He admired the rigour of what was expected of the children. Graduates at the ceremony told of their visit to a historic house and their mission to find out all they could about it. *"It adds value to school education,"* says Sir Robert.

He also liked the way participants gained points by making sure their assignments were completed when they visited a museum or other place of interest.

Academies would do well to look at the work of the Children's University, he believes. *"Academies, of which there are in the region of 230 as yet, and Free Schools which are in the pipeline are fully entitled to choose what kinds of programmes they put in front of their children. I hope they will look at what the national Children's University has to offer – both after school and during school."*

Sir Robert also thinks the Children's University fits well with the Big Society concept being promoted by the Coalition Government. He is heavily involved in charities – as chairman of the English Schools Orchestra and of the League of Mercy, which honours volunteers who care for the sick, among others – and says, *"It is hugely important that people should be able to engage in community activities"*.

He also believes Children's University should appeal to commercial organisations. *"I think as soon as big firms understand what the Children's University does, and the extraordinary benefits there are to children and to society as a whole from children engaging in these activities, I'm sure funding support will be forthcoming."*

As it heads into the future, the Children's University *"must not slacken its standards"*, he says. *"It should continue challenging young people from all backgrounds and all parts of the country"*.

**Diane Hofkins**



Professor Christine King, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Staffordshire University, at the first Stoke Children's University graduation in April 2010

**Earlier this year Staffordshire University was proud to host the first ever Stoke Children's University graduation ceremony. As Chancellor of Stoke Children's University, I was delighted to witness the project's success and celebrate the achievements of the individuals involved, and we have two more planned over the next twelve months.**

Stoke Children's University is hosted by Staffordshire University and co-funded through grants from the National Children's University and the University's widening participation premium. It consists of a small enthusiastic team working with upwards of 40 partners in Stoke including schools, theatres, museums, libraries, dance groups, music groups, angling clubs and a host of others. Stoke Children's University aims to double the number of providers by March next year. At present there are in excess of 1,000 children engaged in a wide range of Children's University validated activities across the city and it is our hope that this will rise to 10,000 over the next academic year.

You may ask "Why is Staffordshire University committed to and involved in the Children's University?"

Here at Staffordshire University we have a long history of serving the community and the surrounding region. Central to the University's mission is the raising of aspiration and attainment within

1. [www.vinspired.com](http://www.vinspired.com)

# Widening participation by bridging the gap

Professor Christine King, CBE

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent and we are committed to celebrating achievement and positive engagement within the community.

The University shares many of the values of Children's University, not least in the recognition of the learning that occurs outside of the traditional classroom setting. Staffordshire University is at the forefront of developing innovative learning and teaching and has a wide portfolio of flexible delivery and innovation in teaching and learning. This includes work based learning, foundation degrees, two-year degrees and a commitment to recognise learning wherever and however it takes place.

In short the University, like the Children's University, is committed to making learning relevant, flexible and innovative.

There is also a deeper sharing of values. We place widening participation at the core of everything we do. The recruitment and successful progression of students from backgrounds that have been under-represented in UK Higher Education is central to the University mission and underpins the University corporate plan. We are one of the top UK institutions for widening participation, consistently exceeding government benchmarks. This success is something we are justly proud of.

However, widening participation goes much further than simply meeting or exceeding targets and benchmarks. Access to education and learning and particularly Higher Education, improves life chances - not only in work, but also through personal realisation. In Staffordshire and particularly Stoke on Trent, it is important not only to promote and encourage young people to engage in all types of learning but also to celebrate the achievements of our young people.

There is a synergy between the University's commitment to widening participation and to our community and region, and the Children's University mission of bridging the aspiration gap. The Children's University allows us to engage with not only the children

## Key Facts

The Children's University works with more than 70 different Higher and Further Education institutions.

Bradford University, Staffordshire University and Doncaster College host their local Children's University centres.

participating but also the siblings, parents and providers of learning activities.

Through a partnership between Stoke Children's University and *vinspired*<sup>1</sup>, University students have the opportunity to develop and deliver extra-curricular activities within local schools. Similarly, students studying the Foundation Degree for Teaching Assistants can use the development and delivery of Children's University activities as part of their assessment.

The University's education department and Stoke Children's University have developed a suite of bespoke 'Children's University Practitioner' courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These will be piloted with Stoke Children's University providers free of charge in the autumn of 2010. If successful, the University will expand this provision.

The Stoke Children's University has the potential not only to raise aspirations to higher education, but more importantly to instill and encourage a culture of lifelong learning in children throughout the city.

Staffordshire University is extremely proud to play host to Stoke Children's University and I am deeply honoured to be its Chancellor.

# Proud to learn!

Dr Hilary Macaulay



Dr Hilary Macaulay  
Principal and Chief Executive  
of the West London Academy

***“... becoming a Children’s University was a non-negotiable for us to explore.”***

Dr Hilary Macaulay

**I confess that I was a Girl Guide! I enjoyed collecting the many badges that filled up the arms of my uniform as I became proficient in lighting a camp fire without causing myself third degree burns, boiling an egg without exploding it onto the ceiling, sewing on a button whilst avoiding lancing my finger and putting up a tent that would actually not collapse and suffocate me and my long suffering friends inside in the middle of the night.**

**I still like awards and the plaques, flags, badges and certificates that come with them. The West London Academy’s national awards and flag poles at our main entrance form part of the very public statement of what we believe in and value. I like being part of something that is successful and in promoting and sharing in the enjoyment that such success brings to a community. However, underlying such ‘badges’ is the reality that, as with many people, our life experiences, opportunities and achievements have a profound impact on helping to shape both what we want to do in the future but also what we want others to have the opportunity to experience and aspire to.**

In this age of attainment and performance tables, judgement and performance ranking by the media, extensive and often overwhelming choices of curriculum and course offer, assessment, examinations and frequent new initiatives coming from every corner, the Children’s University brings a different way of recognising and rewarding the aspects of school life which many of us remember ourselves. Those clubs, trips, visits to places we would have thought boring until we experienced them first hand and with them an awakening of personal interest in something new, something different, something that would affect the way we viewed things forever, they are all still there for the taking – and more.

It is this that, after listening to Ger Graus, Chief Executive of the Children’s University speak at the National Academies Conference in July 2008, triggered the emotions of excitement, freedom and inspiration of my childhood that made me take the DVD back to school and insist to the rest of my Leadership Team colleagues that becoming a Children’s University was a non-negotiable for us to explore. It didn’t take a lot of persuasion, in fact it was the quickest decision we have ever made.

As an all-through Academy with over 1,500 children aged 3-19, 47% of whom receive free school meals, and which is open from 5.50am – 10pm and at the heart of the local community, the Children’s University looked to provide the glue to join all the elements of our work as an extended services provider, a Children’s Centre and a school together in a coherent way. Added to this the opportunity to work closely with a local University and in doing so raise aspirations of our children and their parents even more, it was not a difficult decision to drive ahead with our application. One year on

and we can only say that we wish we had known about it earlier and done it sooner.

Being a Children’s University, with all the different elements that go into creating a diverse and exciting programme of out of school hours learning for our children and young people, has also had a huge impact on the many staff and other adults who are involved in organising activities, running trips, validating courses both in school and further afield and training others. It has been infectious (in the best possible way) and the culmination of the first year of West London Academy’s Children’s University work with the formal graduation at Brunel University was overwhelmingly moving.

For children to be able to attend a University campus, some as young as 8 years old, dressed in gowns and mortar boards was a first for us. To listen to the words of praise for them from the Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Ken Darby-Dowman and receive their awards from the Pro-Chancellor Sir Robert Balchin, their family watching proudly, and then for the traditional throwing of the mortar boards on the lawn outside, words cannot capture the feeling of being proud to achieve, of taking part, the desire to aspire to the next level and to bring even closer a community through a common identity and mission. Seeing their teachers dressed in full academic gowns somehow seemed to transform their views of us all overnight into something they want to align themselves with and, as one Year 5 boy said *“the teachers look so cool in their stuff!”*

Of course there are lots of individual stories including the Year 4 girl who was a school refuser but, through her love of attending the Children’s University Italian cookery class after school, now enjoys and looks forward to coming to

**Did you know?**

Part of the CU are Service Children’s Education schools in Belgium, Belize, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Italy, The Netherlands and Turkey, with the head office in Germany.

**“One year on and we can only say that we wish we had known about it earlier and done it sooner.”**

Dr Hilary Macaulay

**Did you know?  
By April 2011 Children's  
University passports holders will  
be able to access at least 1,000  
public Learning Destinations  
in England alone.**



Graduates from the West London Academy



school. The increase in confidence, independence and self esteem in our children is tangible and energising. With the introduction of a Faculty system next year, whereby other schools become part of the West London Academy Children's University, our children's links and relationships with the wider community can only get stronger and break down some of the barriers that segregation of inner London estates so often engenders.

Our children now have the opportunity to collect their own 'badges' for things other than school

work, to learn that sticking with something and persevering reaps rewards, to have their own successes recognised formally within the framework of a national, and indeed international, organisation which the Children's University is. They can now take their experiences gained through their active membership and participation in the West London Academy Children's University out into their community ready to be the next generation to actively inspire others as a direct result of their own positive experiences gained through the many hours they spend engaged in learning activities through the Children's University. West London Academy is 'Proud to Learn' and establishing a Children's University has brought our mission full circle to make it complete.

# Life is never ever dull in Leeds ...

Chris Edwards

*“The principal goal of education... should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things... men and women who are creative, inventive, and discoverers.”*

Jean Piaget

Life is never ever dull in Leeds, and the last year has once again shown us the outstanding practice, the incredible young people, and the inspirational colleagues that exist in this amazing city where I have spent the last ten years of my professional life. Change is happening wherever we look at a frightening pace, and all of the organisations we currently know and understand are changing as I write. We need to work within the opportunities this presents to build a learning landscape for this new world. A more holistic learning landscape to equip our little learners with the skills they need to be successful bigger learners and to be successful in a world that is changing beyond recognition. A learning landscape where every little learner is inspired by learning, a reader, writer and counter by seven or eight, a powerful little learner by the time they leave primary school and on a pathway to success by the time they leave secondary school. We need to continue to build brilliant learning, wherever we can, working with our colleagues in schools to imaginatively and creatively build and connect with learning places, learning zones and learning communities for our children and young people and their families. We need to think differently, to nurture talent, creativity and imagination, to create social enterprises and volunteering opportunities, and to build strong dynamic partnerships where we share and network the things that work and stop doing those that don't!

We have missed the point with our never-ending focus and attention on testing and

data and so called accountability and we must refocus our collective energies on creating a more personal, more powerful, more inspiring, more engaging and more stimulating learning entitlement and learning offer for all our children, our young people, our families and our communities. If we are going to succeed in this challenge we must re-imagine learning and our learning places and build brilliant leadership, brilliant teaching and intelligent assessment and accountability systems. We must work together to invent pathways to learning, pathways to excellence, pathways to success. We must transform our provision; building on the outstanding practice we have and getting rid of the irrelevant, the redundant and the obsolete which clutters our lives. We must radically change the way we encourage, coach, nurture and support our children and young people, our families and our communities to become brilliant learners. This is fundamentally a partnership enterprise, a community enterprise, a cultural enterprise, an economic enterprise and above all, it's a passionate enterprise.

For me this is where the Children's University fits in: connecting, engaging and validating all the quality learning opportunities that exist within communities, not simply those that are in schools. Through accredited and quality assured programmes that reach the parts other learning doesn't, we can extend and enrich the offer we make to children and young people to deliver truly anytime, anyplace opportunities that stimulate, inspire and

Did you know?  
In England alone, the national Children's University works through its local centres with in excess of 2,390 primary, special and secondary schools and Academies.



Chris Edwards, Chief Executive, Education Leeds with Chloe Sinker the 50,000th CU passport holder and Sheena Critchley, from Fieldhead Carr Primary School

challenge young people: helping them understand that learning is a lifelong never ending process and the key to health, wealth and happiness.

Our study support centres, our city learning centres, our libraries, our museums, our sports centres and clubs, our airports and railway stations, our Universities and our places of work are all part of this wider and richer offer and through all this provision we must continue to build brilliant learning and develop a culture where we will never settle for satisfactory when what we do can be outstanding. At the start of yet another great year in Leeds, my last, the challenge is to agree that we will never settle for things that are just good enough when with a bit of energy and effort we can build outstanding provision.

In Leeds, we believe that the Children's University offers us a proven and successful framework on which we can build the learning infrastructure around our schools; to accredit and validate enhanced and extended learning opportunities which will ensure that our children and young people continue to grow and develop as powerful, capable and empowered learners. And it's not just our children; we must all set new goals and strive, work and struggle, each and every day, to be extraordinary, to be outstanding and to be brilliant... whatever it takes!

And by the way, with the Children's University, everyone can join in!



George Trow, Principal and Chief Executive of Doncaster College and University Centre

# The story of Doncaster College and (Children’s) University Centre

George Trow

## It is a huge step when you are not sure what is meant by the word University.

At Doncaster College many of the students who come through the door are in families where they are the first generation to have the thought that they might like to go to University. Many have never envisaged a University education as a possibility.

As a College of Further Education which has a University Centre we became involved with the Children’s University in 2007. As a result, over the last three years, numerous 7-14 year old children and young people have been encouraged through the Children’s University to gain a better understanding of what is possible.

The staff working with the Children’s University students have gained a great deal from their involvement in this work, but at the outset were often apprehensive and lacked the confidence of working with this age group. This was quickly overcome and the stories of the successful outcomes of these learners in Doncaster College have had a

wide impact on the whole organisation. Why is it that we take for granted that an individual should have aspiration, when in fact the very quest for aspiration is so far removed from some young lives? The minds of our young people are filled with today, and not necessarily what they could achieve tomorrow.

The Children’s University has given the opportunity for young people in Doncaster to understand and gain confidence in what they can achieve now and in the future. It has turned learning into an adventure and away from being perceived as uncool.

To witness a Children’s University graduation here is, as in many places, a magical moment. The involvement of pupils from special schools who have participated here in Doncaster has added a further dimension to the overall experience and has created a rich tapestry of integration, which encompasses opportunity for all.

Over recent times the students of the Doncaster Children’s University have

*“I’m not afraid to try things out even if I fail.”*

Children’s University student

been encouraged not only by their tutors, but we have also created a 3D animated puppet that visits the classroom and stands amongst the participants whilst encouraging the teaching of languages to our young Children’s University students.

I have hope, that as a movement, the Children’s University will become the expectation and perhaps even an entitlement, particularly where children need it most. In order to expand the network of centres who are involved, Doncaster College and the national Children’s University are presenting a case study at the National Conference for the Association of Colleges. The intended outcome is for others to learn how to establish their own local Children’s University and to give an example of what it has meant for Doncaster College and our community.

Doncaster Children’s University graduates and celebrates



# Leading from the front in Bradford (and beyond...)!

**Nadira Mirza**

**The University of Bradford has been at the leading edge of widening participation for over a decade and is recognised locally, regionally, nationally and internationally as a successful and inclusive University that provides realistic opportunities for all of its students. The University is distinctive and has a significantly higher proportion of students from low socio economic groups and from minority ethnic groups than most other institutions; it also has consistently one of the highest proportions of students gaining graduate employment. In essence, the University of Bradford is a University with a holistic approach to securing widening participation and student success.**

The University's approach to widening participation has developed as part of its historic commitment to applied multi-disciplinary based courses located within an inner-city environment and culture. The strong commitment to high quality teaching and learning backed up by well developed student support structures and a caring student centred environment has helped to ensure high progression, high completion rates and excellent post graduate employment results.

As a district, Bradford has a growing and diverse population and the impact of the high levels of deprivation is reflected in the high levels of people who have low or no qualifications, have literacy and numeracy needs, are benefit dependant and who have low aspirations. 40% of young people in local primary schools are of South Asian origin. Many of these young people are from families who have little experience of the UK education system; including Higher Education.

Since 2003, the Children's University has been at the forefront of widening participation at the University. The Children's University is seen as a pioneering initiative which introduces young people to the concept of Higher Education in a unique and exciting way.

To further enable the Children's University to engage more effectively with black and minority ethnic communities and students, in 2008, the decision was made to fully integrate its delivery into the widening participation team. This decision enabled the development of stronger links internally, as well as externally; allowing the work of the Children's University to be further focused on its delivery to young people aged between 7 and 14.

***“The Children's University has always promoted lifelong learning, challenged stereotypes, increased children's expectations for their own learning and future careers and extended their learning and personal development.”***  
**Nadira Mirza**



Nadira Mirza, Dean of the School of Lifelong Learning and Education at the University of Bradford

The Children's University has always promoted lifelong learning, challenged stereotypes, increased children's expectations for their own learning and future careers and extended their learning and personal development.

During the past six years, the University of Bradford has been responsible for delivering key national Children's University priority programmes. One of these was the development of a bank of out-of-school hours learning modules that focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). To date, we have worked with a wide range of secondary schools and special schools, and 150 primary schools. We are able to do this because of our extensive and very active network of key strategic partners such as:

- Education Bradford
- Keighley Girl Guiding
- Partners in Innovation
- Going on Primary (Bradford Aimhigher)
- YES NET (Yorkshire Education Space Network)
- HEARWY (Higher Education Aspiration Raising West Yorkshire)
- Groundwork Trust

Embedding the work of the Children's University into the widening participation team has enabled the work to be shared with our international partners in Russia and Pakistan. Children's University work has been delivered during our work with the Russian Space Agency in Moscow, enabling us to develop space related activities for primary and secondary school pupils. We have also supported various teams of young people from the district to compete in the International Space Olympics (Moscow).



## Did you know?

For every £1 awarded in Children's University grants, a further £2.69 has been generated at local level, totalling £3.07 million of additional local revenue.

***“Since 2003, the Children’s University has been at the forefront of widening participation at the University.”***

Nadira Mirza



Mark Cleary, Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Bradford, at a Bradford Children's University graduation ceremony



Tailor made – a CU fashion project

In 2006, the University of Bradford appointed its fifth Chancellor, Imran Khan. Imran is seen as a role model for young people in the Bradford district and his appointment has strengthened links with communities and colleagues in South Asia. As a direct result of this, in December 2006, staff from the widening participation team were invited to Pakistan. The main aim of the visit was to strengthen existing and develop new partnerships between primary and secondary schools in Mirpur and Bradford. During the visit, our staff were able to introduce and then disseminate our Children's University learning modules on construction and the built environment. We are currently working with our partners in Mirpur to further develop work that is fixed to the Children's University model of engagement and delivery.

The future of the work of the Children's University at Bradford is very exciting. Taking part in the national Children's University impact evaluation with Professor John MacBeath and the Fisher Family Trust will no doubt highlight the difference the work makes that we deliver in primary, special and secondary schools. The University of Bradford is committed to embedding the ethos of the Children's University across all of the primary and secondary schools that we work with and support. We will do this in the future, through the Passport to Learning validation scheme and the launch of new public Learning Destinations.

The University of Bradford values the relationship that it has with the Children's University. As the Dean of the School of Lifelong Education and Development, I am confident that our partnership will provide further opportunities for the promotion of learning, the raising of aspirations and with this of attainment.



Rev Sarah Hayes, Solicitor and Trustee of the national Children's University

# New times, new ways

Rev Sarah Hayes

In ensuring that children know that they matter, the Children's University seeks to put into children's hands the tools they need to grow and to discover that a wide spectrum of opportunity is accessible to them. Through the work of the Children's University, children begin to understand that seizing an opportunity can change both their experience of and their impact on the world. And yet the reality is that the Children's University and the children it supports are working in a context of constantly changing frameworks and expectations: a foggy landscape in which it is difficult to understand who is making which decisions, how they impact on individual experiences and who is accountable for them.

This is as true of local Children's Universities as it is of other organisations. Traditionally each Children's University has been a unique blend of schools, Local Authority, local University and other supportive parties, with one organisation,

often the Local Authority, agreeing to take primary responsibility to ensure continuity and by implication to resolve any difficulties which arose. In most cases this has been a fairly informal structure which has allowed organic growth to suit local needs and it is one which has worked well, enabling energy to be focused on the children and their needs, with no clear lines of internal accountability.

Structures which are appropriate for small growing organisations do not necessarily serve larger ones and have to be reviewed

continually. As the Children's University has grown, so there is a need to consider whether the informal structures of the past are appropriate for the future. Further, as the resources of Local Authorities are stretched, it may no longer be possible for them to take the lead as they have often done. It is important to remember the purpose of each Children's University and build structures which are not so reliant upon one or two organisations that when they withdraw or reduce their input, the hopes and aspirations of children in that area also are reduced.

***“The informal ways of the past really have to change, but change doesn't have to be a constraint.”***

Rev Sarah Hayes

**Did you know?**  
 Since 2007, 43 grants totaling  
 £1.15 million have been  
 awarded to local Children's  
 University centres.

In the current climate, it is less clear which of the organisations involved in a local Children's University can or will take responsibility for it. If Local Authorities have to diminish their support, as seems likely in many cases, there is unlikely to be one member organisation with greater administrative or available financial resource than any other. Up until now the lead organisation would have been placed in a position of taking responsibility should any difficulties have arisen. In time honoured voluntary sector fashion, people from schools and other organisations have come together to make the world of the children they care about a better place. In so doing they have not considered the legal framework within which they have operated, the extent to which it has left them vulnerable nor how to protect against those vulnerabilities. They have worked on the basis that if problems arose they would be sorted out somehow, that the children's interests would be protected and that the damage would be slight.

The informal ways of the past really have to change, but change doesn't have to be a constraint.

The current climate is one of huge opportunity with which, inevitably, comes increased risk and informal structures such as those referred to do leave the individuals involved in them, and perhaps their organisations, exposed to whatever comes along. However the risk is clearly identifiable and can be managed to the point of near elimination. Structures can be set up to provide a framework in which each local Children's University's vision can be given life and room for imaginative and creative development and which can relieve the worry and stress to individuals of personally being liable should problems arise. Where a local Children's University engages many schools in its collaborative framework, it may even be that such structures provide space for joined up delivery of other services and mutual support which are difficult, or prohibitively expensive, to source from elsewhere.

The structures required to give such freedoms are well used across the voluntary sector and require setting up organisations which the interested parties belong to and control and yet which have an identity of their own. The structure most usually adopted is that of a company, whether in the form of a company limited by guarantee which may also be a charity or, if appropriate, a community interest company (CIC). Both structures are clearly identifiable as working for the community they are established to serve.

As a legal entity in its own right, a company takes responsibility for its own actions and does not require its members or directors to assume legal responsibility for those actions, provided they have not acted criminally or negligently or colluded to deprive another of their rights. The company then, in one form or another, provides a vehicle through which a whole range of services and activities can be delivered, contracts negotiated and entered into, funding received and bills paid. It is also a framework within which the members can explore their relationship to each other, identify those things over which they wish to collaborate and agree not to compete and those areas in which they wish to retain autonomy. The company structure gives the possibility of freedom without the loss of that autonomy.

If local Children's Universities take their existing activities and transfer them to the company structure, it is probable that a company limited by guarantee will be the most appropriate and that they will be eligible to register as charities. In some circumstances

initiatives may be taken to generate income in a way which would be prohibited for them as charities. In such cases it may be advisable to consider setting up a CIC. It may even be that the two structures working alongside each other will give flexibility in the activities undertaken and provide a tax efficient vehicle through which to think differently about the provision of services to the children each Children's University is working with.

There is work involved in setting up any new structure and there are rules and regulations surrounding companies and charities which must be adhered to. Although this may sound daunting it is clear that we are working in new times in which informal structures may lead to increased vulnerability and which curtail the possibility of exploring opportunities which may in turn provide much greater opportunities to the children for whom each Children's University exists.

***“Through the work of the Children's University, children begin to understand that seizing an opportunity can change both their experience of and their impact on the world.”***

**Rev Sarah Hayes**



# Mindsets:

## Beliefs that help students learn

Professor Carol S Dweck

**In 40 years of research, I have asked the question: “What makes some students eager to learn and resilient in the face of setbacks?” Here is what I have found: The most motivated and resilient students are not the ones who think they have a lot of fixed or innate intelligence. The most motivated and resilient students are the ones who believe that their intellectual abilities can be developed through their effort and learning. They are the ones who have a growth mindset.**

Is intelligence something inherent or is it something that can be developed? Although this is not really an either/or question, new research is showing that key parts of intelligence can be developed and that the brain has more potential for growth and change than we ever thought. It is also interesting to know that Alfred Binet, the man who invented the IQ test, profoundly believed that intelligence could be transformed and enhanced through education.

What the experts believe about intelligence is important, but what students believe may be even more important.

In a recent study, my colleagues and I followed almost 400 students across the transition to 7th grade<sup>1</sup>, a time when many students lose their motivation to learn and show declining grades. We found it was the students who believed in fixed intelligence who fared most poorly across this transition, showing less interest in learning, less resilience, and lower grades over the next two years. Those who believed their intelligence could be developed showed increasing grades over the same period. How did this happen?

### The Fixed Mindset

Let's look first at the students who believed in fixed intelligence and see how this mindset limited their achievement. Let's look at the rules they followed.

**Rule 1: Look smart at all costs.** This is the cardinal rule of the fixed mindset. If you believe that your intelligence is fixed—that you only have a certain amount—then you need to show that it's high and not low. In many of our

studies, students with a fixed mindset sacrificed important opportunities to learn if there was any risk that they wouldn't look smart. The other rules follow right from this one.

**Rule 2: Don't make mistakes.** Students in a fixed mindset think that mistakes or setbacks mean they lack ability. Our 7th graders told us that if they got one poor grade in a new course, it would mean they weren't good at that subject. They went on to say that they would try to drop the course and never take that subject again.

**Rule 3: Don't work hard.** Our fixed-mindset 7th graders thought that hard work indicated low intelligence: “...*To tell the truth, when I work hard at my schoolwork it makes me feel like I'm not very smart...*” It didn't matter whether the schoolwork was new or difficult. Effort was a sign of limited ability.

This is precisely why many ‘gifted’ students simply stop working when school becomes harder. They've never needed effort, they've come to believe effort is only for the less gifted, and they're too threatened to try it now.

The idea that high effort equals low ability is one of the worst beliefs students can have. Most worthwhile tasks require sustained effort. This is why we should not congratulate students when they do something quickly and easily – they should not think that low effort is the hallmark of intelligence.

**Rule 4: If you make mistakes, don't try to repair them.** Our 7th graders with a fixed mindset told us that if they did poorly on a test, they would study *less* the next time and



Carol S Dweck, Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University

seriously consider cheating. Hardly a recipe for success! Yet, for them, setbacks indicate a lack of ability and, in the fixed mindset, that lack of ability is permanent.

In one study, we monitored students' brain waves (EEGs) as they performed a very difficult task. What were they paying most attention to? The brain waves revealed that students in a fixed mindset were vitally interested in whether they got an answer right, but, when they got one wrong, they paid little attention to what the right answer was. Errors made them feel bad, but did not make them want to learn.

Look smart at all costs. Don't make mistakes. Don't work hard. If you make mistakes, don't try to correct them. These are not rules that foster intellectual growth.

### The Growth Mindset

Students with a growth mindset believe that their abilities can be developed and, so, their cardinal rules are:

**Rule 1: Learn!** Although these students care very much about doing well in school, they put a premium on learning: “...*It's much more important for me to learn things in my classes than it is to get the best grades...*” Ironically, this leads them to earn higher grades than students with the fixed mindset. The growth mindset comes with three more rules that help students reach their goal of learning.

**Rule 2: Take on challenges.** We've often offered students a choice between a challenging task they can learn from and a

<sup>1</sup> Seventh grade is a year of education in the United States. The seventh grade is the seventh school year after kindergarten. Students are usually 12-13 years old. Its English and Welsh equivalent is Year 8, the second year of secondary education. The Northern Irish equivalent is Year 9 or Second Form, also the second year of secondary education. The Scottish equivalent is Secondary 1 or S1 - the first year of Secondary education.

**Did you know?**  
 The Passport To Learning was launched in the Houses of Parliament by Baroness Estelle Morris in June 2009, only 18 months later there were 70,000 Passports in England alone.



Challenging out-of-school-hours experiences with a premium on learning, such as those advocated by the national Children's University in the United Kingdom, can provide important opportunities for process praise to help nurture a growth mindset.

Can a growth mindset be taught directly?

**Growth Mindset Programs Boost Achievement**

Recent studies show that teaching students a growth mindset can result in increased motivation, better grades, and higher achievement test scores. In these studies, over a series of sessions, students were taught that their brains form new connections every time they learn, and that over time they can become smarter. They were also shown how to apply this idea to their schoolwork. Whether the students were in middle school or at University, those who received this growth mindset message earned higher grades and achievement test scores. They also reported a greater investment in learning, and teachers reported noticeable changes in these students' desire to work hard and learn.

These benefits were especially important for students who are subject to negative stereotypes, such as girls in math or African-American students. The negative effects of stereotypes were reduced when students believed that their abilities could be developed. For example, in one study, the gender gap in math was greatly reduced when girls were taught the growth mindset.

**Conclusion**

Many teachers believe in fixed intelligence. They will tell you that their students who start the year at the top of the class end the year at the top, and students who start at the bottom end at the bottom. Research shows that when teachers believe in fixed intelligence, this is exactly what happens. However, when teachers hold a growth mindset, many students who start out lower in the class blossom during the year.

As educators, don't we want all of our students to fulfil their potential? A growth mindset – ours and theirs – helps students to seek learning, to love learning, and to learn effectively.

***"I now feel much more confident about my class work."***

**Children's University student**

task that will make them look smart. Students in a growth mindset overwhelmingly want tasks that stretch their abilities, even if they'll get confused or make mistakes.

**Rule 3: Work hard.** Rather than thinking that effort is a sign of low ability, our 7th graders with a growth mindset said that effort enhanced their ability: *"...The harder you work at something, the better you'll be at it..."* They didn't believe that innate ability was the royal road to success. They knew that even geniuses had to work hard for their breakthroughs and discoveries.

**Rule 4: Confront your deficiencies and correct them.** Students in a growth mindset are eager to remedy their deficiencies. Our 7th graders with a growth mindset, after a poor grade on a test, told us that they would study harder and try different study strategies. Across many studies, students with a growth mindset confronted their mistakes or shortcomings, rather than hiding them or running from them.

What can educators do to foster a growth mindset in their students?

**Mindset Messages: Praise**

Although common sense might tell us that students who are unmotivated, struggling,

or lacking in confidence would benefit from praise for their intelligence, we found the opposite. In our studies, we found that praise for intelligence actually put students into a fixed mindset with all of its vulnerabilities.

After receiving intelligence praise, students rejected a challenging task they could learn from, instead selecting the task that would make them look smart. They did not want to risk their 'gifted' label. When they hit difficulty and made errors, they lost confidence in their ability – now they thought they were not smart – and they ended up performing poorly.

Students who were praised for their 'process' (such as their effort or strategy) entered a growth mindset. They wanted the challenge, they maintained their confidence and enjoyment in the face of difficulty, and they ended up performing far better, even when the task was an IQ test.

There was another intriguing finding. Students praised for their intelligence later lied about their scores. This means that errors were so humiliating that they could not admit them.

The parents we surveyed believed in intelligence praise. They believed it gave their children something valuable. But our findings told a different story. It was praising the students' 'process' – their effort, strategies, concentration, choices, or persistence – that helped them remain motivated, confident, and effective. (For examples of how to deliver process praise, please see my book 'Mindset'<sup>2</sup>.)

<sup>2</sup> 'Mindset: The New Psychology of Success' by Carol S. Dweck, 2006, Random House (ISBN 978-1400062751)



Guy Claxton and Bill Lucas, Professor of the Learning Sciences and Professor of Learning at the University of Winchester, at a recent event at the Centre for Real-World Learning

# Children as teachers and researchers

## Why we must stop underestimating what children are capable of

**Professors Guy Claxton and Bill Lucas**

**We have grievously underestimated the capacity of children to self-organise and self-evaluate.**

If you can have a University for children - and the Children's University has shown that you can - then you could presumably staff it with teachers and researchers who are children. Children, in other words, can play many roles beyond those we have thus far assumed they are capable of.

In schools this kind of change is already becoming more common. So, we see children being teachers (running sessions for other children, creating mark schemes, for example). We marvel at how they can be trained as young inspectors (observing teachers teach and then giving them feedback). We notice how they rise to the occasion when we ask them to be members of steering groups, receptionists, mentors of other pupils, and,



**Did you know?**  
The 2010 national CU evaluation report focuses specifically on impact on children's achievements, attendance and attitudes to learning.

on important school occasions, reporters, photographers, guides and so forth. Yet still we talk about much of their activity in a strange vocabulary which includes expressions such as 'pupil voice' and 'student councils'. Laudable as both these concepts are - the former, as pioneered by the late Jean Ruddock, stressing the need for greater democratic processes and the latter offering the promise of a forum for real participation - both too often miss the point. They fail to recognise how much more children can do with minimal support and guidance from adults. Too often, when probed, activities actually turn out to be tokenistic and insignificant, with minimal impact on children. In the last few decades, schools, it seems to us, have changed far less than the children who go to them or the society which they serve.

### Natural born researchers

Children are innately curious. Surround them with interesting things and they will find their own questions, construct their own experiments and collect their own data. Sugata Mitra's celebrated 'hole in the wall' experiments<sup>1</sup> have shown that, even without any direct input from a teacher, an environment that stimulates curiosity creates opportunities for learning through self-instruction and peer-shared knowledge. Mitra put a PC connected to the Web in a hole in the wall in a slum area of New Delhi and then, using a hidden camera, filmed what happened. His experiment, now replicated in other parts of the world, showed slum children playing around with the computer and in the process learning how to use it, how to go online, and then how to teach each other with no help from any adults.

Mitra's work reminds us that we ignore the innate resourcefulness of many children at our peril.

In the UK, the Children's University is tapping in to a rich tradition. Over the last few decades organisations like Learning through Landscapes have shown how, even within the ambit of school, children can successfully adopt roles such as ecologist, landscape designer or project manager and redesign grounds for a range of different uses. While the 'outdoor education' movement more

generally has shown how many opportunities there are for children to take control of their own learning<sup>2</sup>. Anyone who has experienced the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme or seen the Scouts or Guides at first hand will know how children can excel when adults 'keep out' of the way. And most recently the Children's University has shown how it is possible to connect children with a range of informal learning locations to everyone's mutual benefit.

### Changing the paradigm

But still much of both formal education and informal learning does not go far enough in tapping children's potential to do be taught less and to organise themselves more. While there are pockets of genuinely exciting practice these are not yet deep enough. Recent curriculum reform has produced a rather arid and formulaic, highly teacher-led. In them teachers control the starts, the finishes and every transition within them. Moments of truly child-initiated learning are few and far between. While there are opportunities for self-initiated learning in many schools, these are rarely sustained. The pupil voice in education is still far too quiet and, when it is heard it is frequently interrupted by the clamour of adult attainment anxieties.

The irony will not be lost on any perceptive reader of John Hattie's recent hugely detailed review of what makes the biggest impact on pupil attainment in schools<sup>3</sup>. "*The remarkable feature of [all this] evidence*" he concludes, "*is that the biggest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching, and when students become their own teachers.*" In other words we need a complete role reversal. Teachers do more learning and children do more teaching. Anyone who has had to teach others will know how much being required to teach something to someone else enables real understanding and require the development of clear mental models.

### A glimpse of the future

The Centre for Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester has some ambitious plans for the coming years. We intend to create a network of young researchers. Building on the work of those, for example, at



the Open University<sup>4</sup>, we hope to join forces with the national Children's University and create opportunities, initially via schools, for children to engage in real research into matters that interest them, from school to home, their local environment to the world stage. We see no reason why, in parallel with the exciting reinvigoration of teacher enquiry we cannot develop a nation of young learning scientists capable of using action research to help them grow as learners. Like most curious adults, children often have hunches just waiting to be explored. Like researchers - we definitely fall into this category at the Centre for Real-World Learning - they have any number of ideas needing time and resource to shape them into research proposals. Most excitingly we see children being at the forefront of thinking about their own learning and use both tried and tested methods and the opportunities afforded by the virtual and connected world in which we live to explore these.

As Art Costa and Bena Kallick put it<sup>5</sup>: "*All human beings have the capacity to generate novel, clever or ingenious products, solutions, and techniques - if that capacity is developed.*" We simply cannot afford not to develop children with habits of mind and dispositions that enable them to thrive in ways we mistakenly too often only allow them to do once they are more 'grown up' or 'adult'.

***"The pupil voice in education is still far too quiet and, when it is heard it is frequently interrupted by the clamour of adult attainment anxieties."***

**Professors Guy Claxton and Bill Lucas**

1. See the Ted talk - [http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/sugata\\_mitra\\_shows\\_how\\_kids\\_teach\\_themselves.html](http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/sugata_mitra_shows_how_kids_teach_themselves.html)

2. See, for example, <http://www.lotc.org.uk>

3. John Hattie (2009) 'Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement', Oxford, Routledge

4. See <http://childrens-research-centre.open.ac.uk>

5. Art Costa and Bena Kallick (2000) 'Discovering and Exploring Habits of Mind'; Alexandria, VA, ASCD



Professor John MacBeath, OBE, Professor Emeritus at the University of Cambridge congratulates a Doncaster Children's University Graduate

# Learning to know, learning to do and learning to be

Professor John MacBeath, OBE



**Where, when and how do children learn best? To these three questions we may add one more challenging addition – the ‘why’ question. It is one which schools tend not to be very good at answering. A German book written by Hartmut Von Hentig ‘Warum muß ich zur Schule gehen?’ (Why do I have to go to school?) takes the form of a series of letters written by a kindly uncle to his nephew Tobias’s question. He has to convince Tobias that school is going to meet his intellectual, emotional and social needs and that in a competitive environment (both academically and socially) he will be able to deal with the range of demands asked of him and expectations of him held by his teachers and peers.**

There are many Tobiases who struggle to stay afloat in the highly structured and sequenced school day with its ‘ruthlessly cumulative’ curriculum that threatens to leave you behind and disaffected if you can’t keep pace with your classmates.

But no need to despair because there is a place, there are people and there is a promise in the shape of a University for children. It is a place for success, a place where there are people with whom to engage socially, in a relaxed but stimulating environment. There is a promise that your confidence and self-esteem will flourish and grow so that, as the poster on the wall promises, *“If at first you fail, try again and fail better”*.

Enjoying and benefiting from opportunities to fail safely, to re-engage with learning out of school, in a variety of stimulating ‘construction sites’<sup>1</sup> is what the Children’s University offers.

It works in theory. But does it work in practice? The national evaluation currently being undertaken at the University of Cambridge is pursuing answers to that proposition. We do not, however, come to that question with an entirely blank slate as earlier research into out-of-school-hours learning (MacBeath et al. 2001)<sup>2</sup> reported significant value-added for those young people who were the most persistent and committed attenders at ‘study support’ (a misleading term which fails to capture the variety of activities that fall under that umbrella). However, evaluation of the Children’s University has to go much further. It has to boldly go, to be more imaginative and inventive in order to match the scope of construction sites that the Children’s University embraces. It requires a set of research tools, able to define learning gains and to probe beneath the surface learning so as to get at the parts that simple measures fail to reach - the strategic and deep learning which is lasting and which travels between the informal and the formal, between learning in the wild and learning in captivity.

For policy makers and impatient governments, the most convincing evidence that the evaluation can offer will be identifiable gains in curricula subjects as measured by exams and standardised tests. That is, in a sense, the very bottom line and the evaluation will have to demonstrate tangible gains if further investment is to be forthcoming. That is why we are working with the Fischer Family Trust to carry out a controlled study, comparing matched samples of young people who engage in

<sup>1</sup> ‘Construction sites’ is the title of the book by Weiss and Fine which shows that we construct our intelligence, in differing ways in different sites such as home, school and other places of learning.

<sup>2</sup> MacBeath, J., Kirwan, T., Myers, K., McCall, J., Smith, I. and McKay, E. with Sharp, C., Bhabra, S., Weindling, D. and Pocklington, K, 2001, ‘The Impact of Study Support: a Report of a Longitudinal Study into the Impact of Participation in Out-of-school Hours Learning on the Academic Attainment, Attitudes and School Attendance’



Children's University activities against those young people who don't.

This is, however, an important by-product, but not the essential purpose of what the Children's University is for. Our premise, or research hypothesis if you like, is that the ability to deal with failure and with setbacks, to try again and fail better, to enjoy a challenge rather than shrink from it, is a transferable skill, or disposition. It is learning for life beyond school. As Carol Dweck has shown over numerous studies, it is mind set that makes the difference. As much as anything else the Children's University is about changing minds, from can't do to can do, from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, from a performance orientation to a learning orientation.

Impact may be judged in a number of ways: by numbers participating, by measures of attainment. But there are individual stories to be told as well as accounts of success at school or system level. Policy makers tend to want big numbers while teachers derive great satisfaction from witnessing the transformation of the individual child, the disengaged boy or girl who becomes engaged, the disaffected and the disruptive young person who begins to perceive a purpose in learning for the first time.

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**Here is John, the youngest of four brothers, the older siblings being more able and confident at school. John "... always seems left behind... switched off in lessons. ....not engaged ..." says his teacher. In the local Children's University, the script reading activity engages and enthalls John at every stage. He offers suggestions about plot lines and characters. At one stage during the short break he stays in character and walks around the room rehearsing and engaging in dialogue with his peers. Later he is lying on the floor making notes on a story line and gazing up at the ceiling taking time to think. The different environment is liberating for him.**

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This, and the many other accounts we documented, may be dismissed as anecdotal evidence, devoid of hard numbers, but these are stories of children's lives and they point to something very powerful as to the where, when, how and why of learning.

In our evaluation study many young people talked about the contrast with school. They talked about the fragmented school day in which "... we never get to finish things ..." and "...we never work on things for a long time ..." They gave accounts of the excitement of new challenges and discoveries: not the

product of pre-determined objectives written on a blackboard but being ambushed by the unexpected and surprised into learning.

There is a common assumption that school quality and effectiveness is measured by what children and young people achieve during their time in school – the black box, input-output model. It is a model deeply embedded in mainstream research and prevailing thinking about the impact of school. Yet, as we know from four and more decades of research, in-school learning plays a relatively subsidiary role to what is learned out of school. The family, the peer group, tutoring and tutorial centres and the spontaneous incidental learning that takes place before and after school need to be factored into any value-added equation.

We need to consider not only the contribution of families and other stakeholders but also the contribution which the Children's University makes to their learning and to parents' ability to support their children. Where Children's University activities include family learning, 'outcomes' defy easy quantitative measures. Yet little could be more important than helping parents to learn along with their children, to talk with their children, to take time to listen to them, to share in the joys and the challenges of learning new things.

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**In a local Children's University centre in the south of England, for example, family learning events have proved hugely popular and are usually oversubscribed, with waiting lists of children and families eager to exploit opportunities on offer. It is an article of faith in this Children's University that learning is optimised through reciprocal relationships between children and adults, in families, schools and communities. Family Learning courses help parents to be less 'afraid' of education and to understand that learning and achievement is a way of helping to achieve economic well-being, better jobs and a route out of poverty. Workshops on arts and crafts, ICT and computing, maths and science, cookery master classes, healthy living and balanced diet, for example, are all contexts for parents and children to learn together.**

**While fathers tend to be less likely to attend such sessions, football clubs can, however, offer an irresistible magnet as in Norwich City FC as part of Norfolk Children's University, where free match day tickets for father and son/daughter, are contingent on the father attending learning sessions with his child.**

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We also need to challenge the assumption that school learning is simply for children. It may be argued that equally important is teacher

***"As much as anything else the Children's University is about changing minds, from can't do to can do, from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, from a performance orientation to a learning orientation."***

**Professor John MacBeath, OBE**

learning because this is how the system itself learns. This is how it improves and builds capacity for the future. Schools that aren't learning are bad places for kids. The evidence is again difficult to measure quantitatively, but the evidence from our evaluation is that teachers expand their thinking and their pedagogic repertoire when they become involved with children in contexts other than the classroom.

The 80/20 'rule' of teacher talk/pupil talk, characteristic of classroom teaching and learning is, in Children's University activities, reversed, with teaching or tutoring retaining an important role but with a more supportive than directive character. Sharing learning with children in new sites serves not only to inspire children but to liberate and re-invigorate teachers.

*"... Teachers teach and children learn. It is as simple as that ..."* (Chris Woodhead, 2002). Not so! Learning can be precarious, volatile and unpredictable. How to explore its dysfunctions and unweave its magic is the challenge for evaluators but that task lies not simply with an external University of Cambridge team but should be integral to the providers, to Local Authorities, to schools, teachers, volunteers and pupils, all of whom need to be constantly inquiring *"How good are our achievements? How do we know? What do we continue doing? What do we stop doing and what should we start doing?"* Now, if not sooner!

**Did you know?**  
The 2010 evaluation report evidences significantly better achievement and progress for children aged 7, 11 and 14 participating in Children's University learning.



Professor Mick Waters is Professor of Education at Wolverhampton University and President of the Curriculum Foundation

# Does the CU fit in the curriculum?

Professor Mick Waters

**Children’s learning is best when they do the natural things and we help them to cross thresholds as a result.**

First, it is good to agree what the curriculum is. When a child comes to school it is everything a child does ... it is what goes on in school: lessons, events, routines and that bit before and after ... the entire planned learning experience. The National Curriculum is part of the school curriculum and how it is organised within the school’s curriculum is up to the school. There are lots of National Curriculum myths that are not true. There are no time allocations for subjects. A subject does not have to be taught every week or even every year (we could cover all the Mathematics in Year 4 if we thought it best, but it might be hard to justify). There are no expectations that learning must take place in classrooms; it can be organised anywhere. This is one of the reasons why some schools do better than others; they recognise that children are learning all the time and do not see lessons as the planned learning, separate from the rest of the day which is some sort of lost time.

The job of the school is to offer all children the right learning blend. When the curriculum is planned it includes the bit that arrives from Parliament: the National Curriculum. This comes in bags marked with the names of subjects. These contain ingredients which the good school blends by organising them to be taught in good contexts. The school looks at the



learning that is needed and puts some of it into lessons. Some of it goes into the routines of daily life in school. Learning and practising the use of a library becomes a routine that fits with any subject. Assembly can be a routine that becomes a vehicle for enjoying and celebrating any subject: Art, Science and even Mathematics. Using the outdoor environment of the school becomes an annual routine for the children who tend the garden areas. Some of the learning ingredients can be addressed through events such as the school performance, where, well managed, children enjoy Dance, Drama, Music, Art and English as well as developing organisational skills, performance skills and audience skills.

How many bits of the curriculum are best covered on a residential visit?

There is another place that the learning can be experienced: in that part of the day which is before and after school, or when

**“Good schools are seeing how there could be a CU in their curriculum.”**

Professor Mick Waters

**Did you know?**  
The average cost ‘to society’ of Children’s University learning amounts to only £2.26 per hour per student.

the school is closed. School buildings seem to need a break, but learning never goes on holiday; it just happens somewhere else.

This is where the Children's University fits in. It provides a place for the planned learning experience to be enjoyed beyond the normal school day. It becomes that flexible but strong piece of the learning experience that, as children mature, they can plan to make work for themselves and get the best from, just like good students eventually realise at real University.

The Children's University helps schools to gently structure those parts of the learning beyond the school day. It says, *"Let's make best use of the time after school and recognise the learning that takes place in clubs and activities; let's value that special visit to the museum or the gallery and let's help you to recognise what learning you are accumulating over time."*

Schools start to balance the offer. Clubs, workshops, societies, teams all offer a chance for the accumulation of learning. The watchword is that the activity has to have a 'rigour rating'. It has to make a demand on the learner; aimlessly kicking the ball around in the park is no good, but taking part in a skills improvement session is. The child has to be trying to improve in the widest sense of the word, though the measure of success at the Children's University is learning commitment time. Children demonstrate their commitment and this is recognised. Whether they succeed is not the question. The Children's University recognises and accredits the effort towards becoming a learner for ever. At the end of a university course people are recognised for their degree of learning; the Children's University recognises the first step towards those degrees.

An important aspect of the entire planned learning experience is that we can plan some parts of it ourselves. That is why the Learning Destinations development is so important. Children accumulate their learning by visiting approved venues which offer rigorous learning; National Trust properties, galleries, museums. They go with their parents or carers or maybe their cubs or brownies group and collect the stamp in their passport as they cross another frontier of learning.

Good schools are seeing how there could be a CU in their curriculum. But does it make a difference? Where there has been evaluation, the children always say that

***"School buildings seem to need a break, but learning never goes on holiday. It just happens somewhere else."***

**Professor Mick Waters**

getting their award at a proper ceremony was a highlight and their parents and carers often say that it was a breakthrough occasion for them. Teachers and organisers of clubs and workshops in school say that they got to know children better in different contexts from the classroom. They saw a different angle where struggling was seen as being perseverant, or where shy was thoughtful or excitable was energetic. People who run Learning Destinations talk of the delight at seeing children returning with their parents to show them the exhibit and ask yet more questions.

The Ofsted report on 'Learning Outside the Classroom' points to the difference in achievement and attainment of children who have a regular and well managed experience on visits: in their local area, in the school grounds, in fact anywhere but the artificial world of the classroom. For those who need figures and are worried about results, there are pieces of analysis that show that children who are enrolled with Children's University achieve higher in their SATs than those in the same schools who are not. In Sheffield, for example, a city-wide analysis has shown that the difference in performance was as much as 8% in Level 4 Mathematics.

So why would a school not use the Children's University? More work? Well, yes, a bit. Structures and safeguards? Yes, and carefully thought out so as to be necessary but not cumbersome. Returns to make and evaluation to be completed? Yes, and surely a Children's University should check that things are working properly. All of these are reasonable concerns but the clever schools have realised that a canny way to organise things is to use time twice; to be economic. Many schools already run clubs and societies after school. They already are part of Musical Futures or Creative Partnerships. They roll it all up together under the Children's University banner and cut down the organisation and administration.

Children's learning is best when they do the natural things and we help them to cross thresholds as a result. They make, do and mend, they have adventures, they produce plays and shows, play instruments, speak different languages, and they grow things, care for creatures and have collections. All of these are gateways that teachers make into turnstiles to a brighter future. The Children's University is committed to offering children a brighter future by showing them how learning can be a challenging but enjoyable way to organise time and can make the changing horizon irresistible.

***"It's like school but only better."***

**Children's University student**



# The Children's University and the museum

Dr James Bradburne



Dr James Bradburne, Architect, Designer and Museum specialist, at home in the Palazzo Strozzi, Florence

What makes the museum different from the school, or more generally, the informal setting from the formal one can be summarised succinctly in the words of Frank Oppenheimer, founder of the San Francisco Exploratorium, one of the first, and still one of the world's most innovative science centres. He famously said "...nobody ever failed a museum ...". In a school, the student must be carefully modelled, in terms of prerequisite knowledge and abilities, and carefully evaluated, in order to ensure the

coherent and standardised acquisition of knowledge. In a museum, the visitor is defined by the act of visiting – there are no pre-visit qualifications and no post-visit tests. Our visitors are unknown, and, perhaps more importantly, unknowable. In the formal system, the student is responsible for learning. In the informal system, the institution is responsible for creating learning opportunities. A student can fail a school – but only the museum can fail its visitors.

***"By harnessing itself to the museum – among a wide variety of other informal learning initiatives – the Children's University can help provide a model for debate and democracy in a world rapidly closing in on itself to the exclusion of both."***

Dr James Bradburne

The two systems, although complementary, are like oil and water – they do not mix readily. The formality we speak of in the learning environment is not just a question of style – dusty classrooms and boring lectures versus interactive experiences and jolly good fun. An interactive programme set in the science centre, on whose success or failure a student passes or fails, remains a formal experience – even if it is conducted outside the classroom. On the other hand, an evening lecture, voluntarily entered into and unrelated to passing or failing, is informal, however uncomfortable the chairs are where it takes place. Even though they often work in consort, and are both concerned with education, the formal and informal systems are distinct, independent, and parallel. The formal system often thinks in terms of students: the informal system, in terms of learners.

The museum, by definition, is a privileged informal learning environment. Its unique character is that it is the home of the real – real objects, real phenomena, real people. One of its foremost goals is to provide users with sufficient interpretive tools to decode the world they live in – to make sense of the real. George Goode Brown, director of the Smithsonian Institution in the last century wrote, "...An efficient educational museum may be described as a collection of labels, each illustrated by a well-selected specimen..." Or, put another way almost a century later, the American philosopher of education Nelson Goodman wrote that "...the museum has to function as an institution for the prevention of blindness in order to make works work. And making works work is the museum's major mission. Works work when, by stimulating inquisitive looking, sharpening perception, raising visual intelligence, widening perspectives,



and marking off neglected significant kinds, they participate in the organisation and reorganisation of experience, in the making and re-making of our worlds...”

It is now a commonplace to say that we live in a rapidly changing world. In many cases, however, the changes are not fundamentally changes in practice, but of speed. Since our earliest history, travel and trade have brought different cultures and peoples together. But as Nick Negroponte once said “...we are moving from a world of atoms to a world of bits...” As the ‘global village’ of Marshal McLuhan becomes a reality, it has also become a far less stable place than it used to be. Like it or not, change is a fact of life, and the competitive pressures on businesses, governments, and institutions alike are overwhelming. Nordstrom and Ridderstrale noted ten years ago “... innovation requires experimentation. Experiments are risky. We can succeed or fail. So, an innovative environment must have an exceptionally high tolerance for mistakes ...” But the price of failure is often merciless and high – particularly for those who have little control over the decisions taken by the risk-takers – as we have seen in the successive crashes following the collapse of dot.com and property bubbles in 2000 and 2008. The painful lesson for Western economies is that “... in a world of change, the learners shall inherit the earth, and the learned will be perfectly suited to a world that no longer exists...” The museum must

also come to grips with the fact that it must also change with the times. It can no longer be content to be a temple where the fruits of culture are laid on the altar. Nor can it be content even as a sort of populist ‘low church’, proselytising the invigorating effect of culture in the hopes of making new converts. The time for mere display and celebration is past. It is time to learn, to investigate, and to innovate, and the museum is the informal learning environment par excellence. Just as much as industry – perhaps even more – the museum must learn to see itself as one of the motors of a learning society.

The Children’s University is an innovative means of creating incentives for life-long learning. By giving credit for participation in learning activities, the Children’s University builds self-respect, self-confidence and provides confirmation of the participant’s affinity for learning. In many respects, it provides a bridge between the worlds of formal and informal learning. On the one hand it uses the sites of informal learning – museums, science centres, libraries – for its extensive programmes and activities. On the other hand, by granting a certificate for participation, it provides welcome documentation of the learner’s motivation and perseverance. This documentation – whilst not ‘formal’ recognition – nevertheless serves to reward, motivate, and encourage. It serves both the learner, as an incentive, and perhaps even more importantly, it

Did you know?  
The Palazzo Strozzi in  
Florence became the first  
international Learning  
Destination in 2009.

renders a commitment visible, and alerts the outside world of employers and other educators of the depth of the learner’s engagement. Particularly with learners who have had a difficult experience in the schools, or learners in difficult environments, the Children’s University is a fundamental piece of the learner’s identity, which gives them the confidence to continue learning throughout their lifetime. This renewed emphasis on learning brings us back to the origins of the museum and to its unique role as a setting “...where the life of the mind is a pleasure ...” in Jonathan Miller’s words. Now more than ever, if we wish to continue to live in a world where moral, political and cultural choices are a public, as well as a private concern, it is the role of the museum to take advantage of its function as a learning environment to put the spirit of challenge, questioning and discovery into the hands of its visitors. By harnessing itself to the museum – among a wide variety of other informal learning initiatives – the Children’s University can help provide a model for debate and democracy in a world rapidly closing in on itself to the exclusion of both.

Photograph of Antony Jinman and Darcy St-Laurent taken by Eric Larsen during 'North Pole 2010'



Antony Jinman, Arctic Explorer and Chancellor of Plymouth Children's University

# Dare to dream, believe and you will succeed

## Antony Jinman

*"How do you make the classroom and the experience of learning, interesting and inspiring?"* That is something that I have asked myself repeatedly ever since I left school. I struggled through education, spending time in classes that never interested me, finding the subjects dull and boring because it was what had to be done. I dreamed of being outdoors and couldn't wait to get home and see what the surf was doing during evenings, or escaping to Dartmoor during the weekends to go hiking and exploring. My boyhood hero was another Plymouth born explorer, Captain Robert Falcon Scott; I wanted so badly to go on an expedition, to see remote parts of the world. The classroom was something that I associated with being grounded, stuck in a room until I could escape again.

As I got older, my passion for the outdoors grew and so did my passion for travel; suddenly

I found an eagerness to learn, to experience and see everything I could. To be able to travel to a location enables you to fully appreciate the beauty of its surrounding. Whether it concerns historical significance, the influence of human kind or wildlife, the natural world, there is always something new to learn, to experience. Being able to use your senses stimulates the mind.

It is this passion that has taken me further on my journey to explore, dream and discover.

Over the past four years I have been travelling in the Arctic, learning about the Inuit people, the Arctic environment, the animals that live there and documenting how it is changing due to climate change. I have been shocked at the stories I have heard and what I have witnessed travelling through the same landscapes over this period. Words can not

fully describe the level of change which is currently taking place in the Polar regions.

As my journeys took me to more remote locations, so too have technologies advanced, making it now possible to gain satellite phone coverage in the most remote parts of the Arctic. This enables explorers and researchers to send back daily updates of their findings and experiences; it also enables children to send questions directly to those satellite phones. Using a PDA or small laptop, those questions can now be answered with stunning photographs, inspirational video footage and gripping stories from the trail. Suddenly these sights, these sounds and these experiences can be sent straight back into the classroom and other learning environments, making them inspiring places in which to learn. Credible eye witness accounts of the world around

## ***“The Children’s University’s ability to credit, develop and generate a curiosity for the world is essential in any young person’s personal development”***

**Antony Jinman**

us can be accessed in real time; a text book is only as current as the day it was printed.

My greatest achievement while using this ability to report back from the Arctic included a successful crossing from Canada to the Geographic North Pole in early 2010. The Geographic North Pole expedition saw my two team mates and I ski and snow-shoe (and sometimes swim) over 500 miles from Cape Discovery to the Geographic North Pole in just 51 days, collecting valuable scientific data for the University of Plymouth. Since returning from the Pole, I have taken my experiences into over 50 schools, and the enthusiasm I am greeted with from children is just as rewarding an experience as reaching the Pole itself. This has made me realise something else about myself; it is as an educator, rather than an explorer, that I would like to be remembered.

I am not unique in employing this technology to reach a global school-

aged audience - so why, I asked myself, wasn't there a central platform that brings all of these projects together on one website, so that children and their teachers can learn about the world around them at a click of a button? I decided to answer that question by launching just such a platform under the umbrella of a not-for-profit company called 'Education Through Expeditions' (ETE). Through partnerships with a focus on developing learning plans specifically relating to an extensive range of expeditions and research projects, we aim to provide an invaluable resource which helps not only to educate children on a whole range of issues, including climate change, but also to prove to our learners that they really can achieve their dreams.

I am deeply honoured and very proud to have been asked to become the first Chancellor of Plymouth Children's University. I know, from firsthand experience, how important it is for us all to take an active role in helping young people's personal development, whether educator, parent or member of the community. It is in our children

### **Key Facts**

In addition to arctic explorer Antony Jinman there are currently 20 local Children's University Chancellors including:

- Authors Louis de Bernières and Gervase Phinn
- Professor Christine King, Vice-Chancellor of Staffordshire University
- David Laing, High Sheriff of Northamptonshire
- David Harker, Chief Executive of Durham County Cricket Club

that our future as a species lies and so it is all of our responsibility to make sure that our children grow up in an educational environment which is both inspiring and holds no boundaries. The Children's University's ability to credit, develop and generate a curiosity for the world is essential in any young person's personal development.

### **Did you know?**

The CU has a comprehensive organisational quality assurance process for its centres, 'Planning for Excellence', published in December 2010. All local CU centres are expected to reach at least the first level of the organisational quality assurance within their first 12 months.



Antony Jinman – Arctic Explorer

<sup>1</sup> 'Planning for Excellence – Children's University Handbook for Organisational Quality Assurance' by Ger Graus and Peter Eavers, Children's University, and Joanne Moore, Quality in Study Support and Extended Services, 2011 (ISBN 978-0-9561319-1-1)

# I don't like cricket ... I love it!

**David Harker**

**When I was approached to be Chancellor of Durham Children's University, I was delighted to accept as it seemed a natural continuation of Durham County Cricket Club's links with the local community.**



David Harker Chief Executive of Durham County Cricket Club and Chancellor of Durham Children's University

Durham County Cricket Club has had a Playing for Success (PFS) centre located at its Riverside Headquarters since 2000. During that time thousands of young people have come through the PFS centre doors to be inspired in their learning by state of the art facilities, excellent teaching and the 'wow' factor of an international cricket stadium. We have given them the chance to enjoy our top class sporting facilities, aspire to a healthy lifestyle and, who knows, for some a career as an elite sportsman or woman.

The Children's University's aims of offering a wide range of high quality activities outside school hours, rewarding participation, raising aspirations and encouraging engagement seem to perfectly sum up the purpose of

***"It is fantastic to see an organisation like the Children's University dedicated solely to the provision of high quality inspirational and aspirational activities for our children and young people."***

**David Harker**

Durham County Cricket Clubs engagement with the young people of County Durham. While our primary aim is to produce first class cricketers, we can through our work at the club and in the community, promote the health and well-being of our young people, as well as the aspiration to succeed in life.

Durham county has suffered and is still suffering much economic hardship with many deprived communities. Most of these are ex-mining villages, which historically have had village cricket teams, many playing on 'colliery welfare grounds'. This is where most of our young people are first introduced to the game and this is the supply line for us at county level. The fantastic achievements of the club over the last four seasons (County Champions twice!) are even more significant when you consider the numbers of 'local lads' in the team. They all learned to love the game by taking up the opportunities offered in their local schools and their communities.

The children and young people of County Durham are achieving, year on year, better results at all levels. Despite high deprivation in many communities, as a county our

**Did you know?**  
Local Children's University centres are hosted by a range of partner organisations such as schools' collaboratives, Academies, Further and Higher Education Institutions, sports clubs, charities and Local Authorities.

schools are achieving results which are above expectations.

I believe that to get even better we must continue to give our young people the best possible opportunities beyond the school day, in their local communities. Durham County Cricket Club through its community initiatives and partnerships endeavours to do this. It is fantastic to see an organisation like the Children's University dedicated solely to the provision of high quality inspirational and aspirational activities for our children and young people.

I want to make sure that Durham County Cricket Club has a long and constructive partnership with Durham Children's University.

## **Key Facts**

**Learning Destinations of national importance include:**

- Chatsworth House in Derbyshire
- The Wedgwood Museum in Stoke-on-Trent
- Rochester Cathedral in Medway
- The Houses of Parliament



# Special thanks to...

## Sir David Winkley



Sir David Winkley was co-founder of the Children's University and is an honorary Professor at the Universities of Birmingham and Warwick, and an

honorary Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford. Sir David is also currently Vice-Chair of the Heart of Birmingham Teaching Health Trust. He has been a member of various government committees including the Stevenson Commission on ICT and the Standards Task Force. Sir David was a Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford and is author of numerous academic articles on subjects ranging from management to philosophy. He was founder of the late National Primary Trust, and is a Trustee of the new National Education Trust. His experience of being Headteacher of Grove School, Handsworth for some 24 years is described in his book, 'Handsworth Revolution'. Sir David was the last person to be knighted in the 20th Century and still, on occasion, teaches philosophy to 10-year-old inner-city children. Sir David Winkley is a Trustee of the national Children's University.

## Sir Tim Brighouse



Sir Tim Brighouse was co-founder of the Children's University. He began his career as a classroom teacher and

was a Deputy Head by the age of 26. He then switched to educational organisation and administration, going on to become Deputy Education Officer in ILEA and Chief Education Officer for Oxfordshire. Moving back to teaching, he was appointed Professor of Education at Keele University (1989-1993) and founded the Centre for Successful Schools.

In 1993, Sir Tim left academic life and rejoined educational administration in the role of Chief Education Officer for Birmingham City Council. He remained in this role until 2002 and during this period was also appointed Visiting Professor at the Institute of Education, London University. He then served as London Schools Commissioner and Chief Advisor for London Schools until his retirement in 2007. Sir Tim was knighted in 2009.

## Rev Sarah Hayes



Rev Sarah Hayes is a solicitor working with Anthony Collins Solicitors, after 15 years of running a smaller

practice dedicated to servicing third sector organisations. She specialises in providing legal services to charities and in facilitating connections between the third sector and both public and private sector organisations. Sarah is engaged with policy makers and regulatory bodies in developing good practice and is committed to working with those engaging with third sector organisations to understand the landscape in which they are having to work. Sarah's experience of education is of having been on the receiving end of it formally, with an initial degree in Politics and Modern History and subsequent professional qualifications as a solicitor. More recently she has undertaken theological training and is ordained within the Church of England. Sarah Hayes is a Trustee of the national Children's University.

## Professor Christine King, CBE



Professor Christine King, CBE, is Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Staffordshire University. With an academic career in

lecturing and research, Professor King has an international reputation for her studies on the Third Reich. She has lectured and published extensively in the field, including work with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC. One of the few women at the top of the higher education profession, she is also co-founder and past Chair of the Through the Glass Ceiling network of senior women managers and co-author of the book of the same title. Her championing of widening access and lifelong learning and contribution to Higher Education has been recognised publicly. She was awarded a CBE for her services to Higher Education in the 2007 Queen's New Year's Honours list.

## Antony Jinman



Antony Jinman is the founder and chairman of Education Through Expeditions, Chancellor of the Plymouth Children

University and Expedition Leader for the International Scott Centenary Expedition 2012. He has completed 11 Arctic expeditions in the past 4 years including reaching the Geographic North Pole in 2010, in the process collecting valuable scientific data for the University of Plymouth. Antony has received medals from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, support and recognition from the Royal Geographical Society and this year was the UK's sole representative at the International Polar Year Teachers' Conference in Oslo. He is a popular and experienced public speaker, his audiences ranging from the National Geographic to the Universities of Oxford, St Andrews, Edinburgh and Plymouth.

## George Trow



George Trow was appointed Principal and Chief Executive of Doncaster College and University Centre in May 2010. Prior to

this position George was Principal and Chief Executive at Rotherham College of Arts and Technology where he had worked for eight years. Having worked in Colleges since 1983, he is passionate about student success and brings with him a wealth of experience.

George completed his Masters in Business Administration having studied at Leicester University and was proud to be granted Fellowship of City and Guilds of London Institute for his contribution to Further Education in 2008 and was also granted Fellowship of Institute of Leadership and Management in 2010. He is a National Board member of the Association of Colleges.

### Nadira Mirza



Nadira Mirza, Dean of the School of Lifelong Learning and Education at the University of Bradford.

Nadira is advisor to the Management Development Foundation, an international training consultancy for the developing world based in the Netherlands, a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts and a visiting Fellow of the University of Azad Kashmir. Nadira's first job was as a youth and community worker with responsibility for developing youth projects, emergency accommodation with learning facilities and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, all for Asian young women.

### David Harker



David Harker joined Durham County Cricket Club from Price Waterhouse in 1991, becoming Chief Executive in 2000 and in the last 10

years has been instrumental in the growth of the organisation and the continued development of the stadium. David won the prestigious North East Business Executive of the Year award in 2009. David is the Chancellor of Durham Children's University.

### Professor Mick Waters



Mick Waters is a Trustee of the Children's University, Professor of Education at Wolverhampton University and President of

the Curriculum Foundation. Previously, he worked at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as Director of Curriculum taking a leading role in helping schools to rethink their approach to curriculum design and influencing national policy on aspects of the National Curriculum.

### Professor Guy Claxton



Guy Claxton is Professor of the Learning Sciences at the University of Winchester where he is Co-Director of the Centre for Real-World Learning. Guy

is the originator of Building Learning Power and as well as being described by the Times Educational Supplement (TES) as one of the UK's most influential educators, is in demand all over the world. He has written many books about the mind and learning.

Bill and Guy's most recent book is 'New Kinds of Smart: how the science of learnable intelligence is changing education' by Bill Lucas and Guy Claxton, 2010, Buckingham: Open University Press (ISBN 978-0335236183)

### Professor Bill Lucas



Bill Lucas is Professor of Learning at the University of Winchester where he is Co-Director of the Centre for Real-World

Learning. A former school leader, Bill founded Learning through Landscapes and was the first CEO of the Campaign for Learning. Bill is Chairman of the UK's Talent Foundation and the author of many books about learning and parenting.

### Professor Carol S Dweck



Professor Carol S Dweck is widely regarded as one of the world's leading researchers in the fields of personality, social

psychology, and developmental psychology. Her research has focused on why people succeed and how to foster success. She is the Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University.

Carol Dweck is the author of 'Mindset: The New Psychology of Success'. Her computer-based growth-mindset program, Brainology, can be viewed at [www.brainology.com](http://www.brainology.com)

### Chris Edwards



Chris Edwards was appointed Chief Executive of Education Leeds in 2001. He won the Power 100 Public Sector Team

Excellence Leadership in Education Award in 2006. Chris and his team have built a strong, creative and highly effective education service which supports 265 schools across the city and has secured significant improvements in standards, attendance and behaviour for 110,000 children and young people who attend school in Leeds everyday. For further information visit [interesting-times-in-leeds.blogspot.com](http://interesting-times-in-leeds.blogspot.com). Chris Edwards is the Chancellor of Leeds Children's University.

### Dr Hilary Macaulay



Dr Hilary Macaulay is the Principal and Chief Executive Officer of the West London Academy. The West London Academy is a state funded independent school for children aged 3-19. It includes an Adult Education Centre, Community Sports Centre and Children's Centre. Over 1,500 children attend and over 250 staff work at West London Academy. The Academy has received national recognition for its pioneering and innovative work in several key areas and undertakes extensive work with other schools both in the UK and internationally in disseminating

its work. The West London Academy has been a Children's University since September 2009. Hilary is a member of the Reed Learning Academic Board and has worked for the past four years as a consultant for the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) mentoring and supporting new Academy Principals. She has written several published academic and educational leadership papers and her work on strategic school leadership and organisational transformation has been profiled nationally.

### Sir Robert Balchin



Sir Robert Balchin is Pro-Chancellor of Brunel University. He is the Knight Principal of the Imperial Society of Knights Bachelor (Chairman of the Knights' Council).

He was knighted for services to education in January 1993. Sir Robert was Director General of St John Ambulance for five years in the 1980s and was the senior education policy adviser to the Government throughout the early '90s. He devised and ran the programme for autonomy in state schools and was Chairman of the Grant-Maintained School Foundation from 1989-98. He currently Chairs the Commission on Special Needs in Education. He has been a teacher, lecturer and company director and is the Founder Chairman of The English Schools Orchestra and of the League of Mercy, a charity which encourages and recognises voluntary work in caring for the sick. He is a Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London and his appointment as Knight Principal was approved by The Queen in 2006. He was awarded the Order of St John in 1984 and has several honorary degrees and fellowships. Sir Robert Balchin is a patron of the national Children's University.

### Dr James Bradburne



Dr James Bradburne is a British-Canadian architect, designer and museum specialist who has designed

World's Fair pavilions, science centres and international art exhibitions. He has developed numerous exhibitions, research projects and symposia for UNESCO, UNICEF, national governments, private foundations and museums during the course of the last twenty years. He was Head of Design at the new Metropolis Science and Technology Center in Amsterdam and has directed the Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt. James is currently the Director General of the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi in Florence. He lectures internationally about new approaches to informal learning and has published extensively. For more information about Dr James Bradburne and his work visit [www.bradburne.org](http://www.bradburne.org). Dr James Bradburne is a Patron of the national Children's University.

### Professor John MacBeath, OBE



John MacBeath, OBE, is Professor Emeritus at the University of Cambridge where he held the Chair of

Educational Leadership from 2000 to 2008. He is currently Projects Director for the Commonwealth Centre in Education.

From 1997 to 2001 he was a member of Tony Blair's Task Force on Standards and in that same year he received the OBE for services to education.

For two decades he has researched learning in and out of school, learning in museums, study support and since 2007 has worked with the Children's University in both a consultancy and evaluation capacity.

Professor John MacBeath's evaluations of the national Children's University for 2008 and 2009 can be found at [www.childrensuniversity.co.uk/aboutus](http://www.childrensuniversity.co.uk/aboutus)

## National Office



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Children's University Co-Founder

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ISBN: 978-0-9561319-3-5

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