

The Nuffield Foundation Newsletter

Issue

5

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World Class?

“The importance of language learning for the UK of the 21st century cannot be over-estimated. It promotes communication and flexibility of outlook, vital both to cultural understanding, and to operating in the global economy.”

The significant fall in the number of secondary language students following the Government’s decision to remove language teaching from the compulsory curriculum post-14 has caused much concern.

The UK Committee of the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) recently held a conference to highlight the views of employers on these issues. This group is of importance to decision-makers, but their views on the value or

otherwise of language skills have not previously been clearly articulated.

The conference, *World Class? Safeguarding the UK’s global future* was chaired by Sir Trevor McDonald and supported by the Nuffield Foundation, British Petroleum and the ECF. There was a strong consensus around the main conclusions and priorities for action, and these were forwarded to Lord Dearing’s Languages Review.

The conference agreed that promoting language learning should become a national priority for Government and employers, as well as educators. The decision to make language learning optional post-14 should be reversed, using approaches which overcome the perceived difficulty and irrelevance

of traditional language-teaching. The key point is that compulsory provision commands the resources necessary for success, while optional provision will always be at risk.

Participants also agreed that the economic case in favour of language learning is strong. The message that competence in languages matters will bring career benefits must be authoritatively and credibly conveyed by employers to young people. Employers should develop a coordinated programme of action to convey such messages. Such a programme could also be the means by which employers influence Government policy and action in relation to language learning. [www](#)

Welcome to the Nuffield Foundation Newsletter which highlights our current areas of grant making and focuses on the outcomes of the projects we fund.

Further details on all the stories marked with this icon [www](#) can be found on our website.

The Newsletter is published three times a year and you can obtain further copies or ask to be put on the mailing list by contacting the Foundation. If you have any comments on the Newsletter we would be delighted to hear from you.

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www.nuffieldfoundation.org

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Lifting the barriers

An estimated 1,500 refugee teachers live in England, but many are denied jobs because their qualifications are not recognised. The Nuffield Foundation is supporting two organisations trying to resolve this difficulty.

In addition to its awards to individuals, the Elizabeth Nuffield Educational Fund (ENEF) makes an annual grant to the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS) to pay the professional requalification costs of refugee women doctors, dentists or vets so that they can resume their careers in the UK. The Foundation has also supported the Refugee Teachers' Task Force whose report *Opening Doors for Refugee Teachers Working in Education* draws attention to the difficulties faced by refugee teachers trying to work within the UK system at a time when their skills are much needed. The report's recommendations are under active consideration by the DfES. [www](#)

Vaccination: Making an informed decision

Cervical cancer is caused by a virus (the sexually transmitted human papillomavirus or HPV) and can be prevented through vaccination. The first such vaccine has been licensed

for use in the UK, but many questions remain to be answered. Giving vaccine at an early age ensures greater protection and a higher immune response, but

will vaccination of young adolescents be acceptable to the general public?

Under its Open Door programme the Nuffield funded Dr Loretta Brabin at the University of Manchester to assess parental attitudes to HPV vaccination of schoolchildren. As the first UK study of its type, the main findings were published in the journal 'Vaccine'. It seems likely that most parents will accept adolescent HPV vaccination but they will need reassurance and information on which to base their decision. Having found that over 60% of parents were unaware of HPV, the research team is extending the project to work with schools on educational materials that could help parents and adolescents make an informed decision. [www](#)



HPV poster designed by children at Wright Robinson Sports College, Manchester (L Brabin)

Ethics in schools

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics and the Nuffield Curriculum Centre have begun to work together to promote discussion in schools of the ethical issues raised by science and medicine. This is a requirement of the new GCSE science curriculum and is likely to be included in the new A-Level science courses starting in 2008. The two organisations have produced a set of resources to help citizenship and science teachers run informed, balanced debates on the issues surrounding animal research, based on the Council's 2005 Report on the same topic. The materials are being piloted in the spring, and distributed to teachers in the summer, ready for use in the autumn term. [www](#)



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Training for health

Crispin Hughes/Panos Pictures



At work in a Tanzanian laboratory

Most African health professionals have few opportunities to refresh or upgrade their training. This affects both morale and the service provided as well as being a contributory factor to 'brain drain'. In an attempt to combat these problems the Foundation's Commonwealth programme has been supporting the development of Southern and Eastern African researchers and practitioners, particularly in Tanzania.

An early grant was to establish a Diploma in Laboratory Health Sciences at Tuimaini University from which 50 students have now graduated. The first students from a parallel BSc programme will graduate in 2007. Support for

PhD programmes and an exchange programme for staff has already raised the University's research profile and helped secure a major European research grant for clinical trials.

A second grant has established Community Eye Health courses in Tanzania and South Africa, funding the training of lecturers and supporting some initial bursaries.

The most recent grant is for development of training facilities and courses to upgrade the policy and planning skills of health facility managers. Aimed initially at Tanzania's needs, the initiative has the potential to extend to other countries in the region. [www](#)

Rock and Rotation

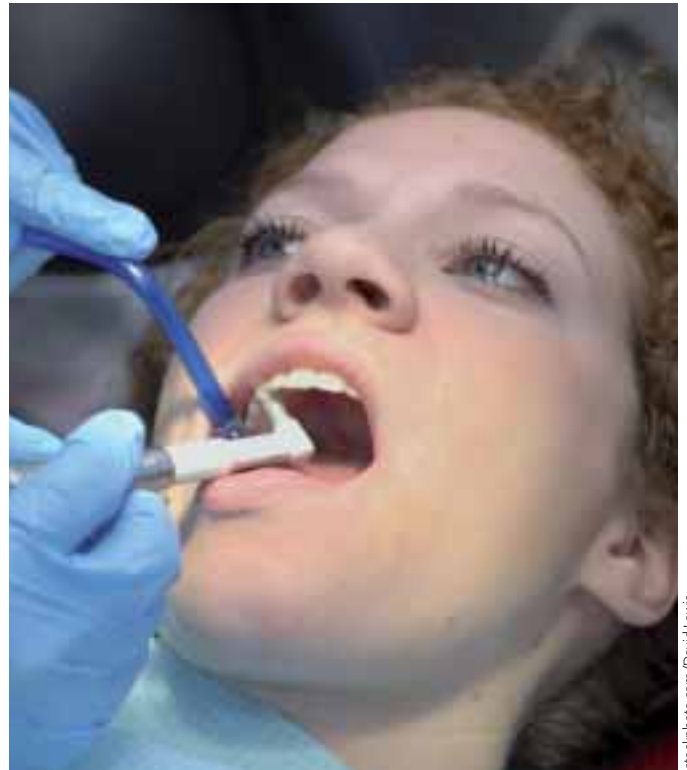
A student who received a Nuffield Undergraduate Research Bursary in 2004 has recently had his project results published in the leading science journal "Nature". Michael Heap studied fracture damage in crystalline rocks with Supervisor Dan Faulkner at Liverpool University, showing that rock elasticity changes with stress around geological faults such as the San Andreas fault with implications for earthquake prediction. Michael is now studying for a PhD in experimental rock physics at UCL. [www](#)



An "action shot" of Michael's research

FROM THE ARCHIVE DENTISTRY

In 1991 the Foundation supported a two year enquiry into the "Education and Training of Personnel Auxiliary to Dentistry". A follow-up of an earlier (1980) Nuffield Inquiry into the education of dentists, the rather dry title of the study concealed a thoroughgoing analysis of the provision of dental services across the board. The Committee proposed comprehensive reforms, including the creation of new classes of dental auxiliaries. The necessary changes to legislation came into effect this year. The reforms now position the UK well to the fore in the regulation of dentistry world wide. [www](#)



istockphoto.com/David Lewis

ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE

The Nuffield Foundation is launching a new research initiative under its Access to Justice programme. "Administrative Justice" has at its core both the administrative decisions by public authorities that affect individual citizens and the mechanisms (eg ombudsmen, complaints handlers, internal review) available for the provision of redress.

With the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Bill before Parliament and forthcoming developments such as the new Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council, the time is ripe for the Foundation to fund an initiative in this area.

Detailed guidance for researchers will be given in a series of 'framing notes' which will be posted on the Foundation's website. [www](#)

Care Matters

Adult learners who are caring for a disabled child or other family member face continuing challenges over accessing the support they need.

In partnership with selected Local Authorities, the Elizabeth Nuffield Education Fund is producing 'Care Matters', the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004: a Practical Guide. It proposes strategies to help Local Authorities meet their new obligations which reflect the Government commitment to independent living and maximising potential.

The Guide was prompted by an earlier ENEF publication aimed at adult learners with caring responsibilities. This raised awareness that many Local Authorities were not fully conversant with their duties to include in the Carers' Assessment process the wishes of family carers to learn or work. [www](#)



John Birdsell



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Innovation in language teaching

With the help of Nuffield Open Door funding, the Mary Glasgow Language Trust (MGLT) recently launched a major three-year programme of prizes for new and different modern language courses. The purpose of the 14-19 Curriculum Prize is to reward and publicise successful courses which lead to a higher take-up of languages by students over the age of 14, and which could serve as inspiration for other schools and colleges. Winners will make their teaching materials available so that other teachers may benefit. [www](#)

Experimenting safely

A survey by NESTA last November suggested that science teachers are shying away from more complex experiments because of a lack of time and worries about falling foul of the health and safety laws.

The Nuffield Curriculum Centre is working to buck the trend in partnership with the Institute of Physics and the Royal Society of Chemistry. We have launched a Practical Chemistry web site which we expect to be as popular as the well-established Practical Physics site which already features 500 experiments and records around 200,000 page views each month. Schools needing advice on health and

safety issues can get all the help they need from the CLEAPSS School Science Service. CLEAPSS experts advise us too, to make sure that teachers can find all the advice they need to carry out practical work safely. [www](#)



NCC

The Nuffield Curriculum Centre welcomes Angela Hall as its new Director from April 2007. For the last three years Angela has been Director of the Science Learning Centre London, based at the Institute of Education, University of London. During this time, she was involved with Salter's Nuffield Advanced Biology, for which she was earlier the project officer at the Nuffield Curriculum Centre. This followed many years of teaching experience, latterly as Head of the Science Faculty at Reigate College.

NCOB

Mr Hugh Whittall was appointed Director for the Nuffield Council on Bioethics in February 2007. Mr Whittall was previously a senior civil servant with the Department of Health, where he headed the Human Tissue Branch. Before this he was Deputy Chief Executive of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and also spent three years at the European Commission working on the ethical, legal and social aspects of biomedicine and health.



William Morris, Lord Nuffield
1877-1963

The Nuffield Foundation is an endowed charitable trust established in 1943 by William Morris (Lord Nuffield) the founder of Morris Motors with the aim of advancing social well being. We fund research and practical experiment and the development of capacity to undertake them, working across education, science, social science and social policy. While most of the Foundation's expenditure is on responsive grant programmes we also undertake our own initiatives.

Full information on all our current activities and on how to apply for grants can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org

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