



in partnership
with

John Smeaton
Community High
School

Report on the progress of the CAPE Partnership July 1998

The initial submission by John Smeaton to be part of the CAPE Initiative was made back in November 1996. Heads Together was invited to develop the work with John Smeaton earlier this year at a time when the funding and direction of CAPE UK was becoming clearer. This report details the progress over this period; forging relationships with staff at the school and refining the focus of the partnership ... it's purpose.

The partnership focus

At a national level, CAPE UK is a federation of some 24 high school-based partnerships (8 in Manchester and 16 in Leeds). At John Smeaton High School, the focus of the partnership has been defined as:

"The CAPE programme at John Smeaton Community High School is intended to contribute to the development of teaching and learning styles across the curriculum by creating an environment which encourages reflective practice and initiative on the part of pupils and staff."¹

In the first year of operation (1998/99), the CAPE Project at John Smeaton will be working under the theme of "Becoming Better Learners: Projects in creative teaching and learning for years 6, 8 and 10".

The 6, 8, 10 Project

Obviously there is a balance to be found between a desire to involve as large a part of the school as possible (staff and pupils) in the CAPE project and to make sure that the (very) limited resources² have a measurable effect. The time-frame is also to develop the work over a 5 - 7 year period, so a measured and realistic beginning is important so that the project can develop over time.

¹ The Smeaton Partnership - John Haggett June 1998 *Part of the submission to CAPE UK for approval of funding.*

² Initial allocation per partnership of £11,410



The focus on Years 6, 8 and 10 has been further defined as follows:

- **Year 6:** Creative approaches to improving the transition from primary school to John Smeaton. Developing, piloting and evaluating the work with Grimesdyke Primary School
- **Year 8:** Developing and supporting creative initiatives to re-invigorate the curriculum and maintain the engagement of pupils in the learning process³
- **Year 10:** Working specifically with the 'Vocational Studies' Group identifying creative approaches to learning and achieving for a group of students who have not had great success academically to this point in their education

Added value

One of the other key factors in the CAPE approach at John Smeaton has been a commitment to recognise the creative teaching and learning that already exists at the School and to look at how CAPE can support and encourage the development of such approaches. This will include devising methods of evaluating the work and then disseminating the important information within the School as well as outside. Thereby CAPE should be adding value to the positive approaches within the School as well as providing a framework that is truly cross-curricular and can aid the development and incorporation of good practice.

Forging relationships and identifying opportunities

Developing clear objectives is absolutely essential for CAPE as is the involvement of senior management in determining the strategy so that it does become a factor in the School's overall approach⁴.

The major task now at hand is to inform and involve staff and students in the CAPE Project. To be able to clearly answer the question "But what is CAPE?" is now a reality at John Smeaton. The initial groundwork has been done very effectively by John Haggett⁵ and I have spent two days in school making myself available for discussions with staff and getting a feel for the school and its students. My main discussions with 13 staff are documented in the Appendix and of course there was a fair amount of additional pressing of the flesh and chatting with students⁶

I feel that it was two days well-spent (only 100-odd staff to go!) and there is much work to follow up on those initial discussions. Apart from the building-up of contacts on a step-by-step basis, I think there are three other routes forward in the autumn term.

³ It has been identified that Year 8 can be a fallow year - the excitement of the new school has receded yet the focus provided by academic pressures have not yet taken hold. However it is absolutely essential to maintain the young people's enthusiasm for learning at a crucial developmental phase

⁴ Setting of the overall strategy and defining the 6,8,10 Project was taken at a full day meeting between Adrian Sinclair (Heads Together), John Haggett (CAPE Co-ordinator JSCHS), Keith Mitchell (Deputy Headteacher) and Judith Russell (Deputy Head Administration)

⁵ The enthusiasm with which I have been welcomed at the School by staff and their willingness to talk about ideas and opportunities is testament to the work that John has done. It is not always the case that members of an institution are so welcoming to an outsider!

⁶ In the end what CAPE is doing is the important thing but it became obvious that we need to come up with an answer to explain who I am and what my role is! John's introduction as "partner artist" drew some raised eyebrows. Some students asked me whether I was a teacher here. I ummed and aahed and finally said no - "Oh we'll take the shortcut through the office then" they replied! It is a perennial problem and any suggestions are welcome.

Presentation to all staff

Partly so I don't get worn out repeating myself and partly to be able to use a more visual way of representing my work, I would like to have a chance to address all staff). This would involve a presentation about both Heads Together and the CAPE Project at John Smeaton (identifying the strategy and initial programme of work and indicating how the partnership might develop)⁷. John has suggested that this could be part of the training day on September 2nd.

Involving the learners

We want them to "become better learners" but it is easy to forget to ask the students themselves what they think might aid the process! I would like the students at John Smeaton to be aware of CAPE. I was thinking of something along the lines of bringing a couple of musicians to play outside of a lunchtime (with no prior announcement) and ask maybe two questions "What is creativity?" and "What would make learning more creative at John Smeaton?". Written answers in the box with prizes for the most creative answers⁸.

Heads Together - an ongoing presence in the School

What has been obvious even in such a short time is that staff do appreciate having an artist to talk to! I do feel that it would be important to try to have a regular presence in the school - a desk, pigeonhole etc⁹ - even if cash limitations mean that this is not going to be a frequent occurrence!

Opportunities so far ...

The following list represents some of the possibilities discussed to-date with indications of how they might be developed. I have indicated where I think there may be implications with respect to School policy¹⁰.

Year 6 Project

We will be looking at the transition of Year 6 pupils from Grimesdyke Primary to John Smeaton in 1999. We will be developing contacts and ideas with Grimesdyke in the autumn

Year 8 Project

Initial work on this year-group has focused on the plans for a day off-timetable as part of Book Week (October 5-9th). The lead for this has been taken by Tim Brookes in the History Department who will be bringing in a Historical writer to work with 120 pupils around the theme of the Tudors. After discussion we agreed that the main focus of the day should be on the theme of communication with the idea of flexible learning underlying it. That we would work with staff (once the timetable is clear) to develop other ideas for a full-day teaching for the rest of the year group and that we would try to develop the idea that each class-group would communicate something to another group in some way by the end of the day (semaphore, smoke signals, thought transfer or even writing!).

It will be important to agree some method of evaluating the day.

⁷ Of course there are possibilities of developing a more interactive programme of work on creative learning and teaching ...

⁸ Maybe we should run a parallel competition for staff!

⁹ Or maybe a tent in the playground with a little sign "The artist is in/out"!

¹⁰ No doubt there are whole issues I have missed or misrepresented - please tell me, I'm new here!

Year 10 Project

I have had outline discussions with Keith and Pauline about doing an initial 4 day photography project with the Vocational Studies group focusing on self-image and developing both an individual and group identity.

Implications: Need to decide on the timing of the project and need to clarify how this is to be co-ordinated with East Leeds Family Learning Centre so as to make best use of the project¹¹. We may use the darkroom and photographic equipment at the school although I would like to talk about the possibility of using the teaching dark-room at the Pavilion Photography Centre in Woodhouse Square¹². Obviously this work could be used as a model for future years but this depends on the policy with this group

The following projects/issues have been discussed in relation to the 6,8,10 project although there exact role is yet to be defined.

Global Rock Challenge

Work on this project is well-advanced. My discussions have focused on the possibility of some practical support eg external choreographer and a collaborative approach to evaluating and disseminating learning outcomes. This could be used as a basis for developing the project in future years, gaining additional support and looking at the role of such activities as part of the learning experience at John Smeaton

Quadrangle project

John Hagggett has recently proposed a joint project based around the visual arts in conjunction with the Geography and RE Departments to develop the internal quadrangle that links the three departments into a real teaching and learning resource. This could develop as part of the Year 8 project as some work has already been done with Year 7 students.

Implications - Obviously this depends on the School Buildings strategy

Scalegill Foot

The development of the School's Residential Centre will create a different learning environment. CAPE could help develop creative use of the Centre - linking in with either the Year 8 or Year 10 projects.

Library

Discussions again about the development of the library as a different learning environment and as an information resource

Implications - IT strategy¹³

¹¹ Ideally we would involve staff from East Leeds and John Smeaton in some way- it would be an ideal opportunity to link work from both sites by focusing on the students' personal development.

¹² The Pavilion's dark-room is a good space to work in and I like taking the students to different sites. It encourages them to think of how they fit into their city and also gives them the prestige and responsibility of working somewhere special. What is the situation with using the school minibus? - I have passed my RoSPA Advanced Minibus Driving test if this helps

¹³ Communication and access to Information Technology has been mentioned many times by different staff. Obviously a strategy for developing the IT provision is currently being considered by the Headmaster and there is an ideal role for CAPE to be involved in promoting the use of the technology as a creative opportunity and a means of disseminating information about the project itself

In summary

The CAPE partnership between Heads Together and John Smeaton is developing well. The overall aims and the immediate strategy have been clarified and the initial phase of communicating that to staff has begun. The response has been very positive and there are many possibilities to develop.

In the autumn the communication needs to further develop to include all staff and to encourage the contributions of the learners themselves. Some practical work will begin as part of the 6,8,10 Project and we should be able to provide added value for some other projects already in the pipeline. As always the immediate issue will be to look at what is feasible considering the limited resources available. For Heads Together I can see that there are many opportunities to develop partnership work but not the money to pay for it¹⁴! But our attitude is that if the work is good enough then the funding will follow!

I look forward to developing the partnership and I appreciate feedback on this report.

Adrian Sinclair
July 1998

¹⁴ If the work is costed soon there is the possibility of accessing additional funds through the Artists in Schools Programme or there might be underspend available from CAPE UK

Appendix

Contact with staff at John Smeaton to-date

John Haggett	Head of Art/CAPE Co-ordinator	John initially contacted me following a recommendation from Yorkshire and Humberside Arts. We attended a CAPE UK residential conference together in February in Preston and have been discussing the Partnership ever since!
Keith Mitchell	Deputy Headteacher	Meeting off-site to formulate strategy and 6,8,10 Project
Judith Russell	Deputy Head Admin	Meeting off-site to formulate strategy and 6,8,10 Project. Follow-up visit with English class to see video of recent performance project (some of these students will be part of next year's Vocational Studies group)
Richard Allan	Headteacher	Meeting to discuss CAPE partnership and how it sits within School's development
Colin Breckenridge	History	Discussion of the development plans for Scalegill Foot Residential Centre. Support for fundraising plans and development of plans for using Centre as a different learning environment for future CAPE projects
Karen Brown	Dance	Discussion of Global Rock Challenge 1999 project focusing on CAPE providing practical support eg external choreographer and a collaborative approach to evaluating learning outcomes
Grahame Hodson	Head of Mathematics	Brief meeting to discuss the possibility of teacher involvement in the Year 8 "Communication" day as part of Book Week
Tim Brookes	Head of History	Two meetings focusing on the Year 8 "Communication" day in Book Week. Support in dealing with external historical writer booked for the day and developing programme for all students. Also discussed possibility of looking at ways of teaching Art History with future A level group
Neil Bunting	Art	Initial discussions on quadrangle project
Debby Callaghan	Art	Quadrangle project and Global Rock Challenge
Pauline Mossman	Year 9 Director	Planning of a self-image/identity project with Year 10 Vocational Studies Group using photography
Lydia Wayne	Librarian	Discussion of Book Week including Year 8 day plus ideas for extending use of Library as information resource.
Cheryl Bryan	Head of Geography	Brief meeting to discuss the possibility of teacher involvement in the Year 8 "Communication" day as part of Book Week