Science Influencers - The Concept

The following document sets out to address the FAQs associated with the newly devised role of 'science influencer' and the city-wide systems in Stoke-on-Trent designed to enable the forum of like-minded enthusiasts known as 'science influencers'. It will outline:

- The Leadership Model
- The Theory of change
- The background context- local Stoke on Trent
- The purpose of the role
- The benefit of the role to the individual, to their school, to the wider primary community across the city.
- Recruitment process to the role
- Opportunities within the role
- Deployment
- Expectations & Financial support

The current recognised science influencers can be found at

http://www.scienceacrossthecity.co.uk/our-team/

New and interested teachers can be nominated by their headteacher at any time to further extend this community of like-minded professionals. Science Influencers should be committed to extended learning around primary science education, be both enthusiastic and a risk taker and be engaged in the wider STEM community. A drive for personal professional development is expected but excellence is not!

Science influencers - Intended organisational culture

Having due regard for the theoretical leadership models of organisational culture popularised by Charles Handy (1999), the concept of a group of enthusiasts with a range of skills and different strengths but with a shared vision fits well the culture categorised as **'Person Culture' (C. Handy, 1993 Understanding Organisation)** . Person culture is perceived as an unusual but desirable culture and is not found in many organisations. The fit known Handy image of a constellation of stars whereby the individual is the focal point and the organisation exists only to serve and assist the individuals within it exemplifies exactly the intention of the science influencers model of leadership. Science influencers are encouraged and supported to further develop their interests without any overriding objective. Influence is shared and the power base, if needed, is usually expert; that is, people do what they are good at and are listened to for their expertise. Person-orientation is prevalent amongst the group of science influencers and is deliberate strategy to build capacity and distributed expertise that will exist

beyond the duration of grant funding. Person culture expects to empower leadership and this is essential as a legacy of recognised expertise to exist in the city of Stoke-on-Trent beyond OA subsidy.

Science influencers - The Theory of change

Science across the city sets out to nurture the science influencers as a community of practice (COP), **(Etienne Wenger, 2002, Cultivating Communities of Practice**) and (Emily Webber, 2019, Building Successful Communities of Practice). The project enables an infrastructure **locally** to provide information, allotted time for discussion/interaction and professional signposting. Since all members of the communities of practice have their professional obligations to their own schools and classrooms the project sets out to keep things simple and informal with minimal responsibility demanded. Understanding the balance between overwork and potential creativity is a challenge to the forum as release from schools expects detailed agenda purpose whilst the COP anticipates the group the privilege of expressing their thoughts. Appreciating and identifying the efforts of the members of the community of practice is highly motivating to them and builds esteem and the belief that they can take up the mantle in opportunities beyond the forum. This is both empowering to the individual and enables increased ideas to the forum from the community members.

Science influencers - The background context

In line with the OA Stoke-on-Trent delivery plan, the primary science team sought to build and support a quality education workforce. Schools prior to the launch of the 'Science across the city' project had shown very little engagement with school to school support in the core subject of Science. Headteacher survey suggested this was due to a lack of profile of primary science and lack of awareness of where to go to, what to ask for or who had credibility and expertise. This reflected little central investment to primary science local consultancy or advisory offer over a number of years. Academy trusts, Charitable science bodies such as PSTT and Ogden trust, STEMSLP and others all had pockets of activity but the reach was within a small group of schools and little opportunity across these clusters. Some schools were not involved in any forums for primary science but still had leaders with strengths but no voice. There was a need to remove barriers between school collaborative working in science and identification of the movers and shakers would build the volume for a city wide vision for raising the quality of science for all pupils.

Science influencers – The purpose of the role

Teacher communities are able to challenge, share and offer professional growth. The mission for science influencers is to affect practice in schools beyond their own. However before this could happen there was a need to create a forum of likeminded, committed, enthusiasts that could support and encourage practice and underpin philosophy within recognised National key messages. (Avoid just tips and tricks- but rooted in BEST practice)

Science Influencers - The benefits

- to the individual: The intended benefit was to raise esteem, build self-confidence and to empower those that had not worked beyond their own school to recognise their own skills and be valued for their great practice in science. Science influencer comments capture this benefit in their own words : ' I feel like I am no longer waving my own small flag for science but am waving one big flag' , 'I have a go to place to test out my ideas'.
- to their school: It is well documented within the work of Hargreaves that JPD approaches between schools has deep impact on all participating. The benefit of articulating own practice and refreshing in light of critical reflection and comparison to others empowers professionalism. Recognising the status of science leaders has the potential to retain good teachers for longer through an extended satisfaction.
- to the wider primary community across the city: Science influencers are the next generation of school development subject advisers. The systems leadership to the science influencers community builds capacity with a connected, coherent understanding of pedagogy for primary science. It can be argued that there is a supply and demand model for school to school support- Quite simply when schools know that an offer exists and what that offer is, then they are more likely to ask for it.

Science Influencers-Recruitment process to the role

The Science across the city team welcome headteacher nominations of science leads that go above and beyond for science. The head is considered to have the in depth knowledge of commitment and performance of their staff and the capability is not questioned. A face to face school visit, to include the head and SL alongside the SATC lead, explores the strengths the individual and addresses explicitly the expectations/ capacity to commit. There are science leaders with the capability to be a science influencer but may not have current capacity to engage. Nominations can be received at any time. Post-visit the Expression of Interest (EoI) is completed and the details are added to the website. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSedk06gFy0VnWmOc9bx3WroI6rL3TmGdMgVZU4lJwu0pK0Mfw/viewform?usp=sf_link

Science Influencers- Opportunities within the role

Within the Science Influencers concept is clear signposting to opportunities. A number of subset options exist for the science influencers and dependent upon capacity and interest the SI may select as appropriate (some do not take any additional offers and some take several). There is no expectation to have to select a focus as there is recognition that work that individuals do already beyond their own school makes them highly valuable to the COP. Example- leading other networks, or other teaching school commitments.

- Chartered Science Teacher Status (Csci teach)
- Aspiring SLE programme
- Accredited SLP facilitator
- Assessment champion
- TDTS champion
- PSQM hubleader

Science Influencers - Management

By promoting the science influencer strengths and interest through the SATC website, all schools are able to explore local expertise available. Contact is via the SATC team to protect that SI individuals from unnecessary workload. Requests for support are brokered by the SATC lead with funding dependent upon level of school need in a citywide priority basis. All schools can access coaching support but only intensive schools will receive the coaching free through the OA. (project funding for 35 FTE school to school coaching days). Quotes for schools not fully funded depend upon need and preparation required and are made before the service is provided. This is an additional benefit to the systems leadership put in place by the science across the city project.
There is flexibility for schools that require additional support but are not yet ready for assessment or TDTS support from champions. In these cases the National lead is hands on and active in working alongside a champion in carrying out agreed activity. This is particularly relevant to be responsive to Ofsted Outcomes and the focus on subject leadership.

Science Influencers - Deployment & Governance

Expectations for workload will depend upon the subset of the science influencer role chosen. The majority of time in the first phase is funded CPD time. Each champion is expected to work with at least one school for 2.5 days of coaching, with some champions supporting two schools when possible. Phase one of the project has 15 target schools that will be supported with in school coaching between learning CPD days. A champion is assisting in removing barriers and encouraging implementation from an earlier CPD day whereby gap tasks have been set by National Tutors. Champions are not expected to provide bespoke SLE type support.
Each school receiving support from a champion has a National lead with an overview for that school. There are two National science leads associated with the OA project. An action plan is produced and shared with the head, the SL and the champion. Each school visit requires a report form to be completed before a payment claim can be processed. These forms are all electronic and systemised

and will exist as a protocol beyond the set up phase of the OA project. There is a communication protocol with school strategic leaders and a monitoring protocol for the project leaders.

Science Influencers- Expectations & Financial support

The nurture model of the science influencers concept is reflected in the finance associated with the release from schools. Each day a science influencer is required to attend CPD, contribute to a meeting, shadow school visits, support a buddy school in a gap task etc is funded at £200 per day. Following the -Expression of interest -form where a science influencer states preferences a letter to the head outlines the dates, the expectations and the finance linked to that science influencer. This total by the nature of the personalised programme varies from school to school but is payable to a school and not an individual.

Route to PSQM hubleader

The role of PSQM hubleader is funded directly by central PSQM and depends upon the number of schools in your cohort. See www.psqm.org.uk. Application is to PSQM HQ and quality assurance is monitored by the regional senior PSQM hubleader. Support is a shadowed phase with co-delivery of CPD sessions and monitoring via on line access to school to school communication.

Route to Science Learning Partnership (SLP) facilitator

The role of SLP facilitator is funded directly by NMSLP and depends upon the duration of the day to be run by the facilitator. Resources and CPD materials are provided to the facilitator by the SLP. Quality Assurance sits with the NMSLP. Speak to Stephen Burrowes with regard to facilitators.

Route to Specialist Leader in Education (SLE)

Teaching schools recruit SLEs through thorough and published criteria. The science influencer programme will have provided opportunities for teachers to develop skills that may be relevant to their aspiration to be an SLE. Application to be an SLE will be an individual decision and will depend upon career progression routes that the individual may have. Applications will be to teaching schools and through the standard procedures and protocols currently in place. Success at application stage will depend upon competence being demonstrated by the applicant. Not all science influencers will meet the standard or desire the formality of accredited SLEs. Governance and management of SLEs remains with the teaching school with which they are affiliated. Access to subject specific CPD appropriate to leadership beyond your own school will be signposted by science across the city and will be updated in light of primary science National landscape, so keeping the City in touch with external expertise and direction. Teaching schools will be well placed to support SLE generic coaching skills and to develop the relationship for a new SLE in the role to be successful.

Underpinning Philosophy

Good practice often goes unrecognised as development programmes focus on the headlines of concern. Science across the city celebrates diversity of strengths and passions and believes in the motto that **success breeds success.** This comprehensive approach to supporting all stages of experience and need is the inclusive culture that it would in turn expect to exist in schools.

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