

Consultant of the Month – Jorj Kowszun

Jorj Kowszun was originally trained as a Mathematician, having read the subject at Cambridge, Warwick and Oxford. He first went to work for what was then called "Economic Intelligence" at the Bank of England, before taking up a "more positive vocation" in education. He has been a consultant since 2004.

Although his financial prospects were seriously curtailed by his decision to make an early career switch into education, Jorj has not regretted it. "I have never looked back: I have found working with young people and with teachers to be an energising and life-enhancing experience," he says.

He worked in a range of state and independent schools and colleges. As his career progressed, he took on more senior roles and over the years found himself covering functions including principal, finance director, human resources, marketing, strategic planning and curriculum. Throughout this time, however, he remained rooted in the reality of the classroom by continuing to teach a range of subjects, including Mathematics, Philosophy and ICT. He did some occasional inspecting for Ofsted and also experienced being a learner himself by taking a part-time MBA. Eventually he found himself in the role of deputy principal of a huge further education college with over 30,000 learners. This was so far removed from his original vision of engagement with education that when the opportunity arose four years ago he "took a package" and started to work for himself as a consultant.

Because of his wide range of experience, Jorj has been able to provide a variety of very different services. "My greatest challenge is to continue to avoid being labelled as a specialist in a particular area," he explains. His work has ranged from the writing of large partnership bids for funding through training Subject Learning Coaches to doing small-scale research studies. Much of his work he does by himself, although a number of recent contracts have involved leading a team of people with different skills and expertise.

In the last year or so some of Jorj's work has come through his role as an Associate of the National Centre of Excellence for the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM). "This has generated some particularly exciting and creative opportunities and is an initiative very close to my heart, since I continue to have a passion for good quality Mathematics teaching. This work is an excellent example of how a consultant can have a significant impact on national policy development," he adds.

Jorj, who is based in Eastbourne, East Sussex, enjoys being a consultant enormously but is frustrated by the impossibility of spreading his workload in some sensible way. For this reason in the last few months he has started up a small training business (see <http://cpd.forteachers.co.uk>) that focuses on meeting the broader requirements for CPD, such as those of the Institute for Learning. He finds professional development work with teachers very stimulating and looks forward to seeing this area of his work expand.