



Merry Christmas from all of us at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences



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MEd (Practitioner Enquiry)

It has been a privilege to study for both my PGCE and MEd at the University of Newcastle. The calibre of the lecturers and the support they have given is exceptional and I feel fortunate to have studied under them
Barry Dunn, MEd Practitioner Enquiry graduate

The Med Practitioner Enquiry is a part time masters course designed for working teachers.

The TDA have confirmed that they will continue to subsidise the Med Practitioner Enquiry programme for all teachers with QTS. This means that the fees will be approx. £700 instead of over £1400. If you have done your PGCE at Newcastle University within the last 5 years then you can also start in the second year of the three year course

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Taking the pulse of the Better Communication Research Programme (BCRP)

Children with poor communication skills are a major concern for parents, professionals and policy makers. They often do relatively badly in school and find it difficult making friends. The Better Communication Research Programme (BCRP) is a 1.5m research



programme funded by the DfE in England following the Bercow review of service to children with Speech, language and Communication Needs (SLCN) in 2008 <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/bettercommunication>. Professor Law from ECLS is one of the four PIs on the project, the others bring from the University of the West of England (Roulstone), Warwick (Lindsay) and the Institute of Education in London (Dockrell). We started the programme in January 2010 and it is due to run through until March 2012.

There are five projects within the BCRP – *Best Evidence* – an integration of systematic review and practitioner judgement, *Monitoring Progress* of SLCN using the DfE’s National Data sets, *Cost Effectiveness* of interventions for children with SLCN, the *Prospective Study* following SLI and autistic children over critical transitions and the *Preferred Outcomes* project looking at the views of parents and young people.

We have made considerable progress over the last few months. In the Best Evidence project 26 systematic reviews (797 individual papers) were identified covering the full range of children with SLCN. We have identified eight key themes which allow us to focus in on the reviews. We have interviewed practitioners about best practice and are rolling out a national survey in the coming months the results of which will be mapped against the review evidence. We have been using the National Pupil Database to monitor the progress of children with Speech Language and Communication Needs which is remarkably similar to that of other children although the numbers drop dramatically between primary and secondary school. We have been looking at the few cost effectiveness studies in the field, finding out what we can about

national service usage and looking at the impact of different intervention dosages. We are collecting prospective data on groups of pupils with SLCN and with Autism in mainstream schools at overlapping phases of education (Year 1, 3, 5, and 7). We are identifying 25 pupils with SLI and 25 pupils with ASD in each year group (c200 in all). And finally we have been talking to parents about what they see as being the key outcomes for their children. Parents linked success in communication to other life outcomes. Two overarching themes emerged: to be included and to achieve independence. While practitioners commonly focus on the children’s communication outcomes parents felt that it was more important to see changes in the understanding and behaviour of other people around their child.

As the BCRP progresses we will be introducing a series of new projects designed to address questions raised in the Bercow review. We will be doing some secondary analysis of data looking at the relationship between language development and behavior, we have a dysfluency intervention study and the development of a measure to assess the “Communication Friendly School”. Where practicable we will be introducing an economic component to the studies that we fund.



Inevitably as such a large programme of work proceeds there are points when we will be able to share the detail of progress on the specific projects. We will be doing a number of presentations as the programme develops including an overview at the **Child Language Seminar** to be held at Newcastle University between the 12th and the 14th of June 2011 <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/CLS2011/>. We also post updates of the various activities on the BCRP programme website and everyone with an interest in the children with SLCN are most welcome to contact me on j.law@ncl.ac.uk.

Learning French in a digital kitchen

As you may know, iLAB:Learn was launched in ECLS in 2010 in collaboration with the Digital Institute. iLAB:Learn is a laboratory for research, development and application of digital technologies in education. iLAB:Learn is a practice-based research lab and includes working technology enhanced learning installations. A major iLAB project started on the first of June 2010 and involves Professor Paul Seedhouse and Saandia Ali (both from ECLS) as well as Patrick Olivier, Daniel Jackson and Thomas Ploetz (from the School of Computing Science). The main objective of this project is to develop the next generation of technology applied to language learning, namely the use of digital sensors together with a Task-Based Learning approach. Sensors are attached to all equipment and ingredients so that each time an item is correctly or incorrectly moved participants can be given appropriate verbal feedback.



We ran a number of pilot experiments over the summer at the Culture lab at Newcastle University and in one of the kitchens of the Agriculture building. This has enabled us to test and improve the tasks we had designed for simple recipes ranging from the croque-monsieur to herb-omelette and even pear clafouti.

We are currently working with our partners in the Catering and French departments at Newcastle College using a preliminary version of the technology. We record and film two students cooking together, one of them being a student of



French and the other a catering student. We are hoping that the students will learn targeted grammar and vocabulary items by doing the task and that the interaction between a linguist and a chef will result in some fruitful knowledge transfer. We've already recorded 12 hours of video and audio data.

Finally, we are very happy to announce that a brand new digital kitchen has been built in the School of ECLS in the King George VI building (in B.83, the iLAB -Learn). It is fully furnished and is equipped with four screens, one of which is a touch screen. These will be used to display the instructions for our recipes as well as videos and pictures. The digital sensors and RFID tags that will be installed in the kitchen are currently being developed at the Culture Lab. We are planning to develop a curriculum that caters for various types of learners ranging from beginners to intermediate and more advanced learners. We'll start sending invitations for you to come and try out our kitchen as soon as it is fully functional. Everybody is welcome and our cooking sessions always end with you eating the food you've cooked! Please get in touch with Saandia at saandia.ali@ncl.ac.uk



Promoting language skills to improve children's behavior in primary school

You can hardly open a newspaper nowadays without reading about the poor behavior of children in school. Where you used to hear concerns about secondary school children the focus has shifted to younger and younger children. Teachers express exasperation and school exclusions rise. The solution for many is to teach the children social skills but few such interventions work very well leaving teachers with something of a dilemma.

Over the past twenty years a series of studies have shown that with many of these children their poor behavior is accompanied by poor language skills. So not only do they not understand much of what is going on in the class room but they cannot communicate very effectively with their peers or their teacher and perhaps most importantly do not respond well to traditional "talking therapies" where teachers and other professionals often use complex language to explain what they want of the children. Specifically we are arguing that it is the children's phonological processing skills which underpin many of these behaviour difficulties. Much poor behavior can be explained by the fact that the children simply do not understand what is expected of them, and they don't understand because they are not able to process speech very effectively. And this is where a team from ECLS comes in.

Funded through the School Research Fund we have pulled together a genuinely interdisciplinary team made up of Professor James Law (Speech and language therapist), Dr Helen Stringer (Speech and language therapist), Dr Simon Gibbs (Educational psychology), Maria Mroz (teacher) together with a speech and language therapist in Newcastle, Alex Wyles. We will be carrying out a series of experimental single subject design intervention studies looking at the effect of a phonological awareness intervention on the children. Alex Wyles will act as the therapist to begin with but we plan to expand the study by having students carrying out the same intervention in similar circumstances. We will start by identifying primary school aged boys who have been identified by teachers as being of concern for their behavior. We anticipate that many of them will be very active and will have what are often known as "conduct disorders". We will start by checking that the children's behavior is relatively stable. We will then introduce the intervention over a single term and monitor the children's behavior at regular intervals. We will know by the summer whether there is enough preliminary evidence to say that the intervention works and if there is we will be putting in for more substantial research funding. If it does work the intervention has the potential to make a real difference to this most challenging group of children. And perhaps most importantly the interdisciplinary team leading the study will maximise the potential uptake of the intervention.

Professor Sheena Reilly from Melbourne visits Speech and Language Sciences

The Speech and Language Sciences section of the School of Education Communication and Language Science will be host in 2011 to a visiting professor from down under. Professor Sheena Reilly is Director of Speech Pathology in the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne and Professor of Paediatric Speech Pathology, Department of Pediatrics, University of Melbourne. Sheena has been an active researcher in the field for many years. Earlier in her career she worked in Great Ormond Street Hospital and the Institute of Child Health in London focusing on the feeding patterns of babies with complex disabilities. More recently she has been PI on the Early Language in Victoria (ELVS) Study a birth cohort of all children born in Victoria who are being regularly followed up and their language and school performance monitored. The cohort has also led to three full scale randomized trials, one of which entitled



"Language For Learning" in which Professor Law is also involved is looking at the outcomes of a universal intervention promoting phonological and language skills as a key component of school readiness.

Funded under the University's visiting professor's scheme Professor Reilly's visit is the first of its kind in the section and indeed the school. She will be

coming to work with Professor James Law for six weeks in April and May. During the time that she is here she will be carrying out three seminars in the Institute of Health and Society as well as an open lecture organized within ECLS. If anyone would be interested in meeting up with Sheena when she is here please contact Professor Law j.law@ncl.ac.uk.

Education for Women in the Gambia: A Success Story

In 2006 I posted an article in this newsletter describing my research into counselling girls in Gambian schools. This was facilitated by ex- ECLS student and active alumni Marie-Antoinette Corr-Jack. This article tells the story of Antoinette's successful career path since

achieving her Masters Degree in Education from Newcastle University, and links this to the UN Millennium Goal 3: Inclusion of girls in education and the setting up of a new charity in NE England.

Antoinette came to the UK early in this millennium and successfully achieved her Bachelor's degree, followed by the Masters in Guidance and Counselling in ECLS. As a teacher in the Gambia, along with her colleague and fellow alumni, Mariama Chow, Antoinette could see the need for counselling in schools and became instrumental in setting up the Guidance and Counselling Unit as part of the Ministry of Education, based in Banjul (see photo).

The Unit and projects were funded by UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, YMCA and EFA (World Conference on Education for All, supported by UN). In 2005/6 Antoinette and I carried out now published research into counselling in schools, which was funded by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has an active Gambian 'Chapter' and Antoinette has embraced the principles of

this by becoming the first ever Secretary-General of the Gambian Teachers Union.

Antoinette has visited the UK and other European countries many times to speak at conferences and we have met up on several occasions over the past few years, including earlier this summer at a large international alumni event organised by Newcastle University. Antoinette has made contacts and used her networking skills well, beginning with her trip as a new student to the Rothbury UN One-World event organised by myself and David Mercer (I have continued this tradition following David's retirement). Her links with the North of England have led to an exchange visit with teachers at

Northallerton College facilitated by teacher Marion Casson. Marion has set up a

new charity to support the work of teachers from the College in relation to learning and teaching and they have completed a successful visit to two schools in Banjul. The new charity is called: Yorkshire-Gambia Children's Project and I have had meetings with Marion over the past year to look at researching the project as a case study in educating girls and women. One of Marion's major aims is for the charity to fund the education of girls and their mothers/carers in urban and rural schools in the Gambia. Opportunities for researching this very worthwhile project will be explored further with colleagues in ECLS over the coming weeks.

Dr Sue Pattison



Antoinette and Mariama at the Ministry of Education, Banjul.

Visiting Fellowship for Academic

Ghada Khattab has been awarded a Visiting Erskine Fellowship to be held at the School of Languages, Culture and Linguistics at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand in February and March 2011. The purpose of the fellowship is to invite distinguished international academic visitors who are advanced in the learning of any subject taught in the



Faculties of Commerce, Engineering or Science for the purpose of giving lectures in such subjects to students of the university. Ghada will be offering lectures in phonetics, bilingualism and sociolinguistics and will collaborate with members of the newly formed New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain, and Behaviour

(<http://www.nzilbb.canterbury.ac.nz/>).

A Continuing Professional Development Framework for Speech and Language Therapists and Allied Professionals

October 2010 saw the launch of an initiative which has developed through partnerships between the Speech & Language Sciences Section of the School of ECLS and North East Regional Speech and Language Therapy Managers and the Regional Strategic Health Authority. This Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework aims to meet the CPD needs of busy professionals who work with individuals with speech, language and communication needs.

What were the drivers for this initiative?

There is a recognised need to create and provide specialised and accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) and allied professionals.

CPD improves the career prospects and career progression of individuals, and the quality of services they can deliver. It also provides managers with a tool for ensuring their workforce has the full range of competencies required to deliver the high quality services which commissioners demand.

A number of drivers of change in working practice in the NHS, Education, Social Care and in the Professions have created a focus on improving quality through an agenda of responsive, applicable and high quality CPD.

Such drivers include: *High quality care for all* (Darzi, 2008); *Bercow review of services for children and young people (0-19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs* (Bercow, 2008); *Modernising Allied Health Professions careers* (DoH 2008); *The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (NHS KSF)* (October 2004).

What does the CPD framework offer?

This framework aims to provide flexible, accessible, specialist and accredited CPD opportunities for Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) and professionals allied to their work in education, social care and health contexts, supporting them to advance their careers through the delivery of Masters level qualifications which are tailored to align with professional commitments.

The framework is designed in order that it can be to be responsive to the identified CPD needs of the professions and to changing agendas in education, health and social care.

How are the modules delivered?

All modules are designed to be accessible to busy working practitioners and so are delivered in concentrated blocks to fit around normal working

practice, with contact teaching time of 2 or 3 full days for each module. Assignments and work-based projects are included which relate directly to participants' practice, hence ensuring the relevance and impact of the learning.

Who are they for?

The modules vary as to whether they are exclusively designed for SLTs or whether they are also suitable for other



Dr Cristina McKean

professionals. We hope to capitalise on opportunities and benefits offered by inter-professional learning. Applications are welcomed from across the UK and from outside of the UK.

What qualification do participants gain?

Each of the modules is worth 20 credits at Postgraduate level.

We are currently working towards developing programmes which would allow participants to accumulate credits from a minimum of 60 to a maximum of 180 credits and so be awarded a Certificate, a Diploma or a Masters in Professional Practice in Allied Health.

The future

The CPD framework will offer a rolling programme of modules with new modules being developed in response to demand. In this way the CPD framework aims to contribute to the future vision for Speech and Language Sciences at Newcastle University. That is, to continue to build on three core areas of excellence: delivering high quality teaching, excellent research and collaborative working with the profession to impact on practice.

For more information please visit the web page www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/postgrad/modules/sltcpd/ Or contact Dr Cristina McKean, Degree Programme Director cristina.mckean@ncl.ac.uk

Student wins Teacher of the Year award

Andrew Bainbridge won the inspirational Teacher of the Year award at the glitzy award ceremony for the Sun FM Local Heroes awards earlier in October. This is an outstanding achievement by a man who is not only Headteacher at Willow Fields Community Primary School but also studying for a Doctorate in Education at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University.

There were a number of awards on the night with teacher of the year being very competitive with over a thousand entries. Andrew was told that his entry 'stood out' and won the judges vote in the final 3 on the night. One of the parent governors at his school nominated him. Willow Fields Community Primary School has dramatically developed in recent years, achieved Good in a 2010 OFSTED inspection and is currently attaining



outstanding in areas such as curriculum and care guidance and support (SIP report July 2010). The school also received Investors in People 'Gold' status recently which only the top 3% of organisations hold nationally.

Andrew says that he thought it was a wind up at first, but is delighted to have won. He puts his success down to family, friends, hard work and dedication of those directly associated with the school and also to his doctoral studies. Andrew has found the EdD a very professional and friendly place for him to debate issues and develop his own learning in a research context.

Kate Wall (Degree Programme Director for the EdD) says "this is an excellent achievement, Andrew has a lot of things to juggle and his award is very well deserved".

Jonathan Thornton: 2009 Marie Butterworth Prize for Excellence in Practitioner Enquiry

ECLS awarded its second Marie Butterworth Prize this term. Marie was a keen advocate of teacher research, an active participant in a number of ECLS research projects, a CfLaT research fellow and a local deputy head teacher. ECLS is making this award in her memory to celebrate her enthusiasm and achievements. The prize, which is awarded annually, is testament to the quality and impact of teachers' academic and reflective work which is driven by a desire to provide excellent learning opportunities for their pupils.

The prize for 2009/10 was awarded to Jonathan Thornton. Jonathan graduated from Newcastle University in 2003 with a Joint Honours Degree in Computing Science and Physics, and completed his PGCE in Mathematics at Newcastle in 2007. He has now completed his M.Ed in Practitioner Enquiry here in ECLS, studying part time while teaching Mathematics and Computing at Heaton Manor School.

During his first year of teaching Jonathan recognised the importance of technology in modern education and the increasingly dominant role computer and video games were playing in the lives of young learners. This inspired him to enquire into the effect of interactive educational software on improving engagement and attainment on pupils in mathematics. The M.Ed in Practitioner Enquiry facilitated this process, allowing him to stay abreast of emerging educational research and ensuring that he continued a reflective approach to improving classroom practice. The Marie Butterworth prize was awarded to Jonathan for his dissertation which focused on the potential of computer games and interactive entertainment media for engagement and attainment. Congratulations to Jonathan and thank you to David Wright who supervised this research.

Projects in the slums of Delhi

Pauline Dixon is advising the London based charity Absolute Return for Kids on two of their current projects in Delhi India. The first is an English literacy programme for Class 1 students in the largest slum in north east Delhi. The intervention is working with 19 private and 11 government schools which are operating in the slum of Shahadra, North East Delhi for children aged 5-7 years old. Teacher training was undertaken in June and the children have been experiencing synthetic phonics lessons every day for an hour. Baseline tests were carried out prior to the intervention with both the children experiencing phonics and

a similar number in a control group. Final testing will take place March 2011 and the data analysed using multi level modelling.

The programme aims to:

- Train and mentor teachers to deliver quality English language teaching;
- Influence the teaching of English in schools across Delhi by demonstrating the impact of the programme using evidence from year one

The delivery of an effective English literacy programme within the local school curriculum also provides additional incentives for children to remain in school. This approach teaches letter sounds, conversational English, reading and writing in an enjoyable and multi-sensory way. Children are quickly empowered to speak, read and write in English with confidence and fluency. Schools that operate in the slums purportedly are English medium, but typically teach by rote. So this



programme offers a unique opportunity to change the way children experience language learning. The second programme is working within the same communities and in partnership with the Centre for Civil Society an established think tank in Delhi known for its work in slum areas working with both private establishments and government. ARK are providing around 900-1,000 poor children access to quality education through the provision of an education voucher worth around £100 per year for five years. This voucher will buy the child uniforms, books, meals, and tuition. Pauline is advising on the external research which will take the form of a randomised field trial to evaluate the voucher scheme. Professor Patrick Wolfe of the University of Arkansas, is also involved as an expert in the field of school choice and vouchers in the USA. Baseline testing is currently underway for all applicants of the voucher using standardised tests in Hindi and English reading and maths. A lottery will take place in January in order to determine which children are allocated a voucher.

Therefore those initially applying for the voucher represent a homogeneous group which will be split into control and treatment groups. Testing will take place for the treatment and control groups over the next three years providing longitudinal data in order to analyse some of the effects providing a school voucher has for some of the poorest children currently out of school or in low quality schools in the slums of Delhi. For more information please get in touch with Pauline Dixon: pauline.dixon@ncl.ac.uk



Cambridge Primary Review Regional Research Network at Newcastle University - Launch Event

March 8th 2011 from 2-7pm
Kings Hall, Newcastle University
£40 per person

The CPR National Primary Network is a direct response to requests from teachers and others who attended regional and national dissemination events following publication of the final report in October 2009. This event launches the regional group which is coordinator by Newcastle University and spans Northeast England and Cumbria and will offer the chance for you and your organisation to get involved.

It aims to provide a summary of the Cambridge Primary Review recommendations alongside an introduction to the aims of the network, nationally and regionally. It will showcase innovative pedagogy in local schools inspired by the CPR and provide opportunities to network with other practitioners in the region as well as the Cambridge Primary Review team.

Speakers include Professor Robin Alexander (Director of the CPR), Alison Peacock (National CPR Co-ordinator) and Dr Kate Wall (Regional CPR co-ordinator)

For more information please get in touch with Dr Kate Wall: kate.wall@ncl.ac.uk

The North Leadership Centre in Romania

The Problem

In 2008 the Romanian Ministry of Education, in attempting to modernise its education system, decided to decentralise financial responsibility and considerable power to schools, as most of the western world had done 20 years previously. It accepted that its headteachers were currently 'managers', implementing national and local edicts, and for decentralisation to be successful, it needed to help them become 'leaders' able to create a powerful and inspiring strategic vision for the school and to win the support of its staff and the local community for that vision.



Our approach

The Ministry succeeded in gaining funding from the European Social Fund for a three year project to help headteachers acquire these skills. This involves many partners across the country and international experience and expertise from the Centre for Learning Behaviour (Warwick University) and the North Leadership Centre (Newcastle University).

The Strategy

We have been involved since January 2009 when we visited Bucharest to meet with the partners and visit schools. This gave us an oversight and we were able to advise the Ministry on a number of issues which affected future planning of the project. Over the next 18 months we provided resources for training and advice on draft materials. In September 2010 a joint team from NLC and CfLB provided a week's training for a team of 28 'super' trainers who would subsequently train 240 trainers, who would then work with headteachers across the country. Our role was to give these super trainers a clear rationale for training and a range of modern training techniques which they could pass on to their colleagues.



Outcomes

At the end of our week small groups of the super trainers had to run a short piece of training with the rest of the participants using the techniques they had been taught. These were all highly successful and we feel confident they are now ready to pass on these skills and techniques.

Some of the team stayed to support writing groups which were creating policy frameworks and occupational standards.

We will continue to support various working groups via e mail and phone calls and will return to Romania in January 2011 to support the super trainers training of their 240 colleagues.

Sugata Mitra in the Press

There have been a number of articles about Sugata's Self organised Learning Environments (SOLEs) in the press recently. This has ranged from articles in the UK Guardian: bit.ly/sugata1

to the Wall Street Journal on wsj.com/sugata2 to the BBC: bbc.in/sugata3.

Sugata has also been given an honorary doctorate by Delft Technological University.

In addition he has given a range of keynotes at the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust National Conference, at the Association for Experiential Education

annual conference, the Australian International Education Conference as well as the closing keynote at the Scottish Learning Festival. Sugata gave a keynote speech at the Association for Learning Technology Annual conference. Sugata also gave a speech at the TED Global event in Oxford, his speech (bit.ly/sugata4) got a standing ovation.



CfLaT School Buildings Conference 15 July 2011

Strengthening CfLaT team members work around school buildings, an inter-disciplinary conference examining issues around achieving productive relationships between school settings and educational activities is being organised in Newcastle on the 15th July 2011.

Members of CfLaT have specific expertise in the subject area, having completed recognised reviews of learning environments, with continuing research in the area. Pam Woolner successfully collaborates with architects and engineers on a range of projects (EPSRC project in Sheffield, HEFCE research in Loughborough and, currently, a UKERC series around sustainable schools). She presents to conferences of educators and architects, and was invited by the British Council for School Environments to give evidence to their Great Schools Enquiry. Pam's book, 'The Design of Learning Spaces' was published in June 2010.

The conference will centre on genuinely interdisciplinary interaction. Delegates will be seated in mixed groups and hear speakers from differing backgrounds. They will experience a range of workshops and complete group activities which facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration about the issues raised from the various disciplines (e.g. architecture and design, education, engineering and construction) and perspectives (research, practice, policy). Confirmed keynote speakers are Prof Guy Claxton, noted education researcher and theorist; Prof Peter Blundell Jones, architect, historian, academic and critic; Dr Rosie Parnell, researcher and practitioner in participatory design for young people.

For further information contact: P.J.Woolner@ncl.ac.uk

Headteacher Training in Chengdu, China

In November, 2010 Kevin James, Director of the North Leadership Centre, and Alan Sergison, one of our independent consultants, travelled to Chengdu to deliver 5 days training to 25 primary headteachers. In March, 2010 the headteachers will come to Newcastle for two weeks further training and visits to local schools (3 primary and 1 secondary).

The content of the three weeks was based on the main themes that we believe are most relevant to headteachers in the 21st century. These included:

- Emotional Intelligence
- Leadership styles.
- School culture
- Learning-centred leadership
- School self-evaluation
- School improvement planning
- The management of change
- Motivation
- Adult learning
- Managing performance
- Building high performing teams.
- Strategic leadership



The Chinese headteachers also learnt about current challenges facing UK headteachers.

For more information please contact Kevin James at kevin.james@ncl.ac.uk.

USEFUL CONTACTS

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