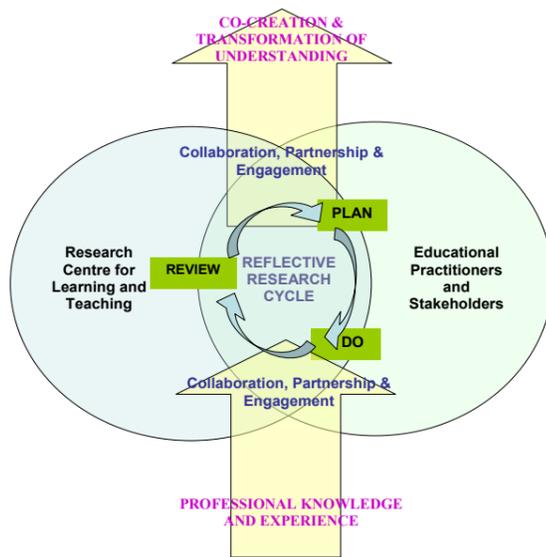


## CfLaT: who are we and what do we do?

The Centre for Learning and Teaching (CfLaT) was established in 2002. It is embedded in the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences (ECLS). It has established itself as a driving force behind teaching, learning and curriculum innovation and as a foundation for research capacity building across the School and the Faculty.

The aspiration of the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CfLaT) is to be an authority in the research and practice of learning and teaching, life-long and life-wide. We are widely recognised as an effective University partner in developing research-led practice with a growing reputation for pragmatic collaboration and improvement in the field of learning and teaching. The Centre has a strong orientation towards applied research and impact, developed through a range of work exploring a variety of innovations all of which address the educational experience and outcomes of learners.



The Centre operates at a critical but complex cross over between different aspects of members' professional and academic interests. As such it works to combine different perspectives and to ensure outputs are produced at multiple levels.

We believe that collaborative partnerships and equality between the different sectors on which we have impact is essential. We have six key research themes which are underpinned by this philosophy:

- Professional practice
- Learning environments
- 14-19 education
- Visual methodologies
- Innovative pedagogies
- Community Learning

Across these themes we facilitate the development of understanding of learning and teaching as well as an appreciation of how research on learning and teaching can support this process.

CfLaT has an impressive, and ongoing, strategy for supporting the research careers of its members, regardless of experience and expertise. The more experienced support the less experienced, and vice versa. Staff in the Centre work hard to create and promote a vibrant research culture which helps to facilitate and enable researchers at all stages of their research careers (including students) through events and activities such as: research teas; bid and paper writing groups; guidance group; education section seminars; national conferences and seminars; and regular away days.

The Centre for Learning and Teaching is a hub of research based activity to which Postgraduate Taught and Research students are invited. Centre events provide the chance for them to engage with researchers of national and international standing. Students across post-graduate programmes are encouraged to take part in research events.



### CfLaT Headlines

*The Education Section including CfLaT has achieved well in the RAE results. Ratings are based on a four point scale and a judgement is made on research outputs, environment and esteem indicators. Our profile can be seen below:*

4*	3*	2*	1*
10%	40%	35%	15%

*Optimus Education (including Chris Kington Publishing) are running a celebratory event on the 11th February at the Baltic to mark over a decade of successful collaboration with the Centre.*

*The 2 day introductory workshop on visual methods run by the ESRC Researcher Development Initiative is coming to Newcastle in May. CfLaT member, Kate Wall, is one of the team organising and presenting on this developing methods agenda.*

### STATUS RENEWAL CELEBRATION

*To celebrate the renewal of CfLaT's status as a University Research Centre (URC) last November, we are planning a celebratory event to formally recognise the achievement.*

*Please come join us for a glass of wine, nibbles and a chat.  
3rd March from 4.30-7pm*

### In this issue:

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# NEWSLETTER

January 2009

Issue 2

## Learning to Learn Phase 4 Case Studies Published

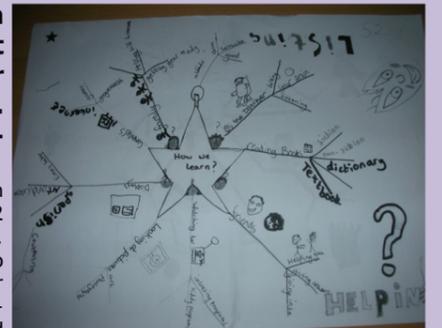
**Year One of the Learning to Learn in Schools Phase 4 Research Project sponsored by the Campaign for Learning has now been completed. 30 case studies written by participant teachers have been produced.**

The Learning to Learn in Schools Project builds on work completed in Phase 1 (Rodd 2001); Phase 2 (Rodd 2003) and Phase 3 (Higgins et al. 2007). Phase 3 was successful in enabling teachers to focus on improving the quality of learning in their schools and this could be identified in pupils' assessed performance in tests and examinations and their wider achievement. Further the teachers themselves valued the opportunity for professional development and enquiry provided by the project.

Phase 4 sees an emphasis on sustainability (the project continues to work with regions and schools involved in Phase 3) and replicability (a new local authority, Northumberland, has been included in the project and new schools have also joined in existing regions). The process of teacher inquiry as practised within the Phase 3 and 4 projects grounds the individual in context, in relevance to the learners and sustains the process through the increased motivation brought by rapid and responsive feedback. This is supported by the focus on two key values from the project: teacher autonomy and the responsibility to make public the work that is done. 30 case studies have been submitted in Year One. Of these, six were from Cheshire, twelve from Cornwall, schools in Enfield produced five and in Northumberland, seven. The case studies come from a range of school types across the four LAs: one came from a special school catering for pupils from three to 19 years; one from the Learning Space which is Local Authority based; 16 were from the primary age phase; one was from a middle school (nine to 13 years); and nine were from schools in the secondary age phase. Examples can be seen in the table below.

**For further information about the project contact the project manager, Elaine Hall: Elaine.Hall@ncl.ac.uk**

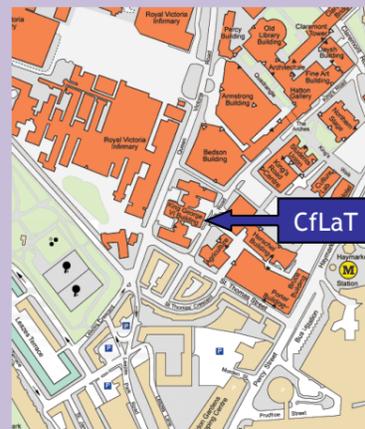
Tytherington High School	Can the use of a weekly Learning Log help students reflect on their learning?
Weaverham Forest Street Primary School	Improving Behaviour And Self Esteem Through Creating A Nurture Group And Developing A Model For Circle Time
Winsford High Street Primary School	Involving children in the process of learning and assessment, and developing a language for learning
Liskeard School and Community College	Students as Researchers of their own learning: impacts on learning relationships
The Learning Space	Pupil-led learning: inspiring gifted and talented students through Summer Challenge
Treloweth Primary School	The impact of target setting on taking responsibility for learning
Carterhatch Primary School	The impact of individual, pair and group work on performance in algebra
Hazelbury Infant School	Does the TASC wheel for problem solving improve infant children's motivation to learn and self-esteem?
Oakthorpe Primary School	Understanding the impact of using success criteria for self and peer assessment in Maths
Duchess' High School	Does cooperative learning impact on the development of assessment for learning, group work and social interaction?
Hexham Middle School	An investigation into the effect of a kinaesthetic approach on concentration and motivation
Hipsburn First School	How will a specific strategy for co-operative learning impact on mature social interactions?



For further information:

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## Small software for secondary mathematics on hand held technology

Two RCfLaT members, David Wright and Pam Woolner, are currently researching the potential for graphical calculators (GCs) to improve secondary mathematics lessons.

The study is a two year enquiry, funded by the National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics (NCETM). It began in June 2007 with the delivery of the GCs.

**Background:** We are focusing on the introduction of two class sets of TI84 GCs together with a range of software into the teaching and learning practices of a secondary school mathematics department. Use of the GCs was concentrated in two top set Year 8 mathematics classes. In one class students were each given a GC to take home, while in the other class the GCs were used in school only.

A later addition to the project is a networking system, the Navigator, which allows the GCs to be linked to each other and to the teacher's pc so that data and images can be shared and projected on to the whole class display.

**Learner's perspective:** There was an initial, consistent perception among the learners that the use of the GCs in their lessons was beneficial.

It was anticipated that the GCs would have a wider impact on learning, perhaps stimulating problem-solving and higher level talk around mathematics. During later classroom observations, a higher proportion of comments related to mathematics were noted.

**Teacher's perspective:** The teachers are developing their experience in how and when the use of this technology might be appropriate

Some activities were extremely popular and pupils returned to their use voluntarily either in the classroom or at home.

**Interest in the project:** There has been national and international interest in this research. David Wright has 'showcased' the research for the NCETM at 'The Potential of ICT in Mathematics Teaching and Learning' Conference. This national NCETM event took place in March 2008 in London, and was opened by the Rt Hon Jim Knight MP, Minister of State for Schools and Learners.

For further information contact David Wright: [D.G.Wright@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:D.G.Wright@ncl.ac.uk)



## Business leader of tomorrow?

**Anna Reid, Knowledge Transfer Partnership Associate has been short listed for a 2009 Business Leader of Tomorrow Award.**

Anna's innovation and hard work on the Knowledge Transfer Partnership project run by the Centre and the Federation of Bedlingtonshire High School and West Sleekburn Middle School has been rewarded by the KTP organisation. Being short listed for the Business Leader of Tomorrow award recognises her success developing and coordinating enquiry-based learning in school over the first year of the project.

The project relies on Anna to facilitate the generation of new understandings across partners including researchers, teaching staff and students (not the easiest bunch to organise!) and to disseminate the new knowledge inside and outside the project. It aims to investigate the best ways to assess enquiry-based learning at Key Stage 3 and as such is developing practice and understanding to support the design of a model for teaching and learning, as well as an innovative assessment framework for enquiry skills. The project addresses many practical issues, but also fulfils many national agendas.

This Partnership received financial support from the ESRC through the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships programme (KTP). KTP aims to help businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the UK Knowledge Base. KTP is funded by the Technology Strategy Board along with the other government funding organisations.

Anna now has to attend a selection panel in London on the 6th February—we will all have our fingers crossed.

**Further information on the KTP project can be gained from Anna:** [anna.reid@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:anna.reid@ncl.ac.uk)

**Information on the KTP Organisation and awards can be found at:** [www.ktponline.org.uk](http://www.ktponline.org.uk)



## Learning more about coaching

**Rachel Lofthouse and David Leat are continuing to work on 'An investigation of the processes and outcomes of coaching between secondary school teachers'.**

This two year project, funded by CfBT and NCSL, is developmental in style, with the desired outcome that we understand more about how coaching can be improved. Schools supporting the research are drawn from Sheffield, Staffordshire, Essex and North East England. We are finding out more about the sustainability of coaching as a professional development approach, and the variety of models that are adopted across schools. At the other end of scale we are analysing transcriptions of coaching conversations to better understand the nature of productive professional dialogue.

In the majority of schools, coaching is a voluntary activity. Coaching is expensive, and managers report finding it difficult to fully support coaching as much as they would like to do, and rely heavily on the goodwill of teachers. Some schools have used coaching as a vehicle to promote other initiatives in teaching and learning such as thinking skills, assessment for learning and the development of post-14 curricula and pedagogies.

Our work is also leading us to understand the role of tools in supporting coaching. These include the use of video and questions in coaching practice. An emerging, but significant, tool is a multi-dimensional framework which characterises coaching conversations. The dimensions include initiation, the use of stimulus, the scale and time frame at which teaching is discussed, the tones adopted by participants, and the intention and / or function of the interaction. Despite this complexity they seem to reveal to coaches some of the appropriate techniques that they can adopt and a language with which to discuss coaching. These are important stages in the improvement of coaching.

For further information contact: [Rachel.Lofthouse@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.Lofthouse@ncl.ac.uk)

### BREAKING NEWS

It has just been announced that Liz Todd and Colleen Cummings have been successful in obtaining a 5 year DCSF funded project. Along with the British Market Research Bureau, Manchester University and Ivy Papps (an economist) this research will continue their work on extended school provision.

### RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE

(Spring 2009)

Research teas aim to provide an informal forum for discursive examination of emerging research themes and concepts.

Tea and cakes will be available from 3pm with the session officially beginning at 3.15.

**January 21<sup>st</sup>**

Colin Bryson: Student Engagement

**February 18<sup>th</sup>**

Kirsten Brandt (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)

**March 11<sup>th</sup>**

Hermine Gunthorsdottir: Inclusion within different European contexts

**March 18<sup>th</sup>**

Anna Goulding: Artists working with teachers

**DATES FOR THE SUMMER TERM:** 22<sup>nd</sup> April (Cathy Burke, Leeds University), 20<sup>th</sup> May (Jo McShane), 17<sup>th</sup> June (tbc) and 15<sup>th</sup> July (tbc)

Further information about the research teas can be gained from Pam Woolner ([P.J.Woolner@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:P.J.Woolner@ncl.ac.uk)) or from the Centre website ([www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/news/teas](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/news/teas)). You could even volunteer to contribute one yourself!!

## Bridging the Gap: Transition Project

CfLaT members Ann Briggs, Jill Clark and Ian Hall have received funding through the Newcastle University Strategic Fund to explore student transition to Higher Education. A significant element of the project will be the synthesis of knowledge already held about students in transition, and the impact of programmes to support them. The information will be used for the following main purposes:

- To enable better understanding of student transition, and how we may best support incoming students, pre- and post-entry.
- To provide a comprehensive 'picture' of the range, quantity and diversity of the University's current transition activities.

To contribute case studies for publication, web dissemination and other materials supporting the University's transition activities.

Fresh data will be collected from Northumberland school applicants, from college applicants in North East colleges and from students post-entry who have experienced pre-entry programmes, to increase our knowledge of student expectations and experiences. The outputs will be in a range of communication media, to suit specific purposes.

**For further information contact Jill Clark:** [Jill.Clark@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Jill.Clark@ncl.ac.uk)