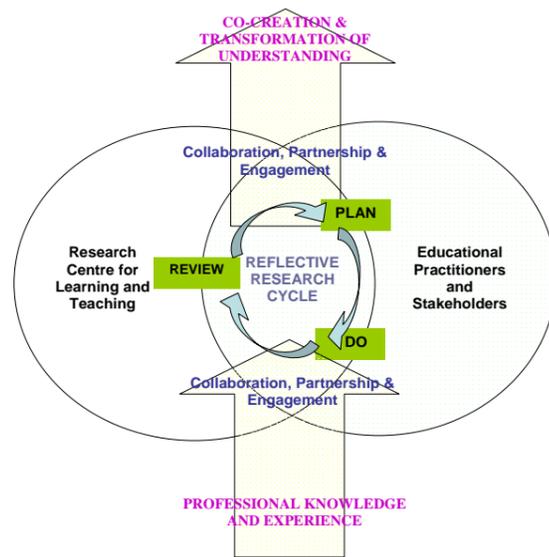


## CfLaT: who are we and what do we do?

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 postgraduate programmes are encouraged to take part in research events.

## Research Centre for CfLaT Learning and Teaching

### CfLaT Headlines

*David Leat, Executive Director of the Centre, has received his well deserved promotion to Professor.*

*The Centre is settling into its new location in the basement of King George VI Building—come visit us at the ECLS Showcase event on 17th September!!*

*CfLaT members are continuing to develop school based contracts to support practitioner enquiry through action research, current partners include St Thomas More's RC School, Gateshead and Oldham Local Authority.*

*Learning and Teaching Update and Extended Schools Update, edited by members of CfLaT are continuing to achieve high circulation figures.*

### CfLaT Leadership Change

RCfLaT will have a new leadership structure this September:

- David Leat, Executive Director
- Jill Clark, Business Development Director
- Kate Wall, Partnership Development Director

This rationalisation of the leadership roles will mean that different aspects of Centre activities will be led by an experienced member of the team who can concentrate on ensuring their success.

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# NEWSLETTER

September 2008

Issue 1

## University Research Centre Status Renewal

The Research Centre for Learning and Teaching has had its University Research Centre Status (URC) Renewed.

David Leat was pleased to announce to fellow Centre members in early September that the University Research Office (URO) has recommended that the URC status of CfLaT be renewed. This is fantastic news as it means there is continued recognition by central University for the work completed by the Centre and there is understanding of the role that CfLaT can play in providing an evidence base to teaching and learning inside and outside Higher Education Institutions.

There are currently 16 University recognised Research Centres and the renewal process is conducted on a 5 year rolling programme by the University Research Office. It required the Centre Directors, David Leat, Jill Clark and Kate Wall, to deliver a presentation and submit a document outlining the strategic plan, objectives, achievements and business plan for the next 5 years. It was a gruelling process and the successful outcome is felt to acknowledge the continuing hard work of Centre members.

## Twice the Research Project Funding Success



**Members of CfLaT have successfully bid for two new projects in the last couple of months. Both new projects build on previous work and extend understanding in key areas of interest.**

Liz Todd, Colleen Cummings and Lucy Tiplady, along with colleagues at the BMRB have been successful in their tender to the DCSF to evaluate their Extended Schools Pathfinder. The 18 month evaluation brings £94,164 to CfLaT's profile of projects and a further £152,750 to BMRB.

This project will compare two school subsidy models that aim to encourage access to extended school activities for children and young people who are economically disadvantaged or in care. Liz and Colleen were thrilled to get this work which builds on their experience of undertaking evaluations in this high profile policy area.

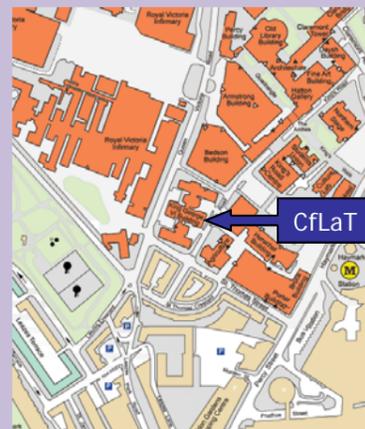
The second project success has been for Kate Wall and Elaine Hall. The Campaign for Learning have confirmed funding for a complementary project to the Learning to Learn in Schools Phase 4 project, researching what learning to learn looks like in Further Education Colleges. This project will team CfLaT up with Northumberland and Cornwall Colleges where teachers will be supported in exploring what effective learning looks like in their context. It will use the same professional enquiry through action research methodology which has been used in other Learning to Learn projects and will have outputs of teacher-led case studies. The project will start in September 2008 and run for 2 years.

**For further information about the two projects please contact the respective project managers: C.L.Cummings@ncl.ac.uk and Elaine.Hall@ncl.ac.uk**



For further information:

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## Conference Season

### BERA Annual Conference

3rd to 6th September 2008,  
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland.



**September brings the Education conference season and CfLaT members will be attending in larger numbers than ever before.**

The majority will be attending the British Education Research Association (BERA) Conference in Edinburgh from the 3rd to the 6th of September. Thirteen members of CfLaT will be heading north: David Leat, Sue Robson, Steve Walsh, Jill Clark, Pam Woolner, Liz Todd, Colleen Cummings, Anna Reid, Ulrike Thomas, Hanneke Jones, Rachel Lofthouse, Karen Lowing and David Wright will all be attending. The group have organised two symposiums, one focusing on coaching and the other on communication between learning organisations, and are contributing to another exploring themes of Philosophy for Children. In addition there are a number of single author papers and posters being delivered.

**Further information on the topics of the papers can be gained from Viv Moffett:**  
[Vivienne.Moffett@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Vivienne.Moffett@ncl.ac.uk)

## Setting the Baseline for 14-19 Education in England



**English 14-19 education is to be transformed by 2013, with revised Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum, and local learning partnerships offering Diplomas.**

The QCA baseline study into current 14-19 education was based upon 45 case studies in schools and colleges across England, carried out by the Universities of Birmingham, Southampton, Newcastle and Oxford Brookes. The CfLaT team, Ann Briggs and Ian Hall, undertook ten case studies in North-West and North-East England, mapping young people's perceptions of their learning experience, the range, equity and perceived effectiveness of provision, ways in

which student achievement is valued, and young people's aspirations for future education and employment. The summary report synthesises findings on enjoyment, learning and attainment, achievement, participation and citizenship.

The proportion of young people who enjoy school is a minority in most of the case study organisations. There appears to be no relationship between enjoyment and attainment; enjoyment is related to a narrow range of variables, largely reflecting student background, and to a lesser extent the approaches to pedagogy, work place context and social interactions between learners. However many learners perceive that enjoyment is related to learning, in that it results in engagement, effort and a capacity to remember knowledge and develop skills.

Achievement encompasses not only qualifications, but also wider development, with a range of types of achievement valued by the 14-19 stakeholder groups. At the heart of the concept of achievement is the demonstration by young people of their capacity for future learning, and for occupying a role in society which is meaningful and satisfying. Achievement can be encouraged by addressing young people's progress and aspirations as individual young adults, by subject teaching which is perceived as exciting and / or relevant to the young person's stage in life, and by valuing a range of achievements and aspirations for future study and work.

The background of parents is the most significant factor in the progression aspirations of young people. The large majority intend to continue in education or training up to 18. Beyond 18, many have no certain sense of a career/employment pathway; they are deferring decisions beyond 18 or beyond higher education. Many young people have an uncertain grip on their future, finding it frightening to think about or having unrealistically high or low goals. The variability of information advice and guidance, of relationships with staff and of success in learning all impact negatively on some young people's confidence in choices and future pathways.

Citizenship provision is more developed in some case organisations than others.

Many young people and adults are enthusiastic about the importance of young people having a voice and about how that voice might contribute to responsible action in and beyond education settings. Not all respondents were convinced of the centrality of citizenship to educational purposes beyond its expression in abstract terms.

**For further information contact Ian Hall:** [I.R.Hall@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:I.R.Hall@ncl.ac.uk)



## An Evaluation of the 14-19 Flexible Curriculum Programme

Members of CfLaT, Jill Clark, Ulrike Thomas, Colleen Cummings and Ann Briggs, have just reported their findings from a Gateshead Council commissioned evaluation of the Flexible Curriculum Programme (FCP) for 14-19 year olds. The project covered the regions of Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead. The final evaluation, forms a body of research evidence which:

1. Captures the emerging patterns of targeted NEET preventative provision in each of the five areas of Tyne and Wear and how they have been influenced by FCP; and
2. Captures the developing local partnership arrangements to lead, manage and fund this targeted and specialist provision.

The final evaluation report offers a set of emerging insights from the FCP2 projects, which can be shared between the local areas, adopting the following framework: (1) funding models; (2) staffing models; (3) FCP2 and the 14-19 Curriculum; (4) Partnerships; and (5) Benefits and outcomes.

Benefits and outcomes of the project included suggestions from providers that FCP2 programmes have had positive impacts on the learners in terms of (re)-engagement, behaviour, confidence, self-esteem, motivation, aspirations and progression. It has been also noted that learners have said that they feel more confident and happier on FCP2 programmes than in conventional purely school-based provision, and have plans to progress into other vocational learning opportunities.



This reflects the level of personalisation achieved in many of the programmes, and the level of engagement of young people with what they perceived as adult-focused work-based programmes.

FCP2 has been responsive to the needs of individual learners, as shown both by the range of programmes available and by the levels of support made available to disaffected and marginalised learners by funded Progression Workers.

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

### RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE

(Autumn 2008)

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.

#### October 1<sup>st</sup>

David Wright: ICT, maths, pedagogy and practice

#### October 15<sup>th</sup>

Ann Briggs: So where does the leadership thing fit in?

#### November 19<sup>th</sup>

Anna Reid and colleagues from Bedlington CHS: Katie Who...?

#### December 16<sup>th</sup>

Ann Briggs: Conceptual modelling (for Christmas...).

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!!

## Networking About Enquiry Based Curriculum



The goal of QCA is to "develop a modern, world-class curriculum that will inspire and challenge all learners and prepare them for the future." Curriculum Networks representing almost 1000 schools nationally plays a vital role in helping QCA achieve this. (To find out more go to [www.qca.org.uk/curriculum](http://www.qca.org.uk/curriculum))

One such group, based in the North East of England, is committed to developing an Enquiry based curriculum within their schools. Comprising 10 schools representing all phases, the group were brought together due to local knowledge of their existing work on enquiry. Using external facilitation and higher education expertise the group meets for a half day or twilight each half term. These well attended meetings create a space for expert input, facilitated conversation, reflection and planning. As a result the group has identified two shared priorities which will form a collaborative focus in addition to their individual school plans.

Further to establishing a clear definition and description of Enquiry based learning the focus is first on how to measure the impact of such a development and second to describe the professional adult learning that is necessary to enable these changes.

**For further information contact CfLaT Partner Julie McGrane:**  
[juliemcgrane@leadinglearning.eu](mailto:juliemcgrane@leadinglearning.eu)