

Enquiry Based Learning / Area Based Curriculum: Changing the Conversation

Scoping

It is now 9 months since CfLaT organised its first Enquiry Based Learning/ Area Based Curriculum conference. During the intervening months scoping work has been taking place in order to ascertain the extent to which EBL/ABC are being developed in the North East and to examine the constraints being experienced by those keen to promote this way of working. Interviews with teachers and representatives of third sector organisations (for example: Dove Marine Laboratory, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums and Food Nation) revealed that there is a wealth of inspirational work being undertaken (for some examples go to: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/Enquirybasedlearning.htm>).

But there are many challenges being faced which are inhibiting sustainability:

- ◆ The fear of Ofsted
- ◆ The fear of not covering the curriculum
- ◆ The fact that it is always the 'usual suspects' who take on innovative projects
- ◆ Difficulties regarding the assessment of EBL and ABC
- ◆ Secondary schools are less likely to adopt EBL/ABC
- ◆ A need for schools to understand that when working with organisations such as museums the learning experience for pupils is more valuable if the relationship between the

organisation and school is long term and involves more than one visit.

◆ Funding

Recent developments

Some exciting work that is currently underway is the development of Project Based Learning in Park View School, Shotton Hall, Darlington Learning Village, George Stephenson High School and Cramlington Learning Village. These schools have been working with members of staff from High Tech High in California who are over in the U.K. for a year courtesy of the Innovation Unit. High Tech High teaches the curriculum solely through project based learning. The projects are introduced on day 1 and the students learn the maths, science or English etc they need to complete the project through 'doing' the work. A teacher from Park View School who went over to see the High Tech High approach in action was amazed by the quality of the work being produced whether it was a book they were writing and then self publishing, robots being designed to



move round a maze or work on the periodic table. The high quality is the result of constant reflection, redrafting and being provided with a purpose and audience for their learning.

The UK schools are now collaborating to find ways to develop the High Tech High approach within the constraints of the English education system. We are following the progress being made with interest and intend to share their experiences at the second EBL/ABC conference.....

The Second EBL/ABC conference: Changing the Conversation

When: Friday 14th June 9 a.m. -4.30/5 p.m.

Where: The Research Beehive, Newcastle university

Cost: £99 (concessions: £50), including coffees and lunch

Programme to include:

- ◆ Curriculum speed dating
- ◆ Project tuning (High Tech High style)
- ◆ Presentations demonstrating current practice (schools and third sector organisations)
- ◆ Assessment of EBL/PBL (The Noad-wood School experience)

The final details and the creation of the booking system are currently being finalised and will be e mailed to you as soon as they are ready but meanwhile, for more information, contact: David.Leat@ncl.ac.uk.

We look forward to seeing you there!

CfLaT Headlines

Elaine Hall, Viv Baumfield and Kate Wall have had the second edition of their popular research methodology book, Action Research in Education, published by Sage.



The second edition of Developing Outstanding Teaching and Learning: Creating a culture of professional development to improve outcomes by Julie McGrane and Rachel Lofthouse, published by Optimus is also now out. It has been updated in response to the new Ofsted framework.

Liz Todd and Karen Laing have been working with BMRB and Manchester University on a study of the pupil premium commissioned by the DfE. Fieldwork is currently being undertaken in 30 schools across the country, and the study is due to report in February 2013. For more details about the study please contact Karen Laing k.j.c.laing@ncl.ac.uk or Liz Todd liz.todd@ncl.ac.uk

CfLaT had a stand at the Honorary degree Reception in December. David Leat and Sue Robson took the opportunity to talk to honorary degree recipient Dr Rakesh Mittal about Learning for Change



VISUAL METHODS SHOWCASE!

Congratulations to the team led by Jill Clark - with Karen Laing, Lucy Tiplady and Pam Woolner - who have been successful in gaining follow up funding (£8.5K) from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) 'Connected Communities' (CC) programme.

Cadiz last year. The second strand to the award is the preparation of an accompanying publication, which will outline our theoretical approach to the methods, guidance on how to use visual methods and details of our related papers on the subject.

Building on the scoping review which focused on the evidence of participation of children and young people in, and with, criminal justice research, the new funds will allow the CfLaT team to further develop our thinking and work on visual methods and participatory research. The first strand of the project is to present a workshop at the AHRC CC showcase national event on March 12th, where we will present a rationale for participatory visual research methods whilst enabling participants to 'try' methods such as photo elicitation and diamond ranking. This part of the project builds a similar successful workshop hosted at the ECER conference in

The publication will be available shortly but meanwhile, for more information, contact: Jill.Clark@ncl.ac.uk.



Supporting children and families in the North East: two forthcoming events

Are you a practitioner working with children, young people and/or families in the North East? Do you want to know more about working together with others to improve the effectiveness of your work? Then come along to these events:

'Supporting children, families and schools outside the curriculum'
The first network meeting being held at Newcastle University on 25th March 2013, from 12.00 until 3.30pm (lunch provided).

'Supporting children and families in the North East: are Children's Zones the way forward?'

This day-long conference is being held at Newcastle University on 23rd May 2013. You will be able to hear about different proposals for supporting children and families, and speakers will be presenting on topics such as developing Children's Zones and using Pupil Premium to support disadvantaged children. There will also be an opportunity to give your views about the way forward, and to network with others.

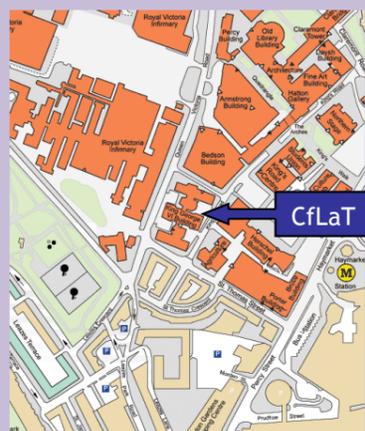
For more information, or to book a place at either event, please contact Karen Laing k.j.c.laing@ncl.ac.uk

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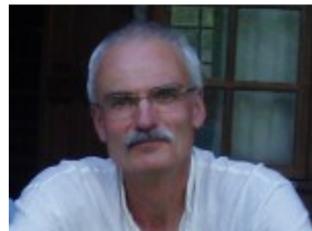
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Educational Psychologists and teacher well-being



Simon Gibbs, Programme Director for the Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology, thinks that educational psychology has a role to play in understanding the resilience and well-being of teachers.

He presented a paper at the British Psychological Society Education Section conference at the Open University in November arguing that an understanding of teachers' attributions and efficacy beliefs provides a basis for supporting teachers. In his paper Simon discussed research into teachers' attributions for the causes of children's misbehaviour, teachers' beliefs in their efficacy as classroom managers of children's behaviour and how such beliefs may

be supported and enhanced. He also provided some evidence (from consultation and interventions with teachers) of ways that applied psychologists have contributed to the professional well-being of teachers.

The presentation concluded with discussion among participants about the value of these ideas for applied psychologists working in schools. The retention and resilience of teachers are subject to many influences but perhaps Educational Psychologists can make a greater contribution in this area.

For further information, please contact Simon.Gibbs@ncl.ac.uk



CLASSROOM SPACE

Pam Woolner and Ulrike Thomas used faculty funding to do some preliminary research work investigating classroom space.



An under-researched aspect of learning environments is how much space is available, how actual area relates to organising the space and how all this impacts on learning and teaching. The likely impact of restricted space on student attitudes, teacher satisfaction and actual classroom practice tends to be mentioned, but not rigorously researched. It matters now because a sustained increase in the birth rate from 2001, leading to increased school rolls, is occurring in a period of cost-cutting in school building work which may well impact on area provided.

We are keen to develop some fool-proof methods to gauge teachers' views about their classroom, record their organisation of their space and (importantly) measure how much they've got. So we visited three friendly schools, armed with tape measures and squared paper (very high tech...!). We measured and sketched five classrooms, arranged for different sized classes from a range of Key Stage 1 and 2 year groups, talked to the teacher responsible for four of the classrooms, to a further two teachers and to two of the head teachers.

Among the teachers we talked to there was interest in the issue, agreement about the importance of adequate classroom space and some passionate views expressed about walk-in cupboards. They had all attempted to re-arrange the furniture to maximise useful space and to accommodate characteristics of their current classes. Their modifications appeared to involve matching the layout to the learning and teaching strategies they favoured. Yet it was clear that they were working within a number of constraints. Chief of these is the number of children to be accommodated, but also school policies and practices have an impact. Furthermore, we observed that the flexibility of a room may be limited by a relatively small number of inflexible features: the location of the IWB, positioning

of power sockets, hard flooring (or lack of it), pieces of particularly heavy furniture.

Both head teachers reminded us that the power of class teachers to decide how to use space in and around their classroom has to be placed within whole school needs and management issues.

Such interest in the physical environment is not what the literature suggests is standard in schools, and it may be that these teachers and heads are more self-aware in relation to the physical setting than is usual. This is an issue to be returned to during the full research project.

For further information, please contact Pamela.Woolner@ncl.ac.uk



Internationalisation: Sue's SIG

Sue Robson has been invited by the Higher Education Academy to convene (along with colleagues Dr Scott Burgess and Dr Diane Sloane from Northumbria University) a Special Interest Group on internationalisation in the curriculum.

The SIG aims to support colleagues engaged in curriculum design, development, delivery and evaluation to internationalise the curriculum. We will explore ways in which all students can be offered an internationalised experience through curriculum innovations and enhancements. The SIG will promote an enquiry network for colleagues interested in developing and investigating their students' internationalist perspectives and intercultural skills for global citizenship. The network will promote reflective practice and evidence informed development of teaching, learning, assessment and the student experience in internationalised HE settings and programmes. The SIG also aims to provide a forum to represent the views of staff who are leading the development of teaching, learning and the student experience and those involved directly in internationalising the curriculum.

For further information, please contact Sue.Robson@ncl.ac.uk

Projects with promise

Over the last few months we have been involved with two small scale projects that both offer the potential of new partnerships and ways of engaging learners.

In June 2012 the Geography and History PGCE students spent a day working with local year 9 students from two schools on the Quayside, in the University's Robinson Library and Newcastle City Library using an enquiry-based approach to discovering more about the local area. The result of this is a new website built using the students' work, which is designed to be accessible to students and their teachers. The new website can be found at <http://quaysidelives.ncl.ac.uk/about/>.

We hope that the website will support fieldwork and act as a virtual resource for schools in the North-East and further afield. The intention is that the website can be developed over time by students in other schools - making their own learning visible. The project was funded as part of the university's Societal Challenge theme of Social Renewal, and has a

basis in CfLaT's work on enquiry-based learning and area-based curriculum.

In January David Leat and Rachel Lofthouse worked with colleagues from both Newcastle University and the wider academic community in supporting the development of the Kropotkin Institute. This is the brainchild of Nick Megoran, (<http://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/nick.megoran/>) a political geographer, who has the ambition of opening up opportunities for school students to participate in Peace Studies through engagement with academics working in the field. Earlier this month we had the privilege of working with the academic community and students and teachers from Benfield School in Newcastle in the initial planning stages of this new initiative. Again there is a strong link here with enquiry based learning, and also on developing aspects of the curriculum informed by exposure to new ideas and thinkers.

For further information, contact Rachel.Lofthouse@ncl.ac.uk



RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE

(Spring 2013)

Research teas aim to provide an informal forum for discursive examination of emerging research themes and concepts. This term the programme includes an eclectic mix of speakers - details below, or from the Centre website: www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/news/teas.

Tea and cakes will be available from 3pm in the Centre base (2.50 KGVI) with the session officially beginning at 3.15.

23rd January 2013

Pam Woolner and Ulrike Thomas - Classroom space: what you've got and what you do with it

27th February 2013

Paul Miller - Teacher Training in Ghana: Bridging the gap(s) via video

20th March 2013

Rachel Lofthouse and Ulrike Thomas - Understanding mentoring practices in Teaching Schools

For further information on CfLaT research teas and/or if you are interested in discussing some of your own research at a tea please contact Lucy Tiplady: Lucy.Tiplady@newcastle.ac.uk

CONTRIBUTORS WANTED!



Learning and Teaching Update is a monthly Newsletter published by Optimus Publishing and edited by Centre members.

Each publication includes news, updates on policy and research, fund raising initiatives and case studies highlighting good practice in teaching and learning. We are currently looking for contributions for future issues.

For more information contact: U.Thomas@ncl.ac.uk