

# Thinking about School Space at Rickleton Primary School

A local primary school where they are hoping to improve their learning space invited a team from CfLaT to facilitate a half day of discussion and idea generation with school staff (including teachers, a school governor, TAs, deputy and head, administration and support).

The team of Pam Woolner, Jill Clark, Ulrike Thomas and Anna Reid used a series of visual activities to investigate how space is currently used at Rickleton Primary School in Washington and to consider the possibilities for change and development.



First a mapping activity was completed in which each participant drew a line on a plan of the school to represent their movements on a typical day. Comments were added and stickers were used to indicate 'places that work' and 'places that don't work'. This enabled the identification of positive and negative aspects of the existing premises, as well as those areas where feelings are mixed.

Next a 'diamond ranking' exercise ranking 9 photos of learning environments enabled collaborative exploration of educational aims and approaches, considering appropriate spaces for these.



The final activity drew on the earlier discussions of experiences with the available space and of how educational intentions and practices relate to the setting. It aimed to prioritise areas for possible development of Rickleton's premises, generate some ideas for development and suggest next steps in realising these plans. Participants worked with images of school spaces at Rickleton and elsewhere, as well as architecture and design brochures and



magazines, to produce collages of their proposed solutions to the issues they see as most pressing.



The half-day was well received by those involved and produced some tangible results. Members of the school community looked anew their existing setting, and conversations were initiated about school space.

The CfLaT team were interested to help ideas begin to coalesce into shared priorities and plans. We are hoping to stay involved as Rickleton attempts to make physical changes to improve learning and teaching.

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

## CfLaT Headlines

Doctorate of Education (EdD) student Anna Reid has submitted the final version of her thesis. Her research investigated the possibility of facilitating pedagogical change in a secondary school. Dr Reid will formally graduate in the summer ceremony.

Liz Todd continues to be invited to talk about CfLaT's recent research on the Pupil Premium. Prof Todd gave a talk in Nov 2013 on Children's Zones, extended schools and the pupil premium in Barcelona at Universitat Ramon Llull. She also gave a talk at Exeter University - Pupil Premium: Closing the gap for disadvantaged young people? Access it here: <http://echo360.exeter.ac.uk:8080/ess/echo/presentation/6dc8692f-3a44-408b-b7b7-483200ff0feb>

In Nov 2013, Pam Woolner was invited to the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon to speak at an interdisciplinary conference on school buildings: Ecole, Espace et Territoire.

CfLaT, through Liz Todd, is working with colleagues in the universities of USA and Ireland (Cornell, Skidmore College, Pennsylvania State University and National University Ireland) to look the concept of vitality in community schooling in rural communities. This group will present a paper to the Trans-Atlantic Rural Research Network (TARRN) conference in Newcastle in April 2014.

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## FASMED PROJECT LAUNCH

A €1.9M project led by CfLaT will take lessons from around the world to help improve mathematics and science skills in Europe and South Africa.

Working with partners across eight countries, researchers will look at how technology can be used by teachers to help raise attainment levels among the lowest achieving students.

"How we go about changing attitudes will be key to the success of this project," explained Jill Clark, principal investigator and project co-ordinator. "We want to challenge the belief that there is such a thing as 'fixed ability' where children are given subtle but potentially damaging messages that there is a limit on what they can achieve."

The project will focus on nine to 13-year-olds, as this is when progress in mathematics and science tends to tail off. Researchers will focus on two areas which intersect both: understanding of graphs and data handling. They will also look at basic numeracy.

"It's not just about better ways of teaching mathematics and science, but also addressing attitudes and anxieties among students, teachers and parents and finding ways to counter these obstacles to learning," said David Wright, deputy project co-ordinator.

"It's quite clear there are several factors

at play which influence attainment, including gender and economic inequality, but what is interesting is that in some schools and some countries they manage to mitigate these factors. This project will work out what works, and why, and share this knowledge across the board."

The Improving Progress through Formative Assessment in Science and Mathematics Education (FaSMEd) project is being funded through an EU grant for three years. A conference to mark the start of the project and bring together all the partners for the first time is taking place at Newcastle University from 29-31 January 2014.

It is being opened by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chris Brink, who had close links with one of the project's partners, the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), when he was Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

"This is an opportunity to demonstrate how relatively small interventions can raise attainment in mathematics and sciences," he said. "I hope that this project can have a lasting positive effect on the long-term problem of under-achievement in these subjects."

One of the outcomes of the project will be a toolkit for teachers of activities, resources and pedagogies that will be applicable to a wide range of pupils.

For further information, please contact Jill.Clark@ncl.ac.uk

## Anna Kristín Sigurðardóttir from Iceland welcomed as Visiting Fellow

Welcome to Anna Kristín Sigurðardóttir who is a Visiting Professor from the University of Iceland. She will be visiting CfLaT from 27 January to 21 February.

Anna Kristín's research interests include school-university partnerships, teacher education and the impact of classroom design on pedagogy. While she is here she will be collaborating with Pam Woolner about school design, which will include presenting papers from their ECER symposium at the ECLS lunchtime seminar on 5 Feb. You can also catch up with her other work at her Research Tea on 12 Feb—see Tea Programme inside.

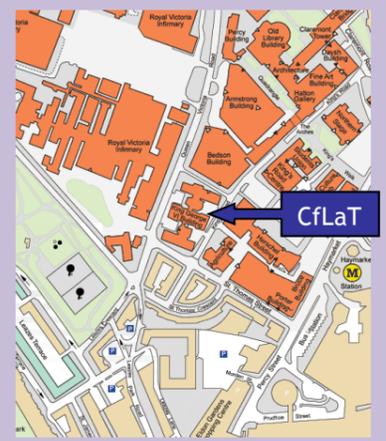


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## ROBIN HUMPHREY CULTIVATES RESEARCHERS IN UK AND JAPAN

Robin Humphrey has developed and facilitated a major Researcher Development School in Bristol and Kyoto, along with his colleagues, Jane Nolan, from Newcastle University, Alison Leggett from the University of Bristol and Tetsuo Sawaragi from Kyoto University

The School was the inaugural event for RENKEI, a major collaboration in higher education between the UK and Japan, supported by the British Council, Japan. Two doctoral candidates or early career researchers were selected via an open competition from each of the eleven participating universities, six from the UK and five from Japan. The aim was to develop interdisciplinary and cross-cultural teams who would each develop an economically-viable response to the Grand Challenge of 'Urban Sustainability and Resilience'. In July, the 22 researchers took part in the first leg of the School in Bristol, where teams were formed and ideas generated. The five interdisciplinary and cross-cultural teams then worked on their ideas over the next five months, communicating via Email and social media, before presenting their more mature ideas to an audience of academics and representatives from business in Kyoto University in December.

This link leads to a short video, commissioned by the British Council, Japan, and filmed during the Kyoto leg of the School:

<http://vimeo.com/84186095>

## Speaking with CLARITY

Rachel Lofthouse has gained a university business development grant to work with 'Clarity' a new business run by Derby Speech and Language Therapists Jo Flanagan and Bibiana Wigley.

It is well known that poor speech and language skills are a significant impairment to academic and social development at school. Clarity aims to enable educational settings to ensure that staff members are confident to support children's speech, language and communication skills at whole class and small group levels. Rachel is working with Jo and Bibiana to develop ways of promoting speech and language development through effective teacher pedagogy via video-based coaching. The work is underway; Rachel has interviewed headteachers in primary and nursery schools, including Stonehill Nursery (pictured below), to gain a sense of the expected outcomes of their



engagement with Clarity. A particular feature is the significance of the multi-cultural settings where fewer than 10% of children have English as a first language. Rachel is helping to co-create a model of coaching based on principles developed through former research and consultancy work. During her most recent visit, for example, Rachel, Jo and Bibiana reviewed video extracts of their first experiences of using their new coaching model, and started to recognise some of the key conversational dimensions that helped bridge the gap between the specialist knowledge held by the therapists and the pedagogical knowledge and skills demonstrated by the teachers. It is hoped that this early foray in to this area of practice will support further research and development; so watch this space.

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

## OBE FOR LINDSEY WHITEROD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SOUTH TYNESIDE COLLEGE

A dedication to education and a deep desire to ensure the highest standards of learning for students has earned EdD student Lindsey Whiterod an OBE in the New Year Honours list.

Lindsey, who trained to be a solicitor and began her career as a law lecturer at South Tyneside College in 1994, has been honoured for services to further education.

She has worked in further education at senior management level since 2000, firstly at Newcastle College then at New College Durham as deputy principal, before returning to South Tyneside College as principal and chief executive in October 2009. She has since implemented numerous improvements, included capital refurbishment and estate rationalisation programmes in excess

of £14m and a quality improvement programme in all provision.

Lindsey's professional life and her EdD research are closely related: her doctoral study explores coaching to improve leadership in FE and the impact of coaching has been huge, she says, contributing 'significantly' to the improvements at South Tyneside College. Lindsey commented: "This is a tremendous honour, and indeed a great surprise. It is a very proud moment for me."

"I was taken aback when informed but I can see that I have been part of many good and positive advances and initiatives which I hope have benefited the students, lecturers and other staff that I have worked with."

No date has been set for Lindsey's investiture but it is expected to be by the summer.

## RESEARCHING SUCCESS AMONG LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE

Laura Mazzoli Smith and Karen Laing have been awarded Catherine Cookson Foundation funding for a project entitled *Supporting the Progression of Looked After Young People to University: Evaluating the work of the North-East Raising Aspirations Partnership* in the context of analysing differing pathways to university progression for looked after young people.

Of more than 89 000 children in care in Britain only 6% in England were in Higher Education by 19 in 2011, and only 4% in the North-East, compared with 33% of young people overall. This project is focusing on those who are successful, against such overwhelming odds, examining what has enabled their pathways to progression in education, alongside evaluating the work of the *Raising Aspirations Partnership*. The full report from this project will be available in the Summer and it is hoped that this project will then lead to a national study, which would be the first of its kind in England.

For further information, or if you are a student at a North-East University who has experienced care and you would like to take part, please contact Laura Mazzoli Smith at [l.mazzolismith@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:l.mazzolismith@ncl.ac.uk)



## Bryan joins CfLaT

New member of CfLaT, Bryan Burford, is a Lecturer in Medical Education in the School of Medical Sciences Education Development.



With colleagues he is developing a programme of work looking at the transitions experienced by medical students as they enter medical school, progress through the MBBS programme, and finally begin practice as Foundation Programme doctors. With interests including questions of preparedness and professional identity, he is keen to develop links with others in CfLaT to consider the application of educational theory and the development of collaborative bids.

Bryan can be contacted on [bryan.burford@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:bryan.burford@ncl.ac.uk)

## LONG SERVICE AWARD

ECLS and CfLaT staff member Jill Clark was among around a hundred staff who celebrated her long service award as a University employee in November. An annual tradition in the University, staff are invited, alongside their respective Head of School, to celebrate with a long service lunch with the Vice Chancellor. Jill joined the University in October 1992 and so celebrated a (belated) 20 year long service award!



## RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE

(Spring 2014)

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](http://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.

**12th February 2014**

Anna Kristin Sigurðardóttir: School-University Knowledge Schemes

**26th March 2014**

Pam Woolner, Lucy Tiplady and David Leat: Understanding rapid whole school curriculum and pedagogical change through Open Futures

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](mailto:Lucy.Tiplady@newcastle.ac.uk)