

Researcher in Residence – ‘Blurring the Edges’ in knowledge exchange

CfLaT researcher Karen Laing was awarded funding to undertake a secondment with Wallsend Action for Youth (WaFY). She spent a day a week during term times for a year based at Churchill Community College.



WaFY is a charity that supports young people in the Wallsend area through a range of activities in collaboration with local schools. Karen was able to take part in activities, providing practical advice and support. She introduced the partners to Theory of Change, which they used to develop their strategic focus, plan evaluation and write funding proposals. She also supported evaluations, and helped them design co-production events with children and young people to inform their work. Two key pieces of work involved co-produced research with local girls and supporting the development of a new partnership, Wallsend Action for Play, now providing play opportunities for local children and a play strategy for Wallsend.

The co-produced work with local girls was conducted in collaboration with North Tyneside YMCA, and two secondary schools. Karen took a regular part in a girls youth group, and worked with them over time to develop a focus group schedule used with other girls in the area to discover more about their lives in Wallsend. The work culminated in an invitation to a residential trip, also attended by Jill Clark, where the girls learned more about research, and decided their own priorities. The results of the research led to teachers and local services changing their practice. Some of the girls were



previously viewed as disengaged from school, but their Deputy Head Teacher reported that they had changed their behaviour. She believed that being listened to in a non-judgemental way about topics that were important to them had made a real difference, and she now involves the girls more in decisions about school life.

The best part about Karen being there was I think that she was based in Churchill [...] she was there and she was on hand and approachable, as opposed to this person who's come up for the day from London, who they don't know, and they may not speak as openly to (Senior Youth Worker)

The secondment led to a 'blurring of the edges' between academia and practice. Karen often undertook a 'critical friend' position which WaFY found valuable. She learned much about how universities and academics can work with their local communities and organisations - the idea of a 'Civic University' is very helpful here. She found that relationships were key to effective collaboration and that many activities essential to this are not ones that can be easily measured. Meeting people, 'hanging around' and 'visiting places' were important, enabling opportunities for authentic knowledge exchange.

The thing that one can't put a value on, and that is just priceless, is conversation. And the space to have conversation. Without purpose, or you know without agenda should I say. And the insights that Karen is able to share in just those conversations, without her even knowing the impact that that's gonna have, is quite phenomenal. [WaFY member]

Although the secondment has now ended, Karen is continuing to work with WaFY to strengthen their partnership working, and support Wallsend Action for Play. She is also using the learning to inform the development of the West Newcastle Children's Community.

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CfLaT Headlines

We have two new NECOP colleagues, based in CfLaT, evaluating the region's Widening Participation programme. They are Dr Christina Cooper - researcher and evaluation manager - who was previously working in Widening Participation at Newcastle College and Nina Jentl - data analyst - previously working in the University International Office.



The 2018 Marie Butterworth Prize for Excellence in Practitioner Enquiry was won by Will Everitt for research into staff retention

in an international school. He joined us by Skype from Lima, Peru for January's CfLaT Research Tea to tell us about his work and 'collect' his prize.

On 25th January, CfLaT's new Research Fellow Eric Fletcher (see p.2 for details), co-hosted a workshop, Research Matters, with Dr Heather Prince (University of Cumbria), at the 2019 Association of Sail Training Organisation (ASTO) conference in Southampton.

Karen Laing, Liz Todd and Mark Shucksmith are heading to Barcelona with Jeremy Cripps of ChildrenNE and Simon Hansen of the Federation for Small Businesses to present their work at the ACCOMPLISH Co-creACTION Summit. They have been working together alongside 14 other partners in 12 countries across Europe to explore how organisations can engage with universities to co-create research.

Karen Laing has a new paper on how schools can work with other organisations to deliver family support for those experiencing parental substance abuse. 50 free copies are available to download, but you need to be quick! <https://tinyurl.com/y97trv2o>

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AWARD FOR FOREST SCHOOL

The Breeze Forest School Project was awarded the Outdoor Learning Research Award at the UK Outdoor Learning Sector Conference in November 2018.

Breeze was a partnership between Lucy Tiplady (Newcastle University) and Harriet Menter (Scotswood Natural Community Garden).



The project explored the impact of Forest School on the emotional well-being of two groups of young people currently unable to access mainstream education due to extreme anxiety and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The research was funded by the ESRC IAA Co-production fund and the project report can be accessed at: https://sncg.org.uk/images/Breeze_2017-2018_Report.pdf

Extended Induction Workshops: Empowering Students for Success

The Extended Induction Project, initiated by Anna Reid, and now led by René Koglbauer, was designed to support full-time Education Master's students at Newcastle University in getting to grips with the requirements of the course. Noelia Cacheiro has been researching its impact.

The series of extended induction workshops consists of two parts: the first part dedicated to understanding a social aspect of the British culture, and the second part spent looking at an academic aspect. Students were particularly pleased with the knowledge gained in terms of assessment, with most students praising the information shared with them in the workshop.

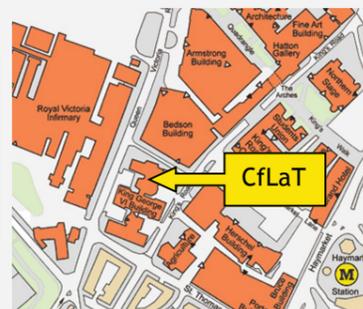
The Extended Induction has proved to be useful for students, and to have had a direct and positive impact on students' success and experience. The next steps for the research team are to explore how to embed this into the induction programme more widely.



For further information, contact Rene.Koglbauer@ncl.ac.uk

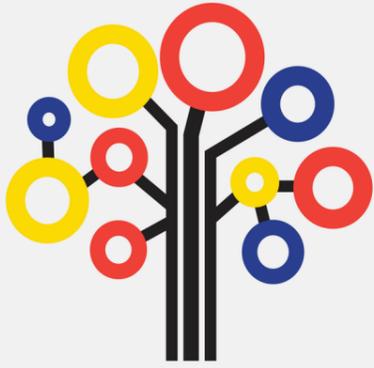
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IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN PROJECT BASED LEARNING

Building on our strong legacy in Thinking Skills and Learning2Learn, CfLaT has been researching and supporting the development of Project Based Learning (PBL).

In this work we have promoted the principle of Community Curriculum Making (CCM) in which projects are developed between schools and partners in the community, such as the university or an arts organization, a company or even a pupil's grandparents with special talents or interests. The advantages of such projects are enormous – student engagement, meeting people who inform their aspirations, developing more complex and positive identities, better preparation for university or work and doing some authentic and meaningful work.

Nonetheless we know that PBL faces formidable challenges – logistical, reputational and finding a place in an exam-dominated system. Secondary schools which are organized around subjects

and timetables can find it difficult to accommodate inter-disciplinary work which might call for occasionally being off-site. How exactly do you plan with a community partner? Some projects can drift badly with students lacking focus and purpose with teachers unsure of their role, and many teachers and senior leaders will be anxious about sufficient subject coverage and learning when students are given some latitude in shaping their work outcomes.

Following work last summer on PBL CCM projects on the University campus, we have secured a grant from the Edge Foundation to develop 30 PBL projects to be trialled and documented with a view to being adapted by other schools.

Our partners in this work are Open Lab (a university research centre devoted to the use of digital technologies), the NE Local Enterprise Partnership (who are also working on PBL and will assist with employer links) and the Great North Museum (who have an inquiry based educational programme). The project



will also be offering free CPD to teachers on PBL and training secondary PGCE students to use PBL in their practice.

So we want to hear from:

- University staff or students with some ideas or resources they want to get out into schools in the shape of a sustainable project;
- Secondary schools who want to start or further develop their work using high quality projects;
- Anyone with contacts with employers (including public service) who are keen to engage with schools;
- Anyone who just thinks PBL with the CCM slant is too good an idea to resist.

CONTACTS: David Leat (David.Leat@ncl.ac.uk) or Ulrike Thomas (U.Thomas@ncl.ac.uk)

outdoor learning (OL) and its beneficial outcomes, such as well-being, character and resilience – themes which are (re-)gaining traction within education. I co-convene, with Lucy Tiplady, the NE OL Research Hub. I am so lucky to have been awarded this fellowship as it will provide me with the opportunity to conduct further research within sail training, as well as to contribute to the current work within ECLS and CfLaT.

Contact: Eric.Fletcher@ncl.ac.uk

CfLaT welcomes Eric Fletcher



I am Eric Fletcher, the new Newcastle University ECLS Research Excellence Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow, situated in CfLaT.

I am, what could be best described as, a 'mature' early career researcher; and since completing my EdD in 2017 I have been an associate with CfLaT working on several exciting projects, including Mantle of the Expert. As a sail training practitioner-researcher I have a keen interest in the processes found in

ITELab launch online course 'The networked teacher: teaching in the 21st century'

David Leat, Kim Cowie and Lucy Tiplady have been collaborating with European colleagues in academia and industry.

ITELab (Initial Teachers Education Lab) is a Knowledge Alliance project between higher education institutions and industry to foster innovation and



knowledge exchange in initial/preservice teacher education (ITE).

The short on-line course for student teachers aims to develop pedagogical digital competence, develop collaborative and active approaches to teaching and learning and connect students with fellow student teachers from across Europe to share ideas and build professional learning networks.

For more information see: <https://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/web/the-networked-teacher>

NE OUTDOOR LEARNING (OL) RESEARCH HUB: UPDATE

In December, CfLaT hosted the second NE OL Research Hub, an event sponsored by the Ocean Youth Trust North (see <http://www.oynorth.org.uk/>).

Jill Clark and Eric Fletcher facilitated a lively discussion with OL practitioners and academics using Plus/ Minus/ Interesting (PMI) and Diamond Ranking (taken from the CfLaT guide to using visual methods: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/>

[media/wwwnclacuk/cflat/files/making-connections.pdf](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/media/wwwnclacuk/cflat/files/making-connections.pdf)).

This activity also demonstrated how these tools might be used in the various OL settings. Those who had been able to make this meeting expressed a desire to learn more about the tools through which they could explore their own practice – it is planned that we will host a Theory of Change workshop in the Spring (details to follow).

Contact: Eric.Fletcher@ncl.ac.uk

RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE (Spring 2019)

The CfLaT Research teas run monthly on a Wednesday from 3.45-5pm and are an opportunity for staff, postgraduate students and other interested parties to get together to discuss current research. The teas are intentionally informal and begin with light refreshments followed by presenters introducing an aspect of their research to be discussed by the group. We meet in the CfLaT base, Room 2.50, unless otherwise stated.

Wednesday 27th February: Peter Thomas and Christine Thomas – Building young people's self-belief in primary and secondary schools

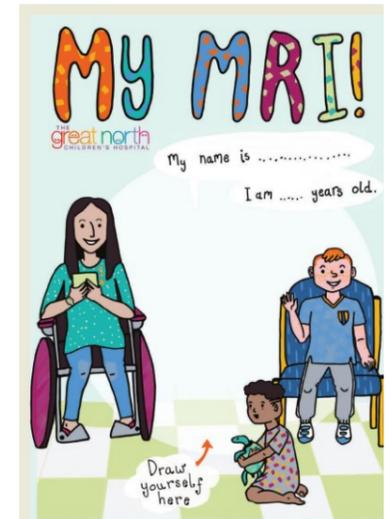
Wednesday 20th March: Simon Cotterill – Co-curate NE timelines

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@ncl.ac.uk. Information is also available from the Centre website (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/news/teas/>)

My MRI!

Children have a right to be informed about and participate in decisions about their health and treatments.

The Radiography team at the Great North Children's Hospital identified a need to make their MRI scan information for children more accessible, with a focus on the process of having a scan rather than the technology involved. CfLaT's Lydia Wysocki was involved in the resulting collaboration to produce the comic, 'My MRI!'.



Read more about this project in slides from a presentation at the British Sociological Association's Medical Sociology Conference at Glasgow Caledonian University: <http://appliedcomicsetc.com/wp-content/uploads/medsoc-presentation-11th-sept-2018.pdf>

The GNCH Young Person's Advisory Group gave feedback at a very early stages of the project, and again when at YPAG's conference. A PDF of the conference poster is available here: <http://www.appliedcomicsetc.com/wp-content/uploads/YPAGPoster.pdf>

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