

# PBL Goes to University

In April 2019, David Leat, Ulrike Thomas and Alison Whelan received funding from the Edge Foundation to enable us to develop curriculum projects with schools that have authentic, real-world links with the university, employers and community organisations.

So far, we have worked with over 20 schools across the region and beyond. We are helping them to embed PBL into their curriculum, empowering teachers to think about teaching their subject in a different way, incorporating visits to campus and places of interest, and outreach sessions by academics, students and employers. Cross-curricular themes mean teachers and students develop team-working and communication skills, and increase their social and cultural capital.

Recent and current projects have included:

Digital Mentoring – Churchill Community College are connecting Language Ambassadors at the university with their Year 7 Spanish students via Skype

Interactive Archives – Corbridge Middle School developed interactive exhibits on the Trevelyan Archive using coding software

A Tale of Two Sieges – Ponteland High School students worked with the National Civil War Centre to create a play based on the Siege of Newcastle

Mock Trials – Hartlepool Sixth Form law students are working with Newcastle University Law School

Fitness and Sport – a combined project with Sunderland College and Castle View Enterprise Academy

Cyber crime – Hexham Middle School are working with Northumbria Police on cyber safety

The automotive industry – cross-curricular PBL with Thornhill Academy, Nissan, local employers & the NE LEP

Canny Planning – town planning project linking Newcastle University with Prince Henry's Grammar School, Leeds

Projects are built around three key areas: an "entry event" to inspire and introduce; a series of PBL sessions embedded into the curriculum, often incorporating visits from external providers or to university or local employers; and a final "showcase" where students can share their learning and present their work to invited guests.

One recent project involved Year 10 Maths students from Norham High School working with a local architect and the NE LEP. Their entry event saw them visit the Ouseburn Valley to explore the local architecture and take measurements, which they then used in a series of maths lessons and presented their designs based on their fieldwork in a showcase to parents and senior leaders. The project was a success and is now being repeated with a different group of students at the school.

Alongside the projects, we are offering free CPD for teachers or those looking to support PBL in schools:

- Session 1: 22nd Jan - The principles of PBL
- Session 2: 10th Feb - Planning a PBL project, embedding subject content knowledge & key concepts.
- Session 3: March (date tbc) How do you decide on a product for your project?
- Session 4: April (date tbc) Monitoring, evaluation and assessment - how do we measure progress, success and impact in PBL curricula?
- Session 5: June (date tbc) Showcase, presentations and feedback.

Sessions are held 4-6pm in the Herschel Learning Lab, Newcastle University and refreshments are provided.

If you'd like to know more or get involved, email [U.Thomas@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:U.Thomas@ncl.ac.uk), [Alison.Whelan2@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Alison.Whelan2@ncl.ac.uk) or follow us on Twitter [@PBL\\_NclUni](https://twitter.com/PBL_NclUni)



**CfLaT**  
Research Centre for Learning and Teaching

# NEWSLETTER

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## CfLaT Headlines

In November, Sue Robson was invited to Tampere University in Finland to give a lecture, sit on a panel and do a doctoral seminar. Here is a link to her lecture: <https://research.tuni.fi/het/event/lecture-series-2019/>



At the January CfLaT Research Tea, the 2019 Marie Butterworth Prize for Excellence in Practitioner Enquiry was awarded to Sara Davidson. Sara then led a discussion about her prize-winning dissertation 'How can the professional development of teachers in practitioner enquiry and the use of research evidence develop collective capacity in a local school improvement partnership?'

Lydia Wysocki has a new publication, 'Using comics as a research method' in the SAGE online Research Methods Foundations series <http://methods.sagepub.com/foundations-search-for-comics-or-Wysocki>



Just before Christmas, CfLaT was visited by Kreetta Niemi from Jyväskylä University in Finland. Her research interests centre on student interaction, but she also has a particular interest in schools with any sort of open or flexible design. So Pam Woolner took her to visit Jesmond Gardens Primary School, Hartlepool.

## GETTING TOGETHER TO CHANGE SCHOOL SPACE

After many years of researching and writing about school premises, Pam Woolner has been awarded European funding to work with academic colleagues across six countries to develop user-friendly tools to enable school users to understand and improve their learning environments, indoors and out.



Collaborative ReDesign with Schools (CoReD) is being funded as part of the Erasmus+ programme and will run until August 2022. Pam will be working with Ulrike Thomas and others in CfLaT to develop the UK tool. This uses the popular teaching activity of 'diamond ranking', but with images, to support school students, teachers and other staff in thinking about educational space. The CoReD project was officially launched in early January with the first transnational meeting, held in Newcastle and attended by all the European Partners.



To find out more about the partners and the aims of the project, see: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/2019-1-UK01-KA201-061954>

Schools who would like to improve the design or use of their learning and teaching spaces are invited to get involved through trialling the redesign tools in their contexts - contact [Pamela.Woolner@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Pamela.Woolner@ncl.ac.uk).

## Get involved with project based learning...



As PBL Goes to University gathers pace, we are offering FREE continuing professional development for teachers or those looking to support PBL in school.

The next CPD session *Planning a PBL project and embedding subject content knowledge and key concepts into your curriculum* will be held on 10th February 2020 4-6pm in the Herschel Learning Lab, Newcastle University with refreshments provided.

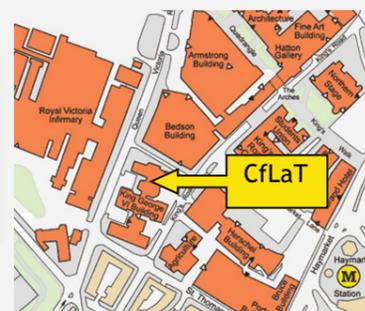
For further information, contact [Alison.Whelan2@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Alison.Whelan2@ncl.ac.uk)

### In this issue:

CoRED LAUNCH	1
GET INVOLVED WITH PBL	1
MUSEUMS COLLABORATION	2
NE OUTDOOR LEARNING HUB	2
PROPIC EUROPA	2
ITELAB CONCLUDES	3
RESEARCH PARTNERS NEEDED	3
RESEARCH TEAS	3
PBL GOES TO UNIVERSITY	4

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# MaGPIE - early birds in museums & arts collaboration

TYNE & WEAR  
archives &  
museums

Using a Teacher Development Award from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM) are carrying out a project called 'Museum and Gallery Partners in Education' - MaGPIE. Within this, Helen Burns is a consultant, contributing theoretical ideas and supporting evaluation of the work.



TWAM holds diverse collections which connect curriculum subject areas of Art, History and Science and is using these to create opportunities to develop questioning and thinking, discussion and debate. The project aims to transform subject learning in participating schools through partnerships with museums and arts practitioners, creating sustainable change in approaches to learning, empowering primary classroom subject leaders by developing their creative skills and confidence.

So far, teachers have used enquiry-based approaches to engage with col-

lections at the Laing, Shipley and Sege-dunum, trying out activities such as 'free writing', 'creative response', collaging and model-making, to generate cre-



active discussion related to artefacts. They have also been introduced to visual evaluation tools for capturing evidence of kinds of thinking. Next year, teachers will use self-produced case studies and experiences from Year 1 to co-design a CPD programme for a wider group of teachers.

Contact: [Helen.Burns2@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.Burns2@ncl.ac.uk)

## OUTDOOR LEARNING RESEARCH HUB NEWS

The North East Outdoor Learning Research Hub met at the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences CfLaT Showcase in November 2019.

The research hub brings together outdoor learning, health and education professionals with researchers and students interested in outdoor learning. The hub provides opportunities for networking, as well as special events as requested by members, including workshops on visual and participatory research methods and theory of change evaluation.

If you are interested in attending a future event or being added to the mailing list please contact:  
[Lucy.Tiplady@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Lucy.Tiplady@ncl.ac.uk)

## The proPIC Europa project

proPIC Europa is an Erasmus+ project, running from September 2017 to September 2020, which brings together five European partners: Newcastle University (UK), University of Barcelona (Spain), University of Borås (Sweden), University of Kiel (Germany) and University of Education Karlsruhe (Germany).

Its aim is to generate a framework for a study programme promoting professionalism, innovation and transnational collaboration in foreign language learning and teaching using mobile technologies.

The students taking part are all prospective language teachers and as part of the project, they spend a study week in a partner university, visiting schools, attending workshops and developing a research project and presentation. The

skills and knowledge they gain from this experience are invaluable, and they record their learning and reflections in a personal online e-portfolio.

On 30th March, we will welcome Cohort III, fifteen students from the partner universities who will spend a week with



us in iLab:Learn (B83) and sample life here at the university, including tours of the city and fish and chips at the coast! If you'd like to come along to meet them, please drop in.

Contact: [Alison.Whelan2@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Alison.Whelan2@ncl.ac.uk)

## ITELab highlights

The EU funded ITELab (Initial Teachers Education Lab) project, involving David Leat, Kim Cowie and Lucy Tiplady, has now concluded with major outcomes, conclusions and recommendations just published.

The project explored how student teachers are being prepared for teaching today and tomorrow, in particular how the digital pedagogical competences required in teaching and learning are being developed in initial teacher education (ITE).

Key outputs from the project are highlighted in the [final project summary](#) report, along with the challenges faced and measures taken to help overcome them.

ITELab Highlights:

- Results and recommendations from monitoring ITE policy, research, surveys (2017-2019)
- 12 innovation in ITE case studies: universities (2017), universities-schools (2018), industry-universities and teacher educator competences (2019)
- Networked Teacher MOOC

- Three flexible, ITE course module frameworks – uniquely co-designed by universities, industry and student teachers, reviewed by 53 universities, piloted and refined over 3 cycles.
- A network of 105 ITE stakeholders from across 30 countries, representing universities, industry, and policy, supported by an ITE Forum sharing knowledge supporting innovation in ITE.
- A 'Student Voice Charter' written by the ITELab student teacher ambassadors with 7 recommendations calling for action to address digital skills in the classroom.
- Recommendations and resources to support innovation within ITE, reflecting on the process and piloting of how ITE curricula can be improved to prepare new teachers.

Find all publications and resources here: <http://itelab.eun.org/research>



## RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE (Spring 2020)

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 26th February - Sally Watson, Architecture, Planning and Landscape - Playing out: The impact of innovative public space design on children's activities in the Byker Estate, Newcastle upon Tyne

Wednesday 18th March - Dr Christy Ducker: 'Our Livers Our Lives': voicing the embodied experience of liver disease through poetry and art

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](mailto:Lucy.Tiplady@ncl.ac.uk). Information is also available from the Centre website

## WANTED: PRIMARY SCHOOL RESEARCH PARTNERS

The transition from primary school to secondary school, a dynamic experience in moving from the 'known' to the 'unknown', is often challenging for children, their families and the school.

Studies have found that transitional practices to support children are not always effective. It is unclear whether this experience of 'boundary crossing' (i.e. transition from the 'known' to the 'unknown') stimulates and develops behaviours which may equip children to deal with future transitions.

Eric Fletcher is conducting a reconnaissance study to explore primary school practices for preparing and supporting pupils towards successful transition to secondary school. Eric has limited funding available for primary schools to host a focus group for staff and parents (before the end of February 2020).



These will discuss current practices and the recruiting of partners for a larger, more detailed study to investigate how children might develop behaviours that support 'boundary crossing'.

If you would like to discuss this study or are interested in hosting a focus group then please contact [Eric.Fletcher@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Eric.Fletcher@ncl.ac.uk)

