

FUNDING SUCCESS!!!!

Members of the Research Centre have been highly successful over the last term in gaining project funding. This supports us in further exploration of key areas as well as starting new areas of enquiry.

Recently completed work in the area of transition from school/college to University, has just been reported on and as part of the ongoing development programme at the University, Jill Clark and Ian Hall have received a further £17,990 from the Student Opinion Working Group at Newcastle University to explore the views of students in their first year at Newcastle University. Furthermore, Jill has received £8,969 to explore transition activities (and what it means to be an independent learner) in Gateshead schools. Working with Pam Woolner, this project will bring two key research themes together: transition and the use of visual methods and tools. This body of work will help us to learn more about the transition to University, and what we can do to make it as smooth a



Sugata Mitra's work with children in remote India is being researched by CfLaT

process as possible. CfLaT have been successful in gaining funds from the Beacon Trust Programme - a scheme which supports genuine engagement activities between the University and community members. Karen Lowing has been awarded £9,2350 from the Beacon Trust for her research: Ane Instruction for Bairnis to be Learnt in Northumbrian and Scottish: a co-constructive participatory study of Northumberland and Scots Language and Literature use for social inclusion and citizenship in the secondary classroom. Jill Clark has received £10,258 from the Beacon North East Fund. Working with Sugata Mitra and David Leat, the project will be exploring the potential of the Retired Skype Mediators - developed by Sugata. 'Skype grannies' are mainly retired people (nearly all women) from the UK and beyond who work with the school students in supervised mediating sessions. They are volunteers and they offer to revolutionise the concept of education, especially in 'remote' and disadvantaged areas (both geographically and culturally) which exist in all countries. Our research will work with them to develop ideas and plans for how best to support their continued and developing commitment to online mediation.

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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 and 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.

Research Centre for CfLaT Learning and Teaching

CfLaT Headlines

Congratulations to Lucy Tiplady who had a baby girl—Elizabeth Rose - in November.

This September David Leat and Jill Clark ran the Great North Run half marathon for their respective charities - the Jubilee Debt Campaign and the Percy Hedley Foundation. Between them they managed to raise over £1,000, whilst also beating their own personal best times!



The third book in the Learning to Learn for Life series which focuses on best practice in Key Stages 3 and 4 was published in December. It is co-authored by Kate Wall, Steve Higgins (Durham University) and Rebecca Goodbourn and Tricia Hartley from the Campaign for Learning.



NEWSLETTER

January 2010

Issue 5

3rd Annual CfLaT Conference



The Research Centre for Learning and Teaching will be running our 3rd National Conference on 14th June 2010 at St James' Park, Newcastle upon Tyne entitled Enquiring into Learning Competencies.

This conference aims to provide opportunities for teachers, trainers and researchers in a range of learning contexts to keep up to date with new developments and to build their own capacity and their understanding of how they fit with the contexts and circumstance in which they promote learning.

Key note speakers will be Professor Carol Dweck, Professor David Leat and Dr Barry Hymer. The conference also includes a choice of workshops led by teacher-researchers, university researchers and learning professionals.

If you would like to find out more about the conference please see the conference website: <http://www.carol-dweck.co.uk/index.php/1146> or <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/about/2010conference.htm> or contact Vivienne Moffett on Vivienne.Moffett@ncl.ac.uk

Learning & Teaching Update: Assessment for Learning Special Issue

December witnessed the 30th issue of the Learning and Teaching Update, the publication for secondary school teachers produced by CfLaT and published by Optimus Education.

In celebration of the editorial team produced an 'Assessment for Learning' special edition and we were delighted when the internationally renowned author and academic Professor Paul Black agreed to write a 'state of the nation' in depth article. He used the opportunity to reflect upon progress and developments in AfL since his seminal work 'Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards' appeared in 1998. The issue also includes 'warts and all' case studies written by teachers tackling assessment for learning with their own classes, plus an editorial by our own Professor, David Leat. All in all, it is an issue that CfLaT can be deservedly proud of.

For more information go to: www.learning-teaching-update.com

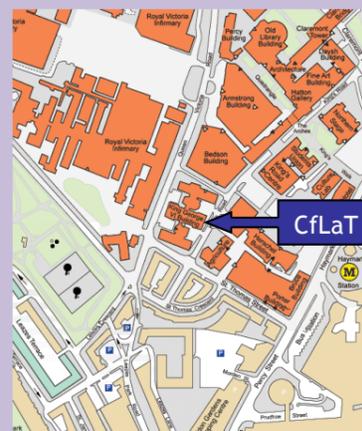
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LEARNING & TEACHING Update

Innovation and excellence in the classroom

Issue 30 December 2009

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STEM subjects: halting the decline

Success in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) is essential for the UK's economic future. However, participation in these subjects has been declining for some time. This special issue explores the reasons for this and offers ways to improve participation. It includes articles on: independent learning and assessment; peer assessment; and assessment for learning.

Assessment and Innovation

A recent report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on the impact of high-stakes tests on the quality of education in member countries has been significant. It highlights the need for assessment to be more formative and to support learning. This special issue explores the ways in which assessment can be used to support learning and to improve the quality of education.

Special edition on AfL

In this month's special edition of the Learning and Teaching Update, we have a special focus on Assessment for Learning (AfL). This is an issue that CfLaT can be deservedly proud of.

For additional subscriber services visit www.learning-teaching-update.com

Improving Coaching

We have recently completed a 2 year project on *Improving Coaching* funded by CfBT and the National College for School Leadership, led by Rachel Lofthouse.

The purpose of the research was to develop tools which teachers could use to analyse, discuss and improve their coaching practice. These tools included 8 dimensions of coaching - *Topic, Initiation, Stimulus, Tone, Scale, Time Frame, Interaction Function and Co-Construction*. Many of the coaches in the project were able to adopt some of these dimensions very rapidly and become more analytical of their work. More skilful coaches had a wider repertoire of interaction, challenged more, made suggestions and very importantly made connections between classroom practice and wider principles.

Other important findings concerned the difficulties schools have in managing coaching. These included the lack of understanding of coaching by some senior leaders, the failure to commit sufficient resource and linking coaching to managerial targets and processes. Many teachers prefer coaching to have a strong voluntary element.

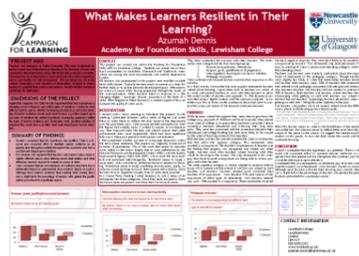
We will be using a wide variety of media to publicise this work in the coming year and it will feed back into our masters module on coaching, maintaining the strong links between research and practice that we take so much trouble over.

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



Rachel and David after presenting findings from the coaching project at ECER in Vienna

New Learning to Learn Case Studies Published



This year has seen the publication of case studies of effective learning and teaching from all 3 sectors of the education system: schools, colleges and universities.

Year Two of the Learning to Learn in Schools Phase 4 Research Project sponsored by the Campaign for Learning has produced 27 case studies written by participant teachers. At the same time, Cycle 1 of the Learning to Learn in Further Education has yielded 9 case studies. These case studies have been presented at the annual Residential conference in Bristol, together with 12 posters produced by university lecturers in the linked EQUATE programme.

Learning to Learn is an enquiry project that focuses on teachers improving the quality of learning in their schools, colleges and university settings. Teachers identify for themselves the focus of their research, stimulated by the challenges thrown up by their learners and the nature of the curriculum. The project supports them to do three key things:

- To formulate research questions that are answerable and manageable and relevant to the wider agendas of schools and colleges;
- To identify tools which will give information that not only answers the research question but also improves the feedback and communication of teaching and learning as it occurs and
- To communicate their findings across a wide and varied network of enquiring colleagues, contributing both to this community of critical friends and to wider policy and research debates.

The table below gives some examples of the projects undertaken in the last year. As in previous years, the variety of approaches and research questions is a challenge for the research team in CfLaT as we draw things together. However, several overarching themes are present:

- **The centrality of process:** understanding why and how learning takes place as an integral part of gaining knowledge and skills
- **The need for a common language:** process can be seamlessly embedded in curriculum-driven learning only when

Duchess' High School Northumberland	Developing the Classroom Experience for Post 16 students: Learning to Learn Collaboratively
Packmoor Primary School Staffordshire	How can co-operative learning and a cross curricular thematic approach impact upon pupils' attitude and success in learning?
Essential/ Key Skills Department Northumberland College	Exploring How Rewards Can Raise Learner Motivation & Confidence in Mathematics
Hazlebury Infant School Enfield	Increasing boys' access to writing through the outdoor environment
School of Modern Languages Newcastle University	What impact will the introduction of an autonomous learning programme have on the development and learning experience of modern languages students?
School of Health, Care and Early Years & Learner Services, Lewisham College	The impact of 'study skills' on metacognitive knowledge and skills
Camborne Science and Technology College, Cornwall	Why do some students engage more fully with L2L than others?
School of Psychology Newcastle University	Do students perceive the mentor group system as worthwhile?

there is a lingua franca for explaining thought processes, strategies and activities.

- **Teachers and students as co-learners:** when it is permitted for the teacher not to know everything, the frame of interaction between teachers and students shifts, enabling creative and productive thinking to take place.
- **Developing independent learners:** students and teachers make explicit what the responsibilities are, allowing students to develop their independence in a supported and challenging way.
- **Changing organisational cultures:** the process of enquiry allows teachers, colleagues and whole organisations to reflect on their identity and purpose.

For further information contact:

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The impact of learning environments

CfLaT has an extended strand of research into learning environments, school buildings and school facility usage. This strand is nationally recognised and over the last month this expertise has been further recognised by the academic and policy communities.

This month sees the publication of an article detailing our exploration of how a school community experiences its setting in the international journal, *Learning Environments Research*. We have also been invited to submit an article to a special issue of another journal focusing on noise and quality of life in the school environment, and Pam has accepted an invitation to write a piece for *House Magazine* - the weekly publication of the Commons and the Lords - outlining our research findings on school design and value for money.

Pam's expertise in this area was further recognised by a recent invitation to give evidence to a commission as part of the British Council for School Environments (BCSE) Great Schools Inquiry. The Great Schools Inquiry is an independent, evidence based investigation that aims to feed into practice on the ground and into national policy development. Chaired by Baroness Estelle Morris, the former Secretary of State for Education, the Inquiry will explore and establish the elements of what makes a great school for the 21st Century.

At the commission, held at the House of Lords in November, Pam and two other noted researchers were asked to address the following question: 'What evidence is there of the link between school buildings/environments and educational achievement and broader outcomes for young people?'

For further information contact: P.J.Woolner@ncl.ac.uk



Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL)

A new professional learning opportunity comes on stream in 2010. The Masters in Teaching and Learning is a TDA funded school-based Masters that has been developed to suit the needs of early career teachers.

In all regions (except the North West) the MTL will initially be available to NQTs and new Heads of Department in secondary schools in the National Challenge and Schools in Challenging Circumstances categories. The North West is acting as a pilot region and the MTL will be open to all NQTs here. CfLaT members have actively supported the development of the national frameworks for both the enquiry-based mode of learning and the coaching component. As the programme rolls out we will also contribute as tutors and module leaders, drawing on our expertise in supporting teachers to develop their practice to enhance pupils' learning outcomes.

For further information about the Programme: www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/mtl



RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE

(Spring 2010)

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 in G16 KGVI with the session officially beginning at 3.15.

January 13th : Carol Moxam - Identification and assessment of metacognition in primary aged children: Observational methods

January 27th : L2L team - Thinking about Learning to Learn: what is it, what does it look like and how should we explore its impact?

February 10th : David Leat and Elaine Hall - Case study: When is a case not a case? When it's a portmanteau...

March 17th : Rachel Lofthouse and Sophie Cole - Reflecting on a creative pedagogical relationship

Dates for the Summer: 21st April, 19th May, 16th June, 21st July

Further information about the research teas can be gained from Pam Woolner (P.J.Woolner@ncl.ac.uk) or from the Centre website (www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/news/teas). You could even volunteer to contribute one yourself!!

CALLING CONTRIBUTORS!

Do you have an experience of community education or extended school practice which you think would be useful to share with others? Do you think your organisation are doing something new and innovative that you think should be recognised? Extended Schools Update is the sister publication to Learning and Teaching Update, published by Optimus Publishers, and focuses upon the provision of extended services as schools move towards the September 2010 deadline and beyond. ESU is a monthly publication, read by school leadership teams and extended schools coordinators around the country. We are currently looking for contributors for our 2010 publishing schedules. Each edition includes a 'Research Brief' and 'Focus On' section (900 words each) that addresses a particular aspect of extended services, and 2 detailed case studies (around 2,800 words). If you would like to contribute or simply find out more, we'd love to hear from you! Alternatively, please spread the word about us at all schools and conferences that you attend, as we would also welcome contributions from teachers and other professionals involved in the provision of extended services to children and young people. There is a small payment for all contributions. For further information please contact the Commissioning Editor s.squires@ncl.ac.uk