

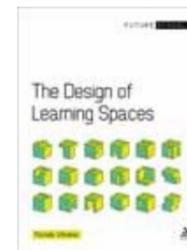
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Research Centre for CfLaT Learning and Teaching

CfLaT Headlines

On the 10th August Pam Woolner's new book, 'The Design of Learning Spaces', will be published by Continuum. It synthesises Pam's expertise in the field of school buildings and learning environments and will be a must for all schools embarking on the Building Schools for the Future process.



A welcome return to Colleen Cummings who started back in the office after maternity leave at the start of April. She will continue to work on the DCSF Extended Schools Pathfinder Evaluation

The majority of CfLaT staff have moved up in the world to new offices on the 2nd floor of the King George VI Building where they now have a bird's eye view of the refurbishment of the RVI!

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NEWSLETTER

May 2010

Issue 6

Good Coaching Guide

Following the completion of the CfBT / NCL funded research into coaching in secondary schools a new publication, *Coaching for Teaching and Learning: A Practical Guide for Schools*, has been written by Rachel Lofthouse, David Leat and Carl Towler.

This will become both a hard copy publication, pdf and web resource. The guide is designed to be of value both to schools who are planning to develop Coaching to enhance teaching and learning as a new endeavour and to those where Coaching already exists. It will provide guidance for establishing models of Coaching which are:

- Focussed on enhancing teaching and learning;
- Beneficial to all Coaching participants in terms of professional learning;
- Sustainable over the long term.

It will indicate a series of approaches that can be used to develop Coaching practices. These can be used as a step by step approach, providing a sequence of activities to support Coaching development or selected to implement specific changes in Coaching practice.

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

Learning to Learn in Schools and FE Colleges Report Published



The many similarities in the way L2L is implemented across schools and Further Education colleges, is the main finding identified in the 2010 L2L in schools and FE Education Project Report'

The majority of learners were seen to have positive, yet complex understanding of learning. There is evidence of L2L approaches changing understandings of learning, facilitating the development of metacognition and improving academic self concept.

Case studies across schools and colleges were seen to have great similarities. We have concluded that L2L transfers well from schools into vocational and community education. However, although practice varied little across different age phases, the rationales given by teachers differed and relate closely to perceived needs of students and purpose of the sector.

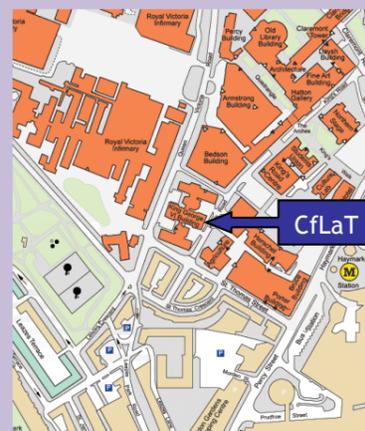
Teachers saw themselves as learners and expressed enthusiasm in thinking differently about their professional role. Being part of a community of practice spanning different geographical areas and education sectors was seen as an important aspect of this professional learning. The dissonance created by talking about and sharing experiences was highly productive in moving thinking about learning forwards.

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Annual BERA SIG seminar: Combining Data in Education Research



On 5th March 2010 CfLaT member Prof Liz Todd convened the annual BERA (British Educational Research Association) Seminar with Prof Lani Florian, from Aberdeen University.

Liz Todd and Lani Florian are joint co-ordinators of the BERA educational research special interest group. Each year they keep their ear to the ground to find a topic that captures the interest and imagination of educational managers, practitioners and researchers.

This year the topic was how to combine different kinds of data from research, data that is numerical and a range of other more qualitative material. Combining data raises interesting philosophical issues about how we use what we can find out to make sense of questions we are asking about education. However, this seminar was primarily interested in integrating the analysis of different kinds of data.

We were very fortunate to have three excellent speakers. Prof Jennifer Greene is internationally known in this area, and gave a most detailed presentation to explore the whole area of mixed methods, but focused on integrated analysis. Dr Jill Porter (University of Bath) and Dr Jan Georgeson (University of Chichester) both gave presentations based on their DCSF Disability Data Collection Project, using quantitative and qualitative methods, that developed tools for schools to use to research the views of their own pupils on experience of disability. It was interesting to see the kinds of data that could be found using on-line questionnaires, and to compare this with more qualitative data.

The day was free, funded by BERA and by both universities, and was very well attended by 60 people, not just from education contexts.

Feedback suggested participants gained much from the day.

"Stimulated lots of theoretical and practical thinking"

"Opportunity to update thinking and creative approaches to presenting evidence and network with like-minded researchers"

"It makes me realise about how flexible mixed methods could be and at the same time, there is always a danger e.g. lack of focus in terms of analysis etc. for example. It is very enlightening experience."

For further information contact: Liz.Todd@ncl.ac.uk

NEW ZEALAND LINKS

Prof Ann Briggs – now resident in New Zealand – attended the biennial conference in Christchurch of NZEALS, the NZ Educational Administration and Leadership Society.

She spoke on educational partnerships, and enjoyed a range of international and national speakers, including Professors Bill Mulford and Viviane Robinson. Issues familiar in the UK, such as the introduction of national standardised tests, are 'hot topics' in New Zealand, and there are NZ heads who would be interested in UK heads' experience. Ann is now a member of NZEALS National Council, and is happy to help UK and NZ heads who would like to link up.

Please contact Ann on ann.briggs@ncl.ac.uk to take this idea further.

BRIDGING THE GAP: School/University Transfer

The 'Bridging the Gap' project focused on the area of transition from school/college to university and was undertaken by Jill Clark, Ian Hall and Ann Briggs.

A significant element of the project was a synthesis of knowledge already held about students in transition and the impact of programmes to support them, both school and University-based. It used case studies of the Newcastle University PARTNERS programme alongside four other university programmes which aim to support this process.

Fresh data was collected from applicants in four Northumberland schools, from college applicants in four local FE colleges and from students post-entry who have experienced pre-entry programmes. Young and mature students were surveyed to identify: their concerns regarding university entry; what

engaged/excited them; their preferred modes of learning and teaching; experience of support for assessment processes and their expectations of learning and teaching and of the University experience. Data was also collected from young people who engaged in pre-University engagement activi-



Bridging the Gap



ties, to evaluate their experience pre- and post- entry.

In the research three 'types' of transition activities were identified: 'generic'; 'focused' and 'pedagogical'. The latter was less obvious in our study but nonetheless was discussed by respondents. Whilst students talked about having to be 'independent learners', when probed they could not articulate what an independent learner looked like, nor what experiences would be involved. Interestingly, we have just begun a second research project (with pre-University students in three schools) which is exploring transition in relation to the context of what it means to be an 'independent learner' in both schools and Universities.

The final report can found at: http://eprint.ncl.ac.uk/pub_details2.aspx?pub_id=153710 or for information, email Jill.Clark@ncl.ac.uk.

Out-Posted MEd Practitioner Enquiry

The MEd Practitioner Enquiry now has a number of out-posted groups. Carl Towler taught on the Investigating Learning module in Wakefield.

Recently I had the pleasure of teaching an out-posted session at Woolley Hall. This not only allowed me to soak up the atmosphere of the venue, but also to engage in conversation that gave a sense of locality and community to teaching and learning. Despite coming from different backgrounds, the session provided a context within which perceptions and opinions related to reform at all levels could be explored. The ideas for enquiry that resulted reflected issues beyond teachers' immediate contexts and took account of the experiences and insights of colleagues.

For more information: www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/postgrad/taught/practitioner



RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE

(Summer 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 the Centre base with the session officially beginning at 3.15.

Wednesday April 21st - Steve McHanwell: "Do I need to know all this stuff?" – anatomy learning in dentistry, medicine and speech and language sciences

Wednesday 19th May - Sarah Squires and Colleen Cummings: Extended Schools: Vision & Reality

Wednesday 2nd June - Pam Woolner: Changing school buildings and transforming learning.

Wednesday 21st July - Vicki Jones: Capturing, analyzing and presenting teacher and student focused data

Dates for the Autumn Term: 15th Sept, 20th Oct, 17th Nov & 15th Dec

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!!

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

School Design Futures: Education for Sustainability, new educational philosophies and designing sustainable schools – what can we learn?

Pam Woolner was on the organising team for this event, run by the UK Energy Research Centre, and one of a series of interdisciplinary seminars. The two-day workshop in Oxford at the end of April brought together architects, educators and researchers, some specialists in sustainability. The intention was to move beyond narrow views of sustainability centring on clever technologies and green gismos. During the workshop we grappled with relating what goes on in schools to environmentally sustainable intentions and actions. When and how do schools change? Can they spearhead sustainability for their



neighbourhoods? It's not easy! But it seems that if a school wants to engage its members in reflection, then sustainability may be a motivating starting point, as well as a goal in itself.

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

Seeing CfLaT through others' eyes

In the last two months we have had the chance to see ourselves a little more clearly through the eyes of three sets of visitors: from Norway, New Zealand and Thailand.

The group from Norway came from a university schools partnership in Bergen, and were interested in how our teacher education partnerships operated and how they led to a link between teaching and research, e.g. in the MEd Practitioner Enquiry and in research projects like L2L.

Dr Helen Dixon and Dr Gillian Ward from Auckland University were on a study tour

investigating research informed teacher education and were also particularly interested in the Practitioner Enquiry and the upcoming Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL).

Finally we hosted 28 senior university staff from Thai universities interested in teacher education and curriculum reform at all levels. Their particular interest was Thinking Skills and Learning To Learn in order to challenge the passivity they encounter in their students. Sadly they were delayed in returning home because of the volcanic dust crisis.

For more information contact: Vivienne.Moffett@ncl.ac.uk

CONTRIBUTORS WANTED!

Extended Schools Update and Learning and Teaching Update are our two monthly Newsletters published by Optimus Publishing.

Each publication includes news, updates on policy and research, fund raising initiatives and case study articles highlighting good practice in Extended Schools and their partners or in teaching and learning respectively. We are currently looking for contributions for future issues.

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