NECOP evaluation update

The North East Collaborative Out-comes Programme (NECOP) is a part-nership of five universities and 17 colleges in the North East region. We are working together to support young people to think about their futures and how higher education can help them reach their goals.

Newcastle University hosts the NECOP central management team, with the programme evaluation team, Christina Cooper (research associate/evaluation manager) and Nina Jentli (research assistant/data analyst), residing in CfLaT.

NECOP is delivering over 30 types of interventions in 106 schools and 17 further education colleges, aiming to increase awareness of higher education opportunities and progression pathways for young people and help them to develop the confidence and skills needed to succeed. Projects and activities are based on the Office for Students’ widening participation agenda, the FutureMe programme provides young people, aged 13 to 19, from low participation wards within the region with high quality impartial advice and guidance.

The NECOP evaluation conducted by the programme evaluations team of Alison and Nina incorporates a theory of change based on an academic readiness model to synthesise evidence of what works, for whom, in what circumstances, and why.

For more information, contact Christina.Cooperncl.ac.uk and Nina.Jentl@ncl.ac.uk

LEARNING SPACES

In April, Pam Woolner was invited to Australia by researchers at Monash University to take part in a three day international workshop and conference about learning spaces. The Monash colleagues have recently embarked on a project following 15 new build schools in the Melbourne area, and the event was to inform this research.

Pam also arranged to visit contacts from Melbourne University who work for La Trobe University at their campus in Bendigo, a two hour train trip out from Melbourne. They had arranged a tour of La Trobe’s Tech School, part of the state of Victoria’s STEM initiative – see https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/ programs/ learning_development/Pages/default.aspx, and Pam gave a lunchtime seminar for the Education Department.

Then it was back into Melbourne and off to the main Monash campus for the conference. This was based in the recently opened and notable Teaching and Learning Centre, which boasts innovative teaching rooms and lots of lovely informal learning space – as well as a sunny window less meeting room that were less well received by the group of educational space researchers!

The one day conference was well attended by students and practitioners keen to hear speakers on education and architecture from New Zealand, Europe, Uruguay and Australia. Overall it was a very successful visit even if, as Pam reflects, “It was a long way to go to meet some of the school buildings researchers based at Oxford University!”

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

NEW TECH PROJECT

On May 1st CfLaT started a project with Sunderland IT company, Consult and Design to do the groundwork on a platform/app for young people to record their learning from school PBL projects, clubs, work experience, part time jobs, informal learning, etc., to support their applications for HE, FE, apprenticeships and work.

This project will undertake consultations and preliminary technical work in order to turn into what we don’t want to end up with flash app that no one uses. We intend raising the profile of learning that is not captured in exam grades, but represents talents, interests, experience and wider learning.

The project is titled ‘Making Learning Visible’ and follows in the footsteps of Digital Portfolios, but with a greater sense of personal ownership.

Contact Ulrike or David if this strikes a chord with you: U.Thomas@ncl.ac.uk or David.Leat@ncl.ac.uk

RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE

(Summer 2019)

Our Wednesday Research teas aim to provide an informal forum for discursive examination of emerging research themes and concepts. Tea and cakes are available from 3.45pm in the Centre base (KGV 2.50) with the session officially beginning at 4pm.

19th June - Paula Cardellino, Universidad ORT, Uruguay: Design for learning: imagining preschool space in a Uruguayan setting.

17th July - Bridget Stratford, NEST Project Manager and Postgraduate Student: Mainstreaming students in the face of the refugee crisis, a focus on North East Solidarity and Teaching (NEST).

Further information about the research teas from lucy.tiplady@newcastle.ac.uk or from the Centre website (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/news/tessa/)

Thank you CfLaT and Goodbye

CfLaT’s Psychology Placement stu-dent, Luke Stevens, wrote about his experience, and introduces next year’s student. Luke writes:

From the beginning of my placement in September last year to present the CfLaT team have provided a supportive, welcoming, friendly and engaging environ-ment for me to explore education research. I am amazed how quickly the time has gone.

From the moment I set foot in the building I felt included in the CfLaT team and was given responsibility to contribute to the work that was going on. I have helped with numerous pro-jects, attended meetings on a range of topics, attended research conferences and teas (including BERA 2018), written a book review, helped with service de-velopment and campaigns within the university, planned my own summer research scholarship project and en-joyed the CfLaT social events.

This year I have had the time to con-template my professional development and to get an idea of what a career in academic research entails by getting involved in lots of different research activities. The highlight of my place-ment has been developing my knowledge of qualitative methods – particularly visual methods – and using these to help facilitate focus groups in both the ‘Equality, Diversity and Inclu-sion Fund’ project (investigating EDI officers and policies at Newcastle Uni-versity) and the ‘Post Graduate Stu-dents in Newcastle: the Intercultural experience’ project.

Finally, congratulations to CfLaT’s new placement student for 2019/2020 Charlie Thorpe—he will be an asset to the team. I will be a placement mentor for Charlie and I look forward to hearing about the work that goes on in the next year.

Best wishes,
Luke

NE Outdoor Learning Hub

The next NE Outdoor Learning Research Hub meeting will take place on Thursday 27th June 1-3.30pm at Newcastle University (room to be con-figured).

In addition to updates from members, Karen Laing will be facilitating a workshop on using a Theory of Change approach in research, evaluation and partner-ship working. For more information please see the CfLaT guide on Theory of Change (and other aspects of our work) at https://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/publications/guides/

The research hub meetings are open to all — please contact Lu-cy.Tiplady@ncl.ac.uk