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BERA blog update

CfLaT members are continuing to make contributions to the British Educational Research Association's multi-authored blog. Follow the links below to read the latest ...

Jill Clark:
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/using-visual-methods-to-help-us-move-from-researching-on-to-researching-with>

Simon Gibbs:
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/some-thoughts-on-the-purpose-of-education>

Rachel Lofthouse:
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/teacher-peer-coaching-a-story-of-trust-agency-and-enablers>

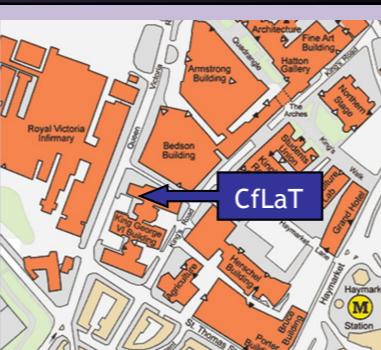
Laura Mazzoli Smith:
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/a-new-direction-for-gifted-education-studies>

BERA blog posts are welcomed from practitioners and researchers in education. If you are interested in writing between 500-750 words contact Rachel.Lofthouse@ncl.ac.uk as she is one of the blog editors.

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Issue 24

NEWSLETTER

CfLaT Headlines

Coming soon: a new look for CfLaT. This is the last issue of the Newsletter that will look like this. In the summer we will be launching our refreshed website and new CfLaT symbol. The Newsletter will be redesigned to match!

Anna Reid has been awarded a £2,000 ULTSEC innovation fund award to promote internationalisation, diversity and academic excellence through an extended induction programme

Karen Laing recently travelled to Groningen in the Netherlands with NISR colleagues to attend the first meeting - in an usual venue - of the brand new European project ACCOMPLISH. This project, with Liz Todd and NISR, aims to explore how academia, business, government and society members can work together to co-create research for maximum impact. Watch this space for more information as the project develops!

BERA/BELMAS Leadership SIG was in Newcastle last month. The link to the presentations and information about the event is here: <https://methods4educationalleadershipresearch.org>

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FaSMED Consortium meeting in Cape Town, South Africa

It is difficult to believe that the FaSMED project is now two years in! In February 2016, we held our consortium meeting in Cape Town wonderfully hosted by our South African partners at AIMSSEC.

This was a significant meeting as we reflected on Work Packages and how we take things forward in the final year. In recent months each partner has completed a huge body of work – our case studies – which are an essential and very fruitful source of data from our interventions. This was our first opportunity to share our case studies and initial findings across all partners. We dedicated significant time to discussing the analysis of our interventions and case studies.

We were also able to present our latest (work in progress) version of the web-based toolkit. This is being designed by a local Newcastle-based graphic design company called Ready Salted. This company has a great deal of experience of working with the University and so the process of producing the website has been very straightforward.

One of the highlights of the programme was our visits to some of the schools that our South African partners have been working with during the FaSMED project. We visited three contrasting schools in the area. Each visit took place in the morning and then we returned to Muizenberg for our meetings. The school visits were both inspiring and thought-provoking, and illustrated the differences of the schools, and schooling, compared to some of our partner schools. Our inclusion of a South African partner has always been prompted by the fact that there are such obvious differences and that we can learn from them, and our visits really brought this to life for all.



COMMUNITY CURRICULUM

FREE EVENT

Friday 8th July 2016, 8.45 am-3.30 pm, at the Herschel Learning Lab, Herschel Building, Newcastle University.

Ulrike Thomas and David Leat have been working on a project on Community Curriculum Making. It is being undertaken with six school-community partnerships, focuses on Project Based Learning, and is producing a school guide to the process. Brokerage is emerging as a critical factor. There is a free project event on July 8th at the university.

To book your place go to <http://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=10012>



NEW LINKS IN CHINA

René Koglauer and Anna Reid were guests of honour at a regional headteacher conference in Baoding, China at the beginning of May.

Research has generated wide interest in the media. The full report can be accessed at: <http://natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/out-of-school-activities/> Readable summaries of the research here: <http://natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/out-of-school-activities/>

For more information about the study, please contact Liz Todd
liz.todd@newcastle.ac.uk

The value of clubs

New research just released by CfLaT colleagues **Liz Todd and Karen Laing explores the link between the activities children take part in outside school time and their attainment.**

Findings point to an association between attending after school clubs and increased attainment for disadvantaged children. The research was conducted in collaboration with NatCen and ASK

For more information about the study, please contact Liz Todd
liz.todd@newcastle.ac.uk

AN ARCHITECTURAL PERSPECTIVE - JESMOND GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Paula Cardellino is an academic colleague from Uruguay who visited CfLaT in March. Here she reflects on a visit to an unusual local school.

Upon arrival, we are greeted by Jane Loomes, the school's Headteacher, eager to us show round and tell us all about the design process. She explains that some foundational ideas were clear from the very start of the process: flexibility of use of the learning spaces and instrumentation of the superclass philosophy - units for 90 children with a team of teachers. Added to these challenges, there was a need to make it exceedingly comfortable. She, particularly, wanted the school to feel very warm, natural, airy, calm, relaxing; a cocoon from the outside world.

During the 8 month design process, meetings and discussions took place between the stakeholders (staff, pupils, parents) and the designer. Many topics were discussed, but the main idea continued to be around transformation of the education: concepts such as 'sense of belonging', 'school as a home' and enjoyment of learning.



rounding streets of houses, and suggests that something different is happening inside.



From the walk around the school it is noticeable how the use of curved shapes enable flexible arrangements : even the toilets have an unusual circular shape. Three circles that can host up to 90 children compose the not very traditional 'classroom' space. Separated by acoustic curtains the areas can become different teaching environments or turn into smaller learning spaces.

As I leave you now with my views on this very different school building you can consider if this is something that you would enjoy as a student, a parent meeting or a teacher. It certainly felt to us that between the stakeholders (staff, pupils, parents) and the designer. Many topics were discussed, but the main idea continued to be around transformation of the education: concepts such as 'sense of belonging', 'school as a home' and enjoyment of learning.



University funding for three CfLaT researchers

Simon Gibbs, Pam Woolner and Rachel Lofthouse have each been awarded funds by the Pro-Vice Chancellor to pursue important lines of research over the next year.

Simon has been granted funds to develop his work on the effects on teachers' beliefs of labels applied to children and their behaviour. The funds will allow him to work with colleagues in Finland and Sweden, build on a earlier study (Gibbs & Elliott, 2015) but with a more sophisticated design to establish if specific labels affect teachers' perceptions of their efficacy. In the context of current debates about the nature and purpose of education it is important to consider how are children described, but also to recognise that the effect of such descriptions may vary depending on linguistic, cultural and legislative factors.

Rachel is going to use her funding from the Pro-Vice Chancellor to support her research project: '*Practice development and workplace learning*'. The purpose of this is to test the value of a new practice development led model for individual professional learning and institutional growth which recognizes the complex ecology of successful professional learning in and for the workplace. In order to further develop this work Rachel will conduct focus groups in a range of educational settings spanning early years to HE, and at different scales (individual schools or units, school alliances and a local authority).

Focus groups are underway, but Rachel would be keen to hear from colleagues in any educational settings who would like to participate in this

Pam's funded project will examine how changing the built environment is understood and experienced - as it happens - in a local school that is being

RESEARCH TEA TIMETABLE (Summer 2016)

Research teas aim to provide an informal forum for discursive examination of emerging research themes and concepts. Tea and cakes will be available from 3.45pm in the Centre base (KGVI 2.50), unless otherwise stated, with the session officially beginning at 4pm.

18th May: David Leat and Ulrike Thomas - Community Curriculum Making

15th June: Rachel Lofthouse - Practice development and workplace learning

13th July: Anna Reid - Supporting the final assessment of NPQ programmes

Further information about the research teas from laura.mazzolismith@newcastle.ac.uk or from the Centre website (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/news/Teas.htm>).

PAM VISITS SCHOOLS IN SOUTH TYROL

In April, Pam Woolner was invited to Bressanone / Brixen in the Italian South Tyrol to talk about, think about and visit school buildings.

Pam spoke about participation methods at a half day symposium



about school design held at the Freie Universität Bozen. The following day, she was part of an interdisciplinary group of academics from Iceland, Portugal and Germany who visited some innovative schools. The schools, within a high mountain region and some with very small rolls, are part of a federation of primary and secondary schools. They follow Italian education policy, but are German medium schools within this bi-lingual region.

The federation principal, Josef Watschinger, led the tour of four schools and explained his 'pedagogic concept'. This vision, honed over the last 16 years, aims to develop autonomous learners

taking responsibility for their learning within a supportive school community, intimately linked with the local community.

Mr Watschinger has come to believe that the physical environment has a key part to play: he has been involved with designing a new school, but also with refitting older buildings to fit the federation's educational values and needs.