

# Network Metamorphosis

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## NETWORK METAMORPHOSIS

*An ordinary network's tale of survival – for better or for worse!*

*By Tim Cantwell, May 2006*

### Introduction and background

This case study examines the way in which an ordinary but fairly effective learning network<sup>i</sup> responded to sudden and major changes to its structure and organisation – changes that were imposed from above and very difficult to avoid. Rushden & Higham Ferrers Networked Learning Community (RHFNLC) was about to enter its fourth year of operation and was looking forward to bedding in practice and reaching that critical mass of activity that is so important for network sustainability<sup>ii</sup>.

Then, the LEA announced that all schools in each given area (or cluster) had to form an Area Improvement Partnership (AIP). The seven schools that formed RHFNLC were to be subsumed into a larger network of fourteen schools, most of which were totally new to networked learning and therefore rather hesitant about it all. Furthermore, the new AIP was encouraged to have three distinct development strands (or learning focuses) instead of one. And lastly, funding for the seven RHFNLC schools would be drastically cut in relation to their forecasts for their fourth year of networked learning – firstly because of the way that the LEA had decided to administer the *Primary Strategy Learning Networks* money and secondly because RHFNLC would inevitably have to share some of its carry over with its new partners.

RHFNLC could have refused to co-operate, but, believing they had something to offer, decided to work and learn with their new network partners in the AIP. Nonetheless, there were fears in some quarters that the AIP might not be so successful, not least because prevailing research<sup>iii</sup> indicated that:

- Smaller networks are more effective.
- A narrow focus is more achievable.
- Voluntarism is the key to success.
- There needs to be a certain level of funding.

Despite this potentially gloomy outlook over the 'forced expansion' of the network, other network activists embraced the concept of the entrepreneurial organisation - if RHFNLC had built up enough capacity to sustain its work, then it should be adaptable enough to be able to take advantage of any external change and even come out of it fitter and healthier than before.

This paper is therefore the story of the new and evolving AIP, looking at whether it has been able to sustain the progress that RHFNLC had made, in particular the progress made in relation to pupil, adult and leadership learning. The story will also attempt to provide explanations for any outcomes so that any other learning networks facing similar challenges may learn from this peculiar tale.

So, how effective were RHFNLC before all this kicked off?

### RHFNLC – an overview of networked activity

This section gives an overview of RHFNLC's networked activity in the academic year 2004/5 – the 'knots'<sup>iv</sup> around which schools, groups and individuals interact and learn together. It also attempts to identify the particular characteristics and key features of RHFNLC that enabled such activity to successfully occur<sup>v</sup>. I will only include what can truly be described as networked learning – that is, stuff that is collaborative,

not stuff that could have been done if schools had acted alone (eg in-house peer coaching). This overview should show the extent of 'reach' across the network which will then be used as an indicator of the network's effectiveness. I will not be using official statistics or making quantitative 'impact statements' as descriptors of effectiveness, owing to the complexity and difficulty with crediting a particular outcome with a particular activity.

It is not necessary to use such measures for this paper as I am looking to:

- measure the level of continuity from one network to the other
- measure the relative success or otherwise when the two networks are compared to each-other

I will aim to explain any differences in activity or success which are identified by reference to decisions that were made and the existence or otherwise of known key features of effective networks. I will also reflect on those characteristics which the network leaders themselves believe are important.

Table One: RHFNLC's Networked Activity (2004/5)

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Practitioner enquiry group (Action for learning group (ALG))	ALG consists of 12 adults (2 from each of 6 network schools). ALG was facilitated by an HEI link person and met six times over the year. Each pair researched an aspect of pupil involvement in teaching and learning. Five of the six pairs reported positive findings in relation to pupil motivation and achievement. Findings were published and used as 'think pieces' in staff meetings. Findings were also disseminated to network adults via learning conversations at network staff development days. 40 per cent of teachers trialled some aspect of findings.
Leadership learning meetings	The first hour of the network's Steering Group (SG) meetings was reserved for leadership learning activities. These were facilitated by the HEI link who often used recently published materials as a starting point. All SG members rated these meetings highly as a vehicle for leadership learning and also reported that they were more likely to 'take risks' as a result.
Headteacher pairings	Each headteacher paired up with another to undertake half-termly 'intervisitations' in each others' schools. These had a focus on leadership and management issues. Some pairs did not meet as regularly as planned.
Twilight training sessions	The secondary school in the network was able to draw on its greater resources and offer twilight training sessions. A programme of workshops was open to all network adults and was based on a prior needs analysis exercise. Feedback was positive and another programme was planned.
Joint procurement of consultancy	The network used its buying power to procure external consultants who led CPD sessions on such things as accelerated learning, multiple intelligence etc. The network also had a critical friend from the Local Education Authority (LEA) who contributed to SG meetings.
Pupil intervisitations	Members of four school councils observed each others' councils in action to ensure that there was consistency of practice between network schools.
Pupil conference	32 pupils from 4 network schools devised and led their own workshops in which they modelled preferred learning styles. About 150 pupils and adults from across the network (and beyond) attended event and reported back to their schools.

The above table suggests that there were good levels of reach rather than exceptional levels, as not all schools were fully engaged in every networked activity. Indeed, it is unlikely that any network will ever have full engagement in all activity, as each school is partly driven by its own needs and capacities which gives rise to an 'ebb and flow' relationship with the network rather than an 'all or nothing' relationship<sup>vi</sup>. A summary of the spread of this activity follows:

## Lateral spread of activity across the network

- Four of the activities had the involvement of all seven schools.
- Two of the activities had the involvement of six schools.
- One activity had the involvement of four schools.

These figures can be used to make a crude measure of networked engagement that will be used for comparison later. For each networked activity there was a potential of seven schools' involvement. If there was 100 per cent engagement we would have a score of 49 (number of activities x number of schools). For RHFNLC the actual engagement was; 4 activities with all 7 schools participating ( $4 \times 7 = 28$ ), 2 activities with 6 schools ( $2 \times 6 = 12$ ), and 1 activity with 4 schools ( $1 \times 4 = 4$ ). Total score for the 'degree of spread' is 44/49 or 90 per cent when rounded. Although it is a crude measure, it suggests good levels of lateral reach for the network.

## Depth of activity within the network

By depth of activity I refer to the extent that it travels into classrooms and how much of it is owned by pupils, teachers and learning assistants, rather than being the preserve of traditional school leaders.

- Two of the activities were mainly led by pupils (pupil intervisitations and the pupil conference).
- One of the activities was a collaboration between teachers, learning assistants and pupils. This is the practitioner enquiry group which even led to real 'bottom up' change in some schools and classrooms. For instance, in one piece of research in which pupils had a major role in planning units of work in science, those pupils who were not part of the study group found out what their peers were up to and demanded that they too plan their own work in science<sup>vii</sup>.
- One of the activities was mainly run for and by teachers and learning assistants (the adult learning workshops).
- One of the activities was designed by head teachers, but was for the benefit of all network adults (joint procurement of consultancy).
- The remaining two activities were mainly the preserve of traditional school leaders.

All headteachers were involved in network activity, most teachers and learning assistants, and a significant minority of pupils. Not bad, but not good, room for improvement, particularly in relation to pupil learning<sup>viii</sup>.

## Explaining the successes

As previously noted, there is an increasing amount of literature devoted to and explaining the features of an effective network. A glance at the table of RHFNLC's activities shows that there was a commitment to enquiry and professional development. The interviewees for this paper would all say, to a lesser or greater degree, that all the known features of effective networks were present in their own network. However, they were keen to point out particular features, or pre-requisites, that they viewed as critical:

- The commitment of each school's headteacher:

*"If the head isn't on board, you can forget it." (Headteacher)*

- The need for trust and quality relationships between people and groups, often referred to as 'social capital' <sup>ix</sup>:

*"We had a history of trust, co-operation and working together in the cluster before we made the bid to become a networked learning community." (Co-leader)*

- The need for good levels of communication and making the network part of the fabric of schools, not a ‘bolt-on’ activity: (12)

*“We have the network as an agenda item on our weekly staff meetings. It’s important to keep things on the boil.” (Teacher)*

- The role of activists and dedicated individuals that can drive the project forward:

*“Nothing would have got done if it wasn’t for (the project manager). He’s a teacher seconded on a part-time basis and he gets a lot of those necessary but menial tasks done, like taking and distributing minutes of meetings, putting the newsletter together, that sort of thing.” (Co-leader)*

- And since project managers come at a price, another highlighted feature was adequate funding:

*“The Steering Group was unanimous in the view that people had to be incentivised to secure their full participation. We could all recount stories of twilight CPD sessions that had been poorly attended in the past, so we decided to make sure that as much of this work as possible happened during school time. For instance, all Steering Group and Action for Learning Group meetings took place in school time and the practitioner enquirers got a further four, half days release time to do their research. Supply cover was one of our biggest costs, but it made networked learning part of the job rather than something else to be done on top of everything else.” (Co-leader).*

So, RHFNLN was judged to be a fairly successful learning network, and partly because it had certain pre-requisites and several of the known features of effective learning networks in place. I will now briefly describe the new circumstances that were imposed upon the network and the decisions that were made by RHFNLN and the newly formed AIP to accommodate these circumstances and attempt to sustain the good work.

### From NLC to AIP: making the right decisions to sustain development

As noted in the introduction, RHFNLN was about to enter its fourth year of networked learning and had a forward plan for continued development. However, it was to be subsumed into a larger AIP that was to be sponsored by the LEA. The existing network did have some say in what the new learning network should look like. The three main changes can be summarised as follows:

- All schools from all phases in a given geographical area (or cluster) had to form an AIP. Up until this point in time, only half of the 14 local schools had opted to be in RHFNLN when the initial bid was made to become a learning network. Now, all 14 were in, whether they wanted it or not.
- The LEA encouraged the AIP to agree on three distinct development strands, whereas NCSL sponsored networks had only ever had one area of focus.
- There would be a relative cut in funding, given the greater number of schools now involved in the AIP.

Although there was some talk of snubbing the AIP and carrying on as RHFNLN, the seven schools believed in the principle of collaboration over competition and decided to learn with their new partners.

Indeed, it was argued that it may well lead to a ‘win-win’ situation that benefited all. The seven RHFNLN schools had a gift to offer their new partners since they had previous experience of the processes and practices of networked learning. In return, their existing plans for developing ‘pupil voice’ could be maintained (and even expanded) if they were able to take a lead on one of the development strands.

Fortunately, the 14 headteachers of the new AIP were able to agree on three development strands, one of which had a focus around pupil voice, (the other two were subject-based, chosen because of known weaknesses among AIP schools in these subject areas). It was suggested that obligations to be involved with all three development strands may have led to a watering down of the new AIP's capacity to fully develop any one of them. Indeed there is research to suggest that a single, tight focus for learning networks gives rise to greater gains in learning<sup>x</sup>. Therefore, the principle of voluntarism was invoked, meaning that each AIP school could 'buy in' to whichever development strand(s) it wanted to. This approach suited all schools and reflects the concept of the inevitable 'ebb and flow' previously mentioned. Some schools could be involved with all three strands if they had the capacity and it suited their purposes, whereas other schools may only need to be involved with one. There was an anticipation that the seven RHFNL schools would at least be involved with the pupil voice initiatives.

Voluntarism was not the only key decision that was made when establishing the new AIP. The seven RHFNL schools had experience of what worked and suggested that the following principles were adopted:

- **Co-leadership and distributed leadership**

RHFNL had operated well with two network co-leaders, but as the AIP was a larger organisation, three were proposed. Furthermore, co-leadership was extended to each of the three development strands with a teacher representative from each of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 leading each strand. This made a total of nine new leadership positions for regular teachers and fitted well with a lot of research suggesting that networks function better when leadership is distributed<sup>xi</sup>. As one headteacher commented:

*"Co-leadership helps with continuity. If one co-leader has to leave for whatever reason, the other two can keep the ball rolling whilst a replacement is found."*

- **Commitment to continuing professional development and purposeful learning**

A learning day facilitated by a colleague from the NCSL re-iterated for all headteachers and newly appointed co-leaders what a learning network involves – ie a deep commitment to learning via collaboration with others. Therefore it was agreed to; retain the existing enquiry group and open it out to all AIP schools; develop a new enquiry group within the numeracy development strand; retain leadership learning activities when the steering group met; and re-establish a headteachers' conference.

- **Accountable practice**

The co-leaders of each development strand were tasked with producing an action plan that met with the approval of the steering group. Learning activities contained in each plan had to be high quality and useful, based on needs analysis. Opportunities for dissemination of new learning had to be built in so that new practices and ideas could be shared with and trialled by all network adults, not just remain within the orbit of a few individuals. Development strand co-leaders were required to meet on a regular basis to review and evaluate progress and meetings for representatives from all AIP schools were held in between. The financial resources of the AIP were held in a central pot rather than shared out to individual schools so that expenditure could be approved and monitored by the steering group.

With these principles guiding the new AIP (ie voluntarism, distributed leadership, commitment to CPD, and accountable practice), how did it look on the ground? A few headteachers were of the opinion that it was all too much and destined to fail, or at best, would only make a difference for a few. By repeating the exercise carried out above with RHFNL, a 'measure' of the reach and depth of the AIP now follows.

## The AIP – An overview of networked activity

Table Two: The AIP's Networked Activity (Autumn 2005 to date). The reader should bear in mind that this report was written part way into the school year 2005/06. Some activities had probably not yet reached maximum levels of participation.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Practitioner enquiry group (Action for learning group (ALG))	ALG is run on exactly the same lines as before with this year's research questions growing out of last year's learning. One school left the group but another has replaced it so a total of six schools remain in the group.
Leadership learning meetings	These continue as before within the expanded Steering Group. The only difference being that they are facilitated 'in-house' rather than by the HEI link person. However, to counter this, headteachers recently had a two day conference at which invited guest speakers and consultants led various leadership learning activities.
Headteacher pairings	Planned for but not happened as yet.
Adult learning workshops	These continue as before.
Joint procurement of consultancy	Co-leaders of all three development strands are bringing in external consultants (and using their own expertise) to facilitate an AIP training day. Adult learning activities around each of the three development strands are being hosted at three AIP schools - each school being responsible for one development strand. All adults in the AIP are invited to attend at one of the three schools.
Pupil intervisitations	Although 13/14 schools now have established school councils, only one pair of schools have initiated intervisitations.
Pupil conference	A second event was held earlier in the school year. This was slightly different to the previous event in two ways: (a) it was designed by adults for pupils (b) the focus was on developing pupils' team skills.
Development strand meetings	Co-leaders of each development strand meet at least twice per term to share knowledge and learn about current thinking within their particular development strand. In between each of these meetings, there are meetings for representatives from all AIP schools to do the same.
Teacher buddies	A new initiative developed by the pupil voice group to enable teachers from different schools to observe and learn from each others practice. Their focus is on the extent to which pupils are involved in lesson planning. A portfolio of good practice will be developed. Buddies visit each others' schools every half term.



On the face of it, there seems to be plenty of networked learning activities taking place. However, to be able to make a more measured comparison with RHFNLC, we need to repeat the analyses carried out earlier in the paper.

### Lateral spread of activity across the network

- Only 1 activity has the involvement of all 14 schools, the leadership learning meetings. It is worth noting that these occur during the steering group meetings that all AIP headteachers are obliged to attend.
- 1 activity has the involvement of 13 schools.
- 4 activities have the involvement of 12 schools.
- One activity has the involvement of six schools.
- One activity has only two schools participating.
- One activity has not happened yet.

Firstly, we can measure how much continuity of practice there is from RHFNLC to the new AIP. Table two reveals that six of the seven activities initiated by RHFNLC are still occurring, which is an excellent score under the circumstances. But what is the extent of participation by the 14 schools in these continuing activities? Repeating the method used above, the 'degree of spread' is calculated as,  $(1 \times 14) + (1 \times 13) + (2 \times 12) + (1 \times 6) + (1 \times 2) + (1 \times 0) = 59/98$  – per cent. The analysis reveals that while opportunities for continued practice undoubtedly exist, not all AIP schools are availing themselves of these opportunities. This is not particularly surprising given that the AIP is new and the schools are not obliged to be involved in everything. Indeed 60 per cent is felt to represent a good score under these circumstances. If we focus on the extent to which the 7 RHFNLC schools continue to be involved in these activities, the score is higher, at 35/49 or 71 per cent when rounded.

So, while there has been a 'slight dent' in continuity of practice, the new AIP is certainly more than simply a vehicle for sustaining RHFNLC's existing work for the original schools. It also has its own agenda and has created new networked initiatives too, namely the development strand meetings and the teacher buddy scheme. If we repeat the analysis to include these activities, we get a truer indication of lateral spread of activity across the new network. There are now nine networked activities, and, using the same method, 100 per cent engagement would produce a score of 126. What we actually get is 83/126 or 66 per cent when rounded. Although not as high as RHFNLC's 90 per cent, this is a good score given the AIP is a larger organisation and only 9 months into its networked learning journey whereas RHFNLC had been operating for 3 years.

### Depth of activity within the network

- Only one activity is mainly led by pupils. This is the pupil intervisitations which still have to really get going.
- Only one of the activities continues to be a collaboration between teachers, learning assistants and pupils (the practitioner enquiry group).
- Two of the activities are teacher led, but seek to develop pupil learning (pupil conference and teacher buddy scheme).
- Three of the activities are mainly run by teachers for teachers and learning assistants (the adult learning workshops, joint procurement of consultancy, and development strand meetings).
- The remaining two activities are mainly the preserve of traditional school leaders.

These statements taken together show that there has been a slight skew in the nature of networked activity. Although the development of pupil voice is part of the AIP's business, the extent to which pupils actually have ownership of networked activity has diminished. Instead, a greater proportion of activity is now developed and led by teachers, with roughly the same amount of activity as before remaining the

preserve of traditional leaders. This is not surprising, given that pupil voice represents only one of the three AIP development strands (whereas it was previously fast becoming RHFNL's core business, prior to the change to an AIP). Furthermore, it is not necessarily a bad thing either because many of the new opportunities for adult learning have a desire to improve pupil learning as their focus.

In summary then we can state the following about the new AIP:

- There are good levels of continuity of practice, although a lot of this is being maintained by the original RHFNL schools.
- The AIP has provided more opportunities for networked learning, but a lower proportion of schools and people within those schools are engaging in such learning.

## Explanations for the changes

### Continuity of practice

There has clearly been a high degree of continuity from one network to the other and this success can be largely attributed by the decisions that were made when establishing the new AIP. All the ideas and activities that were carried over from RHFNL have generated a lot of their own continuing momentum once set in motion. These ideas and activities would not have been adopted in the first place if the co-leaders of RHFNL didn't have the enthusiasm to promote them. Interviews indicated also that a certain degree of trust existed in the new AIP partners for the work of the RHFNL.

### Comparative success

RHFNL's relative success has already been explained and although a lower proportion of schools and individuals are engaged in network activity in the new AIP, it is still regarded already as an effective organisation. Interviews of various members of the AIP all referred to examples of the known key features of effective networks, as they had done when explaining RHFNL's success. The interviewees identified similar factors when asked to explain the AIP's success.

- **Trust, quality relationships and shared values**

*"While we were part of the network (ie RHFNL), we still had relationships with the other heads at cluster level anyway." (Co-leader)*

This seems to confirm recent research by Earl & Katz that 'size doesn't matter'. Small networks don't necessarily make better networks as previously assumed, rather it is the quality of the collaboration that counts<sup>xii</sup>. Being larger just might mean it takes longer to get there.

- **Dynamic individuals**

*"There are some teachers who have a lot of commitment, are good at communicating this to others, and get a lot of the work done." (Headteacher)*

- **Co-leadership and distributed leadership**

*"Co-leadership on each of the development strands has been such a good idea, it really has motivated them, they really are a keen bunch." (Co-leader of AIP).*

Indeed, this is one area in which the new AIP actually excels over its predecessor. The establishment of the nine new leadership positions for regular teachers is providing leadership learning opportunities for people who would never have got them under RHFNL.

To the three features explicitly identified by interviewees above, I would add three more – the key principles that were taken on board when the AIP first established itself, ie: voluntarism, commitment to CPD, and accountable practice.

### Comparative weakness

Interviewees identified a number of reasons why there were slightly lower levels of engagement among AIP schools. The tackling of some of these issues in the future could very well be the key success factors for the new network.

- **The influence of key individuals**

All interviewees talked about the impact that a headteacher can have on his or her school's engagement with the AIP. As noted earlier in the paper, if any particular headteacher is not enthused by the concept of networked learning or has other school issues to deal with, there is little chance of that school becoming deeply involved with the AIP. As one teacher explained:

*“The head is the main gatekeeper for a school and if they don't want something they won't give it space and will shut it out.”*

Indeed, this seems to be the case with the three AIP schools have much lower rates of engagement in all activities. If these three schools were not part of the AIP, then rates of engagement among the remaining schools would be close to 100 per cent.

- **The extent of voluntarism**

The idea of voluntarism being an important feature of network success has already been mentioned and has been validated on numerous occasions<sup>xiii</sup>. However, the three AIP schools that currently demonstrate little engagement cannot withdraw from the AIP because the LEA made membership compulsory when AIPs were first introduced. The concept of voluntarism that the AIP adopted only extends to the selection of individual development strands by each school. This 'requirement for membership' is will continue to skew the coherence of the new network if there are schools which do not engage with any of the activity.

- **Funding**

This highlighted feature goes somewhat against current thinking that suggests that 'individual will' rather than finance is more important to network success<sup>xiv</sup>. Members of the AIP argued that no amount of strength will could ever overcome a lack of resources. They said that RHFNL was able to make networked learning part of the fabric of school life by paying for teachers' supply cover while they engaged in activity. However, the AIP has less money (in relative terms) and cannot afford to pay for as much supply cover. Some headteachers are fearful that if a lot of networked CPD has to take place out of school hours then motivation may wane.

- **Adults as learners**

Some interviewees mentioned the 'mind-set' of some adults as being a block to extending reach within the AIP. Many adults within schools see themselves primarily as teachers who dispense

knowledge and skills to pupils, who are the learners. These adults do not see themselves as learners, or if they do, do not view it as integral to their role. CPD is seen as a 'bolt-on' activity that is tolerated, something that is directed from above, something that happens in staff meetings. Despite many efforts, one of the greatest challenges for AIP leaders is to break down these traditional views and open some people's minds to the concept of the school as a learning centre for all. This is not simply a criticism of those who hold such views, rather, it may be a weakness of the AIP leadership in that they may not have used the right strategies to overcome this perceived problem.

- **Stages of development**

One of the obvious reasons the AIP has yet to reach its potential is the fact that it is still in an early stage of its development whereas RHFNL was about to enter its fourth year. There is evidence to suggest that the majority of effective networks have sustained themselves for more than three years<sup>xv</sup>. The AIP is still really an emerging network that happens to have a few experienced players. It is yet to realise some 'quick wins' that will demonstrate its effectiveness for the newer/younger members. And we can add to this the factor that when schools first come together to form a network, they are often operating against the 'historical grain' and thus find it quite difficult for a while. Indeed, the former co-leaders of RHFNL both confessed that it took a full year before they really began to understand what networked learning was all about and how it worked. During their first year there was a lot of activity that could at best be described as 'messy'.

## Conclusions

This paper tells the story of how an established and reasonably successful learning network was required to go through the process of transforming into a larger one. It is hoped that it has relevance for networks undergoing similar change. There are lessons concerning how this transformation can and might best be achieved. The new network is still less than a year old and we are yet to see how it will unfold. Encouragingly, much of what went on in RHFNL is still going on in the new AIP and generally reflects very much the kind of activity going on in many other learning networks in the country. The story also confirms a lot of what is already known about learning networks, their strengths and key features, though there are some particularities worth looking at in more detail. It is certainly a credit to all those involved in both RHFNL and the AIP that the good work continues. The key enquiry question that I would now put to the co-leaders of the new AIP is this:

*"You say that a lot of your success relies on dynamic individuals. But what if some or all of these people were to leave the AIP for some reason? Do you have the right structures and sufficient organisational capacity in place to sustain development if some or all of these dynamic individuals were not around?"*

Answering this question may hold the key to the new network's further development and ultimately its sustainability.

## Notes & references

i A 'fairly effective learning network' is a judgement based on the network's performance at their NCSL Year Two Review

ii NLG, 2004, *What are we learning about network growth*, Nottingham, NCSL. Available at [http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/E7B/A8/nlg\\_wawla2\\_5\\_Network\\_growthAOP.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/E7B/A8/nlg_wawla2_5_Network_growthAOP.pdf)

iii NLG, 2005, *Learning from learning networks*, Nottingham, NCSL. Available at [http://www.ncsl.org.uk/mediastore/image2/networked\\_learning/Docs/knowledge-base/programme-leaflets/learning-from-learning-networks.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/mediastore/image2/networked_learning/Docs/knowledge-base/programme-leaflets/learning-from-learning-networks.pdf)

iv Church, M, 2006, *Knots and threads: the Power of Networks*, Nottingham, NCSL

v Earl, L & Katz, S (Temperley, J, ed.), 2006, *What makes a network a learning network*, Nottingham, NCSL. Available at <http://networkedlearning.ncsl.org.uk/collections/network-research-series/summaries/nlg-what-makes-a-network-a-learning-network.pdf>

vi NLG, 2006, *What are we learning about sustaining a network of schools (think piece)*, Nottingham, NCSL  
An example of 'ebb and flow' in relation to RHFNL is the network's secondary school which chose not to be part of the enquiry group because they already had a culture of ongoing 'in-house' enquiry. Furthermore, they believed that the findings of their enquiries at KS3/4 might not necessarily be relevant to the KS1/2 schools and vice-versa.

vii Rushden & Higham Ferrers Networked Learning Community, *The kids are alright*, containing a summary of research projects carried out by the ALG. Contact RHFNL.

viii This assessment of the degree of depth of spread as 'good' agrees with the results of RHFNL's most recent 'Levels of Learning survey', 2005. This is a survey designed to measure network members' perceptions of the extent and effectiveness of networked activity.

ix NLG, 2005, *Leading together to build social capital*, in What are we learning about community leadership in networks, Nottingham, NCSL. Available at <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/mediastore/image2/nlg-wawla3-2-Leading-together-to-build-social-capital.pdf>

x Earl, L et al, 2006, *How Networked Learning Communities Work* (external evaluation phase 3), Aporia Consulting Ltd. Available at <http://networkedlearning.ncsl.org.uk/collections/network-research-series/reports/how-networked-learning-communities-work.pdf>

xi Harris, A, 2006, *Distributed leadership within learning networks*, in What are we learning about sustaining a network of schools, Nottingham, NCSL

xii Earl, L et al, 2006, *How Networked Learning Communities Work* (external evaluation phase 3), Aporia Consulting Ltd. Available at <http://networkedlearning.ncsl.org.uk/collections/network-research-series/reports/how-networked-learning-communities-work.pdf>

xiii Jackson, D & Burns, M, 2005, Two system-wide network reforms in the UK: learning themes from the Networked Learning Communities and the Leading Edge Partnership programmes, Paper presented at International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) Annual Conference, Barcelona 2-5 January, 2005. Available at <http://networkedlearning.ncsl.org.uk/knowledge-base/conference-papers/icsei-05-two-system-wide-network-reforms.doc>

xiv Ibid

xv NLG, 2004, *What are we learning about network growth*, Nottingham, NCSL. Available at [http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/E7B/A8/nlg\\_wawla2\\_5\\_Network\\_growthAOP.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/E7B/A8/nlg_wawla2_5_Network_growthAOP.pdf)