

Facilitated learning through the innovative use of ICT

Graham Cotgreave

Facilitated learning through the innovative use of ICT

The Networked Learning Group of the National College for School Leadership set up and facilitated groups of schools which were collectively known as Networked Learning Communities. Each network of schools developed ways of promoting and growing learning at different levels within their learning community. The following are brief portraits of practice describing the use of ICT in learning. In addition are more portraits of practice from other contexts.

The portraits are loosely grouped into five categories or typologies.

To explore portraits of practice for each of the following, please click on the link.

<u>Webpage VLE/MLE</u>	<u>Discussion group email</u>	<u>Multimedia artefacts</u>	<u>ICT-based enquiry tools</u>	<u>Video conferencing web cams</u>
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Webpage/VLE/MLE

Webpage/VLE/MLE

Pupil learning

Taking pupils seriously by giving them something serious to do

East Manchester – a Leading E-Learning Community – is a sub-network of an Education Action Zone, focusing on teaching and learning with ICT across its schools. Its ICT development assistant has worked with children across the network to develop websites for their individual schools. These sites present school art work, display videos of school productions, have profiles of teachers and galleries of children working. Some websites provide child-composed healthy eating tips and the kids' zone offers quizzes and activities.

The value of pupil-created websites lies in the process of creation as much as their content. Apart from the ICT skills developed through website creation, these projects are inherently creative – disciplined, purposeful and original. As importantly though, they are an alternative pupil voice activity. East Manchester's websites are official school websites. Pupils are creating an authentic product, one of use to the school, rather than simply working for marks. The children, by having something serious to do, are being taken seriously as contributing members of the school community.

You can visit the website at: <http://www.eastmaneaz.co.uk/eazfset.htm>

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Webpage/VLE/MLE

Pupil learning

Steve Calton
Coopers Technology College

Sharing of ideas and resources with colleagues in demonstrating innovative use of ICT in the science curriculum

Steve regularly demonstrates a highly innovative approach to the adaptation, use and integration of existing resources into the curriculum. For example, in preparation for end-of-year exams, a Year 8 class was set different topics to research and present in groups. Their work was saved to a class page designed by Steve on the school's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Intranet, thereby enabling students external access for revision and homework purposes and negating class group work problems often caused by absence. Evaluation of their own presentations took place in a VLE assignment and was then voted on through a survey on their class page for the preferred presentations to inform future work.

Through using the VLE to host and deliver students' work, Steve found that his students were motivated and engaged in the learning process. The ability to review and vote on other presentations provided them with a sense of purpose and control, making them active partners in the learning process. The class page allowed Steve to provide extra web-based references and resources to assist the students in further extending their ideas. The use of the VLE's interactive bulletin board meant that Steve was always in touch with his students as well as providing a forum for them to share their ideas, thus building their knowledge.

Steve won the Innovations in ICT in Science Award for 2005 at the Bromley Secondary ICT Teachers Conference.

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Pupil learning

Jo Duncan
Coopers Technology College

Innovative use of ICT and the creation of student-centred learning activities

Jo has been instrumental in the use of interactive whiteboards with Windows XP Movie Maker software to support Year 9 SATS revision for Macbeth in English. This engaged and motivated students to learn what is a difficult text through vision and sound. They demonstrated a keen desire to contribute individual ideas in discussion and at the board and to collaborate in group work reflecting on others' opinions, all of which enabled them to fully grasp the chronology and deeper meanings of the play. Student collaborative learning was consolidated by Jo's VLE assignment, completed and submitted online as independent study.

Jo was a finalist for the Innovation in ICT Award at the Bromley Secondary Teachers Conference.

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Webpage/VLE/MLE

Pupil learning

Dawn Denyer
Derrick Wood School

Interactive whiteboards and maths teaching

Dawn has been successfully using interactive whiteboards (IWB) as part of her delivery of the maths curriculum. She has been responsible for training not only the maths staff at Derrick Wood with IWB, but the rest of the staff as well. Dawn has also provided demonstration lessons for CDEC at this year's BETT conference. She has been involved in trialling new materials for Hitachi Cambridge and other software manufacturers. She has completed a filming session for Resource Review for Teachers' TV. As part of her research towards her MA, she has undertaken research into the cognitive use of ICT in mathematics and has presented part of this research at the 7th International Conference on Technology in Mathematics Teaching in Bristol.

Dawn won the Innovations in ICT in Maths Award for 2005 at the Bromley Secondary ICT Teachers Conference.

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Webpage/VLE/MLE

Adult learning

Content is king

Do Different provides opportunities for teachers to engage in enquiry and research within and across schools. The Do Different website details the network's action research projects. On this site, content is king and its simplicity makes it easy to use and access. Important characteristics are:

- research projects described in detail, including statistical data from projects and student survey comments
- teaching strategies presented with reports in easy-to-print out Microsoft Word documents, diagrams and photographs of the sessions in action
- prevention of users from feeling overwhelmed by the detail through the use of hyperlinks allowing them either to have an overview of the projects or delve deeper into the data or the collection instruments

The strength of the website is its very simplicity, supporting low maintenance and direct delivery of material.

You can visit the site at: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/edu/ddncl/>

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Webpage/VLE/MLE

Leadership learning

Cheshire Improving Leadership and Learning (CHILL) is a network of 35 schools focused on developing learning and leadership through self-evaluation and enquiry, critical friendship, collaborative training and networking.

At its essence, leadership learning is concerned with creating conditions to support learning within one's own school. The website's resources both support and provide evidence of leadership learning in the following ways:

- an animated diagram illustrating the self-evaluation process, and an archive of self-reviews dating from 1998
- models to guide learning on topics such as building school capacity

- development plans and network review documents
- job descriptions for critical friends

The website also captures the network's identity and direction through its logo, statement of values, vision and philosophy, network development plans, newsletter and photographs of conferences. It is a website that celebrates achievement and marks milestones.

You can visit the network at: www.chillnetwork.org.uk

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Webpage/VLE/MLE

Within-school learning

Halsnead Community Primary and Training School is a member of the Knowsley Southern Area Network. The site is a resource providing public information and learning materials:

- games and activities for both children and parents
- help sheets and tutorials on how to use some of the most popular software in Knowsley schools
- examples of children's work
- modules for foreign language study
- links for pupils, teachers and students

A highlight of its website is the multimedia celebration of the network's geography week. This presentation includes an outline of activities, photographs and video clips of key events.

You can visit the web site at: <http://www.halsnead.demon.co.uk/new/africa.htm#overview>

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Capturing the ephemeral

Bedfordshire Schools Improvement Partnership (BSIP) Networked Learning Community is part of a larger learning network pre-dating the establishment of the Networked Learning Group programme. This 150-school-strong network has four strands of activity:

- teaching and learning
- curriculum development
- leadership development
- student involvement

BSIP's 40-page website offers something for everyone. While some areas are richer in material than others, topic areas such as research lend themselves more readily to the production of resources than others. For example, the pages on research and pupil involvement offer a rich variety of resources, reports and 'how-to' sheets.

BSIP.net's pages of scheduled events, weblinks and lists of classroom practitioner learning activities capture a sense of an active and productive network. This is the site's strength. A learning network can be ephemeral, making it difficult to comprehend its uses and benefits. BSIP.net ameliorates this problem by presenting a moving picture of the network in action – what it does, what it has achieved and what it has learnt. More than that, it identifies very transparently a range of ways for members to get involved.

You can visit BSIP's website at: www.bsip.net

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Joining forces

Developing a website can be so time-consuming and expensive that it drains resources out of the core business of a network. Others may feel they lack the expertise to build a website or the time to maintain it. Forming partnerships with other providers can ensure networks receive the technical support, website building and maintenance skills, training and server space needed to establish the community.

Primary Schools Learning Network (PSLN) and Local Enquiry and Research Network (LEARN) have taken such an approach. Their websites are both hosted by the University of Wolverhampton. This is a simple site providing information on:

- the mission of the networks
- a calendar of events
- network projects
- individual school focuses and key staff

It is direct and information-rich. Also, knowing that learning requires as much talking through as absorbing information, the site identifies named contacts for projects.

Visit the site at: <http://asp.wlv.ac.uk/Level4.asp?UserType=11&Level4=1851>.

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Discussion group/email

Discussion group/email

Pupil learning

Cooking by satellite

Made up of 10 Sefton primary schools, **Janus Network** has used email to enhance lessons. Here are two examples that children found exciting and engaging:

- Children in two schools emailed each other throughout their study on Victorian times. In a session on Victorian cookery they emailed recipes to each other. Having prepared and eaten their counterpart's dish, they emailed comments back to the recipe's authors.
- Children in two schools used email to work together on a project on newspaper reporting. Receiving up-to-the minute information on breaking news via email and a ticker tape news feeder, the children worked together to decide if the story was newsworthy enough to warrant broadcast. To simulate a real newsroom, the children had to work quickly on the stories on which they were reporting. They communicated with the 'news studio' by email. Later, they watched the BBC news to see which of their items had also been selected by the BBC.

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Discussion group/email

Adult learning

E-exchanges of practice

Cambridgeshire Outreach Network for Education's (CONE) virtual learning environment offers a number of virtual places for network members to meet and share links to resources, discuss developments and reflect on experience. Even in the 2004 August vacation period, teachers were actively contributing. Key features of these online environments are:

- an active online facilitator who keeps the community moving quickly

- a ‘Watch this Topic’ feature allowing teachers to register for email notifications about specific topics that interest them
- ranking contributors for the number of postings made, using descriptors such as induction phase, foundation phase, regular contributor, committed communicator and advanced communicator

It is a supportive community which encourages participation and risk taking - *“XXX is putting us to shame! Well done for all your investments – and thank you. Even if you don’t always hear it, people are looking and appreciating.”*

Although active participation levels appear low, this needs to be placed in perspective. Active participation on most online discussion forum ranges from 2.5 per cent to 30 per cent. Don’t forget to recognise the value of those who are read only – they are getting something out of the community too.

You have guest access to some sections of the webpage at: <http://www.cone-net.co.uk>

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Discussion group/email

Leadership learning

Living and breathing email

email is ubiquitous in many networks. At times, its use for administration and news-sharing is pretty unremarkable:

“Lots of emails fly around between co-leaders and a small number of other ‘activists’.”

“It is our primary means of talking.”

“Headteachers are emailed or faxed minutes of meetings and activities on a Friday and they have to complete action points by the next Wednesday.”

“If there is a network meeting the minutes will go out the next week and heads get to see what’s happening at the meetings.”

“Steven emails headteachers because they are often difficult to get hold of during the working day.”

In a connected society these uses are conventional, but what they achieve is significant:

- streamlining administration to keep face-to-face time free for quality discussion
- increasing network reach through mass communication
- providing a low-risk way for leaders at all levels to initiate contact with people from other schools they have meet at network events
- maintaining open and transparent channels of communication between network groups

The power of email is that it is so unremarkable. It is one technology that is likely to be part of the day-to-day activity of many network members. This makes it one technology that is most readily used by network members.

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Discussion group/email

School-to-school learning

Building an identity

Not just an NLC, but a network of networks, the **Arts Learning North West Network** is made up of 46 arts colleges. It is a network focused on valuing the arts in and beyond the curriculum and serves to connect as many arts educationalists as possible. With so many member schools, online communication is essential:

- The network distributes its newsletter through an email list to approximately 1,000 people.
- Its primary means of talking is through *“lots of emails fly(ing) around between co-leaders and a small number of other ‘activists’.”*
- Its weblog offers daily news updates communicating the vitality and dynamism of the arts. The weblogs support dialogue so others can discuss breaking news as it happens. As weblogs can be updated from any computer or site, their flexibility is vital.

In a network made up of so many schools, electronic communication is the only practical way to communicate efficiently and quickly with as many members as possible. At the same time, distributing a shared newsletter is an effective way of building a network identity.

You can visit the website at: <http://www.networkingthearts.co.uk/alnw>

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Discussion group/email

Network-to-network learning

A galaxy of communities

There is nothing quite on the scale of the **National College for School Leadership's** (NCSL's) constellation of networked online learning communities hosted within talk2learn. Established in 1999, talk2learn and its counterpart, the Learning Gateway, is a virtual environment supporting the professional learning of school leaders, teachers and other practitioners in school-based education. Examples of online communities include:

- **communities of practice** such as Talking Heads – a community of headteachers throughout the UK offering peer-based support and advice
- **programme communities** supporting ongoing peer-to-peer discussion, tutor contact and learning resources for participants registered on NCSL's face-to-face development programmes
- **consultation communities** offering regular hotseat events, creating opportunities for discussion between the talk2learn community and policymakers, leading educational thinkers and experienced headteachers
- **project communities** supporting learning around financial management in schools or innovations in practice that is the business of the DfES Innovation Unit

talk2learn's registered membership of 55,000 participants is expected to rise to 70,000 in 2005. talk2learn is supported by a team of skilled facilitators who work to foster community development and encourage participation.

talk2learn is a treasure trove of resources and communities to support learning.

You can visit and register at: www.talk2learn.co.uk

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Multimedia artefacts

Multimedia artefacts

Pupil learning

Gifts to the gods

Janus Network is a group of 10 schools in Sefton Local Authority on Merseyside that collaborate to share ideas, swap good practice, observe and evaluate each other's lessons and undertake joint research or teaching and learning projects. A pair of their 14 lead learners working with the local teacher training department used digital video and email to create video lessons. They developed a story-making project where pupils from English Martyrs School worked with St Monica's RC Primary to co-write stories based on Greek myths. Children in one school would come up with a beginning and then email it to their 'buddy' at the other school to plot the next part. The myths were re-written for modern times – the gifts to the gods could include things like pickled onions. The new myths were videoed and shown to the other schools.

You can visit the Janus network at: www.janusnetwork.co.uk

In **North South Network** children have been developing instructional videos on topics such as bullying, not having friends or being afraid. Developing these videos is a rich learning experience. Children are working together to write scripts, film and edit them. The task itself ultimately leads them to develop a deeper understanding of teaching and learning as they structure a piece of instruction focused on a specific audience. While the video projects were originally envisaged for gifted and talented children, teachers have found that they work extremely well for all children.

You can visit the website at: <http://www.sln.org.uk/nsn/>

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Multimedia artefacts**Pupil learning**

Nicola Ashton
Coopers Technical College

Making documentaries

Nicola has been instrumental in transforming the AS media studies course into an active programme where students use digital camcorders to construct their own documentaries or moving image adverts using an editing package. Students are quickly engaged and empowered by the use of such technology since it enables them to evaluate their own and others' productions in a visual and exciting way. Nicola is now in the process of taking this course through Year 13 and developing a training programme for colleagues.

Nicola won the Innovations in ICT in English Award for 2005 at the Bromley Secondary ICT Teachers Conference.

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Multimedia artefacts**Pupil learning**

Karen Parker
Glebe School

Multimedia and modern foreign languages

Karen has participated in international workshops in Spain focusing on the use of technology in the planning and delivery of lessons in Spanish. Based on this work, she has been successful in designing and implementing multimedia programmes in the delivery of her modern foreign languages programme at

Glebe School. Karen has explored the multimedia features of PowerPoint and has successfully exploited them as part of her lessons. A key element has been her use of the audio record features and the use of hyperlinking documents.

Karen is working in an environment where students have learning and behavioural challenges. She initially creates her lessons in the form of an interactive PowerPoint programme which is then delivered to the group as a whole-class activity. Students can see and hear Spanish vocabulary in different contexts. The lesson activity is used as a template for the students to create their own language multimedia 'books'. The students use the features of PowerPoint to record their oral responses. These books are then shared with the rest of the class.

She has been extremely successful in establishing a learning environment that is motivating and engaging for her students.

Karen was a finalist for the ICT Innovation Award at the Bromley Secondary Teachers ICT Conference in July 2005.

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Multimedia artefacts

Pupil learning

Simon Hurst
Hayes School

Using Cubase to integrate music with film

Simon was interested in developing his students' skills to compose music. He commenced his work by encouraging them to examine the role that a music soundtrack can have in contributing to the overall effect of a film. His students then experimented by adapting different music compositions to specific film clips, noting the impact it had on the mood of the film.

Using MIDI keyboards and synthesisers, with CuBase sequencing, his students began to compose their own soundtracks for film clips. Through the use of Cubase and ICT Simon found that his Year 8 students became much more engaged with the music curriculum. He also found that his students have become

much more sensitive to the role that music can have in the creation of a film. His students have also developed a set of music composition skills that will assist them in Year 9 when, as part of the media programme, students will be expected to make a short film.

Simon won the Innovations in ICT in Music Award for 2005 at the Bromley Secondary ICT Teachers Conference.

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Multimedia artefacts

Adult learning

Developing ICT skills

The creation of multimedia artefacts requires ICT skills. In **North South Network** (NSN), ICT is the focus of adult learning opportunities, not only as a subject in its own right but also as an effective means of communication.

Initially, an ICT skills audit took place to gauge the level of skills in the network. Practitioners were linked with more skilled colleagues within their own schools as learning buddies. The audit also laid the groundwork for PowerPoint training with the support of a collection of off-the-shelf resources. All teachers attending the PowerPoint training were required to develop a PowerPoint presentation (on a teaching and learning or management subject) to be loaded up on to the NSN website.

The network also offered digital video camera training – adults and pupils have worked together as pairs in each school and will act as experts in training other staff and pupils in their schools. Pupils will be making their own films in the coming term and will be rewarded at a ‘mini-Oscars’ ceremony in September.

You can visit the website at: <http://www.sln.org.uk/nsn/>

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Using video as part of coaching

Coaches facilitate learning by supporting and challenging teachers to extend their practice. **Tyneside NLC**, a network of six secondary schools, first came together as a Networked Learning Community initiative. One of their focuses, coaching, is a powerful method for leading learning. Participants work together in intra-school coaching triads, but take part in an inter-school coaching training. Part of the coaching process has involved videoing and reviewing lessons – for personal professional development, for the benefit of the coaching triad and for NQT training and development. Interviews with coaches suggest that reviewing videos develops teaching and coaching skills. Here, one coach reflects on the learning value and the huge challenge derived from videotaping a lesson that had not gone well:

“I wouldn’t let that video be seen by anybody other than the coaches really, but we thought we wanted something we could work on and what would be the point of videoing for me a really good lesson? I know what’s good in that lesson. I would prefer to learn and see what am I doing wrong with this class, why I do not have a good relationship with this class – and I wanted to see if we could pick up something that I was missing and that’s what I was hoping would help. So I wanted it to help me at this point, do you know what I mean? I wasn’t seeing it as staff training or anything, I saw it as helping me and then as I thought about this video the more I thought well why not show the bad bits?”

Reviewing video does not just develop teaching skills but also provides a vehicle for the development of coaching skills. In this quote, the interviewee is uncomfortable with the positive feedback on her teaching video, leading to a reflection on the key skills in coaching itself – the ability to ask the right questions about teaching practice:

“...fed back, got lots and lots of praise, but I said: ‘Well there’s just something about it that I’m really unhappy with and I just don’t know why’ and there was something about the lesson that just didn’t work for me. I got through everything I wanted to do, the participation was great, but I had this nagging feeling which my coach dismissed and said: ‘Oh don’t be worrying about that it was absolutely fine’ and then the observer fed back to the coach and it was all very nice and all very polite and I just felt we were missing the point. I went home and thought about it a lot. I didn’t think about much else that evening. I kept thinking about what we had just done as coaches or trainee coaches ... later the best conversation was the one after the coaching session where reflection about the coaching process proved more powerful than the coaching about the lesson itself.”

Good teaching involves working through a cycle of observing, interpreting, and decision making. Skilled observation is important for effective teaching. Sharing video of lessons is a powerful medium for reflection and review.

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Multimedia artefacts

Within-school learning

A record of Africa week

Halsnead Community Primary and Training School is a member of the **Knowsley Southern Area Networked Learning Community**. One area in the Halsnead site is a multimedia record of the NLC's geography week focusing on Africa. Every age group was involved, from Nursery through to Year 6, with each year group choosing to study a different African country. Each class looked at particular geographical themes appropriate to their age group, making links to other curriculum areas through literacy, art and music in particular, with the use of ICT being a priority.

What the website does is present a display of the week's events. It contains descriptions of each year group's activities as well as weblinks to relevant resources. Descriptions of activities are useful, but where the site shines is through its online photographs of the week and video clips to provide a real flavour of the event. As this event was well supported by parents – including a World War II veteran who had served in Africa and one Nigerian chief – the multimedia presentation demonstrated to all the full character of the event.

You can visit the website at: <http://www.halsnead.demon.co.uk/new/africa.htm#overview>

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Multimedia artefacts

School-to-school learning

Sharing practice

Many networks use video and digital photography as part of their learning strategy. Here are some examples illustrating the range of uses:

- Redbridge NLC's website contains a video of teachers discussing the principles of networked learning, helping to unpack the aspirations and ethos of networking.

- At South West London Networked Learning Community two Year 1 researchers focused on ‘fruitful questioning’: turning pupils into active questioners by teaching them about levels of questions based on Bloom's taxonomy. In addition to producing a toolkit, the teacher-researchers produced a video, recording pupil responses to questions. This can be used as a coaching and mentoring model for teachers and pupils as well as a framework to assess timing of pupil answers.
- Bolton Pastoral Network organises ‘Saturday Specials’, providing access to nationally recognised consultants and trainers free of charge. A videotape is made of each network event to capture and help share the learning from the event.
- In Redbridge NLC, pupils took part in a cross-school conference focusing on teaching and learning to provide feedback to teachers. A video has been produced which helps other NLCs organise such an event.

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ICT-based enquiry tools

ICT-based enquiry

Pupil learning

Pupils Transforming Learning

Transforming Learning has become a significant strand in some NLCs. This online tool is used to administer surveys to collect feedback from students on classroom climate. The data is automatically analysed and fed back to the teacher. The Transforming Learning tool also features a tool that assists in action planning.

In one network, Transforming Learning was described as a “*lever which opened up their appreciation of how powerful the involvement of pupil voice was in their classrooms.*” Some teachers interpret their data with their students:

“At times, the issues which are raised by the exercise can be quite puzzling and require you to go back to the class to ask them to interpret them for you. It was only through doing this that I found that I was marking them much harder than their previous teacher, and in the process had knocked their confidence. Talking through this difference in expectations proved to be invaluable in getting them to work alongside me in a very important exam year. I now firmly believe that the findings are much more likely to have an effect in your classroom when you share them with those who have actually produced them.”

Some teachers report that Transforming Learning helps them see the possibilities of pupil voice.

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ICT-based enquiry

Adult learning

Video in Research Lesson Study

In a Networked Research Lesson Study (RLS) small groups or pairs of teachers from different schools work on developing new teaching and learning practices. In RLS teachers identify an aspect they want to teach better, a problem they frequently encounter or a new approach they want to develop. This is usually related to the pupil learning focus of the network – assessment for learning, thinking skills and collaborative group work.

Drawing from existing literature and resources, the teachers jointly plan the research lesson, teach and observe it and capture key aspects for focus. They jointly deconstruct the lesson, paying strict attention to the learning of the 'case' pupils. Many also involve the pupils – or group of them – in helping analyse the lesson and feed into adjustments. What is learned is captured and made available so others can learn from the new practice. RLS teachers are using video, digital photography and a range of ways of capturing their work, structuring it and presenting it vividly so others can learn from it. The **Redbridge Learning Community** has been using video anecdotes to share practice.

You can learn about RLS by visiting: <http://salsafy.caret.cam.ac.uk/rls/index.html>

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ICT-based enquiry

Adult learning

Paula Simmons
Ravens Wood School

ICT and the community

This year Paula Simmons has instigated and managed the introduction of a new after-school session to help primary school students improve their maths. Ravens Wood already utilises the Head Start programme and Paula thought that inviting pupils from feeder schools would be a great way to help them develop their maths skills and give them a taste of what to expect in a secondary school. The scheme has been heavily over-subscribed and attended by both primary students and their parents.

This scheme adds to the community links Paula has already created in providing opportunities for adults to complete internationally recognized ICT qualifications during the evenings. Most notably, Paula has single-handedly created a link with a deprived area of Soweto in South Africa. She has visited her contacts to share her experience and to help them set up the facilities to run these courses in their own universities. Perhaps more importantly, she has been responsible for the training of a number of South Africans to deliver these courses to her own high standards. The training undertaken at Ravens Wood meant that Paula had the students staying with her to help them afford the high cost of living in the south east on a minimal budget.

Paula won the Innovations in ICT for ICT/Leadership Award for 2005 at the Bromley Secondary ICT Teachers Conference.

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ICT-based enquiry

Leadership learning

Leaders Transforming Learning

A number of networks have adopted Transforming Learning to administer and provide feedback from surveys. Transforming Learning is used by some for leadership learning by providing feedback to school leaders on school climate. The data collected is automatically analysed and fed back to the teacher or leader. The Transforming Learning tool also features a tool that assists in action planning.

Transforming Learning is described by networks as promoting collaborative learning and networked activity in two ways:

1. by catalysing dialogue and reflection between teachers and between headteachers and teachers

“The professional dialogue between the lead teachers and headteachers has served to explore and challenge views of leadership. This has emerged through the shared training between the headteachers and the lead teachers and has generated a culture of professional respect and confidence within the network.”

2. As a focus for network building

In some networks, Transforming Learning becomes a central network activity. Extending its use across the network can provide a focus for discussions about the principles, beliefs and protocols that may underpin the network itself.

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ICT-based enquiry

Within-school learning

A change in staffroom debate

Transforming Learning is an online tool that is used to administer surveys to collect feedback from students on classroom climate. The data collected is automatically analysed and fed back to the teacher or leader. The Transforming Learning tool also features a tool that assists in action planning. Some teachers report that Transforming Learning changes the way they work in the classroom.

In some networks, Transforming Learning becomes a central network activity. Extending its use across the network can provide a focus for discussions about the principles, beliefs and protocols that may underpin the network itself. Ultimately, though, its impact lies at the within-school level as the data from Transforming Learning can open up dialogue with colleagues and pupils about classroom climate or leadership styles. Teachers describe themselves talking their classroom and school data through in staffrooms or in network meetings.

“The debate which ensued within the staffroom has changed the way in which the whole school looks at behaviour ... both head and lead learner confirm a change in staffroom debate, both formal and informal.”

Overall though, Transforming Learning is not a standalone method. It builds upon or is taken further by other enquiry activities, coaching and observation.

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ICT-based enquiry

School-to-school learning

Data-driven networking

Frank Driessen of **Maghull and District Cluster of Schools (MADCOS)** describes the use of a piece of software called Electronic School Self Assessment (ESSA). This enables schools to share strengths and ideas across the network and identify common priorities and issues.

Within ESSA, the Ofsted framework was turned into an interactive electronic school review that contains the electronic tools designed to help school managers with the day-to-day requirements of evaluation and development planning. The process automatically generates user-friendly action or issue plans that become a school improvement plan as well as an electronic Ofsted form S4. Trialled in MADCOS NLC, it is now used in every school in the borough.

The impact of the software is that there is no longer a cycle of planning, as monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the software, making self-evaluation an ongoing process situated at the heart of all decision-making. The senior management team makes a positive contribution to this planning process and meets regularly to evaluate progress, update information and prepare reports for all staff and governors.

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ICT-based enquiry

Pupil learning

Stephen Whittle
Hayes School

Teaching MFL in a language lab

Stephen has successfully implemented the creation of digital learning plans delivered through the use of Digital Language Centre. The language centre is a lab of networked computers which provides oral language skill reinforcement using a mixture of interactive audio and visual presentations. The lab allows students to use a variety of visual and auditory cues in consolidating their skills in speaking French and German.

Stephen has found that the creation of digital leaning plans has led to:

- promotion of learner autonomy and self-directed learning

- authoring of digital resources (using software) to consolidate previously taught material as well as teaching new language
- successful use of language lab to practise speaking in pairs and small groups
- successful use of video material in lessons to encourage students to carry out peer assessment
- digitizing audio and video material for use on computers
- students planning and producing websites using digital images

He was a successful finalist for the Bromley Innovations in ICT Award for his work in planning and setting up of Digital Language Centre for use by all students at Hayes School.

Stephen won the Innovations in ICT for Modern Foreign Languages Award for 2005 at the Bromley Secondary ICT Teachers Conference.

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Video-conferencing and webcams

Video-conferencing and webcams

Pupil learning

Adding an extra dimension

Triple E, a network of eight schools – two in Australia and six in the United Kingdom – is using IT to enhance classroom practice. With schools connected by broadband, the Triple E network has used video-conferencing to share expertise. In one lesson, an A-level history student dressed as Henry VIII used video-conferencing to talk to students studying history at a special school. Bringing together three subject areas – drama, history and ICT – the session kept the children highly engaged.

Beginning on a very small scale, **North South Network** began video-conferencing using webcams and interactive whiteboards for whole-class video-conferencing between two different schools. They originally used video-conferencing as part of a Young Enterprise scheme between two schools. The company meetings were run via webcam.

From there, video-conferencing between schools became a regular part of lessons. For example, the children video-conferenced to present reports and receive feedback, ask questions and offer responses. The relationships that were built via the webcam sessions were more readily cemented through face-to-face sessions. Teachers and pupils found that video-conferencing not only added an extra dimension to the lessons but also addressed the small school problem by giving children access to a wider range of pupils.

You can visit the website at: <http://www.sln.org.uk/nsn/>

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Video-conferencing and webcams

Adult learning

Virtual staff meeting

With schools at opposite ends of the county, the co-leaders of the **North South Network** knew they would need excellent communication skills to bring the network together. The network has been focusing on the development of ICT skills and organised a training session. To bring two network schools together to plan the session, they organised a virtual staff meeting via video-conferencing. Video conferences are an effective method of linking colleagues without the inconvenience and cost of travel or, in the case of a school, supply cover.

You can visit the website at: <http://www.sln.org.uk/nsn/>

There are many examples outside NLCs. Teacher trainees in Devon schools used video-conferencing to discuss their lessons, share ideas, plan work together and discuss resources. Teachers at Cockwood and Tipton St John Primary Schools used video-conferencing for informal staff discussions, joint staff meetings and joint INSET sessions. On one occasion, a guest speaker at Tipton delivered the session to Cockwood teachers as well, faxing the handouts to them as they were required.

Example taken from Devon Curriculum Services at: http://www.becta.org.uk/leas/leas.cfm?section=7_1&id=1137.

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Video-conferencing and webcams

Leadership learning

Virtual heads, real learning

With schools at the opposite ends of the county, the co-leaders of the **North South Network** knew they would need excellent communication to bring the network together. As part of their overall development in ICT-based communication, the co-leaders set up webcams in their offices. In the first instance, this offered the opportunity for the co-leaders to become familiar with the technology. They learnt that setting up a webcam was a lot easier than they imagined it

would be – though there were difficulties overcoming the County’s firewall, an internet security mechanism. Using the webcams for regular contact between the co-leaders as they organise network activities provides a more immediate and personal means of communication. The headteachers’ webcams are also used to communicate with the children across the school, using the interactive whiteboards, or even in the other school.

You can visit the website at: <http://www.sln.org.uk/nsn/>

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Video-conferencing and webcams

Within-school learning

In the **Hastings and St Leonard’s Education Action Zone**, video-conferencing was used as a solution to train school meals supervisors whose widespread locations and limited availability would have made a training programme involving personal travel an impractical option.

Teachers in Exeter observed a maths lesson in a school in Barnstaple, 50 miles away, with a live commentary from the numeracy consultant. They then discussed the lesson with the children and the teacher.

Both examples are from Devon Curriculum Services at http://www.becta.org.uk/leas/leas.cfm?section=7_1&id=1137.

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Video-conferencing and webcams

Leadership learning

Trevor Harris
Newstead Wood School

Video-conferencing

Trevor was instrumental in setting up and piloting a multi-camera video-conferencing suite that allows remote interactive white boarding in partnership with the London Borough of Bromley's Master Class Project. Trevor Harris has also co-ordinated the technical development and his venue was used by the Bromley 14-19 Project to establish the pilot.

Trevor has a strong background in the use and conventions of video-conferencing. He can provide practical advice on planning and implementation for any schools considering establishing a video-conferencing suite. He has also explored and tested the use of video conferencing over IP. Trevor has found that video-conferencing has been extremely successful in addressing the needs of students undertaking specialist curriculum subjects where the school may not have a teacher to support it. However, in order for video-conferencing to become more mainstream, there is a need for schools to examine seriously the way the school day is structured which means that issues such as timetabling and the general methodology of delivering the curriculum may have to become more flexible.

Trevor was a finalist for the ICT Innovation Award at the Bromley Secondary Teachers ICT Conference in July 2005.

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Video-conferencing and webcams

School-to-school learning

Exploring the potential

A primary liaison teacher with **Athena Excellence in Cities Education Action Zone (EiCEAZ)** in Birmingham taught a series of literacy and numeracy lessons to groups of borderline level 4 Year 6 children in five primary schools in the Harborne area. Some of these sessions were joined via video-

conference, by schools from other areas, to explore the potential of video-conferencing for delivering such crucial input. In the lesson, a session on time and converting measures was taught to two classes, one taking part in the session via video-conference. This, of course, was just a starting point but shows how the potential of the medium can be explored. The full potential of video-conferencing can only be realised when these ideas are adapted, improved and embedded in the curriculum. Combined with effective use of other ICT tools, video-conferencing has great potential for creative use.

Video-conferencing can be used to enable staff from one school to join training sessions with colleagues at different education centres. In Slough, the number of teachers coming together for their Education Action Zone training day was too many for one location. Three locations were used and each location hosted one keynote speaker, while the others received the presentation via video-conference. Following each presentation, questions and answers were invited in the usual way.

Both examples are taken from Devon Curriculum Services at: http://www.becta.org.uk/leas/leas.cfm?section=7_1&id=1137.

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Video-conferencing and webcams

Network-to-network learning

Here is an example from outsideNLCs. A primary adviser in Devon delivered a presentation on the foundation curriculum to teachers and governors in three venues simultaneously in a multi-point video-conference. The session was followed by questions from all three venues and then discussion between all the centres. This session was delivered six times, saving the adviser visiting over 20 academic council meetings.

Advisers for Devon Curriculum Services hold regular meetings between East Devon, South Devon and North Devon centres, saving hours of travelling time.

Both examples are taken from Devon Curriculum Services at: http://www.becta.org.uk/leas/leas.cfm?section=7_1&id=1137.

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