Play Lists

Recommended Resources for Partners
in Higher Education Institutions

HEI play lists

Two play lists have been created to introduce and make more accessible the work of the Network Learning Group. The first, '*Researching networking and collaboration between schools*', draws solely from research carried out by the NLG research team, externally commissioned research and work published by those who have supported the group. It is targeted at staff and students researching into networking and partnerships and those working in a range of other areas, such as professional development, interested in the potential and impact of school-to-school collaboration.

The second play list, '*Supporting networks and developing collaboration,*' is aimed at those who work directly with schools, and other agencies, that are operating in some form of network, partnership or multi-agency approach. Two broad types of materials are recommended in the list. The first is directed at University staff and students, indicated by (S), and provide an empirical and theoretical introduction to the particular aspects of networking being developed. The second set of materials, indicated by a (P), is intended to be used directly with practitioners.

Play List 1: Researching networking and collaboration between schools

The recommended texts in this play list are split into four main sections:

- Introducing networks, collaboration and partnerships

- Researching the leadership and facilitation of networks and collaboratives

- Researching the policy environment and implications of increased networking and collaboration

- Researching professional development in networks

The first of these provides a useful introduction to the existing research knowledge base into networking and collaboration and the nature of the NLG programme itself.

Section 1. Introducing networks, collaboration and partnerships

- **NCSL and Demos,** 2002, *Learning the Lessons: What can the Networked Learning Communities Programme learn from recent policy initiatives?*

Drawing on UK and US policy initiatives that contained a strong element of collaborative working, this review extracts key messages and relates these to the design principles that underpinned the NLC programme. It is useful starting point for those new to networking.

- **Jackson, D,** 2005, *Learning themes from the NLC programme,* ICSEI, Barcelona, 2-5 January.

This short conference paper, written by the director of the NLC programme, provides a conceptual framework for thinking about different types of reform networks, explores the design possibilities and problems of the NLC programme and sets out key learning themes from the programme.

Researchers involved in looking at networks will be interested in the issue of their effectiveness and the impact they are claimed to have on individuals and organsiations. The following three reports provide an introduction to this area.

- **Crowe, V, with Noden, C, & Stott, A,** 2006, *Evidence from learning networks,* NCSL

This short report gives a statistical overview of the NLC programme and contains trend data on pupil attainment for the whole programme as well as containing information on the activities undertaken within NLCs.

- Hadfield, M, Jopling, M, Noden, C, O'Leary, D & Stott, A, 2006, *What does the existing knowledge base tell us about the impact of networking and collaboration?* NCSL

Put together by the NLG research team this literature review covers over 100 research and evaluation reports on various networking and collaborative initiatives and extracts their impact claims and what was seen as important in bringing these about. It is a useful introduction to the literature including a section on multi-agency working.

- Bell, M, Jopling, M, Cordingley, P, Firth, A, King, E & Mitchell, H, 2006, *Systematic research review: the impact of networks*

What is the impact on pupils of networks that include at least three schools? What additional benefits are there for practitioners, organisations and the communities they serve? (Systematic review), CUREE / NLG.

This systematic review, based on a similar process used in the recent EPPI reviews, focuses on the impact on pupils of collaboration between schools. Based on a trawl of over 3,000 references, its findings draw on 19 studies to provide evidence as to the characteristics of networks that are most likely to result in gains for pupils.

Section 2. Researching the leadership and facilitation of networks and collaboratives

Research into the leadership and facilitation of networks focused in on three broad themes:

The nature of systems leaders and leadership – those leaders whose leadership extended beyond their schools and attempted to change the nature of the local education system.

The co-leaders or strategic leader of networks – in the NLC programme it was a requirement that there was more than one strategic leader, termed co-leaders, of the network.

The increase in middle leaders and distributed forms of leadership – networks require leadership at various levels and points and to provide the necessary leadership capacity some form of distributed leadership is common.

- Fullan, M, 2004, *The future of educational change: system thinkers in action,* AERA, San Diego, 12-25 April.

This theoretical piece sets out the origin of system thinkers in action within broader systems theory and organisational change literature. It develops an argument for

why such individual leaders are necessary for sustainable change across education system.

- **Jopling, M with Crandall, D,** 2006, *Leadership in networks: patterns and practices,* NCSL

This report draws together the leadership research within the NLC programme by focusing upon the work of co-leaders. It provides an account of who undertook this role, their main leadership activities and the issues they faced. It finishes by linking the work of co-leaders to the idea of system leadership.

- **Stott, A with Jopling, M & Kilcher, A,** 2006, *How do school-to-school networks work?,* NCSL

This summary of research carried out within the NLC programme sets out the three main elements of networking that all leaders need to attend to. These are establishing purpose and direction, building effective relationships, and defining key roles and activities. These interlinked aspects of network are described using extensive examples from the programme.

- **Anderson, M,** 2005, *System thinkers in action? The leadership of networks of schools,* AERA, Montreal, 11-15 April.

Again focusing in on co-leaders this paper presents a detailed case study of the leadership of one NLC chosen as it demonstrated the complex and developmental nature of leadership capacity. Theoretically it explores the relationship between the practices of co-leaders and the notion of them acting as system leaders.

- **Hadfield, M,** 2005, *Middle leaders and the nature of distributed leadership in networks,* AERA, Montreal, 11-15 April.

This conference paper concentrates upon the growth of middle leaders within networks, one of the most widely reported developments in networks. It explores their growth, the changing nature of their roles and provides detailed accounts from networks of the tasks they undertook.

Section 3. Researching the policy environment and implications of increased networking and collaboration

- **Hannon, V,** 2005, *Network-based reform: adaptive challenges facing the English education system*, AERA, Montreal, April.

This paper sets the development of the collaborative reform agenda within the systemic, or adaptive, problems that are seen centrally as setting the reform agenda. It contrasts collaborative approaches with more market and competitive

initiatives. The paper ends with a discussion of the challenges of taking reform initiatives 'to scale'.

- **Levin, B,** 2004, **Connecting central policy and networked learning communities,** DfES/NCSL seminar

Based on contrasting the strengths and weaknesses of central policy reform versus networked learning communities, this paper discusses the inevitable tensions between the two approaches due to their very different assumptions about change. It goes on to suggest steps that might be taken to allow co-existence and ways in which the two approaches to reform could move from peaceful co-existence to productive synergy.

- **Jackson, D, Farrar, M & Mongon, D,** 2005, *Local authority-wide support for school networks: adaptive change practices at a system level,* AERA, Montreal, 11-15 April.

Drawing on both UK and international research this paper contains an extensive discussion of the implications for local authorities of a more networked system and the role they could play within it. The paper also introduces the LEArn project that worked with a range of local authorities in investigating their approach to school and multi-agency networks.

- **Hargreaves, D H,** 2003, *Working Laterally: how innovation networks make an education epidemic*: DEMOS

This small booklet introduces the idea of innovation networks as a means of transforming the education system. It is a useful introduction for school leaders as to why networks of various forms are important in the current reform agenda.

Section 4. Researching professional development in networks

- **DEMOS,** 2004, *What is networked learning?* London: DEMOS.

Networked learning was the term used in the NLC programme to describe the particular form of collaborative, or extended, learning it set out to promote. This theoretical paper expands this definition and sets out the learning principles that underpinned the NLC programme.

- **McLaughlin, C & Black-Hawkins, K with Townsend, A,** 2006, *Practitioner research and enquiry in NLCs,* University of Cambridge.

This externally commissioned research looks at the types and forms of practitioner research and enquiry undertaken in six networked learning communities. Some form of enquiry was a pre-requisite of the NLC programme and was therefore one of the most widespread forms of professional development undertaken.

- **Hadfield, M, Noden, C, Stott, A, Spender, B, McGregor, J & Anderson, M,** 2005, *The leadership of adult learning in networks (Summary),* NCSL

This report created by the NLC research on a programme wide enquiry. This looked at the leadership and management of professional development within networks. The report highlights issues to do with the strategic management, sustainability and use of external experts in professional development.

- **McGregor, J with Fielding, M & Robinson, C,** 2006, *Footprints of practice,* NCSL

However successful an individual piece of professional development is within a network there is generally still a need to share its outcomes with others. Drawing on externally commissioned work as well as that carried out by the NLC research team, this report focuses on the transfer of practice within networks. The report problematises the notion of transfer as well as providing examples of successful practices from several networks.

Play List 2: Supporting networks and developing collaboration

The recommended texts in this play list are split into four main sections:

- Supporting the leaders and facilitators of school networks
- Developing collaborative practitioner research and enquiry
- Involving pupils and parents in networks of schools
- Using collaborative approaches to enhance learning and teaching

The materials in this play list are directed at University staff and students, indicated by (S), and those for use directly with practitioners, indicated by a (P).

Section 1: Supporting the leaders and facilitators of school networks

The leadership and facilitation of networks is a relatively new field of study so the following publications are targeted towards helping practitoners understand its nature and the issues and challnges they are likely to face.

- **Kubiak, C & Anderson, M,** 2003, *Facilitation in action,* BERA, Edinburgh, 11-13 September. (S)

Using activity theory as its conceptual framework this paper explores the work of the internal NLC facilitation team. A useful starting point for considering the role of facilitators, whether external or internal to the network.

- **Hill, K & Mann, J,** 2005, *What are we learning about: Facilitation within school networks,* Think Piece NCSL. (P)

This think piece is part of larger set of materials dealing with the issue of how to facilitate the development of a network. It discusses the need for facilitation to support the processes of knowledge transfer across school networks.

- **Spender, B,** 2003, *Leading a network: Challenges and Strategies,* NCSL (P)

Based on research carried out in the first twelve months of the NLC programme this small booklet highlights the initial challenges and barriers faced by network leaders as they struggled to develop their work. It contains vignettes of new ways of working and is as useful introduction for leaders in networks to the potential challenges they face.

- **Ballantyne, P, Jackson, D & Temperley, J with Lieberman, A,** 2006, *System Leadership in Action: System leaders in profile,* NCSL (P)

One of a short series of publications based around an externally commissioned piece of research into the origins of systems leaders. This booklet provides a number of snapshots of system leaders and the work they have undertaken beyond their school and in linking together reform activities. It provides a good starting point for introducing this relatively new idea to practitioners.

Section 2. Developing collaborative practitioner research and enquiry

- **Church, M, Crowe, V, Plummer, G & Worrall, N,** 2006, *What does network practice tell us about the impact of networking and collaboration?* NCSlL (S)

Using case studies drawn the NLC programmes own inquiry programme this report draws out the characteristics of six networks that had a high level of impact on staff and pupils. One of the common characteristics of these networks was their involvement in various forms of enquiry. This report therefore provides a good introduction to the issue of what forms of structures and processes need to be put around collaborative enquiry for it to be effective.

- **McGregor, J Holmes, D & Temperley, J,** 2004, *Collaborative enquiry in networked learning communities*, BERA, Manchester, 14-18 September. (S)

This conference paper provides a good overview of the nature of collaborative enquiry that took place in the NLC programme. It gives examples of specific practices, data on those involved in enquiry as well as a useful section on the potential of employing students as researchers.

- **Leat, D,** 2004 *Partnership and Participation in teacher research*, NCSL

This short booklet focuses in on the challenges of initiating and creating collaborative enquiry. It discusses the progression of teachers' engagement and effective processes for moving them towards greater commitment to enquiry. (P)

Section 3. Involving pupils and parents in networks of schools

Throughout the NLC programme engaging pupils more fully in a network was seen as a means of energising them by not only bringing extra capacity into play but also new and fresh perspectives. The involvement of parents and the local community has been shown to be an important factor in effective networking.

- **McGregor, J,** 2005, *New spaces for dialogue? What are adults learning about student involvement and participation in networked learning communities,* BERA, Glamorgan, September. (S)

Using the conceptual framework of pupil 'voice' and students as researchers this paper explores the different ways in which pupils' participation was structured and managed within networks.

- **Bond, K, Farrar, M, Berry, H, Godfrey, G & Ling, D,** 2005, *Community leadership network: more than an aspiration,* ICSEI, Barcelona, 2-5 January. (S)

Drawing on the experiences of three leaders of a network this paper looks at the approach of one NLC to developing community leadership. It provides examples of the tools and consultation processes used to shape the direction of the network as it sought to bring in the local community.

- **McGregor, J,** 2005, *Students as researchers,* NCSL (P)

Part of a series of publications on teachers as researchers this booklet provides a brief introduction to the different approaches to working with students as researchers. Each approach is illustrated by a short description on how this operated within a network.

- **Bond, K & Farrar, M,** 2005, *What are we learning about: Community leadership in networks,* NCSL (P)

This think piece uses the idea of community leadership and social capital theory to illustrate how to improve community involvement in schools. It is of particular relevance to school leaders attempting to deal with the challenges of the Every Child Matters agenda.

- **Bond, K, & Farrar, M,** 2005, *What are we learning about community leadership in networks: Engaging parents through networks*, NCSL (P)

This booklet provides an introduction to the Effective Partnerships with Parents (EPPa) strategy used by one network to engage local parents. It provides an overview of the EPPa strategy and illustrates how this worked in different schools and colleges.

Section 4. Using collaborative approaches to enhance learning and teaching

- **Worrall, N & Noden, C with Desforges, C,** 2006, *Pupils' experiences of learning in NLCs,* NCSL (S)

The NLG authors worked with Charles Desforges to draw together all the research and impact data available concerning pupil outcomes in NLCs. They use case studies and examples that surfaced in the course of structured enquiry by the NLG's research team and identify specific examples of good practice made possible by network membership.

- **Martin, N & Worral, N,** 2005, *Moving towards a subject learning community. What are we learning about making mathematics count in school networks* NCSL (P)

This pamphlet is part of a larger collection of materials on how to developing the teaching of mathematics in networks. Although it focuses on four different accounts of how networks set about improving learning and teaching in mathematics it has wider relevance to all subject leaders.

- **Watson, A,** 2005, *Learning with insiders: complex professional development. What are we learning about making mathematics count in school networks* NCSL (P)

This think piece sets out the challenges involved in developing collaborative professional development capable of having an impact upon classroom practice.