

Centre for
Transformative
Change in Schools

Centre for Transformative Change in Schools (CenTCS)

Annual Summary 2025 – 26

*School of Education,
University of Glasgow*

‘Supporting equity through educators’ transformative learning and praxis’

Statement on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI):

GenAI tools were used in this work. Chat GPT (High Intelligence) was used to suggest section organisation and revise wording.

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Background

The Centre for Transformative Change in Schools (CenTCS) generates research and facilitates collaborative practice to support equity through transformative changes that benefit school-age students' learning. Our work is grounded in the belief that teachers and school leaders are powerful levers for change, and that transformative professional learning, research-practice partnerships, and critical engagement with policy and practice are essential to building more just educational futures.

CenTCS is jointly directed by Professor Aileen Kennedy and Professor Brianna L. Kennedy. Our joint directorship reflects our commitment to collaborative and distributed leadership. We work closely with CenTCS Fellows, Associates, postgraduate researchers, professional partners and International Affiliates to develop research, support knowledge exchange, build partnerships, and contribute to educational change locally, nationally and internationally.

This Annual Summary provides an overview of our work during academic year 2025–26 and outlines emerging priorities for 2026–27.

CenTCS at a glance, 2025–26

During 2025–26, CenTCS has:

- Finalised and launched its collaboratively developed Research Compass.
- Established three Project Streams to guide shared Centre activity over 2025–26.
- Hosted a monthly **seminar series** showcasing the work of CenTCS Fellows, Associates and International Affiliates.
- Developed and delivered an international partnership project, *Developing Place-Based Dialogue about High-Quality Education Using the Quality Teaching Model: A Pilot Study for Scotland*, funded through the Glasgow Global Partnership Fund, in collaboration with CenTCS Affiliates at the Universities of Newcastle and Sydney in Australia. This included:
 - Hosting a QTR training event involving local teachers, international researchers, teacher associates from the Centre for Teaching Excellence, postgraduate students and CenTCS members.
 - Piloting work using the Quality Teaching Model and Quality Teaching Rounds (QTRs) with a Glasgow City Council learning community and community partners.
- Secured funding for a new project on *Multilingual New Scots, School Leadership and Refugee Language Integration*, working with the UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts (PI), and School Leaders Scotland.
- Developed and strengthened connections with leaders of international peer research centres.
- Continued to grow a scholarly community of colleagues from across research and teaching groups within the School of Education. This includes CenTCS Fellows and Associates from across a range of contracts together with International Affiliates and postgraduate researchers.

Research Compass and project streams

Following the relaunch of the Centre in 2025, we began the year by finalising our **Research Compass**, which was developed collaboratively across the CentTCS community using Nominal Group Technique to facilitate full participation. The Research Compass outlines the substantive themes and ways of working that guide our collective research agenda and strategic decision-making.

Rather than prescribing a fixed route, the Research Compass orients CentTCS toward the values of equity, collaboration and justice. It helps us remain responsive to the lived realities of schools, teachers, leaders, families and communities, while also supporting us to identify shared priorities for research, partnership and knowledge exchange. It frames our work across four interrelated research themes:

1. How do we conceptualise transformative change in schools?
2. How do we prepare teachers for transformative teaching and praxis?
3. How do teachers enact transformative teaching in classrooms?
4. How do we describe the complex relationships between transformative teaching and its impact in different contexts?

These themes were brought into focus through three project streams identified by CentTCS Fellows and Associates as focused priorities from our Research Compass themes for 2025-26.

Stream 1: Transformative Professional Learning

Lead: Dr Ismail Özgür Zembat

This stream investigates how transformative professional learning can serve as a catalyst for change across teachers, schools and education systems. It explores how professional learning can support deep shifts in educators' beliefs, practices and identities, and how these shifts can influence organisational culture and system-level reform. This stream directly connects the first and fourth themes of the Research Compass.

During 2025–26, this stream supported Centre-wide conversations about how we conceptualise transformative professional learning and its relationship to transformative change in schools. The resulting conceptual position paper can be found [here](#).

Stream 2: (Dis)connections and Boundaries

Lead: Professor Brianna L. Kennedy

This stream focuses on connections and disconnections that young people may encounter between home and school. It foregrounds parent and family engagement, place-based education, school exclusion, linguistic and cultural diversity, social inequality, and the funds of knowledge held by young people, families and communities. This work primarily focuses on the first theme in our Research Compass by reimagining education for just futures through developing teachers' professional awareness of the connections and disconnections exacted by the ways that education in schools is shaped and nurtured. We also address the fourth theme in the Research Compass by focusing on partnerships (broadly defined) with young people and their communities, to build connections that afford students' capacity to belong, engage and contribute.

During 2025–26, this stream supported work to understand and soften boundaries between schools and communities, teachers and caregivers, and formal and informal educational spaces. It has also provided a foundation for partnership work with schools, community organisations and international collaborators. Colleagues have collaborated on *(Dis)Connections in Schooling: A Concept Paper*, which can be found [here](#).

Stream 3: Learning Futures: Justice, Sustainability and the Digital Turn

Lead: Professor Aileen Kennedy

This stream investigates how educator learning can become a generative force for justice and sustainability in the context of rapid technological, geopolitical and planetary change. It explores educational futures that move beyond narrow classroom-focused accounts of learning to consider human, more-than-human, digital and

material relationships. The stream sits principally under theme two of the Research Compass by exploring conditions for collaborative professional learning in ways that are fit for the future and global in outlook.

During 2025–26, this stream supported Centre conversations about the future of teaching and teacher education, the implications of digital and ecological change, and the role of educational research in creating more just and sustainable conditions for learning. As part of this work, members of CenTCS were involved in scholarly trips to learn and exchange ideas with other institutions around shared concerns and innovative international professional learning initiatives. In partnership with Glasgow City Council, CenTCS hosted a roundtable discussion with teachers holding a range of different roles in the system to explore ‘Glasgow Learning Futures’. This work is ongoing, and the themes arising from these meetings have informed the scoping of the funding horizon for future actions. An overview of the thinking that underpins our work so far is available on the CenTCS website.

Highlights from 2025–26

Monthly CenTCS seminar series

One of the major highlights of the year has been our monthly [CenTCS seminar series](#). The series provided a regular space for intellectual exchange, research development and community-building across the Centre and its wider networks.

The programme showcased work from CenTCS Fellows and Associates as well as International Affiliates and invited speakers. Seminars addressed core questions related to transformative change, professional learning, equity, school culture, teacher recruitment, language learning, educational leadership, and the future of teaching.

The series has supported CenTCS’ ambition to be a space where educators, researchers, policymakers and community partners can exchange insights, challenge assumptions, and imagine educational futures that are just, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all learners. Alternating between in-person seminars hosted in the School

of Education and online seminars catering to an international audience has allowed maximum participation and fruitful connections among a global scholarly community.

Glasgow Global Partnership Fund project: developing place-based dialogue about high quality education

A second major highlight has been conducting the Glasgow Global Partnership Fund project: *Developing Place-Based Dialogue about High Quality Education Using the Quality Teaching Model: A Pilot Study for Scotland*, which addresses the third theme of the Research Compass. The pilot has been especially significant because it combines several core CenTCS commitments: transformative professional learning, research-practice partnership, community knowledge, international collaboration, and a commitment to equity in school-age students' learning.

This project has been undertaken in collaboration with colleagues at the Universities of Newcastle and Sydney in Australia and is a direct result of a series of international exchange trips, including a Joint Director visit in August 2025 to the Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, funded by the University of Newcastle's Visitor Collaboration Scheme Award. The project builds on the Quality Teaching Model and Quality Teaching Rounds as a research-informed approach to professional learning. In the Scottish pilot, the work has brought together CenTCS researchers, Glasgow City Council teachers, Teacher Associates from the Centre for Teaching Excellence, Masters dissertations students, international research collaborators from Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, and local community members to explore how high-quality teaching can be discussed, understood and developed through place-based professional dialogue. The international research collaborators are also developing projects that involve Quality Teaching Rounds in Europe, and CenTCS is now positioned for joint, large-scale bid development with these partners as a result of the GGPF award.

Multilingual New Scots, school leadership and refugee language integration

CenTCS also worked with the UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts, and the Professional Learning and Policy Officer with School Leaders Scotland to secure funding for a new project entitled *Multilingual New Scots, School Leadership and Refugee Language Integration*.

This project reflects CenTCS' commitment to linguistic and cultural diversity, educational leadership, and the development of more inclusive school systems. It sits within themes two and three of the Research Compass and extends the Centre's work on school-community relationships, professional learning, and the conditions that enable educators to respond ethically and creatively to the realities of migration, multilingualism and refugee integration.

Other activities

Over the past year, CenTCS members have engaged in a range of other activities and individual projects aligned with the Research Compass:

- The School of Education hosted the International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching (ISATT) Biennial Conference, where CenTCS members played a significant role. A CenTCS Fellow served as the conference chair, while 18 CenTCS members established a strong presence across the event, contributing through paper presentations, symposia, roundtables, and a keynote address by one of the CenTCS Joint Directors.
- CenTCS members were involved in organising and hosting an International Symposium on AI in Education, bringing together academics, practitioners and policy makers from across and beyond Scotland.
- CenTCS members have continued to sustain an active international profile, representing CenTCS through participation in other major education conferences (e.g., ECER, BERA, and SERA).
- Two CenTCS Fellows are leading on projects that have been awarded ESRC Impact Acceleration Account funding.
- CenTCS members have been central to establishing and leading the research and evaluation activity in the Centre for Teaching Excellence, funded by Scottish Government and hosted by the University of Glasgow.
- As a result of significant editorial work by CenTCS members this session, we look forward to the publication in 2027 of the Elgar *Handbook of Teacher Education and Professional Learning for Educational Change*.

Contribution and Impact

CenTCS' contribution in 2025–26 can be understood across four areas.

Research development

The Research Compass and project streams have helped establish a shared intellectual framework for Centre activity. This has supported the development of new project ideas, strengthened connections across individual research interests, and created a foundation for larger collaborative work in 2026–27. Three scholarly outputs have been produced and made publicly available.

Professional learning and school partnerships

Through the Glasgow Global Partnership Fund project and the Quality Teaching Model pilot, CenTCS has developed research-informed professional learning with teachers and community partners. This work reflects our commitment to research-practice partnerships and to forms of professional learning that are collaborative, sustained and connected to practice.

Knowledge exchange and intellectual community

The monthly seminar series has provided a visible and inclusive space for sharing work in progress, hosting international speakers, and developing cross-Centre conversations. The series has helped position CenTCS as a site for serious, supportive and critical engagement with the question of how schools can change in ways that advance equity and justice.

External engagement

CenTCS has continued to build relationships with local, national and international partners. These include school and community partners in Glasgow, professional organisations in Scotland, international academic collaborators, and affiliated research centres. These partnerships are central to CenTCS' identity and to the development of research that is both intellectually robust and practically meaningful.

Looking ahead: priorities for 2026–27

In 2026–27, CenTCS will continue to build on the foundation established through the Research Compass and the three project streams. Our priorities for the year ahead are to:

1. Bring the three project streams together under a single, overarching Centre project, and pursue a joint bid to fund it.
2. Continue developing research-practice partnerships with schools, communities, professional organisations and international collaborators.
3. Support Fellows and Associates to develop collaborative projects, bids, publications and knowledge-exchange activities.
4. Strengthen CenTCS' role as a supportive intellectual community within the School of Education and beyond.

Contingent on final budget decisions at School level, we tentatively plan to host two CenTCS colloquia during 2026–27. These colloquia will be open to school-wide participation and will include more traditional presentations of in-progress and recently concluded projects, alongside opportunities to discuss methodological issues, develop new collaborations, and work on bids with peers in a supportive environment.

We also plan to invite International Affiliates to give keynote presentations as part of the colloquia programme. CenTCS Fellows and Associates will be actively involved in developing, hosting and participating in these events.

In closing...

The 2025–26 academic year has been a year of collective orientation, partnership-building and project development for CenTCS. Through the Research Compass, the establishment of project streams, the seminar series, international collaborations, and new funded project activity, we have strengthened our shared identity and clarified the contribution we seek to make.

As we look ahead to 2026–27, our ambition is to deepen this work: to generate research that matters, to support professional learning that enables transformative praxis, and to

collaborate with schools, communities and partners in ways that contribute to more equitable educational futures.

Our Centre community, 2025-26

CenTCS is sustained by an active community of Joint Directors, Fellows, Associates, International Affiliates, professional partners, postgraduate researchers and administrative support. This community provides the intellectual, relational and practical infrastructure for our work.

Joint Directors

- Aileen Kennedy
- Brianna L. Kennedy

CenTCS Administrator

- Amy Sutherland

CenTCS Fellows

- Max Antony-Newman
- Lauren Boath
- Thomas Cowhitt
- Stuart Hall
- Kevin Lowden
- Alison Mitchell
- Mark Peart
- Kevin Proudfoot
- Fran Valdera-Gil
- Ismail Özgür Zembat

CenTCS Associates

- Utkun Aydin
- Mark Breslin
- Rhona Brown
- Helen Burns
- Tal Carmi
- Michalis Constantinides
- Angela Curley
- Leyla de Amicis
- Dobrochna Futro
- Jo Gallagher
- Julie Harvie
- Lavinia Hirsu
- Christine McKee
- Evelyn McLaren
- Cristina Mio
- Deniz Ortactepe Hart
- Claire Ramjan
- Gabriella Rodolico
- Clare Smith
- Ruth Unsworth
- Rebecca Wood

PGR students

- [Kat Brack](#) (Editorial Intern)
- [Lixin Li](#) (Communications Intern)

International Affiliates and partners

CentTCS benefits from a growing network of international affiliates and partners, including university research centres, individual academics and professional organisations whose work complements our focus on educator professional learning and transformative change in schools. In 2025–26, these relationships supported seminar activity, research development, international exchange, and collaborative project work.

CentTCS Affiliates

Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, University of Newcastle, Australia

Professor Reza Gholami, University of Birmingham

Professor Nicole Mockler, University of Sydney

Centre for Teachers and Teaching Research, University College London

NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

Centre for Leadership and Diversity, University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education