

3U Leadership
Symposium

3U

Leading Change as a Professional

Learning Journeys in Education and Healthcare:

The Practitioner Story



Editors

Dr Maeve Martin & Dr Gerry Jeffers

Referencing

The following citations show how this edited book or an individual chapter should be referenced; the respective citations for the book or a chapter are presented in the Harvard citation style.

Martin, M. and Jeffers, G. 2016. *Leading Change as a Professional*. Maynooth, Ireland: Department of Education, Maynooth University.

Chapter Author(s). 2016. Title of chapter. In: Martin, M. and Jeffers, G. *Leading Change as a Professional*. Maynooth, Ireland: Department of Education, Maynooth University, chapter page numbers.

Copyright

Copyright © Maynooth University, Department of Education 2016.

Each article © Named Author

All rights reserved. No article may be reproduced without the permission of the author and/or the Maynooth University Department of Education.

Copy editing and e-publication: Keith Young

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Maeve Martin and Gerry Jeffers	
Seven Propositions About Educational Leadership.....	6
John West-Burnham	
Challenges In An Ever-Changing Landscape – The Global And Irish Backdrop To Change	19
Áine Hyland	
Leadership And Trust – Challenges And Opportunities For Professional Practice	25
Tomás Ó Ruairc	
Understanding The Role Of The Professional In Leading Change.....	35
Kieran C. Murphy	
School Improvements In Order To Support A Positive Learning Environment For Senior Cycle Students	53
Andrea Kelly	
Leading A One Book School.....	66
Noreen Reilly	
Design And Implementation Of A Dermatology Module For General Practice Trainees.....	78
Claire Gleeson	
The Value Of Creating A Learning Community And Using A Distributing Model Of Leadership To Lead School Improvement -.....	87
Jenny Dooley Ryan	
Implementation Of A Blended Learning Educational Module On The Mental Health Act 2001 For Trainee Psychiatrists.....	109
Maria Frampton	
‘The Pobal Project’ An Experiment In Shaping School Culture	117
Sharon Brady	

Laying Foundations For The New Junior Cycle, Literacy And Numeracy Strategy And School
Self Evaluation126

Sinéad Lawlor

Establishing A Monitoring Unit For The Evaluation Of Adult Epilepsy136

Emma Irving

A Leadership Journey Of Learning143

Gwen Oates

Institutional Co-operation In Leadership Education155

Paula Kinnarney, Carmel Lillis, Pauline Joyce (Chairperson: Gerry Jeffers)

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. Maeve Martin is a former senior lecturer in psychology at the Department of Education in Maynooth University. Maeve has worked widely in the field of education, combining it with some clinical practice. She is the author of a number of key reports including, *School Matters: The Report of the Task Force on Student Behaviour in Second Level Schools* (2006). She currently sits on a number of committees and Boards.

Dr. Gerry Jeffers is an educational researcher, consultant and writer. He worked as a lecturer in the Education Department at Maynooth University for 12 years. Prior to that he was national co-ordinator of the Transition Year Curriculum Support Service and has worked in schools in Firhouse and Balbriggan in Dublin, Kilkenny and Kenya. His latest book, *Transition Year in Action* was published by The Liffey Press in October 2015.

Professor John West-Burnham is a writer, teacher and consultant in education leadership with a particular interest in leadership learning and development and learning in schools and communities. He has been a schoolteacher, teacher trainer, education officer and has held posts in five universities. He is Professor of Educational Leadership at St Mary's University and Visiting Professor at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol.

Professor Áine Hyland is Emeritus Professor of Education, University College Cork. She is particularly interested in higher education policy and has authored various reports on higher education including the report on *Transition from Second to Third Level*.

Tomás Ó Ruairc was appointed Director of the Teaching Council in May 2012. Previously, Tomás was in a senior position in the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht. Prior to that, he was Deputy CEO and Director of Education Services in Foras na Gaeilge.

Professor Kieran C. Murphy is former President of the Medical Council (2008- 2013) He is a member of the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and also Vice Dean for Professionalism in RCSI.

Andrea Kelly is a post-primary teacher in St. Michael's Secondary School, Finglas, Dublin 11.

Noreen Reilly is Principal in St. Paul's Community College, Waterford

Dr. Claire Gleeson is a General Practitioner with a keen interest in Women's Health and Medical Education. She is currently based in Cornwall.

Jenny Dooley-Ryan is Principal of Salesian Primary School, Fernbank, North Circular Rd, Limerick

Dr Maria Frampton is a Consultant Psychiatrist in St John of God Hospital and the National Rehabilitation Hospital, Dublin. She also works as a Tribunal and second opinion psychiatrist for the Mental Health Commission, Dublin

Sharon Brady is Principal (Acting) in Scoil Phadraig N.S., Westport, Co. Mayo

Sinead Lawlor is Deputy Principal (Acting) in Loreto College, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Dr. Emma Irving is currently working as a Chief 1 in the Neurophysiology Department in Beaumont Hospital, the neurosurgical centre of Ireland.

Gwen Oates is a Behaviour Support Teacher in St. Brigid's JNS, Brookfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Dr. Pauline Joyce is a Senior Lecturer in the RCSI School of Medicine. She has a Doctorate in Education and has a keen interest in educational leadership among healthcare professionals.

Paula Kinnarney is a lecturer at the Department of Education, Maynooth University. She is the course leader for the Tóraíocht (PGDEL) programme within the university and is also a tutor and presenter on the course.

Carmel Lillis works as an associate with the Professional Development Service for Teachers. She is a tutor and presenter on the Tóraíocht (PGDEL) programme

Leadership Symposium



Ciara O'Donnell, Director PDST



Professor John West-Burnham
and Professor Áine Hyland



Professor Kieran Murphy & Tomás Ó Ruairc



MU Graduates of PGDEL (Tóralocht)



Carmel Lillis, PDST, Paula Kinnarney, MU,
Dr. Pauline Joyce, RCSI & Minister Alex White TD



Professor Cathal Kelly, CEO of RCSI
Minister Alex White, TD &
Professor Philip Nolan, President,
Maynooth University



RCSI Graduates

Introduction

Maeve Martin and Gerry Jeffers

CONTEXT

Educational and healthcare institutions are profoundly human organisations. The smallest can be complex and idiosyncratic, even contradictory. Working and leading in such organisations demands multiple skills and dispositions. We have to balance long term, overarching visions with immediate demands. We have to use limited resources wisely and with imagination. Critically, we are challenged to appreciate the subtleties and nuances of each institution's distinct character and culture. Vitally, these organisations exist to promote the well-being of our fellow human beings. This e-journal seeks to illuminate how emerging educational and healthcare professionals respond to leadership challenges in a variety of contexts.

The contributions arise from conferences held in Maynooth University, including the first ever 3U Partnership Conference in March 2013. The 3U Partnership is a recent force in Irish higher education that combines the complementary strengths of Dublin City University (DCU), Maynooth University (MU) and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). The conferences at Maynooth also involved partnership with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). This service, funded by the Teacher Education Section (TES) of the Department of Education and Skills, provides support to schools through personnel working in multi-disciplinary teams on a regional basis. PDST, Maynooth University and RCSI provide continuing professional development programmes at level 9 on the National Qualifications Framework. The conferences very specifically arose from practical co-operation between the leaders of the RCSI Institute of Leadership, which offers a suite of programmes to healthcare professionals, and the Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership (PGDEL) – Toraíocht, which itself is a collaborative programme offered by PDST and Maynooth University.

Leading Change as Professionals was a dominant theme throughout. The gatherings brought together both faculty and students participating in leadership programmes, along with guest speakers and other health and education professionals. They provided a unique forum for these professionals to share experiences of both practice and learning. The conference in 2013 was, in fact, the first time that the Directors of The Medical Council and The Teaching Council in Ireland had shared a platform together.

SPEAKERS

The keynote presentations cover a broad canvas. Áine Hyland focuses on change and the leadership implications of change. She gives a comprehensive account of the factors that are driving change for health and education personnel in contemporary Ireland. She discusses recent policy initiatives that are influencing developments in Ireland, and challenges the audience to embrace change and grasp the opportunities that changing times provide. Tomás Ó Ruairc emphasises the quintessential importance of trust and leadership coexisting in the professions. He expresses the view that they form the bedrock of the professions and determine their ethical integrity. Where trust and leadership have failed in the past, the consequences are well rehearsed. Picking up on the theme of trust, Kieran Murphy, stresses its importance in forging relationships. Adequate levels of trust are necessary among stakeholders seeking to provide high quality of care provision in the health sector. His presentation develops the concept of professionalism, and teases out how a professional can act as a leader for change. With reference to the work of the Medical Council, Kieran Murphy explains how the regulatory framework for health professionals has changed, not just in Ireland, but internationally with far-reaching implications that are in the best interest of sustaining a trustworthy profession. John West-Burnham draws on a wide range of sources to share his extensive and imaginative exploration of some dimensions of educational leadership that have traction across places and times. He puts forward seven propositions and in doing so, he does not posit them as a definitive answer to the ongoing debate about what constitutes effective leadership. Rather, he recognises the relevance of context in any serious discussion about effective leadership. Nonetheless, his seven propositions are relevant and valuable across cultures and across time.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES

The Toraíocht programme places strong emphasis on developing leadership capacity in participants. One component ensures that each course participant carries out an action research, school-based leadership project. This involves leading a new initiative with colleagues to improve the learning experiences of the students. This engagement with learning has immediate benefits for the whole school, especially when teachers are provided with opportunities to share their experiences. As the name implies, Toraíocht encourages course participants to search within for the values that inform their leadership journeys. The RCSI postgraduate programmes are designed to provide the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour required to be an effective manager and leader in a changing healthcare environment. Action oriented research is central to these and focuses very much on the leadership capabilities of course participants to lead change.

PRACTITIONER CONTRIBUTIONS

The contributions from the graduates represent a cross section of these research assignments. The graduates co-presented at the conference, and feedback from them indicated their surprise at the similarity both sets of graduates experienced in the challenges which confront them in the execution of their work. They welcomed the opportunity provided by the shared forum to exchange ideas and experiences, and to put forward some of their professional triumphs and frustrations. While the domains of knowledge were significantly different, the lived experiences of the contributors had much in common. Topics from the education graduates include a description of an in-school attempt to promote a literacy and numeracy strategy (Sinead Lawlor), while a related theme focuses on the promotion of literacy in a local community via a reading initiative (Noreen Reilly). Implications for practice and lessons learned from her efforts to develop Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Art in her primary school form the basis of Gwen Ni Choircé's contribution. The paper from Sharon Brady addresses the important issue of children's rights and responsibilities. As the project developed within the school in which she works, it embraced the wider perspective of creating a school culture. She uses the Irish language word '*Pobal*' which translates as '*community*' on which to hang her work. The work of Andrea Kelly focuses on the challenges of engaging senior cycle students who attend school in an area designated as 'disadvantaged'. She grapples with leading her school in the creation of a learning and teaching environment that would facilitate greater engagement of the students, and that would support them through their senior cycle studies. The work is highly value laden and representative of the many teachers who struggle to meet the needs of potentially disaffected or poorly motivated learners. With an emphasis on the theme of distributed leadership, the work of Jenny Dooley Ryan, describes her efforts to lead her colleagues in School Development Planning aimed at overall school improvement.

The papers from the health care professionals also report on practice based initiatives. Maria Frampton gives a detailed description of a blended educational module based on the Mental Health Act (2001) and designed by her for implementation with trainee psychiatrists. In a similar way, Claire Gleeson details a Special Interest Module that she designed for implementation with General Practice trainees on the medical condition of Dermatology. She had identified Dermatology as an area in which further training is deemed necessary by trainee General Practitioners. Adding to the medical papers, Emma Irving provides a very thorough account of the setting up of a Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) facility in a neurology ward in a public hospital in Dublin. Her presentation documents the lessons learned associated with her efforts to set up and put in to operation this significant diagnostic tool. Her contribution is situated in a change context, and as with all the papers in this E Journal,

1 The Irish word '*Tóraíocht*' can be translated as meaning 'hunt', 'search', 'pursuit' or 'explore' as in *Bhí siad ag toráíocht na gréine and na gaoise* – They were looking for sun and wisdom.

represents a valuable contribution to the participants' store of knowledge and experiential learning.

A REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION

The capstone piece in the journal, in which faculty discuss together their individual experiences of involvement in the academic leadership programme, gives readers some insights into the work of setting up and delivering a leadership programme catering for a diverse set of graduate practitioners. It makes for relevant reading not just because of the observations of the contributors, but because there is such evidence of trust operating among these pioneers. The contributors demonstrate leadership across the professions and discuss the central importance of trust in the leadership domain. It is evident that their collaboration is clearly underpinned by a deep sense of trust in each other as they share their respective experiences. Their honest openness of how their programmes unfolded and of the challenges they met along the line allows for both inter and intra cultural reflection. One particular insight is that to more fully understand what is happening within one's own sphere of operation, one needs to get outside it. The inter-disciplinary collaboration at both faculty and graduate level alike reduced a sense of isolation, and pierced the introspective bubble that often typifies work settings. There was inevitably some discussion on the interplay of the disparate, but interlinked, areas of leadership and management. As the discussion progresses the centrality of leadership to the success of any initiative in the health or education sector emerges.

The conversation also highlights the merits of action research to kick starting an initiative. This approach served to break down hierarchical structures that are characteristic in both health care and education fields; it illuminates how we are all actors in this together. Through the projects, collaboration became a reality rather than an aspiration. These papers testify how staff members who might not be senior or long serving in the workplace can initiate and lead, worthwhile, even transformative, initiatives. Encouragingly, in many instances the work was ground breaking, and especially affirming for the project initiators.

COMMON GROUND

The evidence from this collaboration between RCSI, Maynooth University and PDST suggests that, while serving different constituencies and needs, the leadership programmes they offer share many values including respect, teamwork, scholarship and innovation. Furthermore, these programmes are built on the belief that imaginative and sustained leadership is nurtured by favouring critical thinking rather than coercive force, by preferring grounded knowledge over inherited myths, and by encouraging collegiality and co-operation instead of lone actions. In tune with changes in technology, these programmes offer busy

practitioners a blended learning model of continuing professional development, combining online learning with face-to-face class contact.

Finally, those involved in leading this collaborative initiative recognise that the whole concept of this interdisciplinary, inter-institutional conference was a high risk venture. They share a belief that for anything innovative and worthwhile to happen, people must step outside their comfort zones. The programme leaders and their learners did just this, and in so doing derived great personal satisfaction, and important insights, forging valuable links as they engaged with the work. The hope is that further initiatives will follow and that learning of value will stem from earnest and value driven endeavours of the kind recorded in this E Journal.

Maeve Martin and Gerry Jeffers,

Journal Editors,

February 2016.

Seven Propositions about Educational Leadership

John West-Burnham

INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a model of effective leadership that is a synthesis of a wide range of sources and ideas. The approach of the discussion is essentially normative although it is recognised throughout that leadership is an essentially contingent context. However, complex the debate about effective leadership, there is a pragmatic argument that certain types of leadership behaviour do seem to be more effective than others in terms of a range of desired outcomes. There is an increasingly robust evidence base that points to certain leadership approaches being more appropriate than others, for example, Bryk et al. (2010) and Robinson (2011).

There are numerous formulations of effective leadership. They are usually the product of a complex range of variables that generate numerous permutations that in turn are the product of policies, philosophies and cultural norms. So, distributed leadership will have very different implications in one school system compared to another; equally, instructional leadership is a norm in some systems and seen to be inappropriate in others where learning centred leadership is preferred. Having said that, there are a number of elements in most models of leadership that seem common across cultures and over time.

What follows is an exploration of those elements of educational leadership that seem to be found, albeit with varying characteristics, across places and times. This is not to argue for a definitive answer to the debate as to what constitutes effective leadership but rather to explore the implications in terms of developing a shared understanding of leadership structures, relationships and development. Equally, these propositions are not presented in terms of hierarchical significance; different elements will have different levels of significance at different times and the relative significance of each element will also vary according to context.

1. LEADERSHIP FOCUSES ON THE STRATEGIC NOT THE OPERATIONAL

This is not a semantic debate. The differences between leading and managing are nuanced. The debate is all-important because it provides a key indication of the relative significance attached to the two elements. The classic distinction belongs to Warren Bennis

who distinguishes them in terms of leadership being about the right things and management about doing things right. Stephen Covey distinguishes between path making and path following. A more specific distinction might be found in the comparison between the strategic and the operational.

Leadership is about the long-term vision and the values of the school; management is making the school function on a daily basis. Schools are complex organisations; managing them is a sophisticated and challenging process but that does not make it leadership. Simplistically, the strategic dimension of leadership might be understood in terms of:

- principle – the values informing the organisation’s culture and priorities
- purpose – the dominant view as to the *raison d’être* of the school
- people – the engagement, motivation and performance of people in securing the principles and purpose.

The operational, by contrast, is concerned with the routines, systems, structures and procedures that translate principles and aspirations into actual practice. Leadership and management work in a symbiotic relationship but always with leadership driving management. There are many ways of conceptualising the tension between the competing paradigms of management and leadership, the linear and nonlinear, objective and subjective, rational and emotional. McGilchrist (2009) has explored how the two hemispheres in our brains influence how we perceive and engage with the world. In simplified terms, the left-brain is perceived as the logical rational dimension (management) of our engagement with the world, the right brain (leadership) the social and emotional response to the world. This coincides with many definitions of the difference between management and leadership. In essence the difference between management focuses on procedures and structures and leadership on values and relationships.

The world of the left hemisphere, dependent on denonative language and abstraction, yields clarity and power to manipulate things that are known, fixed static, isolated, decontextualised, explicit, disembodied, general in nature but ultimately lifeless. (2009:174)

This is very much the world of ‘doing things right’. The right hemisphere in a very different, it:

... yields a world of individual, changing, evolving, interconnected, implicit, incarnate, living beings within the context of the lived world, but in the nature of things never fully graspable, always imperfectly known – and to this world it exists in a relationship of care. (2009:174)

These elements capture the reality of life in organisations – they are messy, full of contradictions, emotions and ambiguities. This is the world that leaders need to inhabit not an artificially neat, rational and controllable world. What would happen if the left hemisphere became dominant in the world?

In fact more and more work would come to be overtaken by the meta-process of documenting or justifying what one was doing or supposed to be doing – at the expense of the real job in the real world. (2009:429)

A primary criterion for effective leadership is the ability to sustain an unremitting focus on the ‘real job’ by not allowing distractions or competing demands to usurp the core purpose of the role and organisation.

2. LEADERSHIP IS A MORAL ACTIVITY

There is no leadership decision-making process that does not have moral implications. Leadership can never be ‘morally neutral’; as was noted previously, Bennis argues that leadership is about ‘doing the right things’ and that implies leadership has to be rooted in an explicit ethical framework and consistent personal values that inform personal and professional behaviour. There does appear to be a correlation between an explicit and consensually based moral code and organisational success:

The high quality and performance of Finland’s educational system cannot be divorced from the clarity, characteristics of, and broad consensus about the country’s broader social vision . . . There is compelling clarity about and commitment to inclusive, equitable and innovative social values beyond as well as within the educational system. (Pont et al., 2008)

Equally:

... for the majority, the values based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and ‘guide to life’ provided by the RRSA (Rights Respecting School Award) has had a significant and positive influence on the school ethos, relationships, inclusivity, understanding of the wider world and the well-being of the school community, according to the adults and young people in the evaluation schools. (Sebba and Robinson, 2010)

What is contentious in any debate about the role of values in society is the definition of the ‘right things’. One simple expression of the ethical basis of contemporary school leadership might be found in the formulation that leadership is about the three ‘E’s – Equity, Excellence and Effectiveness’. In combination, these might be seen as the basis for arguing that school leadership is essentially about securing social justice:

- Equity – it is not enough to ensure that every child goes to school, every child has the right to go to a good school and have access to the most appropriate teaching and learning
- Excellence – there has to be a commitment to ensuring that the school system operates to secure the optimum outcomes for every learner and that there is a clear understanding of the nature of excellent outcomes and strategies to ensure that all may access them
- Effectiveness – resources are managed in such a way as to maximise their impact on the achievement of equity and excellence, for example, the most effective teachers work with the most vulnerable children.

The work of leaders is essentially about taking decisions and solving problems. The key hypothesis here is that there is no decision or solution that is morally neutral; leadership is about a continuous process of exercising choices all of which have moral implications. There are a range of potential moral dilemmas facing school leaders, for example:

- the evidence that banding, streaming and setting are only of benefit to those students placed in higher groups – for the others the impact can be highly negative (Higgins et al., 2010)
- the need to deploy the most effective teachers with the most vulnerable learners (Sutton Trust, 2011)
- the very clear evidence that certain teaching and learning strategies are more effective than others and, therefore, professional autonomy may be less significant than securing consistently high quality teaching and learning (Bloom, 1984; Hattie, 2009)
- Leaders are at their optimum effectiveness when they are actively involved in, and give priority to, the learning and development of teachers (Robinson, 2011).

A broader issue emerges from the idea of the leader as model. In the school environment, the language and behaviour of school leaders, and all adults, is a powerful source of what might constitute the right things. A key precept of most ethical systems is the importance of ‘do as I do’ rather than ‘do as I say’. Leadership should work through consent derived from modelling and exemplification rather than direction and imposition. In essence, the medium is the message. Law (2006) provides a model for the moral development of young people. If such a model is to work then it will have to be exemplified through the behaviour of leaders and all members of the school community. The morally confident and competent person is able to:

- reveal and question underlying assumptions
- figure out the perhaps unforeseen consequences of a moral decision or point of view
- spot and diagnose faulty reasoning
- weigh up evidence fairly and impartially
- make a point clearly and concisely
- take turns in a debate, and listen attentively without interrupting
- argue without personalising a dispute
- look at issues from the point of view of others and
- question the appropriateness of, or the appropriateness of acting on, one’s own feelings.

To secure morally confident schools requires morally confident leaders who are able to implement the skills and strategies identified by Law. That proposition raises interesting issues for the development of leaders and how leadership actually works in the school.

3. LEADERSHIP IS CONCERNED WITH TRANSFORMATION – NOT IMPROVEMENT

Management is essentially about securing, improving and delivering the *status quo*. Part of that process of managing is engaging in incremental improvement – constantly looking for better ways to secure effectiveness. This is a vital element of any organisation’s culture but it might not be sufficient to secure equity, excellence *and* effectiveness. It is at this point that the emphasis has to shift from improvement to transformation, from incremental adjustment to a radical rethinking of why, who, what and how. For example, school improvement, as a policy and strategy, has been the dominant orthodoxy for a generation yet equity remains elusive across the education systems.

It might, therefore, be appropriate to sustain school improvement but to also explore strategies that will really challenge the root causes of relatively poor performance, a lack of equity and a failure to acknowledge and engage with learning in the 21st century. Transformation is not just about a greater level of improvement; in Marshall’s powerful image:

Adding wings to caterpillars does not create butterflies – it creates awkward and dysfunctional caterpillars. Butterflies are created through transformation. (1995: 1)

Unfortunately, in education we sometimes become so focused on developing the caterpillar that we forget that its primary purpose is to become a butterfly, not a better caterpillar. Transformation is about the moral courage to question and challenge the *status quo* and to develop alternative ways forward often going against a culture that can be self-referential and self-legitimizing.

... transformation attacks both the current and the known world *and* the future. It is concerned with the creation of new opportunities, with the ability to junk conventional wisdom and destroy old (often cherished) advantages, to violate established business practice, compete in different ways, shut down competitors’ angle of attack and behave in counterintuitive and, indeed, unpredictable ways. (Taffinder, 1998: 36)

Transformation is the movement from horse drawn to petrol driven transport, from electric telegraph to email, from the Cutty Sark to the container ship carrying 18,000 containers. The core purpose remains the same – the means of delivery radically different. This view requires leadership to be creative, innovative and willing to take risks to move away from ‘doing what we have always done’ to radically re-engineering what is done and how it is done. Management is about conservation leadership is about innovation. Examples of the sorts of themes that might be addressed in the context of transformation could include:

- securing equity in education particularly for the most vulnerable
- focusing on the development of oracy and literacy in the family and community before formal schooling starts

- moving from automatic cohort chronological progression to a culture of ‘stage not age’ - developing a personalised learning experience
- a curriculum focused on the strategies and competencies necessary to live a successful life in the 21st century, personal well-being and the social and moral awareness
- getting rid of the artificial divide between primary and secondary education and developing a model of education from cradle to 18 and beyond
- using ICT to rethink what people learn, where they learn, with whom they learn and how they learn
- developing schools as communities working collaboratively with other communities.

4. THE CORE PURPOSE OF LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION IS LEARNING

There are numerous formulations as to the purpose of education and the nature of schools. What has emerged in recent years is a growing consensus that the fundamental purpose of a school is to enable everyone in the community to learn. This serves as the basis for every other possible outcome, including well-being and improved life chances, academic success, moral development or vocational education. What they all have in common is the ability to learn.

In this context, leadership is seen as creating the environment in which learning is possible for every member of the school community and, potentially, the wider community that the school serves. Leadership is thus concerned with the resources and opportunities that facilitate learning. However, and more importantly perhaps, it is also about creating a culture that enables and secures engagement in learning for all, that is, learning as a process, not an outcome. Schooling often focuses on the content of education – the curriculum or the delivery of that content teaching and the work of teachers. It might be part of the transformation of schools to argue for the primacy of the learning process of itself – the strategies, skills and relationships that enable learning for all. Such learning leads to understanding that in turn leads to the ability to apply that learning in practice and also to question and challenge.

It might well be that leaders are at their most effective when they are supporting and developing the learning of their colleagues and this in turn provides a model of effective leadership in the classroom through the facilitation of learning for all. It does seem to be the case that certain learning strategies are more likely to lead to change than others, notably action learning approaches, collaborative strategies and coaching and mentoring. These strategies seem to work whether the learner is five or 50.

Of equal importance is the extent to which leaders are actually engage in their own learning both in terms of their personal growth and acting as a model for their colleagues and the school community. Investing in leadership development is one of the key components of any strategy to secure improvement, improve teaching and learning and embed sustainable change. Leadership development seems to be most likely to make an impact on the quality of teaching and learning, and developing sustainable high performance, if it focuses on the following principles:

1. Learning for understanding rather than the transmission of information (training) or engagement with abstract theory. Learning for understanding involves developing the confidence to apply and act through certain key behaviours.
2. Probably the most effective form of leadership learning is found in coaching and mentoring. It is the one-to-one that really does seem to have the greatest potential to translate theory into consistent and effective practice.
3. After coaching, leadership learning and development seems to be most effective when it is based in experiential learning, that is, learning to lead by actually leading. The use of real-time genuine leadership projects, internships, job-swaps and similar activities seem to have the greatest impact in terms of confidence and the ability to act with confidence.
4. Collaborative learning projects, particularly in the team, between teams and across schools have significant potential for accelerating leadership learning as well as developing confidence in working in different environments.

Two key learning processes seem to be central to leadership development. Firstly, there is a need for challenge; learning activities need to be challenging of themselves and facilitators needs to be challenging in order to encourage deep engagement with the learning process. The second element is reflection; there is very powerful evidence that successful professionals are highly reflective about their work. This is where coaches and mentors can play a significant role but leadership development means that individuals become reflective in every aspect of their work and are comfortable and confident in reviewing their practice.

All of these approaches assume an underpinning of knowledge of the theory and practice of school leadership. This implies a working knowledge of, for example, research into the most effective deployment of resources to secure student achievement, the current research on classroom practice and the evidence base for high impact leadership of teaching and learning. One very practical example of how research can inform leadership practice is the regular sharing of reading in leadership team meetings, that is, actually putting reading and discussion on the agenda. These strategies are essentially the warp of leadership development – the weft is dialogue. Fundamental to every leadership development activity, but more importantly fundamental to the daily routines of every leader, is a commitment to engaging in learning conversations with other leaders, colleagues, pupils and their parents. For Robinson, the centrality of learning to leadership is absolutely fundamental:

The main conclusion to be drawn from the present analyses is that particular types of school leadership have substantial impacts on student outcomes. The more leaders focus their influence, their learning, and their relationships with teachers on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their likely influence on student outcomes. (2011)

5. LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT COLLECTIVE CAPACITY – NOT PERSONAL STATUS

A key issue with much of the theory and practice of educational leadership is the focus on the leader rather than the availability of leadership. This is very much a phenomenon of the Anglophone world; not all systems and cultures seem to need the focus on one individual and are often deeply suspicious of the emphasis placed on the positional power of one person that is often accompanied by the trappings of status.

The cultural imperatives are very deep and there is evidence that a change of leadership is disproportionately significant, that is, a change of principal can bring about a very significant change in the culture and performance of a school. The obvious issue here is capacity and sustainability. Given all the demands, is it appropriate or reasonable for one person to have such a pivotal role? In other words, does leadership need to be distributed across the school or, more radically, shared? In the distributed model delegation is essentially at the behest of the leader; where leadership is shared then it is a collective property.

The historic model of the autonomous head teacher or principal has been challenged firstly through the emergence of the leadership team (or, often and perhaps significantly, the Senior Management Team), then the transition from middle managers to middle leaders and now the emergence of the related ideas of teacher leadership and student leadership.

What is crucial in this transition process is the genuine rethinking of the location of authority and responsibility - to what extent are they delegated (that is, given) or seen as implicit to professional status? Traditional models of leadership tend to work on the assumption of hierarchy, that is, levels of authority as in the feudal system and this hierarchical approach is often reinforced by a parallel bureaucracy. Given the nature of schools, their moral purpose, the focus on the needs of the learner, it is surprising how bureaucratic they can be.

It might be appropriate to consider alternative models where leadership is seen as collective capacity i.e. a collective, community resource rather than the personal status of one individual working through positional power schools move to situational authority – who is the best person to lead in this context?

6. LEADERSHIP ONLY WORKS THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

It has long been accepted that in some ways emotional intelligence (EQ) is more significant than a person's intelligence quotient (IQ) although this is yet to be fully reflected in the development and selection of school leaders. Leadership effectiveness is a product of personal effectiveness, which is in turn manifested in emotional self-awareness and emotional literacy. What makes leadership distinctive is the high level of sustained and significant engagement with others and just how significant those encounters are. In the course of a day they can involve the extremes of anger and despair, joy and celebration. They will also reflect the tedium of routine transactions and the micro-political scheming that can be found in any organisation.

It is worth reflecting on the number of transactions leaders have each day, each of them rich in potential, each of them a 'moment of truth' and every one of them based in perception rather than logic and rationality – or at least in competing rationalities. The level of demand and impact will, of course, vary over time and context but this aspect of the job of the leader explains why it is both so demanding and challenging and so rich and rewarding. This in turn leads to the need for emotionally literate leaders - leaders who are fluent and confident in talking about their social and emotional engagement because they have a rich personal vocabulary of the emotions and understand the rules of the grammar and syntax of relationships.

Of all the elements that seem to be significant in terms of the relational dimension of leadership there are three that seem particularly significant. Firstly, trust; the capacity to trust and engender trust does seem to be a highly significant human quality and pivotal to so many aspects of leadership effectiveness. It is difficult to see how leaders can function without trust, as it is pivotal to almost every aspect of what we might regard as the basics of effective leadership. Some recent studies show that trust remains a powerful and strong predictor of student achievement even after the effects of student background, prior achievement, race and gender have been taken into account. Therefore, school leaders need to pay careful attention to the trust they engender in teachers, students and parents if they wish to improve organisational performance still further (Day et al., 2009: 244-245).

In their most recent work Bryk and his colleagues (2010: 45-46) report on a detailed and systematic longitudinal study carried out since 1989 looking at over 100 schools that have improved compared with over 100 schools that have declined. The key differences between the schools have enabled the identification of a framework for school improvement that is made up of a number of 'essential supports':

1. leadership as the driver for change
2. parent-community ties

3. professional capacity; promoting the quality of staff and focusing on improvement
4. a student-centered learning climate
5. instructional guidance – focusing on ambitious educational achievement for every child.

Bryk sees these supports as akin to the recipe for a cake but just as putting the ingredients for a cake into a bowl is not enough to make a cake:

... then trust represents the social energy, or the “oven’s heat,” necessary for transforming these basic ingredients into comprehensive school change. Absent the social energy provided by trust, improvement initiatives are unlikely to culminate in meaningful change, regardless of their intrinsic merit. (2010: 157)

The second element is empathy, which is the ability to accurately recognise, reflect and respond to the emotional state of another person. It is, thus, about sensitivity and recognition of the essential dignity of another person but it is also a very basic courtesy and an essential prerequisite to communication, motivation and engagement and sharing understanding. This dimension of leadership is perhaps best captured in the following quotation from the ethical code of the teachers’ union in Finland:

A humanistic conception of people and a respect for human beings form the underlying basis of ethical principles. The worth of a human being must be respected regardless, for example, of the person’s gender, age, religion, origins, opinions or skills.

7. EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP REQUIRES PERSONAL AUTHENTICITY

Personal authenticity is the extent to which what a person believes is consistently reflected in what they say and in what they do. One of the factors that is central to any notion of effectiveness is consistency both over time and across different situations. For Taylor, authenticity is about developing a personal integrity:

Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, and that is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. (1991:29)

Robinson (2013: 21) reinforces the centrality and significance of personal authenticity, which he describes as the ‘Element’:

The Element is the meeting point between natural aptitude and personal passion . . . Being in their element takes them beyond the ordinary experiences of enjoyment or happiness . . . When people are in their element, they connect with something fundamental to their sense of identity, purpose and well-being. Being there provides a sense of self-revelation, of defining who they really are and what they are meant to be doing with their lives.

Leadership development, therefore, might be seen as the process of becoming personally authentic. In essence, to become a leader is to become an authentic person and that involves realising my full capacity as self. Guignon describes this as:

...centering in on your own inner self, getting in touch with your feelings, desires and beliefs, and expressing those feelings, desires and beliefs in all you do ... defining and realising your own identity as a person. (2004: 162)

Authenticity is the result of the integration and interaction of three variables – values, language and actions.

Values are the translation of ethical principles into a coherent and meaningful set of personal constructs that inform language and action and are embedded in day-to-day practice. The authentic leader is, in a positive sense, predictable – ‘We know where we stand with her’ – their views and values are clear, public and applied consistently.

Effective people (and leaders) are fluent and confident in articulating what they believe and in engaging with others to help them understand. They are equally comfortable in engaging with the emotional and intellectual and have the skills to communicate and to influence. Central to this is the notion of dialogue, the ability to hold meaningful conversations with self and others.

In the final analysis leadership is about action, the ability to translate principle into practice. The pivotal criterion for the authentic leader is the extent to which they work on the basis of ‘Do as I do’ rather than ‘Do as I say’. Equally, the intrapersonal informs and enhances their language and ensures that their personal values are informing their personal and professional action.

Personal authenticity is morally, professionally and personally fundamental to leadership effectiveness. It is also fundamental to personal sustainability; certainly research into personal well-being would seem to demonstrate a very high level of congruence between well-being and a range of significant variables. Well-being here is defined as the optimum state for a human being – essentially where negatives are significantly outweighed by positives and it is possible to envisage the ideal circumstances for a human life. This view would include work as a significant factor in determining human happiness and fulfilment. Nurmi and Salmela-Aro (2006: 186) demonstrate a range of significant correlations:

- People who report that their goals are in congruence with their inherent needs report higher well-being than those who report that their goals are incongruent with their needs.
- People who report having intrinsic goals (self-acceptance, affiliation, community feeling) report a higher level of well-being than those who report more extrinsic goals (financial success, materialism, physical attractiveness).
- People who report a high level of commitment and involvement in their goals show a high level of well-being and low distress.

- People who think they can control the ways in which their goals proceed have higher levels of well-being than those who lack belief in personal control.

This raises the issue of vocation as goal orientation or the particular motivation in a person's life. In essence, vocation can be understood as the personal, subjective, motivating force that transcends all other demands and preoccupations – vocation gives purpose or in Pink's compelling phrase it is 'The oxygen of the soul' (2009: 129). As Pink points out, this sense of focus and engagement is what Csikszentmihalyi refers to as an 'autotelic experience' from the Greek *auto* (self) and *telos* (purpose) it is 'something that is worth doing for its own sake ... because it contains its goal within itself' (1997: 117). It may be that this final leadership proposition is the most significant and most challenging:

We can pretend that we are independent and that what we do does not affect others (and what others do does not affect us), but that is not true. We can pretend that everybody sees things in the same way, or that our differences can be resolved purely through market or political or legal competition, but this is not true. And we can pretend that we can do things the way we always have, or that we can first figure out and then execute the correct answer, but this is not true. (Kahane, 2010: 5)

For Kahane:

... we need to acknowledge our interdependence, cooperate and feel our way forward. We need therefore to employ not only our power but also our love. (Kahane, 2010: 5)

REFERENCES

- Bloom B (1984) The 2 Sigma Problem: The Search for Methods of Group Instruction as Effective as One-to-One Tutoring. *Educational Researcher* 13:6 (4-16)
- Bryk, A.S. et al (2010) *Organizing Schools for Improvement* Chicago University of Chicago Press
- Csikszentmihalyi M and Csikszentmihalyi I S (2006) *A Life Worth Living* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Day C, Sammons P, Hopkins D, Harris A, Leithwood Gu Q (2009) *The impact of school leadership on pupil outcomes* Nottingham DCSF
- Higgins S, Kokotsaki D, Coe R (2011) *Toolkit of Strategies to Improve Learning* The Sutton Trust
- Hattie, J. (2009) *Visible Learning*, London Routledge
- Kahane A (2010) *Power and Love* San Francisco Berrett- Koehler
- Law, S. (2006) *The War for Children's Minds* London: Routledge
- Marshall, S.P. (1995) http://www.21learn.org/publ/synthesis/synthesis_four.htm
- McGilchrist I. (2009) *The Master and his Emissary* London Yale University Press
- Nurmi J E and Salmela-Aro K (2006). What works makes you happy in Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006)
- Pink D H (2011) *Drive* New York Riverhead Books
- Pont B et al (2008) *Improving School Leadership Vol 2* Paris OECD
- Robinson K (2013) *Finding Your Element* London Allen lane
- Robinson V M J (2011) *Student-Centered Leadership* San Francisco Jossey-Bas
- Sebba J and Robinson C (2010) *Evaluation of UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting School Award* London UNICEF
- Sutton Trust (2011) *Improving the Impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK.* www.suttontrust.com
- Taffinder, P. (1998) *Big Change*, Chichester: John Wiley
- Taylor C (1991) *The Ethics of Authenticity* Cambridge Ma Harvard University Press

Challenges in an Ever-Changing Landscape – the Global and Irish Backdrop to Change

Aine Hyland

This chapter attempts to set the scene for the discussion on Leadership which was the theme of the first 3U conference held in the National University of Ireland, Maynooth on 2 March 2013. The conference was attended by education and health professionals, some of whom were engaged in postgraduate studies. The purpose of the presentation was to identify the key factors which are driving change in the education of professionals in Ireland, especially professionals in the fields of education and health. This is not an academic paper – it is simply a summary of the key points made by the author at the conference.

At the opening of the presentation, the conference participants were reminded that there is nothing new about change. Change has had an impact on the human race since the beginning of civilisation. Sometimes change is evolutionary, sometimes it is a paradigm shift. But, as Patrick Lynch noted in the Preface to *Investment in Education* (1965) ‘change is perennial, and will not stop this year or next’.

Philosophers and leaders have written about change and its impact, for over 2,000 years. Heraclitus, writing almost 2,500 years ago said: ‘Nothing endures but change’. Three hundred years later, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus wrote: ‘The universe is change: our life is what our thoughts make it’. In addition, Machiavelli’s famous quotation on change, from his treatise *The Prince*, written in the sixteenth century, is well-known and widely quoted:

There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from fear of their adversaries ... and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it. (Machiavelli, 2003: Chapter VI)

The knowledge revolution of the 20th and 21st centuries has had major implications for the education of professionals. It is no longer possible (if it ever was) for a health or education professional to learn all he/she needs to know in an undergraduate programme. Professionals need to be aware of the ever-changing and developing nature of knowledge – they need to have an enquiring mind, to have investigative skills, to be researchers in their field. To quote Angela Brew, from an unpublished report of a strategic project on research-enhanced learning and teaching (2008):

For the students who are the professionals of the future, developing the ability to investigate problems, make judgments on the basis of sound evidence, take decisions on a rational basis, and understand what they are doing and why, is vital. Research and enquiry are not just for those who choose to pursue an academic career. They are central to professional life in the twenty-first century.

In a further statement, Brew adds:

In a world characterised by supercomplexity, we need, not bodies of pre-defined knowledge, but rather the skills of finding out. Knowledge has become fluid and contestable. In its many domains of discourse, it has become a product of communication and negotiation. The students of the future are going to need the skills of enquiry – or research – if they are to be able to investigate and to learn and hence be employable in the future.

We cannot overestimate the importance of developing a culture of enquiry in all professional learning environments - undergraduate and postgraduate, on campus or online, or in teaching/clinical/pastoral settings. Research- informed and research-led teaching are a *sine qua non* of higher education. Engagement by students in research should be an essential component of professional studies at all levels and a spirit of curiosity and enquiry should permeate their learning environment. *The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (2011), otherwise known as the Hunt Report, states: ‘Every student should learn in an environment that is informed by research, scholarship and up-to-date practice and knowledge’ (National Strategy, 2011: 17). It continues:

The integration of research with teaching and learning occurs in an environment and in a context where a spirit of enquiry and questioning prevails and where staff and students are committed to an evidence-based approach to their work, and to creating new knowledge as well as to transmitting and critiquing existing knowledge. (54)

The professional leader of the future needs to be, not only an expert in his/her disciplinary field, but also needs to be able to impart that expertise to his/her colleagues. To quote again from the Hunt report:

It is not sufficient for academics to be experts in their own disciplinary area; they also need to know how best to teach that discipline. They need to have an understanding of learning theories and to know how to apply these theories to their practice. They need to appreciate what teaching and learning approaches work best for different students in different situations. (59)

In terms of ensuring that they help their students to develop enquiry and critical skills, professional leaders need ‘to stimulate active, not passive learning, and to encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over’ (52-3). They need to ‘create a process of active learning by posing problems, challenging student answers, and encouraging them to apply the information and concepts in assigned readings to a variety of new situations’ (53).

Professional leaders and good clinical teachers need to demonstrate professional, teaching and personal characteristics. As professionals, they need to possess excellent clinical knowledge, to demonstrate professional competence and to be excellent professional role-models. As teachers, they need to establish a positive learning environment and to have the ability to inspire curiosity and interest in their students. As human beings, they need to have qualities of empathy, personal characteristics of integrity and humility and they need to have high ethical values and an ability to communicate or explain well (Sutkin et al., 2008: 452-466).

There have been significant changes in higher education in Ireland in the past decade, driven by a variety of factors – local, national and international. The increasing requirements of society and the economy for a well-educated workforce, the ever-growing demand (in Ireland) for higher education, both from school-leavers and from the more mature population, the demand for postgraduate qualifications, the globalisation of higher education and greater mobility of students and staff have all been factors in the change process. The growth in demand for higher education is occurring at a time of financial austerity and cutbacks in government spending on higher education, while at the same time tax-payers are demanding greater accountability in public expenditure and value-for-money in relation to what is perceived by them as a significant investment/expenditure on higher education.

In Ireland, a number of recent reports have contributed to the changing landscape of higher education. *The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* set out a national strategy for higher education to the year 2030. This strategy pointed out that for a country with a total population of less than five million, the number of publicly-funded higher education institutions, is excessive. While emphasising the separate missions of universities and Institutes of Technology, and criticising the tendency over recent decades for mission drift, the report recommended that the binary nature of Irish higher education should be maintained. However, while bearing this in mind, it also recommended that there should be greater collaboration between higher education institutions in contiguous geographical areas.

Since the publication of the Hunt report, the Higher Education Authority has engaged in a wide-ranging consultation process about the future landscape of Irish higher education. In May 2013, the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, issued a major policy statement on the future structure and configuration of higher education in Ireland. The new configuration provides for a major programme of structural reform including institutional mergers and much greater levels of institutional collaboration, with the creation of a series of regional clusters of institutions. The Minister also announced his approval for three groups of institutes of technology to proceed towards detailed planning for a formal application for designation as technological universities.

In the press statement welcoming this reform, ‘New Landscape for Higher Education’, the Higher Education Authority stated that institutions will be expected to collaborate to re-organise their programme offerings so as ‘to create higher quality programmes that are based

on critical mass and economies of scale, rather than low volume programmes that lack the necessary depth to provide a high quality experience' (HEA: 30 May 2013). It anticipates that the change will improve student choice by enabling them to transfer more easily between higher education institutions and to progress from further education to higher education.

Not everyone has welcomed these changes. Some academics and commentators have been critical of what they refer to as 'a new managerialism in higher education', the title of a recent publication, *New Managerialism in Education: Commercialization, Carelessness and Gender* (Lynch, Grummell, Devine, 2012). Reviewing the book in the *Irish Times* (2013) Tom Dunne, a retired academic stated: 'Like a deadly, colourless gas, the elements of a quiet revolution have seeped through every area of Irish education during recent decades, poisoning the atmosphere'. He went on to state:

The emphasis is now on outputs over inputs, on measuring progress rather than understanding process. Using narrowly defined arguments of "Efficiency", "Value for money" and "Relevance", Irish education is being turned into a commodity, designed to suit market forces, rather than a transformative experience for the individual that has incalculable social and cultural – and economic – value.

However, the state, as pay-master, is not the only driver of educational change. Professional bodies have also been drivers of change in higher education, not only because of the need for compliance with EU and international regulations, but also because of their awareness of the rapidly changing expectations within the professions themselves as well as by the 'clients' of the professions. Regulating and accrediting bodies such as the Medical Council, the Dental Council, An Bord Altranais, Engineers Ireland and the Teaching Council all have their own specific professional demands and higher education institutions have been changing and adapting their programmes to meet these demands.

Technological advances have also changed the nature of professional education and learning. Widespread online access to information in all professional fields provides virtually instant access to an unprecedented web of knowledge, for professionals and non-professionals alike. Flexible and blended learning opportunities are increasingly available for professionals who wish to upskill and to add to their initial professional qualifications. The challenge is no longer one of access to information but of funding, choice and time. To quote the HEA Policy paper, *Open and Flexible Learning* (2009):

While traditional full-time on-campus provision is likely to remain a dominant form of provision in Irish higher education for the foreseeable future, it is envisaged that first-time higher education learners of any age will be supported on the same basis as full-time on-campus learners, to access higher education in a flexible way – through a combination of on-campus learning and ODL, on a part-time or a full-time basis. National and institutional funding mechanisms will have to reflect this new scenario. (8)

Moreover, in some cases, learners may take ‘modules and accumulate credits from different institutions to cumulate a recognised personalised qualification at any one of the NQF Levels 6 through 10 (8-9).

Since the publication of this policy paper, the higher education funding model has remained largely unchanged in Ireland, and the financial disincentives to higher education institutions to provide open and distance learning courses have not yet been fully removed. However, developments internationally are beginning to have an impact on the higher education scene, in Ireland as elsewhere. The year 2012 has been referred to internationally as ‘The Year of the MOOCs’ (Massive Open Online Courses). International online networks such as Coursera, Udemy, edX, TED, and so on, have opened up learning to anybody who is interested in learning. The only barrier to the courses provided through MOOCs is hardware and broadband access. Some of the most prestigious and high-ranking universities in the world, such as Stanford, Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have made available online, free of charge, a selection of their courses. While these courses may provide a challenge to traditional on-campus courses, Larry Cuban, a respected educational commentator, suggests in his blog, *MOOCs and Pedagogy: Part 2*, that MOOCs are simply another educational resource and will not replace the traditional role of teacher:

A MOOC delivers a course to a student but a teacher teaches it. What students learn depends in part on how teachers teach. Online delivery of instruction is neither the same as pedagogy nor identical to students learning.

To conclude on a positive note, we can, in all of our professions and workplaces, play our part in ‘creating the future’. The future is, to a significant extent, what we make it. We can be innovators or leaders who determine the course of the future or we can be reluctant followers who drag our feet and resist change as much as we can - until our engagement becomes inevitable. The choice is up to each one of us.

REFERENCES

- Brew, A. (2008) Unpublished report of a strategic project on research-enhanced learning and teaching. Institute for Teaching and Learning, University of Sydney.
- Cuban, L. (2013) *MOOCs and Pedagogy: Part 2* [online] 13 February 2013. Available at <https://larrycuban.wordpress.com/2013/02/13/moocs-and-pedagogy-part-2/> (accessed 20 February 2013).
- Dunne, T. (2013) Education, the Market and the Careless Culture: Is Relentless Managerialism Devastating our Schools and Universities? *Irish Times*, Arts and Books Supplement, 1 June 2013, 10.
- Lynch, K., Grummell, B., Devine, D. (2012) *New Managerialism in Education: Commercialization, Carelessness and Gender*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lynch, P. (1965) Preface In: *Investment in Education*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Machiavelli, N. (2003) *The Prince*. Revised Edition. New York and London: Penguin Classics.
- Hunt, C. (2011) *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills.
- New Landscape for Higher Education (2013). Higher Education Authority Press Release, 30 May 2013.
- Open and Flexible Learning* (2009). HEA Position Paper. Available at <http://www.heai.ie> (accessed 20 February 2013)
- Sutkin, G., Wagner, E., Harris, I., Schiffer, R. (2008) What Makes a Good Clinical Teacher in Medicine? A Review of the Literature. *Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*. 83(5), 452-466.

Leadership and Trust – Challenges and Opportunities for Professional Practice

Tomás Ó Ruairc

INTRODUCTION

In one sense, this talk could be over in 30 seconds. The link between trust, leadership and our professions is so obvious and so simple that we might wonder what all the fuss is about. Nothing unites the professions here today more than trust; it is the bedrock on which all else we do rests. End of story. And yet ... and yet ... we clearly have a sense that that is not the end of the story, that it is not as simple as that. Otherwise, we would not be giving up our Saturday to come here and talk about trust, the professions and leadership!

Yes, trust is the bedrock of all that we do. But it is also like the Sword of Damocles - it also is the greatest threat to all that we do. Confused? Well then we are starting on the right note at last! Let me try and explain. As Minister Alex White T.D. said last year in his presentation, for all that we talk about trust, the extent to which we truly understand the concept is at best questionable. Like poetry and light, we all feel we instinctively know what trust is; it permeates our lives so intimately that we are almost oblivious to it. But without it, we are lost; and it clearly defies definitive explanation. What does it mean to say “I trust you.”? How would you feel if someone looked you in the eye and said “I trust you.”? Would you really feel comfortable and reassured? Or would you feel under the pressure of an expectation that you felt you could not meet?

There are no clear, definitive answers to these questions. Trust is not simple. It is extremely complex. So today I would like to explore with you the sense that we have of trust – what we think it looks and feels like. I would like to tease out what this means for the story we tell about our professions to the broader public. I hope that it will be clear that this goes to the heart of what it means to lead our professions, together. This story is built on the pillars of learning, doubt, courage and balance. It all comes together through choice and connections. And the whole edifice rests in a precarious balance on the pinpoint of hope.

What does trust look and feel like? If trust is so latent, and by and large things seem to chug along just fine, is it really that important? Yes! Firstly, you say it is, and you are the most important and trusted professions in society. Secondly, note what Maureen Gaffney had to say last November about trust:

Trust is at the heart of a well-functioning democracy. It underpins the social contract that asks people to pay taxes, obey the law and consent to be governed because they trust their investment will build the common good that will benefit them. (Gaffney 2013)

If you recall that article in the *Irish Times*, it highlighted a number of commonly held misperceptions about the public service – yet the public trust us. So perhaps we have an understandable fear that while things may seem to be fine on the surface in terms of the public trust, that surface may be little more than a glass veneer which can be shattered all too easily. The best way to reinforce trust is arguably to deepen understanding. Or put another way, understanding gives depth to trust. The Marquess of Halifax put it another way when he said:

A prince who will not undergo the difficulty of understanding must undergo the danger of trusting. (The Economist, 2013)

In other words, to rely on an exhortation of “You must trust me” is risky at best and foolhardy at worst. How might this translate into the language of today? In that same *Irish Times* article, Maureen Gaffney quoted Sam McClure who said the vitality of any democracy rests on “popular knowledge of complex issues” (2013). I can scarcely think of two areas that are more complex, and more vital to us all, than human learning and human well-being. So here is a clearly articulated belief that people need to understand more about complex areas so that our democracy can survive and thrive. The issue, however, appears to be that as each generation becomes more educated than the previous one, it comes to have higher expectations of professions such as ours. Popular knowledge seeks to know, and understand, more. This is a good thing.

The challenge, though, centres around language. This is indicative of why professional standards bodies such as the Teaching and Medical Councils are so important. How we as professionals talk about what we do to those who are not teachers or doctors or nurses is as important, if not more so, than how we talk with our colleagues. Professional standards bodies endeavour to enhance connections between professionals and those whom they serve so that they can negotiate a shared language around what they do. This is in our own professional interests - in talking and explaining, we enhance and nurture trust. As Hafiz says, ‘The words you speak become the house you live in’ (Lampert 2015).

In other words, through deliberate and measured shaping of the language we use about our professions, we can reinforce the glass surface ourselves, rather than wait for someone else to shatter it. For if we don’t explain, if we are not prepared to ‘demystify’ our professions, others will do so. And they may do so in a way that will have little, no or a very limited evidence base, and therefore will have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of those whom we care for. So it is both a professional and public imperative that we enhance our connections with those whom we serve in order to safeguard trust for the future. As professions, we can choose to see this increased interest on the part of the public as a professional insult and clear indication of a lack of trust; or we can see it as a great opportunity to connect and enhance trust. In many

ways, it is as simple as that – it is a matter of choice, and the choice is ours. What choice will we make to enhance trust?

Trust, it seems to me, is fundamentally a matter of choice and of hope. That choice is grounded for each one of us in the values that we hold dear. That hope is embedded in our human nature. We hope because of what we have learned and what we endeavour to learn every day – how to improve the human condition, mind and body.

So we have a sense that trust is the bedrock of all that we do, yet that same bedrock is like limestone – brittle and easily eroded; we know that people have higher expectations of us than their ancestors; they are therefore keen to enhance their connections and understanding of what we do; we can choose to respond and connect, and enhance understanding and trust. If we choose to connect, what do we tell parents and patients about our professions? What story can we tell?

LEARNING

I think that one of the most powerful and reassuring stories that any professional can tell those whom they serve is that of the reflective practitioner – that you care enough about what you do to think and talk about it, and improve it throughout your life. It runs counter to the view our ancestors would have had of the expert ‘master’ in the local school who knew everything and imparted his / her wisdom to all. In the past, professionals were revered almost, at a remove. Today, as members of society, we now seek to know that in grappling with how we feel and think and are, we are not alone.

We seek to connect. We seek to know that those whom we trust to help us understand all these dynamics, the professionals, are grappling with the exact same issues. We draw comfort and strength, reassurance and understanding from that. And therefore we tend to trust.

But even if you accept this premise, it can still be a tall order for professionals to really look at themselves, what they do, how they do it, and question it. Surely that self-doubting is corrosive of trust? Is it not better to exude an air of confidence and authority, and simply exhort others to trust you? No. We have seen the horrors that can ensue when excessive assertion of authority is not questioned or doubted, and how trust can be irretrievably destroyed in those cases. So paradoxically you must question and doubt yourself in order to get others to trust you.

Typically, we ridicule or laugh at the concept of talking to yourself. But this is the surest sign of all that you are a reflective practitioner. Remember Shirley Valentine, who maintained her

sanity by literally talking to the wall! Plato described thinking as ‘the talking of the soul with itself’. Reflection is implicitly about doubt – you think about what you have done, and you re-examine it on the assumption that there may have been a different, even better, way to do it. Questioning the self actually reinforces the trust you place in yourself. It therefore can empower you to become better leaders for your profession.

It can, in fact, empower us to become better leaders for society as a whole. If we are to have any hope of avoiding a repetition of the mistakes that led to the crisis of the last five years, it appears to me that we have to be open to learning. We can never again assume that we have “cracked it”, that “we have it made”. If we are now saying that at the heart of a great teacher lies the heart of a great learner, then I believe that teaching has the potential to blaze a trail for the country as a whole. We have the potential to show everyone how you can be the consummate professional by being open about your learning. This is counterintuitive, it will take time, but it can be done.

So, we know deep down that trust is complex. We can see that trust is reliant on learning and suspicion or doubt, as exemplified by the reflective practitioner. We know that for all its complexity, we must work to nurture trust so that we can lead our professions and maintain the confidence of the public – it is not an either / or situation. And paradoxically, we must doubt or suspect ourselves if we are to achieve that.

But can this notion of suspicion not be taken too far?

SUSPICION/DOUBT

Clearly, it can. For all the importance we place on trust, we seem to trust some strange sources, for example ‘magazines’. Take the phrase you often hear over a cup of coffee, ‘I read it in a magazine somewhere’ ... and twenty minutes later you’re engaged in a heated debate as to whether a glass of wine a day is good for you or not! So like the History teacher who taught their kids to trust nothing that they read, we endeavour to teach critically aware citizens for the future. So therefore we should not trust – and we’re back to square one in terms of confusion!

Because there is a risk of becoming too suspicious! Take this statement:

“Making such a change [Junior Cycle Reform] will be challenging and requires the empowerment of the teaching profession which, international evidence suggests, produces good results”.

Who said this? Me? The Chairperson of the Teaching Council? A head of one of the teachers’ unions? None of the above. It was Tony O’Donohoe from the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), their education spokesperson, writing in the *Irish Independent*

on 16 January 2014. I'm not suggesting that teachers should go out and hug a member of IBEC! But I am trying to make clear how misleading unchecked suspicion or bias might be. Because if you took suspicion too far, you really would begin to question the reality of your own existence! As the physicist Freeman Dyson has asserted:

'To summarize the situation, we have three mysteries that we do not understand: the unpredictable movements of atoms, the existence of our own consciousness, and the friendliness of the universe to life and mind. I am only saying that the three mysteries are probably connected. I do not claim to understand any of them'. (Chopra and Flesher, 2013)

If we can't even rely on our own perceptions, our own consciousness, on the basic structure of the Universe; if we cannot be sure of how suspicious we should or should not be, what do we do? How do we choose to trust? Courage!

COURAGE

We know instinctively that connections and relationships are essential to the nurturing and growth of trust, and are essential to more modern understandings of effective leadership. In speaking of connections, I am thinking of those within our world of comfort, and also beyond. As Charles Duhigg says the loose connections that extend beyond our visible horizon are as essential as the close, tight connections we form more locally, if we are to lead and change the world for the better (Duhigg, 2012). American politics, for example, are arguably poisoned by the lack of loose connections or relationships beyond the immediately tribal. This necessity to nurture loose connections requires courage – for it requires us to step outside our comfort zone and engage with those whom we normally would not. True, trust in those closest to you can encourage you to extend yourself beyond your comfort zone, to learn more. But equally, courage can be the only hope in situations where trust is all but lost – the courage to take the first step, the courage to bear the first blow, the courage to try again; the courage to hold fast to what you believe is right and true. Take this piece from *The Economist*, reporting last December on the PISA results, as an example of the importance of remaining steadfast in the face of challenging forces:

New education stars can emerge and old ones fade fast. But the broader lesson may be simple, if brutal. Successful countries focus fiercely on the quality of teaching and eschew zigzag changes of direction or philosophy. Teachers and families share a determination to help the young succeed. (The Economist, 2013a)

This need for well thought and researched policy, underpinned by consistent implementation and support, has been echoed by John Coolahan for some years now. And it is another reason why professional standards bodies are so important. We have through our professional bodies the chance to become the prevailing wind in the policy discourse, to help steady the ship when

the PISA tornado arrives on our shores; to foster courage to do the right thing, and thereby enhance the trust of the public.

But we still come back to the concept of choice. We can be open about our learning, about our reflective practice, about our self-doubt; we can be courageous in pursuit of doing the right thing. But how can we convince people to choose to trust us in those inevitable situations where someone we trust makes a mistake, or worse, and lets us down?

CHOICE

Jamie Cullum, the singer, said that people letting you down is a universal truth. So why aren't we living in anarchy? Fundamentally, our society is at peace because people choose to trust. For all of its latent and assumed nature, somewhere, even at the subconscious level, people make a choice to trust others. And that is why the role of a body such as the Teaching Council or Medical Council is so important. If people choose to trust, they can choose not to trust. And if there is not a robust system of quality assurance in place to maintain and nurture that trust, then one tragic incident can do irreparable damage to the standing of all members of the profession.

That is why, to answer at least one of my earlier questions, things cannot carry on the way they have, because since we are all human beings, someone, somewhere, will make a mistake. And the key to the future of our society's wellbeing rests on how we as professions deal with those mistakes.

Why? Because (a) our primary goal is to seek to improve, and constant pursuit of improvement is the very essence of our life-force; it is the narrative that unites us with our earliest ancestors and (b) because if we accept that human beings will always make mistakes, and therefore that we will never achieve a perfect state of existence, the real litmus test of our human nature can only be how each of us deals with the consequences of those mistakes.

At a human level, the implications of this for trust, leadership and the professions are potentially quite raw. At a human level, they essentially mean that we have to be ready to put the hands up when we have made a mistake. They mean that we must demonstrate a capacity to reflect on what went wrong, to identify what we might do differently in the future, and how we might make amends. People tend to be far more forgiving, and trusting, of situations where there is such a genuine and prompt reflection. They tend to be far more severe where they perceive a closed shop or a cover up.

Where this comes full circle with professional leadership is in the notion of our collective professional ethical identity. To admit that you got it wrong can be difficult at a human level, and potentially risky in a legal context. The only way we will get there is by leading each other,

and the public, on that reflective journey. We will all, professional communities and the public, have to enhance our understanding of this new way of thinking if we are to make it a reality. We will all have to be prepared to put the hands up when we know we have got it wrong.

So to recap – trust is complex; essential concepts to support it are learning, doubt and courage – they’re the “what” of trust. The “how” of trust is about connections and choice – people can choose to trust, or not. They are very keen to connect and know more about what we do. And how we respond to that interest will in large part determine whether or not trust is maintained. But as professionals, how do we make sense of, and manage, all these expectations of the public? We do what we have always done - we exercise professional judgement in those most challenging moments of uncertainty to maintain a precious balance.

Trust flows and rests on a delicate balance. If trust is essential, but will always be challenged by human nature, cynics may well argue that to trust at all is naive at best, and at worst downright stupid. The more optimistic of us will acknowledge that what this actually means is that ensuring trust is a matter of carefully nurturing a delicate, inexact and sometimes precarious balance.

This nurturing of a delicate and inexact balance highlights the essence of what it means to be a professional. As professionals, we all make judgements in the heat of a given moment, where there can be much uncertainty; and that judgement is not guesswork, but is informed by a deep knowledge base and supported by a high level of skill. So as we understand what it means to make an informed judgement in an uncertain moment, so we understand how to nurture and support something as important and precious as the balance of trust.

Because trust depends on the most delicate of balances, it is best maintained by a lot of small, gentle gestures, rather than one big grandiose announcement. Imagine the difference between me going on Six One and loudly proclaiming, ‘The people of Ireland can trust teachers’ on the one hand; and teachers in every school in the country organising a celebration of students’ work just after Easter, inviting parents in and chatting to them over a cup of tea?

Which of these two gestures is more likely to nurture trust in teaching amongst the broad populace of parents? When you remember how many people have an interest in what our professions do, it seems obvious that there is no exact formula that tells us what this balance should be at any given point in time for a given group of people.

This is not a bleak realisation, but an empowering one. This means that in any given moment that call on trust should, and can, be made by professionals and the public, together. For this to be done in a way that we believe to be best, it requires a new kind of leadership by professionals along the lines of what we talked about at last year’s symposium. In summary, I spoke about how professionals needed to re-engage at a human level with themselves as people as well as professionals; to reflect on why they entered their chosen professions; to reflect

deeply on what they were doing. As I said earlier, such an approach to our work tends to resonate very strongly and very positively with people.

We should not be afraid of the contingent nature of this balance of trust. Human nature being what it is, the earth being what it is, a rapidly expanding universe being what it is, to attempt to fix on a definitive answer to this web of relationships seems all but impossible. But it is the pursuit of this balance that matters, not the exact definition of the balance itself. [Note the title of the programme which the teachers are studying – *Tóraíocht* – the Irish for pursuit!] For in pursuit, in movement, we come closest to the rhythms of the universe. What this means for the practical development of our respective professions, in layman's terms, is that we can never be satisfied with the status quo. We know instinctively that we can always do it better. Not better than those who went before us, nor those who have yet to come. We can do it better, together. And in that constant pursuit of improvement, to better ourselves, we can give the public ongoing reasons to trust us.

CONCLUSION

So where are we now? Am I concluding by saying that trust is really important, but that we can't be definitive about it, but not to worry, in some inspirational ethereal sense; it is the pursuit of trust that matters? Well, you might say, that may be well and good, but it won't transact very well in the daily reality of accountability, of people demanding answers to what went wrong. Individual members of our professions have betrayed trust in the past, and human nature being what it is, they will do so again. What do we do?

The best, indeed the only real, reassurance that we can offer the public is the reassurance of our collective professional ethical identity. And that collective identity is fully bound up with all that I have said about trust. Yes, trust is bedrock to that identity – we must trust each other as professionals to work together. And the public must trust us so that we can have the autonomy we need to do our job as best we can. That trust is fragile, it can be put at risk by the mistakes of a few. The reason we should hope, however, and have confidence in the public's trust is that as professionals we learn, we ourselves doubt, we ourselves give each other courage to trust; we constantly strive to do things better, we thereby give ourselves further confidence. A key point to capture is that we can make more of this by reshaping the language we use when we talk to the public that we serve, so that they can understand better how much we learn and how much we question ourselves.

Where is the hope in all of this? Ultimately it all comes down to the individual's faith in humanity. If we believe that the vast majority of people set out not only to do no harm, but to empower others to do good, then we should all view breaches of that trust for what they are - aberrations, anomalies. So our faith in trust is fundamentally about our hope in human nature, in full knowledge of the frailties of that same nature. Such hope is not out of touch

with our daily reality – it is rooted in that reality, but seeks to continue our journey of learning and improvement that we have done in fits and starts over the ages.

When all is said and done, this is easier said – than done! There are times when I doubt, when I am afraid, when I wonder if I am on the right track. But when I tip that delicate balance back and forth, when I reflect on my own doubt and my own learning, and seek courage to pursue what I feel to be right, I stand back, take a good look, and find solace in this verse from Seamus Heaney:

It was a fortunate wind
That blew me here. I leave
Half ready to believe
That a crippled trust might walk
And the half true rhyme is love.
(Heaney, 1991)

For me, both personally and professionally, it was a fortunate wind that blew me to this post in the Teaching Council, and to this lecture today. I look forward to walking with you in this professional journey of mutual learning and enhanced trust.

REFERENCES

Chopra, D. and Flesher, J. (2013) *The Mystery of God and the Brain*.

<http://www.sfgate.com/default/article/-5027132.php>

Duhigg, C. (2012) *The Power of Habit: Why we do what we do and how to change* William Heinemann: London

The Economist, (2013) Letters page, Edition of 19 October 2013

The Economist (2013a), Finn-ished, 26 December 2013

Gaffney, M. (2013) Our dystopian view of Ireland: we think of ourselves as rational, but we're susceptible to error and bias, *Irish Times*, 30 November 2013; Weekend Supplement, 2

Heaney, S. (2014) @HeaneyDaily 02.2.14

Understanding the Role of the Professional in Leading Change

Kieran C. Murphy

INTRODUCTION

In *A Question of Trust* Onora O' Neill states: "Like many of us, I live and work among professionals and public servants. And those whom I know seek to serve the public conscientiously – and mostly to pretty good effect....Yet during the last fifteen years we have all found our reputations and performance doubted as have millions of other public sector workers and professionals. We increasingly hear that we are no longer trusted" (BBC Reith Lectures 2002).

Trust is the cornerstone of any relationship as, without trust, all relationships will founder. Onora O'Neill argues that it isn't only rulers and governments who prize and need trust. Each of us and every profession and every institution need trust. We need it because we have to be able to rely on others acting as they say that they will, and because we need others to accept that we will act as we say we will. The sociologist Niklas Luhmann was right that "A complete absence of trust would prevent (one) even getting up in the morning".



Figure 1.

For the effective provision of high quality (health) care, there must be adequate levels of trust between all stakeholders within the system (Figure 1). The 7th Edition of the Medical Council’s Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners (see below) states that “The patient-doctor relationship is a privileged one that depends on the patient’s trust in the doctor’s professionalism (<http://www.medicalcouncil.ie/News-and-Publications/Publications/Professional-Conduct-Ethics/>). The role of the Medical Council is to safeguard the public by ensuring that the quality of the doctor’s competence, behaviours and relationships that underlie this professionalism is maintained in the patient-doctor relationship”

But is Onora O’Neill correct when she says that the professionals we have to rely on – politicians, doctors, scientists, businessmen and many others – are treated with suspicion? The Medical Council commissioned a survey which found that 92% of people Irish people trust doctors to tell the truth, and 94% are very or fairly confident that their doctor can effectively communicate to them about all aspects of their personal health. This includes explaining the diagnosis and treatment in a way they can understand and providing adequate information to enable them to make a decision about their care.

WHAT IS PROFESSIONALISM?

Wikipedia defines professionalism as:

- Expert and specialised knowledge in field which one is practicing professionally

- Excellent manual/practical and literary skills in relation to profession
- A high standard of professional ethics, behaviour (including communication) and work activities while carrying out one's profession (as an employee, self-employed person, enterprise, business, company or partnership/associate/colleague etc.). The professional owes a higher duty to a client (patient/student), often a privilege of confidentiality, as well as a duty not to abandon the client just because he or she may not be able to pay or remunerate the professional. Often, the professional is required to put the interest of the client ahead of his own interests.
- Reasonable work morale and motivation. Having interest and desire to do a job well coupled with holding a positive attitude towards the profession are important elements in attaining a high level of professionalism.
- Appropriate treatment of relationships with colleagues. Consideration should be shown to elderly, junior or inexperienced colleagues, as well as those with special needs.

HOW CAN THE PROFESSIONAL ACT AS A LEADER FOR CHANGE?

On reviewing the three project areas considered within the Leadership programme that has given focus to this Conference, Leading People, Leading the Organisation and Leading Learning, I identified four themes that ran through each area: Knowledge, Collaboration, Communication and Focus on the consumer. Below, I include individual student comments from each of these project areas that relate to these themes.

Leading People

- Knowledge
 - “Universal protocols need to be established”
 - “Analysing data and using evidence-based analysis”
- Collaboration
 - “Working collaboratively is a worthwhile endeavour and should be embraced”
 - “Positive relationships and a climate of trust are fundamental ingredients in the change process”
- Communication
 - “Communicate, communicate, communicate”
 - “Listen”
- Focus on the consumer
 - “Patient safety should always be the main focus”
 - “Engaging with students is a worthwhile endeavour and should be embraced”
 - “The project gave me the opportunity to consult the pupils in a real way for their opinions re the social climate in our school”

Leading the Organisation

- Knowledge
 - “Build skills and confidence in those around you”

- “In order for students to have a higher chance of successful engagement, amendments and additions need to be made to the Sixth Year curriculum
- Collaboration
 - “Behaving in an ethical manner, developing mutual trust and respect with co-workers”
 - “Being transparent and engaging all stakeholders”
 - “Build a positive relationship with your staff”
- Communication
 - “Greater communication with the wider community”
 - “Communication is key in leading change”
 - Focus on the consumer
 - “Improved care and service to consumers”

Leading Learning

- Knowledge
 - “Strategic planning based on a sound theoretical knowledge base”
 - “Lifelong adult learning applies to us all”
 - “Teachers need to be empowered and enabled with the skill set...”
- Collaboration
 - “Getting along with people is key to success in leadership”
 - “Inclusion of all stakeholders”
 - “Leading change needs to be a collaborative process”
- Communication
 - “Communication, communication, communication”
 - “Use of communication of goals to all stakeholders to drive change”
 - “Communication at all levels and all stages of the change”
- Focus on the consumer
 - “Mental Health Act training is essential for quality patient-centred care”

HOW DOES THE REGULATOR ACT AS A LEADER FOR CHANGE?

The Regulator acts as a Leader for change by setting the standards for professionalism. The Medical Council acts as the professional regulatory body for the medical profession in Ireland. Its primary role is the protection of the public by promoting and ensuring the highest professional standards among doctors. The Medical Practitioners Act 2007 confers on the Medical Council a range of statutory functions:

- Setting standards for primary medical qualification
- Setting standards for post-graduate training

- Establishing and maintaining the Register of all medical practitioners licensed to practice in Ireland
- Sets standards for the maintenance of professional competence
- Establishes committees to inquire into complaints
- Sets standards for professional conduct and ethics
- Supports doctors with relevant medical disabilities
- Advises the public on all matters of general interest relating to the functions of the Council

STATEMENT OF STRATEGY

In its most recent Statement of Strategy (<http://www.medicalcouncil.ie/News-and-Publications/Publications/Strategy-/>), the Medical Council set out the strategic direction that the Council wishes to take to ensure the continuing protection of the public (Figure 2).



Figure 2.

EIGHT DOMAINS OF GOOD PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Placing patient safety and quality of patient care at the heart of decision-making, the Medical Council has established its eight domains of good professional practice which provide a benchmark for the accreditation of all undergraduate and postgraduate training programmes (Figure 3).

Patient Safety and Quality of Patient Care

Patient safety and quality of patient care should be at the core of the health service delivery that a doctor provides. A doctor needs to be accountable to their professional body, to the

organisation in which they work, to the Medical Council and to their patients thereby ensuring the patients whom they serve receive the best possible care.

Relating to Patients

Good medical practice is based on a relationship of trust between doctors and society and involves a partnership between patient and doctor that is based on mutual respect, confidentiality, honesty, responsibility and accountability.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Medical practitioners must demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills. This enables the exchange of information, and allows for effective collaboration with patients, their families and also with clinical and non-clinical colleagues and the broader public.

Collaboration and Teamwork

Medical practitioners must co-operate with colleagues and work effectively with healthcare professionals from other disciplines and teams. He/she should ensure that there are clear lines of communication and systems of accountability in place among team members to protect patients.

Management (including Self Management)

A medical practitioner must understand how working in the health care system to deliver patient care affects other healthcare professionals, the healthcare system, and wider society as a whole.

Scholarship

Medical practitioners must systematically acquire, understand and demonstrate the substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of the field of learning in their specialty, as part of a continuum of lifelong learning. They must also search for the best information and evidence to guide their professional practice.

Professionalism

Medical practitioners must demonstrate a commitment to fulfilling professional responsibilities by adhering to the standards specified in the Medical Council's "Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners".

Clinical Skills

The maintenance of Professional Competence in the clinical skills domain is clearly specialty-specific and standards should be set by the relevant Post-Graduate Training Body according to international benchmarks.



Figure 3

MAINTENANCE OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

The provisions of Part 11 of the Medical Practitioners Act now place a legal requirement on doctors to maintain their professional competence throughout their professional lives. This development marks an important step forward for doctors as they are now required to enrol in professional competence schemes accredited by the Medical Council and operated by postgraduate training bodies. The positive attitude of the profession to this new legal requirement is very much appreciated by the public and I think reflects very well on the profession that they have embraced this concept so readily.

CONCLUSION

The regulatory landscape both in Ireland and worldwide has changed much over the course of the Medical Council's term of office which recently concluded in May 2013. Best

practice internationally is increasingly moving to the concept of ‘right touch regulation’, a term coined by the head of the UK’s Professional Standards Authority. Right touch regulation advocates an approach which is proportionate, consistent, targeted, transparent and accountable. It creates a framework in which professionalism can flourish and organisations can be excellent. Excellence is the consistent performance of good practice combined with continuous improvement. However, the individual retains a pivotal and essential role in leading change as a professional. As Professor Sir Donald Irvine, former President of the General Medical Council (UK) observed: “Regulation, in whatever form, can never substitute for a doctor’s personal professionalism”.

APPENDIX 1



Comhairle na nDoctúirí Leighis
Medical Council

Understanding the Role of the Professional in Leading Change

Kieran C Murphy
Medical Council

Leadership Symposium
March 2nd 2013



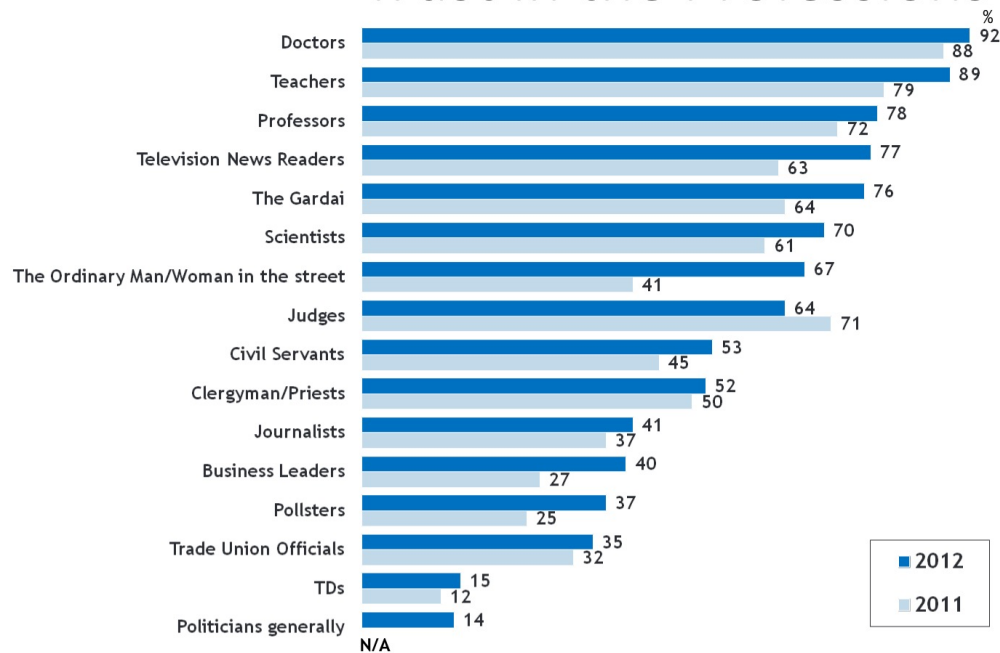
Comhairle na nDoctúirí Leighis
Medical Council

The Importance of Trust





Trust in the Professions



What is professionalism*?

- Expert and specialized knowledge in field which one is practicing professionally.
- Excellent manual/practical and literary skills in relation to profession.
- A high standard of professional ethics, behaviour (incl communication) and work activities while carrying out one's profession (as an employee, self-employed person, career, enterprise, business, company, or partnership/associate/colleague, etc.). The professional owes a higher duty to a client, often a privilege of confidentiality, as well as a duty not to abandon the client just because he or she may not be able to pay or remunerate the professional. Often the professional is required to put the interest of the client ahead of his own interests.
- Reasonable work morale and motivation. Having interest and desire to do a job well as holding positive attitude towards the profession are important elements in attaining a high level of professionalism.
- Appropriate treatment of relationships with colleagues. Consideration should be shown to elderly, junior or inexperienced colleagues, as well as those with special needs. An example must be set to perpetuate the attitude of one's business without doing it harm.

*Wikipedia March 2013



What is professionalism*?

- **Expert and specialized knowledge in field which one is practicing professionally.**
- **Excellent manual/practical and literary skills in relation to profession.**
- A high standard of professional ethics, behaviour (**incl communication**) and work activities while carrying out one's profession (as an employee, self-employed person, career, enterprise, business, company, or partnership/associate/colleague, etc.). The professional owes a higher duty to a client, often a privilege of confidentiality, as well as a duty not to abandon the client just because he or she may not be able to pay or remunerate the professional. Often **the professional is required to put the interest of the client ahead of his own interests.**
- Reasonable work morale and motivation. Having interest and desire to do a job well as holding positive attitude towards the profession are important elements in attaining a high level of professionalism.
- **Appropriate treatment of relationships with colleagues.** Consideration should be shown to elderly, junior or inexperienced colleagues, as well as those with special needs. An example must be set to perpetuate the attitude of one's business without doing it harm.

*Wikipedia March 2013



How can the Professional act as a Leader for change?

- Knowledge
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Focus on the consumer



Leading People

- **Knowledge**
 - “Universal protocols need to be established”
 - “Analysing data and using evidence-based analysis”
- **Collaboration**
 - “Working collaboratively is a worthwhile endeavour and should be embraced”
 - “Positive relationships and a climate of trust are fundamental ingredients in the change process”
- **Communication**
 - “Communicate, communicate, communicate”
 - “Listen”
- **Focus on the consumer**
 - “Patient safety should always be the main focus”
 - “Engaging with students is a worthwhile endeavour and should be embraced”
 - “The project gave me the opportunity to consult the pupils in a real way for their opinions re the social climate in our school”



Leading the Organisation

- **Knowledge**
 - “Build skills and confidence in those around you”
 - “In order for students to have a higher chance of successful engagement, amendments and additions need to be made to the Sixth Year curriculum”
- **Collaboration**
 - “Behaving in an ethical manner, developing mutual trust and respect with co-workers”
 - “Being transparent and engaging all stakeholders”
 - “Build a positive relationship with your staff”
- **Communication**
 - “Greater communication with the wider community”
 - “Communication is key in leading change”
- **Focus on the consumer**
 - “Improved care and service to consumers”



Leading Learning

- **Knowledge**
 - “Strategic planning based on a sound theoretical knowledge base”
 - “Lifelong adult learning applies to us all”
 - “Teachers need to be empowered and enabled with the skill set...”
- **Collaboration**
 - “Getting along with people is key to success in leadership”
 - “Inclusion of all stakeholders”
 - “Leading change needs to be a collaborative process”
- **Communication**
 - “Communication, communication, communication”
 - “Use of communication of goals to all stakeholders to drive change”
 - “Communication at all levels and all stages of the change”
- **Focus on the consumer**
 - “Mental Health Act training is essential for quality patient-centred care”



Functions of the Medical Council*

Primary role is the protection of the public

- Sets standards for primary medical qualification
- Sets standards for post-graduate training
- Establishes and maintains Register
- Sets standards for maintenance of professional competence
- Establishes committees to inquire into complaints
- Sets standards for professional conduct and ethics
- Supports doctors with relevant medical disabilities
- Advises the public on all matters of general interest relating to functions of the Council

*Medical Practitioners Act 2007



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

How does the Regulator act as a Leader for Change?



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

How does the Regulator act as a Leader for Change?

Sets standards for professionalism

STATEMENT OF STRATEGY 2010 - 2013



Vision	Patient safety and public confidence is ensured through excellent doctors upholding the highest standards
Mission	Protecting the public by promoting and ensuring the highest professional standards amongst doctors
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our primary focus is to ensure our activities are in the best interests of the public and are patient focused at all times. We are a progressive organisation and are continually looking to improve the way in which we work. We are open and transparent in our processes and actions. We constantly aim to deliver effective services as efficiently as possible. We treat everyone with respect and dignity. We discharge our duties in a fair and equitable manner.
Strategic objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Set and monitor standards for medical education, training, conduct and ethics Facilitate doctors in attaining and maintaining their registration Set and monitor standards for maintenance of professional competence Take appropriate action to protect the public where standards are not met by individual practitioners Engage proactively with the public, the profession and other stakeholders Enable effectiveness through appropriate internal systems and processes

Medical Council Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice

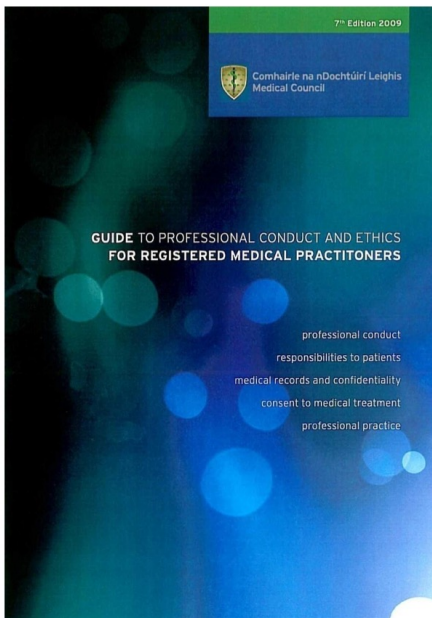




Professional Competence



- **Statutory duty for doctors to maintain professional competence since May 2011**
- **Lifelong learning and skills development**
- **Continuous professional development and clinical audit activities.**



The patient-doctor relationship is a privileged one that depends on the patients trust in the doctor's professionalism

Doctors must always be guided by their primary responsibility to act in the best interests of their patients, without being influenced by any personal consideration



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

Right touch regulation

‘Right touch regulation is based on a proper evaluation of risk, is proportionate and outcome focussed; it creates a framework in which professionalism can flourish and organisations can be excellent. Excellence is the consistent performance of good practice combined with continuous improvement.’

Harry Cayton
Professional Standards Authority (UK)



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

“Regulation, in whatever form, can never substitute for a doctor’s personal professionalism”

Donald Irvine, former President GMC (UK)

School improvements in order to support a positive learning environment for Senior Cycle students

Andrea Kelly

INTRODUCTION

Since beginning my teaching career in my current school, 13 years ago, I became very aware of the personal, financial, social and educational disadvantage of the students. Some often experience behavioural and emotional challenges. To a large extent our school deals very effectively with these issues, especially for students in the Junior Cycle. A significant number of programmes are implemented, including drama therapy, after-school homework clubs, extra-curricular activities and Mentoring Projects. These help improve the educational opportunities and the educational, personal and developmental experiences of our Junior Students and have a positive influence on student retention and attainment.

Engaging in reflective practice and action research encouraged me to delve deeper into the educational disadvantage and the potential of my students, particularly those at Senior Cycle. This helped me to understand their concerns. I was also in a position to work with colleagues in order to create a model with which we could, as a staff introduce and help to alleviate our students' considerable disadvantage. I wanted to encourage the school community to embark upon a cycle of continual improvement in order to enhance students' experiences at Senior Cycle.

BACKGROUND

I am a teacher of Home Economics and Irish in a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School for girls in North Dublin. The school is located in an area of designated disadvantage and therefore we are involved in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) scheme. Working together, our school community aims to provide an environment which allows our students to develop intellectually, physically, morally, socially and spiritually so as they will be able to fulfil their role in society (School Admissions Policy).

I have gained so much experience from the opportunities I have been presented with to show initiative within my school. The trust placed in me by school leaders has benefited my professional development immensely. I held a temporary Special Duties post as Year Head for six years. I had responsibility for and co-ordinated a number of programmes e.g. Transition Year (T.Y) and was a teacher nominee on the Board of Management until October 2010. Transition year is an optional one year programme between Junior and Senior Cycle allowing students develop educationally, emotional and personally, thus encouraging them to become self-directed learners and providing them an opportunity to learn new skills and subjects and complete work experience. I realise the crucial leadership and management roles that I have undertaken on behalf of the school community, and am committed to my role within the school.

MY ROLE AS AN ACTION RESEARCHER

To begin my research in school I used the questions, compiled by McNiff (2002), regarding my concerns and what I could do about them. It has always concerned me why a significant number of students in Senior Cycle, particularly in fifth year, become disenchanted with school and therefore attendance, punctuality and educational attainment suffer as a result. Some students find it very difficult to settle into Senior Cycle, becoming overwhelmed with the level of expectation on them and regress both personally and educationally. A cycle of becoming increasingly disillusioned with school develops and manifests itself through inattention to homework and study, poor punctuality and eventually absenteeism. For some, there are the problems with making new friends, becoming familiar with new teachers/ different teaching methodologies and new subjects. Many of our students seemed unable to self-direct their learning and take responsibility for their actions. They are unaccustomed to the increased workload of Senior Cycle and the consequent demands on their time.

Our school community needed to address these issues in order to improve the classroom and school environments. As our Mission Statement states the school always seeks to make the educational experience a positive and supportive one so that our students can experience success and pursue their educational goals during Senior Cycle and into the future. I felt that we needed to put strategies/initiatives in place in order to do this.

Learners meet many challenges as they make transitions and schools...have an important role to play in supporting them in their learning...Appropriate guidance and support is necessary to enable learners to make wise and informed personal, educational and career choices. (NCCA, 2009)

I decided to bring together a focus group, including the Deputy Principal, team leaders and programme co-ordinators in the school. I also enlisted the help of a critical friend. I was guided by McNiff when choosing this colleague, recognising that:

Your critical friend...is someone whose opinion you value and who is able to critique your work and help you see it in a new light. (McNiff, 2002)

I wanted to address why or how these current issues had come about and what the school community could do to improve the school environment in order to support and cater for students' needs. This needed to be a developmental process where the focus group would look at the situation as it is, decide on possible solutions, and devise a plan on how we could improve on it.

As in all Action Research, we began by collecting data to assess the current situation. This involved organising group and individual interviews with third, fifth, sixth year students and teachers, and distributing questionnaires to students (APPENDIX 1), staff and parents. The focus group reviewed T.Y. application forms, examination results and importantly class attendance and punctuality records. I surveyed a random sample group of 21 fifth year students (APPENDIX 2) and reported my findings to the focus group. 72% of students had concerns about Senior Cycle e.g. stress about examinations, settling in, subject choices, not being able to cope. 33% were experiencing lower grades than in Junior Cycle. 33% stated that the Guidance Counsellor and 29% stated that their Year Head helped them to settle into Senior Cycle. Guidance counsellors advise students so that they can make informed choices about their future in relation to employment, education and training. It was worrying that 29% stated that they still had not settled in. 52% stated their Mother helped and 43% stated their friends helped in their choice of specialist subjects. A large number, 43%, stated they did not have enough information to help decide on specialist subjects. What concerned us here were the low numbers (19%) stating that the Guidance Counsellor facilitated study skills workshops and Options Information Night (10%) helped them in their decisions, as these are the primary strategies used in the school for helping students decide on their programmes and subjects for Senior Cycle. Option subjects or programmes are those that the student chooses to specialise in during their Senior Cycle which culminates in an examination in that area. The Options Information Night is held to inform students and their parents about these specialist areas and how to go about choosing subjects/programmes that best suit them.

ACTION RESEARCH - CYCLE 1

The focus group decided that a positive approach to Senior Cycle by the whole school community should help students in pursuing their educational goals into the future, irrespective of whether they were high achievers or not. I collected data in relation to the thoughts of current third year students (APPENDIX 1). Third Year is the final year of the Junior Cycle where students face important decisions regarding Senior Cycle programmes and

subjects which impact on their futures. Firstly, we planned and implemented a Senior Cycle Programme Information Session for third years, and decided that this session would be presented by Senior Cycle students, guided by the focus group, to help engage students. The senior students briefly explained the programmes available for Senior Cycle in the school. I reflected on this strategy and discussed my thoughts with the focus group. We decided that this session could be supplemented by a talk from the various programme co-ordinators and that the allocation of more time should, in the future, allow students to ask more questions.

ACTION RESEARCH - CYCLE 2

The focus group then planned and initiated our second strategy, a Senior Cycle Subject Information Session for third years. This proved very successful as the students were happy with the information they received. We allocated more time to this session as suggested after strategy one. A teacher, from each of the specialist subjects for Senior Cycle, along with a group of senior students, outlined their subjects to third year students and answered any questions which arose. The focus group discussed how we could further develop these strategies the following year by including them in a Subject and Careers Fair, inviting the parents of third years/T.Y. to attend. Finally I reflected on the challenges encountered e.g. establishing regular meeting times for the focus group causing difficulties with time management and minor conflict issues among the focus group which we overcame through open and clear communication.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

I learned that staff felt valued when involved in all stages of a project, which was what I always aspired to. Conflict resolution and communication skills were developed by staff members and an atmosphere of collaboration and teamwork was established within the school community.

I learned to organise my time, thus helping me to value the importance of time management and organisation skills in relation to school leadership. As our third year students felt that their parents' advice was important regarding their choices for Senior Cycle, I believed it would be critical to include the parents into this project in future.

I feel that my work in action research had significant effects on students, staff and on the school environment. My colleagues were informed about action research and its benefits to the school community. The effect of my work on students was evident in the positive feedback I received from them during taped conversations. As a result of my direction, the third years in the school were better informed regarding their options for Senior Cycle. Students were happier in their decisions compared to how the fifth years felt as expressed in their responses

to the initial questionnaire. Students learned that their teachers were supportive of their choices and were willing to give them advice. The students felt that their opinions and concerns were listened to.

Previously, there was a maximum intake of 18-25 students in T.Y. As a result of our work, this number increased significantly. 48% of third years decided upon T.Y., allowing them an extra year to settle into Senior Cycle. Engaging in the T.Y. year opened up a wide variety of Senior Cycle sample subjects and career programmes including work experience, thus broadening their options for the future. This was greeted positively by the school community. In the experience of our school staff, the positive impact of T.Y. is reflected in students' performance and involvement throughout Senior Cycle.

TY.. helped students to mature and develop, they noted that some benefited more than others... students reported that the programme was giving them a growing sense of independence and maturity...Work experience was valued as good preparation for life... Transition year is very successful in many schools, particularly where it is optional, well planned, includes 'interesting' and 'different' activities and involves a range of approaches and learning opportunities. (NCCA/ESRI 2007)

In June 2010, preparations for Senior Cycle induction began. Students received an induction booklet. This booklet included important details e.g. classroom number, timetable, tutor, Year Head and details of other programme leaders within the school, advice on how to handle the transitional period into Senior Cycle, study tips, healthy lifestyle tips and career/college advice. The Guidance Counsellor visited classes to explain her role and reassure students that they would be supported.

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN MY SCHOOL

A number of changes occurred in the school environment as a result of my work in action research. As Year Head to third year students in 2010/2011, I had opportunities to work closely with students, teachers, and my focus group to advance the support of students in a positive school environment. I organised study skills workshops in the first week back to school, the importance of which were reinforced by the tutors and myself throughout the year. Students were encouraged to engage in after-school and Saturday study. This was extremely successful as students achieved very well throughout the year. Weekly assemblies encouraged good study habits, gave advice on planning student time as well as advice on a healthy lifestyle. The focus group combined the Senior Cycle Programme Information Session and the Senior Cycle Subject as a one day event, allowing more time to both than the previous year.

In order to enhance collaboration between parents and teachers, I encouraged all parents to attend *Options Information Night*. I believe that there is much work to do to increase the informed involvement of parents in their daughters' decisions. This is crucial to the success of the project, aiding students' success thus placing them in control of their futures, under guidance

from the school community and their parents. I have succeeded to some extent, however, I would like to explore this in the future with the help of staff. My colleagues and I see the immense positive effect that action research can have on the school community. Positive changes have evolved as a result. I now understand the true meaning of action research and its transformational influence on educational practice. The challenge for us now is to continue this work so that it caters to the ongoing needs of our students. It is my hope that the benefits of my work will be reflected in my practice as a teacher, as leader and in the future success of my students. I have influenced positively the practice of colleagues as can be seen in their changed attitudes and more focused and holistic planning.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

I developed deeper understandings of my own practice and of the lives of my students. I have become an agent of change and improvement for the benefit of students and the school community. I now think of myself as a leader and a role model for others. I think of teachers as leaders in their own classrooms. I have a deeper understanding and appreciation for the work schools leaders carry out and the impact they have on so many.

I endeavour to develop my personal and professional goals and to continue working collaboratively with colleagues in action research in my future as an educator. Undoubtedly I see myself in a leadership role in the future. I have so many thoughts and ideas regarding change for school improvement which I aspire to implement, either within my current position or as a school leader into the future.

REFERENCES

- Department of Education (2005) *DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools): An Action Plan for Educational Inclusion*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science.
- McNiff, J. (2002) *Action Research for Professional Development – Concise Advice for New Action Researcher*. www.jeanmcniff.com
- McNiff, J and Whitehead, J. (2006) *All You Need to Know About Action Research* Sage Publications.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Dublin (2010) *Innovation and Identity. Ideas for a new Junior Cycle*. Dublin : Author.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Dublin *Senior Cycle towards learning: listening to schools Consultation- Issue 1*. Dublin: Author.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2009) *Leading and Supporting Change in Schools: A Discussion Paper*. Dublin: Author.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2008) *Curriculum framework for Guidance (post-primary): Report on consultation with schools*. Dublin: Author.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2007) *ESRI research into the experiences of students in the third year of junior cycle and in transition to senior cycle Summary and Commentary*. Dublin: Author.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2007) *A Curriculum framework for Guidance in Post-Primary Schools- Discussion Paper*. Dublin: Author.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2002) *Developing Senior Cycle Education Consultative Paper on Issues and Options-Executive Summary*. Dublin: Author.

SCHOOL DOCUMENTATION

- School Admissions Policy (Reviewed October 2008)
- Assessment Records and Reports.
- Attendance Records.
- TY Application forms

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire 2 carried out with a group of 8 third year students of varying levels, classes and abilities.

STUDENT SURVEY

Please answer the following questions.

1. How do you feel about beginning Senior Cycle (TY/5th Year)?

- Excited Worried
- Nervous Not concerned at all
- Looking forward to it Can't wait!
- Happy Interested
- Bored Afraid
-
- Other: _____
-

2. What are your worries/concerns? Please rate the following from 1-17 where 1 worries you the most and 17 least worries you)

- Increased workload Making new friends
- Careers Settling into 5th Year
- New teachers Homework
- Socialising Money
- Bullying Stress
- New subjects What other students will think of you
- What your parents will think Transition Year
- Junior Certificate Performance & results Teachers opinions
- Not knowing which course to do next year

Other _____

3. What are your test/homework results like this year?

- Excellent (A's and B's) Mostly good (Some B's mostly C's)

Mostly very good (B's) O.K (Some C's mostly D's)

Not so good (D's or less)

Always disappointing (mostly less than a D)

4. Who/what in your opinion will help you decide on what options/subjects to do next year?

- Friends Mother
- Best Friend Father
- Tutor Year Head
- Subject Teachers 6th Year Students
- Guidance Counsellor Brothers/Sisters
- Books Study Skills
- Options night in 3rd Year
-
- Other: _____
-

5. How do you hope to pick your subjects for 5th year?

-
- _____
- _____
- _____
-

6. When should 3rd year students choose their subjects for Senior Cycle, in your opinion?

Before Mock Exams At Easter

After Mock Exams In May before the Junior Certificate

7. Are there any improvements the school could make to help 3rd Years in choosing their course/subjects for Senior Cycle? What could be done to help our students e.g. holding meetings with 3rd, 5th and 6th years, get 3rd years thinking about 5th year earlier, regular study skills workshops, bonding trips, privileges for Senior students, a week -long induction

programme at the end of 3rd year/beginning of 5th year etc. ? Do you have any suggestion?

•

APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire 1 given to a sample group of 21 fifth year students

STUDENT SURVEY

Please answer the following questions.

1. How did you feel when you began 5th Year?

- Excited Worried
- Nervous Not concerned at all
- Anxious Looked forward to it
- Happy Interested
- Bored Afraid
- Other: _____

2. Did you have any worries/concerns?

- Yes
- No

If Yes, what were they?

3. What were your test/homework results like last year?

- Excellent (A's and B's) Mostly good (Some B's mostly C's)
- Mostly very good (B's) O.K (Some C's mostly D's)
- Not so good (D's or less) Always disappointing (mostly less than a D)

4. What are your test/homework results like now in 5th year?

- Excellent (A's and B's) Mostly good (Some B's mostly C's)
- Mostly very good (B's) O.K (Some C's mostly D's)
- Not so good (D's or less)

Always disappointing (mostly less than a D)

5. On a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is least worried you and 10 most worried you) how would you rate the following concerns?

-
- Increased workload Making new friends
- Careers Settling into 5th Year
- New teachers Homework
- Socialising Money
- Bullying Stress
- New subjects What other students thought of you
- Parents Teachers opinions

Other: _____

6. Who/what helped you most settle into Senior Cycle?

• **Rate each one on a scale of 1-10, 1 most helped you, 10 least helped you.**

- Friends Parents/Family members
- Tutor Year Head
- Subject Teachers 6th Year Students
- Guidance Counsellor Brothers/Sisters
- Books Nothing- I still haven't settled in
- Other: _____
-

7. How did you decide on your subjects for 5th year?

• _____

• **Did any of the following influence your subject choice?**

-
- Mother Best Friend
- Father Other friends
- Teachers Tutor
- Year Head Guidance Counsellor

- Options night in 3rd Year Study Skills

8. When should 3rd year students choose their subjects for Senior Cycle, in your opinion?

- _____

9. Do you feel you had enough information to help you decide your subject choice?

- Yes
- No
- If No state why

10. Are there any improvements the school could make to ease the settling in period in 5th year? Do you have any suggestion? What could be done to help our students e.g. holding meetings with 3rd, 5th and 6th years, get 3rd years thinking about 5th year earlier, regular study skills workshops, bonding trips, privileges for Senior students, a week -long induction programme at the beginning of 5th year etc. ?

Leading a One Book School

Noreen Reilly

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the impact of leading a One Book, One School, One Community Cross Curricular Literacy Initiative on literacy levels among a focus group of educationally disadvantaged post-primary students. It seeks to ascertain if literacy levels of students can be increased over the course of the school year, through cross curricular collaboration of all first year teachers. The study uses a networked approach between home, school and targeted groups in the local community, namely the County Library Service and a Local Nursing Home. It involves asking all first year students, their teachers, parents and guardians to read the same book and to engage in activities based on themes in the book. It encourages as many people as possible associated with the targeted group to read the chosen book. During the research, students visit a local nursing home and over the course of a week read the book to interested residents. This article outlines the research methods employed and charts the results. It also outlines the personal and professional opportunities' offered by undertaking the research and concludes with the lessons learned by the researcher.

BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH

The study originates from an amalgamation of a personal interest in literacy development and from the professional capacity of the researcher working in the area of educational disadvantage throughout a twenty four year period. The researcher has witnessed at first hand the impact of low literacy levels on the lives of parents and students. The study is also based on the premise that all young people are capable of improving their own literacy levels if they are motivated, supported and mentored to do so.

The ability to read is one of the great gifts or accomplishments for a child as reading becomes the keystone for their future learning and academic achievement. The Irish nation was stirred in December 2010, when the outcomes of the Programme for International Student Awareness (PISA) 2009 research revealed that Irish school children had dropped to average on the overall reading scale of 65 countries around the world (OECD, 2010 and Perkins, R., Moran., and Sheil, J., 2010).

Results for Ireland of the PISA 2009 (OECD) included the following:

“The study places Ireland among the "average" performing countries in reading literacy, with a mean score of 495.6 (OECD mean is 493.4). Ireland's rank, based on its mean score, is 17th out of 34 OECD countries and 21st of 65 OECD and partner countries. The scores show that between 2006 and 2009 Ireland dropped from 5th to 17th place for reading literacy.” (Education Matters, 14.12.2010)

PISA is an international study that is administered to 15-year old students every three years; it involves over 60 countries, including all member countries of the OECD.

As Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator (HSCL), shared between three DEIS post primary schools, the researcher was in a privileged position to make a positive impact on literacy levels among the focus group of students involved. DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), is a Department of Education and Skills initiative which aims to address literacy levels in children who experience educational disadvantage.

The scope of the inquiry was informed by the following research question; can one improve literacy levels using a One Book One School One Community cross curricular literacy initiative, for example, by inspiring and leading colleagues to collaboratively work together as a school staff (cross curricular), with all the partners (students, parents and teachers) in education, to promote a love of reading and to create a discussion on the importance of reading in the home?

Leading this cross curricular literacy initiative, the researcher connects school, families and targeted community groups. It moves the classroom out into the community, connecting with parents and community groups in a new way, these new connections help students develop their literacy skills for returning to the classroom in school.

The aim of the research is to increase literacy levels by collaborative cross curricular work of teachers and to encourage students, parents and guardians to become active participants in literacy development. The object of the research is to evaluate the impact of this cross curricular collaborative and networked approach on literacy levels of the focus group, to ascertain if literacy levels can be increased over the course of the school year.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The two prevailing paradigms in research are quantitative and qualitative; Kuhn (1962: 150) advises “Practicing in different worlds, the two groups of scientists see different things when they look from the same point in the same direction.”

Quantitative methods define life in terms of measures and controls. Qualitative methods are characterised by concern for people, look at the holistic development of the person and their environment. Mixed methods are the chosen methodology for this research with an emphasis on action research. Action research is undertaken by a teacher with the intent that it will inform and change practices in the future, it is usually school based, with the students and teachers in the school where the teacher is based. It focuses on current educational concerns. It is a cyclical process which allows the teacher to identify the problem, collect data, analyse the data, make informed decisions- implement the change that can lead to desired outcomes, evaluate the results which leads to the next step in the process.

PRE AND POST READING TESTS

In September 2011, the focus group of students' literacy levels was tested using the NFER-NELSON Group Reading Test 9-14. This is a standardised test of reading ability for students aged 9-14yrs. It was standardised in 1988 on a sample of 4000 children in primary and post-primary schools. Students' literacy levels were retested in May 2012 at the end of their first year to chart their progress in relation to literacy development.

There were 127 students in 3 schools included in the research. Figure 1, illustrates that at the commencement of the project 21 (17.21%) of the students in the cohort chosen have a reading age of less than 9 years and 6 months which is judged by the Scottish authority as functional literacy the equivalent in England of level 3. The average chronological age of the students at the commencement of the project was 12.4 years

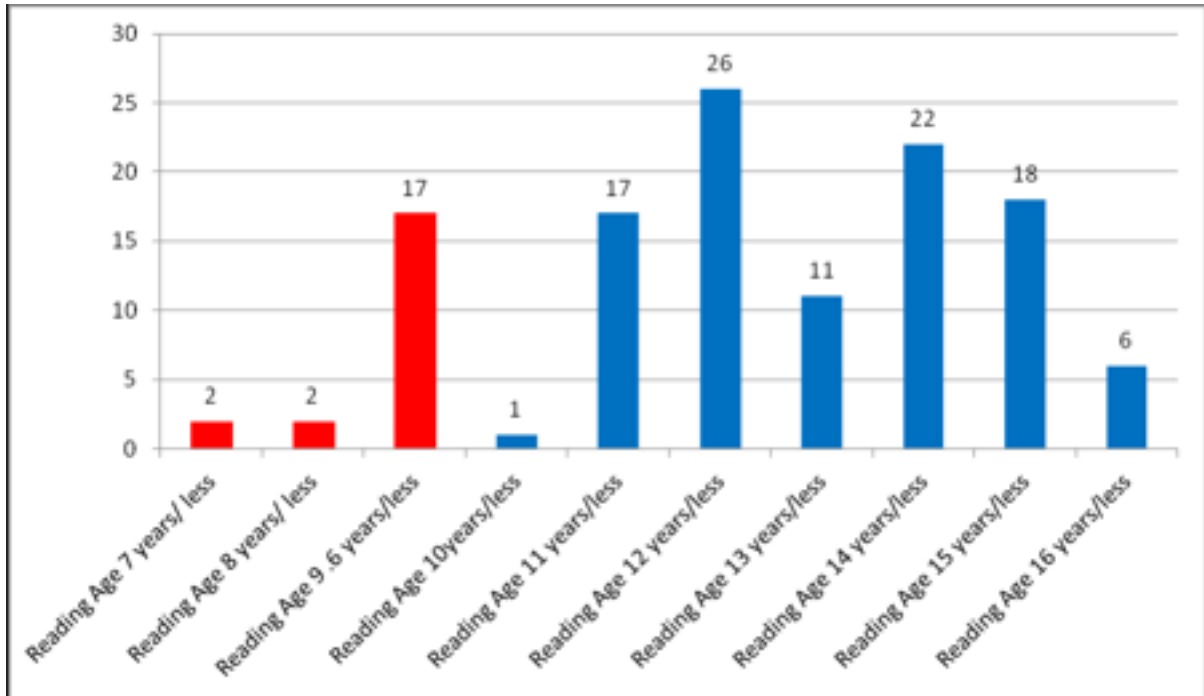


Table 1. Reading Ages of all Students involved at the commencement of the project.

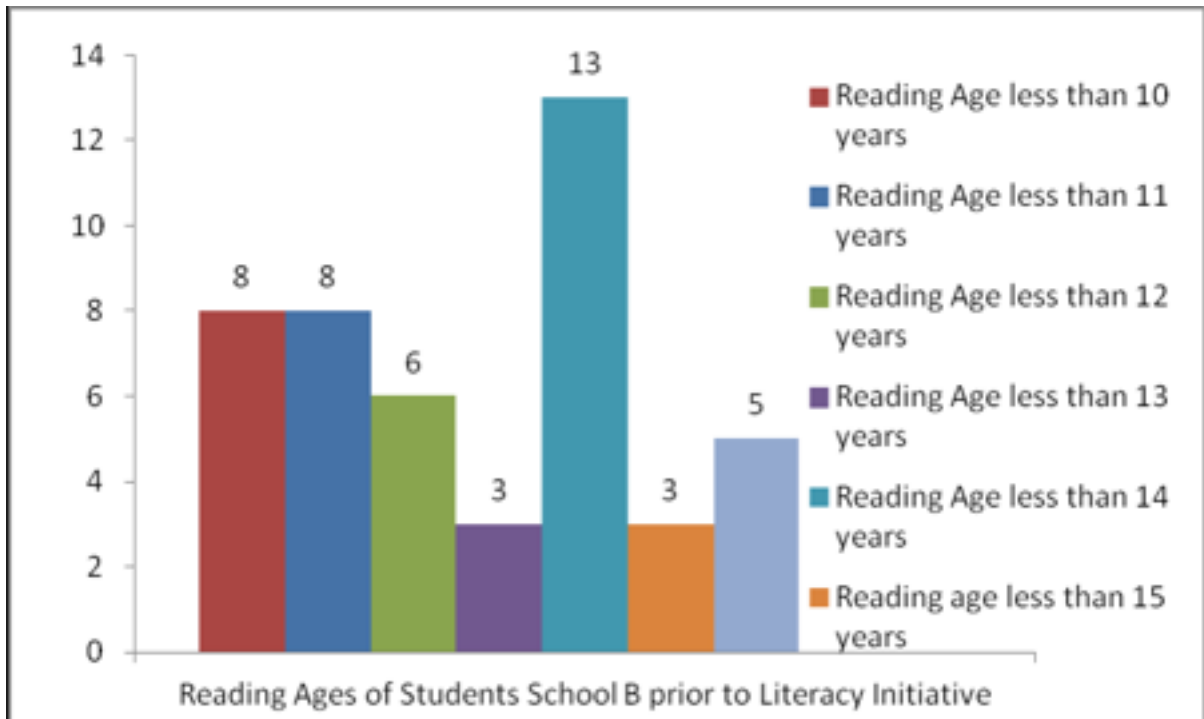


Table 2. Reading Ages of Students in School B PRIOR to Literacy Initiative

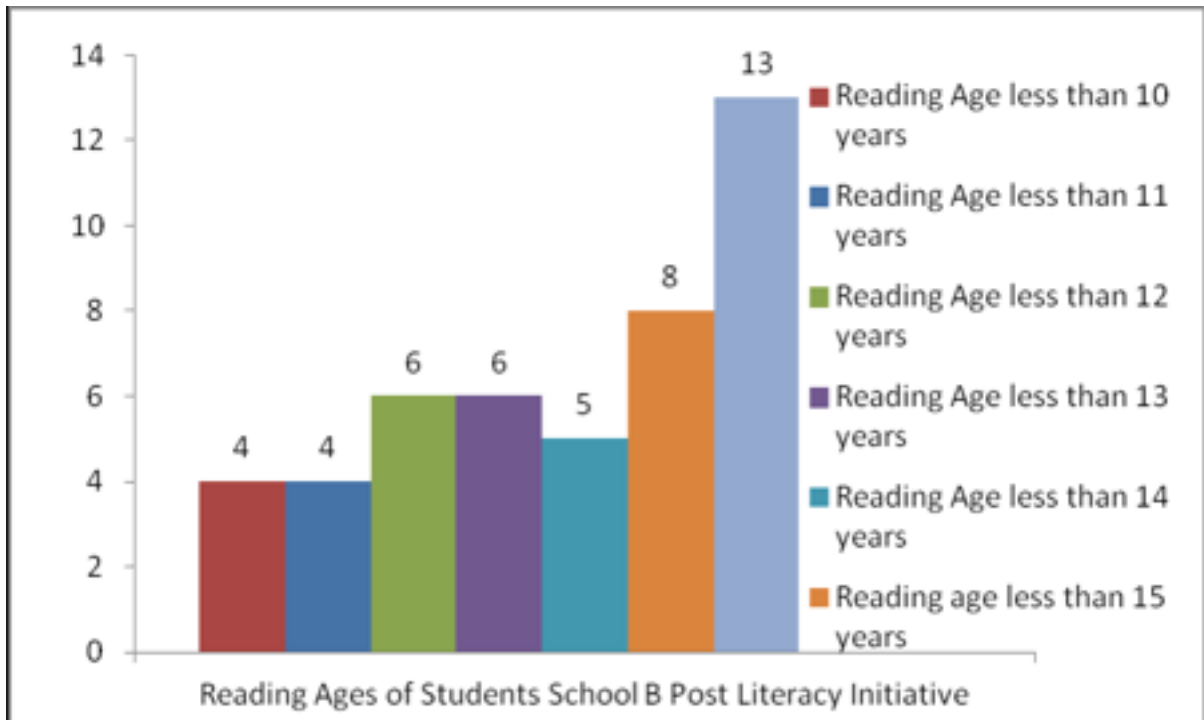


Table 3. Reading Ages of Students in School B POST Literacy Initiative

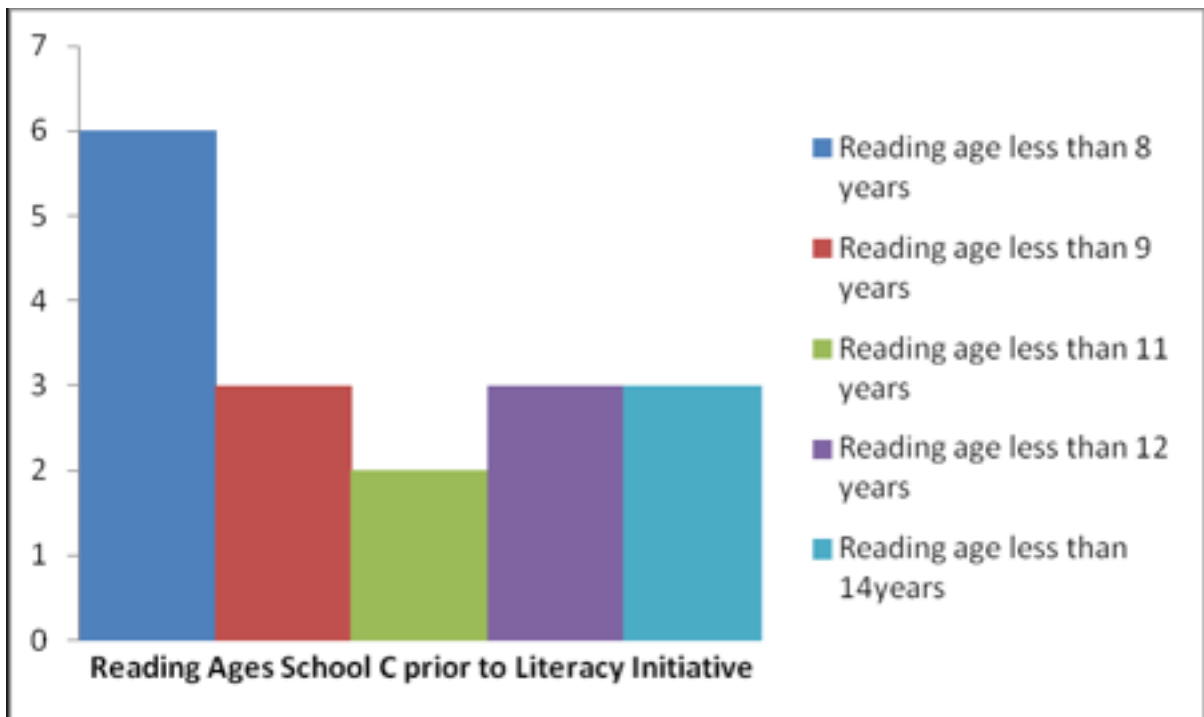


Table 4. Reading Ages of Students in School C PRIOR to Literacy Initiative

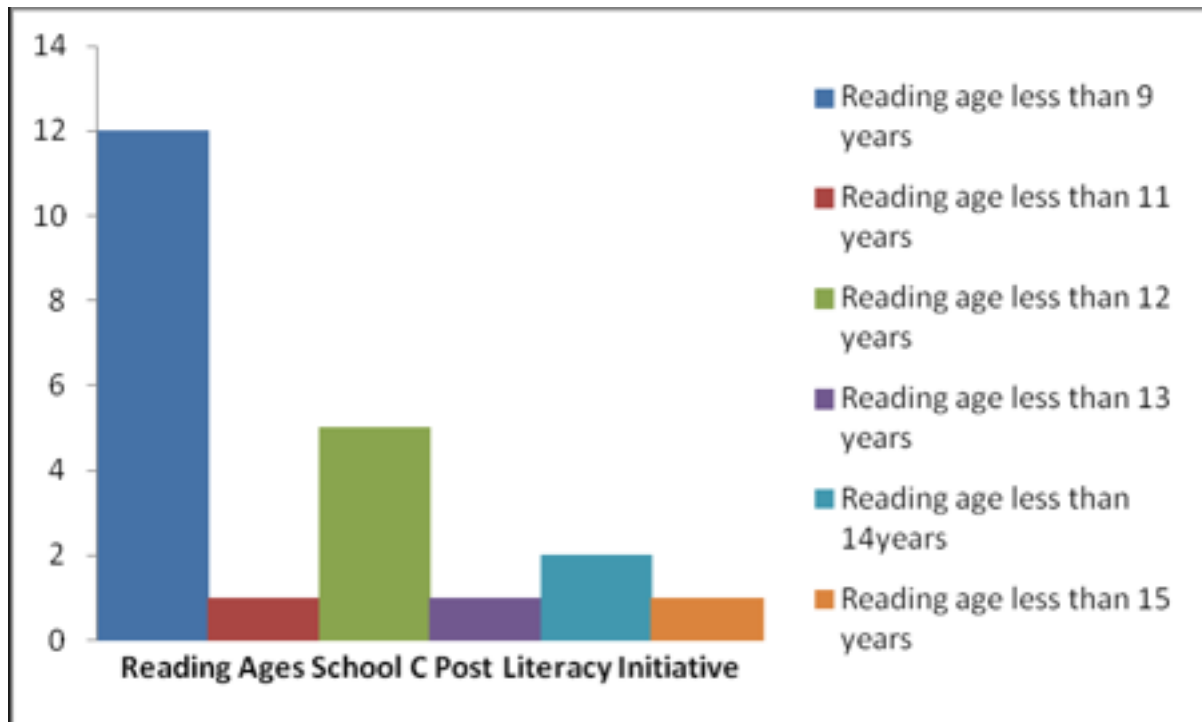


Table 5. Reading Ages of Students in School C POST Literacy Initiative

Post reading test results for school A were unavailable to the researcher at the completion of the project.

The results indicate that irrespective of reading age at the commencement of the project, all students reading ages increased during the initiative.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES UNDERPINNING MY WORK

It is almost overwhelming to reflect on the impact that a teacher can have on a student's life "the imprint of good teaching remains long after the facts have faded" Palmer (1998:22).

My personal and professional core values are integrity, respect, trust, care, equality, inclusion, and a high standard of teaching and learning. I truly value the importance of education and in particular literacy skills. I have witnessed at first hand in the course of my career the negative impact of low literacy levels. It impacts on a student's attendance, attainment and retention as they progress through and out of the educational system. Low literacy levels impact on subsequent employment and overall chances in life for students, along with the

intergenerational impact of low literacy levels in a family. Connecting home school and community can I believe positively impact on literacy levels and make a real difference to the lives of students.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED/ LESSONS LEARNED

I learned that raising awareness and changing perceptions in relation to supporting literacy development in school is challenging. Prior to the publication of “Literacy and Numeracy for learning and for Life”, The National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011 -2020, literacy development in post primary schools was generally viewed as the responsibility of the English and Learning Support Departments. This action focused project asked all subject teachers and parents and targeted community groups to participate in a literacy initiative to promote and support literacy development in school. Without substantial curriculum reform it was an enormous task, calling on teacher’s commitment to get all subject teachers to become involved in a way that did not diminish time spent on their own “core” subjects.

I also learned that it is important to understand that people who resist change are not necessarily difficult people; they can be charming in a social setting but can be burdensome and contribute to heartache for the leader. Change has a fascinating way of touching people that can result in resistance which may manifest in range from fairly subtle, such as avoidance or passive aggressive behaviour, to defiance, and hostility. Or in the case of this research potential damage when school A did not release the retesting results. This allows the researcher to explore what happens when someone refuses to change and remains stuck. In this situation I discovered that it may be better to work with a critical mass and hope to extend my circle of influence over time. I decided to accept the “stuck” position and maintain the relationship, weighing up the potential for future conflict against the gains for forcing the receipt of the results. I also learned that a resistor can really make the leader lead by challenging the leader to justify the benefits of the additional work of the project which contributes to additional workload for teachers in relation to the potential gains for students. In fact as a leader the researcher may learn more from the resistor than all others on the team.

It proved challenging to have an impact beyond the school. It is noted by Hallgartan (2000), that increased parental involvement has a positive impact on student attainment. Considering that children aged from 0 to 15years spend less than 15% of their time in school, the concept that parents can positively impact on their children's education is reasonable. The challenge for me in this action research is to engage meaningfully with the students, all subject teachers, parents, guardians and targeted local community groups (the library and nursing home) to participate in a One Book One School One Community reading initiative. It explored if collaboratively and collectively we can positively impact on literacy levels among the first year students, or as Covey prescribes, to create a synergy which “catalyses, unifies, and unleashes

the greatest powers within people”, so that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (Covey 1992:263).

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE PROJECT

I experienced professional growth. During my postgraduate course in educational leadership and while running the project I felt energised, my knowledge and skills in teaching increased. This resulted from being exposed to new ideas, learning fresh strategies, techniques and methods for leadership challenges. It led to my increased confidence and a stronger commitment to teaching. It provided an opportunity to develop, master and reflect on my own leadership skills and to critically examine the outcomes of the project. This increased knowledge contributed to improving student’s achievement in literacy in my schools.

The project permitted me to trial the learning from my engagement with professional reading and afforded an opportunity to become more reflective and critical in my thinking. I became more self aware, it promoted better self management, my ability to manage my own workload, to make informed judgments on complex issues increased. I was innovative in addressing literacy levels, tackling and solving problems related to project management and research skills.

Professional growth also occurred as a result of collaboration with my new colleagues on the postgraduate course, being exposed to new ideas. I joined with a community of likeminded people who were interested in studying educational leadership and research which stimulated my learning. Working collaboratively with other teachers, and my three Principals in my schools to develop relationships was rewarding. This contributed to my own personal learning outcomes from the project. Not only were there intellectual benefits to the project, it connected me to a broader educational community with whom to interact. I was also given the opportunity to present at an educational symposium and to network with leadership graduates from the medical field.

Reflective practice was a requirement of the project. The notion of the professional educator as a reflective practitioner is widely recommended by Thompson (2008), Elliott (1991), Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Schon (1983). What is required for reflective practice is time alone to think and take stock, or as Thompson states to:

rise above a situation to get an overview of how the component parts fit together and how they create the overall situation and descend back into it to be able to deal with it in an informed way (2001:61)

Reflective practice encouraged me to take a “helicopter view “which enabled me to respond to criticism and to constructively critique my own work with insight and determination.

I was also a catalyst for change in the way we looked at literacy development for 1st year students in my three schools. I posed a question to generate analysis of student learning in relation to improving literacy levels and demonstrated that all subject teachers at post primary can support literacy development. This provided an opportunity to view literacy levels of students from a new cross circular lens thus seeing the problem from many different angles and affording an opportunity to appreciate different points of view. The variety of roles required in each subject/school ensured that all teachers if they so wished could find ways to become involved/lead that fitted their own talents and interests. This reshaping of the culture of literacy development in the school, improved student learning, and influenced practice among teachers. The use of data collated during the project in relation to literacy levels pre and post initiative was effective and paved the way for school self-evaluation.

As a learner myself I also demonstrated the importance of lifelong learning, and working collaboratively with my teaching colleagues used my new knowledge to help support student achievement. While sharing my vision for the project, my willingness to explore new strategies was infectious. Self-belief and enthusiasm ensured that management was supportive and allowed me the freedom to run the project. Other teachers, encouraged by my enthusiasm were willing to become involved. This allowed me the opportunity to share responsibility for the success of the literacy project with the school community as a whole and to publicly celebrate the project at an interschool event. It further afforded an opportunity for teachers to learn with and from one another, and to focus on what most directly improves student literacy levels. This professional growth contributed to my own personal satisfaction on successful completion of the project. The qualification I attained was a source of pride and affirmation.

It also provided an opportunity to reach out to residents in a local nursing home. Over the course of a week, on a rotational basis, three students and the researcher visited the home each afternoon. The chosen book was read to interested residents. Using literacy as a nexus, it brought great joy and hope to the residents, linked them with younger community members and brighten up some dull winter afternoons. For the students, it was an opportunity to give something back, to “adopt a granny” and to appreciate their youth, health and independence.

The considerations for ‘leading change, as a professional in the current climate. A clear understanding that the leadership role is a complex one is a prerequisite for leadership. As a leader I must be able to wear many hats: visionary, figurehead (represent the project publically), champion, (communication of progress, needs, and benefits), liaison and monitor (embrace, develop, and maintain my liaison role), chief negotiator (especially important in the early stages of a project, scope, costs, and schedule), negotiator (help team members resolve difficulties), motivator (keep the project moving, making sure I acknowledge and reward good work), talent spotter (enlist support of key personnel), team leader and player (be a role model in how I execute my tasks). I must also handle the “people” issues that may arise in the course of the project. There are an endless number of social-psychological issues that confront

project leaders, but motivation, discipline, and conflict management are three of the more usual ones.

I also learned that leadership is all about relationship building. Emotionally intelligent leaders are adept at building relationships. Goleman (1998:26-27) describes emotional intelligence as recognizing what you are feeling and what others are feeling. He says that it is about motivating ourselves, managing our emotions and our relationships. Emotionally intelligent leaders are highly motivated, have an ability to motivate others, are empathetic, have good social skills and are adept at encouraging an appropriate response from others.

It is also important as a leader to understand and accept that change is slow learning over time (Fullan (2001). Leading a change in literacy development involves looking at the old and known ways and together seeing if we can create a new way. For change to come about what is required is an understanding, a commitment and a clear model for a future way of working. Change requires working together in a spirit of collegiality towards common aims, which is a necessary element of raising standards in a school. It is also important to have an understanding of the leader as a mediator of change and an awareness of the power of teacher collaboration to make the change happen.

Prior to the symposium it was difficult to see a direct connection or correlation between education and health. However on the day the experience in the workshop I attended was that the opportunities, challenges, key lessons and learning and considerations for leading change were similar irrespective of the field that the presenters were coming from.

On reflection this is perhaps a logical conclusion as all organisations involve people with a complex nexus of interpersonal relationships and external forces which shape the perspectives of all within the nexus and this influences how people respond to change. The real learning for me was that as an educational or medical community what is required for leading change is that collectively the community needs to sit down and look at what is valued and reflect on how these values are lived out every day or as (Covey 1992) proposes that what is needed is a way of leadership that is concerned with principles and values, revolves around the clarification of meanings and is concerned with the whole person.

KEY LESSONS AND LEARNING THE WIDER PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

AND FOR POLICY MAKERS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

There is a need for interconnectivity between home school and community. Research demonstrates that parental interest and attitudes to school, books and to education are the single most important influences on a child's learning. Increased parental involvement in school has a positive impact on school attendance, student achievement, academic success and

educational outcome. This implies building relationships with a student's home, raising parental expectations, and supporting parent-child interaction, as crucial in addressing a child experience of educational disadvantage.

Collecting and collating data affirms new actions and highlights the need for change: The collection and collation of data clearly indicated that the project was successful, graphically representing this to all the partners' students, teachers and parents affirmed the pivotal role of parents in their children's education, and it also allows all partners to input into future planning. The staff in the three schools requested that the project be ran again this academic year. Another additional advantage of the initiative was seen when we began School Self Evaluation as the project had already examined our own practice in relation to literacy, within the context of our students and had reported the strengths of the project. Students, teachers and parents shared their opinions of the project and it allowed students to become co-researchers and have a say in whether it had encouraged them to read more or not.

It is possible to improve Literacy levels: At the commencement of the project the average chronological age of the students was 12.4 years, 17.21% of the students in the cohort chosen had a reading age of less than 9 years and 6 months which is judged by the Scottish authority as functional literacy. A comparison of the reading testing results pre and post initiative indicated that literacy levels increased during the life of the project. It would be disingenuous to totally claim this result; however I believe that the initiative contributed in a significant way to the improvements. To answer my research question, can I improve literacy levels among first year students with a One Book, One School, One Community Literacy Initiative i.e. by inspiring and leading colleagues to collaboratively work together as a school staff (cross curricular), with all the partners in education, to promote a love of reading and to create a discussion on the importance of reading in the home? I believe the answer is YES. Or as a student said of the initiative "I thought it was fun and it encouraged me to read more".

REFERENCES

- Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. New York: Routledge Falmer
- Covey, S, (1992) *Principle Centred Leadership*. New York: Simon & Schuster
- Elliott, J. (1991) *Action Research for Educational Change*. Milton Keynes: OUP
- Fullan, M. (1991) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. New York: Teachers' College Press
- Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. (1992) *What's worth Fighting for in your School?* Buckinghamshire : OUP
- Fullan, M. (1993) *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform* . London: Falmer Press
- Goleman, D, Boyatzis, R. and McKee, A. (2004) *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Harvard Business School Press: Boston
- Hallgarten, J., (2000) *Parents Exist, OK?* London: Institute for Policy Research
- Halstead, J. and Taylor, M. (1996). *Values in Education and Education in Values*. London: Falmer Press
- Kotter J, Rathgeber. (2006) *Our Iceberg is Melting: changing and succeeding under any circumstances*. London: Macmillan Press
- Palmer, P.J., (1998). *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Schon, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: how professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books
- Schon, D. (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: towards a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Starrat, R.J (2004) *Ethical Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Thompson. S, and Thompson (2008) *The Critically Reflective Practitioner*. Palgrave MacMillian: London

Design and Implementation of a Dermatology Module for General Practice Trainees

Claire Gleeson

INTRODUCTION

General practice (GP) trainees who are already qualified doctors undergoing their final year of vocational training before becoming fully-fledged general practitioners are allocated time to pursue extra training in areas of particular interest to them – this is known as the Special Interest Module. Traditionally this module had run in an unstructured fashion, with little guidance for trainees and no supervision or application of standards as to what they chose to study; trainees were free to select their own training attachments without significant consultation with programme directors, and there had been no assessment of attendance or progress. In direct response to this, the project described below proposed to pilot a structured Special Interest Module for the 4th Year GP trainees.

The project consisted of designing and implementing a programme of study for 4th Year trainees, in a clinical specialty that had been frequently cited as an area in which more training was needed – dermatology. Trainees were facilitated to attend and participate in a number of different general and specialist dermatology clinics over a three-month period, under the tutelage of two experienced hospital consultants. The Health Service Executive (HSE) model for organisational change – a four-step process involving initiation, planning, implementation and mainstreaming - was used to guide the change process (Health Service Executive, 2009). Four students took part in the pilot phase of this module, and the end-of-project evaluation showed a clear improvement in their self-reported competence in dermatology on its completion. It is hoped that this Special Interest Module will in time be expanded to cover more clinical subjects and a greater geographical area, and will become a compulsory part of vocational general practice training.

1. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES UNDERPINNING YOUR WORK AS

A PRACTITIONER

As a general practitioner, teacher and continual student, my focus is on open communication, constructive criticism and a collaborative approach to learning. Goal-based learning and teaching are vital, along with the fostering of a desire for life-long learning. At all

times the holistic care of the patient is paramount, and with this in mind there needs to be at all times a broad approach, and a recognition of the many factors, physical, psychological and social, which impact on health.

The relationship between teacher and student is a reciprocal one, and with open lines of communication and an atmosphere that encourages questioning, reflection and debate, the instructor can often gain as much from a teaching encounter as the student. Being tasked with imparting knowledge to the next generation of young doctors forces the educators to examine their own knowledge, skills and competences, and often highlights gaps in these which might otherwise be slow to come to light (Gordon, 2003). Assumptions are challenged - and often changed.

Goal-setting is a crucial step without which teaching may often drift and lack focus. Goals help both the student and the teacher to focus on areas of particular importance, to prioritise and to prepare for assessments and evaluations (Harden, 2007). As a teacher I find it a useful starting point of any educational interaction - both when teaching a class and one-on-one with individual students attached to my practice - to have a discussion about goals and objectives for the course at the outset; as well as preparing the students for what is expected of them, it can help to form a general picture of their current level of knowledge and experience.

Finally, one of the great joys - and challenges - of general practice is the wide breadth of knowledge and skill that is required, with a need for some degree of competence in every area of medical practice. Lifelong learning is therefore not just an aspiration but an imperative, and this message is one that needs to be transmitted to students and trainees from an early stage. Rather than just see this as an onerous task, however, it should also be looked at as an opportunity to develop great confidence across a wide range of medical topics, with the scope for more in-depth learning in areas of particular personal interest. It was this enthusiasm for ongoing self-directed learning that I brought to my leadership project, and which I hoped to help instil in the trainees.

2. THREE KEY LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN UNDERTAKING THE PROJECT

1. Gaining and keeping students' interest in the project without the benefit of external motivators.

This was the biggest challenge presented by my project, and the one which I found hardest to overcome. My own lack of a formal role within the organisation put me in the difficult position of being able to organise and promote the module, but unable to require students to participate in it; being, as it were, “all carrot and no stick”. Initially I did not foresee this being a major problem; dermatology was an area that had been identified by trainees themselves as a knowledge gap, and therefore it seemed likely that they would welcome the opportunity to gain extra training and experience in it. The reality, however, was somewhat different, and trainees were very slow to commit themselves to participating in the course of study. While I had hoped initially that all twelve of the year-group would participate, only four ultimately took part, which was a disappointing level of uptake for the module. It became clear that future iterations of the module would require some sort of incentivisation to encourage students to take part.

2. Co-ordinating schedules for trainees and tutors with full-time clinical commitments.

The trainees participating in the module were already committed to what was essentially a full-time clinical job, working as general practitioners in supervised posts. Under the rules of the training scheme, however, they were entitled to one half-day per week in which to pursue their own special interest. The timing of this half-day would generally be negotiated with their GP trainer, taking account of the staffing needs of the practice. Participation in this module, however, would require them to be released in accordance with the scheduling of the dermatology clinics, and at times which would change on a monthly basis over the three-month period of the project. This, therefore, necessitated a new degree of flexibility from the GP trainers, and had to be carefully negotiated with them.

In order to allow students to ‘sign up’ for clinics in the module, a web-based calendar programme was used and the trainees were emailed details of this. By and large this proved successful, although there was one scheduling conflict caused by a trainee misinterpreting the instructions for the use of this calendar, which led to an altercation between two trainees. Again, as with most of the conflicts which inevitably arise during a new undertaking, more attention to careful communication may have helped to avoid this problem.

3. Completing and evaluating the module within the time constraints of the project and the academic year.

The truncated nature of the academic ‘year’ – approximately nine months in this case – meant that any delay in planning, implementation or evaluation of the project could have serious implications for its successful completion. As with most such undertakings, each stage in this project took slightly longer than anticipated, and there was therefore some pressure to have the module completed and evaluated before the end of the academic year. An initial delay may also have contributed to the low uptake of the module by students, as some had already committed to other Special Interest clinics before the new scheme was announced. It became clear to me that when designing a project to run over a certain period of time, the planning process must in reality begin several months prior to this.

3. THREE KEY LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY UNDERTAKING MY PROJECT

1. First opportunity to devise and manage a change initiative from start to finish.

As a relative newcomer to the leadership role, this project presented the first opportunity for me to undertake a change project from beginning to end. This was an exciting challenge for me, and one which involved a great deal of on-the-job learning. I was able to make great use of the knowledge and skills acquired on the leadership programme, and utilised the HSE change model and other tools to which I had been first introduced during the Masters course. However, I found that academic learning can never completely prepare one for the realities of managing a project such as this, and the practical experience of designing and implementing the project from start to finish proved to be an education in itself.

2. Negotiation with key stakeholders at multiple levels and in varying roles across the medical profession.

While this project essentially involved deliverance of teaching from hospital consultants to GP trainees, its planning and implementation required communication and negotiation with a number of additional stakeholder groups. Initially, I met several times with the training scheme directors, who are ultimately responsible for the direction and content of training; their approval and co-operation was clearly necessary at every step of the process. Once the broad outline of the module had been decided, I then needed to communicate with the hospital consultants who would be delivering the teaching, and devise with them a programme of suitable clinics for the trainees to attend. With this timetable composed, it was then

necessary to inform the GP trainers – established GPs who act as employers for the trainees over the period of their supervised vocational training – of the new plan, and to obtain their consent to release the trainees from their clinical duties for one morning or afternoon each week in order to participate in the module. Finally, then, the trainees themselves had to be informed, encouraged – and, in some cases, gently coerced – into committing to the programme.

This ongoing process of communication afforded me the opportunity to liaise with a number of key groups across the medical profession, garnering valuable perspectives on the development of the module and helping to lay the groundwork for future expansion of the scheme. From a personal/career development point of view, it also allowed me to forge some links with various people within the education community, which may offer more opportunities for getting involved in educational projects in the future.

3. Potential to ‘mainstream’ a process in the hopes of having a lasting beneficial impact on the organisation involved.

The real opportunity of this project lay not in the pilot module itself, but in its potential to add something of lasting value to the GP training scheme. By serving as a prototype for a range of educational initiatives, the modest success of this project showed that the format of this module offered a pragmatic and effective way to facilitate additional learning for GP trainees.

Other areas identified by GP trainees as requiring more training include ophthalmology, ear, nose and throat (ENT) medicine and women’s health, and all of these should lend themselves to short targeted educational modules along the same lines as this pilot project.

4. AS A RESULT OF YOUR WORK, WHAT, IN YOUR OPINION ARE THE CONSIDERATIONS FOR ‘LEADING CHANGE, AS A PROFESSIONAL IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE?’

1. Outcomes-based initiatives with clear short- and long-term goals.

The evolution of this project brought home to me the importance of establishing clear goals from the very beginning of the planning process. Deciding on the evaluation process at the outset meant that I could tailor the module towards this end, and sustain the momentum when it threatened to run out of steam. Not all the goals of the project were met; one key area

in which trainees identified a need for extra teaching – the development of biopsy skills – did not show any improvement over the course of the module, and this is something that will have to be addressed next year.

At the same time, having a definite long-term objective - of expanding the programme to include modules in a number of different medical disciplines - helped to keep me motivated and enthusiastic about making this pilot phase a success.

2. Communication at all levels and all stages of the change.

As discussed above, this project required ongoing communication with a number of different stakeholder groups – the trainees themselves, their GP trainers, the hospital consultants and the directors of the vocational training scheme. After some initial face-to-face meetings, most of this was done by email which, for the most part, proved a reliable and efficient mode of communication.

One episode, in which a scheduling conflict caused some disquiet among the trainees, reinforced for me the need for constant communication over and above what might seem to be necessary, and from that point on I tended to adopt an “If in doubt, send it out” policy with regard to reissuing instructions and guidelines for the project. By and large, this was successful and there were no further communication issues over the duration of the module.

3. Change is continuous and cyclical – programmes may need to be continually reviewed, evaluated and modified.

It would be unrealistic to assume that a new initiative such as this one would be completely successful in its first roll-out, and from early on in the project it was clear that there was scope for improvement. Some small adjustments could be made during the initial pilot phase of the module, but other more fundamental ones will clearly need to be put in place before the module is run again over the next academic year.

Some areas which would lend themselves to modification before further expansion of the project include:

- scheduling of the module - initial approach to the trainees and registration for the course will need to take place earlier in the academic year in order to enhance participation
- introduction of a reward/credit system for participants, to add extra incentive beyond simply the development of professional skills
- modification of the number and variety of clinics (e.g. biopsy skills, a key area for GP trainees, was one area in which the participants did not feel they had improved – this may need to be addressed by ensuring all the trainees are exposed to this important procedure-based discipline)

5. FOLLOWING YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH MEMBERS OF OTHER
PROFESSIONS AT THE 3U LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM, HOW, IF AT ALL, HAS
YOUR AWARENESS OF PROFESSIONALISM/ LEADERSHIP BEEN INFLUENCED
OR CHANGED?

My experience at the 3U Leadership Symposium really brought home to me the enormous changes in the education sector over recent years. The degree of professionalism, the strong academic grounding and the focus on evidence-based practice, which now seem to have become the norm among leaders in both the education and medical professions, are worlds away from the traditional didactic model that would have been my own experience during my years as a student, and is really encouraging to see. All of the speakers and other contributors displayed a strong grounding in leadership theory and an understanding of the importance of using a variety of teaching approaches. The high degree of crossover between the teaching techniques used in education and in medicine was illuminating, and suggests that there is much to be gained in the future from collaborations such as this one.

It was also reassuring to see that some of the same concepts that I struggle with myself are still being discussed and debated throughout the education communities in both disciplines - the definition of professionalism, and what it means for us as leaders, and the influence of dwindling resources on what we can achieve as educators.

6. KEY LESSONS AND LEARNING FOR YOUR WIDER PROFESSIONAL
COMMUNITY AND FOR POLICY MAKERS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1. Brief, targeted interventions can have measurable benefits even within a short period of time.

This was the fundamental and most important outcome of the project – our evaluation showed a modest but measurable improvement in the trainees’ self-reported competence in all but one of the key dermatology skill areas measured. From this point of view, and despite the small numbers participating, the project was a success. This was an encouraging outcome for an intervention that was relatively brief in its duration and modest in its scale, and is a promising starting point for the possible expansion of the programme in future years to include other areas of special interest.

2. External motivators may be needed to encourage buy-in to new educational initiatives.

While it is tempting to assume that all trainees would participate enthusiastically in a new educational programme from a sheer love of learning and without the promise of any external rewards, for most groups of learners this is probably an unrealistic expectation. Particularly when an educational initiative is new and of unproven benefit, there is often a need for some sort of additional benefit to motivate students to take part. In the case of a module such as this one, I feel that a formal system of credits for participation in a Special Interest Module – which is already a required part of the scheme - might help to encourage students to engage with it. Without this external driver, it may be difficult to persuade them to come on board, as was proved this year, and such low uptake may potentially threaten the continuation of the scheme into future years.

In addition, it is hoped that the promising results from the first phase of the project might go some way towards assuring future participants of its benefit. With this in mind, qualitative feedback was also sought from this year's trainees, with a view to sharing their insights and opinions on the module with prospective participants.

3. The short academic year makes careful pre-planning and a high level of organisation imperative.

Probably the most important lesson I took from my experience with the project was that as a leader you can never be too organised, nor is it ever too early to start the planning process. Early interaction with stakeholders, adherence to a detailed timeline and putting the evaluation process front and centre from an early stage are all crucial factors in delivering an educational module such as this one in an effective way. Eventually, as a new initiative becomes 'mainstreamed' as an integral part of the curriculum, the amount of planning work needed each year will become less and less, and so devoting significant time and energy to it in the early years should reap substantial rewards.

REFERENCES

Gordon, J. (2003) One to one teaching and feedback. *British Medical Journal*. 326(7388), 543.

Harden, R. M. (2007) Outcome-Based Education: the future is today. *Medical Teacher*. 29(7), 625-9.
doi:10.1080/01421590701729930.

Health Service Executive (2009) *Improving our services: a user's guide to managing change in the Health Service Executive*. Dublin: HSE.

The value of creating a Learning Community and using a Distributing Model of Leadership to lead School Improvement -

Jenny Dooley Ryan

INTRODUCTION

In 2009 an international assessment, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), showed a decline in the performance of 15-year-old Irish students in reading and mathematics (ERC, 2009). From 2006 to 2009 Ireland's rank dropped from 5th to 17th in reading and from 16th to 25th in mathematics. National assessments of reading and mathematics, in addition to inspection reports from schools, reported a similar decline. In response, Ruairí Quinn, Minister for Education and Science, launched the *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life Strategy* (DES, 2011), setting out targets to improve the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. The researcher undertook an action-research study in which she provided Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in planning and leadership to teachers from four urban schools, to support their school improvement efforts in either literacy or numeracy. Between March 2011 and May 2012, a team of teachers from each school undertook the task of leading collaborative planning with their staff in an effort to create learning communities within their schools. Post-intervention evidence from all schools indicated improvements in pupils' outcomes, attitudes and/or levels of engagement in their priority area of literacy or numeracy, in addition to positive changes in pedagogical approaches, organisational structures and cultural norms within the school.

CONTEXT

School planning, which is a cyclical planning process of review, design, implementation and evaluation, is a statutory requirement for Irish schools (DES, 1998). As a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) provider the researcher supported schools' engagement in this school improvement process to address priority areas. This entailed a process which enabled schools to respond to and manage ongoing educational change. For whole-school change to occur, the involvement of staff through regular professional dialogue and collaborative decision-making was paramount. Effective school planning also required school leaders to co-ordinate the process and maintain the focus of staff on teaching and learning.

Recent national and international assessments and studies have shown that ‘many students in Irish schools are not developing literacy and numeracy skills to the best of their abilities’ (DES, 2011: 5). In response, Ruairí Quinn, the then Minister for Education and Skills launched the Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life Strategy (DES, 2011), requiring all schools to plan for school improvements in literacy and numeracy standards. As an Advisor to schools with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), a DES school support service, the researcher designed CPD to support school personnel in the task of leading staff in raising pupils’ literacy or numeracy standards. Developing teachers’ planning and leadership skills, together with an understanding of change management theory, were the core objectives of the CPD designed to support schools. While engaging in *Tóraíocht* a Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership, in 2011/2012, the researcher undertook an action-research study to evaluate this CPD.

ACTION-RESEARCH STUDY

Teams of teachers from four large urban primary schools partook in this action-research study, with teams ranging in numbers from three to six. Participating teams undertook the task of improving standards in one aspect of literacy or numeracy in their school by creating learning communities within their schools. Such a community has a central focus on improvement of teaching and learning and achieves this by staff creating knowledge through action, reflection and feedback (Bubb and Earley, 2007). Within this culture, staff learning is encouraged and this facilitates school improvement (Garratt, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1989; West-Burnham, 2005). While Hislop, the Chief Inspector of the DES considers that the school is ‘an excellent example of a learning community’ (Hislop, 2011: 41), Irish researchers Flood (2011) and O’Sullivan (2011) are of the view that learning communities are not common in Irish schools. Grossman et al. (2000: 10) caution that cultural and structural impediments that exist within schools can inhibit the development of such communities.

This action-research study used a distributed model of leadership of learning, with two-thirds of participants not in a position of senior management in their school. Harris (2003) states that this style of leadership can transform schools into learning communities and Hargreaves and Fink argue that it is within this culture that ‘the promise of sustainable success in education lies’ (2003: 7). The participation of the Principal or Deputy-Principal was requested by the researcher at the outset, in recognition of the fact that that their leadership would be a significant predictor of success (DES, 2002: 46). A teamwork approach to leading school planning was also established. This was not typical practice for participating teachers who had in the past led initiatives individually in their respective schools.

The role of the researcher was to support the four school teams in planning for and leading school improvement in literacy or numeracy and to encourage their efforts to create collaborative planning practices among staff. Participants acted as facilitators of change within their schools. A key dimension of support provided by the researcher was leading professional dialogue among teams as a means of enabling and empowering them to plan for, reflect on and improve their planning and leadership skills.

Research questions included how best the researcher, as a PDST Advisor, could support teachers in leading and planning a 'project' of school improvement. This involved getting close knowledge about the factors which would facilitate or hinder their work. Of great interest was the impact of the improvement project on the team, staff and pupils. Lessons learned about leadership were two-fold: namely from the perspective of an Advisor leading school teams, and also that of teachers' experiences as school leaders of learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In providing professional development on how to manage change effectively, a transformative model of CPD was used, whereby teachers had autonomy to create their own practice-based knowledge (Kennedy, 2005). This differs from a transmission model which relies on the dissemination of knowledge through training. Bubb believes that a culture of development and enquiry which the former model creates, 'has been the key to many schools' success' (2005: 24).

The school improvement project had three phases. These were:

1. school self-evaluation and target-setting
2. planning and implementing change and
3. evaluation of change.

Teams organised evidence-based school self-evaluation of literacy or numeracy with their staff, and consequently identified a priority area to focus upon. Using baseline data from assessments and questionnaires, three schools developed targets to improve pupils' attitudes to mathematics and their problem-solving abilities, while the fourth school chose the improvement of oral language competencies. Within these schools, teams developed action plans to improve the identified areas. This involved sourcing and attending relevant pedagogical professional development, organising the purchase of equipment, creating tailor-made resources and setting up in-class co-teaching. Teams monitored progress through regular reviews with staff. Post-intervention evidence was then gathered to measure success of the actions taken.

During a fifteen month timeframe, between March 2011 and May 2012, the researcher organised four workshop sessions in the schools' local Education Centre (Laois) focusing on how to plan and lead a project. These sessions were conducted after school hours and were attended by all team members. This provided a forum for a 'community of practice' to develop between the four school teams, whereby participants could support each other's change in work practices (Wenger, 1998). Between workshop sessions, the researcher facilitated four planning meetings with each school team individually during school hours. Three of these meetings took place in the team's school and one in the local Education Centre. These meetings provided an opportunity for the Advisor to monitor progress throughout the three phases of the project and to differentiate the support offered to the individual teams, as needs varied from school to school.

Effective CPD 'enhances pupil outcomes ... brings about changes in practice and improves... teaching, management and leadership skills' (Earley and Bubb, 2004: 26). To evaluate the CPD offered, questionnaires were administered (Appendix A) and focus groups were conducted (Appendix B) with three of the four teams. An 88% response rate was received from the questionnaires. Feedback was sought in relation to participants' reactions, their learning and use of new knowledge/ skills, organisational support and change, and pupil learning outcomes (Guskey, 2002).

This action-research study aimed 'to solve the immediate and pressing day-to-day problems of practitioners' (McKernan, 1991: 3), namely how schools can respond to national educational policy to improve literacy and numeracy standards. This differs from other research as 'at its core, is a wish to improve practice, not to study it' (Roche, 2012: 15). Consultation with critical friends and regular review using participants' workshop evaluation forms helped the researcher to reflect on and improve her practice throughout.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Teachers' experience of leading their project, the impact of their projects and their perspectives on support offered by the researcher are outlined below.

Participants' Reaction, Learning and Use of New Knowledge/Skills

Planning and Leading School Improvement

The majority of teachers agreed that they enjoyed participating in the CPD (87%). They learned what they required (80%), and they used ideas about leading and planning change (80%). 73% believed this CPD improved their effectiveness at leading planning initiatives and agreed that they developed practice-based knowledge about leading school improvement which would guide their future practice.

When leading school improvement, one of the greatest challenges faced was gaining and maintaining the commitment of staff. That was a process of winning ‘the minds and hearts of teachers’ (Bubb and Earley, 2008: 5) for the desired change. Some participants related this to their own lack of conviction regarding the vision and content of proposed changes. This they attributed to their perceived lack of pedagogical expertise. An ongoing challenge for all teams was a lack of time for regular communication with staff. Also the importance of creating a shared responsibility among staff for change was highlighted by teams. In some cases, to win staff ‘buy in’, project leaders committed to a high level of responsibility for organising and creating resources for other participating teachers. It was also apparent that the launch of a change initiative with staff represents a significant professional growth experience, and as such, requires careful planning.

When planning for school improvement, participants considered themselves most effective in organising school self-evaluation. Participants felt that involving staff in this step increased colleagues’ level of ownership of the school’s change agenda, and consequently proposed changes were not resisted. Participants felt least effective in monitoring progress during the implementation phase. Lack of regular consultation during this phase increased the risk of staffs’ disengagement from the process. A key learning for participants was the importance of evaluating actions in order to determine the success of changes introduced. In the past, one participant commented that actions were ‘left hanging’, a planning pitfall that Stoll and Fink (1996: 72) warn against. Target-setting for whole-school projects presented a challenge.

While teams reported positive planning and leadership experiences, they rated their competence as more effective in planning than leading school improvement. The latter requires skills of communication and negotiation. The researcher has learned from this that change management theory, which was explored in the third and fourth workshop session, may have been more beneficial at an earlier stage to help teachers to face implementation challenges.

Distributed Leadership

Teams led predominantly using democratic and coaching leadership styles, finding these collaborative styles to have a greater impact than more authoritarian leadership styles. Participants highlighted the necessity to lead by example, to regularly talk with staff and to monitor progress. One participant learned ‘that you can’t really tell people what to do as a leader, you need to try to work it out, evaluate it, discuss it ... make decisions based on that’.

Participating teachers in this research did not seem to perceive themselves as leaders, but instead as facilitators of professional collaboration. This view was reflected during focus group discussions, whereby teams placed more emphasis on pedagogical rather than leadership issues. One participant felt ‘I don’t think I ever once saw myself in that (leadership) role, even though that’s probably what we were doing’. This confirms Harris and Lambert’s belief that

‘teacher leadership is not a formal role ... it is more a form of agency where teachers are empowered to lead development work that impacts directly on the quality of teaching and learning’ (2003: 43).

Collaborative Practices

It was apparent from this research that cultural norms of collaborative practice, with teachers working together rather than in isolation, underpinned successful school improvement. Leaders deemed working together as a team to be very beneficial. Sharing planning and reviewing practice together provided encouragement, support and access to a range of expertise. The teams considered it crucial to have teacher representatives spanning different class levels and with different levels of experience making up the composition of the leadership team.

The project instigated collaborative ‘learning community’ practices including staff sharing planning and resources, co-teaching and visitations to other schools to observe teaching. The impact of these collaborative practices was significant on staff morale and on professional relationships. One principal explained that this project ‘changed the school morale from individual to more of a ‘team morale’ and that there was ‘a huge shift in how people perceived other people on the staff in terms of expertise’. As a result she observed that the staff was now more critical of CPD models, and had ‘moved beyond’ a training model of ‘this is how you do it’.

The majority of questionnaire respondents viewed interacting and sharing practice with other schools, in a community of practice, as useful. They felt that a comfortable climate for sharing ideas was created during workshop sessions, and they valued opportunities for sharing practice. Benchmarking progress against other schools reassured one school that ‘we were not too far off the mark ... what we were doing was valid’. 27% of respondents deemed the Advisor’s facilitation of the clusters’ sharing and collaboration to be unhelpful. In future CPD the researcher would further develop participants’ ability to constructively critique each others’ work, reducing dependency on the Advisor and increasing dependency on each other within a community of practice.

Organisational Support and Change

Participants reported changes at multi-levels throughout the school including organisational, cultural and pedagogical changes (O’Sullivan, 2011: 117). These are now outlined below:

Organisational Change

Changes were made to timetables and subject time allocation. Funding was provided for the purchase of resources. Time for staff to plan collaboratively was organised.

Cultural Change

The following cultural norms which underpin successful school improvement (Stoll and Fink, 1996) were established, as suggested by participants' comments (in italics):

- continuous improvement (*'you have to challenge yourself all the time, because you can't do the same thing'*)
- collegiality (*'everyone was involved'*)
- lifelong learning (*'we are always developing in our teaching profession'*)
- risk taking (*'we'll even try new things'*)
- shared goals and
- shared responsibility for success (*'a concerted effort to look for a different or alternative way to work'*).

In particular collaborative practices were a hallmark of all projects with teachers sharing expertise and teaching together in classrooms. Teams reported that as a result, staff relations improved. Teachers agreed that staff working together improved one's teaching ability.

Pedagogical Change

All schools introduced new pedagogy to improve teaching and learning. Teachers increased the use of methodologies such as hands-on activities, collaborative learning and talk-and-discussion. They used a wide range of assessment tools, differentiated learning and engaged in co-teaching.

Pupil Learning Outcomes

Teachers deemed the greatest impact of the project to be improved pupil outcomes and attitudes. 93% agreed that improvements occurred in pupils' outcomes, attitudes and/or level of engagement. Examples included:

Pupils' Performance

57% of pupils from 1st to 6th class showed an improvement from the previous year on their result in a standardised mathematics test. Primary schools are mandated by the DES to administer this standardised test to 2nd, 4th and 6th class pupils annually.

Pupils' Engagement with Learning

A teacher commented that 'it has given a more positive attitude towards Maths'. A pupil commented 'I liked Maths this year because it is fun and I am getting better at it'.

Pupils' Confidence and Behaviour

A teacher commented that 'children learned to justify their answers... willing to change their mind having listened to group discussions'. One principal noted an improvement in discipline.

Support Provided by Researcher as Advisor

100% of questionnaire respondents indicated that external support was important or very important to support their school improvement efforts. All questionnaire respondents rated the support the researcher offered as being either 'very helpful' or 'helpful'. The benefit of an external advisor for one teacher was 'very powerful in keeping us going', for another it 'validated what we were doing' and for a third teacher it provided 'support, encouragement and an objective eye'. One experienced principal concluded 'I feel it was one of the best CPD opportunities within our own staff that we have had'. Workshop sessions and team meetings were deemed the most useful forms of support.

CONCLUSION

This transformative model of CPD had a positive impact on teachers, staff and pupils, creating a learning community and facilitating distributed leadership. It empowered and enabled teacher leaders to lead staff in the implementation of effective pedagogical change as shown by evidence-based data. During this project, teachers had a greater commitment to classroom rather than school processes, possibly because they derived most meaning from work with their pupils. While teachers deemed the greatest impact of the project to be improved pupil outcomes and attitudes, changes to organisational and cultural structures were also reported.

The researcher's role as an Advisor during this CPD study was as a critical friend who challenged participants' thinking but also acted as a coach who supported, encouraged and affirmed their work. The provision of continuous support by an external Advisor was deemed valuable by participants, as they tested theory in practice. There was a need to differentiate this support according to participants' needs, illustrating how individualised school planning is to each school.

The research findings show that factors that helped teams when leading planning include:

- support of senior management to encourage distributed leadership
- establishment of cultural norms and organisational structures to facilitate planning
- fostering staff ownership of change through school self-evaluation
- engaging in collaborative practices as a project team and staff
- staff expertise in pedagogy to set a clear vision
- providing a high level of support to staff, including preparation of resources for their use

- adopting democratic and coaching leadership styles
- access to continuous differentiated support from an external Advisor.

The key challenges faced by teams included:

- monitoring implementation on a consistent basis
- a lack of understanding of change management and leadership
- communicating with and maintaining the commitment of staff
- creating time for collaborative planning and preparation
- a lack of clear targets with an emphasis on pedagogical focus which impeded progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To support distributed leadership of learning and the establishment of learning communities in schools, emphasis needs to be placed on

- developing teachers' planning and leadership skills, in addition to their understanding of change management principles from the outset
- fostering a team approach to leading learning
- encouraging teachers to establish collaborative practices and planning time while simultaneously reviewing and evaluating work
- increasing support given to leaders when launching change with staff
- establishing a shared responsibility among staff for implementing change
- developing teachers' self-concept as leaders by encouraging reflection on their own leadership capacity during professional development
- establishing communities of practice within and between schools
- capitalising on teachers' interest to work together by establishing a culture that values 'critical friends'.

This project was conducted in association with Laois Education Centre. Sincere thanks to all teachers who partook in the project and shared their expertise throughout.

REFERENCES

- Bubb, S. (2005) *Helping Teachers Develop*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Bubb, S. and P. Earley. (2007) *Leading and Managing Continuing Professional Development*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Bubb, S. and P. Earley. (2008) *From Self-Evaluation to School Improvement: The Importance of Effective Staff Development*. London: CfBT Education Trust.
- Government of Ireland, *Education Act 1998*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.
- Department of Education and Skills (DES) (2002) *School Development Planning Initiative. National Progress Report 2002*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.
- Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2011) *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life. The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.
- Earley, P. and S. Bubb. (2004) *Leading and Managing Continuing Professional Development*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Educational Research Centre (ERC). (2010) *PISA 2009: The Performance and Progress of 15-year-olds in Ireland. Summary Report*. Dublin: ERC
- Flood, P. (2011) Leading and Managing Irish Schools: A Historical Perspective. In *Leading and Managing Schools*, eds. Helen O'Sullivan and John West-Burnham, 43-58. London: Sage.
- Garratt, B. (1987) *The Learning Organisation*. Glasgow: William Collins.
- Grossman, P., S. Wineburg, and S. Woolworth. (2000) 'What Makes Teacher Community Different from a Gathering of Teachers?' University of Washington, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, <http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/Community-GWW-01-2001.pdf> (accessed April 2, 2012).
- Guskey, T. (2002) Does It Make a Difference? 2002. Evaluating Professional Development. *Redesigning Professional Development*. 59, no. 6: 45-51.
- Hargreaves, A. and D. Fink. (2003) Sustaining Leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan* 84, no. 9: 693-700.
- Harris, A. (2003) Teacher Leadership as Distributed Leadership: Heresy, Fantasy or Possibility. *School Leadership and Management* Vol. 23, No. 3: 313-324, August 2003.
- Harris, A. and L. Lambert. (2003) *Building Leadership Capacity for School Improvement*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Hislop, H. (2011) Whole-School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning. *Le Chéile*, Issue 5, August.
- Kennedy, Aileen. (2005) Models of Continuing Professional Development: A Framework for Analysis. *Journal of In-Service Education* 31, no. 2: 235-250 <http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/id/eprint/3293> (accessed January 29, 2012).
- McDonagh, C., M. Roche, B. Sullivan and M. Glenn, eds. (2012) *Enhancing Practice through Classroom Research. A Teacher's Guide to Professional Development*. London: Routledge.

- McKernan, J. (1991) *Curriculum Action Research – A Handbook of Methods and Resources for the Reflective Practitioner*. London: Kogan Page.
- O’Sullivan, H. (2011). Leading and Managing Professional Learning in Schools. In *Leading and Managing Schools*, eds. Helen O’Sullivan and John West-Burnham, 111-125. London: Sage.
- O’Sullivan, H. and J. West-Burnham, eds. (2011) *Leading and Managing Schools*. London: Sage.
- Roche, M. (2012) Thinking Professionally and Reflecting on Practice. In *Enhancing Practice through Classroom Research*, eds. Caitríona McDonagh, Mary Roche, Bernie Sullivan and Máirín Glenn. 9-27. London: Routledge.
- Rosenholtz, S. (1989) *Teachers’ Workplace: The Social Organisation of Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Stoll, L. and D. Fink. (1996) *Changing our Schools*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- West-Burnham, J. (2005) Characteristics of a Learning Centred School. Handout at *North South Summer Conference. Leadership for Learning in Ireland*. August 22-23.

APPENDIX A

Teachers' Questionnaire (collated using Google Docs)

Leading Planning in Literacy/ Numeracy Project.

PDST in Association with (County's Name) Education Centre (2011/2012).

Many thanks for taking time to fill in this questionnaire. I greatly appreciate it.

Kind regards,

Jenny

Part 1: Background Information

1. Category of school in which you teach (Please tick the appropriate box)

- All girls
- All boys
- Co-educational

2. Focus of your Project (Please tick the appropriate box)

- Literacy
- Numeracy

3. Number of teachers in your school (Please tick the appropriate box)

< 10

10-15

16-20

> 20

4. Your position in the school (Please tick the appropriate box)

Principal

Deputy Principal

Post-holder

Non post-holder

5. Scale of project (Please tick the appropriate box)

Involved all staff in implementing change

Involved some staff in implementing change

6. Number of staff on your project team (Please type in response)

7. How did you become involved in the project team? (Please tick the appropriate box)

- I initiated the project in my school
- I was requested to join the team by a staff member
- I volunteered to be a member
- Other:

8. Prior to this project have you been involved in leading planning in your school?
(Please tick the appropriate box)

- Yes
- No

Part 2: Your Experience of Leading this Project

9. How effective do you rate the work of your project team in the following elements of leading planning? (Please tick one of the three ratings for each of the elements)

	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective
(a) Data gathering and analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Target setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Developing an action plan for improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Monitoring/ reviewing implementation of actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Evaluating the project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Gaining and maintaining staff commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective
(g) Consulting and communicating with staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(h) Supporting staff to implement change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(i) Critically reflecting on the project throughout	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(j) Working together as a project team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(k) Addressing challenges encountered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(l) Acknowledging successes throughout	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

10. What professional development opportunities were created for staff who were participating in the project? (Please tick appropriate box(es) and add 'other' if appropriate)

- Training provided by member of staff
- Training provided by external expert
- Access to research findings
- Visit to another school to learn from their practices
- Time for staff to plan
- Peer observation of colleagues
- No training provided
- Other:

11. Which of the following did you use to evaluate the project? (Please tick appropriate box(es) and add 'other' if appropriate)

- Pupil assessment data
- Questionnaires
- Focus groups or interviews
- Teacher discussion and reflection
- Collaborative teaching and review
- Peer observation of teaching and learning
- Other:

12. Who did you involve in the evaluation process? (Please tick appropriate box(es) and add 'other' if appropriate)

- Board of Management
- Teachers
- Pupils
- Parents
- Other:

13. How important were the following when leading this project?

	V I m p o r t a n t	v e r y I m p o r t a n t	N o t I m p o r t a n t
(a) School culture of staff collaboration and trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Leaders to drive the project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Access to external advisor for project guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Access to professional development for teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Time for planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Access to resources e.g. finance, materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. In your opinion which were the predominant leadership styles used by your team? (Please select no more than two styles)

- Democratic - forging consensus through partnerships - 'what do you think' approach
- Pace setting - setting high standards for performance - 'do as I do, now' approach
- Affiliative - creating harmony and emotional bonds - 'people come first' approach
- Coaching - developing people for the future - 'try this' approach
- Visionary - mobilizing people towards a vision - 'come with me' approach
- In command - demanding immediate compliance - 'do what I tell you' approach
- Other:

Part 3: PDST Support during Project

15. How useful were the following PDST modes of support in assisting you to lead this project?

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful
(a) Information provided at workshop sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Interacting and sharing with other schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Individual team meetings in Education Centre with PDST Advisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) School visits by PDST Advisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Resources provided e.g. planning templates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Phone/ e-mail support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. How would you rate the support offered by PDST in the following aspects?

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not helpful
(a) Motivating you as the project leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Supporting your work as a leader of this project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Planning the project e.g. data collection, target setting, action planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Facilitating the cluster of 4 schools to share and collaborate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Understanding change management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. How satisfactory was the timeline of PDST support to assist you in leading this project?

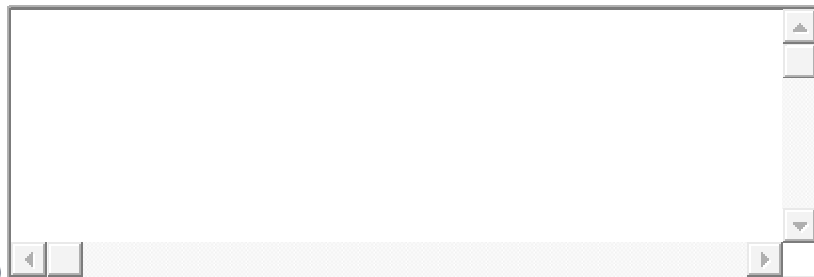
Very satisfactory

Satisfactory

Not satisfactory

18. What aspects of PDST support were most helpful? (Please type in your response

in the space provided)



19. What recommendations do you have for improving PDST support offered during this project? (Please type in your response in the space provided)



Part 4: Impact of Project

20. Please evaluate your experiences and learning during this project.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
(a) Did you enjoy participating in this project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No	Don't Know
(b) Did you learn what you needed to, and get some new ideas about leading planning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Did you use the information and ideas about leading planning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Did the ideas improve your effectiveness at leading planning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Did the project that you led achieve improvements in pupils' learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. Consider the following statements: Involvement in this project has

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
(a) Provided me with a positive experience of leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Improved my leadership capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Improved my teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Improved pupil outcomes/attitudes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Increased collaboration among staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Increased ownership of change by staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Increased staff reflection and evaluation of teaching and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. What have you learnt about leading planning as a result of this project?

23. Any other comments on your experiences of participating in this project?

Powered by [Google Docs](#) [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Additional Terms](#)

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Section 1: Introduction

1. What did you hope to achieve through participation in the 'Leading Planning' Project?

-

Section 2: Your Experience of Leading this Project

2. What been the most positive outcome of the project?
3. What aspect of leading planning did you find most rewarding?
4. What one aspect of leading planning did you find most challenging?
 - How did you try to overcome this challenge?
5. If you were to think of one key thing that helped you lead this project, what was it?
6. What impact has the project had on school staff?
7. How did you find the experience of supporting staff to change?
8. Can you identify any positive differences in the planning process experienced through this project and previous planning experiences?
9. How will your experience impact on future planning processes?
10. What, if any, were the unintended outcomes of this project?
11. What one thing might you have done differently?

-

Section 3: Impact of Project

12. What impact did the project have on you as a teacher leader?
13. After your experience of leading change, what is your impression of being a leader of learning?
14. What have you learned from your project experience?

-

Implementation of a Blended learning Educational Module on the Mental Health Act 2001 for Trainee Psychiatrists

Maria Frampton

INTRODUCTION

In Ireland, The Mental Health Act was passed by the Oireachtas on July 8th 2001 and fully implemented on November 1st 2006 (DOHC). Replacing the 1945 Mental Treatment Act, it is the most significant legislative change in Irish mental health services in over sixty years. As a result of the new Mental Health Act, the core principles of which are to improve the quality of care, and protect the interests of persons detained involuntarily, Irish Mental Health Law has been brought in line with international standards, such as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights (1950). The central reforms of the Mental Health Act include the establishment of an independent statutory organisation which promotes high standards of care in the delivery of mental health services, and the introduction of automatic review of involuntary orders by mental health tribunals. The author is employed by the independent statutory organisation whose responsibility is to oversee compliance with the Mental Health Act. The College of Psychiatry of Ireland (COPI) was formed in 2009, with plans to develop a core curriculum and introduce a new Irish examination system for psychiatry trainees previously under the auspices of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, London. Since there was no formal training for psychiatrists of all grades in the Mental Health Act, the author was invited by the COPI to design and implement an educational module on the Mental Health Act for the new core curriculum, fulfilling learning outcomes in legal and ethical aspects of psychiatry. The author's project is based on the development of the module using a blended learning approach. Kotter's eight-step change model (1996) is used to guide the design and implementation of the module, while Kirkpatrick's four level model (1994) assists evaluation of the module.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES UNDERPINNING MY WORK AS A PRACTITIONER

The role of a consultant psychiatrist is evolving, necessitating today a unique blend of skills and attributes. A psychiatrist is not just a clinician, but also a teacher, researcher, team leader, quality controller and an ambassador for a local service. The maintenance of a balanced view in a wide range of clinical and administrative situations is critical. Although primarily someone who derives greatest satisfaction from clinical work, I especially enjoy being an emissary for a high quality service and seeing clinical excellence delivered in an accountable and user-led fashion.

On a personal level, I see leadership ultimately as a social function. It is about influencing others by inspiring them, acting as a role model and communicating a clear vision that motivates them towards achieving goals while at the same time providing support and encouragement.

I believe that all doctors have a leadership role and need to attend to the development and maintenance of knowledge skills and behaviours for leadership in their Personal Development Plan throughout their career in the same way that they maintain their clinical knowledge and skills. Understanding one's own strengths and areas for development is widely acknowledged as a key component of becoming an effective leader. As part of the Masters in Leadership and Management Development that I completed in The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in 2012, I completed a number of assessment tools including a Personality Inventory (Briggs-Myers and Myers, 1980) and Emotional Intelligence (EQI), Leadership Style (Honey, and Mumford, 2006), Learning Style (Kolb, 2005) and Team Role Questionnaires (Belbin, 2010). Each of these assessments of personal qualities contributed to my development of self-awareness, crucial in my role of leading others.

THREE KEY LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN UNDERTAKING THE PROJECT

The first and perhaps greatest challenge was the power and resistance that exists between psychiatrists and lawyers in relation to the involuntary detention of people with mental illness. Despite the legal framework of the Mental Health Act, lawyers concerns at the denial of civil liberties versus the psychiatrist's paternalistic approach to protecting those with a mental illness continue to give rise to ongoing challenges, a proportion of which have ended up in the circuit court (judicial review) and the high court (Habeas Corpus). Additionally, lawyers require current evidence of mental illness, from the person, which is not always overt or expressed during a mental health tribunal. Psychiatrists in contrast are more concerned

about the history, course and prognosis of the person's illness. As a means of addressing this challenge, I invited three members of the Mental Health Lawyers Association of Ireland to participate in the module allowing for joint discussion and open sharing of perspectives.

The second challenge occurred in the relationship between psychiatrists and the independent statutory organisation. The organisation is seen by psychiatrists as adopting a legal as opposed to clinical and a negatively judgemental approach to patient care. It is viewed as the 'big brother', whose role is to police psychiatrists and increase their overall workload, while at the same time reducing the time they have for voluntary patients and supervision of junior staff, without any consideration for issues such as funding and lack of resources. Some of the views expressed by psychiatrists result from a lack of understanding between psychiatrists and the organisation as well as unease and resistance to change in the system. In order to help understanding, the roles and functions of the organisation were explored. A discussion on the advantages of the new Mental Health Act over the previous Mental Treatment Act (1945) formed part of the learning.

The final challenge was in making the 2001 Mental Health Act a training priority, alongside other core elements of training for junior psychiatrists. The Mental Health Act is a theory driven (as opposed to clinical) topic that does not form part of the candidates' everyday work, nor is it currently examinable material. Involving all stakeholders in addition to using a blended learning approach contributed to the success of the module. Stakeholders were from various disciplines and included lawyers, a psychiatrist, who was a member both of the independent organisation and the COPI, and participants in the educational module. Blended learning combines and aligns learning undertaken in face-to-face sessions with learning opportunities created online (University of Wolverhampton; Penn State University). Online preparatory materials were used to inform psychiatrists of learning objectives and key concepts in advance of the educational module. Course materials were uploaded to the college website following the module and online questionnaires before and after the course allowed psychiatrists to monitor their progress and mastery of the course content.

THREE KEY LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY UNDERTAKING THE PROJECT

The Mental Health Act module forms part of the core curriculum for basic specialist trainees (BSTs) fulfilling the learning outcomes in legal and ethical aspects of psychiatry. I was invited by the COPI to continue running the module for basic specialist trainees (BSTs) on an annual basis continually reviewing and updating the content in accordance with the needs of trainees and the statutory five year review of the Mental Health Act, currently taking place.

I was also asked to extend the module to higher specialist trainees (HSTs). There are over five hundred junior doctors (HSTs and BSTs) currently training in psychiatry in Ireland. From the start of their training, they are involved in decisions regarding detention of patients. Involuntary detention is understandably fraught with moral and ethical dimensions. The module encourages awareness through reflection and research on key issues of clinical practice related to the Mental Health Act such as advocacy and human rights. For each of these reasons, training in the Mental Health Act has become a mandatory part of the curriculum for all trainee psychiatrists.

Another opportunity offered by undertaking the project, has been to design and implement modules on other aspects of the Mental Health Act for consultant psychiatrists (e.g. mental health tribunals) using the blended learning approach. Such modules will be included in the Professional Competence Scheme (PCS) educational programme for consultant psychiatrists. As part of the PCS, the Tribunals module has been approved for continuing professional development (CPD) points, a mandatory requirement for all consultants, by the Medical Council, to remain on the professional register.

Finally, I was invited to participate in the College Leadership Development Programme for consultant psychiatrists, currently in the planning phase.

AS A RESULT OF MY WORK, THE CONSIDERATIONS FOR ‘LEADING CHANGE AS A PROFESSIONAL IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE’

Change is an inescapable part of organisational life and is essential for progress (HBR, 2005). In the words of Heraclitus, Greek Philosopher, ‘Change is the only constant’. Change can be a cyclical process which occurs in response to the needs of an organisation’s internal and external environments. An awareness of the need for change is the beginning of the whole change process (Armstrong, 2006).

Resulting from my experience of this project, the main priorities for initiating and gaining momentum for change are:

1. the establishment of a coalition of concerned parties with similar long term goals and interests
2. the development of a jointly shared vision of the change and
3. the enactment of the change process in a methodical, step-by-step fashion with an awareness of key cultural influences within organisations.

Forming a powerful coalition is about convincing people that change is necessary. This can take strong leadership with support from key powerful and influential people within an organisation. I needed to convince the Director of Training and Education and the Chief Executive Officer of my own organisation as well as members of the College Professional Competence Committee of the importance of introducing a formal learning module on the Act for trainees. The Mental Health Lawyers Association also needed encouragement to come on board. Managing change was not sufficient; I also had to lead it.

A clear vision helps people understand why you are asking them to do something. My vision for designing and implementing the module was clear, focussed and easy to communicate: psychiatry trainees would leave with a knowledge of the Human Rights and legislative background of the Mental Health Act, the role of the organisation and function of the Inspector of Mental Health Services, competency in knowing when and how to use the Mental Health Act during the assessment process, awareness of service users entitlements under the Mental Health Act, competency dealing with relatives and caregivers in matters relating to the Mental Health Act and knowledge of the mental health tribunal review system. Once people are made aware of what you are trying to achieve, then the directives they are given make more sense.

There are many theories about 'how to do change'. For my project I looked to the expertise of John Kotter, a professor at Harvard Business School and world-renowned change expert (Kotter, 1996). Kotter describes eight steps for leading change methodically. His model is ideally suited to a one-off change that is relatively stable, predictable and has a clear beginning, middle and end (Burnes, 1996). Each of his eight steps (create urgency, form coalition, create vision, communicate vision, remove obstacles, create short-term wins, build on the change and anchor the change into the culture) was in synchrony with my project.

I needed to be aware of the three different cultures that were influential in the team I was leading. The independent organisation's culture is to oversee or 'police' psychiatrists' practice of the Mental Health Act without influencing or offering guidance. The College represents psychiatrists who believe that the Act is too bureaucratic and over-legalistic, and that it disadvantages voluntary patients. The Mental Health Lawyers Association are most concerned with the denial of civil liberties of persons detained and believe psychiatrists' approach to be over-paternalistic towards persons detained and, therefore, not in the person's best interests.

Taking the cultural diversities into consideration, I arranged for two planning meetings with the organisation, the college and the lawyers prior to implementing the module to ensure that we were united in our task. We also met for a debriefing meeting over lunch immediately after the module. Each of these meetings proved to be valuable and provided an opportunity for an open discussion forum for all involved.

HOW MY AWARENESS OF PROFESSIONALISM/LEADERSHIP WAS INFLUENCED FOLLOWING ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER PROFESSIONS AT THE 3U LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

There are several definitions of leadership in the literature. Two of my personal favourites describe leadership as ‘the activity of a citizen from any walk of life mobilising people to do something’ (Heifetz, 1994) and ‘a doing thing; a performance art not defined by any set of personal qualities or competencies, but by what we actually do when faced with a challenge it is what we do when we acknowledge and respond to these challenges” (Pedler et al., 2010).

The 3U Leadership Symposium was the result of a partnership between Dublin City University, NUI Maynooth and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Professionals from various backgrounds, including healthcare and education, were invited to share their expertise through graduate presentations which covered a range of topics under the headings: ‘Leading Learning’, ‘Leading the Organisation’ and ‘Leading People’. There were also a number of guest presentations including “The Changing Moral Landscape” and “...The Global and Irish Backdrop to Change” delivered by academics based in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The symposium increased my awareness of:

- communication as the essence of leadership
- professionalism being central to the success of leadership
- leaders coming from all walks of life in many different guises, but having one thing in common, which is the ability to inspire others, to share their vision and to create passion for their chosen cause.

Each speaker communicated passion and commitment with a clear sense of their role, responsibilities and purpose. Of particular interest were the four components of professionalism described by Kieran Murphy, President of the Irish Medical Council, in his talk entitled Understanding the Role of the Professional in Leading Change. They are Knowledge, Collaboration, Communication and Focus on the Consumer. Professionalism is central to the success of leadership.

KEY LESSONS AND LEARNING FOR MY WIDER PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY AND FOR POLICY MAKERS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The nature of medical leadership is manifold. It is about how best to deliver services and it includes an awareness of what lies ahead and how one can turn challenges and changes into opportunities for improving services and care for patients.

In recent years, leadership has experienced a major reinterpretation from representing an authority relationship to a process of *influencing* followers or staff for whom one is responsible, by *inspiring* them or pulling them towards the vision of a new improved state. This model of leadership is referred to as “transformational” (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998). Leadership must always start with the ability to understand, manage and project oneself. Two additional levels in the Mohapel model (2007) are leadership of others (teams, formal and informal influential positions) and leadership of organisations (strategic leadership).

Our leaders must command respect and in order to do this they must be knowledgeable, authoritative and have the interpersonal skills to work with a wide range of people from all backgrounds. They must project confidence and work with integrity while at the same time be capable of humility and admit when they don't know. Leadership can be taught, learned and developed but it requires time, resources and expertise to nurture and maintain.

High quality leadership is required to drive the process of change. Lasting and successful change tends to be a methodical multi-step process that creates power and motivation sufficient to overcome all sources of inertia (Kotter, 1996). The Irish Health Services have been going through huge changes including the reconfiguration of the structure of the Health Service Executive for the last number of years. The many changes provide an opportunity for consultants to work with the Minister for Health and play a real role in shaping health policy for the development and improvement and delivery of healthcare services for patients.

The 2013 Leadership Symposium was the result of the 3U Partnership comprising Dublin City University, the National University of Ireland in Maynooth and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Graduate presentations focused on real practice-based projects which were credible for all concerned. The day provided an excellent and interactive educational experience for students and teachers/presenters alike.

Finally, one of my favourite quotes comes from Mahatma Gandhi (1957). It says ‘You must be the change you want to see in the world.’ This quotation, together with my experience at the Symposium serves to reinforce the value and importance of lifelong learning and personal development.

REFERENCES

- Alimo-Metcalfe, B. (1998) *Effective Leadership*. London: Local Government Management Board.
- Armstrong, M. (2006) *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice, 10th Ed.* London: Kogan Page Business Books.
- Belbin, M (2010) *Team Roles at Work (2nd Ed.)*. Oxford: Elsevier Ltd.
- Burnes, B. (2004) Kurt Lewin and the planned approach to change: a re-appraisal. *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 41 (6), 977-1001.
- Burnes, B. (1996) *Managing Change (2nd Ed.)*. London: Pitman
- College of Psychiatry of Ireland (2011, July) *Basic Specialist Training Blueprint*. Available at www.irishpsychiatry.ie
- Department of Health and Children (2001) *Quality and Fairness: a health system for you*. Dublin : DOHC.
- European Court of Human Rights (1950) *European Convention on Human Rights*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe
- Government of Ireland, *Mental Treatment Act, 1945*. Dublin: Dublin Stationery Office
- Government of Ireland, *Mental Health Act, 2001*. Dublin: Dublin Stationery Office
- Heifetz, R. (1994) *Leadership without Easy Answers*. Boston: Belknap Press.
- Honey, P. and Mumford, A. (2006). *The Learning Styles Questionnaire, 80-item version*. Maidenhead: Peter Honey Publications.
- Honey, P. and Mumford, A. (2000). *The learning styles helper's guide*. Maidenhead: Peter Honey Publications.
- Kolb, Y.A. & Kolb, D.A. (2005) Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, Vol. 4(2), 193-212.
- Kotter, J.P. (1996) *Leading Change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press
- Kotter, J.P. (1996) *How to Get Aboard a Major Change Effort: An Interview with John Kotter*. *Harvard Management Update*. September.
- Mohapel P., Dickson, G. (2007). *Physician Enhancement: Principles to Maximise Participation in the Healthcare System*. Victoria, Canada: The Centre for Health and Leadership Research.
- Myers, I, Briggs & Myers, P.B. (1980; 1995) *Gifts differing: Understanding Personality Type*. Mountain View, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.
- Pedler, M., Burgoyne, J. & Boydell T. (2010) *A Manager's Guide to Leadership (2nd, edition)*. Maidenhead: Mc Graw Hill.
- Penn State University USA, Blended Learning Initiative website: <http://weblearning.psu.edu/blended-learning-initiative>
- University of Wolverhampton, UK website: www.wlv.ac.uk.

‘The Pobal Project’ An Experiment in Shaping School Culture

Sharon Brady

INTRODUCTION

This is an account of how I, a primary school teacher working in a large, urban, recently amalgamated school, together with my colleagues, set about intentionally shaping the culture of our school, creating our own unique social education programme, reflecting a human rights ethos. This programme has become the blueprint for how we approach all social education issues within our school, and has become an integral part of our school’s identity, influencing how we interact with each other on a daily basis as a school community.

CONTEXT

Throughout the course of my participation in the various modules of the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (Mayo Education Outreach Centre), 2011-2012, I was keenly aware that a major aspect of the course would be a Leadership Focused project.

In pursuing a leadership focused project it would be necessary to put into practice all we had been learning about in theory, leading people, leading learning and leading the organisation. The task initially seemed daunting. Where on earth would I begin, what could I tackle, and would I succeed? However, as the course progressed, we, the course participants were given a confidence by the lecturers and a self-belief which I, personally, previously lacked.

I learned that positive proactive leadership is about identifying problems which require attention, gathering a core group of interested parties, devising a carefully worked out and progressive strategy, setting goals, making and monitoring changes and being prepared to make amendments as you work through the project.

As I thought about it, I realised that if I was to be successful, it would be prudent to consult my colleagues as to their own issues of concern in our school, and expend my energy, and ultimately theirs, on a project that would yield widespread benefits for our school community.

At the time our school community was a relatively new one, resulting from the amalgamation of two large urban single-sex primary schools, each with long established traditions of their own. We had 320 pupils enrolled, and were challenged to integrate a rapidly growing and diverse population of pupils from other cultures who had recently arrived in Ireland.

In conversation with colleagues it became clear that a recurring concern for a number of them was that we, as a new school, did not have a clear sense of identity. We were constantly referring back to how things had been done in our constituent schools, with people often identifying more with one ethos than the other. As an entity our school had evolved into a loose amalgam of our constituent schools but lacking a unifying identity.

Therefore, for my project, I set out, together with my colleagues, to create a new and unique 'brand' for our school, one which would clearly reflect the stated values of our mission statement. It went as follows:

To develop a spirituality enriched, intellectually motivated, socially integrated individual who will proactively participate in his/her education. We value working in partnership with parents and with the local community. We care for one another and our planet earth.

We would put our focus on the 'social integration' aspect of our ethos and in so doing, strive to enhance the social environment of our school for all the stakeholders in our whole school community. Our work was to be, essentially, an experiment in creating a positive school culture.

RATIONALE

When it became clear that my project was to be about shaping our school's social culture I was very enthused about it, because I believe passionately that a school community is a microcosm of society at large, and that children's experience of school has implications for how they will fit in to society as an adult. Having a positive experience of citizenship at school may strengthen citizenship in adulthood. I also am committed to my core value that all children are important and have a basic human right to be respected by their peers as well as by the adults in the school community.

Before I began I did a lot of research about the 'how' and 'why' of teaching children a human rights perspective. The Right Start, a Lift Off initiative promoting human rights education in primary schools, tells us that in teaching children a human rights perspective you essentially give them a yardstick against which they can measure their own behaviour towards others and their treatment by others. You are helping them to internalise universally accepted standards of behaviour which will forever enable them to navigate their way in the complex global world in which they are growing up.

Mosley (1996) tells us that offering children social strategies for developing respectful relationships within a warm and supportive environment will enhance not only their social performance, but will also impact positively on their academic performance, obviously of huge benefit is a school setting. This theory for social learning takes into account the importance of internal events and thought processes in the shaping of external behaviour. She advocates that what ultimately determines success in life is ability to relate to others, and so it is vital that children are participants in a deliberate and planned programme of social skills.

I wanted my school to become a rights respecting school. I believed that the children could be taught about their basic human right to respect and their corresponding responsibility to accept that others have this right too, and that if this could be achieved there could only be a positive impact on the teaching and learning environment in the school.

THE PROJECT, AND ITS CHALLENGES

I decided to call my social education project the ‘POBAL’ project, and I did so for two reasons. Firstly, POBAL is the Irish word for community, and I wanted the children to understand that together we were trying to create a special culture of enhanced community spirit in our school. Secondly, POBAL rhymes with Bubble, is a fun sounding word, one which even the children in the infant classes could latch onto. It was a good choice, I believe, because now all members of the school community instantly recognise the term POBAL, and what it stands for in terms of how we are expected to interact with each other every day.

It was very important for me to communicate to the children their role in our project, because essentially it was about improving the social situation in the school for them. I started by conducting a survey with all the children from age six upwards, asking them how they felt about the social situation in the school. The results were far more telling than I ever could have anticipated e.g. 83% of pupils were aware of ‘mean’ behaviour in the school, 58 % of children had experienced exclusion of some sort, and 86 % felt our schoolyard was not always a happy environment. Happily 92% of the children stated that they were happy to help bring about change.

With the children on-board, I was then challenged to achieve the same level of buy-in from my colleagues. Initially I had the enthusiastic support of a core group of four colleagues who, like myself, had genuine concerns about the social climate in our school, and wanted to change the school culture so that it would be more caring, inclusive and rights respecting, with an increased focus on rewarding children for positive behaviour rather than being punitive in our interactions with them. However, it was necessary to sell the idea to a critical mass of colleagues in order to achieve success.

Initially a number of colleagues, when consulted, genuinely did not feel that there were any social problems in the school, stating that if there were any, they would have been blatantly obvious to everyone. On being presented with the results of the children's survey however, no colleague could fail to recognise that there was obviously a lot of unrest at play under the teachers' radar. Subsequently I surveyed the teachers themselves, giving them the chance to express freely their views on social interactions in the school, and soliciting their suggestions and ideas about how problems could be remediated. It was clear from this anonymous survey that many teachers believed that although we, as teachers, were all individually motivated to develop a positive social culture in the school, it was a lack of a uniform approach to dealing with social problems in the school that was preventing this from happening. Clearly we needed to work out our own social programme for our own context and each and every teacher and pupil needed to buy into it if success was to be achieved.

I was keenly aware that my colleagues, like myself, were very busy, and were often stressed through the demands of coping with a heavy workload in large busy classrooms. The last thing I wanted to do was alienate them by presenting them with yet another social education programme to follow. It was clear that by personally providing my colleagues with carefully worked out, context specific, lessons in human rights education, which were interactive, fun, age appropriate and interesting for the children, was my best bet for success. While this required a lot of effort from me personally, it also illustrated to the teachers how committed to this project I was personally, and how realistic I was in terms of what could be expected from busy colleagues. This approach worked. The lessons were a great success, leading to the children in the school writing our school's very own Charter of Pupils' Rights and Responsibilities. The teachers expressed how interesting the process was and how beneficial it was for everyone to evoke this instantly recognisable charter as and when needed in dealing with social problems in the school as they arose.

Another challenge I met was coping with time management issues. As primary school teachers one hundred per cent of our formal school day is spent in direct contact with the children, so it is actually quite difficult to get groups of colleagues together to discuss aspirational concerns around school culture. The agenda of staff meetings is already crowded with practical management issues around curriculum development, organising whole school events like school concerts, sports day and a whole myriad of extra-curricular activities. I needed to interface with the staff, but when could this be done?

I decided to ask the Principal if we could regularly schedule a POBAL slot on the school agenda for all future staff meetings and as a result of this we now have a heightened awareness in our school of 'school culture' and its importance. I also instituted a regular schedule of whole school POBAL assemblies, where as a school community we come together to focus on our Pupils' Charter and what it stands for. Such assemblies regularly validate how

the culture of our school is changing for the better. Many of my colleagues have also regularly come together after school to support this project and me personally, which illustrates their commitment to it. I recognise that, over the years, I had personally banked a lot of social capital with these colleagues, and they would have come to know me as someone generally of good humour and always willing to lend a hand and offer support, perhaps essential ingredients for leadership in and of their own right!

Yet another challenge I met through the course of my project, and continue to struggle with, given that my project is ongoing and will continue to be so in the future, is how to keep it fresh, and keep the charter 'live'. The POBAL project initially was to devise a Charter of Pupils' Rights and Responsibilities, and establish a positive awards programme in the school. Since then we have had a whole variety of activities to keep it live, including having a whole school FRIENDSHIP WEEK, fun interactive assemblies, POBAL poster, poetry and rap competitions, and most recently the establishment of a children's POBAL committee. Future plans include having a school POBAL song and developing our own conflict resolution tool for the children in our school.

While the project was mine initially, I no longer feel the burden of trying to keep it live on my own. POBAL has taken on a life of its own. We are all committed to keeping it going because we have proof that it is effective. A recent pupil survey indicated that 99% of the children enjoy taking part in POBAL initiatives, 75% of the pupils say their class regularly refers to the Charter of Pupils' Rights and 86% of pupils stated that they now feel more confident about standing up for what they know to be right. I know that our whole school community working together can be very creative and innovative ,and the children in particular have no shortage of plans for POBAL going forward!

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES INHERENT IN MY PROJECT

In carrying out the POBAL project in my school I have learned that the beauty of taking on a leadership project is that it allows you to put centre stage those aspects of leadership which you personally value most.

In my own personal definition of Leadership in a school setting, I attach great importance to the need for collaboration with all members of the school community, the need to put a very clear focus on school culture and also to the need to harness the power of assembly in creating a corporate view within the school community. The POBAL project set out to influence the culture of our school for every child and adult in the school. The children were to become more aware of their rights and responsibilities, and to see themselves individually as having a role to play in creating a caring and inclusive atmosphere in the school. In establishing a positive awards programme in the school the teachers were to change their mind-set to one where positive behaviour is promoted, recognised and rewarded at times in a most intentional

way. Parents were asked to familiarise themselves with the POBAL ethos and promote the concept of the charter when dealing with aspects of social concern with their children, the teachers and school management.

All of this necessitated collaboration with and data gathering from the interested parties i.e. teachers, pupils, parents and management. In conducting surveys and focus groups with these groups each felt that their input into the project was of great value and because of this the level of buy-in was high. It has also become the norm in our school to discuss 'school culture' and 'social climate'. Terms such as rights, responsibilities, and respect and conflict resolution have become part of the vernacular in regular use by teachers and pupils alike. In using such a clear vocabulary consistently, and in evoking the pupils' charter regularly all parties clearly understand what the social aspirations in the school are all about.

By instituting our regular POBAL assemblies, our school community has come to develop a more corporate view, where previously we were more akin to separate 'pods' of people working frequently in isolation on each other. These assemblies have also become the vehicle for disseminating information in the school and celebrating the successes of our school and pupils together, and the children in particular look forward to them as they invariably include an element of fun!

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WIDER PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY INHERENT IN MY PROJECT

The education setting, particularly at primary and secondary level, is unique in many ways. When you are trying to make changes in schools it is important that these changes have a clear and positive effect on teaching and learning. They must yield benefits to the teachers and pupils in order to be sustainable. It is important to avoid needless increased paperwork in schools, as they are already such busy places, the focus needs to be on creative and innovative teaching and learning. On paper, my project has created one simple Charter of Pupils' Rights, and yet this has revolutionised how we approach social education in our school.

In the same way that teachers must have pupils on board when introducing change initiatives in their classroom/ school in order to insure success, I firmly believe that policy makers need to collaborate very carefully with teachers when making decisions about changing any aspect of what goes on in schools. An intimate knowledge of the school setting is vital to understanding how the change dynamic will unfold there. Civil servants dictating change without really listening to teachers and school management and without adequate provision of resources should understand that any chance of subsequent success is hugely compromised.

Leading change where children are involved requires simplicity of purpose and a consistent approach. Children/ young people are quite unforgiving in nature, insofar as they have a low tolerance for failed promises and general waffle. There is, consequently, a basic honesty in how they approach change initiatives. They like to see results and, if they do, their motivation and enthusiasm can be boundless. As adults and policy makers we ignore this simplicity and consistency at our peril.

In terms of policymaking, where social education is concerned, I believe that schools can find their own unique solutions to social problems if they are adequately resourced. One size does not necessarily fit all. My POBAL project has been relatively successful, and has huge potential for our school going forward. However as a busy classroom teacher, who also has other responsibilities in the school, I am frustrated at the lack of time I have personally to optimise what it might achieve.

Through POBAL we have clearly impacted on how most of the children interact with each other every day. This satisfactory level of achievement with the majority of the children has highlighted the particular problems of those children who struggle with social and behavioural problems above and beyond the norm. I believe that if policy makers could support schools through enhanced psychological and counselling services for troubled children and, indeed, their parents, a smoother path would be laid ahead for these children, and ultimately for society as a whole.

There is a wealth of knowledge in schools in helping to pinpoint children at risk, but when school referrals for intervention lead to children being placed on waiting lists for services and counselling with a variety of other agencies, many of which operate in isolation of each other and of schools, children fall between the cracks and society again suffers. Policy makers should, in my opinion, consider making the school the setting for coordinating interventions for such children, and provide the necessary professionals to the school setting to achieve this. In the long term I suspect a lot of money could be saved, particularly in the judicial system.

MY EXPERIENCE OF THE 3U LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

The 3U leadership symposium was a very interesting experience for me. In being exposed to the projects of leaders from a variety of settings I came to fully understand that leadership as a topic is in and of itself, unique. It was refreshing to hear about the experiences of people leading change initiatives across a range of medical settings, and from other people working towards change in the non-primary sector of education, which is the sector I am familiar with.

Clearly leading change has its own dynamic. It is about leading people and ultimately changing systems. Everyone whose presentation I heard on the day of the symposium was very passionate about their own projects. Working in their own individual settings they had been motivated by a need to bring about improvements and solve problems. There was no sense of a top-down didactic approach to change, but a very obvious hands on approach, where realistic expectations, hard-work, high levels of collaboration, consultation and a keen sense of good humour all contrived to breed success.

I have been inspired by the people I have met and the stories I have heard, and indeed I believe that policy makers in our government, and administrators in our civil service, could only benefit from meeting with and listening to practitioners of such calibre working, in the areas of medicine and education in Ireland today. If a meeting of such minds could be facilitated who knows what could be created for Ireland and Irish people into the future.

REFERENCES

- Kerr, M. (ed.) (2006) *The Right Start: Introducing Human Rights Education within the Primary School*. Amnesty International: Dublin.
- Mosley, J., (1997) *Quality Circle Time in the Classroom*. 2nd ed. UK: LDA.

Laying foundations for the New Junior Cycle, Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and School Self Evaluation

Sinéad Lawlor

INTRODUCTION

The results of surveys by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which assesses the knowledge and skills of 15 year olds in reading, mathematics and science, identified a concerning reduction in literacy and numeracy levels of Irish students in 2009. Combined with rumblings of inadequacies in our education system from Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), this became a launching point for a new emphasis for secondary education in Ireland. A new Junior Cycle curriculum which developed key skills in our students, notably literacy and numeracy and a mechanism to assess, evaluate and monitor school performance, School Self Evaluation (SSE) were born. Although many changes were heralded, the process for implementing these changes was uncertain. This paper charts my leadership experiences, opportunities and challenges encountered when introducing and developing these many changes in a large single-sex secondary school in Ireland. Recommendations for leaders implementing change are also included.

BACKGROUND

In July 2011, the then Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Ruairí Quinn TD announced that students entering secondary school in September 2012, later revised to 2014, should choose only eight subjects as opposed to the existing eleven in which to sit an examination for their Junior Certificate. The analysis of a questionnaire I devised for our staff revealed that concern existed regarding the lack of detailed information and adequate in-service training. I decided to attempt to bridge the information gap and allay their concerns.

As time passed, the practicalities of implementing this New Junior Cycle remained vague. Further investigation revealed that the development of many key skills in students were to be emphasised in the new proposals. This appealed to my core values as a teacher and gave me a concrete focus on which to base my action research.

VALUES

As a classroom teacher of Economics, Business Studies and French, I have always believed that the purpose of education is to elicit the greatness within each individual and I enjoy exploring various teaching and learning methodologies in order to achieve this. Gradually, I had become frustrated by time and curricular restraints in my attempt to explore the potential of each student. I also believe that over time, basic literacy and numeracy abilities had declined among the student body. This, from my personal experience, has impacted on students' performance in many subjects.

I admire greatly the many extra-curricular activities undertaken by staff and students in the school which often display a great variety of abilities and talents which may otherwise go unnoticed. The requisite skills contribute immensely to the enhanced education of an individual and yet, until now, they are afforded little or no formal recognition.

In our mission statements most schools claim to provide a holistic education for our students, encouraging them to reach their full potential morally, intellectually, physically, artistically and socially. But do we as educators only pay lip service to such claims? Perhaps, building on solid foundations, through the directed development of the key skills identified in the New Junior Cycle, we may truly have the opportunity to practise what we preach.

RATIONALE

In 2011 the Department of Education and Skills (DES) launched the national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy. That document entitled *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life* recognises that

literacy and numeracy should permeate all elements of a broad and balanced curriculum [and that] developing good literacy and numeracy skills among all young people is fundamental to the life chances of each individual and essential to the quality and equity of Irish society. (DES, 2011: 44, 9)

Literacy and numeracy were identified as the core key skills to be central to teaching and learning in all subjects.

PROCESS

Step one in the research was to create a focus group comprising teachers from a variety of subject departments and with a wide range of experience levels. I recognised that a broad spectrum of interests and disciplines should be represented within the group without it being prohibitively large. Fortunately, it was not difficult to put together a group of eight

enthusiastic teachers with differing lengths of service and a range of expertise and skills. The eight members were selected following my requests to subject departments for one volunteer who would be interested in examining the implementation and implications of the New Junior Cycle in my school.

The chief responsibility of this focus group was to up-skill staff in new teaching methodologies. The school engaged the expertise of the literacy and numeracy personnel at the Professional Development Services for Teachers (PDST) to assist in our endeavours. Students were also asked to give their views of their learning experiences and this helped inform the choice of methodologies to be used. I prepared a 'Methodology Toolkit' for classroom use and each member experimented with a variety of methodologies and reported on their perceived effectiveness with various class groups. I correlated the feedback and shared this with the staff as a whole. Each member of the focus group took responsibility for sharing their knowledge and experiences with other staff within their subject areas or general disciplines and encouraged them to experiment and share in turn. In this way, all teachers gained valuable insight into a rich portfolio of learning and teaching strategies and benefited from the experience of their peers. As further information came to light regarding New Junior Cycle, I presented the information to staff.

RESULTS

The results were enlightening. In general, the eight teachers who participated (ranging from 10 to 26 years teaching experience) felt that the overall teaching and learning experiences in their classroom had greatly improved.

Peer coaching in the teaching methodologies ensured that by year-end 75% of respondents from our staff felt that they were at least slightly more equipped to implement the literacy strategy and more informed about the new Junior Cycle reforms. Almost half felt prepared to teach it.

Feedback from students also revealed that they enjoyed learning more, and their recall ability improved. As this process was measured and subsequently rolled out to all staff, it became our focus for year one of SSE. Now, not only were teaching and learning experiences improved, but we also made significant contributions to the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, the New Junior Cycle where literacy is a key skill, and had laid solid groundwork for SSE. Although it had not yet been formally recognised, we had identified and benefited from the close correlation of these three new government initiatives.

CHALLENGES

Negativity

As a natural optimist, one of the greatest challenges I encountered was trying to understand and be patient with negativity and the fact that not everyone shared my enthusiasm for change. Initially, some of my colleagues felt that their teaching methods were being criticised or questioned, and they were sceptical of new approaches. This scepticism actually worked in my favour as they identified potential pitfalls which I otherwise may not have anticipated. As Maurer suggests, ‘resistance to a new initiative can actually be highly instructive ... those who resist ... may see alternatives that we never dreamed of (Maurer in Fullan, 2000: 159).

In my focus group ideas were challenged and reviewed regularly. It proved beneficial and ultimately time conserving to have explored them in advance. Gradually, the suspicion developed into curiosity and advanced to co-operation from many and even, in some cases, admiration for what can be gained collectively from empowering individuals.

Fear of change

Teachers can be creatures of habit with structure and organisation which provides a certain level of control. The unknown weakens that control. We are familiar with and work within a set curriculum which lasts many years; exploring outside this arena takes courage. For some, it can be perceived as a criticism that their methods and teaching resources are being questioned. We can fear change, not simply in itself, but also the process which elicits uncertainties and insecurities. Much doubt and negativity in others appeared to me to stem from fear or lack of information and when given time and knowledge, for many, it dissipated or at least dwindled.

Change takes time but the courage of one or two individuals to break the mould can inspire and encourage others to embrace a similar path. By identifying and empowering some of my colleagues, together we inspired courage in others. Having that courage, however, does not eliminate the fear. Even as a confident leader there is always an element of doubt – what if it all goes wrong? Can I sustain the enthusiasm and persevere despite the fear and scepticism of others? It is well summarised by Havel:

It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense ... gives us the strength to live and to continually try new things. (Havel in Fullan, 2000: 161)

This is also a very important consideration for self-preservation and sustainability as ‘someone will always be dissatisfied with the leader’s performance’ (Fullan, 2000: 160). I realise now that you cannot be all things to everyone and that change in culture and practices takes time. However, by believing in the merits of the change and regularly reminding myself of these, I persevered.

Time

Time is such a valuable commodity in school life and, as with all our resources, there never appears to be enough of it. Finding time to meet with others, the time and opportunity to try out new practices and allowing time for others to grow accustomed to change and adapt to it were all challenging. Momentum depended on the voluntary effort and dedication of our entire team. We invested hours, newly mandated as part of a trade union agreement, lunch times, break times and homework time, all to ensure progress and success.

Patience paid dividends. Gradually, one person after another came on board and now, a large majority of the staff have bought into the use of new methodologies and have grown more enthusiastic about the potential of new processes.

OPPORTUNITIES

Collaboration

Teachers and principals help each other by working collaboratively. Working with colleagues helps teachers and principals in their professional development (Watts, 1985: 118).

In this project the new alliances I have formed within my school have been very rewarding. I have developed strong working relationships with many colleagues, both within and outside the focus group. Teaching can be quite an isolating profession yet we can benefit so much personally and professionally from working together. The talent of my colleagues has been harnessed through our collaborative work which continues to expand through the effective use of the newly mandated hours. We use a similar format to our focus group to implement School Self Evaluation (SSE) and peer coaching in the use of IT and resource sharing. The success of our new initiatives is achieved through collaboration with one another and with management.

The process has drawn on the collegial intelligence of the school where classroom practice is improved by staff and management working together and recognising that 'the sum of the parts is greater than the whole when staff work together to improve and develop one another's practice' (MacGilchrist, 1997: 108).

Support systems for the profession, in my view, have strengthened. I was unaware of the level of assistance provided by the Professional Development Services for Teachers (PDST) subject support groups and trade unions until I embarked on this process. I have developed relationships within these groups which I believe will greatly enhance my professional experience into the future.

Distributed Leadership

This project has given me a credible platform for leadership within my school. I am empowered and I encourage others to explore outside the conventional confines of the job. A culture of distributed leadership is building in my school and is firmly supported by school management. With the growing demands on schools not only is distributed leadership desirable, it is also becoming more essential to ensure the efficient functioning of our schools. I believe it is not only beneficial for our school communities but also for us as teachers. It can offer the potential to reach those higher order needs of self-esteem and self-actualisation. It also acts as a great motivator.

Much teacher leadership already exists but common culture resists labelling it as such. Extra-, co- and cross-curricular activities abound. The challenge remains to establish a clear purpose behind these activities and to utilise

the expertise within the school community and harness the talents of all key stakeholders for the purpose of improving the processes, content and outcomes of teaching and learning.
(Duignan, 2006: 113)

New Initiatives

My investigation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy opened up links for me to the emerging School Self Evaluation (SSE) process. Hailed as ‘a collaborative, reflective process of internal school review whereby the ...[school community]... engages in reflective enquiry on the work of the school’ it attracted much attention from the school community as yet another addition to our ever-expanding workload (Inspectorate, DES: 8).

However, after attending information meetings organised by the PDST, it became apparent that the government’s Literacy and Numeracy Strategy was an integral part of SSE.:

effective schools use assessment information, including information on literacy and numeracy, to inform their school self-evaluation, reflective practices and their school improvement plan.
(DES, 2011: 79)

It appeared that the work being undertaken by our focus group would also play an important role in the development and improvement of our SSE plan. We have since used the findings from our literacy methodology experimentation to help inform our effectiveness and plan for the future. In addition to this, we have built on the collaborative work with the wider school community to become an SSE pilot school for the PDST.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LEADING CHANGE AS A PROFESSIONAL

Communication

An ability to communicate effectively is one of the most powerful tools we possess in leading change. We need to be conscious of the messages that we convey, or fail to, aurally, verbally and physically.

It is essential to listen carefully to people. By processing their concerns, experiences and suggestions ideas can materialise. Reluctance to change can often be due to a lack of information, misunderstanding or the fear of failure. However, this reluctance can be very constructive.

It is important to inform people about what is happening, to keep them up to date, to give them the reasons for and information on change. How and why this change can be beneficial should also be communicated as should the steps to be taken along the way. It is also important to maintain a positive outlook. Change can be daunting but negativity can be toxic – not only for us as teachers and leaders, but it transmits to our colleagues, our students and the wider school community. We should accentuate the positives and seek to challenge existing processes to shape change where appropriate.

Step by step

Clear direction gives people confidence in what they are doing and why. Too much change at once can be daunting so a series of SMART targets can help, this is, short-term goals which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound. Such goals can help us to manage the many new departures in education which frequently occur within the confines of restricted financial resources.

KEY LESSONS & LEARNING FOR WIDER PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY AND POLICY MAKERS

Morale

All teachers can be leaders. The current climate of wage cuts, increased workloads, larger class sizes, job insecurity and the impact of challenging societal changes is testing that potential. Morale is low for many in the profession. As the key component to motivation and productivity, it is essential to address the issue of morale along with the need for effective advocacy and adequate resources.

At an individual and school level, all can contribute by striving to emulate the five practices of exemplary leadership identified by Kouzes and Posner:

Model the way (practise what you preach), inspire a shared vision (assist and communicate the vision), challenge the process (offer alternatives to existing practise), enable others to act (assist, encourage and participate with the involvement of others), encourage the heart (contribute to a happy work environment). (2007: 14)

Provision for Continuous Professional Development

On a wider scale, timely, regular, fully resourced and meaningful Continual Professional Development (CPD) is essential. With only one year remaining until the New Junior Cycle is to be introduced for English, to date, no preparation for the new curriculum has been provided to teachers. This failure erodes confidence, generates uncertainty and fosters resistance to the process. Prompt and effective CPD can illustrate respect for teachers and their professionalism. It emphasises the opinion of John Coolahan quoted by Richard Pring (2011) in *Le Chéile*:

wholehearted engagement with well-designed CPD activity can be a catalyst that unleashes new energies, fosters fresh enthusiasm, cultivates deeper understanding and fine-hones pedagogic skills. (2011: 21)

Training, consultation and consideration provide the basis for empowerment, motivation, a sense of achievement and hence growing confidence. This in turn, enhances ones professional capacity. It is well expressed by Kilcher (1992) as quoted by Edwards:

when teachers feel valued and are empowered ... they pass this empowerment on to their students ... teachers will be respected as authority figures and their opinions and efforts will be valued. (Kilcher in Edwards, 2007: 90)

Such empowerment needs to be nurtured now more than ever as it provides the foundations for self-regulation, reflection and, therefore, self-evaluation.

Feedback

Teachers want to know that such significant changes to their practise are worthwhile

The experience of successful implementation ... changes teachers' attitudes and beliefs. They believe it works because they have seen it work ... the key element in significant change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs is clear evidence of improvement in the learning outcomes of their students. (Guskey, 2002: 383/4)

Communicating the successful outcomes of new literacy methodologies was the most significant contribution to the success of our focus group. It ensured the meaningful engagement of many other staff members. On a national level, it is important to regularly report the experiences of pilot schools both positive and negative.

Such dramatic changes to current school practice must be carefully planned and implemented with consideration, communication and the participation of all stakeholders. Policy makers should also recognise ongoing contributions to change. The goodwill and professionalism of teachers cannot be simply taken for granted.

3U LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

Although the teaching and medical professions may appear to be poles apart, engagement with others at the 3U Leadership Symposium highlighted for me our most significant common bond - people. Presentations and discussions centred on interaction with people where participants exhibited a high degree of professionalism, leadership and emotional intelligence. Regardless of their profession or their project work, the contributors recognised the importance of effective interaction with others and the necessity for strong people skills to ensure the success of their work.

Change is a process. This process requires investment: financial, mental, physical and emotional. As with all good investment, it can only be productive when properly organised and utilised. The essential driving force to ensure its success is effective leadership: 'Good leaders look ahead, anticipate change and prepare people for it so that it doesn't surprise or disempower them' (MacBeath, 1998: 63).

REFERENCES

- Collarbone, P. and J. West-Burnham. (2008) *Understanding Systems Leadership – Securing Excellence & Equity in Education*. Network Continuum.
- Department of Education and Skills (2011) *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life – The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People, 2011-2020*, Dublin: DES
- Duignan, P. (2006) *Educational Leadership – Key Challenges and Ethical Tensions*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press
- Edwards, T. L. (2007) *Classroom Teacher Perceptions of Leadership in the Classroom, School and Educational Community*. Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University.
- Fullan, M. (2000) *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Kotter, J. P. (1995) *Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail*. Harvard Business Review
- Kouzes, J. and B. Posner. (2007) *The Leadership Challenge, 4th Edition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- MacBeath, J. (1998) *Effective School Leadership Responding to Change*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- MacBeath, J. (2008) *School Leadership & Management: Leading Learning in the Self-Evaluating School*. Abington: Routledge
- MacGilchrist, Barbara, K. Myers & J. Reed. (1997) *The Intelligent School*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- NCCA (2011) *Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle - Innovation & Identity, Schools Developing Junior Cycle* Dublin: NCCA.
- Richard Pring. (2012). A Wider Vision of Learning and Teaching. *Le Cheile*. 5 (5), 11-23.
- Watts, H. (1985). When teachers are researchers, teaching improves. *Journal of Staff Development*, 6 (2), 118-127.

Establishing a monitoring unit for the evaluation of adult epilepsy

Emma Irving

INTRODUCTION

Epilepsy is one of the most common neurological disorders affecting people in Ireland. When seizures do not respond to medication, long-term monitoring (LTM) is the ‘gold standard’ tool in evaluating these patients. It can be used for the classification of epilepsy, to evaluate whether epilepsy surgery is required for patients with intractable partial epilepsy and to differentiate between epilepsy and non-epileptic attack disorder. In most studies, LTM has contributed significantly to either a change or refinement in diagnosis in up to 70% of patients.

The purpose of this study was to establish an epilepsy monitoring unit as part of a ‘change’ project. This was introduced in a Neurology ward in a large public hospital in Dublin. The project involved 14 patients, who had recurrent uncontrolled episodes, being admitted into an epilepsy monitoring unit where trained staff observed them synchronously with video and EEG recordings. In most studies, LTM has contributed significantly to either a change or refinement in diagnosis in up to 70% of patients. In the UK, recent papers have indicated a 23% misdiagnosis rate of epilepsy. If similar rates exist in Ireland, the cost of wasted resources is unsustainable to the Health Service Executive (HSE). While it is clear that the epilepsy monitoring unit is a key component in strengthening patients’ diagnoses and improving quality services, it is important to acknowledge the challenges and barriers that occurred during the change process, and in so doing, take steps to proactively minimise or remove these obstacles for the future.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES UNDERPINNING MY WORK AS A PRACTITIONER

We all have a system of beliefs that we have developed throughout our lives. During college we learned how to think critically and professionally. Along with these teachings, ethical behaviour is embedded into each person and every aspect of practice. Honesty has always been one of the personal values that I incorporate into my profession. Self-awareness is very important in determining your true values and how important they are to you, both

personally and professionally. My patients know that I am going to be completely honest with them and I expect the same in return. When dealing with a patient I often consider how I would want myself or my family cared for in this situation. If you treat every person in this manner, both you and the patient will respect each other and generate a trustworthy relationship. In my professional commitment I have compassion and respect for all patients. We are responsible for providing optimal care for our patient's regardless of the conditions or situations presented to us. I feel I have always acted as an advocate for my patients. Patients' rights, safety, and well-being are always top priorities for me.

It is also important that an organisation has a set of values that all the employees working in the company can understand and relate to. In healthcare this is particularly warranted as we are dealing with vulnerable people and their families every day. The relationship between the healthcare worker that is based on trust, understanding, compassion and support serves to improve the patient's experience of the hospital, and has an impact on their quality of life. I think, when leading a change project, that it is important not to lose your values no matter what challenges are faced. Sometimes it is difficult to remain true to your beliefs when certain situations arise. However, you should try not to compromise your values while accommodating the values of the organisation. I always try to look positively at a situation and not create a negative environment for my patient. As I continue to work in this profession I will contribute to and promote my profession. I feel we are always shaping and improving practice even if we do not have the resources we need.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN UNDERTAKING THE PROJECT

Leadership constantly presents challenges and I was presented with quite a few during the project. There was a lack of communication at times. Many involved in the project were new to the concept of multi-disciplinary teams and were unaware of who needed to be included in the communication process and at what stage. For example, the first patient that entered the epilepsy monitoring unit only had seizures during her sleep. The neurology consultant decided to sleep deprive her on the first night in order to increase the yield of capturing epileptiform changes on the EEG. This was not successful, so he decided to repeat the process the following night without informing the neurophysiology staff or the nurses on the ward. When I went up to the unit the patient was very upset and I was confused as to why we were sleep depriving the patient again, when capturing sleep would most likely be more informative. I rang the team to explain both the patient's and my concerns and we were able to compromise. Overall, though, the interdisciplinary team was a great asset to the work, and could, perhaps, be even more effective, by including other disciplines such as nutrition, neuropsychiatry and a smoking cessation nurse.

The lack of co-ordination of care was another challenge. Protocols were established but were not followed by all staff members. The most important protocol created was for the nurses in assessing and caring for a patient having a seizure. Some nurses followed the protocol and performed cognitive assessments such as asking the patient to talk, raise arms, or point to objects in the room. The more information we can obtain during and immediately after a seizure, the greater the ability to confirm diagnoses. Other nurses left the room when the patient was having a seizure and did not provide optimal care.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY UNDERTAKING THE PROJECT

I chose this project for multiple reasons: I felt that it would be challenging; a valuable addition to the organisation; an excellent learning opportunity; that it would give me a different perspective on management and finally, I felt that the added responsibility would be advantageous for my professional development. On reflection, all of these goals were achieved. The additional duties assigned to me allowed me to experience leading a large change project incorporating the co-ordination of colleagues in multiple disciplines. I found it to be an enlightening experience especially in regards to how much the change process made me examine the organisation within which I work and my own role in it from multiple perspectives. Although some of the roles I had to take on were stressful at the time, at this stage of completion and on further reflection, I have identified that it helped me to become more self-confident in my method of management and gave me the opportunity to develop my interpersonal skills. The highlight of carrying out this project was communicating the vision, seeing it being achieved successfully with people learning new skills and working together to the best of their abilities. The people involved in the project were a highly effective and strong team with each member learning from one another. The success of the monitoring was disseminated within the neurology and neurophysiology community in Ireland.

Due to my expertise in this area, I was appointed to the post of Chief Neurophysiology Scientist in Beaumont Hospital. A new four bedded Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU) was established there in 2013. Since being appointed, I have been given the task of co-ordinating and providing training to staff members, to ensure that all staff members are fully competent in all aspects of Neurophysiology. Through the use of an effective rota, all staff have the opportunity to obtain experience in each relevant discipline. This new career promotion allows me to utilise the leadership skills I gained during the project on a day to day basis. I was also asked to become involved in the formation of the IICMS Faculty of Neurophysiology. The IICMS is the Irish Institute of Clinical Measurement Scientists, which is the professional body for all scientists working in disciplines such as Neurology, Cardiology, Respiratory, Vascular and Gastro-intestinal. By creating a faculty, a core group of people will be able:

- to ensure that safe practices are being adhered to

- to provide training programs
- to represent the group when in talks with the government
- to improve continuous professional development.

LEADING CHANGE AS A PROFESSIONAL IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE

It is becoming more and more difficult to embark on new initiatives in Ireland at the moment. The downturn in the Irish economy is not advantageous to substantial investment in healthcare and so we need to examine clearly our current practices. The strain of the responsibility to deliver additional and improved services with the same or less resources requires strategic planning and extensive reorganisation. Planning effectively will have positive long-term consequences for both the community and the healthcare system. In my profession, with the technical improvements and advances in education, the demand for out-patient EEG appointments has steadily escalated over the past few years. With increased unemployment and stress levels, there is a reported increase in the number of patients attending Accident and Emergency with alcohol related seizures. Although clinically it may be apparent that the seizure was triggered by alcohol, it is still deemed necessary to rule out the possibility of epilepsy. With the current moratorium on staffing levels it is essential that staff morale remain high. There is a need to reduce stress on current colleagues while maintaining a high level quality of care. The ability to retain experienced staff is critical to uphold and provide excellent care while ensuring patient safety is adhered to. In addition to the reduced financial availability there is also further stress on hospitals from the growing population which has significantly increased over the last two decades.

Although the economic downturn in Ireland has brought with it challenges for leaders, it is not all negative. There are some innovative projects under way. An example of this is the four bedded epilepsy monitoring unit referred to above. Fortunately for us, the government and management of the hospital understood the importance of such a service and provided us with the essential staffing as well as the relevant technology and support services.

AWARENESS OF PROFESSIONALISM AND LEADERSHIP

Following the completion of my change project I was asked to speak about my experiences at the 3U Leadership Symposium. This was a joint initiative between three Universities in Ireland. During the day I listened to keynote speakers and fellow post-graduates speak about their experiences in leadership and professionalism. The discussions included people with an educational or a healthcare professional background. Although our professions may be completely different, I realised that during a change project most of the same barriers, challenges and opportunities arise. Leadership involves the same necessary skills and competencies no matter what project you undertake, big or small. It is important to involve all

stakeholders from the initial stage and include them in all decisions. As a healthcare professional, I was enlightened to hear how similar teachers and allied health professionals are when it comes to leadership. In schools it is the students who are the vulnerable stakeholders while it is patients in the healthcare world. The importance of buy-in from our 'clients', as well as other parties involved, is essential as it benefits them the most. By including them from the onset they have a higher level of motivation for the change to work and take hold.

Communication is necessary in any workplace, but when you require it for a goal to be achieved it is necessary to be clear and concise. Change agents need to know the target audience, and adapt communication accordingly. While listening to other speakers talk about situations and challenges that they faced during their change process, I reflected on how situations could have been handled differently depending on the individuals involved in the process. I might have handled a situation differently but it does not mean that either way is the correct way. On reflecting on my own project, and from listening to others at the symposium, I recognise where mistakes were made and identified where improvements for the future could be introduced.

The biggest take home message from the day was the requirement of self-knowledge. It is important that you know and understand your own strengths and weaknesses when working either on your own or with a team. When choosing members for a change project, it is beneficial if varying personalities can work in harmony. It is also beneficial if the strengths of some individuals in the project compensate for any weaknesses in knowledge or skill that may exist among some co-workers. By mutual understanding and respect, and through sharing and contributing in a constructive manner, a motivational atmosphere is created.

KEY LESSONS

Several key lessons were learned during this project. Personally, I learned that I can be a good leader and that the thrill of success is highly addictive. As with any change management project, several improvements or modifications can be suggested for future developments. LTM is relatively expensive and time consuming, involving the need for an appropriate hospital bed, expensive monitoring equipment, and a highly skilled multi-disciplinary team consisting of EEG clinical scientists, neurophysiologists, trained nursing staff and neuropsychologists. This needs to be balanced against the considerable financial and social costs of misdiagnosed and uncontrolled seizures. The impact of the change project on management of the organisation and the HSE was investigated, and this study documented the potential for cost savings in a patient group that utilises medical resources at high rates.

Although the risks of video-EEG monitoring are relatively low, the procedure is not risk free. I learned that universal protocols need to be in place for any change project that is undertaken. By reading literature on the subject, I discovered that most EMUs have their own individual protocols. For example, in America most of the EMUs have Neurophysiology staff working around the clock, while in Europe most people work 9am-5pm Monday to Friday, with no Neurophysiology cover over the weekend. This means that if the patient has a seizure over the weekend, the EEG data won't be reported on until Monday morning. This is most likely due to the financial situation in the country. Unfortunately, Ireland does not have enough money in its healthcare budget to provide adequate cover. Patient safety and integrity are paramount and have to be the main focus in any change project in the healthcare system. There have been reports of serious injury and even death in EMUs in the past.

During our project, 81 events were captured and fortunately, no injuries or falls occurred. The patient is asked to press a bell if they feel a seizure coming on. Their family are also encouraged to press the bell if they see a seizure starting. This sets off an alarm to warn the nursing staff and alert them to provide essential care. Multiple quantitative evaluation methods were carried out to ensure that best practice in safety care was in place. We recorded the average nurse's response time to the alarm which was defined as the nurse physically entering the room. The average response time was 34 seconds and only on one occasion did a nurse fail to respond to the alarm.

This service is critically important and can significantly improve diagnoses. 64% of diagnosis changed as a result of monitoring and a further 18% had a refined diagnosis. If more people suffering from epilepsy had this service available to them it could have a great impact on their lives and confidence. Successful roll out of the service would serve to reduce the financial stresses on the healthcare system.

REFERENCES

- Atkinson, M., Hari, K., Schaefer, K. and Shah, A. (2012) Improving safety outcomes in the epilepsy monitoring unit. *Seizure*, 21(2), 124-127.
- Benbadis, S., O'Neill, E., Tatum, W. and Heriaud, L. (2004) Outcome of prolonged video-EEG monitoring at a typical referral epilepsy center. *Epilepsia*, 45(9), 1150-1153.
- Burnes, B. (2004). *Managing Change*. 5th edition, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Ghougassian, D., D'Souza, W., Cook, M. and O'Brien, T.(2004) Evaluating the utility of Inpatient Video-EEG Monitoring. *Epilepsia*, 45(8), 928-932.
- Juarez-Garcia, A., Stokes, T., Shaw, B. and Camosso-Stefinovic, J. (2006) The costs of epilepsy misdiagnosis in England and Wales. *Seizure*, 15(8), 598-605.
- Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Kotter, J. (1995) Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 73(2), 59-67.
- McAuliffe, E. and Van Vaerenbergh, C. (2006) *Guiding change in the Irish health system*. Dublin: Health Service Executive.

A Leadership Journey of Learning

Gwen Oates

INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines my leadership journey of learning in relation to the development of my action research project. My project focused on a theory of education relating to the development of ICT (Information Communication Technology) and art in the primary school context. I will tell the story of an action research study that was based in my school. This study shows how the theory developed through the process of doing the research and the impact it had on my own practice and the practice of others in my school.

Writing this paper and reflecting on my practice has alerted me to the transformational power of action research to generate and foster transformative educative practices and processes (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). This research has also provided me with a wealth of experiences that have added to my knowledge of leadership and given me insights into effective leadership. This paper aims to chart and illustrate key learning moments from my leadership of my action research project.

Placing the 'living I' (Whitehead, 1993) at the centre of my inquiry, my voice permeates this paper; yet, there are many other voices to be heard here too: children, teachers, parents, critical friends - all have played a part in co-creating and generating my living theory through relationships of reciprocity, mutuality and collaborative engagement within a dialogue of equals (McNiff and Whitehead, 2000).

MY RATIONALE FOR UNDERTAKING THIS STUDY

My reasons for choosing to lead this project were concerned with my professional view of education and my personal values. My study looks at three key areas: my leadership, art and ICT. For the purpose of this paper I will focus on leadership.

Leadership

Fullan (2001) maintains that 'leaders are not born: they are nurtured' (131). My aim when embarking on the Toraíocht programme, a programme offered at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth for school leaders, was to foster my leadership skills. By leading an action research project, I hoped to gain insights that would add to my knowledge of leadership.

Fullan argues that we do not need ‘superleaders’ nor do we need ‘superhuman leaders’ (2001: 1). He asserts that all of us can improve our leadership by focusing on a small number of key dimensions. The key dimensions that leaders need to develop are that of understanding change and knowledge creation and sharing. Along with this the leader must be a consummate relationship builder and always act with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of the school community. By focusing on these key dimensions of leadership Fullan claims ‘we become more effective – much more effective’ and that the ‘rewards and benefits will be enormous’ (2001: 2, 11).

ICT

McHugh argues that the ‘digital revolution heralds a time of great change’ and that ‘an advantage for us in this exciting age is that education is at the centre of this digital revolution’ (2010: 4). There is a myriad of ways that ICT can ‘transform schools and classrooms’ (O’Leary and O’Mahony, 2010: 6). I am inspired by children’s competence with many forms of technology and teachers’ use of technology to stimulate and motivate children. I am not especially competent in the area of technology. I do, however, believe that students must be provided with the opportunity to develop the competencies required for life in a technology driven society. I also feel strongly that ICT provides huge potential for enhancing teaching and learning in schools. My research aimed to address my concerns in relation to ICT. In particular, I wanted to develop the skills of our staff to maximise the benefits of ICT resources, harness the knowledge of some staff members and move the focus away from typing skills and game playing in ICT.

There is a significant amount of research documenting concerns regarding teachers’ willingness to integrate ICT in their teaching (Duncan, 1997; Matthew et al., 2002; Rogers, 1995). Resource constraints, poor training opportunities, lack of support and lack of time have been recognised as barriers by a number of writers (Delacruz, 2004; Henning, 2000; Wang, 2002).

Art

‘Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up’ (Pablo Picasso, no date). Picasso highlights my final area of interest for this research, which had to do with the teaching of art.

In my own practice I had noticed in my art lessons that children often told me ‘I can’t do it’ ‘how do you do it?’ and more disturbingly ask me to do their artwork for them. When I reflected on my own practice and the practice within the school, I noticed many teachers’ noticeboards were filled with almost identical pieces of artwork. There seemed to be a culture

of teaching the children to paint 'pretty pictures' rather than teaching the skills outlined in the official primary school curriculum.

ICT presents unique opportunities for supporting creativity (Brown, 2002) and extending visual arts 'beyond clay, crayons and paint' (Stankiewicz, 2004: 88). ICT can allow students who might not possess skills with traditional media to focus more on the message and less on execution of art works, enhancing self-expression (Long, 2001; Wang, 2002). Mistakes can be easily corrected, resulting in decreased anxiety and promotion of experimentation, which lies at the heart of creativity (Freedman, 1991; Wood, 2004). While new technologies do not, of course, replace traditional art processes they do extend the possibilities of art expression, communication and perception (Wang, 2002; Wood, 2004).

There is a dearth in the literature regarding the teaching of the visual arts via the use of ICT. What little has been written of the use of technology to teach the visual arts consistently indicates that, many teachers continue to use ICT in a limited manner (Phelps and Maddison, 2008; Wang, 2002).

Action research

'Action research is a term which refers to a practical way of looking at your own work to check that it is as you would like it to be' (McNiff, 2007: 5). My research reflects Denscombe's theory of action research being 'associated with 'hands-on', small-scale research projects ... It has a particular niche among professionals who want to use research to improve their practices' (2003: 73).

ACTION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND LEADERSHIP

Through this project I endeavoured to develop the characteristics which I require to be an effective leader. Action research provided me with the opportunity to develop desirable leadership traits. Through the implementation of my action research I identified six key principles of action research defined by Winters (1996) and I linked them to my leadership of the project.

Principle One: The Reflective Practitioner

Action research involves reflecting on your work. The idea of self-reflection is central. In empirical forms of research, researchers do research on others (Lather, 1986). In action research, researchers do research on themselves. Habermas (1979) refers to this self-reflection as discovering 'local truth'. Carr and Kemmis echo this premise and regard action research as a form of 'self-reflective inquiry' (1986: 162) undertaken to improve understanding of their practices in context.

Self-reflection is vital to effective leadership. Goleman outlines self-reflection as the crux of leadership development. He states that it requires ‘a reach down deep inside’ (2002: 147) and argues that this reflection is required to intentionally develop ‘an aspect of who you are or who you want to be, or both’ (2002: 140). This is crucial to becoming an emotionally intelligent leader. In my research, I collected data in five ways, through written reflection, observation, unstructured interviews, photographs and work samples. By using these methods I hoped to get a ‘strong handle of what real life is like’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 10). This variety of methods gave me a broad range of data which provided concrete evidence of how things were in my school. I also gained insight into my actions, reactions and emotions, all of which fostered my self-reflection. This self-reflection is not an easy task. It requires you to face your weaknesses and, at times, unpalatable truths.

Principle Two: Dialogue

Hult and Lennung assert that action research is ‘dialogical and celebrates discourses’ (1980: 250). Winters echoes this view. He writes of action research as a ‘dialectical critique’ (1996: 13). Social reality is consensually validated, it is shared through language. Phenomena are conceptualized in dialogue. Therefore, a dialectical critique is required to understand the set of relationships both between the phenomenon and its contexts and other elements. Action research is dialogical and interpersonal with dialogue ‘being amongst the community of equals’ (Grundy and Kemmis, 1988: 87).

Dialogue is fundamental to leadership as it has ‘the potential to be a catalyst of change ... and to create linkages between theory and practice and policy and praxis’ (Nkukwana, 2006: 23). Bakhtin argues that ‘to participate in the ongoing dialogue of life, requires every educational leader to be willing to engage in dialogue, with his or her whole person’ (1986: 293). My research provided me with opportunities to develop my skills in negotiation, active listening and to initiate difficult conversations.

During the course of the project I needed to engage in some difficult conversations. I took direction from Harkins who argues that leaders need ‘clear communication that advances agendas that promote learning and strengthen relationships’ (1999: 73). I found the idea of approaching difficult conversation and negotiations very difficult and I often procrastinated. This was brought to my attention by one of my critical friends. Harkins argues that effective leaders ‘muster the strength to confront and deal with what’s not right’ (1999: 74). This does not mean that they are being confrontational, simply that they are not afraid to confront. I learned a lot while engaging in these difficult conversations. On some issues I was able to compromise, on others I could not, so I worked around these. This encouraged me to ‘think outside of the box’. Goleman (2002) asserts that effective leaders use their emotional intelligence in difficult conversations to emerge without being despised while learning about

themselves. While I still need to develop my ability to engage in difficult conversations, I have learned that ‘even in the most difficult of situations a conversation can drive us forward towards great ends’ (Harkins, 1999: 88).

Principle Three: Collaboration

McNiff (2007) argues that in action research there is a sense of partnership, where practitioner and supporter recognise that there might be a difference in responsibilities and professional expertise, but no difference in value. Participants in action research are co-researchers. O’Brien notes that this collaboration makes possible the ‘insights gleaned from noting the contradictions both between many viewpoints, and within a single viewpoint’ (1998: 7). The theme here is that all involved in the action research share and value one another’s learning.

Educational leaders must master the art of collaboration. Fullan and Hargreaves assert that the basic role of school leadership is in ‘leading the development of collaborative schools’ (1991: 69). Fullan describes effective leaders as having explicit strategies ‘that mobilize many people to work together to tackle tough problems’ (2001: 20). Collaboration was a key component in my research. I needed to create an environment that fostered collaboration between all stakeholders in the project.

During this project I tried to create a culture within the project where teachers felt that our relationship was based on support, trust and openness. I hoped that in creating this culture that it would enable participants to discuss and work through our problem. I valued failure and tried to listen to opposition. All the teachers involved spoke to me of their concerns about not being confident and or competent in the area of ICT (taken from reflective journal, November 10th, 15th, 18th and December 1st, 8th). We shared fears, anxieties and difficulties and tried to work collectively through these. I myself shared their fears and concerns. This echoes Reville’s findings that ‘Many teachers too, conscious of their lack of skills in the IT area, are nervous of exposing their skills in class where many of the pupils might be better versed in the “mysteries” of the computer’ (2010: 162).

I continued to be open and honest with the participants about my own anxiety in relation to ICT and I pointed out that collectively we could build our skills together. To support these teachers I provided professional development training throughout the year. This initiative highlighted to me the importance for educational leaders to support and encourage teachers as they engage in professional development. Fullan and Hargreaves assert the role of the principal in teacher’s professional development is that of ‘supporter and promoter’ (1992: 112). We also shared hopes, successes and achievement with the anticipation that others would benefit from our learning. I think it is important for any leader to foster a climate conducive to collaboration to enhance teaching and learning in all schools.

Principle Four: Risk Disturbance

The change process potentially threatens established ways of doing things. This can create fear among practitioners. One of the more prominent fears is the risk of critique of one's interpretations, ideas, and judgments. My role here was to allay others' fears by engaging in the same process of critique and giving reassurance that whatever the outcome, learning would take place.

Goleman states effective leaders 'are open to critique of their ideas, of their leadership. They actively seek out negative feedback, valuing the voice of the devil's advocate' (2002: 170). Pferrer points out that leaders need to value the lessons of failure 'If you don't learn from failure, you fail to learn. Forgive and remember' (2006: 62). Marris makes the case that 'all real change involves loss, anxiety, and struggle' (1975: 2). It is up to leaders to manage this.

My research project involved the staff of my school embarking on a process of change. During the implementation of my action research project I encountered difficulties and obstacles to this change. While these obstacles and challenges made the implementation of the project more difficult, they certainly enhanced my learning on managing and leading change.

CHANGE

Change is a very complex process. Leadership has an impact on change, and so I needed to understand change in order to lead it better.

The first principle of change is that the goal is not to innovate the most (Fullan, 2001: 35). The school or leader who takes on the most number of innovations is not the winner. Bryk et al. refer to these as 'Christmas tree schools' (1998: 94). From a distance they are impressive with so many innovations but a closer look shows they are lacking in depth and coherence. Relentlessly taking on innovation after innovation is a characteristic of Goleman's pace-setter leader (2000: 86). These leaders must learn to engage with organic innovation that is deep and meaningful in their context. While I had a big picture of where I wanted to go with the research I had to move in smaller steps towards this bigger picture to allow the staff time to deal with, accept and implement the change.

The second principle of change is to appreciate the 'implementation dip' (Fullan, 2001: 40). A consistent finding and understanding of the change process in education is that all successful schools experience 'implementation dips' as they move forward. This is literally a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings. All innovation calls on people to question and in some respects change their behaviour and beliefs. This causes people to feel anxious and fearful of change. This is closely

related to the concept of collaboration. From my experience, I needed to be empathetic to people undergoing the implementation dip and remain sensitive to their needs.

Resistance is a key element of change. While implementing my research I encountered resistance. ‘The problem is not getting new ideas in but getting the old ones out!’ (Covey, 2004: 89). We know the catchphrase ‘if you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got’. Effective schools have a culture of learning and re-learning. The lesson for my leadership was to gain insight from the opposition. It is important to always respect and discuss resistance; otherwise it will have serious implications. While it may be difficult to do, effective leaders are aware that they are more likely to learn something from someone who disagrees with them. Often leaders tend to over-listen to people who agree with them and avoid those who don’t (Maurer, 1996). The resistance to some of my ideas created learning opportunities and skills development for me. As leaders, there will often be times when we experience obstacles, difficulties, challenges and resistance. It is important to listen to and acknowledge these, and to take time to decide a course of action in relation to the opposition. As Champy summarises ‘a culture that squashes disagreement is a culture doomed’ (1995: 97).

Principle Five: Plural Structures

Action research embodies a multiplicity of views and critiques, leading to multiple possible actions and interpretations. This involves the development of ‘various accounts rather than a single authoritative interpretation’ (Winters, 1996: 14). This plural structure of inquiry requires a plural text for reporting. In this project the researcher, critical friends, teachers, parents and students all informed the research. A report, therefore, acts as a support for ongoing discussion among collaborators, rather than a final conclusion of fact.

For leaders the pluralist approach is very important. School leaders need to foster plural structures in their schools. This is linked to the idea of collaboration. Teaching is often called a ‘lonely profession’. It has been argued that professional isolation (the opposite to plural structures) limits access to new ideas, drives stress inwards, fails to recognize and praise success, and permits incompetence to exist (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Lortie, 1975). Thus leaders need to involve a multitude of views to inform their work.

Fullan asserts that ‘it is one of life’s great ironies: schools are in the business of teaching and learning, yet they are terrible at learning from each other’ (2001: 92). To ensure the effective implementation of my project, and also to ensure that the teachers involved became ‘co-authors’ (McNiff, 2007), I took on the idea of ‘teacher leadership’ (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 21). This is defined as ‘the capacity and commitment to contribute beyond one’s own classroom’ (1992: 21). The teachers involved in this project encouraged me as they brought new ideas; supported and implemented ideas that they were unsure of; reported progress or lack of it, with honesty; engaged in professional development and devoted personal time to

the implementation of the project. I tried to encourage and develop leadership and responsibility in these teachers. I tried to share elements of leadership with them while balancing my own need to develop effective leadership skills. Teacher 5 helped to co-ordinate the trip to the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Teacher 3 shared responsibility for the end of year exhibition, and Teacher 1 contributed greatly to the reflection of the group. Fullan argues that 'effective principals share - in fact, develop - leadership among teachers' (2007: 156).

In *What's worth fighting for in the Principalship?* (Fullan, 1997) reported on 137 principals and vice principals in Toronto. To the question, 'Do you think the principal can effectively fulfil all the responsibilities assigned to him/her?' 91% responded 'no' (Fullan, 1997: 2). If leaders cannot effectively fulfil all their responsibilities then it seems that effective leaders encourage leadership in others to empower them to lead in a shared and collective endeavour.

Principle Six: Theory, Practice and Transformation

For action researchers, theory informs practice, practice refines theory, in a continuous transformation. We see theory and practice as interdependent yet complementary phases of the process. The responsibility of the researcher is to make explicit the theoretical justifications for the actions. The practical applications that follow are subjected to further analysis, in a cycle of inquiry that continuously alternates emphasis between theory and practice. Denscombe describes action research as a 'cyclical process' (1998: 76). The crucial elements of the cycle are that 'research feeds back directly into practice' and 'that the process is ongoing' (1998: 76).

The role of the leader is to motivate, support, empower, and praise the efforts of teachers whilst creating an environment and culture that are conducive to change and problem solving. As the leader of this project, it was my role to facilitate the cycle of theory informing practice and transformation while ensuring all involved felt they were working in a culture that promoted their risk taking and supported their reflective practice.

CONCLUSION

'Leadership has to be learned, not just by doing it but by being able to gain conceptual insight while doing it' (Mintzberg, 2004: 200). My leadership of this project has given me a wealth of experiences, which have added to my knowledge of leadership. More importantly it has fostered my reflective practice, which helps me to learn from my experiences. Fullan and Hargreaves argue 'In primary school, transition from classroom teacher to head is often too sharp, too sudden. A more valuable and effective system of preparation for headship would involve giving regular teachers much more experience of leadership' (1992, 20).

Dean Fink states that ‘schools and schools systems need to identify, recruit, train, select and offer in-service to leaders’ (2006: 28). For me, the Toraíocht programme is just the beginning of my leadership journey. It has provided me with the skills to identify, regulate and monitor characteristics of an effective leader in myself. This paper has charted my leadership journey of learning. In Warren Bennis’ book *On Becoming a Leader* (1992) the central idea is that leaders are always ‘becoming’ leaders in the sense that they have never reached the ultimate goal, and can continually improve and become even better. I agree with this assertion. While I have illustrated my key learning moments during this my action research project, I will endeavour to continue this learning curve and develop as a leader. This project has provided me with the opportunity to identify, develop and monitor characteristics of an effective leader in myself. I think all prospective leaders should be encouraged to embark on a learning process that enriches their professional capacity.

REFERENCES

- Bakhtin, M.M. (1986), Response to a Question from the Novy Mir Editorial Staff, in C. Emerson & M. Holquist (eds), M. Holquist (trans.). *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp.1-9.
- Bryk, A. and Schneider, B. (2002) *Trust in schools*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Buckley, H.E. (1999) 'The Little Boy' In Canfield, J. and Hansen, M.V. *Chicken soup for the soul*. London: Vermilion.
- Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical*. Lewes: Falmer.
- Delacruz, E. (2004) Teachers' working conditions and the unmet promise of technology. *Studies in Art Education*, Vol: 46, No. 1, pp. 6-20.
- Denscombe, M. (2003) *The Good Research Guide, Second Edition*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Duncan, P. (1997) Art education and information technology. *Journal of the Australian Institute of Art Education*, Vol: 20, No. 3, pp. 47-50.
- Freedman, K. (1991) Possibilities of interactive computer graphics for art instruction: A summary of research. *Art Education*, pp.41-47.
- Fullan, M. (1991) *The new meaning of educational change (2nd edition)*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2001) *Leading in a Culture of Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2003) *The moral imperative of school leadership*. London: Corwin Press.
- Fullan, M. (2008) *The six secrets of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. (1992) *What's worth fighting for in your school?* Ontario: Open University Press.
- Goleman, D. (2002) *New Leaders*. London: Sphere.
- Grundy, S. and Kemmis, S. (1988) Educational action research in Australia: the state of the art (an overview). In Kemmis, S. and McTaggard R. (eds) *The Action Research Reader (second edition)*. Victoria: Deakin University Press, pp.83-97.
- Harkins, P. (1999) How high impact leaders communicate: *Powerful Conversations*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Henning, G. (2000) Introducing digital technologies into the year 9/10 visual arts program: Cooperative learning in action. *Australian Art Education*, Vol: 23, No.2, p. 37-41.
- Hult, M. and Lennung, S. (1980) Towards a definition of action-research: a note and bibliography. *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol.17, No.2, pp.241-250.
- Lather, P. (1986) Research as Praxis, *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol.56, No.3, pp.257-277.
- Long, S. (2001) Multimedia in the art curriculum: Crossing boundaries. *Journal of Art and Design Education*, Vol: 20, No. 3, pp. 255-263.

- Lortie, D. (1975) *School Teacher: A Sociological Study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Matthew, K., Callaway, R., Letendre, C., Kimbell-Lopez, K. and Stephens, E. (2002) Adoption of information communication technology by teacher educators: One-on-one coaching. *Journal of Information Technology for Teacher Education*, Vo:11, No. 1, pp. 45-61.
- Maykut, P. and Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide*, London: Falmer Press.
- Mc Niff, J. (2007) Action research for professional development, Concise advice for new action researchers, www.jeanmcniff.com/ar-booklet.asp.
- McHugh G. (2010) Foreward in O’Leary, R. and O’Mahony, J. (eds) *ICTs in the primary school: Teaching and learning for the 21st century*. Dublin: Dublin West Education Centre.
- McNiff, J., Lomax, P. and Whitehead, J. (2003) *You and Your Action Research Project*, 2nd edition. London: Routledge.
- Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA:Sage.
- Mintzberg, H. (2004) *Managers not MBAs*. San Francisco: Berret-Koehler.
- Nkukwana, J.G. (2006), *Educational Reforms and their Impact on Leadership*, unpublished paper. South Africa: Walter Sisulu University.
- O Brien, R. (1998) An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research. Retrieved from <http://www.web.net/~robrien/papers/arfinal.html> on 3 February, 2011
- O’Leary, R. and O’Mahony, J. (eds) (2010) *ICTs in the primary school: Teaching and learning for the 21st century*. Dublin: Dublin West Education Centre.
- Pferrer, J. and Sutton, R. (2006) *Hard facts, dangerous half-truths and total nonsense*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Phelps, R. and Maddison, C. (2008) ICT in the secondary visual arts classroom: A study of teachers' values, attitudes and beliefs. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, Vol:24, No. 1, pp. 1-14.
- Reville, M. (2010) Iconoclastic Teachers and the ICT Evolution in Education in O’Leary, R. and O’Mahony, J. (eds) *ICTs in the primary school: Teaching and learning for the 21st century*. Dublin: Dublin West Education Centre.
- Rodd, J. (2006) *Leadership in Early Childhood (3rd edition)*. New York: Open University Press.
- Rogers, P. (1995). Towards a language of computer art: When paint isn't paint. *Art Education*, September, pp.17-33.
- Stankiewicz, M. (2004). Notions of technology and visual literacy. *Studies in Art Education*, Vol:46, No. 1, pp.88-92.
- Wang, L. (2002) How teachers use computers in instructional practice: Four examples in American schools. *Journal of Art and Design Education*, Vol: 21, No. 2, pp.154-163.
- Whitehead, J. (1989) Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, “How do I improve my practice”. *The Cambridge Journal of Education* 19 (1) p.41-52.

- Whitehead, J. (1993) *The Growth of Educational Knowledge: Creating Our Own Educational Theories*. London: Routledge.
- Whitehead, J. and McNiff, J. (2006) *All you need to know about Action Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Winters, R. (1996) Some principles and procedures for the conduct of action research. In Zuber-Skerritt, O. (ed) *New Directions in Action Research*. London: Falmer.
- Wood, J. (2004) Open minds and a sense of adventure: How teachers of art & design approach technology. *The International Journal of Art & Design Education*, Vol:23, No. 2, pp. 179

Institutional Co-operation in Leadership Education

Paula Kinnarney, Carmel Lillis, Pauline Joyce (Chairperson: Gerry Jeffers)

“ **GERRY JEFFERS:** The context of our conversation is collaboration and co-operation between institutions. The Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Management (PGDEL) / Toraíocht course is in itself a collaborative venture between Maynooth University and PDST. Last year Maynooth, PDST and RCSI organised an excellent symposium, in March, which brought together learning from that PGDEL course and learning from health care courses operated under the umbrella of the RCSI. So perhaps the first question is about institutional collaboration, what do you think has been learned? ”

PAULINE JOYCE: I think the symposium has provided a platform and a space for exchange of learning across professions, across education and healthcare. I feel that, to make those collaborations work, our experience is that it is really about the people who are involved collaborating, rather than the institutions themselves. So, the success of the project is down to the personalities getting on together, building up trust. That has been key. Trust is also central to the success of the change projects that the students themselves have been involved in. That was highlighted by Kieran Murphy when he spoke from the regulatory point of view of the Medical Council.

GERRY JEFFERS: Yes, and the point was made that the directors of the Medical Council and the Teaching Council had never before spoken together like that at a shared symposium. So many professions are in their own silos. What you have done is broken into some really interesting new territory in terms of cross-professional conversations. That is significant.

CARMEL LILLIS: Yes, and going on from that that, I like to think about this collaboration as opening up your own culture. I think of this collaboration as a way to analyse school culture. We got rare insights into the world of the medical organisation. This throws a light on school culture. We become so hidebound by what is always done in our schools - what makes our school culture unique - that we no longer look carefully at the outcomes for the school community. I am fascinated by the fact that the symposium and partnership resulted from a serendipitous meeting between Paula and Pauline. It is good to recognise the chance aspect of this. Very often in leadership situations good outcomes are the result of casual conversations, networking, chance meetings. I have learnt a lot from the partnership and the symposium has re-iterated the importance of

research that is related to one's practice as exemplified in all of the student presentations at the symposium.

GERRY JEFFERS: That has echoes of what teachers who move from one school to another school often say, that they learn so much about both schools by the move. It's similar when you go abroad and see another education system; you learn more about your own system. So, when teachers look into healthcare related experiences, they can learn about teaching and, we hope, when healthcare professionals look at what's going on in education they also gain insights into their own work. I think some of that is evident from the collection of articles that have emerged from the presentations.

PAULA KINNARNEY: Carmel mentioned that the symposium was founded on a serendipitous meeting. It's also about having the time to explore this type of creative endeavour. That is one of the difficulties for practitioners in the field; they don't have the time to engage in this type of work unless it is for some specific purpose such as undertaking further study. But it also tells us something about the institutions: really all it takes is one person in an institution to make a significant difference in the experiences of many. One person with energy and commitment can begin a conversation. That then draws in other people and the project gains momentum. We - all three - would now happily engage in conversations within each other's institutions/organisations in a much easier way, without necessarily feeling that we are crossing boundaries or borders. The next step is that our students would also have an opportunity to work in similar ways and operate within the same open framework. How do we make that next move? How do we ensure that the collaborative conversations we have on a weekly – at times daily – basis, are replicated among our students? We might also include our extended colleagues. A sense of isolation and individualism is not just observed in school settings; it is present in all kinds of settings. But I would say that in all three institutions this connection has made differences and people are much more aware of what we are trying to do.

GERRY JEFFERS: I know that in the schooling contexts we already have within PDST we have seen the benefits of primary and post-primary teachers, coming from different contexts, being enriched by learning from each other. Is that the same in a health context – doctors, nurse, physiotherapists and so on learning together?

PAULINE JOYCE: Yes, but there is, first of all, a hesitancy, particularly among the medics mixing with the allied health professionals. Very often they want to have a course on their own. But once they are in, they realise the richness of the learning among different professionals.

GERRY JEFFERS: If we move on. What has been learned about leadership?

CARMEL LILLIS: I particularly remember the phrase from Jack Whitehead that Gwen used when speaking about the values of the leader. She spoke about 'reaching down deep inside'. This was also a theme in John West-Burnham's address and of course

within the presentations by the participants of both courses. Tomás O Ruairc spoke about leadership being ‘a commitment to the immeasurable so that others can face the unknowable’. Maria showed how team-forming, having a vision, good communication skills and the leader’s ability to look for and to support leaders is critical in all areas of the organisation. Paula just spoke about the need for action by the alert ‘listener’ who takes on an idea that has come from the reflection of another. It was quite amazing to see the finished product of the symposium after all the organisation, although this is just another cycle within the process. It was also moving to see teachers with whom you have journeyed for a year speaking to others about their learning and how much this has meant to them. It is empowering.

GERRY JEFFERS: Do you think that the strong emphasis on values and leadership, and the focus on principles, purposes and people rather than on routines, systems, structures and procedures - that separation that’s often made between leadership and management – is sometimes an artificial distinction? In the day-to-day running of a school or health care service, leaders spend a lot of time managing.

CARMEL LILLIS: Yes, indeed. One thing that usually comes up in the course of the year is this artificial separation between management and leadership. John West-Burnham threw some light on this when he said that both leadership and management are vital to the organisation but that management must always be the servant of leadership, a servant of the vision and the values of the leader.

PAULINE JOYCE: Yes, we also know from the graduates before they presented – both teachers and health professionals – that they were wary of each other. There was definitely a hesitancy knowing they were going to be presenting; in our case, healthcare professionals presenting with teachers. Then Paula told me that the teachers were kind of wary of, maybe, doctors in the room. But actually the challenges and opportunities were similar right across the projects. It turned out that there was no need for that kind of worry at all because while the healthcare professionals might be seen as professionally different, the teachers had a lot more experience of presenting so there was a balancing out, in fact. I thought that was very interesting. Another thing for me was that some of the concerns for this particular group were that they were carrying out these projects at a time of recession with industrial relations issues going on in the background. Even at the beginning of the year they were saying to me ‘we won’t be able to do this’ because it will impact on people’s roles and ‘this is extra work’. But actually we had none of that. So, the learning for some of them was that in a time of recession people are more engaged; it’s easier for the leader to get new things done. There are more opportunities than challenges.

GERRY JEFFERS: It seems to me, reading the papers, that time constraint was an issue. But I take your point that themes such as trust, distributed leadership, communication, maybe moral courage and facing the challenges, were very strong across both groups.

PAULA KINNARNEY: Yes, I think so, and for each one of the participants who contributed an article their definition of leadership was different at stages of the process. In relation to Pauline's point about recession related issues, we also had concerns this year that some students would not be in a position to engage in work due to industrial relations issues in their organisations. This, however, was surmounted as the realisation dawned that leadership must prevail no matter what the circumstances are. I think in many instances the leadership learning was that you have to lead in every situation - whether there is a recession, whether there are industrial relations issues, whether there are significant differences and difficulties within your institution. You have to be able to find a way through that if you are the leader. It is about good management; no question about that. But it is about having a vision to bring others with you. Sometimes it is about standing back and creating the space for others to be the leader. I see the symposium as an example of that. Our work is done on the day of the symposium because the management of the event, the running of the event, is in place and it is a space for us and others to have that conversation. In order for those conversations to take place, somebody as a leader has to create that space, and manage that space and time and bring people together. I am not quite sure how close I am to a definition of leadership even now because I think it is different in every single context.

GERRY JEFFERS: One of the interesting tensions in what is being said, and in the courses, is that distinction between 'the leader' and 'leadership'. John West-Burnham and others make the point that leadership should be a collaborative activity. The three of you are living examples of collaborative leadership. The influence of the notion of distributed leadership is also there. Why do you think some latch on to distributed leadership as a concept? Might it be that the institutions they are working in are very hierarchical?

CARMEL LILLIS: If we look at the presentations and the projects undertaken, they are, for the most part, focused on issues that individuals have taken up by themselves as a result of their reflection. They are pinpointing areas of concern within their organisation that warrant their attention. But to go back to your question asking why people take on this work, I think that innately teachers, healthcare professionals, indeed all people, have an ability to lead. I think we might ask why this idea of leadership is not given more attention at pre-service level. Is leadership spoken about in colleges of education? A comment was made at the end of the symposium about the new language of leadership that must be acquired. Maybe this language should be embedded from the very beginning.

GERRY JEFFERS: But isn't it true that schools and the medical professions are quite hierarchical? You go in as a part-time teacher and you are on a part-time contract. There are a lot of status issues. There is talk of 'senior teachers'. Similarly, we talk of 'consultants' and so on.

PAULINE JOYCE: To go back to your question, Gerry, of whether all this talk about distributed leadership is because of hierarchical structures; you could read that into it.

But, remember that these students were asked to carry out an action-research, action-oriented type of research. So, we, as facilitators, guided them from the start to involve other stakeholders. So, if you like, we got them out of thinking in a hierarchical way, because of the approach that was taken in these projects. I think it has more to do with the approach, maybe, rather than they decided that distributed leadership was the way to go. They are required to involve lots of other people in the success of these projects.

PAULA KINNARNEY: In many cases at the end of their projects, they were saying ‘I could just step back from it and it continued without me’. It is that sense of whether you were able to say at a point: ‘I am no longer needed to drive this. I can simply sit and observe this and see it in a new way because other people have taken the lead, have taken the initiative and are taking it on and moving it forward’. It comes back to that idea that if you have a good idea in your institution, in your school, in your professional institution, all you need is the belief, the courage, the vision and the energy to begin the process, and to do it in a way that doesn’t necessarily immediately cause a threat, if there is a hierarchical structure within the organisation. It begins in a collaborative way, and then it is about convincing everyone in the organisation that this is the right way to go. It’s about having the courage to do that and that can be difficult. I often ask myself the question: what is it that brings somebody to apply to complete a course in leadership? Why is that? What is it that’s different about them compared, say, to a colleague who might never consider leadership in a formal way but might be working very quietly in their own institution leading and engaging with initiatives on their own? So what is it about that that is different?

GERRY JEFFERS: Why do you think they do these courses?

PAULA KINNARNEY: I’m still in my own learning space in relation to that. I think there are some people who are very learning focused. I think there are others who are curious, and who wonder have they the capability and the capacity to engage in leadership. And, sometimes, in experimenting they discover it is really difficult and they might not have the courage to do it now or maybe ever.

GERRY JEFFERS: So people come with different motivations, the ones who would like to get top positions and the ones who see these courses as another form of professional development.

PAULA KINNARNEY: When someone says they have undertaken a course to ‘tick a box’ in their professional career, I find that hard to understand and also a little disconcerting.

PAULINE JOYCE: Yeah.

PAULA KINNARNEY: However, if you look beyond that and you talk to the people concerned they will often say, ‘I am engaged in this, this and this, all these initiatives in my

school and I know that in doing them I am doing good work. But in order to satisfy something else, some other requirement, in order to be able to bring my work to the next level, I have to do this, I have to follow these steps because this seems to be what is rewarded in the institution that I am part of? It may not always be the person that has that focus, but sometimes it is imposed by the very institution in which they are working, that in order to fit the institution they have to do courses.

GERRY JEFFERS: But it is directed towards promotion on the one hand and, on the other, it is self-reflective.

CARMEL LILLIS: I like the idea of looking at schools other than one's own. I have held to the notion that the best way of learning to lead a school is to observe critically what is done in both one's own and in other schools, by visiting other schools and by observing the effects of the leadership there. This experiential learning should be scaffolded with a sound theoretical background. There are opportunities for teachers to become involved with other schools through the various initiatives of the DES. Anecdotally we know that when you visit a school the kind and quality of leadership is almost palpable. So we are back again to the notion of going outside the culture of one's own school or organisation so as to be able to critically analyse this and in so doing, form a personal theory of effective leadership.

GERRY JEFFERS: What about mixed motivations?

CARMEL LILLIS: Well, I don't think we can be accountable for that. I mean somebody might come on with a very practical idea of ticking a box. On the other hand, as we have observed, the course can be transformative for some teachers. A person may begin the course with one particular idea and find that through the learning, the interactions and the reflection that they have changed in their attitudes and their motivation.

GERRY JEFFERS: In the medical world, as I understand it, there are obligations on people to engage in CPD.

PAULINE JOYCE: Yes, there are obligations though not particular courses as such. So, we always call the people who have to come to tick the box, 'the prisoners'. And once they are prisoners, we know that we have an issue on our hands as regards trying to facilitate their leadership development and all that. People are in the room but not fully of their own will.

GERRY JEFFERS: One of the projects captured that dilemma for the lecturer very well. 'How do I keep these people motivated?', she kept asking.

PAULINE JOYCE: From the healthcare practitioner perspective the feedback we get from people mostly is 'I need the language'; I need the language to sit at the table with

others in leadership positions. If they can speak the language it also gives them credibility. Language, that's the big thing for the healthcare professionals, for their careers, to have the language to be able to sit at the same table. Because, you are right about the hierarchical structure, now people at clinical practice level are being brought up to the top table to make management/leadership decisions. That wasn't the case years ago. Sometimes in a classroom a doctor may say, 'well, if I am managing, who is going to do my clinical work?' They couldn't identify with that dual role. But once you get them on board on the programme they can see: 'Yes, I have to be leading'. That goes right across clinical practice, not just the paper work and administration.

GERRY JEFFERS: One of the little worries I have about the language point is that some people do a leadership course and they learn the language, but is it not necessarily a transformative experience; the language is enough to get you through the promotion interview.

PAULINE JOYCE: Yes, perhaps that's a cynical way of looking at it, just having the language to get you by. I think you would be quickly caught out in an interview. Now it is mainly competency based interviews in the healthcare professions so you have to give examples. I'm not sure you would get by just having the language without really understanding what's behind it.

GERRY JEFFERS: Maybe education could learn a little from healthcare interviewing.

PAULINE JOYCE: The journey continues!

GERRY JEFFERS: Taking a less cynical view, let's look at the journey of becoming a reflective practitioner. It seems that what really worked in both programmes was the use of action research. So what have you learned about action research? Is it the right way forward? What about Aine Hyland's point about the need for much more active learning at 3rd level? Do you think it is meeting that challenge that she identified from the Hunt Report?

CARMEL LILLIS: What I have learned from the course and from the symposium is that action research offers a systematic way of striving for improvement. My concern would be that it is just for a year, that it isn't continued as part of the professional response. I have engaged with the class recently and asked 'How has your teaching changed as a result of action research?' It was gratifying to hear people say that they have become more reflective. They had become more confident in their own responses. I think of the idea of action research being based around an examination of your values, a prioritising of those values in your context and of bringing that into the research. I know a lot of good research is done, but without a significant focus on the values of the individual involved. I think that the more we can help people to relate their work to their values, the more commitment we will get from them. By systematically working through the stages of action research and, most importantly, that intense reflection at the end of

the process where people can write about what they have learned about themselves first of all, about other people, about the whole system that they work within, about the context in which they operate - that reflection is the beginning of the next part of their professional lives. Of course, that has to be written down and if I could say a small thing about writing: it is difficult for practitioners to sit down and write about their experiences. I think that many of our teachers are really good orally and can make a presentation and speak knowingly about what they are engaged with. It's a different skill to be able to sit down and write about that. I was just reading recently that Thomas Mann said, 'a good writer is someone who finds the process difficult'. Nowadays we have film-stars and footballers and they are all writing their own books, most of them ghost-written. It gives the impression that writing is easy. Maybe we should give more support to participants along the way. It is important that action researchers share their work and their experiences so that others can learn from what they have done. Good writing skills are therefore very important.

GERRY JEFFERS: Isn't that one of the cultural differences between the professions, that traditionally medical people have published much more than the teaching profession? Would you agree, Pauline, with what Carmel has been saying about action research as applying to healthcare professionals?

PAULINE JOYCE: Well, for these projects we didn't actually use the term 'action research', even though they were working within that frame. Healthcare professionals are very traditional in their association with quantitative research. They are not as familiar with the social science research as with the quantitative research - randomised, controlled trials and all of that. So, that's a new language for them. It was interesting just chatting through this with David Coughlan, of Trinity College, Dublin. He was saying that we shouldn't get hung up on the titles, 'action research', 'action learning research'. What we are doing in the RCSI is action-oriented research. The same with 'reflection', particularly for our medical personnel. We don't use the word 'reflection' because they would just go in the other direction. So you try to get them to reflect without calling it reflection!

GERRY JEFFERS: What's the problem with 'reflection'? Just overused?

PAULINE JOYCE : Some of them just don't like looking internally, thinking and putting that out on paper. Some of them have a very structured mind-set.

GERRY JEFFERS: The empirical sciences rather than the social sciences?

PAULINE JOYCE: Yes, very much the empirical sciences. I got feedback from one graduate who said, 'I love the programme but never ask me to do another piece of reflection. I never want to do it again'. So, that is where we are. This year we are saying 'action oriented research '. We used 'action learning' to guide our students. But the principles are the same as for action research. So, let's not get too hung up on titles.

GERRY JEFFERS: Isn't this one of the values of the cross-sectoral dialogue? Stephen Brookfield talks about four lenses: your own experience as a learner; then the experience; in the medical context, I suppose, of patients and in schools of students; collaboration – what is the view of colleagues; and finally the literature. Within the PGDEL I sometimes wonder if the engagement with the literature is a 'tick-box' exercise. They are quoting Michael Fullan, Andy Hargreaves, Warren Bennis and so on but I'm not too sure whether they have all done the joined up thinking

PAULINE JOYCE: I take Carmel's point that the academic writing part of the project is a difficulty for lots of people. The symposium has given them that space to present their projects. For some of the other courses we are running for other groups of healthcare professionals, we are not asking them to write up a formal report. We are asking them to present orally and then to use a poster, a visual of that. We have to continue to think into the future as to how we might disseminate these projects.

PAULA KINNARNEY: That wouldn't necessarily be just the healthcare professionals either. We often get a strong sense of that from teachers who come from a background in the Physical Sciences. They say, 'please don't ask me to reflect on what I do. I'm a good teacher. I know I'm a good teacher. I get on with it. I do it. I don't think about it' and so on. So, it isn't something that is just in one profession. It is even layered within professions. Very often they come to a course like PGDEL/Toraíocht and they say, 'well, I'm going to be much worse at writing than, say, someone who has English in their degree'. Or 'it's years since I wrote an essay or an assignment'. They see genres of writing as being very distinct and the purpose of academic writing as a very different one to the one they use with the children in their school. I think that is one of the significant differences in how we engage with participants on the courses, in that we ask them to present, we ask them to display teamwork skills, we ask them engage in reflection activities, we ask them to work on leading an initiative of some kind. So, there is scope for everybody to display their strengths, not just necessarily within one methodology of a particular focus.

GERRY JEFFERS: In Kieran Murphy's and Tomás Ó Ruairc's presentations, they invoked 'trust'. I think they were focusing on the huge loss in public confidence in all professions in the last decade in particular. As I listen to you now, I wonder about the trust within institutions, about the confidence to talk professionally with colleagues. I am reminded of Dan Lortie's idea of school as 'egg-crate', all these isolated little silos. Maybe education could learn from healthcare, especially from multi-disciplinary teams. Has there been much resistance to that?

PAULINE JOYCE: Yes, when you start off. We try to recruit experienced professionals. Where you have a mix and there are very junior staff, you can have a resistance. In some programmes that we are involved in, the students are really at undergraduate level. It is a continuation on to a Masters. So they go from undergrad to Masters. That group are very junior. There is the notion of very definitely belonging to one professional group. But

when you see the bit of experience, them coming back into the programme, it's much easier to break down barriers and to get rid of barriers.

PAULA KINNARNEY: Over the last number of years we have a number of students on our courses who have come from healthcare professions to teaching at a later point in their career. They will say very clearly and very strongly what they see as being 'wrong', to use the term lightly, with the education system and that is, the absence of the conversations on a daily basis they had with other professionals - physiotherapists, doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals. The sense of having the professional responsibility for interdisciplinary or even wider conversations with colleagues is something that I think the courses are challenging. I think that is critically important. For me, that is one of the core learnings from our conversations.

CARMEL LILLIS: Following on from that, Paula, I think that in many of the projects we see an emphasis on team-teaching or on station-teaching where other teachers will come into the classroom. I suppose we are going towards a day when peer-observation will be the norm. In a leadership course we have to tell people about the possibilities; if you have an inclusive school you are going to have case-conferences with medical personnel, with people from other agencies, with people from the Child and Family Agency. We have to be able to report to other agencies, to deal with them.

GERRY JEFFERS: I think Paula's point that the culture within schools is not one of professional conversations is important. Ann Liebermann states that the best kind of CPD is where teachers who are teaching the same youngsters have professional conversations together. My impression of PGDEL is that the insistence on action research and its collaborative nature within the school, as you rightly say, challenges the culture of isolated individualism.

CARMEL LILLIS: In the instance of student assessment it is important to realise that empirical data alone will not give all the information that is necessary for good decision-making. This can be enhanced through information sharing by all the adults involved with the student, to include parents/guardians and school personnel. Through these conversations a more holistic picture of the student can be realised. Would it be fair to say that this is happening more in urban areas than in rural areas? Is it the same problem with change? Publicising the positive results of collaborative practice at all levels within schools must be given a priority.

CARMEL LILLIS: Teachers writing with other teachers in mind! In this way the message can be spread. In *Tóraiocht* we advise that the result of the interventions teachers make may not result in vast improvements. However, what is critical is the beginning of collaborative conversations within the school.

GERRY JEFFERS: When you cite these examples, people sometimes respond ‘we haven’t got the time for collaborative conversations’. Can we learn from the health sector? How do you get time for conferences and get the clinical work done?

PAULINE JOYCE: They have changed some of the case conferences. Sometimes it’s walking around. They don’t sit in a room. They walk around. The same with hand-over reports. They do a walk-around now, so you identify, not with a name, but with a person’s face.

GERRY JEFFERS: So, professional conversations don’t always take place in formal meetings?

CARMEL LILLIS: I think we would have found that. At the beginning of the year there’s a *cri de coeur* that comes from every class, ‘we are so over-burdened with work. We have to take on this and we have to take on that’. After that initial period of confusion people become excited about their projects. They gather momentum. It is because they have a good system to follow. After an initial period of confusion and through the informal conversations that take place during the tea-break and after sessions, teachers begin to get excited about the possibilities within their projects. Projects gather momentum. I think it is because there is a system, a way of working. Reflection on values and the imperative to act give an added dimension. February often marks a time when some changes have already taken place and this propels the work forwards. They know where they are going next. Because it comes from their reflection on their values I do feel they get excited around February and that excitement gives them the will to go on and complete the projects.

PAULA KINNARNEY: Generally about that time of the year you will find they will say things to you like, ‘well, I suggested this and my colleagues agreed and they were very complimentary and I was so surprised’. Sometimes it is their first step towards being a leader. They have had some validation of that and it gives them the encouragement and the enthusiasm to take it to the next level. Where you find the difficulty with that is where somebody meets a wall of resistance at that point. They then say, ‘I’ve tried this first action and it hasn’t worked. Can I change my project? I want to change the topic’. It is around those conversations where you say, ‘well, if you were the principal in the school or the deputy in the school, could you give up on it like that? How might you come at this in a different way? Remember you are the leader.’ It is that initial panic that sets in, to have somebody, be it their supervisor or a colleague or a critical friend who will give them grounded good supportive advice and a listening ear. By having that they then have another direction in which to go. And that’s very much what we focus on in action-oriented learning. It is about allowing people to be apprentice-leaders in many ways - to give them leadership with scaffolding. It’s not always very high stakes because we encourage them to take something within a timeframe that is manageable. In many cases it is the first time they see themselves as being leaders because prior to this they connect

leadership with having a formal leadership role. I think that's part of the excitement you talk about Carmel. It's that excitement that spurs on the next step.

GERRY JEFFERS: In reading the projects I was struck by how much the health professionals lean on John Kotter's work and the eight stages of change : identifying the urgency, creating the coalition and so on. Once you get to that stage of realisation, the colleagues are not so resistant, 'I have the coalition', then, you are suggesting, Paula and Carmel, you are now 'on yer bike', you are moving. Is that what we are learning?

PAULA KINNARNEY: Yes, you are moving but that doesn't mean there won't be potholes. You might be thrown off but at the same time you have a vehicle to move you to another part of the journey.

GERRY JEFFERS: That's a useful metaphor and in the twelve essays there are some interesting metaphors: caterpillars and butterflies , making the cake, pebbles in the pool, carrot and stick and so on. A lot of people use metaphors as a way of organising their thinking. The journey metaphor, the courage to get up on the bicycle as it were, and the realisation that you are not alone, can be very powerful.

PAULINE JOYCE: I was just going to add to Paula's point. I think key similarities between the way we all teach leadership is that we are looking to develop the person first and foremost. Before we develop them as a leader within an institution I think it is the personal dimension that has to come first. We all emphasise that. And, of course, unearthing the assumptions is key. That comes with the self-development. If we can get that across that you cannot lead out on these projects until you know more about yourself, then that's great. I think the symposium is a great platform for current students to learn those messages from others. We had some people presenting this year who attended the symposium last year and are really excited about presenting themselves.

GERRY JEFFERS: At times I thought that this self-knowledge came out stronger in some of the papers from the healthcare professionals than the teachers.

PAULINE JOYCE: It might be that we focus them more to put that down on paper but I think it is similar across the board.

PAULA KINNARNEY: I think people come to things at different times. I also think that the RCSI course is a longer course - two years - while the PGDEL is one year. Possibly if we were looking at something that is longer you might see more of that personal growth and development element, even more than we do. It is a very busy year, a very packed year. Very often our course participants or course graduates will say, 'You know, I took all of this in, and the year after I used to think of things people would say in class and try them out' or 'I went back to writing in a reflective journal', or 'I tried some action research because I had an issue'. They revert back. As well as changing practice

and changing viewpoints, it also gives them a new skills set, therefore, the self-developmental journey might be over a longer period.

GERRY JEFFERS: That's a helpful distinction, the time period. For example, Maria Frampton does a lot of self-knowledge type tests – Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Meredith Belbin and so on – right at the start. It seems that PCSI is frontloading self-knowledge whereas in PGDEL it is more evolutionary.

CARMEL LILLIS: Yes. I agree with that. In the criteria for assessment we have, 'what you have learned about yourself and how you have coped with the challenges'. We are still at the ground-level. When we read John West-Burnham's writings about the moral purpose that must be the foundation of leadership we might ask, 'to what end'? I would say that all our work is driven by the urge to improve society for the good of all. In a junior infant classroom, or in an Early Start classroom, teachers facilitate play with sand, water and other resources. They gather up building bricks and bits of jigsaws. These teachers need to hold fast to the idea that through their work they are contributing to the building up of society where social justice can be a reality. They are helping to create a better social order. This broader appreciation of their work will help give their lives meaning.

PAULINE JOYCE: Yes.

GERRY JEFFERS: Carmel, that echoes well with what the two heads of the regulatory bodies, Tomás Ó Ruairc and Kieran Murphy said. They were emphasising moral leadership and I think it is West-Burnham who ends with saying that all the regulation in the world won't ensure good practice unless people have the values. So personal values, self-knowledge, moral purpose, social justice, the courage to act collaboratively are deep, spinal themes in these courses.

PAULINE JOYCE: Absolutely. And just to add that myself and Paula have crossed over in the teaching of the different classes as well and that was interesting. I taught down here in Maynooth and Paula was up in RCSI.

GERRY JEFFERS: That's an innovative development.

PAULINE JOYCE: Yes, I think they were a very different group.

GERRY JEFFERS: Conscious of the time, we have covered a lot of territory over the past fifty-three minutes. What do you think has been the big overview?

PAULINE JOYCE: For me, I feel you have to get outside of your own profession to really learn what's going on within; look at it through another lens. That's the key for me. Over the years that has been helpful. My background is in nursing. At Masters level I deliberately went to a programme that was outside that, where there was a mix. Now

when I teach leadership, I say ‘do not read healthcare professional journals, read anything else. Read Feargal Quinn’s *Crowning the Customer* or whatever’. I think you have to step out and look at things from another perspective, to realise ‘we are not unique’. This is not just happening in nursing. It is happening right across the health professions, and outside in industry and in teaching. Having said that, I know that the strength of our own professions is deeply engraved and I have drawn on the work of Lee Shulman in ‘Signature Pedagogies’ that go back to how you were taught at undergraduate level. We have to be aware of that but I think our challenge is to pull people away from their sense of comfort if they are to really learn what is going on. And learning about themselves is first and foremost.

CARMEL LILLIS: That reminds me of the account of the Greek philosopher, Herodotus, who travelled all over the known world. He went to Syria and he went to Asia and he found to his amazement that people acted in the same way as they did in Greece. I could draw a parallel. It could be good to have a national forum on leadership, drawing together all those who work on this issue, whatever or wherever their situation, so that we could reflect together about the issues involved. This conversation today has the same effect as other stimulating conversations. I am more committed to learning about the importance of research, of professionalism, and of providing opportunities for others to reflect on the critical nature of their work.

GERRY JEFFERS: Maybe you could expand on what you have learned from this about what it means to be a professional.

CARMEL LILLIS: Being a professional means trying to do things better all the time, about having standards. I think that being a professional means trying to improve my work all the time, about having personal and professional standards for this work. In this situation, I am influenced by the work ethic of my colleagues. All professionals, whether from educational or medical backgrounds, constantly revisit their work to ensure that it is as they would wish it to be, conforming to their standards. We reflect on our work almost automatically because of what we uphold. For my own professionalism, to be in this triumvirate with people who are trying to do their very best, spurs you on to be equally committed in that way and to all you can do to do the right thing. Again, it’s back to values and vision and one’s own self. Every teacher going home in the evening reflects on what has happened that day and, without formalising, says ‘I could do that in a different way tomorrow’. I am sure every doctor and nurse and other healthcare professionals reflects automatically. That’s a given because we are the people we are.

GERRY JEFFERS: But isn’t one of the learnings from this project that while all of that about being professional is valid, it is a very individualised articulation of it? And, it seems to me, a theme running through many of the projects is the challenge of collaboration. A professional is, of course, someone with moral purpose and high standards but who is also in dialogue with colleagues.

CARMEL LILLIS: Yes, indeed. Even in this conversation my ideas would have been barren without the feedback and interjections from colleagues. That allows you to think in a different way.

PAULINE JOYCE: It does, Yes.

GERRY JEFFERS: Great.

PAULINE JOYCE: A final word, Paula?

PAULA KINNARNEY: I think you have to be willing to take a risk. In a way, you know, Pauline and my meeting was a fortuitous coincidence. Isn't it just a bit random that something like that happens? I believe that part of the responsibility for us is to create those kinds of spaces. While it is wonderful that we have got to this point, again it is on the basis of a small number of people believing in moving it forward and having openness within the institutions in which we work, and support from our colleagues, both seen and unseen, who had confidence in us when we came with these ideas to bring this forward, not just support with financial assistance as well, which is very important. I think you have to be brave enough to take a risk. There is a lot of risk adversity in society at the moment because we are in that space. As teachers we don't often take enough risks within our classes. Depending on the institution in which you work, It may not always be seen as the right thing either. But we had to take a risk. This could have gone terribly wrong. We could have sat in a large lecture theatre last year and it could have failed. Some of our colleagues had reservations about this. Even some of our keynote speakers had reservations as to how well this connectivity might happen or might not. So, one of the things I have learned is not to be afraid to take a risk. They may not always pay off in huge dividends, as this one has in terms of the creative and collaborative conversations we now have and the partnerships of learning that have been forged, to be able to say as a leader that it's ok to take a risk and that if it goes wrong then that's ok too. So, for me risk-taking was immensely important.

GERRY JEFFERS: That also echoes some of the emphasis on moral courage and moral purpose that's in the literature.

PAULINE JOYCE: And learning organisations. That's the key isn't it?

GERRY JEFFERS: The organisation has to be open enough then to allow space for bottom-up initiatives, or at least from within the organisation and that top-down only leadership is going nowhere. If people are looking around expecting the HSE or the Department of Education to take the initiative we will be waiting; leadership has to come from within the professions.

CARMEL LILLIS: And of course, all change happens at the margins. It then depends on the management or the hierarchy to take that up and I have to say that in some

instances, the Department of Education and Skills have taken on board initiatives that started at the margins.

GERRY JEFFERS: That's true.

CARMEL LILLIS: That has to be acknowledged. But for something to work at the margins we go back to Paula's point at the beginning: you need an individual who is going to step out of role and take that on.

GERRY JEFFERS: And the three of you are all very good examples of that in action. And that might be a good place to draw a temporary line under this conversation. Thank you.

REFERENCES

- Bennis, W. (2009) *On Becoming a Leader*, 3rd edition. New York: Basic Books.
- Brookfield, S.D. (1995) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Hargreaves, A. and Fink, D. (2006) *Sustainable Leadership*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Hargreaves, A. (2003) *Teaching in the Knowledge Society, Education in the Age of Insecurity*. New York: Teachers' College Press and Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Hunt, C. (2011) *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills.
- Fullan, M. (2001) *Leading in a Culture of Change*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Kapuscinski, R. (2008) *Travels with Herodotus*. UK: Vintage International.
- Kotter, J. P. (1996) *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Liebermann, A. and Miller, L. (1999) *Teachers, Transforming Their World and Their Work*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lortie, D.C. (2002) *Schoolteacher, A Sociological Study*, 2nd edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Mann, T. (1947). *Essays of Three Decades*. London: Random House Inc.
- Quinn, F. (1990) *Crowning the Customer*. Dublin: The O'Brien Press.
- Shulman, L.S. (2005) Signature Pedagogies in the Profession. *Dedalus*, 134(3), 52-59.
- West-Burnham, J. (2009) *Rethinking Educational Leadership: From Improvement To Transformation*. London: Network Continuum.
- Whitehead, J. A Living Educational Theory (Living Theory) Approach to Research and Life [online]. Available at <http://www.actionresearch.net>