



ESHA magazine

EUROPEAN SCHOOL HEADS ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2010

**Instructional Leadership
is the Way Forward**

KS2 Sats: How was it for you
Holiday Town for the Mind



ESHA magazine is the official magazine of the European School Heads Association, the Association for school leaders in across Europe. ESHA Magazine will be published ten times per school year. You are welcome to use articles from the magazine but we would appreciate it if you contacted the editor first.

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ESHA 2010 CONFERENCE

Grand Resort Hotel, Limassol Cyprus
4 - 6 November 2010

«The successful school: a human approach»

Learning How to Love Life



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ASSOCIATION - POED**

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- **Petros Pashiardis:** Human Systems of Leadership in Successful Schools.
- **Neil Hawkes:** Human Approach, Moral Leadership and Positive Culture in Schools.

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Design By Lena





Dear ESHA friends and members,

Dear ESHA friends and Magazine readers. The 'saving ghost' is on his way in Europe. From a lot of countries we receive disturbing messages of budget cuts; not only at an educational level, but very often [also] severe social budget/welfare cuts as well. Many governments give us less but persuade us to do more. Investing in education is the best investment in the future, in all countries! To reach for the Lisbon goals, governments should do much more than that right now. In my opinion it's a shame that we have spent all our natural resources leaving the debts to the next generation and at the same time we don't give them the tools by saving money on their education.

The ESHA bi-annual conference is approaching rapidly. I know that our Cypriot colleagues are working hard to make it successful. More than 500 Participants, coming not only from Europe but from all over the world, will meet for three days, discussing the human approach to school leadership. This conference is also a good opportunity to launch the new ESHA program. The ESHA board has worked hard lately to complete a proposal to Brussels on building the European School Leader Community. ESHA will contribute with this program to the Leadership Community of European School leaders, or in other words: 'ESHA comes to you!'. 'Sharing good practices, find out what's new, seek help, get connected' are some of the ideas that drives us. In the next ESHA magazine we will publish some of the outcomes of the conference and the new ESHA approach. Although there are not many places left on flights, it's still a good idea to join the conference. See you in Cyprus! ◀

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Duif', written over a horizontal line.

Slovenia: Change induced tiredness

NIVES POČKAR, SLOVENIA

The Slovenian school system has seen a number of changes in recent years. All secondary schools are involved in renewal of educational programmes. The renewal is based on school consortium for vocational and professional schools as well as on National Education Institute for secondary schools. The renewal is aimed at preparing new educational programmes in accordance with strategic guidelines of Slovenia in scientific-technological area, work and organisational area and socio-cultural development. We take into consideration the need for modern, quality and developmental education of the youth, the employees and other adults. Another criterion is the compliance with requirements of internationally comparable knowledge standards of Slovene people. The renewal itself is of utmost importance due to some of the programmes being obsolete as they do not provide the students with the knowledge and qualifications expected from them by the economy. The ultimate objective of the renewal is to enlarge the developmental potential in vocational and professional education as well as the integration and cooperation in development teams in schools. This enables us to achieve breakthroughs in school development.

Didactic renewal of educational programme is taking place in secondary schools. This renewal is aimed at increasing the quality and duration of the knowledge gained. Furthermore, it is supposed to resolve the rigid curriculum, uniformed syllabus as well as tackle the problem of too little detailed knowledge etc. Teachers are actively involved in the



Nives Počkar, Slovenia

renewal too, since they are constantly attending educational and training courses and they adjust their work accordingly. Teaching process will be (some programmes have already been renewed) based on bigger student involvement and more extensive team work.

Sectoral provisions are also changing. Teachers may sometimes be placed at disadvantage because of all the constant changes in legislation, especially in the area of grading students. For example, a student attending third year of secondary school was already subjected to three different Grading regulations. There are currently 2864 legal acts schools are abiding by.

Administrative work has increased, especially that of principals. Principals consequently have less time for their basic task – running, organising and monitoring teaching process in schools.

Self-evaluation and an overall quality of schools are also being implemented. There are less and less students attending high schools as well as a bigger number of students not graduating high schools.

A new way of financing is being put to practice – that of yearly proportions.



Principals are faced with extra work brought about by new legal acts and regulations. A good example of this is the regulation regarding school meals for all students. This regulation is based on partial financing from the state and a lot of administrative work. Slovene principals differentiate themselves from other European principals in the sense that we have a five year term of office, we have the Council of the Institute consisting of mostly teachers appointing and relieving principals of their duties. Another difference is the new salary system that brought about an unfair evaluation of our work because the difference in salaries of teachers and principals is negligible – there are even some instances where deputy principals earn more than the principals. There exist almost no difference between teacher's salary and that of the principal. Other European school systems do not have this. Those responsible for the new salary system did not take into consideration the responsibility, enormity and complexity of principal's work. I enumerated just a few changes currently found in our school system. One thing is certain – our school system is EVER-CHANGING. ◀

Agenda 2010–2011

November 4 – 6

12th ESHA's Biennial in Limassol Cyprus

From November 4th until November 6th the 12th European School Heads Association Conference will be held in Limassol Cyprus.

Registration is still open.

Go to www.esha2010.com and register!

Wednesday 3 November:

Board meeting: 14.00 – 18.00 PM

Wednesday 3 November:

GA meeting: 18.00 – 20.00 PM

End of November

Decision from Brussels about the grant

31 March – 2 April 2011

Spring ESHA GA 2011

Inspections – Effective school- management by external help

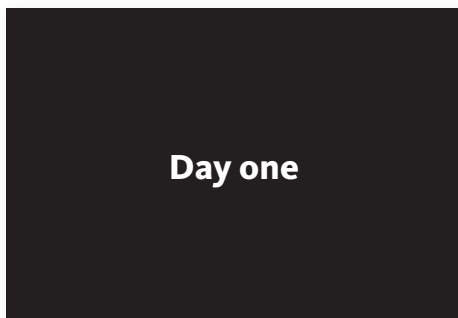
DR. ÁCS KATALIN, PRESIDENT OF ESHA-HUNGARY

Report on the 2nd Regional Conference of ESHA-Hungary

The event's day 1 (Friday) was run on Hungarian, participated by a high number of heads and deputy heads of schools, mainly of secondary high – either grammar or vocational oriented – schools. There were attendants from Slovakia and Serbia, too. (See photos attached.)

The day was run as workshops rather; speakers were giving a brief outline of their theme, and then experience interchange took place, forming a diverse palette on the issue. As themes there were "Inspection, as of in the EU" (*by Mr. Molnár, Géza*), "Effective school: the controlling function of the partners" (*by Mr. Schusztér, Gergely*), "The effect of tertiary education to the secondary schools" (*by Mr. Póth, Zoltán*), "Controlling, by a head's eye" (*by Ms. Dr. Ács, Katalin*). A series of school visits followed the inspired discussions – participants were given the opportunity to choose of various school types, and were led to walk in the living schools; then there were debates on the scenes

Day one



they just saw. Later, the most enthusiastic colleagues right away went to join the “Researchers’ Night” – a nation-wide major event on many many venues, at institutions, at museums, etc., where students and teachers, parents were traditionally showing great interests.

Day 2 (Saturday) had English as working language. It was started with the presentation of Mr. Dr. habil Vass, Vilmos, titled as “The implementation of the Key Competencies and Changing Leadership”. Based on Hungarian educators’ works – written already 30-40 years ago, and since – he cleared the terms of competencies, the importance of being able and ready to change, in order to meet the requirements of the ever changing society and circumstances as general, including the demands of the labour market. He had surprising approaches, vivid examples as illustrations to his statements, got a short video insert for a more

Day two



comprehensive understanding. He gave importance to naming the issue in question by different words at different countries – i.e. “problem” in Hungary would be named as “difficulty” in the Western part of Europe, and “challenge” was its name in the USA. The issue, however, was focused on innovation – as curriculum development was rather concerned. He referred to various studies and books¹ and gave us a brilliant presentation.

The enthusiasm of the participants present was even increased by the presentation of Mr. Chris Harrison, past president of ESHA – titled “Developments in School Self Evaluation & Inspection”. (In order to disseminate its illustration to those not reading English, we put the translated version also to our website.) As presented, in England the Self Evaluation Process, the Performance Data and the previous

Inspection Reports provide the three-leg base to the appropriate timing of inspections – the 1 year, 3 year or 5 year cycle. The inspections should be a ‘with’ and not a ‘to’ experience. He emphasized the importance of working together with partners and explained how to make way to create teachership and leadership an attractive work; a profession which is confident and, therefore, well-placed to self-regulate itself.

Ms. Kákonyi, Lucia presented the opinion of the Mérei Ferenc Institute of Education and Career Counseling, Budapest – the background institution of the Capital’s Municipality, which is the maintainer of well over a hundred secondary high schools and vocational training centres. Briefly, it was told that inspection should check the results of the school, and should point to issues necessary to improve – while institutes of education would be the critical friends at self evaluation, and the places to provide the CPD courses, pedagogical advises, managerial supports requested.

Ms. Dr. Sárközi, Gabriella’s presentation was titled as ‘Bullying at schools’ – a highly exciting topic of recent education. She is the director of the Mediation Service for Education in the Institute of Educational Research and Development. Beside the main theme ‘bullying’, she sorted out other recent challenges – named them as Roma childrens’ segregation, handicapped childrens’ integration. As problems, she mentioned absence of trust, lack of information and of communication, infringements, inattention, not handled conflicts (just to name a few here); educators should focus on communication, confidence and co-operation. Bullying, she pointed out, is the consequence of the problems mentioned. As benefits of mediation/facilitation, she listed and explained better understanding, letting the parties deal with the problem concerned, helping to find more creative, co-operative solutions; cheaper and faster than any other procedure, it develops the partners’ skills, restores trust and communication.



Ms. Monoriné Papp, Sarolta gave the final presentation of the Conference, titled as “STEP 21 classroom diagnostic process”. This Hungarian model offers the advisor as a critical friend, which applies indicators to explore the class/ teaching process and represents it to the teacher in a professional and empathetic way – really, a standard evaluation program, by $3 \times 7 = 21$ value criteria (socially relevant expectations). Details may be studied by the slides of the presentation – see attached.

This 2nd Conference gave floor to many face-to-face discussions on the recent educational developments in Hungary and in the neighboring countries. One of the most frequent issues was the ever changing demand because of the changing young generation – behavior, respect, enthusiasm vs non-motivation, then we might mention career expectations both of the youth and of the teachers. What a school leader should do in order to make his/her secondary high school attractive for the primary school graduates, for the parents, for experienced teachers; how to make the best use of NGOs, of educational service providers – how to keep promising contact with the school maintainer officers. ◀

Many happy returns of such a successful conference, thanks to ESHA!

Budapest, Hungary

September 24-25th, 2010

Notes

1 references included:

- Curriculum development re-invented – ed. Jos Letschert SLO, Leiden, the Netherlands, 2005
- Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of December 18th 2006 on Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning (2006/962/EC)
- Jean Gordon – Gabor Halasz – Magdalena Krawczyk – Tom Leney – Alain Michel – David Pepper – Elzbieta Putkiewicz – Jerzy Wisniewsky: Key Competencies in Europe: Opening Doors for Lifelong Learners Across the School Curriculum and Teacher Education. CASE Network Reports No.87. – Center for Social and Economic Research, Warsaw, 2009 (Dr. Vass contributed to this Report as supporting researcher – see p.4.)
- Shirley M. Hord – William A. Sommers: Leading Professional Learning Communities. Voices from research and practice – a joint publication of NASSP & NSDC, 2008
- Ethan Yazzie-Mintz: Charting the Path from Engagement to Achievement: a Report on the 2009 high school survey of student engagement (HSSSE)
- Douglas B. Reeves: Leading Change in your School – ASCD, Alexandria, VA (USA), 2009

Instructional Leadership is the Way Forward

BY VERITY SWAN, NAPD

Instructional leadership is the dynamic delivery of the curriculum in the classroom through strategies based on reflection, assessment and evaluation to ensure optimum learning. The research, reported below, was an illuminative evaluation of instructional leadership requiring, in its later stages, the participation of current post-primary Principals and Deputy Principals.

The research programme

The study of instructional leadership commenced when the author, undertaking comparative exploratory surveys into teacher employment patterns (teacher recruitment, teacher turnover and retention), in Ireland and Texas, at post-primary and high school level, visited Texas in 2002. The Texan Principals claimed that they could make a positive difference in the experience of a teacher through instructional leadership, in marked contrast to the response to the questions on leadership ...❖



Verity Swan was a teacher, Deputy Principal and Acting Principal in a large north Dublin secondary school until 2002. Throughout her teaching career Verity has undertaken classroom and school-based research focused on optimum teaching and learning. She chose to research the induction of teachers, “new to a school” for her M.Ed. thesis in 1996. Verity is very interested in comparative education. She has undertaken a comparative exploratory study of teacher retention in Ireland and Texas. She is currently Chairperson of the Society for Management in Education in Ireland (SMEI) which is associated with the European Forum on Educational Administration (EFEA). Verity recently completed a doctorate on Instructional Leadership in Trinity College, Dublin.

Verity Swan has been following a doctoral research programme on Instructional Leadership for the last eight years. She has worked closely with members of the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals in Ireland [NAPD], which has adopted a policy of promoting Instructional Leadership with the members of the Association. Here she outlines her findings.

of the Irish Principals, who saw their role as mainly managerial / administrative.

This led to an investigation of the effect of school culture which provided further information on Principal and instructional leadership. The need to investigate instructional leadership was reinforced in 2005 by NAPD, which informed the Minister for Education & Science that “instructional leadership” was the way forward in school leadership. Thus the aim of the study became:

- The clarification of the term “instructional leadership”, both in theory and in practice;
- The establishment of what elements, if any, of “instructional leadership” could already be found in post-primary schools in Ireland;
- The identification of a model for the implementation of “instructional leadership” in post-primary schools in Ireland.



In general, most literature does not define any of these leaderships clearly: this led to extensive searches of literature on school leadership in order to construct sound definitions. However the author found a development in the general theory of leadership, from individual leadership to shared leadership, which is reflected in the thinking on educational leadership (Sergiovanni 1991; Rallis and Goldring, 2000) where it focuses particularly on teaching and learning.

A recent study of transformational leadership and instructional leadership (Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe, 2008) has shown the outstanding importance of instructional leadership for teaching and learning - the core aims of the school as identified by NAPD (2005).

The literature search and accompanying interviews with educators and post-primary Principals in 2006-07 revealed that the term “instructional leadership”, although frequently used, required a detailed investigation to find out its precise meaning both in the theory and the practice. This investigation included a survey of the opinions of post-primary Principals and Deputy Principals.

The methodology was that of illuminative evaluation, about which Burden, (1998, p.17) writes:

The ongoing collaborative process of collecting information and gathering participants' perceptions should incorporate also feedback and discussion of a regular nature such that the final illuminations are made up of a number of small candles (or even fireworks...) which have been lit along the way

Qualitative tools, using grounded theory for interview analysis, were employed in the initial stages of the research. The survey in 2009, using a questionnaire, produced quantitative information from 398 Principals.

The survey

The survey of the opinions of Principals and Deputy Principals on instructional leadership was sent out early January 2009 and was analysed between April and May 2009.



The questionnaire consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A requested background data; Section B, which had four parts, was concerned with the theory and practice of instructional leadership in Irish post-primary schools.

The findings

Clarification of the term “instructional leadership”. The following definition of instructional leadership emerged from the study of literature and the 2006-07 interviews:

*Instructional leadership is the dynamic delivery of the curriculum in the classroom through strategies based on reflection, assessment and evaluation to ensure optimum learning.*²

This definition was accepted by a large number of respondents in the 2009 survey, but was not supported by their practice, according to their response to questions in the survey (Section B, parts 2,3,4). Factorial analysis of the data suggests strongly that the term “instructional leadership” is generally not understood and thus its practice, if any, must be uneven.

It is clear that elements of instructional leadership are being practised in some post-primary schools in Ireland but frequently are not recognised as such. These practices include homework policy, discussions on teaching and learning, classroom visitation that some respondents in the 2009 survey claimed to do.

Factorial analysis of the data suggests strongly that the term “instructional leadership” is generally not understood and thus its practice, if any, must be uneven.

The definition needs to be read in conjunction with definitions of educational leadership and curriculum leadership as these three leaderships are interconnected, not only in the literature (McEwan, 2003; Glatthorn, Boschee and Whitehead, 2006), but also in the examples of “common sense, everyday practice” as found in operational definitions

(Bradley, 2004; Heywood, 2008) and in the response of Principals and Deputy Principals who referred to “happy schools” (glossary) in the 2006-07 interviews and those who responded in a positive way to the relevant questions in the survey in 2009.

The views of interested partners

NAPD has stated that instructional leadership is the way forward. This aspiration is in line with international literature on what must be done to ensure good teaching and learning (Mc Kinsey, 2007). From the evidence of this research all education partners³ are avowedly enthusiastic in terms of ensuring optimum teaching and learning for students. The introduction of instructional leadership has to start with the teacher in the classroom with the support of the Principal who is himself or herself well versed in instructional and curriculum leadership through relevant training. Literature exists for this purpose, including the book *Instructional and Curriculum Leadership Towards Inquiry Oriented Schools* by Heywood⁴ (2008), which was sponsored by NAPD.

Current obstacles

Current obstacles to the practice of “instructional leadership” in Irish post-primary schools: That classroom visitation is not a tradition in Ireland, is an obstacle to instructional leadership. Currently the Principal appears to be apart from the classroom experience of teaching and learning (Section B, parts 2,3,4). The culture in some Irish post-primary schools appears, from the evidence of the written comments in section B, 2,3,4 in the survey, to have remained unchanged in a changing world, thus creating difficulties for those who would wish to innovate in order to deal with the needs of that changing world.

The rationale of instructional leadership – a personal view
 “Unlike Parlett, we do not believe that this (evaluation) can ever be a neutral process. Every evaluator, just like every educational psychologist, brings her/his values to bear on all that she/he does. The



successful evaluator is aware of these and presents them openly and honestly as part of her/his reflections on what has been revealed.”

(Burden, 1998, p.17)

The author is satisfied that instructional leadership, focusing as it does on teaching and learning in the classroom, is an essential leadership for post-primary schools. As seen in the literature what happens in the classroom, whether through the planned curriculum, the hidden curriculum or indeed the null curriculum (Bradley, 2004, p. 13), has a major effect on the student in the immediate and long-term future.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP HAS TO START WITH THE TEACHER IN THE CLASSROOM WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL

Like any other innovation, instructional leadership has to start in a small way respecting the undoubtedly good work, which has been and is being done generally in many Irish post-primary schools. The author's contention is that, if instructional leadership is implemented, all members of the school community can move forward in the knowledge that whatever the current economic, political or social climate, optimum teaching and learning is being achieved for their students. Better relations between members of the school community will arise from the preparation, which must precede the implementation of instructional leadership. Implementation will also ensure other current difficulties are overcome including better use of time by members of the school community. That instructional leadership is not the norm in Irish post-primary schools means that there are many lost opportunities for both teachers and students and according to the data from the survey, poor interpersonal relationships in some schools.

IT IS SHOCKING TO THINK THAT SOME POST-PRIMARY PRINCIPALS (10% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS) CAN REPORT IN 2010 THAT THEY CANNOT ENTER CLASSROOMS.

It is shocking to think that some post-primary Principals (10% of survey respondents) can report in 2010 that they cannot enter classrooms. The literature on leadership shows the development from one sole leader to a sharing leadership, yet students in schools, where lack of good inter-personal and inter-professional relationships prevent their Principals and teachers working together, gives a very different message.

The author does not think that instructional leadership necessitates that the Principal works with the teacher in the classroom (Marzano, 2003) but thinks that the opportunity and possibility must be there. Leaving aside the notion that every teacher is a manager (Heywood, 2009), the distinction between the Principal managing the school and the teacher managing the classroom is acceptable in terms of responsibilities and duties. What is unacceptable is that, from the evidence of the survey of Principals and Deputy Principals in 2009, in some schools the respondents felt excluded from classrooms or felt that they had no place there. These fears may not be based on reality since there is evidence too (CBR, 2007) to suggest that teachers' attitudes towards their Principals are changing. But certainly, from the evidence of this research, such misunderstanding becomes an obstacle to innovation in some post-primary schools.

The research data from this study also suggested that the knowledge which some Principals and Deputy Principals have of Department of Education's policies and trade union regulations appear to be at variance with current agreements from their answers to Section B, parts 2, 3, 4. Discussions that the author has had with officers of the trade



unions have shown their interest in education research, as well as their interest in innovation, with the proviso that conditions for their members are right. Other misconceptions were uncovered during the research study.

The survey in 2009 showed that some Principals felt they could not go ahead with innovation since the teachers would object. The evidence from teachers in this research is that they will be happy to involve themselves in change for the well being of their students, provided that they are fully aware of the reasons for innovation and have the knowledge to implement innovation where appropriate. It seems that some Principals may misinterpret their teachers' attitudes. What emerged from the survey was that some teachers and some Principals are not happy in their respective work.

From the evidence of Principals and Deputy Principals who do engage in such activities in Ireland there is a culture of openness beneficial to all within the learning community of their schools, which subsequently has an influence on society. Students in such schools see teachers working together, teachers working with the Principal and Deputy Principal, teachers welcoming "visitors" to the school. Usually in such school climates, the students too have been actively involved in school life, which makes it possible to implement recent directives from the DES requiring student councils in schools.

The chosen model

The author proposes a model of instructional leadership which involves all members of the school community and which will lead to an inquiry-oriented school (Heywood, 2008). The model requires teacher leadership in the classroom in conjunction with an educational leadership in the school (focused on teaching and learning) and a curriculum leadership, which serves both. These leaderships are all exercised by those who, through training, have a thorough understanding of the dynamic qualities of instructional leadership.

The model of instructional leadership which this research study has identified is one in which the teacher in the classroom becomes the instructional leader, implementing strategies (based on action research) which will ensure the optimum learning for the students, on a daily basis. The Principal with a close knowledge of the practice of instructional leadership, both as a former teacher and as an active participant in instructional leadership training programmes, which will be described in the next section, ensures educational leadership for all instructional and curriculum leaders within the school and beyond⁵. The important matter is that leadership of teaching and learning (instructional leadership) commences in the classroom in the daily relationship between teacher and students, which affirms Heywood's model (2008, 2009) of instructional leadership.



THE AUTHOR PROPOSES A MODEL OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP WHICH INVOLVES ALL MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL AND WHICH WILL LEAD TO AN INQUIRY-ORIENTED SCHOOL.

Where this model clarifies Heywood's model is that the individual teacher is the instructional leader requiring the support of a Principal who has a full understanding of instructional leadership from his/her current role as an educational leader and from his/her former role as an instructional leader in the classroom.

Curriculum leadership will be undertaken by teachers who as instructional leaders are fully conversant with the pedagogic knowledge base, share their ideas in an active manner and conduct their work through reflection, discussion and evaluation in a learning environment. According to Bradley (2005, p.10) a different order of work practice is required from curriculum leaders than from instructional or educational leaders.

In this model the teachers work together as instructional leaders and share the responsibility with their colleagues, including the Principal, in the inquiry-oriented school, which is focused on teaching and learning. This model has the advantage of overcoming obstacles such as subject specialisation in the post-primary schools, which differentiates the sector from the primary school sector, and the perceived opposition from different agencies. A recent study by Rushe (2010) illustrates the differences between the primary and post-primary sectors in relation to instructional leadership.

Once in place this model will become self-generating. However the introduction of such a model necessitates certain steps, which are based on the findings of this research study.

Training requirements

The implementation of instructional leadership necessitates training for each member of the school community in instructional and curriculum leadership; training is required in all schools, but on an individual school basis. There has to be the recognition that:

- schools are different.
- long held traditions exist (classroom visitations are not the usual practice).
- positive interpersonal, professional relationships are essential for the well being (and thus the successful learning of students, teachers and principals) in any school.

This research has identified three different cultures in schools:

- Schools in which Principal and teachers are used to working together and Principals feel comfortable about visiting classrooms.
- Schools where Principal and teachers have no traditions of classroom visits but do have a mutual respect.
- Schools in which there appears to be a culture which inhibits any innovation

Recognising the importance of “fit” between teacher and school (Evans, 1998), the author suggests that training must take account of these differences. The results of this approach should be better teaching and learning and better relationships between principals and teachers since everyone together moves towards an inquiry-oriented school.

Conclusion

Instructional leadership was found to be crucial for optimum teaching and learning, requiring training for all members of the school community. The teacher is the instructional leader in the classroom with the full and knowledgeable support of the Principal in a school which prioritises teaching and learning for all members through mutual sharing and respect. ◀

Notes

2 The derivation of this definition is found in the work of Clandinin and Connelly 1992, Heywood, 2008, Bradley 2004.

3 In the spirit of illuminative evaluation, the author had interviewed teachers in 2004 about instructional leadership and assisted in the facilitation of courses in instructional leadership in 2007 and 2008.

4 Heywood's books (2008,2009) show how the three leaderships are interconnected in the context of the inquiry-oriented school.

5 This model allows for the implementation of systems leadership (Pont, Nusche and Moorman: 2008) whereby Principals work with schools other than their own.

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How was it for you?

BY MARK HUNTER

Despite the Government's fierce attempts to avert a boycott, more than 4,000 British schools shunned this summer's KS2 Sats. Mark Hunter talks to NAHT members about their experiences.

Children's Secretary Ed Balls clearly felt this was a weakness he could exploit and he became ever more bullish as the boycott date approached. He urged school governors to bar heads from their own schools and appoint 'another competent person' to administer the tests if the head teacher refused. It was also suggested that heads should have their pay docked if they supported the boycott. The National Governors Association (NGA) protested at being 'caught in the middle of a trades dispute' and questioned the legality of Balls' demands. In the event the NGA reported that 'next to no' governors had acted on the minister's advice. Local authorities also distanced themselves from the Government's aggressive stance. So much so that NAHT General Secretary Mick Brookes wrote to local authority (LA) directors of children's services to praise their 'measured response' to the boycott.

When the dust had settled, it emerged that 4,005 schools had boycotted the 2010 KS2 Sats. This accounts for 26 per cent of the schools that were expected to deliver the tests. Support for the boycott varied considerably across the country. Analysis by NAHT blogger Warrick Mansell (see www.naht.org.uk) showed that at least 50 per cent of schools joined the boycott in 24 local council areas. Support ranged from 100 per cent of schools in Hartlepool to zero in Islington. The new education secretary Michael Gove had been a strong critic of Sats while in opposition, highlighting their duplication, the risk of teaching to the tests and decrying their lack of rigour in ‘holding primary schools to account’. Once in office, however, he reverted to type by immediately publishing a name-and-shame list of all those schools that had joined the boycott. Mick Brookes described appearing on this list as a ‘badge of honour’. Mr Gove accepted that there were ‘flaws with the current testing system’ and agreed to a review, but in the same breath announced the date for next year’s tests – the week of May 9. The NAHT’s response has been to remain hopeful that an agreement can be achieved before then. So, how was the Sats boycott for you? Leadership Focus spoke to NAHT members about their experiences to find out.

“Our children were more relaxed”

Graham Chisnell is head teacher of Warden House (Extended) School in Kent. His school chose to boycott the KS2 Sats “Our children were more relaxed during the assessment period, the results clearly and accurately reflected the children’s abilities and there was no anxious wait for a set of externally processed results.

“The moderation process, both across the school and across our cluster of schools within the boycott, was informative, professional and enabled a deep discourse into cross moderation of expectations, assessment systems and marking strategies.



“Is this not what our profession is about, our professional judgement must be accepted as a first-class assessment, not a second-class ‘guesstimate’. Regarding the consequences of the boycott, I have a very understanding chair of governors who supported my decision. I had taken careful advice from both NAHT HQ and the South East rep, as there were so many mixed messages and threatening statements from both central and local government regarding pay and legality issues. “I did receive some pressure from my senior team about my decision, but when I spoke with them about the context of the decision they were able to see the purpose of the boycott. I felt disappointed that more colleagues were not engaged with the boycott as we have been bemoaning the decision to keep KS2 Sats as a test-run assessment when we have teacher assessment for KS1 and KS3. “In hindsight, I feel there was a lack of clarity as to why the boycott seemed to some as at very short notice. Without understanding there was a legal timeframe, I can see their frustration. Those schools with pending inspections felt great pressure to comply and one primary school ready to boycott withdrew and administered the tests as their inspection was imminent.”

“I stood by my principles”

Helen Rooks is head teacher at St Mary’s school in Bridgwater, Somerset. Her school also boycotted the KS2 Sats “In common with the majority of head teachers, I do not object to children being tested as part of a complete assessment of their ability. However, the Sats in their present form are not used for this purpose and that is the key objection. “My philosophy is that our role is to educate the whole child and that is how we organise our curriculum and our school. We do not teach to the test and do not spend Year Six endlessly practising Sats papers. Our children have a mock test under test conditions in March, to get them used to the real thing, but that is all.

“The call to boycott this year was a difficult decision to make. I consulted staff who were adamant that we should support the boycott, but clearly this was my call. In the end, I felt I had no choice but to stand by the principles that have guided my headship and boycott the tests. “However, talking to other heads locally, I did feel that I would be going out on a limb as very few colleagues felt they would actually make a stand, and this was not a comfortable feeling. “I kept the children informed throughout, as many of them had heard the news about the campaign and wanted to know what was happening. We had several excellent discussions about the matter and they had a good understanding of the issues involved.



“During the week, our children were tested on old papers which the Year Six staff marked. Only one other school in the town was also boycotting the Sats and I made arrangements with the head teacher for our Year Six staff to undertake some joint moderation. Both schools found this an extremely valuable exercise and we have agreed to do this on an annual basis from now on. That was a positive that came out of the campaign.

“My governors were not happy, but, after a long discussion, made it clear that they would not take any punitive steps as a result of my decision. I wrote to parents but did not receive a single comment or query about the boycott.

“We had an Ofsted visit at the end of June and I informed the lead inspector during our first telephone conversation that we had boycotted the Sats. She did not make any comment or refer to the matter again and did not seem at all concerned. Once in school, she clearly wanted to check that our assessment procedures were rigorous and all the inspectors had access to teachers’ APP (assessing pupil’s progress) files and the pupil-tracking data. When reviewing the progress made by the children she commented on the fact that standards were good across the board and that it could be seen that we had a holistic approach and were clearly concerned with educating the whole child and not teaching to the Sats.

“Obviously, boycotting the tests was a difficult decision to make but having gone through all the soul searching, I am pleased I stood by the underlying principles of my headship. I haven’t been sacked and the sky hasn’t fallen in. Our Year Six children have high-quality teacher assessments at the end of the year and their parents and their next schools are happy with this.”

“I was in two minds”

Jackie Chalk is head teacher of Seend Primary School in Wiltshire. Her school decided to carry out the KS2 Sats

“I voted for the boycott, and would have supported it if I had still been at my previous school. But when the time came I had just taken up my post at a new school. I was only beginning to get to know the parents and the governors and it would have been very awkward to boycott the tests at that early stage.

“So, I was in two minds. I discussed it with the children, who thought we should boycott. Then I discussed it with the parents, who all thought we shouldn’t.

“In the end, the NAHT advised me to go ahead with the tests, so that’s what we did. The tests just went ahead normally with no problems. I do hope the level of support for the boycott hasn’t weakened the union’s position and I’m certainly disappointed that the Government seems to have already set a date for next year’s tests. Sats are a very narrow measure of a school’s performance and I would gladly see them disappear.

“We have a very small cohort here and one child going off sick on the day of the test can skew the results quite significantly. In fact, I think the whole system is skewed.”

“We wanted a negotiated settlement”

Steve Iredale is head teacher of Athersley South Primary School in Barnsley. He proposed the motion to ballot NAHT members on the Sats boycott at Annual Conference “Our position was always that we wanted a negotiated settlement and we were quite willing to compromise to get one. It was therefore with a very heavy heart that we actually went ahead with the Sats boycott. The biggest disappointment about the whole campaign for me was that it had to go that far.



“In fact, in January, we thought we had worked out a resolution. Unfortunately, I think Children’s Secretary Ed Balls took the view that this was a fight he could win and adopted a very aggressive stance and we were left with very little choice but to go ahead.

“The timing of the action worked both ways. Obviously, the election was going on in the week of the Sats, so things went very quiet for us in the media. In some ways that was helpful, but it did mean the issues didn’t get as much coverage as we would have liked.

“The level of support was what we expected in the run up to the boycott and we have achieved a number of things. We wanted to frustrate the league tables and we’ve done that. I think we’ve made the point that we are not against testing, but the way that the data is used. As a result of our campaign we have succeeded in raising the profile and importance of moderated teacher assessment and demonstrated there are more effective ways of assessing children’s progress accurately. This of course is very much in line with the aims of the NAHT Charter.

“We’ve also allayed some of the fears that head teachers might have had about the boycott. We are all still here, we haven’t turned to stone and we have shown that as long as you have robust data, Ofsted is not worried about Sats.

“So, if – perish the thought – we ever have to take action again, the support may well be higher. My feeling is that it won’t come to that. There’s a lot going on behind the scenes and I’m very hopeful that we will be able to agree an interim position.”

“I leave the campaign in capable hands”

Mick Brookes has been NAHT General Secretary for the past five years. He retires in September having led the campaign for change “We were delighted that the action was supported by more than 4,000 schools. That’s a very significant proportion of head teachers in this country and I think it would be a big mistake for the Government to try to minimise the size of that revolt.

“Obviously, we were disappointed with the Government’s rather provocative action in setting a date for next year’s test. Both Michael Gove and his advisers have said while in opposition that they do not believe the Sats are a sensible way of testing and promised a review. So we are now hoping they will do the honourable thing.

“The NAHT remains in active negotiations to try to ensure we are in a more sensible place by this time next year. It won’t be me leading those negotiations, but I leave the campaign in extremely capable hands.” ◀



‘Holiday Town for the mind’

BY DEREK WEST

In mid-summer, Derek West slipped into Glenties, to attend some of the sessions of the Patrick MacGill Summer School on ‘Reforming the Republic’.

If – Heaven forefend – the proverbial bomb had fallen on the Highlands Hotel in Glenties (a small village in Ireland’s north-west), anytime between July 18 and 24, the country would have sustained a 99% loss of visionaries. The wise men and women of the country were gathered for the Patrick MacGill Summer School, set up in memory of the novelist and poet [1889- 1963], who was a native of the Donegal town, and which has been drawing together some of Ireland’s leading thinkers for a serious, if informal colloquium, for thirty years.

The wise were there to hold forth on this year’s theme, *Reforming the Republic*, at a time when Ireland has been grappling with the sudden trauma of recession, and in the three sessions I attended education was very much to the fore.





PROFESSOR JOE LEE



Eminent historian, Joe Lee, saw a pivotal role for education in the reform process. While he was full of praise for his teachers at University, he was conscious of earlier forms of education in the Republic as being geared for a 'static' society. We have been 'sleep-walking through our assumptions'.

Now, as well as ensuring the quality of teaching and teacher-training, there is now a need for 'creative intelligences', 'emotional intelligence', 'for thinking outside the box.' The new learner must 'know HOW to learn' and must operate in interrogative mode: 'WHY do we think what we think? He also highlighted the absolute need for fairness in the management of reform in the recession.

PETER SUTHERLAND



Peter Sutherland [former Attorney-General and international businessman] adopted a tough stance on our view of the quality of our education system. 'We haven't lived up to it... it's a myth.' He maintained that we are fearful about debating the issue. We've a 'dys-functional school year' [at 167 days, far too short] and our performance by OECD standards is just 'average'.

On the other hand he was most positive about the 'can-do' outlook of the articulate young people of Ireland – 'fantastic raw material' who have the feeling that they can do anything. But to achieve full potential ['we have to be in the top Quartile'] the quality of education has to improve – he alluded to deficiencies in standards of learning in Mathematics and Science.

His central focus was on the quality of third level and he raised the question of charging of fees, a 'politically untouchable' issue. Sutherland was adamant that not only has it to be 'touched' but it must be resolved. If universities are not properly funded, and if staffing

levels continue to lag behind those of comparable institutions in the UK and Europe, the prospect of 'excellence' on the world stage will remain remote. He was caustic about the funding formula, whereby quality is sacrificed for the sheer volume of young people going to college. 'We have to stop the political games.' There has been a failure to grapple with serious issues and an avoidance of the hard choices.

Sutherland largely attributed the transformation of Ireland to direct foreign investment ['We didn't do much'] and asserted that Ireland now has to be much more proactive in shaping its future, through 'education, education, education.'

DON THORNHILL



This resonated with the opening remarks of Don Thornhill, former Secretary-General of the Department of Education and Science, 'Education is the most important...' He also echoed the wisdom of Singapore's Prime Minister Lee when he warned ICP delegates in 2009 that the consequences of decisions taken now will be felt in the system 20-30 years

hence. ['If you get it wrong for that whole generation of kids you have no second chance with them, even if you fix it in the next generation'].

MARTIN MURPHY



Martin Murphy [CEO of Hewlett Packard in Ireland] had a much more upbeat view of our secondary education than Peter Sutherland. He felt it had served him well as both a parent and an employer [not to mention the fact that it had assisted his passage to his high executive post!]. Although he made a passing reference to the need for continuing 'faith development' in

our schools, his was primarily a pragmatic and vocational view of education: it should be prioritised as a route to job-creation with a 'steady



pipeline of graduates'; it should be adaptable to changing requirements [For life or for work? He seemed to favour the latter]. He did acknowledge that 'we're not as good as we think we are' and that we need to develop new skills and competencies around HOW we use information. He was not in favour of a total overhaul of the system, but did favour changes to the curriculum [make it 'modern', with a new emphasis on Mathematics, science, languages; 'park' the Junior Certificate; make more of the Transition Year [a gap year for 15-16-year olds], and evaluate performance on a 'constant basis'. [Sounds a lot like an 'overhaul'!]

As the Hewlett-Packard man, he had strong views on the learning environment of the future – scope for 'virtual learning', 100 megabyte internet for all schools, a laptop for every Senior Cycle student by 2012; future-proofing of funding for ICT. He saw the need for a revision of teacher-training, with more links to industry and [brave man!] performance-related pay!

HUGH BRADY



Hugh Brady, President of University College, Dublin, wanted to give his audience a reality-check. His form of truth – like that of Al Gore – was 'inconvenient'. With specific reference to third-level, he highlighted the funding crisis and the erosion of the autonomy of universities. He wanted to stress the urgency of the problem and to highlight our current tendency to linger in 'a Land of Lotus Eaters', rather than facing the unpalatable facts. Brady, like Sutherland, was looking for excellence, for a system that can be part of and a shaping influence on the knowledge economy through the nurturing of talent, research and innovation. He was emphatic that Higher Education is one of Ireland's successes but that it needs to be empowered – the counter-forces of limited funding and the high proportion of students to lecturers are weakening our competitive edge on the global academic stage. The core problem he sees is the

state funding model – more students and a lower funding base, which is eroding the quality.

He had a lot of confidence in the forthcoming report of the Higher Education Strategy Group, but isn't it all in the implementation? Brady set out a substantial wish-list:

- Diversity of institutions, allowing for healthy competition;
- Disciplinary diversity in research and a convergence of disciplines;
- Globalisation of graduate links, allowing cross-links and collaboration between graduates across borders;
- Top level post-graduate work at fourth levels and life-long learning;
- Increased investment in research and development;
- New partnerships;
- Scope for Higher Education to challenge the assumptions of policy; a healthy source of the contrarian view;
- Participation – a reduction of funding could be counter-productive;
- Operational autonomy.

CHRIS HORN



Chris Horn, a computer entrepreneur, began here by quoting John Henry Newman and developed a vision that was based on some of the Cardinal's *Idea of a University*. He favoured particularly the collegiality and collaborative aspect of the university, where a multitude of young men [sic.] are engaged in an extended conversation with, and a process of learning from, each other. Horn suggested that the only place where such team-work operates effectively in education now is on the sports field. Our education system nurtures the individual performance; we are stuck on a 'treadmill of solo academic achievement.' Teachers hoard and jealously guard their materials; there is a lack of sharing, even when the state is paying for it. Sharing, interchange, mutual education is where it should be at.



Horn stressed the increasing value in the internet of a global community of strangers, where discourse leads to discovery, social commitment, and ethos-sharing. There is potential greatness in this. His enthusiasm for the possibility within that global line of communication was almost messianic! He emphasised that it's with us *now*; the younger generation has gained access to it. He envisaged a 'digital divide' based on 'those who have found it' and those who, ignoring it, may simply become 'youth sitters.'

FINBARR BRADLEY



Finbarr Bradley, entrepreneur, communicator and former academic, brought an additional frisson of intellectual excitement to the hall. His criticism of current education practice was that it is still rooted in the kind of provision suited to an industrial age. He advocates for the development of 'the imaginative mind' with its inevitable links to creativity, the

feminine element and the soul! We are swamped with information, but what do we understand? He believes strongly in a form of authentic creativity, rooted in local culture and maintains that 'special places attract special people'.

He cited Bollywood and Nokia as achievements that grew out of a specific region, the mind of that region, and the culture of that region. [Joe Lee had also cited the virtues of localism]. The essence of creativity lies in an acceptance of ambiguity and imagination. It's not about knowing or best practice. Our distinctive resources are artistic – these need to be nurtured.

Portrait of speakers by Mary Ita Boyle, © MacGill Summer School

MARY COUGHLAN



The final speaker, Minister for Education & Skills, Mary Coughlan, worked from a prepared script and did not deviate from it, although she had listened to a phalanx of distinguished speakers, outlining visionary – even revolutionary – scenarios for educational reform. Her stated commitment is to careful reform that ‘must be constant, but well considered.’ Perhaps she was putting a positive construction on things when she said, ‘The impact of a change we make today may not be fully realised for many years’, but it did not seem that she was referring to the Moratorium, a ban on appointments that is diminishing and debilitating middle management in schools or the change to the Pupil-Teacher-Ratio [leading to larger classes] and the threat to the Demonstration Libraries, a brave innovation that was beginning to successfully tackle student literacy.. ‘The consequences of failed or bad reform can be detrimental to their educational attainment.’

The Minister’s focus was on the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum. She touched on the high regard in which teachers are held in Ireland and the high calibre of entrants to the profession. In order to ensure that quality she intends to develop induction and probation reforms, admitting frankly that, to date, such measures have been ‘virtually non-existent’,

Perhaps what was missing from this promise was the recognition that there are very few jobs of any kind available to the newly-qualified and those who are on the lower rungs of the career ladder faces long delays before they will have any assurance of permanency.

[An interesting footnote to this appeared in *The Irish Times* of 14 August, when Eimear Cassidy, a young B.Ed. graduate, told of sending off 60 CVs for 3 interviews and, ultimately, no job. The 43 graduates in her year were chasing 9 jobs – along with the graduates from the year ...❖

before – and in many cases are contemplating emigration. ‘There’s a lot of people in our year that haven’t even gotten one response back, who haven’t been for an interview yet, which is kind of heartbreaking.’]

The MacGill Summer School is an exciting melting-pot for the mind and Director, Joe Mulholland, is to be congratulated on his capacity to convene a gathering of some of the best minds in Ireland to share their ideas.

But the problem that underlies not only MacGill but many other such gatherings is the apparent chasm between the visionaries and the policy-makers. If Glenties was the seed-bed for educational reform, the green shoots have to take root in Marlborough Street [headquarters of the Department of Education and Skills, as it is now known] if they are to grow. ◀

