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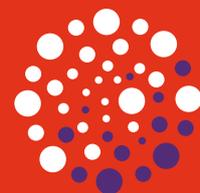
Connecting teachers, schools and systems:
Creating the conditions for effective learning

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Abstracts

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International Congress for School
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TE Paper Session

Topic:	Teacher effectiveness, teacher quality and professional learning
Session:	Parallel Session 6
Session Date and Time:	Saturday 9 January 2016 11.00 -12.30
Location:	Science Centre Tower Base North 2
Chair:	Deirdre Torrance

PAPER 1 ABSTRACT

A qualitative analysis of Teacher Design Teams: links between leadership, process-design, ownership and perceived outcomes. Floor Binkhorst, Cindy Poortman, Wouter van Joolingen, University of Twente/ELAN.

Main issues and conceptual underpinnings

Teacher Design Teams (TDTs) are professional development programs in which teachers collaborate to (re)design innovative educational materials. TDTs can contribute to teachers' professional growth (Voogt et al., 2011). Furthermore, engaging teachers in the design-process could create a feeling of ownership, increasing the probability that teachers will use the innovative materials in practice (Carlgren, 1999). This leads to sustainable implementation of educational innovations (Handelzalts, 2009; Mooney Simmie, 2007). In this study, TDTs consist of 6-8 teachers from various schools, who have monthly meetings during an academic year, and are coached by a teacher-educator from the university.

A recent study showed that TDT-participants are satisfied with most outcomes, but do not often use the designed material afterwards (Binkhorst, Handelzalts, Poortman, & van Joolingen, 2015). Therefore, we question the sense of ownership the participants felt. The most important determinant of the outcomes was the process-design, including organization, types of activities and goal alignment. The team coaches played a key role in shaping this process-design. Furthermore, specific motivating leadership behaviours can enhance the feeling of ownership (Avey, Avolio, Crossley, & Luthans, 2009).

To determine how future TDTs could be optimized, this study is aimed at obtaining a more thorough understanding of the process-design and leadership styles in TDTs and the links with ownership and perceived outcomes.

Method

We studied three cases of TDTs, by collecting qualitative data from multiple perspectives. For each TDT, we observed all meetings, collected logbooks and we interviewed both the team coach and three participants at the start and the end of the year.

Findings

As *outcomes* of the TDTs, all participants mentioned professional learning gains and they all designed educational materials. However, most participants had higher expectations beforehand. Most participants were unsure whether the learning gains would lead to improved classroom practice and not all participants were planning to use the designed materials in practice in the future.

The feeling of *ownership* of the TDT varied among the participants. In general, the participants who felt more ownership were more positive about the outcomes, especially using the designed material in the future.

For the *process-design*, almost all respondents explain that a clear defined team goal is essential for the success of the TDT. This was missing for some participants.

The team coaches played essential roles in enthusing the team members. In two cases, some team members also showed *leadership* behaviour themselves by initiating activities and bringing in new ideas. In general, the participants who took initiatives felt more ownership.

Conclusions

To optimize future TDTs, team coaches should provide clearness and focus in the process-design. At the same time, they should create an atmosphere in which team members can take initiatives themselves, in order to enhance the sense of ownership and improve the outcomes. Then, professional learning in TDTs could be improved in such a way that it leads to sustainable change at the school level and beyond.

PAPER 2 ABSTRACT

Teachers' preparedness to implement curricular reform: a case study of Scottish primary teachers' readiness for the '1+2'.
Hazel Crichton, Francisco Valdera-Gil, University of Glasgow.

The European '1+2' model originated in 2002, as part of specific educational goals to be attained by 2012 (European Council, Barcelona, 2002). Sections 43-45 of the Presidency Conclusions of the 2002 Barcelona European Council set the educational strategies, aiming to achieve 'a competitive economy based on knowledge'. It is interesting to note that point 44 offers the only tangible proposal: 'to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age'. The Scottish Government is committed to providing all Scottish children with the opportunity to learn a second language in addition to their mother tongue from the first year of primary school, with a third language being introduced no later than the fifth year of primary school (Scottish Government, 2012) bringing it in line with other countries in Europe, who have already adopted the '1+2' as policy. This ambitious initiative is to be applauded, as it addresses an issue that meant that Scottish children, like their peers in the rest of the UK, (Macaro, 2008, Coleman, 2009) were disadvantaged in terms of their language learning compared to their European counterparts, with resulting consequences for future mobility, career opportunities and ultimately business and the economy (CBI, 2014). However, there exists a problem of teacher capacity, as primary teachers, many of whom have poor foreign language skills, are expected to deliver the language learning experience to their classes (Crichton and Templeton, 2010). The research described in this paper documents concerns of 40 primary teachers from two local authorities regarding the successful implementation of the '1+2' initiative. The teachers responded to questionnaires and ten were subsequently interviewed in focus groups. Six were then interviewed individually. The data were analysed inductively by each researcher before synthesis of the main themes took place through collaborative discussion. The teachers understood the value for the pupils of learning at least another language and were keen to assist the language learning process. However, they identified a number of issues they were anxious about, including their own level of language, sustainability, progression and support. These concerns have been raised in other research studies (Crichton and Templeton, 2010; Driscoll et al., 2014). Deeper issues, related to the primary teachers' conceptions of language pedagogy and cognitive development were also uncovered. The answer may lie in a sustained and sustainable coherent programme of professional development which addresses primary teachers' needs in a realistic, but effective way.

PAPER 3 ABSTRACT

Initial Teacher Education in Ireland - a case study. Judith Harford, University College Dublin, Teresa O' Doherty, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.

Within the last five years Teacher Education in Ireland has become a significant focus of policy change and development; influenced by a multiplicity of external and internal factors, the reform of the nature, content, duration, and structure of teacher provision and providers in recent years, provides an interesting case study of change in teacher education.

The establishment of the Teaching Council, the statutory body with responsibility for regulating the teaching profession, in 2006, was a significant development on the education landscape. Traditionally universities and colleges exercised high levels of institutional autonomy in relation to the content and nature of teacher education programmes with little state intervention or regulation, and teacher education was almost invisible within the higher education landscape with a resultant low public profile. This situation has changed dramatically and with alacrity within a short period of time.

This paper examines how international research and literature on good practice in initial teacher education has been reflected and refracted within a national policy. Influenced by Global Education Reform Movement, control of teacher education curriculum has shifted from the higher education institutions to the Teaching Council and government agencies. Reflecting the turn to practice within the literature, the role and place of school placement and partnership with schools is now a dominant feature within ITE programmes. In parallel, influenced by the need to achieve critical mass to support and maintain educational research, partnership between institutions has also been mandated, resulting in further loss of institutional autonomy for ITE providers.

A key strand of the research for this paper was supported by funding from the Irish Research Council