

Teacher Leadership

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Teacher Leadership is in two parts. The first part includes brief articles written by teachers and edited by the editors. The second part includes short ‘stories’ of teacher-led development work written by the editors on behalf of the teachers who led the projects described.

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Editorial

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Welcome to the second issue of the second volume of *Teacher Leadership*, the journal that showcases and disseminates teachers' leadership of development work. This issue contains another remarkable collection of accounts of teachers leading change. Here we see teachers striving to extend their pedagogic repertoires and improve their own and their colleagues' practice. More significant perhaps is that these accounts reveal the enormous potential that teachers have to build and embed new ways of working in their schools and carry their influence forward into wider professional networks and even policy arenas.

The teachers featured in this journal often start with a particular concern about aspects of pupils' learning, but as they proceed along the developmental path they soon discover the need and the potential for professional and institutional learning. In the discourse about schools, the concept of learning is commonly reserved for children and young people. Learning is what kids do when they go to school – right? By the same token, teachers engage in professional development and school improvement is the goal of educational leadership. However, supposing we dissolve these clumsy constructions and just use the term 'learning' to refer not only to what pupils do, but also to refer to what teachers do when they want to improve their effectiveness and to refer to what schools do when they want to develop and embed new and better practice. The accounts included in this journal provide vivid illustrations of the way themes such as values, voice, agency, self-esteem, narrative and feedback arise in both pupil and teacher learning. They are all of crucial relevance in a school that aspires to be a learning community (Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007).

Tracey Gaiteri's article deals with how young children can use drama to develop empathy and insight into the human condition. Their sense of narrative and their understanding of other people is enhanced and they find themselves able to write with a new sense of purpose. Their creativity becomes so much more than an empty

academic exercise. Their engagement in dialogue leads to them being 'no longer frightened of their own voice'. The concept of voice is echoed time and again in these pages, not least in the article by Sheila Ball in which she reflects back on her attempts to introduce strategies for student voice at a time when it had yet to become not only fashionable but the subject of official guidance from the UK government. Her experiments with strategies such as photo-evaluation were creative and productive inasmuch as they enabled students to articulate their perspectives on the experience of doing school, but Sheila's reflections are perhaps even more significant in the way they reveal something about teacher voice and the challenge of teacher leadership. Her account includes a courageously honest and sharp analysis of what can stand in the way of achieving influence and some wise observations about the leadership of change. In this story there is no separating the issue of student voice from teacher voice. Both hinge on the question of human agency.

The concept of human agency has arisen with persuasive frequency in *Teacher Leadership*. Colin Gladstone's article is another in which a teacher looks back to the early stages of his career as an agent of change. In pursuing the inclusion agenda he too identifies the connection between voice and human agency when he says: "being human is about being an agent". He applies this to the context of special education needs where young people with severe learning difficulties are given the opportunity not only to be creative entrepreneurs but also to form relationships with other young people in mainstream schooling.

Lucy Bolton's article is likely to leave the reader feeling uncertain. Are we reading about a case of professional development through coaching or is it more a case of collaborative development work through co-inquiry? The blurring of the boundaries in this account is a blessing. Here we can see the interweaving of pupil learning, teacher learning and institutional learning as a Drama teacher works with colleagues in the Science Department to help improve classroom effectiveness. This article also highlights the way a direct focus on classroom practice can contribute to the raising of self-esteem and a wider enhancing of the teacher's professional role. Self-esteem has been a recurring theme in *Teacher Leadership*. In previous issues it has been spotlighted quite explicitly – for example by Janet Ollerenshaw (Volume 1 Number 3), but in Lucy's article it emerges as an essential ingredient in the cultivation of learning for both pupils and teachers. In the same way that the teacher 'Sarah'

gained confidence in herself as a practitioner when the coaching made her gains in learning visible, the students in Helen Hill's project made rapid progress when a simple progress review device made their learning visible to them. Self-esteem is also at the core of the problem that Richard Moore tackled in the context of physical education for young people who tend to be the losers in competitive sports. The project provides a counter weight to Gordon Brown's call at the Beijing Olympics for more competition in sport (The Guardian, 2008). Richard's work offers vulnerable young people an opportunity to improve their physical capability through individual sport within which their self-esteem can be protected and nurtured.

Assessment for learning practice has developed rapidly over the past 5 years as accounts in this journal have testified to (see Sue Lyons article in Volume 1, Number 3 for example). In this issue we hear about a collaborative project in a primary school which again has a strong pupil voice element. This project led by Alyson Mitchell, Liz Sims and Hetal Sitaram is an excellent illustration of how a whole school can develop practice when a group of teachers solicit the views of children and use them to create new strategies to support learning. Listening and responding to the voices of students is the focus of Steve Mackenzie's project. He started out with a focus on assessment but found that the students had so much more to say about their experience of school. His 'off-loading' sessions enabled students to express their views – to comment on what they wanted to comment on. This resonates well with Sheila Ball's article referred to above.

In secondary schools pastoral work has largely moved away from a concentration on welfare towards support for learning. The role of form tutor has always been an additional one for teachers but now we are beginning to see creative strategies in which non-teachers can become form tutors as the story of Joanna Heasman's development work illustrates. This clearly helps to free up teachers' time, enabling them to focus their energy on teaching, but it is also about making better use of the strengths and talents that can be found among the administrative staff who tend to have wide ranging skills including data management.

The use of new technologies is addressed in the story of Zoe Ross's development work. Her project reminds us that the main challenge for the development of ICT is the leadership of professional development and the time and ingenuity that this demands. Here we

have a glimpse of what can be achieved using technological solutions to professional learning.

The final story in this issue of *Teacher Leadership* focuses on the quest of a group of Croatian colleagues. Ljubica Petrovic is one of a number of young professionals who are determined to find a new professionalism in which teachers find their voices and take responsibility for innovation and change. She is a member of the International Teacher Leadership project team which came together in 2008 to work collaboratively to build support for teacher leadership globally. A strong feature of this project is the contrast between different cultures and contexts which echoes some of what Colin Gladstone says in his article about the value of looking outwards and comparing educational systems across the world.

Since the launch of our new website in 2008, it has been possible to download articles and stories from *Teacher Leadership* free of charge. We know that this material is being used across the world by teachers looking for inspiration and information about how to lead the development of practice in their schools. It is evident also that the material is being used in the context of professional development seminars for teachers. We are committed to publishing accounts of teachers' leadership of development work wherever it is to be found and hope that future issues will reflect this increasingly international perspective.

If you would like to comment on what you read in this journal or would like to search for and download material from previous issues, please visit our website www.teacherleadership.org.uk. If you would like to know more about our editorial policy you can either read the Editorial in the second issue of the journal (Volume 1 Number 2) or you can email Lyndsay Upex (lju20@cam.ac.uk) and ask her to send you a guidance document.

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Spotlight on writing and drama

Tracy Gaiteri

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Abstract

Tracy Gaiteri is the Headteacher of a small primary school near Hatfield. In this article she discusses a whole school project in which she developed the use of drama to enable children to become enthusiastic and creative writers.

It was the summer term and the literacy theme for the week with my mixed Year 5/6 class was *Interviews*. We spent the week reading and analysing a range of reports of interviews. We discussed which interviews we enjoyed reading most and why and which were most informative and why. The genre for Guided Reading sessions was science fiction and the children were reading books about life in the future, space travel and encounters with aliens. The children were motivated and enjoyed the week's work. At the end of the week I asked the children to write a transcript of an interview with an alien. This, I hoped, would encompass all our learning throughout the week. There were two learning objectives: to portray an interesting and informative interview with an alien and to structure this in an appropriate style.

When I introduced the lesson to the children, there were a few sighs. Some children were very slow to start; some stopped after a few questions and answers and remarked they didn't know what else to write. I wondered what had happened to all their natural curiosity and motivation with this subject. When I read their interviews, I was really disappointed. The layout of their reports was in the correct style, their punctuation was generally accurate, they had used a few different types of questions but their accounts were simple, unimaginative, unoriginal and unappealing to the reader.

Giving this some consideration over the weekend, I decided to abandon the following week's plans and give the children more practical experience of interviews through drama activities. For four days we experienced interviews through drama. On the fifth day I asked the children to rewrite their interview reports. This time the

writing was exciting, lively, in-depth, rich in description and information and enjoyable to the reader. The children were motivated, on task, and writing for a full hour. An analysis of their work showed it to be of high quality.

At a following staff meeting, we discussed how we might improve the quality of all elements of children's writing and decided to make this a key priority of the School Improvement Plan. I talked of my recent experience with my Year 5/6 class and my conviction that all children should be given opportunities to read, reflect and discuss writing, to play with language, to act out fictional scenes and stories, to be involved in debate and discussion. They needed to experience and experiment with language; their thinking skills needed to be challenged and extended.

We considered ways in which we could enhance their writing and concluded that we needed to provide our pupils with meaningful contexts which would stimulate and motivate them to write. This would include experience on individual and collaborative levels, and an audience for their writing to make the experience purposeful. I suggested the use of drama as a teaching tool since it appeared to me that drama might be able to offer these experiences.

My reading of the literature at this point helped me in planning the next step. A number of key ideas about writing emerged. Firstly, it is essential that we have a developmental approach to writing based on our understanding of how children learn (Raison, 1994). This enables us to know what kind of support is needed at each stage and to provide children with time to experiment within each stage. Another key idea is the distinction between writing for 'knowledge telling' as opposed to writing for 'knowledge transformation' (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). Writing as knowledge transformation emphasises a constructive and creative process where a learner constructs meanings and transforms ideas. Writing for this purpose will surely be deeper, more meaningful and will develop the quality writing that we are striving for in our school. This is a process we can encourage and develop. I wondered how drama could help us to achieve this.

As a medium for learning, drama can have a tremendous effect on children's cognitive and affective development (Heathcote, 1991; Bolton, 1985). It seemed to me that writing and drama are both modes for learning which are dependent upon similar processes. I

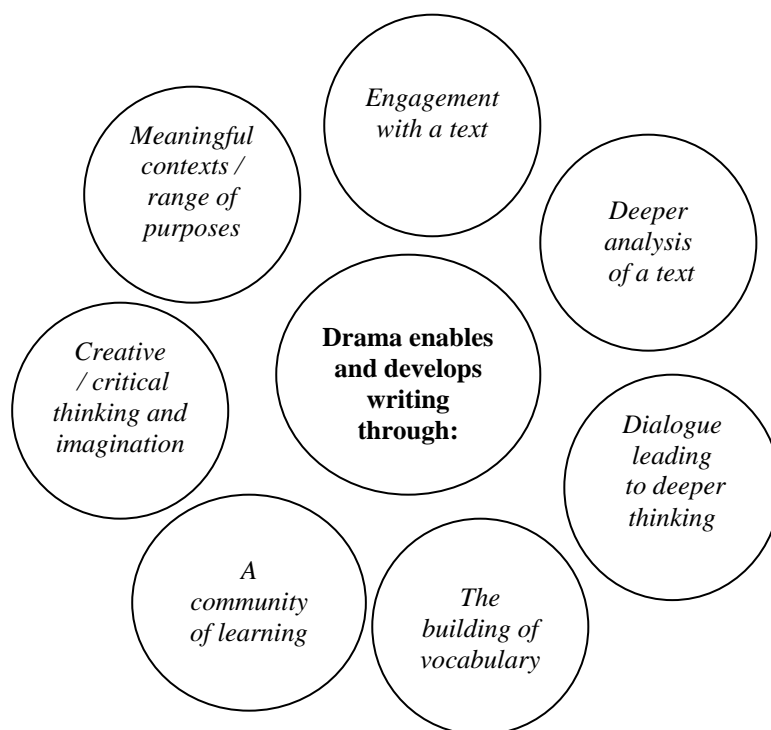
wanted to explore how the two could be developed alongside one another providing pupils with compatible experiences which would develop their thinking and learning by helping them to bridge the gap between using language to think and talk and using language in writing.

The intervention

Our intention to use drama as a teaching strategy necessitated a re-think of the way in which we taught Literacy. I asked colleagues to plan their Literacy units of work over a three or four week cycle, depending upon the genre to be studied. I employed a drama teacher who has expertise in developing drama opportunities for children. He worked with each class for an hour a week alongside the class teachers. The teachers planned a literacy theme which spanned three / four weeks of work in Literacy. They explored aspects of this theme by reading and analysing texts with their pupils. The drama teacher would reflect the week's work in the drama session and in turn the teacher would pick up on the work in drama sessions back in the classroom. The aim was for the children to be able to draw upon their experiences in the drama sessions when they returned to literacy work in the classroom. In addition to this, the teachers planned to incorporate drama into their daily lessons. The children were then asked to undertake an extended piece of writing at the end of the period of study. Time on INSET days was used throughout the period of the intervention to review what we were learning, to support teacher development in the understanding and use of drama skills, and to plan collaboratively for the next step forward.

The intervention had lasted for two terms. Drama had been used to enhance the children's learning experience in numerous ways and it was immediately apparent that the quality of children's writing across age, ability and gender groups had improved. However, I wanted to analyse the evidence thoroughly to move our understanding on. Throughout the process I had gathered evidence through teacher and pupil interviews, classroom observations and teachers' journals. I also analysed the children's writing. This analysis was conducted in partnership with teachers who had been involved in the project. We grouped our observations into emerging themes. These themes are shown in the diagram below. The themes link and overlap with one another although they have been separated here for clarity.

Figure 1: Diagram of the 7 emerging themes



I now discuss each of these seven themes.

Engagement with a text

In my experience, reading can be a passive activity for some children. Some children read without searching for meaning from the text. If we use the reading of texts as an essential strategy for teaching children how to write, as recommended by the National Literacy Strategy, then we will need to ensure that children are engaging fully with the texts they read. Since drama takes them back into the text but without the presence of it, they revisit the writing in a very different way. A teacher is able to remind them of certain aspects of their reading and the children explore their interpretations of these aspects. This in turn develops their thinking and equips them with ideas for writing. In a research study, Barrs and Cork (2001) found that drama had played an important role in helping children to 'live through' fictions by involving them in enactment. It seemed from my research that it is the personal experience with a text which develops children's empathy and understanding that is crucial for developing writing.

Deeper analysis of a text / how a writer writes

In the same way that drama fosters a deeper interaction with a text, our experience in this project suggests that drama activities enabled children to analyse a text in more depth so as to determine a writer's intentions. The drama required teachers and pupils to break down a text in consideration of characterisation, setting, plot, identification of conflict and resolution of problems so that each could be explored independently. Children were also encouraged to think about their audience – Who am I writing for? What will they be interested in? Is this exciting? How should I write?

I considered how these processes impacted on children's writing. Bruner discusses the importance of plot, characters, setting and action (1986). It is the manner in which these interact which brings about unity within a traditional story structure: beginning, middle and end. The drama and writing process in which the children had been involved emphasised these constituents and therefore will have fostered a greater understanding of narrative writing.

Understanding of plot, character and structure is not enough to make 'good' narrative however. Ricoeur (1983) argues that narrative is built upon concern for the human condition. My experience suggested that the drama had fostered children's ability to empathise with the characters in the texts they had been studying and this in turn assisted the children in writing which engaged their readers' empathy. In addition, the language of discourse is critical (Vygotsky, 1978). I would suggest from my observations that children are developing a consciousness of language whilst practising it during drama activities and discussing its use during shared writing activities.

Dialogue and deeper thinking

A key observation from this project was the role of spoken discourse in enhancing pupil's ability to produce meaning from their engagement with a text through drama. Teacher-pupil talk is too often monological (Nystrand, 1997), with a high proportion of teacher-initiated closed questions; minimal elaboration of pupil's responses by the teacher; and pupils' attempts to introduce new topics discouraged or ignored by teachers. In contrast, I observed evidence of 'dialogic engagement' (Lyle, 1998) often throughout this project. It was witnessed between groups of children as they worked upon a drama activity and was characterised particularly through the "How.....?" question.

The ‘dialogic engagement’ continued in the classroom between teacher and pupils. This was also characterised by the “How.....?” question. The teacher would usually begin by asking a general question, “How did you explorein drama?” This type of activity often led to a ‘cascading of ideas’ where everyone’s contributions were considered relevant and written up on the whiteboard. One of the teachers commented during interview that the children’s confidence had increased as a result of the project and that ‘they were no longer frightened of their own voice’. Another teacher remarked in a staff meeting how she had ‘suspected that they all had an opinion and drama has helped them to throw off any embarrassment and inhibition and let it out!’

The teachers felt that there was improved quality of dialogue between and among teachers and pupils. They also felt that they were more in touch with pupils as writers. It seemed that pupils’ metacognitive skills had improved. The Year 5/6 teacher acknowledged that, ‘the children are becoming more articulate in discussing writing’.

During interviews with the children, they also expressed a preference for talking through their ideas in a group. More confident children were able to discuss their thoughts and opinions and less confident children were learning to do this. Once they verbalise their ideas it becomes less worrying to write those ideas down.

The discussions I was observing in drama and writing sessions relate to research carried out by theorists who have been interested in developing thinking skills (Adey and Shayer, 1994; de Bono, 1999; Lipman, 2003). They recognise that strategies which require pupils to work collaboratively, to be involved in discussion, to be challenged to explain their thinking, develops metacognition and children learn to become more thoughtful, better at speaking and listening to each other, better at asking questions and using the language of reasoning and more confident in posing creative ideas and judging their own and others’ responses.

The building of vocabulary

This is a theme that came through the children’s work. When my colleagues and I spent the morning assessing the children’s writing, we discussed the quality of their vocabulary. In particular, the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) remarked on the vocabulary that some of the children with special educational needs were using.

Teachers explained that this resulted from the plenary at the end of the drama session. Teachers would note down words and phrases that the children used during their drama or at the end during discussions. This resulted in a word / phrase bank which was used back in the classroom for a writing activity. More articulate children were modelling a good use of vocabulary which broadened the vocabulary of others in the class. This element of the drama and discussion work evolved through dialogic engagement and developed as a result of the community of learning.

A community of learning

What I have observed most remarkably is the development of a community of learning. Teachers have been learning about new strategies and techniques for learning and teaching and they have been learning from and teaching one another. Children have been learning from their teachers and each other. I find this very powerful. Wenger's (1998) discussion of the false assumption of the individuality of the learning process resonated with me here. I find that our education system is pre-occupied with testing pupils and children can receive a narrow education preparing them for these tests. I realised that we were developing into an example of Wenger's communities of learners, a community involving teachers, the drama specialist, children, parents, governors and myself. Together we considered ways in which we could develop our children's writing. Within school we were discussing teaching and learning strategies, outside of school parents and governors are receiving regular updates on how the project was progressing. Everyone connected with the school was asking questions about writing and the impact of learning.

Creative / critical thinking and imagination

We had concerns about the lack of creative thinking and imagination that children demonstrated in their writing. During my initial observations of children in drama sessions, I began to think that this might be a gender issue. A session in which the drama specialist asked the children to imagine they had entered a garden which contained anything that they wished for confirmed this. The girls' ideas were based mainly in fantasy, whilst the boys' were based mainly in reality. I looked for evidence in their writing to validate this observation. It appeared to be a similar situation in their creative writing. Recently, when I observed drama this gender difference has diminished. The boys' imagination has either been released or developed. In fact the boys' writing, particularly in Year 5/6, is

extremely imaginative, creative and often more original than the girls.

Critical thinking was another skill we wanted to develop in our pupils. Maine, (2007) asks whether critical and creative thinking are different. She argues that key thinking skills such as rationalising, reasoning and synthesising are used to solve problems and reach conclusions, which we consider critical thinking, however, other skills such as thinking of alternatives and making connections also help solve problems. I have observed how the process of writing develops critical thinking skills. In order to learn, we have to place new knowledge into a cognitive framework. Writing provides the process needed to relate new knowledge to prior experience. This knowledge is symbolically transformed via language. When children decide what to take from their experiences of drama into their writing, when they edit their work, they are necessarily involved in critical thinking.

Meaningful contexts / a range of purposes

This theme emerged particularly through interviews with Key Stage 2 pupils. They had thoroughly enjoyed the project, had felt motivated to write for a range of purposes and liked having choices in the style of writing they did. Here are some responses to the question: 'What types of writing did you do?'

I chose to do a children's magazine for the visitor's centre. I knew what they'd like to do in a magazine, you know, word searches, spot the difference. I knew a mummy joke and I put that in.

I wrote like a talk. I wrote it about how the Egyptian's were mummified. I learnt most of it off by heart and I put loads of gory bits in it.

Me and did loads of labels for the (Egyptian) necklaces and the hieroglyphics.

Each of these responses refers to writing of a different kind but each shows the same enthusiasm for a writing activity. Button (2006) argues that to motivate children, teachers should work hard to absorb their pupils in tasks where they are almost unaware of the school context and its demands. I agree with this view. When I asked a group of children about what they thought of the work they do in drama, one child replied, 'We don't do any work in drama, we just have fun!' So much seems to depend upon the children seeing value

in their work. The motivation is that the context created is meaningful and real.

Building on the project

At the conclusion of the project I felt confident that drama can improve and develop children's writing. Drama seemed to me to be thinking out loud. It is literacy beyond paper and pencil. It is metacognition in action. Trying to pinpoint exactly how drama is able to do so is more difficult, although I hope I have gone some way towards identifying some ways forward.

The project was productive in establishing the use of drama to support writing throughout the school and it had led to the clarification of our seven themes. However, reflecting back on the project, it occurs to me that this is probably the tip of the iceberg. As the project developed, and as we began to challenge and change our teaching and learning of writing, we began to challenge and change our teaching and learning in all aspects of school life. Using drama as a teaching strategy inspired us to look for similar innovative teaching strategies and we began to employ drama in many other curriculum subjects and areas of school life. As we witnessed the motivation of our pupils in drama and writing sessions, we began to ask how we could foster this in other areas of the curriculum. As we witnessed the dialogic engagement of pupils, and pupils and teachers, we asked how we might encourage this more generally.

As a staff, we experienced excitement and enthusiasm when initiating change for ourselves. We looked forward to professional development sessions where we could discuss new ideas, share achievements and ask for support with areas of concern. The dialogic engagement of staff had also been fostered and we became active promoters of professional development. As reflective practitioners, we experienced empowerment, achieving greater professional autonomy through professional development. The experience in school has given staff both 'ownership' and 'involvement', with many teachers now wanting to further our understanding by engaging in their own development projects. However, the overriding achievement is that our pupils had the experience of 'becoming writers' which was a worthwhile experience for everyone involved in the project. Many of our pupils now write for pleasure and I am sure that we will not look back.

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School culture: how can we discover the students' view?

Sheila Ball

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Abstract

Sheila Ball is a teaching and learning consultant for the local authority in Hertfordshire. Recently she has been seconded to Heathcote School to support and develop teaching and learning. In this article, she describes how, when she was a teacher in a secondary school, she developed and used a toolkit to evaluate her school's culture from the point of view of the students. She also reflects on the leadership dimension of this project with the benefit of several more years of experience and from the standpoint of someone who has worked to support pedagogy in a large number of schools.

Looking back to when I first experimented with student voice and its role in school improvement, it is clear that the policy climate has changed a great deal and practices which were then quite difficult to establish are now relatively common place. Nevertheless, I think it is helpful to reflect on this project and the implications for leadership. When I undertook the project described below I was a teacher with responsibility for Modern Foreign Languages and a form tutor. I was very interested in whole school development but had no role of responsibility for it.

Learning about school culture

My project stemmed from a growing interest in the culture or ethos of schools. When I was training to be a teacher I both taught in and visited a number of schools in the state and private sectors. I was intrigued by the fact that these schools 'felt' different to one another. I wondered how young people and teachers working with a similar curriculum could have such diverse experiences and expectations. Seven years and three schools later I remained equally fascinated by the 'feel phenomenon'. As I read more about schools I came to realise that what I was 'feeling' was the culture of a school. This is not just the outward expression of a school's norms and values which

is apparent to a visitor on first entering a school (MacBeath, 2001). Rather it is the values, attitudes and habits of the members of the school community at a given time (Holt, 2000). I wanted to find out more about school culture, about how it is expressed and how it can affect the learning experience of students.

I therefore decided to undertake a project which focused on discovering more about my own school's culture from the perspective of a particular group of students. I wanted to consider the students' values, their attitudes to teaching and learning and their perceptions of the conditions that affect teaching and learning in our school. I also wanted to experiment with a variety of self-evaluation tools, to discover which were most effective in helping me to understand more about school culture from a student's perspective. I hoped to be able to offer the leaders of my school a rich source of knowledge to support them in developing the school as a learning community.

An exploration of the literature on school culture helped me to understand more about this complex concept. I was interested to learn of the fundamental importance of values in cultural development and in particular, the centrality of shared values based on civic and moral responsibility in promoting effective learning (Cogan and Derricott, 1998). Our school mission statement described values which I suspected were not necessarily shared by all members of the school community. I wondered how the students would describe the culture of the school and whether they saw themselves having a role in shaping that culture (MacBeath, 1999). I was interested in Wenger's (1998) discussion of schools as learning communities, peopled by individuals who bring variety but also need a sense of belonging. I began to understand that cultures built on the imposition of values would result in conflict (Watson and Ashton, 1995) and would not support effective learning and teaching.

Developing tools to excavate the school culture

Armed with a greater understanding of school cultures, and the need for community building within them, I set out to design the tools which would allow me to explore our school culture from the students' point of view. I was not interested in developing tools to be used on a one-off basis. Instead I wanted to develop instruments which could be reviewed, developed and re-used to explore the students' perspective and involve them as active participants in building a learning community (Rudduck and Flutter, 2000).

Initially I wanted to gain a snapshot of students' perceptions of the values of their school. Each student received a school planner in which the Code of Conduct, a set of rules based on the school's mission statement, is laid out. The aim of this Code is to promote a learning community where all members can work, learn and play together in a supportive environment through relationships based on respect. I therefore devised the questionnaire below, based on this Code of Conduct.

This tool was based on a tried and tested design (MacBeath, 2005) which asked students to respond twice to each statement. It firstly asks students to say whether the statements given are 'a lot like', 'quite like', 'not much like' or 'not at all like' their school. It then asks them to state whether they view the statements as 'not at all important', 'of limited importance', 'important' or 'crucial'. I chose to work with students in my tutor group as I had established relationships with them based on trust and mutual respect. I already knew that these students had views about the school and were keen to voice their opinion. There were perhaps other reasons for this choice which were better understood with hindsight as I discuss later.

Figure 1: Student questionnaire

Perceptions about School Questionnaire

Please complete the questionnaire by reading the statements and ticking one box on each side of the statements.

A lot like my school	Quite like my school	Not much like my school	Not at all like my school	At my school ...	Not at all important	Of limited importance	Important	Crucial
				students are able to learn and teachers are able to teach.				
				lessons run in a friendly, relaxed and orderly manner.				
				everyone is able to work without distraction.				
				students are polite and considerate to others and treat others with respect.				
				students are listened to by staff and listen to staff.				
				students come to school prepared and ready to work and appropriately dressed.				
				students get to school on time.				
				students respect one another's belongings.				
				students respect the places where they work.				
				students help to create a caring atmosphere where they feel involved and valued.				

Thank you for your co-operation.

Having gained this snapshot of the students' perceptions about their school as a learning community, I wanted to explore more fully their personal, everyday experiences of learning and teaching. I had read

that learning diaries is a powerful way to do this (MacBeath, 1999) and so gave students in my tutor group a diary in which to make notes on daily events both inside and outside of the classroom. I then had a formal dialogue with them in pairs in which I asked them to describe and explain the experiences they had recorded.

I also wanted to experiment with using photos to further empower students in interpreting school life (Schratz and Steiner-Loffler, 1998). I asked students to organise themselves into small groups and asked them to agree on five positive and five negative areas of the school to photograph. I then gave them the use of a digital camera and in registration time they took photographs around the school. Each group then organised their images to create a display including captions which explained the photograph and their reasons for including it in their display. I decided to talk with the students whilst they were making their displays in order to get a better understanding of the reasons for their choices and their view of the impact of the environment on their learning.

What did I learn?

My main aim had been to explore my school's culture from the perspective of a group of students in order to support my school's development as a learning community. I learned that the use of a variety of self-evaluation tools with a group of students can produce a wealth of knowledge about key aspects of school culture. For example, I learnt that, despite the existence of a code of conduct based on values of respect and consideration for others, these values are not shared by all the students. Students instead appeared to be selective about these values, depending on whether they respect individual teachers' classroom habits and practices. In addition, students seemed to have little understanding or acceptance of the idea that learning is the common purpose of the school community.

How did I explain what I found out? I might have concluded that the lack of shared values could be because the values expressed in the mission statement had not been successfully communicated in school, but I was convinced that shared values has to be seen as an outcome of a complex range of developmental strategies rather than a straight forward matter of transmission. For example I was aware that the school building had been intended for a community of half the size of the intake at that time and that was probably having a detrimental effect on the development of a harmonious learning community. I was also interested in looking at how these values are

modelled in the classroom by teachers' behaviour and the pedagogical approaches used.

I was mindful of the fact that these outcomes were only based on data from one group of students – my own form group – and although they might be indicative, they could not be claimed to be representative of the student population as a whole. Nevertheless, I thought that the insights generated from just this one group told us that there are serious challenges lurking below the surface and that, as a school, we needed to conduct a more comprehensive enquiry.

Perhaps the most important outcome of my project was the trial and development of a toolkit for exploring the students' perspective. I felt that the tools could be successfully developed and re-used to allow us as a school to learn more about students' views. This data would enable us to develop the conditions for supporting teaching and learning in our school but would also have a direct impact on students' dispositions by enabling them to have a voice and feel a sense of ownership and belonging (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007).

My recommendations

My assumption at that time was that the way forward was to communicate the outcomes of my project to the school's senior leadership team and perhaps other relevant committees within the school. They would then act on this useful information. I had a series of recommendations to put forward. These included:

- the setting up of a working party to look at the development of shared values, our teaching and learning policy and the limitations of the school site
- the further use of the toolkit by Year 8 tutors to find out more about the students' perspective
- the use of self-evaluation tools to help teachers explore the school culture
- the inclusion of self-evaluation as part of the School Improvement Plan.

These recommendations were founded on the belief that the potential for real and lasting school improvement lies with teachers who continuously engage in a process of reflection and action (Frost *et al.*, 2000). From my work I learned that school self-evaluation needs to become embedded in the practices of a school in order to allow the

‘bottom-up’ development which results in lasting change (MacBeath, 1999).

The problem was that my initial discussion with the senior leadership team had been discouraging and so I had shied away from further meetings to share the outcomes of the project. Instead I met with one member of the team who had been sympathetic to the project and had showed interest in the outcomes. He seemed genuinely moved by the students’ photo evaluations and this was very encouraging. However, no action plan emerged.

I subsequently went on maternity leave and feared that my attempts to initiate a student voice strategy in the school would soon disappear without trace. After the birth of my child, I went to see the Headteacher hoping to persuade him to act on the outcomes of my project. I provided a verbal overview of the project and what I had found out, but sadly my account met with indifference. I went home disappointed and dejected. With the benefit of hindsight informed by my subsequent experience working with schools as a consultant, I can see that I was a little naïve. I had focused, perhaps understandably, on the tools and techniques that would allow the students in my own form to express their views, but I had neglected the leadership dimension. So what were the barriers to change and what might I have done differently?

Reframing the leadership dimension

The first problem that I can see looking back on my project, was the choice to work only with my own form. The rationale was that these students were accessible to me and willing to cooperate. It was all very convenient and practical. I had sufficient confidence to try out these strategies within the confines of my own form but I lacked the confidence to persuade colleagues to join me in this enterprise. I was conscious of the possibility that the project would be controversial and that it would be seen as opening Pandora’s box. It was already known that some students were disaffected and their views were likely to be negative. Coupled with this was the pressure of expectations that went with my role in the school. At that time the school could be characterised more as an organisation than a community with all that implies about the link between formal roles and authority. As a Head of Modern Languages I sensed that some colleagues would not be relaxed about my taking on a project which had implications for the school as a whole. This was reinforced by comments made by a university researcher who I had consulted

about my project; he seemed surprised that my project led me beyond the confines of my subject domain. It confirmed my assumption that a viable model for such a project would consist of: a) a pilot study with one class; b) dissemination of the outcomes to colleagues; c) implementation by the school as an organisation. This model has been subject to robust critique (Frost, 2007) and I can now see its limitations. Looking back it is easy to see that the project would have stood a greater chance of becoming embedded if I had persuaded colleagues to join me in this enterprise so that the idea would be promoted through the collaboration.

Another issue which stands out from my current perspective is the question of what might be called a mandate for action. I discussed the initial idea for my project with my 'line manager' who showed little interest but was happy for me to do whatever would help me to satisfy the requirements of the masters degree I was pursuing. Perhaps if I had pushed for an agreement to conduct my initial trials with a whole year group, the outcomes might have been more readily received. It might have been regarded as 'official'. To achieve this would have been challenging of course: it would have required some systematic consultation, tenacious lobbying, subtle trust building, persuasion and a carefully managed meeting. These leadership activities are more easily accomplished in a climate where an explicit model of distributed leadership prevails. These days, many schools have embraced such thinking and would subscribe to a greater or lesser extent to the idea of being a professional learning community (Stoll and Seashore Louis, 2007) but when I carried out my project, that kind of discourse was not yet established.

It may have been unrealistic to hope that my proposals for this project would be welcomed by the senior leadership team. There is no ducking the question that arises in relation to teacher leadership: how can we proceed if our personal view of the priority for development is not accepted or recognised by the senior leadership team? In my case I might have done more to find allies who had more leverage than I did. This might have entailed one-to-one conversations with a range of people in different positions in the organisational hierarchy in order to find someone who would be prepared to present a proposal on my behalf. Sometimes we have to enable someone with more positional power to adopt an idea so that they proudly call it their own and steer it through the necessary committee structure.

What about the way in which my pilot study was disseminated? I had produced a twenty thousand word thesis but as far as I know, none of my colleagues at that time actually read it and it is perhaps unreasonable to expect them to do so. Schools are intense working environments and information has to be consumed quickly. The bullet point reigns supreme. When I spoke to the Headteacher, he told me that my study had not revealed anything that he didn't already know. In retrospect I should have concentrated on the process. I could have demonstrated that I had effectively evaluated and developed some tools and techniques for student voice and school self-evaluation which was the coming thing. If I had offered a process that would foster student participation and help to combat disaffection I might have succeeded in persuading sceptical colleagues to adopt my proposals.

Overall, I have to say that I learnt a great deal from the project. I learnt a great deal about how to facilitate student voice which had major implications for my understanding of school development, but I experienced frustration because these practices were not immediately taken up at a whole school level. There are some interesting lessons here about the nature of leadership. It has become clear to me over the intervening period that, if you want to embed new practices in the fabric of the school, you need to act strategically in the ways I have indicated above. This is challenging in an interpersonal sense of course and demands an accurate reading of the organisational climate.

Engaging in dialogue with colleagues within and across formal structures is essential in creating the social capital and intellectual capital from which leadership can emerge (Hargreaves, 2001). Such dialogue does not necessarily have to take place in formal settings, it can be a chat in the staffroom, an email, an exploratory conversation with a colleague at the end of the day. It is about planting seeds strategically. It is about seeing the value of sharing ideas with others who might express concerns, leading to possible solutions and ways forward. If the climate or language does not exist within your school, you need to grow it – by modelling the language and behaviour of leadership – by using the skills of consultation and collaboration, involving others and persuading them of the validity of your proposals.

Reflecting back on this project has reminded me how the capacity to think and act strategically is not automatic. It takes time and

experience to develop. Perhaps we need to think big but start small and allow time to reflect on the lessons learnt.

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Supporting teacher development through coaching

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Abstract

Lucy Bolton is a teacher of Performing Arts and English as well as having a post of responsibility – Head of Year 9. In this article she describes how she supported colleagues' professional development through coaching. She reflects both on the impact of the coaching programme on student and teacher attitude and on the potential of teacher-led development work to support professional growth.

Over the past three years I have been a member of a Teacher Led Development Work group at my school and have undertaken a number of development projects. In 2008, I focused on a school wide concern: underachieving students in Science.

The beginnings of a plan

Inconsistency in the quality of teaching in Science was impacting on students' learning in my year group. To address this I took up the challenge set out by Brighouse and Woods who had asserted that 'it is the personal and professional growth of teachers that will have the most impact on pupil development' (1999:94). I offered to work alongside science teachers to try to improve the learning experience of Year 8 students. I had read some articles discussing coaching and decided to explore this strategy further. I was encouraged by one description of coaching as: 'a process that helps others to enhance their performance and set their own direction' (Thomas and Smith, 2004:12). The idea of teachers owning their development appealed to me because it seemed to have the potential to lead to sustainable self-development.

With a coaching programme in mind, I met with the Head of Science to learn more about the issues within the department. We agreed that I would lead a Science Department briefing to share my concerns about the learning of students in my year group and to explore ways forward with my science colleagues.

The response from the department as a whole was very positive but there were clear signs that some members of staff were more willing than others to participate in the development work. I asked them to share their views about departmental strengths and weaknesses and their own teaching and learning priorities. We did this in writing as individuals by using a simple feedback sheet. Colleagues felt that the management of the department was a real strength with the main weaknesses being lesson planning, behaviour management and, most importantly, a lack of consistent standards of teaching. One member of the group expressed particular enthusiasm about working with me on developing her own skills. She had also approached me separately to discuss the behaviour of her Year 8 Science class. I will call this teacher Sarah. It seemed sensible to begin with just one enthusiastic volunteer and expand from there.

Sarah and I met to discuss how we could work collaboratively to raise standards of learning in her lessons. We chose to focus on a low ability Year 8 group, some of whom display challenging behaviour in science. As Sarah Bubb points out: ‘teaching isn’t easy and getting better at it isn’t just a matter of experience’ (Bubb, 2005:1). I knew I needed to plan an intervention which would help Sarah to develop her skills. We discussed my proposal that coaching might be the best way to achieve our aims. For me self-reflection lies at the heart of coaching and that the ability to critically review processes and practices lies at the heart of school development (Stenhouse, 1975). The potential for whole-school impact was important to me. I wanted this to be a project which not only impacted on one colleague and one group of children but which had the potential for wider development in the school.

Self-esteem and the self-fulfilling prophesy

I began to consider not only the impact that my interventions may have on the learning of my students but also the impact on Sarah herself. Sarah suffered from low self-esteem with regard to her abilities with this group of students. Her opinion affected her expectations both of her own teaching and student outcomes, which in turn became a self-fulfilling prophesy (Brighouse and Woods, 1999).

I knew I had to help Sarah to improve the effectiveness of her teaching whilst ensuring that she felt confident and empowered. I wanted her to focus on students’ learning rather than her teaching. I wanted her to consider students’ needs and desires and to work with

them to solve their problems rather than accept their underachievement. The way teachers view their pupils as learners is a crucial part of the teaching process and these views could have a significant impact on student behaviour (Moon and Mayes, 1999). I discussed this with Sarah who expressed a very positive attitude towards her Year 8 Science class. She firmly believed that they were capable of achieving; her main concern was their poor behaviour which meant they were not achieving their potential. I discussed with her Moon and Mayes' view that 'all children should have an equal opportunity of acquiring intelligence, and of developing their talents and abilities to the full' (1999:36). She was very interested in this and we went on to establish our joint priorities to impact on the students' behaviour through the development of high quality teaching and learning.

Devising the coaching programme

Having agreed the principle underpinning my work with Sarah I set about developing the actual shape of the support programme. Sarah's main concern was the poor behaviour of the students. She felt very nervous about teaching the class and didn't feel that she was in control of the lessons. I agreed to observe a lesson to see how I could help her. The first observation unearthed some fundamental problems; the poor behaviour I had witnessed seemed to be a result of boredom rather than the students being naturally unruly. There was a distinct lack of learning taking place due to non-productive activities. The students did not know what they were supposed to be learning as there were no aims or learning objectives shared with the class.

I now had to decide how to feed back to Sarah on what I had seen. Montgomery (2002) believes feedback should be immediate whereas Bubb (2005) recommends allowing time for reflection, looking carefully at what your focus will be. I decided that the feedback should be given on the same day as the observation but at the end of the school day. This allowed both Sarah and myself to reflect. It also allowed me to structure my feedback carefully, ensuring that I focused on Sarah's achievements. I had to consider the importance of focusing on the positive, ensuring that the areas for improvement were manageable and included targets set by the teacher herself. This would hopefully allow Sarah to reflect positively on her own progress whilst also allowing her to see potential areas for change (Bubb, 2005).

This first observation was a very productive starting point both for Sarah's own self-evaluation and for my coaching role. I encouraged Sarah to enter into a dialogue with me by asking for her own opinion of the lesson (Bubb, 2005). We then focused on the use of learning objectives and how they determined the lessons' activities. We agreed that Sarah would try phrasing the learning objectives as questions which could then be used to structure her plenary. A further observation was scheduled for the same class two weeks later. When giving feedback I was careful to make visible for Sarah the progress she was making. This process enabled us to plot Sarah's progress, but more importantly to discuss the impact it was having on her students. I also fed back to the Head of Science who in turn encouraged and praised Sarah's achievements.

We continued with a programme of regular lesson observations. Each observation focused on teacher behaviour and related to targets we had previously set together (Weatherley, 2000). The particular focus for the second observation was the use of learning objectives to focus the students' learning and ensure progress was made by all. The pattern of observations ranged from one hour lessons which allowed me to look at the structure, pace and the learning taking place, to specific 10 minute focused observations looking at aspects such as starters and plenaries. We also worked on differentiation and lesson planning which would contribute to improving students' learning and lessen the need for behaviour management strategies. We tried to ensure that the targets we had set during observations were addressed in Sarah's lesson planning. We also met informally. These sessions were vital to the coaching process as they allowed Sarah to share her ideas, problems and successes with me. The openness of our programme was, I believe, one of its strengths, allowing me to support Sarah personally throughout the development process.

Working together to move forward

The coaching programme I developed reflected my belief in the efficacy of a shared process of development. My thinking resonated with that of Joyce and Showers (1995) who argued that the key elements to a successful coaching programme are joint planning and resource development, together with mutual observation and learning. In my case I felt that it was important that Sarah shared my understanding of the power of teacher-led development work in effecting change. As our collaborative work progressed, I began to read more about the way in which collaborative enquiry can impact

on practice. The idea that risk taking was essential to teacher development seemed particularly powerful (Harris, 2002). I was also interested in the links between my development work and the TDA (Training and Development Agency for Schools) framework of professional standards. All teachers are expected to 'have a commitment to collaboration and co-operative working' (TDA, 2007:15) in order to meet the core standards and are expected to 'share the development of effective practice' (TDA, 2007:21). Taking this idea further, it was clear that not only was my own development work corresponding with the core standards but also enabled Sarah to meet her own standards more effectively.

Key outcomes

One of the aims of my intervention was to begin to develop a culture of reflective practice in which colleagues engage in professional dialogue with one another (Street and Temperley, 2005). I was keen that this be a starting point for whole school improvement in this area. At the heart of the coaching programme was also a need for one teacher to find her own solutions to her problems, taking ownership of her own failures and successes and gaining the power to sustain change from this process (Leat, 2008). I wanted colleagues to be able to plot their own journey and feel the benefits of it both professionally and personally. It is very true that 'neither the coach nor the person being coached know what is possible' (Thomas and Smith, 2004:12). When we began the process neither Sarah or myself could have predicted the outcomes, nor could we have predicted the shift in Sarah's perception of what support she needed. The change in focus from maintaining control over her class to a focus on learning outcomes was immense and surprising. The link between behaviour and learning was certainly affirmed for both of us. It was at this point that I realised my role had also changed. I was 'cast in the role of a learner, not as someone evaluating the observed teacher' (TDA, 2008:3).

In order to formally evaluate the success of the coaching programme I firstly looked at the improvement in Sarah's teaching. Analysis of the lesson observation records indicated that there was clear improvement in the quality of teaching with lesson tasks being linked to a clear set of objectives. It was also clear that Sarah's expectations of students had increased. She was no longer expecting them to behave poorly and complete little work. Another indicator of improvement was the reduction in poor behaviour. Using Sir Frederic Osborn School's 'behaviour for learning' data it was clear

that there had been a reduction in students receiving warnings and a dramatic reduction in students being sent to 'isolation'. The numbers are now much more in line with the school wide figures.

Next I began to consider the impact of the coaching programme on Sarah's confidence and self-esteem. I interviewed both Sarah and her Head of Department using an informal approach where I was able to ask a range of questions, but could also engage in further discussion. I first asked Sarah for her thoughts on what had changed whilst we had been working together. She was very positive about the outcomes for students' learning.

Behaviour has dramatically improved; there is a much calmer environment. The entrance into the lesson which was once a major concern has improved greatly which allows the lesson to start quickly and more work to be completed. There has been an increase in mutual respect between myself and the students. The students' attitude to learning has improved and so has their work completion rate. There has been a major increase in students' active participation and contribution in lessons. I have also seen a major increase in the amount of homework completed and handed in on time; I would say I used to get about 10% of the class handing in homework whereas now I get about 50%.

(Extract from Sarah's interview)

I also wanted to gather information on the personal element as I had witnessed a dramatic change in Sarah's confidence and presence around the school. Initially, Sarah's lack of confidence and low self-esteem meant that her body language was very defensive and didn't put her students at ease. Sarah came to understand that her physical presence within the classroom impacted upon her students' learning' (Brighouse and Woods, 1999). She recognised this change in herself.

The main change is in my confidence both within my own classroom, with my lesson planning and around the school with the students. I have been able to see the major changes which is great. I really feel like I am in control and can now manage the groups' behaviour and their progress.

(Extract from Sarah's interview)

Sarah acknowledged the move from an initial focus on student behaviour to that on learning.

Through the lesson observation feedback I have made two major changes, I now use questions as lesson objectives which students can answer at the end of the lesson and I also have improved my plenary and have started to include mini plenaries to structure progress throughout the lesson.

(Extract from Sarah's interview)

A discussion with the Head of Science highlighted other areas of impact.

I have seen a major change in Sarah's overall attitude.. she is very willing to share her experiences, good or bad with others in the department. She is talking about teaching and learning and we rarely hear her mention behaviour. Another thing is that she has started going into the staffroom, sitting and chatting with other staff. She never used to.

(Extract from Interview with Head of Science)

The fact that Sarah's improved confidence in the classroom led to her feeling more confident around the school was an unexpected outcome for me. I wondered about the impact of these changes on the students. I looked at student attainment levels and also interviewed some members of the class.

Students had made significant progress in their learning in the period of the coaching programme. The four students I interviewed, two boys and two girls' gave me some further insights. Many of the students noticed a change in the way Sarah acts as a teacher.

Miss is much more smiley, she sends postcards home when we do something good. I really enjoy Science and I sometimes can tell my form tutor what I learnt because there is always a question on the board that we need to know the answer to by the end of the lesson.

(Student D)

They also noticed a change in the lesson content and in their own behaviour.

We have done loads more experiments and we get to complete them all. We don't do as many worksheets which is great because they are really boring.

(Student C)

I haven't been sent to isolation in Science since Christmas, that's really good for me.

(Student B)

The way forward

I have learned a great deal about the process of coaching and its effect on those involved. When I began the process I was very focused on the aim of increasing students' achievement, but I had not realised how intertwined teacher behaviours and student learning actually are.

When considering the way forward I returned to the idea of a learning culture. In order for teachers to move on in their personal development there needs to be a supportive school climate which embraces weaknesses and celebrates successes, however small. In addition there has to be a strong working relationship between coach and recipient, and a real understanding of what makes effective professional learning. It became evident to me that the best method of implementing change was through collaborative practice.

Through this development work I have not only been able to see how coaching can improve an individual teacher's practice but it has also become evident that the process of inquiry has also made a major impact on both Sarah and myself. Having been a founder member of the Sir Frederic Osborn School's TLDW group I have seen the idea of teacher-led development work grow and make significant contributions to school wide development. It is also interesting to note that Sarah opted to join the TLDW group to support her in pursuing her own development work. Both Sarah and I were cast into the role of learner and together we were able to plan, implement and evaluate a series of interventions which ultimately had an impact on us as practitioners and on our students. It has also had implications for the wider school.

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Searching for a model of inclusive practice

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Abstract

In this article, Colin Gladstone describes his leadership of a Young Enterprise Scheme project, linking Year 12 students with severe learning difficulties with students from a mainstream secondary school. He describes how this project laid the foundations for his current work developing practice and contributing to policy as a teacher in Christchurch, New Zealand.

I am currently working as a teacher in a special school in New Zealand and had previously been a teacher at Greenside Special School in Hertfordshire, UK. My interest has always been to try to make a difference in the lives of young disabled people as they make transitions across their school life and beyond. In 2001 I embarked on a project, linked to my participation in the Herts MEd in Leading Teaching and Learning, that would take me beyond philosophical debates about inequality and the rights of students and to something practical that might move the inclusion agenda forward (Dyson, 1999). I wanted to develop ways of enabling students from both a mainstream and a special school to work together in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. For me, inclusion is about process rather than location. Students with severe learning difficulties can be located within a mainstream school, but may not be included in that community or in appropriate learning activities (Mittler, 2000). Real inclusion requires a change of culture and values.

The students at Greenside School have 'severe learning difficulties' and 'profound and multiple learning difficulties'. These terms can be traced back to the Warnock Report on Special Educational Needs (DES, 1978). Some of the students featured in my project had specific language difficulties in addition to more general cognitive or sensory impairments. These difficulties may be mainly in their ability to interpret language or in expressing themselves. Some of

the students communicate with signing and by writing with symbols. Some students exhibit behavioural difficulties.

Designing my project

I found the official guidance on inclusive schooling interesting (DFEE, 1997; DFES, 2001). It suggests the formalisation of ways of encouraging schools in the mainstream and special sectors to build new relationships and share their experience and expertise. In my experience, a crucial issue when considering any collaboration between students from different sectors is finding ways of enabling a shared discourse. This can be problematic in several ways. Mainstream students can be limited by their lack of knowledge about their special school peers and lack the skills with which to communicate with them. Special school students have their own communication difficulties (Hewett, 1998). I was therefore looking for a vehicle which might help both sets of students to overcome these difficulties.

The Young Enterprise Scheme appeared to offer a way forward. Young Enterprise, since its inception in 1963, has become a very popular scheme both nationally and internationally. According to its website it currently reaches more than 350,000 young people a year from primary school right through to university (www.young-enterprise.org.uk). The key principle underpinning the programme is 'Learning by Doing' in which volunteers from business work with teachers and students. A typical activity is to support students in setting up and running their own real company. The aim is to use active learning strategies to enable young people to become more enterprising and able to make a real difference to their own and other people's lives. For my project, a Young Enterprise company was registered – 'The Green Team' – consisting of 16 students: nine Year 12/13 students with severe learning difficulties from my school and seven Year 12 students at a nearby mainstream community school.

The students' task was to set up and run the company. They met on a weekly basis in the autumn term and worked on a company logo, a letterhead, shareholders letters and product design and production. Shares were floated and capital generated to support the company over the coming months. The group met on both school sites and were supported by business and education advisors and other interested staff. The students chose the company name by voting from a short list. The product they chose to make was novelty clocks and then we decided to add a horticultural element with the growing

and selling of bedding plants. The clocks were sold at a trade fair and the plants from school-based stalls. At the end of the school year The Green Team announced a share dividend of 40% and liquidated the company after a directors' lunch to celebrate the company's success.

Constructing the project as a form of inquiry

For me the project was not just about providing an educative experience for the 16 students involved. I wanted to address the inclusion agenda by exploring the nature of the relationships between the mainstream and special school students and the cognitive and affective outcomes for all students involved. I wanted to see if the Young Enterprise Scheme could be used to promote teamwork and to learn more about its potential for equalising power relations between students and others. I therefore built in to the process the use of evaluation and research tools partly to inform the direction of the project itself and partly to be able to evaluate the project as a vehicle for inclusion.

I involved the students in the design of my data gathering tools and in the evaluation process itself. It would require ingenuity to allow all participating students to have an equal voice given the obvious impairment in some students' communication capacity. The students worked with me to develop questionnaires which combined words, symbols and photographs. These were complemented by interviews which were supported through the use of verbal and visual prompts. Focus group discussion was entirely led by the students themselves.

Key outcomes of the project

Towards the latter stages of the project I was able to sit down and reflect quite systematically on the issues, the impacts and outcomes of this collaborative Young Enterprise project. I explore some of these in outline below.

The promotion of dialogue

The company generally held a weekly board meeting to make decisions. Outside of this they worked in small, mixed-school groups. Students were proactive in their endeavours to learn more about effective ways of communicating with one another. Computers and augmentative communication systems, for example, the 'Signalong' signing system and 'Widgit' symbol system were used to aid the communication process. Generally the students with

severe learning difficulties who were more skilled communicators formed closer relationships with their mainstream peers although there were exceptions to this. The mainstream students and more communicative students with severe learning difficulties actively considered ways to involve everyone.

There was a common understanding amongst the students that working in small groups on practical tasks supports the process of collaboration and enables them to develop a shared discourse. Paired interviews supported students with severe learning difficulties in articulating their views. Students readily joined in and helped their co-interviewees to articulate a view even when they did not share that view themselves.

From collaboration to friendship

The Young Enterprise Scheme advocates teamwork, self-determination and a common goal. Working in this collaborative way on the 'Green Team' project appeared to reduce the stigma which often proves problematic in contact between students from mainstream and special schools. This experience was one where some initial apprehension and nervousness gave way to a mutual respect and genuine willingness to see things from others' perspectives. Students used language such as 'care', 'friends', 'communicate', 'contact', 'learning from each other', 'develop new skills together', to express their experience of the collaborative programme they had taken part in. Students also began to see the 'sameness' in one another rather than the differences.

Chatting to them and being friendly and they'd talk to me and R. I was making pots with her and she started talking to me about her mum and dad separating and I thought it was really nice she felt she could talk to me about it. Because my mum and dad separated, we were just having a conversation.

(Mainstream student)

Some research has suggested that, in collaborative learning projects involving students from both special and mainstream schools, the tendency is for relationships formed within the project to be limited to the context of the project itself (Shevlin and O'Moore, 2000a, 2000b). In contrast to this, my experience leads me to be more optimistic in that the students in the Green Team expressed a wish to extend these relationships into the social and post-school environment. Developing friendships were both appreciated and nurtured as the extract from my interview notes below indicates.

Teacher: *What have you enjoyed about working with students from the H school?*

Student: *Talking and laughing.....She told me a joke ... she's coming to the discoYeah, on Friday*

Sustaining relationships was not always easy however, often due to operational constraints within school. Timetables, particularly for post-16 students are usually fairly full, with free periods at a premium. The mainstream students were proactive in giving up their free time to attend sessions devoted to the development of their company. Students were motivated to come together after school, but this meant staff from the special school supervising and arranging transport home.

Supporting a developing mutual understanding

Students' comments showed how timetabling, staffing, resources and time were crucial factors that schools needed to consider in an inclusive partnership. Students expressed a desire to work on both sites to help them to forge new understandings about each other's schools and how they operate. They saw the schools as very different, not only in physical size but in the level of resources. The students with learning difficulties were perceived as having closer, more intimate relationships with their teachers whereas the greater student numbers and size of school meant more distant relationships between the mainstream students and their teachers.

Developing a sense of agency

Students developed a greater autonomy and control through the opportunities for collaborative processes provided by the Young Enterprise Scheme. Handing control over to students in this way appeared to increase their motivation and independence.

It's all lessons whereas here we kind of go through the stages together, what we need to do next, how's it's going to be done. We get left to do that.

(Young Enterprise student)

Students also appreciated the opportunities for self-determination.

... it's flexible, because no one tells you that you need to do this next, we get on with things in a kind of order. When things need to be done we do them.

(Young Enterprise student)

In the special school environment it is tempting to allow the imperative of care to outweigh the need to allow students to develop this essential aspect of human development. Being human is about being an agent and developing a powerful sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989). There were clear signs in this project that all students were able to make significant progress in this regard.

Reflections on the inclusion agenda

This project highlighted for me the huge potential of the Young Enterprise Scheme to contribute significantly to the inclusion agenda. As a vocational education programme, the scheme offers young people with differing needs an opportunity to work together towards a common goal. Working collaboratively with the teacher was also a feature of this particular project. Students became partners in the inquiry process and in this way their 'voice' is not tokenistic; they have real power to influence and alter the shape of the project as it emerged. Although this proved sometimes to be a difficult path to follow, the benefits far outweighed the difficulties. The Young Enterprise scheme promoted an inclusive approach to the developing project. It encourages feelings of equity and collegiality. It promotes the idea of students experiencing a variety of roles within the company structure thus ensuring that all students have something to contribute. In addition, the widespread use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in running the company provided an equalising tool for students from both schools. The issue of sustainability of the links between mainstream and special school is tackled organically through the necessity of the company running for a protracted length of time.

Developing my agenda for change

Through my experience of the Young Enterprise project I became convinced that if greater partnership between mainstream and special schools is to be achieved, schools from both sectors need to be encouraged to build new relationships and share their experiences and expertise. The powerful message this project encapsulated for me was that listening to students' views and empowering them to explore strategies for collaboration will further the pursuit of the inclusion agenda.

In the year following the project, the two participating schools pledged to build on and expand the links between them. My personal and family plans meant that I had to leave the planning of

further projects to others. My wife and I had been planning for some time to take a break from teaching and take our children on a world tour. We travelled around the world for one year, crossing five continents and experiencing things that would define and shape who we are today. I visited a number of schools on our travels and saw how other countries and education systems tackle the issues and dilemmas in educating young disabled students. Many of the debates were familiar but some of the solutions were often creative in the most difficult of situations.

Our visit to New Zealand led to a decision to emigrate and settle in Christchurch where I now work in a special school. In recent months I have been developing a programme to help young people with the transition to the post-school world and have also been working with the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust and the New Zealand Ministry of Education on projects relating to the transition of disabled students from school into post-school life. This appears to me to be the most difficult transition that children and their families have to make and yet it is not well supported. To underpin this work I have enrolled in a doctoral programme at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch. My study focuses on improving post-school outcomes for disabled young people, a group who have been historically marginalised. I want to explore what control and choice disabled students have at this time of their lives and come to understand more about how they can actively participate in the transition process. I hope that, through promoting student self-determination, student aspirations will rise and lead to them reviewing the nature of their role in the community.

In approaching this new project I am able to draw on a few studies related to transition for disabled young people in New Zealand (e.g. Bennie, 2005; Bray, 2003; Cleland, Rickerby and Morton, 2004; Hornby and Witte, 2008) and there is also an international literature on transitions. However, perhaps the most important resource for me are the values that drew me to the Young Enterprise project at the beginning of the decade and the principles that I was able to clarify for myself through that project. The New Zealand Disability Strategy, launched in the same year I began my Young Enterprise project (2001), clearly articulates the desire of government to improve outcomes in relation to greater employment opportunities and quality of life, but there is still much to be done to develop the practical strategies that will help young people with disabilities to

make the transition from school to the wider social and economic world.

Recently, there have been some exciting developments. I have been working with the Ministry of Education on creating National Guidelines for the Transition of Disabled Students which should be published and distributed to schools by mid 2009. My school is to become the lead school in providing a service across Christchurch secondary schools for 'high needs' students. I will manage this new initiative which fits well with the transition support group I set up twelve months ago. It is now about spreading good practice across schools and building the structure and framework that will prevent these students from slipping through the net. The next important step is to encourage dialogue between the government ministries so that the 'seamless' part of a young disabled student's transition into adulthood is in place. It is hoped that the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development will establish a partnership that allows for continuity of services and support from school into post school life.

My career has taken some interesting turns and my relocation has been dramatic, but I am happy to say that there has also been a great deal of continuity. I feel that I am still pursuing the agenda I clarified when I was a teacher in Hertfordshire and I am finding new ways to influence practice not only in my own school, but in other schools and in wider policy contexts.

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Helen Hill's Development Work **Empowering students in language learning** at The John Warner School, Hoddesdon

Helen is subject leader for Italian at The John Warner School. She sees language learning and cultural awareness as inextricably linked so she had set up links with two schools in Italy. She wanted her students to take more active roles in language lessons but they seemed to lack confidence to do this. She consulted key colleagues and devised a plan to work with one of her Year 8 groups and focus on ways in which students could be encouraged to speak Italian more frequently and confidently in lessons.

Helen began by asking her students to tell her their views of Italian lessons and also to make some suggestions as to how to make language learning more fun. She was surprised by the negative responses she got from some students. Helen herself had been enjoying the lessons and assumed that the students were also. They made a number of suggestions as to how their lessons might be improved, including working with partners and being given the opportunity for more speaking practice.

Although these suggestions were already quite obvious to her, Helen made it clear to students that their comments were invaluable in helping her to develop the curriculum. She followed up these initial responses by talking informally and in more depth with a small group of students. Helen then adapted the Year 8 scheme of work taking into account the students' perceptions and suggestions. Her adaptations included:

- bringing in items of clothing with Italian labels – students used this stimulus to practice their vocabulary through discussion activities
- giving students 250 'virtual' Euros and asking them to 'spend' this on Italian clothing stores' websites to clothe a family of four
- encouraging paired work with activities such as card sorts
- asking the students to plan and stage a fashion show with the compere's script in Italian.

Helen asked students to help her to chart their progress as she used the new scheme of work and found that they believed they were learning more effectively. To do this they completed the progress checker below on a weekly basis. They gave themselves a score of 1 if they thought they had fully achieved the objective described in the statement, 2 if they had partially achieved it and 3 if they had not achieved it at all.

Figure 1: Year 8 student progress review checker

	1	2	3
I learnt five new words / phrases			
I can remember at least three new words			
I spoke sufficient Italian this lesson			
I am happy with my progress			
I enjoyed the lesson			

This tool was successful both in encouraging students to see themselves as partners in learning with their teacher and in building their confidence by making their achievement more visible.

Following discussion with her Head of Faculty, Helen looked for further strategies to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. She investigated the use of the internet to support active language learning (Dudeney, 2001). She looked into the way in which Wikis were being used to support language learning in other Hertfordshire schools. It seemed that a Wiki can provide an excellent way to showcase students' work and a safe way to stimulate a dialogue about learning. Helen set up a Wiki for her students which they used to share work with one another. She then looked into how she could develop its use to allow dialogue between students at The John Warner School and young people in the partner schools in Italy.

At the point at which Helen compiled evidence of her development work, it was already clear that students' learning and their enthusiasm for Italian had been enhanced. She also reflected on the fact that the project had changed her own views of her subject.

I found that the project re-awakened my interest in my subject. I started to look at new ideas and resources and consider how I could use these in my every day teaching.

At that point, the full impact of Helen's project had yet to be realised. She was determined to find further ways to involve students in the development of their learning. She shared an account of her development work with teachers at her own school and at a regional 'Strategic Learning Network' to enable others to build on what she had discovered and to get feedback from a wider circle of colleagues.

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Richard Moore's Development Work Exploring the impact of individual sports on boys' self-esteem at Barclay School, Stevenage

In his role as Assistant Head of PE (Physical Education) Richard noticed an increase in the number of boys who were not bringing their kit to lessons in order, he felt, to avoid participating. Richard wondered what was causing students to want to avoid PE. There were many boys who clearly enjoyed PE; they were the ones who represented the school in extra-curricular fixtures, but there were some boys who were simply waiting for the lesson to end. These boys seemed to Richard to be suffering from low self-esteem.

Richard understood that physical activity can have both physical and psychological benefits (Bailey, 2006). He was therefore very concerned about the possibility that PE might be having a negative psychological impact on some of his students. Perhaps individual sports rather than team games would have a more positive impact on the self-esteem of this group of students. He discussed the issue with Gwen, a colleague in charge of the Learning Support Unit at his school, who he knew was also interested in this. Although accepting that the term self-esteem is difficult to define (Ollerenshaw, 2007), Gwen and Richard came to a common understanding of it as the way in which a person perceives their own worth or value (Shakelton and Fletcher, 1984).

Gwen helped Richard to identify four boys who she thought would benefit from being involved in an alternative approach to PE lessons and Richard invited them to participate in his project. He was interested in the boys' views of themselves so he interviewed each of them and in preparation for the interviews asked them to give themselves a score out of 10 in relation to a few key questions about their enjoyment of school, their enjoyment of PE, their level of skills in PE and their general happiness and success in developing friendships. Their scores provided a starting point for reflection in the interviews.

What did Richard learn from these interviews? All four boys seemed to have a very limited circle of friends and were often bullied. They described the difficulties they had in getting changed in front of other boys' as their physical appearance would provoke negative comments. One boy said:

I am not very fit and I don't like getting changed in front of other people because they are nasty to me and just take the mickey out of me, so I just don't like doing PE... most of the people keep calling me names.. they keep asking me questions like "do you have a washing machine at home?" and "have you got a bath or shower at home?" and stuff like that.

They felt very negative and frustrated not only in PE lessons but at school in general. Richard found it quite salutary to be faced with the difficulties which the school system presents for some students. He and Gwen decided on a way forward. He would teach the boys an extra PE lesson after school once a week for a period of four weeks. This PE lesson would focus on the development of individual skills rather than team activity and would take place off-site. The venues included a bowling alley and a golf centre. Activities such as Ten Pin Bowling and Golf allow the students to concentrate on their performance as individuals rather than as a team member or as an opponent. Clearly these activities can be done competitively but what really helps the sort of students Richard was working with is individuals practising and iterative self-assessment. In this situation the teacher can act as coach.

At the end of the period of extra lessons, Richard and Gwen were interested to see if the new approach to PE had made a difference to the boys' views of themselves and their relationships with others. Richard interviewed the boys again and found that some of them felt that they were more confident during the extra PE lessons. They all felt that they had learned new skills. They loved being taken out of school and felt valued by the experience. Some of the boys felt that this experience had changed their own behaviour and others' views of them. Overall, the impact on their school lives had been considerable although they still faced significant difficulties in school.

Richard found the project to be rewarding albeit emotionally challenging. His collaboration with Gwen was key to the successful completion of this development work. The project highlighted for him the importance of choice in the PE curriculum especially for the

most vulnerable students in school. He feels that individual sports offer those students with frailties the opportunity for rapid and recognisable improvement. He was particularly interested to see that the students were setting targets for themselves in the individual sports lessons, indicating a level of engagement and self-belief which would have been previously unthinkable.

Richard shared what he learned with colleagues in the PE department who subsequently undertook a major review of the PE curriculum. He was committed to continuing to collaborate with the school's Learning Support Unit and in undertaking further development work focussing on the issue of student self-esteem across the school.

Shortly after this project was completed, the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown made a speech at the close of the Olympics in Beijing in which he said: "We want to encourage competitive sports in schools, not the 'medals for all' culture we have seen in previous years," and "In sport you get better by challenging yourself against other people. A lot of sports are team games where people have to work together but they play against other teams." A few weeks later a paper presented at the annual BERA conference received a lot of media coverage. A researcher at Loughborough University presented a paper in which she argued that teachers who have experienced success in competitive sport tend to assume that it is important for their students whereas it may actually be putting young people off sport (Guardian, 2008). She argued for more consideration to be given to health related exercise.

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Alyson Mitchell, Liz Sims and Hetal Sitaram's Development Work **Assessment for learning** at Brookmans Park Primary School, Hatfield

Assessment for learning was identified at a staff meeting as being a priority for development. Alyson, who was teaching Year 1 children, agreed to collaborate with Liz and Hetal who taught older children in Years 5 and 6. They would lead the way with the development of assessment for learning practice. In the staff meeting colleagues had discussed the way children receive feedback on their learning. Typically, this was done through written comments on children's work. These comments were often quite lengthy and so the process is very time consuming. It was also noted that a recent OFSTED inspection had highlighted the relative lack of verbal feedback. Colleagues began to question the usefulness of this approach.

Alyson, Liz and Hetal formed a project group and focused on ways of adjusting the balance by providing effective oral feedback. This would need to be manageable. Written marking of children's work would continue but would be supplemented with more deliberate oral feedback.

A first step was to consult pupils about their views on the comments they receive about their work. The results of a group discussion with pupils were recorded on large sheets of paper. Pupils were also asked to write comments on a simple feedback sheet. The project group reviewed this feedback both as individuals and then as a group, exploring different interpretations of what the children had said.

Year 1 pupils said that they usually knew what they needed to do to improve their work, but could not really say how they knew this which suggested that their understanding might be insecure. Other children expressed dissatisfaction with feedback and said that they were not clear about their next steps. This was puzzling since the teachers had written these down below the work. One surprising

point made by the children was that verbal feedback left them uneasy because they did not have a record of it.

At first Alyson, Liz and Hetal found these responses disappointing and somewhat contradictory. Their perceptions were that they had been conscientious about assessment feedback and so they were very concerned that the children were not finding their marking helpful. They then read more about assessment for learning and found Shirley Clarke's (2001; 2005) work to be particularly helpful.

Having read more about assessment for learning and discussed what the children had told them, they decided to adopt a variety of strategies including the following:

- Written feedback will be shorter, explicit and to the point (e.g. smiley face, straight face and 'have a go'; 3 stars and a wish highlighted in pink and blue).
- Guidance on next steps will be included in the written feedback.
- More time will be given to providing verbal feedback.
- More use will be made of the visualiser¹ to allow pupils to discuss the feedback process.
- Peer marking will be introduced in Year 5, along with 'learning journals'.
- Year 1 pupils' targets will be put on a 'Smart Notebook' and colour coded – pupils will then have easy access to their targets.
- Specific time will be allowed for children to review and improve their work following the feedback.

The decision to make time for review and improvement is very important. It has tended to be squeezed because of the pressure to cover the curriculum.

Following the development of these strategies, informal feedback has been positive, particularly with Year 5 children. Through the target setting they are now more involved and are taking more responsibility for their learning. The pupil consultation exercise will be repeated once the strategies have all been tried out for a substantial period of time.

¹ Visualiser: a machine which projects an image on to a screen – e.g. a page of a pupil's work book.

The project group arranged a staff meeting to explain what they were doing and some other members of staff agreed to try out some of the approaches that were presented to them. Members of the senior leadership team were very positive and the Head observed a pupil review session and responded favourably. This support at senior level is very important in enabling these ideas to develop further. Alyson, Liz and Hetal planned a second staff meeting to present their ideas and the outcomes of the project. At the time of writing they were considering further strategies such as:

- For Year 1 pupils – using the pink / blue colour code to highlight achievement and indicate parts of the work which could be improved.
- Extending peer marking and the recording of verbal feedback to reduce teachers' workload and improve pupils' ownership.

This project has opened up space for reflection on the part of both teachers and pupils and it has brought assessment feedback alive. The children are far more independent as learners because of this.

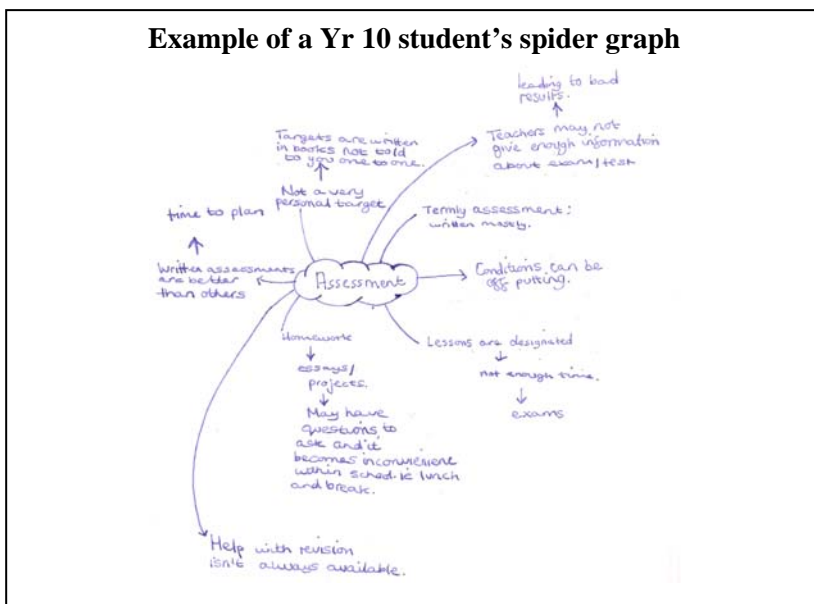
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Steve Mackenzie's Development Work Listening and responding to the voices of students at Birchwood High School, Bishop's Stortford

The impetus to explore strategies for listening to students and responding to their expressed views arose when Steve was concerned about assessment practice with his Year 10 Religious Education students. He had joined the school's Teacher Led Development Work group and had identified 'assessment' as an area that needed review and development.

Steve's first step was to consult the students in order to evaluate current assessment practice but the experience of doing this led him to focus on student consultation itself. He had asked the students to think about what the word 'assessment' meant to them. They scribbled down their responses in the form of spider graphs like the one below:



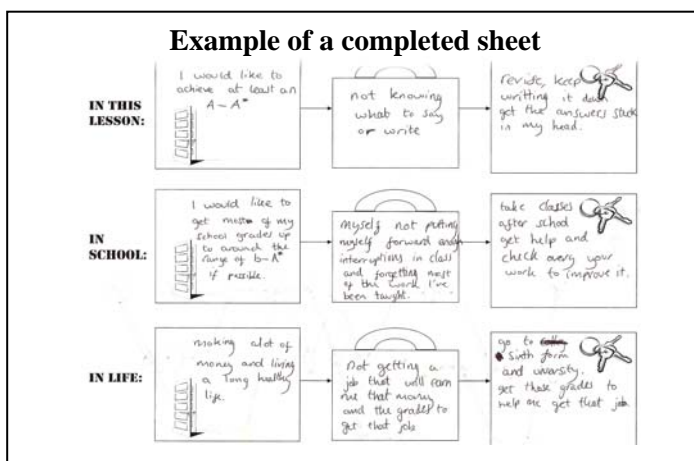
Then he asked them to make suggestions about how the assessment process could be improved.

When Steve asked his students for their views it became clear that there was a massive potential to bring the students into a much fuller partnership for learning, but this positive effect would evaporate unless the students felt that their views had been heard and most crucially, acted upon (Frost, Frost, MacBeath and Pedder, 2009). He therefore used their comments to inform the planning of the next assessment task and the conditions in which it was undertaken.

The discussion with students led Steve to focus not only on the assessment process but more generally on the nature of the tasks he was asking students to do. Planning lessons in an overtly responsive way seemed to have a dramatic effect on the student's motivation and the quality of their work.

Steve decided to talk to more of his students. He designed two tools for opening up discussion. One tool asked students to plot on a graph their current grade in each subject against their enjoyment level. This stimulated a discussion which helped to focus on the factors that effect the quality of students' learning. The second tool asked students to think of three goals – in Religious Education, in school as a whole and in life. They used the 'Unlocking the Door to Success' sheet in Figure 1 below to show their goals (the open door), an obstacle in their way (a lock), and a solution to the potential obstacle (a set of keys).

Figure 1: The Unlocking the door to success sheet



The impact of the use of these tools and the discussion that flowed from them was profound. Once students realised they were genuinely being listened to, they began to discuss a wide variety of issues they had in school. Steve saw this ‘offloading session’ as extremely valuable as it created a relaxed, encouraging and supportive atmosphere in his classroom. He moved on to formalise the offloading sessions and build them into his planning on a weekly basis – Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Powerpoint slide to structure the ‘offloading session’

Offloading time!

- Turn to a partner and share one issue you have had this week
- Hindsight!! How could you have dealt with the situation better? What will you do differently if you find yourself in that situation again?
- One issue Mr Mackenzie has had this week is ... !
- What could I have done differently?
- What do we want to change about this lesson?
- How shall we do it differently next time?

Listening to students also had a profound effect on the nature of Steve’s lessons. They became more student-oriented. He regularly planned tasks and set homework based on the feedback he received from students. He worked in partnership with his students to create displays and make videos. Students researched topics and led sections of lessons. Feedback from the students was very positive and student disposition, particularly amongst the disaffected, improved considerably. Students had been given ownership of the lessons and had accepted the responsibility with open arms.

Steve shared what he had discovered with staff at his school through leading a workshop at one of his school’s regular ‘Learning Forums’. His intention was that colleagues would adapt some of his tools and then come back together in a month to discuss what they had learned. This proved to be a very useful development activity, with many

colleagues feeling that they had consequently developed their practice.

The voices which Steve has heard in the process of his development work have impacted not only on his own planning and marking practice but have also afforded him a deeper understanding of his students and their life in school. He has now left Birchwood School to take on the role of class teacher in a primary school and has continued to develop his ability to listen to and use pupil voice to support learning.

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Joanna Heasman's Development Work Supporting the development of non- teaching staff in pastoral roles at The John Henry Newman School, Stevenage

Joanna had been the school's office manager for some years when the idea of inviting non-teachers to take on roles within the school's pastoral care structure first arose. When she was a student at secondary school Joanna had been interested in becoming a teacher but the Careers Guidance teacher had discouraged her on the grounds that she lacked the required personal attributes. The division between teaching and non-teaching roles in the school had often been discussed and the introduction of non-teaching staff in the pastoral structure was strongly encouraged by the Senior Leadership Team. After shadowing an experienced form tutor during the previous term Joanna became a Year 7 Form Tutor.

Joanna joined the school's Teacher Led Development Work group which provided a structure that would help her to evaluate her experience in this role and explore ways to support the development of other non-teaching colleagues in pastoral roles. She began by consulting a number of books, articles and websites to help her to develop a way forward. She found Marland and Rogers' (1997) views on tutoring particularly thought provoking. She was also interested to learn that the need to develop support staff has been long acknowledged by the DfES (2002).

She wanted the views of the other four non-teaching colleagues who had also taken on pastoral roles in her school. They met to discuss their new roles and the induction and support they had been provided with. Some colleagues felt that they had been fully prepared whereas for others the experience had been less positive. An interesting debate developed concerning the degree to which it is up to individuals to take the initiative to secure the development opportunities they need. They all found this discussion helpful, thought-provoking and supportive so decided to meet regularly as a mutual support and development group.

An important step in identifying ways to support form tutors who are not teachers was for Joanna to meet with the Year 7 Learning Co-ordinator to review the practices and systems she had devised as a form tutor. The Co-ordinator felt very positive about the experience of having non-teachers in the team and encouraged Joanna to develop ways to support more non-teaching colleagues in this role. The next step was to contact two other schools with experience of this move. One of them invited Joanna to visit which enabled her to explore the potential of non-teaching staff in pastoral roles. A third step was to talk to some students in her own school who had experienced a non-teaching form tutor.

The students were, as always, a powerful source of thought-provoking information. They were positive about the introduction of non-teachers as form tutors, commenting that they appreciated the way in which non-teachers professionally prepared for aspects which they had less experience in, for example, leading PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) sessions. They suggested that it would be helpful, when allocating personnel to form groups to take account of their other roles in the school. For example, allocating the administrator responsible for public examinations to a Year 11 group could be mutually beneficial. The students commented that there can be some discipline issues at first with a non-teaching tutor but that, as relationships and respect are built, these problems are soon alleviated.

Joanna gathered evidence of these consultations together in order to influence the school's policy. She developed a training plan for support staff who wished to take on the role of form tutor which was accepted by the senior leadership team. This plan would be put into action in the year prior to the non-teacher taking on a pastoral role and would include the following developmental activities for staff:

- Shadowing at least two form tutors for a protracted period
- Undertaking tasks such as registration procedures, being observed doing this and having feedback by the Learning Co-ordinator
- Joint-teaching of PSHE lessons with an experienced teacher
- Meeting regularly with the relevant Learning Co-ordinator to identify gaps in skills or understanding

The training plan would continue to be used to support the non-teacher once they actually began in their pastoral role.

Joanna now believes that there are further possibilities for the development of non-teaching staff in pastoral roles at her school. Inspired by her visits to other schools in the region, she intends to research the idea of developing non-teaching staff as pastoral coordinators. She feels that non-teaching staff would be particularly effective with the administration tasks that the Learning Coordinators have to undertake and the management of the data which is so important to track student progress (Kyriacou, 1997). She also feels that contact with parents could be eased through access to someone whose time is not fully taken up with classroom teaching. Joanna remains excited and optimistic about the prospects for future development of the non-teaching roles.

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Zoe Ross's Development Work Developing teachers as innovative users of ICT at Presdales School, Ware

Zoe Ross had a role of responsibility in her school. She was the 'ICT Strategy Manager'. To develop the use of ICT in the school she needed to challenge teachers' perceptions of the potential of ICT to support learning and teaching and their perceptions of their own levels of competence in using ICT.

Zoe was convinced that ICT has massive potential to promote students' engagement and motivation and she found plenty of support for this optimistic view in the literature (e.g. BECTA, 2007). Innovative ICT practices such as utilising social networking sites, blogs and games could encourage students to become more active, independent learners (McClellan, 2005). The ICT infrastructure in Zoe's school was improving rapidly but there was a danger that the teachers' practice would remain static due to their own lack of confidence and capability. The new hardware might remain unused. During one of the Teacher Led Development Work sessions at Zoe's school, colleagues were encouraged to consider the barriers and enablers to progress within the school's culture. Zoe wondered how cultural change in relation to ICT could be achieved. The introduction of innovative ICT practices would need teachers to act as 'agents of disruption' (Law, 2007). Zoe needed to enlist the help of a number of people who shared her desire for change to disrupt the status quo and develop a collaborative way forward.

Zoe began by organising a training session for all staff, designed to develop their ICT capability. During this session some colleagues were very modest about their own abilities but, with support from more experienced colleagues, achieved more than they expected. She decided to try to develop this model of peer support. She invited a number of teachers who had already developed some innovative ICT practices to work with her. Two teachers agreed to collaborate with Zoe to develop the use of blogs for exam revision and a software programme called 'Yacapaca' which enables teachers to

“create, share, set, mark and analyse assessments for free” (<http://yacapaca.com>).

Blogging and using webpages to publish text, images and video clips have been growing in popularity with teachers, perhaps because of their students’ enthusiasm for these technologies (Blane, 2008). One of Zoe’s collaborators developed the use of a blog to help his Year 11 and 12 students to revise for tests. After the blog had been in use for some time, Zoe interviewed these students and others who had been using similar resources. She found that they were enthusiastic about this technology. Some students felt they achieved better using Yacapaca because they felt less stressed than in ordinary assessments. Students are also given formative feedback through using this system which they found helpful in moving forward. Having been convinced of the value of these ICT innovations, Zoe wanted to develop ways of enabling other staff to make use of them.

Zoe reflected on strategies she had used in the past to develop teachers’ ICT expertise. These had been successful to some extent but she wanted to try something different, something more in keeping with the innovative practices she was trying to promote. A conversation with her students in which they praised the video tutorials which Zoe had produced for them showed a possible way forward.

They’re brilliant – you can use them when it suits you – at home or school – and you can go over them again and again if you need to.. they are far easier to understand than notes or books.

Video tutorials are highly visual, usually feature a narrative and have an interactive dimension which allows learners to progress at their own pace and to exercise control over the medium of learning. Zoe wondered if this could be of benefit to teachers who wanted to develop their ICT skills. Zoe and her collaborators produced a video tutorial using screen-recording software to introduce other teachers to Yacapaca. The video tutorial gives step-by-step instructions on how to access Yacapaca and how it can be used effectively. Viewers are guided through what they would see on their own computer through a presentation of the screen they would see with the addition of text box instructions.

The reaction of teachers to the tutorial was mixed. Some teachers were very positive whereas others felt they did not have the time to

devote to learning new skills, even if presented in this user-friendly way. Although Zoe was initially disheartened by this response, discussions in her TLDW group and in the staffroom made her realise that there would be no 'quick' fix' – this was a long term project. There is a genuine concern over the amount of time it takes to learn new skills and there is no doubt that computer-based learning should not be seen as a substitute for student-teacher interaction (Sinclair, 2002). Zoe remains convinced that there is a definite place for ICT in schools and will continue to collaborate with colleagues in all departments to develop innovative practices and to influence the process of cultural change in ICT.

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Ljubica Petrovic's Development Work **Building Teacher Leadership** in Croatia

Ljubica has had a successful track record as a student in school and later in university but her experience was of limited pedagogical practice dominated by traditional transmission models of teaching and rote learning. Critical thinking was not encouraged. She left school determined to be a teacher because she believed that things could be done differently. Her experience of initial (pre-service) teacher training was also limited, focusing on the content of a lesson rather than on topics such as relationships with pupils and parents or how to develop critical thinking. The schools she taught in were similarly limited as professional learning communities having little funding to allow teachers to participate in continuing professional development activities. Collaboration and knowledge sharing within the school tended not to happen because of the prevailing 'egg carton' organisational structures (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2001 after Lortie, 1975). She found the development of teachers' practice being further undermined by the relatively low status of the teaching profession in Croatia reflected in the level of salaries which have been relatively low.

In spite of this rather negative picture however, Ljubica is optimistic about the future. She is aware that there are many teachers who she believes are highly motivated and have the potential to influence their colleagues and the educational system itself although they would not currently see themselves as 'leaders'. Similarly there are creative and committed headteachers who would like to move the system forward. Ljubica's own research gave her insight into the way headteachers' roles are constrained by the environment in which their schools operate. The problem is that improvements in practice rely on the actions of individual teachers and headteachers without the benefit of a shared dialogue about school improvement or a systematic approach to professional development for teachers or headteachers. Paradoxically perhaps, this is also the solution. Ljubica draws attention to the fact that there are individuals, whether they be teachers or headteachers, who have a clear moral purpose and the creativity to make a difference and it is these individuals who will build a new professional culture through their strategic action.

Ljubica joined the recently formed 'International Teacher Leadership' project because it offers an approach to providing support for these individuals. This research and development project also involves researchers and practitioners from Greece, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey and the UK, with colleagues further afield in Australia, New Zealand and British Columbia participating through a networking relationship.

In her research into headship in Croatia it was clear that headteachers see the barriers to reform as being the teachers: their current professional identity, capabilities and dispositions towards change and improvement (Petrovic, 2008). Currently there is a lack of support for teachers who want to change things and there is no systematic training which might equip teachers and headteachers with leadership skills and knowledge of organisational learning. Ljubica sees the international project as offering a way forward because it can fill these gaps and activate teachers who are willing to lead change and help to create the conditions in which teacher leadership can flourish. The aim is to establish programmes of support for teacher leadership in the countries listed above and then to explore how the development of teachers' professional identity and their modes of professionalism can contribute to educational reform in a variety of cultural settings. The methodology of the project is developmental and discursive, involving practical work to support teachers in their attempts to redefine their roles and become 'champions of innovation'. Data will be used to inform the development of strategies adapted to each national and institutional context.

Ljubica is collaborating with Ivana Cosic who works for the Department for secondary education at the Croatian Ministry of Education, and Iris Marusic, a researcher from the Institute for Social Research. All three of them participated in the first meeting of the research team which took place in Cambridge in November 2008 and they will be taking part in the second meeting in Corinth, Greece in May 2009. As the project gathers momentum, teachers from all the participating countries will be drawn into the process through international conferences and web-based platforms.

Ljubica is typical of so many young teachers and researchers across the world who are seeking new ways to release the massive potential that teachers have to create educational reform from the bottom up rather than waiting for policy makers to dictate it from the top down.

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