Leading Learning

Newsletter of the Instructional Leadership Programme

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INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP programme

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Introduction

Colleagues,

Welcome to the Instructional Leadership Newsletter, Issue 13, packed with news and articles. We certainly are living in uncertain times and there is no doubt that COVID 19 have presented enormous challenges to us all both personally and professionally.

As I reflect on how we as a profession rose to the many challenges presented to us since March 12th; the delivery of synchronous and/or asynchronous online lessons, calculated grades, Junior Cycle 2020, school meals, attending to student wellbeing etc., I feel very proud to be part of the profession. I wish to extend a deep appreciation and admiration to you all. It has not been easy, and I am only thinking the professional side! No doubt many faced personal challenges in addition to the professional ones!

Thanks to the influence of my mother, I am the type of person that looks at the 'glass half full'! COVID, with all its' challenges also brought many positives. As I read articles in advance of this publication the creativity and collaboration at school level, community level and sectoral level is very obvious. School leaders and teachers took time to listen to each other, to learn and to find new ways of doing things, keeping student needs at the heart of it all.

As you are aware, we postponed the IL Sessions that were due to take place in October and we are carefully monitoring our plans for March. Updates will be issued directly to schools and will be available on the website. Nonetheless we have been working away behind the scenes to ensure that we can continue to support you in your role as Instructional Leader. The website is currently being upgraded; we hope to have it completed by Christmas. We are re-connecting with the schools participating in the IL/NCCA Learner Voice Project, having provided space and time for schools to manage the reopening. The Steering Committee are due to meet in the next few weeks to commence the development of a three-year Strategic Plan and the planning of a Summer Conference for Senior & Middle Leaders. Details will be announced over the coming weeks through twitter, @ILProgramme and the website. I am delighted to say that we have a number of research projects ongoing also, which will assist us in informing the plan for the programme.

We are continuing to enrol for Cohort 15, with limited places available. Remember if you are interested in enrolling your school, a member of the senior management team must register and attend. Request a copy of the application form at admin@instructionalleadership.ie

As teachers we are very social creatures, enjoying face to face interaction with our students and colleagues. Teaching in the online environment somewhat stifles that innate interaction including for instance, cues like eye contact, body language, facial expression and voice tones that are crucial to social interaction. Berge (1995) identified a number of roles for the Online Facilitator; Pedagogical Role - Create discussions that focus energy on critical concepts, principles, and skills; Social Role - Foster a friendly, social environment to promote learning and sharing; Managerial Role - Clarify discussion objectives, timelines, and procedural rules; Technical Role - Make students comfortable with the learning management system, tools, and software[1]. What has been particularly inspiring and interesting for us leading out on the IL programme is how many of you have adapted many of the skills and tactics you learned as part of your Instructional Leadership Programme journey in an online environment. In this edition, Siobhan Lynch, Fingal Community College shares how Mind-Mapping has enhanced learning for her students. Darren Byrne, St Joseph's Secondary School shares how he facilitates '*3 Step Interview*', '*Read and Explain Pairs*', '*Reading Comprehension Triads*' and '*Think Pair Share*' as part of the synchronous delivery of lessons.

This edition is packed with a wonderful line up of articles for your perusal. I extend my thanks to all who have contributed, Professor Barrie Bennett, Dr. Becky Saunders (Murdoch University), Gerard O' Sullivan (NCCA), Kishoge Community College, Fingal Community College and St. Joseph's Secondary School.

As always, we welcome contributions for the newsletter, be it an article and/or photograph. All contributions can be forwarded to newsletter@instructionalleadership.ie. Keep up to date with all that is happening by following us on twitter @ILProgramme and visiting our website www.instructionalleadership.ie

While the timing seems strange, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas!

Le Meas,

J Russell

Chairperson National IL Steering Committee
Education Research Officer (ETBI)

[1]Berge, Z.L., 1995. The role of the online instructor/facilitator. *Educational technology*, *35*(1), pp.22-30.

Teaching in a Re-Structured Learning Environment

Professor Barrie Bennett

Teaching effectively is a delightfully complex process. And inherent to that complexity is a relentless and seemingly endless number of factors that must be considered and enacted. Some of those factors occurring simultaneously and at other times in sequence…one building on and intersecting with another in order to effectively respond to that complexity. What compounds and confounds that complexity is that we do not know 'the' best way to teach. We, as teachers, could all have the same two-week unit on topic X and all teach it differently and be equally effective or ineffective. That said, however, we do have some pretty good ideas that will predict better outcomes than others…for most students. The question for this article is, *"Does this shift in classroom structure, due to the pandemic, in terms of spacing of students in the class or having students learn remotely online or even at times remotely and at times at school, shift the way we engage students in learning? Does this 'new' shift add to that complexity?*

In this article I'll first identify some of those key 'ideas' related to designing effective learning environments in the pre-Covid-19 environment…ideas, that if we ignore, will have a negative impact on learning. From that, I'll explore how some of those key ideas can play out in a 'new' restructured classroom re spacing, as well as, in an on-line environment.

Personally, I would think that having to restructure the classroom re how students sit and how many students are in a class adds another layer of complexity to the process of teaching and learning. As teachers, we have to do some things differently; and whenever we do something 'new' it is almost always a bit 'clunky' at first. And of course, shifting to an online process for teaching and learning compounds that complexity…especially for teachers and students who have never before engaged in that online environment. And yet in the same breath those shifts re classroom numbers and social distancing, as well as online learning can also 'interestingly' reduce that complexity. For example, the teacher is more likely to be limited in terms of the range of instructional methods that can be applied. So while on one hand reducing those instructional options will reduce complexity, on the other hand, having more limited options will negatively impact attending to novelty and variety in the learning environment (variety and novelty are two subsets of the concept 'interest'). Keep in mind that brain research shows that novelty and variety impact the brain's production of dopamine. Dopamine is a 'messaging neurotransmitter' that makes learning more pleasurable as well as helping us think and plan.

Additionally, with online learning the teacher cannot as easily apply some of the more powerful instructional methods that evolve from working effectively in groups (e.g., Academic Controversy, Team Analysis, Teams Games Tournaments and Jigsaw). We also know from brain research that talk is essential for intellectual growth… and having students work in small cooperative learning groups promotes talk.

In summary of this first part, I'll reflect on a comment made by Finn O'Murchú who is the Head of School of Education at Mary Immaculate College. Finn has also recently had to shift his teaching to online as part of their Bachelor of Education program. Finn commented on how the classroom teacher and student interaction is somewhat less complex and that classroom 'attendance' is up. He also stressed that the more extensive a teacher's instructional repertoire, the more likely he or she will be able to effectively respond to the research on what makes a difference in student learning. I liked his comment related to a teacher's instructional repertoire: "*If teachers struggle with face-to-face teaching, they will struggle even more in an online environment*."

Key Aspects of Designing Effective Learning Environments

Below I identify a variety of instructionally related concepts and methods that we know have a positive impact on student learning. I start with eight key concepts the teacher cannot directly enact but must assure they emerge during the process of learning. From that I'll shift to a few instructional methods (instructional skills, tactics, and strategies) that are also concepts, but ones a teacher can actually enact. Hopefully, what I just wrote will make sense when you read the following paragraph. I will embed the connection of the above to the shift in classroom structure and to the process of online learning.

Concepts a Teacher Cannot Directly Enact A number of key concepts, that a teacher cannot directly enact, are key to learning. And somehow, the teacher has to do 'something' that makes these concepts come alive. Here are 9

key concepts: safety, active participation, accountability, meaning, interest (which often divides into novelty and variety), success, and feedback. What I mean by 'not directly enacting' is that a teacher does not '*safety*' or '*novelty*' or '*meaningful*'. You would not say, "*Oh look, how effectively that teacher safeties*." That applies to other concepts as well, such as the concept 'respect'. One does not directly 'respect'; you may lower your voice or take turns in talking to invoke respect, but you would not say, "*Wow, look at that teacher over there respecting."* That said, good luck being an effective teacher if you don't somehow cause safety and respect to play out in your classroom. This is another small part of what makes the teaching and learning process so complex.

As an aside, I've often heard principals/mentors providing feedback to teachers by saying, "*Well, just focus on making the learning more meaningful and make sure they are all actively participating."* Unfortunately, that is somewhat naïve re 'feedback' as no information related to 'how' the teacher would enact those concept is provided.

In a classroom, a teacher can invoke safety by applying a variety of instructional skills and tactics. Skills are less complex methods than tactics and all occupations have them. In construction the skills would be hammering, sawing, and measuring; the tactics, squaring the foundation and putting in the rafters. In cooking the skills would be measuring a cup of sugar or separating an egg white from an egg yolk; the tactic making a meringue. In sports the skills would be catching and passing a ball; the tactic would be a Give-and-Go. Skills are often pre-requisites to enact more complex tactics and the even more complex strategies. (Note: the strategy would be the blueprint, recipe, and a double-low post respectively.)

So for safety, the teacher can ask a question and provide the skill of 'wait time' for the students to think. To increase safety, the teacher could invoke the tactic of Think Pair Share, so students can discuss the answer before sharing publicly. They can also frame the question in such a way that all students are accountable and feel obligated to actively participate. Below is an example.

> "*The other day we discussed chemical and physical change. Please think to yourself of examples of physical and chemical change and be ready to explain the key difference between those two types of change. I'll randomly call on someone in about 20 seconds*."
>
> (Note: if the teacher selects the student with an open palm rather than pointing at the students (a skill) safety increases even more.)

In a restructured classroom in terms of social distancing, framing questions effectively does not change. We can still frame questions (like the example above) to simultaneously invoke the concepts of 'safety' (time to think first) and 'accountability' (you better think because you may be picked). Of course, the fewer the students, the higher the accountability…the law of averages.

If we shift to an online, zoom-like environment, framing questions effectively is still essential; *buying out* and not participating are even more likely to occur in that on-line environment, so asking a question that invokes safety and accountability increases the chances students 'actively participate'. You can still randomly ask students to share. If you are using a program like Zoom, you can see your students, frame your questions, provide the time to think and then select students to respond. If you want them to 'chat' first, you can put them into online 'rooms' where they have a certain amount of time to chat in groups of say 2, 3 or 4 and let them know that in about 3 minutes you will bring them back and randomly ask one person in the group to share the group's thinking. Here you have attended to accountability, participation, and safety. You can also invoke the same process to 'check for understanding' re assessment and to provide feedback (knowledge of results) to the students once they have shared. If you simply ask for someone in the group to share, then the others are left 'off the hook' and active participation and accountability are somewhat lost; safety is high…but because they are did not participate, you decrease the chances they are 'successful'. (Keep in mind that the teacher can go in and listen to student dialogue in those chat rooms…that increases accountability.)

The key difference related to framing questions is that in a classroom environment where students can sit next to one another, you can add in a Think Pair Share before the student is randomly selected to respond; time to share with someone else increases 'safety' and 'success'. I've asked six and seven year old students all the way up to my graduate students and with few exceptions, those students prefer time to think and to share with a partner before sharing publicly. When sharing with a partner, if they get the answer wrong, they don't die alone. publicly.

Key to safety is also enacting other instructional skills related to how you as a teacher respond to a student's response. Basically, there are only seven types of responses students can provide to the teacher or class (and

how we as teachers respond to these responses are part of our repertoire of instructional skills) : (1) correct, 2) incorrect, (3) partially correct, (4) a guess, (5) a silly response, (6) a no response and (7) a convoluted response. (Convoluted refers to the skills of a great politician…talk a lot around the question, but don't answer it.) How we respond to these in a normal, re-structured, or online environment is the same. Key is the concept of safety.

With a silly response, look for the truth; often, in that 'silliness' is a pearl; those students are often very bright and that is why those students can pull out the humor. So acknowledge their wit (if appropriate) and tease out the truth. With partially correct responses, pull out the right part, thank them and then ask the class' to add to the part that is missing. With incorrect answers they are telling you three things: (1) they don't know the answer, (2) they have a piece of information and (3) they don't know where that piece of information fits. So, if possible, show them where that piece of information fits and then go in search of the more precise/correct answer. For example, they give you an example of 'physical change' that is actually 'chemical change'; or they say it is an improper fraction instead of a proper fraction or a simile rather than a metaphor. The teacher's response to an incorrect response might look like what I wrote below

> "Ahh, interesting, proper fraction is important, if I had said 5/9ths you would be right, but I said 9/5ths so it would be what?" (wait time…perhaps share with a partner) and then check with the student. The student says, "*Improper*". Teacher says, *"Exactly, now you are twice as smart. When the number on top is bigger we call it improper and we then usually change it to a mixed fraction, which would be 1 4/5ths. Thank you."*
>
> *(Key here is the concept of safety for that student.)*

Feedback, at times being interpreted as '*knowledge as results'* is also a key concept regardless of the classroom being 'normal', re-structured, or 'online'. John Hattie, an educational researcher at the University or Melbourne, identifies feedback as a key process in the classroom; and I strongly agree. That said, we can give feedback that is also knowledge as results but is little use for learning. Saying "Well done" (feedback) is good for the heart but does not assist the student in what they could do to improve. Ditto with getting a B- or 80%. The specific feedback added and related to what they did well and what they could do differently is key to the feedback/knowledge of results process. For example, saying, "*You have too many run-on sentences"* is feedback (and not knowledge of results) but that type of feedback also assists the student to think about their writing. Of course, over time, students need feedback for both the heart and the mind. Be careful with the idea of 'knowledge of results' you can tell a student they got the top mark in the class (knowledge as results) but they still could have failed. Think of the racetrack; a person can come 'dead last' in the 100-meter sprint…but five of the six sprinters could have come across the line, tied, the 6th person .001 seconds behind and they all broke the world record. Tangentially, as part of providing feedback the instructional skill of 'suspending judgment' is often key when asking students to share their thinking. It also works to enact safety. Judging too soon (positive or negative) shuts down student thinking; public success is important and usually felt as positive; public failure is usually de-motivating. So the science is feedback; knowing what to say and when to say it (the concept of formative assessment) is the art. The concept of feedback applies to all teaching and learning situations (normal, re-structured, and online. The key is to do it effectively.

In this last part of the article, I will mention a few instructional skills, tactics and strategies a teacher/instructor could use in all classroom situations. I'll start with three critical thinking tactics, then shift to three additional tactics, and three strategies. I'll finish by providing a couple of key ideas to consider when having student work in groups…including in a zoom-like environment.

Critical Thinking Tactics. Three key tactics from deBono's CoRT program (note there are 60 in total) are EBS, CAF, and PMI. *Examining Both Sides* of an issue is key in decision making and also central to democracy. Ditto with *Consider All Factors*. Keep in mind when applying these two tactics that the skills of 'equal voice' and 'suspending judgment' are also key (one or two students should not be allowed to take over). You can see that the concept of 'individual accountability' is also key…and can be invoked by how you frame questions when setting up these tactics.

EBS and CAF push analysis and can often be connected with Brainstorming. *Plus Minus Interesting* is one we all use…we just did not know it had a name. When we decide what restaurant to go to or where to go on a holiday or whether or not to go out on a date with a person…we apply PMI. I often change the 'I' to mean important idea or

intelligent decision (rather than interesting). PMI pushes analysis and evaluation re Bloom's taxonomy.

Additional Tactics Brainstorming, Venn diagrams, and Ranking Ladders are also useful tactics. Students can be provided with time to generate their ideas for brainstorming before be asked to share; in an online situation, they can share in their chat room and then share the groups ideas when they come back online. With Venn diagrams, students can easily take time to fill in their Venn diagram, say comparing two or three characters in a novel or in history or types of environmentally friendly energy sources or shapes or animals or rural and urban environments etc. If in groups of three, then each person gets one concept to brainstorm and then the group works to fill in the rest of the Venn diagram. Note that Venn diagrams push inductive thinking (classifying) and analysis (comparing and contrasting). With Ranking Ladders the level of thinking is evaluation. Key with Ranking Ladders is to have students develop the criteria for their ranking. When students first start, keep the number of rungs on the ladder small…say 2 or 3. I rarely go over 6 unless the students are very skilled with Ranking Ladders. With both Venn diagrams and Ranking Ladders, students, when finished, can do a 2 or 3 person interview about how and why they ranked them (in class or in an online chat room) and then be asked to share.

How could you intersect EBS, CAF and/or PMI into Venn diagrams and Ranking Ladders?

Three strategies: Strategies are the most complex and they differ from most skills and tactics in that they evolve from a theory about learning. The three I'll share here are Concept Attainment (information processing theory), Mind Maps (memory theory), and Jigsaw (social theory). These are complex. For example, I've had two full weeks of training in Concept Attainment and have read and/or developed hundreds of data sets over the last 35 years; I did my first Mind Map in a grade one class back in 1984 and have included them in two books that I've wrote. Jigsaw, a cooperative learning strategy is so simple to understand and so complex to effectively implement. Why? The reason is also simple…you are asking students to teach and learn from one another; most students do not have the skills to effectively engage in Jigsaw. If your students are not skilled at Think Pair Share and Place Mat…good luck with Jigsaw. As a metaphor, if you can't run around the block…don't enter the Boston Marathon.

Concept Attainment, (the work of Jerome Bruner) For me, Concept Attainment is one the single most powerful strategies for getting students to grasp a concept. Interestingly, parents use it almost from day one to teach their own kids concepts. How did you mom or dad teach you the concept of 'dog' or 'car' or 'spoon'? Well, you are out for a walk and the child may point and the parent says, "Yes Jack, that is a dog. That is a big black dog." So, what is happening is the concepts of black and big and dog are coming into play. Then Jack says, "Mommy, dog" and the mother says "Yes, that is a dog." Or, "No, that is a cat." And Jack starts pulling out the attributes of 'dogs' and 'cats'. In Canada we have 'bad' cats (aka Skunks). If Jack was in Canada, he'd also start to learn the concept of 'run'.

Virtually every concept we teach can be presented in the same format. Think Similes and Metaphors or Linear and Non-Linear equations or soft and hard or things that roll and things that don't or proper nouns and improper nouns. Of course you only need one side to have the examples of the concept, the other side has examples that may or may not have everything in common. So, for example, triangles on one side and squares and circles and rectangles on the other side. Ditto with figures of speech. Concept Attainment is also useful to clarify concepts, for example, effective vs less effective thesis statement or effective vs less effective paragraphs.

You can create your data sets in a power point format for online teaching; we've done this a lot and it works. Talk to someone involved in the Instructional Leadership Program for help on this one..

Mind Maps (the work of Tony Buzan) I've found examples of Mind Maps back in the mid 1600s. They were not called Mind Maps back then…but that is what they were. Mind Maps are ways to organize information so that it can be 'remembered'. Most of you have run into Mind Maps, key here re online learning is that students can use programs like inspiration to create their Mind Maps. That said, Mind Maps done by hand are more powerful for memory than Mind Maps done using a mapping technology.

Of course, if the Mind Map is being done for a presentation (say using Prezi then online mapping programs would be more efficient re communicating ideas. So, Mind Maps start in the middle and radiate out hierarchically (say from the most to the least important concepts …written in one or two words).

The use of colour and images are also essential. The images capture the essence of the key concepts on the Mind Map. Images and colour are attached to the key concepts and assist in memory. The last part is putting in cross links; these are lines that connect different part of the Mind Map to indicate that they are related. In a classroom, Mind Maps can be placed on the wall and students can go around and do a Gallery Tour. Students can stand in

front of their Mind Map while other students move (while invoking social distancing) to hear what and how the student organized their thinking. In an online classroom they could share their document using the 'share button'.

A lot of schools will have the book *Graphic Intelligence: Possibilities for Instruction and Assessment*…in that 450 page book are several hundred colour examples of a variety of graphic organizers (including Venn diagrams and Ranking Ladders. Mind Maps represents one chapter in that book.

Jigsaw (the work of Elliot Aronson) This cooperative learning strategy is one of over 200 cooperative learning group structures and it would be in the top five in terms of complexity to implement. A lot of you already know about Jigsaw (three phases Home Group (work on your own) to Expert Group (work with others with same Information) and then back to Home Group to teach each other). As an example, students can be put in groups of say three. Each person gets a separate piece of information…it could be three different physics questions or three different recipes or three different verbs to be conjugated in French or four causes of World War II or five types of poetry or safety guidelines on three machines in a wood working class. I suggest not going over a group of four, as students can find it easier to buy out and let others do the work.

So each student (say in a group of 3) in the Home Group studies their piece (say three accounting entries that have different flaws) and then they shift to expert groups where they discuss their specific accounting entry with others who have the same piece of information…they become experts re that flaw. They then shift back to their home group to share/teach their information to the other members in their original home group. This last phase is where Jigsaw often falls apart. Why? It goes back to those key concepts at the start of the article…no accountability to listen or participate. Once a person has shared, why should they listen to someone else (and vice versa re those listening). If the information is in math or physics or chemistry and can be tested, then the teacher can say that he or she will roll a dice and which ever number comes up first, 1, 2, 3 (or 4) then that question is the quiz…and if you get it right, no homework. Now they have a reason to listen. Of course this is no guarantee they will participate, but it increases the chances they will. So having some sort of quiz or having them Mind Map or do a Ranking Ladder or Venn diagram on the key ideas would increase the chances they listened to one another.

In an online environment, this process still works, as students first get time alone, then second then they are put in similar-information-chatrooms and then finally back in their home groups to summarize the information. The teacher can tell them in advance that one person from each Home Group will be randomly selected to share the summary of the group's ideas. Random selection (rather than asking for a volunteer) builds in individual accountability and increases the chances for success. As another alternative, the teacher can also have them all forward their summaries on line and tell them he or she will discuss five of the summaries next class.

Summary: I hope the article was somewhat interesting and provided a few insights into the teaching and learning process. My guess is that a lot of you already do this, and this was simply a review. Or you do this but did not know it had a name or its history. Interestingly, some of these 'ideas' have been around for a long time. Boole at the University of Cork, played with Venn diagrams in the early 1800s…one hundred years before John Venn in the early 1900s. Both were mathematicians. Ever heard of Boolean Logic; it drives computer searchers. A researcher in Wales wrote an article on the history of cooperative learning as a pedagogical process; it predates Christ.

Framing questions was in a book titled, '*The Principles and Practice of Teaching'* written by John Millar in 1897; he had a chapter titled '*The Art of Questioning'*. We still don't attend to most of Millar's ideas related to asking questions. Millar was Deputy Minister of Education in Ontario, Canada. Regarding framing questions Millar said, "*No sign should be given as to who will be selected to respond*." He was not a fan of hands up and call outs. He called his method 'the promiscuous method'. He liked accountability.

If you have more questions, contact the ETBI and they can connect you to a teacher in your area that is involved in this project focused on teaching and learning.

Hmmm. Imagine a Minister of Education writing a book on how to teach.

Adapting How We Teach in a Covid-19 Environment

Dr. Rebecca Saunders, Murdoch University.

It's been an interesting year, full of twists, turns and contradictions, bringing with it unexpected challenges and the occasional hidden blessing. As I write this article on a warm spring day in Perth, Australia, I'm all too aware of my family, friends and colleagues in the northern hemisphere preparing to hunker down for the dark cold winter months ahead. After reading the news this morning, I'm also mindful that as Ireland responds to the challenge of living with level five Coronavirus restrictions, here in Western Australia, we remain comparatively untouched. Our reputation for being the most geographically isolated capital city in the world, has for once, worked in our favour – a blessing.

We will face many different types of change and the corresponding challenges and blessings it brings throughout our lifetime. Some types of change create only minor disruptions in our life, such as having to take a detour on our way home from work when we encounter a traffic hold up. Then there's another type of change altogether, the type that's considered epochal, causing dramatic shifts in our ways of being, living and working, things such as the birth of a child, moving to a new house, or losing a job. Many of us would consider the changes brought about by Coronavirus aligned with the latter – significant, life-changing in nature and touching every aspect of our personal and professional lives.

How we individually perceive and respond to change was something that intrigued Francis Fuller, a university educator at The University of Texas at Austin back in the late 1960's and 70's. Fuller's seminal work on classifying the feelings and perceptions (or concerns) of student teachers as they progressed through a teacher education program, paved the way for the *stages of concern* dimension of the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) that we know today. Fuller identified four levels or stages of concern, that student teachers experienced: *Unrelated, Self, Task* and *Impact.* This same pattern of concerns can be found in people implementing all sorts of change in a wide variety of contexts.

To explore how this plays out, let's consider for a moment how we've had to change and adapt the way we teach in the Coronavirus environment. Individuals who are not worried about changing their teaching approaches in this environment are said to have *Unrelated* concerns, making the change is simply not a focus or a concern for them. Those with *Self* concerns are focused on how changing their practice will affect them personally – "what will this mean for me?". People with *Task* concerns are preoccupied with how to implement and manage the changes they make to their teaching, and those with *Impact* concerns are concerned about what is happening to their students as a result of the changes they have made. I'm sure we all recognise our professional selves at one, or all of these stages over the past few months, I know I certainly do… *Oh to be back in the peaceful Unrelated stage in January!*

How each of us is likely to respond to change is influenced by a number of variables, which I don't have time to explore in this piece, but it's important to acknowledge that we don't progress in an orderly fashion from one stage to the next; change is a messy, emotive, recursive business. Dealing with unexpected and mandated change typically evokes a simultaneous mix of *Self, Task* and *Impact* concerns as we scramble to learn new skills and develop new ways of working, whilst being worried about what the outcome or *Impact* might be for our students. As we willingly or unwillingly strapped ourselves into the metaphorical roller coaster of mandated transformative pedagogical change, we've all experienced our own unique ups and downs through our various *stages of concern*. We've ploughed through the sleepless nights, endured moments of fear, frustration and abject panic as we come to terms with new technology and ways of working and shared joy, elation and relief when we and our students achieve small but hard-earned successes in this brave new world; only to get up the next day and do it all again…! The lived experience of change can feel oddly cyclical at times, and if you feel exhausted right now, that's entirely to be expected. My own research revealed emotions play a significant part in our professional lives. As teachers we regularly supress our own emotional needs in order to support those of our students and meet the social expectations of what it means to be a 'good teacher'. Arlie Hochschild calls this aspect of our profession "emotional labor" (2012). Teaching is indeed hard, and at times, emotionally draining work. The type of change

we encounter is also an important consideration when it comes to understanding how we perceive and react to it. When we think of mandated educational change, we tend to refer to it as "top down". We're all familiar with this – it's the type of change that falls on us from above and we have little or no control over, it includes things such as curriculum revisions and new policy initiatives. Generally, we tend to be more collectively resistant to "top down" change, for lots of different reasons, and it's why this type of change can sometimes be more difficult for us. The other type of change emerges from within, it's grass roots or "bottom up" and can include small things such as like-minded teachers in a school getting together to trial the use of graphic organisers in their classrooms, or groups of teachers from different schools in different counties working together collectively over time, to improve their instructional skills and repertoire for the benefit of their students…sound familiar…? The voluntary nature of this type of change means we tend to view and respond to it more favourably serving to make the experience more pleasant.

The change we've recently encountered has certainly been "top down" – we've had no say in the process, but what I have noticed during this time are the radically different "bottom up" ways in which teachers, schools, colleges, universities and students have risen to meet the challenges, localised responses to community and student need. Listening to The Teaching Council's recent FÉILTE 2020 discussion, "Teaching and Learning During a Pandemic: Challenges and Opportunities", it was reassuring to hear that the same challenges and opportunities that the panel discussed mirrored those reflected in conversations I've shared with colleagues in Australia. Despite all the challenges, innovative "bottom up" approaches to teaching, connecting with students, parents and the wider community and interacting with and supporting colleagues have emerged. For me, these are the unexpected blessings that change can bring, recognising the value of supportive relationships, connection to others, building inclusion and community and creating a sense of belonging. All factors that can help temper the emotional roller coaster ride.

So what wisdom can we take from educational change research and how best do we support teachers as we move forward? Michael Fullan reminds us that neither "top down" or 'bottom up" strategies are effective at sustaining long-term change, he argues that what we need "is a more sophisticated blend of the two" (1994, p. 1). It has to be acknowledged that Fullan is referring to "top down" change here as the type that is administered by centralised policy makers, not as a result of a global pandemic. However, I've observed over the past few months that when it comes to the affective side of the change process, people respond in remarkably similar ways. Whilst it's heartening to know that our resilience, collegiality and compassion for one and other has created a supportive environment for "bottom up" strategies to flourish. We are now at a critical point where it's important for us to take collective stock of the situation and recognise that "top down" support strategies are also needed from leaders, policy makers, government departments, teaching councils and boards to sustain our mental, physical and emotional efforts over time. Now is the time for us to take a strength-based approach, capitalise on our blessings, and to think, plan and work together systemically, in order to meet the challenges that future change will always inevitably bring.

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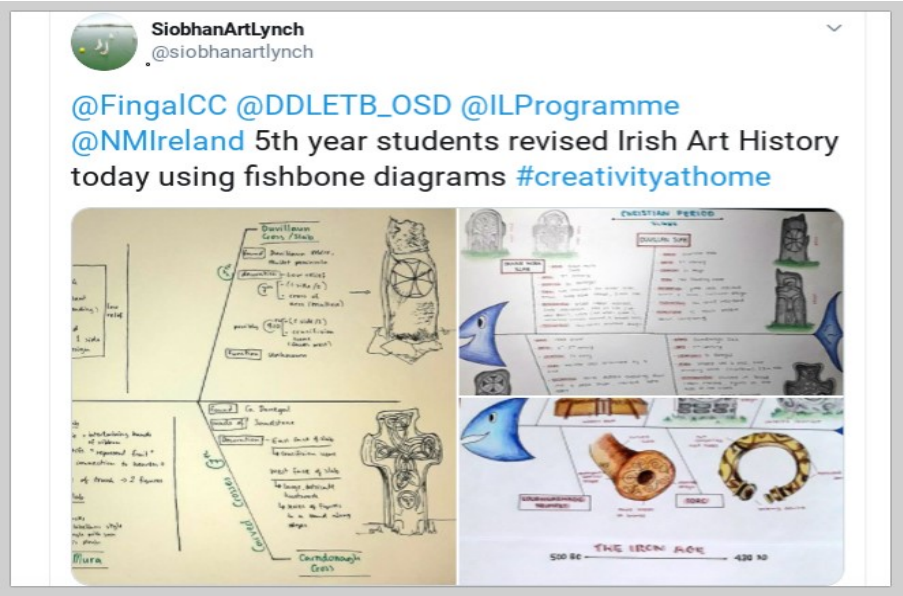
What Twitter is saying about ILP



What Twitter is saying about ILP

A Community Approach to learning about COVID-19

Aaron Kenny, Kisogue Community College

Under the patronage of Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB, Kishoge Community College operates in formal partnership with Educate Together to develop a welcoming, inclusive school community that enables young people to meet their full potential in society. Kishoge Community College guarantees equality of access and esteem to girls and boys irrespective of their social, cultural, religious or non-religious backgrounds. It is learner-centred in its approach to education and run with a respectful partnership between parents/guardians, students, teachers and staff''

Introduction:

Before returning to school in September, we realised that the students were being bombarded with COVID elated news topics from a variety of sources, including social media, on a daily basis. We were concerned that the significance of good COVID safety practices may have become diluted. To develop a community approach to the implementation of good practices, we established a *COVID Awareness Team.* One of the aims of this team was to work with students, teachers and parents in raising awareness of the individual and collective responsibility of developing and implementing the recommendations from NPHET & the Government, in an effort to protect our community and prevent the spread of the virus.

Our belief that students might engage more positively if the message was being delivered by their teachers and from a medical professional. Ms. Deirdre O'Brien, a member of the Parent's Council, suggested organising a Q&A session with Dr. Matt O'Toole.

Developing the resource

Once Dr Matt O'Toole confirmed his engagement with us the collaborative approach to the design and execution of the initiative began. Aaron Kenny (Teacher) and Maeve Ward (3rd Year Head) worked together to host the Q&A session with Dr. Matt O'Toole. Michael Forrestal (Teacher), was asked to direct and produce the videos. Aaron and Maeve sent out surveys to students and staff asking what questions they would like answered. Deirdre O' Brien gathered questions from parents. In all, over 40 were collated, covering topics such as:

- General COVID Information
- Mask Wearing
- Hand Sanitizing
- Other Precautions (Other things we can do to keep us safe – walking home from school, etc.)
- Additional COVID Information (terminology like, 'restricted movement', etc.)

Dr. Matt O'Toole was incredibly informative and provided very clear and direct instructions that we could all follow to help improve the safety of the school community. Michael compiled and edited the videos and broke them down into 3 separate video links which could be upload to YouTube.

Taking a curriculum approach:

Following on from the Q&A session, Aaron and Maeve worked together to design an SPHE lesson, which was used to reinforce the key safety precautions, mask wearing and use, hand sanitizing and social distancing. Using the Madeline Hunter's *Lesson Design*, the videos were used as the 'Mental Set' of the lesson. Mental Set is a concept a teacher invokes to get students focused and actively involved in learning, Bennett & Rolheiser (2001). The lesson was designed to be interactive and invoked AFL strategies.

Conclusion:

The response to the videos in Kishoge CC was very positive. Verbal feedback from staff and students, supported by a student survey, boldly highlighted how the videos and the SPHE lesson helped to improve students' knowledge of COVID and the necessary safety precautions which must be followed.

The COVID Awareness Team then sent the video links and SPHE lesson on to the ETBI which was then distributed to other schools with the intention of creating safer learning environments all over the country. Notably the videos have also been shared by a number of different sources such as, the HSE, who shared it on twitter to their 157k followers.

Other Initiatives

Following on from this initiative, the COVID Awareness Team expanded in Kishoge and started new initiatives to support and reinforce the key COVID safety precautions. We have now started our next set of initiatives which include a COVID safety promotional meme competition, video competitions promoting good COVID practices in mask wearing, social distancing and hand sanitization.

We have also created a COVID Ethical Education short course. This is an inquiry based learning short course which encourages the students to create their own presentations based on certain topics such as, the impacts of COVID in 1st world and 3rd world countries and the impacts COVID has had on the businesses, etc. The short course we created has also been shared with a number of other schools.

The COVID Awareness Team also created COVID key rings for every student and every staff member in the school. The COVID key rings promotes the three key COVID safety precautions of social distancing, mask wearing and hand sanitizing using printed images. The key rings also highlight the five most common symptoms of COVID as a reminder for students to stay home if they experience any of those symptoms.

Resources

The SPHE lesson and the YouTube links to the videos can be viewed on the Kishoge Community College website: https://www.kishogecc.ie/ or contact aaronkenny@kishogecc.ie

COVID Ethical Short Course can be shared if you contact aaronkenny@kishogecc.ie

YouTube Links:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66KWpdWhjEY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WE_bgqVrH4k

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vHUYtQ0VSc

Co Operative Learning in a Distance Learning Environment

Darren Byrne, St. Joseph's Secondary School

The way in which students experience their educational environments has been radically transformed through the unparalleled challenge of Covid19. Children and young people are being socialised in a way that is vastly different from the past. As a result, many students experience a serious disconnect between their learning in school, at home, and in community environments. Perhaps this has never been more evident than during the extended period of school closures where many students became disengaged from the learning process. This period of monumental change has subsequently provided a crucial drive for progress within the educational environment, and a particular emphasis on inclusion and the process of coming to terms with the varied needs of contemporary learners.

Educators as a group generally envision, design and direct the student experience on behalf of young people, however, the controversy arises when one considers that educators are not necessarily experts on the lived experience of every student within this radically diverse society and within these unprecedented social conditions. Traditional classroom structures that typically use competitive and individualistic rewards structures may be systematically biased in favour of majority groups. These classroom structures provide few opportunities for the academic achievement of the ever-increasing cohort of students in need of inclusion during '*the new normal*'. This dichotomy between the perspectives of contemporary educators and learners has the potential to aggravate conditions for exclusion and marginalisation. Therefore, schools should concern themselves with increasing access and opportunities for all learners, particularly those who have historically been marginalised through disadvantage.

In direct response to these challenges '*Cooperative Learning*' methodologies become more appealing because they ensure an active role for everyone by creating small teams of students, rather than attempting to relate to each individual separately. There is evidence to suggest that students of all achievement levels benefit from being part of heterogeneous cooperative learning groups as they are inherently more inclusive. According to social learning theory, most learning takes place in a social environment, in which learners obtain knowledge, rules, skills, strategies, beliefs, and attitudes by observing others. Teachers can use cooperative teams to break through social class differences, cultural differences, language differences, and other potential barriers to communication. Furthermore, these reciprocal interactions within the learning environment promote affinity and support among team members and this reciprocity in turn makes students feel that they are an important part of their learning environment. Hence, this sense of personal value can help to re-engage many students with the formal process of 'schooling'.

There is a natural partnership between cooperative learning and digital technology, and this partnership can enhance education where heterogeneous groups create shared learning experiences. Since our school employs the use of iPads as a classroom tool, it was a natural decision to redefine each task through mobile technology. Though any web enabled device can facilitate online collaboration, and physical collaboration doesn't require technology at all, mobile devices have the distinctive ability to bridge the gap between virtual and physical collaboration. The priority in mobile learning should be to enable students to learn whenever they are curious, switching between formal and informal contexts.

When redefining tasks I focused on cooperative methods that promote conversational learning such as the *'3 Step Interview'*, *'Read and Explain Pairs'*, *'Reading Comprehension Triads'* and *'Think Pair Share'*. These methods naturally support an environment where students can converse with each other, by interrogating and sharing their descriptions of the world. This conversational learning is fundamental to cooperation as a process and in this case the mobile device is acting as a mediator for collaboration and communication. Mobile devices can also enable students to control the public/private boundary within the classroom, students can easily transition from their individual tasks to sharing their work with instructors or peers, which helps to maximise collaborative learning. I encouraged students to interact with each other through their own idiom and vernacular, after all, if my students were to construct new knowledge socially, then they should be working within a set of parameters that are natural and familiar to themselves. The re-definition of tasks within this manner enhanced a sense of equilibrium between blended learning and the physical learning space itself.

Mobile technologies can facilitate digital storytelling through conversational learning. Digital storytelling promotes student centred learning and encapsulates aural, visual and sensory elements, and utilises the multitude of cognitive processes that underpin learning. Students discover and address any gaps in their understanding by explaining the concepts to their peers. Language and communication becomes the significant factor in these shared student centred experiences. During these cooperative learning exercises, students repeatedly mentioned the role of body language and positive attitudes as opposed to vocabulary itself. Students learned to view communication as something that improves through practice within the group. This practice of digital storytelling encouraged my students to create online tutorials, videos, websites, time-lapse demonstrations, webinars, and to amass a shared database of revision content.

It is unlikely that students would engage in the prolonged discussion and explanations that are essential for this kind of cooperation unless the learning of their teammates is important to them. Students not only wanted to be heard as individuals, but also as a group, and they identified the various conditions that imbued them with a greater sense of belonging and community. Those with higher academic ability described working together in small groups as important emotional learning experiences, where they built personal relationships that were essential for the development of pluralistic and altruistic values. Furthermore, those personal relations within a community were fundamentally important since they provided the conditions in which individuals felt safe enough, and valued enough, to develop their emergent individuality on the return to school campus. Moving forward, students and teachers should believe that the idea of students helping one another to learn is not just to be applied on occasion, but instead, is held as a fundamental principle of classroom organisation. Students should see one another as resources for learning, and there should be a school-wide norm that every student's learning is everyone's responsibility, that every student's success is everyone's success.

Using Mind Maps to Facilitate Distance Learning

Siobhan Lynch, Fingal Community College

I learned very early in my career as a teacher of Art, that plans, even the best made ones, can go wrong. At times, the success of a lesson lay in my ability to adapt and change direction at the drop of a pencil.

The pandemic was not something I had planned for, nor something I could change. The 'new normal' – a physically distanced classroom, was one that required me to consciously modify my instructional actions in order to maintain safety and maximise student learning.

Initially, the pandemic took the familiar, organised, interactive, collaborative and cooperative classroom from me and replaced it with uncertainty. I quickly realised that I needed to adapt and change my approach, to ensure successful learning outcomes for the students. Research shows that teachers are able to reshape their knowledge and dispositions to function and respond to any challenging situation. Covid-19 was one such situation that required us to adapt our instructional toolkit to suit a physically distanced classroom.

In a fully remote learning environment, as was the case from March to May, I was determined that the learning gained from my participation in the Instructional Leadership Programme would continue to be used and that my students would still be afforded the opportunities that allowed for synchronous or asynchronous discussion, personalised feedback and coaching from both myself and their peers through the use of instructional tactics, skills and strategies. Through the creative use of ICT and the modification of my instructional actions to maximise their learning, students continued to analyse text, test hypotheses, independently and collaboratively, using instructional strategies. Placing this cognitively demanding work at the centre of student learning accelerated students academically, but most importantly it kept them emotionally invested and engaged during remote learning.

At first glance, guidelines for social distancing in the practical classroom may appear to conflict with active learning techniques, but I soon realised that active learning can be accomplished, with some appropriate forward planning.

The first thing I had to remind myself was that the "active" in active learning refers to students actively integrating new information with their existing knowledge - it does not refer to physical activity! While some instructors might think of active learning as students participating in discussions with their peers, there are many alternative active learning methods that can help students achieve their learning goals.

Peer-review, Think-pair-share, Mind Maps, Jigsaw, and Placemats are active learning techniques that continue to be used in my now physically distanced classroom although, in some instances, these classroom strategies now need to be mediated by technology. One such method that I have found to be consistently successful, with students remote and present in class, are Graphic Organisers, in particular Mind Maps.

Mind Mapping is a highly effective way of inputting and outputting information – it is a creative and logical means of note-taking and note-making that literally "maps out" one's ideas.

Mind Maps are used in my Art class at the start of each new project. The attached exemplar starts with "The Kitchen" as the main theme, branches out into different categories, and then focuses on the actual items in the kitchen itself. Students then use these to further develop their ideas.

Mind Maps have some commonalities. They have a natural organisational structure that radiates from the centre and use lines, symbols, words, colour and images according to simple, brain-friendly concepts.

Mind Mapping converts a long list of possibly monotonous information into a colourful, memorable and organised diagram that reflects the brain's associations.

The following are some responses from my Third Year Art students when asked about their experience on the use of Mind Maps in the Art class:

"In Art we use Mind Maps to come up with ideas that relate to our themes/words/images."

"Instead of words, we mainly use images to portray our thoughts and ideas."

"Artists often experience creative blocks. Mind Maps help us to think outside of the box, rather than trying to focus on a certain area. Mind Maps usually use one keyword per "branch", allowing much more connections from each possible thought / branch (making many smaller branches out of the main one). This helps to expand our thinking and creatively explore more possibilities."

"Due to social distancing, it is much harder to brainstorm ideas in groups without the use of ICT. At the moment, Mind Maps provide the best solution. We use the teacher's visualiser to share our Mind Map with the class and get their feedback on our ideas." **Iona, Third Year Art Student, Fingal Community College, Swords**.

"Mind Maps, in my opinion, are one of the most useful tools that students have at their disposal. For me it is the most beneficial way to organise my thoughts and ideas, whether through illustration or just using words. We use them often in Art Class. As an example, through means of illustration we can show what ideas go through our heads when learning about certain topics or doing projects. You can do them by yourself or within a group using ICT and its capabilities do not change. Once you learn how to use them to their full potential you won't stop using them! However, due to the Corona Virus, we cannot currently work within groups due to social distancing, but this is where we can use Mind Maps to help us! When we fill out the Mind Maps ourselves on our current topic (s) we can go to the top of our room and use a visualiser connected to our interactive whiteboard to show our workings to the class and gather feedback. You can work and learn through your own Mind Map and those of your peers. This way keeps all of us safe while still being able to work collectively. I highly recommend Mind Maps to anyone looking for an effective way to learn or study." **Rhea, Third Year Art Student, Fingal Community College, Swords**.

For me Graphic Organisers are a fantastic strategy to use both in a social distanced classroom and during periods of remote learning. Graphic Organisers have enabled my students to take notes, brainstorm on the spot, collaborate with their peers, and more. Mind Mapping in particular, has allowed my students to reason, think and problem solve in ways that make sense to them. Using Mind Maps in a physically distanced class has encouraged creativity, and has facilitated peer learning, where students' broaden their perspectives by listening to each other's ideas and feedback.

Exploring Student Voice in schools from a rights-based perspective: some thoughts

Mr. Gerard O'Sullivan, Education Officer NCCA

Introduction

The concept of Student Voice[1] in education is one that has become more pronounced in discourse in recent times, particularly in the post-primary sector. The impact of Covid-19 on students' experience of schooling over the last eight months has provided opportunities for students' voices to be amplified, with many schools commendably involving students in evaluating the usefulness of blended learning approaches adopted while schools were closed. Indeed, the profound effect of the pandemic has allowed for reflection on the very nature of schools and schooling, conversations that must have the views of students at their core. This article reflects on some aspects of Student Voice in the current context, and looks at how the *Instructional Leadership Programme/NCCA Student Voice Project*, which has been paused due to the virus, may be realigned to meaningfully progress the theme in the New Year.

Understanding concepts of student voice

Our understanding of Student Voice has evolved and developed over recent times. For many, the term has typically been understood in the context of such forums as student councils, where students are facilitated to form views and opinions about aspects of school life and to convey these to school management as appropriate. Indeed, provision for student councils is made in the Education Act, 1998. However, the nature and effectiveness of these councils varies greatly from school to school, with the extent of student voice and its impact debatable in many cases.

More recently, the term has been invoked in acknowledging a greater awareness of students talking about their experience of learning, teaching and assessment in the classroom. This concept of voice, relating to ideas around metacognition, is reflected in the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015), which emphasises opportunities for learning, teaching and assessment to be enhanced by conversations between students and teachers, and stresses the primacy of feedback and formative assessment, echoing the notion of 'dialogic teaching'. This focus was the main subject of a recent NCCA/Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) Erasmus Plus collaboration entitled 'A Bridge to Learning'. This project investigated how student voice was supported in the junior cycle classroom by working with a network of schools and sharing and comparing findings and experiences with colleagues from Slovenia, Scotland, the Netherlands and Hungary.

A rights-based rationale for Student Voice

While this Erasmus project[2] was rooted in classroom practice and assessment methods, it also considered the term Student Voice in a broader sense and sought to establish a rationale for it. Central to the articulation of this rationale was the fundamental right of young people to a formal say in matters that affect them as set out in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This 'rights' perspective is a fundamental underpinning of Student Voice thinking. Article 12 deals with the child's opinion, and states:

'The child has the right to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account, in any matter or procedure affecting the child, in accordance with his or her age and maturity'.

Article 13 of the Convention is also relevant and deals with the concept of freedom of expression. It states:

'The child has the right to obtain and make known information, and to express his or her own views, unless this would violate the rights of others.

This perspective is the basis for the Lundy Model of Child Participation, developed by Prof Laura Lundy of Queen's University. The model sets out four central pillars, which should be evident in any process that seeks to engage the voices of young people in matters that affect them and is represented here:

The Lundy Model of Child Participation

Interestingly, this model is also the basis of the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020, as produced by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015). It is also the basis for a toolkit developed by that Department in association with Comhairle na nÓg, which has been published in www.ourvoicesourschools.ie[3], and which is intended to serve as a blueprint for how all government departments and state agencies engage and support participation by young people. For the purposes of school-based Student Voice, Lundy's four pillars are elaborated on further in the grid below:

Space	**Voice**
How: Provide students with a safe and inclusive space to express their view Have students' views been actively sought? Was there a safe space for students to express themselves freely? Have steps been taken to ensure that all students can take part?	*How: Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of students' views* Have students been given the information they need to formulate a view? Do students know they do not have to take part? Have students been given a range of options as to how they might choose to express themselves?
Audience	**Influence**
How: Ensure that students views are communicated to someone with the authority to listen Is there a process for communicating students' views? Do students know who their views are being communicated to? Does that person/body have the power to make decisions?	*How: Ensure that students views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate* Were the students' views considered by those with the power to effect change? Are there procedures in place to ensure that the students' views are taken seriously? Have the students been provided with feedback to explaining the reasons for decisions taken?

From an 'instructional leadership perspective' the above matrix for enacting the pillars provides some reminders of key concepts in terms of effective pedagogy. The notion of *space* invokes the concepts of safety and inclusion and provides opportunities for the 'consciously competent' teacher to draw on useful and effective interventions. Equally, the prompt questions relating to *voice* allow teachers to draw on different ways for students to express themselves and once again, a range of instructional interventions present themselves, including concept maps, mind maps and other appropriate graphic organisers, for example. Overall, when attending to each of these four key features of Student Voice, there are many ways of integrating instructional concepts, organisers, strategies, tactics and skills to ensure that Student Voice is appropriately invoked at classroom or whole school level.

The Parent and Student Charter

From a policy perspective, the advent of legislation requiring schools to develop a Student and Parent Charter provides a further context for the growing profile of Student Voice in schools, and indeed, affirms the concept of Student Voice as a right. On 10th September 2019, then Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh T.D. published the Education (Student and Parent Charter) Bill 2019. Ostensibly, the draft legislation seeks to introduce a stronger frame for parent and student engagement in a charter model. It requires of every school that a Student and Parent Charter be published and operated in accordance with national guidelines to be published after consultation with the education partners. This charter should declare to students and parents what they can expect from the school.

The Minister's own words on introducing the bill are interesting in the context of Student Voice, saying that it is:

'critical that the experience of our schools is one that is as positive, responsive and supportive as possible for students and their parents…This new legislation will be an important step towards improving the experience of both students and parents in their engagement with schools. It will give mothers, fathers, guardians and the children in our schools a fair and clear system *to make sure their voices are heard*. The overall aim is to improve the level of engagement between schools and students and their parents *by inviting feedback, comment and observations from students* and parents and by *developing a listening culture* in the school'. (author's italics).

Under the legislation every school's charter will declare to students and parents what they can expect from the school (similar to a customer service charter). Interestingly, the bill requires, among other amendments, the

amendment of Section 27 of the Education Act 1998 to change the requirement on a student council from one of promoting the interest of the school to a requirement to promote the interests of the students of the school having regard to the characteristic spirit and polices of the school and the charter – note the changed emphasis to the interests of students.

Conclusion

The Student Voice landscape which this Bill seeks to affect has already been much impacted upon by the Covid-19 pandemic. The emergence of online/ blended learning environments and platforms necessitated by government restrictions posed an enormous challenge for schools, with dramatic new teaching and learning arrangements introduced in a very short timeframe as schools were forced to adapt their practices. A commendable feature of the response of many schools to Covid-19 is the extent to which students' views have been consulted as to what worked best for them during lockdown, what worked less well and what advice would they offer should the need arise again in the case of further school closures. Similarly, the changed assessment arrangements whereby calculated grades replaced the Leaving Certificate examination process placed students in an unprecedented situation, and it was notable that student perspectives on these arrangements were prominent, with representatives from the Irish Secondary Students Union (ISSU) sitting on the DES advisory group, while student views were also much in evidence in media coverage of developments over recent weeks.

In that context, it is worth revisiting some other aspects of the rationale for Student Voice considered in the afore-mentioned Erasmus project. The work of Dr Paula Flynn of DCU, for instance, has focused on the positive impact of Student Voice in schools in relation to a number of areas, including student engagement in learning, student-teacher relationships and the extent of student agency and student leadership. The impact of Student Voice on the acquisition and development of a positive disposition towards civic life, citizenship values and democracy is also profound. Andreas Schleicher has observed that schools are the first place where children experience society in all its facets and their experiences can have a profound influence on their attitudes and behaviour in life (OECD, 2017).

As schools continue to adapt to the changed circumstances required by the ongoing pandemic, therefore, it is to be hoped that Student Voice will feature prominently in thinking and planning, not as an optional extra but as a fundamental and integral aspect of school life. The NCCA/Instructional Leadership Programme joint project will similarly adapt to support this work. As a concluding note, and to offer further affirmation of the important work of Student Voice, it is worth reflecting on the words of the new Nobel laureate for literature, Louise Gluck, whose poem 'Nostos' notes how deeply formative and profound our experiences as young people are in shaping our world view as adults: 'We look at the world once, in childhood. The rest is memory.'

[1] The term 'Student Voice' with higher case use is adopted here to refer to the concept that is the subject of this article and which is currently being explored in Irish post-primary schools, including in the NCCA/Instructional Leadership joint collaboration.

[2] The Erasmus project 'A Bridge to Learning' provided the impetus for the NCCA/Instructional Leadership project, which seeks to advance the project's findings and further extend thinking in the area.

[3] This website contains very helpful and practical supports for initiating Student Voice in classrooms and schools, including approaches designed to support teachers and students in classroom and whole-school engagement.

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Connecting *Multiple Intelligence* to the Process of Teaching and Learning

Professor Barrie Bennett

Teaching for me implies designing environments that impact learning. And, by learning I include all dimensions, such as academic, social, ethical, and thinking etc. As an advance organizer for the reader of this article, keep in mind that I am not arguing for a best way of teaching or of learning. I simply want to argue the value of Howard Gardner's work on Multiple Intelligence (MI) as a useful patch in the boundary free quilt-work of teaching and learning.

Before I start, I realize that educators/researchers exist who do not support Gardner's work… such as John Hattie. And, I understand their 'take' on MI…that MI does not directly have a measurable effect size on student academic learning. And they are right. And in the same breath, somewhat naïve. (If I upset them a bit they are more likely to read on…even if I'm wrong.)

In a recent chapter I was asked to write for the *Wiley Handbook of Teaching and Learning* (Hall et al., 2019) titled '*What Effect Size Does Not Tell Us'*, I respectfully critique Hattie's use of effect size research. Note that my Ph.D., was a meta-analysis so I'm familiar with the concept of 'effect size'. Effect size, or the power of an innovation to impact a change, is the statistic employed in a meta-analysis. I have explained effect size to eleven and twelve year olds…and they get it. As a practical example, a chain saw has more power to reduce the size of a plank of wood than sandpaper. In terms of the 'effect' of taking off wood, the chain saw wins; however, what if the effect we are looking for is a 'smooth finish'? Then sandpaper wins. In education, Mind Maps are more powerful to organize Information and to aid memory than wait time in questioning. But what if the issue is 'safety' in the classroom. Then providing time to think before having to answer a question would win…especially if we also provided a chance to discuss with a partner before responding publically. You can see how easily we can misuse 'effect size'.

So, now you have an idea of why I am arguing for a better grasp or positioning of Multiple Intelligence and to argue why I value Gardner's work in rethinking what we mean by 'intelligence'.

I often share, when asked about the best way to teach, that you will most likely find Ponce de Leon's fountain of youth at about the same time you find the best way to teach. I do not know the best way to teach. Tangentially, just like artists can be great artists and not use 'red', teachers can be great teachers and not put students into groups…or use the thinking behind Multiple Intelligence. Of course, artists may be even greater painters if they did include red in their palette. And ditto with teachers in terms of adding structuring groups effectively into their Instructional repertoire and also attending to the ideas supporting Multiple Intelligence in teacher decision making.

Of course, in the final analysis, as a professional teacher, you have to ask yourself whether or not MI should be on your teacher 'palette'. And tangentially, should you be able to explain, if a parent or student asks, why or why not?

In this brief article, I will also argue that 'teaching effectively' should be considered as an additional intelligence…an intelligence that equally respects all intelligences. Additionally, I will position the inquiry into the multiple ways of being intelligent re Garner's work into the delightfully complex process of teaching and learning. I will start by creating a space of conceptual discomfort by arguing that you will struggle to answer 'all' three questions below. You will most likely get the first question.

1. What is meant by the concept 'fact'?
2. What is meant by the concept 'concept'?
3. What is the relationship between facts and concepts?

To balance my arrogance (of saying you can't answer those three questions) with a wee bit of humility, I was asked by a Bachelor of Education student back in 1984, while I was just finishing my Ph.D., for the meaning of 'concept'. Keep in mind that I was teaching Bruner's Concept Attainment strategy at the time. I started to talk, stammered and realized I had no idea. So I said, *"This is embarrassing. I've been using that word for years and I'm not sure how to define 'concept'. And come to think of it, now I'm now not sure what is meant by fact. Next class we will all find out."* I called Bruce Joyce. His answer is at the end of the next paragraph

In 1954 Herbert Blumer wrote that we can classify concepts into two types: (1) definitive…..those we do not argue about (e.g., truck, rainbow, cow, proper fraction, chemical change, tornado) and (2) sensitizing…..those concepts we will argue about…..concepts that no one person owns as 'the' definition. Examples would be love, motivation, critical thinking, democracy, and intelligence. So, you can see from Blumer's perspective that no one-person owns

the definition of intelligence. This 'not owning' is delightful in that it opens the door to indefinitely explore the concept of intelligence; much like the concept 'love'. (And here is the answer re 'concept'. By Jerome Bruner argues that a concept must have a label, a definition, and at least two or more examples with the same critical or essential attributes. Can you see why 'most' proper nouns are not concepts (e.g., Dublin, Toronto, France, José, and Maria). Is Australia a concept? How much would you bet that you know for sure? Valentines Day and Catholic are concepts. So some proper nouns are concepts. Multiple Intelligence is a concept; Gardner is working to shift MI from a sensitizing concept to a more definitive concept. The bottom line is that MI is still a theory.

The missing think in the above paragraph is that I've seldom (actually never) found anyone that can explain what is meant by a concept, a fact and the relationship between concepts and facts. (*Feel free to insert opinion or a question in place of fact*.) Of course, you should step back and consider whether or not it matters whether or not you understand 'concept' 'fact' and their 'relationship. That said, is it possible to make a statement or ask a question in the absence of concepts? Answer, "No". Concepts are the building blocks of language (of facts, questions, statements, etc.)

I agree that the above paragraph is boring and one you should keep by your bed to assist with falling asleep. But, beware 'the coma'. Some who've read it have never recovered

I'll now shift to positioning the concept of 'multiple intelligence' into the delightfully complex process of teaching and learning; this next part of my argument for teaching being an additional intelligence. First, I'll switch the idea of intelligence into the idea of 'teaching expertise'. The earlier determination of intelligence (g) was a number, *"Her intelligence score is 126."* That said, David Perkins and Robert Sternberg (professors at Harvard) report that this general intelligence number is a poor predictor of expert behavior. Perkins' argues that expertise depends on four factors: (1) a wide range of experience and knowledge in multiple domains where one collects patterns; (2) constant reflection to create and connect patterns; and (3) a large repertoire of methods to respond to those patterns. So, we can start to sense that focusing on 'multiple intelligences' connects to having a wide range of experiences in multiple domains.

In terms of 'teaching', an expert teacher makes wise decisions about powerful ways to engage students in learning. And concomitantly, students have diverse ways in which to approach learning. From my 47 years of teaching experience, expert teachers understand the interactive/integrative nature of instructional methods and how to select those methods from an extensive repertoire of methods that most effectively meet the existing demands of the classroom…of their students. Perhaps more importantly, they have an ever increasing number of 'lenses' that guide their thinking related to what methods to select and how to integrate them to maximize student learning. Multiple intelligence is one of many lenses that guide teacher thinking and action. Below I illustrate how I classify Multiple Intelligence.

Experts will understand that certain methods are less complex and less powerful than other methods. Key here is that 'less complex and less powerful' does NOT mean they are less important. We can label the least complex and powerful methods as instructional skills. And, although they are the least powerful they are key to implementing the more complex methods that I will label instructional tactics (mid-complexity) and strategies (the most complex).

Note: the above classification of 'skills', 'tactics' and 'strategies' plays out in other areas as well. For example, when building a house, the skills of hammering, sawing, measuring are key to enacting the tactics of constructing and framing the foundation that collectively 'skills' and 'tactics' are key to enacting the blueprint (the strategy). So in education, the skills might be framing questions, using wait time, responding to an incorrect response, suspending judgment, discussing the object and purpose of the lesson. Tactics might be Think Pair Share, Venn diagrams, Place Mat, Examining Both Sides of an Argument (EBS), Ranking Ladder, and Time Lines. Strategies might be Group Investigation, Mind Maps, Concept Maps, and Academic Controversy. Strategies are more complex, have steps or phases and are usually developed from theories of learning. For example, Concept Attainment is based on Information processing theory and Jigsaw on social theory and Mind Mapping on memory work from brain research.

So where does Multiple Intelligence fit? 'Above I have classified instruction into three categories: skills, tactics, and strategies…all are concepts we can enact. Two more categories 'sandwich' those three categories. The first is 'instructional concepts'. Those are concepts we cannot actually directly 'do' or 'enact'. Examples are 'safety', 'success', 'interest', 'accountability', 'meaningful' etc. You would not say, "Oh, look how that teacher safeties."

Safety occurs because you provide time for students to think and share with a partner before sharing with the class. By letting them know you will be randomly calling on them to share their partners thinking, you also enact accountability and active participation (two additional concepts).

The other side of the 'sandwich' is 'instructional organizers'. This category refers to those bodies of research or inquiry that provide the wisdom to make the wisest decisions about what skills, tactics, and strategies to select to maximize learning. Research on autism, the human brain, language acquisition, dyslexia, students at risk, gifted students, taxonomies of thinking, and multiple intelligence are all examples. A lot of researchers spend their career inquiring into these areas that provide key information on how to design learning environments for all students to effectively differentiate our instruction. Gardner would be an example of an intense inquiry into intelligence.

In summary, the key piece to remember, from my experience is that teachers do not 'directly do' multiple intelligence any more than they would 'directly do' brain research. Organizers are not 'strategies' they are guides to wisdom for action. Collectively, that concept, skill, tactic, strategy, organizer interface is key to teaching as an intelligence.

Researchers looking to determine an effect size or impact of organizers such as MI on student learning are somewhat naïve. One would not research the effect of hammers on cutting wood; hammers are not designed to 'cut wood'. Why research something when it was not designed to do what you incorrectly think it should do? If you understand research, that naivety represents a severe problem with validity. This is where Hattie gets caught.

If you want to construct a research project on Multiple Intelligence in education, then look at the impact literatures such as Multiple intelligence, Autism and Brain Research etc., have on teachers' conceptual flexibility (the work of Francis Fuller in the 1960s) and teachers willingness to work to develop an ever-increasing repertoire of instructional methods to meet the diverse needs of a diverse population of learners. (*If you want to discuss this further, please email me at bbennett@oise.utoronto.ca.)*

Notices & Information

As you are aware the October 2020 sessions for the delivery of the *Instructional Leadership Programme* were postponed due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.

In addition, it has been decided to **defer the date of commencement for Cohort 15**.

Cohort 15 is now scheduled to commence in October 2021

Please check our website for regular updates and information, Thank you.

Dates for the Diary

Instructional Leadership Programme March 2021	
Cohort 13 Session 2	*Monday 1st to Wednesday 3rd March 2021*
Cohort 12 Session 4	*Wednesday 3rd to Friday 5th March 2021*
Cohort 14 Session 2	*Monday 8th to Wednesday 10th March 2021*
IL Senior & Middle Leaders Conference - 14th June 2021	

**** Please note the above dates maybe subject to change**

Cluster Meetings

Please see below dates for the Learner Voice Cluster Meetings

Cluster 1 – Friday 11th December 2020
Cluster 2 – Monday 14th December 2020
Cluster 3 – Monday 7th December 2020
Cluster 4 – Thursday 17th December 2020

Due to Covid-19, the Cluster meetings will be held online.
Details and links to the meetings will issue to all participants registered.

Webinar

A Webinar for all Participating Schools of the Learner Voice Project is scheduled for Tuesday 19th January 2021

Supported by Dr. Paula Flynn, Assistant Professor, School of Inclusive and Special Education, Dublin City University (DCU) Institute of Education

Recent Publications

- Giannakaki, S., Flynn, P., Hayes, N., Fitzsimons, S., (1st May, 2019). Teachers' beliefs about education and children's voice practices in the island of Ireland Belfast: SCoTENs
- Flynn, P. (2018) Marginalised youth speak back through research: Empowerment and transformation of educational experience. In: Bourke R., Loveridge J. (eds) *Radical Collegiality through Student Voice.* Springer, Singapore
- Flynn, P (2017) The Learner Voice Report. Embedding student voices in education discourse: Curricular co-construction and development, Dublin: NCCA

Please check our website for regular updates and information, Thank you.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP programme

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