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Journal of the
Irish Learning Support Association

LEARN

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The views expressed in the articles do not necessarily reflect those of ILSA.

Editorial

ILSA works to provide a service to Support Teachers who find themselves on the coalface, and interacting with students who may have a variety of learning and other issues including mental health issues and anxieties. The Editorial in LEARN (2016) by our esteemed previous Editor Jean Johnston, treated this topic extensively.

The mental health issues have not gone away. This fact is reflected in the two first articles in this, the 2017 issue of LEARN. The desire to be the best teachers we can possibly be permeates the remaining articles, be their themes driven 'top down' by policy, or 'bottom up' by practice, or even by an amalgamation of both policy and practice.

Helen Byrne's article addresses mindfulness in schools and lauds the DES for including mindfulness in the new wellbeing initiative for students and teachers.

Helen sets out the overarching benefits of mindfulness for children and young people such as improved focus, heightened awareness, emotional and psychological maturity and resilience, improved behaviour and academic engagements, and lower stress and anxiety. She makes the case for mindfulness to be embodied in teachers. She kindly provides a recommended reading list for developing mindfulness in children and young people.

Mental health is the theme of Patsy McCaughey's article. Patsy sets out the sense of fear, uncertainty and unease that many teachers feel around mental health programmes and their feeling of being ill-equipped to cope with student distress. The previous editorial of LEARN (2016) mentions the lack of specific details in the Department of Education and Skills (DES) new wellbeing initiative for students and teachers; it does not provide details on how to develop or promote resilience, optimism, self-esteem, help-seeking behaviour and other preventative factors in post-primary schools.

Patsy's article on whole-school positive mental health argues for promoting teacher well-being, pro-social behaviour, pupil engagement and academic learning. High on specifics, this article fills in the lacunae in the DES initiative and shows how, working within school structures, one can develop the capacity of all major stakeholders, those working directly with the students as well as the students themselves. He identifies four areas for implementing a programme of whole school positive mental health and shows clearly how to do so through awareness raising, efficient communication, capacity building and creation of a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Improvement in teaching practice and supporting learning for all is the theme of the O'Murchu, Russell and Bennett article on the Instructional Leadership Programme. They explore how their work contributes to empowering teachers to make a difference for each student especially those at risk of not learning. They set down the key principles and features of the programme that support inclusive learning, inclusive practice and its position within the current

educational landscape. The Programme recognises the complexity associated with learning, teaching and assessment which honours and inspires teachers to be consciously skilled. Individual and collective collaborative practice is key. The Programme is concerned with inclusive teaching in a changing complementary educational landscape, which can be top down (policy driven) and bottom up (practice driven). The work of these writers reminds and supports teachers and school leaders that all students have the ability to learn and to engage in powerful learning experiences.

This idea is taken up in the moving article by O'Halloran & Jennings. The Centre for Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity (CSENID) St Angela's College, Sligo and Music Generation Sligo (MGS) describe their collaborative and strategic partnership to research perspectives and best practice on Special Educational Needs (SEN). Researchers and Professionals in both bodies investigated how MGS tutors included pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in music classes through the use of a differentiated music programme. *The Con Tutti Discovering Music Programme* was developed to increase participation of pupils with autism in music programmes delivered by MGS and to promote quality music education in the lives of pupils with autism. The authors review of the literature makes clear that there is no evidence that innate understanding and response to music is different for children with ASD than their peers and that some research indicates that children with ASD have demonstrated particular musical sensitivity and a perceptual preference for music.

The authors also mention pupils with ASD who have extraordinary musical talents and outline the benefits and challenges that music learning brings to the student with ASD. Their knowledge serendipitously echoes the "consciously skilled" theme of the previous article "pedagogical understanding aligns with instructional organisers as those associated with student behaviour and cognitive development so we can match, for example, what we know about a student with autism and what we know about autism in general with pedagogical responses anchored in deeper professional understandings than might otherwise be the case" (p.5). The positive outcomes have the power to provide lesson accessibility and reward for pupils with ASD. Change driven by practice indeed!

Concern for emotional wellbeing and intellectual development and achievement through play is central to the article by Ring & O'Sullivan. The authors suggest that convincing all parents of the role of play in their children's development through the early years of school represents a route to increased educational opportunity for these children through the development of higher-order cognitive, social and emotional skills. The researchers speak of the transformative power of supporting parent capacity to provide play opportunities for children. The authors cite policy driven change through emphasis on play by DES early years education focused inspection (EYEI) and Aistear which reassure parents on the value of play for child cognitive, social and emotional development.

The article on the Primary Language Curriculum in the context of inclusive education by Ó Breacháin & Drudy describes evidence-based teaching

approaches that promote language development for all children and teaching approaches advocated for children with Special Educational Needs and complex needs. It also briefly describes the evaluation of language skills.

The final article in this issue is written by myself as the creator of TEST2*r*. This is a scientifically developed early screening instrument designed to identify 5 & 6 year old children who may experience literacy difficulties in their school careers. The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020 and other DES documents have exhorted teachers to make assessment part of teaching and learning. When teachers assess children it is important that the assessment instrument they use does what it is supposed to do. In other words it must be a valid assessment tool. Children may perform poorly for a variety of reasons. There are numerous theories to explain these difficulties. Teachers need to use a broad-based assessment instrument which spreads the net widely and can assess the many reasons why children may be less than perfect in their performance. It is better still if the children are assessed on an instrument which is normed on the schools' target population. TEST2*r* does just that. It is developed from wide research into multiple theories of literacy acquisition difficulties, is driven by DES policy and is born out of the practice of hundreds of teachers who gave their time and expertise to help develop this Irish normed early screening and diagnostic tool.

The article provides test administrators with an overview of points on how to administer and score the tasks of TEST2*r*. The Manual and scorebooklet for TEST2*r* are already highly specified for that purpose and should be followed exactly.

The landscape of educational support provision is in the process of radical and dramatic change under the terms of the New Model. There is a widespread feeling of disquiet about the New Model which takes many forms. Teachers have expressed their fears about a possible reduction in support for children with SEN. It is useful to set out these fears in the hope that they can be addressed or assuaged over time by DES action, communication and assurance. The expressed anxieties are:

i. Principal teachers or the individual tasked with the allocation of resources in school may not have sufficient knowledge of SEN to make correct decisions.

ii. Who in the DES will be over-seeing the allocation of resources and will these individuals have sufficient knowledge of various conditions to make informed decisions?

iii. There is disquiet among rural teachers especially, about the role of local pressure and influence on teachers and principals who are human after all. "This happens in rural communities".

iv. A number of teachers have expressed their disquiet about the administration of the new model. They feel that solid, specified structures should be put in place and procedures clearly laid down in school policy before any process of resource allocation is initiated.

v.   There is a widespread concern about streaming in testing and assessment. There is also concern about how to address the learning needs and sometimes the specialist knowledge required for the remediation of certain conditions.

vi.   There is uncertainty among teachers as they feel that there has not been enough communication between various stakeholders.

vii. There is alarm among teachers who have been told that children who have disabilities that fall into the "complex needs" category will, in most cases, be in the HSE system before school entry, or will be on a waiting list for a HSE Children Disability Team. They feel this may not be the case.

viii. Teachers are told that assessments are not needed..... so who confirms the needs of the child? How will teachers learn of the specific teaching needs of the child without a detailed, informative report?

ix.   Other worries relate to when children's difficulties are identified. New parents and parents who are not well informed may be unable to recognise their children's difficulties as they may lack a gauge against which they can measure their child's performance. For example, they may be unaware that their child is performing below the appropriate level for language, or for gross/fine motor performance. Parents are not in the privileged position of the teacher who can compare a child's performance against the hundreds of children they have taught in their careers. The first time that alarm bells may be sounded is when the child starts school. Some concerned teachers specify that this is the case for children with ASD and Dyspraxia.

x.   A related issue is, if these needs are recognised by the school, will the child get appropriate teaching time without assessment. As one teacher put it "to date teacher reports have not been accepted when recommending support for a child. We are not considered professional"!

xi.   Children may be referred to their local clinic for investigation of a certain condition. In some clinics children are provided with therapy in the absence of a diagnosis. e.g. for motor difficulties or Dyspraxia. Without a diagnosis or specific information to the parent or school, how can targeted teaching time be provided for this student?

xii. Other disquiet relates to the role of the already stretched National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) who are to help plan programmes suitable for children with SEN. Teachers are worried about this supportive role and how NEPS can get round to all SEN needs in schools particularly where the school has no allocated NEPS psychologist.

xiii. Other worries are more general in nature about the perceived liaison difficulty between health and education and consequently the short-fall between need and provision for the child with SEN.

It is a well recognised fact that times of transition are the times of greatest anxiety. The two year transition period for the New Model is a time when we

have an opportunity to assess how it is working and to document incidents, cases and structures where further scaffolding or supports could be put in place to provide a better service to our children with SEN.

Teachers who are on the coalface, day to day, often do not have time to access research. They may not stand in the crosscurrent of academic ideas or other perspectives in education. Therefore, LEARN as a journal is dedicated to the interests of our readers. The articles in this 39th volume of LEARN treat a variety of subjects, but all have the common purpose of supporting students who have additional learning needs. ILSA would like to thank this year's contributors to LEARN for their support of our mission in promoting cooperation between those concerned with Learning Support and of enhancing the quality of service of Learning Support Teachers.

PAULINE COGAN
Editor of *Learn*
August 2017

Mindfulness in Schools – A Tentative Welcome

Helen Byrne

Introduction:
I welcome the Department of Education's new wellbeing initiative for students and teachers. As a mindfulness practitioner, teacher and teacher trainer, I particularly welcome the inclusion of mindfulness as part of this initiative. There is now a huge amount of research in the adult field and a growing body of evidence in the area of child and adolescent psychology regarding the benefits of mindfulness (Burke, C., 2010; Harnett, P.S. and Dawe, S., 2012). Just as with adults, the development of mindfulness has many potential benefits for children and young people: it can assist them in developing self-awareness and emotional and psychological maturity and resilience, a greater capacity for concentration, better sleep and overall health, and it can help in reducing anxiety and low mood.

This happens because developing mindfulness helps us:

- To become familiar with the workings of our mind, including the ways we may either try to avoid or else become completely consumed by difficulties;

- To notice when we are getting caught in old habits of mind that re-activate downward mood spirals or ratchet up anxiety levels;

- To explore ways of releasing ourselves from those old habits and different ways of relating to challenges:

- To notice small beauties and pleasures in the world around us instead of living in our heads;

- To be kinder to ourselves instead of wishing things were different all the time, or driving ourselves to meet impossible goals;

- To accept ourselves as we are, rather than getting caught up in harsh self-criticism and self-judgement.

One of the interesting things is that, in accepting ourselves as we are and in noticing either how hard we strive or maybe how we sometimes give up very easily, we actually do better at most tasks, because we see more clearly what needs to happen and we are more focused and less likely to become overwhelmed.

Mindfulness involves being present in the moment and responding to whatever arises with an attitude of compassion. Teaching mindfulness operates on these two levels:

1. teaching children and young people to be more aware of what is going on in them and around them *as is happening*

2. teaching them to approach their own experience and that of others in a kinder way.

This deliberate cultivation of attitudes of kindness, consideration and care can be a challenge, but with the understanding that kindness is attitudinal rather than emotional, and therefore can be a choice we make, rather than a feeling we have, most people, including the young people in our care, will choose the kind option. Many teachers who have implemented mindfulness into their classrooms notice a significant decrease in student behaviour referrals with a corresponding increase in academic engagement.

One of the ways that mindfulness achieves these results is that it helps us to create a space between our thoughts and our actions. Poor impulse control is what lands many of our students in trouble. When they can learn to pause, to insert a gap before taking action, students gradually develop their capacity to be a little more reflective and a little less reactive. This allows them to engage more fully with the task in hand, and to take their lives a little less personally and a little more seriously! Mindfulness helps us all to wake up to our lives as they are unfolding in each moment, not at some point in the future, but right now.

Just as with adults, students find that mindfulness gives them a greater sense of freedom. When they discover that they no longer need to act on every thought racing through their minds the sense of personal agency arising from this greater self awareness is deeply empowering. At the end of a 7-week course in mindfulness I taught in a Dublin Community School a 1st year boy with ADHD reported that the 3rd year boys who always slag him were 'stunned' when he didn't react to their slagging. "I never realised I had a choice," he said. "I always felt like I *had to* get mad and shout at them. This time I realised I didn't have to do that any more and they couldn't *make* me angry, it was up to me, and it felt great."

14 schools in Baltimore, USA have engaged the services of The Holistic Life Foundation (http://hlfinc.org/) to embed mindfulness training and practices into school life, including as part of the detention programme. One of their schools, the Coleman School, now uses mindfulness programs instead of detention and has witnessed dramatic results: for over two years, the rate of suspensions at the school has plummeted. (http://www.upworthy.com/this-school-replaced-detention-with-meditation-the-results-are-stunning).

In developing more positive attitudes towards themselves, students are less dependent on measuring their performance against others in order to feel good or bad about themselves and they are more able to acknowledge their own effort in attempting work. This is very good news for Learning Support teachers. We often see our students' self-esteem plummet, particularly as they get older and begin to compare themselves unfavourably with other students who may not have the level of difficulty they have. Seeing themselves and each other more compassionately leads to greater co-operation and less competition, freeing them up to do their best with less anxiety about outcome.

Professor Katherine Weare says of the neuroscience of mindfulness "these changes are not all in the imagination of the meditator. Brain imaging studies on adults are showing that mindfulness meditation reliably and profoundly alters the structure and function of the brain to improve the quality of both thought and feeling (Weare, April 2012).

Mindfulness is a muscle and so it requires exercising. How it is viewed in the school from the top down and the bottom up is very important. It must be seen as a valuable tool in enabling both staff and young people to flourish, to experience agency in their lives, to learn to speak more honestly, and to listen carefully and respectfully to others. When seen and valued in this way it can only benefit our whole school communities enormously. If it is seen as just another item to be forced into an already packed curriculum it is unlikely to be effective, as students and teachers will be much less likely to practice it and then they will miss its life-changing benefits.

Precisely because of the results of the research it is important to manage expectations. Mindfulness is not a placebo and is not necessarily right for everyone at every time. Some people, adults and children, may not be in the right place to receive mindfulness training. In any properly run mindfulness course there is an orientation process to determine that this is the right course and the right time for each potential participant to engage in mindfulness training. For example, a person in the grip of severe depression may easily be overwhelmed by the demands of sitting still with his or her own experience, in silence. So whoever is teaching the programme needs to allow children to opt out and the school needs to be able to provide alternative activities for them. It is useful if there can be at least two adults in the room, the one teaching mindfulness and another who can support those who don't wish to be engaged in mindfulness training.

I teach in a post primary school and I offer short mindfulness practices to many of my Learning Support students. Most of them take to it very easily and they really seem to 'get' it, but for one or two the invitation to come to the body can be too much. The body is not always a safe place and if a child has been sexually abused, for example, maybe that's the last place they can feel safe and grounded.

I teach one boy who has already been introduced to mindfulness in a non-school context and he is convinced that he hates mindfulness. I do not try to persuade him otherwise. I am hopeful that some of what the rest of us are doing is sinking in and that he doesn't have to be seen to be participating to benefit. While I am teaching the other children some mindfulness approaches to manage their anxiety levels, I ensure that he has a book to read or other work of an enjoyable nature to do, as it is important that he doesn't feel that he is being punished for opting out of mindfulness.

Mindfulness is sometimes seen as merely a technique for improving concentration, or for helping children and teenagers to relax. This is to do it a disservice. Mindfulness is about helping us to be with our experience in a different way. Many of the teenagers I work with are highly stressed – by exams, by school, by family situations, they may have difficulties with friends or with girlfriends, they may be experiencing doubts about their sexuality and so on. If they identify with only a small part of their capacity they can get stuck in a place of feeling worthless, or helpless. This can lead to high levels of anxiety and sometimes depression.

How wonderful for young people to be given mindfulness as an instrument for developing self-awareness, self-knowledge and the space and capacity to express what they are learning about themselves. How wonderful to realise that we have a far greater capacity than we may think, or than has been modelled to us by our elders, our parents and our teachers. Because of course stressed teachers and parents teach young people to be good at being stressed! While a certain amount of stress is good – without it we couldn't get out of bed in the morning, study, sit an exam, balance a budget, plan a holiday etc. – it is the perception that this situation is more than we can handle that overwhelms us. Mindfulness can really help to puncture this sense of being overwhelmed and connect in with and build on the resources we already have for managing whatever life throws at us.

Dr. Jill Suttie in Mindful magazine (March 2017) says: "… teacher stress is not only a problem for teachers; it can also be a problem for students. Stressed teachers impact students' stress levels through a contagion effect, and since student stress impacts learning, this can hurt the quality of education in the classroom. Students learn better in a climate that is more emotionally positive and less stressful, and past studies have shown a clear link between positive emotional classroom climates and academic achievement." (Hamre and Pianta September/October, 2005).

Put on your own oxygen mask first:
Jamie Bristow, Director of The Mindfulness Initiative https://www.mindful.org/author/jamie-bristow/) states:

"If teachers are to guide practices for children, it's very important that they embody mindfulness themselves and have high levels of personal motivation. This takes time and effort. Mindfulness training cannot be delivered from a script, much like you wouldn't ask a teacher who can't swim to teach a swimming class from a textbook."

Teachers need first to develop their own daily practice of mindfulness and to experience the benefits of mindfulness in their own lives, and not just in the classroom. The best way for teachers to begin this process is to participate in an 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course, the 'gold standard' in the modern mindfulness movement. Developed by Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in 1979, this course was initially designed for clinical populations (http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/). Over the last 38 years it has been adapted for use with different populations – those with addictions (Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention), with prisoners, for cancer sufferers, people with OCD, psoriasis sufferers, for people with recurrent depression (Mindfulness-Base Cognitive Therapy - MBCT), for those with Generalised Anxiety Disorder, and in its original form, MBSR, with the general public, to help them deal with the ordinary stresses and strains of everyday life.

Over the last 20 years or so it has been adapted in various ways for use with children and young people, at home and in school. People like Susan Kaiser-Greenland (http://www.susankaisergreenland.com), Dr. Amy Salzman (www.stillquietplace.com), the MindUp programme, which is the brainchild of Goldie Hawn's Foundation (https://mindup.org/thehawnfoundation/), the Mindfulness in Schools Project in the UK, which has developed the dot B and Paws B programmes for post primary and primary students, and the Bibo programme currently being developed here in Ireland. Bibo stands for 'Breathe in, breathe out (https://www.bibo.life/).

Steps for Introducing Mindfulness in School
In April's 'Mindful' (2017) magazine Jamie Bristow suggests the following steps, to which I have added my own observations in square brackets [] and italics:

1. First find a local qualified mindfulness teacher to hold a taster session for teachers and staff, so that they can get a sense for what it's all about.

    [*I suggest including all staff here, including administration staff, Special Needs Assistants, caretakers etc.. The Board of Management should be invited. It is essential to link with the Home School Community Liaison Teacher and hold an information & taster session for parents too. Buy-in from parents, who are major stakeholders in the school, is vital.*]

2. Then, for those who are interested, we'd suggest providing an eight-week course for teachers derived from MBSR or MBCT or another evidence-based programme.

   [*This could be provided in school, immediately after school on one evening a week for 8 weeks. MBSR/MBCT are the gold standard in Mindfulness-Based courses. They are of 8 week's duration, 2-2 ½ hours per week, with an additional full day's practice between weeks 5 and 7. The course should be run by a properly trained mindfulness teacher with a long-standing personal practice. See the Good Practice Guidelines for Mindfulness Teachers, at http://www.mindfulnessteachersnetworkireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Irish-Teacher-Guidelines-April-20-2015-1-1-1.pdf*]

3. Once a cohort of teachers has taken a mindfulness course themselves, support them to continue with personal practice by organizing half an hour once a week for sitting together – and/or provide access to apps and other support materials.

   [*I suggest that part of 1-2 lunch hours a week would be designated 'mindful lunchtimes' and taken in a separate room. The self-selected staff group could eat their lunch mindfully in silence together and follow it with a sitting practice. Having 2 lunchtimes would facilitate those who may be on lunchtime supervision one day allowing them to join their colleagues on the second day.*]

2. Then, if they are inspired to do so, they could undertake teacher training, to learn how to introduce mindfulness to children. Most mindfulness teacher training programs require a minimum of six months [*some require two years*] of dedicated daily practice.

   [*There is nothing to stop teachers who have a genuine mindfulness practice themselves sharing aspects of mindfulness with their students without teacher training. But to truly honour the work and to ensure that participants benefit, it is important that teachers receive teacher training before introducing mindfulness programmes to the classroom.*]

Training staff has many benefits in its own right, and research is currently taking place into the impact of teachers' own mindfulness practice on general teaching quality.

Then teachers need to weave mindfulness into the existing curriculum. Finding ways to bring mindfulness into the curriculum means to teach in a mindful way. A lot of the mindfulness programmes that are being taught at the moment are being delivered by outsiders who parachute into the school and then disappear again. That's ok for now but it's not sustainable in the long term. The best way

to teach children mindfulness is to demonstrate it ourselves, by embodying it. If we relate to the children and young people in our care in non-reactive, truthful and kind ways, they will learn to do the same far more effectively than by being taught *about* those ways of relating.

Whole-School Approach:
A school mindfulness programme needs to supported and championed by senior staff, ideally the Principal and Deputy Principal, and if possible the Board of Management. If only one person is behind it, it will collapse when he/she leaves or runs out of steam. A half-hearted implementation will be ineffective. Schools can make a joint decision to become more mindful and create some special environments, for example a prayer room can double as a 'quiet' room, to support the students in undertaking formal practice.

In the UK the Wellcome Trust is investing £8million into researching mindfulness in schools. One of its early findings is that mindfulness in schools is less effective when it happens in fits and starts and is not consistent. It works best when it is taken on by the whole school community, where a sizeable number of staff participates in an 8-week MBSR course, where a significant group of teachers undertakes proper teacher training; where a system of 'mentoring' is set up, perhaps utilizing an outside mindfulness 'consultant' to support the staff; and where the whole school moves towards becoming a more mindful school community.

Of course, as in every walk of life, there will be those among the staff for whom mindfulness has little resonance and that has to be ok. People cannot be forced to embrace something which has little meaning for them. However, it is important that those people who cannot completely come on board would agree to supporting the efforts of their colleagues as best they can. It is also important that the effectiveness evidence that has been gathered is shared with all staff. For many years our education system has placed the emphasis on amassing knowledge of the outside world. What mindfulness offers us is the opportunity to gain knowledge of our internal worlds and of how we relate to our own experience and how we relate with others.

The capacity to develop emotional and psychological resilience, openness and curiosity about ourselves and our experience, empathy with others, self-awareness and the ability to focus are innate to all of us as human beings. We may have spent a great deal of our lives practicing NOT coping very well, and mindfulness challenges us to begin practising a different way of being, which is to live in a way that allows us more freedom and space, more choice and, ultimately, more happiness. These capacities are increasingly believed to be just as important to our human development as knowledge about how that world works. The psychologist Daniel Goleman, for instance, is a great exponent of research (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9yRmpcXKjY) showing that

self-regulation capabilities are the biggest single determinant of life outcomes. Surely these are the skills and tools that we need to be offering to our students to help them navigate the world successfully and happily.

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*Growing Up Mindful (*Sounds True, 2016) Co-Author, with Mitch Abblett

The Mindfulness and Teen Depression Workbook (New Harbinger, 2015)

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HELEN BYRNE

Helen Byrne, B.A., H.Dip. Ed., Dip. Psych., M.A. (with Distinction) in Mindfulness-Based Approaches to Social Care, Health and Education from Bangor University. She trained as a Family Therapist in the 1990s and has worked in education as a Learning Support teacher at post-primary level, as a Visiting Teacher to the Traveller Community and in the community and voluntary sectors in Ireland and the U.K. She co-founded The Mindfulness Centre with her colleague Josephine Lynch in 2008 (www.mindfulness.ie). They run workshops and courses for the public, for organisations, including schools, and they offer mindfulness teacher training. They are also the core teachers on the UCD M.Sc. in Mindfulness-based Interventions.

Whole-school positive mental-health implementation: from aspiration to reality.

Patsy McCaughey

"I know how to hug, does that mean I have to start to teach 'hugging' … or whatever you are doing?", John asked jokingly. He is a young, conscientious, caring teacher who is open to new ideas, but talk of a mental-health programme within the school scared him. It wasn't that he was against it; in fact he was very supportive, but his response summed up a lot of concerns for teachers. "What will this require of me? Is this not someone else's job? I haven't been trained in this and what if I get it wrong – surely this is serious?" Put bluntly: "what if someone dies because of me?"

At the *Creating a Listening School* conference (September 2016), Tony Bates, founder of Jigsaw, quoted Victor Hugo in stating that "nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come". Asking people to support building up students' positive mental-health and resilience is like pushing an open door and yet, despite all this positivity, principals, deputy principals and teachers continue to express a sense of fear. Many professionals working with the students within the school seem to be fearful of what is involved, unsure of what is required of them, and ultimately uncertain about how to start. The overwhelming sense is that they are ill-equipped to cope with the distress being experienced among the student body.

A recent Twitter debate on EdChatIE by Irish teachers (20th March 2017) on mental-health in schools illustrated this fear with some contributors wondering if all this was "mission creep", and expressing worry that they would have to "fix issues way beyond our remit" There was also a sense that "slotting [mental-health education] in as a subject" was not a lasting solution, but rather to "make every child feel cared for everyday" and building "consistent, caring relationships & a safe environment, not amateur psychology class". Anecdotally, these views would seem to be widespread. Yet, there is a willingness among teachers and schools. The awareness that the students' emotional wellbeing needs to be addressed would appear not to have been matched by an available set of practical and implementable measures. Instead of clear pathways to begin the process to implement change, broad aspirational 'actions' have been provided. Who would not consider developing safe environments that foster a

sense of belonging and connectedness (Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools, 2013) to be something teachers and educators wish to achieve?

There is evidence to say that a whole-school approach to student well-being not only enhances mental-health and resilience but also promotes pro-social behaviour, pupil engagement, and academic learning (Roffey, 2015; Noble, McGrath, Roffey & Rowling, 2008). These are all outcomes a school should wish for, but how can we create a whole-school approach that does not add to the sense of fear?

1. Outline of programme.

What a whole-school and embedded approach to the provision of positive mental-health seeks to do is to work with the existing structures within the school and develop the capacity of those working directly with the students as well as with the students themselves. Rather than providing box-ticking interventions that often leave no lasting change (apart, perhaps, from another flag), embedding positive mental-health requires sustained engagement with all the stake-holders within the school and its wider community. Mental-health starts with the staff who are the people who will implement any changes. 80% of teachers in the UK report experiencing stress, anxiety and depression at work, with over 50% feeling 'severely' stressed (NUT, 2013). Reducing this teacher stress and providing opportunities for staff to model good behaviour is a key part of a whole-school programme. Involving all the stake-holders, along with the students will ensure a higher chance of long-term and sustainable effects (Browne, Gafni, Roberts, Byrne & Majumdar, 2004).

Another important point is that many of the positive strategies and interventions needed for a healthy school are probably already in existence or being employed by teachers, staff, parents and students. The aim of any programme is to simply add, develop and expand the coordination of those areas in which the positive work is already taking place, not to add another 'whole-school planning initiative'. Cluster-groups being formed between key people in schools to share resources, mindfulness classes being provided for staff and students, talks from outside speakers on how to identify and manage anxiety within the student body and the staff, and many other initiatives are taking place across the country. Much of the best and most innovative initiatives are being performed by the same teachers and management who express such fear and worry.

The process of implementing any programme is broken into four areas. The first focuses on raising the awareness of, and sharing information relating to, issues of positive mental-health. The second focuses on ensuring that this information is successfully received. Establishing efficient and clear channels of communication between and among the stake-holders involved in mental-health provision is vital to the success of any programme. Inefficient

communication is often at the heart of poor mental-health and, like in any environment, the lack of communication can engender a sense of isolation, frustration and a reluctance to change. The third focus is on building the capacity and sense of efficacy within the student, staff and parent bodies. Through raising the awareness of issues, delivering this information through clear and efficient channels of communication, each group will develop increased capacity to identify and manage issues of mental-health. This capacity will therefore lead to the fourth focus- increasing a sense of empowerment, involvement and a sense of belonging.

2. Awareness raising and information sharing.

There are several ways in which awareness raising can help promote mental-health. To establish a shared understanding of the language around positive mental-health and emotional well-being, interventions that increase knowledge about identifying and managing anxiety must be delivered. There are a many resources available such as Aware's *Beat the Blues* campaign that introduces fourth or fifth years to the 'Coping Triangle', or the *Friends for Life- Youth* programme for first to third year, The .B Mindfulness for Schools Programme, or the Irish programme *On My Own Two Feet* to name just four, provide students with an accessible language to identify and manage anxiety.

A key component of awareness raising is imparting a good knowledge of the supports that exist for young people. The support structures within each school can differ (the Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, Class Tutor, Form Teacher etc.), so providing a clear understanding of where the student can go to is vital to allow the student access the appropriate supports when they are required. Providing clear information on the graduated pathways, processes and systems of support for students can assist in a more efficient support structure (and ultimately reduce the long queues outside the Guidance Counsellor's office). Additionally, parental understanding of the roles of each staff-member within the student support team allows issues of emotional well-being to be dealt with expediently by the appropriately trained person in the school. Staff can also provide an outline to and awareness in parents of typical periods of anxiety and stress within the school year. Sometimes, simply knowing who and when to contact, and what is the most appropriate method of communication can reduce anxiety among students, parents and staff.

This is not limited to the supports within the school. Repeated, clear, and conspicuous sharing of information about external services will also ensure that the students have a good knowledge of what is available to them. Jigsaw provides a self-referring adolescent mental-health service almost nationwide, while the ISPCC, Aware, Pieta House, Bodywhys and many others provide different types of supports. Knowing where and how to access supports should be not only for students, but a good knowledge of the most appropriate

supports available to adolescent and adults should be known by teachers and parents also.

Not all forms of awareness raising need to be directly about mental-health. Other forms of information sharing that can have an indirect impact on positive mental-health include guidance on the appropriate use of social media or the anti-bullying inputs available within the SPHE curriculum, for example. These can provide an understanding of where threats to positive mental-health exist and also allow for an open discussion to be had on the ways to best manage these threats.

Research indicates that interventions that raise awareness of the diversity within the school can also improve the overall mental-health of the school. The National Healthy School Programme in the UK (2006) found that a key aspect of mental-health and well-being within the school is the practice around diversity and the challenging of stigma or prejudice around ability, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Raising awareness and 'normalising' additional needs such as ASD, ADHD, DCD, Dyslexia, Dyscalulia, Downs Syndrome, etc. can reduce stigma that might exist within the student.

Providing information and building capacity in this area is also important for staff. Research in England has found that programmes to reduce any stigma around mental-health were limited by teacher anxiety who believed they lacked the necessary expertise and were worried that it was beyond their remit (Cooke, King & Greenwood, 2016). Providing information about additional needs, offering CPD and training that focuses on teaching methodologies best suited to students with additional needs, and making explicit the boundaries that all students and staff should maintain at all times, can alleviate potential teacher anxiety. Simple strategies such as utilising annual awareness days or using books and films can facilitate safe spaces within which to constructively discuss issues that might otherwise cause fear and uncertainty for students, staff and parents.

3. Efficient Communication

For information to be successfully imparted, there is a need to ensure clear and efficient channels of communication are developed. In a recent survey of a Dublin school 78% of teachers considered communication as the single biggest obstacle for positive mental-health. There are a number of ways that effective communication between the students, staff and parents can impact positively on mental-health within the school. For the school to successfully impart and disseminate the correct information, and thus raise awareness about any area of mental-health, it is important that this is communicating clearly. Some schools have emails, phone numbers, notice-boards, and texts to relay information between staff and to parents. Making the channels of communication

transparent, consistent and clear will reduce anxiety, promote information sharing, help build capacity, and develop a feeling of being heard.

As outlined above, fear is a core barrier to mental-health provision. Management's ability to communicate the vision and programme in a way that brings people with them is vital to its success. Management, as the change-makers, need to articulate the "knowledge of the why of change, namely moral purpose" (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005). Communicating how to build capacity, recognising the process of change and pre-empting the challenges that it will create, and encouraging others within the school to take ownership of the process, needs to be done clearly and consistently if it is to allay the fears of the staff and ensure its successful delivery.

It is also important for all stake-holders to articulate and communicate the importance of positive student mental-health. Management need to be seen to provide Fullan's "moral purpose" and to consistently place it at the centre of its work. Noble *et al.* (2008) consider that whole-school approach to student well-being needs to place the "learner at the heart of educational endeavours" and this includes what "people communicate and how they do it". The expectation is to get to the point with student well-being that, as Jimmy O'Connell, Guidance Counsellor at St Peter's, Dunboyne at the Creating a Listening School Conference described, you are tripping over it.

4. Capacity-building

As the school raises awareness and increases the level of information relating to mental-health being shared through clear and efficient channels of communication, there should be an increase in the understanding of how best to deal with mental-health issues. Capacity-building and self-efficacy in relation to identifying and managing mental-health issues is what any programme should hope to achieve. Across the three groups – students, parents and staff – the development of capacity through a greater level of understanding and awareness that is communicated efficiently should create a mutually beneficial dynamic. Capacity building is defined as any strategy that increases the "collective effectiveness of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning" and that this should occur at the individual level and also at the collective level (Fullan, 2006).

The first area in which capacity must be built is knowledge and competencies. While the My World Survey (2012) found that 70% of Irish adolescents are coping well, have positive self-esteem, and display positive help-seeking behaviours, that still leaves almost 30% having experienced a series of mental disorders in the past year (WHO, 2017). Interventions within the school should aim to build capacity within students, parents and teachers so as to identify issues of mental-health, and to manage those issues through strategies or help-

seeking behaviours. Providing opportunities to gain skills throughout the six years of post-primary school by way of external talks and programmes (e.g. Aware's Beat the Blues; Friends Youth Programme; *On My Own Two Feet*; mentoring; mindfulness) will develop the skills with which to manage the issues of anxiety and stress or the confidence to access the appropriate supports, thus reducing any sense of isolation.

Capacity building in this area is not limited to students. Research has found that secondary school teachers felt that they lacked the confidence and the necessary skills to implement a mental-health programme (Askell-Williams, Lawson, & Murray-Harvey, 2007). For teachers and parents, being able to identify symptoms and signs of poor mental-health in themselves, and in the student, can allow for the most appropriate supports to be put in place. People learn best through doing, experiencing and reflecting. By consistently developing a shared-language around positive mental-health and providing opportunities to engage with it, the capacity to utilise these skills, when an issue arises, is built.

Those who are driving the change in culture within the school must also build capacity in resources. Paying lip-service to the idea of embedding positive mental-health within the school, but at the same time not being prepared to change timetables, incorporate new initiatives, or provide time for additional training and CPD will stymie any programme and any sense of ownership. Management must build motivation by developing capacity within the staff and through tangible changes in the approach to mental-health for the entire school community.

Capacity building is also not limited to within-school activities. Seeking to access additional supports and opportunities to develop "lateral capacity building" (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005) can also assist in embedding mental-health within the school. One way to do this is through the use of cluster-groups. Those who are driving this programme, the "change-leaders" (Fullan, 2006) from schools in the same geographical locality can share resources, share successful strategies and discuss common obstacles, coordinate events, and discuss issues of mental-health pertinent to the community. Using a multi-domain approach (i.e. family/ individual, school and community), has been found to make mental-health provision more successful (Browne, et al., 2004). It is important to recognise the position of the school within its locality and how issues of mental-health can impact on the whole community. Another important way to develop lateral capacity is through the engagement of external agencies. There are many charities which offer school-based initiatives and there are other governmental supports available through National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS), National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).

5. Belonging and Empowerment

The final area of focus which will develop an embedded culture of positive mental-health and emotional well-being is in a sense of belonging and empowerment. Frederickson (2009) showed that the promotion of positive feelings such as feeling calm, being heard and supported actually can increase creativity and problem-solving skills. Research indicates that a sense of marginalisation and exclusion is a risk factor for adolescents and for adults, and conversely, that student involvement and participation boosts positive mental-health (Engels, Aelterman, Van Petegem, & Schepens, 2004). Building social capital is achieved by allowing each group to feel heard and develop a sense of belonging, participation, trust and reciprocity (Mental-health Foundation, 2010). To develop this sense of belonging and empowerment, there needs to be a belief in the ability to change and shape the collective identity. Creating a sense of belonging is a social action that engenders a sense of empowerment through participation. This process requires an active participation of the individuals in the programme in gaining understanding, knowledge and skills that will enable them to have a sense of control over their lives (Barry, 2007).

Developing belonging, connectivity and empowerment can be achieved a number of ways. The first is through the use of questionnaires, seeking out the opinions of the stake-holders and, vitally, publishing the findings. It is important that there is sense of successfully shaping change through the answers provided and making sure it is not simply a gesture. Utilising the psychological knowledge and services available through NEPS can offer a way by which the appropriate questionnaire and measurement tools can be accessed.

The school council is often an under-utilised mechanism for developing a sense of belonging for students. Recognising its importance and celebrating its functions and input to the school is a simple mechanism for raising student involvement. Similarly, with the parent-bodies, providing regular updates and communication about events and mental-health interventions can help manage concerns and fears. Initiatives that seek to draw the parent body (particularly the fathers) into a greater level of positive involvement will also serve to increase a sense of belonging.

Whole-school activities such as awareness weeks (Diversity Week, Friendship Week, Positive Mental-Health Week) that celebrate all aspects of school life can also encourage vertical interaction throughout the year groups and the staff. Any initiatives that positively involve the whole school or that create positive connections between year groups, such as peer mentoring, can develop the sense of togetherness and belonging.

6. Challenges:

Successfully embedding positive mental-health in a school is not possible within a single year; experiences shared at the *Creating a Listening School* conference placed the process at between three and four years. The four areas detailed above take time and are interrelated and dependent on each other. To establish a school where the stake-holders feel empowered requires collaborative and participatory practice (Barry, 2007). Putting in sufficient resources and building capacity requires planning and consultation, and each school's needs are unique. Consultation is key to understanding what the school requires and providing opportunities for involvement. Fullan (2006) considers motivation as being what it all boils down to. Any attempts to circumvent the process can cause motivation to dissipate. Spending the first year listening, consulting on the specific needs of the school, building the moral purpose, and working on multi-domain approaches will ensure motivation is maintained.

There is a multitude of interventions and programmes available, a week does not go by without at least two emails arriving offering inputs to improve the school's mental-health. Knowing which one is worthwhile can be daunting and confusing. It is important to remember that there are plenty of excellent programmes that do not require any money to be spent. Utilising the knowledge and experience of those around (e.g. NEPS, management in other schools, Jigsaw) can be very helpful in this regard. It is important to take time to research the different well-being programmes that exist and assess, as best one can, which aspects would be suitable for each school community.

To move forward successfully, recognising the good work that already exists within the school and listening to the students, parents, and staff who are doing very positive work is a good place to begin. Take time to ask the Johns in your staffroom what they have been doing well, what they need to improve, and involve them in making the changes. This programme seeks to embed a culture of positive mental-health within schools through four different but interrelated areas. By raising awareness of the issues around positive mental-health for all stake-holders within the school through clear and effective channels of communication, and providing opportunities to build the capacity of students, parents and staff through knowledge, competencies and resources, the school can encourage participation, empowerment and belonging. John was anxious and may not quite have understood what positive mental-health was all about, but what he did show was a willingness to reach-out and embrace the idea. The desire and recognition of the importance of positive mental-health exists. Ensuring that that willingness is translated into an embedded culture based on awareness raising, effective communication, capacity building, and developing a sense of empowerment and belonging is what this programme seeks to provide.

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PATSY McCAUGHEY

Patsy McCaughey is the Coordinator of Mental-Health Provision in a
secondary school in Dublin. He has taught Classical Studies, History, CSPE,
and SPHE and authored a Junior Certificate history text book entitled
Discovering History. As an educational psychologist, the emotional well-
being and mental-health of the individual is the central tenet of his practice.
Further information is available at www.epoche.ie

The Instructional Leadership Programme and its contribution to supporting learning for all

Finn Ó Murchú, Joan Russell and Barrie Bennett

1.0 Introduction

I found the programme excellent and it has really helped my teaching. I think I was probably doing fine in the classroom but I think I will be better in the future. It's good to try to keep improving. (Teacher participant in Instructional Leadership Programme, 2017)

As we write this paper we must keep in mind that a range of policy-related initiatives are converging on the concept of what is understood by 'learning for all' in the context of ongoing improvements in practice; *Looking At Our Schools* and *Circular 0014/2017* (DES, 2016, 2017), *Cosán* (Teaching Council, 2016) and the *PISA Report on Students' Well-Being* (OECD, 2017). Such attention 'to try to keep improving' is due in part to the good work already being undertaken in schools and to the growing awareness of just how central the teacher is to the quality of learning and the learning experience that each student encounters on a daily basis. Currently 99.2% of our primary- and post-primary aged students attending mainstream schools (DES, 2016). Combined with an ever increasing understanding of the diversity of student profile in all classrooms, including special schools, we contend that now, more than ever, we need to understand how best we can support teachers to support each other to support our students.

The purpose of this paper, from a practical perspective, is to illustrate how the Instructional Leadership Programme in Ireland (2006-present) supports professional learning for inclusive learning as captured in the phrase 'supporting learning for all'. While we are aware that our project continues to grow and attract increasing attention (for example, DES school inspection reports and *Irish Times, A teaching revolution that makes the classroom come alive 12/1/16*) we know it is not perfect and our purpose here is not to advocate for our programme. Equally we don't seek here or in our work to advocate a certain way of teaching or leading, but rather to explore how our work contributes to empowering teachers to make a difference for each and every student in their classroom. In particular, as is evident from the first encounters with Barrie, **our focus is on attending to students who are at risk**

of not learning. On any given day for any number of reasons a student or whole class may be at risk of not learning and therefore the centrality of the teacher once more comes into sharp focus.

The programme we are engaged in was initially guided by the contribution of Barrie who as Associate Professor of Education in Ontario accepted Finn's invite, then as Senior Inspector for Special Education, to come to Ireland in 2007 and work with schools. Joan, in her then role as Education Officer with Cork Education and Training Board (ETB) (then Vocational Education Committee) was central in establishing the process in 2008 and continues to be central in establishing and embellishing the programme across post-primary and further education sectors, with the assistance of a small steering committee. Currently this voluntary not-for-profit programme has been accessed by over 25% of all post-primary schools and 15% within the further education sector[1].

The first section of our paper will be devoted to the key principles and features of the project that support inclusive learning. The second section looks at key features of the programme with an eye to inclusive practices. The third section focuses on how the programme is positioned within the context of the current educational landscape. We conclude with a review of our progress to date and the work that remains to be re-visited or undertaken with specific reference to supporting learning for all.

2.0 Programme principles that support learning for all

From the outset of our efforts we *did not* nor *do not* seek to 'programme' or 'instruct' individuals or schools in 'what to do'. Our intent is to provide a repertoire of evidence-based actions that can be drawn upon in a context-sensitive, appropriately collaborative and ultimately intentional manner. We seek to professionalise teachers and leaders by asking for a renewed focus on teaching and leadership that attends to all learners and indeed all teachers. We concur with Thomas Good (2010) "Teachers are professionals and need information about practice that they can use to make decisions; they do not need to be told what to do" (p. 56).

Our programme is guided by Barrie's near 40 years involvement in teaching and the insights accrued in merging curriculum, assessment, instruction, knowledge of how students learn and theories of change and systemic change (Bennett, 2010). Such insights pay attention to the categorisation of instruction such as the range of concepts, skills, tactics, strategies and organisers that can be used to frame what we do and why we do it. Such categorisation in turn allows for a more nuanced understanding of the artful and scientific complexity of instruction. This key feature will be addressed in more detail in the next section.

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[1] Exploratory discussions are underway with the primary school sector. Within the Youthreach sector 19% of centres are involved in the programme

We believe that inclusive classrooms have a better chance of occurring when teachers perceive themselves as members of inclusive staffrooms and therefore we believe in the potential that is collaborative practice. Furthermore, we believe in the interdependence between collaborative practice and change wisdom. From that perspective we are not in competition with any other professional learning opportunities that teachers can access and indeed we see our success when our programme is aligned with other actions, either explicitly or otherwise. Our focus is on how best to ensure learning for all and as teachers we recognise the importance of judicious lowering of ego so as to heighten and enhance learning.

We also contend that too often it seems there can be a lot of attention given to what needs to change and not enough to understanding change itself. Our work draws heavily on Concerned-Based Adoption Models (CBAM; Hall & Hord, 2014) where we recognise that change is a process requiring a sensitive metric that measures progress in a timely and intelligent manner. In understanding change we acknowledge the work of others in this regard. Patterson, Purkey and Parker (1986) discussed the importance of systems in their text *Productive School Systems for a Non-rational World*. They noted that school staffs might 'go it alone' but argue that the power to make a difference is at the level of the organization.

We, as authors, clearly agree that the classroom is where the 'rubber hits the road'; however, involving a few teachers in a few schools or all teachers in a few schools is not 'the finish line'. The 'finish line' is an ideal that implies all students learning in an endless and collective effort to get all teachers in all schools to continually improve instructionally. That implies educators in the system creating a learning organization that can deal with the relentless press of change, and make realistic efforts to achieve, the oft said but not so oft achieved goal of learning for all. Currently, our take on 'change' and by implication inclusive learning, is that 'educators in positions of influence' (with few exceptions) collectively prefer to write, research, and talk about the pieces of change rather than *enact* the 'puzzle' of change systemically over time … hence the lack of research on systems successfully sustaining change over time. Finland (Salhberg, 2011) and the Durham Board of Education (Bennett & Green, 1995) would be examples of those exceptions. In addition such work on systemic approaches rarely focuses on the actual systemic implementation of instructional innovations over time, nor the quality of instruction during that time.

In the next section we will describe the programme in more detail and explore the instructional innovations associated with our programme over time. This strikes at the very heart at what we do and whether what we do actually makes a difference for learners.

3.0 Some Key Features of the Instructional Leadership Programme that support inclusive learning

The first key feature of the programme is that it is generic and not aligned to a particular subject nor indeed category of need. It is founded on the concept that 'good teaching is good teaching' where 'what is essential for some is good for all' (Hargreaves and Braun, 2012). By this we understand the need to have in-depth knowledge of identified needs/strengths and the values that lead to how such knowledge is sought (if at all) and used once accessed (to teach or to explain away the need to teach). However, acquisition of knowledge, even with the best of intentions, is not enough and we in turn as professionals are charged with having an in-depth knowledge of our own pedagogical role so as to support the learning we wish to take place.

A second key feature links the transformative dimension for our students with that of our teachers. The programme promotes the involvement of the school principal with two staff members who over time, as a small community of practice (Wenger, 2014), are willing to share their learning with colleagues and build capacity in their own context. The workshops involve the Skill Training Model (Joyce and Showers, 1980, 1982, 2002). This constructivist model involves the presentation of theory/information, demonstration, practice and feedback in the workshop. The workshop process is 2½ days twice a year for two years. Teachers return to their schools and initially work in their classrooms, and with their colleagues who attended the workshops. The topics for the workshops focus on a variety of instructional methods that the research directly, or indirectly, shows as impacting student academic and social learning.

Importantly, teachers are asked not to go back and 'do' workshops or 'training' for staff in their school until they 'played' with the innovations sufficiently that they felt they could share the innovation and effect it was having in their classroom. One common mistake principals make is to have teachers come back to school and have those teachers present to staff before those teachers have had the opportunity to 'play' with the innovation. Having teachers go back and work at the innovation first (with the support of the principal) allows other staff members to see examples of student work and to have their questions answered. Increased use of team teaching has been used to good effect in supporting such practice, though we still need to do more on building in-school capacity and in sharing students' work within schools and upon return to workshops organised by the programme. Table 1 lists some of the methods used in the workshops and the key is how teachers select from a variety of skills, tactics and strategies to invoke instructional concepts and organisers. (For a more in-depth understanding of the topics see Bennett and Rolheiser 2000).

Table 1. Partial List of Workshop Topics from Work on Instructional Intelligence*

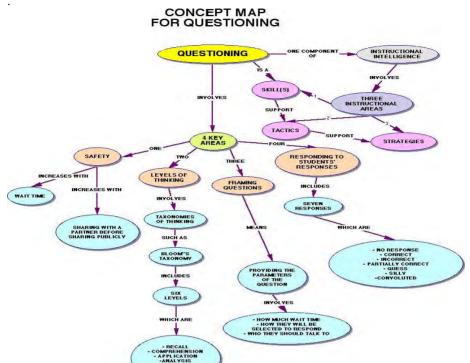| |
|---|
| *Instructional Strategies* (most complex and most powerful): Concept Attainment, Concept Formation, Jigsaw, Academic Controversy, Team Analysis, 5 Basic Elements, Teams Games Tournaments, Mind Maps and Concept Maps |
| *Instructional Tactics* (mid complexity and moderate power): Place Mat, Think Pair Share, Four Corners, 2/3 Person Interview, Snow Ball, One Stray Rest Stay, Ranking Ladders, Fish Bone diagrams, Venn diagrams |
| *Instructional Skills* (least complex and least powerful): Framing Questions, Wait Time, Responding to Students Responses, Sharing the Objective and Purpose of the Lesson, Providing Feedback |
| *Instructional Concepts* (can't do but must be invoked): inclusion, safety, hope, social justice, resilience, trust, team teaching, accountability, checking for understanding, guided and independent practice, modelling, assessment for learning |
| *Instructional organizers*: Bloom's Taxonomy, Multiple Intelligence, Differentiation, Brain Research, Research on Autism etc. |
| *Classroom Management*: Six genres of skills to respond to student escalation |
| *Note that the above are integrated and often occur at the same time or are stacked one after another – much more complex than it appears |

An additional feature of the programme that aligns with inclusive teaching is a recognition of the complexity associated with learning, teaching and assessment. A complexity that both honours and inspires teachers. Fig 1 below is an example of this complexity as revealed in 'as simple' an act as questioning. Firstly we assume content knowledge and knowledge of students is a given. We progress to four key aspects, safety, levels of thinking, framing the question and responding to responses. As the diagram outlines there a range of factors that need to be kept to the fore if questioning is to achieve the goal intended. That said, the diagram could be extended to include the impact of teacher's responses to each effort, vis-à-vis classroom management, sense of belonging and how this influences the safety element of the lesson. Nor indeed is attention given to the diversity of learners and learning styles in the class, i.e. students who prefer not to answer in public, are uncomfortable putting their hand up, students who need more/less wait time or the myriad of other factors such as the relationship with the teacher and the relationships between students in class. Once the complexity is honoured so too is the profession and this in turn enhances the desire to improve in a manner that may be 'essential for some but good for all' (Hargreaves & Braun, 2012).

Fig 1.
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**CONCEPT MAP
FOR QUESTIONING**

Bennett, 2016.

As can be seen an emerging focus on being 'consciously skilled, rather than merely accidently adequate' (Bennett, 2010, p. 87) is a central feature of the programme. Reflection on, in and of practice is supported by the acquisition of a language that allows for both reflection and subsequent action, crucially at a collective as well as individual level. Where deemed of use, students can be encouraged to reflect upon their actions and how they enable or hinder their own and their peers' learning. Such reflection and (re)action can be undertaken at an individual or collective level (i.e. more than one teacher, subject department, whole-class level or across an entire year group or school). Please note we understand collaboration to be determined by the learning experiences and learning outcomes for students and not simply measured by teachers' perceptions of the experience. Such a pedagogical understanding aligns with instructional organisers as those associated with student behaviour and cognitive development so that we can match, for example, what we know about a student with autism and what we know about autism in general with pedagogical responses anchored in deeper professional understandings than might otherwise be the case.

Linked to such a focus is an awareness of where one is at collectively and individually in implementing change. This is not an insignificant point when, as teachers, we struggle sometimes to see if we are making any progress and on occasion may not be able to see any developmental pathway forming for either student or ourselves. Table 2 below outlines the role Concerned-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) can play in supporting our understanding of ourselves within the context of how good we are at using new methods and how or when they impact on our learners (Ó Murchú, 2014). This is an important point when we consider confidence levels and concepts associated with identity among mainstream teachers. Such teachers often require support in addressing the emotional as well as practical demands in seeking to be an inclusive teacher (TALIS, OECD, 2013; Griffin & Shevlin, 2011). In short, CBAM offers a level of comfort for teachers where they can map there progress in a more nuanced and practical way.

Table 2. CBAM Levels of Use (this also applies to students)

Non-Use:	the teacher is not using the innovation
Orientation:	the teacher attends a workshop to understand, practice the innovation
Preparation: classroom	the teacher is planning to transfer the innovation to their
Mechanical:	the teacher starts using it, but the implementation is not effective
Routine:	the teacher is now a smooth user of the innovation
Refined:	the teacher is now a sophisticated user of the innovation
Integration:	the teacher is merging multiple innovations
Refocusing:	the teacher is searching for new ideas
(Note: little to no benefit on student learning until Routine and higher levels of use are achieved.)	

CBAM/Levels of use is presented and discussed with the participants on the programme and assists participants in positioning their efforts within the process of educational change and engage in wiser evaluation (both self and collective) along the continuum of improvement.

In the next section we will explore how the programme supports current actions associated with the promotion of inclusive learning in our schools and classrooms.

4.0 The current educational landscape.

In the past year a number of policy decisions have been undertaken which range from a tangential to central role for inclusive teaching. Of note is the new resource model which focuses much more on the school's enrolment profile (DES Circular 0014/2017, 2017) rather than on identified individuals. Weightings in determining such allocation see the movement towards inclusion as a broader term than special needs and where the focus is nuanced in attending to learning needs over singular interpretations (and funding) as based on disability. Such action brings us back to understandings around students at risk of not learning and schools now having greater autonomy in responding to such needs. But schools need pedagogy as well as autonomy.

Although policy is designed to inspire practice we should remember that policy in itself is often inspired by practice. The Instructional Leadership Programme offers a range of options for schools to consider and, most importantly keeps, the spotlight on pedagogy and how it might be implemented and assessed within classrooms and within/across schools. It gives practical choices and expression around actions that honour concepts such as inclusion and social justice. This complementarity aligns with DES Inclusion Guidelines from 2007 and most recently *Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools* (2017). With such input by the Instructional Leadership Programme teachers can make learning happen within frameworks, and associated concepts like those listed above, and as represented by Junior Cycle Reform including Key Skills across levels 3, 2 and hopefully, soon to come, level 1.

Another key development in Ireland recently has seen the renewed focus on *School Self Evaluation 2016-2020 and Looking at our Schools (LAOS) 2016.* These very useful policy publications chime with our understanding of the need for teachers to 'contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise' (LAOS, p. 17). Of note is that such commentary was observed by Chief Inspector Harold Hislop when he gave the keynote address at the first National Conference of the Instructional Leadership Programme in 2012. Even then the Instructional Leadership programme was seen to be significant in promoting collaborative practice among teachers and school leaders. In the more recent document attention is also given to efforts that 'empower staff to take on and carry out leadership roles (p. 17). That point is significant given the growing importance of leadership as required by many 'SEN coordinators' in our schools and the potential that lies in 'leading from the middle'[2]. In this regard our programme offers space to consider not only pedagogy but how best to lead capacity building among staff in a manner that draws on change wisdom and allows for sustained development within schools. That said, we should not

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[2] See Hargreaves, A. & Braun, H. (2012). *Leading for all: Final report of the review of the development of essential for some, good for all: Ontario's strategy for special education reform devised by the Council of Directors of Education.* Toronto, Ontario

forget that inclusion-generated actions like team teaching offer a reciprocal or win-win opportunity for our programme to be rolled out within schools. To paraphrase Hegarty's (2007) wry observation, special education often comes to the rescue of other initiatives. In turn we can see how CBAM, as outlined previously, can add weight, validity and common sense to how best and when best to evaluate our actions.

That point is also not lost on another key emerging development in Ireland, *Cosán: Framework for Teachers' Learning* (Teaching Council, 2016).

> The Teaching Council is clarifying that teachers' learning is an ongoing process. Teachers know that they need to continue to learn as professionals so that they can empower students to be the best learners they can be (p. 3).

Our programme is designed to do likewise and is indebted to Teaching Council Director Tomás Ó Ruairc for his steadfast support. Joan is a past member of the Teaching Council and Barrie has presented at FÉILTE and Tomás has spoken at, and frequently about, our programme. We also note the collaborative dimension to Cosán, and in keeping with Cosán's stated goals, we see the need for teachers to have a sense of belonging not only to their school but also to their profession. Where such exists the promotion of belonging among students and especially those on the fringes has a better chance of being addressed and a better chance of succeeding.

5.0 Conclusion
Collectively we have worked hard to apply/enact key ideas related to promoting inclusive learning in our schools and classrooms. Our project continues to evolve and we are aware of the many challenges we face including, for example, the challenge of transfer from the workshops to the school so as to build capacity within schools, extending our understanding of how best to engage with primary colleagues and the ongoing efforts to adopt a more interconnected understanding of our work across the educational landscape. Teachers with Joan's support have established networks, both formal and informal, across the country and we continue to work with the DES inspectorate and support services most notably the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT), but also the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and Special Education Support Service (SESS). Our programme is self-financing, has a waiting list for new schools to be involved and is recognised internationally as witnessed by our guests from Australia, Canada, England and Germany at our recent international conference.

In the context of promoting learning for all, we like to think that our work reminds and supports teachers and school leaders that all students have the ability to learn and the right to experience powerful learning experiences when in our class. Our shared value system in the promotion of learning for all is

reinforced and reinvigorated by meeting with each other and by our shared focus and hope to become more instructionally intelligent. As stated at the beginning 'it's good to try to keep improving' and honour Ken Robinson's (2016) observation that 'life is your talents realised'.

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AUTHORS

Finn Ó Murchú is a former senior inspector for special education and is now Head of School at Mary Immaculate College (Post-Primary) in Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

Joan Russell is Project Officer for Instructional Practices, Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI)

Barrie Bennett is Professor Emeritus of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), Canada.

Further details of the Instructional Leadership Programme are available at www.instructionalleadership.ie

'Look at us together' Including pupils with autism in music classes

Ailbhe O'Halloran and Fiona Jennings

Introduction

The Centre for Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity (CSENID), St. Angela's College, Sligo and Music Generation Sligo (MGS) formed a collaborative and strategic partnership in February 2015 in order to research perspectives and best practice on Special Education Needs (SEN). The partnership was formed specifically with regard to the delivery of music programmes for pupils with SEN engaging in MGS programmes. This article focusses on the data gathered during the first year of this partnership which involved investigating how MGS tutors included pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in music classes through the use of a differentiated music programme. The *Con Tutti Discovering Music Programme* was developed to increase participation of pupils with autism in music programmes delivered by MGS tutors and to promote quality music education in the lives of pupils with autism. *Con Tutti* is a musical term meaning all together (Brown, 1987).

Review of the literature

ASD is defined by differences in social and communication interactions together with repetitive and restricted behaviours including sensory sensitivities (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). There is no evidence that innate understanding and response to music is different for children with ASD than their peers (Welch and Ockelford, 2009). Some research indicates that children with ASD have demonstrated particular musical sensitivity and a perceptual preference for music (Thaut, 1988) which facilitates increased attention to musical stimuli (Kim, Wigram and Gold, 2008). Research has evidenced that pupils with ASD can have extraordinary musical talents such as, superior identification and labelling of pitch (Bonnel, Mottron, Peretz, Trudel, Gallum and Bonnel, 2003), enhanced sensitivity for pitch direction (Heaton 2005) and heightened detection of changes in pitch contours (Heaton, Hudry, Ludlow and Hill, 2008).

Learning music may have potential benefits for the child with ASD. Music can be an important channel for the gathering of information and communication for children with ASD (Ockelford, 2013). It can facilitate increased social interactions in school and the community despite the social skill challenges of

individuals with ASD (Shore, 2003). Music can provide individuals with ASD an opportunity to develop a special interest and a skill in which they can excel (Ockelford, 2013). Although it is accepted that no one approach is suitable for all pupils with ASD, it is possible to identify a range of strategies and approaches which have been useful in music education and it is recognised that all pupils with ASD will benefit from a music education that is systematic and sustained (Welch and Ockelford, 2009). Learning music can be challenging, however, for the individual with ASD due to difficulties relating to sensory sensitivities, understanding abstract concepts, communication, co-operating in a group situation and concentration (Department of Education and Skills/North West Regional Special Educational Needs Partnership (DES/NWRSENP), 2004).

Research Methodology
An exploratory case study approach was employed in two ASD specific classes attached to two primary schools catering for pupils aged five to ten years. The sample participants included three MGS tutors, three class teachers, two researchers from CSENID and the pupils with ASD. This approach facilitated the use of a wide variety of data collection tools (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011) including structured observations, focus groups and reflective journals. Quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft Excel (2013). Qualitative data was analysed using codes that had been identified prior to research (Male, 2016). This analysis enabled interpretation of the data and exploration of the context.

Findings
The findings are presented under the following themes,

- Differentiation
- Structure
- Development of communication and social skills through music

Differentiation
The music tutors recognised the importance of identifying and analysing the individual strengths and needs of the pupils as the basis for planning for differentiation. They implemented the *Con Tutti Discovering Music Programme* and employed differentiated strategies during the lessons to meet individual needs and to respond appropriately to the pupils.

> *Differentiation and catering for all pupils in the class – that's something I think we've done quite well in the last few classes in particular* (Tutor (T) 1).

The tutors reflected on the challenges of matching content to individual needs and of developing the pupils' understanding of abstract concepts and emotions. It was noted that it was best to introduce skills gradually and to use repetition to build these skills.

> *It's ok to repeat, repeat, repeat. You're not under a certain timeframe; you're just catering to their individual needs (T2).*

The tutors utilised a range of strategies and activities. Attention was stimulated through the use of a *Mystery Box* that varied in content from week to week but was consistent in its use. Multisensory approaches were identified as being appropriate. The inclusion of physical activities within sessions ensured pupils were motivated. Two separate activities, one involving a parachute and another with ribbons were particularly engaging for pupils. These activities also developed complementary gross motor skills and social skills. It was recognised, as sessions developed, that the order of the activities was important so that a number of sitting and listening activities did not follow each other as they were particularly difficult for some pupils. Activities that appealed to pupils' sense of humour were popular. The tutors incorporated the pupil voice in the lesson and they were observed adapting lessons to include suggestions for the pupils in the music lesson.

Structure

The tutors identified that the use of structure and visuals contributed to the success of the programme. The physical environment was structured to meet the needs of the music session through a circular seating arrangement. Every music lesson followed a consistent structure (Table 1). The order and content of activities changed from week to week but the constants of: *Welcome* and *Hello Songs, Mystery Box*, and *Goodbye Song* remained.

Table 1: Structure of Sessions.

Structure of lessons
Welcome and Hello songs
Song singing
Mystery box
Instrument/rhythm
Relaxing activity
Goodbye Songs.

One tutor reflected on how the use of music or a sung phrase between activities helped in the transition for the pupils.

The music lessons were clearly structured and were suited to the use of visual strategies. The tutors found the use of schedules helpful in providing the pupils with an understanding of the content being delivered and the progression of the class. Breaking the music lesson into manageable chunks and presenting these in a visual format supported the tutors, as well as the pupils. The tutors used consistent language when referring to the visual schedule, which was supportive and reassuring for the pupils, *let's check the schedule, the schedule says it's time for*. The tutors also used a visual turn-taking rota in conjunction with the visual schedule. This reinforced turn-taking, created independence and was *enjoyable* (and) *empowering for the children* (T1). The tutors used visual supports such as pictures and objects that were aligned with the content of the music lesson. These visual supports were often minimised and replicated in the visual schedule. Abstract language, such as, feelings were also made concrete through the use of visual supports that were created by the tutors for the music lessons. The use of visuals to support verbal input supported the pupils understanding of the content.

Developing communication and social skills through music
The pupils exhibited a range of communication abilities. As a result tutors planned for pupil responses to be given in varying formats. Those who were verbal were encouraged by varying sentence lengths. Concrete choices were given to some, for example, *Which instrument was played?* Visual actions were expected from others, such as, putting body parts on a snowman. In early sessions questions were addressed to the full group which meant that a few pupils tended to dominate. The strategy of using a pupil's name before the question was introduced by tutors to encourage responses from less vocal pupils.

> *They all have different levels in their communication. They're all very different and some need more encouragement than others. Some need to be pulled back and others need to be encouraged (T3).*

The tutors were challenged by the varying communication levels. They adapted their own speech patterns and encouraged the use of consistent vocabulary. Tutors used specific language and reduced sentence length to meet individual communication needs. For some pupils this meant reducing verbal instructions to two word utterance for example '*Henry³, ball'*. For others it meant giving two step instructions for example '*Ian, first put the instruments in the box, then check the schedule'* (T1). The tutors worked together to ensure that consistent language was used across activities. In the early lessons a range of vocabulary was used interchangeably during activities, for example, '*slowly', 'gently', 'quietly'* were all used during an activity focussing on tempo. This was seen to be challenging for the pupils who were being asked to match a word to an activity. Key terms were identified and applied consistently and repeatedly across lessons

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³ All names have been changed

to ensure understanding and generalisation. The development of pupil vocabulary was supported through the matching of the vocabulary to functional actions. It was especially important when teaching abstract concepts, such as, emotions, tempo and pitch.

The tutors also placed an emphasis on encouraging communication by the pupils. The use of the *Hello Song* allowed each pupil to be addressed individually. All pupils appeared to enjoy this moment and understood that a greeting was being made to them. As the *Con Tutti Discovering Music* programme developed the tutors recognised the increasing levels of communication by the pupils. Tutor three reflected on this development on a number of occasions.

> *Brian was much more verbal today and offered a new action for the bumble bee song.*
> *Lots of language being used even by those who are generally quiet.*
> *Kim seemed to be using a lot more language today* (T3).

The pupils with ASD presented with challenges in the area of social skills. The tutors recognised the importance of developing relationships with the pupils. One pupil, Con excluded himself from a music lesson. However, the tutor still included him in the *Hello Song*. Another pupil, Cian excluded himself from nearly all of the lessons up to lesson seven when he joined the group without any hesitation. Lesson eight in one School proved to be a turning point for the tutors and their relationship with the pupils.

> *Children who would never use eye contact were connecting with us as tutors – amazing* (T2).

During initial lessons it was observed that the pupils interacted with the tutors but were not interacting with each other. The lessons provided opportunities for the tutors to model relationships and develop relationships with and between the pupils. The rota system was influential in the development of relationships between the peers; Cian reached out to a peer, Con, who had positioned himself outside of the group with the encouraging words, '*Come and join us Con. It is Josh's turn next*'. The use of the rota system reinforced the importance of turn-taking for the pupils and also taught the pupils to wait, observe and listen to their peers.

> *Even Adam had decked quite quickly one week that he had counted himself down the rota and they're there, so I'm next. He said … 'they're all away and so it's my turn'….He had already scheduled his turn in his head being aware of his peers which is something that I've never seen. It sounds so simple but it's such a huge step (T2).*

Activities chosen by the tutors encouraged the development of social skills. A parachute was used regularly; it reinforced the concept of team work and having fun together for the pupils. Another activity used by the tutors was for the pupils to pass their ribbons to the person on their right, encouraging sharing and communication with the individual next to them. A pupil, Con, commented '*look at us together'* during a turn-taking activity. When appropriate, they created opportunities for pupils to take turns on equipment in pairs. They noticed examples where the pupils turned this into a shared experience.

> *….. Owen with Anna with the chime bars. That was lovely because they were delighted that they shared the chime bars. She sat that side and they were to play it at same time but they decided, 'you play that bit and I'll play this bit'. They worked lovely as a team and they were really pleased about it as well (T1).*

The tutors also noticed a number of examples of the pupils opting to sit or work together collaboratively.

> *Con and Bob were sitting together on one mat this week we went in and that was amazing, first of all to see them sitting together so closely. Children who would normally like to be separate and in their own space were like, we're going to share a mat today. It's a tiny mat and I thought 'how are they going to do this?' but they loved it and Con put his arm around Bob (T2).*

The primary aim of the programme was to teach musical concepts to the pupils, however the tutors observed that the social and communication skills of the pupils also improved.

> *I consider that a lot more peer to peer interaction took place …. we wouldn't really have highly considered that because the children can isolate themselves sometimes. That was a learning curve and to see how they responded after a few weeks and that was great and very rewarding as well (T2).*

Discussion

The dyad of impairments outline specific characteristics of ASD. However it is vital that individual differences are considered when teaching pupils with ASD (Dunlop, Tait, Leask, Glashan, Robinson and Marwick, 2009). Research has identified the number of ways that differentiation can occur in order to make the lesson accessible and rewarding for pupils with ASD (Charman, Pellicano, Peacey, Peacey, Forward and Dockrell, 2011). Differentiation can occur when teachers adapt presentation modes, use visual strategies (Charman et al 2011; Darrow, 2009), vary level of participation of pupils, (Darrow, 2009; Bell, 2008) individualise outputs from pupils, make changes to the environment (Darrow, 2009), explore the musical interests of pupils and focus on strengths and needs (Bell, 2008). The use of specific strategies and methodologies are necessary when working with pupils with ASD (Parsons, Guldberg, MacLeod, Jones,

Prunty and Balfe, 2009). These include a need to plan for the individual, use ASD specific methodologies, structure the environment and use functional approaches to managing behaviour (Iovannone, Dunlap, Huber and Kinkaid, 2003). These may however not be part of the natural teaching personality style of the teacher (Jordan, 2008). The tutors in this research were challenged to adapt their teaching styles and strategies to meet the needs of pupils in ASD specific classrooms.

The tutors developed an awareness of the importance of structure for their music lessons. The environment was structured through the use of a circular seating plan which encourages social skills (Ockelford, 2009). The use of visual supports has been demonstrated to be vital in assisting the understanding and development of skills in pupils with ASD (Krantz and McClannahan, 2010). The tutors used a range of visual supports including, visual schedules, turn-taking rotas, visual cues and behaviour supports. Given the range of abilities in the music class, it was necessary for the tutors to use 'purposive differentiation' (Charman et al, 2011, 23) to increase learning, encourage participation and inclusion. The tutors concretised abstract language and emotions through the use of visuals and functional activities. A spiral approach was necessary to reinforce and build on prior learning. All pupils were enabled to participate in the lesson, achieve success and demonstrate their learning according to ability and communication style.

Pupils with ASD often experience difficulties in understanding abstract concepts, communicating with others and social interaction (DES/NWRSENP, 2004). The tutors observed similar challenges in this study and their responses to the pupils' needs facilitated growth in these areas. They found that there needed to be a greater emphasis on functional activities rather than introducing abstract theories and content. The tutors reflected on the knowledge gained by the pupils during the programme including tempo, song singing, pitch and rhythm (NCCA, 2007). Teachers need to adapt their natural communication style to meet the needs of the pupil (Jordan, 2008) in order that learning can occur. The tutors in this study accomplished this by reducing their sentence length and using a pupil-name-first strategy as appropriate to individual needs. Pupils with ASD may have differing verbal abilities and may face difficulties understanding implicit, ambiguous language (APA, 2013). The tutors became aware of their use of language and the need to modify language and to use visual supports to aid understanding (Hourigan and Hourigan, 2009). Difficulties with social interaction is a key challenge for pupils with ASD (Jones, Baker, English and Lyn-Cook, 2009). Music classes have been demonstrated to promote social interaction with peers and tutors (Simpson and Keen, 2011) and have been described as an ideal setting for pupils with ASD to strengthen their social skills (Hourigan and Hourigan, 2009). A key element in this research was the development of relationships between tutors and pupils and between the pupils themselves. Jones et al (2009) identified the building of relationships as

a key standard in working with individuals with ASD. Welsh and Ockelford (2009) describe how teacher pupil relationships can grow through music. This reflects good practice identified by Charman et al (2011) who describe the strong relationships with pupils as the starting point for their learning and well-being.

Conclusion

The *Con Tutti Discovering Music Programme* benefited the pupils with ASD. It supported the development of their musical, communicative and social skills. This was facilitated through the use of a variety of evidenced based strategies employed by the MGS tutors. Individual needs were accommodated through purposive differentiation.

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AUTHORS

Centre for Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity

The Centre for Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity (CSENID) at St. Angela's College provides quality in-service teacher education and continuing professional development programmes in the area of Special Educational Needs (SEN) for teachers and other professionals in a variety of educational settings since 1995. CSENID has a strong research focus striving to undertake high quality research contributing to the development and enhancement of education policy and practice in the area of SEN, inclusion and diversity both nationally and internationally.

Ailbhe O'Halloran

Ailbhe O'Halloran is a lecturer at CSENID. She is co-ordinator of the Certificate in SEN for SNAs which is outreached in Education Centres throughout the North-West.

Fiona Jennings

Fiona Jennings is a lecturer at the CSENID. She co-ordinates the Post-Graduate Diploma in SEN (Autistic Spectrum Disorders).

Only Four Parents Mentioned 'Play': Implications from a National School Readiness Study in Ireland for Children's Learning in the Early Years of Primary School

Emer Ring and Lisha O'Sullivan

Abstract

This paper is based on a national evaluation of concepts of school readiness commissioned by the government in Ireland. The research adopted a mixed-methods approach comprising face-to-face interviews with pre-school educators (n=9); pre-school managers (n=9); junior infant teachers (n=7) and primary school principals (n=7); telephone interviews with parents (n=30) and an online survey distributed to 500 pre-schools and 500 primary schools, eliciting a response rate of 29.6% and 23.8% respectively. Many similarities emerged between participants' school readiness concepts. However while 97% of pre-school educators and 98% of primary respondents referred to promoting learning through play, only four parents mentioned play. This paper focuses on parents' concepts of school readiness and suggests that engaging with parents in relation to the value of play for children in the early years of primary school represents an underutilised resource in supporting children's learning and development.

Introduction

Internationally the benefits of high quality early years' education continue to be articulated in terms of the social-emotional, cognitive and academic aspects of learning and development for children and the wider benefits for families and society (Schweinart et al., 2005; Heckman, 2013; Melhuish et al., 2015; O'Sullivan and Ring, 2016).

The role of play in supporting children's intellectual achievement and emotional well-being is well-recognised and confirmed in research (Whitebread and O'Sullivan, 2012). Critically, limiting the time allocated to play has been criticised as impacting detrimentally on children's development, which potentially creates 'inequality' of educational opportunity for some children from their first engagement with education (Palmer, 2009; House, 2012). Based on the findings of the research in relation to parents' understanding of

the role of play in children's early years' education, the authors suggest that convincing all parents of the role of play in their children's development through the early years of primary school represents a route to increasing educational opportunity for all children.

Play and School Readiness
A range of studies has examined and identified the factors that influence school readiness and children's school outcomes. According to Ring et al. (2016), these factors include **race** (Duncan and Magnuson, 2005); **socio-economic status** (McMunn et al., 2001; Duncan and Magnuson, 2005;); **gender** (Son et al., 2013); **health** (Janus and Duku, 2007); **family structure** (Ramey and Ramey, 1999; Duncan and Magnuson, 2005) and **parenting** (UCD Geary Institute, 2012). Critically, parenting and the home learning environment have been identified as more important for a child's development than either parental occupation or education (Sylva et al., 2004).

A range of specific features has been linked with a child's school readiness and include initiative, engagement, persistence, enthusiasm, curiosity and co-operativeness (Fantuzzo et al., 2007). An increasing corpus of research indicates that these dispositions can be effectively developed through play (Whitebread et al., 2009; Fisher et al., 2011). Play is intrinsically motivating and allows children to experience control over their learning resulting in deeper levels of engagement and persistence as children are more likely to persist when goals are meaningful and self-chosen (Deci and Ryan, 2008). Play, essentially, creates a natural 'zone of proximal development' enabling children to set their own level of challenge and function at their highest level (Whitebread and O'Sullivan, 2012). Through focusing on 'means' over 'ends', play creates a low risk context for children to try out novel behaviours and combinations, which in turn supports the development of higher-order cognitive, social and emotional skills (Bruner, 1983; Whitebread, 2012). Socially shared processes are particularly important for early learning (Whitebread et al., 2009). When children play co-operatively they have opportunities to articulate their own thoughts and feelings and to practice perspective-taking skills as they develop shared understandings and mutual goals (Whitebread et al., 2009). Critically when children demonstrate initiative, engagement, persistence, enthusiasm, curiosity and co-operativeness they are practicing self-regulation which is now considered a better predictor of academic success than more traditional measures of intelligence (McClelland, et al., 2013; Whitebread et al., 2015). Clearly empowering parents to support and encourage their children's play has the potential to pay dividends in terms of children's immediate and long-term educational outcomes.

Methodology
A rigorous methodological approach was adopted for this research study, incorporating a sequential exploratory model, which facilitated multi-

perspectives and meta-interpretations of the findings (Ring et al., 2016). This paper focuses specifically on the thirty telephone interviews conducted with parents of children attending pre-school. In selecting pre-schools for participation in the study, details of primary schools in Ireland, were obtained from the Department of Education and Skills (N= 4,201) and a stratified random sample of primary schools selected using the stratification criteria in Table 1. below. Having established the stratified random sample, a purposive sampling technique was then applied (Cohen et al., 2007; Gideon, 2012).

Table 1: Stratification Criteria for Sampling of Primary Schools

School	Location	Grouping
1	Urban	Primary school located in an area of socio-economic disadvantage
1	Urban	Irish language medium primary school
1	Urban	Mainstream mixed-gender primary school
1	Urban	Special school for children with disabilities
1	Rural	Mainstream mixed-gender primary school
1	Rural	Mainstream primary school in an Irish language speaking area
1	Rural	Mainstream single-sex primary school

Each participating primary school was invited to provide the names of two feeder pre-schools and fourteen pre-schools were invited to participate in the research, with ten agreeing to participate. Parents of children who were due to commence primary school in the following September were asked to indicate their consent to participate in a telephone interview through an information letter distributed by the pre-schools.

While cognisant of concerns in the literature regarding the 'unnatural nature' of telephone interview conversations (Irvine et al., 2012), telephone interviews are particularly useful in research involving parents in view of the possibility of flexibly scheduling interviews. The semi-structured interview schedule is detailed in Table 2. below.

Table 2. Semi-Structured Telephone Interview Schedule Conducted with Parents

School starting-age
1. At what age do you think children should start school?
2. What effect would a later starting age have on a child's school-readiness?

School-readiness
1. How do you decide whether your child is ready for school?
2. What would be the most important factor?
3. What factor would stop you from sending a child to school?
4. What do you think would be the most important factors for early childhood educators?
5. What do you think would be the most important factors for early childhood teachers?

Expectations about pre-school and starting school
1. What do you expect the Early Years setting to do to help your child be ready for school?
2. Do you expect them to speak to you about your child being ready for school?
3. Is there any way you would like to be more involved?

Getting ready for school at home
1. What could you do to help your child be ready for school at home?

Community
1. Do you think that services and supports in the wider community have a role in preparing children for school? (E.g. parent and toddler groups, libraries, sports facilities, sports clubs, family support services, English language support services?)

Concerns
Are there any areas of concern?

Looking forward
What is your child most looking forward to in school?

Other points
Are there any other points you would like to discuss about school-readiness?

Thank you for your interest and your time.

Data were analysed through the use of Nvivo (QSR International, 2013) software and employed a comparative approach, comprising nine discrete cycles, in which categories were derived from the data through a process of inductive reasoning informed by theories, themes and concepts that emerged from the literature review, as well as additional related themes that were significant to the project's focus of inquiry.

Research Findings
Parents' responses indicated that their concept of school readiness was linked to the children's development of self-care skills; children's social and emotional maturity and the ability of their children to make friends and interact with other children. Parents referred to the importance of children being able to '*go to the toilet themselves, wash their hands', 'hang up their coats', 'open their lunch boxes and manage their school bag'*. All parents expressed concerns in relation to their children's future friendships as encapsulated in the words of one parent, '*the academic side comes after [emotional readiness] … it's more important that the child is secure and has the ability to mingle and make friends … it's down to the emotional maturity of the child'*.

Parents articulated specific concerns about their child starting school in relation to large class sizes, bullying, and the level of teacher care and supervision in the junior infant classroom. Parents also expressed concern about the availability of supports for children with specific health or special educational needs. Generally parents hoped that their child would be '*happy getting along with the other children and not stressed in any way'*. Particular concerns were expressed in relation to times when children were less rigorously supervised. However, parents did appreciate that '*in the best school in the world, children can't be supervised at all times'*. Five parents specifically referred to bullying and according to one parent '*bullying is a big thing … everyone is really conscious of bullying … it affects children and you hope that my child wouldn't be a bully or be bullied'* with one parent noting the importance of children being '*more or less able to stand on their own two feet … they would be able to fight their corner and that kind of thing.'*

Twenty-one of the thirty parents interviewed, mentioned the need for children to have acquired pre-academic skills such as knowing letters, numbers and sounds and being able to hold a pencil and write, before starting school. Parents variously suggested that children should know '*all the letters of the alphabet'*, '*words and numbers'* and '*be able to hold the pen and write'*. One parent believed her child was ready for school because '*she knows her numbers. She can spell her name. She can nearly write her name'*. The focus articulated by parents in relation to prioritising the development of pre-academic skills for children in the early years suggests that parents would benefit greatly from support in understanding the central role of play in supporting children's emotional well-being, self-regulation, gross and fine-motor skills in addition to emergent academic abilities.

Conclusion

The impact of parents' beliefs, attitudes and commitment to education on children's school success is often underestimated by parents themselves (Arnold et al., 2007). Supporting the development of parents' capacity to provide play opportunities for their children at home has the potential to be transformative. Many of the school readiness skills, emphasised by parents such as as managing basic self-care, competence with peers, emotional resilience, the ability to articulate themselves and the capacity to learn independently require self-regulation, which is most effectively nurtured in contexts which are playful (Whitebread, 2013). Additionally children also engage in a range of important emergent literacy and numeracy behaviours when they play (Wolfgang et al., 2003; Nicolopoulou, et al., 2015). Earlier research suggests that when parents perceive play as a learning context, they are more likely to support play in the home (Fisher et al., 2008). In this regard, increased engagement with parents around the role of play in learning can also lead to learning becoming multiply entrenched and reinforced (Fisher et al., 2011.). *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* provides a robust framework for teachers to reassure parents of the value of play for the social, emotional and cognitive aspects of their children's development (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), 2009). In this context also the focus on play by the Department of Education and Skills in its Early-years education focused inspection (EYEI) places play firmly on the agenda. Our responsibility now as educators is to share the value of play for children's learning and development with parents.

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Dr. Emer Ring

Dr. Emer Ring is Head of Department of Reflective Pedagogy and Early Childhood Studies at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.

Dr. Lisha O'Sullivan

Dr. Lisha O'Sullivan is a Lecturer in the Department of Reflective Pedagogy and Early Childhood Studies at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.

The Primary Language Curriculum in the context of inclusive education

Conall Ó Breacháin and Fionnuala Drudy

This article is based on a presentation made at the Irish Learning Support Association (ILSA) Spring Conference 2017. It places the Primary Language Curriculum (DES, 2015) in the context of inclusive education and looks at the research that identifies key components in language development as reflected in the Primary Language Curriculum (2015). It describes evidenced-based teaching approaches that promote language development for all children and examines current trends in teaching approaches advocated for children with special educational needs. It looks at how the Primary Language Curriculum (2015) supports children with complex needs and finally it briefly describes approaches to assessment that evaluate the language skills embedded in the curriculum.

Introduction

The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DES, 2011) called for the development of a new curriculum for literacy, stipulating a time-frame for development and completion and some recommendations in terms of structure and content. The following year the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) commissioned the publication of three significant research reports that would inform the content of this curriculum. In late 2015 the Primary Language Curriculum was published and its implementation was due to commence in Primary schools across the country in the school year 2016/2017. In developing the Primary Language Curriculum (2015) the NCCA has attempted to develop a framework that would support a wide range of children with diverse needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN). The curriculum recognises that language learning is a developmental process whereby each child engages at his/her own individual rate and provides a continuum to support differentiated learning. Within this context, this article seeks to examine how the Primary Language Curriculum (2015) supports the teaching and learning of oral language for children with special educational needs.

Inclusive Education:

International developments in inclusive education have influenced education policy and curriculum in Ireland from the early 1990s. The Report of the Special Education Review Committee (SERC, 1993) recognised the rights of

children to receive an appropriate education and recommended a continuum of provision for children with SEN that would cater for the diversity of those needs. The Education Act (1998) and The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN, 2004) provide a legal obligation for schools to provide for a diversity of needs. Since the enactment of this legislation, or parts thereof, the landscape of our classrooms and the subsequent increased diversity challenges teachers to meet the learning needs of all children of varying abilities. Recent Department of Education and Skills publications and policy seeks to identify and support the needs of children with special educational needs (Department of Education and Skills, 2007) and seeks to organise resources and appropriate supports based on educational needs (National Council for Special Education, 2014). The Primary Language Curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 2015) represents a significant landmark in Irish education with particular significance for inclusive provision. It has been developed as 'a curriculum for teachers of all children of all abilities in all school contexts' (Primary Language Curriculum, Department of Education and Skills, 2015, p. 6).

An Inclusive Curriculum
Two distinct but compatible accounts of language acquisition underpin the Primary Language Curriculum: an emergentist view of language development and the interdependence hypothesis, or the common underlying proficiency model (Shiel, McGough & Archer, 2012). The former attempts to account for the acquisition of a child's first language; the latter is focused predominantly on second language learning. This 'coming together' of two complex theoretical positions is a first for Irish education and it signifies a significant shift in thinking about language for teachers in Ireland. The emergentist account of language acquisition is of particular significance in relation to inclusive education as it provides a theoretical framework for a language curriculum that can 'support the development of a diverse population of young children, including children of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, children whose development may be inhibited by social/environmental circumstances and children whose development may be compromised by particular biological and/or environmental conditions, resulting in special educational needs' (Shiel et al., 2012, p. 63)

Drawing on the work of Bloom and Lahey (1978), Wiig and Semel (1984) and Cole (1995), the curriculum is underpinned by a conceptual model of language, articulated in terms of the interactive and interdependent components of 'listener-speaker-communicator skills' (which focuses on the conventions of the listener-speaker relationship), 'content and structure of language' (including semantic and syntactic knowledge), and 'language use' (with explicit focus on the pragmatics of language). This model manifests in the curriculum documents in the form of the 'elements of language learning' – the overarching conceptual paradigm which describe the 'essential language learning' across the three

strands of oral language, reading and writing (Department of Education and Skills, 2015). The elements provide significant potential to deepen teacher's understanding of the language learning process.

The work of Bruner (1983) and Halliday (1993), as well as researchers such as Tolchinsky (2004), Owens (2012) and Peterson and McCabe (1992) amongst others, are drawn upon to illustrate the nature of language development in the early school years and the rich corpus of research combines to provide a detailed, complex tapestry of the linguistic elements that cumulatively and progressively culminate in young children's language growth. This work manifests in the curriculum documents in the form of 14 learning outcomes for oral language and the associated developmental continuum. In describing the concepts, dispositions and skills that children are expected to develop over a two-year period, the learning outcomes support teachers in targeting essential aspects of language development.

Within the components of the language system children will display different strengths and needs. Children with autism display varying levels of difficulty regarding aspects of communication such as joint attention to topic (Shiel *et al.*, 2012). Deficits in vocabulary, syntax and the ability to use abstract language are prevalent among some children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing (Marschark and Spenser, 2009, cited in NCSE, 2011). A recent study conducted by the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS) reported that children commencing Junior Infants in schools supported by the DEIS programme (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) have significantly lower vocabulary development than the national average (NEPS, 2015).

In developing language skills for some children with communication difficulties, the curriculum recognises that communication takes many forms, from non-verbal and verbal to print-based and digital media. There is a recognition, therefore, of the multi-modal nature of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and provision of a range of techniques to support and enable communication, such as Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Braille and Sign are advocated (Shiel *et al.*, 2012)

Language Development
While the emergenstist perspective acknowledges some similarities in the sequence of language acquisition at a global level (Bates and Goodman, 1999) research points to significant variation in the rate of growth for all critical components of language (Shore, 1995). The extent of evidence in this regard is so significant as to refute any notion of a 'universal, maturational timetable account of early language development' (Shiel *et al.*, 2012). This challenges the view that language develops in the same way for all children.

The concept of language learning as a developmental process in which each child engages at his/her own individual rate is reflected strongly in the Primary

Language Curriculum. The progression continua, used in conjunction with the learning outcomes, help teachers use their own judgment and experience to identify where children are in their language learning journey. Teachers are therefore supported in identifying the next steps in the individual child's language development and crucially, can be helped to create learning experiences appropriate to the child's particular developmental stage. The progression continua and the use of the progression steps alongside the learning outcomes can therefore assist teachers in planning for differentiation in their classrooms. The continua are intended to be supportive, not prescriptive or definitive, and the manner in which teachers engage with them is likely to vary from context to context, from class to class and particularly in an SEN setting, from child to child. This inherent flexibility can account for the variation in language development, which is documented in the literature – any notion of a strictly linear, step by step application of the progression steps would be reductive, overly-simplistic and ultimately inappropriate.

Supporting Language Development

 Given the centrality of oral language as a prerequisite for reading, writing and access to cross-curricular learning (Cregan, 1998) it is imperative that teaching and learning approaches are identified that harness and develop children's language skills. Socio-interactionist theories of language development suggest that language emerges through 'adult-child interactions in contexts of mutual attention and intention in which each participant influences the nature and quality of the communicative exchange' (Shiel *et al.*, 2012 p. 126). This is consistent with the emergenstist perspective which views both child and adult as central to the process of language learning, eschewing an historical one-sided interest in the role of the care-giver. The child acts on innate cognitive structures, but only through appropriate communicative interactions are these realised.

Dialogic teaching approaches are grounded in Vvgotsky's notion of teaching directed to the child's 'zone of proximal development' (Vvgotsky, 1978), whereby 'finely tuned utterances provide both the appropriate level of challenge to the child's current level of functioning and the model for the next level of competence which the child must achieve' (Painter, 1996 in Shiel *et al*, 2012, p. 149). Supportive strategies, provided by the adult, can include prompting, imitation, repetition, modelling, recasting and expanding. When engaged in meaningful communicative interactions these strategies help to scaffold the child's learning.

Alexander (2008) identifies four main approaches to support teachers in developing dialogic teaching in their classrooms; the use of open questions, informative feedback, extended contributions and exchanges which deepen lines of enquiry. Inherent in the Learning Outcomes in the Primary Language Curriculum are concepts, dispositions and skills that challenge teachers to create and nurture dialogic classrooms to support the development of key skills in

learning to reason, discuss, argue, and explain as well as respond. Approaches to developing dialogic classrooms are described in a range of support materials for teachers which accompany the online curriculum.

Research has illuminated the fact that inclusive practice involves the use of support in the classroom, the ways in which teachers respond to the individual differences in children's learning during whole-class teaching, the choices teachers make about group work and how teachers utilise specialist knowledge (Florian, 2008). The Primary Language Curriculum promotes such inclusive practices by supporting teachers to plan for differentiation, and to provide appropriate learning experience for the diverse needs of children in their classrooms. The curriculum affords rich collaborative opportunities for class teachers and Special Education Teachers in mainstream schools to work with a shared focus on developing specific skills outlined in the learning outcomes and to plan for the next steps in the children's learning journey. This has positive implications for children with special education needs.

Teaching Approaches for Children with complex needs
The importance of being cognisant of the combined implications of both syndrome-specific knowledge and the developmental perspective on the communication and language strengths and needs of children with disabilities is emphasised in research conducted on specific syndromes (Shiel *et al.*, 2012). It suggests that a continuum of appropriate communication and language teaching strategies can apply to children across diagnostic categories. It can thus be assumed that adaptations to generic strategies by degrees of deliberateness and intensity of teaching are effective for other syndromes (Kennedy et al, 2012). However, some syndromes such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) may require distinctive group-specific pedagogies for literacy (Kennedy et al, 2012). This reflects the commonality-differentiation of pedagogy approach advanced by Norwich and Lewis (2001) whereby pedagogic needs are described as those that are common to all, those specific to a defined group, and those unique to an individual. This provides a useful model for including children with SEN in all school settings supported by a differentiated curriculum, teaching approaches that match the learners needs, and targeted interventions.

Research underpinning the curriculum advocates naturalistic interventions, which are embedded in natural classroom activities, for children with a range of disabilities including children with severe intellectual disability, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, Williams syndrome, autism, specific speech and language impairment and children described as having significant physical disabilities (Shiel *et al.*, 2012). These include explicit teaching, matching the child's topic of interest in contexts which are highly motivating, quality adult-child interactions and goal-orientated teaching. In addition, it recommends interventions that are drawn from both behavioural learning principles and social-interactionist theory such as prompting, reinforcement, time delay,

shaping, fading, modelling, questioning, recasts and expansions and topic supporting and topic elaborating strategies. Responsive environments are advocated whereby children receive responses to their actions, have the opportunity to respond to the actions of others and take the lead in interactions (Ware, 2005). The strategies chosen need to be adapted and differentiated, taking the child's individual characteristics as a learner into account.

The Primary Language Curriculum supports all children, including children in special schools, to progress and work towards the learning outcomes at a rate and a pace appropriate to their abilities and to have this learning recognised. The Learning Outcomes describe expected learning for all children 'when due account is taken of individual abilities and varying circumstances' (Department of Education and Skills, 2015). The Progression Continua break down the learning outcomes across a number of milestones, from 'early a' to 'h', mapping out the journey that children of a wide range of abilities will take on their way towards a learning outcome. The recent addition of the 'early a' milestone and the SEN Pathways, which describe learning and development for children with complex needs, provide a clear vision of a language learning journey appropriate to the needs of children whose progress can be difficult to recognise. The SEN Pathways and Progression Continua support teachers in planning the next steps in teaching, learning and assessment for children with complex needs.

Assessment of Oral Language:
Research suggests that performance assessments involving observation in a real life situations are a useful approach to evaluating children's language learning (Shiel *et al.*, 2012). Decisions are made by checking performance against criteria rather than average performance of children of a similar age. Tools such as anecdotal notes, language samples, checklists, rating scales and rubrics can be useful. Standardised criterion-referenced tools are recommended for children with disabilities (Shiel *et al.*, 2012). These tools need to be used in conjunction with knowledge of the key skills that children need to acquire and how these skills, attitudes and dispositions develop. As stated, the learning outcomes identify these skills and the progression steps give an indication, in broad terms, of how they develop. The curriculum can therefore support teachers' ongoing assessment for learning through scaffolding their thinking when observing children in a variety of language learning contexts.

The research also recommends that assessment tools used are linked to the curriculum taught and suggests that the components of the language system be incorporated as an approach to identify aspects for assessment (Shiel *et al.*, 2012). These include the listener-speaker relationship, content and structure of language and language use. These components are incorporated into the Learning Outcomes and the Progression Continua hence provide important reference points for teachers to plan for, and make judgements about, children's language learning at the stage of development, and to decide on the next steps in teaching and learning.

Conclusion

This article sought to position the Primary Language Curriculum in the context of the development of inclusive education in Ireland and examine its role in supporting children with SEN. The framework underpinning the curriculum is based on the emergentist view of language development which takes account of a diverse range of children. The developmental approach to language acquisition, which recognises that the rate of language development is different for many children, is reflected in the Progression Continua and supports differentiated teaching and learning for all children in all school contexts. Teaching approaches and learning experiences provided through development of concepts, dispositions and skills described in the learning outcomes are promoted through support materials that espouse evidence-based approaches and pedagogies that meet learning needs that are common to all, specific to a defined group, and unique to individual children. There is therefore considerable potential with this curriculum to support children with special educational needs and it represents a significant milestone for inclusive education in Ireland.

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Conall Ó Breacháin

Conall Ó Breacháin is a primary school teacher on secondment from St. Fintan's National school in Sutton. He joined the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) in 2006 as a Gaeilge cuiditheoir. Following the formation of the Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS), Conall worked as an advisor for assessment and joined the newly formed team of DEIS advisors. Conall continued to work in the DEIS context after the PDST was established and went on to join the PDST's primary literacy team designing and providing professional development in all aspects of literacy including school self-evaluation. Conall was appointed Acting Team Leader for Primary Literacy in April 2015 before being appointed Team Leader for Primary Languages in September 2015. Research interests include early language development, literacy policy implementation, school-based curriculum development and literacy and professional development.

Fionnuala Drudy

Fionnuala was seconded to the PDST Primary Language Team in 2016 from Mochua Special School, Clondalkin where she was DP. Area of interest (research) is inclusion and literacy for children with SEN. She worked on developing inclusion programmes with local schools at primary and post-primary level.

Training in the Administration and Scoring of *TEST2r*

Pauline M. Cogan

TEST2r is an evidence-based and reliable classroom assessment tool for teachers in the first years of primary school which is firmly grounded in current theories of literacy acquisition. Cogan & McAnaney (2012) provide the policy context, theoretical bases, and the developmental path for TEST2*r*. It explains the 7 factor structure of TEST2*r* and the criterion study which indicated its strong predictive nature. Since 2012 TEST2*r* has been validated in 29 schools. It has also been normed on 800 five and six year olds in 200 Irish schools. Furthermore an electronic reporting system is now in place and resources for intervention have been identified. Many teachers have been trained in the rationale, administration procedures and scoring of TEST2*r*. There is a demand for training countrywide. Therefore, this article seeks to provide a brief written account of the Administrative Procedure of the Screener and Diagnostic Tasks and how to score them. This information already exists in the TEST2*r* kit, but is drawn out here to further support teachers.

The 3 three physical items needed for administration of TEST2*r* are:

1. Manual (for exact procedures to be followed)
2. Visual Stimulus Booklet (for focusing child attention and thinking)
3. Individual Scorebooklet (for child responses and teacher scoring)

When scorebooklets are purchased there is a Unique Identifying Number (UIN) provided for each scorebooklet. This becomes the identifier for each child for the purposes of data entry to the electronic database. The child is identified in the database only by that *TEST2r* number. The *TEST2r* data is secure and anonymous. .

TEST2*r* is divided into two sections:

• Screener and
• Diagnostic Tasks

The Screener Tasks are:

1. Letter Knowledge: Upper and Lower Case
2. Rhyme Recognition Oddity
3. Phonetic Spelling
4. Copying
5. Rapid Automatised Naming (RAN): Digits

The Diagnostic Tasks are:

6. Letter Sound Array
7. Alliteration Oddity
8. Alliteration: Initial Sound Matching
9. Timed Rhyme Generation
10. Digit Span
11. Non-Word Repetition
12. Initial Phoneme Deletion
13. Final Phoneme Deletion: Real Word Remaining
14. Final Phoneme Deletion: Real Non-Word Remaining
15. Non-Word Reading
16. Spatial Memory
17. Finger localisation
18. Rapid Automatised Naming (RAN): Objects

SCREENER TASKS

Task 1 – Letter Knowledge: Upper and Lower Case
The Letter Knowledge Task seeks to assess the child's long-term associative memory. It examines how well the child can provide the link between each visual letter (grapheme) displayed in the Visual Stimulus Book (VSB) and its verbal label, be it the letter name, letter sound or word/character for a letter.

Twenty-five upper case and 25 lower case letters are presented in the VSB. The capital I and lower case l are not examined as 64% of all children from the pilot study confused these. (To include them would have invited false positives or evidence that there is a problem when there may not be). Therefore, the maximum score for upper case letters is 25. The maximum score for lower case letters is 25. The overall maximum score is 50.

In each letter category (upper or lower case) the child is presented with each

group of letters from the VSB. The child should always been assessed according to his/her experience with letters. **Therefore, if the presented letters in the TEST2*r* VSB are different in appearance to what the child has learned, then the letters should be changed to suit the child's experience (e.g. putting a line on the top of the capital J or putting a 'tail' on lower case letters**. Following the administration procedure the child is given credit whether s/he provides a letter name, or letter sound or a word/character that begins with that letter: The teacher records on the child's scorebooklet with an **x** to indicate which category of response is given. For example, responding to **M**, if the child says the /**m**/ sound, the teacher puts the **x** under the Letter Sound and gives a score of 1 in the 6th column. If the child responds 'Muh' for the letter **M**, give a score of 1 in the 6th column because the child has provided the correct verbal association which corresponds to the letter **M**.

However, **Muh** is an impure sound because an **'uh'** is joined on to the /**m**/ sound. Therefore, the teacher records the **Muh** under the column marked Impure/Incorrect Response and resolves to teach the pure sound /**m**/ without the **'uh'**. This correction is done by placing the back of the hand under the chin. For consonant production, if the jaw presses down on the back of the hand then the sound is being produced impurely. This impure sound production can compromise children's reading and spelling and should be corrected.

Task 2 – Rhyme Recognition Oddity
The Rhyme Recognition Oddity task seeks to assess the child's ability to hear large sound units at the end of words, to compare it to large sound units at the end of other words and to recognise when a final large sound unit is different to those of other presented words. It is a test of sound segmentation as it requires the child to shear off the vowel and final consonant unit from the word's initial sound. As well as being a test of rhyme recognition and rhyme oddity through segmentation, it is also a test of short term memory for large sound units.

In this task the teacher presents and points to the pictures in the VSB for the demonstration, practice and test items. The administration procedure is followed exactly. The child hears the word for each picture in turn. These pictures are named a second time and the child selects the picture that does <u>not</u> rhyme. For the Demonstration and 3 Practice Items, tutoring is provided following the exact text in the manual if the child's response is incorrect. Only the Test Items are scored 0 or 1. The maximum score is 9. The child's score should be entered on the clipboard icon. Tutoring is not permitted in Test Items. Discontinue testing after 5 consecutive incorrect or absent responses.

Task 3 – Phonetic Spelling
It is well known that children can write words which they may not be able to read. The phonetic spelling task assesses the child's ability to map speech sounds onto corresponding letters. This is a test of prototypical or emergent spelling

(an encoding test) ollowing the administration procedure exactly, the child is presented with one word at a time and in the context of a sentence is invited to write each word as best s/he can on the appropriate line and page of the child's scorebooklet. The child is permitted to make another attempt if s/he is unhappy with the first attempt.

The scoring guidance is set out at the end of the administration task procedure in the manual. The scoring structure is set out in the child's scorebooklet just before where the child has made his/her written attempts.

While the words are rather long and apparently difficult it is the scoring procedure which is important and makes this task so powerful in its prediction capacity.

Looking at the child's spelling attempts the scorer looks at each word spelled in terms of:

• How many consonants are present?
• How many vowels or vowel digraphs are present?
• Is the syllabic structure correct?

For example in spelling the word REFEREE the scorer focuses on the consonants written by the child and transfers them to the scoring system in the previous page. One mark is given for each consonant present. An *f* or *v* is acceptable as they are both produced on the lip (in roughly the same place) but the *v* is voiced (vocal chords are working) but the *f* is not. For consonants the maximum marks for REFEREE is **3**. In the word PRINCIPAL and FIREPLACE, when scoring consonants the alternatives for **S** are **C** or **Z**. These are viewed as legitimate and are scored 1.

In the word SKATEBOARD, the alternative consonants **k** or **c** are permitted. In CEREAL **c** or **s** are permitted.

The scorer looks at what vowel (s) are presents in the child's attempt. **Vowel sounds are marked very generously as this is a very difficult aspect of spelling**. In the scoring system I have given examples of what a child might do and get credit for. There are many other ingenious various of the vowels which a child can produce. They may write *Rufurea* etc. Credit must be given for all vowel attempts.

Remember to be generous with vowel scoring and accept letters or letter combinations that can represent a vowel sound.

The opposite is the case where scoring for syllabic structure. Here, syllabic structure is right or wrong. REFEREE has 3 syllables. If 3 syllables are present then give a score of 1.

If more or less than 3 syllables are present, then the score is 0.

Syllabic structure means there is a vowel in each syllable. When determining the score for consonants, add all scores for consonants and enter the score in the 2nd last column for consonants (max 23). Similarly add all scores for vowels and enter the vowel score in the 2nd last column for vowels (max 13). When determining the score for syllabic structure add all the scores of 1 earned and enter into the last column for syllabic structure (max 5). Add all sub-scores and enter total in the clipboard icon (max 41).

While the Phonetic Spelling task is ongoing it is important to note the child's preferred hand (writing hand). This should then be registered on the child's scorebooklet at the top of Task 17 – Finger Localisation.

Task 4 – Copying
The Copying Task assesses the child's motor control, hand-eye coordination and ability to see detail. Ability to see detail is not used by the brain for just copying. It is a skill which is important for differentiation between letters (e.g. **C/G, E/F, A/H, b/d, q/p, i/j** etc.) and many other perceptual processes. It is also a test of a child's voluntary movement ability. (Can the child stop drawing a line in one direction and change to another direction? – i.e. inhibition skill).

The administration procedure must be adhered to exactly and the child is advised to try to make the drawings the same size and shape as the presented drawings in the VSB.

The child's copying attempts are made in the Workbook pages of the scorebooklet towards the back. The teacher tutors the child in what is required on the Demonstration/Practice Items only. No other drawing or tutoring is permitted by the teacher.

The test administration procedure must be followed exactly. A flap attached to the back cover of the scorebooklet is placed under each page to reduce the transfer of imprint on to the next page. The child uses a separate page for each item to be copied. A second copying attempt is allowed if the child feels unhappy with the first attempt.

Note. It is difficult to specify in words the requirements for what would earn a score of 1 in copying each item. The scoring guidelines in the teacher manual represent an attempt to help teachers with their decision to grant a score of 1 or 0. Under no circumstance does a teacher need to use a set square or a ruler, or spend more that 20 seconds on each scoring decision. This is essentially a page turning exercise. If the child makes a good job of drawing a straight line (item 1) and it is nearly 7cms long then that child has earned a score of 1 for good pencil control. If a circle (item 5) is not quite joined or if there is a bit of

overshoot or undershoot then a score of 1 is given. If the circle with the protruding line goes on for a couple of centimetres then the score is not given. However, if it protrudes 1½ to 2cm this is ok. Similar leeway is given for other items. Common sense and page turning is what scoring this task involves.

A score of 1 is given for each item. The total for the Copying task is entered on the clipboard icon.

Note: if the teacher has not already done so, the child's preferred hand for copying is noted and registered in the child's scorebooklet at the top of Task 17 – Finger Localisation.

Task 5 – Rapid Automatised Naming (RAN) Digits
The RAN Digits task is a test of the speed at which the child can access the name of a digit in long-term memory. Recognising a digit and giving it its verbal or word label is one skill, but doing so automatically is what is required for smooth processing of printed material. To recognise and name a digit the child must be able to integrate the details of the digit and then find its name, where it is located in Long Term Memory and name it. This involves recognising the detail of line, slope and junction and recognising the digit by sight and name. Thus, the digit 6 has an orientation/inversion relationship with 9. The digit 2 has an orientation/inversion relationship with 5 etc.

The RAN Digit task presents 40 randomised printed digits (1 – 5) on a card in the VSB to the child who is, firstly, required to name the digits at leisure. Pointing is discouraged. The child is later required to name the digits as fast as s/he can while being timed.

The task administration procedure should be followed exactly. If the child does not correctly name the top row of digits in the familiarisation phase, it is clear that s/he does not know all 5 digits. Therefore the task should be discontinued.

If the child has named the digits in the familiarisation phase, even with some delays or loss of place, the test administrator may help the child with naming digits or finding his/her place if s/he gets lost. (at best with a time penalty).

The next phase is the Rapid Naming phase which is timed in seconds. At the end of the RAN digits task in the Manual there is some important pre-scoring information and the scoring system. This information relates to how to help with

(a) Loss of place
(b) Scoring/registering an incorrect digit name
(c) A non-response to name a digit

It also involves information about breath control in the child. The time required to name 40 digits is noted in the scorebooklet. For every error in naming the digits noted in the particular cell in the grid there is a 5 second time penalty. For every non-response when the administrator is required to provide the name of the digit after 5 seconds (recorded in the appropriate cell in the grid) there is a 5 second penalty. If the child loses his/her place 3 times then a tracking card is used. This is cut off the back cover of the scorebooklet. The naming task is restarted using the back cover flap which now becomes a tracking card. Tracking card use carries a 10 second penalty. All these penalties are noted and summed in the appropriate boxes in the scorebooklets i.e. naming time for 40 digits the number of error penalty x 5 seconds, plus the number of non-responses x 5 seconds + s/c penalty tracking card if used, is recorded in the RAN Digits Total Score in Seconds.

The scores are now entered into the TEST2r database. Instructions on how to access the database are provided with the TEST kit on purchase.

This ends the Screener Tasks

When the child's scorebooklet UIN and age is entered along with the child's screener scores a colour coded report will be generated based on a comparison between these scores and the norms for the child's age. This report will assign a colour to the results for each task.

It will be GREEN if the child has mastered that task skill. It will be RED if the child needs further teaching at that skill. If there is RED in the screener report progression to the Diagnostic Tasks is advised to gain an in-depth knowledge of that child's literacy subskills.

Those who receive an all GREEN report do not need to proceed to the Diagnostic Tasks.

Note: Text is also provided on the Report in the event that the school does not have a colour printer.

DIAGNOSTIC TASKS

Task 6 – Letter Sound Array
This task assesses long-term associative memory for grapheme-phoneme correspondence. It represents a drilling down of Task 1 and checks how well the child knows the 26 single sounds of the alphabet. Knowledge of the short vowel sounds is required. This letter knowledge is necessary for decoding unfamiliar words and for spelling (encoding from a word's sound to its written form).

Important Note

The child should always been assessed according to his/her experience with letters. **Therefore, if the presented letters in the TEST2*r* VSB are different in appearance to what the child has learned, then the letters should be changed to suit the child's experience (e.g. putting a 'tail' on lower case letters)**. The letters are presented from the VSB, page by page and the child is required to provide the sound for each letter. The administration procedure must be followed exactly. For the letter *f* if the child provides a pure sound */f/* then a score of 1 is given and recorded in the appropriate column in the score booklet. If the child responds */fuh/* then the */fuh/* impure sound is recorded under the appropriate 2nd column and a score of 1 is given because somehow this is what the child has learned. S/he has made the correct (although impure) long-term phonological association between the letter and its sound. By recording the impure sound the teacher will have a record of what may prove to be an impediment to decoding or spelling for the child. This impure sound should be tackled as soon as possible according to the method described under Task 1 Letter Knowledge Upper and Lower Case. If the child provides an incorrect sound for the letter, than a 0 is given. If the child gives the name of the letter, try to elicit the letter sound. A letter name is recorded in the Incorrect/Impure column and a 0 score is given. There is no discontinue rule in this task as knowledge of letters are examined.

Task 7 – Alliteration Oddity

Alliteration knowledge is an important point in phonological awareness development because it represents the child's first exposure to the skill of phoneme segmentation. The process of alliteration requires the child to be aware of a sound at the beginning of a word which is similar to the sound at the beginning of another word. It requires the child to shear off or segment the initial sound of each word and recognise if they are similar or different. In the Alliteration Oddity Task the administration procedure must be followed exactly. Four illustrations are presented and named in turn twice by the administrator. The child is required to identify the odd one out, verbally or by pointing. The correct choice is printed in deeper blue to the other items. The Demonstration and Practice Items all permit tutoring in the case of an incorrect response. The Test Items do not permit tutoring. Maximum score is 10. The child's test score is entered onto the clipboard Item.

The task is discontinued in the event of 5 consecutive incorrect or absent responses.

Task 8 – Alliteration: Initial Sound Matching

This task is considered more difficult than the previous task as it requires the child to recognise the two (target) items which begin with the same sound and to reject the other two items which are different (i.e. distractors). Again the task requires the child to be aware of an initial sound in a word which is similar to

the initial sound of another word. It requires the child to shear off or segment the initial sound of each word, and to recognise their similarity or difference. Adams (1990) puts great importance on this level of phonological awareness development.

The administration procedure must be followed exactly. The correct choice is printed in deeper blue to the other items. The Demonstration and Practice Items all permit tutoring in the case of an incorrect response. Test items do not permit tutoring. Task 8 is discontinued in the event of 5 consecutive incorrect or absent responses. The child's score is entered on the Clipboard Icon. Maximum score is 10.

Task 9 – Timed Rhyme Generation
Knowledge of rhyme is complex and extends over a long period of development. Points along the phonological awareness pathway of rhyme include:

(a)   Knowledge of nursery rhymes
(b)   Auditory discrimination of minimal pairs of large unit sounds at the end of words being the same or different {*cat v mat (same)* as opposed to *cat v can (different)*
(c)   Rhyme recognition
(d)   Rhyme recognition Oddity
(e)   Rhyme generation
(f)   Timed rhyme generation

Within each of these points there are many concepts to be mastered both linguistic (i.e. concepts of same/different as well as phonological analysis of minimal pairs i.e. *cat, mat*, as opposed to multiple items i.e. *cat, mat, rat, car*).

The rhyme levels (b) to (d) above are considered easier because the child is provided with a limited field of items to consider. However in category (e) the child is required to do multiple processes:

(i)   Listen to a stimulus word
(ii)   Shear off the rhyme part of the word (i.e. the vowel and subsequent consonant if there is one)
(iii) Hold the rhyme segment in phonological short term memory
(iv) While simultaneously scanning the horizon of his/her long-term verbal memory (an unlimited field) for a word or words which, when analysed/segmented, are chosen as valid matches for the stimulus rhyme.

The Timed Rhyme Generation task is the most difficult level of Rhyme Awareness as it assesses the child's ability/flexibility and automaticity in advanced parallel phonological processing under pressure of time.

A point of interest here for teachers is the following: there are children who do not yet understand the concept of rhyme, phonics/phonological awareness. They are not yet ready for phonics, which is a language devoid of meaning or language at the metalinguistic level. When required to provide a word which rhymes with *pen* they may say *pencil* or *crayon*. This tells the teacher that the child is processing language at the *semantic level* or the level of meaning, which is an earlier stage in the child's linguistic and literacy development. If the child provides semantically related words, then the task is discontinued after the Practice Item.

The administration procedure should be followed exactly. Here the child is presented with a stimulus word and is required to produce a sequence of rhyming words and non-words within 30 seconds. Tutoring is required in the Practice Items in the event of an incorrect or absent response.

For ease of recording if the items produced are correct rhymes then the administrator records only the initial sound as a record of what the child said. These initial sounds are counted to provide the score for the item.

If the child gets stuck on a loop saying the same words, the administrator stops the watch and says that a point is given for every different rhyming word that is said.

The number of generated items which rhyme with WALL are added to the number of generated items for PEN. This total is divided by 2 to produce the Average Timed Rhyme Generation Score. This is the score entered into the database.

Task 10 – Digit Span
The Digit Span test assesses the child's short-term phonological memory. The child is required to listen to an orally presented sequence of digits and to repeat them in the order presented. The administration procedure should be followed exactly. It is very important to present each digit at the rate of one per second. The task seeks to tax the child's phonological short term memory. Short term phonological memory is developmental in nature. It is important for language learning but it is limited in capacity; it can remember a limited number of items. Short term memory capacity grows with age. It is also limited in duration as the memory trace (or engram) fades after a number of seconds unless it is extended by rehearsal. In this task the number of items in a sequence is gradually extended. The task is discontinued when the child has reached his/her limit. The discontinue rule states that the task should be discontinued when the child **incompletely or incorrectly repeats both digit sequences at any one level**.

Task 11 – Non-Word Repetition
The Non-Word Repetition task is a measure of phonological short term

memory (Gathercole and Baddeley, 1989). It is also thought to be a measure of how clearly phonemic information is laid down in teh child's brain (Muter & Snowling, 1998).

Here the child is presented orally with non-words which are gradually increasing in length. The child is required to repeat the word clearly and without delay. The administrator notes/transcribes only the incorrect or partial repetitions. Special care should be taken to note vowel and consonant blend repetitions. No tutoring is permitted. The sequence on non-words to be presented are set out in the child's scorebooklet.

There are 15 levels with two non-words at each level. A perfect word repetition earns 2 points. A repetition with 1 error earns 1 point. A repetition with more than 1 error earns 0 points. The maximum score is 60. This task is discontinued when TWO CONSECUTIVE LEVELS of WORD PAIRS have earned a 0 score.

Tasks 12, 13 and 14 comprise a suite of segmentation exercise which graduate in difficulty. They follow, essentially, the same pattern.

Task 12 – Initial Phoneme Deletion

This is essentially a segmentation task. Here the child is presented with words, each of which has an initial consonant blend. The child is required to 'hear' the phonemes of the initial consonant blend and retain the second consonant while deleting the first. The words which remain may be a real or a non-word. The task is timed while the child is processing each item. The administration procedure must be followed exactly. Credit is given if the correct response is given within 10 seconds. There are two opportunities to get Practice Item 1 correct. If it is correct on the first attempt Practice Item 2 is attempted. If Item 1 it is still incorrect or absent after its repetition then there is a simple explanatory phase before proceeding to Practice Item 2 which follows the same pattern.

The Practice items are timed and scored but not included in the test item total. If the child responds incorrectly over both practice items and their repeats, then the task should be discontinued.

For each of the 5 test items there are 2 scores. There is a score of 1 for each correct response. There is also a time score for each response. The score of 1 is earned if the correct response is provided in 10 seconds or less. A score of 0 is given if a correct response is provided after 10 seconds has elapsed. This delayed but correct response is noted in the comments box. From this the teacher/administrator will know that the skill has been developed but is not yet automatic.

In summary 2 scores are recorded:

(i)   The total number of correct responses within 10 seconds
(ii) The average time for correct responses

Task 13 – Final Phoneme Deletion: Real Word Remaining

This is also a segmentation task. Here the child is presented with words. Each word ends in a consonant. The child is required to 'hear' the final consonant and delete or shear it off while retaining and saying the initial consonant and vowel. The word which remains is a real word. The task is timed while the child is processing each item. The administration procedure must be followed exactly. Credit is given if the correct response is offered in 10 seconds or less. A score of 1 is earned. There are two opportunities to get practice Item 1 correct. If it is correct on the first attempt then Practice Item 2 is attempted. If item 1 is still incorrect or absent after its repetition, then there is a simple explanatory phase before proceeding to Practice Item 2, which follows the same pattern. The Practice Items are timed and scored but not included in the test item total.

If the child scores 0 over both practice items and their repeats then the task is discontinued.

Task 14 – Final Phoneme Deletion: Non-Word Remaining

This task is essentially similar to the previous task. However, following segmentation, the word which remains is a non-word. Conceptually, this is difficult because there is no "address" in the brain for a non-word.

Here the child is presented with words. Each word ends in a consonant. The child is required to 'hear' the final consonant, delete or shear it off while retaining and saying the initial consonant and vowel. The word that remains is a non-word. The task is timed while the child is processing each item. The administration procedure must be followed exactly. Credit is given if the correct response is offered in 10 seconds or less and a score of 1 is earned.

There are 2 opportunities to get Practice Item 1 correct. If the item is correct on the first attempt then Practice Item 2 is attempted. If item 1 is still incorrect or absent after its repetition, then there is a simple explanatory phase before proceeding to Practice Item 2, which follows the same pattern. The Practice Items are timed and scored but not included in the test item total.

If the child scores 0 over both practice items then the task is discontinued.

For each of the 5 test items there are 2 scores. There is a score of 1 for each correct response. There is also a time score for each response. The score of 1 is earned for each item if the correct response is provided in 10 seconds or less. A score of 0 is given if a correct response is provided after 10 seconds has elapsed.

This delayed but correct response is noted in the comments box. From this the teacher/administrator will know that the skill has been developed but is not yet automatic.

Task 15 – Non-Word Reading

Non-Word reading involves pure phonological decoding and phonological short term memory. In Non-Word Reading the child is required to convert the letters (graphemes) on the page into a phonological code and blend them to produce words.

In the VSB there are 5 practice items which follow the simple consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) configuration. The child is required to **decode and blend** at least one of these words in order to progress to the Test Items.

The test items are set out in levels of difficulty. The first 4 levels use the cvc, cvcc, ccvc and ccvcc configurations. The final group of words are bi-syllabic in nature.

A score of 1 is given for each test item which is **decoded and blended**. Self-correction is permitted. Credit is <u>not</u> given if the whole non-word is not produced. Incorrect attempts are noted above the word in the scorebooklet.

Decoding of Test Items is discontinued after 10 consecutive incorrect or absent responses. The maximum score is 25. The child's Non-Word Reading Total Score is entered on the clipboard icon.

Task 16 – Spatial Memory

This task requires short-term visual memory, attention allocation and concentration. It is culture-fair, ostensibly language free and can be suitable for children who are shy or otherwise reticent or poor at using language.

This task requires the child to watch carefully while the test administrator points to a gradually increasing sequence of locations on a linear grid, at the rate of 1 place per second. The child is required to replicate the sequence by pointing to each place in turn.

The sequence to be administered is set out in the levels on the child's scorebooklet.

The administration procedure should be followed exactly. Tutoring is permitted in the Practice Items. It is not permitted in the Test Items.

Task 17 – Finger Localisation

The young baby's lips, mouth and finger-tips seem to be programmed for learning about the world. The finger tips continue to be an important channel for exploring and learning about the world. The finger tips are loaded with micro-structures (which look like drawing pins if viewed under an electron microscope).

These are linked to the part of the brain that can process line-slope, line junction, surface texture, edge and curve. When a child uses plastic letters/digits and follows the line or curve of a letter/digit or uses/traces line or curve of a letter/digit, or uses/traces sandpaper letters/digits, it is those micro structures which feed the brain which interprets and recognises the actual item.

The micro-structures work by vibration caused by finger tips coming in contact with or being drawn across the item. It is known that some children have reduced finger-tip sensation which can compromise learning. The task also requires attention and concentration.

The Finger Localisation Task involves drawing an unpared pencil across the child's finger pad and then asking the child to point with his free hand to the finger that has been touched.

There are 3 phases in this task.

Phase 1 is where fingers are touched using an unpared new pencil on the child's preferred hand first. (The preferred hand will have been noted on the top of the Finger Localisation Task procedure since Tasks 3 & 4). Then fingers are touched on the non-preferred hand.

Phase 2 involves the child looking away while the finger is touched with an unpared pencil. Then, using his/her free hand, the child looks and points to the finger that has been touched.

Phase 3 involves the child looking away while the administrator, using 2 unpared pencils, simultaneously touches 2 fingers on the child's preferred hand first. The child then points to the touched fingers in any order.

The 3 phases and sequence of fingers to be touched are set outint eh child's scorebooklet.

For Phase 1 the child sits at the table in the usual way and is able to view and point to the finger being touched.

Phases 2 & 3 require the child to look away. Therefore, the child is placed seated, with preferred hand turned up and arm stretched out on the table on a continuous line with his/her shoulder. The direction in which the child faces depends on the preferred hand. When the non-preferred hand is required then the child is seated facing in the opposite direction. In all cases the child may look when pointing to the touched finger.

The sequence of fingers to be touched on the preferred hand and non-preferred hand are detailed in the child's scorebooklet. This is for ease of practice and test item administration. A score of one is given for each finger, or fingers correctly

identified. The maximum score is 20. The child's score is entered on the Clipboard Item.

Task 18 – Rapid Automatised Naming (RAN): Objects

When an individual reads a word s/he must find a verbal label for the word in long-term memory in order to say the word. It is well known that slow naming of objects can occur in children at risk of literacy difficulties. These children tend to be searching for their words or use a technique of 'talking around' the word (e.g. a bicycle that doesn't go anywhere = an exercise bike). Their naming errors can also be phonological shadows of the required word (e.g. volcano for tornado). In our everyday lives we can experience difficulty known as the "tip of the tongue" phenomenon. We know that the word or phrase is in our brains, somewhere, but we have momentary difficulty in accessing it. Some struggling readers experience this on a regular basis.

Task 18 involves presenting a card to the child showing 20 pictures of objects which do not have alternative names.

The test administrator establishes that the child can name each object. This is called the familiarisation phase. The object names are set out in a grid in the child's scorebooklet.

If the child does not know the correct name for an object the child should be tutored and taught the correct name. When the name is not known and must be tutored then the task should be suspended for 30 minutes to ensure that the new word (s) is are entered in the child's long-term verbal memory.

The next phase is to inform the child that s/he will be naming the card of items **TWICE** as quickly as possible and that the test administrator will be using a stop-watch in order to time it.

The second time naming the objects is represented on the child's scorebooklet as Second Read Through on the word-grid. In the Manual at the end of RAN:Objects there is a page of pre-scoring information with which the test administrator needs to become acquainted. This relates to what to do in the event of:

- (a) The child losing his/her place
- (b) Incorrect naming of an object – a naming error which is marked as **E** in the word error grid where it occurred (First or Second Read Through)
- (c) Non response to name an object – marked as **N** in the grid where it belongs
- (d) Breath control

Pointing is discouraged. Children should not place 'the' or 'a' before the object name as this will add to the time score. When the child has finished naming the card (20 items) once, the test administrator draws the child's attention by pointing to the top of the card and it is named again as quickly as possible (40 items in all). A low score specified in seconds is a good performance.

For every naming error or non-response there is a penalty of 5 seconds. In the case of a non-response the test administrator simply provides the word after a 5 second delay. Naming time, naming error penalties and non-response penalties are entered into the appropriate boxes in the scorebooklet.

If the child loses his/her place 3 times then the tracking card (previously used in Task 5: RAN Digits) is used and a 10 second penalty is entered in the appropriate box. These 4 items are then added to acquire the RAN Objects Total Score in Seconds.

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Dr Pauline Cogan

Pauline Cogan is a primary school teacher with a long professional interest in literacy difficulties. She has worked as a class, learning support and resource teacher in a number of countries. She has also worked as a Neurolinguist treating people who experienced acquired brain injuries. Her interest in literacy failure led her to study special education and psychology. She also earned a M.Sc in Neurology and Linguistics from the School of Medicine and Pharmacy of the Free University of Brussels. In recent years Pauline has worked with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and before that has been engaged in full-time research in the School of Psychology at Trinity College Dublin where, in collaboration with teachers, she was developing an early screening test to predict which 5-6 year olds would experience literacy failure in their school careers. This work is now completed and was launched by The Minister for Education & Skills in June 2017.