

**Wellbeing and  
Community Partnerships  
Team, Family School  
Partnerships Convenor  
Team, CEOM Central and  
Regional Staff**

## **Master Class**

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Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2012**

# Welcome and taking stock

**Since we were together last year**

***What's gone well?***

***What are the critical issues that need addressing this year?***

***What questions would now do the 'heavy lifting' and need to frame our day?***

**Working in trios**

**Talk – listen – reflect**

## And looking back to Monday's session

1. What did we hear?
2. What struck us most strongly?
3. What implications does this have for our work this year?
4. What didn't we hear that we expected to hear?
5. What troubled us?
6. What delighted us?

# Let the questions do the heavy lifting

'Asking powerful questions can uncover the root of the challenges groups face when attempting to work together; the values, assumptions, perceptions and emotions that often lead to conflict rather than collaboration'.

Powerful questions create space for groups to reveal deep level differences'

Powerful questions are distinguished by –

- They invite exploration
- They resist easy answers
- They invoke strong passions

The Leaders' Edge – Palus & Horth  
Centre for Creative Leadership

# Achieving equity, excellence and closing the gap

	Role	Function	Activity
Leadership	Navigation	Securing the vision	Awareness
			Acceptance
			Advocacy
	Management	Organising	Analysis
			Action
			Application
	Partnership	Modelling partnership	Association
			Alignment
			Area focus

# Priorities set by groups on Monday National College

Define and refine priorities – have a limited number to allow for follow through, evaluation and data analysis

Develop an understanding of collective responsibility

Be clear about the ‘gap’ we want to address

Joint vision – school / community ‘brand’ / clarity on what we want to achieve ; clarity on what is unacceptable;

there is gradual buy in from senior leaders but not yet from rest of teaching staff

Strengthen team approach ( scaffold engagement so greater number feel they can get involved ) and focus on data

– let it drive where we go – know we are part of the problem

Expand the partnership to include local state schools

Greater awareness and access to community resources – to build the ‘40’ hours ‘entitlement’

Home learning v homework

How do we let parents know what we do ?

How do we better inform ourselves about our parents concerns ‘bringing up kids in today’s world’

How do we better educate, support and inform parents – so they value their role in their child’s learning

How do we understand parents better and how we can support them ?

How can we help parents with transition ?

How can we move from information giving to information sharing with parents – working as equals

How do we engage the whole community through what we say and what we do ( language and practice ) – and promote positive learning at home ( schooling / learning / educating )

How will we know – when something is embedded

Developing a ‘theory of the case’ for our work – the ‘why’

Sustaining change through change in people

Maintain this work as a priority

# Patterns of inequity – the lessons National College

**Evidence** is the engine for change – evidence gathering is often inspiring and always challenging, causing us to stop and think

**Student voice** is a powerful vehicle for challenging inequity – and means the teachers construct more ‘humanised views of the students and their families’, rather than merely see them as ‘underachieving exam performers’.

**Collaboration** creates the impetus to get things done and builds joint accountability

Collaboration based on equity creates a sense of **local responsibility** and **Agency** – all schools fail some children no matter how improving they are.

**Federations** and **partnerships** focused on reducing inequity are most successful *‘it shouldn’t matter what school they go to – I now feel I have a responsibility to all the students in the local area’.*

# The Extra Mile Project

What mattered

- National and local backing
- Other schools and partnership approach
- A framework without prescription – but high ambition
- Worked at multiple levels – child, parent and family, teacher, classroom and school
- The 'boring of hard boards' – i.e. building relationships with specific targeted interventions (summer schools etc)

Some money (in phase 1 but not phase 2) and deemed not important by schools

# Long term sustainable change and improvement

From projects to systemic change

From organisational to area based change

From find and fix to predict and prevent

From problems / solutions to wicked issues

*'national level strategies are important especially to address universal issues like child poverty, or poor literacy skills. But on their own they cannot engage with the complex ways in which living in particular places shapes people's life chances. People's identities and relationships, aspirations and opportunities, and health and well being are all shaped by where they live and what happens there. This means that initiatives which are able to engage with complex local dynamics have an important role to play in tackling links between education disadvantage and place.'*

## 2011 - autonomy

- **Funding for government national initiatives withdrawn**
- **No central guidance**
- **Services need to make savings**
- **Need to start to do things differently**

***'well thought out local action set to play a bigger role in tackling links between education disadvantage and place'***

## FEATURES

- They involve schools but not restricted wholly to a school improvement agenda
- Schools are partners - and other resources included
- More time is spent on understanding the needs of the area - not driven by the partner with the most money or 'head teachers and teachers hunches'.
- Use of performance indicators and neighbourhood statistics, by talking to the people who experience the issues
- New forms of governance are emerging - the partnerships are responsible for the improvement of individual services so much as for the well being of a whole area

### What's different?

- A commitment to understand and try to change the underlying conditions that give rise to the issues

### In the past -

- Poor attendance led to an attendance strategy, breakfast clubs, rewards
- Poor behaviour led to learning support, mentoring, alternative curriculum
- Low attainment led to study support, literacy and numeracy strategies
- When the money went to the initiatives, and the people involved in them went - and little had been done to tackle the underlying causes of the issue

***'area based initiatives are likely to be most effective where they understand fully what they are trying to intervene in - How the boundaries of the initiative are to be drawn and what interventions are likely to have an impact'***

# What have been the limits of past initiatives? National College

Targeting more resource in an area is not always effective and unlikely in current funding climate

Bending and changing available resource may be more beneficial

Too narrowly focused on school agenda

Aim needs to be broader to bring together broad coalition of partners focused on the aim

Short term (3-5 years) i.e. the life of a parliament

This has made it difficult to build up the momentum for change

Owned by professionals who move on when the money dries up

Dominated by the views of professionals

Don't fully understand and unable to call on a wider resource

# Design Features

**Based on rich understanding of the local area**

**Need to understand how different issues and areas work together to produce poor outcomes**

**Keep developing the picture as understanding grows**

**Outline strategy 10 - 15 - 20 years**

**Has to work at tackling some of the underlying dynamics of the area rather than simply tackling those surface level problems that immediately present themselves**

**Plan for its own transformation and transition**

**People will leave - plan to embed and be owned locally**

**Build a governance model that is inclusive**

**The biggest resource is people's time**

**Use it well**

**Outcomes will be uncertain if aims are long term**

**Have early feedback loops to provide information on where you are having an impact and where you are not having an impact**

**Review progress regularly**

**Learn from other local initiatives**

**Learn to blend the national and the local**

# Developing our leadership for long term sustainable change and improvement

An exploration of :

1. Appreciative enquiry
2. Contributive and Servant leadership

# Leading change through appreciative enquiry

- Organisations and communities are living human systems
- They respond to stimuli
- The more we enquire into an area the more understanding about it we generate
- Enquiry is not a pre-cursor to doing something it IS doing something

## Building engagement – building connection

*'With increasing numbers of people working on short term contracts or projects – they move on frequently in their jobs. People feel a need to press on to the next project – human contact is relegated to something of a luxury. As a consequence we experience a profound sense of disconnection in our work. The pressure is on us to perform but the tasks we need to undertake require us to make a deeper connection with one another. At the moment it feels like people knock into one another, bounce off and move on. It looks like a lot is happening – but actually there is no meaningful and lasting connection. This leaves everyone dissatisfied'*

Appreciative enquiry for change  
Lewis, Passmore and Cantore

# AI – Define, discover, dream,

**Define** the focus of inquiry – in positive terms  
'the **seeds of change** are implicit in the questions asked.  
'when was the last time this problem didn't exist- what was different then to now?'

**Discover** – the best of 'what is'

**Dream** – what could be; interviews/sharing/bring to life; 'how would life be if more of these good things happened more of the time ?'

**Design** – making decisions ; high level actions to support the dream – including '**provocative propositions**'; what stops us .....

**Destiny** – formation of action groups, '**declared intentions to act**'; and the start of the next stage of the work . Use of **generative questions** to build community  
'*if you could give one piece of advice to Mike that would help him with this commitment what would it be?*'

# The power of conversation in the change process

*'I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest human communication. Not mediation, negotiation problem solving, debate or public meetings. Simple truthful conversations where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard and we listen well'.*

*This means it is vital we are present open and curious. What passes for conversation in our daily experience is really about 'waiting to talk', rather than wanting to listen'.*

Margaret Wheatley

# What stops us – the fear of conversation

The fear of expressed emotion

The fear of being perceived as different from colleagues

The need to manage anxiety

The fear of being seen to 'waste time'

The fear of not 'getting on' and reaching a conclusion

The fear of not being able to handle the outcome

# Addressing the fear – strengthening our practice

Practice, practice, practice – till it becomes natural and not 'bolt on'

Be explicit about the value of the conversation

Ask for feedback

End with a reflection – this is how I now feel... this is what I noticed...

## Contributive leadership

` the conductor doesn't make a sound – the conductor who recognises that he doesn't make a sound can focus on making other people more powerful.  
The conductors job is neither to dominate or be dominated but to make sure every voice is heard'

Benjamin Zander  
Boston Philharmonic

- Contributive leadership is not success/failure leadership
- It tries to address a world where most people are competing for success, position and power
- It tries to address a context where blame, obstacles, threat and fault predominate

Contributive leadership shifts us away from self concern and engages us in a relationship with others that creates an area in which we make a difference

'a leader should never doubt for one moment the capacity of the people  
he or she is leading'

## Contributive leaders

1. Live in the world of 'possibility' - they distinguish stories that expand the self (and possibility) to those that limit it
2. Contributive leaders strive to understand 'what is' and build on it
3. They add value by being clear what collectively needs to be achieved
4. They know their strengths and use them wisely
5. They are patient
6. They are relational – contributive leadership is impossible without 'the other'
7. Are aware of their contribution and seek feedback
8. Are not fully in control of the outcome
9. Are not 'success or failure' leaders
10. Ask – what contribution can I make today and how

# Servant leaders

1. Listen receptively to what others have to say – seek to clarify the will of a group
2. Use empathy – assume positive intent
3. Use foresight – understand and learn from the past, the realities of the present and the likely (and unintended) consequences of a decision for the future
4. Expand awareness and perception
5. Have an ability to conceptualise and communicate ideas
6. Build community through their work and committed to the growth of people
7. Practice the art of contemplation
8. Recognise that servant leadership begins with a desire to change oneself

# Aware leaders

Aware leaders are mindful

They listen and watch within

They listen and watch 'without'

At times of change effective leaders are aware of their blind spots

3 types of mind

**Socialized mind** – what I think others want to hear

**Self actualised mind** – what I want others to hear because it helps my agenda; it also filters what it wants to hear – i.e. filters out what it doesn't agree with

**Self transforming mind** – doesn't filter for the design or plan, but ask questions about it. Lets others know that anything that doesn't agree with their challenge will be welcomed

Immunity to change

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*"Your time is limited so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your inner voice – and most important have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."*

Steve Jobs



# Developing our leadership for a year of transformation and sustainable change

## Pair – share

1. When have you seen another leader act as a contributive or servant leader?
2. What happened?
3. What was the outcome?

## Group

1. What struck you?
2. What leadership skills and behaviours do you want to collectively develop to lead the work over the next 18 months?
3. How can you help each other to do that?

# Releasing our power and potential

In order to meet our objectives for the next 18 months

In order to have move to an embedded and sustainable approach

- We probably need to do less to achieve more – what are our highest yielding strategies/activities/initiatives?
- What is distracting us – what is time hungry but impact poor?
- We probably need to slow down to speed up
- We probably need to spend as much time analysing, communicating and influencing as we need to spend time doing
- We probably need to spend as much time on developing the capability of ourselves and others as we do on delivery

So where do we put our efforts

# For me the best piece of advice I have taken from Michael Fullan is .....

*'Mobilise the social attractors – moral purpose, quality relationships, quality knowledge and ideas'*

Why? Because we need .....

- Patterns of **concentrated effort** among educators
- Joint commitment to **sustained effort**
- An approach based on increasing **knowledge & learning** – personal / joint and new
- **Trust** so people who are more likely to carry on doing the wrong thing well will risk looking less confident and credible by starting to do the right thing poorly.

*'we must design our work so that it strengthens the power of the attractors'*

## A focus on priorities

A year from now the following actions, behaviours, and outcomes will characterise our work

*We will see .....*

In order to achieve this I need to .....

The help I need from my colleagues is .....