

The Teaching and Learning Research Programme in Wales: Social Inclusion

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The TLRP in Wales

Research evidence for educational policy and practice in Wales

The Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) (www.tlrp.org/), funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), is the largest single programme of educational research ever commissioned in the UK. The programme consisted of 52 separate large scale projects, covering every part of the education system from early years to lifelong learning.

As the TLRP moved into its closing stages, the ESRC, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and the Welsh Educational Research Network (WERN), came together to commission a final project designed to explore the implications of the findings from this major research programme for Welsh educational policy and practice.

Coordinated by John Furlong of Oxford University, four teams of researchers from across Wales have reviewed the findings from the TLRP in relation to four key areas of Welsh policy identified by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The four policy issues were:

- The Foundation Phase
- Improving Teaching for the 7–14 age range
- Social Inclusion
- Improving Learning by Taking Account of Learners' Perspectives.

The outcome of the reviews is a series of posters and briefing papers aimed at bringing findings from this major research programme to policy makers and practitioners across Wales. The reports represent the findings of independent research teams; they do not therefore necessarily reflect the views of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Executive Summary

The word 'inclusion' has gained in influence, and been used with increasing frequency, in education over recent years. The term might refer to disabled students or those who have special educational needs; it might be used in response to disciplinary exclusion; and it's a term generally used, including in this report, when defining the reduction of barriers to learning for all groups seen as vulnerable to exclusion.ⁱ

The term 'social exclusion' has been widely used by social policy makers to describe new and complex patterns of poverty and disadvantage which have emerged in post-industrial Britain. In this context, social inclusion refers to the development of policies and strategies to re-connect excluded people with mainstream society and with the full range of public services, including education.ⁱⁱ

Our review of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) examines evidence about how to improve the educational performance of the most disadvantaged sections of

the population. These include those from lower socio-economic backgrounds or ethnic minority communities, those with disabilities, and other identities currently disadvantaged in the education system.

All of the projects within the TLRP have findings which can suggest how we can improve the quality of teaching and learning, and potentially this will have positive benefit for learners who may be at risk of exclusion. However, for this review, we have chosen to focus on projects which speak to issues of direct relevance to social inclusion. From the review of TLRP Projects we have identified three key themes for Welsh policy and practice: *A whole environment model of education*, *The inclusive practitioner*, and *The need for multi-agency working*.

These themes provide the basis for a review of the current School Effectiveness Framework and suggest models of implementation which can facilitate the development of inclusive educational practice in Wales.

1. Key finding:

A whole environment model for education

A whole environment model of education, which places the learning institution and the learner in a wider context of home and community relationships and recognises their impact on the learning process, is critically important. TLRP findings identify many challenges which disadvantaged learners experience. They suggest that one important way to address these challenges is by reducing the separation that is often experienced by learners between home and school lives.

Major implications:

Educators need to recognise that if the cultural knowledge and practices of the community are brought into school/college life, they can become an asset which enhances the delivery of the curriculum, engages learners, and empowers those who may be experiencing exclusion.

2. Key finding:

The inclusive practitioner

TLRP research looks at the challenge of enhancing teachers' inclusive practice and how this challenge can be met. The studies reviewed recommend the

use of 'action research', which can allow teachers to re-evaluate professional values, beliefs and practices and think about and challenge widely held assumptions, in order to develop new professional skills and perspectives.

Major implications:

Schools and local authorities can create conditions in which action research can be introduced and teacher engagement sustained.

3. Key finding:

The need for multi-agency working

The TLRP project reviewed suggests that more effective collaboration between educational professionals and a wide range of agencies impacts on the learners' experience and can be developed through professionals being more responsive and open; the development of new tools and processes for sharing knowledge; increased practitioner awareness of their own and other professionals' skills; and, above all, a clear focus on the needs of the child within a wide context.

Major implications:

Care professionals and local authorities can use multi-agency collaboration as an opportunity to develop new and expansive ways of working together which will benefit the wellbeing of the child.

The Research Evidence

1. A whole environment model of education

Projects consulted:

Bilingual Literacies for Learning in Further Education

www.tlrp.org/proj/martin-jones.html

Community Based Learning in FE Colleges

www.tlrp.org/proj/phase111/gallacher.htm

Home-School Knowledge Exchange and Transformation in Primary Education

www.tlrp.org/proj/phase11/phase2e.html

Identity and Learning Programme

www.tlrp.org/proj/phase111/ILP.html

Learning Lives: Learning, Identity and Agency in the Life Course

www.tlrp.org/proj/phase111/biesta.htm

The Historical, Political and Pedagogic Significance of Pupil Voice

www.tlrp.org/proj/phase1/phase1esept.html

Understanding and Developing Inclusive Practices in Schools

www.tlrp.org/proj/phase1/phase1asept.html

Much of the TLRP research that has been reviewed points to a complex interaction between the learner, the educational setting and the wider social environment in determining the outcomes that result from education. The learner's day-to-day interactions with family, friends and community all contribute to the development of the learner's identity and their educational progress. Therefore the findings suggest that improving educational effectiveness cannot solely be confined to change within school or college, but must involve engagement by the educational setting with this wider environment.

The Learning Lives Project (LLP)

This TLRP project provides valuable insights into the complexities of learning over a lifespan. The research focused on how people learn from reflecting on their lives: reflection is 'often but not exclusively triggered by significant life changing events'ⁱⁱⁱ. It identifies the importance, for learning, of social networks – including the family, local community, workplaces, education institutions, leisure and voluntary activities.

The project's findings further identify that 'a major limitation on the learning of some people is the impoverishment of the learning cultures in which they engage'^{iv}. Prominent among the suggested remedies is planned personal support for the learner. Support may be practice-based or informally offered by social networks of friends, colleagues, family and local community. The researchers believe that the use of technology can enhance opportunities for social interaction, collaboration and shared learning activities; for example they found that young women who have become parents can prefer to learn at home, and can benefit from on-line support.

They identify that contact with rich learning cultures may be difficult for the least advantaged sectors of society. People who are not in employment lack the opportunity for work-based learning, and those who live in deprived areas may not have access to high-quality formal or informal learning environments. Local or outreach activities are recommended as 'critical' in order to expand provision for personal support and learning. For example, a local learning facility and/or sports provision has a great potential to enhance the learning culture of an inner city area or isolated rural community. It can provide not just access to formal 'one off' learning opportunities (which may, for example, be associated with a

particular funding initiative) but continuity and an ongoing resource for the longer term.

The Community Based Learning in Further Education Colleges Project (CBL)

The findings of the CBL project reinforce this. This study provides evidence that Community Learning Centres linked to Further Education (FE) colleges provide a learning environment which is very effective in achieving the re-engagement of adult learners who are at risk of exclusion. This is because Community Learning Centres are small, accessible, community based places with a welcoming and informal atmosphere. Tutors offer support which builds learner confidence and extends to the learner's personal, emotional and social lives. The researchers recommend that this type of education setting should be given greater status in the FE system, and that more resources should be dedicated to providing guidance, mentoring, and bridging courses for students, and appropriate support given to staff. The LLP and CBL projects both highlight the importance of 'nesting' education in a supportive and community-friendly environment in order to engage members of vulnerable groups.

The Identity and Learning Programme (ILP)

ILP researchers studied a group of children for the duration of their school life, which provided valuable insights about the interaction between different social and cultural influences in a child's life, and the key role that school has to play in the development of a young person's identity and aspiration. The researchers suggest that an education system that emphasises only formal aspects of learning is paying attention to only one part of the picture. The curriculum should not be narrowly subject- or skill-based, particularly because the evidence indicates that this may unfairly favour children who come from cultures which are in step with those of the school. Researchers from the ILP project suggest that the curriculum should embrace an enriched interpretation of learning, which includes the skills needed for lifelong learning (such as open-mindedness, self-reflection and judgement); an understanding about how to employ learning strategies; and also

personal, social and moral education. In this way the learner can grow in skill, knowledge and personal confidence.

The findings of this study have contributed to the debates which have informed national curriculum changes in the UK since 1999, and provide affirmative evidence for the current direction of curriculum change in Wales. The ILP also identifies the ‘funds of knowledge’¹ possessed by skilled working-class families, challenging the notion of ‘non-supportive working-class parents’.

The Home School Knowledge Exchange (HSKE) Project

This project found that teachers often fail to realise that there may be rich cultural resources and support in ethnic minority and working-class families. The project identified the advantages of bringing home-based knowledge into the school: these support a more diverse practice and a curriculum geared to life situations rather than artificially devised classroom scenarios.

The project explored ways in which knowledge could be transferred from:

- **School to the home** (i.e. to parents/carers): for example, taking a video of a maths class which showed parents how maths is taught in school. (Additional benefits of this were that parents realised how hard their children were working in school and showed increased respect towards teachers).
- **Home to the school**, for example: sending a shoebox home and asking children to fill it with their favourite things, around which activities were then designed. (Additional benefits here were that normally shy children became more forthcoming when speaking about familiar loved items).

Strategies developed for literacy and numeracy in order to involve so-called ‘hard-to-reach’ families were found to be extremely successful in several cases. It was found that involving parents in this way can reduce barriers between school and families, including disadvantaged homes, and so contributing to a reduction of the effects of inequality. Providing school activities are sensitively planned, so that they do not devalue home based culture, it can demonstrate to the child that home and school

cultures are both valued and important for learning. By doing this, schools acknowledge home lives (including those in working-class communities) as a source of important knowledge and understanding for the pupil’s learning and development. HSKE activities can have a significant impact on children’s attainment, although this effect was not found uniformly across every subject area. At transition to secondary school, children who had attended schools which carried out HSKE activities made significantly better progress in reading than children who had not.

The Bilingual Literacies for Learning in Further Education Project

This research similarly identifies that education providers must be sensitive to the needs and practices of the community when developing programmes of study. Their focus was the Welsh-speaking community. For example, they suggest that the bilingual literacy practices from students’ lives outside college could be harnessed as resources for learning. The study concludes that account should be taken by FE colleges of new forms of spoken and written communication in Welsh, as well as bilingual ways of using and producing texts when developing new courses.

Overall, the critical importance of a positive relationship between home and school was a recurring finding of the projects reviewed – learning must draw from and be informed by home as well as school experiences. According to the ILP, pupil identities – which are constructed from a complex interaction of family, community and school experiences – become fragile when they are not in tune with the school culture of teaching and academic practice. The ILP researchers identify critical periods in a pupil’s career, for example at the transfer to secondary school or in the pre-GSCE period. At these important times of change and challenge, the child’s developing identity is more vulnerable and exposed to positive and negative influences. When, at these times, the learner’s home and school identities fail to resonate, identity fragmentation can occur with negative consequences for the child. A number of projects have findings which highlight the failure of schools and colleges to understand, and engage with groups at risk of exclusion:

- The ILP found that working-class parents sometimes lacked sufficient confidence when dealing with formal organisations; they tended

to be more trusting and less challenging of school systems than their middle-class counterparts.

- The HSKE project describes how schools hold mistaken assumptions about working-class and ethnic minority home cultures.
- The Pupil Voice (PV) project points to failures of engagement with issues of gender and ethnicity, but above all social class, in primary and secondary education.

The Identity and Learning Programme and the Learner Voice projects provide evidence of potential tensions between standard assessment techniques and learner identities and home cultures. Standard assessment practices systematically disadvantage particular gender, ethnic, social and disability groups. In addition, a system of assessment that results in learner classification, especially when used summatively, will tend to reinforce social divisions. In such situations, grouping of children by ‘ability’ (‘setting’) is likely to make matters worse for those who are not as well socially integrated. Therefore a more flexible, formative approach to assessment will recognise and celebrate a wider range of skills, and will be more inclusive of diversity.

Understanding and Developing Inclusive Practices in Schools (UDI) project

This project identifies a tension between national policies of testing and raising standards, and local school practices of inclusion. The former necessitate

an emphasis on aggregation of test scores, and the latter require more individualised interventions which recognise individual learner identities and family cultures. Similarly, in much adult learning, the emphasis on formal and employment-related outcomes does not seem relevant or provide motivation for many students at FE level.

Significantly for the social inclusion agenda, the LLP describes how current strategies and provision for adult formal learning in the UK have tended to focus on short courses and training related to employment. As a consequence, there may be a lack of opportunity for those not in employment, or those in areas where there are fewer jobs. Researchers identify a tension between policy goals which aim to achieve employment, personal change and greater inclusion for trainees, and the possibly contradictory focus on short training courses aimed at the acquisition of narrowly defined qualifications. The evidence also suggests a difference between the value placed on learning in policy documentation and individual perceptions of the value of learning in people’s lives. The research suggests that people value learning for diverse reasons which will vary according to their changing circumstances. It may be that normally they only wish to support daily living, but this can change at important points of transition and with a development of self-confidence or self identity. The findings point to the need for learning experiences and courses that are of a longer duration, which will encourage higher levels of involvement, and which, in turn, will be more likely to promote and sustain personal development. Therefore there needs to be diversity in the range of courses and the choice of providers available to adult learners throughout their lives.

Case study

Theme:

A whole environment model of education

Project title:

Home-School Knowledge Exchange and Transformation in Primary Education

Mathematics has been identified as an area where teaching in the classroom can become detached from

experience of maths in the everyday world^{vi}. During the HSKE project, learners were encouraged to make a video of themselves doing everyday activities that happened to involve maths and bring it into school. These videos showed a range of activities undertaken in the home, some culturally specific, which teachers had not been aware of:

- Saqib (living in Bristol) is regarded as ‘lazy’ and possibly ADHD by his teachers. However the video of him working at home shows he has to do his homework in a crowded and noisy shared living space. An activity he regularly undertakes at home is to collect loose change which has fallen on the floor of his father’s taxi

and count it. This money goes to charity; giving to charity is one of the five Pillars of Islam, and this activity can be seen as not only developing his maths ability but also his understanding of the principles of the Muslim community to which his family belongs and his awareness of wider social responsibilities.

- There were many ways in which Nadia's family (who live in Cardiff) were seen to be engaged in supporting her maths abilities in the video. Of particular interest was a scene where Nadia counts using not her fingers, as in white European cultures, but her finger joints, in Bengali style. Nadia was quite shy about this different way of counting and preferred not to have it widely known at school that she practised it.
- Ellie (home city not specified) filmed herself working out how much food her neighbour would need to give her cat while she was on holiday. The amount of cat food depended on the weight of the cat but when Ellie tried to put her cat on the scales, it kept walking off, so Ellie weighed herself holding the cat, then without the cat, took one figure away from the other and then multiplied the amount of food by the weight of the cat, and the number of days she would be away.

Comment:

The HSKE project showed that children use maths every day in many situations, which the researchers divided into three groups: play and games, authentic household activities, and school-like activities. Play and games included many culturally specific games which involved counting. Authentic household activities included Saqib's collection of loose change, and also helping parents out shopping. School-like activities included not only homework provided by the school but the use of commercially available maths books.

Key questions:

How can thinking about the 'hard to reach' family become thinking about the 'easy to access' school? What activities will best contribute to teachers' understanding of knowledge developed in the home and community? Could transition activities used in this project to ease the transition between primary and secondary school be adapted to ease transition up from the Foundation Phase?

2. The inclusive practitioner

Projects consulted:

Facilitating Teacher Engagement in More Inclusive Practice

www.tlrp.org/proj/smbdavies.html

The Historical, Political and Pedagogic Significance of Pupil Voice

www.tlrp.org/proj/phase1/phase1esept.html

Understanding and Developing Inclusive Practices in Schools

www.tlrp.org/proj/phase1/phase1asept.html

Many TLRP projects identify the essential importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for improved pedagogy and the opportunities that it provides for promoting change. For example, findings from the PV project emphasise the need for initial teacher education to include coverage of working-class cultures. It is suggested that this had until recently been a strong feature of teacher

training and there is a danger that teachers who are now in training may have a poor understanding of children who come from economically disadvantaged communities.

Understanding and Developing Inclusive Practices in Schools (UDI) and Facilitating Teacher Engagement in More Inclusive Practice (FTE)

Our review focused on two research projects which researched how the development of teachers' practice can increase inclusion. UDI explored the value of collaborative action research networks as a method for supporting teacher development. FTE, a Welsh project, extended this focus to study the factors that helped and hindered the use of action research by secondary schools to develop inclusion.

The FTE study found that although teachers could quite readily define the term 'inclusion', they were much less certain of what it meant in practice. Both the UDI and FTE projects provide evidence that appropriate development of teacher professional practice can help to increase inclusion. The researchers acknowledge that the development

of inclusive practice can be challenging. This is because it may involve practitioners revisiting and re-evaluating professional values, beliefs and practices and thinking about and challenging widely held assumptions, in order to develop new professional skills and perspectives.

Both studies identified the use of action research as an effective 'change tool' that is able to create opportunities for teacher collaboration and teacher reflection. It was observed that when action research works well, it acts as both a catalyst and a support to the development of new classroom practice. The UDI study explains that action research can build a context for what is termed 'interruptions' to occur. 'Interruptions' create space to re-evaluate and change existing practice. Pupil perspectives are particularly effective as 'interruptions', because they cause teachers to pause and see things from a different and clearly relevant point of view. They found that when a small 'space' was created from all the other competing demands of daily school life, teachers could meet and collaborate to plan an action research project. This would involve teachers in rethinking assumptions for example based around additional/special learning needs and start to develop more appropriate practice in the context of the diversity of their classrooms. A common feature of action research is collaboration, and both the UDI and FTE studies demonstrate the effectiveness of joint working both within and between schools.

UDI reported that collaborative action research could relatively easily be implemented at a whole-school level in primary schools, leading to changes in thinking and practice, as long as a climate of support was available from the school leadership, from the local authority and from other schools. In secondary schools, by comparison, there was less evidence of significant change, and this finding was one stimulus for the development of the Welsh extension project. FTE, working in seven secondary schools, was able to identify key characteristics which, if present in the teacher action research group, would act to promote its effectiveness. These are teacher ownership of the process; willingness and support from the school and the teachers themselves to enable effective

collaboration; and critical interaction by the teachers with new evidence.

How certain aspects of school planning and organisation are handled was also found to be important for success - for example: Senior managers need to understand and value the process of action research for teacher development, and not only focus on the outcome or product. How the action research group is formed, structured and organised is very important to sustain teacher collaboration and ownership. For example, one school asked school departments to apply and make a case for having the teacher project, and this proved very fruitful in stimulating early interest and support. In order to create wider impact, the ongoing process must to be embedded in daily life at the school – one school had a white board in the staff room that kept other teachers informed of the thinking and discussion of the action research group, and invited comments (written or spoken) about developments as they occurred.

How the action research was facilitated also made a huge difference to the depth of teacher engagement. For example, the group discussion and planning needs to be coordinated by a facilitator who knows about action research, understands issues that impact on inclusion, and has good facilitation skills. FTE used the school's educational psychologist – which also brought a valuable external perspective to the teachers' discussions. The team of educational psychologists and researchers who worked on the FTE project developed a repertoire of facilitation skills which are outlined at www.educationalinclusion.org

The research found that involving the pupils in the development of action research projects led to inclusive change for both teachers and pupils. For example, evidence gathered by FTE researchers found that teachers' engagement with action research projects usually led to some impact on pupils' learning, and sometimes to dramatic change. More information about this, and the project as a whole, is summarised on the GTC Research for Teachers website.^{viii}

Case study

Theme:

The inclusive practitioner

Project title:

Facilitating Teacher Engagement in More Inclusive Practice

Main Road School is a mixed urban comprehensive school with 1,100 pupils. Three history teachers worked together on the action research project. They identified a shared, meaningful, relevant and actionable focus for their project: getting girls more enthusiastic about history. 'Disaffected girls' were causing the teachers some difficulties and distress in lessons. The teachers were assisted in the project by the school's educational psychologist (EP). He helped to keep the project moving along by meeting with the teachers every half term, to facilitate their thinking and discuss their progress. In the initial

sessions, the teachers explained the girls' behaviour with reference to their socio-economic background. The EP listened and acknowledged their feelings, but, through gentle questions, moved their thinking along more constructive avenues. They decided to modify their practice in two ways that they hoped would increase the girls' engagement – they created a student council for history but ensured that a target group of disaffected girls were represented. They also set up a 'learner voice box' via which learners could make anonymous suggestions about improving lessons.

These actions seemed to be rather disappointing in their impact. But they began to start the group really thinking. The teachers constructed an observation schedule and observed one another teaching the target girls; they shadowed some of the girls for a day; and observed how they behaved in other lessons. The EP commented: 'I was fair buzzing with excitement after meeting this week with the history group at Main Road – they keep doing interesting things, and there was some really interesting reflection on the whys and wherefores!'

The teachers' talk began to change away from the tendency to blame the learners, relying more on evidence from the observations. It began to change their practice – for example, one teacher reported that, as a consequence, she 'increased questioning of the target girls, more drama, more student voice, asked other staff for opinions, creating learning

targets every lesson [often based on behaviour rather than subject content], raffle for engagement to win chocolate'.

Towards the end of the year for which the project lasted, the teachers reported that it had made a real and positive difference to the engagement of some of the target girls, and led to new teaching and observation practices that had been disseminated throughout the school.

Comment:

This case study illustrates how the teachers' engagement with, and reflection about, evidence that they had collected helped them to deepen their understanding of the girls. By doing so, their professional perspective changed from a tendency to blame the home culture of the girls to seeking the solution in their own classroom practice.^{ix}

Key questions:

What do we mean by inclusive practice? How does action research help teachers reflect on their practice? Why might reflecting about practice bring about changes in practice that increase inclusion?

3. The need for multi-agency working

Project consulted:

Learning in and for Interagency Working

www.tlrp.org/proj/phase111/daniels.htm

Learning in and for Inter-agency Working (LIW)
The studies reviewed under a whole environment model of education support the view that learners exist within a complex social world in which the education setting is only one element. Their findings provide evidence for why a school or college must not become a silo in which educational needs are separate from the wider social, cultural and emotional needs of the learner. Effective coordination between different aspects of a learner's life, particularly a learner at risk of exclusion, require sound multi-agency working, in which the school and the teacher will be only one partner in a complex of service providers attending to the comprehensive needs of the child.

The findings of the LIW study point to ways in which multi-agency working can improve practice in related professional fields. The study identifies an emerging pattern of collaborative working referred to as 'co-configuration', in which a 'range of agencies and otherwise loosely connected professionals are required to collaborate with young people and their families to develop forms of support over extended periods of time'. This term is similar in implication to the term 'co-production of services' employed in the Beecham Review^x and is a 'participatory' model in which clients become one element in the interagency relationships.

These dynamic, flexible and changing collaborations, focused on specific clients, are referred to as 'knotworking', and are distinct from conventional concepts of team working or partnership. Knotworking is characterised by distributed expertise where professionals with responsibility for interventions may not share similar expertise, may have different physical and organisational locations and may only meet fleetingly.

Case study

Theme:

The need for multi-agency working

Project title:

Learning in and for Inter-agency Working

The overall study took place in a range of multi-professional settings. For example, in the pilot stage, the research team worked with a Youth Offending Team consisting of social services, probation, police, parenting, education and substance misuse professionals. Later studies were located in three separate local authorities and included an 'extended school' setting, a 'children in public care team' and multi-professional educational team.

Central to the implications of the research are the ways in which professionals collaboratively develop new models of working which challenge accepted and routine methods of working. The following extract from the LIW briefing 'Intervention and changes in practice' highlights the nature of changing professional practice that emerges when the child becomes the central focus of actions rather than the standard institutional procedures.

'For example, an attendance officer made direct (mobile phone mediated) contact with a psychologist in order to ensure that a child who was not attending school could get access to support for the bullying she experienced and her difficulties in learning. The traditional pattern of communication would have been for the attendance officer to ensure the child returned to school (which she did not) and that her difficulties with bullying and learning were reported to the school. The attendance officer 'broke the rule' of instituting attendance procedures and also subverted the traditional pattern of reporting. When the psychologist engaged with the child she also made enquiries at the school, they responded that her [the

child's] needs were not a priority and that the school's allocation of psychological support should not be expended on this learner.^{xi} Despite the perspective of the school, the psychologist decided to maintain engagement with child.

In this case the professionals varied the normal procedures in order to make the needs of the child the dominant priority. This was because the new and emergent practices of the MPT [Multi-Professional Team] were focused on 'a moral and ideological commitment to the needs of the whole child, rather than the services that have existed'^{xii}. Therefore the attendance officer and psychologist subverted the former patterns of professional practice to accomplish this goal. Interestingly, the professionals involved in this new form of practice seemed to be unaware that they were acting in a different or novel way. However, 'driven by this emergent ideology of the new interagency formation, the old rules of the individual services were bent and broken'.^{xiii}

Comment:

The example aptly demonstrates the impact of expansive learning on professional practice and the improved outcome that can be experienced by the service user. Co-configuration moves beyond mere partnership working to develop professional practice which centres on the needs of the learner.

Key questions:

How can we focus better on the 'whole child' or learner within multi-professional practice? How can we develop inter-professional 'knot-working' which shares knowledge and promotes cultural and structural change within professions? How can we facilitate 'risk-taking' and rule-change which leads to more effective practice?

By sharing expertise, different professionals are able to experience challenges and 'interruptions' to received ways of working, a process which encourages rule-change and the emergence of more effective practice. Individual knowledge and skill-sets are also enhanced, promoting 'expansive learning', in which practitioners come to share one another's

professional expertise. The researchers describe the key features of this approach: being more responsive and open; developing tools and processes for knowledge-sharing; increasing practitioner awareness of their own and other professionals' skills; and, above all, focusing on the needs of the child within the wider context.

Further Insights

This review of TLRP findings identifies a number of issues which are of importance for the development of educational policy and practice in Wales.

A significant contribution to educational exclusion is the failure of school/college structures – curriculum, assessment, school organisation – to take account of the influences of the wider family and cultural environment on the progress and outcomes of learning.

Wales has made important strides in this direction – most notably new curriculum developments in the pre-statutory school years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 4, and the new arrangements made for national curriculum assessment. However, we believe the clearest policy implications are for the School Effectiveness Framework. The School Effectiveness Framework refers to the importance of ‘working with others’. This section of the framework includes many factors which influence improvement for children and young people at risk of exclusion, and clearly addresses a number of the issues raised in this review. Nevertheless, the outcomes of this review would suggest that the family and community element needs to underpin other sections of the framework, such as curriculum and teaching. The framework shows a tri-level relationship between

the Welsh Assembly Government, local authority, school and classroom, and points to the interaction of these different levels of the education system. In the adapted diagram that we present here, we have included the additional dimension of parents, carers and community in equal collaboration with the original three.

We acknowledge that it may not be realistic to expect that the framework be redrawn in this way. Nevertheless, one implication of the findings of the review is that acknowledgement and involvement of family and community culture is a critical requirement for school effectiveness and that it is necessary to secure an improvement of outcomes for the most disadvantaged and excluded.

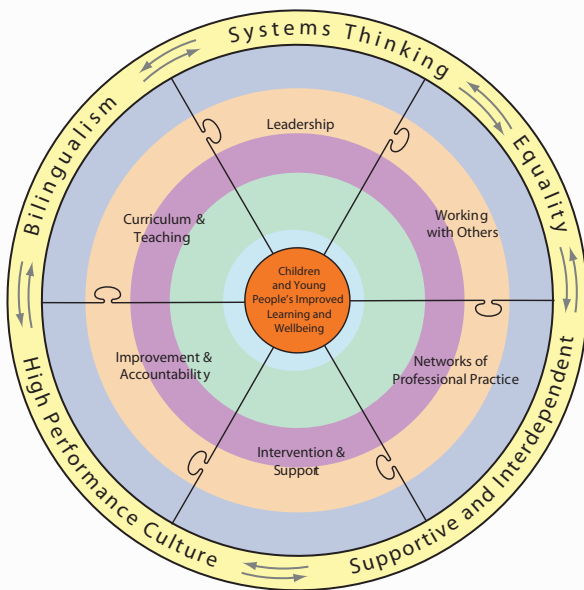
Some of the projects reviewed, for example, the Home-School Knowledge Exchange Project, offer suggestions for practice that can stimulate and support home school links which build pupil participation and achievement.

The role of the teacher is central to the development of inclusive practice.

Action research can be an effective way to engage teachers and pupils in the process of classroom change, TLRP evidence shows. This is echoed in the ‘Networks of Professional Practice’ segment of the framework, which recognises that these should be ‘inquiry driven’ and promote ‘shared beliefs and understandings’. The evidence presented in this report indicates that this type of CPD can develop inclusiveness, and the projects reviewed, for example the Facilitating Teacher Engagement in More Inclusive Practice Project, offer helpful insights into the school structures that can enable teachers’ reflective practice. The findings of the TLRP projects can be used to support the implementation of the framework in relation to educational inclusion.

For learners experiencing or at risk of exclusion, effective multi agency working is crucial.

The Beecham Report and The Making the Connections Agenda both call for more effective inter-agency collaboration. The ‘Working with Others’ component of the framework acknowledges the importance of schools, local authorities and Government working together in a collaborative way to improve school effectiveness. The outcomes from the review would suggest that new ways need to be explored that will improve the efficacy of joint working. The Learning in and for Inter-agency Working Project provides suggestions for how to



Welsh Assembly Government	Local Authority	Parents/Carers and wider community	School	Classroom

develop new kinds of practice which focus effort on the learner, while still maintaining a flexible and reliable network of support from the inter-agency collaboration.

The outcomes of this review offer much support to the 'direction of travel' of Welsh Assembly Government Policy for social inclusion. However although there is considerable harmony between the evidence and Government policy, the TLRP findings can also offer areas for challenge as well as examples of evidence based practice that could be adopted in Wales and which will improve the effectiveness of education for those most at risk from social exclusion.

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Notes

- i. Ainscow et al, 2006
- ii. Adamson, 2009
- iii. Biesta et al 2008: 5
- iv. Biesta et al 2008: 7
- v. Moll, 1992
- vi. Nunes et al., 1993, Baker, Street and Tomlin 2003
- vii. www.educationalinclusion.org
- viii. www.gtce.org.uk/teachers/rft/inclusion1009/
- ix. More information about this and other case studies from this project can be found in: Howes, A . et al (2008) *Improving the Context for Inclusion*, London: Routledge
- x. www.wlga.gov.uk/english/beechem-review2/
- xi. p.4
- xii. Ibid
- xiii. Ibid