CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP

with prospective leaders of practice in the early years

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Introduction

- Early findings of an interventionist research project evaluating a 2yr pilot route to Early Years Professional Status within BA(Hons) Early Childhood at UW.
- EYPS: new graduate status for leading practice with children under 5yrs in full day care and Children's Centres.
- Pilot route commissioned by CWDC 2008: to inform national roll-out.
- Initial interviews with candidates *to identify orientation towards leading practice* on entry to the pathway .

Structure: Context of the pilot

Aims and Approach of the project

Methodology and Emerging Findings

Way forward

Context

- An EYP is a **pedagogical leader** who can have "a strong influence on quality and therefore on children's success" (DCSF 2009;p.43). An 'agent of change'.

PROJECT AIMS:

- To work with candidates own aspirations
- Achieve EYPS
- Develop effective leaders of practice
- Contribute better outcomes for children

Starting with the candidates

In the pilot: we are starting from candidates own perceptions and working collectively with their **motivation, concept of the leadership role, aspirations and analysis of need.**

Leadership: social construct in an historical and cultural context- important to identify what people think about it (Avery 2004).

Leadership: becoming increasingly collaborative (Bennis 2007) , *'participatory, non-hierarchical, flexible and group-orientated'* (Billing and Alvesson 2000: p.144)

Methodology

- Our approach: co-construction, responsive pedagogic process, capable of and subject to change and transformation. (socio-cultural and activity theory.) Vygotsky 1962, Leontiev 1972 cited in Warmington et al 2009).

- Developmental Work Research (Engestrom 2001 cited in Warmington et al 2009) workshops to question and develop new patterns of professional activity.

FINDINGS: Initial interviews

MOTIVATION

Committed: Satisfaction and enjoyment *'you always get something back' ' everyday is different'*

Persistent, long-standing interest .

Ambition and Drive: '*better career prospects' 'extra qualification', 'more professional skills'*

Sense of Mission/ improvement orientation: *'be a positive influence' 'make a difference' 'gain the skills to change things', 'to be there for children'*

Self-belief: Personal skill or ability

"Effective leadership results in a high degree of satisfaction that we are doing or achieving something worthwhile.." (Gill 2006:p.10)

Perception of leading practice

Leading positively:

Inspire, motivate, make it happen, try new things, be accountable

Communicate well: interact professionally, listen, professional contact with all

Involve others: work with different ideas, lead as part of the team

Be knowledgeable: for professional trust, develop others, advise, show deep understanding, stay current.

Common goals: share goals, carry them out, work to same goals.

Continuous development: yours and others

Organised

Confident

They have a passion for young children/about the job.

puts children's needs first, at the heart of what they do.

Integrity

Commitment (moral purpose)

Personal skills and qualities

They are guided by a common morality and want to make a difference to children's lives.

LEADER ASPIRATION

They work collaboratively with others and have the whole place as a community.

Confidence (knowledge)

Relationships

They understand children and involve them in decisions, recognise difference and diversity.

Advocacy & Inclusivity

They don't neglect other people or their ideas.

What was needed? Self-Leadership (Gill 2006)

Interview data	1st DWR workshop priorities
Confidence (people and children)	▸ Professional confidence
Personal qualities and skills (organisation, reflection, listening, patience, relationships, drive)	▸ personal qualities
Knowledge (professional, academic, and self-knowledge)	▸ theory into practice
Experience (professional practice)	▸ Skills and knowledge
Leadership qualities (unspecified)	▸ risk taking

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