

The Attainment Challenge: Leadership, Learning and Success

Dunfermline, October 1st 2015

Welcome to Dunfermline

- Serve your Community
 - Generations who have experienced school at the heart of their community. Scotland retains strong community education.
- Find your Passion
 - When a young person is encouraged to find their passion it can be the beginning of a lifelong personal journey
- Celebrate Successes
 - Within every community there are success stories. Scots have not been great at sharing and enjoying each other's successes

The Attainment Challenge

- Identify the Challenge
 - The gap in educational attainment between low-income and high-income households in Scotland starts early. By age 5, it is 10–13 months. Lower attainment in literacy and numeracy is linked to deprivation throughout primary school.
 - Parental socio-economic background has more influence than the school attended.
- Reframe the Opportunity
 - It is easy to capitulate and outsource all responsibility for effecting change
 - To help colleagues reframe how we perceive this context knowing that there are interventions which will make a sustainable difference
- Park Pre-Judgments
 - The most worrying situation arises when we make premature judgments about a child's potential based on factors over which they have no control
 - Elect to use positive language avoid negative stereotyping and over-use of 'inhibitory' labels
- Support your Parents
 - Successful parental involvement programmes include providing parents with effective strategies to tutor their children, making a good space for homework, and providing enjoyable books

Lessons from Elsewhere

- Evidence Informed
 - There is a growing body of well-researched, readily accessible evidence on what interventions work in schools
 - We should be guided – not shackled - by a professional understanding of what works
 - We should apply our professional knowledge and experience to research evidence to bespoke solutions for each unique context
- Sharing through Trust
 - There is strong evidence that sharing best practice requires mutuality and high level of trust
 - Primary Perspectives DVD strategies from 4 schools
- Pursuit of Core Purpose
 - Leaders are most effective when they are clear about 'core purpose' and bring energy to its pursuit
 - There is more variance within schools than between schools – leaders need to be bold in addressing this challenge
- Model Collaboration
 - Both the London and City Challenges provide models of how significant school improvement can arise through collaboration, strong local ownership and a focus on solutions

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- Collaborative practices can and should be modelled within and between schools

Lessons from Fife

- Climate for Improvement
 - Schools which are organised in 'silos' are difficult to improve
 - Leaders need to be visible in their support for developing professional dialogue especially around pedagogy
 - School staff need to fully understand and be involved in dialogue around the purpose and audience of any research activity
- Shared research approach
 - The lesson study method was effective in improving classroom practice in a Fife Schools pilot
 - Lesson study was effective because it focused on pupil outcomes not teacher performance
 - Research can be sharpened when there is a demonstrable purpose and a clear target audience
- Beneficial outcomes
 - Each of the 24 research projects involving the lesson study method in Fife had very specific benefits for pupils written into their design
 - A Teachers as Trainers programme is being implemented to help enhance capacity for improvement
- Social and Professional Capital
 - There was evidence that the Fife research activity enhanced social and professional capital within each school where staff fully understood and were involved in dialogue around the purpose and audience

Lessons in Leadership

- It's a Moral imperative
 - It's really hard to work in challenging contexts over any length of time if it's only a job'
 - Issues around recruitment, retention and rejuvenation of staff will threaten success
 - The London Challenge experience showed that some local autonomy in allocation of resource was important
- Constructive Alignment
 - The Five C's fundamental to change are: Core Purpose, Clarity, Coherence, Consistency and Community
 - Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development has a strong positive impact on school performance
- Role Clarity First
 - The main Lesson from Mercedes F1 is role clarity – 'know your job, do your job'
- Commit beyond the Role
 - The main Lesson from Les Miserables is to 'manage the people but prepare for the performance'
- Stand back to Reflect
 - The main Lesson from the Freeman Hospital Cardiac Unit is to 'walk away and reflect'

Lessons in Learning

- Know what Impacts
 - The work of academics such as John Hattie, Robert Marzano, Dylan Wiliam, Robert Coe and others suggest that we can identify high impact teaching interventions
 - Cognitive science helps us understand how pupils access, store and retrieve information

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- Teachers ought to have an informed view of what has the most positive impact on their own pupils' learning
- Focus your Interventions
 - Schools should agree which teaching interventions are viable and impactful and focus on those only
 - In Fife we agreed to focus on: Task Design, Feedback and Marking, Questioning and Metacognition, Collaborative Learning, Memorability and Growth Mindset
 - http://issuu.com/alistairstmithlearning/docs/primary_perspectives_dvd_contents
- Offer a Structure
 - Rather than encourage lesson plans as to-do lists provide a systematic approach based on learning sequences; focus on learning not activities
 - Use a language of learning such as that used by Kelty PS
- Share planning and Moderation
 - Shared planning and moderation of children's work is one of the most effective development activities, especially across year groups and involving TA's
- Develop your Teaching Assistants
 - Teaching Assistants are often culpable of disempowering children – without training they can be ineffective.

Lessons in Success

- Measure through childrens' experience not just their performance
 - Evaluate the success of any staff training or new initiative by identifying recognisable changes in pupil experience
- Enable through the Environment
 - Utilise the BASICS (Belonging, Aspiration, Safety, Identity, Challenge, Success) model to create a positive, purposeful learning environment
- Define and Capture Success
 - Identify the great Learner Behaviours in and around classrooms and reinforce these on an everyday basis and in communicating to parents. We used the following:
 - Noticing
 - Explaining things
 - Asking good questions
 - Learning something new
 - Practising hard till you get it right
 - Thinking carefully
 - Listening carefully
 - Trying different ways of doing things
 - Being a *learning* friend who helps others learn
 - Making someone else happy
 - Becoming better at sharing
 - Reading every day
- Win the H Factor
 - The H - or Happiness Factor – underpins a successful school culture. Look after the well-being of staff as well as students.
 - Relational 'trust' is related to academic success
 - Encourage well-being targets for all staff and classrooms

On leaving Dunfermline

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- Summary of What I'd Do Next
 - Model the learning behaviours you wish from others
 - Explicit guidance and support for parents
 - Revise CPD and build around key themes: expectation, differentiation, questioning, feedback and marking, task design
 - Focused Lesson study for influential staff teams
 - Integrate Teaching Assistants into shared planning
 - Track pupil progress more methodically
- Become Leaders of Learning and Promoters of Success

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On leaving Dunfermline

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Which recent educational ideas and researchers might you source for further information?

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2. Interleaving and Desirable Difficulties - Robert Bjork
3. Applications of neuroscience – Sarah Jayne Blakemore
4. Highly structured lesson observation – Robert Coe
5. Metacognition and Learning to Learn - Guy Claxton
6. Nurturing Growth Mindsets - Carol Dweck
7. Developing Social Capital – Hargreaves and Fullan
8. Evidence Based Interventions - John Hattie
9. Co-Operative Learning – Spencer Kagan
10. Peer Influence in Classrooms - Graham Nuthall
11. Purposeful Formative Assessment - Dylan William
12. Applying Cognitive Science - Daniel Willingham
13. SOLO taxonomy and Constructive Alignment – John Biggs
14. Learning Re-Imagined – Graham Brown Martin