NCCA

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta

Towards a curriculum framework for children detention schools, special care units and high support units

Report on a survey of teachers

February 2007

Teacher Survey Findings

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was directed at principals and teaching staff working in children detention schools, high support and special care units. Piloting of the questionnaire took place in collaboration with a number of detention and care settings. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open response questions on aspects of curriculum and assessment currently accessible to students and it was made available in two formats.
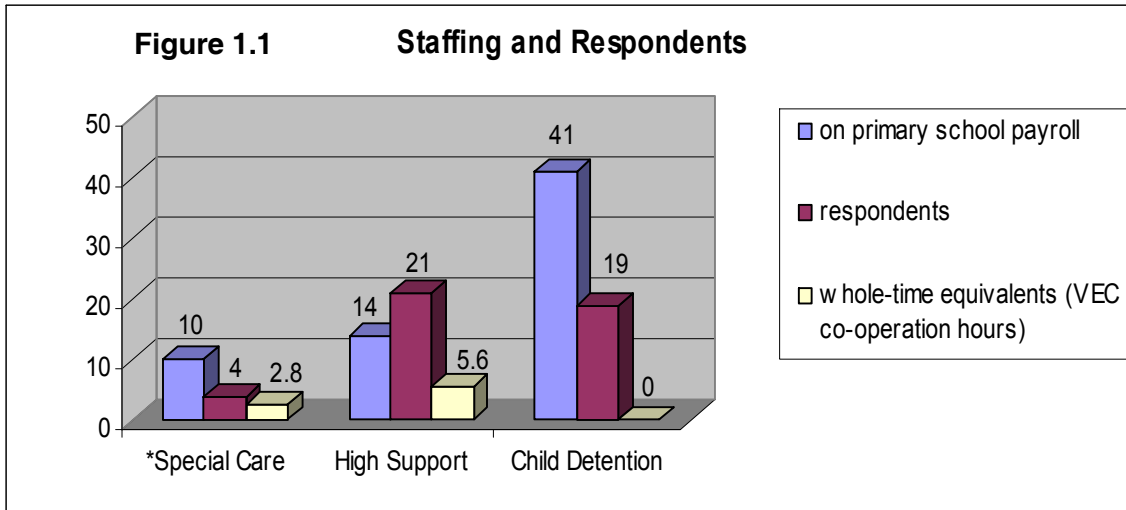
1. Hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed to each school together with return envelopes for each respondent.
2. The questionnaire was e-mailed to each school.

In total, 44 completed questionnaires were received. This was a high response rate considering that there were 65 teachers on the primary school payroll at the time of the survey. Additionally, there were approximately 14.5 whole time equivalent teachers employed through V.E.C. co-operation hours within the high support and special care settings.

On receipt of completed hard copies of the questionnaire, the quantitative data was inputted and analysed using survey analysis software. The qualitative response data from the open type questions was analysed and categorised into sets of emerging themes.
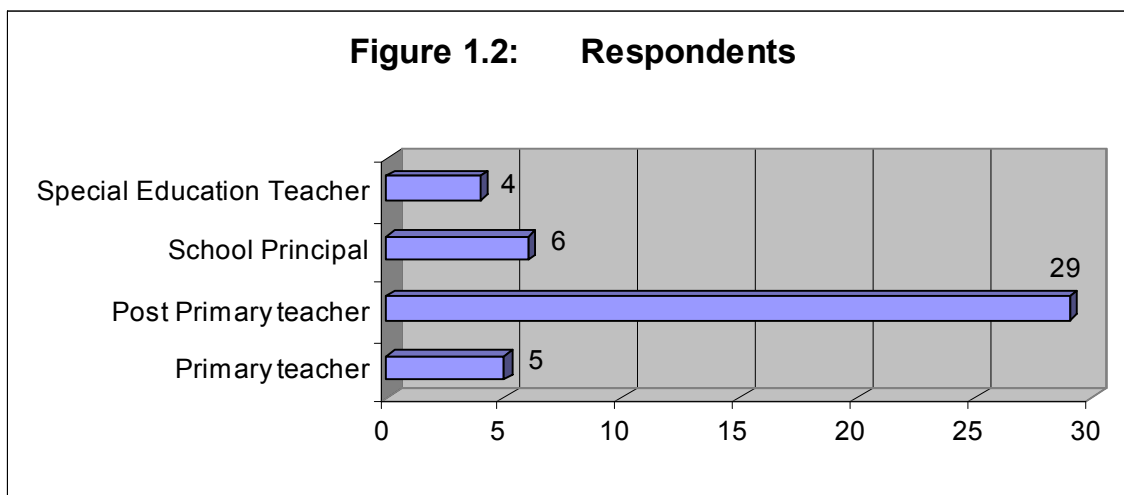
Staffing and respondents

Figure 1.1 gives a breakdown of the staffing arrangements in children detention schools, high support and special care units at the time of the survey. Responses were received from all the settings indicating the representative nature of the sample.

Figure 1.1   Staffing and Respondents

	*Special Care	High Support	Child Detention
on primary school payroll	10	14	41
respondents	4	21	19
whole-time equivalents (VEC co-operation hours)	2.8	5.6	0

* Ard Alainn Education Unit in Cork, which consists of a high support unit and a girl's only special care unit, operates completely within an allocation of V.E.C. co-operation hours (equivalent to 6 full time posts) and does not fall under the primary school category.

Profile of respondents

Figure 1.2 shows that the majority of respondents were post primary school teachers. Five primary school teachers responded. Thirty seven respondents were employed on a full time basis. Six teachers responded as part time teachers, one of which was employed in a children's detention school. Part time hours worked by respondents ranged between three, five and eleven hours per week.

Figure 1.2:   Respondents

|	
Special Education Teacher	4
School Principal	6
Post Primary teacher	29
Primary teacher	5

4

Respondent's levels of professional teaching qualification, examined per setting are outlined in Table 1.0 below. Two special education teachers responded from the children detention school setting with one special education teacher responding from the high support setting and special care setting respectively.

Table 1.0: Respondents level of teaching qualification per setting

	Primary	**Post-Primary**	**Principals**
Children Detention Schools	2 Full time	13 Full time 1 Part time	2 Full time
High Support /Special Care	2 F.T 1 P.T	10 F.T 5 P.T	3 High support 1 Special care
+ 4 Special Education teachers			

Length of service

When compared to children detention schools; high support and special care units are a relatively new part of the care system in Ireland (one special care unit being established in 1995 and another in 2000). Figure 1.3 shows the general period of employment of respondents.

Figure 1.3: Period of employment
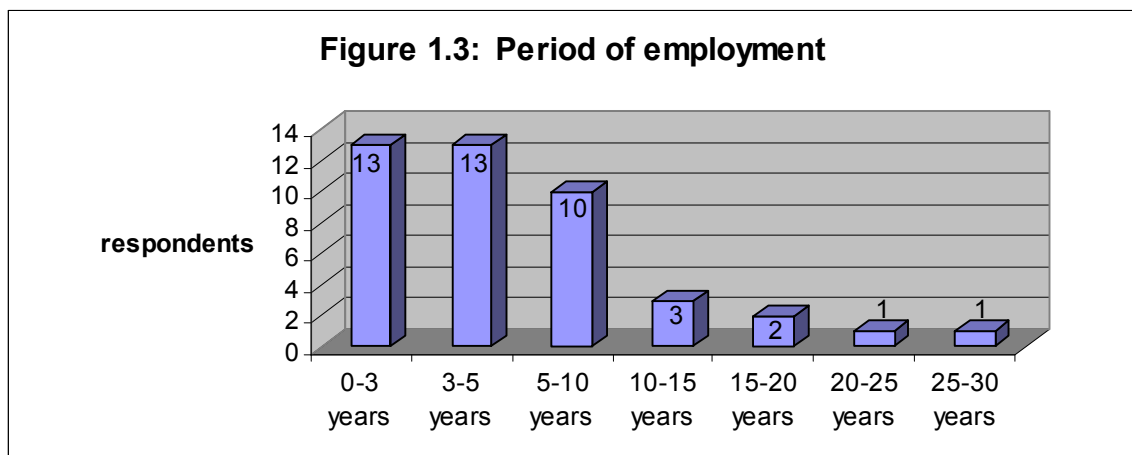
The average period of employment of respondents when examined per setting was as follows

- High Support Units   –   Average 3.5 years
- Special Care Units   –   Average 4.5 years
- Child Detention School –   Average 11 years

Subject areas

Sourcing of general/specialist subject teachers and retention of teaching staff were areas of concern voiced by many schools in these settings. The transitory nature of some children between special care, high support, and mainstream care and to a lesser extent children detention schools can place pressure on a detention/care setting to meet the diverse subject needs and/or the special needs of the incoming students. The work done by staff in meeting these needs is commendable, however a small teaching staff is sometimes stretched in offering a broad curricular experience to the presenting students.

Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 outline the subject areas taught in the detention and care settings by both full-time and part-time respondents based on their professional qualifications. Other subjects taught/short courses introduced by these respondents are also summarised.

Children Detention Schools:		
Full-time teacher's subject areas	**Part-time teacher's subject areas**	**Other subjects/short courses introduced**
Physical Education	CSPE	Art History
Home Economics		Textiles
Horticulture		Graphic Communication
Woodwork		Motor Vehicle Technology
Metalwork		Model Making
Art/Craft/Design		Metalwork
Geography		Photography
Technology		Digital Animation
Literacy		Electronics
English		Personal/Interpersonal Skills
Mathematics		Water Safety
		Preparation for Work
		Computers
		Geography
		History
		Science
		Home Economics
		Information Technology
		Crafts
		Music

Table 1.1:   Subject area/short course provision in Children Detention Schools

High Support/Special Care Units:		
Full-time teacher's subject areas	**Part-time teacher's subject areas**	**Other subjects/short courses introduced**
Physical Education	Art	Biology
Science	Woodwork	Piano
Geography	Home Economics	Geography
English	Music	Irish
Mathematics	Irish	CSPE
Religion	English	Irish History
Home Economics	History	Science
Art	Geography	Field Trips
History	SPHE	Literacy/Numeracy
Economics		Film
Irish		French
CSPE		Walk Tall Programme
Biology		Stay Safe Programme
Business Studies		Mathematics
		Home Economics
		Physical Education
		Computers
		Religion
		Health and Hygiene
		Crafts
		SPHE
		Horse riding
		Board/Card Games
		Music Appreciation
		Climbing Wall

Table 1.2: Subject area/short course provision in High Support/Special Care Units

Curriculum planning and provision

Respondents reported on current aspects of curriculum planning and provision in children detention schools, high support and special care units. Majority responses to the questions posed are outlined below using the categories from the questionnaire.

* The percentages shown are the highest majority rating of respondents.

Children Detention Schools

Strong Evidence	Respondents
▪ Positive use of individual education plans (I.E.Ps)	53%
▪ Collaborative working arrangements	42%

Evidence

▪ Flexibility allowing access for all students	58%
▪ Reflect mainstream curriculum	47%
▪ Meaningful curriculum options – duration of placement	47%
▪ Make use of teacher strengths / interests	44%

Little Evidence

▪ Involving parents	84%
▪ Tracking students progress (entry-exit) to inform future educational interventions	63%
▪ Social/cultural reflection in educational interventions	58%
▪ Enabling students to re-engage effectively with the mainstream curriculum when they leave	53%

High support/Special care units

Strong Evidence   **Respondents**

- Make use of teacher strengths / interests   83%
- Flexibility allowing access for all students   74%
- Adequate range of programs to meet the needs/
  interests/abilities   74%
- Positive use of I.E.P's   65%
- Reflect mainstream curriculum   65%
- Social/cultural reflection in educational interventions   57%
- Collaborative working arrangements   52%

Evidence

- Meaningful curriculum options – duration of placement   55%
- Enabling students to re-engage effectively with the
  mainstream curriculum when they leave   52%
- Tracking students progress (entry-exit)
  to inform future educational interventions   50%

Little Evidence

- Considering Parents   70%

Co-curricular activities

Research[1] supports the use of co-curricular activities in schools in helping students to learn self discipline, to improve self confidence and to embed social skills, leadership

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[1] Gardner, H. (1991) The Unschooled Mind: How children think and how schools should teach, New York: Basic Books.

skills, and healthy living skills,. The levels of agreement by the majority of respondents on activities that are currently provided in these settings to complement the curriculum are outlined below.

Children detention schools

Strongly agree	Respondents
▪ Life Skills	88%

Agree

▪ Holistic focus over academic abilities	67%
▪ Intrinsic value of education	61%
▪ Encourage participation in competitions/mini-companies /fieldwork	50%
▪ Offer a range of cultural/aesthetic/sporting activities	47%

Disagreement

▪ Fostering links with outside agencies	55%

High support/Special care units

Strong agreement

▪ Holistic focus over academic abilities	78%
▪ Intrinsic value of education	70%
▪ Life Skills	65%

Agreement

▪ Encourage participation in competitions/mini-companies /fieldwork	57%
▪ Offer a range of cultural/aesthetic/sporting activities	52%
▪ Fostering links with outside agencies	48%

Kolb, A. and Kolb, D. A. (2001) Experiential Learning Theory Bibliography 1971-2001, Boston, Ma.: McBer.

Key considerations in subject/programme provision

Based on current provision in the children detention schools, high support and special care units, the key considerations in subject and programme provision that respondents acknowledged as being evident in their school settings are outlined below.

Children detention schools

Strong Evidence	Respondents
Placement on the National Framework of Qualifications	74%
Physical education classes for all	68%
Reviewing subject and programme options	66%
Key skills in practical subjects/ information technology	63%
Improving basic literacy/numeracy	63%
Having a broad range of qualified teaching staff	53%

Little Evidence

Consultation with students when preparing curriculum options	77%
Keeping parents informed on their child's learning experiences	52%

High support/Special care units

Strong Evidence

Improving basic literacy/numeracy	83%
Placement on the National Framework of Qualifications	82%
Reviewing subject and programme options	74%
Having a broad range of qualified teaching staff	68%
Physical education classes for all	65%

- Key skills in practical subjects/ information technology   65%

Evidence	Respondents
• Consultation with students when preparing curriculum options	52%
• Keeping parents informed on their child's learning experiences	38%

Learning experiences evident in class

There was strong agreement between respondents across all the settings on the learning experiences that were most evident in class. The strongest evidence from the largest majority of respondents is outlined below.

Children detention schools/High support/Special care units

Strong Evidence

- Building positive relationships with teachers/care staff/other students

- Formal recognition through external assessment

- Recognition from the school for personal achievement

- Building on students own interests/aptitudes

- Develop students thinking skills

Certification routes offered

The certification routes offered by respondents in their school settings are outlined in Table 1.1 below. Many respondents acknowledged the fact that many of the settings offered in-house certification in areas where no official or formal certification was available. This could be simply a certificate of attendance or a certificate of achievement in an area where a teacher felt the student had made progress and deserved some recognition.

	High Support/Special Care Units	Child Detention Schools
Junior Certificate	91%	88%
Junior Cycle School Programme	90%	38%
FETAC externally devised modules	80%	81%
Leaving Certificate (established)	53%	33%
FETAC locally devised modules	46%	46%
Leaving Certificate Applied	43%	9%
Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme	8%	0%
English for speakers of other languages	8%	11%
European Computer Driving Licence	18%	20%

Table 1.1: Certification routes offered

Effective teaching strategies

The extent to which respondents used what they considered to be the most effective teaching strategies are outlined below.

Children detention schools

Daily Use   **Respondents**

- Individualised programmes of learning   72%

- Practical activities   67%

- Enabling students to experience success   67%

- One-to-one teaching   61%

- Individual assignments   61%

Frequently Used

- Decision making/problem solving   50%

Never Used

- Involvement with charity organisations   67%

- Involving guest speakers/performers   67%

- Role play   67%

- Field Trips   61%

High support/ Special care units

Daily Use

- One-to-one teaching   90%

- Individualised programmes of learning   86%

- Individual assignments   81%

- Enabling students to experience success   76%

- Practical activities   67%

- Decision making/problem solving   60%

Frequently used

- Field trips   57%

Seldom Used

- Involvement with charity organisations   60%

▪ Involving guest speakers/performers	60%
▪ Role play	52%

Effective teaching resources/materials

The availability and application of effective teaching resources are a vital part of the curriculum. The materials/resources currently used by the majority of respondents to enhance the learning experience for students in the classroom are shown below.

Children detention schools

Daily Use	Respondents
▪ Readers and workbooks	39%

Frequently Used

▪ D.E.S Guidelines	50%
▪ Creating displays/exhibitions	44%
▪ Video/DVD/Television	39%
▪ Computers	33%

Never used

▪ Visiting speaker	78%
▪ Visiting workshop	67%
▪ Outside agencies	61%
▪ Relaxation techniques/Yoga	65%
▪ Drama/role play	65%
▪ Music	39%

High support/Special care units

Daily Use

▪ Computers	81%
▪ Readers and workbooks	67%
▪ Educational Software	55%

Frequently Used	Respondents
▪ D.E.S Guidelines	67%
▪ Music	65%
▪ Creating displays/exhibitions	62%
▪ Video/DVD/Television	60%

Seldom used	
▪ Visiting speaker	60%
▪ Relaxation techniques/Yoga	58%
▪ Outside agencies	52%
▪ Visiting workshop	42%
▪ Drama/role play	65%

Teacher professional development

In-service support is important as it can maintain frequent communication between the various child detention schools and high support/special care units. If allows for the sharing of 'best practice' approaches to teaching and learning. The majority response rates of respondents to their recent participation in professional development activities and the professional development support considered as most relevant to their needs can be seen below.

Children detention schools

Attended	Respondents
▪ Education, Primary in-career development	78%
▪ Professional development provided by colleagues	72%
▪ In-service organised by school committee	53%

High Relevance	
▪ Professional development provided by colleagues	56%
▪ FETAC in-service	47%

▪ Junior Cycle in-service	41%
▪ In-service organised by school committee	41%

High support/Special care units

Attended

▪ Professional development provided by colleagues	79%
▪ Provided by local Education Centre	68%
▪ In-service organised by school committee	58%
▪ Education, Primary in-career development	52%
▪ Junior Cycle in-service	50%

High Relevance

▪ Professional development provided by colleagues	63%
▪ Junior Cycle in-service	60%
▪ Provided by local Education Centre	50%

Assessment strategies

Assessment can play a critical part in reinforcing the learning of students. It can also enable the teacher to develop suitable teaching and learning strategies that will encourage and challenge the students to explore their potential to the fullest extent. The assessment strategies used by the majority of respondents in the classroom and the evidence of whole school approaches to assessment considered by the majority of respondents are outlined below.

In-class Assessment

Children detention schools	Respondents
▪ Setting short/medium/long term goals	68%
▪ Challenging students learning ability	63%
▪ Celebrating students learning potential	47%
▪ Involving students in self-assessment	37%

High support/Special care units	**Respondents**
▪ Challenging students learning ability	77%
▪ Celebrating students learning potential	73%
▪ Setting short/medium/long term goals	71%
▪ Involving students in self-assessment	50%

Whole school approaches to assessment

Child detention schools

Largely

▪ Having a consistent school assessment plan	63%
▪ Having a clear policy on record keeping	63%
▪ Using assessment to identify learning needs	47%

Somewhat

▪ Considering the effect that poor performance may have on self esteem	42%
▪ Using elements of NCCA'S 'AfL initiative'	35%

High support/Special care units

Largely

▪ Considering the effect that poor performance may have on self esteem	77%
▪ Using assessment to identify learning needs	74%
▪ Having a clear policy on record keeping	63%
▪ Having a consistent school assessment plan	55%

Very Little

▪ Using elements of NCCA'S 'AfL initiative'	45%

Open response questions

Respondents were given many opportunities throughout the questionnaire to express their views on teaching, learning and assessment matters. These views are examined in more detail in Section 5 of this report. Opportunity to relate these issues to the development of a curriculum framework was also provided. The views expressed were based on the respondents own analysis of the programmes they teach and their experience of education within the child detention school, high support and special care settings.

Emerging themes/areas for further reflection that revolved around aspects of a curriculum framework can be summarised as follows.

Factors involved in providing education in these settings

- Strong student/teacher relationship – positive role models

- Goodwill/flexibility of teachers – commendable but overstretched

- Professionally qualified teaching staff (part time and substitution)

- Autonomy of school/teacher to tailor the curriculum

- Understanding across all disciplines of 'the role of education'

- Clear message from the management team of the 'importance of education'

- Positive working relationships – teachers – care staff – others

Nature of the educational programmes in these settings

- Need for more practical type subjects

- Students would benefit from diverse activity programmes

- Short placements – need for short interesting modules of education

- Development of students 'life skills' should be integrated into all aspects of the curriculum

Needs of the learner in these settings

- I.E.P should address the realities that await many students on leaving detention/care (social-emotional-moral decision making)

- Health Education/Healthy Living programmes

- Basic literacy – basic numeracy (P/T ratio 1:1)

- Generally require P/T ratio 3:1

- Special needs assistants required

- Learning areas to correspond to student interest

- To increase self esteem and confidence (socially & educationally)

- To enjoy the learning experience – 'to have fun'

Assessment and qualifications in these settings

- Acknowledgement of <u>achievement</u> important

- Building in opportunities to experience success (reward systems)

- Important to provide continuity (mainstream curriculum- peers)

- Important to gain a foothold on the National Framework of Qualifications

Implementation support

- Quality/relevant in-service & access to professional development required

- Guidance/counselling provision required

- Structured tracking system required that records students educational progress to aid movement between settings

- Structured tracking system required that examines the progression routes of students on leaving detention/care to inform future educational provision in these settings

Commentary on the findings

The quantitative data, as presented in the findings, enables commonalities and differences between the settings to be reflected upon. In an attempt to illuminate the data, the commentary on the findings will draw upon qualitative data garnered through the course off the survey to give some insight into the values, principles and procedures of education that are evident in the children detention schools, high support and special care settings.

The nature of the teaching and learning process

Based on the findings of the survey one can deduce that the approach to teaching and learning adopted in the detention/care settings is student centered. The majority of respondents use what could be termed a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Respondents regularly cited both students' lack of confidence to take charge of their own learning and low levels of self esteem as being the major determinants of the teaching methodologies adopted in the classroom. One-to-one teaching, individualised programmes of learning and individual assignments were seen to be the most effective teaching strategies used by the majority of respondents on a daily basis. The small pupil teacher ratio evident in these settings was felt by respondents to be a major contributory factor to the positive outcomes of these teaching strategies and a necessity for students who may present with specific learning/emotional/psychological difficulties.

In line with constructivist thinking, respondents frequently emphasised the importance of social interaction to ensure that students interacted with their peers/others in both formal and informal learning situations. Co-curricular activities were used by respondents to increase student's social skills/ interpersonal skills and to compliment and reinforce prior learning in the classroom. A majority of the survey's open-type responses expressed the need for more diverse activity programmes and practical type subjects which, it was felt had embedded educational/ social/holistic benefits for the students. This finding is also backed up by responses from the students' survey where students listed practical subjects and physical education as 'fun' activities that they would like to see in their school setting, if not already experiencing them.

The diversity of student's learning needs was felt by respondents to necessitate a focus on the integration of students within the classroom by adopting a structured, yet flexible approach to teaching and learning. This finding correlates with research on classroom management skills and the structuring of the learning process.

A facilitator should structure the learning experience just enough to make sure that the students get clear guidance and parameters within which to achieve the learning objectives, yet the learning experience should be open and free enough to allow for the learners to discover, enjoy, interact and arrive at their own, socially verified version of truth. [2] (Savery & Duffy,1995)

Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

The IEPs are designed to respond to each student on the basis of his or her needs/abilities and to re-engage them in the education process. The aim of the IEPs is to build on the students strengths and to address any educational deficits they may have. The findings of the student's survey showed that many of the children placed in a detention/care setting present with specific difficulties in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

The procedures evident in the child detention schools, high support and special care units of developing an individual education plan for students is consistent with the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004. Generally the detention/care settings mirror the provisions of the Act with regard to IEPs in the following ways.

- The Act provides that each student with special educational needs (SEN) is entitled to an Education Plan

- An Education Plan is a written plan for a named student

- The Education Plan specifies learning goals in a timeframe

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[2] Savery, J. & Duffy, T (1995). Problem-based learning: An instructional model and its constructivist framework. Educational Technology, 35(5), 31-38.

- The Education Plan specifies teaching strategies, resources and supports that are necessary to achieve goals

The significance of these aspects of the IEP to key elements of the curriculum framework and the nature of possible links between both is an area for further discussion with the established consultative group.

The nature of the learning task

Respondents viewed student learning as being either determined or challenged by the following aspects.

Environment for learning

It was the view of respondents that the first responsibility of the teaching staff is to create an encouraging learning environment capable of providing the students with the opportunity to experience success in school. Respondents generally felt that both teaching and care staff worked together to create a positive environment in which the young person could fulfill their potential academically but to a lesser extent socially and emotionally. Respondents frequently expressed concern over the influence of cultural factors on a student's readiness for learning. For schools in these settings, societal factors such as violence/ crime, drug/alcohol abuse, family breakdown and the lack of educational opportunity, act as real obstacles to progress at an educational level. Many respondents felt that if real progress is to be made in relation to their students self esteem, aspirations and future life chances then the academic focus of the curriculum needed to be balanced by attention to the student's social, emotional, moral decision making and healthy living needs.

Learning in context

Respondents regularly stated that in order to create a suitable atmosphere for student learning the teacher often had to actively embed the learning task in the context of the student's personal interests/cultural experience. This personalisation of the learning experience had the added benefit for many respondents of strengthening the teacher-

student relationship. The findings from the student survey support the strength and value of this relationship. Some respondents reported having difficulty sourcing suitable teaching resource materials that could be linked with the diverse interests and experience of some students. Many felt that the educational resource materials available to the mainstream teaching population were not the most suitable choice when helping their students to re-engage with the education process after varying periods of disengagement. Many respondents reported relying on the valuable knowledge and experience of colleagues in these situations.

Empathy / Support

A strong feeling of empathy towards the student's situation and feelings emanated from the open response type questions of the teachers survey. The general feeling in this regard was that the students leaving a detention or care setting may be returning to similar social circumstances as those they left. Respondents reported concern for the long term social and educational life chances of many students who were in or about leave detention or care settings. The majority of respondents recommended that energy directed at educating students in the areas of life skills, personal health, drug awareness, anger management, and behaviour therapy could help improve the often fatalistic life expectations of many students. A tracking and support system for students operating across the various settings and extending into their lives on leaving detention or care were seen as a necessity by the majority of respondents. Mentoring and diverse sport/recreational activities were possible aspects of support recommended.

Motivation

Working with children with challenging behaviour is a difficult and challenging task. Empathy towards students was only one of the requirements deemed necessary by respondents to help create a positive learning environment in these settings. Motivation was a key theme that ran through many responses. The areas where motivation was seen by respondents as having a direct impact on the education of the students, were mainly centred on

- the motivation of the management team to promote a shared understanding across all disciplines of the role and benefits of education

- the motivation of the teachers to display day-to-day goodwill and flexibility in meeting the needs of the students

- the motivation of teachers, care staff and other agencies to engage in positive working relationships

- the motivation of teachers to pursue professional development opportunities

- the motivation of the education team to regularly engage in a process of reflection and review of subjects and programme options

- the ability of the teacher to sustain the student's motivation for learning by nurturing a sense of confidence and self belief.

A minority of respondents across all the education settings were attempting in an informal way to involve parents, outside agencies, visiting workshops and guest speakers. The existence of a network of education partnerships was conspicuous by its absence. The motivational / educational benefits to these settings of establishing such a network to compliment the teaching and learning, to support students social construction and to act as a normalising influence is a topic for further consultation with stakeholders in the development of an enabling curriculum framework.

In relation to professional development in-service support attended, the majority of respondents considered the help and experience of colleagues to be most relevant to their needs. There was no evidence provided of a formal structure or in-service committee organised to generate ideas, to share valuable experience or best practices. This is another topic for further consultation with the stakeholders on the implementation/support aspects of a curriculum framework that could help support the teaching and learning, encourage collegiality and personalise the learning for the students in these settings.

Assessment

Recent advances in our knowledge of how learning takes place and how learners make their way through classroom activities have led to new understandings of the importance of assessment in the promotion of learning. Assessment and learning are inextricably linked and not separate processes. A small minority of respondents reported whole school approaches to assessment that adopted elements of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) initiative currently being promoted by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). Other evidence that was reported from these settings supported the use of a range of formative and summative assessment practices.

Formative Assessment

- Assessment of the student that takes place during the development of the students Individual Education Plan (IEP)

- Classroom assessment to improve the quality of student learning and to inform the IEP

- Classroom assessment that sets short/medium/long term goals and which monitors student progress towards achieving those goals

- Using classroom assessment as an opportunity to celebrate the learning achievement of students in managing both their learning and behaviour. The findings of the student survey concurred with this aspect of assessment practice. Students favored an informal 'praise and reward' system of assessment. The specific motivating aspects of this system reported by students were

  - Lucky dip
  - Student of the week
  - Stamps
  - Homework pass
  - Computer time
  - Teacher praise

Summative Assessment

Respondents reported using both formal and informal summative assessment practices.

Informal assessment of this nature was reported to generally culminate in the presentation of an in-house certificate to a student in celebration of their achievement in, or attendance at an educational course/programme.

Regarding completion of formal summative assessments, the findings across all settings show the greatest majority of respondents preparing students for awards up to level three of the National Framework of Qualifications (Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Junior Certificate and FETAC Modules).

A little over half of respondents from high support and special care units reported preparing students for the Leaving Certificate (established) compared to a third of respondents from the children detention schools.

Both in-house and formal certification was reported by respondents to be highly valued by students. Respondents reported the motivation for student participation in the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate programmes as partly resulting from a willingness to be on a par with their peers in mainstream education settings.

Next Steps

Themes emerging from the findings of the student survey together with the findings from the teacher's survey will form part of subsequent discussion and debate with the established consultative group. The consultative group is representative of the stakeholders involved in the care/education of the young people committed or placed in these settings and will guide the work of the NCCA in developing an enabling curriculum framework for children in schools attached to children detention centres, special care units and high support units.

Taking the combined findings from both surveys into consideration and looking towards the development of an enabling curriculum framework for these settings it is easy to conclude that the learning experience is a shared enterprise between many parties. In beginning to develop a curriculum framework it is important therefore to consider the emotions and life contexts of all those involved in the learning process.

It is important for instructors to realise that although a curriculum may be set down for them, it inevitably becomes shaped by them into something personal which reflects their own belief systems, their thoughts and feelings about both the content of their instruction and their learners. [3]

(Rhodes and Bellamy 1999)

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[3] Rhodes, L. K., & Bellamy, T. (1999). Choices and consequences in the reform of teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 50, 17-26.