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PAPER TITLE:

University - School Partnership: Implementing a Multiple Intelligence
model.

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TITLE:

University - School Partnership : Implementing a Multiple Intelligences
model.

Paper Summary:

This paper reports on a pilot study of a University - School
partnership program which involves teachers in school-based research.

This program operates with National
Development Professional Development funding.

The research was initiated by the Principal and school staff and
describes the roles of the Principal, the University link persons and
the teacher/co-ordinators and other school staff. Details are given of
a programs in one Melbourne Primary School which involves the
implementation across the whole school of a multiple intelligences
model.

The program incorporates the development of diagnostic instruments for

developing a student and staff data base across each of seven intelligences. As well it focuses on the application from K - 6 of innovative teaching strategies based on the model of multiple intelligences.

All teachers are involved in the process of evaluating and refining the checklists, the teaching strategies and the model of implementation. The issue of teacher professional development in this process is also discussed.

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THE PROJECT:

The Innovative Links Project is funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Training [DEET] as part of the National Professional Development Program. The Innovative Links Project was designed to provide innovative professional development opportunities for teachers working in partnership with academic associates from the University sector. Academic staff from participating Universities work with teachers in schools on programs of improvement and reform initiated by the school itself. Whilst each school works on their own particular project, the school staff from all participating schools, the university academics and other stakeholders form a Round Table to disseminate information, to share professional development learning and to provide a structural link between the affiliated schools, the universities, the wider Forum and the Steering Committee.

NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT [NPDP]:

The Innovative Links project specifically addresses the objectives of the NPDP as well as the learnings and principles established by the National Schools Project -

ie these are projects which-

- promote action research on a whole school basis, which explores effective forms of work organisation ,
 - establish a collaborative culture in which the competence of teachers might be enhanced and the learning outcomes for all students improved,
 - improve the professional support available to the teaching profession by
- involving teachers in designing and planning their professional

development

- encouraging partnerships between teachers, their schools and other educational stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

[Innovative Links Project Document]

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Conners defines professional development as

"...the sum of all activities, both formal and informal, carried out by the individual or system to promote staff growth and renewal. It is a complex process in which teachers improve and develop their instructional skills, and their curriculum development, implementation and evaluation skills. It allows teachers to develop a wide range of beliefs and attitudes that support effective teaching practices, by various means and in various contexts. Teacher professional development is not an isolated event but rather a continuous and career long process; and, as such, programmes should be systematically planned to take account of the different stages in a teacher's career."

[Conners, 1991, p.53]

Good practice in professional development should

- acknowledge and account for teaching and learning as it relates to adults [adult learning].
- be delivered through approaches that allow participants to gain

'academic' knowledge to make sense of their own experiences and work practices [delivery modes].

- use the school as the setting for activities [settings].
- show support and initiatives from educational leaders [leadership].
- be supported by relevant internal and/or external support structures [support structures].
- be controlled by the participants themselves [control].
- be structured in such a way as to encourage and support commitment from participants [commitment].
- focus on both the content and the cognition aspects of learning and direct attention toward new ideas [subject matter].
- value the participation of those involved and place programs in an environment which is committed toward professional growth [climate].
- not act as means in itself or a 'one-off' isolated activity but be part of a longer term development which accommodates change based on evaluation of practice [evaluation]

[DEET, 1989]

THE PRACTICE:

When Deakin University received the news that their application as part of a wider Round Table Project had been successful, they invited twelve schools in the bayside area of Melbourne to submit action research

proposals. Under the Link contract each Round Table had to include at least one non-government school and one secondary school. After the proposals had been sifted through and the five schools had been selected, one staff member from Deakin [with an additional supporting staff member] was matched with each school according to experience and expertise. As part of the NPDP funding each school was to receive some money for teacher release and there was a small amount per school for University staff release. There was also a small amount of funding allocated for travel costs and resources.

One of the schools, Beaumaris Primary School, was selected to be part of the project.

Most of the teachers at the school had attended a professional development program called "Bright Sparks". This program had been organised by Deakin University and taught jointly by Deakin Staff and staff from the current and former Gifted Taskforce of the Department of School Education. It had involved four three-hour sessions after school and many different schools had sent several of their teachers. The session fees for the Beaumaris teachers had been paid by their school.

At the outset of the program the University link person met with the Beaumaris Principal and school staff representative to plan where they wanted to go. They had clearly indicated in their proposal that they wanted the focus of their action research to be on Gardner's model of Multiple Intelligences, a concept which had featured strongly in the Bright Sparks program. They were excited by the idea of developing teaching strategies to broaden their classroom practice to address different ways of learning and thinking.

THE THEORY:

Gardner's [1984] model postulates that there are seven different kinds of intelligence but that our Western culture has made the erroneous assumption that there is only one kind, the kind that reflects the typical linguistic, mathematical and scientific focus of most Australian schools. The seven intelligences which Gardner has proposed

are:

- Linguistic intelligence
- Logical-mathematical intelligence
- Visual-Spatial intelligence
- Musical intelligence
- Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence

- Intrapersonal intelligence

In Gardner's model the emphasis is not on quantitative measurement but on the "relative strengths" of each student. Gardner has changed the question from "how smart is this student?" to "how is this student smart?"

THE PROJECT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

In initiating any professional development program it is essential that the purpose of the program is clearly articulated. Griffin [in Conners, 1991] points out that "attention to purpose can be a focusing mechanism. It helps to clarify values about an activity... the relative power of an activity... the potential impact of a programme... and guides for reflection." [p.58]

Thus the first part of the negotiated plan for the Beaumaris school was for the Deakin link person to run a full day in-service for the whole school staff designed to demonstrate how to implement classroom activities based on each of the seven intelligences. The focus of the day was on the teachers' identifying their own relative strengths and participating in the activities to get some idea of how the activities worked. They decided to use an outside conference venue with a catered-for lunch, something which the staff had not done before. Several teachers commented that they felt that they were being treated more as professional people under these circumstances. The day was very successful and all of the teachers participated enthusiastically. At the end of the day each teacher was asked to complete a sheet on which they were asked to do the following three things:

- List any concerns which you have about how the implementation of A Multiple Intelligences model would impact on you personally.
- List any concerns which you have about how the implementation of A Multiple Intelligences model would impact on your classroom.
- List any concerns which you have about how the implementation of A Multiple Intelligences model would impact on your students.

Good professional development should be that which involves learning, which depends on reflection and action and is assisted by collaboration with others. Professional development should lead to enhanced workplace practice and have as its outcome, institution [school] improvement [Baird, 1991].

Significant also in discussions about professional development is the paradigm or philosophy on which the program is based. Eraut [1986] outlines four approaches which may characterise the need for which a particular professional development program for teachers may be required. For example, teachers may be seen as deficit in particular skills or attributes or as practitioners who continue to grow and develop; they may be seen as change agents or as professionals who solve their own problems of practice. This latter approach he defines

as a problem solving approach. Here professional development programs are developed in order to help teachers identify and solve problems that develop in schools or school practice; teacher development is achieved through the encouragement of active involvement in this

problem-solving process.

While each approach may have particular strengths, account must be taken of the philosophy on which the particular program is based as this will become significant in regard to its effectiveness [Conners, 1991].

The Round Table Links model of professional development especially as it is articulated in the Deakin Links program clearly rejects the deficit approach. Whilst acknowledging the need for teachers as professionals to grow and respond to change, it places more emphasis on teachers being best able to identify and solve their own professional problems especially at times with the assistance and support of external colleagues.

THE PROCESS:

The next step in the program was to arrange a series of on-going fortnightly meetings with four teachers from Beaumaris. One of these teachers was the school link person, and each of the other three represented a particular year level i.e. lower [Preps/one /two] middle [grades three and four] and upper [grades five and six]. Several decisions were made:

- There were two long term plans. The first was for the school to become a "model" school for the implementation of Gardner's concept of Multiple Intelligences. The second was to develop a set of resources for all teachers in the school to use. These resources were to be based around particular areas as outlined in the Curriculum Standards Frameworks document.
- In the short term there were several steps to be taken. Firstly the teachers' concerns, as expressed on the Concerns sheet, had to be addressed. Secondly, the teachers decided to trial MI strategies and write evaluations after each was implemented.

TEACHERS' CONCERNS:

As stated, following the initial discussion, teachers were asked to express their concerns about the program. The major concerns expressed are shown in the chart below.

Area of Concern

Numbers

Finding the extra time required to plan and teach this way

12

How to plan for and organise the sessions

11

Personal competence in teaching this way

8

Personal competence in identifying students' strengths and weaknesses

6

What misses out? Are these strategies as well as or instead of?

6

Will I need extra resources and how will I get them?

4

Is this just another passing fad?

3

I don't have the space to teach this way

3

Is this a total approach or do I teach "bits"?

2

How do I sell this to parents and will I be able to respond to any

pressure they place on me?

2

Will this result in the children being "labelled"?

2

Can these strategies be used with younger students?

2

There is so much record keeping required!

2

Do I teach to students' strengths or weaknesses?

1

These concerns were addressed in several ways.

1. Some were scheduled as items to be discussed at the next staff meeting e.g. negotiations took place about how much record keeping was reasonable, how could it be made easier by the provision of fill-in sheets etc.

2. The Deakin link person was able to answer some directly such as the ones relating to extra resources and whether or not these strategies were additional to current practices or instead of them.

3. Some concerns were placed on "hold" to be addressed at a later stage, such as the issue of communication with parents.

4. The doubts about personal competence to adopt this approach to teaching was addressed in two ways. Firstly, the representative teachers were asked to reassure other teachers that this way of teaching did not require highly specialised skills in art, human movement, music and psychology. Secondly, plans are underway for a

video to be made at the school in December in which two teachers from the school and a Deakin staff member demonstrate teaching strategies based on musical intelligence, bodily intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, visual-spatial intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence. Our discussions suggested that most teachers already felt comfortable with linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences.

5. The concern relating to personal competence in assessing students' relative strengths was addressed in the following way. The Deakin link person is the co-author of a student self-report checklist for multiple intelligences. It was decided that all teachers would be asked to administer this checklist to all students in their grades but with the support of a research assistant from the University, paid for by a seeding grant from the University. The purpose of providing the research assistant was to help the teachers understand how to use the checklist and to identify any difficulties students or teachers were having with the checklist.

As well, teachers will be asked to undertake observations of students during the next year of the program, using a structured observation schedule designed to assess relative strengths in the seven intelligences. Some pre-training in the use of the schedule will be given to the representative teachers who will then outline its use to the other teachers.

ACTION RESEARCH:

This program clearly exemplifies a model of school-based action research.

Zuber-Skerritt [1992] describes action research as "collaborative, critical enquiry by the academics themselves [rather than expert educational researchers] into their own teaching practice, into problems of student learning and into curriculum problems. It is professional development through academic course development, group

reflection, action, evaluation and improved practice." [p. 2]

The notion of collaboration and action for change is echoed by Orton [in Owen, 1993, p.141] who defines action research as "a collaborative research, centered in social practice, which follows a particular process, espouses the value of independence, equality and cooperation, and is intended to be a learning experience for those involved, to produce a change for the better in the practice and to add to social theory."

Whilst definitions of action research differ between authors [Gummerson, 1991], the key concern expressed is that action research is not only a research methodology appropriate to inform improved practice but is also for those involved, a learning experience, a process of professional development.

Most references to action research suggest that it is a clearly

defined process related to particular types of research and requiring particular conditions for its practice. McTaggart [1991] outlines some of the conditions regarded as necessarily appropriate for action research -

- the issue or problem is identified from within, for example, something the staff at a school see as 'their' issue, owned by them and relating to their environment - 'what do we want for our school?'
- those involved have to be able to have confidence in each other in order to discuss possible alternative views and problems related to their practice. The group must be able to accommodate change, to be able to move from the 'old and familiar' to the 'new' in spite of possible conflict
- those in positions of influence eg Principals, have to be seen to be supportive and willing to facilitate possible changes
- products of the process and indeed the process itself must be seen as part of long term planning.

THE PRESENT: TRIALLING MI CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

At this stage teachers are trialling selected activities in their classrooms and filling out evaluation sheets on each activity. They are also experimenting with different ways for the students to respond as to how they felt about each activity, and to provide information about the activity as well as the student. They are trying to identify ways of evaluating student feedback from activities for each age group which are not wasteful of paper and are simple to use.

Teachers are also involved in further validation of checklists. They are also widening their network of schools which are working in this area.

PROGRAM EVALUATION:

The evaluation of any program in order to assess its outcomes is extremely difficult [Joyce and Showers, 1988]. Complex and long term programs are detailed and outcomes are heavily influenced by context, for example, the motivation of the individual teacher, the particular workplace setting, etc. If the program is to be seen to have met its objectives then the experiences and development of the teachers involved must contribute to changes in teachers work, students learning and school practice.

Because of the cyclical nature, action research as exemplified by this school and indeed the Deakin Round Table Links program facilitates program evaluation .

Wadsworth [in Owen, 1993] in his description of the process of action research clearly demonstrates its cyclical nature. He sees the components of action research as -

- reflection on current action
- design
- fieldwork

- analysis and conclusions
- planning

Again this cyclical process is echoed by the 'four moments' of action research expressed by Kemmis - to plan, to act, to observe and to reflect [Kemmis, 1985].

In practice however, there is a tendency to downplay or ignore this cyclical process. For example, evaluation of projects are often described in a finite sense. Evaluation of this type can be termed summative evaluation.

Clarke [1972] details the differences between summative evaluation and action research in the table below.

Summative Evaluation	Action Research
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- | | |
|--|--|
| 1.requires a clear and constant purpose | 1.tentative, non-committal and adaptive |
| 2.logical development of steps | 2.focused on the next stage |
| 3.perceives the present situation in the context of the final outcome | 3.evokes the future out of emerging opportunities |
| 4.is not able to interpret the present as a basis until it knows the answer to its ultimate question | 4.has to interpret the present as for asking questions |
| 5.focuses upon a limited range of factors | 5.attempts to comprehend a wide range of factors in a dynamic relationship |

[Clarke, 1972, p17]

Action research can be seen as an appropriate tool for evaluation. The process orientation clearly linked to action research suggests that as a means of evaluation it would provide a model of continuous improvement for educational practice.

CONCLUSION:

It is evident that the Round Table Links Project as it is currently in practice at Beaumaris Primary School clearly meets the expectations for effective professional development for teachers. The action research model chosen as the research model further enhances the project as it will also act as a process of on-going evaluation.

The program as it is described gives evidence of the strength of

on-site, school based research. The teachers involved clearly appreciate the time and opportunity to do something properly and in depth. The program allows teachers to work on issues of their own concerns, in this instance providing an environment for trialling and validating programs and procedures associated with Gardner's Multiple Intelligence model - an area of current importance in efficient and effective teaching.

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