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


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

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

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

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

**Continuous development:** yours and others

**Organised**

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

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

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

They don’t neglect other people or their ideas.

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

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

Leadership Aspiration

Commitment (moral purpose)

Personal skills and qualities

Confidence (knowledge)

Advocacy & Inclusivity

Relationships
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<tr>
<th>Interview data</th>
<th>1st DWR workshop priorities</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Confidence</strong> (people and children)</td>
<td>Professional confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal qualities and skills</strong> (organisation, reflection, listening, patience, relationships, drive)</td>
<td>personal qualities</td>
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<td><strong>Knowledge</strong> (professional, academic, and self-knowledge)</td>
<td>theory into practice</td>
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<td><strong>Experience</strong> (professional practice)</td>
<td>Skills and knowledge</td>
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References