

Enterprise and Lifelong Learning

Columba 1400: Head Teacher Leadership Academy: Developing Enterprise Culture

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This report provides the main findings from an evaluation of the Columba 1400's pilot programme, the Head Teacher Leadership Academy (HTLA) for head teachers (HTs) and deputy head teachers (DHTs) from primary and secondary schools in Scotland. The evaluation was commissioned by the Hunter Foundation and the Scottish Executive. The study uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide the main findings.

Main Findings

- There were positive views by HTs/DHTs on the value of objectives of the Enterprise in Education (E in E) programme, but a high degree of uncertainty on the nature of the Columba 1400 programme and how this related to the objectives of E in E. After the Columba programme there was a greater resolution to achieve the stated objectives of E in E and greater awareness of the place of the Columba 1400 programme within the broad E in E programme.
- There were increased levels of confidence by HTs and DHTs in their own abilities as a leader and to create and manage change.
- HT/DHT attitudes pre Columba 1400 were affected by perceived values of external influencers, such as colleagues, education authorities and the wider society. Post Columba 1400, there was a greater resolution in their own abilities to achieve objectives irrespective of external factors.
- There was less change in attitudes towards using or developing external links with the local community and with local businesses. This result may have been affected by the relatively high proportion of primary HTs/DHTs, compared to secondary HTs/DHTs on the programme.
- There was evidence of increased personal resolution that important constraints on objectives, such as dealing with staff and pupils, could be resolved and overcome through the utilisation of techniques and competencies developed on the Columba programme.
- HTs and DHTs showed a willingness to apply the non-directive coaching techniques in the school environment with staff and pupils and to spend more time listening to staff and pupils before taking action and to introduce some of the coaching techniques with development sessions with their own staff. They increased the extent of delegation of responsibility to staff, pupils and parents and they were more willing to examine the development of links with local businesses and the local community.

- HTs and DHTs had a greater propensity to develop more specific plans for the inclusion of enterprise activities in school development plans.
- The most powerful elements of the Columba 1400 programme were the intensive coaching sessions. All the sources of data, including the internal feedback, the interviews and the observation confirmed that these sessions, although taking the most time and being highly intensive, were regarded as having the most impact. In addition, the indications were that they had some lasting effects on practices and culture in their schools and with relationships with staff, pupils and parents. The Columba trainers indicated that the composition of the individual coaching trios was not contrived, but was formed 'naturally', nevertheless all the coaching trios seemed to work well for each HTLA.
- The interactive seminar sessions were also highly valued by participants within an appropriate professional context.
- The prior preparation sessions were less highly regarded although the two-day residential preparation was regarded as very valuable preparation.
- The individual psychometric profiling was less valued and it was not clear how this was integrated in the full programme. However, some respondents found it to be valuable.

Research Questions

The main focus of the study was on the following research questions:

R1: How do attitudes of Heads and Deputy Head Teachers change towards an enterprise culture and management of change in schools as a result of participation in the programme?

R2: How are changes in attitudes reflected in the management and culture of staff and students subsequently at the school?

R3: What can be learned by policy makers and educational officers from the impact of the programme?

Research Methods

The Columba 1400 HTLA pilot programme has involved six cohorts of up to 15 HTs and DHTs in each cohort. The research has been undertaken with five HTLAs involving 71 HTs and DHTs. The pilot programme consisted of several

distinct elements including; an individual, computer-generated, psychometric profile; residential elements, a two-day preparation and coaching session and a six-day residential intensive programme at Columba 1400's Centre at Staffin on the Isle of Skye. Finally there was also a follow-up visit by the Columba 1400's trainers at the participant's school.

The study has drawn upon 69 survey responses, a response rate of 97%, 30 first and 28 second stage face-to-face, in-depth interviews, representing over 40% of participating HTs and DHTs. Further research methods, undertaken by the research team, have included observation by participation and, in addition, interviews and consultation have also been undertaken by the research team with the Columba 1400 trainers.

Conclusions

There were variable but powerful impacts on each participant. Learning outcomes varied for each HT/DHT and will also depend on the dynamic of each HTLA - with the learning that takes place from the sharing of experience within each separate cohort of 15 HTs and DHTs that undertake an individual HTLA. Despite this recognised variety, the study's findings suggest that there are identifiable, if subjective, impacts on changes in HT/DHT attitudes, in behaviour, in practices and in learning outcomes.

There were limited impacts on objectives that could be associated with the E in E programme. Practice and attitudes to E in E varied, although there was a high degree of awareness of different and varied practice in enterprise in education pre Columba 1400. There was little direct connection made by all the HTLAs with the Columba programme and E in E pre Columba. However, post Columba, greater association was made between the nature of the HTLA and the aims of E in E.

Different elements of the programme also varied in terms of their impacts. The most valuable, and those having the deepest and most profound impacts, were the intensive coaching sessions and the inter-active group seminar sessions. In particular, the large degree of time spent on the programme on the development of individual coaching skills appeared to be worthwhile, since there was evidence of changes in practice and determination on the part of HT/DHTs to develop these individual coaching skills further in their schools.

Most elements of the programme were highly valued but the role of the individual psychometric profiling was more questionable as it did not seem to be integrated within the

programme, although a minority of HTs/DHTs did find it useful.

An important element that contributed to the impacts of the programme was the dynamic interaction that took place within each HTLA due to the composition and the breadth of experience brought by participating members within each HTLA. The authors suggest that the variation brought to each HTLA should be carefully considered. It may be worth considering greater diversity of experience.

A strong finding of the study was that the programme was very different from any other CPD undertaken by the participants, a unique and very valuable experience, but the Scottish Executive needs to consider how it best complements the existing CPD framework for teachers.

Recommendations

The study's recommendations for the Scottish Executive and the Hunter Foundation included:

The time required for the programme and the location on Skye is important to ensure that maximum value is obtained from the programme. A large investment is required in personal time by each participating HT or DHT. The full cost of the programme was not made available to the research team, but the opportunity costs involved alone suggest that maximum benefit should be sought by careful consideration of the selection and invitation to participants for each HTLA.

Careful consideration should be given to the nature of the programme in relation to the framework for teacher CPD that has been established. It may be appropriate to either select or encourage teachers to participate by the nature of their previous CPD experience rather than specifically HT or DHT. Consideration could be given for improving the diversity of experience that is brought to each HTLA. For example, there may be value in having a mixture of experience and more

opportunity could be given to allow this sharing of experience to be developed.

The link between the programme and that of E in E should be made more explicit. This may just reflect the early stage of the ambitious E in E programme and there will be less need for this, perhaps, as teachers become more fully aware of the breadth of the E in E programme.

Further research should be undertaken on the impacts of the programme. The research team understands that the full E in E programme will eventually be evaluated and further research can be incorporated into that evaluation. Of course, this study has examined initial impacts only, the full impacts can only be studied through more longitudinal research that will track the effects of changes in attitudes, behaviour and practices over time within selected schools.

Recommendations for Columba 1400 included:

The findings indicated that the value of the psychometric profiling session is limited. If this element is retained, it is recommended that it is more fully integrated into the programme, perhaps through more follow-up sessions.

We have suggested that the aims of the HTLA could be clearly identified to participants before the residential on Skye. Although we understand that there may be a desire to retain a deliberate vagueness on the aims of the programme, since it is centred on the development of the individual, some reassurance to participants of what the programme is concerned with, coupled with a more explicit relationship to the E in E programme, would be beneficial.

There is a heavy emphasis on individual coaching in the residential on Skye, to the exclusion of team coaching. This was introduced in the two day preparation and some focus on this in the six day residential on Skye could be introduced without losing the balance of the programme.

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The report, "Columba 1400: Head Teacher Leadership Academy: Developing Enterprise Culture", which is summarised in this research findings is available on the Social Research website at www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch

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ISBN 0-7559-2532-7



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