

**ONE YEAR IN THE ROUGH GROUND OF PRACTICE:
PHRONESIS AS A MODE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
IN A MULTICULTURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**Dissertation submitted as part of the requirements for the Doctorate
in Education (EdD) in St Patrick's College, Dublin City University.**

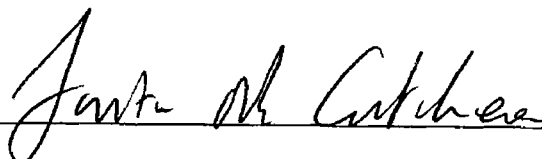
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March 2009

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctorate in Education is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: _____

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janta M. Cutler", written over a horizontal line.

Date: 30th June 2009

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Abstract

Much recent literature of educational leadership acknowledges the need for school Principals to prioritise particular leadership dynamics in school communities characterised by significant diversity (ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic). Commitments on the Principal's part to inclusion, equality, social justice and ethical practice are to inform such leadership. Stemming from these commitments, actions that are context-sensitive, dialogical, critically-reflective, collaborative, creative and responsive to the concerns of multicultural education are seen to make up the day-to-day business of the Principal.

In this dissertation, I argue that 'Phronesis', as conceptualised in recent neo-Aristotelian philosophical articulations of Practical Wisdom and Practice, offers school Principals a way of understanding how to 'be' and 'become' such a Principal – thereby making good what is arguably a lack in the school leadership literature itself.

The dissertation incorporates an action-research self-study of one year of my Practice as a school principal attempting to embody these commitments in a school community with significant diversity. Through selected extracts from a reflective journal, the study offers thick description of issues arising in and the atmosphere pervading this diverse Irish primary school. The layers of reflection, built into the Journal excerpts in the first instance and into the academically informed analysis that accompanies each excerpt in the second instance, are intended to offer insight into significant challenges and dilemmas confronting me in my leadership role as Principal in this quite specific school context.

The conclusions of the study summarise the professional learning and development that accrued for me through engagement in this research/practice over the two years of the study. Tentative claims regarding the refinement of the originally articulated Practice Framework, in terms of more developed understandings of the dynamics of dialogue, action and critical-reflection, are presented and defended. Emerging personal lay theories about the location of the primary school in the broader multicultural society are proposed.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to a great many people and organizations for their contributions, support and assistance in the completion of this dissertation.

First and foremost I would like to thank Dr Joe Dunne, St Patricks College, who was my thesis supervisor. His input has been at all times invaluable, supportive and inspirational. The legacy of our interaction over the two year period will live long in my practice as school Principal. I would also like to thank Dr Jones Irwin as co-supervisor for his timely and thought-provoking contributions. Also, from St Patricks, I would like to acknowledge the valuable advice offered me by Dr Ciaran Sugrue, Dr Mark Morgan, Dr Fionnuala Waldron, Dr Susan Pike and Dr Therese Dooley. I would also like to thank Maria Thornbury for her valuable contribution throughout and Angie Morris for her generous assistance.

All of Ed D colleagues from the 2005-2009 cohort have, throughout the course, contributed to this work with their encouragement, collegiality and practice experiences. In particular I would like to thank Dr Marian Farrelly, Dr Deirdre Farrell and Dr Rory Mc Daid for their advice and assistance.

I am grateful to the generosity of the Teaching Council for their Bursary and encouragement.

It would not have been possible to embark upon this research without the support of the whole community of the featured school in this study. I would like to thank the school's Board of Management for their trust in me. I will be

eternally grateful to the teachers and the families of the school community and the wider community who feature in the journal excerpts for their generosity of spirit and commitment to developing the school to its maximum potential. I would like to thank all the teachers who proofread and discussed the issues of the dissertation with me over two year period of the study.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and express my gratitude to Siobhan, Conor, Sinead and Daire for the sacrifices that they have had to make and for their love, warmth and humour over the duration of this project. Similarly huge thanks to Christy, Berny and all the O'Brien family.

Introduction

In May 2005 I was appointed as Principal of an Educate Together primary school that was due to open the following September. The school, at that point in time, had no accommodation, no formal management structure, had made no other teacher appointments and had not enrolled any pupils. It emerged quickly that the majority of children taking places in the school would be from immigrant and asylum-seeking families.

At this stage I had completed one year of the Education Doctorate (Ed.D) in St Patrick's College specialising in the Citizenship and Multicultural Education strand. I had been working as a teacher educator in this college for a short time following on a career of twenty five years as a primary teacher.

Over the space of the following school year, 2005/06, I was both Principal of this school and a student on this course. At work the demands of a new school with a new staff and children and families who were newcomers to Ireland were both stimulating and challenging. In my student life the courses on Policy, Research, Citizenship and Multiculturalism were interesting and thought-provoking. The opportunity to elide the practice of the professional life and the research of the student life came about through the development of the proposal for this study.

Two distinct bodies of research were important in the development of my sense of purpose for this study. The first was the body of work completed by Devine and colleagues (Deegan, 2004; Devine, 2003, 2005; Devine, Kenny and Mc Neela, 2004, 2005; Devine and Kelly, 2006 with further reference to work

of a similar nature by Cummins, 2000, 2003; Keogh and Whyte, 2002; Lodge and Lynch, 2001, 2004). Devine's research focuses on the experiences of ethnic minorities in Irish schools and on teachers' and Principals' responses to the emerging ethnic diversity of their schools.

The second area of research was the school leadership research of Sugrue (Sugrue and Furlong, 2002; Sugrue, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; McGorman and Sugrue, 2007) and Starratt (1993, 2003, 2004). Sugrue's body of work studies the responses of school leadership to patterns of globalization and emerging diversity in both the Irish and international contexts. Starratt's research concerns itself with ethical school leadership in such contexts.

In her work, Devine claims that Irish teachers' responses to the emerging diversity in their schools and classrooms were characterised by perceptions of 'charity' and a propensity to see these children as being 'in-deficit'. She suggests that many Irish schools were resistant in recognising the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the newcomer children (Devine, 2005). She found that Irish teachers and principals used racialised and classed discourses in their accounts of their experiences with newcomer children and their families. These dominant perspectives, she argues, were resulting in an experience of discrimination and exclusion for many ethnic minority children.

In Sugrue's research on school leadership, I learned that Principals often struggle to incorporate into their daily practice a mode of leadership that is responsive to the needs of their school. Principals were resistant to change and were fearful of taking risks or making creative and imaginative responses to

situations. Many Principals in the face of change or challenge, he claims, are inclined to withdraw into a cocoon of self-protection often characterized by attention to bureaucratic and administrative modes of day-to-day practice. Frequently, Principals are curtailed in their response to challenges by externally-imposed factors over which they may have little control. School traditions, school policy, legislation and societal-demands can serve to disable, overwhelm or distract the school leader from an appropriate response to the needs of the changing school and the diversity within it. Sugrue concludes that school leaders need to develop a practice that is reflective and ethical in the context of their own school and imbued with dynamics of passion and activism. Starratt's work focuses on the development of such ethical practice.

Both Devine's and Sugrue's research prompted concerns for me as a new Principal. How could I, in my Practice as a school Principal, build a school that met the challenge of diversity in a way that is different from the anomalies that they have observed? As a primary teacher coming into the job of Principalship for the first time, I had a bundle of professionally-held and personally-held identities which I felt would inform me as to the type of Principal I wanted to become and the school that I wished to help develop. The greatest source of these lay theories came from my understanding of Education conditioned by my experiences of schooling, teacher training and teaching (see Personal Profile, p.101).

There were two sets of questions that occupied my thoughts at the time. The first set was general questions that could be asked about any school. What kind of school should this be? What ethos should it develop and convey? How

might this school be experienced by children and their families? What experiences may teachers get from teaching in this school? How might the school contribute to current and future society? The second set of questions was addressed to the ostensibly emerging multicultural nature of this specific school. What is a multicultural school? How will this huge range of diversity make itself manifest in the day-to-day business of the school? What challenges and opportunities will this diversity present to me as Principal, to the teachers, to the children and to the parents? How might the school try to avoid the reproduction of inequality and injustice that characterizes the experiences of minorities nationally and internationally? What principles of school organization, curriculum and pedagogy must become the practice of this school? What principles of school leadership must I prioritise as Principal of this school?

As a student of Citizenship on the Ed.D course another set of questions was emerging. What is a multicultural society? How is citizenship to be conceived and understood in a multicultural society? What is the purpose of Education for such a society? How might schools constitute themselves so as to make real any such educative project?

By day at work, I appeared to be living the life of these questions. By night, I was reading the books and having the conversations of the academy. The two worlds became relevant to one another, each informing and questioning the other.

Over the space of the year 2005/06 the questions became more refined and immediate. My professional needs from both projects - the workplace and the academy - merged. How could I as Principal of this school best 'be' or 'become' a school leader who would help to bring about a school that would maximally contribute to the needs of the whole school community and to the development of the society in which the school was located?

I had no answers to this question, but I had preferred starting points. My first starting point was my understandings of Education. I was sympathetic to the work of Dewey (1932, 1933, 1966, 1997, 2005) and those who have developed his work in relation to public schooling, pedagogy, learning theory and learning from experience. (See, for example, Darling and Nordenbo, 2003; Schon, 1992). As a Principal I had to find ways to translate commitments to inclusion, equality, justice, the common-good, active citizenship and the good of education into my practice and to weave it into the fabric of the school.

My second starting point was my understandings of the challenges that lay ahead for Irish society as it faced up to its diversifying demography. A personal view of a desirable multicultural society was emerging through my readings and dialogue with my student colleagues and tutors. I began to align myself with writers in this field who asserted, on one hand, the necessity to recognise diversity in liberal terms and to attribute rights and freedoms to minority groups but, on the other hand, could find a basis for optimism in modern philosophical traditions that propose incorporating diversity into a society that balances the rights of individuals and minority/majority groupings with the ideals of a civic society based on traditions of participation, solidarity and

common-good. (See, for example, Bauman, 2000; Callan, 1993; Enslin and White, 2003; Kymlycka, 1995; May, 1994; Osler, 2005, Parekh, 2006, Taylor, 1991; Walzer, 1992; Williams, 2003)

My lay theory, as Principal and Researcher, was that these understandings of both Education and a Multicultural Society were compatible and formed a coherent philosophical backdrop to my future practice. What I wanted to do was to use these initial dispositions as a starting point for my practice as a Principal. On one hand, to develop a mode of leadership practice that would be informed by these views but, on the other hand, to conduct this practice in such a mode as to be open to their renegotiation or refinement or rejection through critical reflection. The critical-reflection was to be prompted by the research which I was about to undertake.

A small amount of reading undertaken by that stage in the philosophy of Practice, notably Dunne (2005, 2005a) and Kemmis (2005), suggested to me that within this genre of philosophy, and within an Educational Leadership literature that was compatible with the priorities of this philosophy, there lay a potential answer to my question. I was willing to explore this philosophy in the hope (and, perhaps, expectation) there might be illumination as to how I could 'be' or 'become' the sort of Principal who, in practice, could bring these views of Education and Citizenship to life in this new school.

What follows in this dissertation is a record of that journey. From the starting point described here and over the course of two years, I have tried to, simultaneously, practise and research the hypothesis that a Principal working

from a Practice perspective may be able to develop both a school and a nuanced personal practice that can approximate the achievement of Deweyan educational goals and contribute to a multicultural society based on the recognition of difference allied to robust commitments to citizenship.

From August 2006 to July 2007 I kept a detailed reflective journal amounting to 150,000 words. I refer to this document as the Full Journal. An account of the Full Journal is given on page 67 and a discussion on the process of journaling is given on page 82. In summary, the Full Journal is a personal account of the incidents that makes up my day-to-day practice as Principal in this school. It offers a subjective account of many of the issues and incidents that arise in a multicultural context. It is a thick description of the day-to-day business of the school covering the complex interrelationships between the principal, teachers, children, school governors, school care staff, formal school visitors and agencies such as the Department of Education and Science (DES), the Inspectorate and others. The Journal is written in a reflective style and is imbued with emotional, intellectual, aesthetic and political responses to the incidents and issues of the day. It serves as the sole database for the research of this study. It has not been possible to include the full text of the Full Journal in this dissertation. Instead eight excerpts are presented in Chapter 3. A discussion on the criteria for the selection of these eight excerpts can be found on page 98.

Chapter 1, The Theoretical Framework, describes this 'philosophy of Practice' that came to guide both my practice as a school Principal and my research. A literature of Educational Leadership that is in broad concurrence with the

values of a Practice orientation is elided with this philosophical Framework. Literature from the fields of educational leadership in a specifically multicultural context is incorporated here and includes the small amount of such literature that has emerged in Ireland in recent years.

Chapter 2, Research Design and Methodology, describes the specific mode of research of this study. This Chapter further describes the philosophy of Practice that forms the Theoretical Framework of this study and reads as a companion to Chapter 1. The aspects of research methodology that, in this study, become a mode of practice as well as a methodology of research over the two year period of the study are presented. Thus, action-research - and specifically self-study action-research - becomes part of my actions, dialogue and critical reflection as a practitioner in addition to being the formal mode of research for this paper. The Full Journal, the database for this research, archives and documents the Practice across the time span of the one full school year (2006/2007).

In Chapter 3 eight excerpts from the journal are selected, presented, discussed and analysed. The eight excerpts offer the reader thick descriptions of events or incidents that occurred in the school. Written as they are in the heat of the moment, they give a subjective account and my initial reflection as Principal on day-to-day incidents in the style of first person narrative. Each selected excerpt is followed by an analytical discussion in which the excerpt is reflected upon through the lens of the Theoretical Framework. The Chapter finishes with eight specific conclusions drawn from the analytical discussion.

In the final chapter, the Theoretical Framework of the philosophy of Practice is revisited in the light of the eight conclusions from Chapter 3. The purpose here is to show how this Framework can be refined in a way that attunes it more specifically to the priorities of educational leadership in a multicultural context.

Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the Theoretical Framework through which the data of this study will be analysed. It must be stated from the outset that this interpretive lens through which I read meaning into the selected Journal excerpts is but one of a number of alternative lenses that could have been brought to bear on the data. The preference for this interpretive lens emerged organically over the course of the study.

It is difficult to attach to this Theoretical Framework a collective term associated with the range of its contributors, for none such exists. However, because a number of the key figures are those writers who appeal to Aristotelian notions of practice, I term this framework 'the philosophy of Practice'.

The writers and their key texts to which I refer are: Carr, D. (1995, 2007), Carr, W. (1990), Carr and Kemmis (1986), Dunne (1997, 2004, 2005, 2005a), Dunne and Pendlebury, (2003), Kemmis (2005), Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), MacIntyre (1981), MacIntyre and Dunne (2004) and, through, some of their texts and interpretations to Arendt and Habermas, following on Dunne (1997).

Though diverse in their voices, I argue that each of these writers to a greater or lesser degree shares themes and priorities. Many appeal to classical Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle. All espouse practical wisdom and share scepticism of technical rationality in matters of interpersonal relations. All prioritise to greater or lesser degrees practice concepts such as: *habitus*, the

value of dialogue, the reconstructive nature of experience, character, virtue, the influence of life-history and critical reflection.

I complicate matters, further, in this Framework by referring eclectically to voices that are clearly disparate from these writers. For example, when considering reflection and dialogue I appeal to the critical theoretical stance of Freire (1972). On other occasions, I refer to Dewey (1932, 1933, 1966, 1997, 2005), Fanon (1992) and Illich (1973) in order to bring their illuminative insight to particular incidents and phenomena that emerge from the data.

I see this study as, in essence, a practice of the philosophy of Practice. The practice (with the small p) is my practice as a newly-appointed school Principal in unfamiliar territory. The Practice (with the capital P) is that of my tentative grasp of, but instinctive sympathy for, the understanding of Practice as described in this Theoretical Framework.

This study is a self-study. Self-studies of their very nature are simultaneously indulgent and insightful (Johnston, 2006). I am indulgent in the sense that as author I set my own parameters of purpose and analysis unencumbered by concerns for objectivity, generalisability or research-validity as conceived in more positivist research paradigms. Self-studies also hold the potential of observation and illumination that can reach a place of unique insight given the practitioner's immersion in the practice of what is being studied (Clift, 2004, Johnston, 2006). The contribution of the 'research as practice' literature to this Theoretical Framework is made in Chapter 2.

Therefore, the philosophy of Practice as presented in this Theoretical Framework is essentially eclectic drawing as it does on a range of voices. It is not unique in doing so. Dunne and Pendlebury (2003), for example, in their essay on 'practical reason' acknowledge that the philosophical backdrop to their argument lies in many disparate voices citing selected thought from Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Arendt, MacIntyre, Habermas, Rorty and Derrida.

Of particular importance to this study is the hermeneutical aspect of understanding interpersonal relationships stressed by Gadamer and discussed by Dunne and Pendlebury (2003, p.201):

'[o]bjectivity' in our interpretations is never possible, if it is taken to imply an unprejudiced standpoint outside the flux and turbulence of actions and events; how the interpreter is rather always already situated within a particular historical horizon that has to be acknowledged rather than suppressed; and how these 'limitations' on our knowledge - pertaining both to our anticipation of the future and our understanding of the past - lie at the level of our ineluctably human mode of being-in-the-world, beyond the purchase of methodological strategy or prescription.

A second field of literature that accompanies this discussion is the literature of school leadership. I refer to writers within the school leadership literature whose work delves deeply into practice considerations. The practice themes that emerge from this literature are context-bound judgement, the nature of ethical and moral leadership, dialogical and distributed modes of leadership, and discourses of life-history, lifelong learning and living theory.

I will bring this section to a close by mapping out the remainder of the Chapter. Through the frequent thematising and re-thematising of the contents of the Journal in the manner espoused by Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss,

1967; and as discussed in Creswell, 2003 and Denscombe, 2003) a set of what I term 'dynamics' of practice have emerged. By dynamics I mean definable - but not isolated - spheres of endeavour which cumulatively might be agreed by Dunne or MacIntyre or Kemmis to make up practice. The dynamics of practice are those concerns and attributes which practitioners must reflect upon in their own practice if they wish to become 'experienced'. I posit, for the purposes of this study, that six such dynamics may be suggested for the practice of Principalship.

These six dynamics are; the Context of Practice, the Agent in Practice, the Dialogical Nature of Practice, Transformation in the Practitioner (learning from experience), The Practitioner and the Organisation and, finally, Leadership in the service of Teaching and Learning. The same six-heading structure is used again in Chapter 2 (Research Design and Methodology) and in Chapter 4 in order to provide an underlying conceptual cohesiveness that emphasises the centrality of examining my own practice as a major aim of the study.

The Dynamics of Practice

Some Introductory comments

Dunne (2005a) referring to Aristotelian philosophy distinguishes practical reason from technical reason. He questions the validity of technical reason in all practices that deal with human interaction. Referring to MacIntyre (1981), he defines practice as:

A coherent, complex set of activities that has evolved co-operatively and cumulatively over time, that is alive in the community who are its practitioners, and that remains alive only so long as they remain committed to sustaining – and

creatively developing and extending- its internal goods and its proper standards of excellence (Dunne, 2005a, p.368).

Dunne, through MacIntyre and in agreement with Aristotle, acknowledges the internal goods of practice such as craft or nuanced judgement. MacIntyre recognizes qualities in the outcome of the practice as internal goods of the practice. In MacIntyre's sense of practice the internal goods of, for example, school leadership would not only be the craft knowledge or nuanced judgement that is employed by the practitioner but also any attribution of quality associated with the outcome of this practice such as, for example, a school that functions to serve principles of equality or justice.

Dunne (2005a) identifies a further dimension of practice, namely, the ability to transform or change either the practitioner (to become more nuanced in one's endeavour) or the client (to have been facilitated towards some proper goal). Thus, practice is performative (according to its own internal goods), productive (in the form of the 'outcome' of something good) and transformative (in that on each occasion of the practice either the practitioner or the client, or both, will have learned or internalised something new applicable at some future date in any such similar occasion of practice). This is what I understand to be the core of a neo-Aristotelian conception of Practice.

Dunne (2005a, p.370) alludes to three further closely related factors to this core understanding of practice that are of relevance to the consideration of school leadership as a Practice under these terms. Firstly, there is the necessity to institutionalise the practice, to establish structures to frame it and "protect its

wider priorities". The development of the school in this study would be such a venture.

Secondly, there are issues to do with the reproduction of the practice, essentially the professional education of current and newly aspiring practitioners. The development of school structures such as, for example, communities of practice, learners and leaders within this school would be such an endeavour.

Thirdly, there is the articulation of the practice with its own proper concepts and language that facilitate internal discussion and debate. For example, devising and defending the school's policies and practice to the full community of the school and to the wider community beyond the school would be such practice.

Research in Educational Leadership, and especially that of the tenor of Sugrue (2005, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c) and Goodson (1992, 2003, Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996; Goodson and Sikes, 2001) grapple with this notion of internal goods of school leadership practice. Their work on the life-history of school leaders encourages their research participants to reflect on their careers to date and to 'story' their lives in the language of Practice.

The school leaders that these writers describe are practitioners grounded in a specific context. In their reflections on their life-histories they are seeking to understand, sustain and, if allowed, to develop and extend the internal goods of their practice acquired over the duration of their professional lives. At the root of this endeavour lies the narrative of their own development of their internal

goods (their craft, their insight, their judgement), the further internal goods pertaining to the quality and nature of the school they have helped to develop and, most importantly, their story of their own transformation along the way.

Referring to MacIntyre (1981), Kemmis (2005) identifies four orders in which practices are located: biographical, moral, historical and institutional.

Firstly, there is a biographical order - concerning what MacIntyre calls 'the narrative unity of a human life' - which encompasses the unfolding of the Practice and its associated virtues in the life-history of the practitioner. This narrative articulates the practitioners' understanding of their own practice in relation to the traditions of the field. Secondly, the moral order encompasses the distinctive virtues associated with the internal goods of the practice. Thirdly, the historical order encompasses the traditions of the practice giving the practice and its associated virtues their meaning, value and significance. Finally, there is the institutional order in which institutions are understood to stand in a double relation to practices, both sustaining them, but on occasions obscuring or impeding their development. Kemmis (2005, p.398) argues that these orders "provide frameworks against which the actions of an individual practitioner should be understood and evaluated."

I will now proceed to consider the six dynamics of practice.

The Context of Practice: Where Practice takes place.

Dunne (1997) uses the metaphor of 'rough ground' to capture the essence and uniqueness of the contexts in which those practices that involve interpersonal relationships take place.

Following on a metaphor from Wittgenstein, a hypothetical topography of an ice-covered landscape is imagined. The slippery ice has no friction; no obstacles or impediments which can impede the journey. Such a uniform terrain would be predictable and conform to calculable expectations unimpeded by arresting obstacles or friction. But an icy terrain does not sustain life. Life is lived and flourishes, rather, on the 'rough ground' where such obstacles and impediments have their life-sustaining purpose and which we would dismiss or obliterate at our peril in the name of progress.

Practice as a philosophy, as understood here, would assert that the context in which human interaction takes place is a rough ground with its own unique terrain and features. Any applicability of something learned from one rough ground, or context, must not be understood to transfer easily and unproblematically to a new context. Claims for overarching principles and insights must be treated cautiously.

The 'rough ground' for this study can make such claims to uniqueness. A detailed description of the school (p.99) shows it to be quite distinctive in the Irish context. Four factors, I believe, contribute to this uniqueness and make this context a 'rough ground'. First there is the diversity factor; this is a school in which 90% of the students are children of recent immigrants to Ireland. Secondly, there is the Patronage factor; the school is under the patronage of 'Educate Together' who make up only 2% of Irish national schools. Thirdly there is the 'new school' factor; the school is only in the second year of its existence. Fourthly, it is a school with the majority of children from lower socio-economic groupings. I will now discuss each of these, briefly.

First, with regard to diversity, how can the school be fashioned so as to meet the demands and needs of a multitude of ethnically, linguistically, culturally and religiously diverse individuals and groupings? For example, Rutter (2001) would ask how a school might be sensitive to the special needs that the fracturing of families and family traumas inherent in the immigration and asylum-seeking experience? Connolly (1998) asserts the experiences of racism of newcomer immigrant children in schools. Cummins (2000, 2003) refers specifically to the difficulties experienced by immigrant children in relation to their experiences of second language provision. The Immigration Council of Ireland (2004) and Fanning (2002) detail experiences of social exclusion for asylum-seeking and immigrant families in Ireland. Gillborn (1995) examines racism as an experience for minorities in the structure of schools.

Additionally, from the diversity perspective, this context may be seen as characterised by issues of multiculturalism. For example, which model of a multicultural society may best suit the many separate interest groups joined together in this new school project? Schools in this context must, simultaneously, look outwards to the broader society to which they have functional duties and responsibilities and to look within to the micro- society which the school itself becomes. Keohane and Kuhling (2004) explore the ‘collision’ of new immigrant cultures with Irish society. Lentin (2002) looks critically at the anti-racist responses of the Irish state to this emerging collision.

In the context of the broader society the school must negotiate its purpose in this society with due respect to the diversity of its school families. The children graduating from the school must simultaneously be able to succeed within this

society across a range of academic, social and citizenship expectations laid down by, for example, a centralised curriculum and a conservative second-level schooling system dominated by state examinations. However, in doing this the school must also try to generate a critical approach to this task that does not seek to merely assimilate diversity into the unquestioned norms of the broader society (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006). Ladson-Billings and Gillborn (2004) spell out the specific challenges for schools presented by multicultural education.

Similarly the school leaders in this school must look within their own school and observe what kind of micro-society they are generating there. How does the school cater for the diversity of its own community through its own practice (Cummins, 2000, 2003)? What are the experiences of the minority groupings in their dealings with the school? Is their diversity recognised or ignored? Are their voices encouraged or stifled? Are their cultures respected or tolerated or denigrated (Dimmock and Walker, 2002, 2005)? What understandings of citizenship are being pursued in the school in its organization, curriculum and predominant pedagogy?

The classic tensions of all emerging multicultural societies exist here in the context of this study. The conversations that emerge in the school, and as evidenced in the journal excerpts, echo the range of discourses as to the optimal desirability and feasibility of democratically multicultural society.

Liberal notions of respect and freedom for each individual and minority-grouping will be seen in the demands of some of the school's community and

are very much part of the school's stated Educate Together ethos (Rowe, 2000).

More traditionally and philosophically republican demands for robust integrative notions of a diverse society also emerge from the voices of this school community; evidenced throughout the Full Journal in demands for mutual understanding, or common good, or solidarity or voluntarism.

Furthermore we will also witness resistances to any form of multiculturalism, whether thin liberal or thicker republican versions, from inherited and traditional notions of Irish Nationalism and traditional views of schools as being places of cultural transmission (Waldron, 2004). Further resistances to the negotiation of change can be evidenced in the Journal in the exercise of dominance of particular groups such as teachers, indigenous parents and the school leader himself in their exercise of their power bases afforded traditionally in the organisation of public schools (Wilkinson, 2008).

Constrictions of space do not allow for a full perusal of the literature of contestations of an optimal diverse society (see, for example, Enslin and White, 2003). Instead, prioritising the issues as they emerge from the Journal, we see that a number of key texts and writers have dominated the discussion of these questions in the grounded practice of the school. The first influential body of literature is that of critical-multiculturalism (Gundara, 2000; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997; May, 1994, 1999; Willet, 1998). In the Journal excerpts (Chapter 3) we will see how the school initially comes to identify its policy as critical-multiculturalist. Critical-multiculturalism emerged as a response from

the teachers to their critical reflection on liberal multiculturalism with its emphasis on the unassailable rights of the individual or grouping to cultural freedoms. The essays in May (1999) best describe the particular understanding of critical multiculturalism adopted here. From this broad critical-multiculturalist perspective the unquestioning respect and freedom given to the individual and the group in liberal multiculturalism is tempered with many caveats; the prevalence of racism, the dominance of the powerful, the necessity for critical theory and faculties, the necessity for critical pedagogy in the education process and the notion of multiple identities.

However, as the Journal progresses we see that some dissatisfactions with critical multiculturalism emerge. When issues of parental involvement in the life of the school emerge in the Journal tensions arise around the willingness to volunteer or to show solidarity or to join in the dialogue and negotiation concerning a common good. In such instances we see the school drawn to more republican understandings of a diverse society where the freedoms of individuals and groups are seen as dependent on the willingness of all diverse groups to participate meaningfully in the definition and defence of a common good.

As a Principal of a school where many of the diverse groups have little in common with one another, I have been much taken with Williams (2003) in her espousal of the concept of 'shared fate' where she asserts that it is incumbent upon all individuals and groupings to realise that the fundamental freedoms of our society are at stake and can only be maintained when all members realise that their fate is tied up with those of the other, whether one is disposed to the

other or not. In their essay, Enslin and White (2003) also introduce further conceptions of multicultural society that reflect the complexity of dynamics of interpersonal relationships evident in the study's Journal.

In Dunne and Pendlebury (2003, p.210) Pendlebury draws links between phronesis and a specific vision of a citizenship in multicultural society based on dialogue and critical-reflection. She alludes to discourses of deliberative democracy (Gutmann), public-reason (Rawls), communicative democracy (Young) and cultivating citizens (Nussbaum) to conclude that the primary tasks of education must be "the habituation of character and the development of discernment" accompanied by a willingness:

to include the development of the narrative imagination, emotional attunement, a sensitivity to the dialogical demands of different situations and situational moments, and the capacity to act in light of these sensitivities (Dunne and Pendlebury, 2003 p.210).

I argue that the disposition towards the philosophy of Practice, generally, and phronesis, specifically, sits comfortably with an understanding of a multicultural society that takes seriously the imperative of open-ended dialogue, commitment to critical reflection, a reliance on a robust sense of citizenship and one that implicates education with the development of these capacities and dispositions.

A detailed consideration of Patronage Factor, identified as the second factor of this school's unique 'rough ground' context is presented on pages 52-54 under the heading of 'The Practitioner and the Organisation'.

The third unique feature of this school context is its newness. There is a sense of *tabula rasa* which I as Principal initially felt accrued to a new school. There is the absence of traditions which can impact both negatively and positively on a school's response to emerging diversity. Viewed negatively, such traditions can be seen as fixed horizons which can be difficult to change and obstinate in their conservatism. Viewed positively, such traditions may present an established ethos as a springboard for practices that have evolved over time.

A new school is afforded the opportunity to recruit all new staff according to their disposition for working in such an environment. In any new school there is bound to be a sense of initiative and a necessity to initiate given that everything must be started from scratch. This makes space for a unique set of opportunities for collaboration at all levels in the school community. It offers a particular opportunity to develop a sense of vision for the school that is relevant to the community of the school and contemporary to the needs of society. These are all largely positive manifestations of the newness.

However, as the full Journal evidences there are many arresting factors on all of these opportunities. It becomes abundantly clear from the Full Journal that new schools in the Irish context are presented with many difficulties of a financial and logistical nature. It would appear that many of the structural supports that are built into the Irish Education system are lacking in the case of new schools. This issue is discussed in some depth in Chapter 3.

I suggest, in hindsight, that *tabula rasa* is an inadequate metaphor for a public institution such as a school where the traditions and cultural expectations of all

the school community, especially those of teachers and parents, come to quickly colonise this territory. The school may be new but the expectations from the various interest groups that form the school community are not new and reflect the traditions of their own life-histories. In Chapter 3, we see how the multicultural make-up of the school community bring diverse expectations to this scenario.

Furthermore, the need to take so many initiatives, often in the face of urgent and, by times, impatient demand is a unique contextual factor in new schools.

The fourth contextual character of this school is that of socio-economic disadvantage. Rutter (2001) asserts the link between experiences of educational disadvantage and belonging to ethnic minorities. Contemporary discourses on equality in Education identify ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities as being discriminated against in education systems internationally and in the Irish Education system (Baker, 1996; Cummins, 2000, 2003; Devine, Kelly and McNeela, 2005; Drudy and Lynch, 1993; Lynch, 1999; Lynch and Lodge, 2002).

Recent literature in the field suggests addressing educational disadvantage in terms of 'educare' and proposes that schools should organize themselves in order to facilitate interpersonal relationships, curriculum, forms of pedagogy and ranges of services cognisant of the care, love, justice and happiness needs of the school community (Andereck, 1992; Archer and Francis, 2006; Connell, 1993; Noddings, 1992). Similarly this is an emerging discourse in the literature

of school leadership in contexts of diversity (Barth, 2002; Blackmore, 2006; Dimmock and Walker, 2005; DiTomaso and Hooijberg, 1996).

To return to the imperative of context in this philosophy of Practice, it must be emphasised that the word 'rough' in 'rough ground' must not be seen as pejorative. The terrain in which these questions arise is often enlightening, satisfying, motivating and energising for me as Principal in my practice. But, also, the raw neediness of many of the school community (children, parents and teachers alike) and the newness of the situation in an Irish context in combination make for a complex rough ground. On some occasions an unhelpful sense of urgency, an apparent demand for expertise or quick solutions present an inherent jeopardy to the understanding of practice as envisaged here with its commitment to lifelong learning, to incremental growth, to critical reflection, to building of communities of practice and communities of learning. I argue that the multiple identities of individuals and groups across all of the factors of diversity ensure that there are entangled layers attached to the identities of each individual in the school. Attempts to develop actions aimed at, for example, religious identity may open up other issues according to the diversities of gender or skin-colour or family-structure.

Dunne (2005a) describes such a context. He argues that there may be:

points of intersection for several lines of consideration and priority which, while running in different directions are interwoven tightly in a complex web. Attempts to unravel any one of these strands (the classic task of analysis) may only introduce greater tangles in the others. In education, for example, a practitioner or policy-maker may face a situation where ...demands...pull in contrary directions but where some decision has to be made (Dunne, 2005a, p.381).

Thus, acknowledging the importance of context in this Theoretical Framework offers the prospective school Principal the reassurance that the time and energy invested on getting to know one's school setting is of paramount value. Dunne asserts that practical wisdom concerns the ability "to engage in the deliberative process that can yield concrete, context-sensitive judgements" (Dunne, 2005a, p376). Kemmis (2005, p.392) describes practitioners as "searching for saliences" capable of:

changing their reading of the situation as it unfolds and through practice, in the light of changing perceptions, observations and ways of seeing the situation, and in the light of changes brought about by seeing how others see it, and how they are reacting and responding to changes as the situation unfolds (Kemmis, 2005, p.392).

The variety of contexts listed above fall mainly into what Kemmis (2005), following MacIntyre, identifies as the biographical order pertaining to the life – history of the practitioner and also the institutional order in identifying the school and the rigours expected from the school by the different vested interests in its emergence - the teachers, the Department of Education and Science and the Patron Body.

In the educational leadership literature this attention to the rootedness of a Principal's situated learning in the local context is best illuminated in the body of work around the life-histories of school Principals. In each of the narratives of life-history in Sugrue (2005, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c) we find Principals who have learned over time to read the complex contexts of their schools and to devise ways of being in the form of lay theories as to how to act in response to the competing demands of their peculiar location "situated in

micro-politics of that school and it's legacy" (Starratt, J. in Sugrue (2005, p.xii).

In Starratt's own work the importance of the context in the development of ethical leadership is evident in his identification of 'presence' as essential for the Principal (Starratt, 1993, 2003, 2004, 2005):

Presence means a full awareness of the self and others. It suggests full attention to the other. It implies being close, being toward, and being for (Starratt, 2004, p.104).

Drawing on the anthropology of Mead, he takes her maxim; "that we live in the actual or imagined presence of people all the time" and extrapolates it to the necessity for the school Principal to be part of, and not at a distance from, the lives of the school community. This is only achievable through physical and emotional closeness to all parties in the school community, to the dialogue that one must engage in or initiate, to the listening that is at least half of every real dialogue and to the connection that is made through these processes.

Context and biography are clearly crucial, "the central building blocks" (Goodson, 2003, p.1) in the process of forming the self-identity that is necessary for the further dynamics of Practice as understood here. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999, p.4) argue that "outstanding leadership is exquisitely sensitive to the context in which it is exercised."

The Agent in Practice: The practitioner in action.

In this philosophy of Practice the practitioner is seen as an agent. To act is to set in motion a cycle of doing, observation, reflection, deliberation and refinement of action for the next cycle when action is required again. It is the

action that sets up the cycle of learning. It initiates the experience by which one may learn allowing the experience to be reconstructed into significant learning, one that the practitioner will bring intuitively to the next similar or related dilemma. Dunne (2005a, p.382) refers to action as “rising to the challenge of new situations that are not comfortably encompassed” in one’s previous experience. In this understanding deliberation occurs in the critical reflection on the action sequence drawing inferences from the process and the multitude of outcomes for every participant in the action cycle. This is *phronesis* or practical wisdom:

with its role as an action-orientating form of knowledge, its irreducibly experiential in nature, its non-confinement to generalised propositional knowledge, its entanglement with (beyond mere knowledge) with character, its need to embrace the particulars of relevant action-situations within its grasp of universals and its ability to engage in the kind of deliberative process that can yield concrete, context-sensitive judgement. If one wants an English equivalent of *phronesis*, perhaps ‘Judgement’ is the best candidate - a word we use not only for particular judgement ‘calls’, but more generally for the cultivated capacity to make such calls resourcefully and reliably in all of the complex situations that they address (Dunne, 2005a, p.376).

But the agent does not come to this process as an objective being. As we have seen from the earlier discussion the practitioner is generally prompted into recognising the need for action by the complexity of the context in which he is working. The critical incident, that which has given rise to the need for action, will have already been pre-read in some shape or form by the Principal’s previously held experience or knowledge. Each agent, or practitioner, brings a lifetime’s worth of life-history that will influence his own preconceptions as to

the best course of action. We are encouraged to be both comfortable with and wary of this.

The comfort lies in the sense that one's life-history has the potential to throw some previous cycles of significant learning into the interpretive process. In Dunne's (1993) work we are introduced to conceptions of prejudice, notably through Gadamer and Newman. He identifies 'good prejudices' meaning knowledge or generalisations of reasonable learning that have come about through one's life experience to date. Phronesis is reliant on one's deployment of such past learning in action situations so as to set them up, as it were, for a fresh actuation with the possibility of critical-reflection and the consequent possibility for the reconstruction of one's experience. This view of Practice asserts that the action undertaken and the phronetic cycle following one's action will result in the redefinition of one's prejudices according to the critically reflected deliberation that one must engage in. For Dewey education was the continuous reconstruction of experience which increased incrementally our capability to direct and control our lives.

But one must, also, be wary of one's prejudices. Negative or discriminatory prejudices come about from incomplete cycles of action and deliberation. Inadequate critical reflection or a reading of context that is cursory and lacking in intimacy or detail can draw conclusions that may be negatively prejudiced. Such prejudices are fixed horizons where the practitioner is unwilling or unable to loosen them so that they may be relocated, even fractionally.

The practitioner must be open-minded as to the outcomes of his/her action. He/She must be open to possibility that the consequences may be unforeseen and the unpredictable. He/she must be willing to engage in open-ended actions uncertain as to the outcome of the action and be willing to acknowledge the outcome whether it is comfortable or not.

This set of practice considerations may be regarded as part of the moral order (MacIntyre, 1981) where the internal goods of the process of practice- the knowledge, the craft, the intuition, the judgement, the experience gained in the process of practice - prompt moral and ethical behaviour by the practitioner.

In this study many occasions arise where I, as Principal, become an agent; an initiator of action. Frequently this stems from a dilemma raised by an incident. Frequently, too, we see where I am being pro-active, initiating actions in the absence of incidents but out of some other motivation. Such scenarios will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 3. The extent to which I, as Principal, succeed in instantiating complete or incomplete phronetic cycles of action, dialogue, critical-reflection, reconstruction and further action will be discussed.

One frequent well-spring of actions that arises in this school is issues of racism. The language of racialised discourses and allegations and counter allegations of racism feature heavily in the Full Journal. As Principal, I must respond to racist incidents of an individual and institutional nature. Similarly, however, much action is generated by fear of being racist or being understood as having been racist.

Another series of actions arise from sources in my own life-history. Throughout the Journal I am engaged in actions motivated by my own beliefs garnered over the course of my personal and professional life and by my understandings of my responsibilities as a school Principal. Frequently these centre on the development of understandings of the common good in the school community. Also we see a series of action initiatives around the promulgation and defence of childcentred education which may be seen as an integral part of my own professional identity. Similarly my vision of a broader Irish multicultural society, informed by my readings of critical-multiculturalist literature, forms the backdrop for a set of actions.

A third set of actions illuminated in the Journal might be described as those that arise from the process of school building. Interestingly, MacIntyre (MacIntyre and Dunne, 2004) recognises school-building as an example of a practice. We see in these instances the Principal initiating actions that have grown from a variety of sources, for example, suggestions of colleagues, best practice in other schools and the need to develop structures within the school for governance. Kemmis (2005), following MacIntyre (1981), identifies actions of this kind as belonging to the institutional order. Dunne (2005a) would see these specific sets of actions as central to practice in the endeavour to generate an institution that can house the practice and ensure structural support.

The notion of Principal as agent exercises all of the writers across the spectrum of views on Educational Leadership. For those whose work is grounded in conceptions of Practice there is much discussion of the influence of life-history. These writers emphasise the need for freedom for Principals to be

allowed to engage in such action and to be willing to take risks and to use their imagination and creativity in their actions. Faced with such demands for action, Sugrue (2005, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c) notes that practitioners may often be disabled from doing so for a variety of reasons. Sugrue describes such principals withdrawing into a 'protective cocoon' where their actions become overly attentive to bureaucracy, limited in scope and minimal in aspiration.

This may come about due to fears on the Principal's part prompted by external sources such as unsupportive governance. Alternatively it may come from internal sources such as fear of staff displeasure or limited engagement with professional education or an uncritical response on the Principal's part to handed down traditions or externally imposed policies. Sugrue (2005, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Sugrue and Furlong, 2002) argues that Principals should resurrect through professional development the passions that brought them either into teaching or Principalship in the first place. He argues that the governing authorities should support the Principal as he/she begins to act on these passions. Such professional development and on-the-ground support for school leaders should enable them to get beyond the fear of risk-taking and to develop their capacity to be creative and imaginative in their practice.

The Dialogical Nature of Practice

One must be careful, however, not to extrapolate from this espousal of the Principal as Agent to heroic understandings of school leadership. In the school-leadership literature such heroic understandings have been described alternatively as 'the myth of the superprincipal' (Copland, 2001; Wolcott, 1973) or, from a critical feminist perspective, characterised as traditional

masculine and power-based misconceptions of leadership (Blackmore, 2006; Gunter, 2006). An essential premise of all practice, as understood here, is that it is dialogical in nature and unachievable or harmful if the practitioner understands it to be solely his/her prerogative and concern.

Dunne (2005a) warns against heroic notions of action observing that:

while the action of any agent may indeed be a real initiative, setting off something new, it is still inserted in a web of interaction with its own power and limits conditioned by its capacity to mesh with – without manipulating – the actions of other agents which transpire in the same space of plurality, a space between agents (Dunne, 2005, p380).

He proceeds to assert the “non-sovereignty of the single agent” (Dunne, 2005a, p. 381).

Kemmis (2005) asserts that “practices are not just activities undertaken by individuals. They have extra-individual features. These include social and discursive feature that make them the collective property of groups, not just the possessions of individual practitioners” (Kemmis, 2005, p.393). He concludes that changing or developing practice is “inevitably a political process, beyond the responsibility of the individual practitioner acting alone” (Kemmis, 2005, p.393).

Wenger (1998) emphasizes the importance of dialogue in communities of practice. Communities of practice are to be developed within the organisation and are aimed at developing the practitioners through collaboration and dialogue. Kemmis (2005), drawing on the work of Habermas, identifies a ‘public sphere’: a communicative space in which people can converse openly,

freely, critically and self-critically about the nature, meaning and consequence of what they are doing.

Kemmis identifies ten factors that constitute a public sphere for the purpose of developing practice all of which should facilitate and generate meaningful dialogue: they should be constituted as actual networks of communication among actual participants; they should be self-constituted by people who get together voluntarily; they should come into existence in response to legitimate deficits; they are constituted for communicative action and public discourse; they should be inclusive and should use ordinary language; they should maximise communicative freedom; they should generate communicative power; they should seek to affect social systems indirectly and, finally, they can also arise in association with social movements. Each of these factors for the development of public spheres, and consequently, communities of practice resonate throughout the Journal data of this dissertation and provides a useful framework for the discussion of this school and this Principal's efforts at developing dialogue between the different populations in the school.

Sugrue (2005) argues that the dialogical and interpersonal aspect of the practice of the Principal facilitates the reconstruction of professional identity in two ways: firstly, by 'identification' (the investment of the self in dialogical relation) and secondly, by 'negotiability' (equal participation in structures within the school through which solutions, policy and decisions are negotiated). Sergiovanni (1992, 1996, 2001) suggests that in the many different communities that exist in a school two particular communities - a community

of learners and a community of leaders - offer the Principal the opportunity to become dialogical in the school setting.

‘Distributed leadership’ emphasises the importance of leadership being distributed across many players in the institution and the imperative of dialogue between these players in working towards common purpose and common goals (Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2001). In distributed leadership, the Principal, through dialogue, develops an internal community of leaders. A teaching staff becomes an organically evolving set of clusters of expertise and practice with leadership roles and capacity. Successful leadership, from the Principal’s perspective, is that which fosters and nurtures learning- and practice- communities within the school teaching staff.

In his conception of ‘invitational leadership’, Novak (2005) sees the actions of the Principal when inviting discussion, inquiry, initiating programmes of action and devising policy through collaborative and dialogical processes, as optimising the potential of the whole school community for ethical and common goals. Concepts of ‘emotional leadership’ allude to the many forms in which genuine dialogue may take place, emphasising dialogue in both speech and non-speech forms that converse through the emotional vocabulary of love and care (Beatty, 2005).

Freire (1972) delves deeply into the dynamics of dialogue distinguishing between dialogue transforms of the conversants and other forms of communication that are anti-dialogical. In his work we see the importance of

dialogue that is grounded in the context and politics of the lives of the oppressed. He asserts that such dialogue is potentially transformative and emancipatory in the lives of those who are willing to collaborate in such a process. Given the hierarchical power structures of the school and the vulnerability of minorities within school settings, Freire's understanding of dialogue has special reference to this Theoretical Framework:

Dialogue is thus an existential necessity. And since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to one person's depositing ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be consumed by the discussants (Freire, 1972, p.69).

He proceeds to list a series of characteristics of properly constructed dialogue that may maximally emancipate those engaged in it. Dialogue must stem from a disposition of love and caring. It cannot exist without humility on the part of the powerful. It requires a faith in others. The conversant in any dialogue must engage in critical thinking. He concludes:

only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education (Freire, 1972, p73).

Transformation in the Practitioner: Learning from experience.

The assertion that the practitioner will transform as a consequence of action undertaken followed by critical reflection upon that action is central to this portrayal of Practice. Similarly, it is also argued that dialogue engaged in with integrity and authenticity will be transformative.

We have noted already how Dunne (2005a) affirms the transformative element of practice on either the practitioner or the client of the practice or, ideally, both. We note, too, that this understanding of Practice asserts that if the practitioner engages in the cycle of action and critical reflection with authenticity and integrity then his/her subsequent actions will become incrementally more practically-wise with fairer and more intuitive judgement and more ethically and morally attuned to the demands of the situation. He notes:

in each fresh actuation there is an element of creative insight through which it makes itself equal to the demands of a new situation (Dunne, 2005a, p.377).

Dunne then proceeds to talk about what it is that changes in the individual as the practitioner develops this “fine discrimination of judgement” (Dunne, 2005a, p.377).

Firstly, there is the virtue of patience in sticking or persevering with a problem. This patience may involve a restraint from plumping for a quick-fix solution. It requires calmness in trying to remain clearheaded in one’s reflection. It must be accompanied by a confidence aimed simultaneously at assuring those who may be anticipating a solution and, also, a confidence that some solution that will do no harm can be devised if not immediately, then at least eventually.

Secondly there is the courage to entertain an “unwelcome or unfashionable viewpoint” (Dunne, 2005a, p.377). Courage may also be required to take a risk on some course of action that may have an unpredictable outcome, or may only partially resolve an intractable problem. Courage may also be required to throw

an issue open to the negotiation of the community, thereby relinquishing the power to impose one's own preferential course of action or solution. The capability of the school Principal to develop this capacity is central to modes of distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006).

Thirdly Dunne identifies temperateness as an important virtue of Practice. The temperateness "that keeps one from being too easily swayed by impulse or first impression" (Dunne, 2005a, p.377). Likewise, temperateness is required to refrain from being overdramatic, overreaching or lacking in balance in one's course of action. In conclusion Dunne employs Weil's concept of 'unselfing' embodied in one's "receptivity to a problem rather than a keenness to master it with a solution" (Dunne, 2005a, p.378).

Birmingham (2004) identifies phronesis itself as a virtue, coupling these three virtues with the cycle of action, dialogue, critical reflection and transformation that make up the process of phronesis. Noel (1999, 1999a), similarly, identifies phronesis as the manner in which these virtue capacities can be transformed through practice in the practitioner adding that creativity and imagination can be woven into one's teaching through the process.

This Practice framework asserts that while acknowledging that our life-history may have drawn horizons for us according to our experiences we must be willing in our practice to engage in a transformation of these horizons. They must not be fixed, but adequately flexible to be able to be relocated, even if only fractionally or incrementally, by cycles of action, reflection and reconstruction.

When Sugrue (2005) talks of ‘passion’ in Principals, and of the necessity for the Principal to be able to draw on those passions and engage in ‘passionate Principalship’, it remains unclear, to me, how the Principal may be able to understand his/her passion as unproblematic. This Theoretical Framework warns that one’s life-history can leave one with blind-spots or emotive drives that must be opened to examination through critical reflection.

To this end it is important to consider Dunne’s (2005a) conclusion when discussing ‘emotivism’ the term employed by MacIntyre to reject indulgent subjectivism:

the horizon of his or her judgements is always set by proper ends, goods and standards of the practice and is always at least potentially directed towards and testable by , other practitioners set within the same horizon that establishes the practice as a collaborative and communal space (Dunne, 2005a, p.382).

Starratt (1993) argues that it is important to understand leadership as a creative act that combines passion with reason and purpose. Homer-Dixon (2001) acknowledges the power of the emotional intensity and motivation that passion, over and above a more Cartesian response, can evoke. This research argues that such emotions sustain his/her endeavours over a period of time:

I believe that reason by itself is not-and cannot be-our ultimate salvation, and that we must instead call on our uniquely human capacity to integrate emotion and reason, to mobilise our moral sensibilities, create within ourselves a sense of the ineffable (Homer-Dixon, 2001, p.399).

I am inclined to see passions as well-springs of contestable but potential creativity and imagination. The practitioner may use these sources to stimulate

incident and action amongst the broader community of practice, or community of leaders, but they must be critically reflected upon.

This interrogation of one's own life-history prompts one to think of this model of Practice as having a therapeutic import. The value of inter-psychic dialogue and the importance of coming to understand one's own life-history are central to psychoanalytic discourses on the nature of how one transforms or changes. Within the dynamic of critical reflection there are psychoanalytic understandings that reflection will result in emancipation. Dunne (1997), in his discussion of Habermas's conception of critical practice, notes that this concept of practice is "one that would be self consciously directed by an emancipatory interest" (Dunne, 1997, p182).

So how is a practitioner to embark on this transformative or emancipatory reconstruction of one's own identity central to the notion of incrementally becoming a *phronimos* or a practitioner who is wiser, experienced, more assured and more intuitive? Critical-reflection would appear to be the site or phase in the cycle where this growth occurs.

Reflective practice of this nature gained credibility in the seminal work of Schon (1987). Schon developed the concept of reflection-in-action, employing both Dewey's notions of inquiry and Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge - that knowledge known to experienced practitioners that may be missed by the less experienced and be difficult, if not impossible, to articulate fully.

Emotional responses of anger, discomfort, care, fear and worry can effectively inform our deliberations in fruitful ways. These are legitimate and,

occasionally, necessary responses of the practitioner to particular observations and frustrations. Dunne (2005a) refers to such responses as aesthetic in that they are mediated through feelings.

Research by Huberman, Gronnauer, Maiti and Huberman (1993, p.104) would appear to indicate that there are career stages in which teachers are more open or closed to processes of reflection. They describe this trajectory as “filled with plateaux, discontinuities, regressions, spurts and dead-ends”. They portray a clear linear pattern of approximately five to ten year phases of such a pattern which they list as: ‘career entry/socialisation’, ‘diversification and change’, ‘stock taking and interrogations at mid-career’, ‘serenity’, ‘conservatism’ and ‘disengagement’.

Generalisations as to the career trajectory of school leaders with regards to their patterns of reflective practice would be seriously questioned in this Theoretical Framework. Instead, the development of the school leader through phronetic processes envisages a school leader who is disposed to seeing himself/herself as ‘always in construction’. Though some of the patterns may be comfortingly recognisable, in my opinion, they are of little value because of their lack of recognition of all of the dynamics that are precious to Practice.

I feel, too, that such predictive understandings of career trajectories are immune to the stimuli and trauma that normal life experience can inject into one’s life. In the context of this school and this study, the sudden emergence of a diverse school population, the urgencies of a new school and the stimulus of engaging with a new school Patronage after a lifetime of teaching in the

denominational sector have interrupted whatever trajectory of reflective practice my own career had been on prior to this.

The Socratic appeal to 'know thyself' is relevant here. Sachs (2003) incorporates this in his research into sustainable leadership. He identifies four sources of knowledge for the reflective practitioner; know thyself, know the context, know ideas and develop skills (summarised in Sugrue 2005, p.181):

Know thyself: to interrogate values, beliefs and commitments so that we know who we are and what we are for in a personal and educational sense; Know the context: to be familiar with and have understanding of the strengths and limitations of school communities as well as cultivating the thinking tools that enable community members to both celebrate and criticise, to act individually or collectively; Know ideas: to be committed to lifelong learning by being connected with ideas on leadership, where they originate and the invisible hands that shape them, and to refract them in productive ways within their learning communities; Develop skills: recognise that particular skills are more important than others, depending on leadership priorities, the life cycles of schools and policy contexts, and to hone and acquire appropriate skills on a needs basis rather than thinking all skills must be developed at once.

Inherent to notions of personal transformation must be the question 'to what end?' In Freirian terms the purpose of transformation is to be emancipatory (Freire, 1972). Knowledge of oneself is to construct oneself as a subject in the world around one and thus give one the essential motivation, confidence, nous and, most importantly, the language to change that world. Freire's understanding of the education process was that of critical dialogue between teacher and learner and, consequently, the mutual growth in this process. An educator is always a political agent. Central to the education process is the

‘conscientisation’ of the teacher and the learner grounded in the context of the school and society.

Though emerging from critical theory, I argue that such notions of emancipation have resonances in the neo-Aristotelian model of practice. Emancipation is one way of conceiving the incremental growth of experience that occurs in the cycle of phronesis. The need for the Principal to reconsider his own life history and to identify the influences and pressures that may have arrested or enhanced his own personal and professional development would be truly emancipatory. MacIntyre (1981) refers to the process of working out this personal story as attempting to discover the ‘narrative unity of a life’.

Starratt (2004), in identifying ‘Responsibility’ as an essential element in a triangle of ‘authenticity’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘presence’ asserts that political-awareness is necessary for a Principal with aspirations towards ethical leadership. In this school, to be present to the needs and concerns of all of the school community is to be empathic to the issues facing the immigrants and asylum-seekers. It is achievable through endless physical presence in the school and its environs, through language and non-language messages of approachability on the leaders’ part, through listening, through affirmation and invitation and through dialogue.

I conclude this section with the observation by Wilkinson (2008) that if practice is not transformative of either the practitioner or the institution then it is, necessarily, instrumental in perpetuating discrimination in contexts of schools with diverse demographics. She warns that all the current research on

leadership in schools of ethno-cultural diversity in English-speaking countries observes that “principals mainly draw upon the management-for-diversity discourse where diversity though seen as an asset is also continually measured against notions of the native homogenous norm and is prone to observations of deficit in minority ethnicities” (Wilkinson, 2008, p.107).

Devine (2005), following on Foucault’s identification of the diverse as being the ‘other’, points out that observation of diversity as being simultaneously enriching but also in-deficit is common amongst Irish teachers and Principals. Cummins (2003) similarly challenges the predominant understanding in the schools of English-speaking countries where first languages other than that of the majority population are observed as ‘in-deficit’.

Further understandings of critical reflection and transformation are discussed in Chapter 2, particularly those to do with the heuristic nature of writing, journaling and autobiography (Johnston, 2006; Hubbs and Brand, 2005), the relationship based on dialogue of the journal-writer and supervisor-interlocutor (Tripp, 1993), concepts of living theory (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006; Whitehead, 1989) and action-research issues of reflection through self-study (Elliott 1985,1991; Johnston, 2006; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 2003).

The Practitioner and the Organisation.

School-building is central to the day-to-day practice of the the Principal. In the case of school-building, which MacIntyre recognises as a practice, qualities

attaching to the school as a structured organisation can be seen as internal goods of the practice of those involved in its development.

A successful institutionalisation of the requirements of educative practice that we have discussed so far would, in this framework, be considered internal goods to the practice of the Principal (though not exclusively his/her own achievements, of course). We have asserted that each organisation is embedded in its own particular and detailed context which can make for unique considerations and sets of needs. We then, when considering the agency of the practitioner, alluded loosely to the need for such organisations or institutions to be places that can encourage and tolerate open-ended patterns of action.

Following on this we asserted that dialogical relations between all of the diverse groups that make up the community of the institution are necessary for the emergence of properly constructed Practice. In the last section we noted the need for the practitioner to find flexibility and space within such organisations to be able engage in the personal transformation necessary for the refinement of his/her practice according to what he/she has learned through action and critical reflection.

Clearly, there is a need for a very particular kind of organisation to host such practice. Implicit, too, in the context of the school leader is the imperative that the school governance and the school leader him/herself be capable of building such an organisation. In the context of this study and in specific relation to the newness of the school, one where such an organisation is neither impeded nor facilitated by what has gone before, there is an added sense of opportunity for

such a project. Dunne (2005a) in discussing this issue of institutionalizing practice notes that successful organizations:

are ones with an inbuilt tolerance for uncertainty. An ability continually to reconfigure how problems are perceived and objectives interpreted is widely diffused in individuals and small groups, and these multiple loci of initiative are linked – and their respective contributions co-ordinated – through forms of communication that emphasise the exchange of information rather than the issuing of directives (Dunne, 2005, p.385).

For the school leader this assertion is most welcome. It questions the commonly held perception by many in the wider society or within the school community that school leaders must always have the answers to dilemmas that may confront the school and that an absence of such answers is a poor reflection on the Principal. This assertion of Dunne's allows the Principal to see himself metaphorically as a navigator of the school; purposeful but attuned to the prevailing conditions.

In the literature on school leadership, 'distributed leadership' acknowledges an internal community of leaders who, through their effective networking, their visibility and their cohesion as a team, can become a salient feature of effective organisations (Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006). Dewey (1997) asserts that all those who are affected by social institutions must have a say in what happens in them. He highlights the depth of concern over the relationships between those who lead and those who are led. He warns that leaders are not necessarily the experts. He also warns that they are not merely 'followers'; passive recipients and distributors of important directives handed to them by others further up a hierarchical chain. Aranowitz and Giroux (1986) propose that leaders and followers join in a critical social practice of leadership that offers a

common public discourse linked to the democratic imperatives of equality and social justice.

Traditional understandings of leadership as being hierarchical and top-down must be replaced by organisations that are configured where leadership is encouraged at many different levels in the organisation. Sackney and Mitchell (2002) argue that modern perspectives where the leadership may be expected to singularly bring vision to the organisation must be set aside in favour of structures that allow for the emergence of voices from within the organization.

They argue that:

the ascendance of voice affirms the presence of multiple visions and diverse cultural meanings; it encourages participation, empowerment, collegiality and consensus management; and it promotes a democratic culture of inquiry and discourse (Sackney and Mitchell, 2002, p.889).

This notion of culture building as an imperative for school leaders is central to the work of Barth (2000). Within the organisation certain dynamics must exist in order to facilitate this development. As already alluded to, the existing school governance and leadership must be courageous and willing to eschew inherited status, power and privilege in order to restructure such a dynamic. This may take virtues of character such as courage and perseverance.

As already noted, Sugrue (2005) suggests that in the absence of such virtues leaders may often revert into a protective cocoon and develop conservative structures within the school that are least likely to create tensions or conflict. Such leadership is characterised by heavily bureaucratic procedures and the development of organisational policy that is highly directive and with little in-

built flexibility. Walker and Dimmock (2002) emphasise the need to develop trust as an atmosphere and dynamic in schools that are willing to contemplate the development of distributed leadership and to move away from the traditional hierarchical structure. They argue that a palpable trust that is clearly evident in the atmosphere and structures of the school is imperative for the development of communities of leaders who can share in the gravity and responsibility of decision making.

Sackney and Mitchell (2002) argue for the development of the dynamics of 'affirmation' and 'invitation'. Affirmation entails valuing the contributions of all publicly and as a matter of practice etiquette. Invitation means that the dialogical process does not happen by chance or circumstance but by the deliberate and explicit inclusion of all members of the school.

Affirmation and invitation generate an affective climate within which the praxis of postmodern educational leadership can flourish. Affirmation means that people can disagree radically on a host of issues but still value and learn from opinions, ideas or contributions. This honours the postmodern conditions of difference and plurality. Invitation means that the solitude inherent in teaching can be broken long enough for diverse perspectives to be brought into contact with the dominant discourse. This honours the postmodern conditions of diffusion of the power-knowledge nexus (Sackney and Mitchell, 2002, p.904).

Sergiovanni (1992, 1996, 2001) and Spillane (2006) are particularly concerned that schools should pay ample attention to the development of leadership capacity at all levels in order to achieve this goal of distributed leadership. A school in which there is strong capacity for leadership prompted by capacity-building processes is described by Sergiovanni (2001) as having "leadership

density” and a as “community of leaders”. Similarly, Cuban (1988, 2003) identifies the development of such structures as essential for good schools.

Sugrue (2004) alerts us to the bigger picture in which organisations are located namely that of the society in which they dwell. Organisations such as schools are subject to the ebb and flow of political whims and atmospheres. In his essay he notes that internationally, in this era of globalisation, the dominant understanding of school effectiveness in both the UK and USA has resulted in certain demands on school leaders being prioritised. Schools as organisations are deemed effective on an evaluation of their ability to improve test scores over a narrow range of capabilities and pupil-attainment scores. In the Irish context many commentators have noted the willingness of politicians to implore schools to implement programmes across a range of societal issues including substance-abuse, childhood obesity, green-issues and much more. Against this backdrop it is important to acknowledge that many in society perceive the Principal as the gatekeeper for the implementation of handed-down policy, and that such considerations should inform, if not indeed circumscribe, his work. (Morgan, 2003)

Sugrue and Furlong (2002) suggest that schools themselves, as organizations, can have their own narratives and trajectories. There can be times when, according to the needs of the school, and the legacies of previous school Principals, certain kinds of leadership would need to be prioritised over others. They note that, frequently, such considerations are made absent or ignored in the recruitment of future school principals with governors preferring instead to reward one candidate for loyalty or some other attribute as opposed to making

the decision based on the needs of the school as an organisation at that point in time.

Though the school in this research is new and thus has no leadership legacy to consider, its newness does provide its own narrative. The extremely haphazard support on such basics as accommodation, funding and support offered by the DES must be understood to be influential on the nature of the leadership that emerges over the period of the study. Similarly, it must also be recognised that the school Patron Body and the local school management structure may have tacitly or in an unspoken manner identified management energies and priorities by which they will judge the performance of the Principal - which in turn may circumscribe and influence his understanding and performance of his role.

The adjective 'convivial' describes aptly many of the demands that his framework of Practice makes on organisations. Conviviality conveys a sense of welcome, flexibility, openness, hospitality, fertility and responsiveness. In using this term I am referring to Illich (1973) where he argues for a reconstruction of society from its corporate and industrialised priorities to a society that is respectful of the individual. To do this he conceptualises a series of tools of conviviality where he chooses:

the term conviviality to designate the opposite of industrial activity. I intend it to mean autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment and this in contrast with the conditional response of persons to the demands made upon them by others and by a man-made environment. I consider conviviality to be the individual freedom realized in personal interdependence and, as such, an intrinsic ethical value (Illich, 1973, p.12)

He goes on to say: “continued convivial reconstruction depends on the degree to which society protects the power of the individual and communities to choose their own lifestyle through effective small scale renewal” (Illich, 1973, p.17). This definition of conviviality sits well with much of what I argue is offered by this Theoretical Framework in its espousal of context-bound action, dialogue and reflection.

In his articulation of the notion of poetic and political leadership, Deal (2005) asserts that organisations should endeavour to house a culture that is fluid and is constantly negotiated and redefined. He calls upon dynamics of optimism, faith, belief, and hope as essential virtues of such a leader. Optimism and a positive outlook are important ingredients in the disposition of a school leader according to this discourse of school leadership.

Negotiating an institution into a specific location in the broader society is essentially a political act. The school leader, from this perspective, may be viewed as acting strategically as he develops alliances and creates friendships and boundaries with the agencies of the broader community. Starratt (2004), in his prioritization of a sense of responsibility, envisages the Principal as a political activist in the defence and promotion of the needs of his school in the face of pressures from the broader society. Sachs (2003), too, acknowledges the need for the Principal to be activist in the broader community in the political sense.

‘Sustainable leadership’ (Hargreaves, 2005; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006) acknowledges that leadership is inextricably linked with concepts of social

justice and is founded on concepts of equality. Sustainable leadership is, thus, activist. Sustainable leaders are assertive in their broader community, disposed to being publicly critical of national policies and protocols that can and do have negative impact on the community of their schools.

I conclude this section on Practice and the Organisation with some consideration of the notion of school ethos while acknowledging that ethos is, itself, a contested subject. It can be argued that ethos is an essential feature of all schools as organisations. Some understandings of ethos that use the language and symbols of mission, vision and highly defined standards of excellence would appear to leave little room for contextualised local negotiation or the kind of nuanced navigation alluded to earlier in this Framework. Glover and Coleman's (2005) review of the literature on this topic suggests that the terms ethos, culture and climate are often used interchangeably even though they have different meanings and different contexts.

Educate Together (ET) schools claim to have a specific and unique ethos in the Irish educational landscape (Educate Together, 2004, 2004a, 2005). Their four central principles of multidenominationalism, child-centredness, coeducationalism and democratic-governorship, they claim, set them apart from the majority of other Irish primary schools (Hyland, 1989, 1996, 2000; Rowe, 2000).

In some localities, the stated multidenominational ethos of Educate Together schools in contrast to the Catholic-first enrolment policy of the majority of

schools has resulted in the former becoming more resorted to by immigrant and minority families. The consequences of any such segregative trend are explored and lamented by Fitzgerald (2007). The proximity of discrimination based on grounds of religious denomination to discrimination according to race is made by Gilbert (2004).

In their essay on multicultural education, Dhillon and Halstead (2003) take as their starting point a description of liberal multiculturalism and liberal multicultural education. They observe two essential principles; the principle of respect for difference and the principle of education for life. They go on to attach a series of education goals and practices that must attend to each.

For the principle of 'respect for difference' they emphasise pedagogic and organisational practice based on "welcome and educational use of the different cultural experiences that the children bring", "respecting the cultural integrity of the children", combating "cultural, racial and religious prejudice" and "supporting the cultural identity of the children and their families" (Dhillon and Halstead, 2003, p.151).

For the principle of 'education' for life' they emphasise "educating children from different cultures together", "encouraging children to question and respond critically to a range of different worldviews", "developing tolerance and sensitive respect for people from different cultural backgrounds", "preparing children for citizenship in a democratic, pluralist society" and "studying the literature, art, music, history and religions of different cultural groups" (ibid, 2003, p.152).

It is clear that all of these sentiments and assertions are prioritised across the range of ET literature (Educate Together, 2004, 2004a, 2005; Rowe, 2002) and that this liberal vision of multicultural society and multicultural education forms the documented ethos of Educate Together schools.

Interestingly, however, Dhillon and Halstead (2003), though recognising the value and the validity of this approach to education, also problematise some aspects of both this broader view of multicultural society and multicultural education. In the Irish context a similar study by Tormey and Haran (2003) covers many of the same issues. In these essays questions are raised as to whether this liberal vision of society and view of education may be laid open to questions pertaining to the power domination of the hegemonic majority, to its blindness to racism, to its thin understanding of concepts of solidarity or common-good and to accusations of ambivalence towards issues of gender equality or equality across a range of other issues such as sexual identity.

Leadership at the service of Teaching and Learning

Effective school Principalship has for many years been widely accepted as being a key constituent in achieving school improvement (Barth, 1990; Fink 2000, 2000a; Fullan, 2001, 2002, 2003; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005; Sergiovanni, 1992, 1996, 2001; Southworth 1995, 2005). Effective principals are leaders whose work transforms the school in which they work. Research in the school improvement movement has highlighted the importance of leadership in successful school development and change, confirming that effective principals are those who focus primarily on promoting high

expectations, teacher motivation and the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Commentators on Principalship in contexts of diversity emphasise specific demands on such school leaders both in terms of the need for the Principal to reflect on his/her role and of the many expectations laid by the wider society at the doors of such schools (see Osler, 2005; MacBeath, 1998; Riley, 1998; Riley and MacBeath, 2002).

The Journal excerpts in Chapter 3 offer a description of the specifically complex terrain that the Principal must negotiate in his deliberations across many issues of multiculturalism and with many diverse actors from within and without the school community. Processes of judgement, prioritisation, communication, research, deliberation, decision-making, action, reflection, listening and accountability are engaged in on an almost daily basis. Occasionally, these processes can be planned and given due preparation and consideration. More frequently, however, they must be conducted in situations where the Principal is hurried or must act quickly and spontaneously. Common to all of the educational leadership for 'school improvement' literature is an underlying, though frequently unarticulated, understanding that the Principal must have an understanding of Education with specific views on teaching/learning, curriculum development, conceptions of childhood, conceptions of community (in both the school and in societal contexts) and modes of personal and professional development. The 'school improvement' movement of educational leadership is grounded in understandings of Education that are informed by child-centred models of teaching and learning,

critical theories of power structures and organisational development, the value of local context-driven and situated action, lifelong learning and transformative and emancipatory models of personal and professional development.

A Principal can develop a school in accordance with the aspirations of the school improvement movement of educational leadership, I argue, by engaging in the dynamics of practice as understood in this Theoretical Framework. The practice envisaged here offers the Principal practitioner the opportunity to develop incrementally in practical wisdom learning along the way how to weave his daily experiences into the fabric of future judgements and deliberations.

Such a practitioner learns through the consequences of his actions when reflected upon critically in dialogical situations that are grounded in the context of his/her practice. While it acknowledges that the practitioner brings his/her life-history to all situations, and that this life-history represents the consolidation of the practitioner's learned-experience to date, it also carries the dynamic for reconstructing one's historicity in an ongoing and lifelong manner through the refinement of currently held horizons of understanding.

One understanding of the greater Education project that is consistent with this understanding of Practice is that espoused by Dewey (1932, 1933, 1966, 1997, and 2005). For him the aim of education is the development of reflective, creative and responsible thought. This development is achieved through a conduct of teaching and learning that is informed itself by principles of reflectivity, creativity and responsibility.

Darling and Nordenbo (2003) in their essay tracing the historical influence of progressivism chart a revival in interest in Deweyan principles of education in the 1990s:

In the 1990s a sustained revival of interest in Dewey's view of education and democracy has taken place. With reference to Dewey, Gutman stresses political education as the school's main aim in a deliberative democracy and Noddings argues for a renewing of democracy in schools, while Habermas and Joas see Dewey as a precursor to deliberative democracy (Darling and Nordenbo, 2003, p.293).

Darling and Nordenbo (2003, p.293) assert that in accordance with the Deweyan ideals we should, "organise schools as places where everyday life problems, *en miniature*, have to be encountered and solved in an active and socially responsible way." By doing this "schools will not only prepare for life but will be places of life in their own right".

According to Deweyan understandings of Education to know the world is to face endlessly new problem situations; it is to apply the individual intellect instrumentally to cope with problems relative to given contexts. The aim of education is, consequently, to prepare the child to live in such a world together with other human beings. I argue that this aim of Education is especially relevant and timely for a school such as this and could form a guiding principle for the Principal in the conduct of his practice.

Conclusion

This Theoretical Framework asserts that attention to the dynamics of practice can offer school leaders a mode of leadership that is sensitive to the needs of a multicultural school. It offers the school leader a philosophical framework by

which he can critically analyse his/her practice. This analysis is facilitated by the breaking down of Practice into six inter-related dynamics.

The first dynamic is that of the importance of context. The school leader must become sensitive to the context in which he is trying to conduct the practice. He must learn to read the context and to understand that all judgements must be context-sensitive. Context is a 'rough ground', exquisitely imbued with the richness and unpredictability of interpersonal relationships. The diversity of the specific context of this school must be respected and drawn out by the Principal in his presence to it.

In this Framework the Principal is bound to action. It is through action that he will learn and that phronesis will develop. It is through action that the context will be explored and illuminated pragmatically. Action is a source of power, too. The energy of action will permeate the context and empower the practitioner. This same power will also open up further consequences, some predictable, some unpredictable.

Dialogue is central to the actions undertaken by the school leader. It is through dialogue that one can come to reflect on one's actions, questions one's currently held views and reconstruct them according to one's critical reflection.

The school leader must learn from his experiences and be open to a reconstruction of his/her professional and personal identity. Life-history may be seen simultaneously as that which informs us intuitively as to the best course of action, but also, that which reflects the limits of our current horizons. Phronesis envisages the willingness to incrementally realign our horizons

according to what we are learning from the context, through action, dialogue and critical-reflection.

Schools as organizations must be constructed in a specific way if they are to optimally facilitate practice that is conducted through cycles of action, dialogue, critical-reflection and the reconstruction of the practitioners within them. They must be robust in the sense that they must protect those practitioners within it who are engaged in such practice. They must also be adequately fluid so as to allow for the emergence of diverse voices and open-ended unpredictable actions.

Progressive understandings of Education, where important knowledge is that which is relevant to the learner and where such knowledge can be constructed and garnered through an inquiry approach, facilitates the school leader towards a mode of leadership that is context-sensitive, dialogical, action-orientated and critically reflective.

In the next chapter, Research Design and Methodology, this Practice framework will be revisited through an interrogation of concepts of grounded theory, critical theory, action research, autobiography/journaling and lifelong learning. This discussion continues the discourse on Practice introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 2 Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the Theoretical Framework of this study. A philosophy of Practice based in specific understandings of context, internal goods of practice, open-ended action, critical reflection, interpretation, dialogue and learning from experience that, cumulatively, facilitates the practitioner towards *phronesis* was proposed as an analytical lens through which data of the study will be analysed. Simultaneously, a set of literature on educational leadership that shared the same philosophical and theoretical leanings was presented. Six salient features of congruence between Practice and Educational Leadership were identified; the imperative of context, the agent in practice, the dialogical nature of Practice, the transformative capacity of Practice, the institutional framing of Practice and, finally, the notion of Leadership at the service of Teaching and Learning.

This chapter further emphasises this stated philosophic partisanship. In this chapter those models, theories and methodologies of research that share affinities with the philosophy of Practice are adopted as the preferred modes of research for this study. A research literature that is grounded in concepts such as context, action, dialogue, critical reflection, transformation and emancipation is presented as a companion to Chapter 1.

My research as a doctoral student and my practice as a Principal teacher for the thirty months of this study are interwoven and inseparable from one another. The hypothesis of the study is that there lies within this philosophy of Practice a mode of practice for me as a Principal in this multiethnic school that will

facilitate me toward ethical day-to-day school leadership. The research design and research practice is, thus, a further extension of my goal to become a critically reflective practitioner and to initiate an ongoing lifelong mode of practice that is ethical, just and responsive to the specific multicultural context in which I work. The activities undertaken as research must contribute to the development of the school as a reflective and critical organisation.

In the language of Practice, the research must become an internal good of my practice and facilitate the achievement of further internal goods for me as Principal and for the school as an organisation. The Research undertaken as part of this study becomes part of my day-to-day practice with a view to developing habits of action, dialogue, critical-reflection, journaling, engagement with interlocutors and self-study as essentials of my future school leadership. The Journal, thus, becomes the detailed diary of my first year's effort at trying to weave this way of being into the fabric of my practice.

This Chapter will follow a similar structure to that of the Theoretical Framework (Chapter 1). The chapter begins with an introduction that focuses on the qualitative research model in which this research is located. The chapter then proceeds through the same six salient features of Practice through which the Theoretical Framework was structured. This time the discussion of each salient feature will allude to the literature of qualitative educational research. The chapter concludes with statements of detail about the specific context of the school and a personal profile to aid the reader to become more assuredly immersed in the subjective context of the study. An introduction to the Journal

excerpts to be used in Chapter 3 and a discussion as to their selection and configuration conclude the Chapter.

Problem Statement

As noted in the Introduction and Chapter 1, schools with diverse school populations present unique challenges and opportunities across a range of management, curriculum and organisational issues. In the Irish context it is arguable that this challenge is exacerbated by the newness and suddenness of its emergence.

School Principals are axially located within the leadership and governance structure of Irish primary schools to have a major impact on how this challenge may be met. However, little academic literature in either the Irish or international contexts exists to inform such Principals as to how to develop towards a mode of school leadership that is responsive to the multicultural school context. How is the Principal to 'be' or 'become' a school leader in this context? This is the problem statement of this research. The goal of this research is to contribute to the literature of school leadership in multicultural school contexts. The focus is on the practice of the Principal as he tries to conduct the role of school leader when faced with the issues of diversity in the school population.

Research Questions

Stemming from the problem statement, two research questions were mooted at the outset of the study. The first question asked what multicultural schools in the Irish context look like. In straightforward detail terms, what is the diversity

in terms of make up of the demographic of the school community? But more importantly, what is the daily life of such schools as the children, Principal, the teaching staff, the care-staff, the parent body and the agencies of the wider community interact in the purpose of school business? How does the diversity of cultures, languages and religions make itself manifest in the daily life of the school community?

The second question focused on the leadership issues of such a school. What is the Principal as a leader of this school community to do? How must this Principal engage with the broader understandings of school leadership in the specific context of such a school? How is the Principal to conduct his practice in this specific context? What are the issues of practice that require his attention, deliberation and judgement? How are his perceptions of his role as Principal confirmed or challenged in such a context? How is the Principal to act ethically and morally in his practice amidst the competing claims of the needs of the diverse individuals and groups that make up the school community? How is the Principal to respond in his school to pressures and expectations of the wider society?

As the study proceeded, however, it became apparent to me that my primary interest lay more in the second question; that of school leadership. My own emerging lay-theory was that there lay within the philosophy of practice and especially its conceptualisation of phronesis a source for articulating a mode of school leadership appropriate to the challenges of a diverse school community.

While I was still anxious to describe the school in all its multicultural richness and business, my inquiry came to focus on the second question, that of the practice of the Principal in such a context. Though a thick description of the school was still desirable, the purpose of this description became relevant only to providing the reader with a context in which to view and come to understand the practice of the Principal. The description offered, therefore, in the data of this research covers a year-long period of the practice of a Principal in this specific context. This description is laden with incident but, also, as it is written by me as the Principal is imbued with my own emotionality and deliberative commentary.

Dunne (2005a) highlights an important feature that emerged as I came to reflect on any single incident of practice as recorded in the data. It quickly emerged that any single incident worthy of deliberation and reflection, opened up further lines of enquiry ranging across a broader set of concerns than, perhaps, originally envisaged. He summarises this development, thus:

A problematic situation, by contrast, may be a point of intersection for several lines of consideration and priority which, while running in different directions are interwoven tightly in a complex web. Attempts to unravel any one of these strands (the classic task of analysis) may only introduce greater tangles in others. In education, for example, a practitioner or policy-maker may face a situation where academic standards, considerations of safety, psychological needs and the demands of social equality, in relation to a diverse set of students and their parents pull, in contrary directions but where some decision has to be made (Dunne, 2005a, p.381).

My challenge was to design a research strategy that functioned in two specific regards. Firstly, I needed to record my own practice as Principal through thick description in such a manner as to allow me as a researcher to return to it in

due course in order to critically reflect upon it. Secondly, through the dissertation I wished to critically reflect publicly upon the recorded piece in such a manner as to allow the research reader to follow this deliberation so as to observe and be critical of the practice process which I am endeavouring to expose in both practice and research.

Phase 1 of the conduct of this research study, therefore, set out to record my efforts over one full school year at being a Principal who is cognizant of and optimistic about the value and dynamics of a philosophically Practice-orientated mode of school leadership in a diverse context. This recording is completed through the technique of Journaling with the assistance of my supervisor as interlocutor. The result is the 'Full Journal' of this study.

Phase 2 concerned the analysis of the process outlined in Phase 1. As a researcher, I returned to the Journal and, using the Theoretical Framework of the study tried, to describe and analyse the practice of the Principal as evidenced in the Journal. This document, the dissertation, is the result of this second phase of the study.

Research Model

Consequently this piece of research may be seen as being firmly rooted in the qualitative research model as defined by Creswell (2003). As a researcher in this instance I am taking an "advocacy/participatory" stance (Creswell, 2003 p.18). I have aligned myself to a philosophy of Practice that is focused on discourses of practical wisdom but, also, includes other concordant voices. I have identified a body of educational leadership that I understand to be

sympathetic to this philosophical framework. This body of literature on ‘school improvement’ envisages a form of Principalship that is concerned with ethical and moral dispositions of leadership. It is embedded in practice that is context-sensitive, critically reflective, dialogical, present and empathic to the needs of the children and congruent with broader understandings of child-centred education. Similarly, the strategies of inquiry used in this study emphasize the value of narratives, ethnographies, grounded theory studies and case studies. Furthermore the research methodology involves the collection of “open-ended emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data”(Creswell, 2005, p.18).

For the remainder of this Chapter, I will revisit the six dynamics of Practice as delineated in the Theoretical Framework. This time, however, the discussion under each heading will allude to research-literature and research-protocols. Through these discussions the rationale behind the selection of the research design and methodology used in this study emerges. These discussions also describe details of the research process such as the experience of Journaling as a methodology and the ethical considerations of this research.

The Importance of Context

Dunne (2005, p.373) prioritises the “context-dependence of first person experience” in any effort to come to understand practice where human interaction is involved. This priority is central to the research undertaken in this study. One imperative is to ensure that the methodologies employed in the

research give ample visibility and emphasis to description of the specific context in which the study is set. In selecting Journaling as the methodology of generating data this is, it is hoped, maximally achieved.

I will deal with three specific research-design and research-methodology considerations that are pertinent to the discussion of context: The Journal, Insider-researcher and Workplace-researcher and, thirdly, Grounded Theory.

The Journal

The Journal offers the reader an insight into the make-up of the demographic of the school and the backgrounds of the individuals and groups that make up the school community. Excerpt by excerpt, issues that emerge as the diverse groups interact with each other and with the school are recorded. The reader can capture a flavour of the intensity and emotionality of these interactions and gain insight into the practice of the Principal as he records, reacts and responds in action to this plethora of incident.

The Journal is an archive of a series of incidents in detailed form and collated month-by-month over the period of thirteen months. Tripp (1993) advocates the assembly of such a portfolio of what he terms 'critical incidents' as a means of embedding the writer and the reader simultaneously into the writer's situational context.

'Critical incidents' are understood here not to mean dramatic crisis incidents but any action, event, conversation, realisation, meeting, moment or observation peppering the practitioner's day that reveals or exemplifies with some degree of vividness or perspicuity a significant theme, value or conflict

that is being worked out in the life of the school. Tripp (1993) espouses the value of critical incidents as offering the writer the opportunity to put on record detailed narratives imbued with explanatory background and laced with emotional and deliberative responses for subsequent examination. Such a collection, titled a 'critical-incident-file' by Tripp, is more detailed and nuanced than diary-keeping and journal-keeping as asserted by Denscombe (2003) where such diaries or journals are lighter *aide-memoires* or simpler records of incidents.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the journal is not, or cannot pretend to be, an objective journalistic account of the school year. The editorial inclusion and exclusion of incident and the tenor of each excerpt are subject to my decisions as diarist. On an ongoing basis from the very inception of the Journal subjective decisions were made on issues of what may be included/excluded, and on more nuanced issues such as the level of detail and reportage. The accounts of events in the excerpts are given from my own perspective. At best the Journal can be seen as a filtered account of the school year.

Some months before the start of the study I completed a research paper for the Ed.D course with the same supervisors where I had used a reflective journal as the research methodology. This paper, 'A Day in the Life of a School Principal in a Multicultural school', may be seen as a pilot-study for this research methodology specifically, and this dissertation, generally. This mini-journal and the research paper written around it as part of my Ed.D coursework (and submitted to my supervisor) were critically reflected upon in conjunction with

the supervisor. It was possible to deduce from this pilot experience that there lay in this specific methodology potential for a more expanded research paper.

Over the recording period of the study, a range of criteria or guidelines emerged that informed the development of the Journal into the end-product that it became. At a simple logistical level, the generosity of the supervisor with his time allowed for a monthly hand-up of a set of excerpts and a monthly discussion of this material. To that end I always ensured that a set of excerpts was fully scripted and submitted at the end of each month. Some months would yield as many as forty excerpts, some as few as sixteen. Some excerpts would be as short as two hundred words, others as long as fifteen hundred words.

Each excerpt would have been initially noted in my ordinary school diary with a provisional opening line and some bullet-pointed details. This would be fleshed out in the Journal with minimal delay each night so that the initial reactions, hunches and feeling would not be lost. The majority of each excerpt is taken up with the narration of the incident including background details so as to ensure its readability by a third-party. Most excerpts conclude with some initial reflection on the incident, perhaps, in the form of a question or tentative observation or opinion. Many of the excerpts are returned to a few days later with further deliberations and further questions, especially after a rereading.

The journal excerpt, however, once sent to the supervisor was never rewritten or further annotated or expanded: it had then become a historical 'primary source' document of the incident in question. If at some future date I wished to

return to that incident for further reflection this was done in the form of opening a new entry in a later journal.

The main criteria for inclusion in the journal of any incident would be that it seemed in some way significant, salient or 'interesting'. At the outset this would have meant recording an interesting conversation, or a personal eureka-like moment of thought, or a clever or nuanced observation by a colleague, or a day-to-day low-level moment of fracas or dilemma, or some incident characterised by its learning potential. At various times of the year and in accordance with the seasonal changes of work in the life of the Principal as the school year rolls out, different themes emerged and either concluded or continued to develop as the year progressed.

As time went by, the monthly meetings with my supervisor became enlightening and thought-provoking discussions of issues and prompts towards relevant and stimulating reading. These discussions and readings became an internal dialogue influencing what was included in the journal.

In the writing of each excerpt I was anxious to be maximally illustrative of the emotional, dramatic, reflective or deliberative frisson that accompanies each subjective experience so as to make the entries more than factual recordings or *aide-memoires* of detail. I had, initially, thought that I would record in the Journal only those incidents that were of a multicultural nature and embedded in issues of language, cultural or religious diversity. It soon emerged that few things that happened in the school were not in some important respect multicultural or did not have immediate spin-off consequences to do with our

diversity. Conversations and incidents about curriculum or classroom pedagogy or inter-staff relations or parental involvement or teacher recruitment or whole-school policy, to name but a few, were in this school conversations about diversity, equality, justice and multicultural education.

Simultaneously, I was anxious to portray to the supervisor, and to any other post-publication reader such as another Principal or teacher, the repetitive nature of the business that took up the daily time of my work. I was anxious to ensure that 'interesting' incidents did not mask the less interesting but more typical business of the day. Thus, frustrations with buildings, administration, bureaucracy and protocols had to be included lest an unbalanced account of the day-to-day life be portrayed. This, ultimately, proved fruitful for, with the help of the supervisor, I came to understand these apparently more mundane incidents as crucial for the analysis and central to what was going on in the school. I came to see how influential they were in my day-to-day practice. Thus, the journal attempts to be representative of the day-to-day business of life in the school.

As trust developed between myself and the supervisor over time, and as I began to prioritise these sessions with him as interlocutor as part of my own critical-reflective practice as a working Principal some initial resistances inherent in Journal writing of this nature fell away. An initial inclination to refrain from exposing my own naivety, ignorance and political-incorrecness came to be less of an editorial consideration. A further inclination to playing down or minimise the sense of crisis in which I was often enveloped in my practice was also shed. Also, an excessive carefulness that I should not include

any reportage or information that might be sensitive to the others who populate the excerpts also came to be shed as I came to trust the confidentiality of our conversations. The ethical considerations of this research (page 92) deal more fully with this issue.

This dynamic of trust coupled with the acknowledgment that the conversations with the supervisor were extremely important moments of critical-reflective practice contributed to the sense that my research and my practice were, on occasions, seamless and part of the same process. The rigour of Journal writing and the subsequent discussions with the interlocutor conducted initially as part of my research had become part of my day-to-day practice as a Principal. Similarly, my practice of inquiry, action, dialogue and critical-reflection conducted as part of my practice as a Principal was also part of my research.

On page 82, I return to development of the Journal when I discuss Journaling as a means of developing dialogue in the research process.

Insider Research and the Workplace Researcher

My dual role as the researcher and the research-subject is affirmed by proponents of insider-research. Cochran-Smyth and Lytle (1993, 1998) support the notion of teachers conducting their own research as optimally located to understand their own personal contexts and the contexts of those who are subjects of their research. Such generation of research data by the practitioner/researcher for later analysis holds the possibility of greater insight given the researcher's intimacy with the context. Such research, they argue,

would be best translated into reconstructed practice by the practitioner/researcher.

Insider-research may be considered to be ethnographic in nature as understood by LeCompte and Schensul (1998, p.87) where the research process “typically evolves contextually in response to the lived realities encountered in the field setting.” On the other hand, this research may not fit Creswell’s understanding of ethnography where the subject of the study must be an intact cultural group (Creswell, 2003). The mixed, diverse, ever-changing community of this school could not be defined as such.

Gibbs (2007) (and Gibbs and Costley, 2006; Gibbs, Costley, Armsby and Trakakis, 2007 and, also, Billett, 2004) distinguishes between workplace researchers and traditional insider researchers. The key difference between a workplace researcher and an insider researcher, according to Gibbs (2007), building on Heidegger’s understanding of ‘dwelling’ and ‘workplace’, is that the workplace researcher ‘dwells’ in the context of the research. I feel that this notion of dwelling in the workplace is especially appropriate in the case of a school Principal. For Heidegger the workplace is a key environment in which we develop our understanding of ourselves and others in it. It is the place where we come to understand the nature of the impact of what we do on others. The workplace researcher acts within a real workplace in which, as Farrell and Holkner (2006, p.312) claim:

contests exist over what counts as knowledge, who can know, and how knowledge and skill shape, and are shaped by, hierarchies of power and esteem.

Beckett and Hager (2002, p.176) describe the workplace as a space where there is a “pervasive change and crisis, reorganisation of difference and diversity, a focus on the particular and the local, and recognition of the political and social dimensions of knowledge.”

In the contested space of the workplace the role of workplace-researchers in their own communities is complex but potentially very fruitful. It requires judgement, reflexivity and critical awareness about their relationships with others as well as a concern about the richness of data collection, analysis and the use to which the analysis is put. Workplace researchers, according to these authors, aim to understand in order to change their practice, the practice of others and/or the context for action.

The writings of workplace researchers shows that this kind of research is commonplace in many settings outside of the educational sphere such as nursing, social care and business work environments (Billet, 2004; Billings and Kowalski, 2006; Boud, 2001). Workplace researchers have made a long-term commitment to the organisation in which they work and are anxious to continue to work within this environment beyond the period of the research. Any conflict generated by the research must be acknowledged and the researcher must be willing to justify it in a dialogical manner with all those concerned. This requires courage and may be seen as an action on the part of the practitioner that may have unforeseen and unpredictable consequences. In terms of what others may learn it is to be hoped that this study can approximate Dunne’s exhortation that thickly descriptive studies may:

possess what might be called epiphanic power; they disclose an exemplary significance in the setting they depict so that it proves capable of illuminating other settings (Dunne, 2005a, p.386).

However, one must be mindful too of Gibbs' (2007) warning that handing the power of interpretation of the research to the reader may be construed as an abdication of responsibility by the researcher, and one that might leave the subjects of the research vulnerable to misrepresentation and misunderstanding. He argues that the rhetoric of the discussion of the research (and its publication and dissemination) must ensure that the researcher and his clearly stated Theoretical Framework are opened to scrutiny and criticism and not the research participants. This concern informed my ethical approach to this research and is discussed on page 92.

Gibbs (2007, p.233) concludes that workplace research and the practical enquiry it enshrines "is a holistic and integrative approach to interpretation of work based issues that seeks to understand and demonstrably effect change through phronesis".

Grounded Theory

The Journal was submitted to the supervisor on a month by month basis. For the majority of the year no effort was made at attempting to overview the emerging document. After ten months, however, I began to think about how the entries in the Journal might be thematised. Such is the process inherent to Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) where the researcher brings an open mind to the data at his disposal and is committed to acting in his analysis according to that which is grounded in the data and not according to

preconceived expectations. If the Journal does justice to the actuality of the context about which it writes then the data may be considered to be grounded in the context of the study.

A second understanding of grounded refers to the outcome of research, namely, whether the conclusions of the research may yield any illumination to the practitioner 'on the ground'. The problem statement of this research asked 'how might I become a Principal who is responsive to this multicultural context?' The link between this problem statement of this piece of research and Grounded Theory is expressed by Locke (2001, p.59 as quoted in Denscombe p.112):

Grounded Theory acknowledges its pragmatist philosophical heritage in insisting that a good theory is one that will be practically useful in the course of daily events, not only as social scientists, but also to laymen. In a sense, a test of a good theory is whether or not it works "on the ground".

Denscombe (1998, p.112) notes the value of Grounded Theory in three contexts relevant to this piece of research. Firstly this research is 'qualitative research' where particulars of uniquely textured situations are under exploration. Secondly, it is 'exploratory research' where the context is one that is under-researched such as I claim is the case. Thirdly, it is a 'study of human interaction' where the subjective meanings that people use when interacting with others in specific settings are under scrutiny and interpretation.

There is close alignment of Grounded Theory and the field of research analysis termed Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic Interactionism is the form of social research that focuses on the way that participants in social settings make sense

of things through their interaction with other participants in the setting. This form of research acknowledges the extent to which understanding of what is going on, for all participants, is heavily reliant on their interpretation of conversations, events and descriptions.

It must be acknowledged that my interest and confidence in the value of the philosophy of Practice emerged over the thirteen month period of the writing and reading of the Journal. By the conclusion of the act of writing the Journal I had developed this perspective as the Theoretical Framework by which this study would be guided.

Over the period following the writing of the Journal separate and comprehensive siftings of the data into themes took place and was discussed with the supervisor. An initial thematising according to salient features of multiculturalism was completed and discussed. Later a thematising according to features of practice seemed to yield more potential towards the research question pertaining to school leadership.

Through this process the adoption of the philosophy of Practice emerged as the agreed thematic configuration that could be carried forward as a Theoretical Framework for the purpose of the study. However, the fact that my reading conducted simultaneously to the writing of the journal would undoubtedly have influenced the interpretation of the data on an ongoing basis must not be seen as discounting this research as being true to Grounded Theory. As Denscombe (1998, p.124), drawing on Layder (1993), describes this development:

[O]f course, researchers will necessarily introduce some element of thinking that may not be immediately evident in the events they observe. They should not lose sight of their observed data, but they should be encouraged to look beyond what is immediately apparent towards factors that lie beyond the events, factors that explain what is going on but that are not necessarily obvious in the data. From this realist perspective, the empirical data should also guide the emerging theory, but never dictate the scope of the theory generated.

The Agent in Practice

Arguably the most important import from the philosophy of Practice for this research is the centrality it accords to the practitioner as an agent. The practitioner is action bound constantly and inescapably. In this section I shall concentrate on a discussion of Action Research, leading to a discussion of Self-Study as a specific mode Action Research.

Action Research

A disposition towards action is central to the role of the practitioner in the Theoretical Framework of this study. Given the interwoven relationship between my practice as Principal and my conduct of this research, action-research emerged as the preferential mode of inquiry for this study. Kemmis (2005, p.407) writes of this mode: “in the process of participatory action research....participants deliberately engage in exploratory action in order to learn about the possibilities and limits for transforming contemporary situations.”

Dunne (2005a, p381) acknowledges the experimental aspect of practice where one is dealing with problematic situations:

to resolve problematic situations of this kind, one is not calculating the efficiency of different possible means towards an already determined end. Rather, one is often deliberating about the end itself; about what would count as a satisfactory, or at least a not entirely unacceptable outcome to a particular case. This will entail a kind of pondering (though imponderables may not be entirely eliminable from the reckoning). It may only be by action - and not in the end by any purely deliberative process - that this reckoning can eventually be carried through. While strategically directed action will provide new feedback it may also set off its own chain of unintended consequences. And so, one is involved in an experimental process.

Both Kemmis's (2005) and Dunne's (2005a) assertions of the value of exploratory action, whether compulsory or elective, bring the researcher to the rich literature of action-research. Elliot (1985, 1991) identifies action-research as a compelling form of inquiry for teachers, and in this case, a Principal. This draws parallels with Dewey's espousal of teaching and learning as a form of joint-inquiry. Action research is a transformative research practice that can create social change and justice and transform or emancipate the researcher, the research participants and the organization (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). Action-research is a potential tool for developing a living theory for the issues of equality and social justice under examination in a multicultural school (Whitehead, 1989; Whitehead and Mc Niff, 2006). Noffke and Stevenson (1995) identify action research as a means for the practitioner to become 'practically critical'.

Many of these authors refer to Schon's (1987) seminal work on the reflective practitioner where a dialogue is created between knowledge and action, and, theory and practice. In his later work Schon develops the concept of reflection-in-action building on both Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge and Dewey's

understanding of inquiry which intertwines thought and action. Reflection-in-action, Schon argues, is a deliberate strategy aimed at learning from experience and he believes it lies at the heart of knowledge about practice.

This understanding of action research is central to the research design of this study. Few studies on educational leadership espouse action research design, though many do emphasise the importance of critical reflection.

Self-Study and Action Research

Johnston (2006) and Clift (2004) make an argument for self-study as a legitimate and illuminating form of action research whereby the practitioner may draw conclusions from the intense study of his/her own practice. Again, drawing on Dewey, Johnston notes “that self-study is essentially being thoughtful, in the Deweyan sense, about one’s work. It is reflective inquiry” (Johnston, 2006, p.61). A self-study, in Johnston’s (2006) understanding, is defined by the focus of the research, not merely by its methods. In self-studies, the self- the person- is at the centre. Self-reflection is important in all research, and it is often an important part of action research, but in a self-study the focus is on the self who practices - the content, the context and the nature of the activity. Self-transformative and emancipatory virtues of self-study are detailed later in this chapter. For now, however, it is important to emphasise the action orientation of such research and the invocation in the action orientation of a process that is more than coolly deliberative but may be warmed by emotion, enthusiasm, motivation, passion, urgency and fractiousness and much more as the actions become played out.

Dialogical Nature of Practice

In the Theoretical Framework the dialogical nature of Practice was explored. It was noted that practice in the sphere of human interaction, such as schools, is inescapably dialogical. Any non-dialogical understanding of school leadership, for example, would lead one towards heroic and dangerously isolating understandings of leadership (Wolcott, 1973; Copland, 2001). This discussion focuses on 'Dialogue and Critical Reflection' and 'Dialogue and Journaling'.

Dialogue and Critical Reflection

It is essential in the research design of this study to ensure that dialogical opportunities are central to the practice of the research if one is to be true to the dynamics of collaboration and reflection. One model of enquiry that ensures dialogical methodologies is that of critical theory.

Critical Theory in its assertion of the pervasiveness of power relations in all practice, and consequently dialogues, brings a healthy warning to the research design of both action research, generally, and self-study action research specifically. The potential for self-studies to miss out on sharp reflections that would illuminate a power domination being carried out by a school leader in his practice is real. The critical voice that could question power relations or point to alternative reasoning and motivations could be easily missing from any such proposed research design. Tripp (1993) in his critical incident research, and all of the life-history theorists (for example in studies by Ball and Goodson, 1985; Goodson 1992, 2003; Sugrue, 2005) see this as the role of an interlocutor, perhaps in the person of an outsider-researcher. Starratt (2004) in his study sees the role of the academic tutor as that of the interlocutor who will

prompt the researcher/practitioner, through critical questions, towards self-reflection on issues of power relations.

Dunne (2005a) notes the necessity for critical reflection to avoid what he terms 'subjectivism' (or MacIntyre's term 'emotivism'), with its potential for narcissism and self-indulgence potential when reflection that is not collaborative or open to the possibility of public conversation:

The horizon of his or her judgements is always set by the proper ends, goods and standards of the practice and is always, at least potentially directed towards, and testable by, other practitioners set within the same horizon that establishes the practice as a collaborative and communal space (Dunne, 2005, p382).

Interestingly, Tripp (1993) despite his detailed evocation of what constitutes a critical incident, fails to make any link between critical theory and critical incidents. This is unfortunate given that the rigour with which he suggests critical incidents should be written and analysed does in fact make for fertile situations for critical reflections as espoused by critical theorists.

From a research perspective, it must be acknowledged that self-studies could hold the potential for excluding the critical voice of the 'outsider' – a consequence that, I would argue, should be avoided. In this study, I have tried to avoid it, in process, by incorporating an interlocutor role for the research supervisor and other dialogue partners and, in outcome, by presenting this dissertation in a form that is open to the critical scrutiny of third parties.

Dialogue and Journaling

It can be argued that Journaling, as used in this study, sets up two opportunities for dialogue. Firstly, by facilitating a dialogue between the writer/researcher

and his interlocutor, mainly in this case the research supervisor. Secondly, by generating a dialogue with oneself aided by hermeneutical understandings of reading and rereading incidents and the heuristic value of the writing process.

The primary source of interpersonal dialogue was with the interlocutor supervisor. The nature of this dialogue has been alluded to earlier in the discussion of the Journal (p.67). Two other sources of interpersonal dialogue were also availed of. In the first instance there were six occasions where I presented some aspects of this study mid-research at academic and professional conferences. On one such occasion I presented to a conference of Educate Together Principals where there was a huge level of interest in Journaling as a technique of self-reflection and in the concept of phronesis as the dynamic by which one can come to learn from the daily experience of our practice. This level of interest resulted in the development of a 'community of learners' from members of this group that continues to meet regularly (Sergiovanni, 1996, 2001).

A second dialogical situation that occurred over the writing of the journal, and that is evident in the extracts, is the internal dialogue with oneself that emerges through the process of writing, reading and re-reading a journal. Reflective journals are commonly utilised in the process of psychotherapeutic treatment. But the value of reflective journals in life-history research and in practitioner research in the field of education generally seems to be underestimated. There is a propensity in life-history research for the subject's life-history only to become unravelled by the outsider-researcher and an apparent minimal confidence that the research subject could reach such conclusions on his/her

own. Similarly, the use of reflective journals, where it is used in educational research, seems to be valued as a mere starting point for a critical dialogue between the research participant and a professional researcher.

The popularity and esteem of journaling as a research methodology in the fields of nursing and medicine (for example, Banks-Wallace, 2008; Hancock, 1999; Simpson and Courtney, 2007) stands in stark contrast to what prevails in education generally, and educational leadership specifically.

Hubbs and Brand (2005, p62) draw on the work of Rogers (1982) and Vygotsky (1986) when they conclude that Journaling as a methodology can evoke “an inner-dialogue that connects thoughts, feelings and actions”. They conclude that Journals in their intensity and intimacy can capture, as Vygotsky puts it, the “affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last ‘why’ in the analysis of thinking.” Hubbs and Brand (2005, p.63) assert that “reflective journaling can provide ways to illuminate automatic thinking and habits of mind, and can lead students through a transformative process.”

Hubbs and Brand (2005) espouse the written journal as a means by which the practitioner and the researcher may engage in critical reflection. Using the metaphor of the paper mirror, they claim that journaling provides the opportunity for the practitioner to move past an intuitive adoption of patterns of thinking, or unquestioned beliefs, and encourages the practitioner to progress from assimilative learning to transformative learning. “Reflective journals provide a structured way for the instructor and the student to examine the student’s thinking patterns or belief systems, and this examination process

encourages relevant assimilative learning and supports transformative learning” (Hubbs and Brand, 2005, p.64).

They proceed to identify two types of reflective journal relevant to the journaling employed in this study. The first type of journal they call the ‘dialogue journal’ which refers to journal writing where there is an implicit sense of ‘writing to’ an interlocutor. The journal is used as a means of dialogue between the writer and a specific reader or instructor. Through an iterative process involving written and oral correspondence the journal excerpts are discussed and analysed; evidences of assumptions are identified and responded to, motives for action are suggested and either acknowledged or defended, alternative ways of interpreting are either embraced or resisted, all in a spirit of dialogue and critical-reflection. Warnings of the propensity of the writer to write excerpts that may be pleasing to the reader or aimed at portraying the writer’s practice in a particular light must be taken on board by both the writer and the reader and can depend on the power structure of the relationship between the practitioner and interlocutor.

The second type of journal they refer to as the ‘personal journal’. Here we see the writer trying to set up, as it were, an internal dialogue. Brookfield (1998) suggests that such a journal may only be of optimal value for the practitioner who is more experienced in the process of reflective journaling. It must be acknowledged that the absence of another reader may encourage the writer to be more honest, frank and self-deprecating in his journal entries without fear of portraying him/herself badly or anxious to make an impression, and the time spent writing such entries may be of huge reflective value, for both current and

then later reading and rereading. This sense of freedom where the writer may feel released to record sentiments that would not be politically correct must not be underestimated. However, Brookfield (1998, p.197) issues a caution here:

A self-confirming cycle often develops whereby our uncritical accepted assumptions shape actions that then serve to confirm the truth of those assumptions. We find it very difficult to stand outside ourselves and see how some of our most deeply held values and beliefs lead us in distorted and constrained ways.

Transformation of the Practitioner

In undertaking this research, I have asserted that a primary aim is to seek transformations of my practice. In the Theoretical Framework we have affirmed that such transformations involve the ability to reconstitute one's currently held identities and practice into identities and practices that are ethically congruent with the the needs of the multicultural context. In this specific research design, methodologies that will facilitate this process are prioritized. I shall now discuss this process and these priorities under the headings Phronesis, Reconstruction, Life-History and Living Theory/Lifelong Learning.

Phronesis

As is already clear, the notion that Practice, if properly conceived through action, dialogue and critical-reflection, can be transformative and emancipatory of the practitioner is fundamental to this dissertation. It is fitting that the research model to be used in the study of the problem statement and the research questions should employ philosophical stances and specific

methodologies where such transformation or emancipation is clearly the goal. The philosophical roots of this understanding are twofold, firstly in a Dunne's neo-Aristotelian articulation of phronesis, as a form of knowing by which we can possibly learn from our experiences, and secondly, in Dewey's (1933) notion of reconstruction where practice becomes inquiry and facilitates enhanced and refined future practice.

Writing about phronesis, Dunne (2005, p.375) refers to:

its role as an action-orientating form of knowledge, its irreducibly experiential nature, its non-confinement to generalised propositional knowledge, its entanglement (beyond mere knowledge) with character, its need to embrace the particulars of relevant action-situations within its grasp of universals, and its ability to engage in the kind of deliberative process that can yield concrete, context-sensitive judgements.

Notably, the "entanglement with character" prompts an understanding that virtues and character need to be open to the possibility for refinement and where personally held horizons may be, following due consideration, realigned or relocated. For Dewey (1933), too, the self may be reconstructed through properly conceived experience. Birmingham (2004) identifies phronesis as a virtue in itself arguing, through reference to Aristotle and Dewey, that reflection is not morally neutral but is a process involving action orientation, critical reflection, emotional attunement, intellectual responsibility and a moral or ethical commitment to the good. She concludes:

phronesis is not a moral panacea; it will not obliterate moral dilemmas, erase moral quandaries, or undo the damage that has been caused by immoral and incompetent decisions. However, the moral complexity of teaching requires Phronesis to achieve moral goodness, promote excellence in teaching and learning,

and advance human flourishing. Phronesis is both essentially moral and morally essential (Birmingham, 2005, p. 323).

Freire (1972) understands the emancipation of the self through teaching and learning to be the goal of education. He suggests that a critical pedagogy is one that transforms reality and unites critical thinking and dialogue to develop a more humanistic approach to learning; one that makes a self-conscious person able to think critically about the impact of his/her actions and to put these understandings firmly at the centre of their learning. We construct our social realities and sense of self in our everyday interactions. Thus, instead of applying theory to practice, critical reflexivity emphasizes praxis, questioning our own assumptions and taken-for-granted or intuitive actions causing us to think about who we are, challenge our conceptions of reality and explore new possibilities.

This 'way of knowing' and its goal of emancipation have been incorporated into the research design of this paper in a number of ways. The selection of action-research, and specifically that of self-study, holds huge emancipatory potential for me as the researcher and as the research-subject. The selection of journaling as the manner in which the data of the study is to be collected maximizes the possibility for me as researcher to come to observe my current intuitions, habits and patterns of behaviour. Recorded as they are in the Journal they are 'set up' for interrogation with the interlocutor and analysis by me (as is done in Chapter 3).

Reconstruction

This reconstruction of the self is emancipatory of the self, emancipating one from the narrow shackles of assumed and historical knowledge to see multiple interpretations and constructions of reality and opening the opportunity to engage in action to achieve collaborative and ethical goals.

Mezirow (2000, p.7) suggests that “transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken for granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating , open, emotionally capable of change and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.” In other words, transformative learning prompts the learner to consider whether a given belief came about as a result of concepts tacitly accepted, or as a result of a deliberative thought process.

Leitch and Day (2000, p.184) suggest that emancipatory action research can bring about:

- the emancipation of the participants in the action from the dictates of compulsions of traditions, precedent, habit, coercion as well as from self-deception.

Life-History

In the context of this research, Leitch and Day’s (2000) understanding of emancipatory action-research serves well the archaeological excavation of my own life history which will inevitably emerge through the analysis of the journal. In the spirit of emancipation the challenge is to reflect on these layered instincts and intuitions and to discern which ones remain constructive or

destructive, valid or invalid, relevant or irrelevant, rightfully treasured or nostalgically overprioritised for the context in which I am now practising.

Emancipation is not a dramatic or ephemeral discarding of all that is currently embraced but is the process of realignment and reconstruction of one's personal and professional self-identity. It is hoped that in the spirit of emancipation one can become more aware of one's emotions and actions, more attuned to the power dimensions in dialogical situations and become free from debilitating personal and professional fears and blind-spots.

In Chapter 4 we shall return to some of the issues of journal writing introduced here, as part of the conclusions of this study. In particular it will be interesting to conclude as to the value of reflective journals in both the practice of the Principal and as a research methodology in this specific context. The apparent undervaluing of reflective journals both in practice and research in educational leadership research in comparison to its widely acknowledged value in fields of medicine, nursing and business-management will be considered and discussed.

Living Theory and Lifelong Learning

An important aspect of emancipation is the extent to which the emancipation experienced by the practitioner/researcher becomes real in the life of the practitioner across the range of his personal and professional identities and over a period of time. True emancipation requires the practitioner to feel capable of being consistent in his new understandings in many different spheres, including the private sphere of his own personal life. In her unpublished doctoral study, O'Sullivan (2005) refers to living theory as the

basis of the motivation for her study with regard to her practice as a teacher of Travellers in a way that is in keeping with my own quest in this study:

How do I live out my values in my practice? The articulation of such a question suggests a desire to achieve improvement in one's practice, as well as intention to live in relation to the realisation of one's espoused values in that practice (O'Sullivan, 2005, p.127).

Such understandings of living theory are expressed by Whitehead (1989). Whitehead and McNiff (2006) proceed to develop understandings of action research based on understandings of living theory. Central to this conception of action research is practice that is aimed at the development of the professional self and, simultaneously, the personal self, observing little distinction between both selves in the interests of authenticity.

Taylor (1991) asserts that the authentic self is the self that has established principles that function as 'horizons of significance'. These 'horizons of significance' are principles which are held in priority by the practitioner that have been interrogated in dialogical situations and have as their basic premise a commitment to the good of the broader community. They are 'defendable' publicly by their holder in dialogical situations. They are authentic because they are genuinely and consistently embraced as a source and orientation in one's work and life.

The desire to align the professional self with the personal self so as to be consistent is, I argue, urgent and important in the context of Ireland's relatively sudden emergence as a diverse society. Not only is it incumbent upon me as Principal of a multicultural school to understand the tenor and the language of

many of the issues of plurality and multiculturalism at play in my work context, it is also important for me to be able to converse knowledgeably on such issues in both public and private spheres away from the school campus. Many of the journal excerpts deal with just such conversations where the professional and personal lives of the Principal are inextricable from one another. In the course of my day-to-day practice I am happy to engage in an understanding of my role that will, by times, require me to make public in a variety of situations the challenges and opportunities that are presented in the micro-society of this school.

The Practitioner and the Organisation

Issues introduced under this heading in Chapter 1 were: the conviviality of the organisation (Illich, 1973), the desirability for fluid structures and processes that allow for tolerance of uncertainty (Dunne, 2005a), the need for non-hierarchical structures of management that allow for emergence of alternative voices (Sackney and Mitchell, 2002) and the need for conscious capacity-building of leadership and responsibility (Sergiovanni, 2001; Barth, 2002). As practice issues from a research perspective, they do not warrant any further research-design or methodological consideration. I devote most of this discussion then to issues of ethical concern for the kind of research undertaken in this study.

Ethical research measures and statement.

Two ethical features would appear to be in immediate tension in a research paper such as this. On one hand, there is the academic desire to subject a year long episode of practice within this institution to the rigorous analysis of public

documentation such as this. In direct opposition to this are the sensitivities of all those who are engaged in the normal practice in this school and their rights to have their personal and professional lives subjected only to such scrutiny as is covered by normal industrial relations and human-resources protocols and practice within the Irish Education system. The challenge for this research is to ensure that both these considerations are met ethically.

The research process started with the permission from the school's Board of Management to undertake a study as envisaged in the two research questions (p.62). The study was given the permission of the Board simultaneously with the delivery of the dissertation proposal to the college's Ethics and Research Committee. The approval of the school's Board of Management was given in a spirit of trust that I as author/Principal would do no harm to the school as an organisation or to any individual working or participating within the organisation.

Gibbs (2007) addresses the research-ethics issues of the workplace researcher. He identifies the workplace researcher as one who is committed to maintaining his/her membership of the community in which he is researching and emphasises that the research should be part of the commitment to that community as opposed to being for purely personal or private reasons. In this study, the level of trust involved in the permission to carry out the research given by the Board of Management and the importance of respecting the integrity and dignity of the co-workers must not be betrayed. The conduct of the research and the publication of the research report must not be destructive of the workplace. The wise workplace researcher, according to Gibbs and

Costley (2006), is able to further knowledge and effect change with concern for the best interests of all those involved in the workplace.

In the original proposal it was intended to use interviews with teachers as a source of data. Oral permission to volunteer and engage in all such interviews was sought and gained from all of the teachers in the school. However, as the data of the Journal emerged, and were deemed to have stand-alone value, and as the emphasis of the study emerged towards the self-study by means of action research of the Principal's leadership practice, the proposed set of interviews was dropped from the research-design in consultation with the supervisor.

Ultimately, for the sake of this dissertation the huge Journal (150,000words) was reduced to a set of eight excerpts. A discussion of the process of selecting these eight excerpts concludes this chapter (p.97). All third parties mentioned in the excerpts have had their identities altered (names and biographical details) so as to obscure identification. All potentially traceable third parties have given written permission to me to include excerpt(s) in which references are made to them in the final draft of the thesis. These persons were given the full text of the excerpt (as presented in Chapter 3) and the full analysis of the excerpt (as presented, also, in Chapter 3) for their perusal and given the final say as to whether they were happy that this excerpt as presented to them could be used. They signed a permission slip to this effect which has been filed for future retrieval. This permission slip also indicates my wish to publish this research through dissertation, conference paper and, possibly, formal publication. A copy of this permission slip is included as Appendix 1 to this dissertation. Further efforts to obstruct and obscure identification of the school

and of individuals within the school have been made. The school's name and location have been changed.

I have made it clear to all those who feature in the excerpts that it is my own practice that is under critical-scrutiny and the discursive analysis of the excerpts has been shown to all the parties to assure them to this effect. This has been a major factor in selecting a set of excerpts that I feel are illuminative of educational leadership issues, as opposed to the many other themes and issues that could have been drawn from the Journal.

Attention to these ethical issues is of huge concern to me. It is imperative that no member of the school community or beyond the school community feels that he/she has been unwittingly made into a research subject. The power dynamic between me as Principal/writer and all other third parties in the Journal is acknowledged and their generosity in giving permission is duly considered in this context. Any apparent judgements or evaluations of their practice are unintended and every respect is given to their personal and professional integrity.

In the excerpts and in my discursive analysis that feature actors or institutions beyond my school community I have been anxious to ensure that I have not defamed any third parties in any common understanding of this term. I am anxious to assert that the excerpts are a filtered account of the realities of any situation and reflect merely my own opinions and judgements over matters which affect the institution of the school as it interacts with numerous outside agencies. I have been anxious to include in my discursive analysis caveats and

recognitions that I may be mistaken in some of my genuinely-held interpretations of events and acknowledge too that my own perspective may be clouded by biases and perspective closely aligned to my own life-history.

Leadership at the service of Teaching and Learning

In the Theoretical Framework the section titled Leadership at the Service of Teaching and Learning concludes the set of dynamics of Practice with the important reminder that Principalship, for all its frenetic business, can only be considered a Practice when it facilitates and supports the practice of teaching and learning. The point of all activities the Principal undertakes in developing the school is to create optimal learning conditions, opportunities and outcomes for the whole school community. This is especially obvious when the Principal undertakes actions of ‘school building’ aimed at structuring an institution in which the practice of teaching may take place. It is equally true when the Principal undertakes the practices of ‘teaching and learning’ in his practice of school-building such as taking assemblies and all face-to-face contact with the children of the school. It is also true when the Principal takes on the mantle of the teacher when collaboratively planning curricular work with individual teachers, when reading assessment reports and when caring for the children.

The Theoretical Framework (Chapter 1) outlines an understanding of what constitutes a good education and, thus, good teaching and learning. By extension the role of the Principal is the facilitation of such good teaching and learning through the organisation of the physical and human resources of the school. Deweyan understandings of Education espouse an inquiry approach to teaching and learning – an approach that extends, of course, into this research.

Inquiry

Central to the research design of this study as just intimated is the notion that the research is an inquiry in the Deweyan sense. Inquiry is the action-orientated, open-ended, experiential and reflective activity that can incrementally reconstruct the learner and his/her relation with the environment.

Stenhouse (1979) advocates research as a basis for teaching. It is central to his argument that teachers should engage in small-scale action research projects as part of their normal classroom teaching practice. I suggest that this is relevant that Principals should explore the value of research from the perspective of improving their own leadership practice. I suggest that this study is one such endeavour in keeping with Stenhouse's sentiments. Similarly, Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) prioritise an inquiry orientation as imperative in the aspiration to develop their teaching and learning from a critical-reflective practice.

This Chapter concludes with some necessary information for the reader of this study. Firstly there is the description of the school at the time of the study. Secondly there is a personal profile relevant to the study. It is hoped that both of these may assist the reader's interpretations of both the journal excerpts and the analysis and conclusions drawn.

The selection of eight extracts for discursive analysis.

It was not possible to include the text of the Full Journal in this dissertation. A draft analysis of the Full Journal that attempted to refer to the majority of the excerpts failed to deal adequately with the range of issues contained therein. In

consultation with the supervisor it was decided to present selected excerpts in full. This allowed for a selection of a manageable number of individual excerpts from the Journal that highlighted, in a reasonably representative way, my day-to-day practice of being a Principal across a range of different incidents. The criteria for the selection were excerpts:

- that focus primarily on issues and dilemmas that refer to the practice of school leadership as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2;
- where I as Principal am seen as involved in some quandary or drama that requires contemplation and resolution;
- where the dilemma or drama of the incident has its roots in the discourses of multiculturalism and multicultural education;
- that are somewhat ‘stand alone’ and where the reader need not necessarily have been following earlier excerpts where characters or important previous incidents have been introduced (further qualified in the following paragraph);
- that were vivid in their presentation of the emotional and non-language aspects of the day-to-day business of the school, and where the commentary stretches beyond the narration of an incident to include initial thoughts, concerns and emotions.
- that were embedded in the context of the school.

In Chapter 3 the excerpts are not presented chronologically. Instead ‘groups’ of excerpts referring to particular situations follow one another. On a couple of occasions I have used an excerpt as introductory to an issue and, then, followed it up with a second excerpt where the issue becomes more complex

or where the initial analytical observations may be disputed or made problematic.

The original Journal reference number has been maintained in the text (D06.09 means December 2006, 9th excerpt for that month)

The Description of the School

For the majority of the year the school housed 158 children and 15 teachers made up of mainstream teachers, Learning Support teachers and English Language Support teachers. The school was in its second year of existence. It is a school under the Educate Together patronage. Growing from an Infant class base, it had by that stage only reached 2nd Class level (9 year old children). There were two Special Needs Assistants and a part-time secretary employed for the latter part of the year.

The school is co-educational. 62% of the children were boys, 38% girls.

The school is ethnically diverse. A summary table is provided in Appendix 2. 6% of the children had exclusively Irish parent(s). A further 5% had one Irish parent and another non-Irish parent. 22% of the children had eastern European parents. 4% of the children were of Middle Eastern and North African ethnic origin almost all born in Ireland. 61% of the children were of African ethnic origin. 2% were of Chinese ethnicity.

Some further observations with regard to this generalised ethnic breakdown are worth noting. Of the eastern European children, 54% were from within the EU,

46% from outside the EU. Of the African children 80% had Nigerian parents, with the other 20% spread across Namibia, Uganda, DR Congo, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Cameroon and Zaire.

The school is multidenominational. Approximately 20% of the school families profess to hold no specific religious identity. 15% are Catholic. 15% are Muslim. 50% belong to a range of Christian churches including Baptist, Jehovah Witness and other Protestant Church groupings.

The school is linguistically diverse with over 27 home languages identified. Approximately 70% of the children come from homes where English is not the first language of communication. In 50% of the homes English is not a form of family communication at all.

Some salient information about the teaching and care staff must, also, be recorded. 40% of the teachers took their initial teacher training in Ireland and 50% did so in the UK, 10% in the USA. 90% of the teachers had taught outside of Ireland for a period of greater than two years. One of the care-staff was African and another was Polish.

Much attention is given in the excerpts to the physical description of the school and its hinterland. It was housed in three separate phases of unconnected prefabricated temporary buildings on a Department of Education and Science - owned site. The site is located in what might be called a new-town adjacent to a smaller historical and industrial Dublin county town. The emerging demography of the town mirrors that of the immigrant housing experience

described in detail in Kelly (2005). None of the children attending the school had parents who grew up in this town.

Over the period of the two years of the study, phase after phase of new houses and apartments were launched, sold and occupied. Some of the new estates had high percentages of owner-occupancy. Some had low rates of owner-occupancy and high rates of private-rented accommodation. Some of the estates included sections of social and affordable housing and some other sections were bought and rented by the local Council and other Councils for housing of families from their extensive list of families awaiting social housing. Large numbers of families in the school were assisted by the Health Service Executive in the payment of their private rents.

Personal Profile

I am male, forty six years of age and with twenty one years teaching experience including four years in inner-city London. I have nine years of in-school middle-management experience. Seventeen years of this teaching experience was gained in a denominational school in the same town as the school in this study. This was my first appointment as Principal. In addition I had six years part-time and one year full time lecturing experience in a College of Education including supervision of undergraduate and post-graduate teaching practice.

Over the previous decade I also had three years of involvement in the design, training of trainers and dissemination of professional development programmes

with the Irish National Teachers Organisation. Over my teaching career I have also published school texts in English, Drama and Geography.

My own education was gained in a traditional rural primary national school in the borderlands of Cavan/Fermanagh and second-level Catholic-denominational education as a boarder in a Dublin denominational school.

I took a Masters Degree in Education over twenty years previously in University College Dublin including a specialism in Development Education. I have had sixteen years of experience as volunteer on school Boards in Ireland and the UK. I have been undertaking Doctoral studies in Education for the entire duration of this research.

Outside of teaching I have had considerable voluntary involvement in advocacy groups for victims of clerical and non-clerical child-sexual abuse. Similarly I have had considerable voluntary involvement in non-governmental groups promoting active citizenship and social justice issues. I now subscribe to no religious-denominational affiliation. I am married with three young children. I am widely travelled including considerable non-teaching work experience in the USA.

I feel that many of these experiences listed here have contributed to my self-identity as a person and as a teacher/Principal. My own personal education was successful in its own terms with adequate results to allow me to pursue further career or study at all times.

In my teaching career I have always engaged in considerable and rigorous Professional Development both as a participant and as a facilitator/trainer of other teachers and student teachers and in a number of professional organisations and voluntary governorship structures.

Some seminal moments of a personal and private nature were gained through my involvement with the struggles for recognition and justice of victims of clerical child sexual abuse through which I came to see the same denominational structures that govern Irish education in a particular and what I would consider to be a non-complimentary light. This experience informed both my personal decision to shed the Catholic religious affiliation of my youth and my professional decision to seek a position in school management outside of the denominational education sector. This experience has also contributed to my faith in and prioritisation of civic notions of responsibility and of broader views of the value of both liberal and republican structures in political society. It must, be acknowledged that it would be entirely possible for others to remain attached to religious affiliations and still prioritise these republican and liberal values, but that this was not my response.

My few years teaching in London in the late 1980s and early 1990s gave me an introduction to a particular kind of emigrant experience, one that I feel has left me somewhat empathic with the experiences of immigrant families to Ireland. The same four years of London teaching experience also introduced me to the issues of multiculturalism and multicultural education early in my career.

My memories of growing up in a mixed religious rural border community in a state of alternating harmony and conflict has always made me question traditional and dominant descriptions of Irish identity.

I venture that all of these factors at various times form a personal and life-historical analytical lens by which I view all that surrounds me and is evident throughout the excerpts and discursive analysis of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 Presentation and Discursive Analysis of selected Journal extracts

Introduction

In Chapter 2 the process of writing the Journal and broader research considerations of journaling were discussed (p.67 and p.82). The reasons and criteria for selecting eight extracts from the Journal for presentation and discursive analysis were also presented (p.97).

Each excerpt is presented in the unedited and uncorrected form in which it was originally presented to the supervisor. Each excerpt is followed by a discursive analysis. In the discursive analysis I refer to the role that I have played in the excerpt in the third person, as 'the Principal'.

Excerpt 1: Designing an Ethnic Parent-Group Programme

S06.05 Ethnic Parent Groupings. Another programme that I am anxious to develop in the school, and recommended in our own internal Whole School Evaluation (WSE) based on the experiences of last year's full Parent Association is to develop a series of Parent Groups based on ethnic backgrounds. I am anxious to develop these groups for a variety of reasons, primarily to meet the definite needs that the individual ethnic communities in the school need, which can be quite distinct from one community to the next, but also to build some capacity within each ethnic group to become more involved in the school. I have a gut feeling that these groups can work towards both these aims, but the logistics of what groups? When will they meet? What will they do? How will I be involved (me or a facilitator?)? All need thinking out. I consult far and wide over this. I have spoken with a number of friends in non-governmental organisations to do with Interculturalism, Immigration and Human Rights Issues who all see value in the idea, and also on our BOM is very positive about the idea, a Nigerian writer who we consulted with all of last year is also very positive. One or two Principal colleagues are less positive and point to some of the potential pitfalls.... Will it be seen as racist in the first place to "split" up my parent body? What about the time factor? Will the parents engage with it? I am determined to run with this idea, even if it is only to learn the answer to all of these questions for myself. Bit by bit a shape or model is beginning to occur to me.

The Principal in this excerpt may be seen as pre-action. This project has been allowed to gestate for some time and is now on the verge of being put into action. It is a big project and the Principal is clearly concerned that he has no precedent for this action from which he may have learned how best to proceed with this project.

He has assembled the opinions of a number of advisers who he judges to have expertise in the area of ethnic relations. He has consulted those who have a managerial or vested interest in the fall out from such a project. He has sought advice from other Principals who he hopes may warn him of obvious pitfalls that he, in his enthusiasm for the idea, may be blind to.

The first two sets of advisers are positive about the idea and he reports no critical feedback from them. Only the feedback from the other Principals has words of warning. They suggest some reasons why they might not embark upon such a programme. However, the impression is created towards the end of the excerpt that these words of warning are going to be ignored. Perhaps this indicates that the Principal has already foreseen these misgivings and decided to continue nonetheless? Alternatively, perhaps the Principal has not foreseen these misgivings but has decided to proceed nonetheless.

It is clear, however, that the Principal does foresee a risk in the project. He articulates the risk. It is manifold. One concern is that such a major and public project will take many hours and much energy yet may yield little. More importantly, the Principal clearly acknowledges that there is a harm that could

take place; that this action could be understood by members of the school community as being racist in some way.

Would the African population, for example, be concerned at being segregated from the rest of the school community in this project? This is a real possibility. If some of the African parents were to perceive that these meetings were designed to instruct the Nigerian parents exclusively about some aspect of school organisation, would this imply that these parents needed to be taken aside and given special treatment in this regard? The possibility of taking umbrage over being patronised or singled-out in this manner is clear.

In the excerpt it is seen that the idea for this project has emanated from some previous critical-reflection. The Principal's and others' reflections on the performance and operations of the Parent Association in the school over the previous year have resulted in some form of recommendation being made in the school's internal Whole School Evaluation (WSE) process. Something in the current performance or constitution of the Parent Association is deemed unsatisfactory by the Principal. This observation has made its way into the school's formal reflection document; the internal Whole School Evaluation.

The fact that the school has its own internal evaluation process denotes formal critical-reflection at a structured level in the school. The fact that this structured process has resulted in the formulation of a recommendation that some such ethnic grouping policy should be undertaken shows that the critical reflection is attuned to the multicultural needs of the school. Therefore it is fair

to assume that this project has its roots in internal, structured and dialogical processes in the school.

In terms of the Theoretical Framework of this study we see here an action-orientation in the practice of the Principal. The situation is deemed unsatisfactory and must be addressed. We see a willingness to acknowledge that what is proposed here will generate an experience that is uncertain and open-ended. We see that there has been dialogue around the proposed project calling on three separate sources of feedback. We see that there has been reflection of a critical nature where the performance of the Parent Association is deemed in some way to be unsatisfactory in terms of ethnicity in some manner not spelled out on this occasion.

The Principal articulates the concern of risk and the potential for harm that could be an outcome of this project. There is the possibility of being misunderstood and causing offence. The harm could be even greater. It could be perceived as anti-inclusion and undemocratic. It could be construed in some perspectives as evidence of a personal or institutional racism where the different ethnic groups are seen as possibly being divisible according to some understanding of their special needs. This project could harm other projects that are aimed at bringing people closer together. Perhaps the project isn't timely given the newness of the school.

Referring to the Theoretical Framework and to the literature of educational leadership, as portrayed in Chapters 1 and 2, the Principal is observed mulling over a variety of issues. His anxiety to bring in the voice of the African or the

Eastern European population into the structures of the school may be seen as an effort at developing an inclusive culture in the school (Barth, 1990, 2002). He may be understood as developing a communicative space as understood by Kemmis (2005) in his discussion of Habermas's public spheres. In doing this he may be seen as rising to those specific challenges as identified by Lumby (2006); Morrison, Lumby and Sood (2006) and Shah (2006) when they consider the cultivation of minority voices within the school organization.

In doing this he is taking risk and using imagination as espoused by Sugrue (2005a, 2005c). In not choosing to ignore the problem he has resisted the temptation to withdraw into conservative or self-protective cocoon (Sugrue 2005, following on Giddens, 1991). Through formal critical-reflection processes the Principal's leadership style may be regarded as in keeping with Blackmore's (2006) understanding of application of critical theory to leadership practice.

The willingness to grow capacity from within the school's minority groupings and to get to know the voices within the minority groupings may be seen as Presence as understood by Starratt (2004) in his understanding of ethical leadership.

The willingness to engage in open-ended action with unpredictable outcomes is firmly rooted in this conception of Practice. The confidence that at the very least it will be an action from which he may incrementally learn may be understood as an engagement with the process of phronesis as understood by Dunne (2005a), Gibbs (2007) and Birmingham (2004). The action envisaged

here may be seen as an institutional order according to MacIntyre (1981) and as discussed by Kemmis (2005) as part of the practice of school building where an institution that can facilitate Practice is under consideration. In this case the Principal is anxious to build proportional representation for ethnic groups into the structures of the school.

In doing this, the Principal may be seen as embracing Illich's (1973) understanding of conviviality where the local small-scale action of listening to participant voices and meeting their needs is to be acted upon. The Principal's understanding for the need of multiple voices in order to develop shared vision is in keeping with that suggested by Gunter (2001, 2005); Foster (1998) and Sergioivanni (1991). The necessity to facilitate minority voices in the structures of the school is emphasized in the school leadership literature. (Cummins, 2003; Dimmock and Walker, 2005).

But there are causes for concern here, too. By identifying one of the three groups to be titled "The African Group" the Principal can be accused of making the generalisation that the African communities are a homogenous group which is clearly not the case. Here the Principal may be seen as simply seeing the diversity within the African population of the school as a single 'other' and as lacking in the necessary recognition of the degree of diversity within this population (Blackmore, 2006; Gunter, 2005; King, 2004; Mahon, 2006).

The prospect of a set of formal meetings, to be held during the school-day and to be conceived through a public newsletter, displays a disconcerting comfort

with the power-relation within which the Principal stands in relation to the parent-body (Blackmore, 2006; Cummins, 2000, 2003). Though he understands that many will not be able to attend such meetings because of work and care duties and other access issues, the Principal proceeds.

It may be understood that this action does not measure up to the dynamic of 'affirmation' and 'invitation' outlined by Sackney and Mitchell (2000, 2002). Here, 'affirmation' refers to the deliberative and lengthy process of having affirmed to minority groups the value and welcome to which one attaches to their opinions offered on many previous occasions. Consequently, the 'invitation' would be simply the genial proposition to formalise a meeting or event at which these valuable suggestions could be discussed formally and further. As portrayed in the excerpt it would appear that the Principal is taking expedient shortcuts in this regard.

The fears that the Principal articulates are not without foundation. When he expresses his fear that the African population may take umbrage at being singled-out for special attention, perhaps, this is exactly what he is doing. Perhaps he is seeing their contribution to the school as "in-deficit" and is proceeding to address this in a clumsy and expedient manner (Devine *et al*, 2005; Devine, 2005; Lodge and Lynch, 2001, 2003, 2004).

Excerpt 2: African Parent Programme

This excerpt occurred three months later than Excerpt 1 and describes the first three meetings of the African ethnic parent group introduced in Excerpt 1.

N06.05 Three meetings of African Parent Group. We have had three meetings of the African parent group this month. The first meeting was a "What is the point of this group? - meeting". Initially it was difficult to get everybody talking. We did it in circle time. It was clear that the majority who showed up wanted me to tell them what would happen in the group. But bit by bit some suggestions emerged. One mother, a Kenyan woman, suggested that she would like to get to know more about what was going on in the school, she felt she knew very little about what her Junior Infant child was learning. She felt that if she knew more about what was going on in the classroom then she would be better able to assist her child at home. The other parents agreed with this and the discussion went to comparing their children's school experiences with their own school experiences in Africa. There was on one hand general consensus that their children were having a more positive experience of school than they had had, there was a lot of talk about "whipmasters" and physical punishment and being told they were stupid by nuns and teachers. But on the other hand there seemed to be a bit of disappointment that school should not be so soft on their children, and that school wasn't pushing them hard enough, and that they weren't learning enough, or quickly enough, that they weren't doing exams, and that there wasn't enough homework. I suggested that we could have a couple of sessions where I could show them, for example, how we went about teaching reading, or math or some of the other subject areas and we could then discuss it as a group. It was agreed that we could do this. I then asked them if there were any other kinds of session that we could have, but there were no further suggestions. I asked them if it would be possible for us to have a session where I, or some of the other teachers, might get to know about their lives in Ireland, and their experiences of living and bringing up their children in Ireland. There was lukewarm response to this. I further suggested that we might have session about the kind of school that we were, an Educate Together school, and what that meant, if anything. But there was no particular response to that. I asked them if we could have a session about how they as a group could become more involved in the school and there was very good response to that. So to finish the first session we drew up a timetable of the first few sessions that we could have, starting with a workshop on teaching reading. Our second session is then a "teaching children to read workshop". One of my teaching colleagues decided that he would like to do the presentation at the beginning. There is a good turnout of people, over twenty of us crowded into the staff room. He does an excellent presentation on Jolly Phonics and he gives examples of the children's progress as he has witnessed in his own class. There is a very jovial conversation afterwards. One father feels that this

process of learning to read is very laboured, "Why?" he asks "does the teacher not just simply write the words on the blackboard and get the children to chant out the words so often that they can then remember them?" "Why are you trying to trick the children into learning?" another asks. I, however, do not need to answer the questions as another father comes in "I too thought that this was stupid and time-wasting when my first children were learning to read this way, but now I look at them reading and they are better readers than I am. This is the way to learn to read, you just don't learn words you learn how to read new words" There is a very amusing discussion, with some sticking to their earlier opinion that this was a laborious and ineffective way of learning to read, and others arguing that this was a way of learning to read that would make their children better readers than they would ever be. Some also said that it was nice that children learned to read in a way that they found to be fun and enjoyable and that this was very contrasting to the way in which they had learned. But this was countered too with many comments that learning should be "work" and not necessarily "fun". One mother asks me if there is any evidence that this approach to reading actually does lead to a good standard of reading. I start to talk to them about our assessment procedures, but we agree to leave this discussion over to our next session where I will introduce them to the "tests" or "exams" that we use in the school, our teacher-based tests and standardised tests. It has been a great session, with great openness, frankness and humour. It seemed to me that everybody had enjoyed it and felt it was worth coming for and that they would come to the next session. The next session on Assessment has a smaller attendance. I do a small presentation on assessment and show them the teacher-based tests and standardised tests that make up our assessment calendar. I distribute the tests, the Quest, the Micra-T and the MIST and people start to try them out. There is much humour and joking, and they are very interested in what standards the children might be expected to reach at the different levels. Many of them want to take the tests home to "teach" the children, so that they will score well in the tests when the teacher gives it to them, and there is a bit of exasperation when I refuse to allow this. I see some writing down the names of the tests. I explain to them that the tests are used as a means for us to find out what children, if any, are falling behind so that we can give that child some extra help, or some learning support. This leads to an interesting conversation. One father asks me why it is that the children who are not learning, and not trying hard at the tests that get the extra help, "why is it not the children who do well in the tests that get the extra teaching, they deserve it". Another parent says something similar. There is general consensus that we are rewarding the "lazy" and punishing the

“good” children with this approach. I make a case for the way that we do it, but it doesn’t go down that well. They ask me what a good score might be, and I tell them that any child who scores in the 90percentiles would be considered to be very bright, and that we do have in our school policy that we would give these children extra learning support too so that they would not be bored in school and that they might get more stimulating work to do in school too. This meets with huge approval and relief. I introduce the problem of English language and these tests, I point out to them that it is exceptionally difficult for a child who does not speak English at home to score high marks in these tests, and try to introduce the idea that this is the fault of the tests and not the child. But I get nowhere with this argument. It is clear from the discussion that each parent present is confident that their child will score in the 90percentiles in these tests, if the child works hard enough and is not lazy. There is much from this session that is simultaneously informing and disturbing to me. I know from the results of the tests that we have conducted to date that few of our African children have scored above the 50th percentile in these tests, and that many have scored below the 20s and thus will receive learning support. I know this is because of the English-language deficit, where the children simply do not have the language of discussion and experience that will lead to high scores. Then, there is not only the English language deficit, but there is also the socio-economic disadvantage factor too, few if any of our African kids live in the kind of homes where factors such as availability of books, and parental reading to children abounds. The disturbing fact of these discussions too is the enormously high aspirations these African parents have for their children to be doctors and engineers, and the confidence that this school will deliver these children to that place unproblematically. That the child who is “good” and “works hard” will undoubtedly succeed and that the child who fails is “lazy” or “not good”. It has been an interesting session and gives me a lot to think about. As a school we have to provide more, we have to go every extra inch or mile in order to improve the service we offer these children. We must make getting into the Department of Education’s Delivering Equality In School (DEIS) scheme a priority, and while we are waiting for the slow wheels of bureaucracy to allow us to do that we must do what we can through our own commitment and dedication.

This excerpt covers the first three of the meetings of the African group. From a

Practice perspective we see the emergence of a number of tensions and issues

that make practice and leadership of the Principal laden with both challenge and opportunity.

There is an ostensible distance between the community of the group (the African parents who chose to attend) and the school (the Principal) as to what may become the common purpose of the group or such a series of meetings. The assumption of the participating parents is that there is a purpose laid down by the Principal for this assembly and that they have attended out of a sense of duty or compliance.

The Principal, though he hasn't spelled it out, does have a motive for this assembly: the formation of such a group and the hope that from this group some parents may come to be more involved in the life of the school. However, he is reticent to proclaim this and wishes this to emerge organically and in due course from a group who are meeting for their own purposes.

After an inauspicious start some other motives emerge. We see that the Principal, for example, feels that the school does not know enough about the lives of the African families and he is seeking a forum where these stories might emerge. In the research literature on school leadership this may be seen as the leader trying to become "present" to the real lives of the African families albeit in a very formal manner (Starratt, 2004).

It is evident that the Principal is trying to find an opportunity for the African families to find a place where their voice can be expressed. He hopes that this emerging voice can then become part of the school's dialogue. He hopes, too, that parents who are willing to make their voices heard can brought more

centrally into all of the schools structures for ongoing dialogue, negotiation and management (Barth, 1990, 2002; Connell, 1993, Dimmock, 1996; DiTomaso and Hooijberg, 1996; Shields, 2002).

It emerges, too, that the Principal has some concerns about the African parents' understanding of the Educate Together ethos of the school. We can also see the Principal coming to be critical of the Educate Together ethos in its suitability or fit for a school with this diversity. The Principal may, thus, be seen as trying to open the possibility of critical-reflection and to expose the ethos to the school to such critical dialogue. He may, also, be seeking the African community of the school to engage in critical-reflection on their own stances. In the microcosm of the school this may be in keeping with the sentiments of the broader multicultural society proposed by Williams (2003) when she talks of "shared fate" and the necessity to work out common ground for common purposes based around the 'shared fate' of those who find themselves thrown together. Parekh (2006), in his espousal of the necessity for critical reflection within minority cultures and open-ended dialogues between cultures, emphasizes the need for lines of dialogue and voices of minorities to be encouraged and facilitated.

But the facilitation of this process is not without its difficulties. Perhaps even the facilitation of it in such a formal manner, done in the surrounds of the school staff room at an appointed time by the Principal through a newsletter is already too contrived for such dialogue to emerge organically (King, 2004; Lumby and Coleman, 2007; Macedo and Bartolome, 1999).

There is an assumption of homogeneity among the African grouping on the part of the Principal when the reality is that the African group is not homogenous and is diverse in terms of language, education background, religion and socio-economic status (Mahon, 2006).

Nonetheless the exercise, as reported here, has been successful at getting some version of the project underway. It has facilitated action that has generated incident, dialogue and business. In the second and third sessions there is a certain amount of 'getting-to-know-you' in terms of coming to understand the parents' own experiences of education on the African continent. There is some genuine composting of interpersonal relations in dynamics of humour, intimacy, argument and further time spent in each others' presence.

Presence, as understood by Starratt (1993, 2004) refers to the willingness of the Principal to become visible to the school community; to become familiar with the small innocuous milieu of the day-to-day life of all the school community. Presence with the parents would involve knowing their names and enough about their lives to engage in ordinary day-to-day conversations so as to be deemed approachable for potential future reference. It means to be adequately empathic to their daily concerns.

The critical reflection that the Principal engages in towards the end of the excerpt is raising some issues for his deliberation and concern. One such dawning observation for the Principal is what he perceives as a gap between the school (in the form of the Principal and the teachers) and the assembled parents in their understandings of what constitutes an appropriate education for

early-years children. It may even be possible to go further than this and say that there is also some distance between the school and this parent group on understandings of the concept of childhood.

It can be seen in the excerpt that the Principal and teachers are at odds with the parents in their assertion that learning to read should be made entertaining for the children. The Principal is opposed to the assertions from some of the parents that it should be more direct and less fearful of being laborious. The parents assert that the school is “too soft” on the children. The Principal does not concur with one parent’s observation that scoring low on a test is a result of the child’s laziness. Each of these comments can be taken to indicate that there is some distance between the parents understanding of appropriate teaching and learning and that held by the Principal.

Other gaps are observable too. The optimism of the African parents that their children, if they apply themselves, will be hugely successful within this education system is clearly at odds with the instinct of the Principal. In this excerpt we see that the Principal is growing towards a conclusion that such optimism is going to be predictive of home-school difficulties down the line when the progress of some of the children does not match the expectations of the parents. What are the roots of these pessimistic and pathological assumptions on his part? Perhaps the answer to this is twofold.

On one hand, as a teacher of twenty five years experience, including a four year period in London, the Principal has seen the negative impact that socio-economic disadvantage can have in educational attainment and is, sensibly,

aware that this challenge for these children is huge and that there are solid grounds for pessimism. Hence we see that he makes something of an emotional plea for DEIS status (the status attached by the Department of Education and Science to educationally disadvantaged schools carrying with it a raft of measures including smaller class sizes and financial assistance) for the school. He calls, too, for commitment from the whole school community, and especially the teaching staff, to give increased effort to addressing educational disadvantage. Here, the Principal's professional life-history is shaping his opinion on likely future outcomes (Goodson, 1992, 2003; Sugrue 2005a).

The Principal might be criticised as being rather quick at jumping to these pessimistic conclusions. Is he, as described in the literature, making assumptions based on stereotypical representations of race and skin-colour (Blackmore, 2006; Gunter, 2005; Troyna and Hatcher, 1992)? Perhaps, this is evidence of the deficit model appealing to the male, white, middle-class and ethnocentric realities of this Principal's personal and professional life (Sleeter, 2004; Woods and Jeffrey, 2002; Devine, 2005; Lodge and Lynch, 2003, 2004).

However, if this is the case, how is the Principal to proceed here? Should his response be one of broadening this discussion out to include the parents of these children? If so why then didn't he introduce this aspect of the conversation into the meeting when the issue arose? There would have been ample opportunity to have opened the discussion during the meeting about the school's assessment procedures.

The Principal did tentatively open a discussion about the bias in these tests for English language competence. He, however, did not go further and express his clearly held views that the expectations of these parents for the academic success of their children were unrealistic. Was it an anxiety not to offend that caused him to refrain? Was it an anxiety to be politically correct? Was it a fear of having what he was saying being interpreted as racist? Or was he correct in refraining in this forum from that kind of input? Was it too early for this group to have such a discussion?

We can draw from this excerpt that the dialogical set of relations imperative in a Practice understanding of educational leadership is difficult to initiate and sustain. Sub-dynamics of sensitivities to motivations, power-relations and choreography must be observed and negotiated.

In doing this the stage is set for situations where the education leader must establish and clarify priorities for the school such as, in this case, understandings of early-years education or understandings of the concept of childhood. The school community as a whole must engage in a dialogue around issues of the wellbeing of the child, the value of child-centred education and notions of the common good, so that these shared understandings can become guiding principles of the school. This dialogue must involve all of the voices in the school.

The Principal must develop a capacity for critical reflection where he can begin to trace the roots of his actions through either his life-history or through an emerging understanding of his character. Instinctive responses that are

pessimistic with regard to the future educational attainment of ethnic minorities must be interrogated.

On a positive note, it must be noted that none of the risk concerns that we observed in the first excerpt actually did emerge in the account of the second excerpt. None of the African group expressed concern about being singled-out or put-upon by the invitation, or this was not articulated at the meetings. This risk, alluded to in the first excerpt, could be judged as having been worth taking.

In conclusion, it can be observed that this grouping of African parents has become a structured community of the school that has been initiated and sustained for some length of time. Despite the stiff and formal start, dynamics of good humour and cordial argument seem to have made the conversation more grounded, real and dialogical. Presence, as understood by Starratt (2004) is in the process of being established. Solid home-school links are being made with a two way flow of information. The Principal is learning from the conversations of the different experiences of schooling of the African parents through partial glimpses into their life-histories. He is learning, too, of their broader educational views and aspirations for their children.

It cannot be known at this stage if any of the parents attending these meetings will go on to integrate themselves further into the formal structure of parental involvement in the school.

Excerpt 3 Road Map for Critical Multiculturalism

This excerpt features staff discussions and school policy development on issues of multiculturalism.

O06.12 Road Map for Critical Multiculturalism. Over the past few weeks in our policy meeting sessions we have been gearing up towards developing a policy that states our policy and practice on all aspects of the multicultural dimension to the school. In previous sessions we have problematised the concept of multiculturalism. We have reached a kind of consensus amongst the staff that whereby we acknowledge the positive aspects of multiculturalism: its inherent notion of equality amongst all cultures, it's dynamic of inclusiveness and respect for diversity. We did, however, also feel that there was a couple of problems with this version of multiculturalism that came into play especially around questions such as; Should we not question some of the practices of some cultures if they are proving to be "against" the agenda of education or equality or child-protection issues that form the school's stated ethos? Also, where is the line drawn between the expectation that the school should support/respect the diverse cultures of our demography and simultaneously the school needs the negotiated input of all of its constituent ethnicities in terms of voluntarism, commitment to shared goals etc. A third question to that has emerged is whether multiculturalism as a model is cognisant of the dynamic of racism that surely does exist and "makes preference" of one culture over another. These are all difficult questions. So for the training day that we have given over to discussing this I have designed a session around exploring the concept of critical-multiculturalism as offering the school a guiding philosophy around which to base our related policies and practice. I list out the "elements" or "constituent dynamics" of a variety of readings on critical-multiculturalism and set them up for discussion. The aim here is to get some discussion going around each concept; what it means? If it's relevant? Do we agree with it? And then from there to see if there are any initiatives/practice/things that we can do that will bring this alive in the school? So the checklist of "elements" that I have garnered from my reading to date is: 1 criticisms of multiculturalism from a critical perspective, 2 the concepts racism and institutional-racism, 3 the concept of multiple identities, 4 critical reflection on our own practice, 5 critical reflection on our own Educate Together ethos, 6 critical reflection of school leadership 7 critical reflection on the school curriculum The discussion through each topic is most stimulating. There appears to be consensus that critical multiculturalism is correct in many of its criticisms of multiculturalism, especially the teachers seem exercised by the

“right” or the “necessity” to be critical of cultural practices that denigrate women, or harm children. Interestingly too some teachers bring up the issue of the many “evangelical” and “fundamentalist” churches that make up the cultural practices of many of our children. We again discuss the “Irish school” issue and there is much critical discussion of what being Irish means, with by times heated banter around notions that the “old-Irish” of Catholicism, Irish-language, rural, GAA, family, nationalism and a “new-Irish” of being ambivalent to Religion, interested in the Irish Language but “damaged by their experiences of learning it”, returned cosmopolitan emigrants, accepting of other family structures and sexual identities. There is agreement too that racism does exist and extends beyond the shouting of racist abuse but is more pervasive in less obvious ways, and that institutional racism does exist. And most importantly that we, individually and as a staff, can be racist both personally and institutionally. A good discussion brews over the idea as to whether we are being “racist” when we are being “critically multiculturalist”; if you are criticising a culture for its child rearing practices are you also being racist? If you are critical of a religion because of its stipulations about how women should lead their lives are you being racist? There was also some good discussion of the notion of Practice, and whether we are meant to have answers to all questions and scenarios before we come to them, something which we can feel we should have, or can we learn from our experience? What does it take to learn from experience? What does reflective practice mean? There is also some good discussion around our “Educate Together ethos”, is our ethos prescriptive? Does our ethos allow for critical-multiculturalism? Can we be critical of our ethos? One teacher states that he thinks the Educate Together ethos is very “multicultural” and quite “anti-critical multicultural”, that it would be an expectation of our ethos to be uncritical of anyone’s culture. We discuss this for some time. We look at the introduction of the 1999 curriculum and the preamble of the 1998 Education Act. To conclude the day’s discussions we list a set of agreed Principles, some of which are definitely critical-multicultural in tone and emphasis, but also attach to this a number of other Principles that have come from our discussion. We agree that I will distribute these Principles to all staff and that we will come together in a couple of week’s time again and this time try to make a list of things that we can do in the school to bring these principles to life. All told it has been a great day and I think everybody feels that it has been stimulating, provocative and by times heated, especially around the “being Irish” issue where there was some serious argy-bargy, and also around the racism issue.

This meeting of the Principal and the full teaching staff takes place over a full school day permitted by the Department of Education and Science for School Planning and Development in that particular school year. It indicates the priority given to issues of multiculturalism in the school. The Principal and the teaching staff are anxious to work out their own understandings of competing versions of multiculturalism. They are anxious to develop a school policy across a range of multicultural issues so as to have guidelines to inform their practices of teaching and school-building.

In Practice terms, this may mean that the teaching team have come to understand that they must take responsibility for the development of school policy for the specific context of their own school. They recognize that there may be many different versions of multiculturalism at play in their own practice and they are anxious to devise some basic premises of shared understanding so that their practice can be coherent and consistent.

In the opening part of the excerpt the Principal summarises their dialogue to date on many of the issues. Initial understandings of multiculturalism that could be considered to be of a liberal tone appear to have been their starting point. From this perspective, the religious, linguistic and cultural rights of the individuals and minority groupings are to be recognized and respected. However, at the point in time of this excerpt, questions have begun to emerge as to how this perspective may be maintained according to certain dilemmas and challenges. It is clear that there are many different opinions amongst the

staff as to how this might be achieved, or indeed if it should be pursued as a policy goal.

On the issues of what constitutes Irishness, and how the school should frame its Irishness there appears to be a considerable lack of consensus. Some staff members are anxious to ensure that the school undertakes the promotion of Irish language and culture. Others are anxious that this perceived role for the school be examined critically. We observe staff members who fear that their own diversity is not being respected and given due recognition by those who profess more traditional perspectives of Irish identity and expectations of schools to be places of cultural transmission. This debate raises many of the issues about the configuration of Irish identity amidst the rapid demographic diversification that has taken place (see Coulter and Coleman, 2003; Peillon and Corcoran, 2004).

On other issues of multiculturalism, it is clear that as a staff they have reflected on their own actions and have come to something of a dissatisfaction with the concept of multiculturalism, or at least the concept as understood and practiced by them to date. For some teachers dissatisfaction with the premise of unquestioning respect for all minority cultures emerges when incidents of gender equality or child-protection arise. Their debate and their expressed dissatisfaction with multiculturalism echoes the classic debates between liberal discourses of a multicultural society and a range of other perspectives ranging from feminist, critical, postmodern and republican visions of diverse societies (see Enslin and White, 2003).

It can also be concluded that the beginnings of what might be some critical reflection on their own practice as they begin to question what vision of diverse society their stated and documented ethos of Educate Together supports or prescribes is underway (Educate Together, 2004, 2004a, 2005; Rowe, 2000). Some of the teachers begin to question the liberal thrust of this stated ethos and point to some contradictions in its articulation.

From this excerpt, it would appear that the teachers, with the facilitation of the Principal, are delving deeply into the context in which they are working. They are bringing their life-histories to the table and in dialogue are working towards future actions that may incrementally improve on their actions to date. The process appears from the excerpt to be democratic and inclusive. There may be examples within this process of what is described as both a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) and a community of learning (Sergiovanni, 1992, 2001). There appears to be value attached to the diversity of voices around the table.

The Principal, in prioritising this issue for policy-development, has navigated the teaching staff towards this collaborative exercise. He has played a facilitative role, both in the organisation of the day's meeting and also in the choreography of the series of meetings over a period of time which preceded this meeting. There are moments of initiation, direction-change and impetus that the Principal prompts through his acting as Chairperson of the meeting.

The Principal also questions the liberal multiculturalist paradigm as the dominant guideline for the school. It is his own reading of critical-

multiculturalist literature that prompts him to present this discourse to the staff as a possible solution to their disaffection with liberal multiculturalist practice. The question remains, however, if in doing this the Principal is engaging in the open-ended staff development to which he clearly aspires. Or is he subtly, through his powerful position, directing the staff toward his own goals and aspirations, through thinly disguised democratic practices?

In summary, neither possibility can be denied. Perhaps there is a dilemma for the Principal here with regards to the understanding of dialogue as presented in the Theoretical Framework. In this case we see where the Principal, through his private reading, is aware of a literature of Critical Multiculturalism (May, 1994, 1999) and that he is anxious to utilise this knowledge in his leadership capacity. One could question as to whether this practice is edging towards 'superprincipal' understanding of leadership where the Principal poses, or is expected to have, the answers (Copland, 2001)?

Or is it inevitable that in any dialogical situation within an organisation there are some individuals who in some circumstances will have a prior knowledge or a prior experience that they can bring to the table and expect to be influential? Is such prior knowledge part of the essence of leadership or is it obstructive of developing collaborative solutions?

Much of the literature on educational leadership that espouses democratic practice in policy development and other school arenas fails to consider this real and inevitable dilemma. Sugrue (2005, 2005c) approximates it in his appeal to the passions of Principal and for their freedom to bring such passions

to their leadership capabilities. In certain contexts and through certain rigorous processes the practitioner may lead through persuasion, charisma and passion (Hallinger and Heck, 1996, 2002a).

Towards the end of the excerpt it may be observed that ‘being critical’ as a principle of practice has been prioritized. The ‘road-map’ encourages the teachers to be critically reflective of their own practice and of the practice of the school. They are encouraged to be critically reflective on their own cultural identity and on other cultures. They are encouraged to be critical of the school’s own stated ethos. In the Theoretical Framework we identified schools as organizations that must be comfortable with such critical interrogation despite the uncertainty that it may bring.

Excerpt 4 Staff Discussion of Devine (2005) Welcome to the Celtic Tiger?

Following on the previous excerpt, the staff teaching team did proceed and develop what they call a Road Map Towards Critical Multiculturalism; a policy for the school on all arising issues to do with its diverse school community. Part of this Road Map demanded them to consider Racism and to develop school policy around this issue. In this excerpt we see the teaching staff six months later developing school policy and practice on issues of racism.

MH07.21 Staff discussion of Devine (2005) Welcome to the Celtic Tiger? About one month ago I had distributed Dymyna Devine’s journal piece “Welcome to the Celtic Tiger?” (Devine, 2005) to the staff asking that they read it and make a personal response to it as part of our planned Anti-racism workshop as had been requested especially by a couple of the younger teachers as part of the development of our Critical-Multiculturalist Road Map. The format was very simple, we sat in a circle and each teacher in turn gave their views on how they felt on reading the article. The later contributors all cross

referenced their talk to that which had gone before them. Martin got the ball rolling by stating that he felt quite defensive on reading the article and that he didn't think that the teachers' statements within the article, that Devine concluded to be racist, were in any way similar to his own views and that it was unfair of Devine to draw such general conclusions from such a small amount of evidence. Many of the teachers as we went around agreed with Martin's point of view. Noelle added that she didn't think that Devine gave adequate cognisance to the context in which the teachers were working and that her methodology didn't allow the teachers to be particularly expansive of their views and that as a researcher doing an interview she was never going to get very far into the mind or the actual practice of the teacher. Rita added that Devine drew very general conclusions from very small comments and that she had a problem with the way she drew conclusions that some of their statements were racist when in fact they were "true" and "factual". Against this Fiona argued that Devine's article exposed a racism and a lack of understanding that she found common not just in Irish teachers but in Irish people too, she felt racism was rampant in Ireland and that too many people were anxious to deny that it even existed. Caroline concurred with Fiona and felt that she had been given no training whatsoever in her St Pat' College Postgraduate course on racism or on anything to do with the multicultural society in which she and most of her PG friends are now working. It was clear that Nadia was very nervous about what she wanted to say, and she started her piece by thanking Fiona for saying what she had said. She went on to say that she found Irish people to be quite racist, and that she felt that there was a real difficulty for anybody, and especially any teacher, who did not fit a "norm" of background, qualifications and experience. She felt that her teaching training course in New York had equipped her very well for the challenges of teaching in a multiethnic school. She felt that the tardiness with which the Department of Education and Science was processing her qualifications (submitted for over 7 months and still no reply) was a form of Institutional racism and she felt too that the grossly unsatisfactory manner in which the courses for the Scrudu Cailliocht (the exam for recognition for primary teachers in Gaeilge) were taught and designed was another form of Institutional racism giving non-Irish people little hope of even earning the right to become qualified in the teaching of the Irish language. She felt too that Ireland as a state was going about managing its recent immigration with very poor skill and was sure to replicate many of the gross mistakes made in America many decades ago, and from which she claimed it had never recovered. Berny said that she felt that the racism that Devine describes could also be extended to sexism and to all

other forms of discrimination on the grounds of religion or gender or sexual-identity. By the time the second group had spoken the further comments from the earlier contributors, Martin, Noelle and Rita, changed in tone and content, there now appeared to be a consensus amongst all that racism did exist and that we as teachers could be racist if it was something that we were not cognisant of. Teachers then began to give examples of possible racism in our school.... Our Friday awards, our DEN, the language we use, the homogeneity of our staff, our fractious conversations with parents especially after an "incident". Noelle suggested too that sometimes we used our Critical Multiculturalist policy to "legitimate" a racism that our Critical Multiculturalist Policy seemed to give license to over-ride or dismiss aspects of the children's culture if at times these were proving inconvenient. She gave an example of how some weeks earlier when we had decided that a girl in Martin's class had been complying with her gender role in her family and her culture and would not answer to Martin her teacher or communicate with him because that would be outside of her understanding of the gender role, and we had made the decision that we would encourage all of our girls to see themselves as equal and to learn to assert themselves both at school and at home in a manner that was not in keeping with her culture. Rita then suggested that perhaps there were certain principles that did indeed "out-trump" culture, such as equality, or child-protection. Before the meeting I had jotted out a number of sentences to do with racism, and to do with our practice. I asked if we could agree to incorporate a number of these sentences, and perhaps exclude some too, from a final document and that we could call this our anti-racist statement. Many of the sentences had been already said by people in our discussion and I alluded to who had said what as I read each statement. We ended up with about twelve agreed sentences. Some sentences needed further mulling out and editing and altering, some sentences were excluded as not being sentences that we were willing or ready to sign up to. One sentence that I read out referred to the suggestion that we should monitor every outcome to check does the reward/punishment/opportunity/status accruing to it mirror the ethnic-proportionate breakdown of our school community, and that if it didn't then it must be assessed for its potential racism. Noelle felt that this was positive discrimination and wasn't something that she would be happy to stand by... she gave the example of if she was running the school football team and she toggled out a team that was seven Irish boys, three black boys and one eastern-European boy and that she felt this was the best team, would she be asked to change the proportionality of the team to reflect the school's community, and therefore that it should be one Irish boy, six African boys and four eastern -

European boys which would reflect the proportionality of the school. All eyes turned to me, so I just said that that what I would "monitor" in this situation would be more general, I'd be asking questions such as what sports should we have representative teams in? (with the answer being in sports that the children would like to participate in) and how would we organise the squad training for this sport so as to maximise the participation of all and to bring all to a common high-competence), I gave one or two examples of how I felt a school in London that I worked in got this spectacularly wrong (the school was 80%asian 20% white) the school insisted on having a representative soccer team in which the Asian children were not interested (the Head was a mad soccer fan, and always had a soccer team from the school), the Asian children only turned up for training out of a sense of duty, the team was disproportionately white but from such a small base of white kids the representative team lost spectacularly on each occasion and the Asian kids took the brunt of the annoyance from the soccer-mad white parents. This answer seemed to satisfy for the moment. The working anti Racist Statement that we had produced by the end of the meeting has a heavy reflective-practice emphasis and is as follows; "Rationale: We acknowledge the harm caused by racism, sexism and all other forms of group- or individual- discrimination on grounds of gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual-identity, age or special needs. We acknowledge that it is within the personal capacity of all individuals in the school community (Patron Body, Principal, Teachers, and SNAs, Other School Staff, Parents and children) to act either consciously or sub-consciously in a discriminatory manner. We acknowledge that it is within the capacity of the Institution of our school to act either consciously or sub-consciously in a discriminatory manner. In order to ensure that discrimination on grounds of gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual-identity, age or special needs does not occur in our school we undertake to: Reflect critically on an ongoing basis on our personal-practice conscious at all times of the possibility that we have acted personally in a discriminatory manner. Reflect critically on an ongoing basis on our institutional practice conscious at all times of the possibility that as an institution the School, the BOM, the Parent Association, the teaching Staff, the Support Staff we may have acted in a discriminatory manner. To monitor statistically and intuitively that all rewards, sanctions, opportunities, priorities, activities etc. are distributed in a manner that does not exclude one group or set of individuals in a discriminatory manner. We undertake that the Teaching Staff, the BOM, the Parent Association agree to undertake training, to read widely and to discuss openly issues of discrimination at all school structured meetings (staff meetings, BOM meetings, Policy meetings, In-service Training)

and informal meetings(staff room). We undertake to review and rewrite any school policy that is facilitating any form of discrimination. We undertake to prioritize the teaching of anti-racism in our classwork across all the curricular areas, and as outlined in the Intercultural Guidelines document. We agree to make anti-racism a component of our school's Citizenship project as defined by our Ethos, our Learn Together programme, our Critical-Multiculturalism Policy and Human Rights Education initiatives and future- initiatives such as Student-Councils. We seek to be proactive in the employment of school staff that reflect the diversity of the school community and acknowledge the value of this in acting as a bulwark against racist, sexist and all discriminatory practice in the school.

There are some similarities between this excerpt and the previous excerpt. Again it is an example of a practice-orientated form of staff, professional and policy development where there is some agreed immediacy or urgency to the need to initiate discussion or action on a specific issue.

In this case this urgency comes about from the more overarching school policy of A Road Map Towards Critical Multiculturalism where the need for definite and specific anti-racism policy and practice was identified (see Excerpt 3). A second urgency was added by the insistence and request of a couple of staff members. In practice terms, the action of the initiation of this discussion is grounded in a previous cycle of action, critical-reflection, dialogue, judgement and further action - the classic cycle of phronesis.

The need for the development of an anti-racist policy did not come from an external directive, but instead from an incremental piece of learning based on the previous inquiry around the issue of critical-multiculturalism; and its adoption as a means of personal, professional and institutional development.

The absence of an anti-racist policy and anti-racist practice was identified by the staff as a whole, and by individual teachers, as a current lacuna in the school.

Once again the method used to develop this policy is that of round-table facilitated staff discussion. This time, however, the discussion is to be facilitated in terms of focus by some academic reading; namely a piece of Irish research by Devine (2005) which all of the staff have pre-read and which will stimulate discussion in a fresh way and in contrast to the manner in which the Road Map for Critical Multiculturalism was brought about.

This stimulus was devised by the Principal following his reflection on the previous session as described in the Excerpt 3. On critical-reflection on that journal-entry, the Principal felt that the previous Critical-Multiculturalism session had been too Principal-led because he alone had done the critical multiculturalist reading and therefore was, perhaps, too enthusiastic and directive about the adoption of this approach. It was to be hoped that the pre-reading of the Devine article by all would put each participant on a more even footing, using the same language and having been given the time for reflection on the piece and its conclusions.

The question one of the teachers poses as to whether certain principles such as justice, or child-protection or equality should trump such cultural practices that threaten these principles is important and central to debates about moral relativism and multiculturalism. It would appear that there is emerging staff

agreement with this teacher, that this is something that we as a school should be unreserved and not fearful of challenging in our daily practice.

Some staff members are resistant to Devine's conclusion that Irish teachers when confronted with diversity perceive such diversity as being 'in-deficit' to the norm, and that in discussing diversity Irish teachers are inclined to use racialised and classed discourses.

Other staff members, however, argue that racism does exist in Irish schools and that it is possible for each of us to be racist and for the institution of the school to be racist. Those teachers within the staff who view themselves as diverging in their route to teacher qualification from the Irish norm are quite vehement on the manner in which they see themselves as having been viewed as 'in-deficit' by the DES even when they are confident that their teaching experience and training abroad is, on the contrary, more relevant to this context than that of their Irish-trained colleagues.

On reflection, the task of writing an anti-racist statement could have been left for another date. The discussion of the day should have been left to gestate and the action of writing an anti-racist statement could have been done at a follow-up meeting. Instead the Principal expedited matters with a trite device for developing an Anti-Racist statement; that of a selection of pre-written sentences to include or omit.

The Anti-racist statement that does emerge is worth some consideration. There is clear emphasis that the process of observing racism, combating racism and promoting anti-racism is to be achieved in the first-instance through action, and

then through reflection-on-action. The second half of the statement is all action steps that are to be undertaken forming an agenda for the coming months and years. The heavy emphasis and use of the word 'critically reflect' indicates that the staff are willing to recognise that superficial reflection or defensive reflection on their behalf will fail to unearth or expose racist practice. In doing this they are showing a willingness to inculcate critical-reflection into their teaching and learning (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). The critical-reflection espoused here would allow, for example, for some action-research to be conducted at some future date with either children or their parents invited to describe the school's response to issues of racism.

Locating anti-racism work within the ambits of the school curriculum and the school Ethos programmes ensures that anti-racism is not to be viewed as an add-on but central to the norm work of the school - a criticism made of many anti-racism programmes and school-based anti-racism initiatives (Tormey and Haran, 2002; Wilkinson, 2008; Clarke and Drudy, 2006; Beirne and Jaichand, 2006)

Finally, I wish to refer to some issues of insider-research that emerge from this excerpt. It is interesting to note the vehement criticism that some of the teachers make in response to Devine's conclusions refer to her not fully understanding what the teachers are saying or not understanding adequately the context in which the teachers are making these comments. Some of the teachers felt that the evidence which Devine presented in her discussion did not warrant these conclusions. Some also felt that such articulations of deficit are too readily understood to be racist by Devine and assert that this conclusion is

not cognisant of the type of difficulties and issues which the children do present to the school. At the root of this may be a certain suspicion of Devine as an example of an outsider-researcher unable to immerse herself adequately in the context to understand what it is that teachers are trying to say and, as a result, misunderstanding the teachers to some degree.

The final piece of the excerpt is the document of the school's Anti-Racist statement arrived at as a conclusion to the meeting. I have already referred to misgivings about how this document was achieved and on reflection find the idea of choosing appropriate sentences from a list of pre-written sentences gauche, trite and expedient. Furthermore, following on conversations with the supervisor I have looked closely at the language used in this statement.

The opening sequence, the 'rationale', attempts to suggest that we are all capable of acting in a discriminatory manner. The second part, 'the undertakings', lists a set of actions that we as a school will undertake in order to ensure that we are not individually or institutionally racist in our actions. I concur with my supervisor's observations that there is a tone of moralism about the manner in which these are stated and that their tone is bordering on the evangelical and almost zealous in mood.

Excerpt 5: Interview with Jehovah Witness Parents

In this excerpt we switch attention away from the practice of staff- and policy-development to an instance of daily practice where the Principal meets with parents for a pre-arranged discussion. This excerpt took place towards the

beginning of the school year and prior to the discussion on critical-multiculturalism and racism of Excerpts 3 and 4.

S06.34 Interview with two Jehovah Witness congregation parents. For the first time, we have had a big influx of Jehovah Witness children in the school with this year's intake. I count that we have eight new Jehovah Witness (JW) families. I have discussed their religion and our school's multidenominationalism with these families on a one-to-one basis with each family at the enrolment interview. But following on requests from the teachers for specific guidance, and on slightly "heightened" conversations with a couple of the JW mothers that have occurred already I have requested that they meet me as a group and that we can discuss every aspect of both the JW needs and our Educate Together(ET) needs at a formal meeting. I suggest that meeting will be fact-finding for me, and that I will be able to answer any questions too that they may have. The person I asked to convene the meeting, Isobel, is an Irish-American single mother, and she brings along to the meeting only one person, Ruth, a Nigerian single mother. I am disappointed that none of the English JW families are there as they are the majority, and also I would be interested to learn of their experiences of being JW in English primary schools which I feel I understand quite well having worked there for some time. Nonetheless we proceed with the meeting. Isobel takes me through JW beliefs, and also through their understanding of how they participate in the wider society. Ruth then deals specifically with their aspirations for the education of their children. In summary she notes that they would prefer to have their own school, in the same way as the Catholics have, but the next best thing is to go to "secular" school like ours where "at least they won't be taught another religion". I take notes as I go along, not wishing to break their flow, but wishing to make note of issues that I would like to return to. When both Isobel and Ruth have finished I suggest that I would like to ask them some questions about issues as they cropped up. The first I address to Isobel. In her account of her religion, I suggest to her that she places a lot of emphasis on the evangelical side of it, the need to "persuade" others to the "truth" of her religious understanding. I ask her how that sits with our stated ethos that "all religions and none" having equal status in our school. Is there not an assumption that if your religion is the "truth" and those others must be persuaded to it, and then JW do not accord equal status to other religions but see them as inferior or lesser in a fundamental way? Isobel says that this is the case and she quotes "text" to me to show me that her religion is the "light" and that others' religions are false gods and follies. Ruth nods. I

ask again, I point to the fact that each time she has called to my office she has handed me a copy of the Lighthouse, and in many conversations has asked me if I had read such and such an article. I ask her if that might not be construed by me as being disrespectful of my own religious stance? Isobel said that she was carrying out the duty of her religion and she asked me what my religion was. I told her that my religion was a private matter for me and that I wasn't willing to disclose it other than to say I did not bring it to my workplace. We seemed to have reached an impasse here, so I moved on to the next note I had taken. Again I addressed it to Isobel, I asked her about her wider views of society. I said that I was confused a little bit about one thing she said; she had said that on one hand as a JW she wanted to live outside of society, to have the freedom to be her own religion and not to be discriminated against., but on the other hand she, personally, and her religion, generally, had little time for "liberal" society, which had no real values and where "anything goes", and where children are offered no real "way". I asserted to her that in my views these two stances contradicted one another, I asserted that if it wasn't for a "liberal" society, with its values of personal freedoms and rights then it would be entirely possible that she, and people of other religions, would not have the right to live and practice their own religion and would be discriminated against. Isobel disagreed with me. She said that liberal society had no basis, no "text", that the "text" offered them a society and a set of beliefs by which to live, and that the liberal society did not contribute to it in any way. Ruth added that in the liberal society that I "praised so much" they were discriminated against on the basis of her religion and her colour. I addressed my next question to Ruth. I told her that it was entirely possible under the Irish constitution and under the Education legislation for JW to have their own schools, and if that was what they preferred then why didn't they go about it? I offered to help them to constitute the plea for one to the DES if they so wished. Ruth argued that they would not have the numbers for such a school, and when she told me the size of the numbers in their church I told her that she clearly would have the numbers. I then asked her if the ethos of this school had nothing to offer them other than the possibility of doing less harm than a denominational school. Ruth added that that was about what it amounted to. I asked them if they had read the *What is an Educate Together School?* booklet? and the *Learn Together* book that I had given them and asked them if there was nothing in these books of any value for the education of their respective children? Isobel said that she had read them and felt that they were typically "liberal" and offered the children little by way of moral development or "way" or "truth". Ruth said that she expected that her home and family and church would offer her children the education

for their moral development and she expected that the school would look after their academic development. Isobel opened a few earmarked pages of these booklets. She asserted that she would expect her daughter to be given the right to opt out of "the celebration of other religions" as noted under the World Belief Systems strand of the Learn Together programme. I asserted that world religions would be "celebrated" only to the extent that their religious festivals would be acknowledged, their beliefs summarised, and the children exposed to their cultures and art forms and way of life, that we would not as such, however, be "celebrating" or "teaching" these religions. She said that this would still be too much. I decided not to get heavy about whether her daughter would indeed be allowed to opt out or not, but my effort to continue this question was stopped as Isobel moved on to another page and stated that Sarah will not participate in any democratic citizenship projects that resemble "politics", that she will not participate in any "elections" or "student councils" or be bound by the decisions made in any such elections or by such student councils that are not in keeping with her understanding of the "text". Again I argue that the ethos of this school would be to encourage in the children to be active participants in the society of the school and beyond, and to have their voice heard. Ruth argued that this was where the "liberal" society was at odds with their beliefs, that the "text" taught them how to deal with many issues of society that there was no need for these to be "negotiated" or "discussed". Unfortunately Isobel and Ruth had to go then and it was not possible to continue the conversation. Again I regretted that there was nobody there from the English JW community, because I would really have welcomed their contributions to the arguments that we had had.

Despite the fact that this was a preplanned meeting, the Principal appears to lose his composure early. Though he has invited the Jehovah Witness parents to air their views on the Educate Together ethos, he quickly becomes reactive to their assertions of their disagreements with many of its basic tenets.

What are the reasons for this instinctive response on his part? Our life-histories inevitably leave us with prejudices and passions, sometimes very close to the surface of our intuitive and spontaneous reaction to threat or discomfort. What

may be visible here are his prejudices towards organised religion or this religion specifically? While he may claim to respect diversity across many issues of diversity - race, ethnicity, sexual-orientation - perhaps religious identity is one diversity where his liberal senses of respect and tolerance are challenged.

In Practice terms, perhaps this was a meeting in which neither of the participants set about engaging in any dialogue, but instead wished to use the opportunity to make assertions and lay down markers with regard to future issues. This kind of behaviour Freire (1972) would term anti-dialogical.

Perhaps, the Principal's real agenda in this meeting was to try to problematise for the JW parents the issue that they were sending their children to an Educate Together school with its own defined ethos and to try to impress upon them problems that lay ahead for them, and their children, in this school with its defined liberal multicultural ethos.

Certainly the invitation to them to open their own school and the speed with which this notion was presented to them is evidence of some frustration on the Principal's part. In the terms of Sackney and Mitchell (2002) their diverse voices were neither affirmed nor invited.

In terms of Practice, perhaps this says something about dialogue. Perhaps it says that dialogue must be more organic if it is to be dialogue at all, that it must emerge organically out of action. That, perhaps, preplanned meetings such as these are dubious situations for real dialogue.

If, alternatively, the issues here had cropped up out of a genuine action the Principal's approach may have been different. For example, if Isobel had come to the school to discuss with the Principal some specific incident that had occurred then this conversation would have grown organically from the context of the school. The discussion of issues in this meeting was, in contrast, about hypothetical future situations and was not grounded in the specific context of action.

That is not to say, however, that interesting issues did not crop up at this meeting. In the first instance, we see where liberal understandings of multicultural education (the Educate Together ethos) are at odds with the religious-informed understanding of this religious minority. In the heat of the argument the Principal appears to become frustrated at what he understands the JW's wish, as a group, to avail of the freedoms of the liberal society and, yet, criticise that society for its excesses. The Principal is clearly irked by their wish to remain aloof from the interaction with that liberal society without any sense of duty on their behalf to contribute to the sustenance of that society.

There is a legitimate concern here for the Principal, motivated as he is to develop the school as an integral part of the common good of a robust liberal-democratic society. To do that he expects that the individuals and the groups who make up the school community will, voluntarily, contribute to the common good of developing the school. In the excerpt, it can be seen, perhaps, that in the JW community a sizeable group of parents are grateful to avail of the presence of the school, but are critical of the values central to its rationale

and as a consequence unwilling to play their part in the development of it as an organization.

The JW community is seen by the Principal as beneficiaries of the school's policy of multid denominationalism but from within the school are critical of its multid denominationalism. Similarly, the Principal sees the JW community as being critical of aspects of the school but unwilling to engage in the local negotiation of the school's practice because of their unwillingness to become involved in the structures of the school.

The educational leadership literature makes an assumption that all alternative diverse voices will bring their voice to the local negotiation of the school (if facilitated to do so, of course). Here, however, there is a quandary; an alternative diverse voice is critical of the school but unwilling to come to the table to negotiate the common-good or conviviality of the school and instead chooses to opt out of the aspects that they do not agree with. The assumption that all vested interests will engage in dialogue, understood in both Practice and in practice-orientated educational leadership discourses does not prevail in this situation. Here, instead, is a minority group who do not wish to be included.

The philosophical questions raised here have resonances for the stated ethos of the Educate Together School. The ET ethos clearly calls for the respect, and not merely tolerance, of all religions and non-religions within the community of the school (Rowe, 2000). This is the fundamental premise of its principle of multid denominationalism. But its multid denominationalism is also founded on

concepts of promoting respect for all religions through educative programmes as embodied in the Learn Together Ethics programme (Educate Together, 2004).

But this programme appeals to moral and political concepts that can be alien to the religious views of some of the religions that it appeals to respect. In this excerpt we see where the kind of moral development envisaged in the ethics programme through active engagement by the children in active democratic citizenship processes is at odds with the JW's religious understandings as stated by these two parents.

The Principal, as described in this excerpt, is axially located in this dilemma, motivated as he is by his understanding of the value of a multidenominational education while bearing the responsibility to ensure that it is delivered to a section of the community of the school who do not share that value. Further stated ET goals such as maximal participation of all parents as willing volunteers in all aspects of the school, especially governance and management structures, can only exacerbate this dilemma. The JW community cannot be represented in the structures of the school because they refuse to be there.

The philosophical understanding of Practice is one that can contribute positively to this dilemma and encourage the practitioner to remain confident and true to the dynamics of open-ended action steps, dialogical engagement and critical reflection. The implications for educational leadership are described by Starratt's (2004) emphasis on presence, responsibility and authenticity as a means towards ethical leadership in such situations. To remain

within dialogue, even if one is at odds with the opposing view, is the essence of Parekh's (2006) revised understanding of multiculturalism.

An alternative argument could be that in endeavouring to 'manage' the opposing perspectives in this scenario, Educate Together ethos and Jehovah Witness worldview, the Principal is mistaken in viewing this as a dilemma that it is desirable or feasible to 'manage' in the first place. There are huge differences between the Educate Together ethos (as discussed in Chapter 1) and the version of the Jehovah Witness worldview and in trying to accommodate both perspectives, it could be argued, that he is being genuine to neither.

Dunne (2005) identifies establishing an institution in which practice can take place as one of the defining needs of practice. In the context of education, the development of a school in which the practitioner may engage in practice within coherent structures, supports, forms of apprenticeship and public- and internal- appeals to legitimation would be seen by MacIntyre and Dunne (2004) as school-building; a legitimate practice in the service of teaching and learning.

The role of the Principal, according to this philosophical understanding, would be that of developing the institution of this particular school according to its stated Educate Together ethos. After all, that is the publicly legitimated institution that he is compelled to build. The legitimacy of Educate Together as an ethos must, of course, be assured in that the features by which they describe their schools must be founded on sound principles of education, childcare and

have acceptance within the broader society. If those legitimations are in place (and the recognition of Educate Together as a Patron Body has been sanctioned by the State), then it is the role of the Principal as an important practitioner in the school-building process to engage in practice that will bring such a school into being.

Similarly, the Irish education system is one that is built on the premise of plurality of schools as opposed to necessarily supporting pluralism within schools. This phenomenon has been described in many sources as state subvention for an entirely private school system.

Therefore, from both the Practice perspective and from the Irish State's perspective the Principal's role in this dilemma may legitimately be to argue that the Jehovah Witness grouping, in their declarations of intentions to opt out of core values of ET ethos, cannot be embraced by this specific school model and must either seek compatibility with other forms of Patronage or develop their own which they will be facilitated in doing by the structure of the State.

Excerpt 6 Waste of 1000 euro?

This excerpt sheds light on discourses of pedagogy and perceptions of diversity held by the minority indigenous Irish population that make up the school's Parent Association.

MH07.19 Waste of 1000euro? Our Arts Week is now fully organised and gets underway tomorrow, there has been an excellent atmosphere in the staff and teachers and care-staff are clearly working as a team. In his own quiet way Martin has assembled all the resources that will be needed by the teachers in their classrooms, there has been a real sharing of expertise too, and there has been a generosity of time and flexibility in

the manner in which all the classroom teachers and the seven support teachers have worked out timetables for splitting classes into manageable sizes for various activities. The Parent Association are to pick up the tab for the Nigerian Drum Circles Workshops and for the three return coach fees to the Botanic, the National Art Gallery and the Natural History Museum; this amounts to 1000euro. The BOM will pay for the two visiting concerts; the Seamas Ennis Irish Music quartet and the local classical quartet and the expensive-ish materials for the outdoor murals that three of the teachers have undertaken. We have sponsorship for the art work pertaining to the Green Schools Project. Most importantly of all, all of the teachers have bought entirely into the dynamic that it is all about the children experiencing "doing arts" and there are no "presentations" of completed work other than the normal school display boards and assemblies. Parents have been invited to observe and help out for every event, and the teachers have also detailed a specific hour each day when parents are welcome in their classroom where they will observe normal class art, music and drama lessons. When my wife saw this aspect of the week she expressed her relief that she does not work in my school as she wouldn't have parents poking around the place like that. This served to remind me that the staff had been generous with this gesture and that I must ensure to especially acknowledge it, and their willingness to open their classroom doors goes back to the discussion we had many months ago where we agreed that many of our African and Eastern European parents especially didn't know what inside an Irish classroom looked like in action and that we should do this kind of thing by way of helping them to get to know. When I was checking up with the Chairperson of the Parent Association that their 1000euro was in cash and enveloped and ready she told me of a conversation that they had had the previous evening at their meeting. One of their number, a white Irish mother, had expressed her misgivings about the PA subventing the Arts Week to the tune of 1000euro, she felt they had put a lot of hard work into raising 1000euro, that not all parent groups had participated in this chore equally, and here it was all going to be blown and there would be "nothing to show for it", and she also had misgivings that the week didn't include a concert of the children's drama and music work or an exhibition of their paintings "as would be done in other schools". There had been other mothers at the meeting who had fully agreed with her and had made similar assertions.

The context of this incident is not as obviously linked to issues of the school's diversity, but is nonetheless central to many of the tensions that exist within the school as a result of its diversity.

The rationale for the design of the school's Arts Week is based primarily on the teachers' understandings of educational disadvantage. Large numbers of children in the school from the ethnically diverse groupings are also living in conditions of considerable socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore, many of the trappings of family life that may occur in more socio-economically advantaged families such as visits to theatres, concerts, cultural events, galleries etc. do not occur for these children. For the majority of our children, too, their independent explorations of their locality to attend local arts events that this Dublin town has to offer are not availed of for a variety of reasons. It is also understood by the teaching staff that these programmes of events are of huge educational value to all of the children of the school regardless of ethnic background. The stimulation to children of performance arts, whether theatre or concerts or exhibitions in purpose-built venues, is understood by the teachers to enhance the children's emotional, aesthetic, social and academic response to the Arts and to motivate them in due course in their own Arts work back in the classroom.

It is seen as an educational endeavour that in the long-term will contribute to the life skills of the children and contribute to their adult life. The emphasis for the Arts Week is for the children to experience quality Arts both through class-based work and fieldtrips.

While the Principal and teachers understand this educational issue clearly, its central premise is obviously not either understood or agreed with by many of the Parent Association group. At the end of the excerpt we see a registered disappointment on the part of some parents (and one that is echoed in many other excerpts in the Full Journal by many parents) that there is a fear or a suspicion that the money spent on these educational activities has been wasted or could have been better spent.

Part of the root of this concern is the energy that they had to expend in order to raise this money and, perhaps, a lack of consultation over how it is to be spent. There is a feeling that at the end of this Arts Week there will be nothing to show for this expenditure as in no physical resources, equipment or infrastructure that now will be available to the teachers for future use.

We also see at the very end of the excerpt a second understanding of the expression 'nothing to show' which means nothing to show the parents, as in a concert or performance to which parents are invited to see a polished end-product of sorts. While the school does do concerts and assemblies to which parents are invited, in this instance the rigour of preparation for such an end product is considered by the principal and teachers to be obstructive to the other goals of the children experiencing the Arts through observing and doing.

In Practice terms the Principal is engaged in action that has been collaboratively developed with the whole teaching staff. As a result there is a wholeheartedness and enthusiasm to the endeavour of the full teaching staff in this project. The rationale for their action is grounded in child-centred

education in which the Principal and the teachers as trained teachers have expertise and craft- knowledge. The development of craft-knowledge as part of practice and the initiation and apprenticeship of the practitioner into the craft knowledge form a significant part of the identification of teaching as a Practice (MacIntyre and Dunne, 2005).

To return to Practice issues it would appear to be incumbent on the Principal to understand and to act in response to this issue. Many of the Parent Association are concerned about the design and the intent of the Arts Week. If the situation as it exists were to continue indefinitely then the gap between teachers/Principal and the Parent Association could become a source of discontent. Simultaneously, it may also be incumbent on the Principal to hold firm on the central educational issue (that of experiential- and discovery learning) in deference to the teachers' craft-knowledge and in deference to the broader educational goals of the school and its professed curriculum and ethos.

In this dilemma the Principal is acting as a gatekeeper playing a pivotal role between the different communities in the school. This example does raise an important issue for the Principal in his practice, namely, that of balancing the expertise and craft-knowledge of the community of practice with the goals of a cohesive and shared-purpose whole school community with its concomitant understanding of increased parental involvement. This principle of parental involvement is a stated ethos priority of Educate Together schools (Educate Together, 2004a, 2005).

Another aspect of this excerpt warrants discussion. Though not mentioned in the excerpt specifically, but alluded to in Excerpt 1, the Parent Association is, possibly, not representative of the full parent community of the school. For a variety of reasons white, indigenous parents make up the majority of active members of the Parent Association. In this school, too, these families, though not all, are more likely to be less socio-economically disadvantaged than the immigrant families. Therefore, it may be possible to conclude that the necessity that the Principal and teachers attach to getting the children off-campus and to experience Arts is not something shared by these parents as this activity is commonplace in their lives.

Allied to this is an understandable anxiety that money raised through tedious fund-raising (bag packing in the local supermarket!) should be spent on projects that they see of value. Furthermore a tension exists and is alluded to in the excerpt that the chore of fundraising has not been equally undertaken by the whole parent community, but disproportionately by the Parent Association. It appears to the Parent Association, however, that the needs of these parents who did not contribute to the fund-raising efforts are being prioritized in the spending of the money over and above their wishes.

The Principal is called upon to make judgements in two separate fields. In the first instance, he defends the pedagogy of experiential learning. He is prioritising the educational goal the valuing of offering the children the opportunity to make an emotional and aesthetic response to the Arts that occurs in quality fieldwork. It is to his understandings of Education and quality teaching and learning that the Principal appeals in this instance. In his role as

school leader in the specific multicultural context of this school the Principal may be seen as being attentive to issues of care and happiness (Noddings, 1992). There is also some integrative intent in the design of the Arts Week. The Principal and the teachers are also anxious to introduce the children to the Arts of the country in which they are living. While there are workshops in African music we also see the children are about to experience a concert of Irish music. Though unspecified, the visits to the theatre, concert-hall and gallery are also likely to feature Irish Arts. In the excerpt the Principal states that one of the goals of the week is to introduce the children to the local Arts infrastructure so as to facilitate future access for the children to these venues. As school leader, the Principal, in collaboration with the teachers, is drawing on passions that are related to the broad goals of the curriculum developing the aesthetic and emotional intelligences of the children.

Secondly we see the Principal refereeing a dilemma where the active members of the Parent Association are agrieved that their efforts in fund-raising are not being shared by the immigrant parents and yet it is the considerations of the socio-economically disadvantaged children of these parents that the school is prioritising in its design of the Arts Week programme. It is to his understandings of equality that the Principal appeals in this instance. With specific regard to the multicultural context of the school the Principal must be careful not to allow such senses of agrievement fester or develop. In such agrievement lies the potential for tension and disharmony between the parent groupings of the school. One solution to this emerging tension is for the Principal to attach urgency to trying to ensure that the Parent Association does

evolve to approximate proportional representation of all the school's ethnicities. A certain amount of work can be done in terms of recruiting parents on the ground. Some effort at building the capacity of the excluded ethnic groupings must be undertaken. Simultaneously, the Principal must also prompt the Parent Association towards generating their own activities that will attract all parents into their membership. It may be necessary for the Principal to request that the Parent Association refrain from any further fund-raising endeavour while this tension exists. Alternative sources of funding for projects such as Arts Week through national or regional social-inclusion initiatives must be explored. In this context and in response to this emerging tension, the school leader must see beyond the limitations of traditional school-based expectations from Parent Associations and facilitate them towards broader understandings of their potential role in the building of this new school.

Excerpt 7 Request to open Autism Spectrum Disorder Unit

The final two excerpts (7 and 8) focus on the assertion in the Theoretical Framework that Practice in an institution such as a school is tied to issues of the broader society in which the organisation exists. In this excerpt the support from the state's agencies in facilitating the development of an institution in which ethical practice and leadership can develop is questioned.

MH07.24 Request to open Autism Spectrum Disorder Unit. Two days before our Board of Management meeting I received a letter that had been somewhat flagged by a phone call a few weeks ago from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). In summary the letter stated that the NCSE felt that there would be a need for a three roomed Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Unit in this geographical area and that our school would seem to be suitable. We were invited to respond, and if our response was to be negative we were to be detailed in

our reasons. Some time ago we received a letter from ET Head Office suggesting that Educate Together schools should be open to these invitations, as the development of inclusive schools as is our remit would be enhanced by inclusivity to children with Special Needs. On the ground the word from all working Principals who have such units as part of their school is that the NCSE and DES assistance in the establishment and the ongoing management of these units which falls entirely into the existing workload of the Principal and the existing responsibilities of the BOM falls short and is abysmal. No assistance with buildings to house it other than those generally available for school expansion, a tiny amount of finance, huge recruitment issues where no qualified teachers exist with expertise in the teaching required in these units resulting in the employment of non-qualified teachers with a very high turnover rate, the further recruitment of SNAs who also have no experience or expertise of working in such units and again a huge turnover of personnel, a huge amount of paperwork and administration, a set of 18 children (three units of six children each) all of whom are in an educational crisis situation and where the families are traumatized by their experiences of special-needs education Irish-style, an Irish Autism Society who are extremely dissatisfied with the education service envisaged in these units and have gone to the High Court to seek that the DES provide an alternative curriculum and failed in this bid, huge school transport issues and bus chaperones and bus driver vetting issues and resistance etc.. Etc. I now, after some research, know of two such units where the temporary accommodation has been put in place but where the school and the NCSE are at complete loggerheads about getting the school Unit up and running, I know of one Principal who has opted to resign because the situation is so unsatisfactory. I read out the letter from the NCSE to the BOM and keep my own opinion to myself, I also read out ET Head Office's letter from some time back on the issue. The discussion around the BOM table begins. The first to speak is aggravated by the letter, by the fact that it has been sent to us at this point in time, He says that we are already perceived as the school for non-nationals, should we now also be seen as the school for special needs children too leaving all other schools cosy in their situations. Other members of the Board bring up other issues, they are aware that we are running out of space for temporary accommodation that will inhibit us growing to 6th class in our current project, they ask about the financing of this project and I reread back the small paragraph that deals with it and they are dissatisfied. It is agreed that we will decline this invitation at this point in time and I draft a letter on the spot that they as a BOM are happy to sign up to, the letter reads thus (this is the text of the letter in full): Draft Response to the invitation to host a

permanent ASD Unit in our school. Dear NCSE, We welcome the NCSE's intention to establish an ASD Unit in our area as outlined in your letter dated XXXXXX. As a Board of Management we have given careful consideration to your invitation for us to act as the host school for this Unit. Unfortunately, our considered decision at this point in time is to decline this invitation. In summary, we are a new school having only come into being in September 2005. Our primary goal of establishing this school as a full-vertical school in permanent buildings has not yet been fully realised. Until this goal has been achieved we as a Board of Management do not consider that we are in a position to expand our services to the broader community in the manner envisaged in your letter. In more detail we assert that the accumulation of the following individual factors pertaining to our current-situation leave us poorly positioned for the expansion of service; At the time of writing our school only caters for children as far as 2nd class, it will be 2010 before we have reached our full-vertical status of Junior Infants -6th class. This annual expansion involves the application for, tendering of, overseeing of construction, furnishing of, and resourcing of up to four new temporary classrooms each year on a year-by-year basis. Our architect has informed us that our current site will not cope with this expansion beyond the next school year..., by which time the school will have only reached 4th class. In other words, on our current site there will be no room for the classrooms necessary to accommodate 5th and 6th classes when they are due to come on-stream. This represents a management crisis for the Board. Any proposed construction of further classroom, such as would be necessary for the proposed ASD unit would further exacerbate this unsatisfactory situation. As a new school we have been excluded from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) service. We feel that any school envisaging hosting an ASD unit should be part of the NEPS system and have an established advisory relationship with a NEPS psychologist. As a new school we have been excluded from making an application for the DEIS programme for disadvantaged status. Given that the majority of our children come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds we have made accessing the DEIS programme a priority. If we are ultimately successful in gaining DEIS status this will immediately make expanded staffing, accommodation and services a priority for the school community, and (unfortunately) a greater priority than the establishment of as ASD Unit for the wider community at this point in time. Though we have assurances from the Department of Education and Science that plans for a permanent building are at an advanced stage, we see little evidence of this on the ground. Until we are housed in this proposed permanent building we will not

consider expanding the services that we as a school can offer to the wider community. At our current rate of expansion we expect each year for the next 4 years to be recruiting 4 permanent teachers, 6 temporary teachers, and a number of SNA staff and Resource Hours Teachers. All of these teachers and support staff must be inducted into the school and given considerable management support throughout their first year in the school. It is considered by the BOM that this places enough Human Resources responsibility on the shoulders of the school Principal without the addition of further recruitment, induction and management responsibilities that the ASD unit would bring. We note that your "incentives" do not cover, for example, the appointment of an administrative Deputy Principal or indeed any further middle- management support for the school. As a new school, and especially as a new school catering for children who come from diverse (80% international children) and predominantly socio-economic disadvantaged background the school is constantly in a perilous financial situation with little or no fund-raising capacity and a very disappointing response to this situation from the DES. Your incentive of 6500euro start-up grant and the ongoing capitation would fall short of the finance required for this school to initiate and sustain the proposal to the quality level that we would envisage. Once our primary goal of establishing a full-vertical National school in permanent buildings has been achieved we would be receptive to discuss any future projects that the NCSE would propose. Yours Sincerely, (end of letter) I feel guilty about this response, even though it suits me personally and I do have misgivings about my ability to cope with the added work that such a unit would bring when added to my current stresses and workload.... I still do feel that hosting such a Unit would be the right thing to do, that the parents of Autistic children are badly treated and that our refusal is NIMBYism. I go back over the draft and include a few more softening "not at this point in time" kind of sentences. I also decide not to post it yet and let it sit for a few weeks while I do a little more research and let my thoughts gather a bit more coherently.

This excerpt highlights a number of the serious structural and governance difficulties that exist within the Irish primary education system and are instantiated in the short history of this school. Criticisms of the manner in which the governance and ownership of Irish primary schools are structured are manifold, and from many perspectives. Sugrue and Furlong (2002) do so from the perspective of the Principal. They describe Irish primary schools as

simultaneously “highly centralised and decentralised” meaning that all schools are privately governed by an individual Board of Management with responsibilities of ethos to the private Patron Body but also highly centralised to the extent that the school is financially wholly reliant and obliged legally to the Department of Education and Science and a plethora of recently DES-founded agencies who look after issues of welfare, special needs provision, psychological support and curriculum support.

In this excerpt we see where the Principal must make judgements as to how to negotiate this fledgling school through a series of demands coming to the school from a variety of sources. In doing this he must advise the Board of Management as to some of the predictable and less-predictable consequences of different courses of action. There is an expectation from the Board that the Principal will be ‘expert’ in these predictions and foresee challenges and difficulties that lie ahead.

Simultaneously we see that both the Board and the Principal are frustrated with the level of structured support that they are getting from the Department of Education and Science and that the Principal’s judgements or predictions are *mindful* of a possible future lack of support for the proposed Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Unit. Furthermore, we can see that the Principal and the Board feel strongly that in their current project of developing a mainstream school there is already a history of inadequate support from the Department of Education and Science. Cycle after cycle of temporary building provision, annual rounds of temporary teacher recruitment for English language Support positions, exclusion from DEIS status (to do with educational disadvantage),

exclusion from NEPS provision (to do with psychological assessment), inadequate financial support, and suspicion as to the extent to which other schools in the locality are sharing the challenge of the huge wave of immigration into the local community have left a Principal and a Board of Management feeling isolated and concerned for the future of their school.

The request from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to open a large ASD Unit simply brings to the surface all of these concerns, both privately for the Principal where he admits to a sense of potential overwhelm and to the Board of Management who are angered and frustrated.

It is obvious that the Board of Management are concerned, too, for the Principal and take his concerns seriously about the potential workload of the new Unit and his pessimism that such a Unit will be inadequately supported. We can see that the BOM are anxious to support the Principal in his primary project of developing a fully vertical mainstream school.

The DES, judging from the advice received by the Principal from other Principals, does not appear to be cognisant of the logistical, financial and human-resource supports that are imperative for the development of such a Unit. Similarly, they seem unaware of the crisis that already exists with buildings and site in this school. Also, specifically, with regards to this school, there is the issue of it being perceived as becoming a school for a further set of children who are, perhaps, not wanted by other schools or where other schools in the locality have refused to develop this service.

In practice term, the range of problems and issues evident in this excerpt makes for a very complex practice context in which the Principal must act. The Principal is caused to make numerous guesses and predictions in his judgements. He is caused, through lack of clarity and by personal experience to date, to be pessimistic, angry, frustrated, suspicious and resistant in his thinking evident in some of the intemperate language in the extract. This backdrop is not conducive to the cycle of action, dialogue and critical-reflection proposed by the philosophy of Practice. Instead there is suspicion, reaction, anger and frustration. We see throughout the excerpt that the Principal moves through a range of emotions from fearfulness to guilt. He is fearful of the consequences that taking on such a Unit would entail. He is made to feel guilty at turning down this request. Though acknowledging the opportunity of inclusivity and educational opportunity that the development of such a unit might bring to the whole school community he feels helpless in the face of the logistical demands that this development would entail.

Following O'Neill (1994), it might recognise that the commitment, or 'covenant', to the child by the State is the essential element missing from this context. He proposes a model of provision of an appropriate and excellent education for all children. The role of the State, the states agencies, the school governors, the Principal, the teachers and the parent organizations would be clearly defined, making for an accountable chain of responsibility and a two-way dialogue between the school (the on-the-ground institution) and the policy makers with their commitment to children's educational needs.

In this proposed project a Principal would be assured as to his task in developing a quality unit with committed teachers and ensuring the integration of any proposed ASD Unit with the business of the mainstream school. His energies and practice would focus exclusively on the development of such a Unit on the ground. His practice would be minimally concerned with issues of accommodation or the absence of proper financial and psychological services to the school in its development of this Unit because other layers in the State's structure of education provision would be committed to these tasks.

Even without the project of such a Unit we see from the excerpt, and from many other excerpts in the journal, that the complex structure of the Irish primary school system fails to develop such a clear and accountable chain.

This excerpt proposes some questions about Practice and, especially, the confidence with which we understand that phronesis will occur in a cycle of context-sensitive action, critical reflection, dialogue and refined action. The problem, in this instance, is the context. It is not the rough ground context understood by Dunne as the place where interpersonal relationships take place and where practice must be responsive. The context here is inhospitable to ethical practice. The school in such a scenario is not supported by an institutional structure, as envisaged by Dunne (2005a), where the needs of the practice may best be served and protected according to its own ends. The elements of support and structure are insecure or absent so that the Principal cannot fully concentrate on the practice of school-building at the level appropriate to his role as school leader. Consequently, the Principal is forced

into a practice that is circumscribed by conditions and influences compromise its integrity.

The Irish school Principal, however, has been historically placed at the apex of all these negotiations, with expectations of his role covering the full range of concerns, from the development of school buildings to the quality of educational provision (Hay Group, 2003). Though the Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998) specifies responsibilities for various layers of structural responsibility, the reality on the ground, as evidenced in this school's experience, is that there is a chasm between this school's needs and the responses of the structural support. Further exacerbating this complexity is the fact that much of the management and governorship structure at Patron and school level relies on committed volunteers who may or may not have expertise or experience in the functions required from them by legislation and best practice.

Historically, this has resulted in the Principal undertaking many of these responsibilities, thus, broadening the understandings of the role and responsibilities. Alongside this issues of financial support also exist. Putting both structural and financial realities together it must be questioned if the Irish primary school Principal is placed in an impossible context well beyond the normal expectations of management and fiscal accountability.

In terms of Practice this excerpt poses the question as to whether the judgements being required from the Principal in this instance are being grounded in the context of the community of the school, as would be proper,

or are more influenced by broader factors of neglect on the part of the State. There is a sense of heteronomy where the decisions are being made for the school without adequate consultation with its leadership or any understanding of its specific context.

Excerpt 8 Quotas and quotas

JY07.15 Quotas and quotas. Every time I go into our neighbouring supermarket I do a head count and a quick mental proportionate ratio. I make the assumption (not strictly accurate) that the people shopping are proportionate to the racial mix of the geographical area in which our school is situated. The shoppers generally break down as 35% African and 65% white. Off the 65% white, though it is hard to tell, I also roughly reckon that the breakdown would be 50/50 Irish and eastern-European. This makes the proportions in our school very much out of kilter with the geographical area. Our school would be 65% African, 25% eastern European and 10% Irish. There are possibly many reasons for that, but I personally feel that it is a combination of two things working in tandem. The first is the fact that our most local national school is a Catholic school and very meticulously exercises its Catholics-first enrolment policy. The vast majority of Irish children are Catholic and this guarantees them a place in this school, all they need to do is to show up in the February week when the school announces its Enrolment Week and they get a place in the school. All other non-catholic children who show up that week only get whatever places are left over when the catholic list is exhausted. Many non-Catholics are thus excluded. This is not disputed by the school; this is their stated policy in keeping with directives from Archbishops House. I have enquired from both the principal and the Chairperson and they have confirmed that this is the case. To compound this, once the February Enrolment week has gone by; no further applications for places are accepted. In an area such as this town where a new cul-de-sac or apartment block of privately rented accommodation may open on any given Friday, this may result in forty or fifty children seeking school places from 1st to 6th in the town's schools on any given Monday morning. The majority of those seeking privately rented accommodation (as opposed to home owners) are either African or Eastern European. In practice our neighbouring Catholic school will not accept any new applications as their school is now "full", but those that plead that they want a place in the school because they are Catholic do have their details taken and are placed in a Waiting List in the eventuality of a place becoming free. Those who do not profess to be Catholic do not have their names/details taken and thus are never offered a place in the school even when one becomes free. The Principal has not confirmed to me that this is the practice, but I have

ascertained that to be the practice by interviewing each "late" applicant that come to me and noting it on their application form for our school. Over the past two years we have taken on every post-February applicant to our school the vast majority of whom are African or non-EU eastern European including many from the Roma community. Last October, in response to the huge and highly-distressed number of parents/children who had moved in over the summer months we sought and gained a new prefab classroom from the DES and started up a new class of SI/ 1st all of whom were African or eastern European. And this is where the 2nd factor kicks in. Such is the overwhelming disproportion of Irish children in our school that it is now a militating factor against us getting Irish children to accept places that have been offered to them by dint of our first-come-first-served enrolment policy. Many of these Irish parents were even among those who initially agitated for the foundation of an Educate Together school. A small number of these have called up to the school to tell me why they have decided against sending their children to the school, they have said things like "we do not want our child to be in the minority in school" and other related sentences, they have also said that "the standards in the school can only be poor with so many children who do not speak English as their first language" and other related sentences. One has said the he does not respect the manner in which the African parents rear their children and the violence which he knows the black boys will bring to the schoolyard. When doing this he referred to an incident which happened in the school sometime ago when an Irish family did, eventually, withdraw their child because of a playground incident where three black boys had pulled down the trousers of a young Irish girl (and a family friend of this man) in the school yard. There are of course other factors contributory to the skew in proportion. Many Catholic parents will want their children to go to catholic schools, as simple as that. Many parents do not know much about Educate Together schools and feel that there is something non-norm about it. We are the only school in the town with exclusively temporary buildings and no PE hall. We are not long established and, thus, do not have any reputation good or bad about our academic or general history. The recent opening of a Scoil Lan-Ghaealach elsewhere in the town has given further option to the Irish population when seeking school places for their children. I have mulled long and hard about what to do about all this. I have occasionally been publicly critical about my neighbouring school's enrolment policy, both when face to face with the school's personnel, and in a couple of phone calls to Archbishop's House and with the Archbishop himself when I met him on holidays last year. In particular I have tried to point out to them that their policy is discriminating against those African parents who do want to send their children to a school of Christian Ethos but are excluding them on the count that their Christian-ness isn't strictly-Catholic. I have told them that this is discriminating racially against black-skinned Christians, and that their action fits perfectly with any definition of institutional racism. However, I've also had to examine

our own practices too. Was setting up the "emergency" class last October a mistake? I have tried to play the game a bit.... Our very extensive after-schools programme and, especially the publicity I tried to generate around it was a very definite ploy at trying to get the chattering classes to talk about the school in a positive light. Our decision not to go beyond two-form entry and not to accede to the DES's pressure to expand to four-form entry was very definitely "informed" by the reality that our white minority would fall into almost obscurity by such a move. As a geographer at heart, I do feel demographics at the end of the day will outweigh everything else. The standard of housing and the serious availability of private rental accommodation in this area (some new estates have as low as 3% owner occupancy) will, ultimately, mean that the area will for the foreseeable future be occupied by those families who need to avail of short-contract private rented accommodation which is for the most part those who have their rent paid for or subsidised by the HSE or other Welfare agencies. This town has what you might call a critical mass of African people; there are established African community resources, shops and churches. This will result in more African being attracted to the area and more non-African choosing to move out from the area and not to have their children educated in the schools of the area. Perhaps the sooner I loose the impulse to try to turn that tide and to concentrate fully on the serious professional challenge that this development would offer the better. The satisfactions to be gained from building a meaningful educational community in such an environs are immense, I knew this going in to the job and I am as convinced of that now as I was two years ago. Why the hankering then?

The roots and reasons, as understood by the Principal, for the school's unique and demographically skewed diversity are spelled out in this excerpt. It is clear from the excerpt that this unique demography has shaped the school in many obvious ways. The most notable has been the perception of the majority indigenous community of the local town that this school is not one for their children but rather for 'non nationals'. The extent to which the Principal is exercised by this issue is obvious, manifest in his reported correspondence and conversations with the broader community and with the Patron Body and officers of the neighbouring Catholic school. It is manifest too in the emotionality of the excerpt in tone and language.

The local Catholic school is enacting a Catholic-first enrolment policy in keeping with its instruction from its Patron Body to do so. This policy is spelled out by the Archbishop in his speech to the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) Conference (Martin, 2005) and in a published directive to Catholic school Boards of Management in the Archdiocese of Dublin. Here, he advocates a primary school landscape where there is a plurality of educational provision and where parents may make informed and personal choices as to which school their children should attend.

However, one of the results of this policy has been to facilitate the type of enrolment pattern that we see in this study. Historically, the overwhelmingly dominant and unchallenged private status of Catholic primary schools has meant that a unilateral decision such as this by the Archbishop has had immediate effect (Fitzgerald, 2007; Beirne and Jaichand, 2006).

The umbrage taken by the Principal, in accordance with his understanding of this development, affects him on many levels. In the first instance he perceives that this places his new school in a perilous position. Emerging as it has done into this landscape, it has not been given the opportunity to grow into a school where the intake is dictated by the choice of parents, but by a lack of choice. It has become, to all intents and purposes, a racially segregated school.

The non-Catholic immigrant children are forced to come to this school because they alone in this political landscape are left without choice. They are excluded from the Catholic schools on the basis of their Catholic-first enrolment policy. The wishes of Christian families, other than Catholics, to send their children to

such schools because of their Christian ethos are turned down. In particular, the African community, the majority of who belong to Christian churches, have been frustrated in their right to choose a school for their children.

The Irish parents, many of whom agitated for the development of an Educate Together school in the first place, also have been left with what they might consider a 'spoiled choice': a school whose ethos they were willing to choose for their childrens' education has been turned radically into a school where their children would be in a tiny minority in terms of language, religion, skin-colour and socio-economic status.

It can be deduced from the excerpt that the Principal has become political in his actions at both local and national level. The Principal has, thus, taken on the role of teacher-activist (Leo and Barton, 2006; Sachs, 2003). Equally, the need to be outspoken and to act in this regard may be seen as acting out of a sense of responsibility as envisaged by Starratt (2004). The Theoretical Framework of Practice embraces such feelings and emotions and views them as legitimate responses in the dialogical and critically-reflective cycles of action. Emotions of anger or frustration are understood in phronesis terms to be appropriate responses to certain situations.

There may be a number of factors underpinning the Principal's sense of agrievement in this situation. His actions and ire may be influenced by understandings of social justice and equality issues around the almost racially segregated nature of this school. In the excerpt he clearly states that he is of the opinion that the enrolment policy of the Catholic schools in the locality of his

own school is functioning in an institutionally racist manner. He sees their recent, sudden, unilateral and powerful action of this Patron Body in altering their school enrolment policy as either consciously or unconsciously resulting in the exclusion of or discrimination against ethnic minorities from their schools (see the discussion of institutional-racism in Beirne and Jaichand, 2006, p.15 and a discussion of state-funded Irish Catholic schools in Williams, 1995). The Principal sees this action by the Catholic Patron Body of the region as abusive of their powerful position as Patron of over 95% of the schools in the area. This is clearly his opinion.

In his activist understanding of his role the Principal has sought to highlight this understanding both to the neighbouring school, its Patron Body (including the Archbishop himself) and the wider public. The Principal's views would thus be very much in concurrence with those of Gilbert (2004) which draws a clear link between race and religious identity and understands discrimination on the basis of religious identity to bring discrimination on the basis of race inevitably in its wake. It must, however, also be noted that the particularity of the geographical context of this school; the inadequate number of school places for the burgeoning population, the historical legacy of exclusively denominational schools in the area and the sudden and uniquely local emergence of large numbers of immigrant families to this specific locality have contributed to the skewed pattern of school enrolment in this town. Simultaneously, this demographic challenge emerged at a time when the Catholic school movement in Ireland have been engaged in a considerably radical internal discussion of their provision of primary education in light of

factors such as dwindling numbers of religious congregation and broader discussions of the value of Catholic education (Martin, 2005).

Whether there are other motivations for this activism on behalf of the Principal we are left to surmise. In the excerpt, it is clear that he is uncomfortable and dissatisfied with the public perception of his school as in any way undesirable to the greater public or with the fact that this public should perceive anything inferior or second-rate about the school. Perhaps his vanity, both personal and professional, is hurt by such assumptions.

His acknowledgment of having undertaken 'PR exercises' in order to change local perceptions of the school show that his actions are not limited to critical responses to other agencies but that his is proactive in trying to change perceptions.

From a practice perspective, it is useful to refer to Dunne's (1997) discussion of action as understood in the writings of Arendt. For her, action itself exerts a power that is highly charged and unpredictable in the context of the action. This power can be positive in its energy and motivation. Arendt uses the term 'trespass' to refer to the uncontrollable aspect of this effect where the power might travel into unexpected places with unexpected consequences. Through the decision by Archbishop Diarmad Martin, the Patron of the vast majority of primary schools in the Dublin area, to introduce a Catholic-first enrolment policy to apply to schools under his Patronage, the power of this action has trespassed into the pupil enrolment reality of the school in this study.

It must also be noted that the Principal would need to critically reflect on what would appear to instinctive or intuitive in his make to apportion blame to the Catholic hierarchy for this development. In his Personal Profile (Chapter 2) the Principal expresses his criticism of the church's hierarchy in their response to issues of clerical child sexual abuse and the non-complimentary light in which this has led him to view the structural institution of the church which governs education. Here, we see the Principal's life-history locating him instinctively in a judgement situation which should, in phronesis terms, require more critical-reflection.

At the beginning of the excerpt, the degree to which the Principal is consumed on this issue is obvious. Innocuous visits to the local supermarket become instances of empirical market-research. The sustainability of such alertness and the underlying emotionality of anger and frustration must also be a matter for concern. Any sense that his lone actions may redress the enrolment trends that are by now embedded in the locality may be unrealistic. Energies spent here may be futile and self-defeating.

In both excerpts 7 and 8, a school leader who is frequently responding to forces that are having a negative impact on the development of his school institution, and over which he has little or no control, can be observed. In Excerpt 7 this force is making manifest a school that is seriously challenged in providing the appropriate educational services to children made more urgent by issues related to their diversity. In Excerpt 8 the development of a skewed demographic in the school, that approximates that of racial segregation, can be observed. In both these developments it must be questioned whether the practice of the

school Principal, however phronetically it may be constructed, can succeed in surmounting these externally-imposed obstacles.

Conclusions from this Discursive Analysis

There are eight observations that I am able to make on educational leadership as a Practice on the basis of the discursive analysis presented in this Chapter. These eight observations are what might be described as ‘things that I have learned’ through the process of this research: the writing of the Journal, the reading and rereading of the Journal, the lone and private critical-reflection on the individual excerpts of the Journal, the discussion of the excerpts with my interlocutor/supervisor, the further actions prompted by these stimulating conversations such as further readings and exploration of ideas and, finally, the writing of the discursive analysis of the eight excerpts for this dissertation.

The research process and my practice as Principal are inextricably interwoven. These eight observations have accrued over the thirty months of this study as a result of both processes. The learning encapsulated in the observations mostly comes in the form of heightened or refined understandings of practice issues or leadership issues over and above how they are presented in Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation.

Sometimes the learning simply confirms the importance attached by some of the prominent authors to the dynamics of action, critical-reflection, dialogue, and reconstruction. Sometimes my learning simply allows me to understand their work better and to interpret more meaning for myself from their seminal texts and by extension to the seminal works of others to whom they appeal.

This is especially true of the more complex works of Dunne, MacIntyre, Arendt, Habermas and Kemmis. In the literature of school leadership my learning to date has also prompted me to explore further those authors who explore life-history and ethical approaches to school leadership. Sometimes, too, my learning causes me to question some of the assertions in this literature. I am mindful of Johnston's (2006) assertion that research of this nature, self-study action research, cannot lay claim to 'findings' as generally understood. I am, also, a little uncomfortable with titling these eight observations as 'conclusions' lest it have any connotations of the strict meaning of conclusion in the positivistic sense as that of alleged irrefutability. Conclusions, here, is taken to mean personal conclusions amounting to that which I feel I can state that I have learned.

The eight conclusions I draw are discussed under the following headings: Observations on Risk and Imagination, The value of Journaling, Enhancing Dialogue, Power Relations Issues and School Leadership, Insider Research, The Influence of Life-History, Governorship and Support for the Principal and The Principal's Lifelong Learning needs.

Observations on Risk and Imagination

I have learned that it is inevitable that risk accompanies open-ended action. However, I have learned, too, that in the unique context of this school over this period of time the risks that I had agonised over prior to action have rarely, if at all, had harmful consequences for the organisation or individuals within it. It has also become apparent to me that much of the risk that I had been worried about came from fear of either being racist or being perceived as being racist.

But on no occasion did I find that this would be a reasonable interpretation of the actual outcome of the risk-taking action. I have found the many ethnic communities of the school willing to engage with actions generously if they are undertaken incrementally and acted out in a spirit of presence, authenticity and responsibility. The positive response of the African group to the ethnic parent group programme (Excerpts 1 and 2) shows that fears of being racist, or perceived as being racist, in undertaking this project were unfounded.

Risk is frequently tied with imagination in the school leadership literature. A Principal willing to use his/her imagination in devising school policy and in undertaking creative actions must be willing to take risks. In practice terms this is encompassed by the understanding that the practitioner must be willing to engage in open-ended action with unpredictable outcomes. The practitioner will learn from these actions through the process of critical-reflection. Risk can be lessened by ensuring that the actions are maximally dialogical. Risk can be further lessened by ensuring that the voices of the ethnic minorities are to be heard in all of the communities of the school; the community of practice, the community of leaders, the community of learners, the Parent Bodies and in the fabric of the school's daily life. The Principal must be present to these voices: approachable, visible, engaged, empathic and dialogical. The voices must be affirmed and invited.

The imagination to bring about creative solutions to dilemmas can be sourced in a number of ways. Various school leadership writers urge Principals to draw on the passions that are present in their personal and professional life-histories. Similarly, Principals are urged to engage in facilitating communities of

practice, communities of leaders and communities of learners within the school all of which, if properly constructed, will result in creative responses to the school's needs.

From this research, I argue that the Principal, in the case of schools with ethnic diversity, must engage in communities of learning where the issues of multiculturalism in the broader society and issues of multicultural education in schools are discussed and studied. Within the school the Principal must seek to include diverse voices in the various communities of practice and the structures of the school so as to ensure that these voices are part of the dialogical and collaborative processes of the school. Creative and imaginative ways of bringing these voices into the school's structures must be explored. In Excerpts 3 and 4 of this study we observe that diverse voices in the school's teaching staff enhance the school's policy development on issues of multiculturalism and racism. The conflict that emerges in such situations is to be welcomed and should be seen positively as generating critical-reflection on the part of all practitioners.

Another occasion when the Principal must engage in risk and imagination in this research is when he takes on an activist role concerning issues with communities outside of the school. In doing this the Principal may be seen as acting out of a sense of responsibility to issues of equality or justice. In Excerpt 8, we see the Principal becoming activist in light of his perception that the school is been racially segregated by dint of the practice of other schools. In Excerpt 7, we see the Principal and the school's Board of Management frustrated and responding politically to a dilemma where they feel that they

must be defensive of their institution and are being neglected by structures of the State that should be supportive and sympathetic to their need.

Engagement in action-research as a workplace researcher holds the potential to minimize risk and to enhance the imagination of the school leader. Taking an inquiry approach to dilemmas or problematic issues at once enhances the Principal's chances of resolving issues collaboratively with all of the school communities. Action-research ensures that the inquiry is grounded in the context of the school.

The value of Journaling

The second observation has to do with the value of documenting reflection in the form of a Journal. I have become impressed as regards the value of the Journal and the process of Journaling from both a practice (as a Principal) and an inquiry (as a Researcher) perspective.

The process of journaling provides for the opportunity of telling the story of the incident in a manner that is laden with the emotionality of the engagement. The process of writing is simultaneously clarifying, illuminating, exploratory and calming while, also, creating the space, time and focus for deeper thinking on both the individual incidents and broader patterns emerging over a sequence of excerpts.

The end product, the Journal, gives the wherewithal for analytical rereading at a future date either by the practitioner or by an interlocutor with whom the practitioner wishes to engage. On rereading the excerpts of my Full Journal I have been taken aback on occasions at some features that they reveal.

Rereading the journal with the benefit of some distance in time has made me question some of my priorities, identify my prejudices, observe my initial and spontaneous responses, analyse my initial interpretations and observe patterns of mood and emotionality. This rereading has been by times affirming and questioning of my practice. I have spotted instinctive reactions and recurring patterns of behaviour in my practice of which I was only barely, if at all, aware. On many occasions the rereading of the excerpts, whether alone or in the company of an interlocutor, has prompted critical-reflection of a therapeutic intensity. The writing of the discursive analyses for this dissertation, and for public perusal, has further deepened this critical-reflection.

The Journal, though a highly filtered and subjective document, archives much that is rich for future analysis. On its simplest level it archives the day-to-day incidents of the school and can act as an *aide memoire* for future reference. At a more analytical level it records the moods, frustrations, tone, instincts and intuitions of the writer and opens a window into the exploration of his motives, priorities, personality, identity, ideology and historicity of the writer. It is at this analytic level that the writer/practitioner can maximally engage in critical-reflection and set about reconstructing, transforming and emancipating oneself from prejudices and limitations. Similarly it is an opportunity to identify what one holds as significant, one's passions, and to open these to critical interrogation.

It is clear from the research that journaling as a form of practice and as a form of research is held in higher esteem in nursing and medicine than it is in teaching or education. From my experience in conducting this research, I

conclude that both journaling as a process and in the completed form of Journal can only enhance the lifelong learning process and the generation of living theory that I stated as goals for this research in Chapter 2. The potential value of journaling in the training and professional development of school leaders should also be considered.

Enhancing Dialogue in the school

The third conclusion concerns dialogue. Through the discursive analysis of the eight excerpts in Chapter 3, I have tried to distinguish between dialogue that is contrived and other forms of dialogue that have grown organically from moments of real presence in the day-to-day context of the lives of those that make up the school community. What I have learned over the thirteen months of the study has allowed me to re-read Freire's (1971) discussion on dialogue with greater insight and engagement.

For dialogue to be meaningful in the context of this multicultural school, it must emerge from fertile interpersonal relationships where the Principal is trusted, approachable, present to the needs of the ethnic minorities, empathic to their circumstances and cognisant of the discrepancy of power between himself and those with whom he engages in dialogue. Dialogue emanating from these sets of circumstances is best suited to the purpose of generating actions and critical-reflection on the part of the Principal and the other conversants alike. In the multiethnic school the school leader must be willing to be creative, imaginative and willing to take risk in order to initiate actions directed towards these goals. The school leader must also be willing to challenge traditional roles within the organisation and, especially, the roles of structures such as the

school's Parent Association if their performance is seen to be jeopardising the quality of interpersonal and intergroup relationships.

Power Relations Issues and school leadership

A fourth conclusion refers to Leadership and issues of power-relations. Though I did not set out with a critical-theory philosophical framework, I have found elements of this discourse to be compelling – in particular the focus on the centrality of the abuse of power in the oppression of minorities. An understanding of critical theory by the practitioner enhances his/her critical-reflection. I would suggest that this observation is something that is lacking in much of the school leadership literature with the exception of that stemming from a feminist perspective. Few models of school leadership take adequate cognisance of power issues in the relationship of the school leaders with all others in the school community.

The Principal should be conscious at all times of the power he is afforded within the hierarchical structure of the school organization. Leadership styles that promote distributed forms of leadership offer an opportunity for the school Principal to develop a community of leaders within the school's structure. Similarly, developing a community of learners and a community of practice and inserting himself as an equal into these communities can enhance issues of trust, shared-purpose and collaboration between the Principal and others.

For many ethnic minorities with only a foothold in Irish society and no experience of Irish education, the school Principal can be the very public face

of the education system specifically, and the State, generally. This leaves the Principal in a very powerful but complex situation.

On one hand positive interaction between the Principal and these families can succeed in bringing them into Irish society in a grounded and meaningful way. This can be achieved through facilitating participation by minority parents through paid-work and voluntary-work in the structures of the school. Building a multicultural society based on understandings of the shared fate of the school and the common ground of robust citizenship could be hugely important for the future integration of these families into Irish society in terms that are equal and just. In a number of the excerpts we see where the ethnic minorities in this school are generous in their response to all actions by the Principal to invite them into the life of the school.

On the other hand, negative interaction between the Principal and these families could serve to alienate and reject them from the society in which they are now living. In some of the excerpts in Chapter 3 we see where the Principal must critically reflect upon instinctive reactions that encourage him to see minorities and the problems they face in a pessimistic and pathological light. Furthermore, we can see the vulnerability of the Principal to negative interactions with minorities in cases where he is forced by poor State planning, poor support by State agencies or by the actions of others to refuse to meet the needs and demands of the emerging diversity of Irish society.

5. *Insider Research*

As a fifth conclusion, I feel confident from my engagement in this study of the value of insider-research and action-research on matters of practice. Working in this way can tackle subjects at a level and intensity that other methods of research and external researchers may fail to reach. I feel that the credibility of attempting to work with integrity and authenticity in an organization in which one is willing to invest huge effort and energy, places the insider researcher and the action researcher at an advantage for enhancing his/her own practice and improving the organisation. If as a researcher he/she is then willing to document and disseminate this research other practitioners can interpret the study for the value that it may bring to their own practice. It is my hope that the process of the research undertaken here as well as its content and conclusions will be of interest to Principals of other schools with a similar context.

I am very much taken with the concept of the workplace-researcher as, ethically, a person who is concerned with the improvement of his/her own practice and the improvement of the organisation but remains committed to the series of imperatives that sensibly inform workplace relationships and their sustainability. Trust is a very important dynamic in this relationship. A practitioner-researcher who is trusted by his colleagues may access moments of practice and insight that would be obscured from other researchers. However, if the trust given to the researcher is abused the dynamics of the interpersonal relationships in the organization may be irreparably damaged.

The Influence of Life-History

The sixth conclusion concerns Life-History issues in Leadership. As Sugrue (2005) asserts, issues of life-history are interwoven at many different levels of

the Principal's practice. It would appear that aspects of life-history can be very influential on practice especially in moments of stress or when instinctive or spontaneous reaction is called upon. The challenge for the school leader is to come to know his/her life-history and to constantly be critically reflective as to what aspects of this historicity are helpful and what are unhelpful in his/her ongoing critical-reflection. I concur with those writers who assert that critical-reflection, especially that carried out in dialogical situations, offers the best strategy for the formulation of professional and personal self-identity. However, I would also like to suggest that, through the process of journaling, it is possible for the practitioner to begin to excavate the layers of his/her own life-history in a critically-reflective and quasi-therapeutic manner.

Governorship and support for the Principal

My seventh conclusion is of a very practical nature and one that concerns the role of the school Principal in school governance. I feel that it is evident from the discursive analysis of Chapter 3 that, in the system that prevails in Ireland, the role of Principal within the structure of school governance is both demanding, ambiguous and, it could be argued incoherent, to the detriment of his/her practice.

Clearly many unsatisfactory features of the Irish education system force the Principal into day-to-day decision making that has little to do with practice in the context of education and more to do with coping with unreasonable demands of logistics, finance and a lack of professional engagement by agencies of the state's Education structure. Frequently, the Principal in this

study must engage in dilemmas that are created by a lamentable absence in standard support for schools.

The Principal is, thus, inevitably compromised as he tries to school-build if those with responsibility for partnering and supporting the school in this process are neglectful or abusive of their roles. No matter how phronetically constructed, the Principal in his practice is as reliant as all other practitioners in the organization that the institution of the school is constructed in a manner so as to protect its integrity. Judgements that are endlessly compromised by the actions or inactions of external-forces are not judgements that can be phronetically informed.

The Principal's lifelong learning needs.

My eighth and final conclusion relates to the Principal as part of a community of learning. The most valuable experiences I have had over the thirteen months of this study have been when I have engaged in the process of learning with the range of people across the school community and beyond.

I have learned, through this research, the value of lifelong learning and the need to understand that Practice as a philosophy asserts that learning is always context-bound, reconstructive of one's identity and can always be furthered through cycles of action, dialogue and critical-reflection.. In practice terms learning is endless. Cycles of action, critical-reflection and dialogue will always necessitate learning in the form of reconstruction of one's current knowledge and identity. This is a true meaning of the term 'being experienced'. To become a *phronimos* must be an aspiration, in the knowledge that it cannot

be attained fully. Any arresting factors such as failing to undertake actions, failing to engage in dialogue or failing to critically-reflect break this cycle and will not result in reconstruction of the practitioner's experience. I feel that, too often, Irish teachers and Principals adopt the badge of experience in reference only to time spent in the position. Those Principals who deserve to wear this honour of 'experienced' must only be those who throughout their careers remain open to the need to refine and reconstruct their professional identities in accordance with phronetic constructions of practice.

In Chapter 4 I will insert these eight conclusions into the broader Theoretical Framework of the study. In doing this I shall make observations as to the value of Phronesis as a mode of educational leadership in a multicultural school.

Chapter 4 The Theoretical Framework Revisited: The Case for Phronesis as a mode of educational leadership in a multicultural school.

Introduction

In this chapter I knit the eight conclusions of Chapter 3 into the broader picture of the Theoretical Framework of this study. The goal is to refine the Theoretical Framework in the light of what I have learned. Through this process I will focus, primarily, on Phronesis. It is my central argument that the eight conclusions that I outline above can all be brought to fruition in one's practice with the guidance of Phronesis. The eight conclusions from Chapter 3 refine, heighten and prioritise the dynamics of practice so as to maximize the phronetic process. They offer the disposed school leader a way to 'become' and to 'be' a Principal who is characterised as action-orientated, dialogical, critically-reflective and open to an ongoing and lifelong reconstruction of his/her life-history and experience.

This study has been a journey for me. This chapter will set out a description of the destination at which this research journey ends, for the moment at least. Chapters 1 and 2 set out the Theoretical Framework as understood by me prior to the months of interrogation and analysis of the excerpts documented in Chapter 3. The Theoretical Framework represented a mid-point in a journey which started with vaguer understandings of Practice but adequate confidence as to its value and potential for me, both as researcher and as Principal. These initial understandings of practice were interrogated through extensive reading and discussion with my supervisor. Simultaneous to the writing of the Framework I kept an extensive reflective journal. When I could, I incorporated

what I was learning in my reading of this philosophy of Practice into my day-to-day practice as a school Principal. Thus, the Theoretical Framework of Practice (as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2) became not only the lens through which I, as researcher, could interpret the excerpts, but also provided philosophic guidance in the conduct of my practice as a Principal over the initial thirteen month phase of the study as archived in the Journal. The discursive analysis of the excerpts in Chapter 3 is an interrogation of my practice as evidenced in the chosen excerpts. The remainder of this Chapter articulates my understanding of Practice revisited in the light of the conclusions drawn in Chapter 3.

The Dynamics of Practice Revisited

The context of practice.

In Chapters 1 and 2 the unique, complex, idiosyncratic, highly nuanced nature of the 'rough ground' of any context in which human interaction takes place was emphasised. In these chapters I argued for the need for the practitioner to come to know this 'rough ground' intimately and to be cognisant of its unique nature in all judgements, actions and interpretations. My year of practice as school leader has been one year in this 'rough ground'.

In the discursive analysis of the journal excerpts, the ruminations and actions of the Principal frequently focus on issues of multicultural education. Many of the actions of the Principal resonate with the definitions of multicultural education as set out by Dhillon and Halstead (2003) which I have argued are very much in keeping with the ethos of Educate Together schools. The Principal is also hugely engaged in the practice of school building and takes the

stance of recognising and developing the school as a micro-multicultural society.

I argue, from the evidence of Chapter 3, that there are a number of salient characteristics to this particular landscape. I assert that the multicultural 'rough ground' reveals some heightened tensions which may not exist in schools that are not multicultural and which must be taken into account by practitioners in this specific context. The first such heightened tension is the extent to which childcentred education is contested within this school community by virtue of the diversity within it.

The extent to which the Irish Primary Curriculum espouses a childcentred conception of education and pedagogy is irrefutable. The language of discovery learning, importance of play, development of self-esteem abounds. Teachers are directed towards pedagogies of independent learning, group work, differentiated learning, fieldwork and discovery learning. Contested understandings of knowledge appealing to notions of pedagogy of Bruner, Dewey, Buber and Froebel are central to this curriculum.

Notwithstanding the small amount of research that questions whether Irish schools are genuinely delivering childcentred education in the 'secret gardens' of their classrooms, childcentred education as understood in the Revised Primary School Curriculum is seen as the default mode of education. It is also embedded in the professional and personal psyche of the teaching staff according to their pre-service and in-service training. This is true of the Principal in this study evidenced in the excerpts and Full Journal.

Furthermore, there is another understanding of childcentredness espoused in the Educate Together ethos of this school. Here, in addition to the sentiments of childcentred education, childcentredness means recognising the child as a citizen. As a consequence it prompts the school towards citizenship education projects encouraging active participation in society. (Educate Together 2004, 2005).

On occasions in the excerpts, this understanding of education is contested for varying reasons, by various ethic groups and in various forms of assertion and resistance. Direct forms of pedagogy which will economically deliver knowledge are preferred and prioritised by some parents in their conversations with the teachers and the Principal. Strategies of behaviour management are both used and suggested by the parents that are not in keeping with childcentred discourses. Appeals to the Principal to develop the school along the lines of schools familiar to and comfortable with their own historicity are made by many parents.

Alongside this, assertions by the school of the need for differentiated forms of pedagogy according to the needs of the child are contested and resisted. Classroom- and whole-school policies that are aimed at facilitating such differentiation are also questioned and resisted.

Similarly, aspects of the specific Educate Together understandings of childcentred education are particularly resisted and questioned. The notion of the child as citizen and the expectation that this should be promoted through daily practices in the school aimed at encouraging the children into actions of

participative citizenship can be seen, in the excerpts, as being understood to be in opposition to some minorities' understanding of their own religions or cultures.

In this Educate Together School they, also, often become apparent in discussions with parents around citizenship education programmes within the school, such as the Learn Together programme, the Student Council initiative or other school projects as evidenced in Excerpt 5.

So what are the implications of these three observations or descriptors of a multicultural context for the notion of phronesis as a model of educational leadership?

First of all I might make the simple observation that the Principal must develop the disposition to become comfortable with these contestations of what may be fundamental beliefs on his part. To be comfortable means to welcome their eruption and to see in such eruptions moments of opportunity for dialogue. To see such eruptions as failures on his/her behalf or evidence of something wrong in the school is, according to Phronesis, to misunderstand context and its pivotal role in defining and enriching practice. To fear such eruptions and to endeavour to minimise them through actions could be to oppress either the voices of those who make them or to lose sight of the fact that education is the defining task of the institution of the school.

To be open to such eruptions is to take genuine leadership as understood by Starratt (2004) in his sense of ethical leadership. This is, in part, achieved by being 'present' to the context of the school. I would also argue that this

disposition, whether instinctive or one that must be learned, is also imperative for issues of sustainability and maintenance of professional and personal health. The dialogical opportunities that open through such visible, vocal and emotive contestations have the power to transform all participants and to refine one's own authenticity.

That is not to say that the school leader must not 'stand for' certain principles and that such principles should be endlessly modified to suit the contesting voices. Taylor (1991) identifies "horizons of significance" as those principles which come to be held by a practitioner as worth defending publicly and in a spirit of dialogue. Such public and dialogical interrogation ensures the school leaders authenticity with respect to these principles.

It is with confidence in Taylor's argument that I, personally, can in this case form my own 'horizons of significance' around concepts of progressive childcentred education. Similarly, I am disposed to affirming modern conceptions of childhood, the value of robust citizenship education and the combating of racism as 'horizons of significance' in my practice. Together these four concepts may be identified as my "horizons of significance" around which I am prepared to take creative actions that involve risk and imagination. In my day-to-day practice I am willing to defend these concepts against challenges to their value or relevance. Such a defence will include my assertion that these concepts have value for the common good of the whole school community. However, I am also cognisant of the need to remain dialogical and critically-reflective at all times about these assertions.

The Agent in Practice: The practitioner in action.

In Chapters 1 and 2, an outline of the Practitioner as an Agent was given. The emphasis in these chapters was to differentiate between the action-orientation of this philosophy and more passive and contemplative orientations. The practitioner, through the lens of the Theoretical Framework, was described as somebody who could only learn by initiating actions and reflecting critically on these actions. A cycle of action and reflection was proposed. Actions were to be open-ended and not necessarily certain of where they were leading. Though not to be reckless or poorly thought out, they were understood to have inherent risk and the potential to lead in unknown directions. Small actions that might lead incrementally through many cycles were seen as the maximal manner in which to bring about change and development. Concerns in the school leadership literature were expressed about practitioners who became disabled towards action.

In the excerpts and through the full Journal we see that the Principal engages in many specific actions in a research or inquiry mode. It is clear, too, that some actions were more successful than others in generating learning situations for the Principal. The open-ended nature of the actions in some instances did result in unforeseen outcomes. Some were easily taken on board, others rather less easily but valuable nonetheless. The primary outcomes, from a Practice perspective may be seen as twofold.

Firstly I wish to make some observations on the necessity for action in order to generate the opportunity for genuine dialogue between community members. An action orientation propels the school leader headlong into the cut and thrust

of the daily life of the school. The power of the action can energise the Principal and all others engaged in it in terms of motivation, collegiality, collaboration, familiarity and bonding. Even the smallest of actions can give rise to opportunities for developing a sense of shared purpose in all of the interpersonal relationships within the school community. Actions provide the opportunity to develop dynamics of trust, credibility and goodwill. Actions facilitate the development of presence to the needs and opinions of others.

Secondly, from both a research and practice perspective, actions provide the opportunity for inquiry in its experimental sense. Actions as experiments can test lay theories and tentative hypotheses that may be emerging. These actions function as the source of incident about which to engage in critical reflection. The critical-reflection can occur through the interrogation of the Journal excerpts by the practitioner alone, or with an interlocutor.

Through this research I have come to understand the dynamic of action (and the practitioner as an Agent) more fully as a result of the analysis of Chapter 3. I refer here to broader understandings of the nature of action which must be identified as missing from the discussion of action in the Theoretical Framework as presented in Chapters 1 and 2. Dunne (1997), following on Arendt (1998), examines the nature of action itself. From this perspective action is seen in all its unpredictable, boundless and hazardous sense. In the context of the intricate web of interpersonal relationships, action, according to Arendt, has a power of its own. The primary realization of action is not an end product but this power of the action being let loose on a situation.

In the actions of a school leader there can be an energy that may empower other practitioners or motivate them. Actions may energise day-to-day practices in a way that could bring them to life or bring freshness to their actuation. Action is the unleashing of power. Power, in this context, is good and has analogous possibilities with the 'lead' role often attached to understandings of leadership. The leader who generates such power through his/her actions can be seen from this perspective injecting energy into a situation, an energy that may facilitate progress or movement.

On reading the excerpts, and the full Journal, I find Arendt's understanding of action as a positive power compelling and suggest that it is descriptive of the charged atmosphere that surrounds actions in the multicultural setting of this school.

The Dialogical Nature of Practice.

Perhaps the most valuable learning which I feel is an outcome of this two year practice and research project focuses on the nature of dialogue. Though I had engaged in extensive reading on the subject I feel that a fuller understanding of dialogue did not seep into either my practice or my research until I engaged in the discursive analysis of the excerpts in Chapter 3.

In Chapters 1 and 2 the importance of generating dialogue as a means of democratising my leadership was given due discussion and elucidation according to how I understood it at the time. I understood all dialogue and all actions which generated dialogue to be of uniform value. However, following on the discursive analysis of the excerpts, I now believe that there is more to

dialogue in a mode of educational leadership based on Phronesis than is articulated in those Chapters.

Specifically, I have learned that there are dialogical situations that are optimal for the purpose of critical self-reflection. Other situations which, on the face of it, may seem dialogical in so much as they occur through speech and with two or more participants, may not be truly dialogical.

To this end I propose the notion of 'organic-dialogue', as the dialogical situation that maximises the potential for phronesis. I term 'contrived dialogue' that which is of little value or may even be anti-dialogical. I argue that Phronesis as an incremental process by which one may become ethical in one's leadership requires the fuel of 'organic dialogue' to achieve that purpose. Consequently I argue that not only does contrived-dialogue serve this purpose badly but that it may also obstruct and obscure genuine incremental learning and development.

By organic dialogue, I mean dialogue that grows in the context from the soil of the rough ground. Organic dialogue refers to the dialogical situations emanating from the actions of Principal in his/her interaction with the complex web of interpersonal relationships within the community of the school and beyond. It is that which emanates from, what Starratt (2004) terms, the presence of Principal. It is the dialogue that is achievable when, in Freirian terms, both parties in the dialogue, and especially the powerful party, address something that matters and is relevant to the oppressed or less powerful in any situation.

In contrast, 'contrived dialogue' is that which has purposes other than mutual understanding in mind. It emanates from situations which are not grounded in the context or are barely so. They may be exchanges in which the conversants do not share trust with regards to issues of power-relations. I am cognisant here of the critique of Blackmore (2006) of the school leader as frequently belonging to the powerful elites of the homogenous and host cultures in which the school is situated.

In the analysis of the set of excerpts, a few incidents may be observed where in I have identified something unsatisfactory about the dialogue emanating from these situations. In some of the excerpts contrived exchanges occur that are more akin to posturing on my part than any genuine engagement in dialogue. I feel this observation is particularly true in the excerpt dealing with the meeting with the Jehovah Witness parents (Excerpt 5).

A different scenario may be observed in other excerpts, especially Excerpts 2, 3 and 4, where the action that has sparked the dialogue is embedded in the rough ground of the school and where the dialogue clearly works in causing the conversants to question their own perspectives and to come to understand the perspectives of others better. This dialogue, and the reflection it brings in its wake, is of immense value in the determination of further action and in the transformation of the self.

None of this will be new to those who are already immersed in and living the understanding of dialogue articulated in Chapters 1 and 2. What I am stating is that the practice of bringing this sense of dialogue to life in one's own practice

is difficult, or is difficult for me. In the spirit of phronesis I must acknowledge this and identify it as something which I must be acutely aware of and develop in my own practice.

As articulated by Freire (1972), enhanced attention to dialogue brings about incremental growth in its participants. The growth may be evidenced in learning to read one's own emotionality and to observe the other's emotionality more sensitively; learning to listen and respond to the unfolding dialogue; learning to engage in dialogue that builds trust and affirms the engagement; learning to read the timing of one's own input so as not to abort the dialogue or to insert obstacles; learning to reflect on one's approachability so that dialogue may be more easily initiated by others.

One consequence of genuine dialogue is increased potential for the transformation of the self through interpsychic interrogation. Here, the person is caused to reflect on and rearticulate currently held views as a result of either the critical (or affirming) voice of others or a dissatisfaction with one's own argument.

Some argue that this dawning of the limitations of one's own currently held views can only occur in interpersonal dialogical situations. The realignment of one's current view according to self-reflection on the dialogue, the intrapsychic phase, can happen only after the interpsychic engagement. Taken alone, and without interpsychic element, the incremental learning from experience that is understood in phronesis may never occur. Worse still, this may result in unchallenged views becoming fossilised in one's own historicity. The default

situation for many of appealing to one's own life history for intuitive and instinctive reactions to dialogue or action may thus appeal to concepts that have not been publicly interrogated. This assertion is at the root of my concern about those in the school leadership literature who uncritically turn to their 'passions' as an unproblematic source of inspiration and energy. To return to Taylor's (1991) "horizons of significance", one should be willing to publicly defend such self-held principles. Only when such principles have been interrogated in public situations through dialogue can they be deemed significant and worth defending.

Does the process of Journaling enhance dialogue? On one level I have acknowledged the value of Journaling as a means of communication between the writer (the practitioner and the researcher) and the interlocutor. The Journal excerpts have been a valuable springboard for dialogue between me and my supervisor in the manner envisaged by Tripp (1993).

I have also tried to make the case that the Journal offers the opportunity for further dialogue with one self (the self who is recorded in the incident as the actor in the incident) or a second self (the self that wrote-up the incident in the Journal in the first instance). I argue, also, for the identification of a third self. This is the self who has allowed the original incident and the initial writing up of the incident time to sit and to become archived; cooled by the distance of time and mood. This third self is the historian who returns to this archive and may strive to archaeologically sift through the actions of the original actor (the first self) the original writer (the second self) and attempt to see these persons

as third parties and reflect upon their motives, reactions, consistencies and inconsistencies.

This kind of interrogation is, I argue, what I have largely done in the discursive analysis of Chapter 3. The process of doing this, taken in conjunction with my own personal experience of psychotherapeutic counselling relating to other incidents in my life and childhood, has convinced me that there is, indeed, some value in this process. A dialogue with oneself, as it were.

Nonetheless, despite the value that I am inclined to recognize in the author's own interrogation of the journal, I must acknowledge that the dialogue between the selves as envisaged here does lack in the critical 'other' voice that another person can bring and thus cannot make claim to full intersychic interrogation.

Transformation of the practitioner: Learning from experience.

The practitioner who is engaged in the cycle of action, dialogue, critical-reflection and further refined action is understood in phronesis to be incrementally growing in calibre of judgement towards a position of instinctive/intuitive right judgement and practical wisdom. According to Phronesis this is how one can come to be 'experienced' as a practitioner.

Phronesis, as a guiding principle in the practice of school leadership, would assert that experience and wisdom gained through this process will, if properly conducted, result in ethical and moral practice. A development of virtue is inherent in this process. Some obstacles may arrest such a development such

as: a lack of action in one's practice, poor engagement with dialogical situations or inadequate critical reflection. .

Throughout the discursive analysis of the excerpts we have come to see the extent of the role which one's life-history, or as Dunne (1997) phrases it one's 'historicity', plays in one's instinctive and intuitive reaction to a set of events or dialogical situations. However, whether this set of values and principles around which one identifies oneself - one's passions, one's politics or one's ideologies - are either constantly self-interrogated and evolving or are fossilised and unchallengeable bears greatly on one's willingness to transform or to be transformed unconsciously. I remain sceptical of those writers in Educational Leadership who urge Principals to throw off the shackles of conservatism in favour of the energy and motivation of their passions. It is, instead, I believe important for the Principal to interrogate one's passions in open dialogue with diverse voices and to critically reflect upon them according to their contribution to the common good of the broader society.

Time and again throughout the Journal, and in the excerpts given, I have been left to question my own values and authenticity. Many forces can cause one to resist opportunities of transformation or emancipation. This is especially true for the school leader. It takes courage to observe in one's habits and patterns of behaviour prejudices that may be discriminatory. It can be difficult for the school leader to publicly change his stances and perspective over time, given the expectation from some that he be expert or consistent. To admit that one has probably been getting something wrong for a long time would not be easy.

Similarly, it can be difficult to translate one's professional learning into a living theory and to ensure that commitments to equality or justice espoused in the work setting also inform the Principal away from the school.

Some of these difficulties are specially compounded for the Principal of a multicultural school. It could be easy for the school leader to hide from the many conflicts and confrontations that erupt as cultures clash. Families and children who have come through a difficult immigration or asylum-seeking experience can be traumatized and can make greater demands on the school. Resistance to the ethos, organisation and pedagogies of the school on the part of the immigrant family can become quickly manifest in a tense home-school relationship between the Principal and the family. Prejudices in the life-history of the immigrant family and the Principal alike can quickly surface if they emerge in crisis situations. Disputes, arguments, accusations of mistreatment, aggression and other such unpleasant realities can often serve to stubbornly harden one's views rather than set them up for reconstruction.

A commitment to phronesis calls upon virtues of courage, temperateness and perseverance amidst all of these human foibles. The Principal must be open to change and willing to see in each cycle of action, dialogue and critical-reflection an opportunity to transform and emancipate himself.

The practitioner and the Organisation

With regard to the practitioner and the organisation I wish to make two refinements on what is presented in the Theoretical Framework.

The first is the rather disappointing conclusion that, in the instance of this school, a dereliction of commitment to the supported development of a new school through adequate financial, logistical and ancillary support threatens the school's ability to deliver an optimally educative service to the children despite the practice of the Principal, teachers and the school community.

From an ethical leadership perspective, the ethical and moral responses of the Principal to the needs of the school community are circumscribed by agencies outside of the control of the Principal and beyond his sphere of influence. Issues to do with inadequate buildings, inadequate amount of school places to serve this burgeoning population and the exclusion of the school from state-funded services charged with responsibilities for Educational Psychological assessment and for addressing issues of educational disadvantage are resulting in diminished school services to these children and their families. The Principal as the frontline face of these refusals and inadequacies is compromised in the community's perception of his trustworthiness, approachability, sense of responsibility, commitment to equality and anti-racism.

The elasticity of phronesis as a mode of educational leadership cannot be stretched to the extent that it is possible in all situations. For phronesis to occur the practitioner must be working in a practice that is structurally defined and supported. Without such structures the practitioner cannot be expected to make up what is lacking in the function of others over which he has no control or influence.

The second observation I wish to make with regard to the school leader and the organisation refers to the broader understanding of the function of the school within the wider multicultural society. In the Introduction I asserted that I began this journey with tentative understandings of a preferred model of a multicultural society. I had aligned myself with writers in this field who asserted the necessity to recognise diversity and to recognise racism but could, also, find a basis for optimism in modern and republican philosophical traditions of a civic society based on traditions of participation, solidarity and common-good.

I cannot say whether it is the research guided by the philosophy as documented here, or the practice guided by the philosophy of Practice but over the two years of the study I have come to identify further with this understanding of a multicultural society. I feel it is impossible for a public school to structure itself exclusively according to liberal understandings of a multicultural society. As a micro-society a school relies on assertions of membership by all of the school community. It requires that all families and groupings within the school commit to a minimum threshold of principles that will serve the common good of the whole school community.

Similarly, the progressive understandings of education, on which the Revised Irish Primary Curriculum is founded, require that school engages in an understanding of citizenship education based on, for example, principles of active participation and principles of gender equality. This requires that school may in some instances educate the children in ways that are different in practice and philosophy from their homes. Schools must, however, ensure to

communicate with the homes as to the agenda of their educative project and be comfortable with tensions that this may generate. Schools and school leaders must also be able to publicly legitimate the nature of their school, and the philosophy of education and ethos to which they espouse. They must remain in dialogue with their school community even when their philosophical underpinnings are challenged and they must ensure to facilitate the voice of its diverse groupings across all of the structures in the school.

This understanding of the school as a community of deliberative democracy with ethical obligations to the care and inclusive education of children allows me to locate the school, and my own role within the school, as a potential institutional instrument for the development and defence of concepts of common good. School may be envisaged as a crucial part of civic society. The different members of the school community have a shared fate and must also share a common purpose and the resultant school and its quality represents their shared project.

On one hand, and appealing to liberal discourses, the diverse individuals and groups which make up the community of the school can be recognised in the fullness of their diversity. Programmes of anti-racism, care, positive action, strategies of inclusion, capacity building exercises and democratic structures of representation could, in time, ensure the development of such an institution.

Simultaneously, however, the school must stand for something that represents the common good. This understanding of the common good appeals to the needs of the wider society. Civic society demands that school should educate

children for participative citizenship in society. The children must learn about civic virtues, democratic processes, respect for diversity and learn the skills for effective participation in that society. Similarly, values of childcentred education, understandings of childhood that prioritise child-protection, recognition of the child as full citizen, notions of equality and justice and assertions of rights and freedoms must be actively negotiated into the day-to-day practice of the school.

I have found myself, as school leader, comfortable in the ongoing navigation of the school towards such a philosophical understanding of a multicultural society. I have found it compatible with ethical models of school leadership such as that proposed by Starratt (2004, 2005). I have found that it fits with a phronetic mode of school leadership where cycles of action, dialogue, critical-reflection and reconstruction of one's personal and professional identity on an ongoing basis are required. I have found that it fits the stated Educate Together ethos, meeting both the demand of this ethos for liberal understandings respect for diversity and the demand for the involvement of parents in the structures and life of the school.

I feel that this philosophical location for the school becomes the source of huge amounts of positive interaction between all of the persons who make up this diverse school community. The flourishing of the children in the school, when such flourishing is evident, becomes a tie that bonds the school community, generating warmth of inclusion, common-purpose and integration.

The school's fate, if it is to be a school in which the children flourish educationally, socially and emotionally, is a shared project. Its success or failure is dependent on the contribution of all its diverse groupings even if they have little else in common. The teachers, the Principal and the care staff are equally exposed to this shared fate if they are to attain the internal goods of practice in this institution. The school can, thus, be seen as *en miniature* a wider society constructed according to concepts or republican philosophical traditions imbued with liberal and rights discourses.

Phronesis, with its capacity to absorb uncertainty, to welcome dialogical conflict, to encourage critical self- and institutional- reflection, with its propensity to action, with its commitment to the development of virtue incrementally over time and its ethical imperative equips the disposed Principal with a mode of leadership that is necessary to navigate the school through both the still and choppy waters of such a project.

I concur with Bauman's (2000, p.178) recommended concept of unity in the contemporary multicultural society, and feel that it can be readily translated to a school as an organisation within such a society and that it fits phronetic understandings of school leadership:

The most promising kind of unity is one which is achieved, and achieved daily anew, by confrontation, debate, negotiation and compromise between values, preferences and chosen ways of life and self-identifications of many and different, but always self-determining members of the polis. This is, essentially, the republican model of unity, of an emergent unity which is the joint achievement of the agents engaged in the self-identification pursuits, a unity which is an outcome, not of an a priori given condition of shared life, a unity put together

through negotiation and reconciliation, not the denial, stifling and smothering out of differences.

Leadership at the service of Teaching and Learning

All school Principals are as surely engaged in the school's business of teaching and learning as any other actor within the organisation. The Principal is busy in his day-to-day activity with matters of behaviour management, curriculum planning, pupil-assessment, school assemblies and much more that is essentially teaching and learning. Structurally, it is the facilitation of optimal atmospheres for the development of the educative project of the school that every action in which the Principal involves himself/herself will serve. Writers in the 'school effectiveness' model of educational leadership will see the tasks in question here as somewhat technical; the structuring and delivery of a narrow set of accountable measures that will increase economy and efficiency of practice in the understanding that such measures will result in observable, measurable and short-term gains across a narrow range of attainments.

However, this research and the practice that it describes are embedded in a 'school improvement' discourse of educational leadership. Here, the goals of the educative project of the school are aspirational and are interwoven with visions of society that are in flux and challenged by change. The nameable, but un-measurable goals of this educative project take defensible visions of a multicultural society and seek to build a school and to educate a community with the dispositions of practice that will sustain and nourish this vision. Concepts such as inclusion, equality, justice, common-good and concomitant

forms of citizenship, and thus citizenship education, become the educative project.

Conclusion

In the Introduction I outlined my understandings of Education and posed the question as to what mode of educational leadership might best suit the achievement of this educative project in this new multicultural school. I, also, hypothesised from the outset that a mode of leadership based on philosophical understanding of Practice would appear to hold such potential.

I stressed that this study was not, however, an implementation study whereby the philosophic tradition of Practice would be reduced to a programme of initiatives and put into operation for the duration of the study with some kind of evaluation in mind. For a start my own understandings of the philosophic tradition of Practice were inadequately formed to allow me, even if it were desirable, to devise such a two year programme of educational leadership. Secondly, no model of Educational Leadership outrightly declared itself as defined by the philosophic tradition of practical wisdom, (see Davies, 2005). Thirdly I was not interested in conducting the type of research that would make claims to optimal modes of leadership in the general context of multicultural schools. Instead, I wished to examine in depth one philosophical approach to leadership that appeared to have potential in this regard.

What has emerged is a descriptive and, to a lesser extent, analytical study, of the instantiation of the practice of Principalship disposed to philosophical understandings of Practice in one school over a two year period. This has been

conducted through self-study action research. The conclusions drawn in Chapter 3, and revisited here according to the tradition of Practice, are not presented as findings. Instead, from an academic perspective the study appeals to prospective readers to engage with the 'story' of this school and its Principal and to enter into agreement or disagreement with the Theoretical Framework, the Research Design and Methodology, the Research Data and its Analysis and the Conclusions of the Study in a spirit akin to that in which a theatre goer might approach a new play or a sports journalist might observe a football match.

Dunne (2005a, p.386) describes the potential and value for the sort of educational research which I venture this study became over the two years of its conduct. Other empirical forms of research, he suggests:

need to be complemented, then, by thickly descriptive studies. These will embrace a variety of narrative modes and be strongly hermeneutical in character. That is to say, they will tell stories about particular projects or episodes, for example in the history of an individual teacher or school, and they will do so with the kind of interpretive skill that can bring out the complex weaving of plot and characters, the dense meshing of insights and oversights, of convergent or contrary motivations or interests, of anticipated or unanticipated responses from the internal environment – or irruptions from the external one – all conspiring to bring relative success or failure. If with their deep embeddedness in a particular milieu, these studies do indeed renounce the generalising ambitions of wider gauge research, they are not on that account condemned to narcissism or self-enclosure. To the contrary, when they are well done- which among other things, will require a keenly reflective awareness of the "point of view"- they possess what might be called epiphanic power; they disclose an exemplary significance in the setting they depict so that it proves capable of illuminating other settings-without need for rerouting through abstract generalities and, indeed, with greatest potential effect for this deeply in the throes of the very particularity of another setting.

I suggest that this study has, indeed, been that kind of study. It has been, on numerous occasions, epiphanic for me as I came to understand concepts of context, action, dialogue, critical-reflection, life-history and reconstruction more fully and in a manner grounded in my day-to-day practice. Similarly, it is to be hoped that readers of this research may find moments of epiphany as they bring their contexts to this dissertation.

Phronesis as a mode of educational leadership mirrors and deepens models of ethical leadership from international school leadership literature. It mirrors the priority to which this literature attaches to modes of leadership when it talks about best practice in educational leadership being characterized by: democratic practice through dialogue; developing communities of practice, leaders and learners within the school community; a prioritization of critical reflection through self- and interlocutor- modes; Principals being 'passionate' or 'present' or 'authentic' or 'exercising responsibility', and when it places responsibilities of moral and ethical judgement on the shoulders of Principals.

I argue that Phronesis offers a mode of leadership that will nurture the Principal towards such practices. Phronesis with its commitment to incremental growth of practical wisdom garnered through cycles of action, dialogue, and critical-reflection offers the school leader an opportunity to learn. Phronesis as a model of leadership is a way of 'being' and a way of 'becoming' such a school Principal.

As a way of being, it offers the Principal a place to be that asserts no pretensions towards expert or heroic understandings of the 'superprincipal'. It offers the Principal the comfort of working towards solutions, judgements and visions incrementally and collaboratively in answer to those who seek them from him.

Phronesis is holistic in the sense that it gathers together competing demands and instincts which can govern our leadership behaviour. The sense of our historicity is understood to be where we start out in our action and reflection. It acknowledges that sometimes our historicity can be trusted and sometimes it must be guarded against. Phronesis leaves room for the examination and renegotiation of our identity. In phronesis, our critical reflection requires dialogical and public engagement with others and respects, too, the emotional and aesthetic information which such interaction evokes. It legitimates and espouses the process of seeking and promoting other voices through communities of practice and communities of learners. Phronesis compels the Principal to action while acknowledging that such initiatives can have uncertain and unpredictable outcomes.

I would argue that Phronesis facilitates the possibility for the Principal to experience the internal goods of the Practice. The internal goods of a Principal in the practice of school building conducted through phronetic process would nourish the practitioner over the duration of his/her career. As a way of being, Phronesis is thus sustainable across the full range of criteria that Hargreaves (2005, p.176) identifies as characteristic 'sustainable leadership'. "Sustainable leadership matters, lasts, spreads, is socially just, is resourceful, promotes

diversity and builds capacity, is activist, is vigilant, respects the past and is patient.”

If properly engaged with, Phronesis is protective of the Principal’s personal and professional health from pressures and stresses placed upon him/her unreasonably by others while simultaneously regenerating and reenergising the self. This is an important point to make lest it be understood that I am suggesting that Phronesis (or journaling as a methodology) be seen as yet another set of add-ons to which the diligent Principal should subscribe.

Phronesis is also a way of ‘becoming’ such a Principal. At the heart of Phronesis is a transformative project. The incremental growth towards the goal of ‘being experienced’ is one such transformation. The psychotherapeutic backdrop to processes such as dialogical critical reflection and the acknowledgment of both the value and the limitations of one’s historicity are understood to be developing and transformative of self –identity.

There is an understanding within the philosophic tradition of practice and virtue ethics that the process of phronesis will develop one’s ethical character if properly and authentically conducted; that the wisdom that forms the backdrop to ‘right judgement’ will come about if the practice has been properly and earnestly conducted. The goals of lifelong learning, the eternal dissatisfaction that there is always more that can be learned, that there is never a final destination in one’s understanding of the web of interpersonal relationship, are embraced by Phronesis. Similarly, the aspirations of living theory, where one conducts one’s personal and professional lives, one’s private and public lives,

in harmony and consistency with one another can be enhanced by an engagement with Phronetic modes of transformation.

I conclude this dissertation with a small anecdote. My 15year old son, Conor, was looking at the title of the dissertation and asking me questions about it. He was interested in Wittgenstein's metaphor of the 'rough ground' and the use of a word Phronesis from classic Greek and asked me to summarise the study. I told him that in this dissertation I argue that school leadership in a school such as my own is best enhanced by developing a way of 'becoming' and 'being' a practitioner who engages in action, who seeks to engage in dialogue with all throughout the action, who critically reflects upon the dialogue and the action and who tries to learn from the experience before setting about on that cycle again and again and again. I added that I was confident that any Principal who would do that would come, in time, to be able to make good judgements of an ethical nature in the majority of the dilemmas that, for example, a diverse school community in a rapidly diversifying society might present.

"But that's common sense," he replied.

I will leave the last word to Dunne (1993, p.381):

Phronesis does indeed depend on a common sense that has built up around particular practices. And this common sense can indeed go flat. What I have been trying to show throughout this study, however, is that phronesis is precisely the leaven that keeps this from happening.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics Consent Form

To whom it concerns,

I, Fintan Mc Cutcheon, have used eight excerpts from a Reflective Journal kept over the 2005/06 school year in my dissertation for the award of the Ed.D degree.

The focus of my study in this research has been on my school leadership practice as Principal of this school. The journal excerpts that have been included in this dissertation have been chosen in order to expose my school leadership practice in this multicultural context to academic scrutiny and analysis. This research has been undertaken in order to develop my understanding of the challenges of school leadership and to develop my own practice.

Some of the enclosed excerpts feature meetings, conversations and incidents at which you were present and to which you contributed. These have been recorded according to my memory of them. The accounts are presented to you for your perusal and to seek permission from you to include these in my final dissertation text. Your name has been changed and alterations have been made to some biographical detail so as to prevent identification and to protect your anonymity. Each account is followed by a discursive analysis which focuses on the role that I played as school leader. This discursive analysis is also enclosed for your perusal.

**If you are happy to allow me to use these excerpts in my final dissertation
I would be grateful if you would sign the permission slip below.**

Throughout this research I have been at all times mindful of my duties and obligations to my position of trust in this school. I assert my commitment to this school and to the value I place on each and every member of the school community.

Yours Sincerely

Fintan Mc Cutcheon

To whom it concerns,

I, _____, have read the excerpts and discursive analysis as presented to me by Fintan Mc Cutcheon from his final dissertation. I give permission for this excerpt to be used in accordance with the request above.

Signed _____ Date _____

Appendix 2: Summary Table of Ethnic Diversity of the Children attending the school.

Ethnic Origin	% of children	Notes
Irish parents only	6%	Including both one-parent and two parent families and families where a partner may not be the birth-parent of the child
One Irish parent and one non-Irish parent	5%	The non-Irish parents range across the UK, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, South America, Africa, eastern Asia, North African and western Asia.
Eastern Europe	22%	54% from within the EU, predominantly Polish but also Lithuanian, Latvian and Slovakian. 46% from outside the EU, predominantly Ukranian and Russian
Middle Eastern and North African	4%	Ranging equally across Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Lebanon, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco.
African	61%	80% Nigerian, and others equally across Namibia, Uganda, DR Congo, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Cameroon and Zaire.
Chinese	2%	

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