'Crafting responsive education for democracy in uncertain times'

Benjamin Mallon, Justin Rami, John Lalor & Ebru Eben
(Dublin City University)

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DEMOCRACY IN IN IRELAND - SOME MILESTONES

Earliest Parliament
The earliest parliament in Ireland was recorded.

1

JUNE 1264

DECEMBER 1937

2

Bunreacht na hÉireann
The Irish Constitution (or Bunreacht na hÉireann) was ratified by the Irish people.

The Republic
Formation of the Republic of Ireland (and departure from the Commonwealth).

3

MARCH 1949

DECEMBER 1955

4

UN Membership
Ireland was admitted to the United Nations in 1955.

The Troubles begin...
The violent political conflict across the island of Ireland.

5

LATE 1960s

JANUARY 1973

6

EEC membership
Ireland joined the European Economic Community in 1973.

Good Friday Agreement
Peace Agreement was approved by voters in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

7

APRIL 1998

2007-2008

8

Global Financial Crisis
...instigated a period of recession, emigration and unemployment in Ireland.

Covid Pandemic
The Covid-19 Pandemic instigated a national vaccination programme and lockdowns.

9

APRIL 2020 - May 2023

Democrat
EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Living Labs: Description
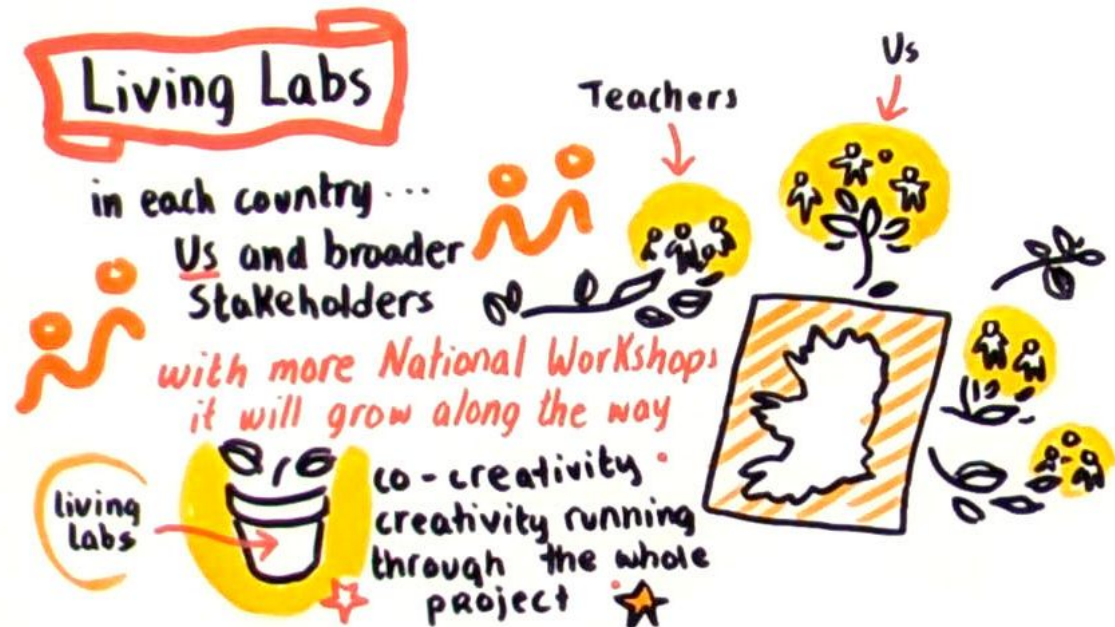
- Multiple stakeholders in real-life settings to foster open innovation and co-creation (Leminen, 2015).
- Collaboratively address challenges, develop, and test new ideas, and create sustainable value for all involved stakeholders (Malmberg et al, 2017; Schuurman & De Marez, 2012; ENoLL, 2015).
- Collaborative spaces where educators (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009), students, technologists, and policymakers can co-create and evaluate educational tools and methodologies.
- Bridge gap between research-practice gap by facilitating the direct application of research findings in educational settings (Ruiz-Calleja, at al, 2017).

Living Labs: Participants

Which individuals, Groups and Organisations should be represented/ included in the living lab?

Working with similar groups

Getting Children Engaged.

Influencers On Social Media
Irish Speakers

Policy Makers?

Mental Health Services?

Teaching (Literary, Classics, Geography?)
- Teachers - Educate Together

we rep a specific group we need to be aware of this.

LIVING LAB

Living Labs thrive on participation of various stakeholders, including educators, students, policymakers, and community members (Leoste, Tammets, & Ley, 2020)....

★ Academic Experts....an inclusive Living Lab
★ Teacher Educators (Primary & Post-Primary)
★ Teachers - Primary, Post-Primary, Youthreach
★ Youth Workers

➜ Children and Young People
➜ Parents
➜ Policymakers
➜ Patron Bodies
➜ Teacher Unions
➜ School Leader Networks

Wider context:
Dublin Riots (November, 2023 & ongoing); Irish Referenda (March, 2024); National and European Elections (June, 2024)

Contemporary Challenges to Democracy: Exclusion and Participation

- Access to and exclusion from formal education remains significant issue for many children, particularly those in disadvantaged groups (members of Traveller community, children seeking international protection, and children with disabilities (Mallon and Martinez Sainz, 2021).
- Young people value the opportunity to participate in school but find provision inadequate (Forde, Horgan, Martin and Parkes, 2018).
- Young people at risk of exclusion (including those with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties) valued the opportunity to participate, however, acts of silencing had negative impacts (Flynn, 2018).
- Boys have lower levels of civic participation than girls, with boys' civic participation varying depending on the perceived influence on decision-making (Gilleece and Cosgrove, 2012).
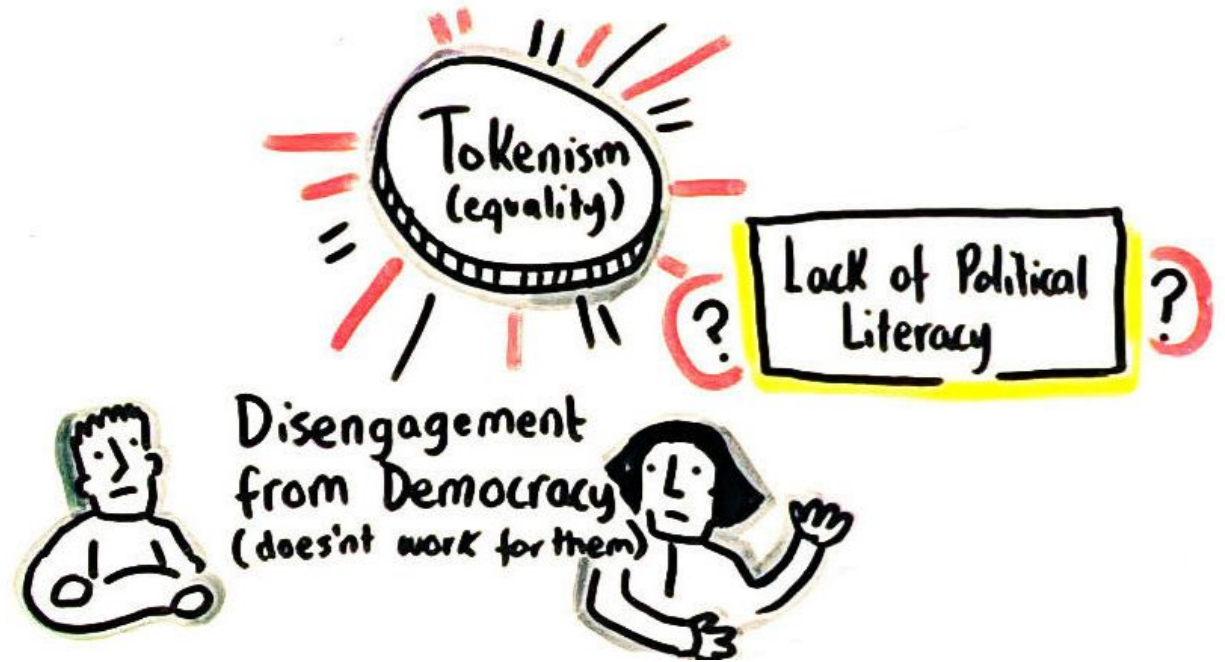
Contemporary Challenges to Democracy: Mis/Dis Information

- Those under the age of 18 have a right to access information under Article 19 of the UNCRC (Gillet-Swann and Sargeant, 2018).
- Increasing recognition that mis/disinformation presents a challenge to education and wider democracy (Gordon, 2018).
- In an Irish context, this threat can be seen across platforms, actors and topics (Gallagher et al, 2023).
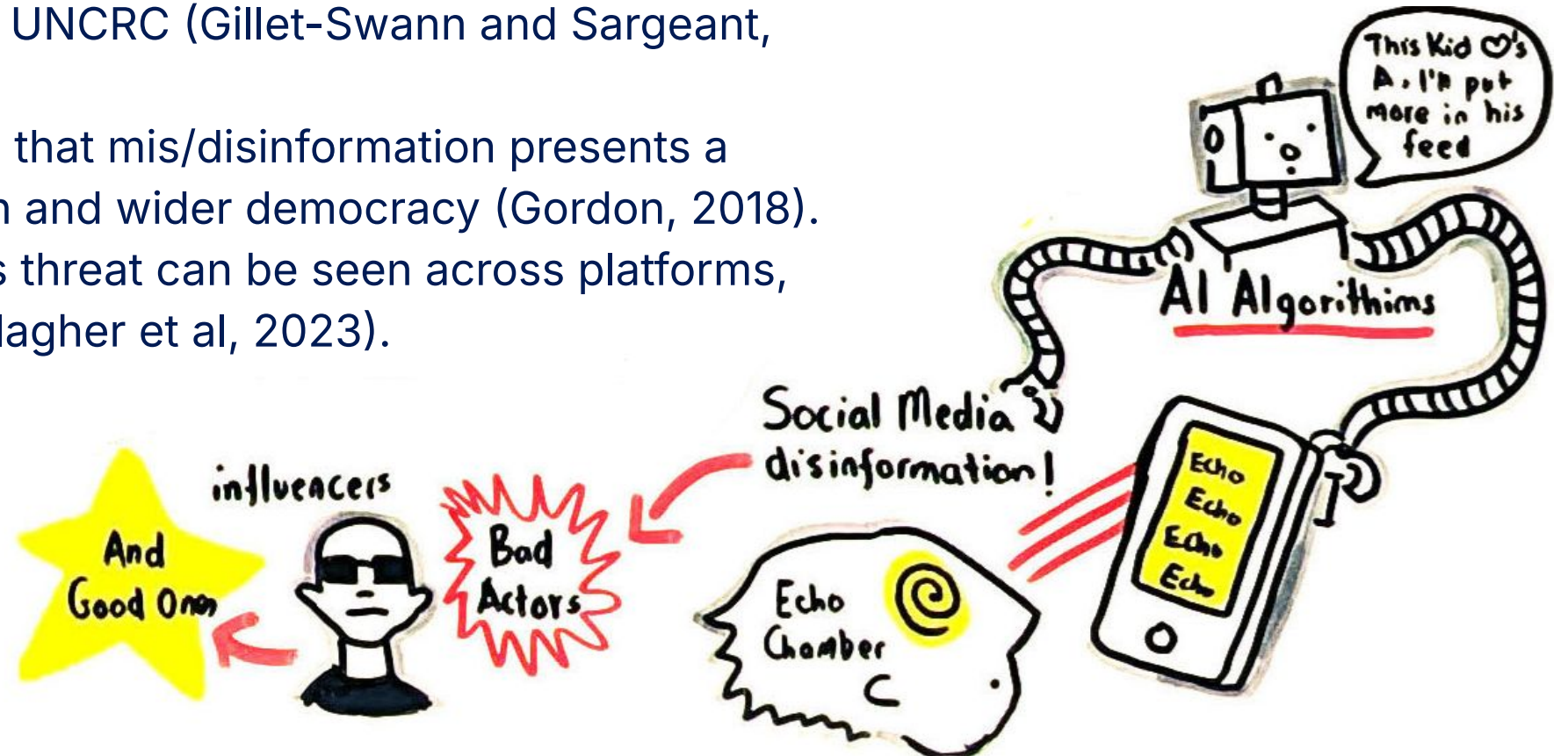
Local Project: Empathy in Action

- Empathy is the ability to understand others' perspectives, engage with their emotions and care for their lives (Eisenberg, 2018).
- Learning about the other, bringing about empathy, suggested as transformative in schools (e.g. Zembylas, 2017).
- Exploring stories of difficult knowledge can support empathy (Neary, 2020).
- Zembylas (2012) recognises difference between 'passive' and 'active' empathy – latter taking action for social justice.
- There are limits - shaped by subject of empathy, relationships between actors, and presumptions around knowledge leading to empathy (Neary, 2020).
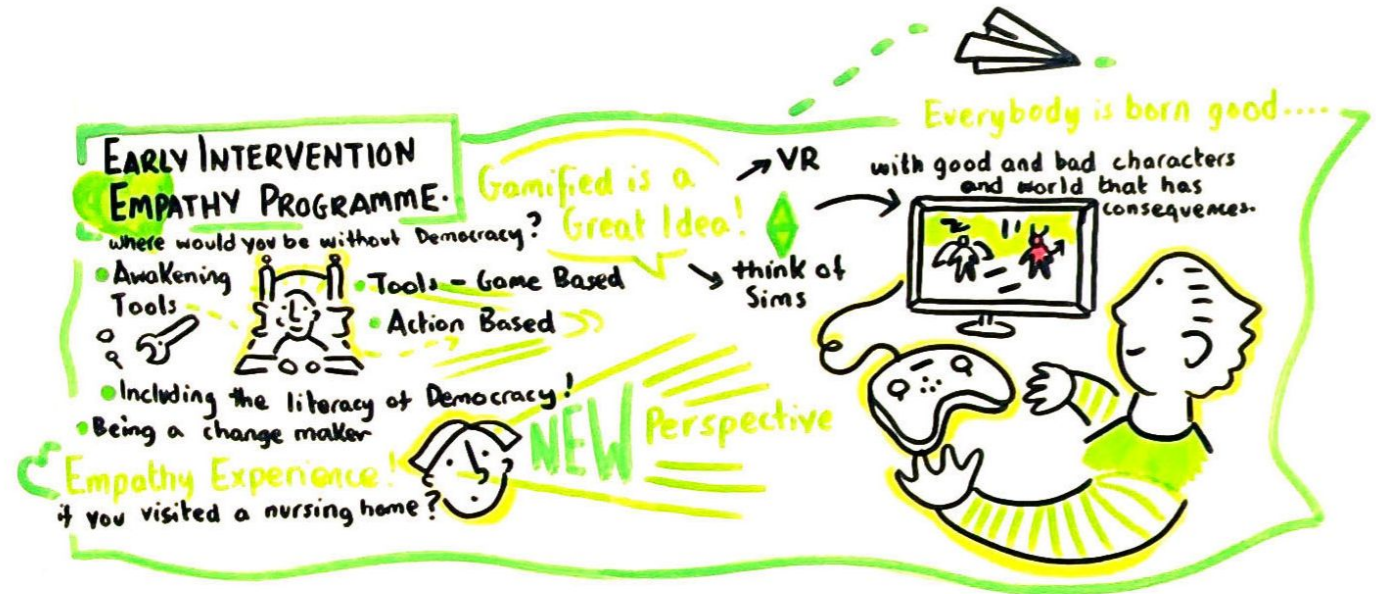
- Respect for self, others and environment is common across Irish curricula.
- Empathy is less apparent although it includes a focus on local and more distant others.
- It also includes conceptualisations such as 'historical empathy'.
- Within the post-conflict context, empathy can also be connected to dealing with conflict and/or teaching of controversial issues.

Local Project: What's the Story...?
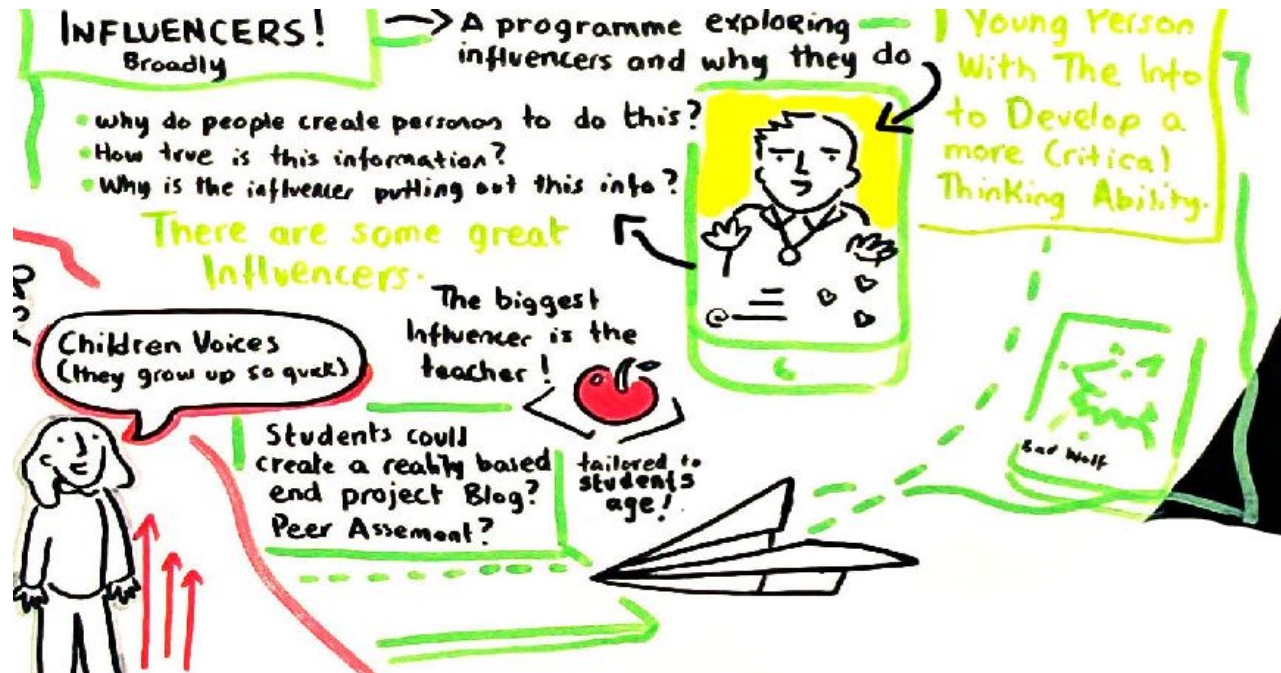
- Simply developing young people's political knowledge is not shown to improve judgments of accuracy, but media literacy education can develop critical perspectives on information (Kahne and Bowyer, 2016).
- Different forms of media literacy education are recognised, including those which focus on news, film, games, and digital and information literacy (Petronova et al., 2017).

- Working with information is relatively common in curricula across all levels
- Smaller number of references related to analysis of information.
- Reference to 'Misinformation', 'Media Literacy' and 'Scientific Literacy' are limited and confined to post-primary curricula.
- There is an entire JC Short Course on Digital Media Literacy.

Future Challenges to (Education for) Democracy

- Continued/increased violent conflict?
- Ongoing anti-immigrant protests?
- Increasing levels and forms of mis/disinformation?
- Climate and biodiversity action?
- A border poll?
    "Whether in the longer term NI remains British or secedes to the Irish Republic, that decision by referendum, should be rationally reached by well-taught and informed citizens who show critical awareness to both the positive and negative implications of cherishing their own sense of national identity." (McCully and Clarke, 2016, p. 365)
- Parental and societal resistance to types of schooling?
- National ban on smartphones in schools?

Thank you

Benjamin Mallon

Benjamin.mallon@dcu.ie