The Whole Education Network

System Note for the Innovative Learning Environments project (ILE)
Strand 3: 'Implementation and Change'

The Whole Education Network: System Note

Introduction, Aims, Context and Rationale

Whole Education is a not for profit organisation based in London that grew out of a charter calling for educational change in England, produced by the RSA titled *Education for the 21*[1]. Its primary aims are to develop a network to enable schools to provide a high quality whole education and to make the case for the need for and impact of a whole education. Beyond this, it seeks to cultivate a wider movement of stakeholders working to achieve its vision and to influence public thinking and policy to embrace a whole education as a basic human entitlement. The organisation's definition of a whole education is a broad and inclusive one that helps children and young people to develop a range of skills, qualities and knowledge needed for life, learning and work. It also seeks to help make learning more relevant and engaging, with young people owning their own learning It argues that it is the combination of these skills, qualities and knowledge that is important. It does not maintain the view that there is only one way of achieving this.

Context and rationale

The context of the English system [2]both created the need and provided the impetus for the development of the network, but the core elements, change model and many of the lessons learn to apply more widely across other geographical systems also. The context of a central government commitment to a school led system with resources concentrated at a school level balanced by high stakes testing and accountability processes means that the Whole Education Network is both a product of and in some ways a reaction to its time and context. It is a response to what some might describe as an over emphasis on conventional outcomes and test scores that can be easily measured. These factors provide an opportunity for national networks to facilitate peer-to-peer support between schools to together seize the agenda towards a values-led, self-improving system. The 'network' approach has been taken for three reasons. Firstly, it draws on research showing that institutional change is more sustainable and effective when led by practitioners / users. Secondly, within the current political context where policies and governments change relatively quickly, encouraging change to be led by practitioners / users protects to some extent against the short-termism that often comes with changing governments. Thirdly, the change / reduction in the role of the conventional 'middle tier' and a decline in conventional approaches to professional development provide a need for peer-to-peer learning to fill this gap.

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[1] RSA - http://www.thersa.org/action-research-centre/current-projects/education-campaign/education-for-the-21st-century-a-charter

[2] Department for Education – The Importance of Teaching - Coalition Government White Paper 2010

Aims

More fundamentally, it is also a response to what many, including the OECD, identify as a weakness of the English and other systems in terms of the "attainment gap" of outcomes achieved by more disadvantaged students. In part, its moral purpose is to play a role in helping to narrow this gap - a purpose underpinned by the belief that focussing on immediate outcomes and test scores is not enough, and that only by entitling all young people to a "whole education" can any school or system truly make a difference in the opportunities available to them.

In summary, the Whole Education Network has created a school to school membership organisation that seeks to inspire, enable and support the provision of an entitlement for all children and young people to "whole education" through both sharing and developing existing and new practice.

We describe a whole education in our aims as an education that:

- Helps children and young people to develop a range of skills, qualities and knowledge they will need for life, learning and work
- Helps make learning more relevant and engaging, with young people taking ownership of their own learning
- Supports learning across various settings (online, outside, at home, volunteering, through work) and engages the wider community in learning

These three aims are intentionally broad and uncontroversial, and they reflect the consensus amongst the teaching profession of what a "fit for purpose" education is.

This initiative is "innovative" because it uses a bottom-up, networked approach to achieve this change, as opposed to a prescriptive, top-down approach. This applies the notion of an "inside out approach"[3] (see below). It is also based on the premise described in the second McKinsey report in 2010 that, *the journey from great to excellent systems focuses on creating an environment that will unleash the creativity and innovation of its educators."* [4]

Who are the learners targeted and what environments and sites are to be brought in?

The learners targeted are children and young people studying in English schools and the staff who teach and support them. The sites brought in are all types of English schools including community schools, academies, private schools, free schools and faith schools. The Whole Education Network was born out of a group of 15 schools who nominated themselves as the founding members of a network which was committed to the three

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[3] Crossley, D et all; Sustainable Transformation, Bloomsbury 2013

[4] How the best school systems keep getting better; Mona Mourshed, Chinezi Chijioke, and Michael Barber; 2010

principles of a "whole education" listed above and to sharing with and learning from and with each other. The majority of network members are English state secondary schools with growing numbers of primary schools too. It has three categories of membership; Partner Schools, the main membership category which are called Pathfinder Schools and Network schools who join in locality groups.

Leadership and Partners

The Whole Education Network is led by a Director, Douglas Archibald, who previously carried out and published research on Communities of Practice in business[5], and an Executive Director, David Crossley, a former head teacher who developed and led a national major school to school project involving over 700 secondary schools from 2004-2008.[6] They together have extensive experience in school leadership, school improvement, change management and communities of practice. The network is also led by a Steering group of 12 school leaders who provide strategic input. Whole Education, the organisation, is governed by a board of 10 trustees whose Chair is Sir John Dunford, the former General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)[7] and current Pupil Premium Champion for the Coalition Government. It also includes representatives from third sector organisations, charities, not for profits and business as well as the education sector.

Strategies and Activities

The operational strategy is designed largely in line with the common principles of a Community of Practice, whereby the knowledge and expertise on providing a whole education exists within the network. The role of the 'centre' is to facilitate, broker and co-ordinate learning and support between our schools and partners.

Importantly, each school picks from a menu of Interest Group areas, activities and opportunities that are most suited to them and their needs so the mix of areas and activities that each school engages with will be different for every school. This is a crucial point underpinning the theory of change. In the same way schools are committed to personalising learning for students, the network is committed to personalising the learning and support opportunities for schools and their staff, based on needs and interests.

Any school can join the Whole Education Network, wherever they are on their journey. They are expected to a) have a deep commitment to providing a whole education at a leadership

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[5] McDermott and Archibald, harnessing your staff's informal networks, Harvard Business Review. 2010 www.hbr.org

[6] Raising Achievement Transforming Learning – summary of research included in Hargreaves and Shirley – The Fourth Way – Corwin 2009 – P55-56.

[7] www.ascl.org

level and b) have a deep commitment to learning with and from our schools and partners to do so. Schools self-declare on these points.

As the list below shows, the network provides a host of opportunities and activities for member schools to engage with – more than any one school could engage with. Importantly, each school is assigned a School Relationship Manager to help schools make the most of the opportunities available from the network by tailoring their engagement.

The School Relationship Manager, who will work with the school complete a School Survey that will help us to better understand:

- where the school is on its journey to providing a whole education
- the specific learning and improvement needs and interests for the school and staff
- where they have expertise and innovative practice that others could benefit from

This information for each school is used to drive network activity, link schools to each other, to our partner organisations and to projects, initiatives and programs that will help meet their needs.

Menu of Activities and Opportunities:

- **Conferences and Events:** Holding regular conferences and face-to-face events including a major annual national conference, regional, twilight regional sharing events and day long school based events in leading schools.
- **Regional Networks:** as well as the network existing at a national level, regional networks are emerging where professionals (especially those in classroom) can begin to share learning with peers, often in twilight after school learning events.
- **Interest Groups:** support professional learning around a matrix of currently 10 areas of interest on diverse areas such as Innovations in Literacy; project based learning; Flipped and Self-regulated Learning; Driving Digital Fluency' ; Engaging Parents; Passport to Employment; and Recognising Wider Progress. These areas have been chosen by members of the network and have changed over time. Each group has a different set of objectives ranging from simple practice sharing to joint practice development, through a variety of methods such as pilot projects, face-to-face events, online webinars and case studies.
- **Meta Interest Groups:** which overarch the network and address issues at a whole-school level, such as A Whole Education Curriculum; Narrowing the Gap; Transforming Professional Learning; and Leadership Culture and Change.
- **Online Learning and Sharing:** active online environment including regular webinars, being dynamic and responsive to the needs of the network, developing a decentralised organisation which is non-bureaucratic and is united around a common set of principles or goals.

- **International Study Tours and Visits:** including USA, Finland and Sweden, Canada.
- **Engagement Visits:** to member schools, teaching school alliances[8] and locality groups foster the development of within School and Locality Networks.
- **Peer Review Process:** which affirms, validates, challenges and supports the development of whole education practice. These Peer Reviews are led by a Headteacher from a leading WE school.
- **Leadership Programmes:** which support the development of values led, evidence informed and impact focussed practice. The Middle Leadership and Senior leadership programmes helps leaders to enact a whole education in their context and sphere of influence. Importantly, as well as wider leadership development support (3 days of training, with basic coaching support) leaders focus on an Impact Initiative within their school that will help deliver a whole education.
- **Collaborative Enquiry Groups:** Impact focussed joint practice development projects including the major focus area for 2014 focussing on Narrowing the Gap based on the "Spirals of enquiry" model developed in British Columbia and supported by colleagues from British Columbia and UK academics
- **Partner Organisations:** as well as schools, work with a group of Development Partners who are not for profit, third sector or private organisations who commit time and resources to support the development of practice with schools linked to Interest Groups. This helps to ensure that the practice of our schools and our partners remains at the cutting edge of development.
- **Development and Innovation Hub Projects:** The Development and Innovation Hub exists as a platform for our schools and partner organisations to obtain funding to pilot innovative approaches and evaluate impact. Examples include projects on Numeracy Across the Curriculum; Language Futures (1 Class, 10 different languages being learned); Effective use of Video to support Higher Order Staff Professional Learning.

Approach to change

How a school makes use of the full menu of activities to drive change is up to them, though they will be supported by their School Relationship manage through regular calls or visits to ensure they are aware of and making the most of the opportunities.

All of the menu of network activities that schools can engage with can be summarised around the 5i's Model as illustrated in the diagram below. This diagram was developed retrospectively by the Steering Group of schools to illustrate how the various activities support schools to provide a whole education.

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[8] For details on the development and role of teaching schools in England, see https://www.gov.uk/teaching-schools-a-guide-for-potential-applicants

Importantly, programmes like the Peer Review, Middle and Senior Leadership programmes and the Narrowing the Gap Enquiry groups were developed based on demand from schools to help with wider 'school improvement' focus to complement activities around inspiring professional learning, influencing thinking and innovation.

The Whole Education Network Model

The 5i's are the basis for the network model, with young people and their futures at the core

Improvement in School
Support for schools to progress on their journey to provide a fully rounded & engaging education, including improvement through peer support

Inspiring Professional Learning for Staff
Help high potential staff connect with like-minded peers at a national & global level through enquiry and joint practice development

Influencing Thinking
Influence practice, thinking & inform public debate; take your students, colleagues & key stakeholders with you in support of wider influence for change

Innovation in School
Support the development and spread of innovative practice with individuals and in-school networks

Impact on Young People
+ Help children and young people improve attainment and achievement
+ Develop more rounded young people with aspiration, wider skills and qualities and love of learning

1   The Whole Education Network is a Community of Practice. Please see appendix for more information on the theoretical basis for communities of practice.

As indicated above, it is based on an inside out, bottom up approach.

An Inside Out Model

Outside in…	Inside out…
A Defined "top down policy	Add any structures and processes to support it
Systems	DRDRDR Development and research cycles
Processes	Replicate best practice
Structures usually built on existing ones	Generalise from best practice
Bureaucracies	Allocate some resources or way of delivering
Employ People	Ask schools to respond to a defined policy with clear accountability and outcomes
Implement to Schools and students	

Crossley, D, Sustainable Transformation Bloomsbury 2013

It has drawn on and applied research and thinking about what makes lateral networks such as this effective, including the work of Professor David Hargreaves in his think piece for the English National College for Leadership and Learning[9], and been influenced by the work of a number of other leading national and international academics and practitioners.

Criteria for a deep partnership
A self-improving school system: towards maturity
David H Hargreaves, Wolfson College, Cambridge, October 2012

- Collective moral purpose is a value shared and enacted by all stakeholders, including students, within the partnership.
- Joint practice development is well established within and between schools in the partnership.
- Social capital is high within and between schools in the partnership.
- Evaluation and challenge are practised at every level within and between schools.

At a systemic level, we have five key strategic aims over a 10 year period:

- Develop the Whole Education Network to support schools to provide a whole education (current major focus)
- Make the case for a whole education with key stakeholder groups (with evidence from impact from schools as well as wider evidence of need)
- Create a wider movement for change across key stakeholder groups (e.g. employers, universities, parents, students)
- Influence public thinking and policy (to ensure accountability frameworks and policy are supportive of schools who want to provide a whole education)
- Maintain and adaptive, nimble and sustainable organisation able to deliver against our mission (with ownership spread across schools, partners and wider stakeholders)

These aims are interrelated but our progressive focus can be seen to extend in an additive, linear fashion over time.

How is communication and feedback assured?

Due to the organic and long-term nature of networks, feedback and monitoring is developing. It includes formal processes, as well as more informal mechanisms. Individual

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[9] ASCL – www.ascl.org

annual review conversations are carried out with all schools and organisations in the network. Members also complete an online survey to assess the impact of the network on their school in terms of a number of measures, conventional and otherwise. Feedback is built into all face-to-face events where participants complete short written evaluations. Convectional national data sources are collected and analysed each year. In addition, the Peer Review formally analyses the impact of Whole Education at a school level and a report is provided for each school visited, links with the wider network are built into to process and data is compiled at a network level. The current size and nature of the network fosters a culture of ongoing communication and feedback too.

Resources

Financial resources for 2013-2014 include (with 2014-2015 projections in italics):

In £	Events and conferences	Sponsorship	Network subscription fees (schools)	Network subscription fees (partner organisations)	Grants	Staff	Office Rent and services
Income	134,519 (*166,00*)	48,160 (*68,500*)	319,741 (*432,000*)	65,316 (*74,000*)	125,550 (*160,000*)		
Expenditure	153,125 (*137,425*)					295,544 (*552,500*)	54,913 (*67,902*)

Supplementary resources include an increasing dependence on "human capital" as the network increasingly makes use of paid expertise drawn from schools within the network and on a needs basis.

Developments over time

Whole Education, the organisation, is now half way through its 5th year, with the Whole Education Network now coming to the end of its 3rd year. The below table details major activities and developments.

	Whole Education	Whole Education Network
Year 1	Start up, attract seed funding, team, infrastructure. Test and pilot thinking with events and focus groups.	n/a
Year 2	Running "exhibitions" across country for schools with partner organisations to test demand build up schools database	n/a
Year 3		60 "Pathfinder" Schools join up to network. 12 Interest groups selected facilitated by school staff. Steering group

		of 10 schools established
Year 4		70 "Pathfinder" Schools join/renew membership. 15 "Partner" Schools join (higher level of engagement) and 20 "Network" Schools (lower level of engagement). 2 new Interest Groups established. Engagement visits to individual schools support the development of within school networks. Peer Review Process and Middle Leadership programme launched.
Year 5		80 "Pathfinder" Schools, 15 "Partner" Schools, 70 Network Schools. Continue as before, now with the offer of collaborative enquiry project "Spirals of Enquiry" to help network schools to narrow the achievement gap. Senior Leadership Programme launched
Years 6-10	Increasing focus over time around wider strategic aims to: Make the Case for a Whole Education Create a Wider Movement for Change Influence Public Thinking and Policy	Continue to grow and develop network with increasing focus on Impact on young people and impact on schools improvement around providing a whole education

Evidence of effectiveness and efficiency and Success factors

As a network that leaves the nature of engagement up to schools it is difficult to track cause and effect relationships. However, we have some proxy measures and emerging approaches that are relevant

Engagement and growth as a proxy

- Membership renewal and planned growth: ongoing growth of network year on year
- Participation in network activity: increasing breadth of activities and programs schools are engaging with
- Feedback at events: consistently high quality and positive
- Engagement Dashboard: we track the level of school engagement in network activities

Tracking Impact

- Annual online survey to assess the impact of the network on the school related to the 5i's Model. This is evaluated by schools themselves on the extent to which the network is supporting their school and staff on the 5i's: Influencing Thinking; Inspiring Professional Learning; Innovation in School; Improvement in School; Impact on Young People. This was piloted last year and will provide a baseline year on year.
- Impact Tracking: we have started this year using conventional measures (i.e. student attainment) to track how Whole Education schools are performing as a cohort and in relation to each other. Further work is required to a) isolate the impact of specific practices and projects on attainment and b) to recognise the wider impact of school practices (i.e. on skills, qualities or engagement in learning)

Qualitative

- Growing evidence from schools' views on the impact of offering a Whole Education in explaining their own improvement journeys
- The approach to staffing and capacity which is predicated on a small central team and capacity drawn from schools and other supporters of the network
- A genuine appetite for change from school leaders, in line with principles and values of the network and the methodology of the network
- The fact that a model such as this and the approach taken are sustainable and not reliant on central government funding

Key Performance Indicators

We also have some Key Performance Indicators that we track around:

- Network Growth and Engagement
- School Development
- Impact
- Leadership and Sustainability (increasing ownership in schools and partners, not central team)

Tensions and Impediments

- High Stakes Accountability structures with a sole focus on exam results over wider skills and qualities and a punitive system, which can close schools if exam targets are not met. This still discourage some schools from being confident in the aims of the

network and committing time and money to it. This is unlikely to change in the short term.

- Growth continues at a linear rate year on year, with projections by Year 6 to be around 150 Schools. The network needs to gain a critical mass for the approach to be able to give full value to its members. This is important for both financial sustainability, the ability to demonstrate impact and to influence policy.

- Once joined, teaching staff still have very limited time and capacity to contribute or make the most of the network. Our strategy to overcome this is through virtual learning, but this still has limited exposure in schools. Some staff are still reluctant to use new technologies.

- Time to build and prove impact. The aspiration is for the network to offer wide access to high quality professional learning and innovative ways to support schools in developing the professional capital of their staff in cost effective ways with proven impact.

Further Source information

Whole Education Website - http://www.wholeeducation.org/

Whole Education Network offer for schools - http://wholeeducation.org/pages/overview/get_involved/617,0/become_a_pathfinder_school.html

Making the Case for a Whole Education - http://www.wholechildeducation.org/take-action/making-the-case

'Sustainable School Transformation' – Edited David Crossley (Executive Director of Whole Education Network) including case studies from Whole Education Schools and Chapters written by two partner school leaders. http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/sustainable-school-transformation-9781780937830/

Online articles about the Whole Education Network - http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/article-search/tags/whole-education

Plus footnotes and other references included within the document.