

Prosiect Dysgu Cydradd

Facilitating Teacher Engagement in More Inclusive Practice

Project grant holders: Sue Davies, Andy Howes, Tim Carroll, Peter Farrell

Aims

At the heart of this project are teachers engaging in collaborative action research with colleagues in order to develop their practice more inclusively. The project is designed to investigate the factors and processes which help and hinder teacher engagement, and which make that engagement more or less effective in influencing the participation and learning of pupils, particularly those currently at the margins of their classes and schools.

Significance

Inclusive education is being pursued at the level of rhetoric and policy throughout the English and Welsh education systems. However, significant tensions exist around the achievement of more inclusive practice, particularly in secondary schools. The research project aims to develop school-level strategies and tactics for linking policy and practice in order to enhance the quality of education for relatively marginalised and underachieving pupils.

Framework for the inquiry

The research will be carried out in six secondary schools (four in Wales, two in England). In each school, groups of teachers will work together to implement small-scale action research projects to improve pupil attitudes to learning.

Educational psychologists will play a key role in facilitating the projects; they will also work alongside the university researchers to monitor and explore the reasons for changes in teacher engagement. In addition, the research team will monitor the impact of the teachers' changing practice on the learning and school experience of their pupils.

Experience of working in large research networks leads us to emphasise the need for commonalities across the project sites in order to strengthen the findings that emerge through comparison and contrast between them. There are three major dimensions of commonality:

- **Participants** Educational psychologists work as skilled observers and facilitators – and sharing between each other along the way;
- **Substantive focus** There is a common focus to the teacher action – improving pupil attitudes to learning;
- **Method** The research is constructed as a design study, focused on 'change'.

Research design

Research questions considered	Data needed
<p>1 <i>What factors relating to teachers and their learning environment facilitate or hinder schools or teachers from engaging in collaborative action research with the aim of developing inclusion?</i></p>	
<p>For example, can the group or department work together in this way? Is such research a priority? How does it fit with the school's culture? Is there uncertainty about the outcome? Will demands and circumstances change? With regard to inclusion, there may be different educational perspectives, or hostility to inclusion. Teachers may be perceived as lacking in expertise and may themselves vary in their willingness to move outside their comfort zones.</p>	<p>Data generated through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• teachers' questionnaire about existing attitude to inclusion and action research as it relates to behaviour, pupil attitudes and diversity;• Interviews with senior management about inclusion and behaviour within the action plan, and about teacher development and workload;• Initial focus group for teachers;
<p>2 <i>What features of practice, organisation or external support can enhance these facilitating factors, or mitigate hindering ones?</i></p>	
<p>For example, in what ways can senior staff in the school support an effective action research process? What materials assist teachers in working together to develop more inclusive practices and arrangements? What useful role can educational psychologists play as supportive outsiders? Which LEA personnel, policies and processes are relevant?</p>	<p>Here stories will be particularly important, revealing an understanding of informal networks of influence and the operation of policies in practice. Use will be made of diaries, structured reflective journals, and interviews with teachers and educational psychologists.</p>
<p>3 <i>Does teacher engagement in collaborative action research have an effect on the learning participation of pupils?</i></p>	
<p>For example, will teachers feel able and willing to predict the sorts of changes which might occur in pupils' behaviour and attainments? Might pupils also be able and willing to comment on the conditions influencing their attainments and engagement?</p>	<p>The project will involve working with teachers' theories of change in order to determine likely influences and effects. Relevant local pupil level data on attainment, attitude to learning and engagement in learning will be crucial.</p>
<p>4 <i>In respect of these questions, what are the significant differences between the Welsh and English contexts?</i></p>	
<p>We will have the opportunity to compare different relationships between bilingualism and inclusion. Will the relative absence of league tables and standardised assessment in Wales be an identifiable factor?</p>	<p>The active comparison of cases will be essential for drawing conclusions in this area.</p>



How do we become more inclusive?

Partnerships

Frequent discussions between educational psychologists and university staff have informed the development of this project. This led to an elaboration of research questions and proposed linking with data generation activities.

Research team

University researchers: Sue Davies, Andy Howes, Peter Farrell, Tim Carroll with two research assistants to be appointed

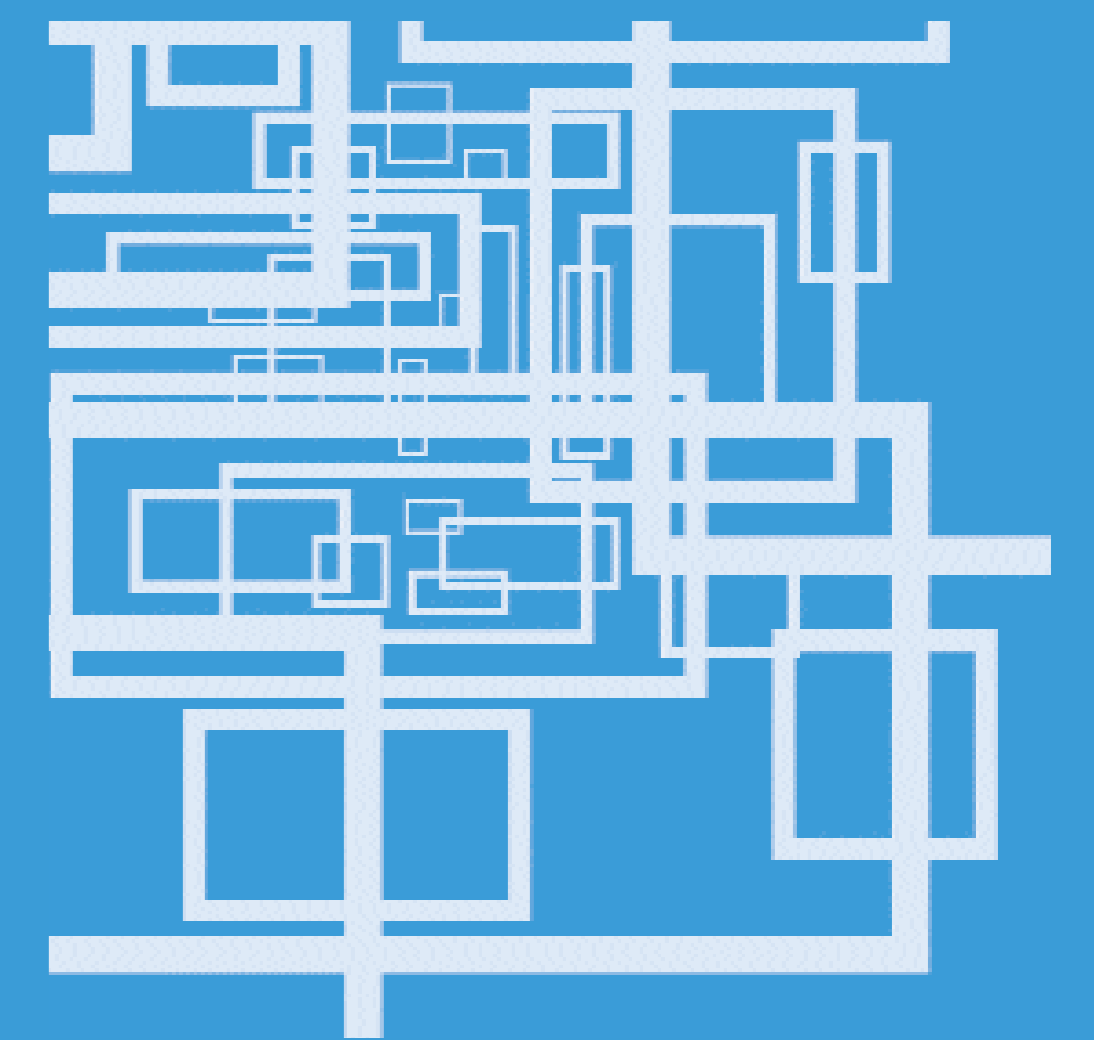
Educational psychologists: Adele Christopher, Mark Hancock, Garry Squires, Gill Rhydderch, Bethan Roberts, Anwen Thomas

Teachers: to be decided

Contact details

Please feel free to contact us about the project, or to look at our developing website (via www.tlrp.org)
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Teaching and Learning Research Programme



TLRP involves over 30 research teams with contributions from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Work began in 2000 and will continue to 2008/9.

Learning: TLRP's overarching aim is to improve outcomes for learners of all ages in teaching and learning contexts across the UK.

Outcomes: TLRP studies a broad range of learning outcomes, including the acquisition of skill, understanding, knowledge and qualifications and the development of attitudes, values and identities relevant to a learning society.

Lifecourse: TLRP supports projects and related activities at many ages and stages in education, training and lifelong learning.

Enrichment: TLRP commits to user engagement at all stages of research. It promotes research across disciplines, methodologies and sectors, and supports national and international co-operation.

Expertise: TLRP works to enhance capacity for all forms of research on teaching and learning, and for research-informed policy and practice.

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