esha magazine

DECEMBER 2016

Lessons from the ESHA Biennial Conference

European School Heads Association

ESHA magazine is the official magazine of the European School Heads Association, the Association for school leaders in Europe. ESHA magazine will be published nine times per school year. You are welcome to use articles from the magazine but we would appreciate it if you contacted the editor first.

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ABOUT ESHA
ESHA is an Association that consists of 42 Associations of School Heads and Educational employers in 26 countries in primary, secondary and vocational education.

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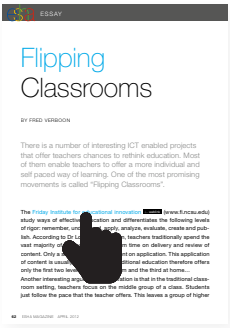
ESSAY

Flipping Classrooms

BY FRED VERBOON

There is a number of interesting ICT enabled projects that offer teachers chances to rethink education. Most of them enable teachers to offer a more individual and self paced way of learning. One of the most promising movements is called "Flipping Classrooms".

The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation (www.fi.ncsu.edu) study ways of effective [illegible]ation and differentiates the following levels of rigor: remember, und[illegible] apply, analyze, evaluate, create and publish. According to Dr Lo[illegible], teachers traditionally spend the vast majority of [illegible] on time on delivery and review of content. Only a [illegible] on application. This application of content is usua[illegible]ional education therefore offers only the first two levels [illegible] and the third at home...

Another interesting ag[illegible]ation is that in the traditional classroom setting, teachers focus on the middle group of a class. Students just follow the pace that the teacher offers. This leaves a group of higher

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Lessons from the ESHA 2016 Biennial Conference

In education, we have never experienced so many changes in such a short period. Student centric learning, lifelong learning, the new Pisa2016 strategy with its focus on competences and the current immigrant issues are among the many challenges we are facing today.

BY FRED VERBOON,
DIRECTOR, EUROPEAN SCHOOL HEADS ASSOCIATION

esha 2016
Biennial Conference
Maastricht The Netherlands
October 19—21
Organized and hosted by VS

During these times of changes, The Dutch school leaders association AVS hosted the 2016 ESHA Biennial Conference in the historic city of Maastricht, The Netherlands, from October 19th to 21st, 2016. The conference addressed all major leadership issues during the keynote speeches, the interactive tracks and theme cafes all in the heart of the beautiful town of Maastricht.

The themes were divided into 4 interactive tracks:
- Dream of the future: 21st century pedagogies
- Inspire and Innovate: 21st century leadership
- Global citizenship: 21st century competences
- Well being for 21st century kids

ORGANIZING THE EVENT

The preparations of the conference started 20 months ago. A group of 15 interested educational leaders gathered for the first steering group meeting. Their goal was to come up with the content of the conference. Their first step was to draft a list of all major school leadership issues and divided them into groups.

It became clear that there are so many challenges that they had to group them into the four main domains of leadership: pedagogies, leadership, competences and well being for children. Each domain was appointed a leader and his/her task was to come up with a program that highlighted all major aspects of each domain.

In the mean time, the AVS office worked hard to deliver a conference that was unique in its own way. The objective of the AVS staff was to organize a conference that offered the best of Maastricht.
Their first tasks was to engage the city of Maastricht with the objective of securing the prestigious Vrijthof Theater. The theater at the Vrijthof Square is among the finest in the Netherlands and not available for

commercial activities. After several meetings with representatives of the city council, it became clear that they supported the ESHA 2016 Biennial Conference and offered the theater as main conference location for the key note sessions.

From that point on the AVS staff was brave enough to take on the challenges of organizing a conference that was characterized by its many locations: 4 conference locations, lunches in 14 restaurants at the Vrijthof square, theme cafes and the meet the board session at 5 cafes in the evening, a Gala dinner in the caves of Neercannes, guest rooms in 6 hotels, school visits to 47 schools and a closing session at Chateau Gerlach. You can imagine that this was not the most easiest conference to organize…

During the conference I had the pleasure of working with the dedicated AVS staff that made sure that all the logistical challenges were met and nobody got lost. My special thanks goes out to the two persons that organized the 47 school visits.
We left Maastricht with a smile. Over 700 persons attended the conference and their feedback was very positive. I would like to congratulate AVS, the Dutch school heads association with such a great conference. The ESHA 2016 Biennial Conference was a great success. ■

The pictures, presentations and videos of some of the keynotes, performances and workshops are located at **MyESHA**

Images from the ESHA 2016 Biennial Conference

Thank you

On behalf of ESHA and the AVS I would like to thank all of you, who came out to the ESHA 2016 biennial conference in Maastricht. Thank you all for your participation and contribution to make this conference a success. It has been a great experience having so many of you at the conference sharing your ideas and experiences and being open minded to receiving so much information that has been given to you via keynotes, performances, workshops and individual conversations. Many thanks to all school leaders in the region that opened their schools to international colleagues from all over Europe.

I sincerely hope you have gone home inspired with new ideas, new connections and that you might have been able to apply some of those into your school or in your classroom. 'Schoolleaders can make the difference'.

ESHA is proud to present to you the renewed website **www.esha.org** So if you would like to look back at what you have heard and seen you will be able to find pictures, presentations and videos of some of the keynotes, performances and workshops via **MyESHA**

Monique Westland

esha 2016
Biennial Conference
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Agenda 2017

APRIL

21st – 22nd GA meeting TBD

OCTOBER

26th – 28th 4th Regional Conference in South Eastern Europe, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia

Address to the ESHA 2016 Biennial Conference

Clive Byrne, President of the European School Heads Association, addressed the many challenges school leaders are facing in these times of change.

BY CLIVE BYRNE, PRESIDENT,
EUROPEAN SCHOOL HEADS ASSOCIATION

esha 2016 Biennial Conference
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Minister, distinguished guests, counsellor and aldermen from Maastricht, President of AVS, who has spoken so eloquently, the President of the International Confederation of Principals, the President of the European Parents Association, who are joining us in a confraternal way, I just want to welcome you and all of the delegates to our conference here in Maastricht and look forward to an enormous learning experience and professional development experience over the next number of days.

I would like to introduce the Board of ESHA and ask them briefly just to stand up. We have Greg Dempster from Scotland, Omar Mekki from Norway, Barbara Novinec from Slovenia and Jens Nielsen from Denmark.

Briefly, the itinerary is a meet the board session at some stage today and tomorrow but we are delighted to interact with the delegates from all over Europe who are joining us for this event and it is absolutely apt that we concentrate on school leadership, because school leadership matters. And, as Petra was remarking, the concurrent theme give individuals attending conference over the next few days the opportunity to attend interesting and relevant workshops that can affect their day to day life in their own schools back home. Because as we come to 2016, coming towards the end of it and beginning to go on into 2017 and beyond, the challenges for school leadership have never, ever, ever been greater. Schools are asked to solve, routinely, society's problems.

ESHA's policy is that schools must be seen as beacons of hope, whether it's to do with children who are disaffected or at least school leaving, children that are migrants coming from battlefields in either Syria or Africa, refugees making their way, struggling their way across the Mediterranean, all of those are issues that are now in schools and schools are expected to cope, and schools are willing to cope, because they see that the vision and the values that they have for each individual society must be matched by the values that we try to transcribe and to hand over to the next generation.

We find, without being overtly political, that issues to do with OECD, PISA studies and so on, are often used as battering rams to criticise school leaders and education systems. That is because, purely and simply, people look at the top line, countries have moved up,

countries have moved down. At the ESHA Board we had a presentation from Andrea Schleicher of OECD in Ljubljana in April earlier on this year. The key point that was made, that the headline figures are never, ever, ever the quality of the report and the in depth analysis that is made available to each of the participating countries, people rarely study that in sufficient detail to grow and to benefit from what happens as a result of the studies that's there.

I know that there will be further studies coming out soon, in November/December time, and there will the usual headlines, but we need as educational leaders to recognise that these are snapshots in time and actually to speak up in our own countries or in our own associations, individual statistics are misused to make political points that are not fair on the schools. Because, as I say, schools must be seen as beacons of hope and if we, given the appropriate resources, we will cope with whatever society demands for us to do.

Miracles. As I often joke, the impossible principles manage but miracles take a little bit longer. We need to try and see, through negotiation with our municipalities or our civil authorities, that we are in a position to cater for the client base in the context of the society in which they are living so that we can grow and develop and hand on the vision that we have for our society and imbed the values that we needed to do that.

One of the issues that has come up recently in my own country, Ireland, is we have tried to develop leadership supports by establishing, with school leader organisations and our ministry of education, a centre for school leaderships; issues to do with mentoring, issues to do with coaching, issues to do with having I have forgotten the word now at the moment, but actually having a group of principals that will come up, aspiring school leaders that can take over. They

are the three issues that through partnership approach between the professional associations for school leaders and the ministry we are trying to put in those necessary supports.

The one thing that has become clear to us, we have tried to solve many of society's problems, many of our staff's problems, many of our student's problems, but oftentimes we don't look after ourselves sufficiently. What we need to do is to prioritise wellbeing and to prioritise ourselves on occasions, because we cannot do our very, very best job if we are struggling ourselves personally without the necessary supports.

One of the issues that I would like to prioritise over the next phase of conference, and it's occurring in some of the themes that we're working through, 21st century pedagogies, 21st century leadership skills, the whole citizenship agenda and the Well-being agenda, is that we must prioritise children in lesser served communities, people who find our curricula or our syllabi or our education systems not to their liking.

We need to involve what I would call student voice. The best way to get students on board is to consult with them and to realise that the advice that they can give us, in working in partnership with those and with the parents, because with the parents of those particular students, lifelong learning opportunities are the key to success. It's a whole approach between the school community, involving school leadership, the municipality, the parents and the students.

If we can grow and develop that, I believe that we can go from strength to strength to look after those lesser served communities and to create and embed a culture of lifelong learning.

One of the issues that was discussed at the general assembly yesterday was this whole concept of Europe, of the European Parliament, the European Commission and so on, and the possibilities of ESHA, the European School Heads Association, that are brought about by involvement in and eTwinning and Erasmus+, because conversations and contacts between schools in the different jurisdictions are the greatest way to break down barriers and also to promote this fraternal idea of a greater Europe which can act for everybody's benefit.

So it is really, really important that we explore over the next while, as we mix and mingle amongst others from the different countries, the different jurisdictions and so on, that we create opportunities to allow

and eTwinning culture grow and develop, because it's something that the European Union and ESHA and the Commission and Erasmus and our own agencies in our own countries is keen to promote. It's a resource that's there that's underutilised and we can definitely do more.

In coming to a conclusion, I just want to say to you that the European School Heads is a body representing thousands of school leaders throughout Europe, it doesn't have an enormous budget but it does have access and it has an enormous moral authority, and that moral authority gives us the possibilities of speaking with professional associations in the different countries, with ministers, with ministries and with municipalities to enable us to promote the idea of school leadership as a common good, because school leadership as a common good, properly resourced, properly trained and properly appointed with particular terms of reference can do nothing but good for our own society, for our own countries and for the greater Europe which ESHA is a part of.

So, I want to thank you for your listening to me today very, very briefly and I want to look forward to meeting you over the next number of days in any number of different fora, informal and formal, where we can exchange ideas and go from strength to strength.

Thank you very much for your time. ■

Clive Byrne, ESHA President
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ESHA General Assembly, 18 October 2016, Maastricht

Just before the ESHA2016 Biennial Conference, at October the 18th, the 42 member associations of ESHA gathered at the house of parliament of the province of Limburg. In the same room as where the treaty of Maastricht was signed. This article summarizes the proceedings and some of the decisions that were made during the meeting

GREG DEMPSTER, SECRETARY GENERAL ESHA BOARD

WELCOME

Clive Byrne, President of ESHA, welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular our guests: Eszter Salamon (President of European Parent's Association), Ari Pokka (President of ICP), Fiona Forbes (President Elect of ICP) and Hans Teunissen (Limburg Regional Minister for Education).

Hans Teunissen shared his belief in the great importance of education and highlighted the focus within Limburg on languages and on digital learning. He welcomed ESHA members from around Europe to Maastricht and wished ESHA well for an excellent visit and conference.

ADMINISTRATION AND UPDATE ESHA WORK

The minutes of the last ESHA General Assembly meeting (8 April 2016, Ljubljana, Slovenia) were unanimously approved without amendment.

Monique Westland provided the meeting with brief updates about ESHA involvement in EC projects (Entrepreneurship, Intercultural Learning, Early School leaving and 'Breaking the Silence' – a project focussed on tackling child abuse, any GA member interested in engaging with this project should contact Monique Westland via monique.westland@esha.org.

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

Huub Friederichs, an ESHA partner on this project, explained his varied background in engineering, finance, health and education before setting out the scale of the problem that the project sought to address. Early school leaving was a significant issue in most countries of the EU and the project would focus on dropout prevention – Huub also described this as 'push-out prevention' as it was wrong to think about this in terms of the young person's decision to opt-out when we should be thinking about what factors might be addressed

to reduce the number of young people becoming disillusioned with school.
The General Assembly had group discussions about the issues contributing to Early School Leaving and possible solutions.

ELECTIONS

Jaume Pratt (Chair of the elections committee) explained that three roles on the ESHA Board had been open for nominations. These were the President and two board members. There had been only one candidate nominated for each post so there was no election required. Clive Byrne had been re-elected as ESHA President. Omar Mekki and Greg Dempster had been re-elected as Board Members.

ESHA BIENNIAL 2018

Clive announced that with only one remaining bid to host the next ESHA Biennial he was delighted to announce that the ESHA biennial conference in 2018 would take place in Tallinn, Estonia. Toomas Kruusimägi gave a brief introduction to Estonia and looked forward to welcoming ESHA to Tallinn in 2018.

ESHA ACADEMY

Fred Verboon presented the plan for the ESHA Academy. The ESHA academy is a new initiative that aims at offering school leaders throughout Europe an opportunity to attend leadership courses of a high international level in several European cities. The program includes courses from renown institutions like the Ontario Principals Council, job shadowing with European colleagues and an optional MSc accreditation by ISSBS in Slovenia.
The program will take advantage of the Erasmus+ funding opportunities with the objective of removing the financial barriers for all member associations.

The program is in its initial phase and all ESHA members are asked to contribute to the program by giving input to the program.

Ontario Principal Council – Joanne Robinson from OPC had been delayed so was unable to attend the meeting. Instead, Omar Mekki explained the modular International School Leader programme offered by OPC as he had arranged for some of their training to be delivered in Norway. Omar reflected on the very positive response he had received from Norwegian and Scottish school leaders who had attended the training and suggested to ESHA GA members that if they were interested in high quality, relevant and practical training for school leaders than this was very much worth looking at. He also noted that OPC arranged Principal Exchanges and group visits to Ontario. Omar had recently taken a group of Norwegians on a study trip to Ontario and was very impressed with the organisation and content provided by OPC.

For more information on International School leadership go to www.internationalschoolleadership.com

MICHAEL FULLAN, JOANNE QUINN & JOANNE MCEACHEN

Michael and his colleagues explained their current project 'New Pedagogies for Deep Learning'. The team was interested in system change but was working directly with groups of practitioners in pursuit of iterative improvement. Their work was practice based, taking account of the best in pedagogy and seeking to make links with measurable impacts – trying to identify causal pathways.

It was clear to them that a significant feature of effective systems was coherence. This meant putting the right drivers in the right place in the system in relation to leadership, pedagogy and impact on

learning. Michael reminded the GA that coherence was subjective in that it was reliant on how individuals interpreted and interacted with the information and motivators provided to them. For this reason it was absolutely essential that structures, policies and expectations were all expressed with as much clarity as possible. Joanne Quinn explained that part of this 'building clarity' was a focus on precision when developing new pedagogies founded on the 6 C's of Deep Learning: Creativity, Communication, Citizenship, Critical Thinking, Character, Collaboration. This included:

- Being specific about what we are trying to do and how we will do it.
- Learning in partnership and seeking intentional links to learning inside and outside school.
- Making use of all learning environments – not being constrained by just thinking about school.
- Amplifying learning by effective use of technology (rather than trying to find a use for technology because it is there).
- Assessing impact at all stages.

Joanne McEachen stressed the importance of thoughtfully building up new pedagogies as if lessons are to be learned from implementation that allow incremental improvement then the assessment of impact needs to be based on the same set of elements that were used to plan the approaches – this was very much linked to the openness and clarity explained earlier.

Michael highlighted the implications for school leaders as the 'glue to stick the change together'. Leaders need to demonstrate that they are the lead learner (listen, learn, leverage, lead – ask questions you don't have the answers for) and to cultivate that passion for learning and leadership in others. This demonstration of good learning liberates students and practitioners to do the same. School leaders also

need to look outside their own schools to help others and to improve – *'…all schools need the fuel of external interaction.'*

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Toni González Picornell & Amparo García Escarbajal briefly outlined a project proposal 'Approach to a Possible European Model of Professional Management' and asked that any GA member interested in engaging with the project contact them for further information (gonzalezpicornell@gmail.com or garcaescarabajalamparo@gmail.com)

CLOSING OF THE MEETING

Clive Byrne thanked everyone for their attention and contributions throughout the meeting and looked forward to what promised to be an excellent ESHA biennial over the following days. ■

Hope Flowers School a great example towards responsible world citizenship

One of the workshops on the ESHA conference in Maastricht was on Global Citizenship.

WARNER TEN KATE ON BEHALF OF IBRAHIM ISSA, SCHOOL DIRECTOR FROM BETHLEHEM IN PALESTINE

The presentation highlights on the historical situation and context for finding founding Hope Flowers School 32 years ago by Hussein Issa, a promotor of peace, promoting coexistence and non-violent resistance to occupation. This was welcomed neither by Israeli authorities nor by Palestinian people. The school grew gradually, and evolved to contain also a secondary school. The school has been leading in the field of meeting special needs of the students especially in trauma-healing. The school has a history of cooperation with Israeli schools and students with diverse religious backgrounds which is maintained in spite of the obstructions. Most recently a cooperation was established in the field of autism, where Palestinians had only limited understanding and Israelis were willing to help out.
One of the striking features of the school is that it receives no government funding at all. The school is dependent on tuition (parents) and benefactors, often organized in foundations of friends of Hope Flowers (in USA, Norway, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands).

ABOUT IBRAHIM ISSA

The present director, Ibrahim is a son of the founder, Hussein Issa. He grew up in one of the refugee camps in Palestine. After completion of his studies as a mechanical engineer (in Holland) he went back in 2001 for a short period during promising peace talks and an Palestinian uprising at the time. He felt he had to stay there and was asked to be the director. He has had problems both with Israeli and Palestinian authorities. Once even his house was demolished after he was taken to jail (which turned out to be a mistake).

THREATS TO THE SCHOOL

Soon after he took office the school received a demolition order for the building. That was later suspended after international protests. Also at one time the road to the school was ploughed over making it harder for the children and their parents to reach the school.

The school is literally on the edge of the Palestinian- Israeli confrontations. The wall built in recent years runs close to the school and makes access to the school for many students difficult. Next to that there are the numerous road blocks that make coming to school time consuming. The school finds that many pupils lack basic provisions and try to meet these needs by providing meals and sometimes clothing. The school aims to be a safe place for teachers and kids. Children cannot properly learn when they are hungry or disturbed by regular violence and bombing around them.

Besides this the school needs to deal with traumas of children that sometimes have witnessed horrible things like torture or even the killing of one of their parents. This leads to lack of focus and concentration, sometimes aggressive behaviour etc. Sometimes parents are in jail and often they lack a job. If they have one in Israeli territory it takes them a long time to go back and forth to their work because of Israeli security measures. The trauma approach is especially important to prevent the growing circle of violence. Teachers are asked to look out for symptoms so that children may be referred to specialized care either within or outside of the school.

Next to working with teachers and students, the school also has programs for parents. Some of them are directed towards creating employment for women.

Ibrahim Issa, director of Hope Flowers School

Workhop Ibrahim Issa at ESHA 2016 Biennial Conference

INTERVIEW WITH IBRAHIM

You might expect to meet a stressed or maybe bitter person. Ibrahim however is a friendly man who takes all that comes to him and the school with a touch of humour.

How do you like the conference?

I enormously appreciate to be with so many colleagues from all over Europe. I get very little chance to interact with other school leaders. The presentations are excellent, but you must understand that I have questions as to the applicability of some of it under the circumstances that we work in, with poverty and many dysfunctional families, and many children whose basic and special needs we need to find answers to.

How do you see the future of the school?

It is difficult, and physical situations of the wall and the road blocks threaten our future. Next to that the exchange with Israeli colleagues seems to be getting more difficult, many of them come here without their colleagues or families knowing. Sometimes during our 2 day workshops however, I notice that they and their Palestinian counterparts – when they interact on the basis of their knowledge and their concern for children- more and more start regarding each other as individuals, and the being of Israeli or Palestinian is not of much importance at those times. I tremendously enjoy when they say they have told their families about interacting with us. These are the moments times that give me hope for the future.

We will have to keep thinking about the time after the conflict. It is my conviction that in the future their there will be one state in which we all live. We do not just need politicians and legislation to make this come true, we need humans that stop being hostile.

What are your takeaways from this conference?

I hope it will be possible to have a meeting or conference in the not too distant future on a smaller scale, involving interaction between European, Israeli and Palestinian school leaders. We should together focus on the needs of education now that Europe is also faced with problems of refugees and traumas on a larger scale. We should learn from each other. I am encouraged by the support that I got from the presidents of AVS and ESHA, I felt very welcome in the meetings, and had a very interested audience. I hope to hear from many of you, and invite you to visit our website **www.hopeflowersschool.org**

Peace is a responsibility of every individual

I dropped the idea of such a conference to some of the colleagues I met, and they were immediately enthusiastic. I hope that the spirit of cooperation and leadership may also be broadened from Europe to our region for once, and that especially in the interest of our children we may learn together in such a conference, and lay the seeds for further cooperation among us in the future. ■

How Khan Academy can improve the educational outcomes of students (II)

I have had the pleasure to attend the Wednesday and Thursday days of the ESHA conference 2016. I have attended very interesting Keynotes and talked to different people from several countries. Very inspiring indeed, I hope you have enjoyed it as much as I have! Also inspiring for me were the two sessions I gave about the possibilities of Khan Academy as a means to help your students improve their educational outcomes.

BY YVONNE KLEEFKENS, PRESIDENT DUTCH KHAN ACADEMY

In the September magazine, I also made the suggestions that in order to make that happen, you just simply spread the word as much as possible:

- Anyone can start learning at Khan Academy just by picking any topic from the list of subjects at: https://www.khanacademy.org/.
- But only when you create an account, Khan academy can keep track your progress and offer you adaptive learning
- Check whether translation for your language is underway or maybe even already available: https://khanacademy.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/226322087-Contact-info-Language-Advocates and https://es.khanacademy.org/, https://fr.khanacademy.org/, https://de.khanacademy.org/, etcetera

You can also embed Khan Academy in your own education, for example like this:

- Use Khan Academy for yourself as a source of inspiration for the topics your students find most difficult. Maybe Salman Khan's approach can bring you new ideas. E.g. https://www.khanacademy.org/economics-finance-domain/core-finance/housing/home-equity-tutorial/v/introduction-to-balance-sheets) explains the balance-sheet in an intuitive but concrete way for students to grasp.
- Or even give the video as homework and test the next day how far they are with the topic. ("Flip the Classroom")
- Use Khan Academy to fill in students gaps. Have a student take an assessment to show their skill level. Then put them in the appropriate MATH mission working on mastering the skills at each level. The videos, hints, and lectures are very helpful for the students to learn the material.

For more inspiration, see https://www.khanacademy.org/educator and https://www.khanacademy.org/educator/reference-for-coaches.

Hope it helps, lots of success!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yvonne Kleefkens is mathematician, IT-professional, Higher Education IT-Teacher, Entrepreneur and Chairwoman of the Stichting Khan Academy NL ■

Images from the ESHA 2016 Biennial Conference

Energy and hope

Looking back on the ESHA Biennial Conference in Maastricht being held from October 19th – 21st of 2016 I feel so much energy and hope. From the first day on, there was a very special vibe.

PETRA VAN HAREN, PRESIDENT OF AVS,
HOST OF THE ESHA2016 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

School leaders and other guests connected with the themes and activities and connected with each other in a very inspiring way. Keynote speakers and wonderful performances touched both the left and right side of our brains and touched our hearts.

By walking through the city our bodies were active as well. Workshops and activities like the school visits filled and coloured our professional learning and sharing of knowledge. New networks were being build. Whenever I saw participants or talked with school leaders, people spo ke about education and leadership. And not in a superficial way, but always with curiosity and an open learning attitude. Sharing emotions and what was learned or experienced in our schools or at the conference. People shared inspirations and visions and used this to 'mirror' the situation in the country of origin, with the new ideas and insights.

In Europe we have a lot of differences in our systems and our working situations. But as leaders we find we have even more in common. We all dedicate our lives and work to the development of children, our schools and our teachers. We all seek the best way to be educational leaders in a changing world. We try to answer to our challenges. Our societies are captured in global and regional developments. Wellbeing for kids and equal chances for all are under pressure. Technological developments provide us with threats and opportunities. With all that is coming towards us, we want for our children to have a future in a liveable, respectful and sustainable world. Education is the most important fundament to achieve this. Investing in the next generations is crucial for our future. We all feel this and we know that education matters!

The way we are sharing our being as persons, leaders and as school leader organisations through the European School Head Association, the way we did in Maastricht and the way we do this on many other occasions, makes that I feel energy and hope. Energy from working and learning together. Hope that through our education we help to create a better world and future for our children.

As said at the conference: the AVS and I were proud and honoured to be your host. Together we have learned a lot and celebrated our networking and leadership in a profound way. Personally I hope to see you again in Estonia in 2018 with a lot of your colleagues. As we keep working together, our education and leadership will keep growing stronger step by step. Thank you all for making this ESHA biennial conference a great experience! ■

BreakSquad

Ismène Elbers with “Tree of Desire”

Thank you

BREAKSQUAD

Thank you to the BreakSquad DanceCrew who performed an amazing and touching dance at the Theater aan het Vrijthof and who received a standing ovation.

Try to be your own miracle, because everybody is special in his or her own way!

www.stichtingbreaksquad.nl / @BreakSquadCrew

LIMBURG CONNECT

Many thanks to Ismène Elbers with “Tree of Desire” project in which children tell about their dreams for the future in Limburg ‘Little Europe’ Boom van Verlangen / @ismeneElbers / www.ismene.biz

esha 2016
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Organized and hosted by

A window of opportunities

A Window of Opportunities incorporates personnel from out side the field of education into educational leadership positions.

DR. ALEX SCHNEIDER, EDUCATOR AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER, ISRAEL

"*New organizations need new people to run them, people with new skills, new capacities and different career patterns*" (Handy's 1995 p.119)

The challenge to find and train educational leaders who will translate their commitment into a vision, raise standards and aspirations across school, community and society is a worldwide challenge. Nevertheless, where will these educational leaders come from? What mission will they be qualified to accomplish? What challenges will they be competent to face? (Chen 1999 p. 321).One way of responding to the challenge is by re-training and developing qualified people from beyond education field. However, can changing competencies, developing abilities and capabilities through appropriate training, qualify persons from non-education field for the assignment of school leaders as professional experts?

The idea of selecting and incorporating outstanding personnel from other fields Into Educational leadership is an important revolutionary step in the field of educational management, which opens a window of opportunity. Since up to now, cases of a structured institutionalized re-training for personnel from outside the field of education for educational leadership have been rare.

Once this initiative is open to a wider range of candidates, it requires for a completely new/original and different concept of training to be developed.

CANDIDATES FROM ELSEWHERE

The need for finding suitable candidates for educational leadership from other professions raises questions from which fields should they be drowned from, and how possible is it to transfer them successfully?

Nissan (1997) seems to have an answer: *"People change occupation on the assumption that the skills they have accrued, developed and utilized in one field will serve them equally well in another."* (P.12)

This is based on the notion that skills acquired in one field are good foundations for operating in any field.

The question of the extent to which both leadership and management skills can be transferred from one form of organization to another is partly answered by Yukl (1998) who believes that conceptual and technical elements can be transferred to another organization, but particular knowledge elements need to be re-learned. He distinguishes between a transfer of lower level managers, where due to differences in technical skills there might be difficulties at that level of management, and the higher probability of success in high-level management. Katz (1955, quoted in Yukl 1998) supports him that high-level people with good human relations and conceptual skills can be easily shifted from one industry to another without losing their effectiveness. Such people with the need to develop a new, relevant, network of external relations to replace the old network that served in the other organization. Others, such as Kotter (1982) and Shetty and Peery (1976), agree and define a list of possible challenges for the transferability of skills due to variation of ownership, tradition, organizational climate and culture that should be addressed and trained towards: *"Only the general components of conceptual and technical skills can be transferred to a different situation; the unique knowledge component of those skills must be relearned, moreover*

an executive moving to a different industry must develop a new network of external contacts, where the old network would still be relevant for a move to another organization in the same industry." (Yukl 1998 p.256)

So training as well as the development of new network of external contacts is a key factor in the concept of institutionalized transfer of personnel from outside the field of education into educational leadership.

TRAINING FOR THE JOB

Referral to training for educational leadership usually applies to those already in the educational system, namely teachers. Will it be possible, with proper training, to train people from outside the education system for educational leadership?

To cultivate and develop educators who can meet the challenges of creating new structures and reforming schools practices, there is a requirement for a dismantling and restructuring of the ways in which they are prepared and trained.
The challenge therefore is to try to develop a training concept for a non-teacher group.

TRAINING AS AN EMPOWERING PROCESS

Training for educators is intended to be an adaptation and empowering process for the aspiring educators in those areas where they lack knowledge and experience.
The model shown below as Table 1 is presented in order to analyse, understand and evaluate the educators training concept as a transition process with the intention of examining the feasibility of incorporating personnel from outside the world of education.

The Model "The way to education – a route through training" presents a feasible process, which will enable the incorporation of personnel from outside the world of education.
The model is based on establishing a balance of required training based on the three elements leadership management and pedagogy determined by the Source the candidates – a preliminary reservoir from which educators might be drawn. Moreover, training phase the central and significant process in which, strategies are acquired. Founded on the bases of knowledge, qualities, abilities and capabilities of the candidates, shortages and requirements are identified, in order to be addressed in areas of leadership, management and pedagogy in the theory, praxis and practice stages.

The training activity phase as proposed is an outcome of all the changes and developments aimed at providing new capabilities.

The model does not require a fixed structure of training or the use of any particular set; it can facilitate the use of a range of training techniques and enables the use of various training concepts and different perception prototypes.
The uniqueness of the model is based on the shifting distribution of emphasis between the three bases of principal ship, leadership, management and pedagogy. The intention, after identifying weaknesses and strengths, is to focus on areas that need reinforcement. The model, attempts to discover the necessary balance between elements the three elements required for principal ship, to determine the possibility of integrating outstanding personnel from other fields into the educational system and qualifying them as school principals.

This can be done by an evaluation of the aspiring principal's own concept of their qualities, abilities and capabilities in the fields of

leadership, management and pedagogical skills. By locating their strengths and weaknesses, mapping areas in which they might need empowerment during their transfer into the field of education, the process focuses on individual needs.
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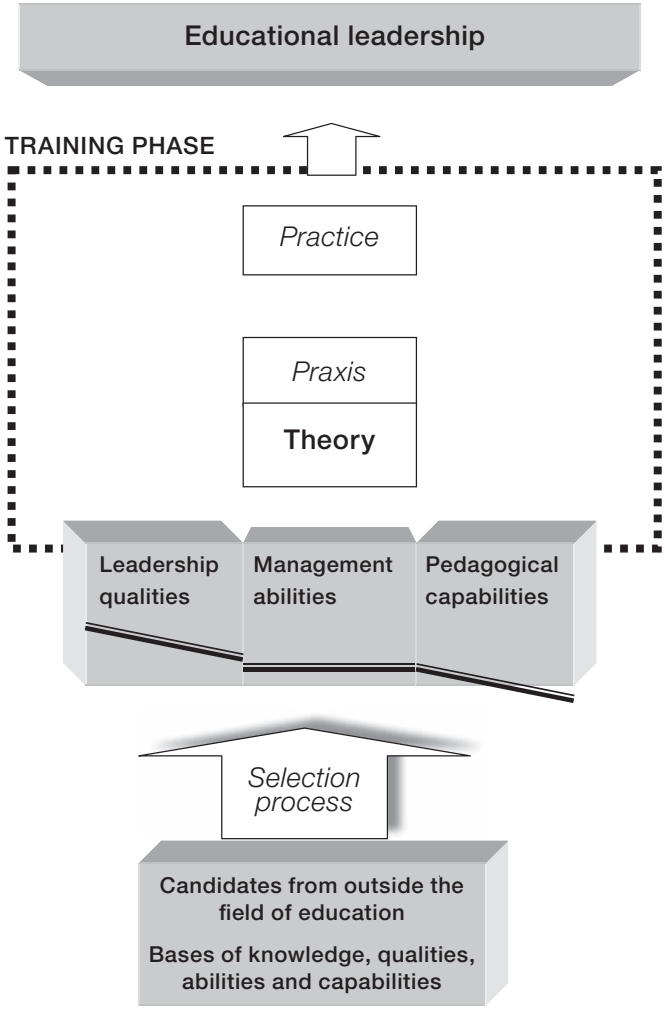
The configuration of emphasis of each of the elements in the training syllabus should be prepared with the active involvement of the participants, especially when incorporating into the educational system elements from outside the system and qualifying them as school principals. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) claim that adult learners perform best when they can direct their own learning, influence the

way decisions are made, feel that there is a focus on problems that are relevant to practice, use their rich experiential background, and build strong relationships with peers. This should guide us in our approach to establishing the training process.



THE SOURCE AND SELECTION PROCESS – WHERE CANDIDATES MIGHT COME FROM

The preliminary stage "the source" identifies the origin of candidates. Those coming from outside the field of education, who have no formal pedagogical education and whose qualifications are in other fields.
In this article the question of possible fields from which candidates coming from outside the field of education will be drown, will not be discussed but will be elaborated in a future article.
From this point there the route into principal ship, goes through a training process.
The selection processes to participate in the course can vary from workshops through selection committees to an automatic acceptance of those applying to join the course. The selection process presents a major challenge as to what will be the selection process for this particular group. Is there need for a selection process?
Should there be a pre requisite for attending the process? It should be remembered that all candidates are interviewed and rated by a committee consisting of the representatives of the training institution, the ministry of education; will it be same individuals that select the candidates today? Will it be more of the same, or will there be a new fresh concept as to who is a suitable candidate. It is the author's opinion that in order to eliminate the danger of damaging the process training itself should be the selection process. Which leads us to the question of whether the process be a governmentally controlled process, or will it be an open market for various institutions similar to other professions?
The selection for the process is not necessarily the final selection. It might be only about two third to half of the candidates will act as educators for more than three years.

THE TRAINING PHASE

The proposed model presents a way in which the educators can be

incorporated into a training process by being involved in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. They are led through a mutually agreed process, in order to shape their qualities, abilities and capabilities. In order to develop, enhance and strengthen these abilities aspiring educators must qualify themselves through appropriate and relevant training and development.

WHAT DO THEY REQUIRE?

In the case of ex-military personnel (Schneider 2004), their particular background as former commanders and unit executives during their former military service, qualifies them broadly officially in the field of leadership and management. As for pedagogy, since the ex-military are not officially qualified in pedagogy and their only formal education is the teaching certificate they obtained, they should obtain the necessary training in this field. In order to identify and understand the uniqueness of pedagogy there is a need to elaborate that field as part of the training process.

This identification of required elements is based upon their own assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. Once the content of training is established the training formation is open to variations... Griffiths *et al* (1988) suggests that, a training program should be based on theoretical and clinical knowledge, applied research and supervised practical experience. Hoy and Miskel (2001) recommend implementing the following elements:

- The theory to form base layer for knowledge.
- The praxis part emerges from theory to a training process implementing the theories in a controlled environment.
- A practice element in which they practice in real life situations.

The training part is the central and focal part of the model.
This enables the candidate to transfer into principal ship.

The model establishes a frame for analysing and understanding the process in which it is possible, by concentrating on the acquired balance between elements of leadership, management and pedagogy, to train and develop into educational systems

A "PORTFOLIO" SOCIETY

The need for modification, updating and the on-going development of new competencies, as described by Yukl (1998), are part of the ability to adapt to a new environment. This notion is developed in what Handy (1995) refers to as the "professional portfolio". Handy (1995) describes modern society as a "portfolio" society in which people are defined by a personal portfolio, which they develop and attain within their professional life.

Macbeath *et al* (1998) feel that teachers occupationally represent an uncharacteristic line of occupation in which they might do the same job for life and most of the time at a single place – the school. This is unlike most people in most other occupations, who experience a series of job changes, retraining a few times, learning new skills and re-orientating their life ways and skills. This might make the transfer into education easier for personnel outside the field of education, since part of their routine is a change of position from time to time, sometimes to a new position that requires training and the development of new competencies. Going through a training process for others who come from outside the world of education, will be a normal process.

Furthermore, understanding the need, knowing the process, and adapting to changing circumstances, develops a mechanism that helps in developing the ability to review strengths and weaknesses and realize what they should be trying to improve.

The characteristics described by Macbeath *et al* (1998) of an uni-occupation present a problem in a world that requires a multi-skill ability.

Here they should be looking for new areas they were not exposed to.

THE TRANSFORMATION INTO PRINCIPAL SHIP

The model presented earlier was used in the research (Schneider 204) tried to determine the feasibility of pre-service training for aspiring principals from outside the world of education to qualify them as principals while analysing the essential characteristics of leaders and principals. By doing so, it broadened the possibilities of opening new options for integrating elements from outside the world of education into school principal ship through an appropriate training process. The basic assumption in the research was that since *"Aspiring principals can identify tools and skills, required for their training into principal's positions, based upon evaluation of their own abilities and capabilities in the fields of leadership, management and pedagogical skills"*, then, it is possible to form an appropriate training programme for them.

The training programme established was based on the two operational hypotheses. First that aspiring principals from outside the field of education are more likely to emphasize pedagogical aspects than candidates within the profession. Secondly, that candidates from within the educational field will concentrate more on aspects of management, compared with candidates drawn from outside who have extensive management experience. Further, aspiring principals from outside the educational field will try to improve their abilities in areas within this field.

An analysis of the tools and skills required to prepare these candidates sufficiently and adequately for leading positions in the educational system was conducted this was achieved by examining the contribution of pre-service training in preparing retired officers for principal ship in Israel, compared to a group of regular teachers aspiring to

become principals. An evaluation of both groups' concepts of their abilities and capabilities in the fields of leadership, management and pedagogical skills was conducted in order to locate the areas in which they might need support and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

The research succeeded in demonstrating the relevance of the hypothesis. It was found that ex-military personnel, as aspiring principals from outside the field of education, tended to regard pedagogical requirements as a more essential element in their training process compared to those regular teachers aspiring to become principals coming from within the educational system. It was also found that regular teachers aspiring to become principals were inclined to consider managerial needs as a significant element in their training process, as did the ex-military aspiring principals who tended to try

to improve their abilities in areas in the field of management linked to education.

Reviewing all of the data, it seems that the transfer of ex-military personnel into the Israeli education system has been largely successful. There are obvious potential difficulties, such as the sensitivity of existing teachers to receiving new managers drawn from beyond the educational system. However, this is not a problem – yet. Rather the evidence is positive in the sense that over 72 percent of the military candidates graduating from the re-training course are serving in the education system. Approximately 12 percent of this cohort would be acting as principals. The vast majority of other candidates rapidly assume middle management positions in the school system. Overall, this constitutes a pattern of successful transfer.

Based upon the assumption that aspiring principals can identify tools and skills required for their training it is possible to develop a training programme, as described in the model, for a non-teachers group. However, the tools and skills needed to prepare these candidates sufficiently and adequately for leading positions in educational systems must be provided at the right time and in the right way. Implementing this model should be based on dialogue and immediate response. The training syllabus should be established in collaboration with the course participants. If this is not feasible then graduates of earlier programmes should be consulted and their input incorporated into the programme.

A COMMUNICATED PROCESS

The ability of aspiring educators to identify needs and requirements led to an understanding of a need for on-going dialogue. Programs should regard participants as equal partners, to be consulted with, listened to and responded to. The planning of the training syllabus

should be a joint activity between teachers and learners, graduates of earlier year's programs should also be consulted and their input incorporated.

Aspiring educators training should be regarded as a process. It is an implementation of a lifelong learning process. The training element in the form of various courses is only one part of the process. The process starts with the decision to select education as a way of life, and it ends by performing the educator role. The process should develop in the aspiring principal a professional orientation including moral and ethical values. It is an on-going process and affects the personal development of the trainee. Each educator develops his own unique way to deploy and perform his/her role. However, the common base of knowledge should be the same and this is the responsibility of the training process developers. From a common starting point each educator can decide his own way. It is important to emphasize that we are not talking about a fast track; we are referring to a process. Perhaps the key element is the diagnosis of candidates' strengths and weaknesses. If this diagnosis is accurate, the training programs can be successful in terms of addressing individual needs.

SUMMARY

In this article a possible concept for the retraining of candidates from outside the field of education has been presented as a response to the recommendation for selecting and incorporating outstanding personnel from other fields Into education. This is innovatory, opening windows of opportunity for highly motivated volunteers to respond to national needs.

Training to be an educator of such personnel presents a challenge. In order to respond to the challenge, this article presents a model capable of identifying individual strengths and weakness. This

facilitates the implementation of the planning and execution of the training relating to requirements of the trainees and facilitates their integration into an individualized course.

This model can be implemented in training as adult training hereby recognizes the types of changes which adult learners experience. Further, it relates to the central characteristics of adult learning, which are based on the need for ongoing dialog between all parties related to the study throughout all processes.

On the other hand, it recognizes the old philosophical distinction between needs and wants. It understands that what candidates want is not always, what they need. Therefore, it is critical for the process of need analysis to be constantly up dated.

Members of the education world with the understanding that the possible contribution is far bigger then the threat some educators discern should welcome this unique opportunity. There should be willingness and support for this initiative by acting principals to adopt graduates of this project. It should be remembered, “New organizations need new people to run them, people with new skills, new capacities and different career patterns” (Handy’s 1995 p.119). Schools are not the same any more, understanding that and adjusting to the new skills, qualities, abilities and capabilities can significantly enhance education systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Especially designed programs for educators training should be established for outstanding/willing personnel from other fields.
- A key factor in achieving success on a re training programme is the proper diagnosis of candidates strengths and weakness.

Therefore, it is important for the success of the re-training program that careful attention is paid to the diagnostic process.

- The ability of candidates to identify their needs and requirements is a basis for an ongoing training dialog. In this context, it is recommended that candidates continually review their needs.
- These re-training programmes should be widely available in regional centres.
- Each candidate should be issued with a mentor (an acting educator) for the whole process.
- The government should not sponsor the courses.
- There should not be a selection process for the courses.
- Possibilities of commencing the re-training process while candidates are still working in their original occupations should be explored. ■

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Educating immigrant children

The modern State of Israel was re-established as a national home for the Jewish people. It therefore maintains an immigration policy that gives priority to immigrants of Jewish descent (Olim). The State has absorbed large populations of Olim from all over the world. In the last decade it has received approximately 850,000 Olim from the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States, former U.S.S.R), and approximately 65,000 from Ethiopia.

BY DR. ALEX SCHNEIDER

Education in Israel is a precious legacy. Following the tradition of past generations, education continues to be a fundamental value and is recognized as the key to the future.

The educational system aims to prepare children to become responsible members of a democratic, pluralistic society in which people from different ethnic, religious, cultural and political backgrounds coexist. It is based on Jewish values, love of the land, and the principles of liberty and tolerance. It seeks to impart a high level of knowledge, with an emphasis on scientific and technological skills essential for the country's continued development.

CHALLENGES

When the State of Israel was founded (1948), a fully functioning education system already existed, developed and maintained by the pre-state Jewish community, with Hebrew, which had been revived for daily speech at the end of the 19th century, as the language of instruction.

However, since shortly after the establishment of the state, the education system has faced the enormous challenge of integrating large numbers of immigrant children from over 70 countries – some coming with their parents, others alone – thereby fulfilling Israel's raison d'être as the historic homeland of the Jewish people. The mass immigration of the 1950s, mainly from postwar Europe and Arab countries, was succeeded in the 1960s by a large influx of Jews from North Africa.

In the 1970s, the first sizable immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union arrived, followed intermittently by smaller groups. Since the beginning of the 1990s, over one million Jews from the former Soviet Union have come to Israel, with tens of thousands more still arriving each year. In two mass movements, in 1984 and 1991, almost the entire Jewish community of Ethiopia was brought to the country. Over the years, many Jews from the Americas and other Western countries have also settled in Israel.

In addition to meeting urgent demands for more classrooms and teachers, special tools and methods have had to be developed to help absorb youngsters from many cultural backgrounds into the school population. Programs designed specifically to meet the needs of the newcomers include preparation of appropriate curricular aids and short-term classes to introduce immigrant pupils to subjects not learned in their countries of origin, such as the Hebrew language and Jewish history. Special courses were initiated to train teachers to deal with immigrant youngsters, and retraining courses for immigrant teachers have facilitated their employment in the education system.

At the same time, the Ministry of Education is involved in an ongoing process of bringing educational standards in line with modern pedagogic practices, such as mandating gender equality, upgrading teacher status, broadening humanistic curricula, and promoting scientific and technological studies. A key aspect of its policy is to provide equal opportunities in education for all children and to increase the number of pupils passing matriculation examinations.

SOCIAL EDUCATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Facilitating the integration process of new immigrant students in Israel was a major goal of the Israeli social education policy during the 1950s-1960s. Apparently, the state schools served as a crucial interface between the host society and the new Jewish immigrant children, who comprised nearly half of the student population at that time. Examination of various aspects of this phenomenon is the main focus of this article. The education system attempted to use social educational tools to activate peer groups and to empower student councils and committees, as well as employing various other techniques. These educational means at the disposal of the student society, based on progressive educational theory in tandem with Zionist educational goals, were employed in order to create a new society. The Hebrew national education system theorized that the schools should act as key acculturating agents, in expectation that the socialized younger generation would promote the acculturation of other members of the immigrant families, as well as that of the immigrant students.

LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKING CHILDREN

All children, including immigrants, are entitled to receive a free education from ages three to eighteen. Immigrants who qualify under the Law of Return are entitled to supplemental Hebrew education programs. The Ministry of Education allocates limited funds for education in foreign languages, including those of originating countries. ■

For further information:
http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/ijjer/pdf_03/3_3Social%20Education.pdf
https://www.loc.gov/law/help/non-native-education/israel.php

Preparing for Headship

At the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) we've led the development of the new Specialist Qualification for Headship in Scotland, in partnership with universities, local authorities and stakeholders.

GILLIAN HAMILTON, SCEL CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND LESLEY WHELAN, SCEL DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We know that leadership development is a key area on the national policy agenda in Scottish education and while there is a clear commitment to the development of leadership at all levels within schools, the specialist role of head teachers must also be recognized. A consistent finding from school effectiveness and school improvement literature is the significance of headship in the development and on-going performance of a school – we know that excellent schools need excellent head teachers.

This new Into Headship qualification is designed for suitably experienced leaders working within their own context and who are in the final stages of their development towards the role of head teacher. This preparatory stage is critical in building the capabilities necessary for strategic leadership. The focus of the *Into Headship* program is to further develop the skills, knowledge and understanding, professional values, abilities and commitment for participants to move into headship posts with the confidence to successfully lead a dynamic school community to make a difference to the lives of young people.

Throughout the Into Headship program, which takes around a year to complete, aspiring head teachers engage in a range of developmental activities including an in-depth and supported 360 feedback process, experiential pedagogies, practice based learning, forum discussions and online modules focusing on the key management areas head teachers need to understand. These activities are all designed to provide opportunities for participants to build strategic leadership capacity and develop a better understanding of their own leadership practice.

The new qualification has been accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland ensuring that the Into Headship program enables participants to demonstrate their achievement of the GTCS Standard for Headship. Once the qualification is completed successfully, participants will achieve a post graduate qualification at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 11 with 60 credits and be awarded the Standard for Headship. SCQF is Scotland's national qualifications framework, with level 11 being equivalent to masters level. The qualification has been developed nationally to be delivered locally across university and local authority partnerships. To ensure that participants are well supported each has a head teacher mentor, a local authority coach, a local authority coordinator, and a professional verifier as a complimentary aspect of the assessment procedures.

As recognised by the GTCS accreditation process we have taken an "innovative and ambitious approach towards the program'. Our aim is to continue to work collaboratively with our partners to embed this new Into Headship qualification across the system and to make a positive difference to outcomes for young people in Scotland. To date, 140 participants are engaged in the first cohort of the program, with 183 participants having attended the launch conference of cohort 2 in September 2016. Recruitment for the third cohort will begin in Easter 2017. Completion of the program will be mandatory for all new head teachers in 2019. Early feedback from participants has been really positive, recognizing the importance of developing insight into strategic leadership, a focused awareness of education policy and a real appreciation of the head teacher's role in the school. Participants have also welcomed the practical aspects of the program, combined with the theoretical contexts of leadership.

We are now taking forward development of a Masters pathway, building on the Into Headship work, to create the Specialist Qualification for Headship. This work involved working with universities and local

authorities to undertake a scoping exercise across the system to ensure that the middle leadership component of the pathway offers an opportunity for middle leaders and aspiring middle leaders to explore their understanding of the role and relevant literature in detail, mapping to the GTCS Standard for Middle Leadership and awarding 60 credits at SCQF level 11. We are aiming for breadth and diversity of offer at this stage of the pathway ensuring that access to programs is open and equitable.

The In Headship element of the Masters pathway is currently in the design stage. Again we have convened a design group which includes representatives from the profession and local authorities as well as university partners. Key to the design and development of the In Headship program, which will be open to head teachers on appointment as well as those in their first 18 months in post, is the continuation of learning and teaching approaches utilized in the Into Headship program with the model of professional learning and practice based learning at the heart. The In Headship program focuses more on the system leadership role of the head teacher.

The aim of the design group is to devise and design a programme that is valuable, highly sought after and seen as crucial in the journey to becoming a high performing and capable head teacher, with a strong emphasis on professional growth, resilience and building capacity in self and others, leadership and management practices that are informed and critiqued through engagement with research and academic literature, collaborative practice, political insight as well as system level leadership.

Our intention is to have all elements of the Masters pathway agreed and in place by December 2016. ■

For more about Into Headship and the wider work of SCEL, visit www.scelscotland.org.uk

Erasmus+ School Education Gateway

ESHA attended the 2016 launch of the latest SchoolEducationGateway event in Brussels in October, to receive news of the latest developments to Europe's online platform for school education. The new Acting Director General for Education and Culture, Adam Tyson welcomed delegates to the launch and stressed the value and importance of a professional culture of collaborative networks and opportunities to identify, share and learn from best practice in schools across Europe.

CHRIS HARRISON, PAST PRESIDENT OF ESHA

The Gateway is a single point of entry for all teachers and school personnel across the European Union – it also enables all who are connected to the world of education to access experts and others in the education field.

This extensive online platform is impressive and seeks to have the most comprehensive engagement of professional working in schools – it is available in 23 European languages to present the widest opportunity for all to hear about and to contribute to education policy, news, expert articles, national initiatives and the sharing of best practices across Europe. Additionally, the platform offers collaborative spaces within online and on-site courses for school teaching staff and school leadership together with many other useful resources www.schooleducation-gateway.eu

When schools engage, interact and access the European school education community their endeavour and commitment contributes to the success of the platform by discussing content, taking part in surveys and polls on current issues and helps to develop and refine education policy within the European Community. Regular users are able to stay informed and can comment on articles, exchange views and workplace experiences, to disseminate project outcomes and to, therefore, learn from each other.

The new platform contains news items, expert articles and examples of best practice focussed on a monthly theme aimed to support the future involvement of project activity in school based active research supported through Erasmus+ programmes A monthly programme of Education Talks offers short online interviews with European school experts published in a regular calendar of upcoming events where school staff are invited to participate with their own practice and experience. The European Toolkit for Schools displays the most recent insights.

INTERESTED?

If schools are considering an application for project support and funding three dedicated tools facilitate the search for:

- online/onsite training and mobility opportunities for teachers;
- forming partnerships between schools and other organisations in Europe;
- Erasmus+ opportunities, guidance and the necessary support to prepare for funding applications;
- Professional development opportunities outlined in the online catalogue, including on-site training courses;
- Access to the Teacher Academy whereby all school/education stakeholders can participate in either specifically designed online courses through the Gateway or to find information about on-site courses in each national member state;
- A selection of teaching materials developed by EU institutions and practitioners together with best practice from EU-funded projects for use in the classroom or in extra-curricular professional development activities.

So, remember the four key messages about The School Education Gateway are that it is the school professional's opportunity, entitlement and expectation for training and development that is …

- … funded by Erasmus+, the European programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport;
- … supervised by the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture;
- … run by European SchoolNet, an international partnership of 31 European Ministries of Education;
- … linked to eTwinning, the community for all schools in Europe.

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