

ICP



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ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP



LINKING
LEADERS
MAGAZINE

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From the ICP President's Desk



In the midst of the pandemic, we have tried to celebrate the ICP's 30th Anniversary. This milestone year of the ICP will, however, be remembered as the year in which the resilience and adaptive skills of school leaders have been put to the test. The ICP Executive has therefore, decided to focus on 'Adaptive Leadership' as the theme for this edition of the ICP magazine.

Adaptive leadership is a leadership model that was introduced by Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky. Heifetz defines it as the act of mobilizing a group of individuals to handle tough challenges and emerge triumphant in the end. If we look at the ICP website and the stories shared by our members in this magazine, we are amazed to see how leaders have adapted and led their teams to achieve great things during difficult times. This leads me to agree with Buddha who said, 'Every experience, no matter how bad it seems, holds within it a blessing of some kind. The goal is to find it.'

Through the dark pandemic cloud, many silver lining streaks of goodness are evident for society: A strong community spirit has emerged, there has been a renewed appreciation for loved ones, changes in work habits to ensure the safety of all, people are sleeping better, carbon emissions have been reduced, the earth is healing, etc.

Together with the good that has come from the Covid-19 pandemic, we must acknowledge that there has also been a lot of pain, suffering, great loss of life, economic crisis and many related negative issues across the globe. Against a backdrop of all these serious life threatening challenges, people from every profession and walk of life endeavored to adapt to the demands of the new environment...and for some.....to simply survive.

In the education environment we have seen good things happening to change systems:

Teaching is no longer an insular profession, skills of teachers to deliver curricula online have improved exponentially, collaboration amongst education systems across the world has improved greatly and service providers have generously made online educational resources available free of charge, to name but a few good things.

The closing of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic and the quick change to distance or online learning has once again highlighted the disparities in society and school communities. It has shone the spotlight on equity and I trust that as ICP members have found ways to deal with the challenge of Covid-19, they will find the inner resolve to deal with the equity issues found in organizations and schools across the world. Let's be leaders 'who gracefully stand for others, demonstrate courage, and take risks to forge improvement' (TeachHub).

Richard Branson said, 'Every success story is a tale of constant adaption, revision and change.' As adaptive leaders, let's use the current environment to evaluate our practices and then mobilize passionate people in our organizations to develop new practices to deliver excellent education to all the children of the world. This will help ICP realize its vision of 'More equitable opportunities and outcomes for students through quality school leadership'.

Alta van Heerden
ICP President

Adaptive Leadership

Clearly Articulate Intent and Embrace Uncertainty

By Karen Ferris



Not only do leaders need to give up control, they need to become adaptive leaders and be able to chart a course when they cannot predict the outcome of their choices.

My Adaptive Leadership Model below illustrates what a leader has to undertake to become an adaptive leader.



Clearly articulate intent

Adaptive leaders, while avoiding command and control management or micromanagement of employees, must ensure that the strategic intent and objectives are clear.

The adaptive leader explains the 'what' not the 'how'. Everyone must be aligned with a common goal and then left to achieve that goal in their own way. The goals must be clear and unambiguous but also credible and forceful. This should inspire action.

Adaptive leaders then keep their eye on the game but do not run on the pitch to direct and play the game. Adaptive leadership provides direction using clearly articulated intent to enable actions to be taken in line with the intent. The purpose is to empower agile and adaptive leaders to achieve that intent. Intent is centralised and execution is distributed.

Embrace uncertainty

Adaptive leaders must embrace uncertainty and adopt new tactics if they play to win in the face of constant and relentless change.

Leaders must lead with uncertainty and be honest about it at the same time. If leaders cannot embrace uncertainty and, therefore, display overconfidence in a particular outcome, which may not arise, employees will lose trust in their leader. They will also disengage.

Using overconfidence as a protector means leaders are likely to make risky and costly decisions.

Adaptive leaders represent the truth and share this with their teams. When there is uncertainty, it is shared. This demonstrates authentic leadership. Teams that work for adaptive leaders who openly communicate uncertainty and seek team input to address the challenge are more engaged and loyal to the organization. Teams know that we are living in a turbulent world so they will immediately see through an overly confident, all knowing leader as false reality.

When change is uncertain, ambiguous, and constant, the successful adaptive leader will lead the team

through the confusion and admit to not having all the answers. They will then call on the collective knowledge of the team to address the uncertainty. This demonstration of vulnerability establishes a sense of trust and mutual respect.

Adaptive Leadership continued.....

Game score

Leadership in the face of volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous change has to be adaptive.

Adaptive leaders need to know when to operate in the fray, and when to get off the field and watch from the side line.

They will embrace losing a game as a learning opportunity and the team will bounce back ready to play the next game. They will have empathy and be able to walk in another's shoes to understand their perspective. Players are inspired to be accountable and make decisions.

Adaptive leaders expect and embrace change. It is their reality. The teams they build are dynamic and embrace change, and they channel any uncertainty into positive outcomes through collaboration and communication.

Adaptive leaders clearly articulate their intent and then let the players get on with the game. The players will ultimately win or lose the game.

Adaptive Leadership Get Off the Dance Floor

Get off the dance floor

In a world of constant and relentless change, the days of making a plan and waiting for it to unfold are far gone. When change is constant, what seemed like a good plan yesterday may not seem like a good one tomorrow.

Adaptive leaders need to be able to change direction quickly based on a rapidly changing environment. Therefore, adaptive leaders need to be able to observe what is happening and make interventions when needed.

In adaptive leadership, this ability to perceive, observe, and intervene is often described as moving

continually between a dance floor and a balcony. Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky coined this metaphor in their book *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*.

When on the dance floor the observation may be very different from when on the balcony. When you are dancing you are focused on the music, your partner and your impression is that everyone is having an awesome time. When you retreat to the balcony and observe the dance floor, you may observe that there are some people not dancing at all and there appears to be a departure of people from the dance floor when the music speeds up or gets louder. These are observations you could not make when on the dance floor. Now you have a clearer picture of what is really happening.

If leaders then want to intervene to change what is happening, they have to get back onto the dance floor and operate in the fray as opposed to above it. Therefore, adaptive leaders operate both on the balcony and on the dance floor. When on the balcony leaders take a step back and gain a clear view of what is really happening and can look at the bigger picture.

Adaptive leaders need to create a space where they can review and reflect on what is happening. Adaptive leaders continually move between the dance floor and the balcony. They are able to determine what amount of time to spend on the dance floor versus on the balcony. On the balcony, they gain perspective and make observations. On the dance floor, they make interventions.



Karen Ferris provides consultancy services in IT Service Management and application of best practice as per ITIL. She is an organisational change management practitioner. She brings over 15 years of practical experience working in ITSM in the capacity of practitioner, manager, trainer and consultant.

The Education sector will have a greater focus on Wellbeing in a post COVID World



Professor Anne Looney is the Executive Dean of Dublin City University's Institute of Education in Ireland. She is a much respected academic nationally and globally. During a recent interview for the Institute for Education's 'Facebook Live' Series 'From a Distance', she offered some thought provoking insights into how we as school leaders and educators grapple with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

These are some of the most significant areas highlighted by Anne during the course of the extensive interview.

Inequality will continue to grow as long as schools remain closed. We are going to need to address these inequalities when school returns. The longer we remain out of school we exacerbate the existing inequalities that are already there, not just in a digital sense but others that schools work so hard to mitigate. What we are experiencing now has been described as the largest educational experiment in human history.

Wellbeing and an enhanced focus on the emotional health of students will be among the top priorities certainly in the Irish Education system and no doubt globally in a post Covid world. When we come out of this we will be going back to a different kind of education.

Across the world parents, educators and learners are going to be asking themselves 'what are we learning from this' or 'has the system learned as it resets itself'. There will be a need to experience a more contemplative education approach when we return to the classroom.

Children want to return to the classroom as they are missing friends and the social interaction at school. Children will need to be with each other when they return to the classroom – rather than just doing lessons. We will move into more time 'just to be'. And teachers too will need to be minded and supported when they return to the traditional classroom.

Society will also have a greater appreciation for the work of teachers and more respect for the people with vocational skills, with work that may have been considered 'low skilled' in the past now proving to be essential during the crisis.

Many thanks to Professor Anne Looney for giving ICP permission to include her thoughts in the latest edition of the ICP Magazine.





Learning through a Pandemic

Dr Shirleen Chee

President: Academy of Principals (Singapore)

Adaptive Leadership is brought to the fore in times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic brings about unprecedented challenges that demands changes on all fronts, including schooling. In the face of constant change and daily uncertainties, adaptive leadership is critical for schools to navigate every situation with success.

When COVID-19 hit Singapore, it brought back memories of how our schools battled Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003. I was then a newly minted principal and it did not take me long to realise that despite all the training I received, I was unprepared to deal with SARS and the subsequent unfolding of events. Together with my more experienced colleagues, we steered through the labyrinth of the unknown, and in the midst of uncertainties, resolved to keep a safe learning environment in the schools.

COVID-19 descended on us like a storm overturning everything in its path. Its onslaught impacted families, communities and countries on an unprecedented scale. As Singapore dealt with this pandemic, our schools were not spared. The mass assembly disappeared; creative seating arrangements in groups for collaborative learning were dismantled while the industry style of exams seating became the norm. Facilitative learning in groups gave way to frontal teaching as everyone had to don face shields and wear masks. We had to undo what we created, adapt and introduce new ways of teaching and learning as our lives became subsumed under rules of social distancing and personal hygiene. How do school leaders handle and share changing guidelines while helping teachers to shoulder the increasing stress they feel and soothe the mounting anxieties of our students?

Some of the challenges that confronted us include:

- Quality online learning resources. The availability of these resources was uneven. For instance, for the older students at the pre-university level, a lot of these resources were contingent on what the teachers could find. Thankfully many of them are part of the networked learning communities where sharing of resources took place.
- Just-in-time Learning had to take place swiftly as teachers explored ICT tools that they could use to facilitate learning effectively. It was heart-warming to see teachers trying out the different ICT tools so that learning could continue. These included teachers who were not naturally drawn to the use of ICT and even those who were retiring.
- Teacher well-being – stress and fatigue was common as everyone had to work from home (WFH). Many had to pre-record video lectures; carry out both synchronous and asynchronous learning online over ZOOM or Google Meet. At the same time, teachers had to cope with managing their own children and family members schooling or working from home.
- Equity of resources – There were students who came from households where they had to share one laptop with several siblings or did not have adequate data / WIFI access. The schools assisted these students as much as possible.
- Student well-being – Family problems, frustrations from being confined in close quarters and learning difficulties were potential sources of stress. Deliberate efforts were made to reach out to students to ensure that they had avenues of help. Teachers kept a close tab on their own form classes. Conferencing (over ZOOM or Google Meet) with parents concerning the well-being/ learning needs of the students continued despite Circuit-Breaker Measures, when schools are closed and most of the work-force in the country are working from home.

Learning through a Pandemic

A Crisis brings out the Best and the Worst in Us

I remember the anxiety and fear people experienced during SARS. Healthcare workers were shunned and we lost some of our very best in the medical fraternity. One lesson we learnt was that morale is an important factor and often it can be derailed by selfishness.

During this current situation of COVID-19, many teachers made the conscious effort to rally their students to cheer the healthcare workers by sending encouraging notes, posters and care packs (containing snacks /fruits) to cheer them on. In Singapore, we had a steep rise of cases in the dormitories of our Foreign Workers. Many schools reached out to these workers by assembling and sending care packs to them, reaching out to them in different creative ways.

Nuggets of Lessons

Some nuggets of lessons that we are still learning:

- **Problems of uncertainty and fear** – Conquer it with Trust. When we have to work with changing instructions and evolving situations, we need to trust one another and work together knowing that the decisions made are always for the good for all.
- **Pressures to act** – Conquer it with calm and then consider the consequences of your actions. Remaining calm helps us to re-focus and be above the frenzy. We will have greater clarity and come to sound conclusions that are not affected by emotional or reactive responses.

The Lens of a School Leader

Our work in the education sector deals with lives. **Walk our Talk.** Our actions speak louder than words. Our staff sees how we manage situations and what we are really are. They will know if we genuinely care or if we do things grudgingly. Our students see how we conduct ourselves. Do we exercise social responsibility? Do we do what we ask our students to do?

Be authentic.

Our relational transparency goes a long way, especially in an evolving situation when we are not sure what will happen next, and our plans are changing rapidly. It is alright to admit that we are uncertain and unsure when we will see the light at the end of the tunnel. But at the same time, we need to show care and to give assurance that we will do our best.

Remember that the ordinary folks can do much in extraordinary times.

Overcoming extraordinary times like COVID-19 is possible only with the combined efforts of all and not just the effort of one extraordinary being. Since the past has shown that the present travails can be overcome for a better and healthier future, let us ride on the lessons of the past, persevere in the present, and step into our desired future.

Ordinary Gestures that are now Extraordinary.

What we take for granted in ordinary times has taken on a greater significance. We miss receiving and giving hugs, having coffee with our colleagues, meeting friends and even breathing fresh air without having to wear a mask! Deprivation helps us to be more grateful for the simple things in life. It reminds us to value each other.

Navigating the pandemic has been a difficult and stressful journey for all. Some days, it seems like we are driving in the dark, without knowing when the road will end. In times like this, our mettle as a school leader and educator is tested to the limit. Can we be strong for our colleagues, students and families? Just as we emerged victorious through SARS, I am fully confident that we will come out stronger and better through COVID-19. In a span of a few months, we have mastered new ways of teaching and learning that we had only planned for the future. In a short time, our fraternity has come together to support and collaborate with one another in a spirit of care and friendship. Much good has emerged from this crisis. Let us hold onto to what we have learnt and press on.

TRUE PARTNERSHIPS OF SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

LIZ HAWES - NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION



WE KNOW WE are living in unprecedented times, when the world's media channels are completely consumed by one piece of news. Coronavirus – COVID-19 has been headline news for the past three months. And rightly so. The globe is experiencing a pandemic of exceptional proportions. World-wide, on 15 May 2020, the number of cases of the virus is 4.48 million and according to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) figures, 304,000 people have lost their lives. Country lockdowns and border closures have become the global new normal along with economic collapse.

Our experience in Aotearoa New Zealand has charted a similar course to other countries. By March 25, we had recorded 100 cases of COVID-19 and our Government directed our people to hunker down at home for the next five weeks. That of course meant the closure of all schools.

A bright ray of sunshine amidst this catastrophic background has been the way educational professionals have responded. All New Zealand students were to do their learning at home. Stories of schools' experiences, published in this issue, testify to the incredible humanity, care and moral purpose the teaching profession applied to this challenge.

Health and wellbeing were central to every school's home learning plan and this consideration was extended to the whole school community. Multiple learning options were prepared at lightning speed with unerring support and guidance from the Ministry of Education.

What we saw was the true partnership of schools and their communities in action. We witnessed food in schools shifted to food in homes – in many cases delivered by teachers and school staff in the form of 'care packs'. We saw multiple communication channels established to cater for the different home circumstances including through websites, emails, texting, zoom meetings and for those without electronic connections, phone calls.

There was a heightened awareness that some parents would be working from home and some would be out on the front line as essential workers. For some families it would be a stretch to cope with home learning supervision whilst also caring for pre-schoolers or elderly relatives and for many families their previously reliable weekly income stream had completely dried up. Thousands became newly unemployed or were on wage subsidies.

Principals and teachers took account of all these variables and set expectations to suit each family. Health and wellbeing of the whole family remained central.

In many cases the connections between home and school became stronger than ever. We were all in this together. As we have seen before, during the Christchurch earthquakes, the Pike

River disaster and the Mosque shootings, the teaching profession always rises to meet a challenge. In a major crisis, school leaders become the trusted community leaders. They revert to their default position which is to collaborate, to support and to care. We have seen it again throughout this pandemic.

In an effort to give every student an equal home learning experience, school chrome books, iPads, and notebooks were distributed

to families without devices. The Ministry of Education also assisted in the provision of internet connectivity and devices where homes had neither. Whilst this gesture was hugely appreciated by the many families who benefitted, it was never possible to reach every household in need.

What the lockdown did was highlight the extent of our society's ongoing, long term inequities. It highlighted the level of child poverty, of overcrowding and the number of families where children are not safe at home on a daily basis.

As we have seen in the wake of other disasters in our country, nothing stays the same. Christchurch is now rebuilding a new and very different city. In the wake of Pike River, work and safety requirements were revisited and a whole new set of regulations to protect workers was established. After the Mosque shootings we radically changed our gun laws and as a nation we reached out to our Muslim communities. We embraced them and as a nation became just a little more inclusive and tolerant of difference.

There will be no 'normal' to return to after this pandemic. But it gives us an opportunity to do things differently. It gives us the chance to inject the humanity that has been central to our home learning plans, into our regular school curriculum. The kindness, the caring, the generosity, the team-work and the empathy shown throughout this extraordinary period of our history can all be harnessed to educate future generations to be healthier, more resilient, more humane, contributing citizens.

The pandemic has also shown us the power of collective effort. It took five million New Zealanders to fight this disease. Five million people working together for a common cause. It has been impressive. Imagine if those five million people, post-COVID, set a country goal to eradicate societal inequity.

It's time.

What we saw was the
TRUE PARTNERSHIP
OF SCHOOLS and
their **COMMUNITIES**
IN ACTION.

TEACHING THROUGH ADVERSITY: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES

Dr. (Mrs) Indu Khetarpal
Former Principal, Salwan Public School, Rajendra Nagar Delhi
Presently Consultant National Testing Agency- India

Post-pandemic the world will be seen through a new lens, what will be required is a huge shift in mindset on both social and emotional front. To take the teaching learning process forward, a new approach is needed in this altered paradigm. Our outlook towards life has acquired new dimensions, living through the pandemic. It has brought before us a multitude of challenges. This has also driven home a reality that to stay relevant in the current scenario we need to adapt new and innovative strategies. The expectations from education both as a learner and educator have been redesigned. What is required is Citizen Empowerment, we need to look beyond individualistic desires to human well-being at large. Global Solidarity not Nationalistic Isolation is the Way forward.

The current scenario has also reinforced the importance of imbibing critical life skills in future generations such as Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking & Design thinking which can evolve with new challenges and demands. Progressive and adaptive leaders will be able to meet these challenges and become the torch bearers of the new education system. If we want to groom a future ready generation which is equipped to emotionally and physically survive future challenges, we need devise definitive measures to engage children in education which goes beyond mere classroom learning and involves intensive life-skills development.

Schools and Classrooms are being redesigned to ensure greater use of Technology. The future involves a schooling system which will be a blended approach of both online classroom and physical classroom teaching. We need to accept digital learning as the new age educational approach. It is the new Normal. Another challenge is to tackle the issue of non-availability of equipment and network-connectivity issues. As we make the obvious shift from 'Me' to 'We', Let Us Remember Triumph of Human Spirit is when we are one with Nature.



Winning in Turbulent times: Reassembling education in the digital age

Rashi Oberoi
Senior Faculty
Salwan Public School, Rajendra Nagar, Delhi.

Education today is in its 'Liminal space' (transactional period) and only leaders who are continuous learners and ready to upgrade their skills will survive and emerge victorious. Our responsibility as Leaders is to work in the present and ensure that we do best in the present to ensure a promising future when we emerge out of this chaos.

The first step is to recognise the crisis and draw the learning it has to offer to the human race. As Educationist and Adaptive leaders, it is critical that we are able to groom a generation that comes out wiser from this crisis. The cycle of learning must continue, what needs to be altered is the instructional methodology. The new normal brings with it, redesigned learning objectives and new initiatives which will drive the Education industry into this new phase.

As an adaptive leader we need to take control of the situation, we need to understand that the current scenario demands operational flexibility and the way forward will involve a blended approach with higher dependence on technology, e-content and artificial intelligence. We need to ideate on all possibilities, develop many possible selves and all this while taking into consideration available resources and existing skills of the manpower. Let us remember the biggest threat remains to that section of the population which is economically weaker and lacks access to technology. We need to devise ways to make technology accessible to them, because countries who are still in the nascent stage of technological development are at the risk of being left behind. Once this is collaborated, we need to act on the most plausible solution. While challenges in the education sector are global the solutions will be regional and personalised influenced by local factors. There is no single, pre-fabricated solution to the situation. It is important that we ensure that the learners who emerge from this situation are equipped with skills of resilience and sustainability. The world has endured much worse and only those who are adaptable to change shall emerge equipped to deal with future challenges.



Education Online: Bridging the gap between alienation and attachment

Seema Malik

Principal, Salwan Public School Mayur Vihar, New Delhi



The current scenario of pandemic has thrown up numerous challenges to school leadership. The changes that came to the school functioning system were met with by accepting these adaptive challenges to find the way ahead with possible solutions. We were able to create conditions that were conducive for building an environment of empathy and cooperation among all stakeholders of the school.

Gradually, we were able to navigate these challenges of uncertainty by developing new perspectives to find creative solutions for thinking about possibilities instead of limitations. Physical and emotional wellbeing of our students and teachers were our priority. We ensured that communication with our valued stakeholders continued seamlessly to bring in greater empathy all around. We followed a framework to first determine what practices are the core to the future in the wake of the pandemic and what could be the obstacles. For instance, social and physical distancing that were required to mitigate the threat of pandemic were addressed by taking our classes on a virtual platform. This made us identify the training required to go online, recognise the pedagogical changes that would be required to make these classes effective and finally make learning meaningful for the students.

Once these issues were deliberated upon, we developed the practices to realise them both individually and collectively. This was followed by integrating these 'next practices' to the school academic structure and system. It was heartening to see the self-correction practices adopted by both students and teachers in the learning process. We continued to gain confidence. Through adaptive leadership practices followed at every level in the school, we brought in a gradual but meaningful process of change. Emotional intelligence played an important role in thriving in this environment since the focus shifted from primarily cognitive learning to affective learning also. By articulating our mission intent to our students and teachers, we were able to motivate a significant change in our schools.

Learning in a crisis-Irish Primary Schools and Covid-19

By Damian White, president of the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN)

There are many to whom the quote 'No crisis should go to waste' have been attributed, probably most recently to former US Treasury Secretary Rahm Emmanuel during the Obama administration in the US. A previous iteration had been used in the title of a 1976 article in a medical journal "Don't waste a crisis - your Patients' or Your Own". As medical science races to develop a vaccine to combat Covid-19, it is a maxim much to the fore in the spirit of collaboration taking place in the world of microbiology right now. Replacing 'Patients' with 'Pupils', it could just as easily be applied to education.

In Ireland, all schools closed on Thursday March 12th, for what was originally thought would be a 2-week period. Cancellation of the major St. Patrick's Day parade in Dublin, scheduled for the following Tuesday to coincide with the feast day of our world famous Patron Saint, was indicative that serious steps were going to be taken to prevent the spread of Covid-19 on our island. As schools close for the feast day each year, most schools had planned to use one of their optional holidays on the Monday to make it a worthwhile break. As events everywhere were being cancelled, school leaders were anticipating that all schools would therefore close on Friday 13th and remain shut until it was safe to return. Some, but not all, had contingency plans already developed to support children remotely, knowing what was coming. Others had prepared work-packs for children, to cover the anticipated 2 weeks' absence.

As it became apparent that school closure would extend beyond the initial 2 weeks, IPPN felt that it was important to establish the level of support required by school leaders to ensure the delivery of distance learning. A wide-ranging survey of our members was commissioned through Dr. Jolanta Burke and Dr. Majella Dempsey of Maynooth University to establish how school leaders were coping with the new reality of remote or distance learning and the services they most value, or are now required to support them in their daily work. Over 2,500 school leaders completed the survey.

The initial results were informative and reassuring in many cases, but concerning in others. Up to 50% were coping well and had established good systems of communication with pupils and their parents, and were using a range of IT supports and other methods to pass on and correct pupils' work. A further 30% had established communication lines with their pupils and were up and running in terms of a system of working. The remaining 20% reported that they were struggling to or had yet to meaningfully engage with the process of distance learning. On a scale of 1-10, the average score for leaders coping was a moderate 5.24. The survey also found that school leaders really appreciated IPPN's support, with 95% describing our weekly updates or 'E-scéal' e-message as very useful, with high appreciation also for our guidance documents and advice on teaching and learning.

A shorter, follow-up survey some weeks later showed that, while school leaders were still under very considerable stress, the level of engagement with distance learning had increased substantially.

In normal circumstances, asking schools to take on an entirely new and revolutionary practice such as distance learning would likely involve a pilot project, significant CPD and potential IR issues over a change in terms of employment. But these are truly extraordinary times and, with the increasingly frightening prognoses with each passing evening, school personnel rallied to the cause and put supports in place to ensure insofar as possible, that learning



Learning in a crisis-Irish Primary Schools and Covid-19

learning would continue for children in their homes. Those with the capacity to deliver significant online support, and whose students have access to sufficient IT devices and broadband, put systems in place using Seesaw and other online resources. Where equipment or training was an issue, school leaders assessed their local situation and made the best possible use of the resources at their disposal to support their pupils' learning.

IPPN and other agencies shared advice, links to useful websites, and webinars, as teachers sought the very best for their pupils in their newfound situation. When IPPN was established in 2000, one of our main aims was to share good practice and resources so that everyone benefits. Never has this been more in evidence than over the past two months. Our members have shared everything from letter templates to advice on how to use new online platforms. IPPN has now opened a special section on our website, where resources sent in for sharing are stored, with easy access for all members

Since March 12th, it has become apparent that school via email or the internet is different. Most children cannot sit for the length of a school day with every minute timetabled. Access to computers, broadband and even their own books presented issues. The family make-up, job status of parents, number of children in the home and other issues all affected the chances of work being done. Parents were reassured that work given was a menu rather than a prescription. School staff and pupils were encouraged to take a break over the Easter holidays, though many children continued to do some school work each day and had an agreed way of communicating with teachers should the need arise.

As the Coronavirus thankfully struggles to raise the curve that our country has battled collectively and successfully to reduce, keeping the number affected at a manageable level, talks of restoring normality are inevitably being heard. Schools are at the fulcrum of normality for many people. School communities in Ireland and throughout the world

have played an extraordinary part in maintaining normality for children through all of this. It is possible that out of this terrible situation will emerge a positive evaluation of the complexities of school life and the wonderful work which goes on daily in schools. There is certainly a palpable warmth and regard for school leaders and staff who have been in personal touch with homes supporting children's learning in new ways.

Since March 12th, for IPPN, engagement with members as was originally planned, has, to paraphrase our most famous poet W. B. Yeats 'changed, changed utterly.' Visits to schools and local Education Centres and to meet and share concerns with local support groups and individual school leaders have had to be shelved for the moment due to 'social distancing' and the restrictions placed on travel. We had been planning a high degree of collaboration with the Education Centres as a way of supporting school leaders, with a particular view towards the establishment of specific support groups for deputy principals.

The pandemic, for all its terrible consequences, has further developed the collaboration between IPPN and Education Centres across the country in the support of school leaders. Planned local meetings within these regional centres has been replaced with Zoom and Webex meetings facilitated through these centres. The level of engagement has been very high, with 30 to 40 school leaders at most meetings. Participants get to share what is working well, what the challenges are and arrange how they can collaborate regionally. In several cases, meetings exclusively for deputy principals were held and ideas shared. Education centres have also hosted webinars on every relevant current issue from the effective use of technology to the transition of pupils from primary to second-level education. To further paraphrase Yeats, 'A terrible beauty has been born' and school leaders are collaborating in ways previously inconceivable.

Learning in a crisis-Irish Primary Schools and Covid-19



Webinars

IPPN are hosting series of six webinars, all designed to support school leaders as they deal with the issues brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic. Our first webinar was very successful and had over 800 school leaders registered to attend. At the time of going to print, it looks like more than 1000 have registered for our third webinar. Each webinar features updates from Our CEO Páirc Clerkin, who is working very closely with other primary education stakeholders and the Department of Education and Skills to provide the best possible support and guidance across the primary education sector. Participants also hear from two principals, teaching and administrative, on the issues they face and how they are handling them, as well as updates from key stakeholders. Subsequent webinars will cover the Return to School and the protocols involved, as well as other relevant issues.

Working Well

Following the initial school closures from 12th March, which has now extended until the new school year which begins in late August/early September, the majority of schools now report that their schools are actively communicating with their pupils and parents to provide the best possible learning opportunities remotely. Those who initially struggled have made the very best efforts since then to support learning needs. There has been widespread use of Google Classroom,

Seesaw, Microsoft Teams and other platforms to provide online learning opportunities, while Zoom has featured strongly for face-to-face interactions between pupils and staff, as well as for staff and board meetings. Many schools are using their school websites and blogs very effectively to upload school work for children. School leaders and teachers have personally phoned parents at regular intervals to check how children are doing. Special educational needs' teachers, including many deputy principals, have been in very regular contact with their pupils by phone, through their parents, to provide extra reassurance and support.

Many school leaders have reported that the overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive and are actively engaging to support their children's learning. They are very positive about, and appreciative of the supports they are receiving from school.

The advice shared included sincere acknowledgement and thanks for the work undertaken so far by schools and school leaders, and a reminder that every school is different in its context, location and capacities. Communication is the key to all relationships and especially in this time of difficulty. Some schools are doing extraordinary things with technology and sharing on social media. A key message from IPPN to school leaders is, well done to those schools, but no school should be put off or made to feel inadequate for their efforts. If you are doing the best you can with the resources you have, you are doing a great job.

Challenges

Many school leaders, especially in remote rural areas, are reporting major issues with access to reliable broadband, resulting in major difficulties providing proper online supports to pupils and their families. They have had to adapt to suit the circumstances, with many being very creative in how they get work out to pupils. The initial issues included access to school books, which has reduced as an issue following the first two phases of the Government's plan to reopen society and business.

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Access to IT devices was highlighted regularly as a major issue. Parents and second-level siblings are all working from home and many homes do not have sufficient access to laptops, iPads or other devices for everyone wishing to use them during a working day. Some families have little or no access to appropriate IT devices. In such cases, a pupil may not be in a position to complete work given by teachers. Schools have been creative in supporting those families in the most need, distributing school devices where possible to pupils for use. In some areas, school leaders have sourced funding locally, or through fundraising, to ensure that pupils receive appropriate devices to support their learning.

School leaders working in special schools have told of their difficulties in supporting their pupils through remote learning. Many have reported that regular phone contact with the families and pupils has been vital in terms of supporting children with complex physical and psychological challenges.

Catholic Schools, which comprise the majority of Irish primary schools, were also concerned about postponed Sacramental ceremonies. Patrons continue to advise on this and how and when ceremonies will take place.

School Reopening

Through member engagement meetings, IPPN ascertained what were the main issues needing addressing before returning to school in September. The contributions at these meetings, along with those from the IPPN Board, Council and staff, contributed to an extensive submission to the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The DES also received similar documents from teacher and special needs assistants' unions, the national parents' council and the management bodies outlining their concerns.

The main issues highlighted included the practicalities around social distancing, possible split days or alternate attendance days, the layout of classrooms, the presence

presence of SEN teachers and SNAs in classrooms, the purchase, use and disposal of PPE, the expectations around support of both attendees and remote learners, insurance cover claims arising from social distancing breaches, cleaning and the use of equipment, toys, shared books and utensils. Many highlighted the workload on school leaders during the Summer holiday period to have the school ready for September and concerns about ongoing expectations thereafter. Concern was expressed by schools who have enrolled children for September whom they fear may postpone school attendance until the threat of the pandemic has passed. Some schools are depending on these numbers to retain a teacher, or to retain administrative principal status.

Through our links with ICP and ESHA, IPPN has received very good guidance about what works in other countries. Bearing in mind the prevalence of Covid-19, the system differences, and the various social distancing measures in place in different jurisdictions, we can still learn a lot from each other's experiences.

Much has been learned over the course of this enforced school closure and members, while physically apart, have engaged in new and innovative ways in large numbers. Hopefully, we will see the end of this terrible crisis soon and that we can get back to normal in the way we teach, communicate and learn.

However, normality, when restored, will include newly-learned ways of doing our job, as will be the case in many professions. Hopefully, some of those newly-found ways will help to reduce the stress on school leaders.

This crisis has indeed been devastating to the lives, the health and the physical and emotional wellbeing of many. But we have also learned to do things differently. In that sense, this crisis may not have been entirely wasted.

What Students, Parents and Teachers told us about Home-based Learning



Based on surveys conducted MMG Education at 16 AHISA members' schools, offering remote learning during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Top 10 Positive Aspects of Home-based Learning

STUDENTS' TOP 10 POSITIVES

1. Working at own pace
2. Time for other interests and hobbies
3. Not having to get up so early
4. Being comfortable at home
5. Being able to spend time with family
6. Not having to travel
7. Can do more work - more focused
8. Fewer distractions
9. Engaging with friends
10. Responsibility & accountability for own learning

PARENTS' TOP 10 POSITIVES

1. Independence, organisation, time-management, responsibility
2. More family time together
3. Support from staff and communication from the school
4. Being able to help/see what my child is learning
5. Adapted to & enjoying online classes
6. Can work at own pace
7. Reduced travel time
8. More engaged and task-focused
9. Less distractions from other students
10. More sleep/time to rest

TEACHERS' TOP 10 POSITIVES

1. Adopting new/innovative ways to teach
2. Development of stronger IT skills
3. Positive connections fostered/maintained with students
4. Developing self-efficiency/independence in students
5. Greater flexibility to create and deliver quality lessons
6. Increased communication/collaboration between staff
7. Planning & execution by school leadership
8. Assisted with my own wellbeing/less stressful
9. Working at home with my children
10. Reduced travel time

Top 10 Difficulties/Concerns with Home-based Learning

STUDENTS' TOP 10 DIFFICULTIES

1. Too much screen time for school-related work
2. Being able to interact with other students in class
3. Distractions at home
4. Ability to focus and remain on task
5. Managing stress/anxiety
6. Maintaining high academic standards
7. Internet connection or bandwidth
8. Ability to stay well connected with friends
9. Getting enough physical exercise
10. Too much screen time for recreation (games, videos, social media, etc)

PARENTS' TOP 10 CONCERNS

1. Maintaining high academic standards
2. Too much screen time for recreation (games, videos, social media, etc)
3. Reduced direct supervision
4. Ability to focus and remain on task
5. Being able to interact with other students in class
6. Amount of feedback on my child's progress
7. Ability to stay well connected with friends
8. Too much screen time for school related work
9. Being able to ask questions and get help from teachers
10. Distractions at home

TEACHERS' TOP 10 CONCERNS

1. Additional workload placed on staff
2. Too much screen time for students in relation to school-related work
3. Balancing classroom and online teaching simultaneously
4. Staff wellbeing
5. Students' mental wellbeing
6. Students' ability to stay well connected with friends
7. Distractions for students at home
8. Students' ability to focus and remain on task
9. Maintaining high academic standards
10. Reduced direct supervision



Association of Heads of
Independent Schools of Australia

MMG ✦ EDUCATION

The information in this infographic was taken from MMG's AHISA members' schools 2020 Parents, Students & Staff Home-based Learning Executive Summary Report. For the report, MMG gathered data from 16 independent schools, with respondents totalling 4283 students, 7570 parents and 729 teachers. The survey was completed online during April/May, 2020, while schools were offering remote learning during the COVID-19 lockdown. To view the full report please contact enquiries@ahisa.edu.au



The man behind Telling Tales

As the Executive focused on connecting with the past of ICP to help members 'celebrate the past to awaken the future' (John F Kennedy) in our 30th anniversary year, we were introduced to an amazing gentleman, Christopher John Lowe

Although we are yet to meet Chris in person, we have all developed an image of this amazing person through the stories that he writes and sends to us daily. When Sheree Vertigan (ICP Executive Secretary) asked permission to post the Telling Tales series on the ICP website, he responded as follows:

'I am perfectly happy for the Telling Tales to be used for whatever purpose. I have had offers for them to be turned into a book, but at the age of 83 I do not want anything to do with more hard work. I have enjoyed writing all my life - when not teaching and helping Mary, my wife, bring up our two sons - and so that is not a burden. I have as of today (26 April) sent out 33 Tales to family and friends.'

Every day at approximately the same time, my email alerts me that the next tale has arrived, number 90 is sitting in my inbox waiting to be read.

Chris is a brilliant storyteller; his 'Telling Tales' are a great joy to read and transports one into the world of his stories. Chris has shown us how important it is to find humour in almost every situation and to go through life lightly. As a reader I have been delighted by his stories and have connected to this outstanding gentleman and member of our profession.

We are publishing one of Chris' stories in this magazine, but I invite you to enjoy the many others on the website.

Thank you, Chris!

Alta van Heerden

CHRISTOPHER JOHN LOWE CBE. TD. D.Ed. MA. LL.B



Birth: 3rd July 1937

Married: 10th August 1961 to Mary Rosalind Travers

Two sons: first born in 1969 and second in 1975. Plus, now, one granddaughter, born 2003.

Born and educated at primary and secondary stages in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, UK. From age 4 to 19.

1956-58. National Service: Served in the British army as a Second Lieutenant in the infantry, The North Staffordshire (Prince of Wales's) Regiment. Subsequently served as a Territorial Army (TA) officer in the North Staffordshire Regiment, and the Royal Leicestershire Regiment and Royal Anglian Regiment, retiring with the rank of Major.

1973: Awarded the Territorial Decoration (TD) for services to the TA.

1958-61. Read English at Downing College, Cambridge. BA degree followed by a Cambridge MA degree.

After Cambridge I went into teaching, first as an Assistant Master at Trinity School, Croydon. I then got a post as Head of English at the City of Leicester Boys School followed by the same post at a larger school, Wyggeston Boys School, also in Leicester. It was here that I gained my first experience of quasi-political activity when as the county Chair of the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE) I led a protest against proposals for new kinds of national Advanced Level examinations.

1971-1999. I was Headmaster of Prince William School, Oundle in Northamptonshire. It was a new 13-18 comprehensive school....one of the first 'comprehensive upper schools' in the Midlands, a product of a government Circular issued in 1985 by the Labour government calling on all Local Authorities to submit plans for total comprehensivisation (which, by the way, never fully happened and to this day there are still a number of selective schools in the state system).

1973: LL.B Law Degree. After leaving Cambridge I had started reading for an external London University law degree but took some ten years to complete.... for obvious reasons.... I thought I might like to change professions, but while reading law it became apparent that I much preferred teaching!

1980's Political Activity: In the 1980s I became the Chair of the Northamptonshire Secondary Headteachers when the headmasters and headmistresses associations joined together, following the late 1970s burst of equality legislation. As Chair I had my second bout of political activity, as I represented secondary Heads on the county Education committee. It was a time of significant change, with a whole raft of national legislation followed by local implementation from the middle to end of the 1980s.



The man behind Telling Tales

Eventually, around 1985 the national Secondary Heads Association (now re-named the 'Association for School and College Leaders') heard of my activities and my possession of a law degree. The Association was looking for a new Legal Secretary. They decided that I would be cheaper than a paid lawyer.... In fact I would be FREE... so they invited me to be the Honorary Legal Secretary, while continuing as Head of Prince William School. I agreed and my governors supported me.... on the grounds that it would do the school no harm to be at the forefront of educational developments. What neither they nor I knew then was that there would be a flurry of educational legislation over the next fifteen years....like no other period before or since.

I was called on to attend meetings with politicians and civil servants during the passage of fourteen Acts of Parliament concerning schools and hundreds of regulations, all of which had implications for schools: My most vivid memories are my activities during the passage of the sections of the 1986 Education Act abolishing corporal punishment in state schools in England and Wales (Scotland had their own legislation) I also had to represent Heads in some high-profile legal cases, supported by a firm of top London solicitors. It all got so legalistic that in the 1990s the Association appointed its own fulltime lawyer.

1990-91: President of the 'Secondary Heads Association (SHA):
I was elected President of SHA for 1990-91. This was during this turbulent period of legislation. It was also the period when eastern Europe was in turmoil following the break-up of the Soviet Union empire. There was an increasing clamour for some organisation to be formed to bring some pan-European unity of purpose. Although most of my activities were focused on issues in England and Wales, we also had links with the Northern Irish Heads Association and the Headteachers Association of Scotland. Inevitably I spent a lot of my Presidential year on the numerous education bills and regulations going through Parliament.

President of ESHA

1992 – 97: We achieved the formation of the European Secondary Heads Association following a conference of western school associations in Maastricht, Netherlands in 1988. Later the Association felt confident enough to open up to primary school associations and it is now the European School Heads Association. The great movers and shakers of ESHA at the outset were the Dutch. They were passionate about the possibilities for influencing the then EEC thinking. Education was not part of the EEC mandate and any money had to be wheedled out of the social fund. The Dutch were adept at that. It was the Dutch Principal, Anton van Rooijen, who was elected first President nem con.

Over the years ESHA did some excellent work behind the scenes – even though 'education' was not part of the EEC brief. Everything done to help education had to be through other funding mechanisms such as the Community fund or one set up to help the new eastern European countries move forward – through the EEC 'Socrates' programme – which also helped to develop the new democratic situations in the east European countries who secured their independences from 1990 onwards. I was actually in Moscow in the days before the 'revolution' that brought Yeltsin to power in August 1991.

When I took over the Presidency from Anton van Rooijen I had the good fortune to inherit the Dutch secretariat from him and to have the services of a Honorary General Secretary, a Belgian Principal, Sabin Schoofs.

Sabin and I spent the next four years inaugurating new Headteacher Associations in the eastern European countries, supporting new Heads Associations and organising conferences which brought East and West together. During the height of the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland we organised the first ever official joint Conference of Northern Ireland and Eire headteachers. I do not know whether there has ever been another one.

I handed over the Presidency in 1997 to Eeva Penttila of Finland.

ICP: I attended the exploratory ICP meeting at the NASSP Conference in San Diego in 1990 as a representative for SHA and then the meeting in Geneva (1991) when we agreed to hold the first ICP Conference in Geneva in 1993 and elected Jean-Jacques Streuli as the first President. I attended the next three Conferences.

At the exploratory meeting in San Diego there was an entertaining 'diplomatic incident'. Halfway through the meeting a young Lithuanian principal, Aurimas Juozaitis, burst in and demanded a seat at the meeting, since his country had just declared its independence from the Soviet Union. This would have been fine... if we had not had an official Russian delegate at the meeting, who threatened to leave the meeting if Aurimas was allowed to stay, since, he argued, Lithuania was still part of the Soviet Union and there 'were no plans for Lithuania to leave!' The impasse was amicably resolved when John Sutton, the General Secretary of SHA proposed that Lithuania be allowed to 'sit in' on the meeting as an 'observer'. That solution was accepted! Aurimas eventually became the new Lithuanian Minister for Schools, a post he held for some years.



The man behind Telling Tales

1997 -1999: I was invited to be the Visiting Professor of Education Law at Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia, and spent three weeks each year holding seminars for Heads around Perth..... and radio seminars with groups a thousand miles away in the north and south! I had the honour to be at the inaugural 'Sorry Day' at the university in 1998, and to sign the book.

Books and Articles: I was active for many years in publishing books and essays on school law and school management, and for ten years wrote a weekly 'Legal' column in The Times Educational Supplement.

Royal Opera House 1983 – 1997: Following my school's reputation for producing grand opera, with a cast of hundreds (well, the largest cast was 200!) and linking with schools abroad to perform them, I was invited to be the Chair of the Education Council of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1986. I was then invited to join the Board of Directors of the Royal Opera and Royal Ballet from 1994 to 1997. My brief was to promote the ROH outreach programme.

1992: Commander of the British Empire (CBE): I was awarded the CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in 1992.

Subsequently I have been made an Honorary Fellow of the University of Wolverhampton, and the University of Northampton, and been awarded an honorary Doctorate in Education by the De Montfort University, Leicester.



1999-2000: Following my retirement from Headship I have worked for a while in what were called Education Action Zones, and in 2008 set up a company specialising in advising schools on compliance with the law. (Mainly as a result of the move to give schools in England and Wales a greater autonomy.). The company, Handsam Ltd., is currently owned and run by my two sons, while I act as the Chair of the Board.



TELLING TALES OUT OF SCHOOL

CHRIS LOWE AND FRIENDS

OPENING UP

IMPROMPTU REFLECTIONS OF AN ENGLISH HEADMISTRESS IN MAY 2020.

I am not normally emotional. But pandemics bring out the worst in me.....especially the coronavirus pandemic of 2020.... Possibly because it was the first one I experienced... and to date, the only one.

I am normally a cheery, hail and well-met kind of person, arm round the shoulder type. Now I am a bitchy, frowning, two-metres-apart kind of person.... A pandemic Headmistress.

I have just come into my lounge after a day of moving this, shifting that, sticking markers on floors, putting up notices, answering staff queries, listening to parents' concerns'....oh, and taking my shift of looking after the 5 year olds belonging to 'key workers'. It is sometimes a good thing to live on the school site, and sometimes not. At this precise moment I am dreaming of Provence.... Where I was booked to be at the summer half term break. Two triple gins on the tables on either side of me might go some way to creating the illusion.....

Is it the pundits' fault?I have to admit to being deafened by the cacophony of commentators who keep reminding us all, me, them, and anyone else who will listen.... all day, every day.... that teachers do not wish to return to school on June 1 because we are all having a lovely holiday and we are too lazy to go back and do some actual teaching! Commentators whose only contact with schools is when they attended them..... and tell us how different their schools were then.....I ask you.....!

One sip from my right-hand glass should soften thoughts of assassination.

Or is it parents?.... well, not the majority.... but those who enjoy complaining that my staff need to "pull their socks up", stop being "lazy" and do a bit more to engage..... really....!

Another sip calms me down.

Commentators, professional and amateur, I conclude, are not on my list of favourites this week. I will add them to my virtual-morning-assembly prayer list.... That's what I will do..... put the matter squarely in the hands of the Almighty.

I suppose I have right to feel just a bit bitter.... as all this criticism came after a week where we totalled a thousand messages to parents two thousand videos and countless photos, shared, feedback provided and more work set.....- So, put that in your computers and save it.

A third sip marks my defiance.

And then.... having zoned my car park... very attractively and very effectively.... so I thought.... to ensure a swift and safe drop off and pick up without the need for anyone except children to leave their cars..... I was delighted.... well, in ecstasies of emotion.... to see the reward for my efforts was a gathering of excited key worker parents, clustering.... YES, CLUSTERING - no social distancing here.... around the artwork admiring it and sharing their lockdown stories.

A final swirl and gulp are called for.... and that's number one glass emptied.....

Needless to say, my email home to parents about the need for them to follow my rules was rewarded with a flurry of messages.... from the parents of Nervous Nelly and Anxious Andrew.... about the fact that if they did not walk their child to the door they might be run over, snatched by some pervert, get lost on the way or eaten by wild dogs.

TELLING TALES OUT OF SCHOOL

Well, I suppose everything is 'possible'....but once I pointed out the distance between car door and school door to be 2.3m precisely, the flurry of messages has - for now - subsided....

A sip from the left-hand glass.

.... but not entirely disappeared.... because there is:

Pushy Petra from the lower years who has asked if I am intending to draw squares on my playground and isolate the children "like they do in France".....well, I am not!

..... and then there is Dithery Delia who is not sure whether her child should come back as she is enjoying lockdown so much she may become a teacher after this- it seems such a doddle!

Another sip gets me over that one.

I have staff directed to disinfect the lego, trained to wipe the switches every 15 minutes, test the water every day.....

I have "pods" of children created to play as safely as I can - the result?..... another parental query..... a question from No-idea Nerys:

- could her child choose his pod friends and could we swap them round every day to give the children a change?

And then a follow-up,

- would these pods be the same in the classroom as outside in the fresh air - because if you are outside it is fine to forget about the social distancing as demonstrated earlier by the keyworker cluster that formed around my Zone art?

Aaaaarrgghh!

Another sip....or better still, two.

Or is it my colleagues?.... those, admittedly a few.... who have hot-footed it into suburban lockdown.....or like my deputy who has escaped to a rural retreat with not a child or a teacher within ten miles, on the grounds that he might possibly have asthma.... but in any case a friend of a friend that he has recently been in contact with, certainly has. 'Best not to risk me with the children,' he said....'Amen to that,' I unkindly said to myself, 'Best to shield you.....from the kids at any time!'

Another sip..... a gulp..... empty glass.....oh dear.

But remember....the caretaker has been a delight- repainting everything he can before the little darlings return in any number.

His zonal art is quite magnificent (I may enter it for the Turner Prize next year). He has cut every blade of grass on the four acre site three times and he is tackling the weeds in our wildlife area which now contains three deer, four red kites and a couple of buzzards as well as the dozens of nesting pheasants who will not be best pleased when I unleash 30 children on them come June 1st.....

TELLING TALES OUT OF SCHOOL

I am not sure what he is planning in the way of supervised entry to school at drop off time... no doubt he is relishing the thought of using his new yellow cones.... at least, I think that is what he meant when I told him the children were back on the 1st and he replied, 'Bollards!'.... before marching off - no doubt to locate them in preparation for the onslaught.

Refill right-hand glass.....no, better still....both sides...

I will be unable to hold an assembly to train the pupils en masse as this is definitely not in my risk assessment. Instead, I shall perhaps visit each pod in turn and emphasise the need for the children to stay in their pods and not move between them... before I continue my mission of moving between the pods to warn them about moving between the pods.....if you see what I mean.... I am just endeavouring to follow the guidance sent out by the government in recent weeks:

I am simply....implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings.... following Guidance for educational settings.... taking account of Guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and well being during a pandemic.... making arrangements for Cleaning in non health care settings....bearing in mind Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak.... and ensuring appropriate Actions for education settings to prepare for wider opening from June 1st. I am proud of my quick reading of 15 templates.... or is it 20 now?....for a risk assessment for schools.... and the...I forget the number... of helpful toolkits.... which I gave up after 500 pages.

Phew!

Another sip.... that's better...

And I have, I remind myself.... after several sleepless nights.... created a risk assessment spanning 10 glorious pages. I sent it out to my staff- quite proud of my efforts- only to be told that I had forgotten to set a rota for going to the toilet! and what "sort" of cloth do we need for the light switches?and have I remembered to remind the children to put the toilet seat down after use?

Aaaaarrrgggh!

I did all that.... on the dot....sat back.....and then?!....the government documents all came back.... updated in the past week and there- in very small print at the bottom of most of the statements – a little note.... 'we will be publishing further guidance..... and this document will be updated on or before 30 May!'

Aaaaarrrggggh!

30th May eh?...well... that clearly leaves me nearly, but not quite, 24 hours..... to rewrite my risk assessment, inform my staff and parents of the changes and delight my caretaker..... who will probably need 24 hours notice to rearrange his bollards.

Finish rest of glass..... fetch ne bottle.

Then a little head pops round the door.... granddaughter Nellie.... She clambers on my knee and snuggles down

'Will you read me a story, granma?'

And then I know why I do all this.

More of Chris' stories can be read by visiting www.icponline/podcasts-videos

The International Confederation of Principals as a facilitator of Equity in Global Education Systems: A Case Study from Shanghai Council, October 2019

As one would expect from a worldwide leadership organisation, there have been several strands to ICP's exploration of equity over recent years, ranging from a discussion of gender, to an exploration of the allocation of resources and the impact of physical infrastructure. Our most recent Council at Shanghai in October 2019 was attended by 57 delegates from 15 different countries and 46 member associations. We felt that the first step towards exploring equity was to adopt a common statement which expressed the value we attached to the beliefs and values of those present and our respect for the jurisdiction in which the meeting was taking place:

We come together as an International Community of leaders, united by our common purpose of learning from one another, advancing the cause of school leadership and improving outcomes for young people worldwide.

Throughout our time together we will be inclusive and affiliative, valuing the contribution of everyone.

We thank our hosts for their hospitality and commit ourselves to respecting their culture, traditions and values during the time we spend with them.

In order to frame our discussion, we heard a powerful case study on the South African experience from one of our Executive members, Thembi Ndlovu. Her paper explored the practical outworking of the South African government's commitment to a three stage plan for promoting equity:

- Putting legislation and policies in place to address equity, inclusion and diversity
- Ensuring equitable and universal access to quality education and meaningful learning opportunities
- Redressing the effects of the past

Thembi shared some of the lessons learnt from the process, itemising the key levers that South African policy makers and leaders had agreed needed to be in place in order to facilitate their journey towards a more equitable system:

- Adequate finance
- Provision of qualified and competent human resources

- Professional teacher development
- Providing adequate infrastructure
- Significant resource allocation
- Educational access
- Sense of ownership by role-players
- Sense of accountability by teachers
- Regular monitoring and evaluation

Thembi left us with a powerful visual image to demonstrate the transformation that the country is aiming for:

EQUITY WITH FAIRNESS (3RD IMAGE)

EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.

In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.

In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Inspired by this presentation, we then went on to draw together perspectives from across the world. Delegates were asked to sum up in one or two sentences what equity meant to them. Their perceptive and wide-ranging responses demonstrate the breadth of the concept and the difficulties of addressing equity through a one size fits all approach:

In South Africa Equity involves an aspect of redress Equity does not mean that everyone is equal. It means that we work to remove the barriers that certain groups of people (from among our Members, our students, our staff) experience so they can reach their full potential.

HOW SMALL STEPS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



The International Confederation of Principals as a facilitator of Equity in Global Education Systems: A Case Study from Shanghai Council, October 2019

Australian leaders have learnt that equity is not a concept as much as it is a process that requires self-awareness, honest and difficult conversations and an acceptance that we'll always be engaging in the process.

Equity in an African context means having similar infrastructure, similar number and quality of students whether the school is cited in a rural or urban environment. It also about being Equality is a central and almost sacred principle in Finnish society and school. It is also important for the organization, in our small country all principals and vice-principals (primary, lower and upper secondary) belong to the same organization as equal members.

Equity is an important component of all processes related to education, in a multi diverse country like India. Access and inclusion from the rights perspective are extremely essential for equity in the community, state and nation.

Equity is critical in our context as we have an increasing equity and achievement gap in our jurisdiction. Our state government has introduced an effective needs based funding model to address some issues, but federal agreements and deals undermine attempts to improve equity for our most disadvantaged students and communities.

As the statements above make clear, the global nature of ICP means that it would be impossible to advocate for a specific set of policy interventions, since contextual factors are so variable for our members. However, in order to support the work of individual jurisdictions, our Shanghai Council adopted the following statement, underlining our commitment to work for greater equity in education systems worldwide:

The ICP respects and acknowledges the varied challenges faced by each member in our shared journey to ensuring equity of access and opportunity for the learners and the communities in which we lead. Every member of the ICP acknowledges their personal responsibility to shape, lead and advocate for educational equity at all levels in their own cultural, social and economic context. To achieve this goal, ICP is committed to open dialogue world-wide, towards access to equitable, quality education for all.

Peter Kent, ICP President Elect

Have you ever had that light-bulb moment where you wake up and say, 'Right – I'm going to start eating healthy, and exercise more,' only for your good intentions to fall apart at the first sign of weakness? You're not alone. For many, the problem is biting off more than you can chew. Making a lifestyle change and creating healthy habits can be daunting. It's a massive step. And this is where people often trip at the first hurdle, by taking on too much and expecting instant results.

You need to remind yourself that it's the small changes you introduce to your life, in small doses, that all add up to make a big difference. Incremental change is the key – not everything at once. Here's what you can do to make sure you don't fall over at the first challenge.

Make choices that are right for you. If you're at the bottom end of the scale as far as exercise and diet goes, aiming to complete a marathon or triathlon is only going to set yourself up for failure. Choose activities that are achievable – and enjoyable. A simple walk with a friend turns exercise into a social activity. Setting times to meet someone to join you means more likely to commit to doing it. Give yourself stretch targets. It might be starting with a 30-minute walk and adding an extra five minutes in incremental steps. Or adding one extra lap around the park with each go. Anything that increases your exercise in small steps. Plus, you'll have your trusty fitness tracker by your side to help you see how you're improving.

And the healthy habits will follow...

Many participants on the Global Challenge discover with all their newfound activity, they don't want to undo all their good work with bad food choices. After all, if you've worked hard to reach 10,000+ steps a day, or to add extra steps to your existing average, it seems counterintuitive to undo all that positive work with fast food or an extra serve of dessert, or an unhealthy snack. When the urge kicks in to make healthy food a new habit, the Food Calculator and Weight Tracker in Nutrition can certainly help you stay on track. It's a simple process of learning that for all the energy you take in, you need to up your exercise to get that energy out. And don't forget: what gets measured gets done!

Celebrate the wins

Share your success with friends and family. Don't be shy. You'll discover a support network to help you celebrate the wins, and provide support, encouragement and motivation when you need it. Set yourself milestones to keep your eye on the prize (hitting your step goal) or create something to aim for – like your first 5km charity walk or fun run.

Keep it up!

If you do stumble and break one of your healthy habits, don't be too hard on yourself. Remember the situation and what triggered it so you're prepared for next time. Whatever you do – don't give up. Get back on track and keep at it – it gets easier and easier the longer you keep at it. And before you know it, your small changes will be healthy habits that are just a normal part of your new healthy lifestyle! See you on the track!

Introduction to Jack Delaney

*‘We celebrate the past to awaken the future’-
J F Kennedy*

Let us introduce you to Jack Delaney, the third President of the ICP, a past president of NASSP, and a Boston school principal for thirty years. Jack retired in 2000 and as he states, ‘one of his few regrets was the thought that they there were so many friends that he was unlikely to see again.’

Fortunately for Jack, two of his ex ICP friends Rob McConchie (Australia) and Rinnie van Der Horst (Netherlands) came up with the idea to form the little known group – ICP Alumni.

Eight couples from across the globe met up in Tuscany in the summer of 2004 and they have continued to meet every second year since that time, 16 years of coming together to share a friendship that began with membership of ICP. Unfortunately, 2020 catch up had to be postponed.

Jack’s reflections of those ICP Alumni catch ups and the reminisces can be read in full at insert ICP link or by visiting their website www.icpalumin.org

Jack and Rob McConchie hope that by sharing their wonderful experiences other members of ICP will be inspired to start up another small group of members or alternatively support the ICP to establish a form of the Alumni.

At each ICP Council and Convention, members always speak of the importance of networking, friendship and learning together.

Take the time to share this idea with your membership, read Jack’s story and reflect on the words of Rob McConchie, “helping to establish the ICP in 1990’s opened my eyes to the world beyond my own country. I saw a richness of less familiar landscapes, cities, cultures, and of course education systems.”

There is no doubt that many of us are currently reflecting on the COVID 19 travel restrictions and how it has changed our lives in 2020, but we can also think about the wonderful learning experiences that the ICP has provided members in the past and will provide in the future.

If you are interested in forming an alumni please contact the Executive Secretary.

Sheree Vertigan
Executive Secretary - ICP

An ICP Life After ICP

By Jack Delaney, Nahant, Ma. USA

In the previous issue of this magazine, Rob McConchie did a superb job of summarizing the first ten years of ICP with all its challenges and achievements. What we hope to accomplish in this article is tell you about the fantastic experiences enjoyed by a little known group calling itself the ICP Alumni, all formerly members of the ICP leadership.

The year was 2003 and I had been retired for three years after spending 30 happy years as principal of the same school in a Boston suburb. In addition, I had the good fortune to spend many years as part of the leadership of our national principal's organization (NASSP), including a term as President in 1992. NASSP had 40,000 members at the time and considerable resources. These resources became invaluable to the fledgling ICP organization.

Involvement with NASSP in the early 90's allowed me to participate in a series of meetings that eventually resulted in the founding of the International Confederation of Principals (ICP). My wife and I had always been avid travelers with great interest in other countries so becoming one of the US representatives to the new ICP was a very attractive opportunity. There were many challenges and frustrating moments, but also great pleasure in establishing relationships with interesting people from so many other countries. Wonderful friendships developed among delegates and their spouses as we attended meetings and conferences all over the globe. During our period of involvement, the conventions in Geneva, Sydney, Boston and Helsinki allowed us to broaden and strengthen the many personal friendships that had been established. Elected as the third President of ICP in the late 90's meant that we continued to participate in activities and meetings around the world, often involving people who had long since become friends.

After retirement, one of the few regrets was the thought that there were so many friends that we were unlikely to ever see again. So, in 2003, imagine my surprise and delight to receive an invitation from Rob McConchie to join a small reunion of former ICP members in Tuscany the following summer. Were we interested? Of course, we were! The gathering was scheduled to take place in San Donato and we were to be housed in villas at this tiny village over 900 years old. The reunion was the brainchild of Rob and Rinnie van Der Horst of the Netherlands, who met the previous year and thought it would be fun to gather some old friends again. Ten couples were invited, although only 8 were able to attend; but what a diverse and fun group! Attendees were: Rob and Brenda from Australia, Kyu and Jaissoo Uhm from South Korea, my wife, Jeannie and I from the US, Roald and Maren Beck from Norway, Horst- Dieter and Doris Laufs from Germany and three couples from the Netherlands: Rinnie and Herma van der Horst, Benno and Jeanne Elsen and Anton and Marlene van Rooijen. Establishing a pattern to be often repeated, my wife and I joined

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whole group activities together. He likes to point out that we have enjoyed some wonderful cultural events such as a Mozart dinner concert in Salzburg and violin concert in Barcelona. We continue to learn through these activities and through our personal exchanges, although we discuss education less and less. As one of our founders, Rinnie and his wife, Herma, continue to play a lead organizing role for our group. Rinnie is probably the most influential member in deciding future venues for our gatherings. He thinks a key to our success is the great friendships developed among the spouses and their enthusiasm for participating in all the travel and the activities. And there surely have been many wonderful experiences enjoyed together.

Like me, Horst Dieter Laufs, from Germany, had participated in many ICP activities over the years, but was “a bit astonished” to be invited to join this group. Horst writes: “The invitation was made by former ICP members that we had known for years, but only at official occasions. There was Rob McConchie, the Australian president searching for solutions; then Jack Delaney, the diplomatic American president and Rinnie van der Horst, the Netherlands organizer and auditor. We knew, and liked, all the others, as well. Doris and I used to prefer individual travel, but we gladly accepted the invitation. As our week in Tuscany progressed, we realized how much fun it was to spend time with this group. We often spent happy hours talking about what each of us had done during the day. Most of all Doris and I remember one evening in San Donato when Rinnie organized a dinner in the beautiful garden of our hosts. They were oil farmers and wine makers, who then presented us with perfect steaks cooked on an open grill. We drank a lot of excellent wine and you could eat and drink as much as you wanted at very low cost. A perfect night! We are glad to be part of this wonderful group of people.”

The linguist, and choral director, of our group, Benno Elsen “I was not born for one corner, my homeland is the entire world” (Seneca) and his wife, Jeanne, from Holland, bring a cultured presence. They have been influential in organizing several of our meetings and also some of the wonderful events we have attended.

Benno traces his first contacts with NASSP back to 1980 when he visited the national headquarters in Reston, Virginia on a Fullbright-Hays scholarship. Invitations to several of their annual conventions followed and a group of international participants at NASSP conventions evolved that, in many ways, inspired the forming of the ICP. As President of Dutch AVS (1985-1992), he was one of the founders of both ESHA in 1988 and ICP in 1990. He notes: “ESHA was founded in close pre-Brexit cooperation with SHA (UK) to the goal EDUCATION TOMORROW’S EUROPEANS. Oh irony! Will Brexit in the end appear to be a historic mistake that will be corrected in the future by the English youngsters as writers Julian Barnes and Ian McEwan suggest?”

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Benno continues: “In August, 1993, some 250 principals from 30 countries and 5 continents gathered together in Geneva as PRINCIPALS OF THE WORLD LEARNING TOGETHER. This first ICP convention was a unique and historical event. We soon came to realize how most of our educational challenges, goals and problems were basically the same or almost so all over the world (communist countries excepted).

After becoming a key member of our ICP Alumni group, Benno describes how our conversations no longer focused on topics such as Effective Leadership and School Curriculum, but shifted to how to manage our senior lives in a meaningful way. We all travel and make cultural trips, respect the value of international friendships, discuss climate change, populism and unstable world politics. We share worries about fake news, denials of scientific results, extremist views and attacks, and perhaps most of all, the deteriorating state of our democracies. We worry about the future of today’s youngsters, often our grandchildren. And yet, a good laugh is never far away when we gather, especially during happy hours and dinners. Fortunately, our group is heavily infected with the virus of humor.

Benno ends by writing: “I sincerely hope that ICP will continue to prosper while offering our headmasters an international outlook and influencing staff and pupils with it. This is even more important now than ever before. It is a must in a world threatened by several infections at the same time.”

Perhaps, the funniest participant is Roald Beck of Norway, whose wry commentary and extraordinary knowledge of world affairs adds so much to our conversations. With his wife, Maren, who also has a strong educational background, they provide very interesting perspectives. Each of us can offer stories about our history with ICP and Roald is no different.

“Shortly before the first ICP convention, a friend who was President of the Swedish principals convinced me to join him in Geneva. In retrospect, a wise, entertaining and rewarding decision. Later, through a joint venture with Sweden and the Netherlands, aiming to assist Latvia in building a democratic society around 1990, I became acquainted with some people who knew other people who were part of another network, etc., etc. Through these connections, we eventually ended up becoming part of the early ICP group. At home, in Norway, our association was hardly 10 years old, struggling to find a platform of its own, different from other organizations and trade unions. Furthering an international perspective and building connections through the ICP and its European relative ESHA, enriched both my professional and private life. Hopefully, I was also able to return some useful information.

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As the turn of the millennium approached and I left the presidency of Norway, the domestic board decided to leave the ICP for financial reasons. Professionally, a defeat for me, but personally a success as I got to know the people who later formed the ICP Alumni. Years later, when I also got the email from Rob McConchie and Rinnie van der Horst, inviting me and my wife to join other veterans from the ICP executive board in Italy, I gladly accepted. We found our way to this tiny, medieval village in Tuscany and quickly found a common platform for joy, laughter, stories and discussions during our “happy hours”, excursions and group meals. Since then, this biannual event has become a highlight, although it’s a pity that we get older year by year. Interested in studying some of our experiences through these 16 years? Take a look at our website: [“www.icpalumni.org”](http://www.icpalumni.org)

Our resident historian and philosopher, Rob McConchie, claims: “Helping establish ICP in the 1990’s opened my eyes to the world beyond my own country. I saw the richness of less familiar landscapes, cities, cultures, languages and of course education systems. After retirement, the thrill of travel remains undiminished, but the luxury of extra time is a welcome bonus.” The ICP group has certainly fit nicely.

He also offers a number of personal suggestions:

- Be adventurous with food and eat local as it is a window on the culture of the places one visits
- Stay longer, and stay in a B&B rather than an international hotel chain. There is so much to learn that can only be assimilated by living like a local. (for example: the Delaneys and the McConchies rented an apartment for a week in Venice prior to one of our gatherings.)
- Life in many parts of the world is viewed through a community, rather than an individual lens. While great to return home to our stand alone house in suburbia, there is much to learn from the community life typical in parts of Europe and Asia.
- And finally, our world faces four immense challenges. These are inequality in its various forms and the fragility of peace, democracy, and the environment. These issues can only be addressed by well-educated communities. Collaboration between students, teachers and school leaders across the world has never been more important.

Rob ends by noting that our little group of ICP Alumni is continuing its learning journey, discussing important issues whilst having lots of fun along the way.

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We hope sharing our wonderful experiences will inspire others to embark on similar ventures.



Left to right: Anton von Rooijen, Herma van der Horst, Rinnie van der Horst, Brenda Mcconchie, Marlene von Rooijen, Horst-Dieter Laufs, Doris Laufs, Jeannie Delaney, Maren Beck, Roald Beck, Benno Elsen, Jeanne Elsen, Jack Delaney, Rob McConchie.



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