

Learning For Life



Presentation to
The Parents Association of Community and Comprehensive
Schools
Racket Hall
Roscrea
Co Tipperary
Saturday March 3rd 2007

“CHILDREN TODAY ARE
TYRANTS. THEY CONTRADICT
THEIR PARENTS, GOBBLE
THEIR FOOD AND TYRANIZE
THEIR TEACHERS.”



SOCRATES 470-399 B.C.

What does 'Learning for life' mean?

1. Learning as a preparation for life (formal and informal)

or

2. A motivational attitude driven by the journey itself and is ongoing

Core Principles of Lifelong learning (White Paper 2000)

- Lifelong Learning as a systemic approach
 - Cradle to Grave, open boundaries, flexibility in learning sources, offers challenges at all levels
- Equality
 - Socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability, gender. Principle of inclusion and targeting need
- Inter-culturalism
 - ”my neighbour may no longer be like me”(Delors Commission). Notion of tapestry, acknowledging and celebrating individual ethnicity leading to a shared collective awareness of nationhood.

Factors influencing lifelong learning

- Globalisation – *Economic restructuring*
- Aging populations still working
- Demographic changes – *Need to retrain*
- Emphasis on higher skills – *design, research, specialist production and marketing*
- Need for flexibility in society
- Cultural change – *collapse of traditional values, different expectations and opportunities for young people*
- Changes in policy of regulation and governance – *Decentralisation, partnership, devolution of control*
- Changes in assessment patterns

What does 'Learning' mean?

1. **Instrumental** - *results driven where outcomes are set and performance is evaluated*
2. **Communicative** – *Knowledge and understanding is constructed through shared meaning and dialogue*

What type of learning is currently taking place in schools?

Traditional Curriculum

Junior Certificate

Leaving Certificate

Externally assessed

Outcome driven

Teachers are disempowered

Evaluates a limited skill base

Little room for innovation

Limited range of assessment options

CAO points system

Curriculum change

CSPE

SPHE

Transition Year option

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

Leaving Certificate Vocational (LCVP)

Why has this change become necessary?

- Student Profile
- Learning Styles
- Multiple Intelligence Theory
- Reflective Practice
- School as a Pastorally infused community



What should schools be doing about learning?

Traditionally

- *Knowledge/information*
- ↓
- *Teaching (chalk & Talk)*
- ↓
- *Exam Technique*
- ↓
- *Results*
- ↓
- *Points*
- ↓
- *College?*

Alternatively

- *Teach for understanding*
- ↓
- *Critical thinking (HD)*
- ↓
- *Alternative Assessment*
- ↓
- *Results that acknowledge different capacities*
- ↓
- *Alternative entry routes*
- ↓
- *Learning for life (College or?)*

What do we need to do?

- Is the junior Certificate necessary in its current form?
- What direction does the leaving Certificate need to take?
- Is the CAO system working in terms acknowledging and accommodating alternative learning capacities?
- Does the points system set unrealistic expectations for parents of their children's capacities?
- What Should parents realistically have a right to expect from the educational system?
- Is the educational system doing enough to help our children cope in a very different and radically unknowable world?

School as community

“The essential prerequisite for any school to develop relationships successfully with its communities, is that it should aim to be a coherent community itself.”

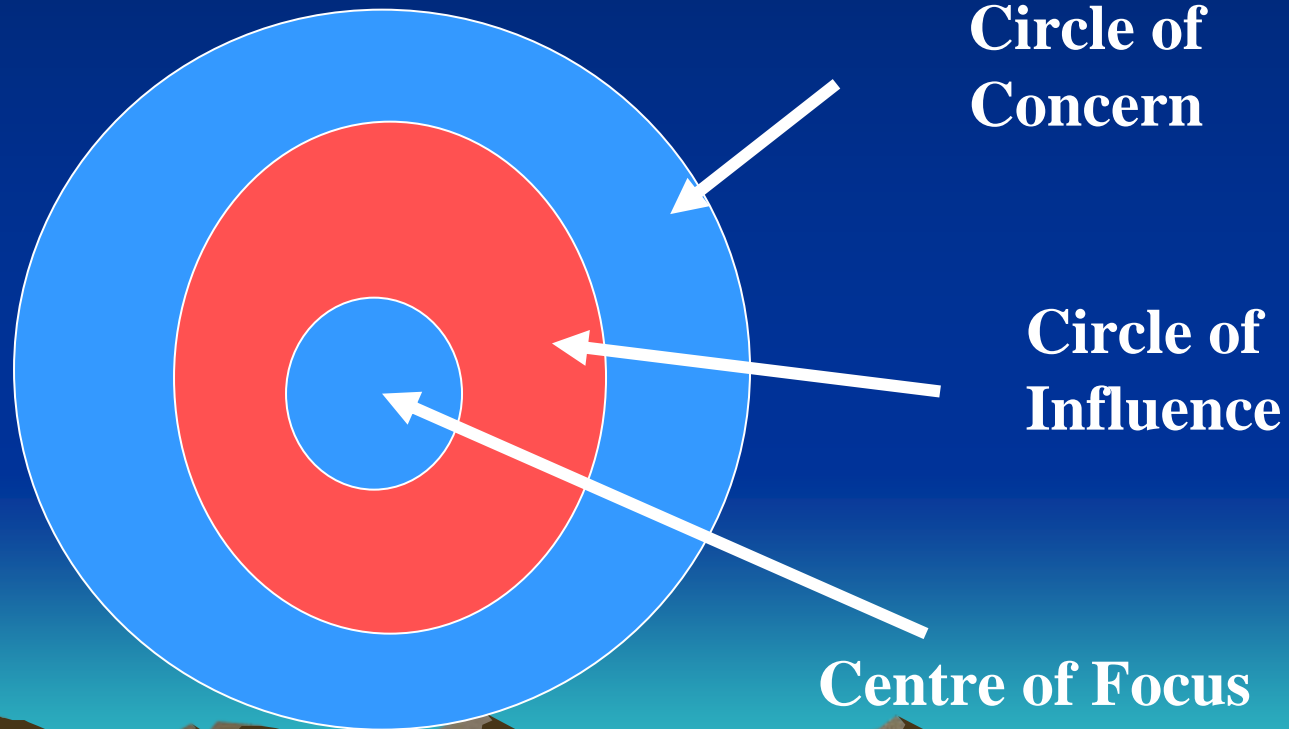
(Clarke.-1995),

- A sense of belonging
- A sense of place
- A sense of support
- Social Relationships
- Communication network
- Identification with common values

Being Proactive vs. Reactive

Being Proactive – Working within Our Area of Influence

Covey also talks about being proactive as being focused on circle of influence rather than the broader circle of concern.



From Stephen Covey "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People"

Challenges facing PACCS into the future

- Values
- Vision
- Leadership
- Community
- Partnership
- Affirmation
- Support



Learning for life as a motivational driver for living!

**What can we do to support/lead change in the
school and community?**

Are we clear on the values we want to promote?

**What immediate actions can we take to promote
these values both locally and nationally as an
association?**

What long term actions can we take?

What further skills or training do we need?

Final Thoughts

“If there is anything that we wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could be better changed in ourselves.”

Carl Jung

***Vision without action is a dream.
Action without vision is a waste of
time. Vision with action can change
the world”***

Nelson Mandela