

Title of Research Project: Supporting Inclusive Education in Seven Primary Schools Through Participatory Action Learning and Research (PALAR); A Teacher Leadership Community of Practice

Researchers: Dr Fiona King, Alice Donnelly, Laoise Gormley, Leona Harford, Jill Higgins, Eimear Holland, Ellen Lunney, Mary McElvaney and Anna Kristina Maria Tapper Clasborn



Contact Details: leonaharford93@gmail.com

Relevant key words: Inclusion; Participatory Action Learning Action Research; Community of Practice; Newly Qualified Teachers.

Summary:

This research explored early career teachers use of Participatory Action Learning Action Research (PALAR) within a community of practice (CoP) for enhancing inclusive practices. It involved seven primary teachers and two teacher educators focused on empowering teachers to exercise teacher leadership for inclusion within and beyond their own classrooms.

Research questions:

To what extent can engagement in a Leadership for Inclusion Community of Practice (LIn-CoP):
Develop and enhance teachers' knowledge, skills and practices for inclusive education through the 6 facets for inclusion? using PALAR, raise teachers' critical consciousness levels enabling them to identify power boundaries and overcome barriers to applying their learning back at school?

Early career teachers evidenced enhanced knowledge, skills and practices using photographs and reflections on photographs during LIn-CoP workshops, and on Trello (online platform). They reported

evidence of impact on their students. Participants engaged in cycles of reflection, planning and acting on targets in their context. All seven teachers reported feeling empowered professionally and felt able to identify relevant stakeholders in their schools and lobby them for support to enact change. Participants were engaged in and with research processes through inquiry approaches, coding of data, presenting their findings at Féilte and writing an article for publication.

Published: May 2020