



## APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1 DVD 1: 'Celebrate what's right with the world.'**

An independent camera-crew's filming of the activities of a day on an Edmund Rice Camp. It captures the caring relationship of the leaders with the children, the circle format of meetings and the reflective process that ends each day. It is clear that the leaders take full responsibility for all aspects of the Camp, and they demonstrate that leadership is a shared and distributive function throughout.

### **DVD 2: 'What does Edmund Rice Camp mean to me?'**

Four young adult leaders explain what the Camp means to them.

### **Appendix 2 Reflection on our journey together**

**Key Research Participants reflect on our working together.**

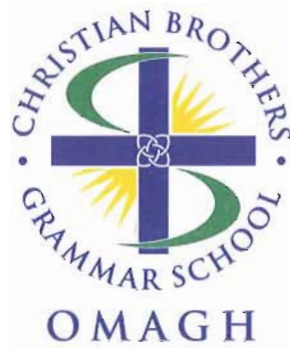
- 2.1 A School Principal.
- 2.2 A Member of Senior Management.
- 2.3 A Principal and Vice-Principal from a second school.
- 2.4 Director and Deputy Director of the Education Offices.

### **Appendix 3 Reflections of 'Critical Friends' and Colleagues.**

- 3.1 Hanora , a young adult leader, Camp Co-ordinator and Mentor.
- 3.2 Colleague 1
- 3.3 Colleague 2.
- 3.4 Member of Province Leadership Team.

### **Appendix 4 Student leadership and Child's Edmund Rice Award.**

- 4.1 Senior Prefects thoughts on Student Issues
- 4.2 Student Evaluation and Reflection Form
- 4.3 Leadership Development Programme 2007
- 4.4 Child's 'Eddie Award'.



## Appendix 2.1

### Validation of work undertaken by Chris Glavey in CBS Omagh

During the period 1980/90s the contribution made by students in Omagh CBS was somewhat limited to their involvement as class prefects, the annual school magazine or weekly news bulletin. No formal mechanism existed within the school that enabled students to participate in any semblance of a more democratic process. Senior Management, on a number of occasions, had discussed setting up a Student Council but no real progress had been made. It could be said that there was a degree of uncertainty within the school on how to approach the issue of establishing an effective Student Council. There were some concerns that, by giving students a greater say in what happens within the school, a Student Council may raise more issues that it could resolve.

Chris Glavey had been involved in the school over a number of years in devising and leading an induction programme for Year 13 students preparing to undertake duties as school prefects. It was at a meeting I had with Chris prior to the 2003 academic year that the topic of Student Councils was raised. I was interested in what Chris had been doing in schools and, after he had detailed his current research and work already undertaken, I felt that the insights and experiences Chris had gained could be used effectively within Christian Brothers Omagh.

Following these initial discussions, I arranged that Chris would meet with the Vice Principal, Head of Senior School and other staff with the purpose of exploring the formation of a Student Council. One of the significant outcomes of these discussions was that Chris prepared and delivered a 2-day training programme, and subsequently followed this up by mentoring the students as they progressed through the various phases in establishing the student council. At all times Chris liaised with Senior Management and kept staff briefed on developments. A particular effort was made to ensure that the school community was kept up-to-date on progress and that all appointments to the Council were made following procedures that had the full support of the student body.

Within a short space of time it became clear that a worthwhile project was underway. Feedback from students was extremely positive and encouraging. Students welcomed the opportunity to express their views and to have these received sympathetically by Senior Management. Proposals from the Student Council were practical and had a very specific focus on making a real contribution to school life. The Student Council accepted readily that staff and students were working in partnership with the expressed aim of creating the best possible environment for the whole school community. At no time was there any evidence of conflict between staff and students, openness was encouraged and Senior Management was welcomed to Council meetings. As the work of the council developed, members of staff remarked that students in general demonstrated a much





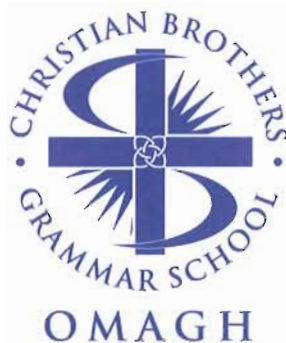
greater respect for all within the school community. It was particularly noticeable that post 16 students had adopted a more mature approach and that the environment for study in the post 16 centre had improved. This improvement in approach was subsequently reflected in A/AS examinations results surpassing the school previous high levels.

Prior to his work with the Student Council, Chris was engaged in training Senior Prefects in preparation for undertaking their duties with the various year groups within the school. I was keen to involve Chris in the training of Senior Prefects as there had been increasing evidence over a number of years that there was a lack of understanding of the prefects' role and they were not having the desired effect within the school. As a result of the training programme provided by Chris, Senior Prefects approached their responsibilities with greater enthusiasm and with an action plan for their year's work. Students were much better prepared for their work, were more confident in the tasks being undertaken and were more sensitive to the needs of fellow students.

Chris continues to work closely with school staff and is involved in the review and updating of the annual 2-day Year 13 induction programme. I have no hesitation in confirming that the school community has benefited enormously from the work undertaken by Chris. As a result of his guidance, the Student Council has been able to make an effective and positive contribution to school life. Chris communicated most effectively with staff and students, was held in the highest esteem by all and was instrumental in promoting the concept of collaborative working among Senior Management, the teaching staff and students. It was clear from discussions with students that they have every confidence in Chris and enjoyed the training being provided. The work of the Student Council surpassed its own expectations within the first year and there was visible evidence for the contribution being made. It is my firm belief that a Students' Council empowers students in a very positive way, it enables them to share in the responsibility for enhancing school life and it engenders a real sense of partnership. I am convinced that adequate preparation of students and staff is vital and it was in this area that Chris made a most effective contribution to our experience. The guidance and support received from Chris is greatly appreciated by all involved.

Roddy Tierney (Headmaster 1993-2005)





17<sup>th</sup> February 2008

## Appendix 2.2

### Describe how you experienced my work with you and your students?

- I have worked with Br Chris over the past 8 years as we have attempted to help our senior students and their Form Teachers to have a shared vision of the values of the school and the students to develop on all fronts and in particular to develop leadership skills as young men.
- Working with Br Chris has been a valuable learning experience for me as Head of Senior School, for teachers and for the students

From Br Chris I have reflected and changed our practices on the following areas:

#### How we treat our students

- From working with Br Chris we place much greater emphasis on how we treat our students as individuals each with his own strengths and individual personality but working within a school community
- The clearest example here is the practice of serving tea and biscuits or scone or lunch to the students as we work on any training sessions. This engages the students, helps them to interact and build up a community feeling and a greater appreciation of the school.
- Senior prefects and members of the Student Council receive a personal invitation from the Principal to our Christmas Dinner and Prizegiving. Members of the Senior Prefect team and the Student Council receive special mention in the Principal's address and those members of the Council or the Senior Prefect team who have performed exceptionally well will receive awards.
- The challenges we currently face come from the impact of part time jobs on the amount of study undertaken by students and the amount of time students spend on the computer. This is contributing to underachievement. Traditionally we may have approached these issues from a disciplinary point of view. Now we are more inclined to sit down with the students and talk through the implications of issues. The students are fully aware of the Positive Behaviour Policy and our discussions are within certain boundaries or rules.
- All of this has contributed to a greater sense of co-operation and a partnership between the students and the staff. The senior students are young men and they have now become role models for our younger students.
- I sense from within the students that they are happy and feel valued, as well as being challenged in the school.
- All of this has contributed to a greater sense of identity and loyalty to the school and overall good behaviour





### **How to shape our vision of how we want the Senior Leaders to develop**

- We now place greater emphasis on the community dimension of the school, with shared values
- A lot more time is devoted to the appointment of Senior Prefects
- Over the past years we have worked a programme which allows us to incorporate the selection process into our students' overall development
- Students are set challenges, discussion tasks and report writing exercises which will form an essential part of their application process to Higher Education
- Br Chris has emphasised to us the competitive nature of boys and we have tapped into this when setting the challenges and carrying out our training
- A lot of thought is given to how we support students who are not successful in their application for Senior Prefect positions
- Very often in my discussion with Br Chris he will make suggestions about how to proceed. I will follow through with the action steps, sharing Br Chris' ideas with colleagues in school.

### **How to pace change**

- Working with Br Chris has encouraged us to pace the changes we introduce.
- Initially we were much too ambitious in what we were attempting to do.
- Br Chris has shown us how to work on the principle of creeping success.
- We try to take one or two areas and get these areas developed each year.
- I feel that working with Br Chris has emphasised to us the importance of the process of change.
- It has been so important to engage with as many students and staff as possible as we carry forward change. This gives us wider perspectives on how to move forward and people have a sense of ownership of change.
- Through the guidance of Br Chris our students have become more assertive, empowered, able and willing to contribute to the life of the school
- We are very aware that school is an intensely busy place as students are prepared for exams. This is particularly true for senior students who take modular exams in January and May.

### **Carrying out immediate self evaluations**

- The success of what we have undertaken with Br Chris has been based on his advice to prepare very carefully for any training, setting out exactly what we want to achieve.
- Then immediately after the seminars we would carry out an evaluation based on how our planned exercises worked in practice.
- Over the years we have tweaked our Induction Programme with the Year 13 students to meet the needs of the students. We now involve our Form Teachers in carrying forward the tasks which previously would have been undertaken in large groups by Br Chris.
- 





- This enables us to build a relationship between the form teachers and the students in their form class.
- Br Chris has trained the Form Teachers, giving them guidance but yet enabling each Form Teacher to bring their own personality to each exercise.

## **2. Has our work together influenced your thinking or practice?**

- My Thinking - I always come away from our discussions with Br Chris energised and more focused on what I want to achieve.
- From working in the school, Br Chris has gained a good insight into the ethos, the culture and thinking of the staff and students.
- He provides very clear ideas and guidance on how to develop our students, helping them to work as a community, with a shared vision, to be more assertive and self disciplined in what they want to achieve.
  
- My Practice -Through observing Br Chris leading training sessions we have come to appreciate the value of more pupil centred active learning.
- At all times the students are shown the meaning, purpose and value of each exercise and in this way the students are motivated to participate.
- Br Chris emphasises the importance of no student feeling a failure.
- As the students engage in work on tasks / puzzles, they are seeing the importance of group work and the need to support and learn from each other. He is particularly attentive to the student who is not engaged in a task. He will pose serious questions to this student to determine why he is disengaged.
- In working with the Student Council, Br Chris shows the students how to manage meetings, process ideas and shape the direction they wish to go. Yet he leaves so much of the decision making to the students.





### 3. Has my work made a contribution to

- (a) students themselves
- (b) the school as a whole

The training undertaken by Br Chris, combined with his suggested follow up work by Form Teachers has assisted our Senior Students

- To make the transition into Post 16 studies.
- Develop self discipline and take responsibility for their own progress
- Have clearer goals
- Be motivated and focussed
- Know how to be committed to their work, and try to operate at their maximum potential
- Manage their time effectively
- Work as part of a team, learning from each other
- Cope with and learn from mistakes
- Become more involved in the community of the school
- Look forward to the challenges of being in Senior School.
- Work as Senior Prefect or as a member of the Student Council

### The school as a whole

This is very difficult to measure.

- There is a greater sense of a shared vision in the school as a community with staff and students working in partnership.
- From my observations, I see an increasing number of teachers now asking Br Chris for guidance, training materials and ideas as the new heads of Student Learning work with the different year group
- It is extremely advantageous that Br Chris knows the school and therefore brings a fresh and accurate perspective to our work in school

4. I have always been aware that Br Chris has been carrying out research for his dissertation

5. As a result of the guidance and support given by Br Chris we now have an active Student Council meeting on a regular basis, consulting with other students and making recommendation to develop the life of the school. Last year our Student Council developed a new tie for Senior School, introduced free filtered drinking water for students and on their recommendations had the changing rooms and a set of toilets refurbished.

  
Mrs T Bradley - Head of Senior School

17/2/2008





## Appendix 2.3

### Validation Letter

5th March 2007

#### Reflection on our Student Leadership Development

Loreto Grammar School, Omagh has had a long tradition of leadership development with our students since the 1970's with a framework of responsibilities and roles influenced by the Loreto sisters' vision of leadership development. Over the years this has grown and developed and the Senior Pupil Team is a dynamic energy within the school. The Team have a shared vision, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and a transparent appointment system is in place. A clear process of formation, a support structure has been implemented, and the input, work, accompaniment and shadowing of Brother Chris Glavey has had a significant influence on this.

Loreto established a formal link with Chris in August 2000, having been aware of his ongoing work with the Edmund Rice Summer Camp in Omagh, his development work with Student Councils and mostly we were impressed by his commitment to and his enthusiasm for the development of students and young adults in leadership skills.

Since then Chris has led and facilitated training days in August with our Senior Leadership Team. He has acted in a consultation role for the staff and team throughout the year. He has been involved in weekend residential experiences developing the teamwork and leadership skills of the students. He has also advised and assisted us with our ongoing evaluative and continuous planning and revision of the programme.

Chris' approach to leadership development and training are steeped in his wealth and depth of research and practical experience in this area. We have always been aware of his ongoing research which he has shared readily with us, especially Thomas Groome's "Shared Praxis Approach" and Adair's Model of Leadership which have been particularly useful in enabling students to understand the relationship between the individual, the team and the tasks.



Through ongoing discussion, meetings and reflection with Chris we have devised a Senior Leadership Team Policy with clearly defined rationale, aims, procedure, Job Descriptions, Roles and Responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation procedures. He has guided us towards devising an outline of the Leadership Development Programme for students, enabling us to consolidate the in-house training and support offered to the team on an ongoing basis, which is flexible enough to meet the needs and issues faced by the students.

Chris has challenged us to hold values to the fore and has encouraged us to question **why** we do things. We have been most influenced by his own example in working with the students, especially with the level of trust he places in the students and his belief that given the right support and the opportunity, great things can be achieved by student leaders.

The significance he has placed on reflection has encouraged us to infuse regular evaluation into our meetings through the introduction of individual journals. This has proved invaluable for self-reflection, evaluation of team performance and providing valuable feedback to staff and Senior Management Team of the school. In addition he has reminded us of the importance of celebrating and recognising the success and achievements of the Team.

Chris' training and approach to leadership, centres on the development of interactive, active learning strategies, skilfully selected to build team work, foster specific skills and nurture personal growth and confidence. However it is not the activity in itself that is central to the learning, rather a debriefing and processing of the learning experiences that enables the signposting of the key skills.

Through observation of his own practice with students and young people we appreciate the importance of building relationships with them, honouring the uniqueness of each individual, and being brave enough to place trust in them, as pivotal to the motivation and success of our student leaders.

Chris' work has always been collaborative, based on the sharing of equal partners. Through ongoing reflection, sharing, discussion and practice his work has influenced our thinking and shaped our approach. This work has made a difference to the students evident in their commitment to their roles and their sense of belonging to the school. Their peers clearly recognise their contribution and aspire to emulate them. In a recent ETi Inspection 2006,

Inspectors commented on the confidence and self-esteem of the students and that the practice in Student Leadership Development was commended as best practice seen.

We can vouch for the ethical, non-coercive manner in which Chris approaches his work and the standard of his collaborative work with young people and with staff, aimed at developing a partnership model of school community and empowering them to make a significant contribution to the life of the school.

The rationale of our Leadership Team Policy states that Loreto Grammar School:

“seeks to develop dynamic student leaders in Year 14 with heart, wisdom, vision, the will to influence and bring about change in the school community through an meaningful role of responsibility on the Senior Leadership Team.”

We are certain that the leaders are highly effective ambassadors, keen to encourage a sense of belonging to the school and who have been empowered to become agents of change, building a better school community and better world for all.

We are grateful to Chris for the spirit of trust, collaboration and transparency he has fostered through his work with staff and students. This model of leadership development continues to be for the good of the whole school community.

Some Student Leaders' comments on the training and support programme:

“I found the leadership training a great way to understand what leadership was about”. Kate

“I feel my time as a leader within the school has been a very challenging yet rewarding one. I feel it gives you an opportunity to really become involved in the school community as you have a great sense of belonging”. Shauna

“The success of your role depends upon the people you work with, the class and your input. The training helps you as a person and helps you to know what to expect.” Maeve

“The leadership training was brilliant. It gave great practical tips and helped me approach my role with confidence.” Christina

“I found all the meetings reassuring and if I had any problems I felt I could discuss them with the other girls and staff.” Emma

“Being a Senior Prefect has increased my ability to become assertive. I believe my confidence has been boosted along with my delegation skills. I was constantly challenged and supported.” Colleen

To conclude, while Chris has been a strong influence on the development of our students as a Critical Friend, he has also had a significant impact on staff leaders, challenging us to make everyone feel confident and empowered, irrespective of whether or not they are placed on a team.

Some very encouraging comments about student perceptions of the Team and their work are included in comments extracted from applications for a position on the Senior Leadership Team as outlined below:

“It would give me great satisfaction to know that I would be able to have the opportunity to display my pride in the school.” Emma

“Over the years Loreto has taught me things I thought were impossible. It gave me opportunities that I could only have dreamed of and I am forever indebted to the school for this, for they have made me the young lady I am today. Ever since I was in primary school I remember the Senior Leaders of Loreto and the respect I had for them. To me they were young ladies who were living out the legacy Mary Ward has left us in Loreto.” Alice

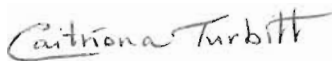
“This school has given me so many opportunities throughout the years and now I feel that it is my turn to give something back through hard work and commitment.” Grace

“I have been inspired by our current Senior Leadership Team and just hope that if selected I could take on the near impossible task of improving on their work. I aim to be able to build on their fabulous work this year.” Maeve

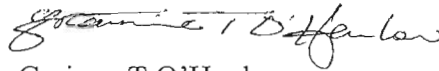
“From I was Year 8, the Head Girl and Senior Leaders have always been people I have looked up to and respected especially for all the commitment and work they put into their positions. Also I have always respected and admired their school spirit and enthusiasm in every thing they do.” Emma

“The Leadership Team has an extremely important job in school and out of school, and that is to be the best role model and representative of the school.” Ellen

“I have always had a great respect for the Senior Leadership Team and the work they do and I would like to have a similar effect on people. I believe that they play a vital role and make a huge contribution to school life. I would now like the chance to give something back to the school by becoming a key member of the leadership team.” Catherine.



Caitriona Turbitt  
Vice-Principal



Grainne T.O'Hanlon  
Principal





## EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

*Christian Brothers  
Cluain Mhuire  
274 North Circular Road  
Dublin 7*

Tei: 01 868 1197  
Fax: 01 868 4044  
E-mail: edo@indigo.ie

### Appendix 2.4a

#### **Feedback Questions to Chris Glavey re Developing a Model for the Promotion of Student Leadership in Schools**

**1. *Please describe how you experienced my work with you and with your students.***

I began working with Chris Glavey in my role as Director of the Christian Brothers Education Development Office. I had identified the area of student leadership as a key area for future development and Chris and I began to discuss an approach to this work. Chris adopted a broad holistic approach to the area and emphasised that his vision was very much based on developing a whole school approach to student leadership. He worked to a vision of developing communities of learning with students, teachers and management developing a shared vision of the student leadership.

I found Chris approach very exciting and also challenging because it meant that we had to move beyond the quick fix of just focussing on training groups of students and letting them at it. I soon realised that such an approach although yielding an immediate feel good response would soon ground into disappointment and frustration as students found their efforts to engage in meaningful activities, undertake leadership roles and contribute effectively to the life of the school frustrated because management and staff didn't share in their vision.

In commencing our work we ran student leadership training programmes with each programme involving students from at least three schools. In this way we not only gave students an insight into their own leadership talents but also began helping them focus on areas of their school life that they could make an immediate impact on. In addition we brought individual teachers from a number of schools together and shared with them a sense of the student leadership programme, supported them in their own school situation and began to challenge them as to the potential of student leadership in their schools.

Each year we expanded the scope of the programme with visits being made to meet the principal in the school, principals as a group being addressed at conferences, full staff groups being addressed, student leadership teams being visited in their schools on a number of occasions and students being surveyed at the end of the year as a means of sharing their learning experiences not just

with the next student group in their school but the wider network of student activity in the Christian Brothers network of schools.

Through this process student leadership is now a well developed and accepted part of the life of the schools in the Christian Brothers network. Not all schools are at the same point but through the sharing of experience in the schools all are working to the point of student leadership becoming an integral part of school life in each of the schools and in the network as a whole.

2. ***Has our working together influenced your thinking or your practice?***

Working with Chris broadened my vision and view of the potential of student leadership and the impact that a whole school approach to involving students could have on the school. Chris and I worked collaboratively with Chris sharing his vision of student leadership with my more pragmatic approach to what was possible in the life of a school.

I learned a lot from this work and feel privileged to have developed such a positive working relationship with Chris.

3. ***Has my work made a contribution to***  
***(a) the students themselves,***  
***(b) the school as a whole?***

***Please give your own perceptions of any contribution made.***

As I said earlier student leadership is now an accepted part of the schools in the Christian Brothers network. Student leaders are now having a positive and effective role in the schools. The student leaders have become accepted above all by their peers and the role of students in the leadership of the school is now accepted by all members of the school community.

4. ***Were you aware at all times of my research and can you vouch for the ethical and non-coercive way in which it was conducted, working with people rather than on them?***

Chris always fully shared his approach to the work and his research with me. We worked collaboratively and as Director of the Education Development Office I was always the contact person with the schools. Chris developed an excellent relationship with school management, teachers and students and his approach was always one of helping people to recognise their own potential and to make a contribution based on this potential.

Chris contribution to the growth of student leadership in the Christian Brothers network is acknowledged by all in the school communities.

5. ***Can you validate that my work was aimed at developing a partnership model of school community, and empowering students to make a significant contribution to the life of the school.***

It has always been my experience during my work with Chris that the focus was on developing a partnership model to student leadership. From day one Chris shared his vision with me and everything we did was focussed on achieving this goal. We set out to convince students, teachers and school management that there was great potential within the student body in the school. This was something that could only be achieved over a period of time by working with people at all levels to show that the leadership qualities of students were a very powerful force for development in the schools.

The positive and effective contribution of student leaders to the life of the post-primary schools in the Christian Brothers network is a testament to Chris's vision and his capacity to bring that vision to fruition. I would like to thank him for sharing his vision with the school communities and with me on a personal level.

Ferdia Kelly  
Director Christian Brothers Education Development Office – 1998 to 2006.



**CHRISTIAN BROTHERS**  
Clonkeen Road, Blackrock,  
Co. Dublin, Ireland.

**Tel:** 00 353 1 289 7511  
**Fax:** 00 353 1 289 7540  
**Email:** [edoffcb@indigo.ie](mailto:edoffcb@indigo.ie)

## Appendix 2.4b

### FEEDBACK QUESTIONS Responses from Seán Ó Briain

1. *Please describe how you experienced my work with you and with your students.*

As Assistant Director of St. Helen's Education Office I was keen to introduce facilitation in Student Leadership to the forty-five second-level schools in our own network.

I was aware through another Education Office of the "great work" being done by Br Chris Glavey and decided to attend one of Chris's actual training sessions in Emmaus to see for myself.

I arrived for the opening session and stayed for less than an hour as I had to dash off to another appointment. I was not initially impressed. It struck me with my own untrained eye that there was a lot of fun and games going on and wondered when was the real work going to start.

I decided that I had better check out this process again before I could possibly recommend it to the Principals in our own network.

The following week I stayed for the entire day and observed the process from start to finish. Everything began to make sense.

I realised that there was an aim and a purpose to all of the various activities. The "fun and games" I witnessed were actually part of a process to encourage young people to work together, to listen to each other, respect each other's views and take collective decisions. My original narrow focus had been on the product – the answers to the fun quiz – rather than on the process which was developing and encouraging team work and team deliberation.

As each activity was completed Chris persuaded the students to explain in their own words what the experience and process had been like for them. He also invited students to share their experiences and practices from their own schools, and to weigh up the opportunities and challenges involved in applying other initiatives they had heard about to their own school context.

During the day there was a perceptible move away from mentor-led activities to self-directed learning and independent team work. In the early stages it appeared to me that Chris was leading the way, as guide and facilitator.



This soon changed as there was a gradual move from individual to pair work and from group work to team work, with the students themselves doing most of the work, playing the key leadership roles and learning from each other. While all this team work was happening I noted that Chris was moving among them and observing. He often included his observations subtly into his subsequent questions to the groups. It struck me that Chris facilitates the process partly through questioning and it is the students themselves who provide the answers.

2. *Has our working together influenced your thinking or your practice?*

St. Helen's Education Office introduced training in Student Leadership on a trial basis, very tentatively. The days, which I attended and observed, proved very successful. I also asked the students to review and evaluate the session and to provide feedback. The response was so positive that Chris was engaged by the Office to conduct similar sessions throughout the province.

Our Principals often share good practice by word of mouth. The fact that thirty schools in our own network participated in the first year is an outstanding achievement and a clear indication of how the process was valued by school leaders.

The participation of other schools outside of our network was also actively encouraged to bring a variety of experiences to the day. As many of our own schools are all-boys schools, it was most beneficial to have students from mixed and all-girls schools also participating.

However I would also welcome Chris' own suggestion that Students themselves be invited to facilitate the sessions along with Chris.

Student Council training and facilitation in Student Leadership is now recognised as one of the most successful and beneficial initiatives undertaken by the Education Office in the academic year (2006 -2007).

So much so, it has now been adopted by Marino Institute of Education to facilitate the implementation of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter at student and school level. It is significant that Chris has been engaged to advise Marino and to work with them in developing this important process.

3. ***Has my work made a contribution to***  
***(a) the students themselves,***  
***(b) the school as a whole?***  
***Please give your own perceptions of any contribution made.***

- (a) I felt that the students grew in confidence during the day. Their ability to present material publicly improved, but more importantly their group work and team work became more focused, with many taking the time to listen to others' views rather than speaking over them! Principals have reported a dramatic improvement in their attitude, behaviour, work ethic and enthusiasm on their return to school. I am also aware that the Inspectorate as part of the Whole School Evaluation Process interview Students Councils and have commented very favourably on their abilities and attitude. St. Declan's Cabra is a case in mind.
- (b) The fact that Chris emphasises the need to work in partnership with all the stakeholders means that the students have now become more diplomatic and realistic (rather than excessively demanding) in their dealings with staff, parents, Principals and Board members. They have become more effective through the power of persuasion and diplomacy, trust and mutual respect. Their peers and Principal are also taking the students' role more seriously.
- (c) What impressed me most was the positive attitude and sheer energy and enthusiasm of the young people involved and the potential they have to make the school community a better place for all.
- (d) Indeed some cynical observers (who had always seen students as playing a very passive role in their education – "the more passive and docile the better") are beginning to come around to the idea that students really have something very worthwhile to contribute.

4. ***Were you aware at all times of my research and can you vouch for the ethical and non-coercive way in which it was conducted, working with people rather than on them.***

I can vouch that Chris works professionally and ethically at all times, with much of the learning coming from the students themselves. He gives students a sense of empowerment and helps to foster a sense of responsibility and self-esteem among them. The rest is up to them, but Chris conducts follow-up visits to schools to observe their progress.

5. *Can you validate that my work was aimed at developing a partnership model of school community, and empowering students to make a significant contribution to the life of the school.*

Chris always stresses the need for responsibility, mutual respect, an awareness of the needs of others, a sense of the school context and working in partnership with the Principal, parents, staff and students. Much of his initial work centres on effective communication, learning to understand and then how to be understood. Students often cite examples of how they have meetings with the Parents Council or Board of Management, or are asked to present their issues to fellow students or staff members. Apart from their role in policy development (e.g. homework, codes of behaviour, anti-bullying or uniform issues) the students also identify particular school needs and harness the support of the school community to bring positive change about. Many also get involved in mentoring and looking out for others, as well as representing the school and the student body at significant events in the life of the school.

To conclude, I believe that much work remains to be done on convincing all the stakeholders of the importance of fostering Student Leadership in all our schools. But Chris' work is certainly making a significant contribution in this regard.



Seán Ó Briain,  
Assistant Director.  
18 June 2007