

Appendix 3.1

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Reflection on Our Journey Together.

I am not sure that I would be the person that I am today if I had not met Chris. He was the first adult to speak to me as if I had something really important to say and Chris seemed wanted to hear what it was. This was and still is an amazing gift, it allowed me to think that maybe I did have something important to say and that it could influence those around me. Through the seemingly simple act of truly listening to a seventeen year old girl Chris has helped me become a confident twenty-five year old woman.

The very first time I met Chris was on the 9th October 1999 at a leadership training course organised by my school and the local boy's school. I suppose it was a day out of school and when we entered the room, it seemed to be like another day of being talked at. There was a flip-board at the front of the room and rows of chairs facing it, as I took my seat I did not realise that it was going to be a very different day. As soon as Chris had introduced himself, he asked us to place the chairs we were sitting on, in a circle and what a difference it made. This has become something of signature for Chris and the Edmund Rice Camps Omagh, sitting in a circle allows us all to be equal. Without telling us what we thought or who we were, was important, Chris had let us know that he thought we had a valuable contribution to make. The 'Circle' of seats epitomises Chris and his way of leadership to me, everyone counts, has something important to say and should be let know that they do.

I recently found a 'Certificate of Completion of The Blessed Edmund Rice Leadership Course' which took place that day, along with a certificate for completing the first Edmund Rice Camp Omagh eight years ago. In the bundle of papers were information packed letters to all, with a personalised handwritten note on the bottom of each of them from Chris. He wished me good luck in my exams, hoped I would get over the flu and looked forward to seeing me the next time he was in Omagh. That is Chris and how he leads, by example; pay attention to people as they are full of potential and just need to be given the space to develop it. By writing a small note on the bottom of these pages Chris made me think that he has remembered me and that I had made an impression on an impressive adult.

In the years that followed that day 'How do you think it should be done?' were words that became the most annoying and frustrating words I had ever heard. Each and every time during camp any of us asked Chris how something should be done; a variation of these words greeted us with a smile from Chris. Here we were entrusted with fifteen children and the adult would not tell us what to do, did he know what we were doing? It turned out he knew exactly what he was doing; by not providing answers, he allowed us to think for ourselves and to trust ourselves and each other. By the time I realised exactly what Chris was doing I had already made some huge decisions and appreciated that he had trusted me to make them. This was life-changing, if Chris could trust me with these children and I did not mess up, maybe I could do other important things and not mess them up either. But there was also a freedom to make mistakes and awareness that if you did then you would learn how to do it better next time. Chris would simply take you aside at some later stage and

quietly ask how you were, when you stated that you messed up, Chris would draw attention to all the good things you had done and suggest another way of doing those you had done less well in. A great example of this was when I first did a reflection for the leaders, my tone was all wrong; I spoke too fast and did not give people time to reflect. Later in the day when I spoke to Chris about it he simply said to breathe when I talked and that the rest would come with time.

As a result of what I have learnt from Chris I do a lot of things differently, and as Chris says I've become a lot less worried about everything. As someone trusted me, I can now trust others and know that they will reach the desired results. This is an ongoing challenge for me, as I was a true believer in the saying 'If you want something done properly then do it yourself', I would (and sometimes still do) feel sick inside as I watched some make a mistake that was obvious to me. But in my roles as camp co-ordinator and mentor, Chris has helped me to control the impulse to step in, to allow them to make small mistakes and still get it right in the long run. I've learnt that my way is not the right way, it is just my way; and there may just be a better way of doing it if I allow others the space to develop their potential. Another major thing I do as a result of Chris' example is to truly listen to what other people say, and this means hearing what they actually say rather than what I want them to say. This is not always a comfortable thing to do, as people do not always say nice things to you or about you, but it is sometimes necessary to hear negative things to help you grow as a person.

The most recent lesson that I have learnt from Chris is to be true to myself and my values, and therefore not to become a carbon copy of anyone; including him. There is a real temptation to do things exactly as Chris does as I know that it works, but Chris wants me to find my own way of reaching the same destination as him, without taking his exact path. Once again this is an amazing gift of trust that my way of doing something will work and that by being myself I can continue to grow as a person and leader. He has shown me a way to think about life that does not judge others and allows you to make mistakes and learn from them; 'Does it give life?' is a question I try to ask about situations I am confused about. Chris had mentioned this question to me once when I asked him about something I was unsure of, and it was a good indicator of a right decision.

Chris, his way of leadership and of living life has influenced me in so many other subtle ways that I may never truly realise how much he has helped me. He has changed how I look at myself, others and life in general in an extremely positive way, and allowed me the space to find out who I am by trusting that I will find the right way.

Genora.



Appendix 3.2

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I have had the pleasure of collaborating with Chris Glavey over a number of years in the areas of Youth Leadership and Student Council. Below are responses to questions posed regarding this work:

FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

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

My experience of your work was at first hand, at the planning, implementation and evaluation stages. At all times the work was carried out with what can best be described as professionalism tempered with a quiet flair. This was particularly evident in the implementation stages, where students were brought through a range of activities with a lightness of touch – cajoled gently when needed – bringing out the best in these students. After all sessions there was an evaluation period, exemplifying the concept of reflective practitioner¹

You are an educator in the original meaning – educare to draw out – and his approach is reminiscent of Lao Tzu's definition of leadership²

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

Working with Chris Glavey has had a major influence in both my thinking and my practice.

¹ The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action *Donald Schon*

² A leader is best when people barely know he exists,....But of a good leader who talks little when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say, "We did it ourselves. *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching*

On one level it has helped crystallise feelings and attitudes that I would have had regarding the nature of leadership into more formal definitions³:

- *Although a few have evident natural leadership skills, many can help develop their latent leadership skills.*
- *A subset of leadership skills is those of teamwork*
- *that it is a role that can be assumed by any person*
- *that this role can be temporarily adopted over an issue or group of issues*
- *Skills such as effective running of meetings are life skills*

3. Has my work made a contribution to
(a) the students themselves,

At all times those working with Chris Glavey were treated with absolute respect, which in turn influenced others to show similar respect.

On a practical level, the students developed competencies – tangible and intangible- will assist them long after their school days. These would cover areas not normally covered in formal school curricula, such as inter- and intra-personal competencies. By competency I mean a blend of knowledge, skill and attitude.

- (b) the school as a whole?

The contribution made to the school as a whole was that the work carried out by Chris provided a framework within which students could be empowered to make a real and important contribution to their school.

This influences how the students see their own role within the school and causes teachers to reconsider the students' role within the school community (see 5)

While most schools believe that students can play a role, without appropriate structures and supports in place it is unlikely to happen. This is the main contribution made by Chris to Pobalscoil Neasain.

Please give your own perceptions of any contribution made.

³ Leadership is not magnetic personality—that can just as well be a glib tongue. It is not "making friends and influencing people"—that is flattery. Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations.
Peter F. Drucker

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.

Regardless of Chris' acknowledged prowess in martial arts, at no time did I feel coerced. All work was carried out in an exemplary manner. The concept of working on rather than with people is alien to any dealings I've had with him. Instead his approach has been more Ghandiesque(?) "no one has a right to coerce others to act according to his own view of the truth" – the Mahatma Ghandi.

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.

I had begun to answer this question in 3(b) without reading all questions. I would contend that not only did his work aim at developing a partnership model of school community, and empowering students to make a significant contribution to the life of the school, but that by the time I had left Pobalscoil Neasain in 2005 this was happening.



Pat Seaver
ICT Advisor
Blackrock Education Centre

June 12th 2007

Appendix 3.3

Research with Chris Glavey cfc

In 1999 I was appointed to the Marino Institute of Education as the project officer for what was known as ‘The Partnership Project’. The aim of this project was to deepen the partnership approach to schooling within the Christian Brother Network of schools. The focus was to be on boards of management, parent councils, student councils and school staffs so that teachers, students and parents and management would each in their own way come to own and be more deeply involved in a way of being school that reflected a deepening of democracy within education.

My first task was to become familiar with what was happening already in the schools. Whenever student councils were mentioned one name always came to the fore. Everyone told me that Br. Chris Glavey was the person I had to meet, that he had been involved in training student councils over a number of years, that his approaches were innovative and effective and having a great impact in the schools with which he worked. Over the following two years and afterwards I came to know the truth of what I had heard in advance and it became my great privilege to work with Chris, to learn from him and to be a fellow researcher with him within the Action Research paradigm. Chris and I became mutual critical friends in each others research. My own research concluded in a masters thesis submitted to the National Council for Educational Awards through All Hallows College, Dublin in April 2001. The thesis title was: Towards a Model for Promoting Partnership in a Catholic School Community: Observing the Process through Action Research 1997 – 2001. While my thesis focus was on one particular school it included learning achieved from work with the Christian Brother Network. Chris had a broader canvas from the outset with his research and practice focused on developing communities of ‘shared praxis’ through development and implementation of student and young adult leadership programmes in a number of schools and towns – Dublin, Waterford and Omagh, and in the Edmund Rice Camps.

At this juncture as Chris comes to the end of his research it is my privilege now to offer a testimony in validation of his work.

I can still remember my earliest conversations with Chris in which we talked of challenging institutional dominance and subordination as a basic organisational principal of schooling. I remember us speaking of less social control in school, of deeper levels of belonging, of the psychological need of students to influence their learning environment.

Our initial collaboration was in delivering training seminars for teachers who were attempting to set up student councils within their schools as per the recommendations of the Education Act, 1998, Article 27. These seminars arose out of a growing awareness that while student workshops and training days were worthwhile and effective, the actual implementation of the student councils was hindered by teachers' lack of expertise and practical knowledge of how to go about it. To address this need, Chris and I collaborated on drawing up a two-day programme for teachers which covered the following topics:

- Reflection on the content and implications of the Education Act, Art 27.
- Changing perspectives on student involvement in their own education.
- The rationale behind the establishment of a student council.
- Practical steps towards setting up a student council.
- A model of a tried and tested student leadership training programme.
- The provision of resources and relevant bibliography.

On the first day of the programme we outlined the rationale for a student council with emphasis on particular models and procedures, constitution, election, agenda, meetings etc. I still have our hand-out on: 'Ten reasons for having a student council in your school'. The reasons we enumerated were as follows:

1. To promote community-building in the school;
2. To counter disaffection, alienation, disconnectedness;
3. To shift from a culture of passivity among students to one of activity;
4. To begin to shift the locus of control from external to internal;
5. To improve student-teacher relationships;
6. To provide a forum to access students views;
7. To enlist a helpful agency for school spirit, peer-support, mentoring, anti-bullying etc;
8. To promote a range of other desirable educational values and outcomes;
9. To live up to some of the things schools said in their brochures;
10. The Education Act 1998.

On the second day of the programme we introduced a 'Youth Leadership Training Programme'. This day depended heavily on approaches Chris had been developing and the elements included: communication skills, leadership qualities, group work, team work and effective meetings. We said that the values we promoted were self-esteem, self-confidence and responsibility.

The entire programme was devised and delivered in the context of the partnership model, with active involvement by teachers at all times. Teachers were encouraged to adapt our material and input to meet the particular needs of their own school, and by the end of the two days they had carefully devised a personal action plan for setting up their own student councils. We referred to our teacher leaders as 'liaison teachers' and we pursued with them the concept of 'championing' student councils.

The seminars had the following outcomes, affirmed by the teachers in their own evaluations and by the education officers of the network:

- Formal student structures became a factor in the network of schools with an increasing instance of student councils within the network.
- A greater awareness of the value and implications of the partnership model.
- An all round appreciation of, and commitment to, student leadership development.
- Deeper levels of communication and improved relationships between students and teachers.
- Giving voice to students and providing them with opportunities to contribute to improving their learning environment.
- More democratic practices in schools with increased ownership of learning processes and interactions by students.
- Generally a greater degree of self-confidence around student council involvement.
- A network of teachers willing to share resources, ideas and provide support.

A particular outcome involved the fact that some of the schools were officially designated as disadvantaged and in this context it was significant that young adults were given the opportunity to 'do' leadership through addressing issues of marginalisation and disadvantage in their community.

Another outcome was that programme participants requested a further follow-up day to be held in different locations to assess progress, to address any difficulties they might have encountered in the intervening months, to identify areas of further training and to provide a supportive forum. These follow-up days were greatly appreciated and very successful. We also made ourselves available for individual 'conversations' with liaison teachers and this proved to be important in a number of instances of discouragement.

I recollect that many challenges and obstacles had to be overcome. We encountered many instances of reluctance and fear about the empowerment of students - the sense that if someone was empowered someone else had to be disempowered. There was a worry about where all this democracy would lead. Practical challenges included an outbreak of foot and mouth disease which restricted travelling at one stage. It was a challenge for Chris also when I left the Partnership Project to take up a different role. One casualty was that the book we planned together had to be abandoned because of my departure. Our ongoing conversations always contained the sentiment that while much was achieved much more remained to be done.

In looking back at our work I attest that the process throughout reflected at all times the following elements:

- A non-coercive, reflective, and collaborative approach.
- Dialogue at every stage with all the stakeholders involved.
- Practical involvement at all stages in the project.
- A willingness to engage with participants on an individual basis.

- Appropriate boundaries were observed with each session conducted in an atmosphere of reflection, personal engagement, sharing and fun.
- Transformation was at all times pursued in a respectful and ethical manner.

I could sum up all these elements by saying that Chris's living theory approach was truly embodied theory. I was also a witness to the manner in which Chris modelled leadership as a shared and distributive function, training young adults to adopt all leadership roles and making himself redundant.

It is my belief that the action research paradigm proved to be very effective in promoting the values we were trying to achieve. We both shared an interest in applying the vision of Catholic education to the partnership model and the processes whereby it is implemented. I believe we contributed together to building more enlivened communities in the schools involved, to enhancing student leadership and to getting the relationships right at many levels.

It has been a collaboration I am proud to have been involved with and am happy to be acknowledged as a co-researcher in Chris's work. I congratulate Chris on reaching the concluding phase of his research and I wish him well in its final presentation.

Signed: Ned Prendergast April 6th 2008.

Ned Prendergast
Co-researcher and co-presenter

Director of Faith Development, CEIST



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Appendix 3.4

9th May 2007.

Dear Chris,

As we enter into a new phase of Irish Education, with the inauguration of the Christian Brothers' European Province and the launch of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter, I have been reflecting on your work with students and with adult leadership over the last six years. You deserve many congratulations for it.

As you know, as a Member of the St. Mary's Province, Christian Brothers Leadership Team in Ireland with special responsibility for Youth Activity, I have taken a keen interest in your work over the last five years and your research in preparing your PhD thesis.

I know your work in developing a shared praxis in local communities and in school communities. Your work has been both collaborative and ethical. And I know from my position on the Leadership Team, how very much you have contributed to the development of the various communities in which you have become involved. I have seen you at first-hand during the summer Camps, working with the leaders of the Edmund Rice Camps.

I receive a lot of feedback from local communities, head-teachers, parents and students. The feedback always speaks of the signal contribution you have made to the development of staff-members and community members, and the education of the young into leadership roles among their peers. On the Youth Committee I serve on, I hear nothing but praise for your pioneering work with the young, and with youth leaders.

Your initial work, I remember, was in three schools. It has now grown to involve forty-five schools all over Ireland.

Your work is ground-breaking, and has contributed so much, as has been acknowledged by all, to the formation of communities that are strong and enthusiastic, and that work highly effectively with the young people they cater for.

Congratulations again on your work! And I wish you every success with your Thesis.

Sincerely yours, Chris

John Ledwidge, PLT