Early Years leaders changing practice: the value of a CPD module for graduate leaders

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Graduate leaders in Early Years settings are effective at implementing changes in practice. These changes have positive effects on children, settings and staff.

- Mathers et al., 2011;
- Hadfield et al., 2012;
- Davis and Capes, 2013
- Davis and Barry 2013
Setting up an MA EYPP

- Collaborative – University, local authority
- Applied – relevant to and aiming to develop practice – CPD (post EYPS)
- Part time, practice based

Style:
- Facilitative rather than authoritative
- Flexibility in the delivery
- Students have ‘voice’
- Students as experts
Leadership and change module

- Theoretical perspectives on leadership and change management
- Discussion of these in relation to their relevance to different practice settings
- Analysis of the value of one or more theoretical approach in changing practice in own setting
Does the module make a difference to practice?

- Evidence from:
  - Student module evaluations
  - Data from research project
  - Examples from practice
Student evaluations

- 18 anonymous evaluations
- Numerical score:
  - Mean score = 9.5 (Maximum possible = 10)

- Qualitative data – three themes
  - Valuable to learn new theory
  - Valuable to relate new theory to practice
  - Style of module delivery supported application of learning to practice
Examples from data

Finding: It is valuable to learn new theory

- ‘Being able to get a better understanding of leadership theory’
- ‘Taking on new theories of leadership’
Examples from data
Finding: It is valuable to relate new theory to practice

- ‘Learning new ideas that I can relate to my work and (use to) inspire future changes within my career’

- ‘This course has helped me to reflect on my practice and has changed how I am working …’
Examples from data
Finding: The style of module delivery supported application of learning to practice

- ‘The group discussion challenges my thinking’
- ‘Excellent to be with like-minded people’
- ‘It has been very interesting to listen to other practitioners’
- ‘The opportunities to discuss as a group with sufficient and leading prompts’
- ‘This has been an amazing learning experience for me … good quality teaching and support’
- ‘This module is inspiring’
Research study data (Davis and Capes, 2013)

- High value placed on CPD by graduate leader.

- Masters leadership module identified without prompting from the focus group, particularly the ‘valuable new dimension to think about practice’

- It provided:
  - Interaction with others
  - Separation from practice
  - Opportunity to think in depth
Practice examples

- 21 scripts were reviewed, each analysing a change in practice in relation to a theory or theories of leading change.
- Leadership styles: empowerment; engagement; teamwork; collaborative; caring; inclusive.
- Use of a staged model of change: e.g. Kotter, Lewin.
- Use of Kübler Ross’s work – effect of change on individual.
Conclusions

- Graduate leaders embrace CPD to enhance their leadership practice.

- Leadership of change in early years must be collaborative and value the staff.

- Graduate leaders can analyse and apply a range of theory to improve practice.

- Staged models of leading change are useful for the early years leader.

- Graduate leaders enjoy learning in a facilitated and reflective way, lecturers need skills in this way of working.

- Learning about applying leadership theory to practice is facilitated by networking and by taking time away from practice to reflect.
References


THANK YOU

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