



Anti-poverty Professional Learning
for the Teaching Profession

Chat questions and comments from PACT Webinar 18/06/20

In Main Themes

From Johns' Presentation

17:24:35 From NY: Is this data Scotland wide.

I will double check with John, but I think the data is Glasgow based.

On the importance of teachers in the classroom for equity?

From iPad (163): From BR: In a sense maybe, everyone has taken the concept of the teacher and the classroom for granted as its "always" been with us. Maybe the teacher and the classroom are the single most important equity lever?

I think people have been "forced" to see the importance of the in-person relationship with the teacher and recognise the importance of the classroom. Hopefully this means more respect for our profession. Unfortunately, I don't think the right-wing press support that view – just look at how teachers (and teacher unions) have been demonised in the headlines.

Issues with Tech

Parental knowledge/skills

17:24:12 From CY: Lack of parental knowledge about IT is massive. How do we tackle that?

17:24:42 From 9072738: @CYates, agreed

17:25:21 From CM: same here, knowledge and lack of equipment

17:25:24 From NY: Digital literacy in BME families is a big issue.

17:25:59 From CY: Digital illiteracy and poverty in general. Huge correlation.

17:26:40 From NY: However, with the right support the engagement and use of digital learning in BME families is extremely good.

- 17:28:22 From HF: Cost is obviously a huge issue for children living in poverty. Some councils have given laptops/iPads to families - as mentioned earlier though, a lot of families don't have digital literacy necessary. Also, what if they do not have internet connection?
- 17:28:50 From CY: And parents unfamiliar with the tech.
- 17:49:03 From 9072738: ICT parent groups in schools...
- 17:32:49 From NY: Parent councils can and should be brought in the loop to support parents going forward.

Yes, Digital literacy is a major concern. Giving out the devices can be seen as an "easy fix" but there are so many other issues to consider. As well as the digital Literacy issue, families on low incomes may not have access to wi-fi. Its also important to think about issues of quiet space, suitable work area, etc.

Tech and BME families

- 17:30:06 From NY: Communication with and from BME families has been shown to be a particularly weak area. How can solutions be put in place when we are not even aware of the barriers. For example, many schools sent iPads to the families which caused additional stress as the families needed support to use these.
- 17:31:05 From Claire M: Dependence on IT needs care because it needs technical support that is already underfunded in schools. Who is going to manage the break, problems, internet access? What about back to books?
- (18:21:21 From NY: BME, GRT and the poor communities are sometimes more vulnerable and accept the status quo because a lack of knowledge of their rights.)

Yes – you are absolutely right about the additional stress. It can lead to further barriers between the school and the family when things are given out without support or explanation.

On EAL

- 17:44:27 From AF: All pupils will have experienced some loss of learning due to the lockdown and it will be compounded by disadvantage and further compounded by being an EAL learner. There will need to be effective assessment of their needs and targeted and enhanced support for them, and their teachers. Unfortunately, the approach at the moment, despite talk of health and wellbeing, is focussing on bums on seats.

17:44:49 From NY: We had one school put together a 'family Care' leaflet but asked the EAL teacher for input and it was easy to then tweak/add activities for it to be more inclusive and send out to all parents.

Schools need to recognise the additional barriers faced by EAL students and their families. Its essential to include developing bilingual learners in enhanced support plans for the return to school.

Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities

From NY: Poverty and minority status is a big risk factor. Similar issues with Gypsy Roma Traveller communities

17:37:38 From NY: Positives - For a small number of vulnerable students this might be good e.g. the development of remote learning resources and systems and acceptability of this form of learning and teaching will bring benefits to some of our Traveller children.

Good point, Nikhat. As we know, there has been a lot of resistance to making online learning available to GRT students so hopefully that can be overcome now as it has suddenly, through necessity, become more acceptable to those in power.

COSD and Poverty Awareness from Councils

17:38:42 From SB: How is PACT connecting with Cost of the School Day? It has had a lot of attention recently and has made some positive inroads.

17:39:41 From JN: "poverty proof" - so important! not just pencils - I watched a task go up for our pupils in a 90%SIMD 1&2 school asking them to build an obstacle course in their garden. Well-meaning but no concept that children were living in flats with shared gardens, many of which are in no state to play in.

17:40:37 From AB: PACT will use Cost of the School Day materials and has the Director of CPAG who created the cost of the school day resource on the Advisory Board.

17:41:54 From John McKendrick: J.N. and the example is such an easy sort. North Lanarkshire Council promoted a big camp out, but suggested that the camp out could just as easily be indoors in the living room, as in the garden.

Please read the latest release from CPAG – hot off the press.

<https://cpag.org.uk/news-blogs/news-listings/cost-learning-lockdown>

HUB Provision/Location (overlaps with above)

- 17:43:54 From CM: Hub provision appears to be very different from one local authority to another.
- 17:44:08 From CY: Do we know where hubs are located? Are they geographically placed to 'pick up' the vulnerable kids?
- 17:45:50 From HF: @Claire Macdonald - agreed. There are vast differences between councils since this began - even to the present time with expectations for Teachers to be in school. One school in Glasgow has asked Staff to come in for a lunch on Wednesday!
- 17:46:19 From John McKendrick: Re CYates on access. Really important issue. In the early stages of using hubs for FSM access, I think there was a real lack of understanding in some areas about the challenges of access.

It seems to be a very varied picture across authorities. It is really important to discuss these situations with your LA reps and LA Secretary. The EIS guide for members is really helpful too. <https://www.eis.org.uk/Health-And-Safety/COVID19>

Worries/Fears

On Health and Wellbeing

- 17:46:45 From AD: one of our pupils had seen a clip of pupils in school with social distancing and described it as looking like a prison. As an SLT we are concerned about having large areas sectioned off in some kind of hazard tape as that could feel intimidating and are looking for ways to identify work zones etc. in a positive way.
- 17:47:47 From CP: totally agree Joan! am so worried however that the schools have not planned with HWB being key to the young people coming back
- 17:49:43 From NY: Teachers have a huge task in front of them, managing their own anxieties and H&W and supporting the H&W of their learners and families. Everyone will be looking to teachers and adults in school to make it a safe, fun, happy place.
- 17:51:22 From HF: All councils need to commit to looking after the health and wellbeing of Staff, otherwise it is nothing more than empty words and the children will suffer even more
- 17:52:11 From C.Y: And, HF, not just pay lip service to it.
- 18:12:14 From CP: I have to leave but thanks so much. I will catch what I have missed on the recording. I really am worried that some of us are not equipped to deal with the traumatic experiences of our young people returning to our school communities

Great point about the physical environment. Schools need to look at this and see how they can make the areas more welcoming using Nurture principles, etc.

We as teachers want to offer safety and shelter to our pupils. We cannot do that in the same way as before and that's bound to affect us on many levels. When we know that the kids in our classes are living in poverty and we find ourselves thinking about whether they will have enough food and shelter its stressful at the best of times but we can use familiar systems to manage risk and protect our own boundaries. It is different now as these issues are coming into our own homes when we discuss them with colleagues or have phone contact with parents, for example. Our boundaries are compromised, and we find ourselves unable to switch off. NQTs will be particularly vulnerable, as will teachers starting at a new school in August. We all need to remind ourselves to take care of our own health and wellbeing so we can have the strength to support our pupils and their families. Your union is here to help you.

Rights not Charity (and Narrative)

- 17:59:09 From NY: I agree, we need to focus on and address the systems that cause/ add to poverty and not just the end result. Need to move away from the charity and saviour frame of mind to the human rights frame of mind.
- 18:08:12 From NY: You are right Kait. The question to be asked is how have these rights been taken away? And what systems should we put in place so that these rights are re-established?
- 18:09:35 From NY: The focus needs to be with the individual and beyond to the systemic.
- 18:13:19 From NY: I agree, why go back to an imperfect normal when we have the chance to forge a better one. Time to change the narrative
- 18:19:56 From GL: I think that rights are actually much more in focus because of COVID 19 and the broader realisation that rights have been limited. So there is an opportunity now to push rights...
- 18:21:21 From NY: BME, GRT and the poor communities are sometimes more vulnerable and accept the status quo because a lack of knowledge of their rights.
- 18:22:02 From HF: In my personal experience, there is huge emphasis (rightfully so) on Children's Rights but very little on Human Rights.
- 18:29:16 From BR: Regarding Johns final Point if broke Britain could develop the NHS and Welfare State in 1945 then the treasury in 2020 could do the same, key point it isn't innovation it's already in the treasury playbook from the past.
- 18:33:15 From SM: Many thanks, very motivating. Let's being about a new normal.

18:33:37 From JN: Thanks all - really inspired and proud to be part of a profession and union with this perspective.

Yes, we think that re-framing the argument and changing the narrative is so important – and really glad that you agree how motivating and inspiring this new narrative could be.

And picking up on some other points here - the power of a Human Rights framework – or Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) – when used to its fullest intent, is that as well as being designed to protect the rights of the individual, it also locates individuals within families, communities of place, and communities of interest in recognition of our inter-dependency and social nature.

However, that knowledge is not always ‘out there’, and what is, is often convoluted, confusing, and sometimes seemingly contradictory. In addition to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, while there is much material on Human Rights Education (HRE), for example, it is not always obvious where to start.

In answer to what systems we should put in place to re-establish rights – that’s a good question... The thing is, we already have systems, but for various reasons most of us don’t know about them (see above), Therefore the problem is about how we raise awareness of what is already there and of what mechanisms exist that we can use to help realise those rights.

This is all part of what PACT is working on, and will be delivering in our professional learning offer. In the meantime, for those who want (and have the time and energy), to look deeper now, we suggest three good places where teachers could start – two of these have already been mentioned in the Webinar. These all build on our knowledge of the UNCRC, and hopefully act to contextualise it further:

1. The U.N. Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training –

*This makes the important and substantive point that **Human Rights Education (HRE) should be about, through, and for Human Rights** (article 2).*

“Human rights education and training encompasses:

(a) Education about human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection;

(b) Education through human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners;

(c) Education for human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.”

This can be found at:

[https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/UnitedNationsDeclarationonHumanRightsEducationandTraining\(2011\).aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/UnitedNationsDeclarationonHumanRightsEducationandTraining(2011).aspx)

2. In turn, this supports the fourth phase (2020-2024) of the United Nations World Programme of Human Rights Education, with its current timely focus on Youth.

See:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/WPHRE/Fourthphase/Pages/FourthPhaseIndex.aspx>

3. For the purposes of siting poverty-related Human Rights violations firmly within this overarching framework, we suggest taking a look at this foundational treaty:

The United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

We think it's worth comparing this document – signed and ratified by the U.K. - with the reality that we can all see around us.

We will be offering an opportunity to learn more about these, and to discuss Human Rights education issues further as part of the PACT PL offer.

Prepare for the Backlash?

- 18:22:15 From John McKendrick: While we should be thinking about building a better future (in my honest opinion), we need to be mindful of history. In previous times of stress, what often happens is that there is a focus on holding on to what we have got, and our approach is divisive, rather than community oriented. This might be different ... but there will be a 'common sense' backlash to this ... "can't afford it" "need to get economy sorted" etc.
- 18:24:11 From GL: Agree with John, getting back to "normal" will be familiar and so many will want to get back to a familiar and unchanged narrative.
- 18:25:04 From NY: That is why education about issues that are not comfortable is important e.g. education around rights, poverty etc
- 18:27:25 From SuS: Thank you to all speakers and those who added comments on chat. So much to think about. I think we need to remain optimistic though I fear the desire to get back to normal and earn the money to repay what has been spent, without even thinking about changing the bad systems which have created such a big level of need, will be a major driver.

Yes – as we know there is always a backlash from vested interests when progressive social change is mooted (particularly in education), so thank you - these comments are timely reminders! And of course, the points made here, both historically and looking forward, are rooted in realistic scenarios. We can see that there is already a contest of competing political and cultural narratives about what has happened and how we should come out of this crisis.

PACT would argue that the work we have been doing on highlighting and changing the poverty narrative(s) pre-corona virus, is now more relevant than ever, and so we think it is indeed time to seize the moment to offer that different narrative.

We are grateful for your comments, as we also develop additional 'tools' to defend that narrative against any backlash that attempts to re-normalise – and even potentially deepen – the appalling poverty that too many of our young people and their families are enduring every day.

School Leadership needed

17:52:20 From NY: Leadership at every level is crucial. HT need to be supported from above as well, so they have the confidence to make decisions that work for their staff and learners.

17:52:56 From HF: Agreed CY and NY

Absolutely. I know our HT and DHT members are working very hard on this. Nikhat, you are absolutely right about the need for support from above. I'm looking out for examples of good practice...

Other possible resources?

18:09:03 From CY: Does anyone remember the FAST programme? Maybe it's time to bring it back.

18:11:01 From SB: Common Weal has published a plan called Resilience Economics - which ties in a lot about rebuilding a better future - rather than returning to 'normal'. We don't want to return to normal. It's very good - but not getting much traction in the media.

18:18:59 From NY: UNICEF are doing an article of the week series at the moment which schools can use as part of their learning and teaching.

Thanks for sharing these resources. We will explore a range of resources in more detail in our future webinars, including those resources previously mentioned.

Kait and Sandra

PACT Co-Leaders