

D2.2 Initial Trainees' Guide

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. WHAT IS THE ESTEP FRAMEWORK?	5
2.1 WHO IS THE ESTEP FRAMEWORK FOR?	7
2.2 HOW CAN THE ESTEP FRAMEWORK WORK FOR YOUR SCHOOL?	7
2.3 HOW LONG WILL THE TRAINING PROGRAMME TAKE?	9
2.4 WHERE CAN I SEE EXAMPLES OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME IN ACTION?	9
3. MODULE 1: UNDERSTANDING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN CONTEXT	10
3.1. MODULE AIMS	10
3.2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES.....	10
3.3 MODULE CONTENT	11
3.4 MODULE OUTCOMES	12
4. MODULE 2: WORKING TOWARDS CHANGE: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING CONTEXT SPECIFIC PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT	13
4.1. MODULE AIMS	13
4.2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES.....	13
4.3. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	13
4.4. MODULE CONTENT	14
4.5. MODULE OUTCOMES.....	15
5. MODULE 3: PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN PRACTICE: UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES, IMPACT AND INFLUENCE	16
5.1. MODULE AIMS	16
5.2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES.....	16
5.3. MODULE CONTENT	16
5.4. MODULE OUTCOMES.....	17
6. EXPLORING DEFINITIONS AND VALUES	18
6.1 WHAT ISSUES OR CONCERNS ARE MOTIVATING YOU TO THINK ABOUT PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT?	18
6.2 HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE CURRENT PRACTICE, ATTITUDES AND VALUES TOWARDS PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AT YOUR SCHOOL?	19
6.3 HOW ARE YOU CURRENTLY USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SUPPORT PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT?	19
6.4 WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE THROUGH YOUR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT WORK?	20
6.5 HOW IS YOUR DEFINITION OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT DEVELOPING? HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN 140 CHARACTERS?	20
7. EXPLORING YOUR OWN CONTEXT – PLANNING YOUR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT REVIEW	22
7.1 WHAT ARE THE KEY QUESTIONS DRIVING YOUR REVIEW?	22
7.2 WHO DO YOU WANT TO INVOLVE IN YOUR AUDIT? WHO CAN HELP YOU TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS YOU POSED IN 2.1?	22



7.3	HOW WILL YOU INVOLVE OTHERS?	23
7.4	ARE THERE ANY ETHICAL ISSUES THAT YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE IN TO CONSIDERATION? HOW WILL YOU RESPOND TO THESE TO ENSURE THAT YOUR ROAD MAP FOR CHANGE IS UNDERTAKEN RESPONSIBLY?.....	23
7.5	WHAT EVIDENCE WILL YOU NEED TO COLLECT?	24
7.6	HOW ARE YOU GOING TO COLLECT ADDITIONAL DATA?	24
7.7	HOW MIGHT YOU MODEL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO SUPPORT THE REVIEW PROCESS?	25
8.	DESIGNING YOUR 'ROAD MAP' FOR CHANGE.....	25
8.1	WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM YOUR REVIEW?	25
8.2	WHAT WILL THE BENEFITS AND IMPACT OF YOUR ACTION PLAN BE? WHO WILL BE THE BENEFICIARIES?	26
8.3	WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO MORE OF? WHAT DOESN'T WORK SO THAT YOU COULD DO BETTER? WHAT NEW AREAS OF ACTIVITY DO YOU WANT TO DEVELOP? WHAT'S THE BASE-LINE AGAINST WHICH YOU WILL JUDGE PROGRESSION AND DEVELOPMENT?	26
8.4	WHAT'S YOUR TIMEFRAME FOR CHANGE?	26
8.5	WHAT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WILL YOU NEED TO ALLOCATE TO ACHIEVE YOUR ACTIONS?	27
8.6	WHAT NEW RESOURCES WILL YOU NEED TO SUPPORT YOUR ROAD MAP?.....	27
8.7	WHAT SUPPORT WILL YOU NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL? FOR WHAT, AND FROM WHOM? HOW WILL YOU GO ABOUT THIS?.....	27
8.8	WHAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE INDICATORS OF SUCCESS?	28
8.9	HOW WILL YOU COMBINE YOUR PRACTITIONER ENQUIRY ROLE WITH YOUR TEACHER/PROFESSIONAL ROLE. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE POSSIBLE PROBLEMS AND HOW WILL YOU ADDRESS THEM?	28
9.	BACKGROUND.....	30
10.	OVERVIEW OF FRAMEWORK	31
11.	WORKING WITHIN A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH FRAMEWORK	34
12.	IDEAS FOR TEACHING	36



E-STEP PROJECT TRAINEES GUIDE

SECTION A:OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

This guide accompanies the ESTEP training framework and is supported by a teacher's guide and a suite of learning activities. Together these resources will support you to develop, implement and evaluate strategies to engage parents more actively and effectively in the work of your school through use of social networking technologies. As you work through the three modules of the framework you will

- **explore** key issues and debates in parental engagement;
- **engage** with the wider school community to better understand parental engagement and the existing and potential roles of social media in their own context;
- **create** new meanings, identities and roles in relation to parental engagement;
- **experiment** with social media as a tool to support effective parental engagement;
- **collaborate** with parents, teachers and the wider school community;
- **drive** innovation and implement change.

2. What is the ESTEP Framework?

The ESTEP framework is a learning programme that aims to support reflective approaches to parental engagement that draw on effective use of social media. ESTEP draws on an evidence base that includes secondary analysis of large-scale studies of parental engagement and new technologies across five EU countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, England) and primary analysis of teachers needs in twenty-five settings, five from each country. The framework is underpinned by a number of **key principles** about meanings, contexts, values and forms of parental engagement that have emerged from this work.



Meanings and value of parental engagement

- 'Parental engagement' is a contested concept;
- Conceptualisations of the meanings of school, learning and childhood are implicit in all forms of PE;
- PE that engages parents in their children's learning has been shown to contribute to beneficial outcomes (social, developmental, academic) for young people;

Contexts for parental engagement:

- Many parents value opportunities to engage with schools and teachers although needs and wants may evolve and change as the child progresses through their school career;
- Schools and colleges work with diverse communities of young people and parents and a parental engagement strategy must be responsive to the complexity and plurality of the particular local context;
- The engagement of senior leaders is crucial to effective forms of PE;
- Highly valued parental engagement is characterised by a range of interactions for a variety of purposes and is likely to make use of a range of communication modes including social media;

Forms of Parental Engagement

- Participation in social media is a social practice and requires digital literacy knowledge, expertise and confidence from all participant;
- Teachers' and parents' (and young peoples') knowledge, awareness, understanding and experiences of social media (and other forms of ICT) vary substantially and impact on their attitudes to social media use in school;
- Teachers and parents attitudes towards social media are informed by wider discourses and these might be especially influential where individuals lack direct experience;
- Initial teacher education does not necessarily teach either PE or digital literacy, teachers knowledge and expertise is likely to be tacit and gained through experience and participation;
- The use of technology to support PE is in its infancy and the body of evidence that might inform practice is very much emergent;
- Communication between parents and schools that is mediated by technology will be framed by the existing attitudes, values and cultures of the school or institution;
- Attitudes and values of leaders, teachers, parents and children are crucial in determining the success or otherwise of both a parental engagement strategy and implementation of a work in digital modes.



2.1 Who is the ESTEP framework for?

The ESTEP framework has been designed for use by any member of the school's professional community including **school leaders, teachers** and **ICT coordinators**. The generative nature of the framework means that the framework user, and their local, strategic priorities, is always the starting point for ESTEP actions. As

such the framework is useful to a wide range of users and can be flexed to achieve a broad spectrum of purposes from micro-interventions at the level of a single class teacher working with their own class and a discrete group of parents to a whole school focus led by the senior leadership team or across school ICT co-ordinator.

2.2 How can the ESTEP framework work for your school?

Building on the principles outlined above the ESTEP framework recognises that because no two school or college contexts are the same parental engagement strategies that make use of social media must be tailored to the specific needs of the school community if they are to be successful. As such the framework encourages you to take an enquiry-based, or action research, approach that will put you and your school at the centre of learning enabling you to: build grounded knowledge about your parent community; articulate local vision and aspirations for parent engagement; and work collaboratively towards implementation of a 'road map' for development and transformation. The ESTEP framework also accepts that individual teachers, parents and school communities are at different stages in their adoption and use of social media. Throughout the learning process you will explore social media in two ways; as a context for stimulating and sharing your own thinking and learning and collaborating; and as potential tools to support and facilitate new ways of working and interacting with parents.

The framework comprises three modules that, taken together, will enable you to work through three key stages of a participatory action research process, that is to say a process in which you are both the enquirer and an active 'participant' in the context being explored. This will involve:

- *documenting and contextualising your current situation in relation to parental engagement and use of social media;*
- *identifying how you want to develop and working towards change;*
- *and understanding impact, affect and influence.*



It is hoped that working through the modules will not only support development of your parental engagement work but also enable you, and colleagues, to work competently and confidently within an action research cycle, and build research expertise and capacity within your school that can be put to work in other aspects of school development.

Module one, '***Understanding Parental Engagement in Context***', will introduce action research methodologies, modes and strategies and open up exploration of key concepts and definitions. You will be encouraged to experiment with social media (for example using MyODS communities) and engage in reflexive evaluation of existing practice, cultures, attitudes and values. These will involve you in collection of pre-existing empirical material as well as generation of new data through implementation of more creative, experimental approaches such as story-telling and artefact production. A range of conceptual lenses will then be used to critique, analyse and make sense of this material so as to establish starting points for working towards change.

Module two, '***Working towards change: planning and implementing context specific parental engagement***', will facilitate a series of interventions derived directly from the close examination of the school/college context undertaken in module one. You will identify strategic priorities for your institution alongside a bespoke, context specific, 'road map' for change that will identify the key actions and dependencies (resources, roles, responsibilities, training needs) that will be required to realise the aspirations articulated in module one.

Module three, '***Parental Engagement in practice: understanding outcomes, impact and influence***', will explore a range of strategies for documenting, describing and evaluating the outcomes of parental engagement in practice. It will support design, development and implementation of robust and rigorous evaluation tools that draw on a range of qualitative and quantitative traditions. This will your institution, and the communities of parents you work with, to understand the outcomes, impact and influence of your parental engagement work through a range of lenses and to pay attention to anticipated, as well as contingent and serendipitous, change and or development. This module will also explore strategies for sustaining momentum and enthusiasm for ongoing collaborative development in this key area of work.



2.3 How long will the training programme take?

The learning you do with the ESTEP framework can be paced to suit your own timeframe for the work you want to undertake. You can choose which areas of work you want to spend most or least time on according to what you want to your aims and aspirations. You are advised to work through each of the modules however so that you complete the action research cycle and ensure that your aims have been met, that you understand the impact of your ESTEP intervention and that your success criteria have been met. Completing the cycle will also help you to plan the 'what next' so that you can continue to develop and improve over the longer term.

2.4 Where can I see examples of the training programme in action?

IN FINAL DRAFT WE NEED TO ADD CASE STUDY EXAMPLES DERIVED FROM THE PILOT PHASE.



SECTION B: MODULES

3.Module 1: Understanding Parental Engagement in Context

3.1. Module Aims

This module will facilitate exploration and analysis of parental engagement and use of social media in your context. You will discuss key contemporary concepts, issues and debates in the field and develop a working definition of parental engagement for your institution. You will make use of enquiry orientated practitioner researcher approaches to explore existing attitudes, values and cultures to parental engagement in your setting and, to understand the role and potential role of social media in developing practice. You will begin to agree priorities and aspirations for the future development of practice.

3.2. Learning Objectives

Through participation in this module trainees will:

- describe and synthesise existing debates, concepts and research evidence in relation to parental engagement and social media;
- use participatory action research techniques to plan strategies for change;
- make effective use of a range of investigative tools to explore current practice and stake-holder perspectives (including their own) on parental engagement and use of social media;
- evaluate the potential value of social media to support and sustain parental engagement in your own context;



3.3 Module Content

Unit Code.	Unit Name	Description
M1U1	Introduction – exploring definitions, values and attitudes	<p>In this unit trainees will engage in a range of creative methods to explore and describe their personal attitudes, values to, and perceptions of, parental engagement. See suggested session plan M1U1</p> <p>Introduction to and exploration of key theories and concepts in parental engagement for example Price-Mitchell, Epstein (see M1U1 sample session plans). Generate working definition relevant to own context</p> <p>Review personal definitions and share a revised personal definition with wider group through appropriate social media tool (for example definition in 140 characters via <i>Twitter</i>) in the session.</p> <p>Share a follow-up reflective 'think piece' through example through <i>Storify</i> post session.</p>
M1U2	Exploring own context	<p>Introduction to modes of practitioner research and the action research cycle.</p> <p>Plan an action research 'audit' to produce a baseline against which to measure development.</p> <p>Determine what data already exists to inform the review and what new data will need to be collected.</p> <p>Explore a range of techniques and strategies collecting data e.g. map, box etc</p> <p>Consider ethical issues and e-security</p>



		Review a range of social media tools and select an appropriate social platform through which to document and share the review process e.g. <i>Facebook</i> or <i>Storify</i> .
M1U3	Analysis and Review	Produce baseline analysis – ‘where are we now’ in relation to parental engagement and social media and make available for dissemination. Identify key priorities of a ‘road map’ for change – <i>what does the school want to do differently?</i>

3.4 Module Outcomes

At the end of this module trainees will have:

- agreed a working definition for parental engagement that is meaningful in their own context;
- designed and planned a participatory action research process to implement in their school/college;
- engaged the wider school community in a study of current practice;
- used social media to support and facilitate the above.



4. Module 2: Working towards change: planning and implementing context specific parental engagement

4.1. Module Aims

This module will provide a step-by-step approach to planning for change using a range of modes and mediums. You will generate a context specific 'road map' that responds to the strategic priorities identified in module one and define targets, milestones, key dependencies and success criteria.

4.2. Learning Objectives

Through participation in this module trainees will:

- analyse existing school development processes and cycles and potential spaces and places for embedding development work on parental engagement;
- re-conceptualise boundaries between home, school, community and identities of key stake-holders including young people, teachers, leaders and parents;
- identify the key components necessary to facilitate cultural change within the local context;
- identify, describe and attribute key roles and responsibilities in cultural change processes for different groups of stake-holders within the community;
- plan the stages and processes of a parental engagement intervention/s within their local context and the evidence base that will help to document the communities experience of participating in the intervention;
- explore strategies for winning support and commitment from the wider school community for new ways of working in relation to parental engagement.

4.3. Skills Development

Through participation in this module trainees will develop, expand and practice their skills:

- as communicators - influencers, persuaders, brokers of change;
- as analysts of qualitative and quantitative data



4.4. Module Content

Unit Code	Unit Name	Description
M2U1	Understanding and agreeing purpose	<p>Reviewing existing school development processes and understanding how this work will complement. Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does my school develop? - What existing cycles and processes could this work fit in to? <p>Identifying actions for change</p> <p>Identifying stake-holders. Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who needs to be involved in the process? How? and why? <p>Agreeing time-frame for implementation of Road Map</p>
M2U2	Building stories of success	<p>Agreeing what the school wants to achieve through the intervention and describing in detail what success might look like for different groups of stakeholders and beneficiaries.</p> <p>Identifying interim milestones – what will the stepping stones towards success look like?</p>
M2U3	Designing and planning change	<p>Construction and dissemination of plan.</p> <p>Key activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreeing deadlines Identifying dependencies and resources. Clarifying roles, responsibility



		and expectations.
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4.5. Module Outcomes

At the end of this module participants will have:

- clearly articulated strategic priorities and aspirations for both parental engagement and the use of digitally mediated environments to support parental engagement in their context;
- constructed a co-produced and community owned 'road map' for change



5. Module 3: Parental Engagement in practice: understanding outcomes, impact and influence

5.1. Module Aims

This module will provide a step-by-step approach to evaluating the processes, experience and impacts (planned and unexpected) of the 'road-map' proposed in module 2. It will explore approaches to designing impact and strategies for effective sharing, dissemination and sustainability of outcomes.

5.2. Learning Objectives

Through participation in this module trainees will:

- Explore and evaluate a range of pathways for achieving maximum impact and determine what most preferred approach in their context;
- Plan how they will track and monitor the progression of their intervention and document and share, via social media, 'change in action';
- Construct a dissemination plan that makes effective use of social media to ensure that the process and outcomes of change are shared with local, regional audiences as well as those further afield;
- Determine how change will be sustained over the longer term

5.3. Module Content

Unit Code	Title	Description
M3U1	Understanding & Maximizing Impact	Explore a range of potential approaches to achieving maximum impact for a wide range of stake-holders and beneficiaries. Ensure that strategies for achieving high impact are 'designed-in' to Road Map from the outset.
M3U2	Build an evidence base	Evaluate a range of ways of capturing and evaluating outcomes (both planned and serendipitous) using social media.



		<p>Determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where to look - Who to ask - What to collect - How to collect it - How best to share with other - Who you want to share with
M3U3	Dissemination and Sustainability	<p>Create a social media dissemination plan that identifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - key stories - audiences - best social media platforms and tools to utilize <p>Review whole action research cycle and determine <i>Where next?</i></p>

5.4. Module Outcomes

At the end of this module participants will produce:

- An impact strategy
- a plan for generating evidence (pictures, stories, case studies as well as more traditional forms of data) to document the process of implementing a change 'road map'
- A dissemination and sustainability strategy



SECTION C:

LEARNING (B)LOG

The ESTEP Learning (B)Log is can be completed in any format that supports your learning and development. It is suggested that you choose an appropriate social media platform (your trainer/teacher will be on hand to advise) and experiment with a 'live' blog that documents progress through the ESTEP programme. This blog will then have a dual function of enabling you to capture and reflect on your learning and helping you to communicate with and engage your wider school community. Examples of completed ESTEP Learning (B)Logs can be found at [ADD HYPERLINK](#).

6.Exploring Definitions and values

6.1 What issues or concerns are motivating you to think about parental engagement?

Prompts for reflection:

Why parental engagement is important in your school?

Why do you want to make changes at this particular time? What is it that is driving change?



6.2 How would you describe current practice, attitudes and values towards parental engagement at your school?

Prompts for reflection:

What images and metaphors would you draw on?

Do you think different members of the school community (school leaders, teachers, parents, pupils) have a shared view? Or different views?

How engaged are different groups?

What about the community beyond school?

6.3 How are you currently using social media to support parental engagement?

Prompts for reflection:

What platforms and tools are you currently using?

If you are not yet using social media – what would you like to use? Why?

If you are already using social media what works well? What works less well?

How are you evaluating current practice?

How skilled are teachers in the use of social media?

What do you know about your parent group as users of social media?



6.4 What do you want to achieve through your parental engagement work?

Prompts for reflection :

What are the end goals of your parental engagement work? For teachers? For pupils? For parents? For the wider community?

How do think social media might help you to achieve these goals?

6.5 How is your definition of parental engagement developing? How would you define parental engagement in 140 characters?

Choose an appropriate social media tool to share this with your community - how does your definition compare and contrast with those of others?





7. Exploring your own context – planning your parental engagement review

7.1 What are the key questions driving your review?

Prompts for reflection:

Revisit the issues raised in unit 1, how are these shaping and influencing your review?

What you want to achieve as an outcome of the process and why?

What do you want to know more about in relation to attitudes, values and experience of parental engagement across the wider school community? And about social media and parental engagement?

7.2 Who do you want to involve in your audit? Who can help you to answer the questions you posed in 2.1?



7.3 How will you involve others?

Prompts for reflection:

How will you involve diverse groups of parents?

How will you involve young people too?

How will you involve members of your wider community, could they contribute? In what ways?

In ways will different groups be involved? What will they be doing? What will you be doing?

How will you draw on the work you did in unit 1 to inform how you work with others?

7.4 Are there any ethical issues that you will need to take in to consideration? How will you respond to these to ensure that your road map for change is undertaken responsibly?

Prompts for reflection:

What ethical frameworks do you currently work with in school?

How familiar are you of the European Educational Research Association's guidelines for Ethical Practice (see <http://www.eera-ecer.de/about/ethical-guidelines/>)?

How might you use these guidelines to help you to plan your work?



7.5 What evidence will you need to collect?

Prompts for reflection:

What data already exists?

What other data might be useful? Where are the gaps in your evidence base?

What new data/evidence will you need to generate? What kind of evidence?

How will communicate and share the process of data review?

7.6 How are you going to collect additional data?

Prompts for reflection:

What tools will you need to use? (E)Surveys? Group discussions?

What events will you need to organize?

Where and who will your new data come from?

How will you store it appropriately?

How will you share it with others?



7.7 How might you model use of social media to support the review process?

8. Designing your 'Road Map' for Change

8.1 What are the key issues arising from your review?

Prompts for reflection:

For children and young people?

For the school?

For teachers?

For parents?

For the community?



8.2 What will the benefits and impact of your action plan be? Who will be the beneficiaries?

Σχόλιο [AK1]: Bring forward, impact

8.3 What works well and what do you want to do more of? What doesn't work so that you could do better? What new areas of activity do you want to develop? What's the base-line against which you will judge progression and development?

8.4 What's your timeframe for change?

Prompts for reflection:

What are the internal and external factors driving your timeframe?

How will you prioritise your actions?



What do you want to achieve in the short? Medium? and longer term?

8.5 What roles and responsibilities will you need to allocate to achieve your actions?

8.6 What new resources will you need to support your road map?

8.7 What support will you need to be successful? For what, and from whom? How will you go about this?



8.8 What would be appropriate indicators of success?

Prompts for reflection:

How will you judge 'effectiveness', 'progress' and 'improvement'?

How will you monitor progress against your targets?

Who will be involved in this process? How will different groups in your community be represented in this process?

8.9 How will you combine your practitioner enquiry role with your teacher/professional role. What do you see as the possible problems and how will you address them?

Prompts for reflection:



How will you manage each of the following...

- *time management?*
- *public engagement?*
- *the need to persuade and build support?*
- *the need to deal with resistance and reluctance?*
- *change management?*



SECTION A

Introduction to the ESTEP Framework

9. Background

E-STEP aims to develop, implement and evaluate a training programme for school education staff in order to prepare them to effectively engage parents in schooling, through social networking technologies. The aim of WP2 is to design a training framework that draws on the findings and recommendations of work undertaken in WP1: D1.1 the state of the art review; and D1.2 needs analysis. The framework is derived from the following principles about meanings, contexts, values and forms of parental engagement that have emerged from this work.

Meanings and value of parental engagement

- 'Parental engagement' is a contested concept;
- Conceptualisations of the meanings of school, learning and childhood are implicit in all forms of PE;
- PE that engages parents in their children's learning has been shown to contribute to beneficial outcomes (social, developmental, academic) for young people;

Contexts for parental engagement:

- Many parents value opportunities to engage with schools and teachers although needs and wants may evolve and change as the child progresses through their school career;
- Schools and colleges work with diverse communities of young people and parents and a parental engagement strategy must be responsive to the complexity and plurality of the particular local context;
- The engagement of senior leaders is crucial to effective forms of PE;
- Highly valued parental engagement is characterised by a range of interactions for a variety of purposes and is likely to make use of a range of communication modes including social media;



Forms of Parental Engagement

- Participation in social media is a social practice and requires digital literacy knowledge, expertise and confidence from all participant;
- Teachers' and parents' (and young peoples') knowledge, awareness, understanding and experiences of social media (and other forms of ICT)

vary substantially and impact on their attitudes to social media use in school;

- Teachers and parents attitudes towards social media are informed by wider discourses and these might be especially influential where individuals lack direct experience;
- Initial teacher education does not necessarily teach either PE or digital literacy, teachers knowledge and expertise is likely to be tacit and gained through experience and participation;
- The use of technology to support PE is in its infancy and the body of evidence that might inform practice is very much emergent;
- Communication between parents and schools that is mediated by technology will be framed by the existing attitudes, values and cultures of the school or institution;
- Attitudes and values of leaders, teachers, parents and children are crucial in determining the success or otherwise of both a parental engagement strategy and implementation of a work in digital modes.

10. Overview of Framework

The training framework will enable trainees to:

- **explore** key issues and debates in parental engagement;
- **engage** with the wider school community to better understand parental engagement and the existing and potential roles of social media in their own context;
- **create** new meanings, identities and roles in relation to parental engagement;
- **experiment** with social media as a tool to support effective parental engagement;
- **collaborate** with parents, teachers and the wider school community;



- **drive** innovation and implement change.

The framework design is underpinned by an enquiry-based approach, participatory action research (PAR), that encourages inclusive, collaborative and co-constructionist approaches to institutional growth and development. PAR is process orientated and starts with reflexive engagement with the everyday experiences of participants in the school/college community enabling trainees to develop, in collaboration with others, grounded descriptions of how parental engagement 'currently works' in their particular context. This then allows the community to 'work towards change', the next stage of the PAR process, that is distinctive, highly differentiated and tailored very particularly to the needs and aspirations of the institution and the community it serves.

This generative approach, where course participants are most often in production rather than consumption mode, will ensure that the framework generates outcomes that meet the needs of a broad spectrum of institutions and promotes trainee learning that is responsive to the diverse student, parent and community groups that schools and colleges work with. As such it is 'future-proof', sustainable and highly relevant to a wide range of institutions across Europe that are concerned with young people's learning.

Throughout their learning participants will explore social media in two ways; as a context for stimulating and sharing their own thinking, learning and collaboration; and as potential tools to support and facilitate new ways of working and interacting with parents. As such they will be immersed in an experiential learning programme through which they will learn about the potential of social media through 'real-life' engagement and participation in a learning context.

The framework comprises three modules that, taken together, train participants to work competently and confidently with the PAR learning cycle, each module representing a stage in the classic PAR process: *documenting and contextualising the current situation*; *working towards change*; and *understanding impact, affect and influence*.

Module one, '**Understanding Parental Engagement in Context**', will introduce action research methodologies, modes and strategies and open up exploration of key concepts and definitions. Participants will be encouraged to experiment with social media (mainly using MyODS communities) and engage in reflexive evaluation of existing practice, cultures, attitudes and values. These will include collection of pre-existing empirical material as well as generation of new data through implementation of more creative, experimental approaches such as story-telling and artefact production. A range of



conceptual lenses will then be used to critique, analyse and make sense of this material so as to establish starting points for working towards change.

Module two, '**Working towards change: planning and implementing context specific parental engagement**', will facilitate a series of interventions derived directly from the close examination of the school/college context undertaken in module one. Participants will agree strategic priorities for their own institution alongside a bespoke, context specific, 'road map' for change that will identify the key actions and dependencies (resources, roles, responsibilities, training needs) that will be required to realize the aspirations articulated in module one.

Module three, '**Parental Engagement in practice: understanding outcomes, impact and influence**', will explore a range of strategies for documenting, describing and evaluating the outcomes of parental engagement in practice. It will support design, development and implementation of robust and rigorous evaluation tools that draw on a range of qualitative and quantitative traditions. This will enable institutions and communities to understand the outcomes, impact and influence of their parental engagement work through a range of lenses and to pay attention to anticipated, as well as the contingent and serendipitous, change and or development. This module will also explore strategies for sustaining momentum and enthusiasm for ongoing collaborative development in this key area of work.

Through participation in the ESTEP programme trainees will develop, extend and practice a range of skills in relation to:

- use of digital and social media
- communication skills
- community engagement
- project management
- reflective practice
- enquiry and research
- project management, planning and target setting
- data collection
- team working
- collaborating with others

Whilst this document outlines the aims, objectives and outcomes of the ESTEP study programme and offers guidance ideas and suggestions for the content of training sessions



the teaching sessions have not been prescribed. This enables trainers to make local decisions about the best way to engage learners. Trainers should consider the best way to pace learning and select modes of learning that are most appropriate for particular groups and individuals, it is anticipated that a programme of study will include a dynamic combination of the following approaches to learning:

- face to face, synchronous and asynchronous online activity;
- analysis and synthesis of a range of texts in different formats;
- participation in a range of learning activities including mini-lectures (synchronous, asynchronous or both) and workshops;
- participate in digitally mediated interaction and learning;
- research and data collection;
- discussion and debate with peers;
- discussion and debate with a wider range of stakeholders in the school community including trainees, young people, parents, other teacher and wider representatives of the local community that the school/college serves;
- elicitation and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

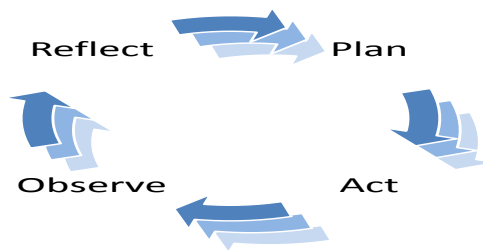
11. Working within a Participatory Action Research Framework¹

Experience of working with teachers in school/college contexts, along with considerable research evidence (e.g. Timperley, 2011), suggests that delivery and transmission models of training are far from guaranteed to bring about changes to practice. Timperley (2011, p.4) suggests that teacher professional development has become associated with 'delivery', calling for a re-consideration of professional learning as 'meaning-making'. This

¹ References

- Davis, B., & Sumara, D. (2005) Complexity science and educational action research: toward a pragmatics of transformation. *Educational Action Research*, 13(3).
- Hopkins, D. (2008) *A Teacher's Guide To Classroom Research*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. (2005) Participatory Action Research - Communicative Action and the Public Sphere. In Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Phelps, R., & Hase, S. (2005) Complexity and action research: exploring the theoretical and methodological connections. *Educational Action Research*, 10(3), 507–524.
- Price-Mitchell, M. (2009) Boundary Dynamics: Implications for Building Parent-School Partnerships. *The School Community Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 2.

echoes a distinction made within this training programme between parental involvement and parental engagement, the latter denoting a more 'active power-sharing role' for parents beyond mere invited participation (Price-Mitchell, 2009, p.13). Participatory action research is therefore a potentially suitable and powerful approach for bringing about the deeper professional learning and parental engagement that the E-Step project seeks. It is intended that this will enable teachers, parents and learners, working collaboratively, to identify and better understand their own situation in order to benefit the specific needs and aims of their learning community.



Action research typically follows a cyclical process of *planning* changes to practice, often in small steps, *acting* on these and *observing* their influence, then *reflecting* on the evidence, process and outcomes (Kemmis and McTaggart in Hopkins, 2008, p.51). The cycle becomes a spiral as more sequences of planning, acting, observing and reflecting are carried out, with each feeding into the next. In participatory action research, each stage in the process is carried out collaboratively by those involved (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005), with 'meanings constructed from shared experience' (Phelps and Hase, 2002, p.514). Conversation between participants plays a key role in guiding the process, acknowledging that 'the outcome is never pre-specified' and 'is sensitive to contingencies' (Davis and Sumara, 2005, p.462).



SECTION B

Ideas for Teaching

12. Ideas for Teaching

Research evidence suggests that teachers and trainers generally prefer to plan and produce their own lesson plans and resources so as to work in ways that suit their own teaching styles and preferences and respond effectively to the needs of their students. In this section we offer a series of sessions plans to support the design of teaching and learning opportunities that enable achievement of the ESTEP framework objectives and outcomes. As outlined above these strategies can be adapted for face to face or synchronous/asynchronous online activity and it is expected that teachers and trainers will differentiate their planning to meet the specific needs of the trainee groups they are working with. The sample session plans are mapped to the module unit codes for easy cross-referencing.



Module 1, Unit 1 (M1U1)

Module	1
Unit	1
Activity Title	Introduction – definitions, values and attitudes
Teaching and Learning mode (face to face, online etc.)	This unit can be done either face-to-face or online, although appropriate adaptations would need to be made.
Session objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider purposes of parental engagement. • To explore existing definitions and models of parental engagement. • To explore values and attitudes towards parental engagement. • To develop a shared understanding of parental engagement within your context.
Session outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clearer understanding of issues relating to parental engagement. • The formation of a group to take forward parental engagement within the context.
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompanying slides. • Six Types of Involvement - Ch.1 p.10-12 (Epstein 2009). • Cards or post-its, whiteboard, flipchart or screen. • Coloured paper, fabric, pens, glue, pipe-cleaners, shapes, scissors and any other collage and model making materials. • If unit is taking place online, appropriate conferencing or discussion tools.
<p>Session Outline</p> <p>Discussion – <i>Why</i> parental engagement? (Slides 3, 4 & 5)</p> <p>The intention is for participants (teachers, parents, learners) to consider and discuss this question, in order to share their initial viewpoints and to build confidence and trust within the group.</p> <p>The discussion could be focused towards the two main assumptions or starting points of the E-Step Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental engagement is a 'good thing'. • Social networking and media might help. <p>What might be the <i>reasons</i> for these two starting points?</p>	



- *Why* parental engagement?
- *Why* social networking?

A further stimulus to discussion is offered in a quote from Peter Senge (2000).

Finally, it is suggested that parental engagement and social networking are perhaps best understood as **processes** to support learning, achievement and wider positive **outcomes**.

Exploring understandings of parental engagement (Slides 6 & 7)

This is a highly creative and open-ended activity, designed to both explore values and attitudes around parental engagement, as well as act as an 'ice breaker' in enabling a group of teachers and parents to get to know each other. There are many ways in which this activity could be varied to suit different groups and contexts.

Create something that helps tell a story...

- **Use** creative methods to explore our understandings of parental engagement.
- **Create** an artifact/picture.
- **Share** our stories about parental engagement in our own context.
- **Generate** ideas about we might use creative methods in our own context.

Activity – defining terms (Slides 8 & 9)

Participants are asked to consider the three commonly heard/read terms below and compare key words that they associate with each one:

Parental
involvement

Parent-school
partnerships

Parent
engagement

Prompts to guide the activity:

- What do these terms mean to you?
- In what ways do they feature in your school/context?
- What are the overlaps and differences?



- Discuss and share ideas.
- Jot down some key words to summarise each term.

This activity can be carried out in various ways, depending on the teaching and learning mode and size of group. For example, a whiteboard, flipchart or screen could be used to gather key words, they could be written on cards or 'post-it' notes, or posted to an online discussion board.

Spheres of Influence (Slides 10, 11, 12 & 13)

Two models are provided to present ideas concerning the *spheres of influence* on the learner, the first from Joyce Epstein (2009) and the second from the Children's Society (2013) based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (see accompanying slides):

- Epstein introduces *six types of involvement* and participants are asked to consider and evaluate these.
- Using Bronfenbrenner's model, participants are asked to consider the wider influences within their own context.
- Participants are also introduced to, or may have already identified, the potential problem of parental involvement, spheres of influence and transfer of information and knowledge being seen as a 'unidirectional process', lacking 'the characteristics of a learning organization' (Price-Mitchell, 2009, p.16).

(Re-)defining Terms (Slides 14 & 15)

Finally, Price-Mitchell's (2009, p.13) definitions of the key terms considered earlier are shared, as well as a broad definition of parental engagement from Goodhall and Vorhaus (2011, p.66).

Possible follow-up activities:

- Produce a micro-blog 'think-piece' to define of parental engagement (e.g. Twitter).
- Upload photos of pictures/artifacts to a shared media website (e.g. Facebook) for further comment and sharing
- Hold a 'story' session, for participants to tell their own stories or describe their pictures/artifacts.
- Provide links to literature and further reading and encourage comments.

**References:**

The Children's Society (2013) *The Good Childhood Report*. Available from: http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/good_childhood_report_2013_final.pdf [Accessed 01.07.14]

Epstein, J. L. (Ed.). (2009) *School, family, and community partnerships: your handbook for action* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin Press.

Goodhall, J. & Vorhaus, J. (2011) *Review of best practice in parental engagement*, Research Report DFE-RR156. London: Institute of Education; Department for Education.

Price-Mitchell, M. (2009) Boundary Dynamics: Implications for Building Parent-School Partnerships. *The School Community Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 2.

Senge, P. (2000) Systems Change in Education. *Reflections*, Vol .1, No. 3.

Module 2, Unit 1 (M2U1)

Module	2
Unit	1
Activity Title	Understanding and agreeing purpose
Teaching and Learning mode (face to face, online etc.)	This unit can be done either face-to-face or online, although appropriate adaptations would need to be made.
Session objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore and identify purposes and priorities for parental engagement. To agree a timeframe for change and development. To consider the roles of stakeholders in school development processes.
Session outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A shared understanding of purposes and priorities for parental engagement. Identification of a timeframe for change and the roles of stakeholders.
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accompanying slides. Large A3 printouts of slides 5, 6, 7 and 8. Paper, post-its, whiteboard, flipchart or screen. If unit is taking place online, appropriate conferencing or discussion tools.

Session Outline

A 'roadmap' for parental engagement? (Slide 3)

The metaphor of a 'journey' with a 'roadmap', first introduced in Module 1 Unit 3, is offered again to support teachers and parents exploring and developing parental engagement in their own context. There are four main stages of the journey and two main 'warning' signs or reminders along the way.





This slide could, of course, be adapted to provide different metaphors or stages in the process

Activity – setting priorities (Slides 4 & 5)

This two-stage activity supports participants in identifying purposes for parental engagement in terms of priorities for learners' experiences and outcomes. The latter may come from existing priorities, already identified through school self-evaluation processes. However, the activity provides an opportunity to articulate and share these within this particular group, formed to develop parental engagement.

The following prompts are offered to guide the first part of the activity:

- What are the current priorities for developing **learners'** experiences and outcomes within
 - your context?
 - Be as specific as you can.
 - 'Post-it' them.

The second part of the activity involves placing these priority 'Post-its' on the map below. The aims are:

- to prioritise those that have high impact on learner experiences/outcomes;
- to identify those where the school's ability to influence is low as potentially fruitful for parental engagement.

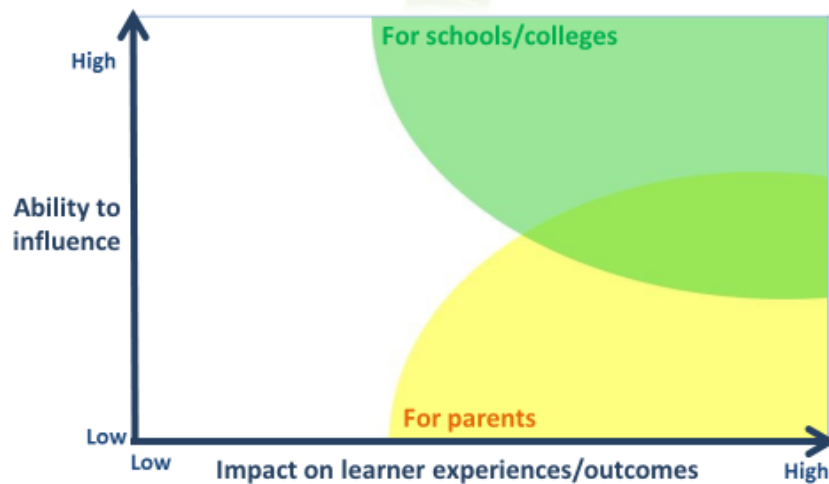


Prioritisation Activity

Adapted from *School Improvement Planning Framework (TDA 2008)*



- Place your priority 'Post-its' on this map.
- What are your priorities for parental engagement?



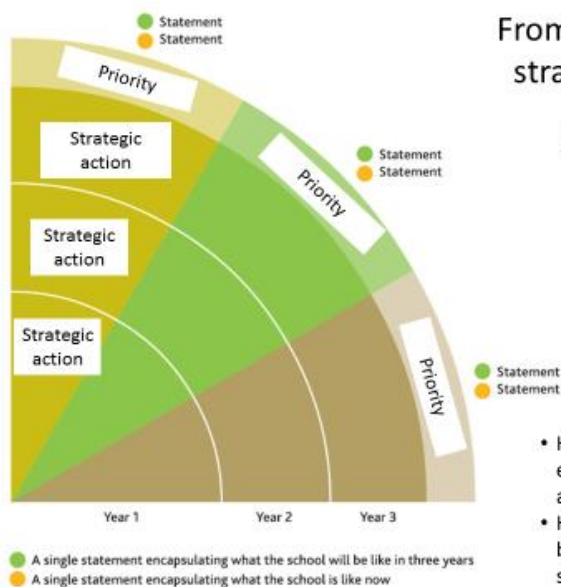
From priorities to strategic actions (Slide 6)

A 'fan plan' model is presented to guide a discussion on how the priorities identified in the previous activity can be translated into strategic actions over a three-year timeframe. This is simply an example, although has the advantage of a being a simple and visual framework. Of course, it could be replaced by a different planning model/time-frame according to established school practices and preferences. The discussion could consider:

- What would be appropriate strategic (i.e. high-level) actions to take in pursuing the agreed priorities?
- What is the school like now in relation to these priorities?
- What will the school be like in three years?

These questions are posed:

- How will **parents** be engaged in strategic actions?
- How can **social media** be used to support strategic actions?

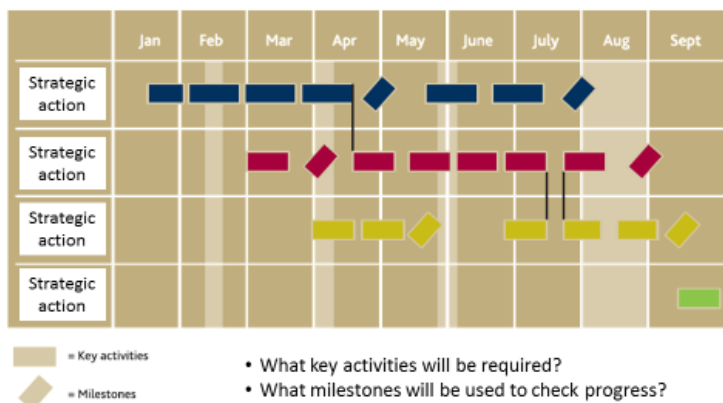


From strategic actions to key activities and milestones (Slide 7)

A further step in the planning process is offered in the form of 'swim lane' plan (similar to a Gantt chart), to guide discussion over month-by-month operational activities for each strategic action. Milestones are also proposed as opportunities to check progress, which may also relate to points of reflection within a participatory action research cycle. Again, this is simply an example of an operational planning framework, which may be replaced with established school planning models.

From strategic actions to key activities and milestones

Adapted from *School Improvement Planning Framework (TDA 2008)*



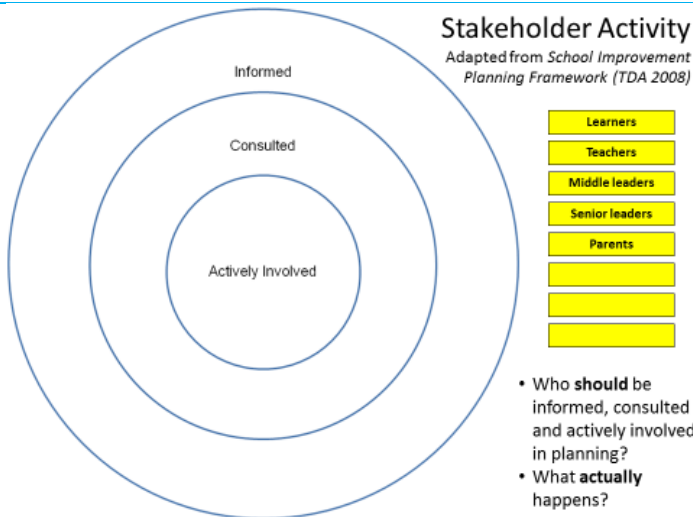
Stakeholder activity (Slide 8)

This final activity is designed to challenge any pre-conceptions about the roles of stakeholders in school development planning and action. There are three stages to the activity:

1. Identify who the stakeholders are (some are already included) – they could be written on 'Post-its' or cards.
2. Position each stakeholder on the map according to whether they **should** be actively involved, consulted, or informed.
3. Re-position each stakeholder on the map according to what **actually** happens in your school.

Stakeholder Activity

Adapted from *School Improvement Planning Framework (TDA 2008)*



Possible follow-up activities:

- Produce a visual representation of a strategic and/or operational plan for development incorporating parental engagement and:
 - display it in a prominent place in the school;
 - upload it to a social media site where stakeholders can view it;
 - encourage stakeholders to comment, contribute and become actively involved.

References:

TDA (2008) *School Improvement Planning Framework*. Training and Development Agency for Schools.

**Module 2, Unit 1 (M2U1)**

Workshop

Duration: 1 hour 4-5 pm

Aim: To explore barriers and boundaries to effective parental engagement

Objectives:

1. To familiarise the group with boundary dynamics in parental engagement - Introduction
2. To experience boundary dynamics in parental engagement through modelling and stories inspired by the participants' scenarios – Main activity
3. To question how boundary dynamics may affect children using the participants' scenarios – Main activity
4. To identify border-crossing activities (including ICT where possible) where parents and schools interact on behalf of children – Plenary

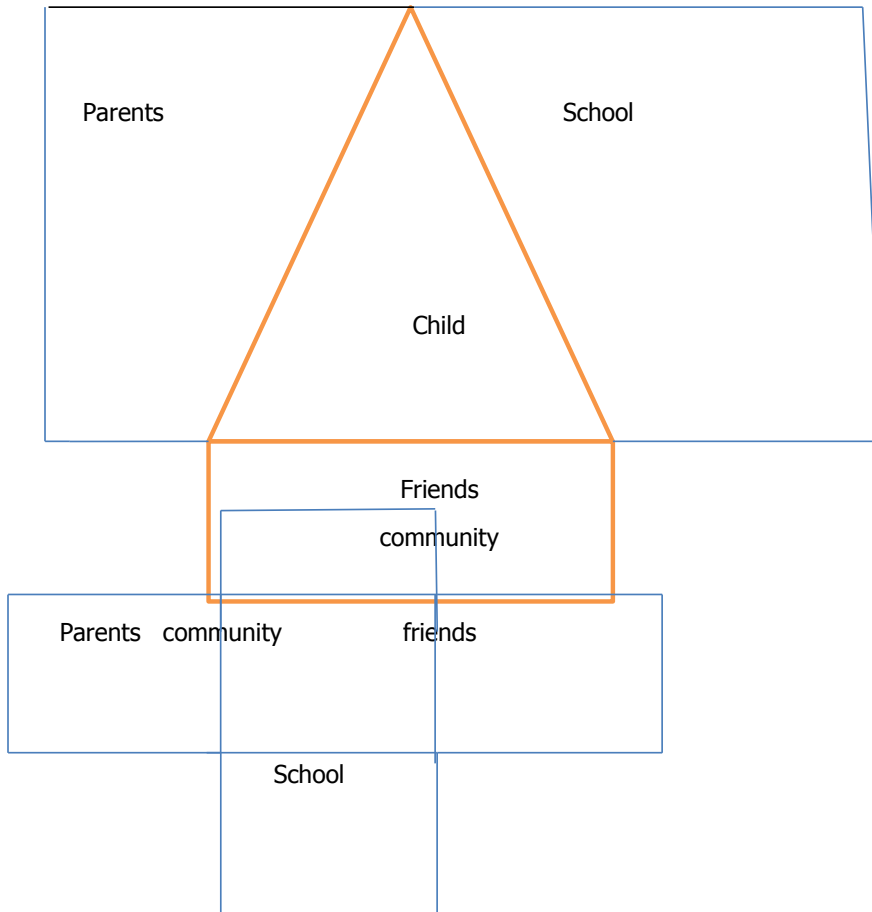
1. Rationale:

Schools are learning communities that generate new knowledge and innovation as the experiences and competencies of teachers and parents interact to make tacit knowledge explicit (Price-Mitchell, 2002). However, understanding of boundary dynamics which are complex relationships in the context of parental involvement and parent-school partnerships could identify strengths and limitations in partnerships, build learning communities and create innovation in today's complex, global environments.

Activity 1: On sugar paper in 5 groups of 5 brainstorm challenges and opportunities schools face as they seek to improve achievement for all children (ie. personal/community values, communication, behaviours, policies, etc.).

Activity 2: Then draw a diagram that represents the social contexts which are associated with the challenges, identified in your groups (friends, community (be specific), government, Department for

Education, UNCR). Position the school and parents in your diagram. Where is the child in this diagram?



2/3. Main Activity:

With reference to the chosen scenario 'We all face the same moon' use the masking tape and flash cards and design on the floor to give shape and name on challenges/barriers associated with the educational objectives as illustrated in the PP; use any other information from the PP to make your decision. Use an empty chair that represents the child and position the child in your floor diagram. Position yourselves in any of the shapes of the diagram and imagine that you represent this group (community, school, parents, and government). Use flash cards and write down the benefits of your participation in the project (ie the community will ensure that our library has relevant books and network connections). Read these to the child in a chorus one at a time.



5. In your groups reflect/discuss if there are any border crossings between these groups (community, school, parents, and government) in their activities.

How does the child feel being put in the middle?

(Facilitator note down on white board groups' responses).

Resources:

Masking tape, flip chart and pens, 10 copies of the 'We all face the same moon' scenario, card for flash cards



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