

Outcomes of inclusive leadership. Comparing the experiences of children and people living with dementia.

Within this essay I am going to talk about drawing the comparison between working with children and older people living with dementia. By using my experiences as well as researching and reading academically, I am able to understand the importance of these practices, and how they may differ between each group. Throughout my leadership practices, I can carefully compare in detail the progress and outcomes of both the care home and the Primary school. I am also able to thoroughly reflect on my on myself, and how my leadership practice and skills evolve and mould as the progress to evolves.

Inclusive leading has not been something that I have personally considered practicing before, but evidently, it's something that has come quite naturally to me. Along with help from workshops on leadership, to researching and academic reading, if you just let the natural fluidity drive it, the practice becomes a lot more enjoyable and manageable. Leading a room full of people can sound daunting, all eyes are on you, and so is their trust in that you are going to educate them on whatever topic you are presenting. Being a performer within the dance industry, this has worked in my favour when leading classes. This is narrowed down to how you portray yourself to the people who are being led by you, and how you are portrayed to those specific people. As a performer, I am able to lead a class in a collective, confident manner, and bring a sense of presence when doing so. Having trust in yourself is also a key factor within this practice, if you have no trust in yourself, then how can the people you are leading have any trust

in you? Then those people lose interest quickly, and become distracted and this is something I have experienced throughout my progress, but I am able to look at my strengths and weaknesses and things to improve on as my practice evolves. As much as I agree that it is highly important you have trust in yourself, it is just as important to have trust in the people you are leading. As I have participated in many classes and been led by different leading practitioners, I have learned the most when the leader has clear trust in myself and the rest of the participants, and there is a strong sense of equality, without any superior atmosphere or tension. The participants must feel confident and comfortable enough to get the absolute most out of their specific workshop, it is the leader's responsibility in doing so.

What is inclusive leading?

Within my experiences, and research, I have begun to learn a number of things about what it actually means to be an inclusive leader. Leithwood et al (1999) suggests that with the continuing diversity, schools will need to thrive on uncertainty, they should have a greater capacity for collective problem solving, and be able to respond to a wider range of pupils. Another useful lot of information found from researching online explains six 'signature' traits of becoming a successful inclusive leader. These six traits are; communication, cultural intelligence, courage, curiosity, cognizance and collaboration. (Deloitte Insights, 2019). There are keywords that explain a successful inclusive leader, which are also attributes that are very much a necessity when leading inclusively. These things are stated as; personal values, adaptability, knowledge, having a voice, empowerment, bravery, fair play, perspective talking, self-regulation, openness and coping with ambiguity Deloitte Insights. (2019). (b). Inclusive leaders have a general interest for taking other people's feelings into consideration and are more people-orientated. They also become patient and taking the time to listen to their learners, and also understand the

importance of stemming ideas from their learners. Being accountable for humility is another important aspect of inclusive leading and how it is an important element of inclusive leading. This is simply because by accepting mistakes, or learning from others and therefore asking for help can help overcome any limitations, that can become slightly humiliating. Knowing that it is okay to make mistakes, or misjudge calculations about an aim or an outcome can seriously help decrease damage in the specific project within inclusive leading. When applied correctly inclusive leadership can provide the tools, behaviours and mind-set for team members to be more effective not only at work but also in their personal lives. (PMO Perspectives Blog, 2019)

The aims and objectives are changing all the time. A task that was set before the workshop had even started, sometimes completely flip and turn into something else, that then ends up being better than my first idea. Sometimes, while leading a workshop, none of the tasks set have worked, and neither have the alternatives, which can become frustrating. Sometimes things go swimmingly and so fluid, but having trust in whatever the outcome is makes it more manageable.

Being flexible and trusting your instincts. You must be able to adapt to the energy in the room, you may have a picture set in your head of what the workshop is going to be like and how the people are going to act, but then when it actually comes down to it, the experience is completely different. Adapting to these changes are important. Another main factor is to trust your intuition, and never doubt it. This practice almost become a type of therapy to myself personally. Both come hand in hand with each other in my experience.

Being careful on how I portray myself to the learners, or part-takers.

Sitting back and observing sometimes is important. Facial expressions, and body language is also such a key element. It's easy for a person to mistake your expressions as 'judgemental'.

Whatever baggage I carry, or whatever is going on in my head or personal life, I must leave it at the door, I must not bring it into any workshop with me, as it is portrayed in my leading and teaching. I come into every workshop completely present.

The process is more important than the outcome.

Inclusive leading is progress based. It is a lot more interesting to look at how each workshop evolves, and how different they are to each other. Being able to evaluate the progress becomes rewarding and more educating than looking at the final outcome. This also gives you a chance to self-reflect, so you can correct your mistakes the next time round, and work on what worked and what didn't.

'By working with dance, movement and music, there is no need to rely on any short-term memory or language skills. Instead we are able to work on people's strengths, progression and continuing abilities' (Danceanddementia.co.uk, 2019)

There are many benefits from including dance and movement for people with dementia.

Movement and exercise is scientifically proven to release endorphins. We are aware of the physical benefits of exercising, but it is also very beneficial to heighten your mood in a positive way. These benefits are listed below;

- * Encourages social interaction, sharing and inclusion
- * Stimulates memories and provides opportunities for reminiscence
- * Boosts confidence
- * Provides exercise that is both mentally and physically demanding
- * Stimulates memories that triggers opportunities

- * Stimulates language both vocally and through body
- * Helps encourage individual expression and exploration

Within my time working in the care home, I was able to witness first hand the importance of exercise and movement for suffers, and why it is beneficial to implement these activities in everyday life. In relation to my findings about the importance of stimulating memory via dance, I am able to prove that my research was found to be not just correct, but more valuable than I first imagined. I believe this because dementia suffers are stuck within the disease they've been unfortunately locked into and has therefore highlighted the importance of adding happiness and reflection within the unfortunate circumstances these people have been left in. Dance and music has a powerful effect amongst everybody and my research goes to show that no matter what state of mind you may be in, dance has the ability to unlock a previous state of happiness like no other.

As stated earlier, my studies prove that dance is beneficial to all ages, so in relation to the younger groups of people I have been working with these factors apply to all. "In general, endorphins can relieve pain, produce feelings of pleasure, reduce stress and increase relaxation. One way to stimulate the release of endorphins is through exercise." (Healthfully.com, 2019). This quote highlights the importance of doing daily exercise. Most people would agree that doing that exercise through the means of dance, makes it it a much more enjoyable and worthwhile form of exercise than, lets say, going for a run. In my experience, when I am dancing, I forget that it requires a big ask, and how it is mentally and physically demanding. This is because I am doing something I thoroughly enjoy, so actually forget that it is such a high demanding form of exercise.

Dementia, and its effects

According to Alzheimer's Disease International, Dementia affects around 35.6 million people worldwide. In the UK alone, 800,000 people are living with dementia, and another 670,000 people in the UK are caring for people who are living with dementia. Whilst reading and researching, I discovered a figure to measure the number of people who will be living with dementia by the year 2021. '...Over a million people in the UK will be diagnosed with dementia' (Tufnell, n.d.).

The word Dementia itself, is a term used in order to describe a 'loss of memory, that keeps getting worse, or it's progressive' (RC PSYCH ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS, 2019)

Ensuring that you are living a lifestyle that includes physical exercise, as well as keeping the brain and mind active, can be beneficial. 'Physical activity creates valuable opportunities to socialise with others, and can help improve and maintain a person's independence' (Alzheimer's Society, 2019)

Throughout my time leading workshops within the care home, the time for reflection is quite important. After every session, I would note each patient's progression, behaviour, participation, etc.. For the first few sessions, myself and my classmates were finding our feet, as this was something new to us. Leading in general was something fairly new to me, but leading a group of dementia sufferers was something that I had never considered before, and was completely out of my comfort zone. Having said that, the experience was highly rewarding, and very eye-opening. Regardless of the fact that these patient's minds are deteriorating by the day, the more we visited and held workshops with them, the more we could see progression and improvement in social interaction, as well as increased mobility. The very first time we visited, hardly any of the patients stood up off their chair, some are completely unable to stand up, but nonetheless, they are still able to move their hands, legs, and talk to a certain degree. One

person in particular stands out to me for progression and that was a lady named Bonnie. Bonnie was a part-taker that wouldn't really socialise, I have never actually heard her speak, but she will communicate by nodding or shaking her head. She is also extremely shy and timid, and would become quite uncomfortable when taking part in partner work. Of course all these symptoms are common within this stage of Dementia. 'Those who suffer from FTD may be unwilling to talk, lack concern for their personal appearances and self-care, exhibit unusual sexual, verbal or physical behaviors, show a marked lack of inhibition and repeat certain actions compulsively.' (Rossano, 2019). By the time our sixth or seventh visit at the care home, I noticed a shift of attitude within Bonnie, even though it was fairly subtle. She started to become more relaxed when having to do contact work with others, I could feel a sense of comfortability from her, whereas the other times, and the first time especially, her energy was completely different. She would be more inverted, sometimes you would forget she was even there because of how quiet she was. I think it is also important to be aware that everyday is different, and therefore the effects of Dementia will differ within the patients. Regardless, I could definitely see a progression and benefit from these specific workshops, even if it was only ever so slightly. I strongly believe that if these sessions religiously took place every week, for maybe twice within a weekday, we would see even stronger benefits for progression and improvement for the social element especially. Below is a construction of our lesson plan, explaining the structure of the workshop. As the structure base stayed more or less the same, the aims would change, as well as the outcomes. When something did not work as well, we would take that into account and try other things for the next workshop. Being aware of the investigation and research was important to keep in mind. This is what our lesson plan consisted of;

The introduction-

Firstly, we would start with Zosia, who would tell everyone her name, pass the ball to the person next to her and get them to do the same, and so on and so forth.

Warm Up-

Seated, circling the wrists, the ankles, shoulders, elbows. Nothing complex, and basic movement to ensure that the participants become mobilized. Coordination exercises with the feet and arms were also included.

Contact Task- The Cha Cha

This required a partner, but firstly we would ask whoever could stand to do so. By forming an inwards circle, we would demonstrate a few simple foot paths, easily enough to follow. After demonstrating the steps, we would then ask the participants to partner up, we would also partner with who ever we felt may need an extra boost, or some confidence within the steps.

Prop Task-

The next thing we would do is hand out different coloured scarfs to the patients, and to improvise with them in any way they would like, the first few times we tried this, we had set a motif for them to follow or copy for structure, we soon realised that watching them react to the music with the scarfs was far more interesting. If there were others who were not reacting, encouraging them carefully was something we took into account.

Cool down-

The cool down would consist of sitting back down, taking a few deep breaths, whilst raising arms to ceiling, and on the breath out the arms go back down. Once again mobilizing the wrists,

ankles, etc. Arm reaches, picking up and copying anything they end up doing. Repeat. Bow at the end.

Within these workshops, there is a few music tracks used. These songs are relatively from the 1940's, meaning that at that time the majority of the patients were in their early youthfulness. Nearly every participant within this workshop will sing along to these songs, or those who are unable to actually speak, will subtly tap to the beat of the song. It is so fascinating to discover that music can trigger memory for these patients. Those who are able to verbally communicate will sing every word. 'Music Helps Dementia Patients Recall Memories and Emotions' (Sauer and Sauer, 2019) (a). According to studies, we can learn that music actually triggers even the worst case patients. "Music evokes emotion, and emotion can bring with it memory... it brings back the feeling of life when nothing else can." This quote has come from Neurologist, Oliver Sacks. By doing daily exercise and pairing it with music, can really help benefit patients, by 'developing a rhythm that helps them to the recall the memory of that activity, improving cognitive ability over time.' (Sauer and Sauer, 2019) (b). Music requires little to no mental processing, so we learn that singing music does not actually require the cognitive function that is not present in most of dementia patients.

Being able to teach dance the younger years allowed me to have a sense of control over them whilst still allowing them to express themselves in any way they found right. Although there is a drawing comparison between leading in Brynseifel Primary School, and the care home within the same principles, the variety of difference within energy, atmosphere and outcome are very

different in certain elements. In the care home, the aims and objectives were to make a slow progression in the patients social elements, improvements on communication and coordination, as well as trying to encourage they have a good time within the short period we have with them weekly. In the primary school, the aims and objectives were to create a piece on a class of year six children that would then be entered into the Eistedfodd competition.

The structure of each lesson would be similar to this;

Introduction- asking the children how they are feeling today, and how their week has gone, striking conversation and questions such as these, can give you a better outlook on how the energy will be like, depending on what the overall mood is in the class.

Warm Up- As well as ensuring safe dance practice, the warm up also initiates the way the rest of the lesson will pan out. You can always tell how the turn out of the lesson will be at the beginning of class. If the children are chatty and distracted right at the beginning due to earlier circumstances in the day, then it can become a bit more challenging to grasp their attention. So using strategies such as 'When I raise my hand, I would like you all to raise your hand and stop talking'. This strategy usually works, but in some cases it takes longer if the children are more disruptive than usual.

Teaching a harder motif to challenge the learners- Challenging the learners is a good technique to get the children to really focus on something, as these challenging exercises will not come natural to them in most cases.

Cool down- Ensuring safe dance practice is accounted for, and also enabling the learners to become calm and collective for the rest of their day in school.

Two stars and a wish- This is one of the most important aspects of the learning structure for me personally. At the end of the class, asking the children for two different things they thought they

did well at in the workshop is important. This is so that they are able to recognize the improvement and progress, which will also encourage them to do well in the next session and the session after that. The wish is something that they would like to improve on, giving them an aim or goal to reach for the end of the next session, which will then also keep them motivated whilst learning the specific subject matter. Two stars and a wish technique enables self-assessment and peer student feedback. Having students evaluate work gives them authentic opportunities to learn critical thinking skills. Additionally, this strategy allows students to learn how to provide positive feedback in a safe environment. (Discovery Education, 2019)

The two main differences here were the fact that in the care home the progress was what we mainly focused on. The outcome in this instance was not. Then, for the primary school the outcome was most important in this factor. Having said that, the progression leading up towards the outcome is just as much considered, and ensuring that the pupils still enjoyed themselves. I think, as an inclusive leader or any leader for that matter, offering an element of enjoyment makes for a healthier teaching and learning environment, and will normally help learners gain more of an interest for whatever the subject matter may be. Try not to take things so seriously, stay focused, but enjoy it and it will make the experience a lot more beneficial for all participating. By creating a positive climate and atmosphere will encourage learners decrease in misbehaving. 'Creating an environment where learning is not just an aspiration but an expectation is the bedrock of any effective learning environment' (the Guardian, 2019). Another point I had mentioned earlier that is an important strategy for both the primary school and care home is to ensure that you are giving constant support and guidance. A quote I found on the same website the Guardian explains this perfectly.. ' , give many examples, check for student

understanding, and provide sufficient instruction so that the students could learn to work independently without difficulty'. (the Guardian, 2019) (b).I would argue that using this tactic within both situations is important for a successful progression towards whatever the goal may be. The children appreciate the guidance, this is because they are not a class of dancers, but school learners, and though some of them may dance outside of school, the majority do not. It's exactly the same as learning any other subject, you will never get things right first time. So, by taking the additional time and effort to go over movements will most likely mean for a more positive and successful outcome. Plus, if the learners are aware of the fact that you are taking your time to offer additional support, they are more likely to stay positive and keep a more bearing and enjoyable atmosphere. For the care home in instance, this element of techniques and strategies are important to include because they physically need that additional support for the reason that it takes longer for their brain to process instructions, especially if it is including mobility and movement. We learn that dementia sufferers experience the loss of confidence, social skills, the ability to perform their favourite activities, self esteem, etc.. Having this in mind proves why it is important to be offering that extra support and ensuring that they have constant guidance.

Within my experience of leading in the primary school, there are a few differences within handling disruptions from the learners in comparison to the care home patients. Both require a lot of patience, as stated previously within this researched essay. Having said this, the level of patience differs in each environment. Both the care home and primary school require a certain level of patience as we are aware that learning things take time, especially when the learners are on a highly diverse spectrum. Our ability to be a patient leader also requires the ability to manage the learners in a collective manner. Understanding the importance of management is essential for keeping patient when need be. There will always be a form of difficulty when

leading anyone in any circumstance, it is just the prime experience of being a leader.

Understanding the purpose, and sticking to it will encourage positive and meaningful change.

Tolerance also comes hand in hand with patience, this is due to knowing when learners have reached a limit that no longer offers a level of patience or the learner is becoming unfair or not 'meeting you halfway' in workshops or lessons. Intolerance stunts growth, and tolerance simply empowers it. Patient leaders are also very independent, even though it is important to be constantly collaborating with the learners and co-peers, it is still important to have an element of independence. Another key aspect of patience, I would argue comes along with being empathetic, Being empathetic is a sign of maturity and confidence. (IndustryWeek, 2019)

Inclusive leadership does not only embrace, value, and provide a sense of belonging to individuals, but they leverage individual differences as a competitive advantage. (Inc.com, 2019)

Although this is something that goes for inclusive leading, I also think it is just as important to include this within any type of leadership practice you experience. If the learners understand a sense of belonging from their teacher, I would argue that it is more likely that they will be more interested to listen and learn from you.

To conclude this researched essay, understanding and taking into consideration the importance of these different techniques and strategies, undermines the drawing comparison of being an inclusive leader and a leader within a school. Both require a substantial amount of acceptance in all elements. To become the best version of a successful leader, requires patience in many aspects. It is also key to understand that being a leader often means the majority of the time, you will be leaded by your learners. Having complete trust to let go sometimes in inhibit the meaningful change that you are often looking to succeed. Not only do these aspects create a better leader, it also helps create a better version of yourself, and helps you know exactly where

you stand in the world, leading or not. Furthermore, taking these things into consideration helps create a wider range of experiences and opportunities for collaboration in the future. Other leaders will be interested in working with you, if they have the impression that you are doing exactly what is asked to be a successful leader, whether that is an inclusive leader or a non inclusive leader. All these strategies and techniques stem purely from experience, and the learning from other leaders. The continuous cycle of successful leadership will help for a more accepting workplace, and therefore a happier workplace for everyone involved.

Bibliography

Danceanddementia.co.uk. (2019). *Dance & Dementia Using movement and dance to increase wellbeing for people affected by dementia.* [online] Available at: <https://www.danceanddementia.co.uk/Welcome.html> [Accessed 18 May 2019].

Healthfully.com. (2019). [online] Available at: <https://healthfully.com/516702-why-does-your-body-release-endorphins-while-youre-exercising.html> [Accessed 18 May 2019].

Tufnell, M. (n.d.). *When I open my eyes.*

RC PSYCH ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS. (2019). *Dementia and memory problems.* [online] Available at: <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/dementia-and-memory-problems> [Accessed 20 May 2019].

Alzheimer's Society. (2019). *Exercise and physical activity.* [online] Available at: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/daily-living/exercise> [Accessed 20 May 2019].

Rossano, S. (2019). *Signs & Symptoms of Frontotemporal Dementia.* [online] Negeriatrics.com. Available at: <http://www.negeriatrics.com/blog/signs-and-symptoms-of-frontotemporal-dementia> [Accessed 20 May 2019].

Sauer, A. and Sauer, A. (2019). *5 Reasons Why Music Boosts Brain Activity.* [online] Alzheimers.net. Available at: <https://www.alzheimers.net/why-music-boosts-brain-activity-in-dementia-patients/> [Accessed 20

May 2019].

the Guardian. (2019). *Teachers: your guide to learning strategies that really work.* [online]

Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2017/oct/27/teachers-your-guide-to-learning-strategies-that-really-work> [Accessed 24 May 2019].

Deloitte Insights. (2019). *The six signature traits of inclusive leadership.* [online] Available at:

<https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/topics/talent/six-signature-traits-of-inclusive-leadership.html> [Accessed 24 May 2019].

PMO Perspectives Blog. (2019). *What is Inclusive Leadership? - PMO Perspectives Blog.* [online]

Available at: <https://www.strategyex.co.uk/blog/pmoperspectives/what-is-inclusive-leadership/> [Accessed 24 May 2019].

IndustryWeek. (2019). *Why Patience Is a Virtue in Leaders.* [online] Available at:

<https://www.industryweek.com/leadership/why-patience-virtue-leaders> [Accessed 24 May 2019].

Inc.com. (2019). *6 Questions That Reveal If You Are an Inclusive Leader.* [online] Available at:

<https://www.inc.com/ryan-jenkins/how-to-be-an-inclusive-leader-in-6-steps.html> [Accessed 24 May 2019].

Discovery Education. (2019). *SOS: Two Stars and A Wish.* [online] Available at:

<https://blog.discoveryeducation.com/blog/2016/06/27/sos-two-stars-and-a-wish/> [Accessed 24 May 2019].