Developing inclusive systems in and around schools for early school leaving prevention: The Importance of Emotions and Relationships

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An Emotional-Relational Focus for Inclusive Systems (Downes, Nairz-Wirth & Rusinaite 2016) for ESL Prevention – There is _not_ 1 early school leaving problem !
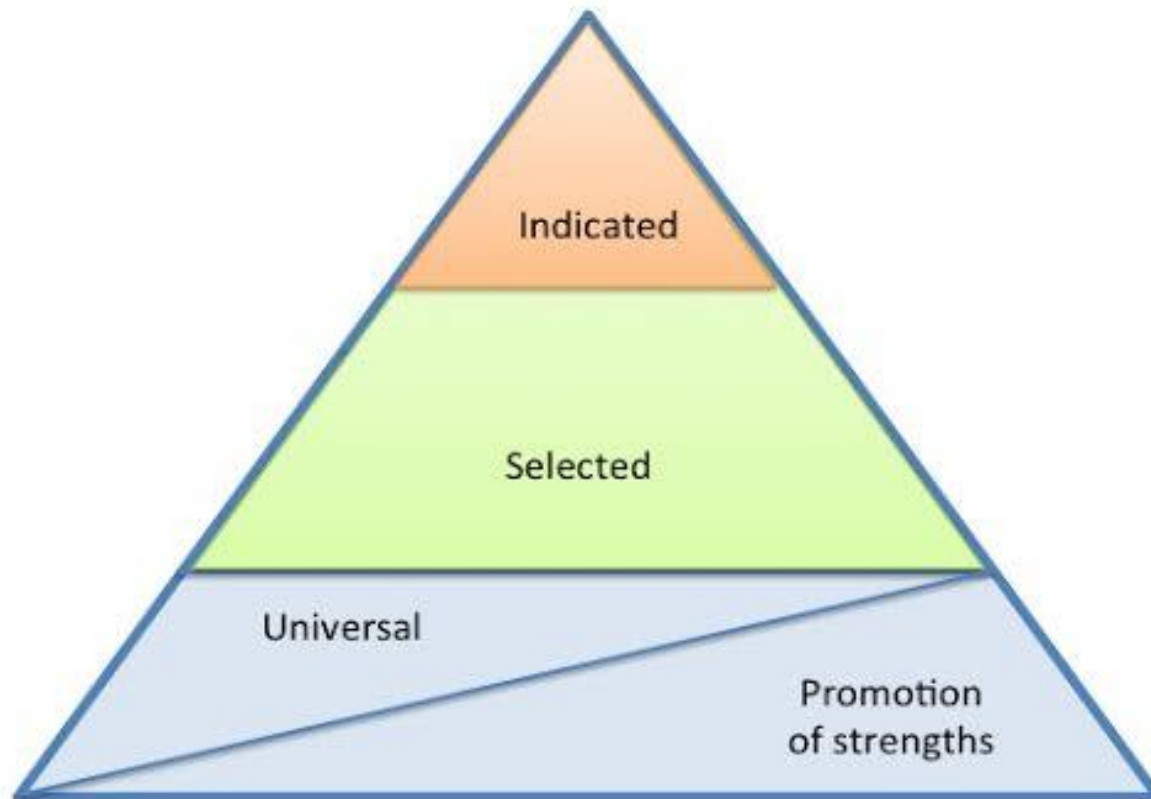
A. *Overcoming System Blockages in Communication*

- Students' voices
- Authoritarian teachers and discriminatory bullying
- Emotional supports
- Bullying
- Social and emotional education
- Sleep

B. *Overcoming System Blockages as Fragmentation, Resistance and Exclusion– linking health and education*

- Multidisciplinary teams
- Family support services and parental involvement
- Community lifelong learning centres
- Alternatives to expulsion

"Those born into poverty or on the margins of society require our extra support to realize their dreams." Novak Djokovic

All, Some (moderate risk – groups), Few
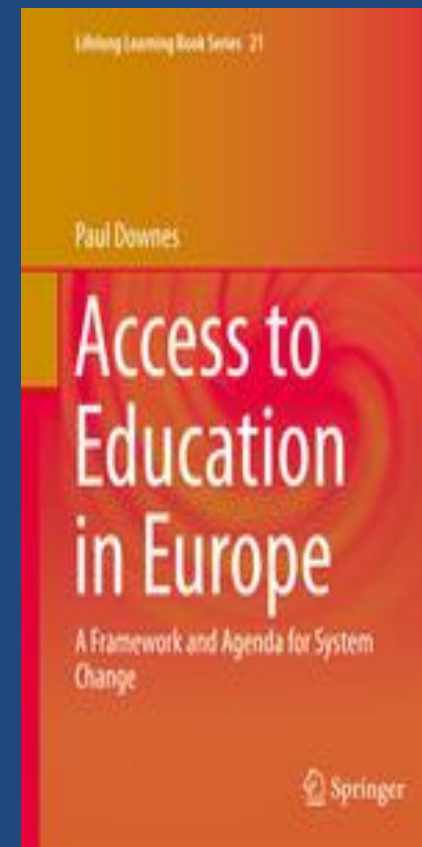(chronic need - individual –intensive)

SECTION A. OVERCOMING SYSTEM BLOCKAGES (Downes 2014) IN COMMUNICATION

Inclusive Systems as Voice – Voices of Students
Inclusive Systems as Systems of Care – Conflict Resolution Skills of Teachers

*In Iceland, Brigisdottir (2013) highlights a process of communication with those dropping out from school, whereby the students are interviewed individually by an education Ministry official to find out why they are leaving school early.

*Yet this dialogue with students arguably comes too late in the process and needs systematic expression at a range of earlier stages as part of a Europe-wide prevention focus (Downes 2013)

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Students' Voices – A Clear Gap in the EU Council and Commission Documents (2011) on Early School Leaving Prevention

EU Commission Thematic Working Group on early school leaving report (2013):

"Ensure children and young people are at the centre of all policies aimed at reducing ESL. Ensure their voices are taken into account when developing and implementing such policies."

Article 12 (1) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which declares: 'States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child'

*Children's voices largely absent from US research as they have not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Authoritarian Teaching

In Poland (CBOS 2006), a national survey of 3,085 students, 900 teachers and 554 parents, across 150 schools
-Experience of school violence from teachers towards students was reported directly as being hit or knocked over by 6% of students with 13% reporting having observed this occur for others. Teachers' use of offensive language towards students was reported by 16% as having been experienced directly individually and 28% as observed towards other students.

Pyhältö et al. (2010) Finland, 518 students, 9th grade, 6 schools: 'unjustified and authoritarian behaviour that undermined pupil's agency was considered as a source of burden, anxiety and anger'

Percentage of socio-economically disadvantaged students who agree/disagree with the following statements (PISA 2012)

Countries	I feel like I belong at school % S.E	I feel like an outsider (or left out of things at school) % S.E.
Austria	82 (1.6)	89.9 (1.1)
Belgium	63.5 (1.6)	88.4 (1.0)
Czech Republic	73.6 (1.9)	80.5 (1.6)
Denmark	69.3 (1.6)	90.3 (1.0)
Estonia	78.2 (1.8)	90.0 (1.3)
Finland	80.5 (1.1)	89.2 (1.0)
France	38 (1.7)	73.2 (1.8)
Germany	83.8 (1.6)	89.7 (1.4)
Greece	87.8 (1.2)	83.9 (1.4)
Hungary	83.5 (1.1)	85.6 (1.6)
Ireland	76.7 (1.5)	91.6 (1.0)
Italy	75 (0.9)	89.3 (0.6)
Luxembourg	71.9 (1.7)	85.9 (1.2)
Netherlands	82.4 (1.7)	89.8 (1.3)
Norway	83.5 (1.5)	89.1 (1.0)
Poland	73.2 (1.8)	88.2 (1.3)
Portugal	87.9 (1.2)	87.4 (1.5)
SERBIA	86.4 (1.2)	83.1 (1.5)
Slovak Republic	75.4 (1.8)	74.0 (2.3)
Slovenia	83.7 (1.7)	89.0 (1.2)
Spain	92.1 (0.7)	90.1 (1.0)
Sweden	74.8 (1.9)	87.0 (1.3)
United Kingdom	74.9 (1.5)	86.9 (1.1)
OECD Average	78.1 (0.3)	86.2 (0.2)

Cefai & Cooper (2010), Malta review of qualitative research: 'the autocratic and rigid behaviour management approach adopted by many teachers in their response to misbehaviour. Their blaming and punitive approach was seen in many cases as leading to an exacerbation of the problem...It looks...that perceived victimisation by teachers was more prevalent and had more impact than victimisation and bullying by peers'

A number of US longitudinal studies provide evidence that a teacher's report of a supportive relationship with a student has positive effects on elementary students' behavioral and academic adjustment (Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz, 2009; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Hughes, Cavell, & Jackson, 1999; Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999; Meehan, Hughes, & Cavell, 2003; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, Swanson, & Reiser, 2008).

Dublin, Ireland survey (Downes et al., 2006) of students in 4 primary (n=230) and 2 secondary schools (n=162):

*Approximately 74% of pupils at primary level (6th class) and 55% of students at secondary level (first year) stated that they are treated fairly by teachers in school.

*Approximately 15% of pupils at primary level (6th class) state that they are not treated fairly by teachers in school, whereas 25% of students at secondary level (first year) state that they are not treated fairly by teachers in school.

*These differences between 6th class primary and 1st year secondary are statistically significant.

In the EU Commission public consultation 'Schools for the 21st century', classroom management strategies were raised as an issue needing to be better addressed by teacher initial education.

WHO (2012) Modifications that appear to have merit include:
• establishing a caring atmosphere that promotes autonomy;
• providing positive feedback;
• not publicly humiliating students who perform poorly;
• identifying and promoting young people's special interests and skills to acknowledge that schools value the diversity they bring

A school principal from the Estonian national report:

"schools can create circumstances where unwanted students feel that they have to leave… and they do..." (Tamm & Saar 2010, in Downes 2011).

The secondary education system in Lithuania according to a school management representative:*"The attitudes towards students have to change and then they will feel better at schools. […] at the moment students are selected under the criteria „good" and „bad" and those who get the „bad" label do not want to stay at such school – they leave it"* (Taljunaite et al 2010, in Downes 2011)

No sunlight ! (Downes & Maunsell 2007)

"I can't wait to leave, I would leave tomorrow if I had the choice because I get picked on by a teacher"

"No some[teachers] think they own the school"

Downes' (2004) student centered research in Ballyfermot, Dublin, 12 focus groups and 173 questionnaire responses from secondary students:

"Have anger management courses for teachers" (female, focus group):

"The teachers shouting at you. That makes me really, really down" (Age 13, F)

"If the teachers didn't roar at you" (Age 13, F)

"Have an equal teaching system and sack ignorant snobby teachers...very harsh teachers usually make me stay out of school" (Age 16, M)

A Holistic Curricular Focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) for Bullying Prevention: Emotional Awareness and Students' Voices

A study of more than 213 programs found that if a school implements a quality SEL curriculum, they can expect better student behaviour and an 11 point increase in test scores (Durlak et al., 2011).

The gains that schools see in achievement come from a variety of factors—students feel safer and more connected to school and academic learning, children and teachers build strong relationships.

Durlak et al. (2011) highlight a range of SEL benefits indirectly related to bullying and school violence, for outcomes on SEL skills, Attitudes, Positive Social Behaviour, Conduct Problems, Emotional Distress and Academic Performance.

Durlak et al (2011) classroom teachers and other school staff effectively conducted SEL programs so these can be incorporated into routine educational activities and do not require outside personnel.

Sklad et al.'s (2012) meta-analysis of recent, school-based, universal programs concentrated on ones that promote development rather than prevent specific problems such as bullying.
-SEL programs showed statistically significant effects on social skills, antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, positive self-image, academic achievement and prosocial behaviour.

SEL - Not the same as civic or religious education !

Downes (2010) SEL across curricular areas: empathy in history, language and emotion in English, conflict role play in drama etc.

Classroom Climate and Bullying: Discriminatory Bullying

Elamé's (2013) 10 country European study regarding 'the fundamental importance' of teacher influence on discriminatory bullying
-Those immigrant and Roma students who think the teacher exhibits similar behaviour towards 'native' and immigrant and Roma children in the class are those bullied least in the last 3 months.

In contrast, 'those who declare that their teacher favours native children over immigrant/Roma students are more vulnerable to suffer some form of bullying.
Specifically less than half (48 %) of the 123 [immigrant/Roma] children [across the 10 countries] who sense bias in the teachers' attitudes towards native classmates declare to have never been subjected to violence' (Elamé, 2013).

INCLUSIVE SYSTEMS AS EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Poverty impacts on mental health, mental health impacts on early school leaving

- Mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, disruptive behaviour disorders, eating disorders, or post-traumatic stress disorder, can negatively impact on a child's school success, as well as general well-being (Kessler 2009; World Health Organization 2003)

- Children living in low-income families are especially vulnerable to mental health difficulties (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2009; US Department of Health and Human Services 2001).

Quiroga et al. (2013) 493 high-risk French-speaking adolescents living in Montreal

*depression symptoms at the beginning of secondary school are related to higher dropout mainly by being associated with pessimistic views about the likelihood to reach desired school outcomes; student negative self-beliefs are in turn related to lower self-reported academic performance and predict a higher risk of dropping out.

Quiroga et al. (2013) "interventions that target student mental health and negative self-perceptions are likely to improve dropout prevention".

Even apart from poverty related depression, emotional distress contributes to early school leaving:

A troubling number of adolescents showing serious emotional distress and depression symptoms are at risk for school failure and dropout (Quiroga, Janosz, Lyons, & Morin, 2012; Thompson, Moody, & Eggert, 1994; Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, & Sumi, 2005).

Emotional trauma (bereavement, rape, sexual abuse, bullying, family break up, sleep related problems) – supports needed to prevent early school leaving

Irish Parliament and Senate Report on early school leaving (2010): Case studies of those who left school early due to trauma factors of rape, bereavement, sexual abuse

Wider referral processes – reach withdrawn kids
-Evidence suggests that the emotional support needs of withdrawn students, who are at risk of early school leaving, may be missed by teachers compared with those students displaying and externalising problems through aggression (Doll 1996; Downes 2004).

Downes & Maunsell (2007):
"Why do you think some people are dying ? Because there is no one to talk to"
- "we should do more personal development"
- "girls slit their wrists"
- "girls take tablets and slice their wrists"
- "girls sleeping around to hurt themselves, other ways instead of slitting wrists"

Sleep aspects linked to academic achievement, mental health

Taras & Potts-Datema (2005) note that most children need at least 9 hours of restful sleep each night and conclude that:

'The preponderance of literature that recognises the detrimental effects of sleep disorders is astounding and perhaps not fully appreciated among many primary care providers, school health professionals and educators'.

Other research has shown that adolescents require at least 8.5 hours of sleep per night and more appropriately 9.25 hours of sleep (Carskadon et al., 1980). A review by Blunden et al (2001) of 13 articles demonstrated that reduced attention, memory, intelligence and increased problematic behaviour resulted from sleep-related obstructive breathing. Other international studies have shown a relationship between insufficient sleep and lowered academic performance (Allen, 1992; Kowalski & Allen, 1995; Schuller, 1994; Wolfson & Carskadon, 1996, 1998).

"At what time do you usually go to sleep on a weekday?" (Downes & Maunsell, 2007)	Before Midnight	Midnight	After midnight	Varies/NA
Primary School A %	42%	16%	---	42%
School B %	54%	16%	15%	15%
School C %	78%	9%	6%	7%
School D %	83%	6%	---	11%
School E %	40%	26%	---	34%
School F %	60%	8%	---	32%
School G %	81%	15%	---	4%

Common system supports needed for bullying and early school leaving prevention (Downes & Cefai 2016)

School Climate, Teasing, Bullying
Cornell et al. (2013)

A basic conclusion from our study is that the Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying in high schools deserves serious consideration by educators in addressing the problem of dropout. In a sample of 276 high schools, the level of teasing and bullying reported by both ninth-grade students and teachers was predictive of cumulative dropout counts over 4 years after the cohort reached 12th grade.

Cornell et al. (2013) "Because educators are often concerned about the impact of student poverty and academic capability on dropout rates in their schools, these findings suggest that a climate of teasing and bullying in the school also deserves consideration. Notably, the increased dropout count that was associated with Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying was quite similar to the increases that were associated with FRPM [i.e., poverty] and academic failure".

Cornell et al. (2013) note that dropout programs often focus too narrowly on changes in individual students, without considering broader peer and school influences.

SECTION B. OVERCOMING SYSTEM BLOCKAGE: FRAGMENTATION

Inclusive Systems as Systems of Care – Multidisciplinary Teams in and around Schools

From Multiple Agencies to Cohesive Multidisciplinary Teams for Early School Leaving Prevention

**-Emotional support
-Outreach family support
-Speech and language**
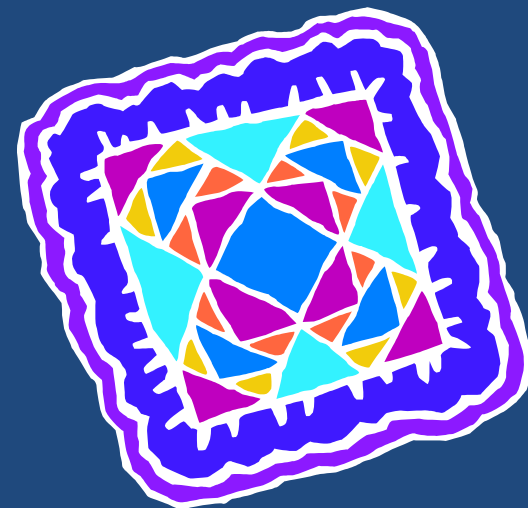
OUTREACH FAMILY SUPPORT FOR CHILD'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AS PART OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM

The Child Welfare Worker will regularly call to the child's home to
- support the parent implement morning time routines,
- enable the breakfast, uniform and schoolbag preparation,
- ensure the child gets to school on time
- support the parent to be firm and follow through when a child is school refusing.

Work is also carried out with the parents to support them with night-time routines i.e. homework and bedtimes. The Child Welfare Worker will often transport the child to school or arrange for the child to take the school bus when available.

Familiscope/Familibase, Ballyfermot, Dublin

OVERCOMING SYSTEM BLOCKAGE: FRAGMENTATION
Anticipating Territoriality and 'Not Not Doing' Services

Territories

- Local rivalries across municipalities and schools an obstacle to sharing of good practice
- Local rivalries across agencies especially in a recession – to claim resources and credit for gains
- Tensions between schools and community, including community professionals
- Physical location of community service needs to be in a neutral community space (Downes & Maunsell 2007)
- If possible, no more than two agencies to limit fragmentation and provide shared goals focus – restructure agencies for greater focus (Downes 2013b)
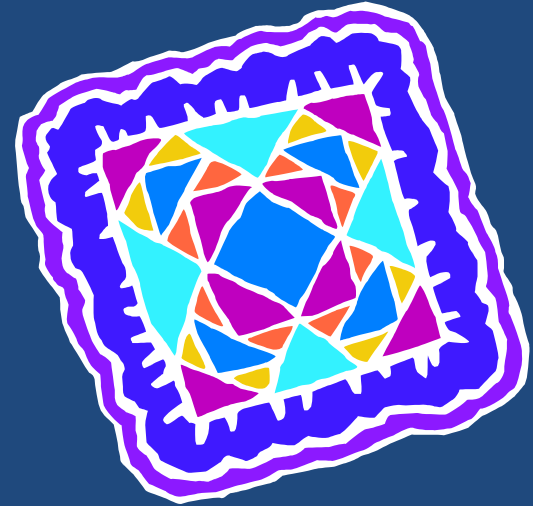
The *Alliances for Inclusion* report (Edwards & Downes 2013) 16 examples from 10 European countries.

-A policy focus is needed to go beyond multiple agencies -Need to minimise fragmentation across diverse services 'passing on bits of the child' and family (Edwards & Downes 2013)

-the multi-faceted nature of risk requires a multi-faceted response that needs to go beyond referrals to disparate services resulting in this 'passing on bits of the child'

- For genuine interprofessional collaboration for early school leaving prevention, for example, between schools and multidisciplinary teams of outreach care workers, therapists/counsellors, nurses, speech and language therapists, social workers, occupational therapists, policy-led co-location is not sufficient. Efforts are needed to support inter-professional collaborations and overcome resistance.

Need to focus on direct delivery and to minimise 'committee sitting' (Downes 2013a)

Prevention and early intervention focus
• To engage directly with problems related to early school leaving, for example, nonattendance, trauma, bullying, mental health difficulties, language development, parental support, sleep deficits, substance misuse, suspension/expulsion, conflict with teachers
• Each family has one 'lead professional' to link them with others (Edwards & Downes 2013a)
 *Continuum of interventions – all, some, intensive individual

B. OVERCOMING SYSTEM BLOCKAGE: RESISTANCE

Inclusive Systems as Voice – Voices of Parents in Response to Students

Inclusive Systems as Voice – Promoting Democratic School Culture for ESL Prevention

System Blockage as Resistance – Parental Involvement

In a Swedish context, Bouakaz & Persson (2007) ask 'do the teachers' distrust parents ?'

the 'apparent' official organization
and the 'below the surface'
unofficial organisation (Scholtes
1998).

Resistance as it is perceived as peripheral to main job (PREVENT 2014) – put parental involvement in teachers' contracts and promotional posts (O'Reilly 2012)

Parental involvement in school policy making:

- beyond reliance mainly on formalistic parents council approaches for engaging marginalised parents
-beyond discussion in the abstract (Downes 2014, PREVENT project across 10 European cities)

*For issues that matter to students and parents
* That require school system change (including to hierarchy of communication)
*Issues of conflict, specific problems with school actors, policies bullying, negative interactions with individual teacher, behavioural difficulties of student, learning problems of student, questioning of quality of teaching instruction

Communicative processes need to be put in place in municipalities to address these conflicts – these are system issues and not simply individual parent concerns

Parental Involvement (Downes 2014a): Structural Indicator - Availability of School Site After School Hours for Lifelong Learning Classes for Parents

Country	On a scale of 1-3 where 3 means at least 80% of schools in your municipality open their doors after school hours for lifelong learning classes and 2 means at least 30% of schools do so and 1 means less than 30% of schools do so – which number best describes the situation in your municipality?
The Hague	3
Gijon	3
Tallinn	2
Stockholm	2
Antwerp	1
Usti	1
Munich	1
Nantes	1
Sofia	1

OVERCOMING SYSTEM BLOCKAGE: STRUCTURES OF EXCLUSION
Alternatives to Suspension/Expulsion to Stop Diametrically Opposing Strategic Approaches

The Irish post-primary figure of 5% for suspension, applied to the total population of 332,407 students equates to well over 16,000 students suspended from post-primary schools in 2005/6 (ERC/NEWB 2010).

An English study by Rennison *et al.*, (2005) found that young people in the NEET [Not in Education, Employment or Training] group were over three times more likely previously to have been excluded from school than young people overall.

Alternatives to expulsion in place (Yes/No)

Teacher Professional Development available for conflict resolution skills (Yes/No)

Teacher Professional Development mandatory for conflict resolution skills (Yes/No)

Teacher Preservice modules on conflict resolution skills compulsory (Yes/No)

Qualified emotional counselling support services available to students (Yes/No)

Multidisciplinary teams linked with schools to engage with students with complex needs at high risk of early school leaving, including with their families (Yes/No)

Open-ended surveys of students of different ages on the experiences of school take place on a regular basis organised through an agency independent of the school (Yes/No)

Opportunities for parents to respond individually and in groups to the findings of the student surveys as part of input to school policy (Yes/No)

Clear role of municipality or other local agency to mediate dialogue between school and parents on policy issues (Yes/No)

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