Are Shared Education Networks Social?

Gareth Robinson, School of Education, Queen's University Belfast

Supervisors: Prof. Tony Gallagher, Prof. Joanne Hughes, Dr. Helen McAneney
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Presentation Overview

What is Shared Education?
Existing Research on Shared Education
The Current Study
The Contested Space Network
Network Properties
The Staff Members' Voice
Are Shared Education Networks Social?
What is Shared Education?

The Ministerial Advisory Group Report endorsed a broad definition of Shared Education:

*Shared Education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration* with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion. *(2013: xii)*

Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organisations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes: a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards. *Mattessich & Monsey (1992).*
What is Shared Education?

The Ministerial Advisory Group Report on Shared Education:

**Shared Education involves two or more educational institutions from different sectors working together to deliver educational benefits to learners.** It involves sharing of resources, and promoting equality, diversity and identity, respect for diversity and common values.

Collaboration is a defined relationship between organisations to build a relationship including mutual relationships and strategy to structure and share authority, opportunity and accountability.
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Existing Research on Shared Education

- Enhanced sharing of expertise among teachers 1.
- Teachers express preservative sentiments about the links developed through Shared Education 1.
- Catholic and Protestant teachers are motivated to collaborate to develop a more broadly based curriculum for pupils. 2.
- Teachers tend to avoid discussing their differences in mixed-faith contexts, argued that this may have the potential to constrain collaborative relations. 2.

Assumptions about staff members
- Wider access to resources
- Build positive relationships between schools
- Promote knowledge sharing across the sectors

References
1. Sharing education through schools working together (Gallagher, Stewart, Walker, Baker, & Lockhart, 2010).
Pupil Centric!
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- Wider access to resources
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Current Study

Rationale

The social tapestry of relationships between my colleagues and I will determine the pupils' outcomes and the effectiveness of implementing shared education between the schools...

Methodology

Questionnaire
- Outline of the systematic staff population
- National curriculum action partnership
  - Pre-Forth (school)
- Saskatchewan's framework
- Focus on collaborative interaction
  - Outlining processes
  - Desktop and telephone hotline
  - Meeting socially in informal settings
  - Social media in collaborative settings
  - Social media in collaborative settings

Interviews
- Non-structured
- Network & topics as prompts
- Multiple interview participants

Social Network Analysis
+ Thematic Analysis

Theoretical Framework

Social Network Theory

Collaboration Theory

Existing framework of Shared Education

Networks:
Human networks arise as a result of acts by individuals and organisations. The networks created by these acts in turn produce networks that have consequences for individuals and social organisations. Social networks evolve from individuals interacting with one another but produce extended structures that they had not imagined and in fact cannot see. (Kadushin, 2012. P 11)

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Theoretical Framework

- Social Network Theory
- Collaboration Theory
- Existing framework of Shared Education
Methodology

Questionnaire
- Census of the partnership's staff population
  - The Foyle Contested Space partnership (n=5 Primary Schools)
- Sociometric instrument
- Four collaborative interactions:
  - Exchanging resources
  - Seeking professional knowledge
  - Discussing personal matters
  - Meeting socially in informal settings
- Total of n=62 responses (n=16 missing)

Interviews
- Semi-Structured
- Network graphs used as prompts
- n=16 interview participants

Social Network Analysis

Thematic Analysis
Questionnaire

- Census of the partnership's staff population
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- Sociometric instrument
- Four collaborative interactions:
  - Exchanging resources
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  - Meeting socially in informal settings
- Total of n=82 responses (n=15 missing)
Interviews

- Semi-Structured
- Network graphs used as prompts
- n=16 interview participants
Social Network Analysis

+ 

Thematic Analysis
Current Study

Rationale

The social tapestry of relationships between my colleagues and I will determine the pupils' outcomes and the effectiveness of implementing shared education between the schools...

Methodology

Questionnaire
- Contextual and demographic staff population
- Impact of the shared education partnership
- Schools' involvement
- Questionnaire statements
- Four different interactions
- Emotionally engaged
- Understanding and appreciation
- Developing relationships
- Social network analysis
- Social media usage (e.g., Facebook)

Interviews
- Network diagrams
- Network graphs as prompts
- Multiple interview participants

Social Network Analysis + Thematic Analysis

The Contested Space Network

(n=97)
Network Properties

Asymmetrical Network Structure

School competition

School size

Actor roles

Reciprocity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whole Network (n=87)</th>
<th>Direct Involvement Only (n=44)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arc Reciprocity</td>
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Density of Social Relations by School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School ID</th>
<th>Social Meets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (n=5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (n=10)</td>
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<tr>
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Comparison of Social Interactions by Involvement in Shared Education

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"We keep in touch, yeah. We would text quite often, just about how things are going and maybe nothing about Contested Space project but just about life in general." - Elaine, Controlled Teacher

"We just clicked straight off, y'know. We just clicked straight off and made sure that we went out socialising at night as well as during the day, we really did. I regard myself as a very open minded person but it has probably even astounded me how close I feel to David and John and how comfortable I feel in their schools and with their staff as a result of this." - Janet, Maintained Principal

"...a massive number of my staff as well here are in their forties, we would've lived through the Troubles in the seventies. And while I said to you not that many of them are from the local area a few are and they've been in this school when we've lost children to the Troubles. We had a child hit with a rubber bullet, a number of children in this school were affected by the Troubles—home was blown up, stepped on a bomb—they've lived through all of that." Rosaleen, Maintained Principal
Are Shared Education Networks Social?

A higher number of staff members reported shared social interactions and discussion of personal matters, indicating an increase in social outcomes for those directly involved.

Levels of reciprocity within the network suggest that motivations for prosocial behaviour may not be altruistic.

Staff members take ownership and control of certain aspects of activity, empowering them as practitioners.

Direct involvement in Shared Education enhances institutional relationships between Controlled and Maintained schools.

Shared Education contributes to a more cohesive cross-sectional community of staff members.
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Questions

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