

QQI CONFERENCE

Sharing Smart Approaches to Optimising Quality

SNMCI

Clash of the Titans

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Policy Context

- Early Years sector 'light' regulation;
- No qualification standards requirement for practitioners;
- 2013 RTE Breach of Trust programme
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) response:
 - Increased regulation, including qualification standards;
 - Establishment of TUSLA (Child and Family Agency)

Chaos in the Ether.....

- SNMCI
 - HETAC IR process;
 - Intensive rebuilding, academically and organisationally;
- QQI
 - Amalgamation processes;
 - Policy development;
- DCYA
 - Funding linked to regulatory compliance;
 - Adjudicating on variety of qualifications

And then the practitioner.....

Practice development – Síolta/
Aistear etc



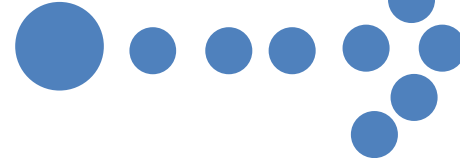
Society expectations
– costs etc



Intrinsic motivations –
vocation,



Practitioner



Who is
listening to
me?



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Development of SNMCI Response

- Responsibility to holders of legacy SNMCI awards (pre NCEA 1994) and ACCS Statement Holders;
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy required shift from certified learning (*in Montessori*) to all forms of prior learning;
- “Mind the Gap”
 - Legacy Awards more than 20 years old;
 - 2013 Level 7 Award;
 - Academic integrity
- Time driven by regulations;
- Capacity within organisation

Level 7 –v- Legacy Awards

PLO	SN (London)	Experience *	Gaps
PLO1	Y	Y	
PLO2	Y but...	Y but...	Emergent Curriculum, birth – 3 years
PLO3		Y but...	Primary School Curriculum (PSC)
PLO4	Y but...	Y but...	PSC, Special Education, Gaeilge
PLO5	Y but...	Y but...	Psychology (2 & 3), Sociology (2 & 3)
PLO6	Nutrition etc	Nutrition etc	ECEC Policy, Child Protection etc
PLO7	Y	Y	
PLO8	Y	Y	ICT Skills
PLO9	Y but...	Y but...	CPD
PLO10			Research methods and practice

Engagement Process

- Meeting with potential applicants:
 - Explanation of revised RPL policy;
 - Demands of the programme;
 - How to apply etc;
- But...
 - Evident substantial change required in approach;
 - Barriers existed – language of higher education, communicating academic rigour of higher education etc;
- Obligation of SNMCI to balance ‘professional distance’ with support and guidance;

Profile of the Cohort - 1

Experience in Early Years Settings



Age of Learner



Profile of the Cohort - 2

Employment Status in Early Years Settings



Highest Education Qualification of Learner



Back to the Starting Line

- How to address the 'Gap'
 - SNMCI scanned the EY Education landscape of awards;
 - Profiled the 'typical' EY practitioner in terms of possible experiential learning;
 - Developed two sets of template
 - each module requiring evidence;
 - Experiential Statements;
 - Model Portfolios;
- As well as
 - 'Hands on' session of portfolio preparation;
 - Access to telephone support;

Was SNMCI Helpful	
YES	NO
67%	33%

Evaluation Process

- Each application evaluated by RPL Committee, with final decision approved by Academic Committee;
- Additional information sought on two further applications;
- Interview process to prepare applicants;

Programme Delivery

- 16 learners in a dedicated group;
- Two intensive weeks – August and Easter, targeted at:
 - ICT, including use of Moodle;
 - Academic writing;
 - Specifically demanding academic modules;
- Eighteen week-end delivery (Friday/ Saturday)
- Dedicated “go-to” academic leader;
- Reaction from lecturers – very committed, collegiate and supportive group of learners;

Learners' Experience

- All felt comfortable engaging with lecturing staff;
- 92% agreed that time of delivery was appropriate;
- 92% found the first assignment difficult but this fell to 42% at the final assignment;
- All preferred group work;
- 75% found using Moodle difficult;
- All found academic books tough to understand;
- 83% said they changed their approach to everyday EY practice;
- 42% planned to continue with further study

Learners' Comments

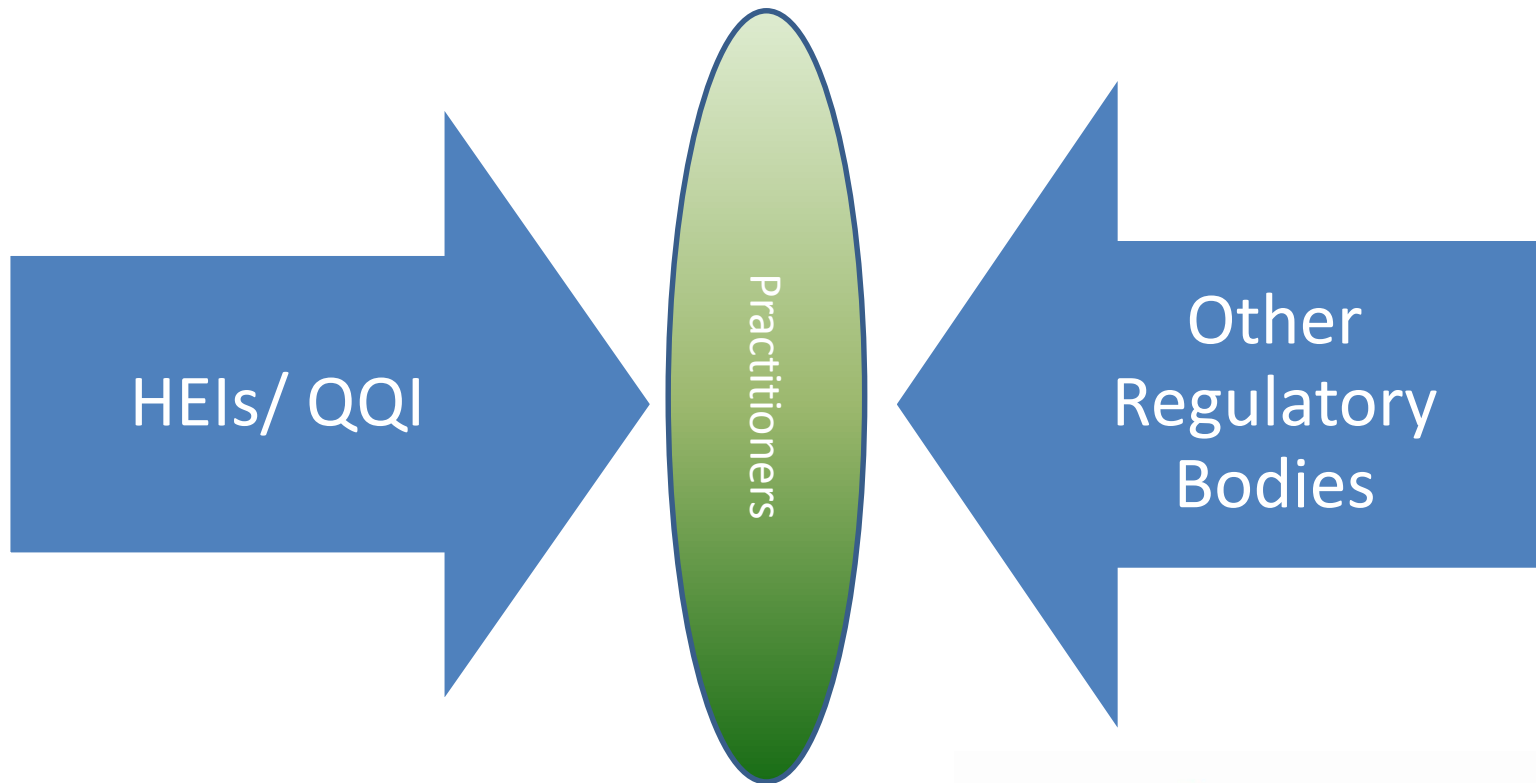
"I enjoyed the learning process in particular Psychology and Sociology, and at some stage would consider further studies in these areas. I have developed a more in-depth Learning Support Policy for my school, and have become more aware of monitoring procedures, parental involvement, and record keeping." (TD)

"This course has changed me both personally and professionally. On a personal level I am so proud of myself and my achievements while on the course. Professionally I have discovered that, in many areas, I was stuck in a rut and complying with certain criteria on paper only – not necessarily understanding the importance behind it. Having been asked to analyse practices over the duration of the course, and been introduced to many new ideas, I have made, and will continue to make improvements in my daily practices benefitting all." (MB)

At the end of the day...

- Learners
 - Genuinely transformative, from the starting point of “DCYA compliance” to endpoint of “reflective EY practitioners”;
- SNMCI
 - Allow more time and support to application stage;
 - Increase support for Moodle and wider learning supports;
 - Harness the experience of exceptionally committed and focussed learners and bring into wider learner body;
 - Do not be afraid of stretching and learning from other HEIs;
- HE Institutions
 - Must publicise RPL more;
 - Break down the language barrier of HE;

And so, Who are the Titans?



Final thoughts....

- If you join us, you are about to embark on emotional roller-coaster
 - Nervous;
 - Questioning;
 - Cautious;
 - Exposed
 - Excitement;
 - Pride;
 - Achievement;
 - Renewal
- SNMCI is here to help you achieve your goal



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