

the development of a multi-agency approach in which there is a shift away from a ‘culpability culture’ to a common agenda. Moreover, student needs must be placed at the centre of the education system, a system which needs to move away from tackling educational disadvantage to promoting inclusion of all students within the education system.

Through the data analysis the study demonstrates that disaffection and early school leaving are significant issues within the Irish education system. Disaffection as outlined within the data analysis, while complex in its structure, is identifiable among students through characteristics such as aggressive behaviour, disrupted attendance, poor relationships with teachers, lack of interest and non-engagement in academic processes.

The research also established the existence of two original factors which are contributing to the issue of disaffection. The first is tension within the education system. The following contribute to such tension: clash of cultures and ‘power-control’ struggle among teachers and students; ‘power-control’ struggle between disadvantaged schools and non-disadvantaged schools; ‘power-control’ struggle between schools and the Department of Education and Science; and a propensity within policy towards addressing educational disadvantage rather than promoting inclusive education. The second factor is a ‘culpability culture’ among those who contribute to disaffection and the issue of early school leaving. Education policy makers, students and schools have created a culture of culpability, a culture in which each places blame on another for the issue of disaffection.

8. References

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