

Warner, Ann, 1995, *The Home School Community liaison Scheme: Partnership to combat disadvantage*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The purpose of the study is to assess, through a critical examination of the literature, the viability of Home/School/Community 'partnership' as a strategy to combat educational disadvantage with particular emphasis on the rationale and research basis of the current Irish Home/School/Community liaison scheme. The challenge such a thrust poses for school management and practice is also considered.

Chapter One traces the development of Home/School/Community relations in the context of disadvantage with emphasis on key developments in Britain and Ireland since World War 2. The importance of the Plowden Report in shaping attitudes and strategies which colour today's thinking and approaches is noted.

Chapter Two considers conflicting theories on the nature of educational disadvantage and analyses the literature pertaining to poverty, parental attitude and parental aspiration as determinants of educational success. Emphasis is placed on studies that counter the Plowden assumption that attitudes are separable from circumstances, suggesting rather that they, and aspiration may be shaped by circumstances.

Chapter Three considers changing paradigms in Home/School/Community relationships since the Plowden Report. Studies on parents as educators and on collaboration between teachers and parents are presented, as is the theory of 'social capital' as a determinant of educational success. The strategy of home visiting is examined and the key concepts of Empowerment and Partnership analysed. Chapter Four considers school practices, as identified in the literature that contribute to educational disadvantage. The challenge that the new thrust poses for the school is assessed and the literature analysed. Counter-views are presented and the limitations and ethics of such a scheme discussed. Research findings on the effects of the new market thrust in education on disadvantaged families are presented.

Chapter Five consists of an overview of the dissertation, conclusions and some recommendations for future research. A small sampling of attitudes and practice 'on the ground' is incorporated into the wider evaluation based on the analysis of the literature.