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AUTUMN
2017

Education and Training Boards Ireland

**HIGHLIGHTING ERASMUS+
WORK PLACEMENTS**

**EDISON Entrepreneurial
Education** in Cork

**NCGE's Whole School
Guidance Framework**

**Ireland's First Apple
Distinguished School**



etbi

Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Boird Oideachais agus
Ollúna Éireann*

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Editorial

To say there has been a seismic shift in the State's educational planning process over the past twenty years is certainly not an exaggeration. There has been phenomenal expansion and growth in educational strategic planning, most of which has occurred over the past five years.

Strategies and plans, goals and targets, accountability and outcomes: together they define the operational context of the education and training sector for which both the Minister for Education and Skills and his Department have overall responsibility.

In 2016, the *Programme for a Partnership Government* set out the government's commitments and priorities, including the area of education and training. The subsequent *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019*, with annual and quarterly updates, has set out a broad range of targeted priorities to be achieved in the education and training sector. The Action Plan sets out an operational framework with targets to be achieved and this is to be welcomed.

In recent years, second level schools have been subject to strategic oversight, reviews and reform. The *DEIS Plan 2017* follows the recent *Review of the DEIS programme*; the new framework for Junior Cycle is being embedded in schools since 2015; new *School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020* have been issued; *Looking at our Schools 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools* provides definable standards for schools regarding teaching and learning and leadership and management.

Impacting on both schools and ETBs are the *Action Plan for Jobs and Pathways to Work*. Further education is under scrutiny, with the aptly named *Strategic Review of Further Education in Ireland*. and for further education services we have *Best Practice in Entrepreneurship Education and Training in the Further Education and Training Sector* (November 2016).

Also in the area of further education and training, the *SOLAS FET Strategy 2014-2019* sets investment priorities and a framework for the development of a strong FET sector. *Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025* sets a target, among others, of providing 50,000 apprenticeship and traineeship places between 2016 and 2020, while the *Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020* aims to grow work-based learning over the coming five years, highlighting the apprenticeship and traineeship modes of learning and skills development as viable, attractive career options; and yes, there is also an *Apprenticeship Implementation Plan*.

This list is not exhaustive, but it certainly gives testament to my

initial claim that the pace of planning and reform in education and training has been phenomenal in recent years.

ETBI's sixteen Education and Training Boards have also been rationalised, amalgamating the original 33 VECs and the Training Division of the former FÁS since 2013, while new operational and staffing structures have been implemented in the recent past. This process is ongoing and more is to be done to ensure ETBs can cope with newly defined roles and responsibilities.

Strategies and plans, goals and targets, accountability and outcomes: together they define the operational context of the education and training sector

Coping with such rapid and almost overwhelming change has been challenging for Ireland's schools and training services. Yet such rapid evolution is essential if we are to not only match developments in other EU countries, but also achieve Minister Bruton's declared goal of the best education system in Europe by 2026. Indeed, this challenge by Minister Bruton is complemented by his predecessor Ruairí Quinn's 2011 ambition to establish a world class further education and training system in Ireland.

So, there has been no shortage of ambition and planning, while the focus on accountability, transparency, outcomes and outputs is now at an unprecedented level.

The objective of such reform is to ensure that the students in Ireland's schools and the clients of Ireland's education and training services have the best possible educational experiences to equip them for a world of rapid change and evolution.

Leaders, teachers and trainers in our schools and educational services are to be commended for their capacity to meet and take on this significant challenge of change. These are the people who will realise the ambition to achieve the "best education system in Europe" that has now been set as a national target.

Planning needs both partnership and perseverance at the implementation stage. But implementation needs to be resourced with targeted investment, including staffing. The education and training sector can, and will, deliver on the admirable vision of "best in Europe", but only if resources are put in place to match the ambition.

Therein lies the core challenge.

Michael Moriarty, General Secretary

ETBI Annual Conference 2017



Annual Conference took place this year in Kilkenny on 20th and 21st September 2017. The Annual Conference is the one occasion in the year when delegates from all of Ireland's sixteen Education and Training Boards come together to address topical issues, with expert analysis and input. Delegates include members of the ETB boards and professional staff from the ETBs' head office, schools, colleges and training centres. Guests comprise top-level officers from the Department of Education and

Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and representatives of other education stakeholders, as well as business and community interests. The ETBI Conference is also the first education conference of the new academic year, and can be a reality check on current issues in the education sector.

Four years on from their establishment in 2013, the ETBs have transitioned from 33 standalone Vocational Education Committees to 16 local education

and training authorities with a wide-ranging remit from primary to second level to further education, including apprenticeships and traineeships. The theme of this year's Conference, **"One Vision, One Voice – A Shared Experience"**, focused on the future of, and issues around the management of change in the ETBs.

On the first day of Conference, ETBI General Secretary Michael Moriarty addressed delegates on recent



developments and future plans regarding **multi-Belief Community National Schools (CNS)**.

Day One also featured a panel discussion on the Conference theme, **One Vision, One Voice – A Shared Experience**, in which the future potential of the ETBs was teased out. The panel included Markita Mulvey, Principal of Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training (Kilkenny & Carlow ETB), David Leahy, Chief Executive of Galway & Roscommon ETB, Cllr Jim Finucane, Chairperson of Kerry ETB, Dr Karina Daly, Director of Organisation Support & Development in Waterford & Wexford ETB, and Clodagh Geraghty, Lecturer in Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology.

Day Two's sessions addressed a variety

of topics of interest to delegates and guests.

Professor Tony Fahey, Professor Emeritus, UCD, enlightened the audience on what **the outcomes of Census 2016** revealed about changing Ireland and how ETBs could best respond to the challenges thrown up by these changes. Caroline Martin, Chief Psychologist, City of Dublin ETB Psychological Services, and Joan Russell, ETBI Director of Schools Support Services, looked at how **driving change has always been the hallmark of the ETB sector**, and considered what that currently meant for ETBs and what it might mean in the future.

In parallel sessions, Des Murphy, ETBI Training Function Support Officer, looked at new directions for **apprenticeships**

and traineeships; Rosaleen Molloy, National Director of Music Generation, discussed a pioneering approach to establishing a **national infrastructure for performance music education** in Ireland; and Dr Patricia Kieran, Lecturer at Mary Immaculate College, UL, reflected on **an innovative approach to religious education** in the ETB-run Community National Schools (CNS).

In the afternoon, the issue of **skills as the driver of economic growth** was examined by a panel comprised of Owen O'Donnell, Director of Further Education & Training at Kerry ETB, Philip Sheridan, Regional Business Manager of City & Guilds, Paul Sweetman, Director of Technology Ireland, and Karen Hennessy, Chief Executive of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland. This was followed by



a discussion on **corporate governance** issues, which was chaired by Seán Fleming TD, Chair of the Dáil Public Accounts Committee, with contributions from Paul Turpin, Governance Specialist and Associate of the Institute of Public Administration, and Joe O'Toole, former Independent Senator, author and former trade union leader.

The Conference concluded with the Presidential and Ministerial addresses, delivered to a packed audience of delegates and guests.

In a wide-ranging speech, **Pat Gilmore, President of ETBI**, covered issues such as school admission policies, the review of the DEIS scheme, the need to establish a comprehensive guidance structure in schools, the focussing of

initiatives on STEM and languages, the ethos of schools as well as religious and moral education, league tables, Community National Schools (CNS), investment in skills enhancement, and promoting the take-up of apprenticeships and traineeships. He made a special appeal to the Minister to ensure the continued viability of Ireland's stand-alone small schools and island schools through the provision of specific additional, on-going, ring-fenced funding. As outgoing President, Mr Gilmore also paid tribute to the twenty years of astute stewardship of the development of ETBI and its predecessor IVEA by General Secretary Michael Moriarty.

When **Minister for Education and Skills Richard Bruton TD** took the stage, he expressed confidence in the work of the

ETBs and ETBI. He and his Department, he said, recognised and appreciated their support, and looked forward to continuing their collaboration with them in implementing many of the targets and actions aimed at achieving the goals set out in the *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019* and the *Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020*. He assured listeners that his Department would be looking into many of the issues raised by Mr Gilmore, and committed his Department to working with the ETBs to ensure that they would be able to fulfil their remit in the coming year.

Videos, speeches and presentations made at the 2017 Conference are available to view or download from the ETBI website: www.etbi.ie/annualconference2017/.



Music Generation raises the baton on Phase 2

Nine new areas of Ireland selected for participation in its second phase of funding

By Aoife Lucey, Communications and Marketing Manager

Music Generation has announced the new areas of Ireland that will receive philanthropic funding from U2 and The Ireland Funds to create increased access to music tuition for children and young people in their local area. Music Generation, Ireland's national music education programme, was initiated by Music Network in 2010, and is co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds, the Department of Education and Skills and local Music Education Partnerships.

Following an open call for applications

from ETBs and Local Authorities earlier this year, the nine new areas selected for participation are: Cavan/Monaghan; Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown; Galway City; Galway County; Roscommon; Kilkenny; Leitrim; Waterford and Wexford.

The programmes will be managed and delivered in each area by local Music Education Partnerships (MEPs). The Lead Partner organisations of these new MEPs include Cavan and Monaghan ETB, Galway and Roscommon ETB, Kilkenny and Carlow ETB, Wexford and Waterford ETB, and Mayo, Sligo and

Leitrim ETB. In each instance the MEPs will collaborate with a wide range of partners, including local authorities, music providers, youth and community groups, education institutes and festivals, among others, in the successful delivery of Music Generation within their local areas. The new MEPs will be established on a phased basis over the next five years, and it is anticipated that the new programmes will create substantial employment opportunities for musicians in each area, as well as offering access to high-quality, subsidised vocal and instrumental tuition to thousands of

children and young people who would otherwise not have the choice of access or the chance to participate.

Operating on a 50/50 matched funding basis, the new MEPs will receive an investment of €5m raised by U2 and The Ireland Funds, and will also generate a further combined €5m in local investment over the next five years.

Speaking on the announcement of the Phase 2 expansion, U2's The Edge said: *'This is a really important moment for Music Generation. Our ambition is for every child and young person in Ireland to have access to tuition, and this next phase of expansion brings us ever closer. Huge thanks to both the Government and The Ireland Funds for their ongoing commitment to a programme of which we, as a band, are immensely proud.'*

Expansion of the programme into these nine new areas has been made possible through the ongoing support of U2 and The Ireland Funds, who announced further donations to Music Generation in July this year to establish the programme's next phase. Moreover, 'Phase 2' has been assured of long-term sustainability through a further commitment by the Department of Education and Skills to co-fund the new areas into the future, together with Local Music Education Partnerships.

'I would like to congratulate the new Music Education Partnerships and the various individuals, groups and Statutory Agencies that have come together to support the development of the Music Generation programme within their local areas', said Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton TD. 'My Department wholeheartedly believes in the importance of facilitating access to music for children and young people, which unlocks their creativity and can help them reach their potential in all areas of their education. Through our ongoing annual €2.5m funding of Music Generation's first phase, and our commitment to co-funding the nine



it is anticipated that the new programmes will create substantial employment opportunities for musicians in each area, as well as offering access to high-quality, subsidised vocal and instrumental tuition to thousands of children and young people

new areas into the future, we will work together with all partners to ensure the continued success of this important non-mainstream music education programme.'

Kieran McLoughlin, Worldwide President and CEO, The Ireland Funds, said: *'It is wonderful to see the ongoing success of this pioneering programme, which has already had a remarkable impact on the communities in which it operates. We are delighted to be working with U2 and the Department of Education and Skills on this great Public-Philanthropic Partnership to bring the benefits of musical education to thousands of young Irish people.'*

Already, Music Generation creates access to high-quality, subsidised music tuition for more than 41,000 children and young people annually in Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Laois, Limerick City, Louth, Mayo, Offaly/Westmeath, Sligo, South Dublin and Wicklow. This first phase of the programme was seed-funded through philanthropic donations by U2

and The Ireland Funds in 2009, and is now sustainably co-funded on a 50/50 basis by the Department of Education and Skills and the local Music Education Partnerships.

National Director of Music Generation, Rosaleen Molloy, commented on the significance of this announcement: *'This is another landmark moment for Music Generation, and we are thrilled to announce our next phase of development. We would like to acknowledge the ambition and the vision of these new Music Education Partnerships in seeking truly transformative outcomes for the children and young people with whom they will engage. We look forward to working with them to support their plans for development, building upon the extraordinary success of Music Generation's story so far.'*





(L-R:) Linda Darbey, NCGE, Jennifer Mc Kenzie, Director of NCGE, Beatrice Dooley, Vice President IGC, Clive Byrne, Director NAPD, Eamonn Moran, DES

A Whole School Guidance Framework

NCGE publishes document on the role of guidance counsellors in schools



By David Cullen, Communications Officer, NCGE

In September, Minister for Education and Skills Richard Bruton TD launched the National Centre for Guidance in Education's (NCGE) **Whole School Guidance Framework**. This document highlights the key role of the guidance counsellor in schools, working with other school staff, in the delivery and planning of guidance to students. A copy of the document has been issued to every post primary school in the country.

Welcoming the publication of the Framework, Minister Bruton said, *"This framework is the product of continuing work in the area of school guidance undertaken by my Department. The Action Plan for Education 2017, launched in February, committed to finalising the Framework by the end of this year. This delivery is therefore ahead of schedule, and highlights the importance and urgency of developing*

a whole school approach for guidance delivery in Irish education. I would like to thank the NCGE and the relevant consultative bodies for their work in producing the Framework which I hope will assist schools in developing and updating their guidance plans."

The Framework was developed over a three-year timeframe and was informed by similar frameworks

published internationally. It follows a public consultation process from late 2016, ministerial review, and receipt of commentary from other stakeholders, including employer organisations. In September and October 2017, NCGE met with ETBI, ETB Schools Directors and the School Principals Forum regarding the implementation of this Framework.

Areas of learning for students highlighted in the framework include:

- Developing Myself
- Developing My Learning
- Developing My Career Path

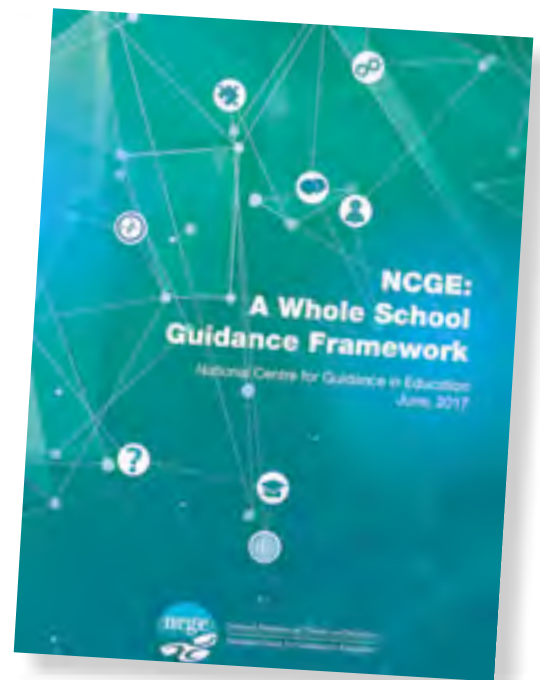
With associated competences:

- Developing & maintaining self-esteem & a positive self-concept
- Interacting effectively with others (face-to-face & online)
- Developing & growing throughout life
- Employing effective personal learning/exam strategies
- Making educational choices in line with career aspirations
- Using career related information & sources appropriately
- Understanding the world of work & life roles
- Managing career development & decision making

Speaking at the launch, Jennifer Mc Kenzie, Director NCGE, said: *‘The aim of the guidance programme in schools is to help students*

to develop an awareness of themselves and their interests, so that they can learn to make choices for their future education, career and indeed life plans. It’s not just about choosing a list of college courses. Guidance in schools is offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Guidance Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling and very often combinations of these. NCGE intends that this framework will support the work already being done by qualified school guidance counsellors and indeed all school staff, in these areas. The framework re-enforces the key understanding that guidance provision in schools is ‘whole school’. This involves collective and collaborative action to develop student learning, behaviour and wellbeing, and the conditions that support these.’

NCGE will be developing and providing additional resources which will be available for schools via the NCGE



School Guidance Handbook site. Schools will be invited to participate in these developments.

You can download a copy of the publication and an additional poster resource on www.ncge.ie.

If you require any further assistance, please contact NCGE by e-mailing ncgeinfo@ncge.ie or call us on 01 8690715/6. You can also stay up to date by following the Centre on Twitter @ncgeguidance.



Social innovation education: where life and learning meet

By Rachel Collier, Co-Founder and CEO Young Social Innovators



Largy College named Young Social Innovators of the Year 2017

Project: Mend a Mind – it's a disorder, not a decision.

The Largy College YSI project set out to promote positive mental health as well as eliminate stigma that surrounds mental health. The group used many creative vehicles in order to deliver their message, including film-making, art, dance and music and social media.

Their short film, 'Explaining My Depression to My Mother' was shortlisted for St Patrick's Hospital's *Frame of Mind* short film competition, and the team received the provincial prize for photography in Mental Health Ireland's Transition Year art competition.

The students made extensive use of social media to send out positive messages around mental health, and from their first *Lighting up the Darkness* event that they broadcast on Facebook live from Clones, the group's popularity on social media spread. Other actions included performing a flashmob on Grafton St, holding a holistic community day in the PEACE Link¹, peer education with primary and post-primary schools, and working with numerous other community groups.

These students were selected from over 7,000 who participated in the YSI competition. This is the second time in four years that the school has received the Gold Award. In 2014, the school also received the *Making our World One World* category award. The team looks forward to continuing their good work and they are keen to acknowledge the wonderful support they have received from Largy College management, staff, CMETB and from their community as a whole.

When I set up **Young Social Innovators** (YSI) in 2001 with Sr Stanislaus Kennedy, very few educators were talking about innovation in education. In fact, YSI was the first organisation to use the term 'social innovation education'. Since then over 540 second-level schools have offered social innovation programmes to 120,000 students. And this, not because any school or teacher *has* to offer it but because they see the benefits to students and local communities. This type of learning supports and encourages the development of young people as caring, connected, creative, empowered adults. It connects young people, educators, schools and communities in advancing ways to improve lives and wellbeing in truly unique ways.

I first began thinking about the potential of Young Social Innovators while working on the streets of Dublin in the 1980s with severely disenfranchised homeless young people. My involvement with Sr Stan then in the establishment of Focus Point [now Focus Ireland] gave me two major insights that informed the subsequent establishment and design of YSI.

The first was that young people, when encouraged and empowered, can use their creativity and wisdom to bring about innovative change. There was no shortage of ideas and creativity amongst the homeless young people I met about what needed to change and how. In fact, their wisdom was essential to designing the services that were relevant to them. The second was that



Students from Largy College (CMETB) celebrate their Young Social Innovators of the Year 2017 Award

1 The PEACE Link is an iconic state of the art sporting facility on the edge of Clones, Co. Monaghan. The facility is at the heart of a movement to build better relationships between people in the Clones (Co Monaghan) /Erne East (Co Fermanagh) area, using sport as the medium.

RECRUITING TOMORROW'S INNOVATORS TODAY

SOCIAL
ISSUES

YOUTH
VOICE

CREATIVE
SOLUTIONS

Every year...

220 SCHOOLS

7,000 YOUNG PEOPLE

300 EDUCATORS

Make sure **YOU** are one of them.



YOUNG
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INNOVATORS

Exploring social justice
through innovation
learning + practice



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JUNIOR + SENIOR ENROLMENT NOW OPEN



The YSI Social Innovation Model

by establishing much-needed and well-designed services for homeless people, together, we gained an incredible level of knowledge and insight into how social change comes about and learned first-hand what impactful social innovation involved.

Through social innovation, they come together and co-create solutions to realise a better, fairer world.

Years later, in 2001, with the benefit of such hindsight, we designed a framework for the actual *learning* of social innovation, the 'YSI model of learning'. Now that model is widely used by hundreds of educators every year with some 7,000 students in Ireland.

THE ROLE OF INNOVATION LEARNING

Our environment is evolving rapidly. Teachers are tasked with preparing students for economic and social change that we have not yet realised;

for jobs that do not yet exist; and for the use of technology that we cannot yet imagine. It is understood that education needs to provide young people with the tools to thrive in an unpredictable, exciting and challenging world. That challenge is not simple. Increasingly, we understand that learning and doing innovation can play a critical part.

The importance of innovation in learning is gaining recognition, with the OECD promoting the need to measure innovation in education. Integrating social benefit into innovation and entrepreneurial learning is important, particularly as a new and evolving generation emerges that understands this need in a profound and inspiring way.

Social innovation learning is learning innovation with a humanitarian purpose. Our students understand the need to grow a strong economy in *tandem* with a strong, cohesive and inclusive society. In fact, they become part of that evolution. Through social innovation, they come together and co-create solutions to realise a better, fairer world.

THE 2017 YOUNG SOCIAL INNOVATORS OF THE YEAR: AN ETBI SCHOOL AND GOLD WINNER

A team of students from Cavan and Monaghan ETB school Largy College in Clones is an excellent example of social innovation education in action. The team scooped the Young Social Innovator of the Year Gold Award 2017, choosing mental health as the focus of their Social Innovation Action project, *Mend a Mind – it's a disorder, not a decision*.

The team used their innovation and creativity with the aim of reducing the stigma around mental illness in their community. This is an issue that was close to their hearts, as Laura Hamill, one of the project participants, explains:

"Bullying has affected a lot of us in some ways," she said. "We wanted to bring attention to it, to shine a light on it."

The team worked with a wide range of organisations, individuals and professionals working in the area of mental health and undertook a multitude of activities to promote their message. Activities ranged from producing a strong social media campaign, creating a positive mental health calendar, delivering workshops for primary and secondary students, and undertaking a number of other creative activities, all combining to achieve significant impact. A video created by the team narrating the impactful poem 'Explaining My Depression to My Mother' reached over 27,000 people online.

Their extensive use of social media using videos and images to highlight the issue, brought stories to life in a creative way. They broadcasted events held in their hometown of Clones on Facebook Live, extending the reach and impact of their awareness-raising activities. With the help of a local dance teacher, they even assembled a flashmob on Grafton Street in Dublin city centre.

"We'll definitely keep going," said Hamill.

“There’s so many creative people in the class, that we have so many ways of getting the message out there.”

As the Monaghan students demonstrate, we underestimate these young people at our peril. This generation has experienced a lot in their short lives, living through boom and bust, and witnessing world events that have left older generations reeling. They understand that ours is an uncertain and unpredictable world to which they must be able to adapt.

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

At Young Social Innovators, we believe in the transformative power of education – transformative for students and whole communities. Social Innovation Education demonstrates this in very tangible ways. We can see how learning and doing social innovation enhances students’ sense of themselves while also benefitting the wider community.

Education can support and enhance human life and living. It can empower

people to be participants in and contributors to the world. I would argue that most educators believe their work aspires to this ultimate goal. Empowering young people is integral to education. It is not a nebulous concept but very real. It begins by recognising their ability; presenting them with new learning and opportunities; and giving them a voice in their learning and development.

Empowering young people is integral to education.

After years of working with Focus Point / Focus Ireland, it is with sadness, yet hope, that I hear so many young people expressing concern about the terrible suffering of homeless people on our streets in recent years. Sadness, because the problem of homelessness is so much larger in scale today than it was in the 1980s. But also hope, because while I didn’t hear how concerned young people were about homelessness at that time, I do hear that voice loudly today. I hear

how many hundreds, if not thousands, of young people are using their voice and opportunity, through YSI, to speak out about homelessness and doing something positive about developing solutions which help address the problem.

We have a huge, and largely untapped, human resource in our young population. I anticipate that, because we have thousands of young social innovators in Ireland each year, in the future we will see a fairer, more inclusive society. I believe that because of this, we will reap the benefits of collective youth-led social innovation education where learning and life meet in very meaningful ways.

Recruiting Tomorrow’s Innovators Today: *To get involved, please sign up to our Junior and/or Senior Action Programmes. To find out more, or to sign up, go to youngsocialinnovators.ie/signup, email us on educate@youngsocialinnovators.ie, or call us on 01 645 8030.*



RECRUITING

Post-primary Inspectors of Construction Studies, English, Home Economics, Religious Education, and Special Education

The Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills will be recruiting post-primary inspectors in the above subjects shortly. If you are interested in any of these positions, you can register your interest by registering with the Public Appointments Service on www.publicjobs.ie where full details of the positions will be available.

IPPN’s New Leadership Team

Newly appointed CEO and President



Páirc Clerkin was recently appointed as CEO of IPPN, succeeding the first CEO Seán Cottrell, who had served from the inception of the organisation in 2000.



David Ruddy commenced his new role of President of IPPN on 1st September 2017 and will serve until August 2019.





New Commis Chef Apprenticeship for Ireland



The first intake of 112 Commis Chef Apprentices in Ireland will take place in November this year, at training centres in Kerry ETB, Cork ETB, Galway and Roscommon ETB, Limerick and Clare ETB, City of Dublin ETB, and Cavan and Monaghan ETB.

This dedicated apprenticeship programme, the culmination of five and half years of advocacy and development, provides a route for apprentice Commis Chefs to gain a recognised trade qualification.

The programme will deliver a sustainable stream of skilled, long-term employees who are equipped to work in the sector and take advantage of the attractive career opportunities that exist throughout the Irish hospitality industry.

The apprenticeship is two years in duration, and consists of alternating phases of on-the-job training (60%) with their employers and off-the-job training (40%) in ETB

Centres. Successful apprentices will be awarded a QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) Advanced Certificate Culinary Arts at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The qualification covers food safety, food preparation and production, nutrition and menu planning, classical and global food influences, food innovation and entrepreneurship, resource management and business practice, and event planning.

The programme that has been developed offers a career path with opportunities for progression and professional development. The approach taken is closely aligned with the principles underpinning the Hospitality sector's Quality Employer Programme, which promotes standards of excellence in human resource management and supports the development of employees in the sector.



The Commis Chef Apprenticeship Programme Writing Team: (L-R) Mike Foley, Commis Chef Instructor, Bernadette Corridon, Kerry ETB Training Centre Acting Assistant Manager, Aoife Comiskey QA and Programme Development, Christy Enright, Kerry ETB Training Centre Acting Assistant Manager

Those wishing to continue studies will be eligible to progress to the Chef de Partie Apprenticeship Programme (NFQ, Level 7), currently being developed by the Restaurants Association of Ireland (RAI), the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF), Tralee Institute of Technology, the Irish Hospitality Institute (IHI), Euro-toques Ireland, other Institutes of Technology (IoTs) and Fáilte Ireland. They may also wish to continue their study with one of the Higher Education Institutes, participating in courses such as the BA in Culinary Arts at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, or the BSc in Baking and Pastry Management at Dublin Institute of Technology.

DEVELOPING A NEW APPRENTICESHIP

In 2014, a call for proposals for new apprenticeships was made by the Apprenticeship Council of Ireland.

For many years, the Hospitality industry had been crying out for skilled chefs to work in the sector, one of the most important drivers of the Irish economy. A Hospitality Industry Consortium was formed, chaired by the IHF, and consisting of representatives from various hospitality and catering bodies, including the RAI, the IHI, Euro-toques Ireland, training providers from the ETBs and IoTs, and Fáilte Ireland. The Consortium established

The approach taken is closely aligned with the principles underpinning the Hospitality sector's Quality Employer Programme

a dedicated Working Group comprised of HR managers, chefs currently working in the industry and other key partners, to consider the existing chef training programmes offered at the IoTs and former programmes provided by City and Guilds.

The goal was to provide a new modern programme taking into account the advances in work standards and the complexities of the modern industrial standard kitchen. At the end of five and a half years and an enormous amount of work, the new Commis Chef Apprenticeship is a modern, up-to-date programme that satisfies appropriate quality assurance standards approved by QQI and provides a high-quality training experience for the apprentices.

The entry requirements for this programme are set at a minimum Level 4 qualification; or three years' trade-

related experience. Learners must obtain employment as an apprentice in a hotel or restaurant kitchen. Their employer must be approved to train apprentices and must register the apprentice within two weeks of recruitment.

Employers seeking approval to train apprentices must demonstrate that they have the capacity and the ability to provide quality, relevant on-the-job training to apprentices consistent with the requirements of the national apprenticeship programme and the statutory apprenticeship system overall. Part of this process involves a site visit to the employer's premises and formal assessment by a SOLAS Authorised Officer. Once an employer has been approved to train apprentices, they can recruit suitable candidates and register them as apprentices.

Further details are available on <http://www.apprenticeship.ie/en/apprentice/Pages/commis-chef.aspx> or contact Kerry ETB, the industry lead for this apprenticeship. Tel: +353 (0)66 714 9600 | (0)66 714 9638 | (0)66 714 9676. Email: training@kerryetbtrainingcentre.ie. Web: www.kerryetbtrainingcentre.ie. Alternatively, contact the Authorised Officer in your local ETB.

Pictured attending a recent briefing in Kells on **Freedom of Information and GDPR legislation** are staff from Louth and Meath ETB and Cavan and Monaghan ETB.



Profiling Youthreach learners

Identifying some key characteristics of learners attending a Youthreach centre



By Dr Mary Gordon, Retired Senior psychologist, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and National Coordinator for guidance, counselling and psychological services in Youthreach and Community Training Centres



This article reports on a NEPS research study that was carried out in a Youthreach centre in 2016. The study set out to investigate some key features of the young early school leavers attending the Youthreach programme.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Youthreach programme as defined by Department of Education and Skills is to equip young early school leavers with the knowledge, skills and confidence to participate fully in society and to progress to further education, training and employment (DES, 2015).

To achieve the aim, it is necessary to take into account what might be the characteristics that distinguish early school leavers from their peers who remain on in mainstream education and, in particular, the characteristics of early school leavers who choose to return to education by an alternative route.

In 2016, with the active support of learners and staff in one centre, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) carried out a research study to identify some of the key



features that characterise Youthreach learners and that can be considered to have implications for the educational and training approaches that are most likely to be successful in achieving the programme's aim for them. The research was envisaged as a contribution to the review of the Youthreach programme planned by the Department and SOLAS to begin in 2017.

THE YOUTHREACH PROGRAMME

Youthreach is located in the Department's Further Education and Training (FET) suite of programmes that are funded and coordinated by SOLAS and managed locally by Education and Training Boards (ETBs). At present, there are 112 Youthreach Centres and 35 Community Training Centres spread evenly across the country in most cities and large towns and in a number of small towns and villages. Attendance is on a full-time basis, usually for two years' duration. Certification is through QQI courses and/or State Exams, and learners over 15 years receive a training allowance. Youthreach is the only FET programme that caters for children and young people, with the majority of participants being in the same age range as students in the senior cycle of secondary schools.

Teenage early school leavers (ESLs) who have, at most, lower secondary qualifications make up a relatively small group. It is estimated that 10% of a year's cohort (between 5,500 and 6,000 students) leave school early each year, with Youthreach accommodating almost half of these.

The key challenge for the system is how to attract and retain ESLs within education until they have acquired the knowledge, skills and confidence they need for financial independence, social inclusion and general wellbeing.

POLICY AND RESEARCH LITERATURE ON EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

This study was informed by the international literature on early school leaving, where there is a general recognition that the phenomenon results from a wide range of personal, social and economic factors. In Nov 2015 the Council of the European Union concluded that

Early school leaving tends to result from a range of frequently interconnected personal, social, economic, cultural, educational, gender-related and family-related factors, and is linked to situations of cumulative disadvantage which often have their origin in early childhood. Groups with low socio-economic status are affected to a greater extent and early school leaving rates are particularly alarming for certain groups, such as children with migrant backgrounds (including newly arrived migrants and foreign-born children), Roma children and children with special educational needs¹.

The Department Inspectorate in their review of 25 Youthreach centre evaluations remarked on the wide and varied mix of individual learning needs they had observed in the learners:

It was clear to inspectors that many of these young people had learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties, often exacerbated by family problems and mental health issues. In discussions with learners, some outlined the emotional pressures that they had experienced in life so far. Learners regularly described, for example, the rejection they felt as a result of being put out of mainstream education. Inspectors were also made aware of other factors affecting the learners, particularly relating to dysfunctional households, violent behaviours and personal isolation².

Staff and other stakeholders associated with the Youthreach programme have long identified significant levels of problematic household issues and dynamics in the families of their learners, including parents or other family members with

The key challenge for the system is how to attract and retain ESLs within education until they have acquired the knowledge, skills and confidence they need for financial independence, social inclusion and general wellbeing.

substance misuse or mental health difficulties³.

ACE RESEARCH

First undertaken in the US in 1998, many small and large-scale international enquiries have been carried out since into Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), focussing on the relationship between childhood trauma and the risk for physical and mental illness in adulthood.

The research indicates that there is a clear association between traumatic experiences in childhood and poor physical, mental and social outcomes in adulthood (including medical conditions such as pulmonary disease, heart disease and diabetes; addiction to cigarettes, alcohol and drugs; mental health difficulties including depression and suicide; early sexual activity along with multiple sexual partners, sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancies and risk for sexual violence; poor academic achievement; and financial stress). It also emerged that the risk of negative outcomes for individuals increased significantly with the number of ACE categories experienced.

Figure 1 summarises what is considered to be the impact of ACEs over the life course.

1 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14441-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

2 http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/insp_evaluation_youth_reach_2010_pdf.pdf Page 8.

3 <http://www.youthreach.ie/webwheel/reports/REPORTofConsultation.doc>

Fig.1 Impact of ACEs



Table 1: Comparison between ACE scores of original study participants and of Centre X learners

ACE scores	% of original ACE study participants (n=>17,000)	% of Centre X participants (n=23)
0	36.1%	4%
1	26.0%	13%
2	15.9%	9%
3	9.5%	9%
4 or more	12.5%	65%

RESEARCH STUDY IN CENTRE X

Methodology

The focus of NEPS’s research was on key characteristics of the learners under a number of headings:

- Learning profiles, including cognitive ability and literacy and numeracy competencies
- Difficulties in relation to physical and mental wellbeing and risk-taking behaviours
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Information from school reports, home visits, consultations with social workers / Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

teams / Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs) / GPs / other professionals, staff observation and QQI certification results.

The research drew heavily on the goodwill and collaboration of the young people and staff in the centre. It was comprised of three elements: 1) assessment of learning profiles using tests of functioning and academic attainment; 2) a detailed structured interview with each learner by the centre’s learner support practitioner; and 3) additional information provided by the coordinator about the learners’ situations, difficulties, contexts and achievements.

STUDY FINDINGS

The findings of this study are quite striking. They indicate a significantly elevated level of health and other kinds of difficulties and of engagement in risk-taking behaviours that have the capacity to seriously undermine these learners’ future wellbeing.

The number of ACE categories experienced by the learners (see Table 1) – for almost two-thirds, it was four or more – was significantly greater than that found in the original epidemiological study, where one eighth of the study participants reported four or more ACEs.

The research also found a clear negative relationship between the number of ACE categories experienced by learners and indicators of their wellbeing.

The data provided by the staff tended to back up or confirm much of what was self-reported by the learners themselves.

Comparing the learners to a national sample surveyed in 2012⁴, the study found that the learners in Centre X were significantly more likely to report depression, attempted suicide, substance misuse, parents not together and parents with mental health problems. Poverty, and the

4 Dooley, B & Fitzgerald, A (2012). *My world survey*. Dublin: Headstrong and UCD School of Psychology



Table 2: Reduction in difficulties and risk-taking since joining Youthreach

Difficulties and risk-taking behaviours whose incidence were reported to have reduced since joining the Youthreach programme	Difference in reported experience of difficulties and risk-taking since joining Youthreach
Involvement in criminal justice system	-44%
Depression	-39%
Anger management problem	-30%
Use of illegal drugs	-26%
Engagement in anti-social behaviour	-18%
Anxiety	-18%
Considered suicide	-17%
Attempted suicide	-13%
Eating disorder	-9%

social disadvantage that frequently accompanies it, were also considered to be real issues for many of the learners in the centre.

One aspect of the study concerned the impact of attendance in the

Youthreach programme. An important finding was that the learners reported a significant reduction in their difficulties and risk-taking after they began the programme (see Table 2), especially in relation to depression, anxiety and suicide ideation and the use of illegal

drugs and involvement in the criminal justice system.

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

A major finding from the assessment data was that many of the learners displayed significant difficulties with basic literacy and numeracy although the great majority of them had no general learning disability.

Of perhaps more significance is the finding that the majority of the learners in Centre X had suffered high levels of adverse experiences growing up. It is to the implications of this finding that the analysis will primarily attend.

We know from the original and subsequent ACE research studies that adverse childhood experiences are associated with negative physical and mental health and a reduction in emotional, social and economic wellbeing in adult life. ACEs are essentially experiences of neglect and abuse in childhood. They are damaging because they produce developmental trauma, and developmental trauma undermines cognitive, neurological and psychological growth and reduces the capacity for positive social interaction.⁵

An analysis of how childhood trauma affects neurological growth and disrupts personal and social development is needed to understand the educational implications of the research study findings.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL FORMATION

Personal and social skills do not simply emerge naturally, they are acquired through learning. While many other kinds of knowledge and skill are taught formally and practised systematically – think of literacy, swimming, how to tie shoe laces – emotional and social competencies are mostly learned informally through

5 van der Kolk, B (2014). The body keeps the score: Mind, brain and body in the transformation of trauma. New York: Penguin.

6 Attunement. Being or bringing into harmony; a feeling of being "at one" with another being.

interaction with others. And the others that help small children first acquire these competencies are their primary caregivers, usually their parents.

The learning is experiential. Infants who have a secure attachment with their primary caregivers experience attunement⁶, comfort and safety. Secure infants discover they can trust that they are safe, and to trust what they feel and how they understand the world. They have a sense of self-worth and control, and engage in the world with the confidence that they can make good things happen. If they experience difficulty or unpleasantness they know their caregivers will attempt to alleviate their distress and restore this sense of safety and control. Over time, they learn how to soothe themselves and how to regulate their own emotions.

Secure attachment relationships with caregivers also form the framework for acquiring social skills. Socialisation involves becoming sensitive to the inner experiences of other people and learning appropriate ways of interacting with them. As they grow older they are encouraged to engage in socially acceptable ways of behaving and to develop a sense of social responsibility or conscience. The acquisition of socialisation skills is dependent on awareness of others and the development of increased self-regulation, both of which are learned within the context of a secure attachment.

The acquisition of these kinds of emotional and social competencies is disrupted or blocked when neglect, abuse and other kinds of developmental trauma are present in childhood.

CAUSES OF DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA

Developmental trauma can be caused



Just as positive experiences assist with healthy brain development, children's experiences of maltreatment or other forms of trauma negatively affects brain development.

by subtle daily events that involve relational disconnects between children and their caregivers. Infants and young children are extremely sensitive to breaks in interaction. If these disconnects happen too many times or for extended periods during the first few years of life, they learn not to trust that adults will care for them or that their basic needs for security and relational attunement will be met. This is the critical factor in disturbed attachment.

The child's experiences can be of emotional absence, inconsistency, frustration, violence, intrusiveness and neglect. Either response will cause a breakdown in their capacity to process, integrate and categorise what is happening, which reduces their ability to attend and to learn.

The negative working model that children who have encountered developmental trauma acquire – whereby they see themselves as

unlovable, expect others to reject them and view the external environment as an unsafe place and source of pain – limits their expectations of their future life and reduces their motivation to invest in it.

THE NEUROSCIENCE OF TRAUMA

Just as positive experiences assist with healthy brain development, children's experiences of maltreatment or other forms of trauma negatively affects brain development. This includes changes to the structure and chemical activity of the brain (e.g., decreased size or connectivity in some parts of the brain) and in the emotional and behavioural functioning of the child (e.g. over-sensitivity to stressful situations)⁷. The brain adapts to the frequent presence of threat and this results in changes in emotional, behavioural and cognitive functioning even when the source of fear is no longer present.

The environment, including the social environment, has a very powerful

7 https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/brain_development.pdf

8 Epigenetic: relating to or arising from nongenetic influences on gene expression

epigenetic⁸ influence on brain development, determining which genes will actually be expressed and which will not. This leads to what neuroscientists refer to as the “plasticity of the human brain”, meaning that it is capable of changing in response to experiences, especially repetitive and patterned experiences. Because of this plasticity, positive experiences in later life can mitigate some of the worst effects of earlier trauma. A negative environment has a damaging effect but a positive environment has an ameliorating effect, precisely because the brain forms in this “use-dependent” fashion.

The period of adolescence provides a particularly fruitful opportunity for intervention because synaptic pathways that were formed earlier in life become pruned in adolescence and new ones established. Thus, it is possible to help a child to learn emotional and social skills that will serve them well in their adult lives and to unlearn ways of thinking and behaving that may have assisted them to survive childhood but are no longer helpful or protective.

IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY FINDING

The Centre X findings of a clear association between level of ACEs and susceptibility to physical and mental health difficulties and engagement in risk-taking behaviours can be said to bear out the general research literature on the impact of trauma.

This developmental view of learning indicates the important role that education can have in helping young people affected by developmental trauma. The fulltime attendance by these early school leavers over a two-year period in the Youthreach programme provides a very significant opportunity to intervene and mitigate some of the most damaging effects of their early life experiences.

Educational responses

Research has found that the most effective ways for schools to enhance young people’s general emotional and social wellbeing is by ensuring that there is deliberate focus on the development of students’ emotional and social competencies. An environment that enhances competence and wellbeing is one that consciously fosters warm relationships, encourages participation, develops pupil and teacher autonomy and cultivates clarity about boundaries, rules and positive expectations.

Three factors are thought to influence whether children who have suffered adverse experiences will go on to develop educational competencies. These are 1) a strong surrogate caregiving figure who serves a mentoring role; 2) the development of good cognitive skills; and 3) learning how to self-regulate attention, emotions, and behaviours. In the educational context, this requires of teachers that they play a care-giving role and form a relationship based on this with their learners, that they help them to succeed in academic and vocational tasks, and that they support them in learning how to regulate their emotions and manage their behaviour.

The principal focus for the teacher is on the creation of a connection with the young person, which involves trying to understand where they are coming from, managing their own reactions carefully, modelling emotional regulation, avoiding power struggles and being careful not to reinforce negative internal working models by causing humiliation or experiences of rejection. The teacher attempts to construct a calm and regulated environment that is based on structure and consistency, sets limits on unacceptable behaviour, employs consequences rather than punishments and encourages the young person to heed and understand their feelings.

Achieving retention in education

It is also necessary for young people who need help with learning emotional and social competencies to be successfully retained within an educational setting.

Extensive research into how to maintain young people in education or training has been commissioned by the OECD and EU in recent years, much of it based on the recognition that there is a need for alternative measures such as second chance pathways. There is agreement that policy measures need to be diversified, tackling different issues along the road to employment and paying attention to vulnerable groups that are more likely to comprehend multiple disadvantages. These more disadvantaged and vulnerable groups need a student-centred, individualised approach to learning – for example through guidance, mentoring, individual learning plans or case management – which are core features of compensatory measures to reduce early leaving from vocational education and training.

The recommendation that second-chance education should be different from mainstream education and more focused on personal and social development is common across the ESL research and policy literature. The building of staff capacity was deemed another element in good practice, with teachers seen as a key factor in young people’s learning at school and one of the major agents for educational success.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NEPS’ 2016 research study in Centre X presents evidence of the existence of a significant level of difficulty and risk in the young people attending this typical Youthreach centre. And as there is no reason to see this sample

The fulltime attendance by these early school leavers over a two-year period in the Youthreach programme provides a very significant opportunity to intervene and mitigate some of the most damaging effects of their early life experiences.

as unusual or unrepresentative of the national body of Youthreach learners, it is reasonable to consider the findings to be generally applicable. The findings accord with international research evidence of there being a vulnerable, disadvantaged group of young people who are at most danger of not completing an upper secondary level of education and who, as a result, face much reduced opportunities for finding secure or well-paid work in their future lives. We know that retention within education (whether mainstream or vocational) increases their future employment prospects and acts as a protective factor against other negative correlates of early school leaving.

The study also found that a very significant number of the learners had experience of multiple adverse events growing up. Psychological explanations of the effects of traumatic experiences give an insight into the reasons why many of these young people may have been unable to remain on in school and why they might be suffering with mental health difficulties and engaging in risk-taking and anti-social behaviours.

The psychological and neurological literatures offer recommendations on educational approaches that can mitigate some of the negative effects of trauma in childhood. Meanwhile, the more sociologically-based international research literature on ESL also provides clear policy and practice recommendations on how to achieve the retention of vulnerable, disadvantaged students within education and training.

The sets of recommendations from these two different sources show a great deal of similarity of approach, which can be summarised as involving care-giving and

relationship-based working; addressing needs through the involvement of welfare, health and child protection systems alongside education; focusing on personal and social development, including the teaching of self-regulation and social skills; devising extra-curricular and non-formal activities and flexible teaching approaches that create confidence and a sense of agency; and training and supporting staff so that they can interact with learners in professionally challenging but effective ways.

Learners attending the Youthreach programme need to be comprehended within a wider context than simply preparation for further training or employment. These learners have an even greater need for the personal and social development project that is regarded as a natural part of the overall agenda of schools – and implemented in a wide range of ways, including through physical education, SPHE and RSE, guidance, mental health promotion, the arts, extra-curricular activities, etc.

Despite current gaps in attention, services and governance, the Youthreach programme largely does provide just that. This research study found that Centre X had not only successfully attracted and retained the kind of young person who would otherwise have exited education, their attendance had led to a significant reduction in difficulties and risk-taking behaviours and, for most of those who completed the programme during the research period, the achievement of academic qualifications equivalent to an upper secondary level.

To conclude, what is needed for the kind of young early school leavers who were the subjects of this research is a

dedicated and resourced education and training intervention that has the capacity to provide what all the evidence suggests are the most effective approaches. These include:

- A strong emphasis on learners' care and on their emotional and social development;
- A priority focus on successful retention;
- Designation as a pre-vocational educational programme;
- Sufficient time for relationship-based approaches to be implemented;
- The application of psychologically-informed principles;
- Investment in attracting and training skilled staff;
- Commitment to the achievement of ambitious holistic outcomes for learners;
- Liaison and coordination with community agencies and services;
- Accountability in terms of the priority aims of retention, emotional and social learning and promotion of physical and mental health; and
- Access to all relevant child education and welfare services.

While targeted programmes of this kind are not cheap, the alternative of not providing an effective second chance intervention is unlikely to be cheap either, as the social and macroeconomic consequences of not intervening in effective ways impact not just on the young people themselves but on society as a whole.

The full report can be found at <http://www.youthreach.ie/wp-content/uploads/A-profile-of-learners-in-Youthreach-NEPS-research-study-report-Mar-2017-1.pdf>.



Smartphone micro-blogging supporting mobile learning

Digital mobile post primary Religious Education in Scoil Uí Mhuirí



By Ciara Morrison-Reilly, teacher of religious education and music at the LMETB post-primary school Scoil Uí Mhuirí, Dunleer, County Louth. This article is a synopsis of a thesis submitted for the award of a Doctorate of Education. Ciara was conferred as a Doctor of Education in November 2016 at Dublin City University.



THE LEARNING AND TEACHING RATIONALE

A 2015 report 'Net children go mobile'¹ found that smartphones were the most used device for daily access to the internet by Irish nine to sixteen-year olds. The Department of Education and Science report '*Investing Effectively in Information and Communications Technology in Schools, 2008-2013*'²

recognised that 'while technology has become more mobile, there is a significant and unexplored digital divide between the technology used outside school and that inside'. Additionally, the Department of Education and Skills 'Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020'³ (2015) identified 'Bring Your Own Devices' (BYOD), such as smartphones, as part of schools' ICT infrastructure. Notwithstanding the potential education benefits of using

the smartphone for supporting learning, the '*Net children go mobile*' report discovered that 87% of Irish children between nine to sixteen-year olds were banned from using their smartphones at school.

This article focuses on research into our experience of smartphone microblogging supporting mobile learning within post-primary religious education 'across

- 1 O'Neill, B. and Dinh, T. 2015. *Net children go mobile: Full findings from Ireland*. Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology.
- 2 Morrissey, J., Hume, M., Baker, S., Ryan, S., Galvin, C., Ryan, T., Glenn, M., O'Sullivan, T., Hallissy, M. and Turpin, F. 2008. *Investing effectively in information and communications technology in schools, 2008-2013: The report of the Minister's strategy group*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science, p.8.
- 3 <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Digital-Strategy-for-Schools-2015-2020.pdf>

multiple contexts, through social and content interactions,⁴ using students' own smartphones for homework assignments. The rationale is centred on a vision of teaching that promotes student-centred, active, authentic, creative, and collaborative learning as advocated by the Junior Cycle Framework. Through Edmodo students were encouraged to become active learners, engaged thinkers and co-creators of knowledge.

One-hundred-and-five First Year students attending Scoil Uí Mhuirí, with me as teacher-researcher, provided data on our experiences of smartphone microblogging, which involved publishing short posts through the password-secured smartphone microblogging app Edmodo. This free educational app facilitated safe learning in a 'private living room' rather than a 'public square'.

FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH

The research findings focused on collecting and analysing information categorised into three aspects:

1. The technology aspect: The smartphone device and Edmodo app
2. The learning aspect: Cognitive and collaborative learning
3. The social aspect: The online learning community

Regarding the **technology** aspect, the findings recorded that 97% of students found Edmodo useful or helpful for learning, while 95% of students found the app easy to use. Just 3% of the 986 posts uploaded by students detailed technical challenges encountered, many stemming from poor wireless connectivity at home. The research found that 97% of posts were focused on the Junior Certificate religious education learning module 'Images of God', while just 3% of posts consisted of colloquial chats.

Several students commented on the

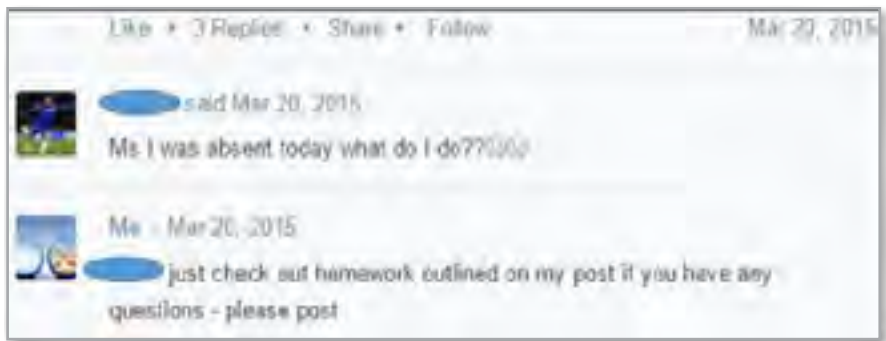


Fig 1 conversation



Fig 2 Edmodo post

convenience of the smartphone's portability as a learning tool for carrying out homework assignments as opposed to books. A few students cited distraction from the learning task at hand as an issue. Conversely, several students noted that online learning with smartphones was less distracting than offline 'as in the classroom you can talk sneakily but in Edmodo you cannot really talk'.

The following pedagogical strategies were employed to ensure the minimising of distractions from the homework assignment:

- Informing students verbally in class and online on Edmodo of the learning objectives pertaining to each

homework assignment

- Continuous online monitoring of students' posts and homework assignments
- Bite-sized homework assignments that could be completed within a short time-frame
- Recommending students to turn off smartphone notifications during the completion of their homework assignments

Regarding the **learning** aspect, the findings confirmed that students' use of the smartphone Edmodo app advanced online collaborative learning: 97% of

4 Crompton, H. 2013. A Historical Overview of M- Learning IN: Zane, B., L. and Muijenburg, L.Y. (eds.) *Handbook of Mobile Learning*. New York: Routledge, p.4.

students' posts involved collaborative online learning conversations; 60% of students recorded that they learnt something surprising from their peers on Edmodo. Students also experienced Edmodo as an effective online learning management system that enabled absent students to access resources and homework assignments anytime and from anywhere as this post details (See Figure 1).



Additionally, the findings indicated that cognitive learning was advanced through the use of smartphone microblogs' multimedia affordances that support text and visual channels of communication. It has been found that multimedia affordances can advance learning, especially recalling information. Students 'learn better when corresponding words and visuals are presented simultaneously'⁵ on the same page or screen. Figure 2 shows a post of two photographs from a student's local beach and farm, evidence of text and visual channels of communication in operation via Edmodo.

These results reflect findings from previous research that smartphone microblogging can support seamless learning in the formal context of the classroom and in the informal contexts of life's authentic, real-world matrix of learning places. Seamless learning can support deep learning through the connections between formal and informal contexts by 'helping young people to make deep sense of the world despite the changing context'.⁷

Regarding the **social** aspect, the findings found that Edmodo supported and sustained an online learning community, the inclusion of students' voices, the improvement of interpersonal relationships and extended conversations not possible within the conventional classroom.

The research established that Edmodo offered students a safe online learning community for self-disclosure, for the creation, exchange, and critique of meaning on personal images of God, including agnostic and atheist worldviews. Many students noted that this was the first time they were presented with an opportunity to talk about their image of God. Several students felt that they would find discussing their image of God or spirituality in the conventional classroom embarrassing. These findings confirm other research that 'mobile technology offers a religious and spiritual learning intimacy... that is not possible in formal learning contexts'.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

The following recommendations were developed from our experience of employing Edmodo for supporting mobile learning that incorporated tried and tested recommendations offered within previous research on mobile learning. The pedagogical strategies recommended for supporting mobile learning include:

- An audit of students' smartphone ownership and internet access at home and at school
- Student training on using Edmodo

along with guidance on safe and responsible online use

- Promoting students' immediate self-reporting of technical problems via Edmodo
- Encouraging students to address and resolve technical problems or general learning queries posted by peers
- Continuous monitoring of students' posts to ensure technical problems or general learning queries are resolved promptly, effectively, and efficiently
- Informing students of the learning objective attached to each learning and homework assignment
- Encouraging students to post their own visuals reinforced by text
- Providing frequent personalised feedback to individual students' posts
- Promoting students' online conversations and peer scaffolding to advance their understanding and learning
- Effective questioning of students' learning and uploaded posts through lower and higher order questions.

5 Mayer, R.E. 2009. *Multimedia learning*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, p.153.

6 Sharples, M. 2015. *Seamless learning despite context* IN: Wong, L., Millrad, M. and Specht, M. (eds.) *Seamless learning in the age of mobile connectivity*. London: Springer, p.153.

7 Daily, E.M. 2013. The promise of mobile technology for public Religious Education. *Religious Education*, 108(2), p.124.

New Guidelines for Student Teacher Placement in the Further Education and Training Sector



By Dr. Jane O'Kelly, Assistant Professor, Teaching and Learning Convener, School of Policy and Practice, DCU Institute of Education

Summer 2017 saw the publication of a new set of Guidelines for Student Teacher Placement in the Further Education and Training Sector (FET) for circulation to ETBs and all FET settings by the HEI FET Forum. The HEI FET Forum is a national network comprised of eight higher education institutions who designed initial teacher education programmes accredited by the Teaching Council specifically for those in the Further Education and Training sector. The Forum was established in 2012 as a national network focused on the continued enhancement of teaching and learning in FET. It aims to support the sector through collaborative working approaches and the development of communities of practice. In particular, the Forum aims to:

- Share knowledge and practice in education, specifically for the Further Education and Training sector, with regard to qualifications for teachers, tutors and other facilitators of learning in Further Education and Training;
- Contribute to the quality of teaching, learning and research in Further Education and Training;
- Promote awareness about initial and continued professional development for practitioners and new entrants to the sector;
- Explore common areas of interest such as research, programme design, assessment and placement;
- Contribute to an emergent community of practice in Further Education and Training.

The Guidelines aim to provide an overview of what a placement for students undertaking an initial teacher education (ITE) qualification in FET might entail for the student, the designated teaching and learning practitioner, the placement setting, and the higher education institution. All information is provided as a suggestion of good practice and is informed by the Teaching Council of Ireland March 2011 publication: "Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications".

The Guidelines were developed through a partnership process with the Teaching Council of Ireland, Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and the HEI FET Forum. It is envisaged that a more comprehensive document will emerge in coming years as initial teacher education in FET evolves and the partnership of agencies and practitioners further consolidates. The Guidelines are available at <http://heifetforum.ie/>.

The Institute of Education in DCU, as a member of the HEI FET Forum, is working to progress the partnership between FET settings and HEIs as part of our BSc in Education and Training and through FETRC (Further Education and Training Research Centre). The BSc in Education and Training is the only concurrent Level 8 honours degree in education and training in Ireland that offers the option in third year of accreditation by the Teaching Council of students as teachers in FET upon completion of a placement year. The programme has been designed to accommodate individuals who already work in FET and require a degree and Teaching

Council recognition, and individuals looking to explore a career as a tutor in FET while developing pedagogical and andragogical skills and competences applicable to the diverse requirements of FET learners. The BSc in Education and Training recognises the need for access routes across QQI levels through the Foundation Programme in Education and Training which offers modules at FETAC Level 5. This course is delivered collaboratively with Whitehall College of Further Education and Dublin City University (DCU). Learners spend one day a week in DCU as two modules will be taught in DCU at first year degree level. This course aims to provide a foundation to students who wish to progress on to the BSc in Education and Training.

FETRC is interested in providing quality research data on policy and practice in FET, research focusing on the learner experience and in particular our national qualifications systems and progression pathways between levels, as well as capturing the practitioner voice on the evolution and progression of FET as a setting recognised for excellence in teaching and learner centred approaches. Further information can be found at

www.dcu.ie/institute_of_education/undergraduate-programmes.shtml and www.dcu.ie/fetrc/index.shtml.





Further Education: progression outcomes are transforming lives



By Ed O'Connor and Sharon Browne, Adult Education Officers, Kerry ETB

For any adult learner, whether school leaver or mature student, getting exam results is an important milestone. But in many ways, the real results are not about marks and percentages – but about where those grades might lead a person in terms of next steps, and ultimately, life outcomes.

A recent government report laments the state's historic limited capacity to track the outcomes for students after a €1.7 billion investment in the further education and training sector. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has publicly welcomed new systems being put in place by SOLAS to help track the progression outcomes for the sector – but they are new and still in development.

However Kerry ETB has been leading the way in this work, gathering empirical data over the last two years to allow for results-based planning and continuous improvement. Kerry ETB has been tracking the progression outcomes for Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) and VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme) learners for the past two years via a telephone survey involving 700 further education students, to find out where they have gone four months after their chosen course finished.

The study found that over 50% of all PLC learners go on to some form of further or higher education and training. And nearly a third secure paid employment of some type, including self-employment.

Interestingly younger learners are more likely to go to education and training, while a higher percentage of learners in the 26-41 years age band tend to go directly into paid employment. It should be said that the PLC population in general is predominantly young and female (under the age of 26 years).

FE PROGRAMMES DO THEIR JOB

PLC programmes were originally intended as a bridge to higher education, as well as an opportunity to develop core competencies and marketable skills in certain vocational areas leading directly to employment. The survey results show that indeed the programme still does fulfil both of these roles.

Kerry ETB operates four different PLC Centres across the county. Completion rates are between 92% and 100% in all four Centres, with the majority of students achieving a QQI Major Award on completion.

RURAL IRELAND IS AGING

But the comparative progression results between Centres vary. They tell the story of rural Ireland. The largest centre is in Tralee, and not surprisingly has the youngest population. Listowel and Killarney have more people in the middle age band of 26-41 years. Moving south to Caherciveen, it's a different story. There are more males in the PLC population and 38% of group are aged over 41 years, very much mirroring the profile of this rural town. Given that there are fewer employment opportunities in the area than in the main towns, it is not surprising that more Caherciveen learners progressed to further study or a government sponsored scheme, than to paid employment in the open labour market.

THE VALUE OF PLC AS A PRE-UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION / VOCATIONAL TASTER

Another positive outcome from PLC courses, which is often not documented, is the potential of such a course as a pre-university preparation year. More and more people are using PLC as a one-year transition before college. For some, a one-year foundation taster is a sound investment before committing to a four-year degree programme. Any parent who has funded their young people through college only to have them switch courses mid-way or drop out completely, will see the merit in using PLC to try out a new vocational area.

VTOS AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

VTOS has a somewhat similar remit, but there is a much stronger focus on social inclusion. This is a two-year course, targeting people who may have left school early, or did their Leaving Certificate many moons ago and now lack up-to-date skills for the labour



Case Study - John Dee

"You're going nowhere these days unless you have a piece of paper"

During his summer holidays from school, 14-year-old John Dee went working on farms in the Listowel area.

"I never returned to school – I had no interest," he says. "I enjoyed working on the farms, and later in construction. All kinds of work. I never went a day without work until 2008. Then everything went wallop."

Last year, more than two decades after he left school, Dee was back in the classroom of his old school, now known as North Kerry College of Further Education. This time John was enrolled in an Engineering PLC Course to gain a QQI Major Award at Level 5. His wife had gone before him to adult education, gaining qualifications in Childcare and Special Needs Education, and now works in the sector. She was his role model. That spurred him on.

"I was a bit nervous going back. The idea of getting your head into the books at age 37 is a bit daunting. But I realised you are going nowhere unless you have a piece of paper."

It was a struggle, says Dee, a father of one, but it was worth it. "I got there in the end," he says. "It was a great sense of achievement. I learned about computer-aided design, as well as maths, engineering and building construction. I wasn't sure how I would do, but I got a distinction in every subject."

Along with boosting his knowledge and skills, the course also enhanced his confidence and self-esteem. He completed last May, and a day later walked into a job with O'Carroll Engineering, a Liebherr sub-contractor in Killarney.

Now John works as a fabrication technician and uses his new skills on a daily basis to help manufacture steel components for cranes.

While the DPER report raises concerns over the allocation of FET funding, Dee feels it is well spent and considers his experience transformative.

He says he owes a debt of gratitude to the staff of North Kerry College, especially Principal Stephen Goulding and Engineering Teacher Pat O'Sullivan. "Even if you don't find a job immediately, it gets you out of the house, you meet people, you stimulate your mind. It's good for your wellbeing and mental health."

market – particularly in the area of ICT skills, which are necessary for most jobs today. Over 62% of the entire VTOS population in Kerry is over the age of 41 years. The in-built supports are key to successful outcomes for VTOS learners: childcare subsidies, literacy supports, study skills, adult guidance, and access to psychological counselling where necessary.

Close to a third of all respondents in the Kerry ETB VTOS progression survey had gone on to further education and training, but this goes up to almost 50% for VTOS learners aged 26-41 years of age and to 75% for all Listowel VTOS learners. Over a third of all Killarney VTOS learners went directly to employment after course completion. The survey thus confirms that in the more rural locations, there are the fewer paid employment outcomes and a higher uptake of government-sponsored schemes.

Education and training have a key social inclusion role to play in making sure that all citizens have a chance to develop and maintain core skills for participation in everyday life as well as in learning and work. But no amount of courses or training can create sustainable jobs in rurally depopulated Ireland, especially where the public transport and broadband infrastructure may be poor and care, such as childcare and elder care, does not come cheap.

In these places, education and training still has a key role to play in sustaining people and community life – indeed sometimes, even life itself. Many of these depopulated areas are also have high suicide rates and poor health indicators.

CAPTURING QUALITATIVE OUTCOMES IN THE FET SECTOR

As a FET sector, ETBs need not just to track the numbers and percentages. We need a new metrics to measure the

qualitative outcomes for learners and the societal contribution those programmes make – ultimately a saving for the taxpayer and for rural Ireland.

“Our telephone survey to PLC and VTOS learners is a key mechanism we use to track progression outcomes for learners,” said Owen O’Donnell, Director of FET at Kerry ETB. “But it is also really good to talk directly to our students and get their feedback on where their course has taken them. Every year we reflect on the results as part of our continuous improvement and planning strategy. We already know that many of our Traineeships have 100% progression to employment. This year the scope will be expanded to look at the outcomes from a range of other Training Centre courses. We are looking forward to the day when this project will be made a little easier with the new SOLAS learner database as a useful tool for accountability, planning and evaluation.”

‘An investment in knowledge pays the best interest’ (Benjamin Franklin)

New Post-Primary schools for Limerick South-West (LCETB) and Athlone (LWETB)



First Year students on their first day at Mungret Community College with Deputy Principal, Helen Ryan (far left) and Principal, Liam O’Mahoney (far right)



Athlone Community College’s dramatic new school building was recently officially open by (former) Taoiseach Enda Kenny, TD.

The European Social Fund

Promoting employment and social inclusion



By Catherine Ormsby, European Social Fund Managing Authority,
Department of Education and Skills



The **European Social Fund** (ESF) is Europe's main tool for promoting employment and social inclusion. It provides €10 billion annually towards improving job prospects for millions of Europeans, in particular for those who find it difficult to obtain employment. The European Union is committed to creating more and better jobs, and a socially inclusive society. These goals are at the core of the **Europe 2020 Strategy** for generating smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU. The ESF supports Member States to address the challenges faced in developing human and social capital across Europe, by supporting lifelong learning, upskilling and retraining, social innovation, and social inclusion, and by tackling disadvantage.

Ireland's **ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020** was launched in April 2015, following its approval by the European Commission in February 2015. With a total budget of €1.153 billion, the PEIL is co-financed with €542.43 million each from the ESF and the Irish Government, and a special allocation of €68 million from the EU's Youth Employment Initiative, which was established to tackle youth unemployment. The PEIL 2014-2020 provides funding to over 20 national measures which aim to help almost 1 million Irish people over the period of the programme. The programme focuses on increasing labour market participation, promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities, reducing youth unemployment, and developing the skills of the future and



Nicola Finnegan and Catherine Ormsby from the ESF Managing Authority at the KETB North Kerry FET Fair

existing workforce. The PEIL 2014-2020 invests over €750 million in Further Education and Training across the 16 Education and Training Boards, providing funding for Youthreach, Adult Literacy, the Back to Education Initiative, and Training Programmes for the Unemployed, including Community Training Centres, Traineeships, Bridging Courses, and Specific Skills Training.

EUROPE IN MY REGION 2017

Europe in My Region is an EU-wide

campaign that aims to highlight the excellent work being done by projects across Europe with the help of EU funding. As part of the campaign, the European Commission asks projects across Europe to open up their doors and hold events to mark the occasion. This year, for the first time, a number of ETBs got involved, holding various events across the country. Limerick & Clare ETB kicked off the campaign on 5th April with a Further Education and Training (FET) Opportunities Fair in Limerick. The Fair



These goals are at the core of the Europe 2020 Strategy for generating smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU.

showcased the many FET opportunities for adult learners in Limerick, including part-time and full-time courses, ranging from QQI Level 1 to Level 6.

Louth & Meath ETB held three FET Information Fairs on Europe Day, 9th May, in Navan, Drogheda and Dundalk. Staff from LMETB were on hand to offer excellent advice and guidance to the public on all available FET options.

LMETB Information Fair Drogheda



Fingal Adult Education Service and Youthreach Balbriggan, which come under the remit of Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB, also hosted an Open Day on 9th May. Members of the public were invited to meet tutors and discuss learning options. The event marked 60 years of the European Social Fund with a birthday cake and DDLETB & ESF treats baked by participants. The Open Day also featured a photo exhibition, displays of the centre's work and a treasure hunt for visitors.

Meeting Erasmus+ participants at the LCETB FET Opportunities Fair

On 29th May, Kerry ETB held the North Kerry FET Fair in Listowel. Aimed at jobseekers, second chance learners, guidance counsellors and parents, the Fair provided information on a range of courses as well as skills demonstrations and talks. Spin South-West Radio was there to broadcast the event.



All of these events were included on the European Commission's interactive map of events (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/communication/inform-network/map/).

*The ESF Managing Authority thanks all the staff and participants who made our first **EU in my Region** so successful. If you are interested in taking part in next year's campaign, please contact the ESF Managing Authority on 01 889 2003 or peil@education.gov.ie.*

Daniel Flanagan, Yvonne O'Sullivan and Sarah Ashe from Balbriggan Youthreach with a selection of their baked treats



Well Now!

An innovative new health and wellbeing course specially designed for people working in adult literacy and community education services

By Helen Ryan and Bláthnaid Ní Chinnéide, National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) has recently launched a guide on how to run a 'literacy friendly' health and wellbeing course. The guide, **'Well Now!'**, is intended for adult literacy and community education services who wish to provide courses on health and wellbeing for adults. It's free to download and can be easily adapted by any ETB.

In particular, the guide is intended to help tutors in planning, designing and facilitating the course. The course is based on a very successful 10-

week course that was piloted and delivered to older adults in South County Dublin, in partnership between a local authority (South Dublin County Council), a local adult education provider (An Cosán, Tallaght) and local health services and professionals.

"Many people who deal effectively with other aspects of their lives can find health information difficult to understand, especially people who struggle with reading and understanding everyday text," says Helen Ryan, Policy Officer with NALA.



"All the research shows that those who are better informed about their health have more effective consultations with health care providers, are able to manage their health better, and as a result have improved health outcomes. That's why this course is so unique and successful. Through careful planning, the course takes account of the literacy and numeracy support needs of its participants, whilst also giving them the knowledge to understand their options and make informed decisions about their own health," says Helen.

Participants can set a personal goal at the start of the course – one that is confidential to them and that they re-visit at the end of the course.

HOW DOES THE COURSE IT WORK?

The **'Well Now!'** guide outlines topics that can be covered on the course, with sample methods and activities. These are intended to inform, not prescribe, a tutor's planning. The overall aim is to facilitate people to explore health and wellbeing topics as well as gain the knowledge and skills to support healthy choices.

In the guide NALA suggest a course with ten sessions and recommend 2½ to 3 hours per session on themes such as:

- Getting started: my health and wellbeing
- Getting active to keep well
- Using our local health services
- Eating well (Part 1)
- Communicating in health settings
- Keeping our brain active
- Eating well (Part 2)
- Using technology to communicate and learn about health
- Local resources for health and wellbeing
- Keeping well

"The topics you focus on, and the methods you use, will depend on your situation and your group," says Bláthnaid Ní Chinnéide, Integrating Literacy Coordinator with NALA.

"From the start, participants should have active input into deciding the programme content. Participants can

set a personal goal at the start of the course – one that is confidential to them and that they re-visit at the end of the course. While each session focuses on a specific topic, health and wellbeing should also be built into the process used. We recommend including core activities in each session that help create wellbeing in the 'here and now' and that introduce participants to healthy routines for everyday life," says Bláthnaid.

In the **'Well Now!'** guide, NALA suggest using 'literacy-friendly' methods. This means using a variety of active learning methods, such as short quizzes or games, and not relying on reading as the only or main channel for learning. For example, NALA recommend including activities to increase confidence in communicating with health services and professionals; and supporting participants to become more confident in the language, reading, writing, numeracy and digital literacy involved in health settings and in exploring health topics.

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

"A partnership approach was key to



the success of this programme," says Bláthnaid. "The first pilot course was a partnership between a local authority, a local adult education provider, and local health services. Everyone worked together in developing the programme so that it was learner-centred. For example, the core tutors on the programme had expertise in good adult literacy work and experience in facilitating groups and in participative adult learning methodologies."

These tutors then worked in partnership with local health service professionals in planning the course. The health professional's expert advice and information ensured that the key health messages were accurate and up to date. The tutors also invited guest speakers who were experts in particular areas of health and wellbeing to make a contribution



Some of the work of the participants in the pilot programme

We were delighted to hear that as a result of being on the course, many of the participants said they had taken up some physical activity such as walking, pitch and putt, dancing and tai chi.



to the course. By liaising with the guest speaker before a session, at all stages the tutors were able to make sure that the health messages were appropriate or explain any important terminology that might be unfamiliar to participants. For example, tutors were able clarify what a phrase such as ‘take at regular intervals’ means, allow time for participants to talk, share experience and knowledge, and ask questions.”

IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING

“Having and maintaining good health and wellbeing is essential in today’s world,” says Helen. “We were delighted to hear that as a result of being on the course, many of the participants said they had taken up some physical activity such as walking, pitch and putt, dancing and tai chi. Others said they introduced new healthy eating habits into their daily routine after doing the course.”

“In the evaluation of the course people said that the course improved their confidence in communicating with healthcare providers. For example, having done the course participants felt better prepared to ask relevant questions during visits to their doctor.”

“There was also an intergenerational effect in that participants often ‘brought the learning home’. For example, a participant reported that she had removed sweets from her ‘treats’ cupboard in order to encourage her grandchildren to eat

more fruit.”

“Participants reported taking more ‘time for me’ – time to do what was necessary to look after themselves. Others reported becoming more socially involved, getting out of the house more often, meeting new people and joining in activities.”

“The great thing about this course is that it gives people an opportunity to reflect on health and wellbeing while gaining new knowledge,” says Helen. “Participants are now able to understand labels and instructions on food and medicine, and are more confident in communicating with health services and professionals. Some have

joined other community education programmes and are maintaining links with the community health and wellbeing resources they have learned about during the programme. Indeed some learners from the introductory course have even progressed onto a specially designed follow on 10-week Health and Wellbeing programme,” says Helen.

The National Adult Literacy Agency hope that the ‘**Well Now**’ guide will be a useful resource for ETBs to help with planning, designing and facilitating similar courses in their area.

*A free copy of **Well Now!** can be downloaded at www.nala.ie/wellnow.*



Successful participants in the pilot “Well Now” programme



Safety Management Workshops for ETBs



By Robert Moore, Risk Advisor, and Stephen Geary, Risk Advisor, IPB Insurance CLG

IPB Insurance CLG, in pursuit of its objective to protect and safeguard the interests of IPB members, has developed and rolled out a programme of safety workshops for Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to promote the embedding of a safer environment for students, teachers, trainers and others who form the ETB community.

The objective of the safety workshops is to integrate the practice of managing risk and working safely into the day-to-day business activities of specific groups of employees who are considered to be at risk of injury based on the nature of their work activities and based on claims experience arising from incidents involving such classes of employees. The ultimate goal is to arrive at a position where employees have fully integrated safe working

practices observing at all times the mantra – *if it's not safe, don't do it* – by embedding an effective risk management system.

INTEGRATING THE PRACTICE OF MANAGING RISK AND WORKING SAFELY INTO YOUR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

The Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs sets out the steps required in order to embed an effective risk management system as follows:

An effective risk management system identifies and assesses risk in the context of the operation of an ETB, identifies appropriate responses and then provides assurance that the chosen responses are effective (section 13).

The ultimate goal is to arrive at a position where employees have fully integrated safe working practices observing at all times the mantra – *if it's not safe, don't do it* – by embedding an effective risk management system.

This is consistent with IPB's recommended four-step approach to managing risk, in which we:

1. Identify Risks
2. Assess Risks
3. Manage Risks, and
4. Monitor and Report Risks.

Risk is inherent in the everyday activities of your ETB and the management of risk is an important part of the day-to-day responsibilities of management and staff. Managing risk is a process whereby decisions are made to accept a known or assessed risk, and to implement actions to reduce the consequences or probability of occurrence and increase opportunities for successful prevention, minimisation or avoidance of risk.

The workshops and associated advices are based strictly on the contents of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (“the Act”), and associated guidance from the Health and Safety Authority. The Act places responsibilities on both employers and employees, and it sets out protective and preventive measures to be taken, such as hazard identification and risk assessment. The workshop focuses on three key parts of the Act.



A key means of achieving IPB's objective of achieving a safer working environment is promoting compliance with safety requirements.

Part 1 of the Act provides that every employer shall ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees. When managing, and conducting, work activities, employers must ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees and prevent improper conduct or behaviour. This is to be achieved through the design, provision and maintenance of a safe working environment.

Employee responsibilities are set out at part 2 of the Act. These include a number of requirements whereby employees must:

- Comply with relevant statutory provisions;

- Cooperate with the employer;
- Not engage in improper conduct;
- Attend and apply training;
- Report inappropriate practices, defects and contraventions.

Protective and preventive measures are set out at part 3 of the Act and include hazard identification, risk assessment and safety statements as key measures. A key protective and preventive measure is the carrying out of a risk assessment in order to consider the adequacy of current management controls, assess the likelihood or frequency of any risk arising, and consider the impact and consequence of the risk if it does materialise.

The workshops are designed for and delivered to four distinct groupings:

- Practical Teachers – Woodwork, Metalwork and Technologies Teachers;

- Science – Science and Home Economics Teachers;
- Ancillary staff – Caretakers, Cleaners and Porters;
- Safety Coordinators – Principals and Safety Officers.

A key means of achieving IPB's objective of achieving a safer working environment is promoting compliance with safety requirements. The aim of facilitating this series of workshops is to:

- Reinforce, influence and promote positive behaviours;
- Promote the importance of managing risk and working safely;
- Prevent fatalities and serious injuries.

For further information about these workshops, contact Robert Moore on robert.moore@ipb.ie or telephone 01 639 5500.



QUAKE - QUALification Knowledge ECVET



Supporting the continuing professional development of FET practitioners



By Cathal de Paor, Mary Immaculate College, and Susannah Kelly, Limerick and Clare ETB

INTRODUCTION

Learner mobility is already currently one of the defining features of the Erasmus+ programme, but is becoming an increasing priority, especially in the further education and training (FET) sector. The mobility of learners has a crucial role in the ***New Skills Agenda for Europe***, launched in 2016, which calls on EU members states, social partners, industry and other stakeholders to work together to improve the quality and relevance of skills formation, and strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness. In addition, another initiative also launched in 2016,

Investing in Europe's Youth, proposes to further boost the potential of mobility in vocational education and training (VET) by enhancing support for long-duration mobility through a new activity, Erasmus PRO.

While learner mobility has been taking place for many years, there is now greater emphasis on the need for the learning from such mobilities to be recognised and validated as part of the learner's programme of study. This requires a clear agreement between the sending and the host institutions as to the learning outcomes that are to be achieved and

assessed during the stay abroad. This is where ECVET can play a major role.

ECVET (European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training) is designed as a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and where appropriate, accumulation of learning outcomes by learners in VET, thereby promoting transnational mobility and access to lifelong learning. The framework has been tested in pilot projects across the European Union with the intention of extending its application gradually to a wider range of VET qualifications, either existing or new,

as part of the **Education and Training 2020** initiative.

From monitoring ECVET implementation initiatives, it is being increasingly recognised that teachers and trainers are crucial to unlocking the potential of ECVET, and that these ‘teachers and trainers need additional/special competences to use learning outcomes for teaching and assessing’ (CEDEFOP, 2014, p. 90). Such a focus on the professional development of teachers reflects the realisation that, apart from the need for the necessary policies at a system level, it will be the FE practitioners who will ultimately drive the wider acceptance and adoption of ECVET. This provided the rationale for an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership, involving Limerick and Clare ETB and Mary Immaculate College (co-ordinator).

QUAKE

QUAKE involved seven partners from five European countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Ireland, and Spain) and aimed to

develop the capacity of VET teachers and their schools and colleges in the use of ECVET.

A total of 25 learner mobilities were organised, providing the basis not just for an exciting learning experience for the learners, but also for the professional development of over 30 teachers who participated in various professional development events. Collaboration in the project led to the production of a number of documents, including a guide for teachers, aimed at bringing the learning to a wider audience.

Opting to confine the project activities to a single vocational domain – horticulture – and one level – EQF level 4 (NFQ level 5) – helped to ensure the involvement of a sufficient number of teachers working in similar contexts, and thus increase the probability of getting these mobilities off the ground. This also explains the composition of the partnership, which included partners from ministries of agriculture, ministries of education,

higher education institutions involved in the preparation of VET teachers, and other horticultural professionals, as well as a VET provider with access to schools, colleges and enterprises involved in horticulture.

ACTIVITIES

The project included a range of activities over three years, beginning in September 2014 and continuing up until the end of August 2017. The first activity focused on examining the state of ECVET adoption and VET teacher education within each country of the partnership. An analysis of teachers’ professional development needs showed that the levels of awareness about ECVET varied greatly among teachers. This analysis then informed the design of the first programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in November 2015 to 25 teachers gathered in Orléans, France. This also enabled teachers to identify possible partners for the mobility of their learners later on in the project. The online training programme which followed built on the initial CPD, enabling teachers to continue exploring possibilities and developing relationships. Most learner mobilities took place in spring 2017, as the return of the growing season offered more scope for learners and teachers to match practical activities to the learning outcomes being targeted. The participating teachers reconvened for a second face-to-face week of CPD in March 2017, this time in Brussels. Various written results were produced along the way, including a methodological guide, which has formed the basis for a series of national dissemination events in each of the five countries.

REFLECTIONS

QUAKE aimed to provide the participating teachers with the knowledge and support required for using ECVET mobilities in their teaching of horticulture. In the process, this also enabled them to deepen their knowledge about teaching, learning and assessment more generally, particularly with regard to the alignment between

QUAKE aimed to provide the participating teachers with the knowledge and support required for using ECVET mobilities in their teaching of horticulture.





what is taught, what is learned and what is assessed.

Some of the mobilities involved a graded assessment of the learners' achievements against criteria for the targeted learning outcomes, while for others, the learning was assessed in a more holistic way, i.e., successful/unsuccessful. Some mobilities were also based on a placement or practice module from the learner's home programme, while other mobilities attempted to also target learning outcomes taken from taught modules. The way in which assessment results could be incorporated with the learners' other results in their home institution was an important issue. Supporting teachers in designing learning agreements that target outcomes from more than one unit or module is something that the project team would like to focus on in the future.

The project results also highlight the importance of national systems from participating countries in determining the nature and extent of ECVET use. As shown in the recent CEDEFOP monitoring report (2016), there is great diversity between countries with regard to their readiness to enable learners to transfer credit from mobilities undertaken abroad.

Part 2 of the ECVET user's guide, *Using ECVET for Geographical Mobility*, emphasizes the need for trust between teachers and institutions (sending and receiving) in preparing the ground for a successful ECVET mobility. A key focus in the CPD course therefore related to the assessment of learning outcomes (LOs), and the importance of having evidence that demonstrates achievement in a transparent way. The CPD meetings were invaluable in creating the professional relationships that made discussion on these issues possible.

CONCLUSION

There is so much about ECVET that is congruent with other trends in education in the 21st century, for example, greater integration between learning across multiple sites, and greater scope for teachers to create engaging learning pathways that take account of the individual learning needs of learners. There is also the added benefit for teachers that learning about practice in other countries prompts them to reflect more deeply on what they are already doing at home.

Overall, the project results show that

the implementation of ECVET depends on teachers 'on the ground' having the knowledge, inclination and support to embark upon partnerships with colleagues in other countries. As in the world of horticulture itself, future growth depends on action from the ground up, as well as from the top down. Support for relatively small-scale projects such as QUAKE is therefore crucial – helping to break new ground for those involved, and to cultivate it for greater returns in the future.

For more on QUAKE, see www.quakeprojet.eu/.

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The Patronage of Schools

How did the Irish system of school patronage evolve?

By Áine Hyland, Emeritus Professor of Education, University College Cork. Áine is a former Vice-President of University College Cork. She was a founder member of the Dalkey School Project in the 1970s and was Secretary and Chairperson of Educate Together in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The evolution of the school patronage system in Ireland is different in the primary and post primary sectors.

The patronage of primary (national) schools dates back to the foundation of the system in 1831 – although it was not until the Education Act of 1998 that the term ‘national school’ was enshrined in legislation. The majority of national schools have a patron and trustees (or a Trust) - usually two

separate entities.

Historically, post-primary schools were not set up under a patronage system. Most voluntary secondary schools were owned by religious orders or congregations or by diocesan trustees and are nowadays owned and controlled by trustees or a Trust, although some are owned by individuals or companies. The words Patron and Trustee are often used interchangeably in the case of post-primary schools.

THE EDUCATION ACT, 1998

The concept of patronage was enshrined in legislation for the first time in 1998. Section 8 of the 1998 Education Act defines the patron of primary and post-primary schools as follows:

- i)** *The person who at the commencement of this section is recognised by the Minister as patron of a primary school, and*
- ii)** *The persons who, at the*

commencement of this section, stand appointed as trustees or as the board of governors of a post-primary school and, where there are no such trustees or such board, the owner of the school.

The Act requires that the Minister for Education maintain a register of school patrons and that “the Minister enter the name of every patron in the register”. In the case of schools recognised after the commencement of the act, the patron shall be “the person who requested recognition of the school or a nominee of such person”.

The 1998 Act bestows considerable powers on the school patron. The patron determines the ethos or “characteristic spirit” of a school. The patron not only appoints the members of the board of management; he/she/they can also remove any member of the board for unspecified reasons, or dissolve the board. Section 14(4) states that “the members of a board (of management) shall ... be appointed by the patron of the school”. Under Section 16 of the Act, and subject to the consent of the Minister, the patron may

- a) for good and valid reasons stated in writing to a member of a board of management remove that member from that office, or
- b) If satisfied that the functions of a board are not being effectively discharged, dissolve that board.

The Act states that it shall be the duty of a board “to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents”. In carrying out its functions, the board shall

- uphold and **be accountable to the patron** for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school

as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives of the school ...

- **Consult with and keep the patron informed of decisions and proposals of the board**
- publish, in such a manner as the board **with the agreement of the patron** considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school

The 1999 Primary School Curriculum states that responsibility for deciding what form of religious or ethical education will be provided is a matter for the school patron¹. Although Section 15 (e) of the 1998 Education act recognises the distinct ethos and philosophy of individual schools, it nevertheless requires all schools to “have regard to the principles and requirements of a democratic society and have respect and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society”.

PATRONAGE OF PRIMARY (NATIONAL) SCHOOLS – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There are currently about three thousand primary (national) schools in Ireland. About 90% are under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church; about 5% are under the patronage of the Church of Ireland; a very small number of schools are under the patronage of the Presbyterian or Methodist Churches; two schools are under Muslim patronage; there is one school under Jewish patronage; there are about 90 schools in the Educate Together network; and about the same number under the

patronage of An Foras Gaelscolaíochta. Some special schools for intellectually and physically challenged children are under the patronage of a variety of organisations and bodies, including St. Michael’s House and other corporate bodies. In recent years, a small number of other patrons have also been recognised (e.g. John Scottus Trust), and there are now 12 Community national schools under the patronage of various Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

The patron determines the ethos or “characteristic spirit” of a school.

It is ironic that over 95% of Ireland’s primary schools are under denominational patronage – given that the specific intention of the national school system, when it was set up in 1831, was that it be a multi-denominational system – that it would “unite in one system children of different creeds” and that children of all religions would attend the same local school. The concept of patronage in the Irish primary or national school system was formally enshrined that year, when under the terms of the 1831 Stanley letter, applications for grant aid for schooling for the poor of Ireland were invited from “patrons” who would be willing to take responsibility for setting up and managing national schools. These patrons could be groups or individuals, landlords or Church leaders, but priority would be given to applications jointly signed by Catholics and Protestants.

In the early years of the national school system, applicants generally abided by the rules and included the requisite number and balance of signatures. In theory at least, the early national schools were religiously mixed, i.e. multi-denominational. However, as time went by and religious and political

1 Department of Education and Science, *Primary School Curriculum: Teachers’ Handbook*. Dublin, Stationery Office, 1999.

tensions resulted in a growing number of denominational applications, the Commissioners of National Education turned a blind eye to their own rules and regulations, and approved the granting of aid to single-denomination schools. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the majority of national schools were religiously mixed (i.e. their enrolment included both Protestant and Catholic children), but by the end of the century the number of religiously mixed schools was in decline.

70% of those surveyed were of the view that the time has come for Church bodies to have less influence over local schools

After 1922, the leaders of the new Free State were content to allow the Churches to maintain and strengthen their control of Irish national schools, and by the middle of the twentieth century, fewer than 5% of the 5,000 or so national schools in the Republic of Ireland were religiously mixed. Moreover, by the mid-1960s, the Rules for National Schools explicitly recognised the denominational nature of the national school system and made no provision to protect the rights of those who did not belong to the main Churches which were patrons of national schools.

This was an issue which had arisen on many occasions in the nineteenth century, when the Rules for National Schools specifically precluded the recognition of denominational schools. One of the main difficulties faced by the Government was how to devise a formula which would recognise denominational schools, while at the same time ensuring that children who did not belong to one of the

main Christian churches would not be discriminated against. In the 19th century, the Nonconformists were particularly vocal in objecting to any change in the national school system which might, as they saw it, effectively disenfranchise children who did not belong to a Church which owned and managed national schools².

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE 1970S – AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE POPULATION

Since the 1970s, there has been an increasing demand for multi-denominational schools, i.e. schools which are not under the patronage of a church or religious body. The first multi-denominational school set up since the foundation of the State was the Dalkey School Project, which opened in 1978. This was the first of the Educate Together schools, and there are now over 90 such schools in the country³.

In recent years, the population of Ireland has become ethnically, religiously and culturally more diverse. An increase in inward migration has contributed to this diversity, as well as an increase in the number of people who describe themselves as having no religion. In the 2016 Census of Population, 78% of the population identified as Catholic, compared to 84% in 2011. More than 12% of the population described themselves as having no religion or did not state a religion, and a further 3% were Orthodox, Hindu or Muslim⁴. In three counties (Dublin city, Dún Laoghaire and Galway city) more than one in three of the population are not Catholic. A recent international survey found that those in Ireland who considered themselves religious had fallen from 69% in 2005 to 47% in 2011 – the second greatest drop (after Vietnam) in the 57 countries surveyed⁵.

A survey carried out on behalf of EQUATE in 2017 found that more than 70% of those surveyed were of the view that the time has come for Church bodies to have less influence over local schools. A similar number were of the view that the law should be changed so that baptism should no longer be a requirement for school admission in state-funded schools. And a surprising 24% stated that they would not have baptized their child if it wasn't necessary to gain entry to school⁶.

Given that 96% of schools are under the patronage of churches to which just 81% of the population belong, it is clear that there is now an imbalance between the religious patronage and ethos of schools and the population. In response to the EQUATE survey, almost 50% of respondents stated that they would prefer not to send their children to a school under Church patronage⁷. Although in practice many schools under Church patronage have welcomed children from all faiths and none, there are fundamental issues arising from the private nature of school patronage and ownership, which remain unresolved.

ROLE OF THE STATE?

In 1996, the Report of the Constitution Review Group adverted to the failure of the State since 1922 to take a pro-active role in the establishment of primary schools, although the Irish Constitution clearly allowed for this option⁸. The report quoted Article 42.2 which states that “*parents shall be free to provide this education in their homes or in private schools or in schools recognised or established by the State*” and pointed out that “*no national schools have been established by the State since 1922*”.

The more passive role of the State,

2 D.H.Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: the national system of education in Ireland in the nineteenth century*, 1970.

3 <https://www.educatetogether.ie>

4 http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/population/2017/Chapter_8_Religion.pdf

5 McGarry, P., *Irish Times* 8 August 2012. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2012/0808/1224321714657.html>

6 <https://www.equateireland.ie/educationandresearch>

7 *Ibid.*

8 Report of the Constitution Review Group, 1996 on <http://archive.constitution.ie/constitutional-reviews/crg.asp>



until recently, in the provision of primary schooling in Ireland since Independence is in stark contrast to the actions of other democracies throughout the western world. In other OECD countries, privately-owned schools exist in parallel with schools which are publicly owned, controlled and managed. The extent to which privately owned schools exist and receive public funding, varies from country to country. In the US, for example, privately owned Church schools are constitutionally precluded from benefiting from public funding, although some concessions in his regard have been made in recent years. In some European countries on the other hand, subsidies to Church-controlled schools are generous. The proportion of the school-going population who attend privately run primary schools in OECD countries other than Ireland, varies from fewer than 5% to over 50%.

COMMUNITY NATIONAL SCHOOLS

In 2008, in response to a shortage of school places in some Dublin suburbs, the State set up a new type of primary school known as “Community National Schools (CNS)”. Twelve such schools are now in existence and since 2016, these schools are under the patronage of the relevant ETBs. When the schools first opened, the then Minister for Education conceded to the demands of the Catholic Bishops that Catholic faith formation classes (including sacramental preparation) would be provided within school hours in these schools. Some parents and teachers objected that separating Catholic children for RE would dilute the inclusive ethos of the schools and in particular might be seen as “the segregation of native white Catholic children from non-white newcomers”.

A pilot RE curriculum called “*Goodness Me, Goodness You*” (GMGY) was

introduced in these schools, and in order to provide separate faith formation classes for Catholic children within the school day, pupils were divided for part of the school year into four separate RE groups: (1) Catholics, (2) “Other Christians”, (3) Muslims, (4) Hindus, Buddhists, Humanists, Atheists and Others. The GMGY programme also made provision for sacramental preparation for Catholic pupils within the school day. This approach aroused public controversy once the details became known⁹ and there was ongoing discussion on the form of RE to be provided in recent years.

On 21st September 2017 the ETBI General Secretary Michael Moriarty announced that preparation for the Catholic sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation would no longer take place within school hours in Community National Schools.

9 O’Kelly, Emma (2012) - the following website includes links to numerous government files released to RTE: <https://www.rte.ie/news/special-reports/2012/0328/315388-educationfoi/>

10 Katherine Donnelly, “State-run primary schools will no longer offer First Communion class” in Irish Independent 22nd Sep. 2017.



This decision was described in the Irish Independent the following day as “a significant milestone in the long-running debate over the place of religion teaching in primary schools”¹⁰. The announcement was welcomed by the Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, and will hopefully bring to an end the controversy about the teaching of religion in Community National Schools. In this regard, it is of interest to note that when the first of the Educate Together schools were recognised by the Department of Education in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a condition of recognition was that “denominational instruction should be provided within school hours for those for whom it was required”. While initially the Educate Together schools attempted to meet this condition, over time it became impossible to implement, both for practical and ideological reasons.

FORUM ON PATRONAGE AND PLURALISM, 2011

In 2011, a Forum on Patronage and Pluralism, was set up by the then Minister for Education¹¹. The Forum consulted widely, and its report addressed a range of issues relating to patronage and diversity. The Forum called for the Rules for National Schools

and school policies and practices to be amended to ensure that schools comply with “the human rights requirements of national and international law” in relation to freedom of conscience. It also called for State action to provide a greater diversity of schooling options at primary level. Since parents seldom have a choice about where to send their child for primary schooling, the Forum concluded that a programme for all primary schools on *Education about Religion and Beliefs (ERB) as well as Ethics* be developed to ensure that children can receive education “about religions” as opposed to faith formation in primary schools. Responsibility for developing this programme was delegated to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

The Forum also recommended that in areas of stable population, where there is no overall shortage of school places but where there is a demand from parents for multi-denominational education, existing (Church) patrons should hand over their surplus school accommodation to a more relevant patron. In the five years since the report of the Forum was published, almost no progress has been made on this so-called divestment programme. The

number of church-run schools which have been handed over or divested in the past six years – either to Educate Together or to an ETB – remains in single figures. In recent months, responsibility for coordinating the divestment programme has been devolved to the ETBs. It will be interesting to see whether ETBs will be any more successful than the Department of Education and Skills in achieving the objectives of divestment. The recent reassurance given by the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to members of the Catholic Church led by Archbishop Eamonn Martin, that “divestment should only occur where the parents and prospective parents attending these schools want it to occur” does not provide any great prospects of success in the divestment process.¹²

WILL THE SCHOOL PATRONAGE SYSTEM CONTINUE?

How realistic is it in this day and age to assume that the national school patronage system will continue? To the surprise of many, support for school patronage was a theme which unified the otherwise diverse education partners during the debate at the National Education Convention in the early 1990s. Such support was not unexpected from the Churches and other patron bodies, but it was more surprising to hear it voiced by parents and teachers.

However, things have changed in the past few years. There is growing disillusionment by the electorate with the role and power of the Churches in Irish society, and parents who see themselves as disenfranchised by the current patronage system are becoming more vocal and insistent. It is in everybody’s interest to co-operate in the reconfiguration of patronage, and to support the rights of parents and families who should not find themselves in a position where they have no choice but to send their child to a school which is in “violation of their conscience and lawful preference”¹³.

¹² Marie O’Halloran “School divestment up to parents, says Taoiseach” in Irish Times 27th September 2017.

¹³ Bunreacht na hEireann, Article. 42.3.1.

Kerry Education and Training Board opens its first Community National School

A new chapter in primary education provision commences in Kerry

August 30th 2017 was a momentous and historical day for Kerry Education and Training Board (Kerry ETB) with the official opening of Two Mile Community National School (CNS) in Aghadoe, Killarney. Two Mile CNS is Kerry ETB's first national school, and its opening represents the commencement of a new chapter in primary education provision for Kerry ETB. The ETB has a long and proud record in the provision of post-primary and further education and training across the county and the opening of Two Mile CNS affords the ETB the opportunity to extend its educational provision further.

The story of the establishment of Kerry ETB's new Community National School at Two Mile is brief but eventful. It commenced in February 2017 when a local community action group from Aghadoe, Killarney, requested a meeting with Kerry ETB to discuss the community national school model. The members of the group were past pupils of the currently unoccupied Two Mile School and were very anxious to reopen the school for future generations in the area.

In early March 2017, a public meeting to discuss the school was attended by seventy-two local residents, a local

TD, several local county councillors, and Chief Executive Colm McEvoy and Director of Schools Ann O'Dwyer from Kerry ETB, as well as ETBI's Primary School Development Officer Séamus Conboy. Attendees at the meeting learned about the CNS model, and the role of the ETB in managing and supporting schools under its patronage, including school governance, teaching and learning, human resources and financial management, among others.

A few days later, having considered the patronage options available to them, the community action group wrote to the then Patron of the school,





the Bishop of Kerry, advising that the community had agreed unanimously that they wished to pursue the development of a community national school. In early June, the Bishop of Kerry wrote to the Department of Education and Skills indicating his desire to lease the school building at Two Mile, Killarney, to Kerry ETB for the provision of a community national school, commencing in September 2017. He also notified the community of this decision.

Two Mile Community National School became a reality for Kerry ETB on 12th June 2017, when the Minister for Education announced his approval for Kerry ETB to lease the school and open it as a Community National School under its patronage. Catherine Barry was appointed as Principal on 1st August 2017, and Pádraig Ó'Donnabháin¹ was appointed as Single Manager to support the opening of the School. A Board of Management was subsequently set up. The Kerry ETB Buildings Officer was extremely busy



over August, overseeing the painting and refurbishment of the school.

During July and August, a drive to get the message out to the community of Killarney about the opening of the school saw Kerry ETB organising several information and enrolment nights in the school and setting up information stands over two weekends in a busy shopping area of Killarney, and the local community action group going door-to-door in the area to promote the school.

The doors of Two Mile Community National School finally opened on 30th August, with nine pupils enrolled over all classes. A formal opening ceremony was attended by over 100 people, which included representatives of all the constituencies in the school, ETB representatives, and members of the local community and local government, who witnessed the symbolic presentations of the National Flag to the youngest pupil by a Captain of the Irish Army Reserves, and the Community National School flag to another student by Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Brendan Griffin TD. Both flags were then re-presented to Principal Catherine Barry.

Chief Executive Colm McEvoy thanked all involved with this very important initiative for Kerry ETB, acknowledging in particular the role of Director

of Schools Ann O'Dwyer, who led the establishment team, and that of Seamus Conboy of ETB, whose support was invaluable. "The opening of Two Mile CNS represents in a very real way the commitment of Kerry ETB to provide the full spectrum of

education opportunities to learners in Kerry and we look forward to the opening of more community national schools in the years ahead."

There are now ten pupils in Two Mile Community National School, with the level of interest in this national school model increasing with every passing week. Applications have been received from parents for the coming year and up to 2020, which is very positive. In addition, a new preschool has since opened in the school, an important addition for the local community and an expected provider of enrolments in the CNS in future years.

Kerry ETB looks forward to providing a quality primary educational experience for all its pupils and providing for diversity in the Two Mile and the broader Killarney area for many years ahead. Indeed, the ETB wishes to expand its CNS provision across the county with a target to establish at least four more community national schools over the next three years.



1 Former Primary School Inspector and author of recently published book 'Stanley's Letter - The National School System and Inspectors in Ireland 1831- 1922

Work-Live-Eat-Dance in Vienna

By Linda Higgins - Linda Higgins is a teacher at Inchicore College of Further Education and St John of God's Special School, Islandbridge, Dublin. She is currently undertaking research in the area of Special Educational Needs within the Further Education sector, as the final part of a Master's Degree in Education at Trinity College, Dublin.



This past July and August, twenty students from the dance studies course at City of Dublin ETB's Inchicore College of Further Education (ICFE) undertook three weeks of work experience in the culturally-rich city of Vienna. Classes were held within the historical Arsenal complex in the south-east of the city. This imposing site, designed in a mix of Byzantine and Neo-Gothic architectural styles, was originally a military barracks during the early part of the twentieth century. It has evolved over the years to now include rehearsal studios for the state opera theatre companies during the year and, annually, for four weeks in the summer, it is transformed into a home for dance. Many of the rehearsal spaces are literally the size of airport hangars, which contextualises

the sense of history that can be felt when moving through the venue. It was here that the students observed, learned and reflected upon each experience that was made available to them through the ImPulsTanz 2017 international dance festival.

Every summer since 1984, the ImPulsTanz festival for contemporary dance and performance has opened its arms to the international dance community. Dancers from beginner to professional level flock to masterclasses, research workshops and performances in a wide range of genres for the four-week festival. Just a small sample of the classes this year included Modern Jazz, Hip-Hop, Limón Technique, Feldenkrais, Parkour, Afro-Dance, Pilates, Bollywood,

Ballet and Contact Improvisation. The international faculty are experienced dancers, teachers and choreographers. This year, they included Joe Alegado, Janet Panetta, Bruce Taylor, Hagit Yakira, Kathleen Hermesdorf and Tony Rizzi, amongst many others. Each member of the diverse faculty shared



This fully-funded opportunity was made possible through the European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus). The name Erasmus underpins the values of the programme. The Dutchman, Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), who inspired the naming of this project, was a peripatetic scholar who travelled across many European cities, broadening and deepening his intercultural knowledge, long before this concept became the genesis of a European project. The Erasmus+ programme honours this germinal ethos by aiming to enhance education and training possibilities across Europe and to foster stronger links between education and eventual employment. In Ireland, the Erasmus+ programme is administered by the national agency, Léargas. See www.leargas.ie/programmes/erasmusplus/ for further information.



their artistry and craft with hundreds of dancers over the course of the festival.

Observing seasoned practitioners in action was a rare opportunity for the dance students to witness and embody such an experiential mode of work experience. Elite professionals have a way of altering the view of what is possible. Taking the six hundred and fifty-six muscles of the human body and seeing each artist's ability to transform these elements into tools for articulation on both a physical and metaphorical level created an intellectually and corporeally satisfying experience. This phenomenal level of talent was also matched by a real sense of the democracy that can be found in the movement experience. The common human asset of body and breath, which move to the best ability of each individual mover, was valued as a credible and interesting vehicle for expression. Students also had the opportunity to watch an immense number of live performances that were held during the festival. Each performance highlighted for them the eventual transition of dance from the privacy of the class space to the public domain of the stage and performance arenas.

The project's aims were manifested daily this Summer in Vienna by the dance students as they mingled with other learners and experienced excellence in both education and training. This deepened their own awareness of the multilingual and multicultural backgrounds which are at the heart of both ImPulsTanz and the Erasmus+ programme. Living in the city of Vienna for three weeks allowed the dancers and accompanying teachers to live, for a brief time, like local Viennese residents. Saturating themselves in the mundane aspects of negotiating shared living spaces with one another, transporting themselves around the city, overcoming language barriers, eating new foods and even being exposed to the fantastic variety of recycling waste disposal systems on offer. The learning potential from this experience goes far beyond their chosen occupational area of dance. Seeing how other cultures tackle the myriad of common universal issues faced by all people, allows for reflection upon best practice and other viable ways to live harmoniously in the worlds we each inhabit. This upcoming academic year will hopefully unfold all that has been learned this summer by the dancers through the support of the Erasmus+ programme.

The QQI Level 5 dance course at Inchicore College has been successfully co-ordinated by Dance Director, Marian Lennon, for over twenty years now. The dance course places emphasis upon the importance of contextualising the academic aspects of dance pedagogy alongside the practical requirements of movement education. Students are encouraged to use this work experience placement as a springboard to expand their potential as learners, dancers and teachers in a European and International context. Principal of ICFE, Donnchadh Clancy, and each member of the college staff collectively support and facilitate this ethos of educational development. Employing a variety of extracurricular mediums, including digital media, college open days, sporting, charitable and cultural events, enables the college community to create opportunities for students to develop their multiple and varied talents.

The tangible and intangible moments experienced by the dance students in Vienna bolsters the work undertaken by all our learners in the college and reflects the variety of ways within which lifelong learning can be successfully nurtured.

In Inchicore College, the Erasmus+ project is coordinated by European projects director, Miriam Dunne. Several other ICFE courses, including Early-Care and Education Studies, Social-Care, Business Studies, Sports and Exercise Science, Theatre Performance, Nursing Studies, Choreographic Studies, Tourism, Creative Writing, and Sports Coaching also undertake work-experience annually in a variety of European locations. The vibrant impact of this experience is felt throughout the college and permeates the attitudes of ICFE students in a positive and profoundly holistic manner.



After two years in an Irish school, three Palestinian sisters look back

By Helen English, Language Support Coordinator, Maynooth Post Primary School (KWETB)

Maynooth Post Primary School recently bade farewell to the three Deis sisters from Palestine who spent two years in the school and who returned to their homeland in June. When the girls' dad, Dia Deis, announced to the family that they were relocating to Ireland for a two-year period, the girls weren't initially enthusiastic about the move. They thought it would be disruptive of their education. However, they agreed to the move and arrived in Ireland in the summer of 2015, along with younger brother Mohammed, now aged 6, sister Nada, 11 and mum Inam.

Before their departure, Layla, now 13, Hazar aged 16, and Yasmeen aged 18, shared some reflections on the time they spent in Ireland.

Layla: "I've made some good friends here and I will really miss them. I will also miss my lovely teachers. They helped me so much. My English has improved so much and that is so important for me as I go back home. Ireland is so peaceful – I will miss that a lot. I enjoyed sharing my culture and traditions with the Irish students on Language & Culture Day. We represented Palestine for two years."

Hazar: "I loved the amazing beauty of Ireland. It's so green. We visited many beautiful places in Ireland. I will miss my teachers and the respect they showed us. They did an amazing job and I want to thank them all. I will miss my friends. The people here are so friendly and respectful. There is an openness to people from different countries. I'm so happy I came here. These are times I will never forget. When I go home I will encourage people to come and visit Ireland. Language & Culture Day was a great opportunity to tell people about my



Layla, Hazar and Yasmeen Deis

country. It made me feel proud of who I am and where I come from."

Yasmeen: "I love the atmosphere here in Ireland. The people are so kind and they respect your background. Nature here is beautiful. I've learned so much about Ireland and its culture. It's very different to Palestine; it's a whole new world for me. I will miss school a lot; I didn't expect I would say that. I have very mixed feelings about going home actually. I want to stay here but I love my homeland too. It's very multicultural in Ireland and I like that. Back home it's only Israelis or Palestinians. There's great diversity here. It enriches Ireland. In school I've met students from so many countries, Syria, Philippines, India, Spain and so many more. The experience of living here has changed me, I think. I've become more open-minded. I really respect my own culture and traditions but there are things I'd like to bring back to Palestine, like diversity, for example. Also the freedom I have here, the freedom to travel and move about freely, it's safe here and peaceful and there's no conflict. There are restrictions on travel and movement at home. I've felt so safe and secure here. People can be fearful

in Palestine. Living here for all of us has meant a break away from the conflict in Palestine. Still, I would encourage people to come to Palestine. It's home to the three monotheistic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It's a great place – but many people here confuse it with Pakistan!"

Layla and Hazar will both return to school when they return home. Layla will go into third year; she would like to become a teacher. Hazar will begin her final year in secondary school. After she sits her final exams, called *Tawjihi*, she will begin her third level studies. She would like to become either a nutritionist or a teacher. Yasmeen will sit her leaving Certificate in Ireland. She took seven Higher Level subjects, including English and Arabic, and her target was to get between 560–580 points. The results of her Leaving Certificate will determine which university in Palestine she studies at. She wants to become a computer scientist.



Bringing Instructional Leadership to Donegal

By Áine Cunningham, English Teacher, Abbey Vocational School, Donegal ETB

The work comprised the following The Instructional Leadership Programme is a programme for the professional development for school management and teachers, facilitated by ETBI and Emeritus Professor Barrie Bennett, University of Ontario, Canada. The programme is aimed at enhancing learning and teaching in our Schools.



As a model of professional development, it provides for engagement and submersion, modelling and practice and the development of collegial networks as a means of support and encouragement.

The programme endeavours to initiate and facilitate systemic change, across all sectors, by specifically aiming to:

- Encourage teachers to consciously modify their instructional actions so as to maximise student learning
- Facilitate the conscious and deliberate utilisation of teacher actions – skills, tactics and strategies
- Foster an awareness of how a teacher's actions can impact on student learning – motivation, novelty, authenticity, accountability, safety
- Acquaint, and re-acquaint, teachers with the extent to which learning is affected by diverse learning styles, multiple intelligences, 'at risk environment', etc.
- Enhance classroom management
- Encourage / support review – individual, subject, department, school

Further information can be found on www.instructionalleadership.ie/. Enquiries to admin@instructionalleadership.ie, or contact ETBI on 045 901 070.



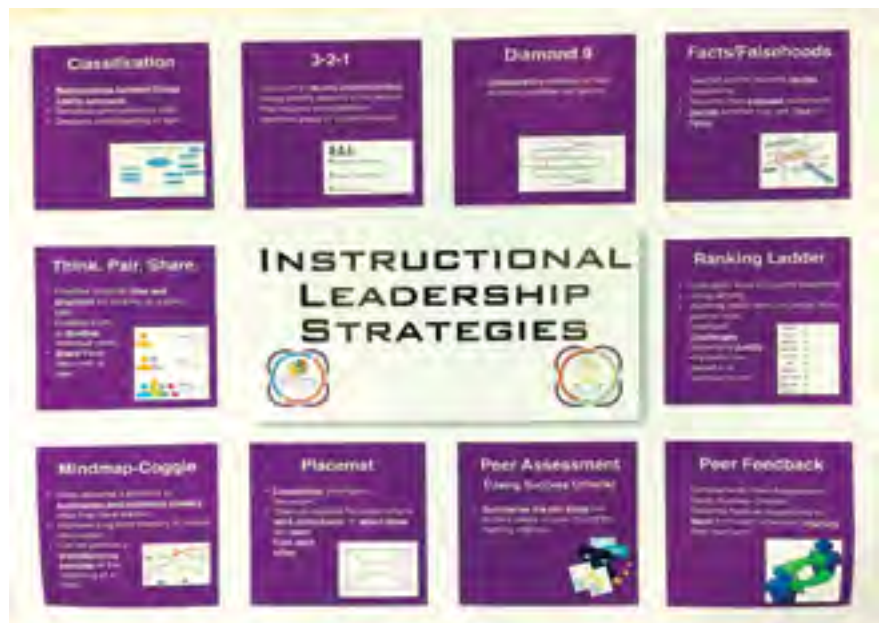
(L-R) Abbey Vocational School teachers Michael Leyden (Construction Studies), Áine Cunningham (English) and Christopher Hegarty (Science) with the Teacher Handbook

C.P.D. Three letters that can often elicit groans and eye-rolls from even the most enthusiastic of teachers. However, when you have a waiting list within a school for a certain type of CPD, you know it must be effective. Abbey Vocational School's first foray into the world of Instructional Leadership came in 2015 when our first cohort set off on the lengthy but worthwhile journey from Donegal to Carlow. Following three days of intense, yet fascinating, workshops, Instructional Leadership had become like Bowie lyrics to a 1980s teenager: complex, intriguing and leaving them yearning for more. Equipped with Prof Barrie Bennett's stern warning against returning to school in an overly enthusiastic fashion for fear of more eye-rolling, our colleagues simply began to incorporate the methodologies that they had encountered at their workshops with Barrie into their daily classes, and it wasn't long before enquiring heads began to take notice! Subtle changes were taking place in the classrooms of Abbey Vocational School and many staff members were interested.

A waiting list was soon drawn up as demand was certainly exceeding supply for remaining places on further cohorts. Our Principal and Deputy had the novel idea of creating an



Abbey Vocational School Teacher Handbook



Abbey Vocational School instructional leadership strategies

Instructional Leadership committee comprised of management and staff members engaging in Barrie's training. The committee meets regularly and has taken a number of steps in the past two years to improve instructional approaches within our school.

The committee conducted a staff survey on Instructional Leadership and the extent to which staff were being 'intelligent' about their instruction. It was felt that often as educators we are fully aware of 'what' we are delivering but less focused on 'how' we are delivering it. Fortunately, our Instructional Leadership experience coincided with training in Junior Cycle reform and our committee decided to use this training as a vehicle to move our Instructional Leadership plans forward.

With the new focus on a skills-based curriculum, we decided to select a series of methodologies that were promoted by JCT and indeed, incorporated by Barrie into his workshops. Having selected methodologies, our committee

collaborated on creating an Instructional Leadership booklet which was given to every member of staff in Abbey Vocational School. These booklets set out in detail how these methodologies can be incorporated into classes, and provide a series of A4 graphic organisers which can easily be photocopied for class groups. Large A3 and A2 poster were provided along with the booklets as visual reminders of the methodologies, as were Bloom's Taxonomy¹ posters.

Just two years have passed since our first cohort began their journey to Carlow and we have since had two more cohorts begin the insightful training with the compelling and accomplished Barrie Bennett. Just a short walk through the corridors of Abbey Vocational School is all it takes to recognise the impact of Instructional Leadership within the school. Traditional classroom seating arrangements have been altered in favour of group arrangements; noise and movement within the classroom signifies learning rather than disruption; the corridors are adorned

with reminders of our instructional practices and plans are in place for further departmental collaborations.

Last June, Abbey Vocational School teachers were given a wonderful opportunity to deliver a presentation at the Principal and Deputy Principals conference in Carlow, during which we displayed our Instructional Leadership booklets and posters. As privileged as we felt to be given this opportunity, we were even more thrilled to have the chance to hear the other presentations and to be part of a national collaborative community where an abundance of ideas was shared. We left with renewed enthusiasm and several plans for the coming year, and an awareness that the fateful letters CPD are nothing to be scoffed at!



1 **Bloom's taxonomy** is a set of three hierarchical models used to classify educational learning objectives into levels of complexity and specificity.

Active Citizenship and Intergenerational Learning

Meet role models, a grandmother and granddaughter from Clare

By Mary Flanagan, Family Learning Coordinator, Clare Adult Basic Education Service, Ennis

AN ACTIVE CITIZEN GRANDMOTHER

Ann Nicholas is a grandmother who was working in a care environment and who had to return to education after many years, forced to up-skill to retain her job. This was an anxious step for Ann into a formal learning environment after many years as a mother and grandmother. She had years of lived experience working as a carer, but regulations required her to gain a FETAC (now QQI) certificate to continue working. Ann bravely returned to learning with some hesitation. She got support from Clare Adult Basic Education Service (CABES) to meet her needs, and staff supported her during her learning journey. Ann gained her qualifications and continued working.

Ann gained a lot more besides during her time with CABES. Her self-confidence increased, to the point that she became interested in representing other learners. Having successfully put her name forward to become a National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) Ambassador for Learning, she now provides a female voice for learners in Co Clare at national level. She contributes to the decision-making process in NALA, who pass on advice and suggestions to the Department of Education and Skills which will impact on future learners across Ireland.

Ann has recently offered to work with CABES learners, to put together a record of their voices; she plans to have this work carried out by the end of 2017. She has also put her name forward as a Learner Representative on Limerick and Clare ETB. Ann has spoken on Clare FM local radio to encourage others to join adult learning opportunities and to share her own story. In September, Ann was invited

by NALA to meet President Higgins as part of International Literacy Awareness Week. Ann commented afterwards 'What an honour to meet President Higgins, an amazing man and the Áras was beautiful.'

AN ACTIVE CITIZEN GRANDDAUGHTER

While Ann was busy gaining her qualifications, her granddaughter Hannah Alcock was working in Transition Year in 2016/2017 on an enterprise project in St Caimin's Community School in Shannon. Her project Nana's Knits and Bits was inspired by her grandmother, who also encouraged her to go on Clare FM to encourage people to buy local handmade products and back Social Entrepreneurship and Irish Crafts.

Hannah has also been a member of Clare Comhairle na nÓg for the last number of years. She is the Clare Comhairle na nÓg representative on the Youth Committee of Limerick and Clare ETB. This allows her to represent the voice of young people in Clare and contribute to decisions that impact on youth across the ETB.

Hannah recently met Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Katherine Zappone, who visited Clare in September. Hannah discussed her experience as an active member of her youth centre with the Minister, where she volunteers at her local youth club, has taken part in an exchange to Northern Ireland, and attends Comhairle na nÓg meetings.

INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

Ann and her granddaughter Hannah are prime examples of how learning can be intergenerational. Ann encouraged Hannah to speak on Clare FM and learn something new, while Hannah inspired Ann with her



Ann Nicholas and Hannah Alcock, active citizens and lifelong learners



Ann Nicholas meeting President Higgins in September 2017

work in Comhairle na nÓg to become a Learner Ambassador and Representative. Ann and Hannah also demonstrate very clearly that learning is about much more than obtaining a certificate. Learning gives you confidence to contribute to your own development, the local community and to your country.

Former Donegal ETB learner receives global recognition

Prestigious City and Guilds Medal of Excellence and Lion Award Trophy for Joanne McKenna

By Dr Sandra Buchanan, FET Communications Coordinator, Donegal ETB. sandrabuchanan@donegaletb.ie



Joanne is pictured (centre) receiving a special presentation from Donegal ETB to mark her achievements in receiving the City & Guilds Medal of Excellence and Lion Award. (L-R) Michael Carr, Assistant Manager, Ballyraine Training Centre, Letterkenny; Paul Heron, lead tutor, Software Tester Application programme; Joanne McKenna; Anne McHugh, Chief Executive, Donegal ETB; and Guven Faracli, Contracted Training Officer, Ballyraine Training Centre, Letterkenny

Former Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB) learner Joanne McKenna from Glenfinn recently received global recognition for her achievements in completing the Software Tester Application programme run by Donegal ETB's Letterkenny Training Centre. Joanne was awarded a 2015-2016 City & Guilds Medal for Excellence which recognises the achievements of learners, lecturers and trainers who have achieved great results by producing exceptional work, going above and beyond what is expected to achieve their results. This global award programme, which has been running for over a hundred years, recognises not only excellent results but also those who show a true journey of progression throughout their qualification.

Joanne came to the course with no former

knowledge of software programming or testing, but her lead tutor, Paul Heron, recognised the excellence of her approach to learning and the application of this learning in the testing environment, and put her forward for the award.

Some two million learners worldwide participate in City & Guilds programmes every year; out of these two million, 87 Medals for Excellence are awarded each year, and Joanne was one of only three people in Ireland to receive the accolade for 2015-2016, putting her in the top 0.004% of City & Guilds learners worldwide.

Joanne received further global recognition for her achievements by also being awarded a coveted Lion Award. The City & Guilds Lion Awards event, their

most prestigious awards ceremony, acknowledges the 'best of the best' in a range of categories. Joanne received her award in the *International Learner of the Year (not in employment)* category at the Lion Awards ceremony in London on 15th June.

Winning a City & Guilds Medal for Excellence is an outstanding achievement. To receive a Lion Award on top of this was absolutely outstanding.

In April this year, a special presentation was made to Joanne in recognition of her exceptional achievements at Donegal ETB's Annual Awards.

Joanne is currently employed as a software tester and support with Firecloud 365 in the Co-Lab in LYIT.



Killorglin Community College embraces eTwinning & Erasmus+

By Donal O'Reilly, Deputy Principal, Killorglin Community College

eTwinning offers a platform for staff – teachers, head teachers, librarians, etc. – working in a school in one of the European countries involved, to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share and, in short, feel and be part of the most exciting learning community in Europe.

eTwinning promotes school collaboration in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) by providing support, tools and services for schools. eTwinning also offers opportunities for free and continuing online Professional Development for educators.

Launched in 2005 as the main action of the European Commission's eLearning Programme, eTwinning has been firmly integrated in Erasmus+¹, the European programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, since 2014. Its Central Support Service is operated by European Schoolnet², an international partnership of 31 European Ministries of Education developing learning for schools, teachers and pupils across Europe. eTwinning is further supported at national level by 38 National Support Services.

The programme is administered in Ireland by Léargas. More information on Léargas and its programmes can be found on www.leargas.ie.



Killorglin Community College students share their recipe for Irish stew with their European counterparts!

Killorglin Community College has recently 'dipped our toes' into the exciting world of eTwinning joined a vibrant community of progressive and enthusiastic educators with a goal of improving teaching and learning, shared throughout the European member schools.

Once signed up on the eTwinning website³ at, teachers, youth workers, and all staff working with young people in schools have access to a platform that facilitates communication, collaboration and continuous professional learning within this European learning community. Whatever your needs, objectives, level of skills or depth of knowledge, there is something for you within this community. It promotes school collaboration through mini- or large-scale projects through the use of ICT, and provides almost unlimited support and resources for those involved.

The introduction this year of the ability to include other schools within Ireland in European eTwinning projects has opened up even more possibilities and collaboration opportunities. This will facilitate the creation of a local network to share expertise from one school to another. This year has also seen the introduction of the 'eTwinning School' classification for those who have already signed up, participated in an eTwinning project and received a national quality label for their project. Hopefully this will remain, and be available in the coming years to those of us who are 'newcomers' to this community.

Professional Development is a high priority of eTwinning and there are many well-structured webinars, workshops and online courses offered throughout the year. The webinars are mostly of one hour duration and take place at 5 pm (GMT),

1 <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/>

2 <http://www.eun.org/>

3 www.etwinning.net

which may suit many staff. Some Killorglin CC staff have already participated in webinars relating to SEN, Learning Environments, eTwinning for Leaders and Introductions to eTwinning. These webinars have attendances ranging from 25 to 220, and some have been hosted by our Irish colleagues, Conor Galvin (UCD), Anne Gilleran (European Schoolnet), Tom Roche and Brendan Colleran (eTwinning Ambassadors). They are offered via Adobe Connect which facilitates slide sharing, audio/visual presentation, live commenting and participant interaction through Q&A sessions.

We have also participated in an online course of 80 hours duration and are currently involved in the design and delivery of a new course to be offered in June 2017. One staff member attended a workshop in Brussels last June, hosted by European Schoolnet in the 'Future Classroom' Lab, and entitled "Make Learning accessible: Special Educational Needs in my classroom." These workshops are an opportunity to meet with teachers from other European schools, share best practices, develop policies, 'show & tell' the positive work that is happening in our school, and develop working relationships that lead to successful eTwinning projects.

The eTwinning programme has many possibilities under the new Junior Cycle curriculum, and does not necessarily equate to an increased workload for already overburdened teachers. It can work in parallel to the great work that is already being carried out in schools, but complement it in a way that brings learning to life for the students. Teachers of modern European languages can add benefit to their teaching by linking in with students and teachers from other countries to share their aural and oral language skills. Cross-curricular links can be created with history and/or geography in this example, and a school eTwinning project could be developed.

For those with reservations that

4 https://youtu.be/ulBEo_u63iA



Killorglin Community College students share their recipe for Irish stew with their European counterparts!

eTwinning means extra work, more paperwork and long hours, please be reassured that this is not the case. From our experience at Killorglin CC so far, it can be as much or as little as you want it or need it to be. We completed our first eTwinning project over a period of three months with two partner schools from Spain and France. It is not of award-winning quality, but it was our first step, and the students involved thoroughly enjoyed participating in it. This was completed as an extra-curricular activity and was student-led, allowing the students to take control of their own learning. Take a look at one of our outputs at the link given here⁴, but please do not judge us!

We have now progressed to submitting an application under the current call for proposals for staff professional development in specific areas, and are hopeful of a positive result later this year. This will allow us to build on our school improvement plan (SIP) and assist in the targets set out in same. eTwinning

affords us the opportunity to explore best practice and new methodologies in the European setting, and enter into professional, educational dialogue with similar schools in other countries.

Ireland has much to be proud of in terms of its education system and, while we still have much to learn, we also have very much to share with our European colleagues. We are looking forward to further developing our links with European Schoolnet and the eTwinning community over the coming years and are happy to share our learning with other schools who wish to learn more. Our Deputy Principal, Donal O'Reilly (dp@killorglincc.ie), is an eTwinning ambassador for Léargas and is very happy to deliver workshops to those who wish to investigate the programme further.



EDISON Entrepreneurial Education Week in Glanmire Community College

By Grace Hickey, Glanmire Community College, Cork



Aaron O'Brien and Mark Moynihan work on the STEAM bridge building project.

Glanmire Community College celebrated its second annual EDISON (Educational Diversity and Innovative Skills ON Entrepreneurship) Education week from March 20th to 24th. Entrepreneurship is attracting growing interest internationally as a way to rebuild economies and stimulate growth. Both recent research and recommendations in Europe strongly support the belief that entrepreneurship education can be taught, and has a part to play in determining peoples' attitudes and developing the skills needed by the labour market. This is the underpinning view of the EDISON project.

The focus of the EDISON project in Glanmire Community College is on providing students with opportunities to develop the entrepreneurial competencies of **Teamwork, Creativity, Convincing, Adaptability and Risk-taking**. Our team of thirteen teachers and Transition Year students worked diligently to prepare an action-packed week which included the following activities.

DRAGON'S DEN FOR FIRST YEARS

The Transition Year EDISON team planned a Dragon's Den style

project to give First Year students an understanding of the EDISON programme as well as the opportunity to use these skills in workshops. Students were divided into teams and given a week to come up with creative ideas for a new product relating to a specific theme. Each team then made a presentation to a tough panel of judges to convince them that they had come up with the winning product. Creativity flowed as the First Years came up with innovative concepts for products, some of which have not yet been invented.

'LEARNIT' ROBOTICS WORKSHOPS

Covering all of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects, this LEGO Education based workshop for two Second Year groups gave students the opportunity to become engineers, researchers, analysts and designers. Through a practical and hands-on approach, students learned to take measurements, analyse data, make predictions, solve problems and design solutions. Students worked in teams to build and test their projects using LEGO Education kits, worksheets, tablets & laptops.

STEAM BRIDGE BUILDING PROJECT

A team of dedicated teachers developed a STEAM project for Transition Year students, which incorporated Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. This project gave students with aptitudes for these STEAM subjects the opportunity to research, design, take measurements and build a model bridge to scale. Students worked in teams with their lead teachers to carefully plan each stage of the project. The Art students researched and designed a bridge for the Cork dockyards. Their design was presented to the Maths and Science teams who took measurements, tested viability and adapted the design to ensure it was workable and set to scale. The final



Fifth Year Physics students with their wind turbine building project



Ciara Judge with Fifth Year students Caolann Maher, Emma O' Driscoll, Sarah O' Sullivan, Adam Collins, Max Callanan



The STEAM bridge building team



Leigha Barry and Sean Kelleher enjoy the Robotics Lego workshop

design was presented to the Technology and Engineering teams who worked tirelessly for a number of days to build a model of the bridge. Throughout this exciting and challenging project, both the teachers and students involved got plenty of opportunities to use the EDISON skills of creativity, teamwork, adaptability, convincing and risk-taking when completing their stages and passing the project on for the next stage of completion.

WIND TURBINE MODEL BUILDING PROJECT

A group of Fifth Year Physics students were invited to take part in a wind turbine model building competition run by Brookfield Renewable Energy. Students were divided into two groups and asked to appoint a project manager to lead the group. Armed with model building packs, the students' creativity, teamwork and adaptability skills were tested when they were challenged to

design and build efficient model wind turbines.

CIARA JUDGE SPEAKS TO FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS

Ciara Judge inspired Fifth Year students with her 'If I can do it, anyone can!' attitude as she outlined the journey she has followed leading to her current successful career in Silicon Valley while pursuing full time studies in UCC. Ciara is a nineteen-year-old scientist and entrepreneur from Kinsale. Over the past three years, her research on using natural soil-living bacteria to increase crop productivity has seen her win the BT Young Scientist competition, the EU Young Scientist competition, and the Google Science Fair. In September 2014 Time Magazine named her one of the 25 most influential teens worldwide. She was also listed by TheJournal.ie on their '20 under 20 to watch for 2015', and by Huffington Post as one of the Most Fearless Teens of

2014. Her message to the Fifth Year students was clear:

"If you want to be successful in any walk of life, you have to work hard, learn to adapt when things go wrong and never give up. Success takes commitment, and anyone can be successful if they work hard enough."



ESS graduates march to success in Limerick

By Margaret Hanrahan, Training Standards Officer, Limerick & Clare ETB Raheen Campus

In July 2017, fifteen learners from a newly-developed Employment Support Scheme (ESS) graduated at Sarsfield Barracks in Limerick. These learners had committed to, and successfully completed, a ten-week intensive and demanding residential course, based in Sarsfield Barracks and LCETB Raheen Campus. The programme was developed by LCETB and the Defence Forces as part of a new Employment Support Scheme, a joint initiative between the Department of Defence, the Defence Forces, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP)¹, and ETBI.

The group of learners came from a thousand-strong panel of long-term unemployed young people in the Mid-West Region who had applied to take part in this initiative, which involved a complete change of lifestyle, combining physical and motivational development, and academic training.

The course was organised through partnership between Defence Forces Ireland, Sarsfield Barracks; Limerick & Clare ETB; DEASP; INTREO Service Limerick; and Ballymun Jobs Club.

The programme offered training in a significant range of skills in the areas of physical fitness improvement, confidence and adventure training, foot drill, basic medical training, HACCP, citizenship, personal organisation, lifestyle and wellbeing, STEPS to excellence for personal success, Safepass, interpersonal communications and a QQI level 5 Certificate in Information and Administration. All the learners delivered presentations outlining their

personal experiences and attainments from the programme, and achieved full certification.

The participants agreed that peer support and becoming part of a team aided their self-development. One participant commented in her presentation: “The course has been an amazing experience. I would love to do it all again, even though it was hard at times. I feel like I have come a long way since I first started, both mentally and physically. I have overcome fears and have done things that I could never have done. I would recommend anyone

to do this course. You meet amazing people and friends for life. I now have more confidence and courage from doing this course.”

Ballymun Jobs Club provided individual support to the group during the programme and evaluated personal development pre, during and post course. Their post assessment findings revealed that the intervention (the ESS Programme) had a significant effect on self-esteem, hopefulness and perceived distance travelled (using the Cantrell Ladder measure of self-perceived life satisfaction).



Damien Lynch receives award for Most Improved Fitness

1 From 2nd September 2017, the Department of Social Protection was re-named the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP)

Well done to the graduating “recruits”: Caleb Brennan, Laura Dee, Dylan Desmond, Sean Hayes, Raymond Heelan, Dean Hughes, Damien Lynch, Donal McNamara, Sean Mangan, Pdraig O’Connell, Robert O’Leary, Jack O’Shaughnessy, Sean Price, Viktorija Ruthkovska and Jessica Stokes. All the staff involved, in particular Suzanne Kiely and Dave Barry of LCETB Raheen Campus, and Sgt Patrick Canty, Lt Dermot Considine, Comdt Ian O’Brien and all the staff of B Company, 12 Infantry Battalion, Sarsfield Barracks Limerick, are very proud of your achievements!



Winner of Academic Achievement Award
Sean Mangan



ESS Group Graduation

Ballyfermot Training Centre oil fired up for new OFTEC Course

By Bernard Morley, Training Standards Officer, Ballyfermot Training Centre, City of Dublin ETB

From September 2017, Ballyfermot Training Centre will be delivering a range OFTEC approved courses covering the servicing of oil fired appliances in conjunction with the European Registration Scheme.

While the Training Centre has a rich history in delivering apprenticeship and industrial programmes within the Republic of Ireland dating back to the 1970s, it is viewed by many as one of the most forward thinking and progressive training facilities in the state. The diversity of programmes within the centre and its approach to learning

has resulted in a range of international awards being presented to the centre, including City & Guilds International Centre of Excellence for Europe, from which a delegation was invited to Buckingham Palace to meet HRH Princess Anne.

When asked about the Centre’s continued success and the new suite of OFTEC qualifications due to commence in Ballyfermot Training Centre, Manager Mr Paul Fennelly said, “It’s exciting times in the Centre! With the number of learners entering apprenticeship programmes rising across the disciplines, Ballyfermot Training



Instructor Eamon McGlade giving a demonstration to a participant

Centre is now offering apprenticeships in Carpentry and Joinery, Electrical, Motor Mechanic, Painting and Decorating and Vehicle Body Repair, in addition to a range of other construction industry courses within the centre. With the inclusion of these new OFTEC programmes along with our Domestic Gas Safety programme, we are seen by many as one of the key providers of training nationally.”

There is more than one route to a successful future

Report by Dylan Brophy, LCA 2 Student, Youthreach, Kilmallock Road Campus (LCETB)

This year we were visited by **S**indy Joyce, a PhD student with the Department of Sociology in the University of Limerick, currently researching how anti-Traveller racism shapes young people's use of and movement through urban public space. **S**indy visited to talk about Traveller rights but she spent most of the visit telling us about her own education experience. It was really interesting because she didn't go the traditional route of going straight to college after school.

Sindy told us she dropped out of school after her Junior Cert. The next September, **S**indy's parents never pressured her to go back to school. Instead her mother was really clever and gave **S**indy loads of housework to do. **S**indy soon got tired of this and went back to school because it was easier than doing all the cleaning. She finished her Leaving Cert but she never applied for college. She told us how her teacher never gave her a CAO form



Sindy Joyce with learners and staff in Youthreach FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus

because she said she wouldn't need it, and how she didn't have the confidence to argue the point. She just accepted it because she was told that Travellers don't go to college.

A few years later **S**indy did go back to do a course and realised that she was really good at learning. She continued on

doing her degree and masters and is now studying for a PHD. **S**indy now advocates for Traveller rights and is campaigning for Travellers to be recognised as an ethnic identity within Ireland. I think she is really inspiring and it is hard to imagine her as the same girl who was once forgotten about when her teacher was giving out forms for college.

Erasmus+ work placements at Galway Technical Institute

Well done to Galway Technical Institute's visiting Erasmus+ students from Madrid who recently completed a very successful Healthcare work placement with elderly clients at St Marys Residential Care Centre in Galway City. The picture shows the students with GTI Healthcare Teacher, Ann Jennings. Students from Healthcare Assistant Level 5 courses in GTI will travel later in the year to Madrid for work placements, also as part of the Erasmus+ programme.



GTI is the largest provider of Erasmus+ placements in Ireland. Over eighty students from GTI will participate in Erasmus+ work placements in Europe between October 2017 and May 2018. For more information, visit www.gtieurope2017.weebly.com.



“It’s never too late to get an education”

By Maria Nolan, IR/ Legal & Communications, Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

In June 2017, Denis North sat with his fellow Sixth Year students for his Leaving certificate examinations in English and Geography at Kennedy College, New Ross. The previous week, Denis was awarded an achievement award for Lifelong Learning on Kennedy College Awards Day.

When he was just 16 years old, Denis left education after completing the Intermediate Certificate in 1960, as he had no choice but to go out and get work to earn money to support his family. He worked for nearly 48 years in a finance company before receiving his pension at the age of 63. Lacking the confidence to look for new employment, Denis decided to return to education, “to get involved with something instead of sitting around scratching my head.”

He attended a Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme to learn about computers, communications, and culture and history. Then an opportunity arose for Denis to go on to complete a Post Leaving Certificate course in Information Processing at Kennedy College, New Ross. He followed that with the Office Management course, then while studying he decided to try Mathematics at Leaving Certificate level in 2014. Denis studied the Leaving Certificate Maths curriculum independently (with

a little help from one of the teachers at Kennedy College) and went on to pass the examination in 2014. The following year, he decided to follow his love of History and ended up with an A in the Leaving certificate History examination.

Denis then applied to go into Fifth Year and follow the curriculum with the other Fifth Year students. He had no problem integrating with his fellow students as he had been involved in youth work for years, dealing with young people between the ages of 13 and 18. As a result, he enjoyed sitting in class with them and became totally involved in school life. His fellow students also enjoyed his company and he was a source of inspiration to them.

By the time the Leaving Certificate came along last year, he decided to sit English and Geography. Following all his hard work for the previous two years, Denis was delighted with his H3 result in Geography and O3 result in English. He has returned to complete Irish and Art to make up the full range of subjects for his Leaving Certificate.

Looking back at the school setting in the 1950s, Denis says that it is a lot easier for students to learn in today’s world because the education system has widened out, with



Denis North is a Leaving Certificate student at Kennedy College in New Ross.

a greater range of text books and sources of information.

Despite experiencing serious health problems during his time studying for his Leaving Certificate, Denis has persisted with his aim of “getting an education”. He says that any adult can successfully go back to education if they have a positive attitude and are not afraid of hard work. Denis encourages any adult to take their courage in their hands and have a go.

GTI and Macnas

Galway Technical Institute (GTI) Second Year Hairdressing students worked with the Sarah Mahon Professional Hairdressing team to create these magnificent styles for the Macnas Parade in Galway in October.



LCETB Gaelcholáiste is Ireland's first Apple Distinguished School

Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh named 'Apple Distinguished School'

By Donncha Ó Treasaigh, Principal, Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh, Limerick

Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh, a post-primary school in Limerick and Clare ETB, was selected earlier this year as an *Apple Distinguished School* for the period 2017-2019, the first school in Ireland to be selected for this recognition. In May this year, the Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton TD, unveiled a plaque presented to the school by Apple Inc. Apple Ireland was represented by Liam Donohoe, Country Manager and Éanna Ó Brádaigh, Business Development Manager for Education. LCETB was represented by its Chief Executive George O'Callaghan, and representatives of the entire Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh community also attended. Other distinguished guests included Dr Mary Shire, Vice President Research, University of Limerick; Professor Teresa O'Doherty, Dean of Education, Mary Immaculate College; and Timmy O'Dwyer, Site Leader, Dell EMC Limerick Campus and Executive Director, GLOBAL Service Parts Operations Dell.

The announcement coincided with the Department of Education and Skills event, **Focus on the School of the Future – the Role of ICT in Education**, at which the steps the Government is taking to make Ireland the best education and training system in Europe by 2026 were announced.

Minister Bruton set out the Government's detailed Action Plan for 2017 based on the objectives outlined in the **Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020: Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment** which was published in October 2015. Minister Bruton said: "Our Digital Strategy for Schools sets out a clear vision that is focused on realising the potential of digital



Senator Maria Byrne, Chair of the Board of Management, Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh; Timmy O'Dwyer, Dell; Liam Donohoe, Apple Ireland, Dr Mary Shire, University of Limerick; Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Education and Skills; Donncha Ó Treasaigh, Principal, Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh; Professor Teresa O' Doherty, Mary Immaculate College and Éanna Ó Brádaigh, Apple Ireland

technologies to transform the learning experiences of students. While we are introducing coding and computer science into the curriculum, we must also invest in the ICT infrastructure of our schools. That is why we have made €30m in ICT grants available to schools this year, and in the next four years we will invest a further €180m in ICT in our schools."

AN EARLY ADOPTER OF THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LEARNING AND TEACHING

Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh was one of the first schools in Ireland to embrace the use of technology in learning and teaching, initiating the use of iPads in 2011 with its Transition Year pupils. Since 2011, all staff members have been provided with an iPad and MacBook, and the students from First Year to Sixth Year use iPads in their learning and development to enrich their academic and social development.

According to Donncha Ó Treasaigh, Principal of Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh, who led the application process, "The adoption of Apple technology at Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh has been one of the most significant and empowering initiatives of this school's development since it opened in 2006."

"The school motto features the slogan 'Ag forbairt le chéile' which means 'Developing Together'. It is very appropriate to describe how we develop as learners and how we embrace technology to learn in a more enjoyable and effective way. Change is constant, and we aim to be agents of change using the latest tools to benefit our learning community," Donncha said. "Our learning and teaching environment has been continuously enhanced with the use of technology because we believe – as do our students and parents – that learning is enriched and is more personal to each

child in the school. This has been at the heart of the learning and development vision for the school's community."

COMMUNICATING THE VISION TO THE ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The school's leadership had charted a clear and detailed plan on the stages of development of iPad learning in Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh, and consulted widely with all its stakeholders. The 'buy-in' of parents and the wider school community – board of management, administrative staff, and of course teachers – was essential in sustaining the goals of using technology in the school to transform students' learning outcomes. It was essential that the entire school community understood and appreciated the vision and objectives of transforming the school's culture from a traditional teaching and learning model to one where learning and teaching are transformed with the powerful benefits of enriching educational content using iPad."

"The school recognises that learning is a deeply personal and unique experience for each student," says Donncha. "Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh strives to equip each student with the necessary skills to engage with the world around them using the best and most compelling learning strategies that reflect the way they learn in a modern world. Using iPad allows students to map and chart how they learn through communication with others and their teachers, recording and noting learning moments, creating resources to capture their learning and skills acquisition and development. Students have become more effective in critical thinking, as they can easily draft and redraft their work to demonstrate their learning. Central to our vision for iPad, we have moved student learning outside of the traditional classroom setting. We have transformed rooms by creating different types of learning spaces in classrooms. We have added more activity-based and enquiry-led learning into lessons."

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE AN APPLE DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL?

The Apple Distinguished School designation is reserved for programmes that meet criteria for innovation, leadership and educational excellence, and demonstrate a clear vision of exemplary learning environments. Apple recognised Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh as exemplary in its integration of Apple technology into learning and teaching across the entire school for the benefit of all its students and staff. Principal Donncha Ó Treasaigh comments: "The selection of Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh as an Apple Distinguished School highlights our success as an innovative and compelling learning environment that engages students and provides tangible evidence of academic accomplishment."



Distinguished School

Deansrath students stand up to animal abuse

TY students in Clondalkin want to start a national conversation that animal abuse is never acceptable!

By Matt Corbett, Teacher, Deansrath Community College, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, mattcorbett@deansrathcc.ie, 085 123 5685

Over €400 was raised as part of a Halloween Costume event organised by Deansrath Community College Transition Year students. The event was part of an ongoing campaign by the students to increase their knowledge in animal care and to speak out against abuse of animals. The students, who are completing a TY module entitled 'Animal Welfare', are being supported by the ISPCA to create a greater awareness of the role of education in preventing animal abuse.

Teacher Matt Corbett who designed the programme, said that "the students are very enthusiastic about the module and determined to start a national discussion that serious action needs to be taken to address abuse of animals." *Clondalkin Animal Aid and My Lovely Horse Rescue* are among the organisations who will benefit from the recent fundraiser, and the students are determined to continue to take action throughout the year, and carry the skills developed into their future lives.



Deansrath students Lyndsey, Jenis, Adela and Sarah helped to organise the Halloween Costume event



Creating a little piece of inside – outside!

Finding an innovative way of bringing learning 'al fresco!'

By Angela McCrossan, Adult Literacy Organiser CMETB. B.Sc. Counselling and Psychotherapy. Angela has a special interest in creative learning and can be contacted at angelaMcCrossan@cmetb.ie.



Camphill Communities of Ireland is part of an international movement working with people with intellectual and other kinds of special needs. In the Republic of Ireland, eighteen Communities have been established and are home to around 500 people, communities where individuality is recognised, and everyone's contribution is valued. The centres are continually adapting to provide a healthy environment in which to live, learn and work with others.

Cavan and Monaghan ETB, through their Adult Literacy Service, continues to provide educational support to Camphill residents in Ballybay, Co Monaghan, and tutors have shown initiative and creativity in making learning meaningful, fun and inclusive.

Keen to think outside the box, a group of students from Camphill Community and their tutors recently began to look at how best to apply their combined learning and creativity in designing and creating an outdoor space for all to enjoy.

There was an area on the 'to do' list for quite a while, and staff had been dreaming of the day when the rumble and concrete chippings would be cleared away, leaving way for a little sanctuary for all to relax and enjoy. As it was, this outdoor space was dilapidated, but what it had to offer was a real sun trap and an extension of inside outside, with winds deflected and moved on to the nearby drumlins.

The idea was to create a safe space where students could rest, chat, read, watch nature unfold, contemplate, be creative, explore, and feel a sense of pride at having had a key role in creating 'a little piece of inside – outside!'



Work is well underway – learners on lunch break!

With the summer sun encouraging those indoors to get out, students were guided to explore their environs, to scratch their heads and look for new ways to integrate classroom learning into tangible possibilities, 'al fresco!'

For those involved in the project, it was exciting to be part of the goings-on: eyes widening, body language leaning in, chatter vibrating and enthusiasm flourishing; pencils lodging behind ears and chins being rubbed as thinking took place and the potential of the area was surveyed. Measuring tapes were run up and down and in and out, of what could only be described as abandoned nooks and crannies. With all hands on deck, each person found their niche, and so knees bent, arms stretched wide, feet stepped out boundaries, and an image of what 'could be' began to emerge.

Clearance of the site began, and shovels and spades filled wheelbarrows, barrowloads were toted away, wood was sawn, nails were hammered, screws were screwed, and there was the odd wipe of a brow and a welcome cuppa.

Day by day this construction site began to take shape, as a damp proof course was laid, decorative paving stones were poured, and the eagerly awaited decking and veranda were secured and weather-proofed.

It was really lovely to watch this team move in synchronicity, in a common gesture of mutuality, the weaving of "a pattern of reciprocal relationships, wherein deeds find their corresponding echoes in the actions of the other" (from Camphill Mission Statement).

This little haven is a work in progress, with much done and more to do. When seasonal bulbs and shrubs are planted, and perhaps some outdoor furniture is installed, these will add a little finesse to this special space, and those involved can stand tall with pride and satisfaction.

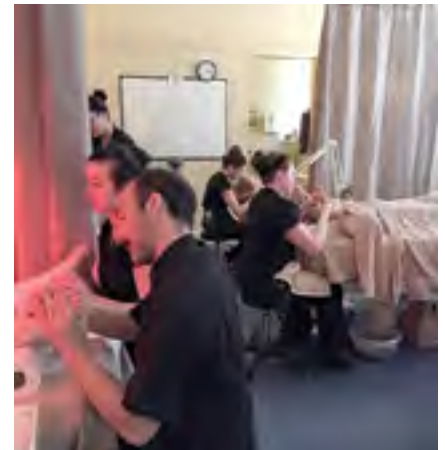


New Diploma in Complementary and Sports Injury Therapies at GTI

By Catherine Brennan-Fahy, Press Officer, Galway Technical Institute



Students on the CTI Complementary Therapies course



GTI students treating clients

A new course offering a unique and dynamic combination of five prestigious and highly sought-after ITEC Level 3 Awards has been developed by Galway Technical Institute specifically to meet the demands of both industry and employers.

Students who complete the course will graduate with Diplomas in Sports Massage, Holistic Massage, Spa Therapies, Anatomy & Physiology, and Body Treatments. With these internationally recognised

qualifications, students will be equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to gain employment in therapy clinics, spas, salons, sports clubs, healthcare or other settings, or to set up their own business. They can also progress further to Level 4 ITEC awards, such as ITEC Level 4 Diploma in Spa and Salon Management or ITEC Level 4 Certificate in Sports Massage Therapy.

Students on this course are given ample opportunity to enhance their

practical skills in GTI's popular in-house Poise salon. This applied learning allows students not only to master the practical components of the course in a supervised environment, but also to develop many key transferable skills such as customer service, communication and professionalism, an integral element of the course in giving the graduates the confidence and skills to enter directly into employment or to establish their own business.



TEL at GTI

Technology Enhanced Learning to equip students to learn effectively and efficiently

In the SOLAS strategy for *Technology-Enhanced Learning in Further Education and Training 2016-2019*, Technology-Enhanced Learning is defined as "using technology to facilitate and support innovative teaching and learning practices." A working group in GTI is examining various teaching and learning models and approaches to update for the digital age, in order to equip students to learn effectively and efficiently using digital technology. This will include technology-enhanced programme design and learning content.

Students and teachers in the Art, Beauty & Hairdressing departments in Galway Technical Institute are using new iPad Pros for technology-enhanced learning.



Striving for the Best Hospitality Training in the World in the Coolest Place on the Planet with Donegal ETB'S FET Service!

Dearbhla Kelly, Adult Guidance Counsellor, Donegal ETB - dearbhlakelly@donegaletb.ie



Donegal ETB Catering Traineeship learners visiting Solis Lough Eske Castle Hotel.

'With a weather-nibbled coast spotted with sea stacks, Blue Flag beaches and offshore islands, Donegal is a land that feels undiscovered. Last summer, scenes for "Star Wars: Episode VIII" were filmed on the Inishowen Peninsula. But this area of Ireland is also expecting 2017 to be a big year; there's an array of reasons to visit, from surfing beaches in Magheraroarty and Ballyhiernan Bay to Horn Head — a driving, walking or cycling loop that squeezes the 1,600-mile Wild Atlantic Way into a 4.5-mile nutshell.'

This was the accolade by National Geographic that elevated Donegal to 'the coolest place on the planet' earlier this

year. Donegal ETB's Further Education and Training (FET) service is aware that this accolade, along with the success of the brand of the Wild Atlantic Way, will generate great interest in the area from a world-wide audience. Donegal is preparing itself for a record-breaking year in tourism in 2017. The FET service has already been encouraged by the 8% growth rate in the industry in 2016 which recognised the success to date and future potential of the Wild Atlantic Way branding initiative; as a consequence, it has begun to develop its offerings in terms of tourism-related courses which will allow people to capitalize on new employment opportunities. The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) staff team

have established three tourism-industry related QQI L4 Major Award courses in Hospitality and Front Office Skills in three locations. Training Services also established a City and Guilds Diploma in Culinary Skills and Catering and a QQI Major Award in Hospitality Operations to meet the shortage of staff in the industry.

Donegal ETB understands the value of collaboration at local level. In order to enhance the employability of our learners, we liaised with local industry in order to establish the needs of the hoteliers and tourist providers, consulting with Fáilte Ireland, the Irish Hotels Federation and various hotel owners. Additional training modules, site visits

and guest speakers were identified as important in responding to the needs expressed by the industry representatives. The QQI L4 qualification has been supplemented with bespoke training from leading experts in the sector in areas such as property management, social media training and customer service training, as well as arranging guest lectures. Presentations on the Wild Atlantic Way were organised through Fáilte Ireland, on the concept Signature Discovery Points and the value of an experience that leaves tourists wanting more.

Each class has visited hotels in their local area for 'A Day in the Life of a Hotel'. The catering programmes visited Solis Lough Eske Castle Hotel, a luxury 5-star hotel which has scooped up countless awards and now ranks as the number eight hotel in the world. The photos show HR Manager Catherine Monahan of Solis Lough Eske Castle Hotel sharing insights on attitude, grooming, customer service and excellence in catering that constitutes superior hospitality. Head Chef Cedric defines 5-star dining as he takes the learners through his tasting menu.

Meanwhile, Deirdre McGlone, Manager of Harvey's Point Hotel, which was named Best Hotel in Ireland and 10th Best in Europe, instilled in our Hospitality and Front Office Skills learners the value of creating a memorable experience for guests. Deirdre emphasised the importance of generating the 'Céad Míle Fáilte' throughout the hotel. Deirdre believes in good internal and external customer service, and knows the hotel's unique selling point is its staff.

Visits like these give our learners insights into the running of a hotel, along with the various functions and the advantages of working in the sector. In the coming year, visits are planned to the Tourist Office in Letterkenny and the Wild Atlantic Way's Signature Points of Fanad Head, Malin Head and Slieve League. Our goal is for learners to build upon their local knowledge.

Building relationships with the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) continues. We have met with the Chairperson Paul Diver, Manager of the Sandhouse Hotel in Rossnowlagh, in order to improve our provision in tourism and hospitality. Currently the FET section of Donegal ETB is in discussions with Paul Diver exploring further ways of collaborating with the IHF to address skills shortages in this area. We are also forming an affiliation with the Restaurants Association of Ireland (RAI), which has branches countrywide. We are meeting with the RAI to look at the design of a new catering traineeship, as well as looking at developing links to the restaurant industry. We recognise the need to collaborate locally with an industry that competes globally.

As Donegal heads into a record-breaking tourist year, we know we need to constantly update the relevance of our courses to meet the needs of the sector in order to enhance not only the opportunities of our learners, but also the reputation of a region



Catherine Monahan, HR manager of Solis Lough Eske Castle Hotel, sharing insights on attitude, grooming, customer service and excellence in catering that constitutes superior hospitality with BTEI learners.



Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) QQI Level 3 Hospitality and Front Office Skills learners visiting Harvey's Point with hotel owner Deirdre McGlone and staff.



Solis Lough Eske Head Chef Cedric defines 5-star dining as he takes the learners through his tasting menu.

on the rise. Donegal ETB's FET service recognises the potential to build up the Donegal brand name, and is delighted to play its part in doing that. Together we'll contribute to making the coolest place on the planet into the coolest place in the galaxy!

Fingal Adult Education Service's largest graduation to date

By Fiona Kavanagh, newly appointed ALO, Fingal Adult Education Service (DDLETB)

It was very clear in February this year that Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB's aim for its students to "Learn, Achieve and Succeed" was working, when Fingal Adult Education Service hosted its largest awards ceremony to date. A total of 134 graduates received QQI Major Awards in a diverse range of subjects: Childcare (Levels 4, 5 and 6), Healthcare (Level 5), E-Business (Level 5), Business Management (Level 6), Childcare (Level 5 and 6) and Beauty Therapy (Level 5). Other awards given out were in Horticulture (Level 4), Retail Skills (Level 4), ICT (Levels 3 and 4), Office Skills (Level 4) and General Learning (Levels 2, 3 and 4).

The annual ceremony provides an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of the students and recognised the courage, commitment and dedication required for their return to education. On the night, two graduate students shared their experiences of returning to education. Nigel Ross, a graduate from the Level 4 Horticulture class, told the audience about his successful return to education after



Anna Lachacz inspires the audience at Fingal AES Awards Ceremony.

being made redundant. He spoke of the positive experience it was for him, and thanked his tutors and fellow graduates for helping him to achieve his goals. Anna Lachacz inspired the audience with her account of her journey from learning to speak English to graduating with a full award in General Learning and gaining employment.

Congratulations to all the graduates and thanks to everyone involved in making this a memorable occasion for both students and staff.



Participants at the joint **ETBI and ETB Chief Executives and Directors Conference** which took place in May 2017 in Gartan Outdoor Education & Training Centre, Letterkenny

Traveller Girls publish their first story collection

Book launched in Waterford

By Maria Nolan, IR/ Legal & Communications, Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

There was great excitement in Waterford's Central Library in September, when a collection of stories written by girls from the Travelling community was launched by the WWETB Waterford City Youth Affairs Youth Development Officer, Joe Gough. The book, written when the girls were aged between 8 and 12, was published by Waterford Traveller Youth Project, funded by WWETB Waterford City Youth Affairs in Partnership with Waterford Area Partnership and Waterford Youth Arts.

PJ Brennan, Project Leader, Waterford Traveller Youth Support Project, said the book was about getting the girls to reflect on and record their lives in a tangible way and to use their imagination in writing their story. "It was a lot of hard work initially because it was a whole new project for the staff, young people and everyone involved. There was a lot of fun too, with creative juices flowing. We are all very proud of our young people," he said.

Vanessa Bray, Youth Support Worker, Waterford Traveller Youth Support Project, who came up with the idea for the book, said the girls were originally undertaking a literacy programme, but to stimulate them further, it was decided to compile a selection of stories for a book. "It really sparked their interest," she said. Eimear Cheasty, Creative Writing Tutor, carried out workshops with the girls.

Joe Gough said at the launch that he was really impressed with the drawings and the stories written by the children. "I want PJ and Vanessa to encourage you to keep on writing stories, and hopefully there will be more launches in the future. As budding Waterford artists and writers, well done to you!" he said.

Phoebe Quilligan, aged 11, said her story



At the launch of the Traveller Girls' first story collection

centred on two characters called Vanessa and Gail. "They got kidnapped. They were tied together, back-to-back. Then a police car chased the van they were in. Vanessa and Gail returned home and they lived happily ever after." Phoebe said it was fun writing the story, but it took a lot of concentration.

Thirteen-year-old Charlene Ward explained that her story was about a girl called Ellen who could tell the future. "A man came to her and wanted to know his future. She told him he was going to die soon and he got angry and lashed out. He kidnapped her mother and brother. [Then] she woke up and it was all a dream," she said. Ellen had a daughter 20 years later who had the same dream. She was haunted by a

woman called Bloody Mary. However, it turned out ok in the end. Charlene said the inspiration came from her imagination and watching horror films. "I love horror films. That is where I got my inspiration for Bloody Mary. I love writing stories and reading books as well," she said. However, Charlene plans to become a singer in the future.

Brigid O'Reilly, aged 13, said she liked contributing to the book. "It's really nice. I am proud of myself. My story is about Mary. She was so beautiful that a king came to marry her," she said. Brigid loves fairy tales and writing stories.

Congratulations to the girls and best of luck in their future writing!

Future PE teachers kick off to a brilliant start at CSN College

Well on their path to Higher Education or employment

By Jenny Monks, Tutor at Coláiste Stiofáin Naofa College of Further Education, Cork



CSN College Coaching & PE students jumping into their future.

Coláiste Stiofáin Naofa College of Further Education (“CSN College”) in Cork trains the Physical Education teachers of the future in Coaching & Physical Education (QQI Levels 5 and 6).

2017 marks the ninth year of this reputable course, in which school leavers and mature students focused on continuing on to Higher Education – e.g. B.Ed. in Sports Studies and Physical Education – have been hugely successful. Graduates from the course have been progressing on to Physical Education courses in UCC and in England at a steady rate. This year CSN College proudly boasts five students who successfully obtained places in PE courses in UCC and Liverpool, despite having insufficient CAO points from their Leaving Certificate to head directly to these courses.

The students’ journey is a vibrant learning experience during which they gain hands-on coaching skills and in-depth knowledge of sports, fitness and sports-related fields.

Work experience is central to the CSN College Coaching & Physical Education course. This unique programme links with three local primary schools. Students spend one day a week in one of these schools, from October to Easter, coaching and teaching young people of different ages and backgrounds a variety of sports and skills. This experience is invaluable to the students, and would be very difficult to mirror elsewhere.

Another highlight of the course ensures that students gain extra qualifications that include coaching badges in Basketball, Soccer, Gaelic Games,

Rugby, Swimming, Lifeguarding and Gym Instruction; all these certificates are awarded from their relevant governing bodies. The benefit of additional certification enhances the graduates’ CVs, and future-proofs their careers.

Students seeking further information about the Coaching & Physical Education course or one of the 34 other full-time courses, should contact CSN College of Further Education, Tramore Road, Cork. Tel: 021 496 1020. Email: info@csn.ie. Web: www.csn.ie.



New social society for FE students in DDLETB

Enhancing the college experience

By Carol Gormley, Deputy Principal, Stillorgan College of Further Education, and member of the Steering Committee of Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB Student Society



At a meeting of the DDLETB Further Education Colleges Network¹ back in April 2015, the idea of establishing a new DDLETB Student Society was raised, similar to the student society which had been in place in City of Dublin ETB for a number of years. In May, Gerard Flanagan of CDETB met with DDLETB teachers to explain the advantages of establishing such an initiative. Students had the opportunity to have a more enjoyable time while in further education, thus encouraging them to complete their studies in a friendly and social environment. Students also had the opportunity to mix with students from other Further Education colleges and they welcomed this interaction. CDETB now had a very active calendar of social events, which had evolved over a number of years.

Following on from that meeting, a Steering Committee was tasked with setting up the new DDLETB Student Society. One of their key aims was to harness the energy and skills of the students in the

individual colleges and use them to create a calendar of events that other colleges could partake in. Individual colleges would take the lead in areas that interested them most, and there was no shortage of volunteers. A logo was created, and Link Teachers volunteered in each of the ten colleges and schools that provide FE in DDLETB. Since then, a range of events involving all the colleges, organised by the DDLETB Student Society, have become part of the annual calendar.

An annual Christmas Fun Run organised by the staff and students of the Sports and Leisure courses of Sallynoggin CFE was extended to all the other colleges, allowing a lot more students, staff and colleges to participate. That first Christmas run in December 2015 saw students from Grange CC, Stillorgan CFE, Dundrum CFE, St Kevin's Clondalkin and Blackrock Further Education Institute, travel over to Pearse Park in Sallynoggin to run or walk 5km just before the Christmas break. In 2016, this event evolved into a Zombie Run just before Halloween break.

Students dressed up and had scary looks applied using the wonderful make-up skills of the Hair and Beauty students at Sallynoggin CFE, Blackrock FEI and Grange CC. The run through the park was a truly colourful sight on a gorgeous October afternoon.

A number of colleges had the practice of hosting a Christmas Fun Quiz as part of the lead-in to the Christmas break, including Dundrum, Sallynoggin, Greenhills and Blackrock FEI. It was agreed that each college would hold its own pre-Christmas quiz in December 2015 with First and Second place winners going on to represent their college in the Grand Quiz Final in January 2016, hosted by Stillorgan College. Quiz Master Kevin Kimmage did a fantastic job on that occasion – which, co-incidentally, the hosts won!! January 2017's Grand Quiz Final was hosted by Grange CC, and saw Dundrum CFE emerge victorious.

A Super Bowl Event of Bowling was hosted by Stillorgan College in conjunction with

1 The DDLETB FE Colleges Network enables all ten of its FE Colleges and Dual Schools who provide Further Education to meet approximately three times a year to discuss issues of particular relevance.

Sean Kennedy, Manager of Leisureplex Stillorgan. Over 100 students from Stillorgan, Dundrum, Sallynoggin, Grange and BFEI enjoyed an afternoon of bowling, socialising with their classmates, and availing of the opportunity to meet students from other colleges while having fun, food and the opportunity to win many, many spot prizes, generously donated by Leisureplex Stillorgan.

A Sand Sculpture Competition organised by Monica Alvarez of Dundrum CFE was held in May 2017 on a beautiful summer's day out in Velvet Strand Beach, Portmarnock. Monica even cooked a lunch of Spanish Paella at the beach. Held again in October 2017, this was the first event of the calendar year 2017/2018, and a fantastic day was had by all out in Portmarnock. Dundrum College won the overall prize, followed very closely by Grange CC who won Second and Third prize for their fabulous creations.

Sallynoggin CFE also organised a 5-a-Side Soccer Tournament which proved to be extremely popular, if also a little dangerous, as some staff members decided to don soccer boots and display some fancy footwork that had not been seen for a number of years. Another fantastic team-building exercise!!

The Student Society is now an established feature of DDLETB FE colleges and schools, and looks set to carry on into the future. And why not? These are just some of the many benefits of this fantastic Student Society:

- The DDLETB Student Society has its own identity.
- These social events are great for colleges who have an existing social calendar, and even better for smaller colleges who do not have as many events or resources.
- The DDLETB Student Society is an additional selling point for the colleges as they promote their courses in second level schools and elsewhere,



similar to the Clubs & Socs in the universities.

- The enhanced college experience for the students who partake in these events can lead to better retention and completion rates.
- Teaching staff have the opportunity for great social interactions and even friendships as they get to meet with colleagues in other colleges on a regular basis.
- Colleges have an opportunity to recognise and work with the strengths of their students and teachers.
- Students can gain some valuable

work experience in their field of study or interest, and get the opportunity to put the knowledge and skills gained in their FE courses to practical use, including Event Management, Sports and Leisure, Hair & Beauty, and Photography.



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