

Leading Learning

Newsletter of the Instructional Leadership Programme.

Issue 7: January 2018



INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP
programme

INTRODUCTION

Colleagues,

I extend a very Happy, Healthy and Successful New Year to you all. I hope that 2018 will bring you all that you wish for.



2018 will be a very exciting year for the Instructional Leadership Programme as we celebrate our 10th Birthday in September. A host of celebratory events have been planned and we are currently working to bring them to fruition.

Earlier this month, every school received an invitation to participate in a competition to design a poster highlighting the importance of *Blooms Taxonomy* in teaching and learning. Details of the competition can be found on our website and indeed in this newsletter. The winning poster will be developed and printed by the IL Programme before being issued to every school/college.

On October 11th/12th we will host the National Conference closing with a Gala Ball. Details of the programme will issue in February but in the meantime, I would advise saving the dates as I can guarantee you it will be well worth attending!

At the Conference we will launch *The History of the IL Programme in Ireland* and we will invite you to join us to take a pictorial trip down memory lane of your time with us! We will launch a new resource pack for teachers as part of the celebrations.

2018 will also be an exciting time in terms of the development of the programme with Cohort 10 and Cohort 11 commencing their journey with us. It will bring the commencement of a formal partnership with five Education Centres in the training of facilitators for the delivery of the IL programme to primary school teachers as part of the suite of courses available in the Primary School Summer Course Programme in 2019.

This newsletter is jammed packed with accounts of wonderful ideas and experiences of schools/colleges around the country. I hope you enjoy and learn from them. If you try out any of the ideas, please do let us know. Equally if you are doing anything that others can learn from write up a short article and we will post on the website and/or include in the next edition of the newsletter.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the newsletter and to all who give of their time to develop the IL Programme.

Happy reading!

Joan Russell

Chairperson National IL Steering Committee
Director for School Support Services (ETBI)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Cohort 9 - Session 3

Monday	5th March
Tuesday	6th March
Wednesday	7th March



Cohort 10- Session 1

Monday	12th March
Tuesday	13th March
Wednesday	14th March

Cohort 11 - Session 1

Wednesday	7th March
Thursday	8th March
Friday	9th March



The first primary school graduates of the programme are pictured here. Caroline Colleran, Principal of Naas Community National School, Rory Kinane, Principal of Greystones Community National School and Seamus McGowan, St. Aengus National School. (Formerly principal of Straffan National School)



Athy College – linking ILP and IT

In his closing remarks at Mount Wolseley this year Barrie Bennett made reference to Google Classroom and how he was awestruck by it. Yes, IL and IT run in parallel and the pedagogy, concepts and strategies of Bennetts philosophy can be enhanced and delivered by harnessing the realm of technology.

We use Google, of G Suite for Education as it is now called, and through its diversity and simplicity we attempt to deliver a 21st learning experience. Collaboration, shared knowledge and teamwork are delivered through shared documents and shared folders.

As we move to changing the physical layout of our classrooms into groups of tables have we looked at our computer rooms. Once the envy of other departments the legacy of design has left us with long industrial lines of networked computers sitting on laminate worktops with a myriad of cables, sockets and data points. But digital literacy demands that every classroom is, or can be, a computer room with the inclusion of portable devices. We have just attacked our first computer room and taken out the jungle of data and electric wiring, removed the kitchen worktop and replaced it with folding tables, chairs, Chromecast televisions and Chromecast. Now the former computer room is a modern digital space where students can sit in groups and collaborate on projects and present them on their group television. Group responses can also be cast to the larger teachers screen or the HDMI data projector.



Through Google Classroom students can work on individual versions of the class material either at home or in the classroom with each students work individualises. This differentiation is not public as each student can work independently.

Google Forms can receive and coordinate responses from individual students either for examination or for research. Each response is private which can be delivered without embarrassment.

The chosen device? We have a range of devices which the teacher controls by handing to the students when required. Devices do not need to be permanently on the students desks and should never be a distraction. We explored with MacBooks, iPads, Surface tablets and netbooks before settling on mainly Chromebooks. The attraction of these devices is that they are simple and can be exchanged between students. Once a student logs out of their account their information also vanishes and a new user, once logged in, can use the machine as their own.

Google Educator

Google provide a range of Google Educator courses and classroom material. We have one teacher at Google Trainer level with four at Educator 2 level and six teachers at Google Educator Level 1. These courses provide a quite comprehensive training which include many of the IL strategies



TEACHING AND LEARNING CLUB AT NAAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

NCC runs a teaching and learning club one morning a month in order to support teachers in the whole school implementation of IL practices. The 30 minutes session starts at 08.15 and is organised by the teaching and learning committee. This voluntary session is well attended and breakfast is provided as a means of encouraging staff to come along.

The approach is informal and teachers are encouraged to engage in conversation and share best practice. A different focus is chosen each month, for example; placemat, framing questions, concept attainment.

The morning begins with some brief input from one of the teachers who has completed or is currently engaged in the IL programme. The discussion then opens up as teachers discuss how they might implement this practice in their own classroom.

Each month, we also revisit the previous topic and have teachers share their experience of playing with it, in their own classroom. Teachers often bring along examples of student work or photographs to share with colleagues.



CASTLEISLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Here at Castleisland Community College we looked at "Dynamic examples of how Instructional Leadership supports Initial and on going Professional Learning.

Our vision is to hear all the voices of our stakeholders, using the Language of Pedagogy. We strive to use the Language of Pedagogy to support all the layers of school planning. These include, School Improvement Plan, (SIP) Croke Park time, Kerry ETB Initiatives, including Induction for New Teachers. Our Teaching and Learning school team, our Junior Certificate for Teachers, including embedding Key Skills and Statements of Learning in all subjects. Our Developing Schools Enriching Learning (DSEL) initiative, in conjunction with Kerry ETB.

Our goal, is to use one common Language of Pedagogy, from which all school planning emanates. We endeavour to streamline all the layers of planning, that come to our school door, using Instructional Leadership as the pulse from which all school planning is embedded, to support the initial and ongoing professional learning of teachers.



CARRIGTWOHILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

We opened our doors as a new school in Sept 2016 & welcomed 43 first year students. Currently we have just 1st and 2nd years onsite with 14 teaching staff. We have a fantastic opportunity to establish & engrain a teaching & learning framework within our College.



Current Steps:

1. Developing and implementing IL as the key driver in catering for student diversity within our student population
2. Aim to make teaching & learning within our College:
 - Central
 - Collaborative
 - Engaging
 - Enjoyable
 - Purposeful
3. Staff meeting incorporating a brainstorm session regarding the central pillars to supporting teaching & learning framework in our College was conducted
 - Enabled us to identify how IL fits into this framework
 - Staff provided a list of skills & tactics, frequently used within their classrooms, that they would be happy to discuss, share & demonstrate in practice
4. Tactics (placemat, ranking ladder and mind maps) were chosen as practice to focus on by all staff or remainder of term 1
 - Development of a common language within our classrooms
 - Build student awareness of and exposure to tactics
 - Enrich teacher and student learning experience

Our belief: by developing & using a broad range of tactics & strategies in support of multiple intelligences it will, by default, lead to greater student engagement within the classroom & subsequently assist them in reaching their potential, i.e. achievement of our mission.

Going Forward:

1. Reflect on tactics and how they support & accommodate diversity
2. Use of IL as a common language through which we can deconstruct & analyse our practice



ST DAVID'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

"The presentation was aimed at giving the audience a snap shot of the Instructional Leadership Programme from the perspective of a first year PME student teacher and how it impacted my approach to teaching practise. Each slide represented a step in my journey as I travelled from my initial exposure to the Instructional Leadership Programme courtesy of being introduced to the concept of Instructional Leadership by my mentoring teacher in St. David's Secondary School Greystones Mr Gerry Maloney, right through to the conclusion of my first year's teaching practise. What I saw caused me to completely modify my approach to teaching in order to enhance student engagement and student learning.

The presentation also featured adjustments that I made to established AFL techniques and methodologies such as adding a fourth 'blue' traffic light to identify students who not only understood the subject material, but felt confident enough to teach it to their peers. It also showed how the Instructional Leadership Programme changed my role in the classroom from being a teacher to a facilitator of student learning. This major adjustment, which resulted



directly from my exposure to the Instructional Leadership Programme, has helped me to adapt my lesson plans to improve not only my classroom management techniques and teaching methods, but it has also helped me to elevate students' engagement and subsequently improve their learning."

PEER OBSERVATION: A DRIVER FOR EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK IN COLÁISTE CHOILM

Classroom observation was not an initiative that was new to Coláiste Choilm- in fact for many years, as part of our teacher induction programme, student teachers observe and are observed by their mentors and other staff members. Also, the introduction of team teaching to the school in 2011 provided opportunities for teachers to look at what is happening in their classrooms, alongside their colleagues. It has already been widely accepted in the school that teachers learn as much by observing others as by being observed themselves.

In early 2013 we were invited to participate in this NAPD and DES joint venture to explore the possibilities of creating a culture of observation in schools. We decided to grasp the opportunity, and to use it as a means to also enhance and extend two other projects already in motion, namely team teaching and the Instructional Leadership Programme.

In Coláiste Choilm eight members of staff were involved in this project which we decided to call 'Sharing Best Practice'. (We were slightly concerned that the use of the word 'observation' in the title might prompt an association with the fear of being judged.) Many teachers are currently team teaching in two pairs and a significant cohort of staff have completed the Instructional Leadership Programme. A team meeting in October of that year started the ball rolling. The team teaching pairs visited each other's classrooms before Christmas. The instructional leadership graduates each chose a strategy to use with a class and invited their project colleagues to observe, again before Christmas. We decided to focus on student engagement and just simply identify 'two things which worked well' and 'two things I learned' from each class.

This template focused attention on the observer and the learner, it did not stand in judgement and led to openness and transparency. Additionally senior management are also teaching and were part of this group opening their doors to observation firstly.



Teachers recognised the importance of mutual trust, they gained confidence by showcasing their expertise and were greatly affirmed in their practice. The template prompted focused reflection and the organised post observation meetings led to great opportunities for professional discussion and professional learning.

In 2017 we re engaged with the process through a Leading Learning project with a second year cohort where we focus on learning styles and instructional methods with a particular grouping.

We have decided to visit each others classrooms post Christmas to view instructional methods at work and to learn as co conspirators through best practice, post observation discussions and dissemination of instructional practice.

We have found Peer Observation works where the focus is solely on learner benefit from instructional methods at work, where it is about the embedding of best practice conducted in a supportive collegial way.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP FACILITATOR - PRIMARY SECTOR



The Instructional Leadership Programme is delighted to announce the partnership with Cork Education Centre, Carrick on Shannon Education Centre, Limerick Education Centre, Donegal Education Centre and Kilkenny Education Centre to pilot the Instructional Leadership Programme at Primary Level.

The Education Centres will invite applications, in February 2018, from primary school teachers to train as IL Programme Facilitators. The Facilitators will then work with the Education Centres to deliver the Programme as a Summer Course for primary school teachers in 2019.

The training will take place in Mount Wolseley Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort over five days in October 2018 & five days in March 2019. Successful applicants will cover the cost of programme and the Education Centres will cover the cost of travel and substitution.

Details of the application process will be available on the IL website early in the new year.

www.instructionalleadership.ie



THE THINKING CLASSROOM: ARE YOU FIT?

When we decide to enter a marathon, we do a wee bit more than make our application to the race...we have to spend a lot of time getting ready...becoming fit.



And, in running, a difference exists between walking around the block and running the Boston marathon. Thinking is somewhat the same. We all think, just like we all walk...and fortunately, as humans we can also 'think' while we walk. For example, we might think about what we should have for dinner or where we would go for a vacation. But thinking about our day is different from engaging in critical thinking...the walking marathon analogy.

That said, we all know that when it comes to running and thinking, there are different levels of fitness. So in this brief article, you have a chance to self-assess your fitness when it comes to getting ready for thinking. So let's start.

We've all heard of '**facts**'. As educators, we will have heard ourselves say something like, "My students have to learn the facts." And in addition, we may have said something about '**concepts**'. For example, we may have said, "My students have to understand those key concepts". So, if someone came up to you and asked you to explain 'fact' and 'concept' and the relationship between the two...what would you say? Could you identify one 'word' that is not a concept? Now, you should know, that in the last 30 or so years, I've not had one person be able to answer those three questions. Of course, you are thinking, 'Does it matter whether or not I know?' And in addition you may be asking, *Do these questions and the answers relate to thinking?* Of course that is up to you.

Let's try another one. Now if I am driving down the road between Ottawa and Montreal and I see a terrible accident and I say to my friend in the car, "I bet a lot of people were hurt and ended up in the hospital on the way into Ottawa" ... would that statement be a prediction or an inference or both? I asked a principal and consultant in Canberra Australia a wee

while back...and they both got it wrong. They were concerned about the elementary students' struggle with making inferences and prediction; I wonder if the students struggle had anything to do with the teachers not knowing. Could someone make a **prediction** without first making an **inference**? What level of thinking (say from Bloom's taxonomy) are inferences and prediction. Where does the scientific method fit into inferences and prediction...say the idea of making a hypothesis? Are inferences and predictions concepts? Now you may like to know that students have no problem making inferences and predictions; they do it all the time from a very early age (pre-school); they simply do not understand what those two concepts mean. Is conceptual clarity important?

If you have a thinking classroom, should you be able to frame questions at different levels of thinking...or select and apply instructional methods at different levels of thinking? Is it possible for you to 'differentiate' your 'teaching/instruction' if you do not have control over a taxonomy of thinking ... say Bloom's taxonomy or SOLO. I guess that would imply not just being able to *recall* the levels of thinking (say with Bloom's taxonomy) but also *understanding* those levels and being able to *apply* and **analyze** those levels etc. Have you ever thought about the idea that every sentence that comes out of your mouth is about thinking; and each thought plays out at one or more levels of Bloom's taxonomy...by default (e.g., "Great dinner dear!"...evaluation.)



Hmmm...could you identify say, one instructional method that pushes analysis and inductive thinking (e.g., Venn diagram or Concept Attainment)? Oops, I'm opening another can of concepts...'*inductive*' and '*deductive*' thinking...the two major strands of *critical thinking*...which is essential when applying *Socratic dialogue*...which requires you to deeply grasp the 'concepts' involved in the dialogue...and to be very skilled at framing questions...at different levels of thinking. But, hey, that is enough assessment for one day. I know, you are already starting to 'un-friend' me.



St Leo's College

St. Leo's College in conjunction with Killarney Community School presented a two hour work on maximising learning in extended lesson time. Our remit explored the use of Madeline Hunter lesson design.

Our school's specific focus was examples of lesson design through Maths, Modern Languages and Wellbeing. We included various Instructional Leadership strategies throughout each lesson and demonstrated how we were in the process of using the template for collaboration within departments in our school.

Instructional Leadership strategies have been presented to all staff through various workshops and staff have been provided with a toolkit of Instructional Leadership resources. The strategies form the basis of professional dialogue within our school.



National Conference 2018

Thursday 11th October & Friday 12th October.

The 2018 National Conference will be a very special Conference as we celebrate our 10th Birthday. It will have both a National and International flavour culminating in a Gala Celebratory Ball on Friday 12th October.

Details will be announced via twitter and our website in February 2018 and early booking is advisable.

instructionalleadership.ie

@ILProgramme

BLOOMS TAXONOMY POSTER COMPETITION



Check our website for the details of a poster competition. Schools/ Colleges are being invited to design a poster to promote the awareness of the importance of Blooms Taxonomy in quality teaching and learning.

Closing Date Friday 23rd April 2018

Winners will be announced on Friday May 11th on the website.

www.instructionalleadership.ie

NATIONAL CONFERENCE



**INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP**
programme

CONTACT DETAILS:

MS. JOAN RUSSELL
Chairperson
National Steering Committee
Instructional Leadership Programme

MS. PAULA FITZPATRICK
Instructional Leadership Programme
ETBI Head Office,
Pipers Hill,
Naas, Co Kildare

admin@instructionalleadership.ie
Tel (045) 901 070 Ext #31
www.instructionalleadership.ie
newsletter@instructionalleadership.ie