



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fourth edition of Leading Learning, the newsletter of the Instructional Leadership Programme. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform and support teachers and learning environments that engage with, or are interested in knowing about, the Instructional Leadership Programme.

Over the six years since the programme was initiated following a series of seminars for teachers in the vocational sector led by Professor Barrie Bennett and supported by the Irish Vocational Education Association, Instructional Leadership (IL) has emerged as one of the foremost agents promoting excellence in learning and teaching in the Irish context. This role is rooted in the key principles underpinning Professor Bennett's thinking.

Firstly, effective teachers possess an extensive and varied repertoire of interventions, classified variously as skills, tactics and strategies, along with the wisdom of knowing how and when to invoke and integrate them. Secondly, such teachers must acquire the vocabulary and language by which they can articulate their practice and in so doing, demonstrate a conscious awareness of the power of these actions in terms of stimulating learning. Equally, the acquisition of this language enables the capacity for critical self-evaluation, along with the nurturing of real learning environments where meaningful professional conversations can take place in a spirit of collaboration.

While the programme places value on the important role of principals as leaders of learning, it also acknowledges the leadership role played by all who participate and commit to the effective dissemination of the key tenets of IL at local level, in the classroom, the subject department and the school at large.

For those who continue to reflect on and put in practice the key principles of Instructional Leadership, the learning that follows has in many respects transformed these ideas from academic ideas to 'a way of being', as a teacher, a learner and a member of a learning community. It is to be sincerely

hoped that the Instructional leadership programme continues to inspire such powerful change in Irish education in this new academic year and beyond. The steering committee of the Instructional Leadership Committee extends every good wish to all IL graduates and friends, as well as our schools, colleges and centres, for the year ahead.

New role for Joan Russell, Chairperson of the Instructional Leadership National Steering Committee



Joan Russell, who was instrumental in engaging Barrie Bennett for the Tullow conferences that inspired the ILP, has taken up a new role with ETBI (Education and Training Boards Ireland; formerly IVEA). Joan, who was Education Officer with Cork ETB following a period as Acting CEO of Co Cork VEC, has been seconded to the position of Projects Manager for Instructional Practices with ETBI. This role will see Joan implement a strategic vision for the future development of the ILP, among other duties. We wish her well in this key leadership role.

Recent Developments:

The following offers some examples of how Instructional Leadership continues to evolve and cascade through the Irish educational landscape:

- Following on a successful and well-received contribution to the Teaching Council's FÉILTE conference in 2013, the programme's steering committee has accepted an invitation from the Council to present once more about the programme's work at this year's event, which takes place at the RDS on Saturday 4th October. FÉILTE, the Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence, is a celebration of innovation in teaching. The theme of this year's event is "Talking about teaching: Tearing down the

walls" and will feature Ryan Tubridy as keynote speaker.

- Cork ETB has led the way in disseminating IL at local level for a specific cohort of educators. Graduates of the Instructional Leadership Programme have devised a modified course of seminars focused on the needs of adult education providers who work in a variety of settings in Cork. Five two-hour sessions were facilitated for a group of 26 participants in the last academic year, with five more to come in the current year.



- On a related note, a presentation on aspects of IL was also facilitated for adult education officers from ETBs throughout the country at a conference in April 2014 in Navan, Co Meath. We look forward to further developments in this key sector as the potential of IL to be a powerful and innovative influence on adult education is explored further.
- Eleven graduates of the programme have completed the inaugural two-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Leading Learning facilitated by the School of Education at NUI Galway. This course, devised in association with a working group drawn from the Steering Committee of the programme, has been acclaimed by participants as an extremely positive experience. Sincere thanks to Mary Fleming and Andrea Higgins of NUI Galway who

demonstrated great foresight in affirming work done by graduates of the programme by developing a model allowing for third-level accreditation.

- The EDISON project: ETBI has become involved in a new (2013-2015) EU-funded project called EDISON (Educational Diversity and Innovate Skills On Entrepreneurship) which aims to transfer successful experiences and strategies in teaching entrepreneurship from Austria, Spain and Italy to other jurisdictions, including Ireland. The project aims to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit and capabilities of a certain group of students and to meet the requirements of the current labour market. Joan Russell will lead the project and it is intended that IL will play a crucial role in facilitating its successful implementation.
- Some of the project's key aims are:
 - to promote the ability of teachers and trainers to understand and teach entrepreneurship,
 - to establish a trans-national and trans-sectoral network on entrepreneurship education
 - to develop a flexible Edison learning programme based on blended learning
 - to develop a transnational Edison 'Train the Trainer Programme' for entrepreneurship conducted through an innovative pedagogy in a blended learning environment.

Barrie Bennett Returns to Lead the Tullow Workshops with Cohorts 4 and 5

The fourth and fifth cohorts of teachers will convene in the Mount Wolseley resort in Tullow during the last week in September for their latest series of seminars with Barrie.

These cohorts include representatives from the voluntary and community/ comprehensive schools sectors as well as vocational schools and community colleges, while Youthreach centres and adult/ further education centres are also involved. Notably, the DES inspectorate is also represented, a welcome acknowledgement of the increasingly visible effect of IL in subject inspections and whole school evaluations.

Since its inception in 2008, over 600 teachers have engaged

with the Instructional Leadership Programme, representing 185 post primary schools and 29 Youthreach and FE centres.

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| Cohort 1 | 132 |
| Cohort 2 | 159 |
| Cohort 3 | 96 |
| Cohort 4 | 129 |
| Cohort 5 | 116 |
| Total: | 632 |
| Cohort 6 is enrolling for Spring 2015 Notification will issue in October 2014 | |

We wish the best of luck to all at the Tullow sessions this autumn, especially the 129 principals and teachers who will graduate.

Cohort 6 to commence in spring 2015

A sixth cohort will commence in March 2015. Invitations will issue to schools/ colleges/ centres in due course.

Steering Committee Update

The National Steering Committee of the Instructional Leadership Programme is charged with implementing strategic vision for the implementation of the programme. The committee, chaired by Joan Russell, meets on a regular basis.

The following offers a flavour of some of the work currently being undertaken:

- IT: the website of the programme is currently undergoing a review. Among the features that are being developed are a Facebook page and Twitter account. Watch this space for more developments.
- Video footage: The committee is in possession of several hours of video footage of lessons and workshops from conferences and the Tullow sessions with Barrie. These will shortly be edited and placed on the website.
- IL Logo: A new logo has been created, based on the jigsaw theme used previously. The committee is currently



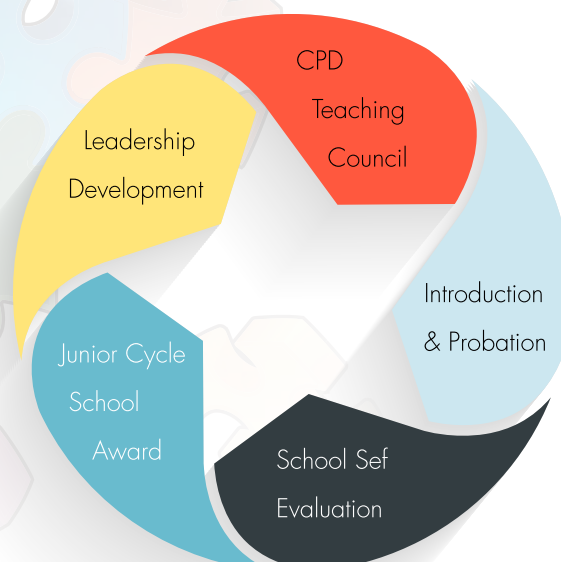
revising specific criteria against which schools and centres can measure themselves to see if they can describe themselves as IL schools or centre of learning. Schools that are deemed to meet these criteria may be able to place the logo on their websites or other promotional material. More details will shortly issue to all participating schools.

- International conference: the committee is preparing to host an international IL conference. More details of the plans for this event will issue to schools in due course.

Instructional Leadership and Current Educational Policy

A striking feature of the Irish educational policy landscape over recent years has been the extent of change in a range of areas, within the context of the formalisation of the profession of teaching in the emergence of the Teaching Council.

These changes include:



- junior cycle reform
- school self-evaluation
- literacy and numeracy
- initial teacher education and induction
- models of continuous professional development

The emergence of the Instructional Leadership Programme has coincided with this raft of policy change. It is evident that the programme offers teachers and schools an invaluable medium by which much of this change can be realised.

National Conference 2014

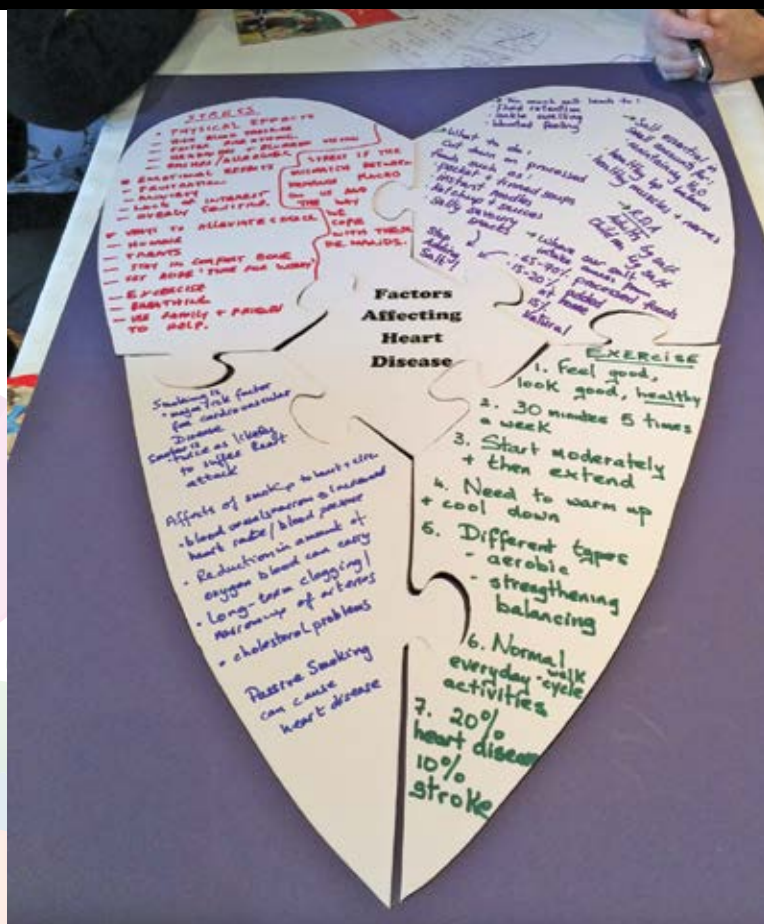
The Steering Committee is delighted to confirm that Barrie Bennett will deliver the key note address at the IL annual conference in Tullow this year.

The title of Barrie's talk is 'Managing change is chess; Exploring the key patterns that you have to respect if you really want to do something that works.' The theme reflects once more the focus on leading change in our schools, a change that is central to the successful realisation of the goals of Instructional Leadership. The conference theme is 'Instructional Leadership: building professional learning communities'.

The committee is also pleased to welcome Dr Pádraig Hogan of Maynooth College will also attend and will deliver an address entitled: 'To fresh woods and pastures new: opening up the landscapes of teaching and learning'; while Jerry McCarthy, familiar to many from his role with the JCSP support service, will facilitate a workshop on how IL can support the implementation of a numeracy strategy in schools. Other workshops on the IL experience of schools and teachers will also take place, as well as question and answer sessions and discussion forums.

A report on the conference will be included in our next newsletter.

www.instructionalleadership.ie



**INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP**
programme

CONTACT DETAILS:

MS. JOAN RUSSELL
Chairperson
National Steering Committee
Instructional Leadership Programme

MS. CLARE CREEDON
Administrative Officer
Instructional Leadership Programme
E: ccreedon@instructionalleadership.ie

T: 021 4665056 F: 021 4665090
W: www.instructionalleadership.ie

Cork ETB,
Yeats House,
Barrack Square,
Ballincollig,
Co. Cork.