

English

September has seen an exciting growth of personnel numbers in the JCT team and this growth has been reflected in the JCT English team. Contact details for all English Advisors can be found on our website www.jct.ie. During September, JCT English Advisors have continued to deliver support to teachers across the country at our Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) facilitators' CPD days. This CPD day included:

- An outline of the key details of the Junior Cycle English learning journey
- An exploration of facilitation skills within a community of practice
- An opportunity to practically experience the SLAR process for both Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

Feedback from participants has been very positive. Teachers expressed their excitement for the new opportunities for subject learning in their school departments arising from the rich professional discourse and collaboration among colleagues.

Preparations are nearing completion for our next English CPD day. The day will be offered to all teachers of English and rolled out across the country from November. The day will revisit the rationale and aims that underpin the Junior Cycle English specification. It will also explore the use of learning outcomes in the English classroom for teaching, learning and assessment. Learning outcomes being focused on in first year will not have been 'completed' at the end of that year but will continue to support the student's language development up to the end of junior cycle. With this in mind, the day will also explore how the assessment of learning outcomes take place at different moments across the student's learning journey, including their Final Assessment.

The team are currently developing a Reference Guide which will further outline key changes in the new Junior Cycle English specification. All our resources remain available online at www.jct.ie, including our suite of interactive screencasts recently developed by the team. The JCT English team very much looks forward to continued engagement with teachers of English in the academic year 2016/17. Teachers can contact the English team, with any questions or queries, by emailing info@jct.ie.

L2LP - The journey continues . . .

This year promises to be very exciting for the L2LP team and those availing of L2LP CPD from JCT. We will be walking with schools once again; visiting special schools for their Day 1, Day 2 or Day 3. Hands on teaching and learning activities will form the basis for CPD sessions, enabling teachers to go back to their classes with ready-made resources and materials that will benefit their practice and their Level 2 learners.

Watch out for details on an upcoming School Principal's Conference which should help pave the way for collaboration and networking between schools around the country.

We are also very excited to invite teachers from mainstream settings to a full day of L2LP CPD in Education Centres nationally, and look forward to aiding mainstream schools in their implementation of the L2LPs across subjects and their whole school community.

Have questions?

The L2LP team are only a phone call/email away, please contact Sarah Nally, Team Leader. sarah.nally@jct.ie

Business Studies

September 2016 is a momentous time for all first year Business Studies students as it marks the introduction of the new Business Studies specification in schools. The new specification aims to stimulate students' interest in the business environment and how they interact with it.

The Business Studies team delivered its first CPD day last year and we are now actively preparing for CPD day 2. This second CPD day is being informed by feedback provided by teachers, and our Associate teachers, working in classrooms across Ireland. Day two will centre on teaching, assessment and learning. In March, the NCCA published 'Junior Cycle Business Studies - the Guidelines for Classroom Based Assessments and Assessment Task' and this provides more detailed material and sets out the practical arrangements relating to the Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs).

Our team are pleased to be invited to present a workshop at the Business Studies Teachers Association of Ireland (BSTAI) conference, taking place in the Lyrath Conference Centre in Kilkenny on the 22nd October 2016. This workshop entitled '**Junior Cycle - Navigating the First Year**' will focus on key aspects relating to the new specification. We hope to see you there!

Welcome



Dr. Pádraig Kirk

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2016/2017.

I hope that you find this newsletter to be an informative and interesting read. We are an expanded organisation this year and along with our existing whole-school CPD, English, Science and Business Studies teams we now have support teams in place for Art, Modern Foreign Languages and Gaeilge. We also have a new Wellbeing team and new personnel in the areas of Assessment and Leadership.

At the moment we are busy preparing all of our CPD programmes for delivery later in this school year and DES circular 0024/2016 outlines how that delivery process will work. We are keen to get on the road again and look forward to supporting you throughout the coming year. As always, feel free to send us any feedback by email to info@jct.ie

Dr. Pádraig Kirk
Director



First meeting of the new JCT full-time team in Monaghan Education Centre in August 2016.

Science

From January to June 2016, JCT Science facilitated 40 CPD Day 1 workshops for over 1,100 teachers. The context of this professional development was the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, the Science Specification and the Science Assessment Guidelines. Teachers worked on the key skills in science, the inquiry continuum, working with the learning outcomes of the science specification and curriculum planning. In support of this, elective workshops were also provided in partnership with Science Foundation Ireland, Epistem (Step into Science) and the Science Gallery.

Materials from CPD Day 1 including planning templates are available in the Planning section of the Science area of the JCT website (www.jct.ie). To further support teachers with their planning in year one, a working model of how subject and teacher planning can work is also now available.

CPD Day 2 is under development and is expected to roll-out after the October mid-term. The focus is on bringing the learning outcomes to the classroom. This day will look back at CPD day 1 and discuss where teachers are in terms of their planning and enactment of approaches to experimental and science in society investigations with first year students.

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

JCT would like to welcome our new Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) team led by Claire Matthews. We also have a team of associate teachers supporting our full-time team, who will be piloting approaches in the classroom and facilitating workshops.

The MFL team will offer high quality CPD for teachers of Modern Foreign Languages across the country beginning with a one-day workshop in Autumn. We will also be developing online supports that will be accessible at www.jct.ie. We hope to encourage professional collaboration, reflection and sharing of practice.

The team is currently designing the first day of CPD which will offer teachers a great opportunity to engage with the new specification. The focus will be on the rationale for the new specification as well as changes to current teaching, assessment and learning practices. The aim is to familiarise teachers with the learning outcomes as outlined within the three strands of the new specification. Effective pedagogy for language teaching, assessment and learning will be modeled throughout the day.

The MFL team is delighted to be working with teacher colleagues as part of this exciting journey of curricular reform for languages at Junior Cycle.

SHORT COURSES

Short courses are a new and optional component which schools may include in the junior cycle programmes offered to students. Each short course will require 100 hours of student engagement, will be assessed through Classroom-Based Assessments, and will be reported upon to parents/guardians and students by the school.

Short courses can broaden the range of learning experiences for students, address their interests and encompass areas of learning not covered by the combination of curricular subjects available in the school.

Schools may opt to include short courses developed by the NCCA, or alternatively, short courses that have been developed either by the school or another organisation in accordance with templates and guidelines set down by the NCCA.

JCT is delighted to support schools and teachers of short courses by facilitating CPD activities to support their introduction. These activities include workshops which will focus initially on supporting schools in their consideration of short courses. JCT will also be involved in the roll-out of various elective workshops and carefully designed online supports to assist teachers over the coming months and years. Also, an informative short course newsletter 'Short Courses in the Spotlight' is available.

ATS2020 Assessment of Transversal Skills Project

Our ATS2020 project is in its second year and we are now embarking on the in-school pilot phase of the project. Transversal Skills refer to a broad set of Key Skills that are known to be critically important to success in school, further education and the world of work. They include the ability to think critically, take initiative, use digital applications, solve problems and work collaboratively.

JCT is working with our partners H2 Learning in administering and supporting the in-school phase, in thirty schools. The thirty piloting schools were selected after an open call. Each school has two piloting teachers and will focus on the integration of transversal (key) skills into teaching and learning and through assessment supporting student learning. Schools in the pilot phase will also have the opportunity to use ePortfolios in teaching and learning, to support the development of key skills and ongoing assessment.

Our ATS2020 teachers will participate in a CPD day which is taking place in Dublin and Limerick venues on 26th and 29th September respectively. Teachers engaged in the project will have access to a range of resources to support teaching, assessment and learning and will be assisted throughout by a project mentor to support reflective practice and collaboration.

ATS2020 is a large-scale Erasmus+ project funded by the European Commission and involves 250 schools in ten European countries.



L-R: Dr. Pádraig Kirk, JCT, Mr. John Hurley, H2, Minister Richard Bruton, Ms. Sinéad Tuohy, JCT, Mr. Dónal O'Mahony, JCT and Mr. Eddie Ward, Teacher Education Section at the ATS2020 partners meeting in Dublin in June 2016.

WHOLE SCHOOL

The Whole School Team are back on the road nationally, delivering Day 2 of their CPD Workshops. Teachers will be updated on:

- Developments in Junior Cycle (Circular 24/2016 and the draft NCCA Guidelines on Wellbeing and Reporting)
- Participate in a Workshop on the 24 Statements of Learning

Teachers will generally have two options for the remainder of the day:

- Activating the Key Skills in the Junior Cycle classroom and a Marketplace activity on strategies for teaching and learning
- Assessment changes in Junior Cycle and Developing a learning culture in our classrooms

New schools (for their Day 1) will have the Framework: Context and Rationale workshop available to them. There are also workshops in the areas of Short

Courses and Level Two Learning Programmes available for schools.

A four-hour workshop "Activating the Digital Elements of the Key Skills in the Junior Cycle Classroom", is being developed and will be offered to a small number of schools initially.

The Whole School team would like to thank Principals and their Boards of Management, for releasing the many Whole School Associates, to enable delivery of their workshops nationwide.



Teachers engaging with key skills and assessment during their JC CPD Whole-school day

JCT Art News

The newly established JCT Art team has begun preparations for the introduction of the new Specification for Art, Craft and Design in September 2017. The team looks forward to supporting Art teachers in their understanding and implementation of the new Specification which aims to provide students with a set of personal attitudes and qualities through visual art skills and processes.

The team will provide teachers with opportunities to engage in professional development workshops that focus on student-centred approaches to teaching and learning and will facilitate active engagement in sharing professional practice specific to Art teachers and their students.

In the current school year the team will guide Art teachers through a full day of in-service on the structure of Junior Cycle Art. There will be a focus on the learning outcomes across the five elements and the three strands of art, craft and design. Authentic examples of student artwork will be used to enhance the learning experience and provide teachers with a practical understanding of the specification.

Wellbeing for all in education and the pursuit of human flourishing

Wellbeing will be a game changer in our Education System. As we embark on building on the excellent Wellbeing structures and practices that are already in place in schools, formalising Wellbeing and allocating definitive hours to nourish the health and happiness of our students.

The mission of JCT Wellbeing is to promote wellbeing, a sense of life satisfaction and happiness. It is an inclusive approach couched in the indicators of Wellbeing: active, aware, connected, resilient, responsible and respected. The indicators are explicit to students, parents and the wider school community through the descriptors. The mission is informed by the 8 Principles, 24 Statements of Learning and 8 Key Skills of the Junior Cycle.

At the core of the mission is the provision of opportunities for human beings to flourish:

- Promoting the Student Voice in all aspects of school life
- Promoting and supporting the prominent role of Wellbeing for every student and teacher through the provision of all Subjects, Short Courses, Level 2 Learning Programmes and Other Learning Experiences
- Actively supporting, communicating and liaising with all stakeholders in developing a community based, inclusive approach to Wellbeing
- Developing and facilitating high quality CPD opportunities for all Junior Cycle teachers
- Supporting schools in developing their own programmes and initiatives and contributing to the development of the four curricular areas of SPHE, PE, CSPE and Guidance, and Other Learning Experiences
- Engaging in research to actively promote current best practice in teaching, learning and assessment and also to inform future policy development

Learning in Wellbeing will ensure that children and young people develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes that they need for human flourishing. There is a recognition that a sense of wellbeing and connectedness is vital to academic, social, emotional and physical wellness and resilience of young people.

Learners need to experience opportunities, which are designed not only to raise their awareness of future choices, but also raise their expectations and aspirations.

Employment patterns and employer demands are changing, so it is particularly important for all young people to develop their Key Skills. They also need an understanding of the world of work, training and lifelong learning in order that they can embrace opportunities.

Wellbeing is a Whole School Project and a Community Endeavour is needed.

We look forward to working together with all of our partners in education, we know we can succeed.

Ní neart go cur le chéile!
Betty, Hazel, John and Michelle



L-R: David Duffy, Research Officer, TUI, Norman Emerson, Director NCCA, John Curtis, General Secretary, JMB, and Betty McLaughlin, Wellbeing team Leader JCT at a recent Critical Friends workshop in embedding ICT in Junior Cycle.

... Leadership ...

School leaders play a vital role in leading the process of curriculum change in Irish schools. The DES circular letter 0024/2016 has outlined changes regarding duration of class length to be introduced from 2017. This has significant implications for all schools regarding the structure of the day and changes to subject provision.

The JCT leadership team have created a comprehensive workshop supporting school leaders to facilitate these changes in their schools. The workshop will focus on curriculum design and timetabling.

This will be the first of two workshops this year with the second one in 2017 focussing on Wellbeing. School leaders will be invited to confirm their attendance at the first workshop in a letter to Principal Teachers in the coming weeks.



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