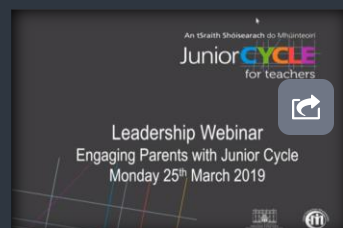
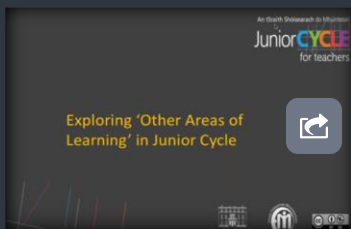
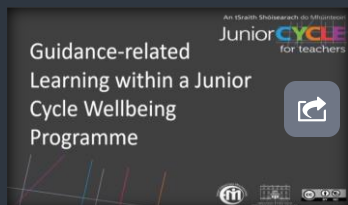


## Webinars

Inside this edition of *JCToday* you will find links to our most recent Webinars supporting teachers and school leaders across a range of Junior Cycle areas. Our Webinars this year (2018/2019) attracted up to 5,000 teachers. Webinars are growing in popularity and we will be working hard to make them more attractive in 2019/2020. Click on links below to view some of these useful resources.



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# Welcome

The 2018/2019 school year will be remembered as a significant year in the history of JCT. Following the phasing in of the new Junior Cycle subject specifications over the past number of years, this year we had all of our respective teams in place.



We had 117 full-time secondees working with our organisation this year, and over 300 part-time Associates, all of whom are fully qualified and experienced school leaders and teachers. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff who worked tirelessly this year to plan, design, schedule and facilitate a comprehensive programme of high quality teacher CPD for schools nationwide.

Some figures will help to illustrate the sheer scale of JCTs work this year. In our whole-staff CPD days we met 31,566 teachers, while in our school cluster events we engaged with some 29,106 teachers. In the provision of CPD days last September and October for teachers with a second teaching subject, some 8,760 teachers attended, while 1,777 school Principals and Deputy Principals attended our leadership workshops during 2018/2019. Our L1/L2 LP team met 1,692 individual teachers, while our elective CPD opportunities, including STE(A)M, Arts in Junior Cycle, Coding, webinars and symposia, attracted a whopping 7,263 teachers. To each and every school leader and teacher that engaged with our CPD this year, we simply say Thank You.

We are confident that our work is making a difference in terms of supporting schools to embed the Framework for Junior Cycle. We can see this from our ongoing engagements with schools and teachers, and our partner organisations, as well as from our school visits and from the feedback we receive. This newsletter tells only part of our 2018/2019 story, I hope you enjoy reading about it. We already have exciting plans in place for 2019/2020, and we are up for all of the challenges that lie ahead.

**Dr. Pádraig Kirk**  
**Director, CPD for Junior Cycle**

## STE(A)M

*STE(A)M in Junior Cycle is a nationwide elective CPD initiative brought to you by Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), in partnership with education outreach partners in the STEM and Arts fields.*

Four months, twenty-seven venues, seventeen counties, eleven partners and four hundred and thirty-seven teachers later, we completed our professional learning experiences (PLE) for 2018/19. It has been a pleasure to work with all our partners and teachers nationwide.

The next steps took place on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May as we commenced the development of our 2019/20 STE(A)M in Junior Cycle programme. We were delighted to welcome our partners to this day of professional learning with great creative buzz!

Click on image for a short video on this year's programme

Want to be kept up to date with future developments as part of STE(A)M in Junior Cycle? Why not join our mailing list [here](#)



## School leaders reflect on Junior Cycle reform



*Coláiste Pobail Bhaile Lotraí*  
*Luttrellstown Community College*

Príomhoide: Fionnuala Ní Chaisil



*"We work very closely with middle management to embed Junior Cycle to ensure the available supports are accessible to all our staff. Having a JCT associate on our staff is hugely beneficial to management and staff as all subjects come online".*

*"In Luttrellstown Community College we run the TASK (Teachers Actively Sharing Knowledge) programme where teachers have a TASK poster on their door inviting colleagues to drop in during the class and share professional practice, which is a wonderful way to share knowledge and collaborate".*

*"Following much debate, we now structure our Term1 assessments for first and second year students around the Classroom Base Assessments (CBAs) and while our summer assessments are also structured around the CBAs, we also utilise written in-class assessments for all year groups.*

*This has transformed our traditional assessment strategy. We constantly review these changes to ensure the best possible learning experience for students".*

*"We work hard to ensure our curriculum is varied and responds to the needs of our students. Through dialogue with teachers, parents and students we now have a Junior Cycle curriculum that we are proud of which represents the needs, and is made in the best interests, of our students. We review our curriculum on an ongoing basis ensuring the needs of our students are met.*

*"Student engagement with their learning is evident with the teams that I see working in classrooms. Students have opportunities to research, analyse, present and debate across subject areas, which encourages teachers to share teaching methodologies and teaching strategies. You can see and hear this active learning taking place across different subject areas. Teachers can now collaborate more with professional time to build in planning time and subject department meetings. It is evident that there is much more professional dialogue taking place".*

*"The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) celebrates students learning and experiences in a new and refreshing way. As a staff we have agreed that the creation of the JCPA will be organised by post holders in collaboration with our Care Team. In relation to the "Other Areas of Learning", our year heads work with tutors in each Junior Cycle year group gathering the learning experiences. From first year, we use spreadsheets where student's engagement is recorded for each year in Junior Cycle and this is brought together at the end of third year. Under the guidance of their teacher students can review their learning experiences and update their record as they progress during the three years of Junior Cycle".*

*"Following consultation with staff and our Wellbeing Team we agreed that every Friday, period four we go into wellbeing mode. We have one period a week where we "down tools" and look after our wellbeing. Sometimes the focus is about areas such as healthy eating, sleep deprivation or exercise. Staff have yoga and indoor soccer activities to mention but a few".*

## School leaders reflect on Junior Cycle reform

*"To support the new Junior Cycle, we had an information evening for parents focusing on different aspects of the reform."*

*"We involved parents and staff in the creation of our curriculum. We had to move from eleven subjects to a curriculum that was appropriate to the new Junior Cycle. We were committed to involving parents and students in this process who were surveyed on the choice of short courses and optional subjects. Following on from this consultative process we ended up with nine subjects and two short courses:- Coding and Physical Education".*



### Virginia College Cavan

Principal: Niall Lynch



*"We moved towards hour-long lessons and this could not have happened without the collaboration of individual staff and subject departments. We also consulted with parents and students on the possible changes to our timetable. This resulted in teachers working together to agree on subject plans and how best to utilise the new timetable structure. Teachers had to agree how they were going to engage with the learning outcomes and what strategies would be used to ensure effective teaching and learning was taking place. To support this collaborative process, we introduced Microsoft ONENOTE to allow teachers work collaboratively, in person or online, and to share resources".*

*"In terms of assessment and reporting we ensure parents are kept informed. We make sure parents are aware of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) and what is included under "Other Areas of Learning". As a staff, we have recently taken the decision of ensuring our first-year reports are comment only. We are also in the process of replacing end of term exams with the ongoing Classroom Based Assessments. In this respect, we are reporting to parents as students complete the CBAs. In addition, to support the teaching and learning we encourage our students to attend Parent-Teacher meetings with their parents/guardians. In this context, and where appropriate, students' are invited to open the conversation about their learning".*

*"Many of our classrooms look very different to what they looked like only a few years ago. What has happened is that students now work in a more collaborative fashion, working together, sharing their knowledge and learning with each other. It is evident that they are more engaged with their peers and have an increased responsibility for their own learning".*

*"We are also involved in a Digital Leadership programme. Most of our teachers use digital devices in their classrooms. This is supported by our digital leaders who advise and collaborate with colleagues and students on effective teaching strategies that can be used in the classroom".*

*"Scheduling the CBAs can present challenges. Consultation with subject departments is essential in this process. When this process is completed, we inform students and parents of our assessment calendar. To ensure all in our school community know when assessments take place we have placed our assessment calendar online using Office 365. This enables the whole school community to see when year groups are engaging with CBAs or other in-class assessments".*

*"The introduction of forty minutes professional time is proving to be very effective in allowing teachers and subject departments to come together at a time that suits them to focus on their subject planning and professional practice".*





## School leaders reflect on Junior Cycle reform

“Junior Cycle reform is a road journey for us and we have travelled a long way. It’s trying to bring everyone with us on that journey, that’s what we are about.

The changes associated with Junior Cycle require a cultural shift in how we teach and how students learn. The one-hour classes and active learning is bearing fruit in a really healthy way where students are enjoying their learning more and engaging in classroom activities more effectively.

We introduced one-hour classes a few years ago and we did a lot of work on active teaching methodologies. We focused on teaching and learning strategies with staff which was very beneficial”.

“Some of the great aspects to this reform has been increased collaboration amongst staff, and active teaching has gone from a low level to a very high level. Wellbeing is hugely important for us and our new curriculum acknowledges this. We sat down as a staff and acknowledged that this was the most crucial issue to get right. If a student’s mental health is good, they are going to learn better.”

“One of the challenges for us is engaging parents in Junior Cycle reform especially with new assessment and reporting practices. However, our students are taking home their classroom and learning experiences which provides parents with a real and clear understanding of what is happening inside the classroom”.



### Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine

Principal: Dermot Healy

“Keeping parents informed is hugely important. Traditionally, reporting was with grades and percentages and most parents seemed to be happy with that. We are now moving towards more formative feedback on an ongoing basis. We have been working on formative assessment for years and while there is still summative assessment during the year, the challenge is to marry both and move the culture forward to enhance the learning experience for students.

Parents need to be supported in this respect and the challenge is finding a happy medium while at the same time we move our assessment and reporting forward”.

“The JCT supports are very beneficial, especially the leadership days. This CPD can give school leaders a chance to sit back for a day and reflect on how we are embedding reform and hear about good practice in other schools. The resources online are very good in this respect”.

“The noise levels are different, but this occurs in a supportive classroom environment. You can pass classrooms where students are engaged in group work or active work. There is a buzz in the place and this is evident in many classrooms”.



“Timetabling is always a challenge. However, embedding Wellbeing into our timetable, along with new courses such as Coding for our first years, are new and exciting challenges for us.

We wanted to broaden our curriculum to allow for greater choice for students. Some of our traditional core subjects moved to option bands to provide for short courses and to support our Wellbeing programme. This has been successful, albeit a challenge.

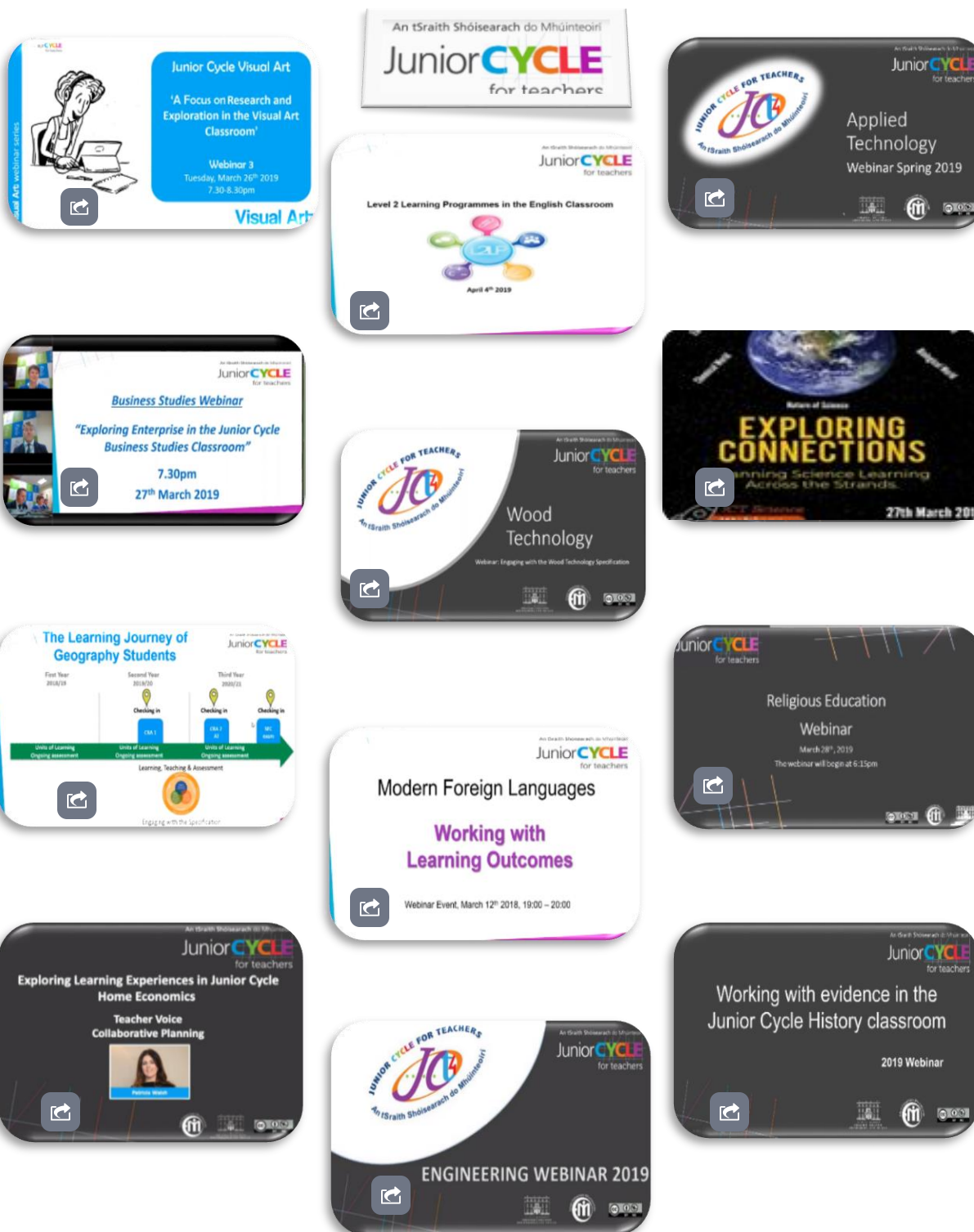
The involvement of staff and parents was hugely important here as we constantly review our curriculum. To ensure students have experience of all subjects we run a taster programme with all subject options in first year. This is very popular with students and parents”.

“Assessment and reporting are key. We recently changed our Management Information System (MIS) and invested in another platform to promote collaborative planning with staff. This provides increased opportunities to link our evolving assessment and reporting strategies. We are at the initial stages and the process is ongoing”.



## Weeks of Webinars

Our Weeks of Webinars comprised twenty-three Webinars facilitated between 25<sup>th</sup> March and 11<sup>th</sup> April. Over recent years, these resources are proving to be very popular with teachers. You will find all these resources on the subject pages of our website [www.jct.ie](http://www.jct.ie)



## Inaugural Science Symposium

The inaugural Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) Science Symposium will take place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at the Cork Institute of Technology – Registration is now OPEN! We are delighted to announce this JCT Science Symposium – “(R) Evolution – Harnessing Potential”. Full agenda and times will be confirmed soon for this full day conference. Check with your Principal or nominee to register at

[www.jctregistration.ie](http://www.jctregistration.ie)



If you would like to register for one of our two-hour in-school workshops (with small groups of teachers) for 2019/2020 please indicate your interest by clicking on the orange L1LPs/L2LPs button on

<http://www.jctregistration.ie>

We will then be in contact regarding a date & time.

## Subject and Short Course Symposia events



The JCT Maths Symposium took place at Microsoft DreamSpace on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Shane Flanagan, JCT Maths Team Leader, is pictured here welcoming teachers and encouraging collaboration and sharing of learning throughout the day.



Thanks to all the Home Economics teaches who joined us for an inspiring JCT Home Economics Symposium on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May at Airfield Estate, Dublin. It was a wonderful sharing of ideas of how to bring the Specification to life in our classrooms



The JCT Geography Symposium took place on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March in Powerscourt House. Dr. Siobhán Power of the Geological Survey of Ireland showed teachers their Map Viewer which shows the different layers and explanations of soils. A great resource to use with Junior Cycle Geography students.



Dublin City University, DCU, was the venue for the JCT Religious Education Symposium which took place on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> April. One of the highlights was Tomi Reichental providing a powerful testimony of his experience as a Holocaust survivor.



Click on image for short video with some highlights of the day.





## Subject and Short Course Symposia events

On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March the JCT English Team facilitated our SOAR event, Sharing Opportunities Approaches and Reflections, focused on student voice, Poetry and Performance and Creative approaches to non-literary texts. Click [here](#) for further details.



*Thank you*

**Thank you** to all of the schools and Centres for Education that registered over 11,000 teachers with us for their 2nd teaching subject workshops recently. Registration is now closed. These workshops take place in Education Centres nationwide during September and October 2019.

### Leadership Clusters

Our JCT team are working closely with the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) and with selected leadership clusters. There are a wide range of projects including reflective practice, student voice, collaborative planning with learning outcomes and engaging with stakeholders

### Leadership for Learning Conference

Dr Kathy Smith, of Monash University in Australia, addressing participants at the joint National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and JCT Leadership for Learning Conference in Dublin on 17<sup>th</sup> May.



Our JCT Business Studies Symposium took place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May at Ballymakenny College, Drogheda. The agenda included guest speakers, panel discussions and Interactive Teachmeets.



The inaugural JCT Classics Symposium took place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May in UCD Classics Museum. Participants were introduced to the School of Irish Archeology [@SIAeducation](#) and Legion Ireland [@legion ireland](#) who were amazing and really bring Classics to life for students and adults. Click [here](#) for further details.





## Supporting Junior Cycle



Thanks to over one hundred JCT Whole-school CPD Associates, Advisors and Team Leaders who travelled to four venues nationally on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May to reflect on effective facilitation and the direction of our Whole-school Professional Learning Experience for next year.



Thanks to all our **PE Associates** who gathered in Laois Education Centre in May developing their understanding of the Junior Cycle Short Course Specification and Assessment Guidelines in Physical Education.



The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, (NCCA) and JCT **Joint Seminar Series** continued on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May where the **Step-Up initiative** was celebrated. This initiative, in collaboration with the Inspectorate and nine schools nationwide, is a Schools' Excellence Fund initiative aimed at supporting schools in embedding highly effective practice in the context of Junior Cycle Reform.



Our **CSPE Associates** gathered in Athlone Education Centre in May to discuss and review the professional learning experience (PLE) for 2019/20.

Thank you to all our Associates and schools who supported JCT in the delivery and development of our PLE supports over the past year. Roll on next year.



**Thank you** to all the Technology & Visual Art teachers who joined us for an inspiring National Drawing Day at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology on 18<sup>th</sup> May. A wonderful sharing of practice and ideas. There was lots of play, experimentation and creativity, brought to life through drawing.



### Exploring the Design Process in Art

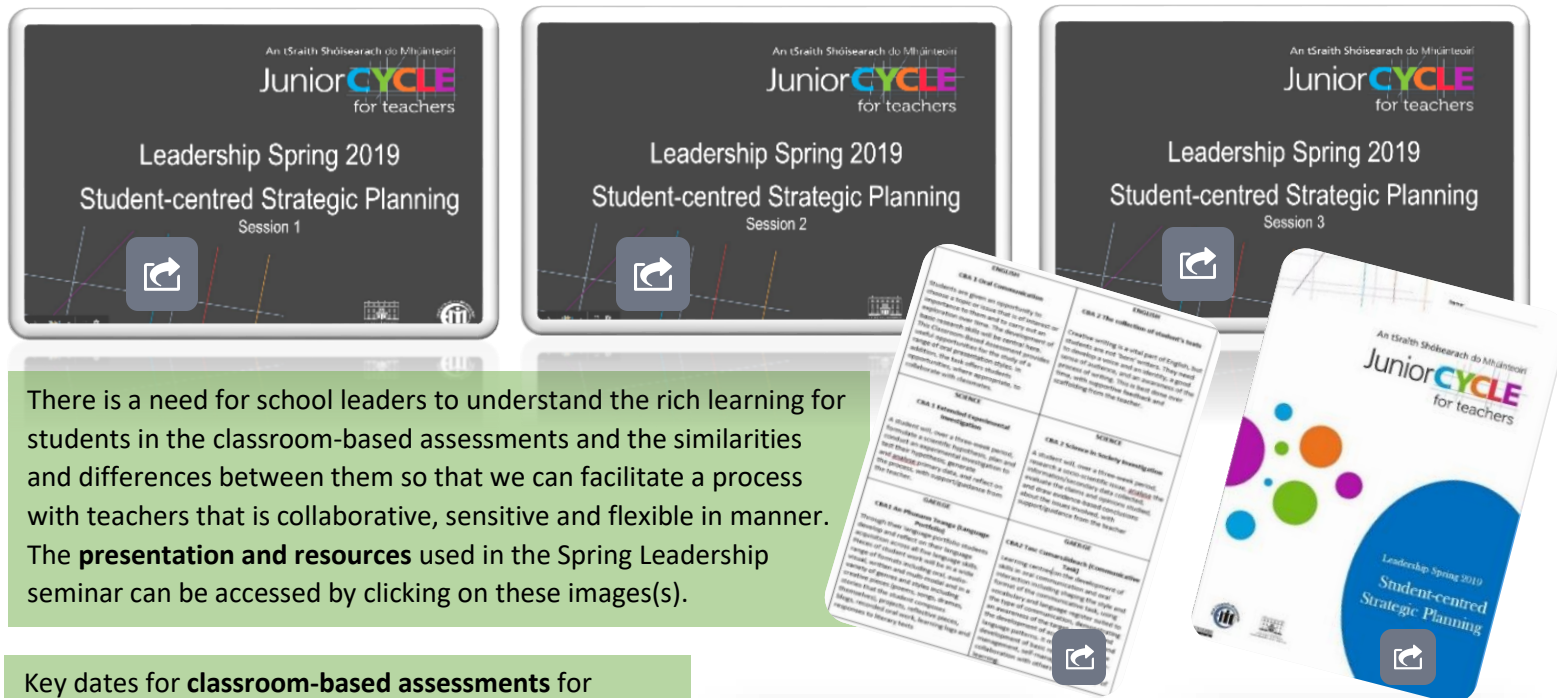
Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), in collaboration with the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCol), offered a two-day summer CPD programme for teachers of Visual Art in early June. Using a hands on approach, teachers experienced a range of methodologies and techniques to support teaching and learning in the classroom.





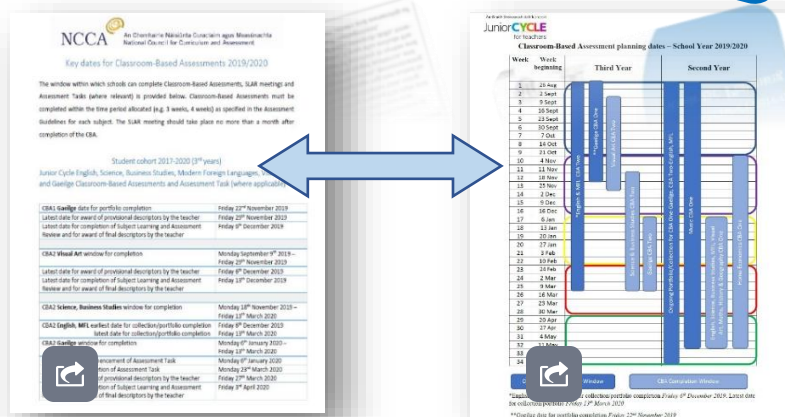
# School Leadership Workshops

The Spring Leadership seminar 2019 focused on *Student Centred Strategic Planning*. It aimed to support school leaders in deepening their understanding of how to plan a Junior Cycle curriculum which is needs and context driven, and student centred in approach. During the workshop participants reflected on the vision for Junior Cycle which places the student at the centre of their own educational experience and explored how the curricular decisions school leaders make in their schools can put the student at the centre.



There is a need for school leaders to understand the rich learning for students in the classroom-based assessments and the similarities and differences between them so that we can facilitate a process with teachers that is collaborative, sensitive and flexible in manner. The **presentation and resources** used in the Spring Leadership seminar can be accessed by clicking on these images(s).

Key dates for **classroom-based assessments** for 2019/20 have been issued by the NCCA. The JCT leadership team have created a supporting document to assist school leaders to collaboratively plan with these dates for the school year 2019/20. This document links with the proposed process for collaborative planning of the school assessment calendar which was supported during our Spring Leadership seminar in 2019. Click on images to access Key Dates CBA 2019/20, CBA Collaborative Planning Grid, CBA Thematic exercise and the Spring Strategic Planning Learning log.



## JCT Leadership Supports 2019/20

The JCT leadership team are now in the planning stage for our Professional Learning Experiences (PLE) for school leaders for 2019/20. These PLEs will be based on feedback gathered from engagement with school leaders throughout our engagement in 2018/19 and will aim to best support the needs in the system in the leadership space.

The autumn Leadership Seminar will be delivered through education centres nationwide from the 5th of November until the 10th of December 2019. Schools will be notified when registration is open through [www.jctregistration.ie](http://www.jctregistration.ie).

If you have any queries or concerns regarding school leadership and the Junior Cycle please contact the leadership team at [fiona.obrien@jct.ie](mailto:fiona.obrien@jct.ie) and [helen.costello@jct.ie](mailto:helen.costello@jct.ie)

# Whole School Support for 2019/20

In 2019/20, JCT's Whole School CPD Day provides schools with a choice of three pathways while they focus on **planning for student centred learning** in their own context.

Each of the three pathways commences with an opportunity for participants to reflect on the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 in their school to date and to identify planning considerations for the students in their unique context.

The mid-morning session facilitates planning for student learning. This will be informed by the experiences and collective understanding that has resulted from participant reflection during the first session.

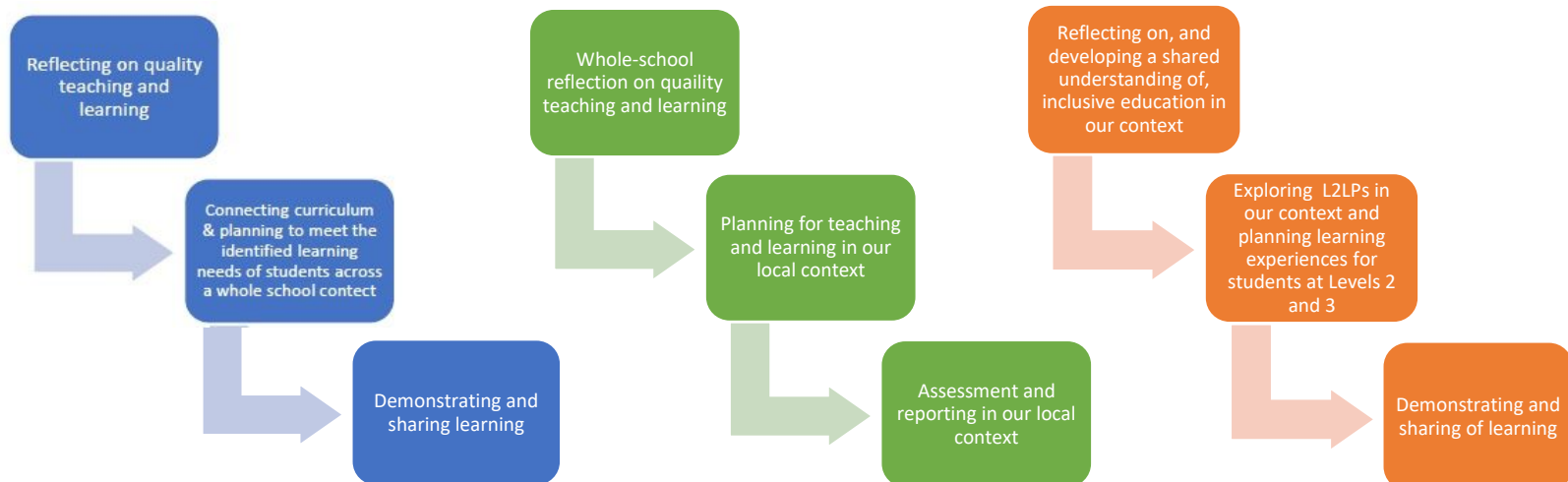
The afternoon session will provide opportunities for participants to demonstrate the learning experiences which they have planned for their students and to consolidate the professional learning that has taken place throughout the day. Steps to be taken after the conclusion of the Whole School CPD Day will be identified and agreed during the final session.

The choice of pathway or focus for this day of **planning for student centred learning** will depend on the current school context and the associated CPD needs. Following consideration of this and a conversation with the relevant JCT Regional Team Leader, the most appropriate Professional Learning Experience from the following three pathways may be chosen by each school;

**Pathway 1:** Planning for student centred learning - Planning to meet the identified needs of our students across the whole-school.

**Pathway 2:** Planning for student centred learning - Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Reporting in our classrooms.

**Pathway 3:** Planning for student centred learning - Embedding the Level 2 Learning Programme in the mainstream classroom.



*As the school summer holiday begins, Junior Cycle for Teachers wishes to take this opportunity to thank all the school leaders, teachers, administration staff, special needs assistants, caretakers, cleaners and everyone else that worked with and for us during 2018/2019. Have a restful and happy break.*