



## INTRODUCTION



*Colleagues, In the first instance, I wish to extend my good wishes to you for a happy and successful new academic year; I hope that the year will provide you with opportunities to further enhance your own professional learning.*

It has been a very busy and fruitful time since our last newsletter, April 2017, for the Instructional Leadership Programme. We were delighted to host the inaugural Conference for Principals & Deputy Principals on June 19th, affording time to the senior leadership team to converse and plan around their role in leading learning and to learn from their professional colleagues around the country. A huge thanks to our IL colleagues in schools/colleges who presented on the day; Abbey Vocational School(Donegal), Athy Community College(Kildare), Naas Community College(Kildare), Kinsale Community School(Cork), Castleisland Community College (Kerry), Dominican College (Dublin). The feedback from the day was so positive that we are delighted to include it as an event in our annual calendar, save the 2018/2019 date in your diary, **Monday 18th June 2018**. Details will be available on the website in due course.

Congratulations to our 2017 Graduates from Cohort 7 & Cohort 8 (173 teachers in total) and welcome to those who have commenced the programme in 2017, Cohort 9 and Cohort 10. We are currently processing the applications on the 'waiting list' and hope to be able to make an offer of a place, for the Cohort 11 Group, before the end of this term.

In our recent self-evaluation process, we identified the need to support schools that are aiming to 'roll it out across the whole school', in a true professional learning community manner (PLC). As a result, the theme of our National Conference, 13th/14th October, is Instructional Leadership Programme;

Cohort 9 pictured at their first session of the Instructional Leadership Programme



## TELL US YOUR STORY

If you would like to tell us your ILP story or journey please email [newsletter@instructionalleadership.ie](mailto:newsletter@instructionalleadership.ie) with details and photographs.

*Moving Towards a Whole-School Approach to Effective Teaching and Learning*, at which a number of schools will showcase how they have employed their IL learning to scaffold the development of a PLC.

The aim of the Newsletter is to share practice and ideas; a virtual PLC! I hope you enjoy reading about some of the examples of effective and innovative practices that are featured in this edition of the IL Newsletter. Remember, there is no reason to feel the need to 'reinvent the wheel', the articles aim to share practice that can be replicated or tweaked for implementation in your context. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require assistance and/or further detail, [admin@instructionalleadership.ie](mailto:admin@instructionalleadership.ie)

Don't forget to visit our website regularly, [www.instructionalleadership.ie](http://www.instructionalleadership.ie) for updates at what is happening at national and regional level.

Mise, le meas

*Joan Russell*

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

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Cohort 9 - Session 2	
Monday	9th October
Tuesday	10th October
Wednesday	11th October
Cohort 8- Session 4 (Graduation)	
Wednesday	11th October
Thursday	12th October
Friday	13th October
Cohort 10 - Session 1	
Monday	16th October
Tuesday	17th October
Wednesday	18th October



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2017

Registration is open for Instructional Leadership Programme National Conference 2017 "Moving Towards A Whole School Approach to Effective Teaching and Learning" is now open. Email [admin@instructionalleadership.ie](mailto:admin@instructionalleadership.ie) to express your interest and to receive a copy of a registration form.

**Friday 13th & Sat. 14th October 2017**  
at Mount Wolseley Hotel, Tullow, Co. Carlow



## AVS IL JOURNEY SO FAR

C.P.D. Three letters that can often illicit 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. The Abbey Vocational School's first foray into the world of Instructional Leadership came in 2015 as 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 Barrie'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 notice! Subtle changes were taking place in the classrooms of the Abbey Vocational School and many staff members were interested.

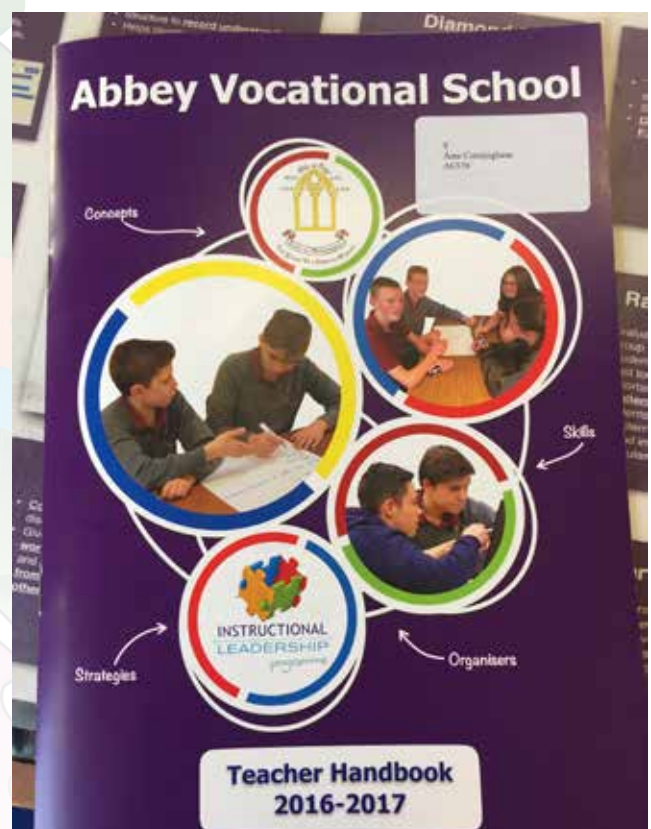
A waiting list was soon drawn up as demand was certainly exceeding supply for remaining places on further cohorts. Our Principal and Deputy had the novel idea of creating an Instructional Leadership committee comprised of management and staff members engaging in Barrie's training. The committee meet regularly and have 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. We 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 both promoted by JCT and indeed, incorporated by Barrie into his workshops. Having selected methodologies, our committee collaborated and created an

Instructional Leadership booklet which was given to every member of staff in Abbey Vocational School. These booklets provide a detailed explanation of 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 Taxonomy posters.

Just two years have passed since our first cohort began their journey to Carlow and since, we have had two more cohorts begin the insightful training with the infectious and accomplished Barrie Bennett. Just a short walk through the corridors of the Abbey Vocational School, Donegal Town is all it takes to recognise the impact of Instructional Leadership within our 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.

On 19th of June, we were given the wonderful opportunity to deliver a presentation displaying our Instructional Leadership booklets and posters at the Principal and Deputy Principal conference in Carlow. 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 were shared. We left with a renewed enthusiasm and several plans for the coming year and a knowledge that no longer are the fateful letters CPD something to be scoffed at!



## COLLINSTOWN PARK COMMUNITY COLLEGE OPEN EVENING

During Collinstown Park Community College Open Evening 5th Year student facilitated parents in a Teams Games Tournament about the school. Pictures of the event are included below:



## INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP COLLABORATION AT DOMINICAN COLLEGE, GRIFFITH AVENUE.

On the 21st August, Dominican College hosted a meeting with a number of local schools to share some of the work they have been doing as a result of attending the Instructional Leadership Programme (ILP). It was attended by Principals and Deputy Principals from Manor House, Raheny, Holy Faith, Glasnevin and St. Aidan's, Whitehall.

Our Instructional Leadership (IL) team, who were trained in Cohort 6 of the programme, gave a short presentation on the changes brought about in Dominican College over the past number of years.

A Teaching and Learning box was also presented, which contained resources promoted by both the ILP and Junior Cycle for Teachers such as placemats, show-me boards, coloured paper and role cards etc. for group work. One box has been placed in every classroom in Dominican College.

The Principal of Dominican College, Dr. Olive Laffoy highlighted the importance of the support of senior management in becoming an IL school. She also outlined the development of a Code of Learning in the school. This encourages the learner to take more control of their learning, which dovetails with the IL philosophy. This was produced in close consultation with junior and senior students and is now included in the school journal.



A tour of the school followed, giving an opportunity to view some of the resources that have been developed by the IL team to enhance Teaching and Learning among teachers and students e.g. Bloom's Taxonomy posters on staff and student corridors, learning intention boards in every classroom and student bookmarks explaining each level of Bloom's taxonomy. Previous initiatives that linked in very well with the IL philosophy

were also highlighted e.g. a photographic montage of the entire school community produced as part of a Friendship Week programme.

The meeting concluded with a light lunch allowing time for discussion and sharing of ideas before the commencement of the new academic year. It proved a very successful event and worthwhile endeavour.



## OUR TOP TIPS TO SCHOOL MANAGEMENT!

- Open the opportunity to attend the IL programme to all teachers.
- Explain in advance that you expect the trio to bring back something at regular intervals to the rest of the staff (perhaps twice a year?). To ensure this happens, the trio need to be hardworking and have a good relationship with other staff members.
- To allow proper sharing of IL skills to happen, you must be prepared to give **time** to facilitate workshops and/or **money** to buy resources. Permanent reminders of IL are worth their weight in gold. eg. Bloom's posters or Learning Intention boards in class rooms. Everything costs money, but it is worth it.
- Ensure a folder is kept to record all progress made.
- Show the folder to every inspector that walks through your door!
- Use the IL progress in your SSE and SIP documents.
- If at all possible, have teachers working in pairs when trying out new methodologies – team teaching/facilitating reduces the intensity for individuals and allows teachers to try new methodologies out in a safer environment.
- Keep the Board of Management informed of the programme and the value for money that it is. The trio could give them a presentation.
- Keep parents informed of the programme and the impact in school for their children. Articles in school newsletters could give updates. The trio could give them a presentation.
- Take photos of **absolutely everything** and store them somewhere accessible. Encourage people to include photos in their subject plans as evidence of the methodologies employed – much more effective than a written list (which we can all put together in a few minutes.)
- Do not attempt to go from 0 – 100 in one year. Start small and grow gradually. Also basic concepts will need to be revisited again and again as not everyone gets on board with everything first time. eg. in two years, we have revisited Bloom's Taxonomy three times and will do it again at the start of the next school year.
- To ensure the effective continuation of the programme, it is vital that a new group from your school participates in the programme at regular intervals. This will bring new energy and enthusiasm from new faces.
- Thank your hardworking staff! Most of them give more than they have to, most of the time.



June IL conference stand

## FÉILTE SCOILE AS A MECHANISM TO EMBED INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING.



*Leona Forde and Orla Cronin, Kinsale Community School, Co Cork.*

*“Those who dare to teach, must never cease to learn”, John Cotton Dana.*



**F**éilte Beaga is Kinsale Community School's unique in-school teaching initiative that pioneers collaborative practice and innovative teaching.

In 2015, inspired by the Féilte Festival our school decided to begin our own internal celebration of the teaching and learning that was taking place in our school.

In Kinsale, like many schools around the country, teachers were benefitting from the training they were receiving in the Instructional Leadership Programme and the Programme is making a positive impact on the staff and students in our school. Those involved in IL training returned to our school and began using the skills, strategies and concepts they had learned on the course.

In KCS, along side IL, many of our teachers were attending other courses, studying for masters and undertaking independent research in a wide variety of areas of education. The knowledge they were gaining was invaluable to our school, but what was missing was a space, where teachers could share this knowledge with each other.

A new approach to the sharing of best practice was needed and the idea of *Féilte Beaga* was formed. It was envisioned as an opportunity for collaboration and celebration of the knowledge of our staff.

In 2015, we held our first *Feilte Beaga*. Staff members volunteered to lead a series of workshops about innovative practice for their colleagues. Teachers and visitors were divided into groups and attended each workshop for a fifteen-minute presentation. Six workshops were facilitated by staff on the day, covering a variety of topics. Two of the workshops, one on questioning and another on the use of mindmaps were focused on sharing knowledge teachers had gained as

part of Instructional Leadership Programme. Other teachers showcased methodologies such as using Lego serious play and the educational app EdPuzzle both examples of learning from the Edison Entrepreneurial Education Programme, which members of our staff were also involved in.

The feedback from teachers and visitors, which included representatives from the Teaching Council, the principals of local primary schools and University College Cork was so overwhelmingly positive, that we decided to make this an annual fixture in our calendar.

Our second Féilte Beaga, was held on October 5th 2016, World Teachers Day. To make it more inclusive we decided to invite our headboy and headgirl along to the workshops. This year our SNA's, also took part in the workshops. Again, teachers volunteered to present on a variety of topics. In 2016, the workshops included: teaching and challenging gifted children, an overview of our school's experience of Droichead, as well as the sharing of pedagogical practice from Business Studies.

Whilst Féilte Scoile is an annual event, we felt that it was important to consolidate collaborative practice in our school on a more regular basis. Thus, we decided to hold termly Teachmeets. A Teachmeet is an informal gathering of teachers who come together voluntarily to share instructional resources and reflections on practice. Some of the methodologies shared at our Teachmeets include: Hexagonal thinking, peer editing and Schoology. We have also established a teaching and learning page on our schools internal reporting system to facilitate the ongoing sharing of resources.

Next year, we plan to base our Féilte Scoile and Teachmeets around four cornerstones of teaching and learning: Questioning, Feedback, Self-directed learning and Challenging the student.

The benefits of collaboration can be enormous, teachers in our school have spoken of becoming aware of the invaluable knowledge their own colleagues possess through the workshops of Féilte Beaga and the TeachMeets. Other have explained how they have been introduced to apps, methodologies and resources that have had a very positive impact on their lessons.

The school has also experienced positive external evaluation of the success of the Feilte Scoile initiative. In March 2017, a WSE-MLL was undertaken and several references in the report recognised the obvious success in the area of continuing professional development in our school.

***“Of particular note is the prominence attributed to CPD as a key part of maintaining and further developing best practice throughout the school community. The commitment of the board, the senior management team and the teaching staff***

*to collaborative and enduring CPD opportunities incorporates innovative practice and is of an excellent standard. It is having a discernible impact on student outcomes and experiences."*

Our students have also highlighted the positive impact this collaboration is having on their learning, some of their own thoughts can be read in the image below. Micheal Fullan argues that the role of leaders is to "Foster in others the capacity to innovate, to learn, to collaborate". Féilte Scoile allows all teachers the opportunity to become leaders of learning in their own schools. It creates a space where the learning of those who participate in the IL Programme can be demonstrated to their colleagues to strengthen a culture of collaboration within schools.

Féilte Scoile has helped us to harness the knowledge and potential of the teachers in our school. It has allowed us to consolidate local professional expertise and excellence within, resulting in more effective teaching and enhanced learning. We are delighted to be able to share our initiative with you and would be more than willing to provide further information and resources to those interested.

Leona Forde and Orla Cronin  
www.kinsalecommunityschool.ie

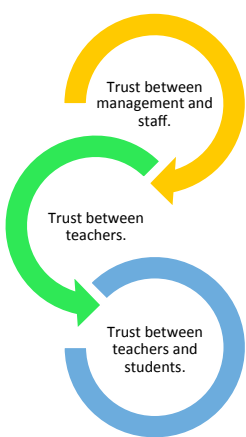


## A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AT NAAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

*By Sammi Dunne and Michaela Piare.*

*Instructional Leadership (IL) has become an integral part of the culture of Naas Community College in just three, short years. It is a prominent part of the teaching and learning in our school, and as such, there is a lot invested in this area in terms of time, effort and finance.*

Ensuring engagement in IL on a whole school level requires an abundance of trust.



Our principal, Ciarán Keegan, and our deputy principal, Sarah Buckley, are both graduates of the IL Programme. They have invested a lot of their time, and the school budget to ensure that staff are trained in IL, and in turn, that IL becomes ingrained in our culture. So far, nine of our staff have been involved in the IL Programme.

Trust is evident again, in our management trusting those who are participating in the IL Programme to share their new knowledge and methodologies with the whole staff. This is carried out in our school through a Teaching and Learning club. We meet once a month before school to demonstrate our strategy of the month, be it Teams Games Tournaments, Graffiti, Ghost Walks, etc. and to reflect on the previous month's strategy.

However, we find that explaining a tactic in T&L club is only one step towards sharing our knowledge, and it has proved much more effective to observe teachers using such tactics in class. For this reason, management at Naas CC have allocated two Croke park hours to allow teachers to get involved in peer collaboration and observation, therefore, encouraging the spread of IL strategies and tactics.

For this to work, we have wooden traffic lights outside each classroom, which can be switched from green, to orange, to red, to indicate the teacher's availability for observation.

The traffic lights are a permanent feature of all classrooms, and indicate as follows:

- Green:** You are welcome to observe this lesson.
- Orange:** You are welcome to observe, but I am trying something new.
- Red:** Please do not observe this lesson. (During class tests, etc.)

We also have a green light for each day of the week in the staffroom, where teachers can write the time of the lesson they would like invite others to observe. The IL team use this space to invite others to see them use the strategy of the month, also.

Once again, the importance of trust is evident in peer collaboration. For this to work, and for staff to truly learn from each other, we must trust that our colleagues are observing to learn, and to improve. We have a 'no criticism' policy to ensure

that teachers do not feel they are being assessed. We hope that once trust is firmly established, that teachers will become comfortable in asking for, and offering each other advice.

With our traffic lights practice prevalent around the school, it's important to make Instructional leadership practice physically accessible to all of our teachers in all of our classrooms to drive our whole school approach. IL boxes have been created for every room, which contain an abundance of physical resources that allow for IL to be used in the classroom. Some materials included are: post-its, laminates of placemats, whiteboard markers, graphic organisers, playing cards and other essentials a teacher may like to include to make their tools for the classroom characterise their own teaching practice to encourage active learning. These boxes are a vital tool and ever present in all the rooms in the school, which gives a physical presence to allow for consistency in all classrooms.

As well as making IL boxes available in each classroom, we strive to create the interactive classroom by aligning the desks in all the rooms in group settings to replicate peer collaboration and create similar experiences for students in all subject areas.



Schoology is also used for teachers to share resources through our online interface. All of the templates, resources and materials are available to everyone on the IL page, once again strengthening our collaboration, and active learning philosophy within the school.

We encourage all teachers to continuously document their practices using pictures in the class as a means to celebrate our instructional leadership through media platforms such as



our twitter page and our school blog, in order to make people outside of our school aware of educational practices that are influencing our students.

Through IL training we are embedding a strong collaborative culture at Naas CC. With a curriculum moving away from the old traditional practices in the classroom, we hope to foster an environment that will help our students become critical thinkers. This environment helps our students develop in our new society and ever-changing culture, and we as educators need to prepare our students for the outside world by creating experiences in classes that develop the skills needed for them to be successful.

By using active and beneficial strategies in the classroom environments, we can strengthen our student's abilities to develop their own skills by encouraging innovation, communication, collaboration and creativity, in line with the new Junior Cycle Key Skills and Statements of Learning. Using these approaches, combined with a support and trust between management, staff, and students, we find our whole school implementation is creating a foundation for our school in the future. As a school community, using collaborative learning allows the classroom experience for students, teachers and management alike, to be more enjoyable and progressive.



# Principals and Deputy Principal Day



**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