



## Leading Learning

*Newsletter of the Instructional Leadership Programme*

Issue 11: January 2020

# INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP programme

## Introduction

Colleagues,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Instructional Leadership Newsletter, which is packed with news, articles and invitations. Like yourselves we have had a busy few months!

We facilitated a wonderful Senior & Middle Leaders Conference in June 2019, *The Dialogic Classroom: Instructional Leadership Activating Learner Voice*, during which we explored the role of students as active agents in their own learning and explored the theory, policy and practice to embed a culture of authentic student voice and create rich learning experiences in the classroom. We were delighted to have such distinguished speakers as Dr. Paula Flynn, Assistant Professor in the School of Inclusion and Special Education in Dublin City University (DCU) Institute of Education, Dr. Domnall Fleming, School of Education, UCC and Mr Norman Emerson, then Director, Curriculum and Assessment with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. Norman has since changed position and is now working with the European Commission. We wish him continued success and happiness in his new role and in noting the loss to the Irish system of education we thank him for his enormous contribution.

Since that conference we have commenced a project, in partnership with the NCCA, leading and supporting thirty-five post primary schools, from across the three sectors, in activating learner voice in the Junior Cycle classroom. Inside you will see an article outlining the detail of our Introductory Conference for this project, authored by Mr. Gerard O'Sullivan, Education Officer, NCCA and member of the IL Steering Committee. We will keep you updated on the progress via the website and the next edition of the newsletter. In the meantime check out the ETBI Journal, featuring articles on learner voice, at [ETBI Journal of Education – Volume 1](#)

In October we celebrated the graduations of 'Cohort Ophelia' (Cohort 10) and Cohort 11. Cohort 12 are mid-way through the programme.

Enrolment for Cohort 13 is complete, and we are currently enrolling for Cohort 14, with limited places available. Both Cohorts will commence in March 2020. Remember if you are interested in enrolling your school, a member of the senior management team must be registered and attend. Request a copy of the application form at [admin@instructionalleadership.ie](mailto:admin@instructionalleadership.ie)

We are also working on the development of a project with the Teaching Council, to support you in leading teacher learning through the framework, Cosán. We are looking forward to deepening our partnership with the Education Centres to further facilitate framework for professional learning the further roll-out of the programme to the primary sector. We are also looking forward to drafting the programme for the Senior & Middle Leadership Conference 2020, scheduled for Monday 15th June 2020. As this is a conference to support you, if you have a suggestion as the theme just send us an email.

I wish to thank all who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter. As always, we welcome contributions for the newsletter, be it an article or photos. The next edition will publish later in the spring and all contributions can be forwarded to [newsletter@instructionalleadership.ie](mailto:newsletter@instructionalleadership.ie)

Keep up to date with all that is happening by following us on twitter @ILProgramme and visiting our website [www.instructionalleadership.ie](http://www.instructionalleadership.ie)

Wishing you all a very happy and successful 2020.

Le meas,

*Joan Russell*

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



**etbi**

Education and Training  
Boards Ireland  
*Boird Oideachais agus  
Oiliúna Éireann*

## Effective Teachers: A Brief Archeological Dig

Okay, this is not about archeology, but the metaphor holds 'digging down' to explore some instructional 'concepts'. So, if someone asked you to identify a few key attribute or characteristics of effective teachers, what would you say? Interestingly, when I ask teachers to think back on effective teachers they had, the teachers come up with the same answer as secondary students, when there were asked the same question.

Over the last 37 years of my 47 years in teaching, I've done workshops on classroom management. When I ask teachers to think back on teachers they liked and respected, and that more effective and then to identify why that teacher was put in that 'category', they consistently came up with the same three in this order: sense of humour, enthusiastic, and caring. Other characteristics were 'organized', knew their subject area, communicated they wanted to be in the classroom etc.

A study done recently with secondary students in Newfoundland, Canada asked these students the same question...and their answer was the same and in the same order: sense of humour, enthusiasm, and caring.

In working with teachers over the years, one part of my work was working with teachers that were at risk of losing their teaching job. Think along the lines of a personal coach. This program with Edmonton Public Schools in Alberta Canada was designed by the School District (think Ministry of Education) the Teachers Union and a law firm. Seventeen consultants worked with three teachers a year. The issue, on the surface, looked like the focus should be on classroom management; however, that was not the case. The issues were those variables that were causing students to misbehave in the first place. One of the key concepts we all came to consensus on was the idea of 'more effective teachers win kids over'; their students bond with them and not against them. And now you start to see the connection to humour, enthusiasm and caring.

The problem is that 'humour', 'enthusiasm' and 'caring' are not skills one does 'directly'...rather, they emerge because of other things we do. For example, students are not asking us to be 'funny' they are asking us to see the humour in classroom life. I remember a student who was sent to the office because his response to the teacher's request to 'turn around'. The student stood up,



turned around, sat down and kept talking to that same student and the teacher got angry and sent the student to the office. So, now you're the principal, what would you do to this student? The teacher should have said something like, "Very good, my fault, could I get 180 degrees; someday you will make a great lawyer...and of course you know I will triple your homework for this evening." And the students laugh. The class bonds with the teacher. The students say to themselves, "He or she will treat me with that same sense of respect/care; he/she likes us; he/she wants to be in our class."

So at the end of the class or the end of the day, when that bell rings, we as teachers get a 'mean score' from our students. That score is between zero and 100; with 100 being the best teacher they've had and zero the worst. The higher our mean score, the easier our classroom life becomes; the less management problems we have. So when we say, "Sean please" ...Sean stops, he does not say, "Why are you always picking on me."

Key here is that if your mean score is 23 or 92 when the bell goes; you carry that score to the next class or next day. And word gets around the school; students know your mean score. So when the next year starts, and our students walk into your classroom on that first day... they already know your mean score. You start where you left off.

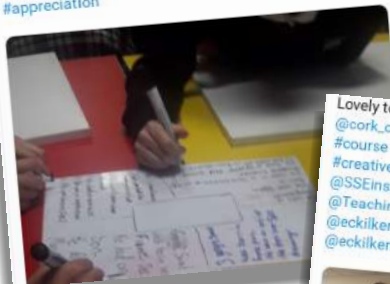
By the way, 'winning over' is a concept that emerged from Joseph Kounin's study in the 1960s on highly effective teachers; one of the first studies we know of related to effective teaching. Do the 'dig'... Google him, find out about his work.

*Professor Barrie Bennett*



## What Twitter is saying about ILP

@FingalCC @DDLETB\_OSD @ILProgramme  
@jctVisualArt First Years, having previously used  
Visual Thinking Strategies @philipynawine to explore  
the work of George Seurat today used placemats to  
share knowledge about him. #visualculture  
#appreciation



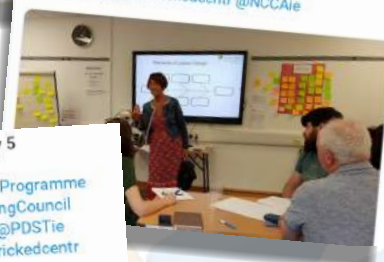
Day 5 of #instructionalleadership #course saw great  
discussion during #DeBonoThinkingHats  
#creative #teachers in @cork\_cesc @ILProgramme  
@cpd\_spd @IPPN\_Education @TeachingCouncil  
@NAPD\_IE @DonegalEd @eckilkenny @PDSTie  
@CarrickOnShann @eckilkenny @limerickcentr  
@NCCAie



Great fun creating @GetKahoot on Day 5  
#instructionalleadership #course  
#creative #teachers in @cork\_cesc @ILProgramme  
@cpd\_spd @IPPN\_Education @TeachingCouncil  
@NAPD\_IE @DonegalEd @eckilkenny @PDSTie  
@CarrickOnShann @eckilkenny @limerickcentr  
@NCCAie



Lovely to welcome Joan Russell of @ILProgramme to  
@cork\_cesc on Day 4 #instructionalleadership  
#course  
#creative #teachers  
@SSEinspectorate @ETBireland @IPPN\_Education  
@TeachingCouncil @NAPD\_IE @DonegalEd  
@eckilkenny @PDSTie @CarrickOnShann  
@eckilkenny @limerickcentr @NCCAie



Fantastic mini lessons modelled on Day 5  
#instructionalleadership #course  
#creative #teachers in @cork\_cesc @ILProgramme  
@cpd\_spd @IPPN\_Education @TeachingCouncil  
@NAPD\_IE @DonegalEd @eckilkenny @PDSTie  
@CarrickOnShann @eckilkenny @limerickcentr  
@NCCAie #steam #STEM  
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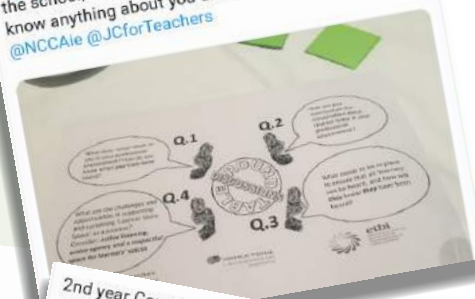
@paula\_flynn\_ asks whose voice gets listened to in the  
acoustic of the school? She says that if we're  
embarking on change in schools, we need to hear the  
voices of #teachers and students, & the nature of that  
dialogue is v important. @ILProgramme @NCCAie  
@JCforTeachers @PDSTie



Interesting panel discussion with Mr Norman Emerson  
NCCA, Dr Paula Flynn DCU, Dr Domnall Fleming  
UCC, Veronica Walsh DP Coláiste Treasa and Maria  
O'Sullivan DP Coláiste Choilm @ILProgramme  
@stleoscailow



Lots of practical ideas for nurturing learner voice  
emerging from the 120 #teachers participating in the  
@ILProgramme today, e.g., a student learning team in  
the school; a questionnaire asking "Do you want me to  
know anything about you and your learning?"  
@NCCAie @JCforTeachers

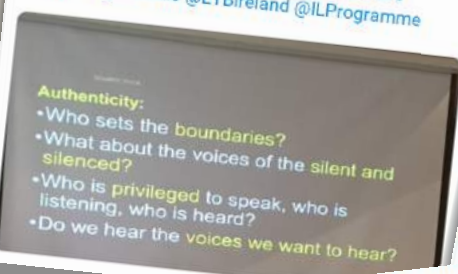


@ILProgramme #WeAreDonegalETB Revision / Critical  
thinking for Leaving Certificate Art History Class today  
using different Instructional strategies #placemat  
#teamsgametournament #memory



Challenging and thought-provoking questions being  
posed by @DomnallFleming of @UCC in relation to  
learner voice. @ILProgramme @JCforTeachers  
@PDSTie @NCCAie @ETBireland @ILProgramme

**Authenticity:**  
• Who sets the boundaries?  
• What about the voices of the silent and  
silenced?  
• Who is privileged to speak, who is  
listening, who is heard?  
• Do we hear the voices we want to hear?



Students using think-pair-share for placemat, fishbone  
and Venn diagrams to learn about rock types this  
morning in Learning Support #GeographyRocks  
#teamwork @ILProgramme



@FingalCC @jctVisualArt @ILProgramme Great  
Mindmaps from First Years on the Art Elements  
#Creative



2nd year Concept Attainment Competition for  
Friendship Week @ILProgramme





**Niamh Broderick was a teacher in St. Leo's College in Carlow, Cohort 5. Niamh was a teacher of french at the time of her graduation. She is now Deputy Principal of St Leo's College, Carlow.**

My introduction to the IL Programme coincided with the beginning of my Junior Cycle journey in 2013. I look at that period as the second phase of my teaching career, a rebirth of sorts. I had returned from my third and final maternity leave the previous year and yearned for something more in my teaching career, something new and dynamic. I kept hearing about Professor Barrie Bennett and IL Programme from teachers at other CPD events. They spoke about both with such passion and enthusiasm. I knew I needed a piece of the action!

I recall the day a letter arrived in our school inviting three staff members to participate in the IL Programme. I happened to enter the office as our Principal Clare Ryan opened the letter and read the contents aloud. This was definitely fate! The following November I took the first steps on my IL journey with my two colleagues Helen Regan and Alison Doyle. We developed a great working relationship and friendship over the two years, an unanticipated bonus of our involvement in the programme I have to say.

I had high hopes and expectations naturally and was of course a little apprehensive prior to attending. Perhaps I had built the programme up too much, perhaps I would be bitterly disappointed. We've all had that bad CPD experience at one stage or another unfortunately. I hoped to gain knowledge, to extend my instructional repertoire and to develop my ideas of teaching, learning and assessment. Did the programme and Professor Barrie Bennett deliver? Yes, absolutely!

The programme consisted of four residential seminars over two academic years between November 2013 and March 2015. The drive from my home in Carlow to the lovely Mount Wolseley Hotel in Tullow does not really merit a mention but the professional journey on which I embarked at that point is certainly noteworthy. It has a beginning and a middle but has no end. I will use the analogy of the ripple effect to describe the impact. I see the IL Programme as a pebble thrown into a clam lake, disturbing the status quo, its presence felt instantly, transferring outwards in concentric circles. The initial point at which the pebble hits the water represents the effect it had on me as a person, a teacher, a leader of learning. It forced me to consciously question my own practice and pedagogical approaches, to untwist my thinking about teaching and learning, to identify the

negatives and the positives, to extend my instructional repertoire and to modify my instruction actions in order to maximise student learning in my classroom.

Oprah Winfrey would refer to it as the 'aha moment' of my teacher career. And so the ripple effect began, firstly within the four walls of my own French classroom and ultimately extended out to other teachers and classrooms in my school and beyond.

Networking with teachers of similar mindsets, with similar enthusiasm for and interest in pedagogy, was a real joy. Conversation about education took place for the most part in the hotel's Austin Suite but continued over dinner and dare I say into the bar until the wee small hours at times. Barrie Bennet expertly facilitated all four seminar and was truly inspirational. He loves to 'play' with strategies and tactics. The combination of fun and learning made this one of the best educational experiences I've ever had.

This residential, complete submersion model of CPD is costly but a worthwhile investment if participants champion the initiative when they return to their own schools. It is highly effective and allows teachers the time and space needed to completely engage with all aspects of the programme and internalise the learning. The selection of potential teachers in a school is a decision which needs careful consideration. I am hugely grateful to my Principal Clare Ryan and the St. Leo's College Board of Management for affording me that opportunity.

My experience and more importantly the experience of the students in my classroom during the early implementation stages of the programme's material were very positive but not without operational issues at times. My students noticed a gradual change in me as a teacher and the way we did things in French class, an injection of new energy I suppose. I began to rethink how I was engaging and motivating them. They say that teaching children is an accomplishment but getting them excited about learning is an achievement. There's no doubt but that embedding instructional leadership practices involves hard work and careful planning on the part of the teacher. I introduced new strategies and tactics - group work, effective questioning, placemat, team games tournament, think, pair, share, mind mapping, concept mapping... the list goes on. The price of innovation is occasional failure and I had to find my way out of the implementation dip on several occasions. Patience and perseverance are undoubtedly the keys to success.

Through collaboration, the establishment of an AFL Working Group and the facilitation of several whole staff presentations, the message of instructional leadership

started to spread throughout my school and continues to do so. In fact, one of the very first in-service sessions I co-facilitated was with my two IL colleagues Helen and Alison. Our workshop on Team Games Tournament and Mind Mapping was very well received by staff.

All of the above beautifully complemented and enhanced our efforts to embed Junior Cycle Key Skills.

On a personal level, involvement in this programme provided me with an opportunity to reflect, to evaluate and to grow. It pushed me out of my comfort zone and challenged me. I was exposed to new ideas and new methodologies. It boosted my confidence and motivated me to try new things. I now have a heightened awareness of the importance of my role as an educator and the impact of my instruction.

Since graduation from the Programme I am proud to say that I have been appointed Deputy Principal in my school. I attribute this partly to the knowledge and skills I acquired and refined through the Instructional Leadership Programme and Junior Cycle CPD. I became a Whole School Associate with JCT in 2015 and continue to facilitate Junior Cycle whole staff CPD in schools in the southeast region. I frequently refer to Barrie Bennett and the IL programme during my presentations.

One aspect of my role profile as Deputy Principal is to lead teaching, learning and assessment in my school. Instructional leadership features heavily in the cut and thrust of this work. In conjunction with formative assessment, it forms part of SSE school improvement plan. I am happy to report that I still teach French and continue to consciously amend instructional leadership in my practice.

Our role as teachers is a hugely privileged one. It is our moral duty and ethical imperative to ensure that we provide the best possible learning experiences for our

students. In order to do this, it is essential that we ourselves never cease to learn, to improve, to hone our skills, to build our own capacity to engage, inform and inspire the variety of learners we teach. We must seize every opportunity to develop professionally and keep up to date with the newest pedagogical practices. Much like the instructions given by flight attendants to parents and guardians to secure their own oxygen masks first before tending to those in their care, we have to acknowledge that before we help others we must help ourselves. Focused CPD helps us to stay interested and interesting. It opens us up to new possibilities, new knowledge and new skills.

The Instructional Leadership Programme allowed me to do just that.

My IL learning did not stop with the completion of the programme. I grieved a little when I reached the end I must admit. I welcome the opportunity to stay connected through the IL website, the newsletters, the annual national conference and my IL colleagues.

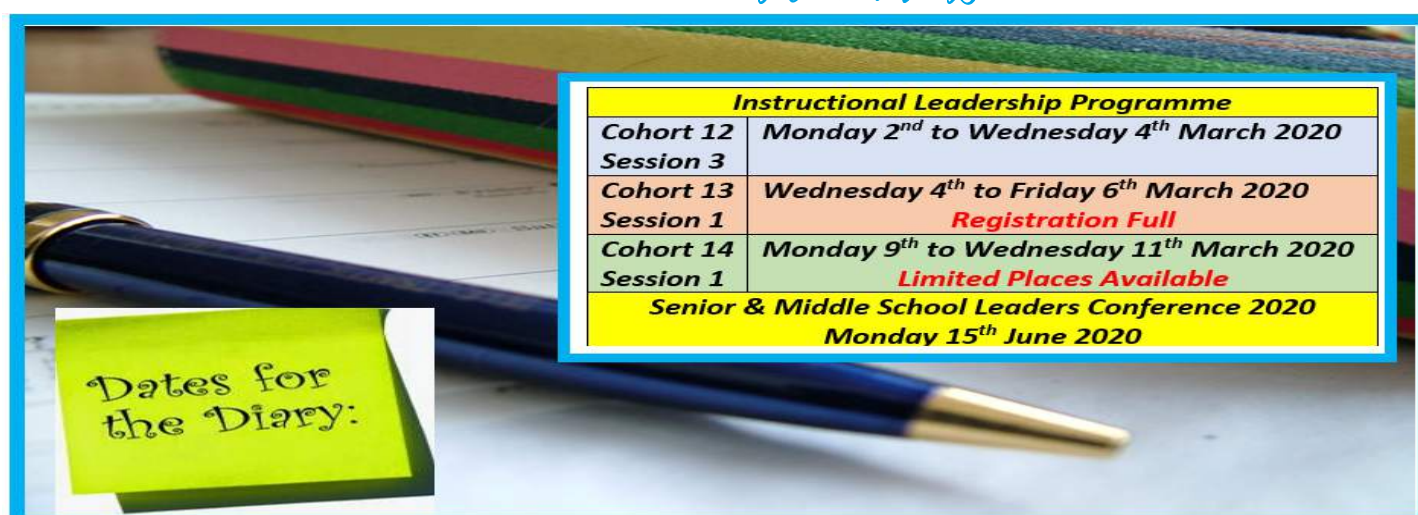
Three more of my St. Leo's College colleagues graduated from the programme last year. The ripple effect continues.

Michael Fullan writes about the wrong drivers and the right drivers in whole system educational reform. He mentions four criteria for judging the likely effectiveness of a driver: '1. Foster intrinsic motivation of teachers and students; 2. engage educators and students in continuous improvement of instruction and learning; 3. inspire collective or team work; and 4. affect all teacher and students.'

The instructional Leadership Programme ticks all of these boxes in a very real way.

'I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better'. Maya Angelou.

*Niamh Broderick*



Instructional Leadership Programme	
Cohort 12 Session 3	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> to Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
Cohort 13 Session 1	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> to Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2020 <b>Registration Full</b>
Cohort 14 Session 1	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2020 <b>Limited Places Available</b>
Senior & Middle School Leaders Conference 2020 Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	





Valerie Lewis, Educational Policy and Development – Post Primary and Seamus Conboy, Director of Schools who graduated from Cohort 10.





## Cohort Ophelia

Claire Roche is a teacher in Carrigtwohill Community College in Cork, Cohort 10 Graduate.

Having learned of the Instructional Leadership Programme in Carrigtwohill Community College, many teachers expressed interest resulting in the need for a lottery in our school. I was delighted when my name was drawn.

We began with a bang. Barrie Bennett lulled us into a false sense of security with well-known techniques such as a Venn diagram and placemats. He delved deeper into these seemingly simple techniques and showed us examples of 7-10-year olds intertwining mind maps and classifications into ranking ladders and concept maps. This is where we realised the depth of knowledge that we were being exposed to with Barrie Bennett. We got lost in concept attainment, concept formation and a litany of professional studies by Blooms, Johnson, Hunter, Miller to name drop just a few. But Barrie reassured us that by the end of our four sessions, it would all fall into place.

Barrie Bennett, a great sports person in his day, is the epitome of a coach and he certainly encouraged us to take this journey together. His interest and passion for these strategies' mirror that of a sportsman with his game. Over the course of the programme he helped us develop our educational skills-set, so that we too could play with the best tools as a team player. We left the first session experimenting with visual techniques like mind maps and fish bone diagrams. Barrie gave us the background of Ishikawa's fish bone diagrams (Japanese genius) as well as clear instructions on its application; the onus was on us to apply them to our classrooms. The exposure of this content and the development of these skills with the background theory would encourage any teacher to play around with these techniques.

Returning to the subsequent sessions we delved deeper into the mechanics of these techniques. Understanding the who, what, where, when and why, Barrie's enthusiasm was infectious. We had to apply Bloom's taxonomy to a lesson plan and progress to teach it to other peers. This was a very daunting prospect at first, but with the support of other teachers/learners we began to appreciate Hunter's lesson design and Johnson's 5 basic skills. Technically we were applying serious research methodologies to our stimulating and

entertaining lessons. We had great fun with the competitiveness of the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) and our lesson structure using concept formation. We returned to our schools feeling more informed and less apprehensive in using different teaching strategies. We also formed great contacts with other schools and other teachers of different subject areas as well as those in our own subject areas.

In the final session, we felt it all began to fall into place- embedding Blooms in our classrooms understanding why we want the students and ourselves to develop high order thinking and pushing our own learning beyond recall up to synthesis/creating. We also use different aspects of these techniques within our teaching pedagogy, although some of us of a certain age may not have known the background research that went into their development or even what they were called. I am privileged and delighted to have had the opportunity to complete this IL course with Barrie Bennett. He is a lovely, very intelligent person. His passion for change within teaching and learning is palpable. Barrie is very humble in his request for change *if you are going to use these skills, apply them correctly*. Understanding effective group-work means far more than simple groups of no more than 4 and employing Johnson's collaborative listening skills – the key is don't be afraid to play around with your lesson.

I returned to my school full of hope and a deeper understanding of what effective teaching looks like and an appetite to affect change in my classroom. I plan to start by using Academic Controversy and PWIM in my classroom before sharing my learning and experience with the whole staff. On reflection, attending the Instructional Leadership Programme has inspired my teaching practice and zest for learning. As I said to Barrie "it is a sad day when we stop learning" and "learning is something you should never stop doing in your life". I also said about a million other things to him but hopefully he did not understand my Cork accent or the majority of them!

*Claire Roche*

Carrigtwohill Community College, Cork.

## **Creative Teachers Creative classrooms: Unlocking the Potential of Innovative Methodologies to Enhance Teaching & Learning**

**Niamh Ní Mhaoláin, Director, Cork Education Support Centre.**

During the last academic year, 5 Education Centres, Cork, Donegal, Kilkenny, Limerick and Carrick on Shannon collaborated with ETBI in training facilitators in Instructional Leadership under the tutorage of Barrie Bennett and the ETBI Instructional Leadership team.

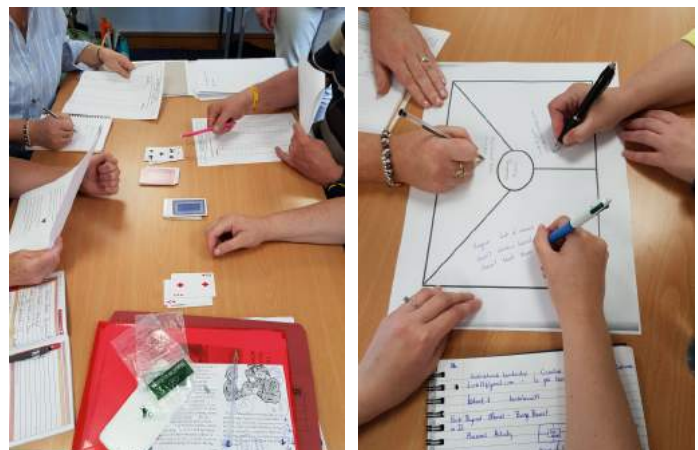
The rationale for this initiative is to extend the instructional leadership practice to primary school classrooms providing teachers a framework within which to frame their own pedagogy while also initiating and enabling teachers own professional dialogue. Primary teachers are eager to develop skills in their pupils that will prepare them for the project work, group interactions and presentations that presently characterise assessment in post-primary schools.

Post primary schools within the various Education Centres' regions have been leading and embedding Instructional Intelligence practices in the classroom successfully over the past ten years. The inclusion of the primary sector in IL through the summer course programme was to enhance the learner experience,

provide a scaffolding for teacher professional dialogue and competent competencies while also ensuring a smoother transitioning from primary to post primary school.

In July a five-day 20-hour summer course for teachers was hosted in Cork, Donegal and Kilkenny. Education Centre Directors were delighted to welcome Ms Joan Russell to address the cohort of teachers over the course of the week. Joan continues to liaise with the Education Centre directors involved on a regular basis with a view to further expanding the programme. Great credit is due to the 10 newly trained facilitators who worked with the materials in advance of the course. The participant learner experience during the course was excellent. The course presenters succeeded in creating a relaxed atmosphere with very high levels of engagement and participation. A broad range of methodologies including collaborative tasks and challenging whole-group discussion topics are used very well to stimulate participation and response. By participating in this course teachers feedback indicated that they gained a range of skills, tactics and strategies that will enhance the teaching and learning in their own classrooms across all subject areas. Participants were explicitly skilled in a large number of instructional methods that will increase student learning and will facilitate the participants themselves in differentiating their instruction to meet their diverse students' diverse needs.

They also became familiar with a wide range of instructional organisers that will enhance their classroom management and organisation skills, resulting in greater participation by all students in all class activities, greater motivation on behalf of students and greater student accountability for their own learning. These strategies are carefully linked to many of the standards of highly effective practice as outlined in LAOS in both Domains (Teaching and Learning & Leadership and Management) and are identified through research as having measurable impacts on student learning.





In their feedback participants expressed a wish to bring their learning back to school where they can share their learning with a whole school staff and lead change in instructional practice through modelling and example.

A DES Inspection Report carried out highlighted the deep reflective engagement with course content and the enabling of participants to contribute insightful opinions and experiences from their own classroom practice. It also commended the explicit explanations a provided on theoretical aspects of instructional leadership with clear pathways provided to link these concepts with practical everyday classroom implementation.

The report noted that the national priority of school self-evaluation (SSE) was addressed in the learning outcomes and forms part of participants' timetabled learning experiences. The course content was also clearly linked

to the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020 and participants were provided with suitable strategies to support them in their effective use of digital technologies in line with the STEM Education Policy 2017-2026.

Both participant and DES feedback highlighted the benefits of exposure to this highly engaging CPD at a wholeschool level.

*Niamh Ni Mhaolain*

Cohort 11 Graduation October 2019



Cohort 10 Graduation October 2019





## Cohort 10

**Siobhan Lynch is a teacher in Fingal Community College, Swords, a graduate with Cohort 10.**

My IL journey first began when I was first introduced to the work of Barrie Bennet whilst doing a Masters in TCD on Positive Behaviour Management for School Leaders. Until then I would have considered myself an experienced teacher, having taught for 26 years', however Barrie's book Classroom Management A Thinking and Caring Approach, which he co-wrote with Peter Smilanich enabled me to appreciate that regardless of how many years' teaching experience one has, a teachers instructional repertoire is part and parcel of effective classroom management.

I am fortunate enough to work in a supportive school environment where senior management understand and acknowledge that effective learning and teaching can only take place in an atmosphere of collegiality and collaboration. In 2017 I was delighted to be afforded the opportunity to collaborate with two other colleagues in leading the start of the schools Instructional Leadership journey with Cohort 10 on the IL programme.

The programme was exciting and exhilarating. Barrie is a very honest and entertaining speaker; he uses concrete examples which I could easily relate to. After every session my colleagues and I were eager to return to school to utilise the skills, tactics and strategies that we had learned that would enable us to improve our effectiveness in the classroom.

As I have an interest in the area of positive behaviour and classroom management, I decided to focus on a particular instructional concept called 'Active Participation' which applies to the concept of framing questions

For active student learning to occur within my own Art classroom I considered the various ways in which students are encouraged to participate. I decided to use strategies like Cooperative Learning, Mind Mapping and Concept Attainment. I differentiated my lessons which engaged students at appropriate levels of difficulty enabling all learners to experience success. I framed questions using Think Pair Share which allowed equal, active and safe participation and most importantly I explained to learners why I was using the instructional skill.

Since introducing Think Pair Share in my lessons, I have found that when a question is asked all students are involved in the thinking. By using wait time there has been an increase in the length and quality of answers and by allowing students to pair, an element of safety has been added. The feedback from students has been very positive so much so that the poster I designed for my room as a reminder of the skill, is quickly referred to by students when I don't give them wait time or allow them to pair.

I also consciously applied a taxonomy of thinking when asking questions during the lesson, but firstly I shared what Blooms Taxonomy was with students and asked them to design their own Blooms Taxonomy poster for their sketch pad which is now referred to during peer critiques in the Art room. Since focusing on Blooms I find that students are able to respond more appropriately because they recognise a question as analysis and know what analysis means.

Since completing the IL programme, I am more confident using groupwork. Weaving the five basic elements has made it more effective. Using structures such as Teams-Game Tournament, Round Robin and Walk About have provided ways of engaging students in group activities, and has encouraged students to apply social theory to issues related to behaviour, misbehaviour and the resolution of conflicts.

I can honestly say that my participation in the IL programme has enabled me to become more intelligent in my instructional behaviour. It has extended and enhanced my repertoire of instructional practices which has led to more effective classroom management. Participation in the programme has given both myself and my IL colleagues a common language. I now look forward to building and embedding the principals of IL in the school.

Siobhan Lynch

Fingal Community College, Swords





## Instructional Leadership Programme Senior & Middle School Leaders Conference 17th and 18th June 2019.

**Joan Russell, Director of Schools Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI) opened the 3rd annual Senior & Middle Leaders Conference in Mount Wolseley, Tullow.**

During her opening address Joan expressed that the Instructional Leadership Programme is about supporting teachers in providing authentic, inclusive, safe and exciting learning environments in our schools.

Dr Paula Flynn, an Assistant Professor in the School of Inclusive and Special Education in Dublin City University (DCU) Institute of Education gave the keynote address on the first day. Paula opening statement asked delegates “whose voice gets heard in the acoustics of the school”? She said that as we embark on change in schools, we need to hear the voices of teachers and students and the nature of the dialogue is very important. The more student voice engagement that there is, which involves teachers, the more improvement we see in student-teacher relationships. Student voice is not about amplifying one voice at the expense of another. It is about the voices being heard. Student voices being heard can impact on a young person's self-esteem, wellbeing, motivation and behaviour. Paula emphasised that leadership is key to implementing sustainable processes to activate learner voice. The Learner Voice space is not about a response it is an ongoing process. “Leadership for listening” in schools is truly listening and students understanding “How do you know you have been heard” and that every person in the process is learning.

Ger O’Sullivan, Education Officer for NCCA highlighted that in school we have a responsibility to not only give students a voice but to go back to the students and tell them how their voice and opinions had an impact.

Dr. Domnall Fleming, a lecturer in the School of Education in UCC spoke about Student Voice- From Policy to Practice. Domnall invited delegates to consider where the levels of participation in teaching and learning are and where the Learner Voice lies within it. Learner Voice is about listening to the ways and means of their learning in comparison to teachers imposing learning onto students.

Domnall expressed that the learner voice should be empowered by the student, begin in the classroom and develop that culture throughout the school. Domnall concluded his session by asking delegates to consider “who is privileged to speak, who is listening and who is heard”?

A Panel Discussion followed Domnall’s session. Sarah Buckley, Deputy Principal Naas Community College moderated the session. The panel comprised of Dr. Paula Flynn, Dr. Domnall Fleming, Ms Olive McGovern and Ms Grainne Macken. Olive McGovern spoke about the National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-Making. Olive expressed that Ireland is an EU leader with Student Voice. Grainne Macken, Junior Cycle for Teacher Team Leader discussed that students need to have clarity in the learning, in the absence of clarity students cannot take responsibility for their learning. Student reflection, feedback, formative assessment all feed into the learner voice. We as teachers have to feed into this reflection and this is done through the CBAs and Assessment Tasks. It comes back to the Lundy model- how are we providing that space for students.

The second day of the conference was opened by Mr. Norman Emerson, Director Curriculum and Assessment with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. Norman presented on Student Voice- The Bridge to Learning. Norman discussed the recent Student Voice project run in conjunction with JCT, NCCA, schools from Cork ETB and Cavan Monaghan ETB. Norman emphasised that Student Voice is not a bolt on, it's about building on what is happening in schools already. Veronica Walsh, Deputy Principal Coláiste Treasa, Kanturk, a pilot school for the project shared the schools experience in activating learner voice. Veronica's workshop demonstrated the different strategies that the school used to activate learner voice.

Maria O’Sullivan, Deputy Principal Coláiste Choilm moderated a panel discussion with Norman Emerson, Veronica Walsh, Paula Flynn and Domnall Fleming.

Joan Russell closed the conference by inviting schools to apply to participate in the “Activating Learner Voice in the Classroom” project in conjunction with the Instructional Leadership Programme and the NCCA.





# INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP programme

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