



Lead Learning

Newsletter of the Instructional Leadership Programme

Issue 12 : June 2020



Introduction

Colleagues,

Welcome to the Summer 2020 (Issue 12) of the Instructional Leadership Newsletter, which is packed with news and articles. The past few weeks have provided us all with an opportunity to engage with life and work in a different way. In many instances that has been challenging but I hope that it has provided you with the opportunity to learn new things and new ways of doing things.



I commend the responsiveness of the teaching profession in providing for the continuity of teaching and learning. I have been inspired by the creative ways that teachers have engaged with students over the past numbers of weeks and am proud to be a member of the profession.

Like yourselves, we at the IL hub have had to change our plans too. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the *Senior and Middle Leaders Conference*, scheduled for June 15th. We had an interesting and pertinent programme planned to support schools in facilitating and encouraging parental voice. We will update you on the rescheduling via the website www.instructionalleadership.ie or Twitter, @ILProgramme.

As you may be aware, we are working with the NCCA on a project, *Facilitating Learner Voice*. There are 34 schools involved and unfortunately, we had to cancel several scheduled school cluster meetings. As soon as we know when schools are reopening, we will reschedule them. The two clusters that did have the opportunity to meet shared great ideas from their experience of engaging with the project and gave us an insight as to how they are planning to further facilitate the voice of the learner in the classroom.

I hope you find something inspiring in this issue, which is packed with articles and photos. Thanks to Glenart College, Newbridge College, Piper's Hill College and Fingal Community College for their articles, outlining their experience to date of the Learner Voice Project.

Cohort 13 and Cohort 14 commenced the programme in March. In fact, we just finished the delivery of the programme the day before the Taoiseach announced the closure of schools.

We are currently enrolling for Cohort 15, with limited places available. Cohort 15 will commence in March 2021. Remember if you are interested in enrolling your school and are new to the IL Programme a member of the senior management team must be registered and attend. Request a copy of the application form admin@instructionalleadership.ie

I wish to thank all who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter and congratulate you on the leadership you are showing in leading teaching and learning. As always, we welcome contributions for the newsletter, be it an article and/or photograph. We would be particularly interested in hearing how your learning from the IL Programme has supported you and your students in the continuity of teaching and learning.

The next edition will publish in the September, which will be available on line and all contributions can be forwarded to 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

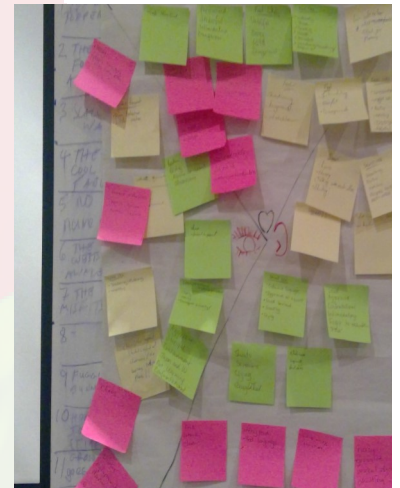
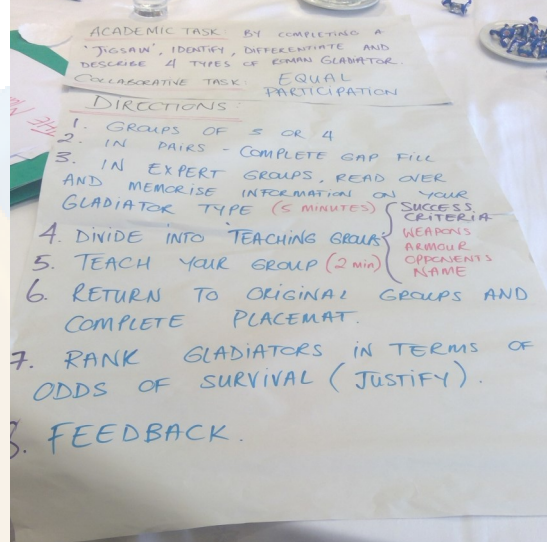
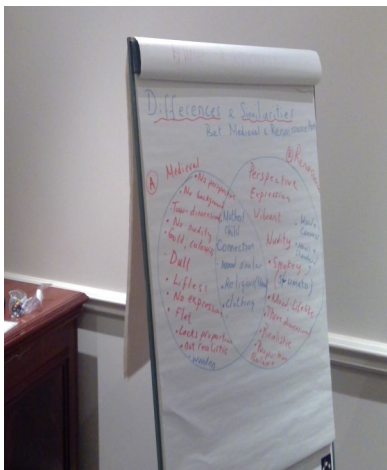
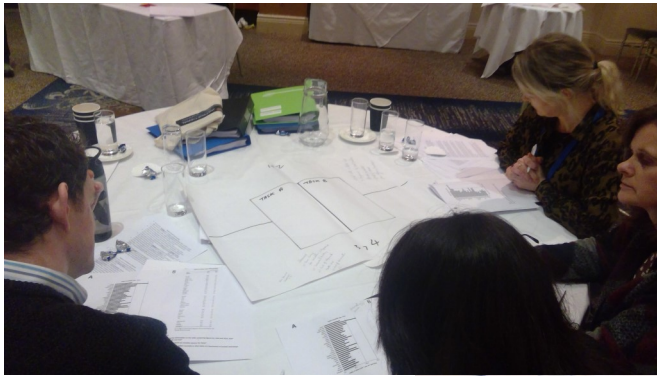
We will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 and post updates to advise of developments and any amendments to the IL Programme schedule for October 2020.

Wishing you all a very happy and safe Summer.

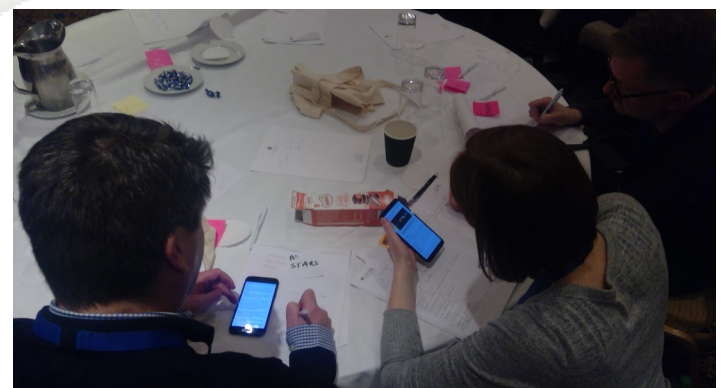
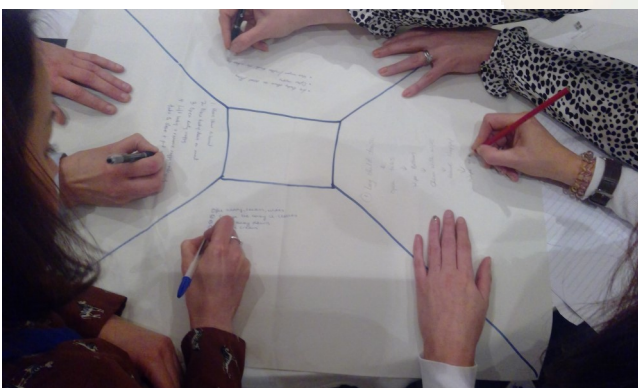
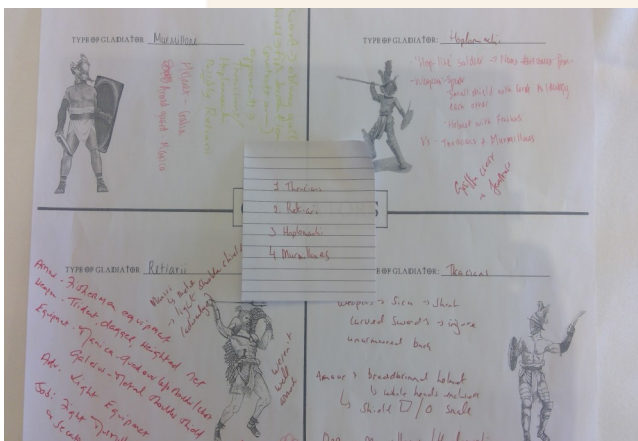
Le meas,

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





Teachers Teaching Teachers—Cohort 12 introducing ILP to Cohort 13





Glenart College: Promoting Learner Voice to Impact Cultural Change

WB Yeats describes teaching as “not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire”. The traditional perception of the student as a passive recipient in the educational process no longer fits the twenty- first century model of teaching and learning or educational purpose.

When our school first embarked upon our journey with the Learner Voice project we were determined that our mission would be to remain true to the title concept and give meaningful voice to all learners within our school community, both staff and students alike. Providing space and opportunity for learner influence in the educational process were the key goals.

Within the *Framework for Junior Cycle* and *Looking At Our Schools 2016* we identified an opportunity for the achievement of these goals. We decided to focus on teacher/student co-creation of success criteria. This presented an ideal platform from which to develop classroom practice providing for genuine student input in the teaching and learning process.

The Instructional Leadership Programme, has been pivotal in the development of pedagogical practice at Glenart in recent years. Our stage in this journey lends itself ideally to the embedding of the facilitation of learner voice. The pedagogical toolkit, various skills, tactics and strategies, that we have developed through the programme, amply supports the facilitation and encouragement of learner voice in the classroom.

Our target group were first year students and their teachers. During the launch stage of the Learner Voice Project, we conducted a survey. Following an analysis of the data we identified specific goals; to give meaningful voice to all learners within our school community; to provide space and opportunity for learner influence in the educational process.

Through discussion we had previously identified that collaboration is an essential cog in the wheel of teacher support. A culture of peer observation has already been established in Glenart College, our IL graduate teachers make themselves available to observe and/or be observed in the use of specific IL strategies. This project is travelling as similar journey. We collaborated and supported teachers through the facilitation of IL workshops and through individual teacher support, provided by the school’s IL team. We set up an online staff reflective journal where teachers share experiences, observations, concerns and advice with colleagues. We have found that this tool also helps with maintaining the energy and momentum of the project and of course is inline with the best practice of professional reflection.

For us, this project represents the beginning of what we hope will give rise to a sustained change in culture in our school where learner is given *space, voice, audience* and *influence* (Lundy) . The challenge is considerable. We are conscious of a tendency towards tokenism when promoting student voice in education, but we are determined to avoid this outcome. We are influenced and inspired by Jesse Jackson, “Inclusion [of learner voice] is not a matter of political correctness. It is the key to growth”.

We are in the early stages but thus far the response has been positive from both teachers and students alike which is both encouraging and energising as we look ahead to the next phase of the project.

Activating Learners' Voice in Newbridge College

I always believe we are in a very privileged position to change the paths, journeys and lives of those in our care. For us, activating learners' voice in Newbridge College is one of the purest and most powerful ways this can be done in education. We would like to share a synopsis of our learner's voice story with you and how our Instructional Leadership learning is fundamental in our work.

Instructional Leadership training was the beginning of a powerful journey for us in our school. Our Learners' Voice work was getting underway in the same term. Our participation in Instructional Leadership training in Mount Wolseley, with Barry Bennett was foundational to the facilitation of our Learners' Voice work. For us, both are very much integrated and intertwined. The successful Instructional Leadership training provided for us the understanding of the instructional processes. The increased awareness and understanding of instructional concepts, skills, tactics and strategies for us as teachers was essential before we could get learners' voice work underway.

It enabled us as teachers to develop an improved ability to articulate our educational practice with each other and students. In terms of learners' voice work we could then share this with our students in our classrooms and in Learners' Voice workshops. Over time a shared 'language of learning' has been co-constructed between teachers and students in classrooms, thus enabling students to engage in conversations regarding their learning. They are able to express their needs and thus teachers can make changes in their practice in response to these needs. Overall teachers are enabled to better facilitate differentiation in instruction in order to meet the diverse range of students' needs.

Phase One of Learners Voice work in Newbridge College took place from October 2018 to June 2019. This work involved the co-design of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Curriculum. This has led to the development of a curriculum which is designed in partnership with students, and is authentic, personalised and tailored to meet the needs of the students in our school.

The Learners' Voice group was established in October 2018 with a view to involving students as active partners in whole school decisions related to teaching and learning. I facilitated this work with a group of 35 students who volunteered to be a part of the Learners' Voice group. Workshops were facilitated and student led, taking place over a period of 4 months. Students shared their ideas as to what they felt should be included in the Wellbeing curriculum. The Learners' Voice group subsequently prepared and distributed questionnaires, collated their findings and presented them to the staff, Wellbeing Committee and Board of Management.

A range of ideas for modules were put forward by students to address their key concerns. Students showed their strengths and produced intelligent responses to real issues in our school. They produced strong and evidence based arguments to lay the foundations for effective change. For example, students expressed concerns in relation to their 'study skills' and 'time management'. To address this issue the Learners' Voice team proposed a 'Learning to Learn' module for the new Wellbeing Curriculum which would address these areas. Three teachers are now facilitating the teaching of this module to all first years since September 2019. Students have helped us co-design this module and review it regularly also. Students proposed 'Wellbeing Retreats', 'Fitness Classes' etc. also in response to other concerns.

For us there were some powerful and transformational experiences in our school on this journey. Our Learners' Voice team were invited to make a presentation to our Board of Management. This was the first time in the history of our school that students presented to the Board. The fact that this was on a topic related to teaching and learning was quite powerful. It linked stakeholders together, from students to the Board of Management.

Phase Two of this work took place from September 2019 and is ongoing. Here we are focusing on 'Formative Assessment – Learning Intentions and Success Criteria'. This work was initially piloted with 7 teachers and 230 students. We, as teachers in our school, are seeking student engagement and are making changes in our teaching practices as a result. We are having conversations with our students about what they are learning, how they are learning it and what success looks like.

Together over this period of 4 months we shared learning intentions with students. We developed and co-created success criteria with students and we provided feedback to move learning forward. Together we met as a Community of Practice regularly and reflected on our learning in our classrooms and our changes to our practice as a result of incorporating learners' voice. We supported each other in this process.

In January 2020 we facilitated a whole school staff session where we shared our learning, as teachers, both professionally and personally, with our colleagues and senior management based on our pilot work. We also shared the changes to the students learning which we captured via student videos and also via survey analysis. We developed a resource booklet for staff on 'Learning Intentions and Success Criteria' also. Afterwards staff worked in their subject departments planning with their colleagues as to how they could progress Formative Assessment, whilst incorporating learners' voice moving forward. Our pilot group has acted as a support network for other staff members on their journeys.

Based on feedback from students, both quantitative and qualitative, we have noticed a significant improvement in student engagement and enjoyment in learning as a result of our learners' voice work. We have recognised the success of this collaboration in increased student ownership of their own learning and also in the development of student's leadership and confidence, amongst many other benefits. Students have noted that this has led to improved student-teacher relationships and student peer relationships. Without Instructional Leadership and Learners' Voice, none of this would have been possible.

The support of our senior management team has been outstanding from the outset for learners' voice. We believe this support is necessary for the long term success and sustainability of this work. We are supporting each other through change which is quite transformative. We have opened up our classrooms and minds and are growing together as learners. The Instructional Leadership experience has been at the heart of our work and has allowed this opportunity for fostering powerful student voice and powerful learning. We believe this experience has changed the way decision making will be made in our school and our classrooms forever. To all in the Instructional Leadership and Learners' Voice Organising Teams...

"Thank you for this incredible experience".

Deirdre O'Callaghan
Newbridge College

I believe the impact of learners' voice is encapsulated in this article by one of our 6th Year students in Newbridge College: Aoibhín Collins.

My name is Aoibhín Collins. I am a member of the Learners' Voice team and I honestly can tell you that the benefits reaped from this group within school have been phenomenal, both for me personally and for Newbridge College, as a whole.

Initially I decided to get involved in the Learners' Voice group because I wanted to try something new. It grabbed my attention as I sensed this was a space where there was a place for every student. I quickly realised that my input could affect real change in teaching and learning in our school. I saw this as my attempt to leave my positive mark for other students. From the start I could see the Learners' Voice meetings were very different. The meetings were all student led with an emphasis on hearing all voices in the group. There was always great energy and productivity in our meetings.

In our workshops we put forward our ideas and suggestions as to what we felt should be included in the Wellbeing curriculum, to address matters that were real and relevant to us. We collated our information, surveyed peers, designed presentations and PowToon animations. We presented our ideas to the Wellbeing Committee, the Board of Management and staff. We were included in the drafting of the new Wellbeing Curriculum. We designed a visual as we believed it would depict what Learners' Voice meant to us and communicate this to the whole school community. The visual we feel captures the values we aspire to develop in our learners' voice work such as inclusion, partnerships, student- teacher collaboration and living the values of our Dominican ethos.

We were involved in a way we had never been involved before and it felt empowering and it made us feel important and valued. Our feedback means that from this year many new modules will be included in our Junior Cycle Wellbeing Curriculum e.g. a Learning to Learn module in 1st year. It was really important to us that we can see our voice has affected change.

As word filtered in our school of our impact on teaching and learning, more and more students became involved in the learners' voice group. We started out with 35 students and 2 teachers. This increased to 210 students and 7 teachers on board and now we have gone school wide with this since January 2020. I feel incredibly lucky to have the unbiased and listening ears of teachers and senior management, appreciating and acknowledging my unique views as a student. For me I found I have really grown and developed throughout the process. I gained confidence in voicing my own opinions. I developed as a team player and I developed my leadership skills. It was amazing to have such a sense of belonging in a group. These are valuable skills for life that I will hold with me forever.



Learners' Voice Visual

- Peace symbol represents power sharing between staff and students. This promotes an inclusive learning community where students are valued and respected contributors.
- Partnerships are represented by the holding of hands. Here decision making is shared between teachers and students. This allows for authentic student / teacher collaboration thus leading to real, engaging and successful learning.
- The Newbridge College building in the visual represents how we aspire to further embed Learners' Voice into our culture in the College.
- Learners' Voice sees inclusion as a central value in the process. The voices of all races, ethnic groups, ages, gender, etc. are welcome.
- The Newbridge College flag represents our pride in our College and the Dominican ethos which is at its core. Newbridge College is student-centred. The focus of education is holistic, thus also including education for democracy and active citizenship.

Cohort 14—Group Picture



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT



*Dates for
the Diary:*

Instructional Leadership Programme October 2020

Cohort 14 Session 2	Monday 5th to Wednesday 7th October 2020
Cohort 12 Session 4	Wednesday 7th to Friday 9th October 2020
Cohort 13 Session 1	Monday 12th to Wednesday 14th October 2020

Important – Please Note

Due to the ongoing Covid-19, we will continue to monitor the situation and update / advise with regards any changes or amendments to the above scheduled dates for October 2020

Please check our website for regular updates and information, Thank you.

A Snapshot of the Learner Voice Project in Piper's Hill College

Piper's Hill College has always strongly promoted student voice and it has been an integral part of our school culture since we opened ten years ago. Students were heavily involved in selecting our uniform, designing our school crest and even in choosing our school name and this created a sense of belonging and community from the beginning.

Traditionally, student voice has been developed through our prefect system, school council and mentoring programmes and these have been very positive endeavours, providing many leadership opportunities. Our senior wellbeing prefects have spearheaded projects such as the Amber Flag and Positive Mental Health Week, literacy prefects have led the Well-Read campaign and sports prefects frequently organise and lead competitions and activities with junior students. Our student council meanwhile is representative of all year groups, has a high profile within the school, and is very proactive in highlighting a range of issues from recycling and litter to cyber safety, traffic safety and school policies such as Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy. Currently we are updating our Mission Statement and Code of Behaviour and student voice is at the centre of this process- all our students have been involved in workshops, along with staff and parents, to contribute to the language, priorities and needs of our new policies. Student voice in this respect is a means of empowering students and promoting democratic citizenship and values.

In recent years, particularly with the introduction of SSE and Junior Cycle Reform, the concept of student voice has expanded and grown. Now it has become more integral to the classroom as a means for students to have agency, choice, and influence in how their learning takes place. Student voice has now evolved into 'learner voice' and supports the student-centred learning that is at the heart of what we strive for in Piper's Hill College. In our most recent subject inspection, it was stated that the student capacity to describe their learning experience in lessons was impressive and this is something we very much want to build on and develop further. Supported by the JCT training days, our SSE and teaching and learning team conducted a range of focus groups with students across all years to discuss their experience of learning and describe what positive and active learning felt and looked like for them. We have since conducted similar focus groups around learner experience of the CBA process across a range of subjects. When we showed student videos and responses to staff, they were impressed with our students' capacity to reflect on and describe their own learning experiences. Our teaching and learning club for teachers promotes a different instructional method or learning resource each month and this is also informed by learner voice and their experience of a particular tactic, skill or strategy.

When our TL21 teacher group decided to focus on embedding Learning Intentions and Success Criteria in Junior Cycle lessons, learner voice was at the heart of the action research as students were consulted throughout the process and their feedback informed how teachers would introduce these concepts at classroom level. This data was initially collected through small focus groups and classes and later, through whole school surveys, the wording of which was informed by learner voice to ensure the language and question structure was accessible for all. One thing we have learned regarding 'learner voice' is the importance of ensuring that we pitch discussion and dialogue at the appropriate level and avoid 'adulteration' of language, allowing the students to own their own learning and reflection.

As we engage with the Learner Voice Project, we are taking our work on Success Criteria to the next level as we work with students to co-create their own success criteria and experiment with various Instructional methods to ensure every learner in the class is engaged and confident in expressing their preferences and ideas. We particularly want to build and enhance students 'language of learning' and this will be our focus next year. We look forward to sharing our experience in our clusters over the coming months and in turn, learning from other schools how best we can bring the learner voice to the core of learning and teaching in our school and classrooms.

Siobhan Dalton
Deputy Principal
Pipers Hill College

Two photos below show students working into groups, using table mats to create success criteria for Home Ec CBA project, they then decide on top 5 in the middle and report bac to class. Example for Learner Voice Project

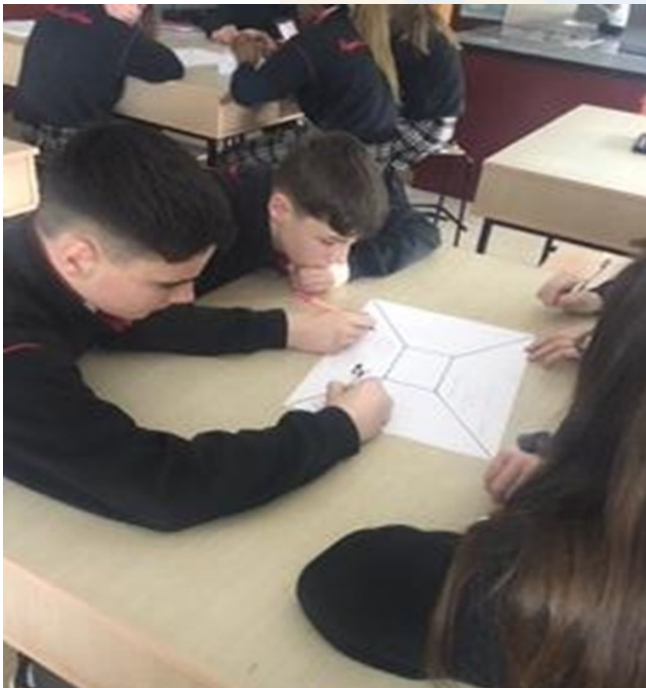


Photo shows a focus group of students discussing their learning experiences in Piper's Hill College.



Fingal Community College

At Fingal Community College we are very proud of the many opportunities we offer throughout our school for our students to have a voice and have their views represented. We are delighted to be a part of the IL Learner Voice Project, which was the impetus for the Learning Ambassador Programme.

Having analyzed our school SSE data, WSE MLL findings and the finer details of LAOS, we decided that we would further seek to embed student voice into teaching and learning across our school via this project.... and so our Learning Ambassador Programme was born.

Following on from the guidance of Joan Russell (ETBI) and Gerard O'Sullivan (NCCA) at session 1, we agreed to start small and pilot this project with our second-year students. In December 2019, we selected a group of eight students to become our Learning Ambassadors via an application process which was open to all second-year students. Their role would be to promote positive teaching and learning across the school.

Meeting once a week they would:

Discuss and share feedback of good practice seen and experienced in school.

Identify areas for improvement and development in learning.

Recommend additional teaching and learning strategies.

Organise and deliver training, events and support to peers.

During our initial weekly meetings and discussions our Learning Ambassadors acknowledged that there is a lot of positive teaching and learning happening across our school. They also suggested that there is also a large number of students who are not benefitting fully for a number of reasons; because they lack the motivation to learn, they face barriers to learning or they don't have the necessary skills and tools to support them with their learning. It was agreed that we would conduct a 'learner survey' on a large sample of second year students to ascertain their needs and decide what our next steps would be.

LEARNING AMBASSADOR

Fingal Community College - Learning Ambassador Application Form

The role of a Learning Ambassador in Fingal Community College is to:

Promote learning	Develop and enhance learning	Inspire others and empower them to learn
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Why are you interested in this role?

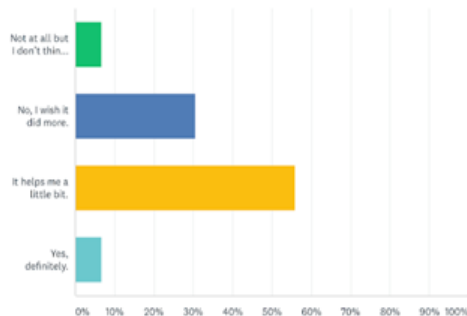
Please outline your skills, qualities and abilities which would make you a good candidate.

What would you like to change / improve / bring to teaching and learning in this school?

Our Learning Ambassadors worked together to draw up a concise survey. It consisted of eight questions that would provide them with information about: how our students learn, if they feel school supports them with their learning and which learning techniques they would like more help and support with.

Do you think your school teaches you how to learn / revise / study at home?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 0



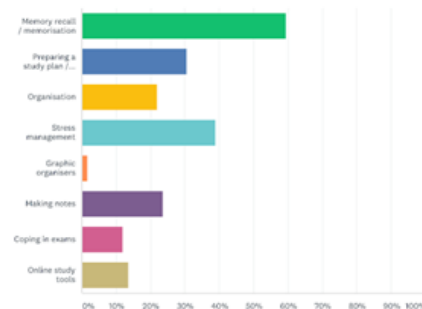
The key findings from this survey were that the majority of students know what they need to learn but don't know how to learn it. They feel they need more support from school about how to learn outside of lessons and would appreciate more support with specific learning techniques.

Following on from the feedback our Learning Ambassadors decided that they would deliver three 'learning' sessions to all second year students during SPHE lessons. The key areas they would focus on would be those highlighted in the survey findings:

1. Recall learning
2. Stress management and positive mental health
3. Motivation for school, college and life

In which areas do you think you (as a learner) would benefit from having more support and help?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 0



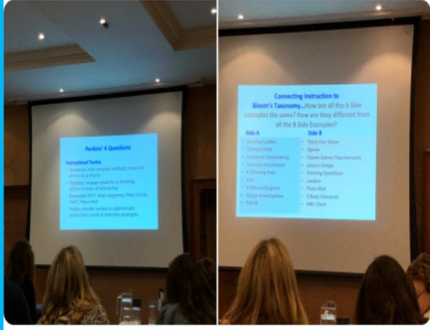
Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we have been temporarily stopped short in our tracks.

To date, the team has divided up into four groups of two. Each duo is currently preparing and putting together a forty-minute lesson on recall strategies that their peers may find useful in supporting them with their learning and that they will deliver to our five second year classes. Our intention had been to deliver one session prior to the Easter break and the next two by the middle of May to support students in their preparation for summer exams but these plans are on hold for now and our Learning Ambassadors remain positive, enthusiastic and keen to deliver session one on our return to the classroom.

As we look to the future, we have many challenges to face; how do we train and upskill our learning ambassadors to ensure a high quality of delivery for all students? How do we raise awareness of this project and get all stakeholders on board and engaged? What steps do we take next to expand this school wide? What is the most effective way to communicate and share our findings and student feedback with teachers? How do we overcome the resistance we may face from various colleagues? As you can see we don't have all the answers just yet but we are learning as we go. We look forward to the cluster meetings organised through ETBI and NCCA, which will give us an opportunity to share our learning and learn from colleagues across the country. If you would like more information on our Learning Ambassador Programme, please don't hesitate to get in touch with rgorey@fingalcc.ie or mdonnellan@fingalcc.ie.

Darren Byrne Education Account
@djbyrne80

Plenty of food for thought today. Looking forward to building these instructional skills into my lessons
@ILProgramme @stjosephsrush @NAPD_IE @NCCAie @JCforTeachers



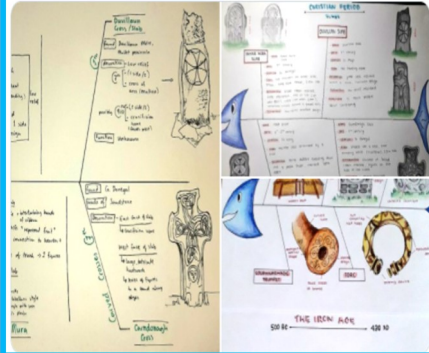
Abbey V.S.
@AbbeyVS

Delighted to be part of the Learner Voice programme and looking forward to collaborating with colleagues.
#WeAreDonegalETB #learnvoice @DonegalETB @ILProgramme



SiobhanArtLynch TY & LCVP FingalICC Account
@siobhanartlynch

@FingalICC @DDLETB_OSD @ILProgramme @NMIreland 5th year students revised Irish Art History today using fishbone diagrams #creativityathome



ILP
@ILProgramme

Teachers working collaboratively at the ILP today. Great day of learning from each other.



What Twitter is saying about ILP

CBC Teaching, Learning and Assessment
@CbcTeaching

A fantastic concept map by 3rd year French student Aisling McGlynn on 'ma maison'!



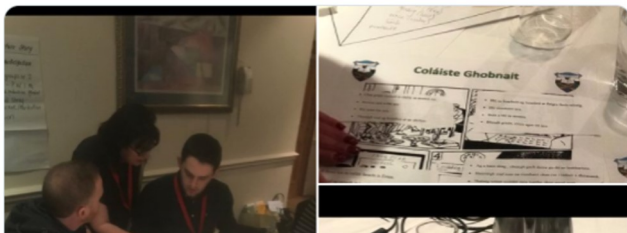
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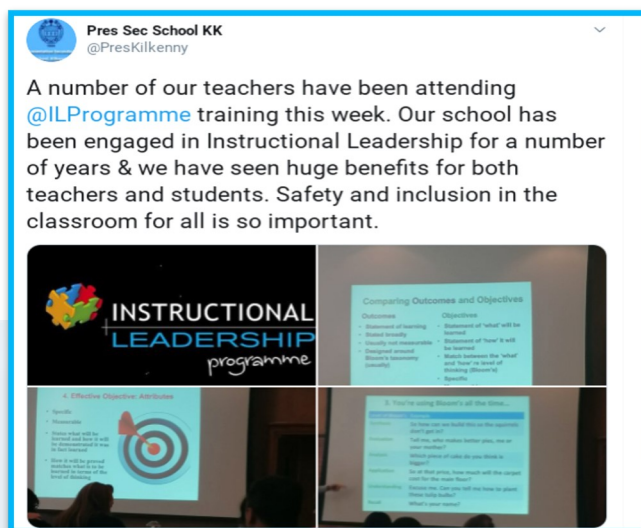
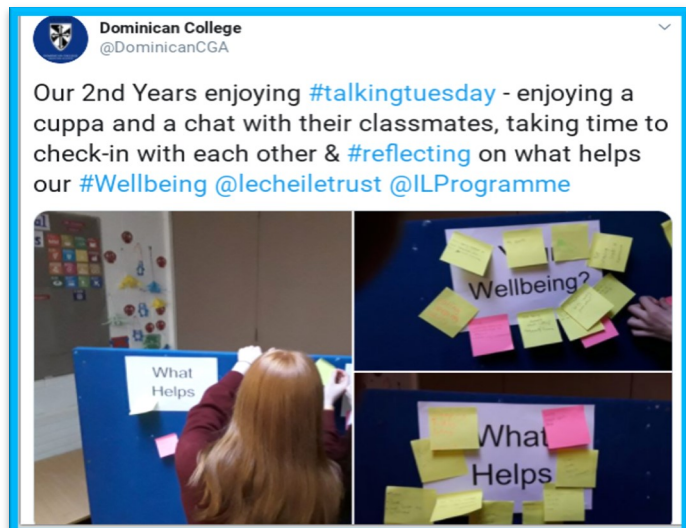
Staff @Pres_Terenure this afternoon #ThinkingAboutThinking and learning how 'De Bono's Thinking Hats' can help students develop different thinking skills #CreativeThinking #BeyondMonet #JuniorCycleReform @JCforTeachers @ILProgramme @CDETBCChiefPsych @ciy @ETBIreland



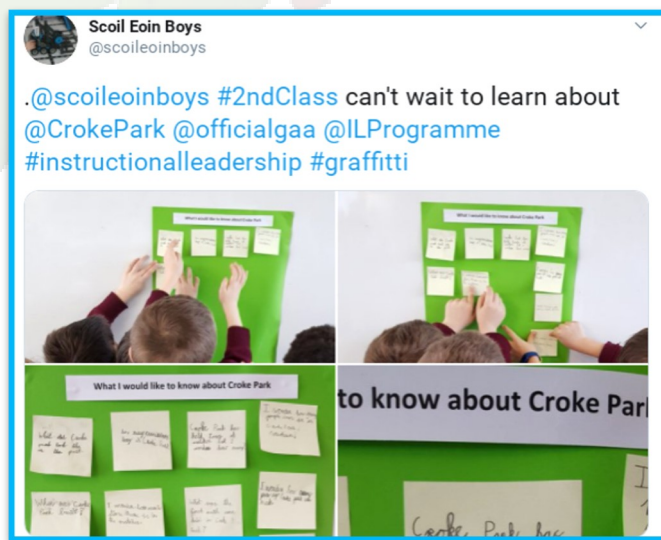
Colaiste Ghobnait
@ColGhobnait

Ag múineadh straitéis éagsúla mar chuid den chúrsa IL.
Úsáid bainte as na straitéisí seo - Placemat-PWMI, Stay and stray agus an ticéad Exit. Ag súil go mór iad seo a úsáid i gColaiste Ghobnait le cur le teagasc&foghlaim.
@ILProgramme @GRETBOfficial @ETBIreland





What Twitter is saying about ILP





INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP
programme

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