**Step Up Project**

The DES Inspectorate and Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) are delighted to launch, as part of the School Excellence Fund (SEF) initiative, a project entitled ‘Step Up’. The overarching aim of the SEF Step Up Project is to support schools already at an effective level of practice to move to a highly effective level of implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) with a view to improving learner outcomes. Schools participating in the project will be required to take a school self-evaluation approach to reviewing their current implementation of the Framework in one or more of these three subject areas: English, Business Studies and Science. Support for the project will be provided by the Inspectorate and JCT. Inspectors and JCT personnel will work collaboratively to provide support and advice to the selected schools throughout the project. Application forms and further details about the project are available on the Announcements section of [www.jct.ie](http://www.jct.ie). Applications must be submitted by 14:00pm on Friday, 15th June 2018.

**CPD Workshops for Principals and Deputy Principals**

Moving beyond marks and grades - a new way of reporting learning

Reporting on learning at Junior Cycle is changing. Reporting is an important way of sharing progress between students, teachers and parents/guardians. Our Spring leadership workshop focused on the NCCEA guidelines, Ongoing reporting for effective teaching and learning (March 2018) to support school leaders in implementing changes in their schools. Subject Specifications and their associated Assessment Guidelines, the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) and Looking at Our School (2016). A quality framework for Post-Primary Schools all highlight a new language to communicate learning. The workshop focused on how schools can use their School Self-Evaluation process to support teachers in embedding this language in their classroom practice. Changing reporting practices in school must be meaningful and sustainable for all stakeholders and schools are advised to engage in the process at a pace that suits them.

Understanding how to report learning effectively, and reflecting on the eight Guiding Principles of Reporting, is a complex process. Therefore, the topic will be continued in the workshop for principals and deputy principals to be delivered during November 2018 to support school leaders in leading these changes in their schools.

The new reporting templates will also be addressed at the Autumn workshop. School leaders will be invited to register for this workshop in September 2018.
Key Skills in Action in the 21st Century Classroom


This was part of a series of JCT/NCFA joint seminars under the banner of ‘Leadership for Learning’. The primary purpose of February’s seminar was to share and discuss the learning from two EU projects, the ATS 2020 (Assessment of Transversal Skills) project co-ordinated by JCT and the Co-Lab project, co-ordinated by NCFA. The ATS 2020 project was a 3-year Erasmus + research project exploring the development of key skills and the use of technology to enhance and support teaching, assessment and learning.

Dr. Helen Barrett, formerly of the College of Education at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, provided the keynote address ‘Know Thyself, Effectively Reflective Stories of Deep Learning’. Dr. Barrett, a pioneer in the area of selfshortlofts, provided the audience with practical insights regarding their research and application for teaching, assessment, learning and reporting in the Junior Cycle classroom.

Professor Deirdre Butler from DCU’s Institute of Education facilitated a joint workshop focusing on collaboration and the development of collaborative tasks. The afternoon of the conference was a shared learning session, with students and teachers from the two European projects exploring their experience in dialogue with attendees.

With all previous JCT/NCFA joint seminars, the day provided an opportunity for teachers to reflect on the presentations and consider how teaching, assessment and learning can be supported and developed in the 21st century classroom.

The Scientists’ Dilemma The ‘H’ Factor

Across these workshops, teachers were invited to consider the interplay between STEM and societal advancement, using critical and creative dialogue as a lens through which to consider the consequences of the choices we make, and the role of Science in informing those choices. Issues that teachers engaged with included bioethics, sustainability in terms of energy, plastics and ecosystems, and the ethics of space technologies providing greater and better data on Earth and its inhabitants. All workshops were developed to align with the learning outcomes of Junior Cycle Science, with an overarching focus in all workshops on Nature of Science Learning Outcomes 1 and 10.

As teachers considered the role our humanity plays in advancing society through STEAM, it led to a deeper appreciation of how scientists work, and the personal, social and global importance of the role of science in society.

Resources for STE(A)M in Junior Cycle workshops are available on the JCT website www.jct.ie

The Scientists’ Dilemma and the ‘H’ Factor will continue in the 2018/19 academic year, with an exciting new approach - all of our workshops will be interdisciplinary in nature.

Teachers of subjects like Science, Geography, History, Maths and Home Economics will be invited to the same CPD day, where they will be invited to collaborate within and across their subject disciplines to engage with societal issues and challenges. We look forward to working with our teacher colleagues as we move full STEAM ahead in the new year.

STE(A)M in Junior Cycle CPD 2017/18

In conjunction with our STE(A)M partners, JCT Science developed five elective CPD days for Science teachers.

These workshops ran across 10 Saturdays, beginning in November 2017 and concluding in March 2018. With CPD offerings in Dublin, Meath, Cork, Wexford, Carrick-On-Shannon, Galway, Limerick and Athlone, this was a nationwide initiative. The titles of the workshops offered were:

- Scientists at Work
- Sustainability
- The Scientists’ Dilemma
- The ‘H’ Factor
- “One small step…”

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Whole School Visits

The whole-school team have had a busy year exploring the Framework and participating in whole school engagement activities across the country. In the earlier part of the year, ETB schools engaged with the new area of learning called ‘Wellbeing’. Schools were asked to listen to and capture the voice of students in the teaching, assessment and learning cycle happening in their classrooms. School staff examined the ‘Looking at our School’ (LAOS) quality framework from the DES inspectorate and explored how it could help them improve both the learning experience of, and outcomes for, all students. Methods included working individually and collaboratively to explore both teacher and student perspectives. This work will continue with ETB schools in the new school year 2018/2019 when the areas of teaching, learning, assessment and reporting will be further explored.

Schools engaging in JCT CPD for the first time this year, spent a full day exploring the Framework, Context and Rationale of Junior Cycle reform and developments in the approach to teaching, learning, assessment and reporting. An important focus was on experiencing how working with learning outcomes in subject specifications will change the learning experience and outcomes for our students in the classroom. The quality framework, LAOS, will enable schools to embed this new focus. This emphasis was further backed up at the subject cluster days provided for all teachers. The whole-school team have had direct support of Associates – practising teachers who work with JCT on a part-time basis, and who assisted in the facilitation on our CPD days.

Schools were also supported this year by a series of workshops held in local Education Centres looking at the role of teachers with responsibility for management resource hours. These were backed up by a webinar held in March 2018 where teachers had a chance to have their questions answered. If you missed this webinar you can find it on www.jct.ie

The whole-school team also fulfilled responsibilities across the following areas: web-design, technologies support, short course support, translations, FGA, do na Gaeil Choláistí, wellbeing, Student Voice and GDPR.

The whole-school team are currently visiting schools to assist them with their work with Junior Cycle. Issues being discussed include: use of Professional time, wellbeing curriculum, other areas of learning for the JCPA, short courses, CBAs and SAI.

Please contact your relevant regional team leader should you require a school visit.