

STE(A)M in Junior Cycle

We are very excited to announce a new elective CPD initiative in lower post-primary education – **STE(A)M in Junior Cycle**. Spearheaded by our JCT Science Team, the vision for this initiative is **“to provide Junior Cycle teachers with rich STE(A)M CPD experiences in keeping with national and international best standards; this provision will allow for interdisciplinary responses to societal challenges in subject-specific and cross-curricular contexts”**.



Dr. Pádraig Kirk, JCT Director, launching the 1st STE(A)M in Junior Cycle partners' CPD event at Laois Education Centre.

To realise the vision of the STE(A)M in Junior Cycle initiative, Junior Cycle for Teachers will collaborate with informal CPD providers in the STEM and Arts fields to design and deliver interdisciplinary Junior Cycle elective CPD events. Our partners represent a broad range of interests, including animal conservation, space exploration, sustainable energy, development education, biotechnology, chemistry, art and design, to name but a few. We look forward to bringing a unique and engaging programme of CPD to teachers very soon.

We recently held our first partners CPD event, and are currently in the process of designing elective CPD experiences for teachers which will be combined under specific ideas/themes. These elective CPD events will be trialled, refined and delivered in the autumn/winter of 2017.

Business Studies

Our Business Studies team recently published their first newsletter highlighting key information for teachers. This newsletter is available to download in the 'Resources' section of our website.

We recently hosted our first webinar entitled 'Using the Business Studies Specification', for both English medium-schools and scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge. Thank you to all who attended and participated. The webinars and the accompanying resources have been uploaded to the Business Studies section of our website within the 'Elective Workshops' tab under CPD Supports. It is intended to continue this series of webinars this year as part of our programme of supports for teachers.

At present, we are designing our next CPD day workshop, the content of which is informed by the feedback received from teachers, and further supports the new specification for Business Studies. We are looking forward to delivering the day as part of the cluster model. Themes emerging for the day include student reflection, group work, research and applying Features of Quality to student work.

Focus on Wellbeing in Whole-School CPD

Our expanded whole-school CPD team is enthused at the prospect of providing a full day of CPD to all post-primary schools in this academic year. Those schools entering their third year of CPD with our team will, in the majority, avail of a day examining student wellbeing in a revised Junior Cycle. This day will also cultivate an appreciation of how Wellbeing links to the work schools are already progressing around formative assessment and the 8 key skills. Circular letter 0015/2017 requires all schools to have a Wellbeing programme covering 400 hours in place for incoming students by September 2020.

Schools who are beginning their journey with our service will, in the majority, avail of a day providing an overview of the implications of all aspects of 'A Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)' on learning and teaching in their context. Our team of regional leaders are available to support all schools and contact details can be found under 'meet the team' in the whole school section of our website – www.jct.ie

Contact details have also been circulated to all schools by post.

Retirement



We would like to wish our outgoing Team Leader, Dr. John Hennessy, the very best in his retirement. John leaves a lasting legacy in the support services, dating back to his time in the JSSS. He has been a shining light for Science education in Ireland and will be missed by all in JCT.

L to R:- Áine Woods, Dónal Ó Laoire, Eadaoin Norris, John Hennessy and David King.

Welcome



Dr. Pádraig Kirk

Welcome to the ninth edition of our Newsletter, **JCT Today**. This school year heralds a new beginning for JCT with all schools now in a position to engage with us, some for the first time.

I have now written to all schools asking Principals to either update their staff registrations with us (on our registration portal at www.jctregistration.ie), or register, for the first time, all of their teachers with us. The purpose of getting registered is so that we can invite teachers to CPD.

Our whole-staff CPD days commence in schools from Monday, 11th September and will continue apace right throughout the whole of 2017/2018.

Our school leaders workshops will start later in this term and all school leaders will be notified in writing of relevant workshop topics, dates and venues.

Teachers in schools that engaged in our school cluster CPD events last year will be attending CPD in their second teaching subject, if they have one, in local education centres across September and October 2017. These teachers were registered for these workshops in the last school year.

Teachers in those schools that engaged in our school cluster CPD events last year will be offered follow on subject specific CPD via our successful school cluster model during November/December 2017. A series of school cluster CPD events for teachers in schools that did not engage in any of our CPD to date will commence after Christmas 2017.

We start 2017/2018 with a significant number of newly seconded staff and we wish them well in their respective roles. We also remember staff that have moved on from JCT last year and we strive to continue their great work.

This year is set to be an extremely busy one for us and we look forward to meeting and supporting as many teachers as possible throughout the year.



Dr. Pádraig Kirk
Director

Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs)

The team were busy during the 2016/2017 school year facilitating workshops in both special and mainstream school settings. Workshops provided An Overview of L2LPs, "Teacher Planning and Timetabling", "Planning to Assess", "Teaching Learning Outcomes" and "Gathering Evidence", "Building a Portfolio", and "Using the Planning Toolkit". These workshops will continue to be offered during 2017-2018.

We are delighted this year to be offering new workshops on "Wellbeing and Special Educational Needs", "Exploring Short Courses: Teaching, Learning and Assessing", "L2LPs and Technology", and "Teaching and Moderating Priority Learning Units".

L2LPs help ensure that schools can work towards becoming truly inclusive for their SEN students. We are looking forward to hosting several L2LP and Leadership workshops for Principals in Post-Primary settings this year. Principals and teachers in Special Schools can also look forward to our first L2LP conference. Details to follow.

WHO?
Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) are designed for a very specific group of students who have high moderate and low mild general learning disabilities.

WHY?
The special needs of these students prevent them from accessing some or all of the subjects and short courses at junior cycle that are broadly aligned with Level 3 NCFQ.

Where?
Level 2 Learning Programmes are covered in the classroom and in resource time. It is a programme that can be followed and utilised in school, at home and in the community.

When?
L2LPs are made up of five Priority Learning Units (PLUS) and Short Courses. Schools may offer all or some, based on the needs of their students.

What?
L2LPs allow for a student-centred approach to teaching, assessing and learning. Focusing on developing independence skills, and providing the opportunity to develop knowledge, skills, and values necessary for adult life.



JCT bids farewell to our colleague, Ms. Karol Sadleir, former Deputy Director. Pictured at her last management meeting. (L-R): Deputy Director, Dónal O'Mahony, Deputy Director, Karol Sadleir and Director, Pádraig Kirk.

Leadership

In 2016/17 our leadership workshops focussed on timetabling and curriculum planning, the new Wellbeing guidelines for Junior cycle, and on implementing circular letter 15/2017. These presentations and resources are available in the leadership section of our website www.jct.ie

Planning for our leadership workshops this year is well underway. In the coming weeks school leaders and learning support co-ordinators will be invited to attend a specific leadership workshop focussed on **Level 2 Learning Programmes**. The aim of this workshop is to provide participants with a deeper understanding of how students should experience the programme in the classroom through specific Level 2 learning outcomes. Other topics to be addressed in the workshop will include planning an L2LP programme, gathering evidence of learning for the student's portfolio, timetabling the programme and assessing student learning. Workshops will be delivered in different venues around the country at the end of September/early October by school leaders and teachers who are currently implementing the programme in their schools.

Log on to www.jctregistration.ie today to book your place.

The **2017 Autumn JCT leadership workshop** will focus on examining the key themes of Junior cycle reform and how school leaders can further embed these changes through collaborative whole-school planning. Letters of invitation to these workshops will issue in early October.

CSPE

Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) CPD will commence as part of the 2017/18 cluster model of CPD. It will constitute a full day of CPD that will examine the impact of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (NCCA 2017), Circular Letter 0015/2017 and the short course specification for Civic, Social and Political Education, which was published in 2016.

Session 1 of this day will examine the curricular options available for CSPE in light of the recent developments at Junior Cycle and will examine how these developments will support citizenship education at Junior Cycle.

Session 2 will give participants the opportunity to examine the different sections of the CSPE short course specification, with a particular focus on planning for teaching, assessment and learning using learning outcomes.

Session 3 will give participants the opportunity to reflect on their practice in CSPE and engage collaboratively with colleagues to plan for teaching, assessment and learning in the CSPE classroom.

Registration for this CSPE CPD will be via www.jctregistration.ie

English

Our English Team had a very busy and productive 2016/17. The team delivered a number of CPD training days to new SLAR facilitators. This coincided with the delivery of elective in-school two hour workshops to teachers of English in schools across the country. Workshops included; *Collaborative Planning and Developing and Sharing Resources*, *Formative Assessment and the English Classroom*, as well as *Subject Learning and Assessment Reviews*. Last year our English Advisors visited a total of 82 schools across the country delivering in-school supports. These in-school visits will continue again this year. Our online supports include a number of interactive screencasts; *Understanding and*

Exploring Learning Outcomes, Selecting Learning Outcomes and Aligning Assessment, as well as a screencast on the Assessment Task. Further online supports were provided in April 2017 in the form of 3 elective Webinars; *Working with Learning Outcomes*, *Poetry as a Stimulus for Classroom Based Assessments and Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings*. The English Team delivered a total of 105 day long English CPD workshops from December 2016 to April 2017 in numerous venues nationwide. We thank all attendees for their participation and look forward to seeing our colleagues again this school year.

All our online supports can be accessed on the English section of www.jct.ie You can also follow the JCT English team for news and updates on Twitter @jctEnglish

Gaeilge

Foilsíodh dhá Shonraíocht don Ghaeilge i Mí Feabhra na bliana seo: Sonraíocht Ghaeilge do scoileanna a fheidhmíonn trí mheán na Gaeilge (T1) agus Sonraíocht Ghaeilge do scoileanna a fheidhmíonn trí mheán an Bhéarla (T2). Beidh na sonraíochtaí seo a gcur i bhfeidhm i scoileanna ó Mhí Mheán Fómhair 2017. Díríonn na sonraíochtaí ar bhuanú scileanna teanga agus litearthachta trí shnáitheanna comhtháite: Cumas Cumarsáide, Feasacht Teanga agus Chultúrtha agus Féinfheasacht an Fhoghlaim. Soláthraíonn na sonraíochtaí eispéireas foghlama don scoláire trí na snáitheanna thuasluaite a chruthóidh deiseanna taitneamhacha, spreagúla chun an teanga a shealbhú agus a úsáid go cumarsáideach ó lá go lá.

Ón 13ú Feabhra soláthraíodh 55 cheardlann FGL ina iomláine do mhúinteoirí Gaeilge. Ceardlanna idirghníomhacha a bhí iontu a thug deis do mhúinteoirí tuiscint a fhorbairt ar na

móráthruithe a bhaineann le cur i bhfeidhm na sonraíochtaí Gaeilge. Léiríonn meafar foghlama na Gaeilge, a bhí in úsáid ar na laethanta FGL, tábhacht an chur chuige chomhtháite agus múinteoirí i mbun planála don Ghaeilge as seo amach. Roghnaigh foireann Ghaeilge na SSM an chruit agus ceol na teanga don mheafar seo; tá trí thaobh ar an gcruit a léiríonn na trí shnáithe. Tá cúig théad uirthi mar shiombail den chúig scil teanga. Is tríd na snáitheanna agus na scileanna teanga a chomhtháthú a bhaintear amach an ceol is binne.

Mar thacaíocht do mhúinteoirí tá gach eolas a bhaineann leis an gcur chuige don tSraith Shóisearach Ghaeilge chomh maith le hAonaid Foghlama Shamplacha ar fáil ar shuíomh na SSM ag www.jct.ie. Nuair atá tú linn ar an suíomh ná déan dearmad dul ar an liosta seachadta agus coinneigh súil ar an gcóras gíolcaireachta @jctGaeilge don nuacht is déanaí.



Assessment

The assessment changes, introduced with the Junior Cycle Framework have underpinned all the support we have provided for teachers and schools leaders last year. Between whole-school days, subject days, cluster days and European ventures, life has been very interesting in the world of assessment.

Each school is on their own journey and we have made it our mission to support schools by providing workshops best suited to their individual context. We've supported schools in taking their first steps into the world of formative assessment, while also working with schools already firmly on the

road of embedding formative assessment practices in every classroom in their school.

One extremely exciting venture for us is to have embarked on a new three-year Erasmus+ Student Voice Project, in partnership with the NCCA and ETBI. This project aims to activate students' voices in the classroom space enabling students to take centre stage in their own educational

experience. The new assessment approaches, with their focus on supporting learning, are an avenue through which this can happen. We are working with teachers in nine schools in Cork and Cavan / Monaghan ETBs. Considerable progress has been made and already students are exhibiting the positive impact having their voices heard can bring about. **Watch this space!**

Visual Art Update

Last year was a busy and exciting year for the JCT Visual Art team. In the **Introduction to the Visual Art Specification** we had the pleasure of facilitating the workshops in art rooms and schools across the country. The response from our art teacher colleagues was very positive and they particularly found the experience of working and sharing with other art teachers hugely beneficial and supportive. We were very grateful for the feedback we received on the day and it has been central in aiding us in our planning, preparation and design of our next CPD day to be delivered this year.

This year's first year students will be the first cohort of students to engage with the learning outcomes in the new Junior Cycle Visual Art specification. We look forward to hearing how art teachers are engaging with the changes and to continuing the conversations started last year.

All our resources from last year can be found on our website at http://www.jct.ie/visual_art/. Visual Art is also now on Twitter, follow us to keep up to date on upcoming news and events @jctVisualArt



MFL

Our 2016/2017 CPD day focussed on working with the new MFL specification. It afforded us a wonderful opportunity to meet with MFL colleagues and to share insights and new ideas. Together, we further developed our understanding of the bigger picture of junior cycle reform and examined how the MFL specification sits within it. We familiarised ourselves with the learning outcomes of the specification and explored how they will shape our teaching, learning and assessment practices going forward. Our next CPD day will have assessment as its primary focus. We will be working towards enhancing our understanding of how assessment, in all of its forms, supports teaching and learning in the junior cycle MFL classroom.

Recently the JCT MFL team attended a most informative workshop organised by the Post-primary Languages Initiative (www.languagesinitiative.ie), in conjunction with the European Centre for Modern Languages (www.ecml.at). It considered the significance of the specification being broadly aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Five new Associates joined our team recently and we are delighted that the MFL team is growing with such dedicated and enthusiastic colleagues.

Join us on Twitter @JCTMFL #jctmfl



Training for MFL Associates in Athlone EC, May 2017

Pictured left to right: Emma Dwyer, Gillian Murphy, Kelly McGrath, Clíodhna McManamon, Kim McCarney, Claire Matthews, Elisabeth Butler, Patrick Kavanagh, Tina Killackey, Ingrid Fallon, Sandrine Pac-Kenny, Damien Lonergan. Missing: Judith Callan-Gough, Amanda Quinn Mary-Elaine Tynan.

ATS2020



Our team are currently working on analysing the initial findings from our engagement in the in-school phase of our ATS2020 project. These include observations from our case study schools (including interviews with teachers and students taking part in the programme), school visits, lesson plans and sample student work shared by teachers in the project, and trends emerging from the student online assessment. These findings will contribute to the European report on the project and will also support JCT in tailoring our ongoing CPD and school supports, particularly in the areas of Key Skills, Portfolios, Formative Assessment and the embedding of ICT to support teaching, assessment and learning. An online resources portal will make resources and materials from the project available to all schools in the near future.

The project team presented an update on the Irish project to partners in Zagreb earlier this year and also presented the project at the CESI conference in DCU and the ICTedu conference in LIT.

Planning is now underway for an event in the current school year to showcase the findings from the Irish pilot implementation. We are most grateful to all teachers and students who have taken part in the project to date and also to the school leaders who have facilitated our interactions with their schools.



Dr. Pádraig Kirk pictured at ATS2020 International partner meeting in Zagreb with ATS2020 project leader Anastasia Economou (Cyprus), Croatian hosts CARNet and members of the ATS2020 team from JCT and H2 Learning.