



The Junior Cycle for Teachers Team has expanded this year to accommodate a new team of Science Advisors. We have completed our preparations on our first CPD day for Science teachers and this promises to be an engaging and informative day.

The new Science Specification has informed our day which will address the new 'Earth and Space' strand, the 'Nature of Science' as well as the learning outcomes in the other strands. It is our intention to give substantial time to planning approaches which align closely to the flexible nature of the new specification. Teaching and learning methodologies will be modelled throughout the day and the inquiry approach to Science education will be a central feature within the activities developed.

Exciting developments are

also underway in the elective CPD space. We will partner with Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and Science Gallery, Trinity to offer additional opportunities for teachers to engage with the Specification, with a particular focus on new material. Watch this space for further partnerships and collaborations which we hope to be able to share with you in the coming months. Members of the JCT Science Team were pleased to meet some of you at BTYSTE. We will be out and about in the coming weeks and months at conferences and seminars and we welcome your interest in our plans and aims for the year ahead. Following the NCCA consultation process, we look forward to meeting you in Education Centres where we will endeavour to support and engage with you in preparation for the implementation of the new Science Specification from September 2016.



JCT Science Team. (L to R): Miriam Doran-Hamilton (Subject Leader), Dónal O'Laire, Eadaoin Norris, Aine Woods and David King.

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Teachers are invited to read about the development of the final Science Specification



Visit

www.juniorcycle.ie/Curriculum/Subjects/Science/Test_Hidden

Using ePortfolios to Support Teaching & Learning

The Department of Education and Skills will host an international ePortfolio Conference on April 22nd 2015 in Dublin Castle, which will showcase the findings of the EUFolio classroom ePortfolios pilot project, with pilot implementations conducted in five European countries.

International research has shown that the use of ePortfolios support many aspects of teaching and learning, and in particular promote student reflection and student engagement.

The EUFolio pilot project examined three main functions of ePortfolios:

Storage: An ePortfolio can be used as a repository to securely collect, upload and store materials, such as drafts of the writing process, with the added advantage of the capacity to store digital files, links to websites, audio and video files.

Workspace: ePortfolios provide a platform to support student reflection, collaboration, peer and teacher feedback as well as promoting communication and interaction. This is fostered through the use of individual ePortfolio features such as forums, class groups, individual student pages and the reflective journal. These features support ongoing assessment in the classroom, and develop student collaboration and individual student autonomy.

Showcase: The showcase aspect of the ePortfolio also supports student reflection and collaboration as students can engage in peer and self-assessment of their finished pieces of work. Students can show their achievements through their individual profiles and through the pages of their ePortfolio. The capacity of the

ePortfolio to host multi-modal files extends the potential to present assignments in a range of media for assessment.

For further information on the EUFolio Conference, see www.eufolio.eu, follow @eufolioirl on Twitter or email: eufolio@education.gov.ie



Welcome

Welcome to the third edition of our Newsletter. 2013/2014 was a very busy year for JCT. It began with the appointment of our team of English Advisors and the roll-out of the first day of CPD to nearly 5,000 teachers of English in Education Centres across the country. Elective workshops were also provided in conjunction with The Arts Council. These were very well attended and the feedback from all who participated, was extremely positive. We facilitated school leader workshops for 1,200 Principals and Deputy Principals and again, these workshops proved to be very productive.



Dr. Pádraig Kirk

This school year we have recruited additional full-time staff into the service and now have in place, an additional Deputy Director with responsibility for Assessment, an expanded English Team, a new Science Team, a new Whole School CPD Team and Team Leaders are in place for both Short Courses and Level 2 Learning Programmes. We have recruited a cohort of part-time Associates and with continuing developments in JCT, more Associates will come on board.

We have prepared comprehensive CPD programmes for national roll-out and we are confident that teachers will be pleased with what we have to offer. Last year we listened to the many views and concerns expressed and we are now looking forward to presenting our CPD both online and in schools and Education Centres.

As always, we are available to answer queries and provide guidance and support in all things related to the Framework for Junior Cycle. You may contact us by phone, email or visit our new website at www.jct.ie

We are currently exploring new and exciting ways of delivering our CPD online and details will be communicated to schools and teachers shortly.

We are aware of the ongoing industrial relations issue regarding the Framework for Junior Cycle. JCT remains optimistic that the matter will soon be resolved and we can resume our normal work with school leaders and teachers.

I wish you well in your work.

Dr. Pádraig Kirk
Director, CPD for Junior Cycle

Check out our new website
www.jct.ie

SHORT COURSES

Short courses are a curriculum component of the new Junior Cycle which offer exciting possibilities to schools. Short courses can be developed by teachers to suit the needs and interests of their students, but must also meet specific requirements as outlined in the 'Framework for Junior Cycle'.

A short course is designed for approximately 100 hours of student engagement, usually over two or three years and is specified at a common level across the Junior Cycle. Short courses provide an opportunity for an enhancement of current provision in some areas of student learning, as well as the potential to include new areas. Schools may choose to use any of the nine short courses which have been designed by the NCCA to support student learning.

There are examples of schools throughout the country that have created short courses in Radio and Television Broadcasting, Sports Science, Youth Leadership and Environmental Studies. Agencies, such as the Road Safety Authority and the National Consumer Agency, are working with teachers to develop particular short courses that schools may wish to consider for inclusion within their programmes. Opportunities for teacher innovation and creativity as well as for student engagement and learning are certainly present within short courses at junior cycle.

Short courses are also a key feature of the Level Two Learning Programmes and form part of the Junior Cycle pathway for students at that level.

A JCT newsletter entitled 'Short Courses in the Spotlight' is published monthly and provides up-to-date and relevant information for those interested in short courses.

More information on short courses is available online at www.jct.ie



JCT at NAPD Conference, October 2014

(L to R): Padraig Flanagan, President of NAPD, Paddy Flood, Deputy Director of JCT, Jan O'Sullivan, Minister for Education and Skills, Ursula Diamond, JCT Whole School team, Anthony Doogan, JCT Whole School team, Clive Byrne, NAPD Director.

WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT & CPD

JCT's new Whole School Support Team has been busy and proactive in developing a range of CPD options designed to support schools on their Junior Cycle journey. Currently 513 post primary schools have requested support from JCT in facilitating a whole school staff day around the 'Framework for Junior Cycle'. The aims of this day will be to provide teachers and school leaders with an opportunity to engage with the Framework, understand the rationale for a change in Junior Cycle education provision in Ireland and contextualise the changes envisaged to student learning. An important feature of the day will be allowing schools to choose optional inputs which will best serve their current position on the journey towards a new junior cycle programme. A suite of optional workshops has been developed by the team around the areas of key skills, statements of learning, assessment, the Level 2 Learning Programmes and Short Courses.

On the day, schools will be guided in developing their next steps, consequently allowing them to move forward in a manageable and meaningful way. The Whole School CPD Team is enthused about working with schools and teachers in a supportive and collegial way. It is worth remembering that in accordance with DES Circular 0020/2014 each school may take one day's whole school support or its equivalent each academic year right up until 2021/22. The purpose and nature of our support will evolve, change and develop over time and will ultimately be determined by the expressed wishes and needs of each particular school. The team is looking forward to working with schools on this journey of learning.

Whole School Support Team Up-date

Since December 2014, our Whole School Support Team has delivered a number of very successful in-school workshops to Special Schools across the country. This work continues apace and has been very well received. Any Special School that would like to request a school visit from the team can register at www.jct.ie or contact Monaghan Education Centre to submit its request.



Special School teacher engagement with Whole School CPD



Newly expanded JCT team meet for the first time in Monaghan Education Centre August 2014.



Colleagues from Northern Ireland visit JCT to speak about Assessment in Northern Ireland Schools.
Left to right: Pádraig Kirk (Director JCT), Karol Sadleir (Deputy Director JCT), Brendan McDowell (Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment, NI), Ruth Wilson (Principal, Dunclug High School, Ballymena), Paul Murray (Dept of Education NI), Roger McCune (CCEA, NI).

Website ...
Junior Cycle for Teachers
has just launched
its new look website
www.jct.ie
Check it out today!

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Got a query regarding JC CPD?
Contact: info@jct.ie

ENGLISH

Teachers of English, who received their first CPD day in 2013-2014, will be offered a second full day workshop in Education Centres nationally. Teachers of English will be invited to attend this workshop on a phased basis so as to minimise disruption at school level. This second full day will provide a brief recap of the English Specification and will guide teachers in assessment procedures as outlined in the NCCA 'Assessment and Moderation Toolkit', and as provided online in the English Planning and Assessment Materials section at www.jct.ie

The CPD day will demonstrate practical classroom strategies in preparing for school-based assessment and in using learning outcomes. Throughout the day, time will be given to interaction and discussion so that teachers may benefit from the classroom experiences of colleagues from other schools. Teachers are asked to bring their TEACHER RESOURCE PACK from last year as they will be provided with additional pages to add to those given at last year's day. For any teacher who did not attend last year's seminar, the full Resource Pack can be downloaded from the 'English Resources' section of www.jct.ie

Once again, provision is made for planning in further teacher-led, in-school CPD sessions.

JCT is collaborating again with the Arts Council to continue the Arts in Junior Cycle English Initiative begun in 2013-2014. Last year, we collaborated with the Abbey Theatre Outreach Programme, Tenderfoot at the Civic Theatre, the National Association for Youth Drama, (NAYD) and the Irish Film Institute. We will also collaborate with Poetry Ireland to offer teachers writing workshops. Full details of all elective courses will be posted on our website. In recent months, JCT English has collaborated with RTE in producing teaching materials for the Documentary on One series which was one of the new digital texts presented in last year's seminars. These will be available at "Educational Resources" within the Documentary On One website and at www.jct.ie

Further CPD will also be provided in elective workshops in the areas of Developing Oral Language, Writing as a Process, Planning and Teaching Comprehension Strategies.

Since last autumn, we have been emailing updates to those teachers who are on our mailing list, which we encourage all teachers of English to join.

CPD support for teachers of English will continue each year up to and beyond the first junior cycle final English examination in 2017. English Advisors will provide school visits for English departments in the period that follows that third year of support.



Paddy Flood, Deputy Director JCT, facilitates a 'critical friends' day with JCT English Advisors re: English Day 2 CPD.

LEVEL 2 LEARNING PROGRAMMES

An L2LP is a Level 2 Junior Cycle programme aimed at a very specific cohort of students with General Learning Difficulties (GLD), in particular those who function within the high moderate general learning difficulties and low mild general learning difficulties. An L2LP is made up of five Priority Learning Units (PLUs) and two Short Courses. The PLUs are as follows:

- 1) Communicating and Literacy
- 2) Numeracy
- 3) Personal Care
- 4) Preparation for Work
- 5) Living in the Community

Prior to the L2LPs, there was no structured framework set by the Department of Education and Skills/NCCA for students functioning in this category. This will now change and students will be awarded with a Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement at Level 2.

At present the link between schools and communities is often under-utilised. Level 2 Learning Programmes offer the opportunity for students to become involved in their local communities, transferring learning and skills into real-life situations. It prepares learners for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult and working life and lifelong learning.

L2LPs can be developed and integrated in a variety of learning contexts including mainstream post-primary and special schools. Level 2 Learning Programmes offer continuity, progression, relevance and enjoyment.

L2LP Whole School CPD for Special Schools began in November 2014 and by the end of February 2015 63 schools have participated, with many more to receive CPD in the coming weeks. This is a full day CPD, facilitated by our L2LP Associates who are all practicing teachers in both mainstream and special schools. The CPD is held in each school to allow staff fully engage with the Framework for Junior Cycle, familiarise themselves with the Level 2 Learning Programmes and to share good practice within their school setting. Guidance is also given on how to begin implementing the L2LPs within each school context.

We would like to thank all the schools involved for the warm welcome we have received to date and the enthusiasm shown for the Level 2 Learning Programmes.

More information is available on www.jct.ie and www.curriculumonline.ie



Teachers working on Priority Learning Units as part of their Whole School CPD day



Follow us on twitter @JCforTeachers - We currently have over 3,000 followers and growing.