

Science

We are very busy in the Science Team making plans to support teachers for the implementation of the Science Specification in September 2016 with our CPD plan commencing in Autumn 2015. The training schedule for our new Science Associates has been put in place and we are looking forward to the opportunity to work with them. We are particularly excited to have these teachers on board to deliver the excellent CPD we have planned.

Collaborative work is ongoing with our elective CPD partners, Science Foundation Ireland and the Science Gallery. Planning is well underway for some innovative and exciting workshops, with a particular emphasis on exemplifying how the Nature of Science permeates all areas of the new Science Specification. The elective CPD will be offered following delivery of CPD Day 1.

Our Science section of the JCT website has been populated with initial resources to support student learning in Science classrooms. There are dedicated pages for each of the contextual strands and the Nature of Science from the specification, as well as a page for methodological supports. JCT will continue to upload new and engaging supports for teachers and students to the website over time and we will liaise with teachers to discuss their resource needs. Teachers can also access recent news, events and information on core and elective CPD opportunities on our website. The JCT Science Team is actively looking at various ways to support Science teachers in the online space. More exciting updates to follow on our new website www.jct.ie



JCT Science Team engaging in some scientific enquiry at Amgen Teach in DCU.



(L to R) Chief Inspector Harold Hislop with Patricia Maguire and Ursula Diamond (JCT) at the ACCS Conference in Galway.

(L to R) Betty McLoughlin (President of IGC), Damien English TD (Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation), Paddy Flood (JCT) and Mai Kearns (Vice President of IGC) at IGC Conference 2015.



EUfolio International ePortfolio Conference – Dublin Castle

The EUfolio International ePortfolio Conference took place on Wednesday 22nd March in Dublin Castle and saw a host of distinguished academics and educators present their work and research in the area of ePortfolios in second level education.

The keynote speaker, Professor Val Klenowski, spoke of the social aspect of learning and the need for fusion between connection and communication. The findings of the EUfolio pilot implementation project were also presented, highlighting the potential of ePortfolios to support formative assessment and the development of key skills. JCT associate Eoghan Evesson from Newbridge College, presented his experience as a teacher in the pilot project and spoke of the positive impact on his students and on teaching and learning. Four schools (Athy Community College, Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh, Athlone Community College & Coláiste Bhaile Chláir) presented their EUfolio journey in parallel sessions while a joint JCT/NCCA workshop on using ePortfolios for Formative Assessment was facilitated by Sinéad Tuohy (JCT) and Ben Murray (NCCA). Minister for Education, Jan O' Sullivan, visited the school showcase where schools from Ireland and other partner countries discussed their project experience with the Minister and showed exemplars of their work. The Minister brought the conference to a close on Wednesday afternoon and in her speech commended the positive collaboration between teachers and the wonderful innovative work done by both teachers and students throughout the pilot implementation.



Pictured at the ePortfolio Conference at Dublin Castle. (L to R) Kevin Marshall, (Microsoft Ireland), Karen Murtagh (DES), Sinéad Tuohy (JCT), Ben Murray (NCCA), Minister Jan O' Sullivan TD, Eddie Ward (DES), Michael Hallisey (H2 Learning).

More information on EUfolio, including links to resources for schools considering implementing ePortfolios can be found at www.eufolio.eu

"Well-Being" - Promoting health, happiness and an ability to navigate the challenges of life

Within the new Junior Cycle, schools have the opportunity to review their programmes and examine their promotion of physical activity and positive mental health as part of healthy lifestyles.

A renewed emphasis is being placed on physical education under the reforms, which is scheduled to form part of a compulsory programme of Well-Being which also incorporates CSPE and SPHE (which includes RSE). Well-Being will be a central part of education at junior cycle level, and students can access learning through the various short courses, or via other learning experiences in the above areas.

For the first time, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their achievements and understanding in the various components of their junior cycle Well-Being programme. Following their third year, each student's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement will document achievement in wellbeing related areas of learning in addition to other subjects, short courses and other learning experiences that they have undertaken as part of their Junior Cycle programme.

Welcome

Welcome to our second Newsletter of 2014/2015. As the current school year draws to a close, I am heartened by the news that proposals for a way forward, in terms of Junior Cycle reform, have been agreed between the Department of Education and Skills and the leadership of the unions. Hopefully, this will pave the way for JCT to work with all schools, school leaders and teachers in the next school year. We must first await the outcome of a ballot which will take place early in the new school year.

JCT is well prepared to support schools in implementing the new Framework for Junior Cycle. The Framework is being revised in light of recent developments and we look forward to receiving the new Framework by the end of next month. We have a wide range of high-quality CPD at the ready, including programmes for whole-school, school leaders, teachers of English and Science, teachers of short courses, L2LPs and Guidance Counsellors. We also want to engage with school leaders and teachers in shaping additional programmes for future roll-out.

JCT has also established strong working relationships with a number of external bodies that have supported us in developing specific CPD for teachers, including the Arts Council, RTE and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI). We are continuing to develop other strategic relationships for the benefit of teachers and students... watch this space!

I wish everybody a pleasant summer break and we look forward to an engaging and fruitful 2015/2016 school year. If you would like to talk to us please feel free to send us an email, or simply lift the phone and give us a call.

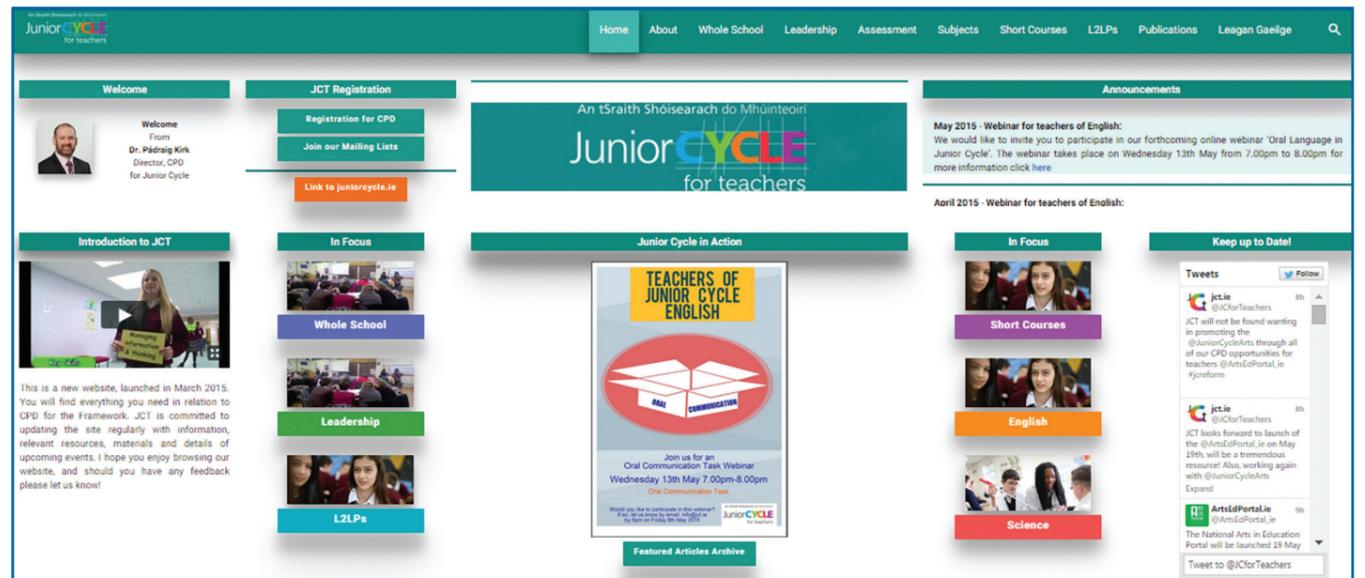
Sincerely,
Dr. Pádraig Kirk
 Director, CPD for Junior Cycle



Dr. Pádraig Kirk



JCT and partners on a recent visit to Scotland to meet with Education Scotland.
 (L to R) Norman Emerson (NCCA), Karol Sadleir (JCT), Heather Fuller (Education Scotland), Anne O'Mahony (DES), Linda Neary (DES), Pádraig Mac Fhlannachta (DES), Claire Harvey (Education Scotland), Rachel Linney (NCCA) and Pádraig Kirk (Director JCT).



JCT is pleased to announce that in March 2015 we launched a new, user friendly and comprehensive website to support schools in implementing the Framework for Junior Cycle. Our new website www.jct.ie is now live and contains high quality teaching and learning resources for school leaders and teachers. You will find dedicated support in the following areas: Whole School; Leadership; Assessment; English & Science; Short Courses and L2LPs. JCT is committed to updating the website regularly with information, relevant resources, materials and details of upcoming events. We hope you enjoy browsing www.jct.ie, and should you have any feedback please let us know.

ENGLISH

English CPD Day 2 workshops

A series of English workshops for CPD Day 2 were rolled out during the month of April and while the numbers that attended were small, there was extremely positive feedback on the content of the day. The following is an outline of what to expect in our CPD Day 2:

- a brief recap of CPD Day 1
- advice on planning, teaching and assessing using learning outcomes
- practical classroom strategies for developing oral communication and writing
- information about the school-based components
- introduction to features of quality for the school-based components
- opportunities to apply features of quality to student work
- information about the final assessment and indicative assessment material

Webinar

In early April, the team held its first webinar which provided detailed information on planning for English in second and third year. This innovative CPD approach was initially oversubscribed and the feedback, on the night and subsequently, has been hugely positive. The webinar and the transcript are available to view on www.jct.ie. A second webinar on the Oral Communication Task has also been completed.

Website

The new JCT website is currently attracting a lot of attention. The English site abounds with materials to support teachers of English and their students. In the Junior Cycle in Action section of the site, there is an infographic which outlines the key changes including: planning, teaching and learning using learning outcomes; the new emphasis on oral language; links

with the primary school curriculum; the enhanced focus on the process of writing; and information on the school-based assessment component and the final assessment.

The Resources section of the site continues to be populated with materials that should prove extremely useful in the classroom. New to the section are a variety of resources and examples of good practice to support teachers and students when exploring drama in junior cycle. There is a guide to the Prescribed Drama texts and also a sample drama resource from our Speaking Shakespeare workshop. Recently added are links to support the explicit teaching of reading and writing with junior cycle English classes. All of these complement the materials on prescribed films; speed trailering for the short films and the booklet guide for the prescribed 20 novels. We will continue to enrich the site with resources that will benefit teaching and learning in our classrooms.

Mailing List

We have been emailing updates to those teachers who are on our mailing list and we encourage all teachers of English to sign up for this by clicking 'Join our mailing list' on the main page of www.jct.ie. We encourage teachers to visit the www.jct.ie website and view the materials available to assist in their planning for English teaching and learning.



Celine Kiernan, (left) author of JC English prescribed novel **Into the Grey** being interviewed by Mary Gilmore (JCT). Extracts available on www.jct.ie

Newly-developed Short Courses at 'FÉILTE 2015'

A diverse range of new short courses will be exhibited at the annual 'FÉILTE' celebration this October. These courses have been designed by teachers from six Special Schools that are engaging in a JCT Short Course Development Community. 'FÉILTE', which is hosted annually by the Teaching Council, provides a platform where teachers can share their work in leading innovative learning in schools.

The work involves curriculum innovation where, within a pioneering community, six teachers undertake the creative process of short course design. The Level 2 courses are aligned with the Framework for Junior Cycle and specific to the needs of the students and the context of each school. As each short course develops, it is further refined in light of feedback from the participating teachers and from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), with support from JCT.

The 'FÉILTE' workshop will showcase the short courses developed as a result of the project and highlight the learning garnered from the process. Examples of the Level 2 Short Course titles are:

- Water, Water Everywhere
- Where am I from? Where am I going?
- Grow it, Cook it, Eat it!
- History through Artistic Performance

Teachers and members of the public will:

- view the opportunities available to schools, teachers and students resulting from the autonomy offered within the Framework for Junior Cycle.
- become fully aware of the amazing work currently in place within Special Schools nationwide and the potential for students to receive certification for their work through the new Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement at Level 2.

For more details on the above, please contact info@jct.ie or visit

<http://www.jct.ie/shortcourses/shortcourses.html>



JCT meet with Education Charter Implementation Group. (L to R) Dr Katie Sweeney (National Director for the Integration of the Arts in Education, DES), Karol Sadleir (Deputy Director for Assessment, JCT), Prof. John Coolahan (Chair of the Implementation Group), Dr Pádraig Kirk (Director JCT), Orlaith Mc Bride (Director of the Arts Council) and Seona Ni Bhriain (Head of Young People, Children and Education, the Arts Council).

LEVEL 2 LEARNING PROGRAMMES

The Level 2 Learning Programmes team has continued to deliver CPD Day 1 to Special Schools and to date 80 schools have received CPD. It has been great to experience the enthusiasm and interest shown in the L2LPs with many schools now intending to implement the programme in September 2015. Plans are underway to deliver to the Principal and one other representative from each school. This day will deal mainly with planning, timetabling and assessment. The L2LP team has been out filming examples of good practice in Special Schools and will upload these videos to the website. (Don't forget to check out our L2LPs section on our

website). Further resource material for use with each of the Priority Learning Units will also be added.

The ePlanning toolkit is now live and will be of great benefit to schools undertaking the L2LPs. Further information is available online.

The Draft Background Paper for the Level 1 Learning Programmes has been published and a huge thank you is extended to those of you who took part in the consultation process. The results of the consultation will be published in due course. This is an exciting step, because when implemented, will bring another welcome dimension to Irish education.



Above: JCT meet with National Parents Council, Post Primary. (L to R) Paddy Flood (JCT), Karol Sadleir (JCT), Don Myers (President, NPCpp) and Tomás O'Seaghda (Board of Directors NPCpp).



Left: Matt Kelly Productions filming L2LPs in Special Schools for JCT.

WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT & CPD

The Whole School Support & CPD team has had a busy 2015 thus far, engaging with teachers, parents and various organisations on the implementation of 'A Framework for Junior Cycle'. This has included the delivery of one full day's Whole School CPD to staff in Special Schools in partnership with our colleagues from the JCT L2LP team. We have also engaged with some Special Schools on their journey towards implementing a revised Junior Cycle at Level 3 for their students. Recently we delivered our first full day's CPD through the medium of Irish. Furthermore our team was enthused to deliver training sessions to undergraduate and postgraduate students in NUI Galway, Dublin City University and University College Cork around aspects of 'A Framework for Junior Cycle'.

Other developments include ongoing work on the development of a planning tool to aid teachers in embedding formative and summative assessment in classroom practice. We are pleased to be able to offer schools support in this important area. Members of our team have also been working collaboratively with NCCA and the National Parents Council Post Primary (NPCpp) in the development of an information session for parents which we look forward to delivering in regional centres. Further collaborative work with the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) has been most positive in the development of CPD for guidance counsellors around the revised Junior Cycle. All of this work and the feedback received is helping to shape and inform our vision of Whole School support as we progress. We look forward to continuing to support schools and teachers on their journey into a revised junior cycle.



JCT Regional Leader Anthony Doogan engaging with students in NUI Galway recently on the topic of 'Activating Key Skills in the Classroom'.



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