

A publication of the Association of Teachers' / Education Centres in Ireland



Issue 3

NASC 2010

Promoting and Supporting Best Practice in Irish Education

WHAT'S INSIDE



**Inclusion of
Newcomer Students**

**A Conflict Resolution
Programme
for Schools**

**New Online
Opportunities
for Teachers**

**Teacher
Professional
Communities**

**ICTs in the
Primary School**

...

and much more

"If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill,
Be a scrub in the valley - but be
The best little scrub by the side of the rill;
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

If you can't be a bush be a bit of the grass,
And some highway happier make;
If you can't be a muskie then just be a bass
But the liveliest bass in the lake!"

Douglas Malloch
(Be the Best)



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Foreword



*Caitríona Ní Chullota.
Chairperson ATECI*

“Life and the living of it is the real education!”

These words of wisdom received many years ago from an old man, who had little access to education in the formal sense, come to mind again as I contemplate the articles published in this issue of NASC. I am reminded over and over of man’s desire to belong, to be connected and to be able to make sense of his environment within a context of extraordinary unpredictability.

I am challenged by such questions as “Belong to what and to whom? Be connected to what and to whom? Make sense of what/whose environment?” I am concerned with the inevitable “how” in an attempt to grapple with these questions. NASC, issue 3, provides us with an opportunity to reflect on a number of issues that are critical considerations for the world of education at this time.

We may reflect on our awareness of dissolving boundaries and collapsing conventional learning environments for example. The articles may provoke in us the need to attend to the implications of a relentless and urgent pursuit for connectivity, which appears to pervade societal thinking at this time. Images of “Community” reflective of collaborative endeavour and the potential for collective knowledge- creation alert us to the realization that “Community” is being re-shaped and re-designed as we read some articles. We may be drawn towards a renewed focus on the values underpinning personal growth and fulfilment and harmonious communal living when reflecting on others.

The articles lead us on to interrogate the practice of education in a world, where our students and teachers face challenges that are without precedent. This is indeed a “new” world. The creativity, imagination and innovation characteristic of so many of the initiatives published in NASC are not optional in our quest to address the challenges, which this “new world” presents.

Teachers and students are at the heart of this creative process-the learning continuum. It is an imperative that they connect with each other, and with the wider community, separately and collectively, engaging each other and the global community in meaningful and purposeful dialogue. The reconceptualisation of our support infrastructure must reflect the needs of teachers and schools in the context of the “new world”

At a time when the ATECI is consulting on a Framework for Development, when the Educational Leadership role of the Network is a central focus in that development we have the opportunity to garner existing synergies and to create new synergies. This creativity will involve the sharing of our resources and the exchange of our expertise and experience for the good of our teachers, students and communities.

We cannot afford to waste this opportunity. The Living of life is, most assuredly, the real education! How do we support that process in the early years of the 21st Century? This is the real challenge facing us, as educators.

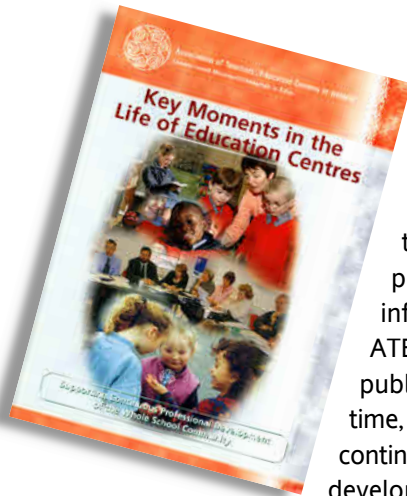
Is áthas liom agus is cúis onóra dom é NASC- Eagrán 3 - a chur in bhúr láthair thar ceann ATECI. Ta súil agam go mbeidh sé mar ábhar mhacnaimh, tacaíochta agus spreagtha do mhúinteoirí agus scoileanna agus sibh i mbun chúram an Oideachais.

Le dea-mhéin.
Caitríona Ní Chullota.
Chairperson ATECI.



Our Previous Publications

2003



The core objective of our first publication (2003) was to provide up-to-date information about the ATECI network and to publicise its role at that time, in the provision of continuous professional development to teachers

and schools. The booklet also set out to highlight the infrastructural investment that had just been completed in the many new purpose-built Education Centres around the country. This, our first publication gave readers a window into the variety of projects and events engaged in by the network through discreet centre vignettes.

2008



Our 2007 NASC celebrating our tenth anniversary as an expanded network, was so well received that we decided to produce another NASC. NASC 2008 adopted a themed approach to the articles of interest submitted by various personnel involved in the education community throughout Ireland. The single

thread uniting all the articles included in this issue was the concept of disseminating useful advice and interesting information in order to support and stimulate, entertain and engage teachers and school personnel in the vital work they undertake throughout Ireland.

2007



Our second publication and first issue of 'NASC' in 2007 heralded a new approach in that we sought to encapsulate the diversity of professional development opportunities and resources available through the network of

education centres. Its title 'NASC' means link or bond. Our intention was to use our publication NASC as a link through which teachers and educationalists could share their ideas. This Spring edition came as we approached the tenth anniversary of the network's major expansion in 1997. The issue carried articles of general interest, promoted innovative teaching resources and highlighted projects worth replicating throughout the country.

This issue of NASC 2010



This Issue of NASC 2010 - our first in the new decade, is intended to stimulate interest and dialogue in the context of teaching and learning. We include a sample of the innovations, projects and events that are taking place in Education Centres and in schools. Many of these exciting projects can

be replicated by students, teachers, other educators, schools and Education Centres. We hope you will enjoy reading this issue and we look forward to continuing a dialogue on innovation with you into the future.



Department of Education and Skills

The network of Education Centres under the umbrella of the Association of Teachers' Education Centres in Ireland (ATECI) works with a number of sections in the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Most of the work of Education Centres falls under the remit of the Teacher Education Section (TES). Department funding for Education Centres and for the national programmes and services managed by Education Centres comes from the TES. Relations between the network of Education Centres and the TES are cordial constructive and collaborative. There is an understanding that we share a common objective, ensuring the provision of quality programmes of continuing professional development for 60,000 primary and post primary teachers enabling them to provide the best possible learning opportunities for their students in a twenty-first century context.

Education Centres deal with other sections in the DES from time to time and with all the education partners at pre-school, primary, post primary and third levels.

The ATECI network welcomes Tánaiste Mary Coughlan T.D. as the new Minister for Education and Skills. The network looks forward to working with Minister Coughlan and her officials, together with Dr. Alan Wall and his staff in TES in forging a vision for teacher education which will simultaneously meet the needs of teachers, schools and the system at local, regional and national levels.

ATECI NEWS

There have been a number of changes of Director in Education Centres since Issue 2 of NASC in the Autumn of 2008. Lorna Gault retired as Director of Sligo Education Centre in December 2008 and was replaced by Mary Hough. When Seamus Toomey retired from his position as Director of Limerick Education Centre in October 2009, for mer incumbent Joe O'Connell returned to resume duties as Director. The departure of Tony Kelly from the Director's chair in Clare Education Centre created a vacancy which was filled by Pat Hanrahan in the Spring of 2010.

There were changes in personnel in a number of Part Time Centres also.

Michelle O'Loughlin was replaced as Director of Co Tipperary Education Centre by Michelle Percy. When Mary Comer vacated the Director's position in Tuam Education Centre she was replaced by Aodhán De Búrca while Sean Hanley returned as Director to Cavan Education Centre replacing Maureen Gaffney.

ATECI wishes to extend sympathy to the family of the late Francis Cunningham, a management representative on the ATECI executive who died suddenly in February. Francis was a founder member of Donegal Education Centre and was Chairperson of its Management Committee on a number of occasions. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.*

Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge the contribution of our designer, Seamus O'Neill of We and Us Ltd., Educational Design Services, Navan. His creativity, patience and perseverance are highly commendable. We acknowledge also the excellence of the assistance of Daireann Kilbride from the administration staff at Dublin West Education Centre who liaised with all centres throughout a lengthy process and also the assistance of administrative personnel in Navan Education Centre, Zita Robinson, Joan Shankey and Breda Johnson at various editorial meetings.



Europe Through the Eyes of a Child

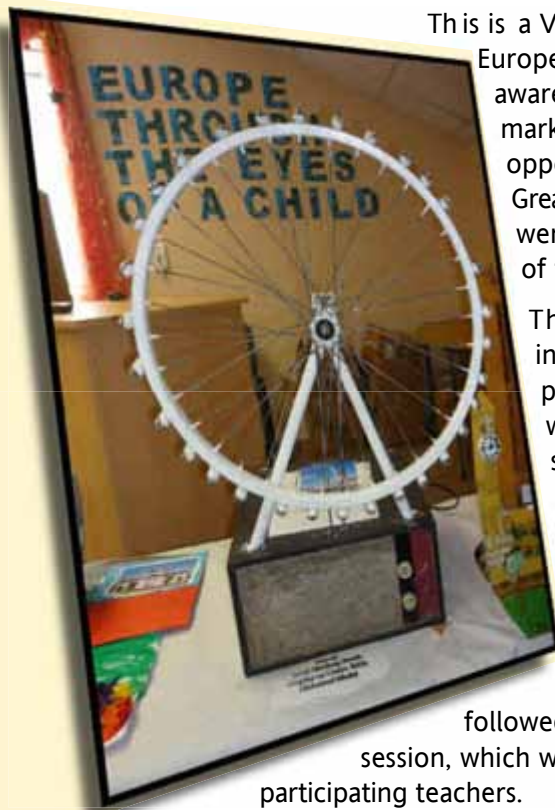
BUILDING EUROPE THROUGH ART

West Cork Education Centre

West Cork Education Centre developed a project for Primary Schools to support the 'Communicating Europe Initiative' funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Participating schools submitted their completed designs to the Education Centre. All entries were displayed at West Cork Education Centre. Entries were accredited at a National Awards Ceremony. All participating schools received a *TREASURE CHEST OF ART MATERIALS*.

The interest in this project was overwhelming. West Cork Education Centre will undertake this project again in May/June 2010.



This is a Visual Arts Project based on European Buildings and children's awareness of Europe and its landmarks. Children were given the opportunity to create designs of Great European Buildings. Buildings were created 'through the eyes of the child'.

These building materials included wire, willow, cane, paper and straws. Materials were made available to schools to support this 'Structure Building' activity.

Marie Brett, our project artist and advisor gave a demonstration to teachers on the construction of structures. This was

followed by a hands-on activity session, which was thoroughly enjoyed by participating teachers.

This exciting project offered innovative ideas for the Construction Strand of the Visual Arts Programme and explored a creative path towards 'Looking and Responding' in the Visual Arts Strand.





Enniscorthy Education Initiative

Inclusive Schools: Developing a Positive Approach

Co. Wexford Education Centre

In recent years there have been significant developments in the education of pupils with special educational needs. Along with substantial legislative changes that support the development of inclusive schools, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs enrolled in mainstream schools. This project looked at developments that have occurred in schools in Enniscorthy to encourage inclusivity and was researched as a joint project between Dr Sean O'Leary, SESS and Paula Carolan, Director, Co Wexford Education Centre with the assistance of the School Principals and Learning Support/ Support Teachers in Enniscorthy.

The principals from all nine schools in Enniscorthy town formed a partnership, the 'Enniscorthy Education Initiative' to explore issues of mutual concern relating to learning and teaching in their community. The

partnership includes four primary schools, one special school and four post-primary schools and is facilitated by Co Wexford Education Centre and the Special Education Support Service. As their first collaborative project, it was decided to explore perspectives on inclusion from individual pupils with special educational needs representing each school along with their parents and teachers. Extracts from the comments received are included below.

Parents:

'Children with special needs often feel isolated and excluded from many activities, which in turn excludes the whole family. My son is fortunate to feel included in school, however much support and work is required to make inclusive environments work. My son has little or no involvement in our local area (as most of the activities involve being good at sport).'

Pupils:

The most of our teachers are nice. They have good subject choices like metalwork, woodwork and art. I like some of the normal subjects like science. Our teachers are doing teambuilding with us so I would be included in the school.

Teachers/Principals:

Inclusion from the very beginning of school life nurtures and promotes a safe environment in which the natural process of learning and acquisition of social interactive skills can formulate and develop.

These perspectives offered by pupils, parents and teacher/principals can support schools to develop a practical definition of inclusion.

This extract is from the article written by Dr Sean O'Leary, Deputy National Coordinator, SESS, and published in full by SESS earlier this year.

Enniscorthy Celebrates 1500 years!

In 510 AD a lonely monk built his monastery on the banks of the Slaney river just north east of the present town of Enniscorthy. Here, he and his followers built their monastery and church. St Senan's settlement was on the site of the 'Old Graveyard'. To commemorate the 1500 years many celebrations will take place over the year and

Co Wexford Education Centre has several events planned.

On February 9th Wexford Historian and Notre Dame scholar, Kevin Whelan, launches 'History Trails'. This pack comprises historic walks through nine towns and three coastal areas around Wexford. Every Primary School in our area will receive a free pack.

On May 11th all nine schools in Enniscorthy will celebrate 'Enniscorthy Schools' with a Parade through Enniscorthy Town. Búí Bolg will attend and the town centre

will be transformed into a hive of colour as schools celebrate through music, song and pageant. Each school has chosen a different historical theme and the day promises an exciting overview of the history of Enniscorthy. The celebration will culminate with the 'Birthday Cake'!

Wexford Film Festival will take place in the week of May 24th. Participating Primary Schools are already working on their films. The theme is historical to mark the 1500 years celebration. Films will be shown throughout the county.



Supergrans To The Rescue

As a Band 1 DEIS School we identified maths as a significant area which needed some extra reinforcement. Following some research in the area, we decided to implement the "Number Worlds Maths Intervention Program". This programme has been widely studied in America and has shown itself to be successful in helping disadvantaged students attain basic math concepts. The programme at level A is spread over 30 weeks with daily lesson plans clearly laid out. Number Worlds uses computer

software (which works great with the interactive whiteboard) and maths games to aid instruction. In our school, we decided to pilot the program in two of our Junior Infant classes. We approached the local Active Retirement Association to ask for some volunteers to help us with the maths games. Many of the games we play are board and card games which few children seem to play at home. For two days each week a team of ladies have come in and played games in small groups with the children. These ladies have become our 'Supergrans'. The games each week are based on the topic being taught, with some revision of other topics in the setting of stations.

We have found the programme to have been very successful with a noticeable improvement in the weaker children. Counting skills have considerably improved and the gap between the extremes is beginning to narrow. In addition to the improvement in maths skills, we have noticed vast progress in the children's oral language and their social skills. The children clearly enjoy the Number Worlds programme and the most common question each morning...are the Supergrans coming today?

Michael Mulligan
Junior Infant teacher
St Aidan's Primary School
Enniscorthy
Co Wexford



Vinegar Hill



Enniscorthy Castle



**Enniscorthy
510 - 2010**



Fr. Murphy Monument



Etiquette Programme in Coláiste Bríde, Enniscorthy.

What started ten years ago as a couple of preparation classes for work experience and Graduation Evening in Transition year is now an integral part of the TY Programme in Coláiste Bríde Secondary School, Enniscorthy, Co.Wexford.

Teacher, Maria Whitty became aware of the general erosion of students' manners and lack of awareness of appropriate behaviour and soon realised that the flexibility and innovation of TY presented the ideal forum for running a tailor-made Etiquette programme for her school. Rather than sit around bemoaning the death of manners, the school decided to be proactive and tackle the issue head on and provide two Etiquette classes a week for TY.

The main thrust of the programme is to provide the students with a realistic and practical grasp of manners for the 21st Century. So, rather than teaching them to speak with plums in their mouths, the basic educational philosophy is to equip the girls to function in a modern world where manners are largely forgotten but much needed. The central message of the course is that the use of manners should always be sincere and never disingenuous and the programme is designed and taught absolutely without pretension. With the core values of TY always in mind, the programme aims to instill in the

students the confidence to enjoy a well-rounded family, social and work life. It strives to help them communicate with people on a very dignified and mannerly level. TY provides the ideal opportunities for the students to apply what they are learning because they engage with other people of all ages and walks of life during Transition Year. The real buzz words of the Coláiste Bríde programme are self-respect, awareness, consideration for others and kindness.

The last year has seen a lot of media attention directed towards the issue of manners and etiquette and whether these should be taught in school. Maria Whitty believes that children always learn their behaviour from watching how adults behave and therefore if our students do n't behave in a mannerly way it is the fault of the adults. She firmly believes that there is a place for teaching it in TY and she points out the fact that teachers are teaching manners every day in the course of their work in the classroom and on the corridors. As teachers we all accept that good manners lead to a warm classroom climate and a positive learning environment. However, she stresses the importance of ensuring that the significant adults in a child's life also take seriously their responsibilities as educators. Maria Whitty was interviewed on this very issue for an article by Kim Bielenberg last year in the Irish Independent and an RTE Radio 1 interview with Marian Finucane. The TY Etiquette programme in Coláiste Bríde was also the focus of a feature on the RTE Nationwide programme earlier in the year.

In an Irish school setting the key to an effective Etiquette programme is to adapt it to your school's specific needs. The strength of this is that the programme can change from year to year. In Coláiste Bríde, Enniscorthy, the basic course content includes dining etiquette, communications etiquette (letter writing, phone manner & mobile use, netiquette), movement, bearing and grooming and appropriate behaviour in the workplace. This is all delivered in as practical a way as possible, using role play, humour, discussion and debate and real life experience. One of the highlights of the course is a four course lunch for the students in Kelly's Resort Hotel in Rosslare.

This is a very successful programme in Coláiste Bríde and an Etiquette programme is to be recommended for all TY schools. In the past year Maria Whitty has given workshops on the programme run in her school in education centres in Cork, Portlaoise and Enniscorthy.

Maria Whitty
Coláiste Bríde,
Enniscorthy





Athlone Education Centre supports the teaching of music in Tanzania



Patricia Hynes pictured with her music students in Arusha, Tanzania.

In early 2009 Athlone Education Centre became aware that one of our local teachers had decided to use two weeks of her Summer holidays to broaden her educational horizons by helping to teach young children in the Tanzanian area of Arusha.

Patricia Hynes working with the Galway based charity Return to Tanzania was about to visit Tanzania to assist the programme in providing much needed support for the local community. An accomplished traditional music player Patricia made contact with Athlone Education Centre in an attempt to maximise the impact of her work in Arusha.

Combining Patricia's passion for music with her forthcoming trip Athlone Education Centre suggested that the provision of recorders for the Tanzanian children would broaden their education and leave a

lasting impact in the local area. With this in mind local teachers were made aware of the forthcoming trip and small donations of only a €2 coin over a period of some three weeks provided enough money to purchase some 150 recorders. These were then flown to Tanzania by the charity.

Over the two week period all 150 recorders were in use each and every day. The children developed basic skills and at the end of the two weeks the recorders, fingering charts and teachers' notes were all left with the local primary school. To mark the culmination of the visit the local children played a number of tunes for the Sunday Mass.



SAMBA

Teachers Catch the Rhythm

Early in 2009 Athlone Education Centre purchased a 20 piece Samba Drumming kit as a resource for the teaching of music at both primary and post primary levels. Under the tutelage of experienced rhythm king Kieran Gallagher a number of teachers applied for training. Following from this training it was then envisaged that the kit would be rotated from one school to the next after a period of three weeks to a month.

Well, the kit was delivered, notes were prepared, earplugs put on stand-by and the training began. Teachers were delighted with the results and amazed at the enjoyment that they received from the training session alone. Athlone Education Centre then received a flood of requests to "borrow" the drums, with some requests even coming from schools that had not attended training.

The kit is an excellent resource for a school and provides an ideal vehicle to cover many of the elements of

contd. next page

Tanzanian students get to grips with the recorder





the listening and responding, performing and composing strands of the primary curriculum. It also dovetails well into the post-primary curriculum and is ideally suited as part of a music programme for transition year students.

The response from teachers was that enthusiastic that Athlone Education Centre now has three full samba kits in circulation and is considering

purchasing more. In addition to this most of the Education Centres in the country have now purchased samba kits and we have recently trained two tutors in each of these Centres.

Nationwide reaction has been hugely positive to date, and the future?.....well, wouldn't it be great if all these samba kits could be put together in one venue for one parade or concert.



Kieran Gallagher, Samba Tutor (Front Centre) with some of the many teachers from across the country who will be tutoring a samba course in an Education Centre near you!

Podcasting

Athlone Education Centre has recently initiated an exciting project for primary and post-primary schools in its catchment area. With the rise in the number of on-line broadcasts and the increasing use of portable media devices Athlone Education Centre decided now would be an optimum time to get local teachers engaged with this particular strand of technology.

Some 30 schools from both school levels have attended a three night training module covering the basics of podcasting. Starting with the technical aspects of the hardware involved, teachers are then led through background information and theory, basic journalistic skills, preparation for recording, recording and finally editing of the podcast in question. This is then added to by providing a final night on multi-tracking and of course, trouble-shooting.

Teachers then return to their class to make a series of three minute podcasts. The theme of these podcasts is to be decided by the class in question and each school commits to producing a minimum of ten podcasts throughout the project. These podcasts are then made available through the school website and collectively through the website of Athlone Education Centre.

Working in partnership with Midland's 103 (The Midland's local radio station) it is then envisaged that some of these podcasts may actually make it to broadcast stage as part of the radio stations interest in all things educational. Either way, students and teachers have great fun and a thought provoking educational experience as part of this new and exciting initiative.

Podcasting





Carrick Students *NET* Listeners

Carrick-on-Shannon Education Centre

The inception of Transition Year in Carrick-on-Shannon Community School has been a remarkable success. Two Cross Curricular Projects between the ICT and the Media Studies modules gave students a real taste of the world of Media.

In November, a short one minute spoof film was produced, directed and edited under the guidance of Joe Bambrick, ICT coordinator in the school, and the script devised by the transition year group themselves in the Media Studies class. Given that this is the first year of the Media studies Module, some equipment was supplied from other sources. Carrick-on-Shannon Education centre was instrumental in bringing this project to fruition in that a number of computers were loaned to the school for the purpose of editing the film.

The cornerstone however of the year's work was the setting up, launch and subsequent running of a streamed radio station by the transition year students. Firstly the teachers involved ICT coordinator Joe Bambrick and Media Studies teacher Peter Nyland had to enlist the help and expertise of outside personnel to get the project from conception stage to where it is now - a living reality. Rory O'Brien, a Broadcast Engineer, Presenter and Production Specialist inspired the students to become involved in media studies and radio during the school's sampling day. All through the year Rory was on hand to give advice on software packages to use

and guide the teachers through the basics of teaching simple production techniques. The studio was installed by Mid West Radio's Sean Egan and Michael Neary who have vast experience in sourcing and equipping stations with their requirements. Once some basic presenting and production skills were taught students presented lunch-time shows to the school community.

After Christmas the next stage of the process started. The students' dream of broadcasting across the internet was embarked upon. Whilst much credit must go to Mr. Bambrick for bringing this phase of the project to fruition, he also relied on the help of Mike Mulvihill and Keith Fahy of Shannonside FM to fine tune operations for the launch night. When the launch date arrived the school's common room was packed to capacity for the festivities. Thanks to the combined efforts of Fergal Woods, Peter Nyland and Joe Bambrick, people not only in Carrick-on-Shannon but all over the world could listen to events unfold from the school's bustling radio centre! Many students, parents and indeed interested parties logged on to www.carrickcs.ie to capture the flavour of the evening.

School radio is not a new phenomenon, but the idea of broadcasting shows by the students for the students across the internet is quite novel. Indeed by virtue of the fact that students broadcast daily at lunchtime and between 5 and 7 three evenings a week, it is a

great testimony to the commitment and drive of the students and teachers involved.

So what's next for the students at Carrick-on-Shannon Community School? Perhaps a licensed broadcast on the FM band? Who knows? Whatever the project might be it won't happen without the support and expertise of outside bodies and the talent of individuals from both inside and outside the school.



Media equipment at launch of Internet radio broadcast in Carrick-on-Shannon Community School



Craft in the Classroom

Carrick-on-Shannon



Fifteen schools from all over Leitrim participated in "Craft in the Classroom project" which is an education programme launched by the Crafts Council in 2005. The project was supported by the Education Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon where the teachers and the artists came together for a number of workshops and information sessions. The programme develops craft and design skills for primary school children. The schools worked collaboratively with a professional craftsperson and the children developed their creative skills with projects that were fun, ambitious and challenging. At St. Brigid's National School, Drumcong children took their inspiration from a local history and geography project. Using the expert skills of ceramicist Ann Geaney the second and third class children created ceramic models of well known buildings and landmarks. These combined to make a large scale three dimensional map of the local area and are a beautiful representation of places of interest in Kiltubrid. The project provided integration in a number of subject areas including visual arts-drawing, painting and clay, local geography mapping, local history research, English reading and writing, science

of materials, maths- drawing to scale, S.P.H.E. – road and water safety as well as safety visiting old buildings.

The fifth and sixth class pupils of St. Brigid's NS Ballinamore worked with Ester Kiely a fabric & fibre artist and they chose "Me" and "the artist in me" as the theme for the project. Ester brought in a no old hand cranked sewing machine - a 90 year old singer machine and demonstrated hemming, basic stitching, cross stitching and how to use different stitching to make designs and pictures in fabric. She also showed them how to sew a button and hand sew a seam. Each pupil got a chance to use the sewing machine to make their own treasure-bag, and used a drawstring to secure. Inside they put something special to them. This led to the final display – every pupil made a pyramid of their favourite colour on the sewing machine. Inside they put some "treasures", something special to them e.g. pieces of fabric, buttons, beads, their name, pictures of things important

to them. They hand stitched them closed. So each pyramid represents one pupil in the class. Under the direction/stimulation of the artist the girls decided to display the pyramids in the window of the classroom, suspended by fishing wire. The light shines through them and they move gently in the breeze. The class decided to call this work "precious treasures" as in the way pyramids of Egypt have precious treasures.

The students of St. Brigid's NS Drumkeerin have built a 15ft curragh using willow, paper, weaving glue and lots of colour. The project which is based on the Viking invasion of Ireland was led by artist Jane Groves.

The participants cited many benefits of their involvement in this project and look forward to working on future projects with the Education Centre and the Craft Council to bring the craft process alive.

Model of well known buildings and landmarks in Kiltubrid Parish





1959 – 2009 Celebrating 50 years of Creativity and Innovation The Irish Teachers' Trips to the U.S.A.

Waterford Teachers' Centre

As a young teacher in 1975 I headed off to the United States as part of the Irish Teachers' Project to the US A. This was an educational trip to the University of Delaware, organised by Stephen Daly (R.I.P., November 2001). Stephen a primary teacher originally from Drogheda but by then living in Rathgar, had been bringing groups of teachers to the East Coast and West Coast of America since 1959, the year he chartered the first Aer Lingus flight from Ireland to the U.S.A.. Apart from the teachers that he was bringing to the East Coast and the West Coast of America on his Educational Projects, he advertised and sold the remaining seats to teachers and to anyone else that would buy them. It was a great privilege for me to be accepted on the trip and the cost was kept to an affordable level for young teachers through subsidies and grants that Stephen had sourced from bodies such as the Department of Education and the American Embassy in Ireland, and the U.S. Office of Education and the Trustees of the John B. Lynch Foundation in America. The whole thrust of the project was that the teachers would derive great educational benefit from learning new educational ideas and different methods of teaching through studying and observing in action the American education system. There were daily lectures and visits to schools and other educational institutions. It was believed that the opportunities to meet and live with Americans would help to broaden the horizons of the young teachers and that their professional lives would be enhanced by their observations, discussions and experiences in America.

Certainly, Stephen Daly was innovative and creative in his thinking and organisational ability to get these trips funded through a variety of grants. Young men and women, who would not otherwise have had the opportunity of transatlantic travel or the facility to study the American education system and the American way of life at such close hand, had a life-enhancing experience that many, if not all, will recall with fond memories. On my trip in 1975 there were 24 teachers in the group. The trip was for three weeks and in addition to being based in accommodation on the Campus of the University of Delaware, we also stayed with host families in Wilkes Barre, Wilmington (Delaware), and Philadelphia for a number of days. My experience of the trip was that it opened up my mind to not only the American education system and all that that involved, but also to the American way of life. I made lifelong contact with several families and just this summer attended the 7th Birthday Party of a Great Grandson of my original host family in Wilkes Barre. From 1976 onwards an entire programme has been hosted at Kings'

College in Wilkes Barre. In the intervening years, nearly 1000 Irish teachers have benefited from participation in the King's College programme alone. Unfortunately, all of the grants from both sides of the Atlantic had dried up completely by the early 1980s and so the programme in King's College is now the only one of its kind operating between Ireland and the United States of America. This is possible only through the generosity of Kings College and that of various individuals and organisations located in Wilkes-Barre.

Wilkes-Barre is the central city of the Wyoming Valley and county seat of Luzerne County in northeastern Pennsylvania. The city and valley are framed by the Pocono Mountains to the east, the Endless Mountains to the west and the Lehigh Valley to the south. The Susquehanna River flows through the centre of the valley and defines the northwestern border of the city. The Wyoming Valley was first inhabited by the Shawanese and Delaware Indian tribes in the early 1700s. By 1769, a group, led by John Durkee, became the first Europeans



This photograph shows members of the 2009 Teachers' Group with members of the Philadelphia Branch of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick pictured in front of the magnificent and inspiring Hunger Memorial which depicts scenes of an Gorta Mór and was erected at Penn's Landing in 2002.



to reach the area. The settlement was named Wilkes-Barre, after John Wilkes and Isaac Barré, two British members of Parliament who supported colonial America. Wilkes-Barre's population exploded due to the discovery of anthracite coal in the 1800s, which gave the city the nickname of "The Diamond City." Hundreds of thousands of immigrants, including many from Ireland, flocked to the city, seeking jobs in the numerous mines and collieries that sprang up. Most coal operations left Wilkes-Barre by the end of World War II, and the 1959 Knox Mine Disaster in which 12 people lost their lives, marked the end of King Coal's heyday. The city entered into a decades-long decline, hastened by Hurricane Agnes in 1972. The storm pushed the Susquehanna River to a height of nearly 41 feet, four feet above the city's levees, flooding downtown with nine feet of water. Six people were killed, 25,000 homes and businesses were either damaged or destroyed, and damages were estimated to be one billion dollars (\$1bn). Today Wilkes Barre has a population of 43,000.

King's College, founded in 1946, is a highly-ranked, Catholic, private liberal arts college, with its campus in the downtown area. The total student enrollment is approximately 2,400. The college is administered by priests and brothers from the Congregation of the Holy Cross, who are the founders of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, as well as other Catholic colleges in the United States. The college's current President is the Rev. Thomas J. O'Hara, who himself graduated from the College in 1971. The college offers baccalaureate degrees in the basic arts and sciences, business, and several specialized fields such as physician assistant and gerontology. Master degree programmes are offered in education and health care. All students are required to complete a number of

core courses, designed so that, no matter what their major, they will obtain the basic skills of critical thinking, effective writing, effective oral communication, library and information literacy, computer competence, creative thinking and problem solving, quantitative reasoning, and moral reasoning.

The driving force behind the Irish Teachers' Programme has been John McKeown from King's College, who along with his wife, Peg (R.I.P. 2008), has ensured that the programme has survived and indeed thrived for over 30 years. Sadly, Peg McKeown passed away in May of 2008 and the many teachers who knew Peg, and who corresponded regularly with her were saddened by her passing. Through sponsorship and funding from the people of Wilkes Barre, the generosity and personal interest in the programme by the president of King's College, and the generosity with which the people of Wilkes Barre embrace the Irish Teachers, it has been possible to keep the cost of the 22 day programme to a very reasonable €1,600 approx. for each teacher participating. The true cost of the trip would be in excess of €3,000 but for the subsidy from King's College and local businesses and organisations from Wilkes Barre. Both the College and the City regard the

visit by the Irish teachers as a truly International event.

The programme has three aspects to it, social, cultural, and educational. Teachers stay in air-conditioned apartments belonging to King's College in the Centre of Wilkes Barre, supplemented with short stays in Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and New York. The social aspect is facilitated by the frequent contact with various groups that host many events in honour of the teachers while they are in America as well as daily interaction with people they meet on the campus and around the city in the shops, bars, and on the streets. The teachers get invited into the homes of people who queue up to be selected as dinner hosts to them and they are also guests at dinner functions organised by a variety of groups including the Ladies of the AOH and the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. There are also other outings to "pool parties" and "cook outs". On a two-day trip to Philadelphia the teachers get to meet and share a meal with members of The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick from Philadelphia. The teachers are given a guided tour of that city over two days which provides them with the knowledge and understanding of the circumstances and the negotiations that lead to the Declaration of Independence and they also learn about

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Photograph of the 2009 Teacher Group who visited Kings College in July 2009. **Front Row:** 3rd and 4th left to right, Ursula Knox and Harry Knox from Waterford, Co-Leaders of the groups from 2002 to 2009. **Middle Row:** 1st and 2nd left to right, Bill Behm and Jean Behm, Co-Directors from King's College and last position on the right, John McKeown who was Director of the Programme for over 30 years and is currently Advisor to the Programme.



the signing of the Constitution of the USA. In Washington D.C. the teachers spend three nights with a host family. As a result of all of these opportunities to chat with and to meet with Americans it is possible for the teachers to get very good idea of what life is like as experienced by the ordinary American today.

The education aspect is achieved by attending the four seminars given by the staff of King's College as well as the educational visits such as to Eckley Village, an old company mining town from the 1850's (used in the making of the Molly McGuires), a trip down the Lackawanna coal mine near Scranton, visits to Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia as well as its Museum of Modern Art and its Independence Seaport Museum. Most Irish immigrants entered the United States through the port of Philadelphia before Ellis Island was brought into use in New York. There has been a beautiful and highly unusual Famine Memorial erected in Philadelphia during 2002. In Washington D.C. there are opportunities to visit the numerous Smithsonian Museums, the various War Memorials, and Arlington Cemetery to observe the Changing of the Guard and to visit the graves of John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert Kennedy. A tour of Capitol Hill is part of the trip and the group usually meets with Congressman Carnogorsky, who represents the state of Pennsylvania, in his Office where they have an opportunity to talk and ask questions. In 2009 the group also got to meet and talk with Congressman Patrick Murphy, who represents Philadelphia, is a graduate from King's College and is also an Iraq war veteran. The group also visits an old Amish Farm House while on the journey to Washington D.C. and visit the site of the Battle of Gettysburg on the way back to Wilkes Barre. Visiting all of these historic sites and museums gives you an insight into the culture in America. Another

unique feature of the trip is to meet with a Judge and Officials of the Court in Wilkes Barre and to discuss the similarities and differences about the system in America and Ireland. Of course, a visit to America wouldn't be quite complete without an opportunity to shop. There are many shops and retail stores in Wilkes Barre that can be visited and revisited during our free time. A large Shopping Outlet Village that has all the big designer brands is visited on the way to D.C. and with a favourable exchange rate there are usually many more cases of clothes brought home than were on the outward flight. The trip ends with a two-night stay in the Travel Inn Hotel on West 42nd Street which is located just off of Times Square and Broadway.

The teachers, both young and old, who take the trip in variably enjoy themselves and come home with happy memories of their stay in King's College. Many stay in contact with the people they have met there and strong friendships develop. Some enjoy the experience so much that they repeat the trip after a number of years. The spirit of giving by our hosts is exemplified by the following example. The Fitzgerald family who run the Shamrock Restaurant in T hurmont,

Maryland has hosted a free Dinner and drinks function for over 30 years. This happened as a result of a routine telephone enquiry by John McKeown, all those years ago, looking to book a meal for the teachers on their way back from Washington to Wilkes Barre. The trip usually departs from Dublin on the 2nd Tuesday in July. Eric O' Connor of Odyssey International, in Rathgar, issues the flyers for the trip in January each year, takes the bookings and deals with enquiries from teachers. Teachers are welcome to have their spouses on the trip with them if they wish. Eric can be contacted at info@odysseyintl.ie. The King's College website can be found at www.kings.edu and information about Wilkes Barre at www.wilkes-barre.pa.us. If you would like to speak with someone who has been a leader on the trip a number of times then you can do so by contacting Harry Knox, Director of Waterford Teachers' Centre using director@wtc.ie and leaving your contact details.



This photograph shows, Lisa Quinn and Kevin Willoughby, two teachers who were leaders of the Teachers' Group on many occasions during the 1990s. Here they are seen in a happy mood in July 2009 when the group visited Washington D.C. Both Lisa and Kevin participated in the 2009 Programme to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Irish Teachers' Programme in America.



DIGITAL CREATIVITY THE NEW FRONTIER FOR CPD

by Dr. Séamus Cannon, Blackrock Education Centre



There is little doubt in anybody's mind that the future shape of teacher CPD will be radically different to what has gone before. But what will it look like? After almost 15 years of DES –driven CPD, we are witnessing a dramatic cutback in support teams and other services. This reduction occurs at a time when there is a likelihood that, in future, teacher registration will be linked to CPD, and that this model might well be hastened by the downturn. We could be facing into increased demand at a time when support services we've been accustomed to are being withdrawn.

Quite apart from such a possible scenario there will continue to be a constant need for upskilling and deepening of our knowledge of our professional work. One could argue indeed that the need will increase as the rate of societal change

increases and demands for curriculum change mounts. Many voluntary teacher associations will continue, but how are they going to cope with the mass exodus of baby boomers from the profession, those of us who embarked on our careers at a time of great expansion in the 70s?

There is an argument for looking at ICT in education in a novel way, modelled on the advances in social networking sites like Bebo and Facebook, or professional networking sites like LinkedIn. Recently, it was announced that Facebook has 300 million users worldwide including, we can be sure, many young teachers in Ireland, and YouTube is second nature.

Digital Cre8or

In Blackrock Education Centre we've been exploring the capabilities of a training programme in digital media called **Digital Cre8or** with a view to

offering it to teachers. This course is analogous to ECDL in the modular delivery style, but introduces a much more creative use of digital media and at much lower cost. It has been designed for the British Computer Society and our neighbours, Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT) are responsible for rolling it out in Ireland. It is one of a cluster of imaginative initiatives being fostered under the umbrella of FÍS www.fis.ie.

Blackrock Education Centre has offered three courses to date with the financial assistance of the NCTE. One of these was a tutor training course for Education Centres nationally, in which all participants did four course units as well as a training day. Several Centres will be offering it as a summer course.

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A group of tutors from the Education Centre network attending a Digital Cre8or training course in Blackrock Education Centre.



Digital Cre8or can be checked out on www.digitalcre8or.ie, but in summary it comprises 8 modules, 5 creative units and 3 sharing units.

The creative units are:

- Digital Audio: you'll learn to use your MP3 or iPod much more creatively, create and edit your own audio files and share them with others
- Digital Stills Images: Learn to use your digital camera properly, learn editing and presentation techniques
- Moving Image language: you'll learn the language of movie making, so you can analyse what's happening on screen
- Digital video: you'll learn to capture, store, edit and store your videos
- Storytelling with animation: make your own animations by learning about timing, movement and sound

The Sharing Units are

- Sharing with Optical Media: learn to publish your work on DVD and other optical media
- Sharing on the Internet: put your projects onto websites, set up links using podcasts, blogs
- Sharing using multimedia presentations: you'll never be accused of making a boring presentation again!

These modules make up a substantial training programme and we believe that they can form the basis of a very valuable teacher training course. Many young teachers will have a degree of expertise in one or more of these modules already. The modules are each of approx. 12 hours duration with four modules

required to secure an award and 8 for certification. The British Computer Society certificate is mapped onto the NQAI level 4, which is equivalent to FETAC level 4. The entire course can be taught face to face, but can also be delivered online. In BEC we are exploring a blended approach - online delivery with a limited number of face to face workshops. This is both cost effective and makes best use of participant time. The online materials are excellent and all assessment is centrally managed by IADT.

Transforming Professional Networks

Digital Cre8or gives teachers an opportunity to learn skills that will enable them to network professionally in entirely new ways. They will have some familiarity from use of social networking sites and from using the likes of *YouTube*, but bringing it into the professional field could be radically transformative. Imagine sharing experiences by exchange of short video clips or by posting them onto a platform like www.eurocreator.com, a safe, monitored platform for education and available in 10 languages. At the very least it will add a dynamic dimension to our interactions.

For this to work requires that teachers individually take more responsibility for their own CPD, something which has been hinted at by the Teaching Council. Couldn't this transform the delivery of training? Of course it opens up the international dimension as well: the internet is not confined by geographical borders. We could have Irish teachers benefitting from, and very importantly, *contributing to* the continuous professional development of colleagues abroad, and without leaving home!



The MEDEA Awards competition www.medea-awards.com is an EU funded initiative whose purpose is to recognize, encourage and reward excellence and creativity in media in education. MEDEA aims to highlight the educational environments that reflect the media-rich world in which our learners live nowadays.

Medea seeks to build on and encourage the remarkable interest in the creation and use of digital video and audio in education. The aim of the MEDEA Awards is to encourage innovation and good practice in the use of media (audio, video, graphics and animation) in education with an emphasis on pedagogy and production.

The MEDEA Awards were launched in November 2007. In its first year MEDEA received over 100 submissions from 25 different countries. In 2009 more than 254 online submissions from 38 countries were received. Numbers are expected to be up considerably in 2010. This year the organisers have decided to make a distinction between two different category of producers reflecting the resources available to each: those from schools/colleges or individuals in 3rd level colleges on the one hand, and professional companies or dedicated university media department on the other. Full details are on the Medea website. Education Centres should consider presenting their media creations for award and Directors who have an interest should consider putting themselves forward as a judge in the Medea competition. Several Centres have already won national Digital Media awards and Medea is another opportunity to highlight achievement.

Blackrock Education Centre is a Medea partner and promotes its activities. We see Digital Cre8or as a means of providing teachers, as well as students, with the skills to engage creatively with media.



"If a man does not keep pace with his companions perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer". Thoreau

The Inclusion of Newcomer Students

Adopting an Innovative Approach

Tralee Education Centre

Mercy Secondary School, Mounthawk, Tralee, Co. Kerry addresses the needs of Newcomer Students.

A short essay by Ms. Martha Brassil, Teacher

Introduction:

Mercy Mounthawk Secondary school has been working on a variety of levels to promote the inclusion of Newcomer students and to foster an awareness of a diverse student population within the school culture. Our challenge, as a school, has been to meet the needs of newcomer students and to support and facilitate teachers to respond to the complexity of the mix.

Teachers in the school have had to take into account the differences that many of these students experience in terms of motivation, prior experience and knowledge, learning support needs, cultural expectations, literacy and language skills, numeracy, ICT levels and learning preferences.

In this context it was necessary to adopt innovative approaches to the support of these students. This short essay outlines some of the steps taken by teachers and the school towards achieving that objective. It is hoped that the Mounthawk story may be of assistance to Colleagues in other schools and in Education Centres.

1. Student – Centred Focus

Identification of Need : process & outcome

Newcomer students have a set of needs that are not generally the same as the needs of the majority of students in the school although there may be some similarities.

As with all students this is the starting point for a response to meeting those needs. The student's needs are established by means of initial assessment and identification, talking to the students and classroom observation. Assessment Policy features the development of a more specific testing of the Language skills of Newcomer students in the current academic year. This is a shift from the traditional Neale Analysis testing system.

The Department of Education and Science has commissioned assessment packs to assist teachers and school communities in determining the Language proficiency of students. While this testing method has been very effective in targeting the specific needs of the students on the one hand it highlights the need to establish a national provision of resources to target their language difficulties on the other.

In Mercy Secondary school, Mounthawk the assessment allows us to establish a base line. The Tracking System developed by the Deputy Principal allows us to monitor the student's progress throughout the year. The student is re-tested at the end of the year to assess his/her progress. Individual classroom Teachers provide coursework that is designed to fit with and respond to the needs of these students.

2. Curriculum Access

Classroom Teaching & Differentiated Learning

In this academic year we have emphasized the exploration of new methodologies and approaches to Curriculum modification in an effort to respond to the needs of the Newcomer students with regard to accessing the Curriculum.

Teachers in the English, Science and History departments have looked at how they might vary the lesson content, activities, methodologies and resources to suit the various learning styles of students.

The English department decided that students who are tactile, kinesthetic learners might increase English language acquisition and proficiency through the medium of drama. The visual learners might have a more enriching and fruitful learning experience if exposed to text which is supported with colorful illustrations or pictures. Opportunities to express and communicate the learning outcomes relative to the methodology used are provided for the students. In this way the student's learning style can be established and the Course material modified to suit the student.

In a lesson (series of lessons) focusing on the topic of Bullying behaviours for example, one student may write a report on bullying, another student might participate in a drama acting

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out what it feels like to be bullied and yet another student could create a graph, which demonstrates the percentage of students being bullied in school today.

In this move towards differentiated methodologies within the class opportunities are provided to respond to individual and group needs in a manner, which is more student-centred, learner-focussed and provides enhanced opportunity for the student to access the Curriculum.

Differentiation by Content & Process:

1. Differentiation is defined as the matching of work to the differing capabilities of individuals or groups in order to extend their learning. The Staff decided that the development of key concepts, understanding and skills would be a central focus in the teaching and learning processes for these students. In this context each student, regardless of ability, would have the opportunity to explore and apply the key concepts of the subject being taught. It was discovered that such instruction allowed struggling learners to grasp and use powerful ideas and encouraged advanced learners to expand their understanding and application of key concepts and principles.

Example 1:

Teachers in the History department differentiate the Curriculum by both content and process.

Students were given a modified History book "Shortcuts to Success" by Charles Hayes. Teachers produced a booklet, which identified the key concepts being used in each chapter, as an accompaniment to the History book. The booklet also contained the short questions and the people in history essays, which the students needed for the exams. The students

could answer the short questions in the booklet having completed the relevant chapter in the History book. The booklet contained a variety of worksheets which facilitated the students to apply the learning from the people in history study.

Example 2

History teachers worked on producing individual and differentiated lesson plans, while taking into account the various learning styles of the students. For instance in order to introduce a topic on Celtic Ireland to students it was decided to take them to the Museum in the town. This helped students who tend to be more visual and kinesthetic learners to understand the history of the Irish people. It was especially helpful to the Newcomer students who could see the various models of Celtic man, the types of weapons he used and his farming methods. The students also saw examples of Celtic artwork and maps which highlighted their origin. Students took photographs of the artifacts.

In class the teacher began the lesson by focusing on what the students had learned about Celtic Ireland from the Museum visit. This proved to be very helpful as it gave students a chance to work on their prior knowledge of the subject. The Teacher, in collaboration with the students, wrote down the key concepts that needed to be learned. These were divided into four sections:

- *Lifestyle of Celtic man,*
- *Housing and Clothing,*
- *Structure of Celtic Society*
- *Burial Customs.*

The students were given a modified worksheet which highlighted the key concepts. Students demonstrated their learning through completing a

quiz on Celtic Ireland and participating in a Question and Answer session. In a follow up lesson one of the students exhibited his photographs of Celtic artifacts. To complete their learning students worked on various projects on Celtic man.

Findings:

Differentiation in the History class was not "more" class work or homework. It provided the opportunity to take a regular Curriculum Topic and to explore it innovatively and creatively and in greater depth and complexity. This method gives a myriad of opportunities for learning and for re-enforcing that learning. This method – adopting a differentiated approach – suits the gifted Newcomer student and the underachieving student as both groups of students have a preference for active, tactile and kinesthetic involvement when learning new material. In this way the learning needs of the students can be accommodated in a more meaningful approach.

3 .Whole School Approach

Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk promotes an inclusive school environment that reflects and affirms linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity. There are policies and procedures in place, which promote and facilitate the inclusion of all students. The establishment of a post of responsibility in the school for the integration of Newcomers is reflective of the importance attached to these policies and procedures and to the development of an inclusive school culture and ethos. The importance of Parental involvement in the education of Newcomer students is acknowledged, valued and keenly promoted by the Home School Liaison Officer. The provision of a Language



Programme for the parents of Newcomer students is regarded as a significant support to achieving the teaching and learning objectives of the Curriculum for these students. Whole school support is an essential element in the adoption of new teaching and learning methodologies, which will enrich the learning experiences of all students with particular reference to Newcomer students in this instance. The decision taken by all Staff regarding the process of teaching & learning supported the innovative approach being explored and implemented with reference to differentiation. The cross-disciplinary approach taken by a number of Departments helps to endorse the approach.

4 The Inter-cultural dimension:

Mercy Mounthawk is proud to have been chosen to take part in the Yellow flag Programme, a national pilot project designed to promote and foster Interculturalism.

The main aim of the programme is to develop a series of practical steps that highlight issues of Interculturalism, equality and diversity.

Our school believes that Intercultural education happens naturally through the hidden Curriculum of the social world within which the student learns. We therefore foster inclusion by increasing the Newcomer student's participation in extra-curricular activities. Students take part in sporting activities and go on trips. They have also taken part in a drama production, which gave students from diverse backgrounds a chance to work together. The students have a social club in the school which gives them opportunities to interact socially and to make friends. Pupils are encouraged and facilitated in maintaining a connection with their own culture through

displays in the school. The general body of students has been exposed to speakers from the ITM and Kerry Association for Development Education (KADE), which helps to heighten student awareness of inter-cultural issues and to foster a more inclusive school culture.

A Policy of inclusion, which supports the Newcomer student, is critically important to the success achieved by that student in accessing the Curriculum.

5. Other Support:

It is essential that opportunities for professional and personal development in areas such as language acquisition & development, intercultural education, the use of differentiated teaching methods, AFL etc. are available to teachers. The work of the Education Centres and Second Level Support Personnel in Region 4 is an example of such an opportunity. It facilitates teachers to network, to share expertise, experience and best practice, to explore ideas and to learn from each other and from the Support personnel, who facilitate the workshops.

The School's participation in the Education Centre's WORLD WISE Networking project has the potential to deepen intercultural understanding, which will permeate school culture and ultimately facilitate the exploration & adoption of innovative approaches to the inclusion and education of Newcomer students.

Mercy Mounthawk will continue to differentiate the school Curriculum for Newcomer students while working on fostering their inclusion in the school.

The Emo Court Project

by Laois Education Centre

This Project, which has just been completed, was an eighteen-month partnership between Laois Education Centre and the Office of Public Works. The aim was to provide educational resources for primary and second-level teachers and pupils based on the local 'Big House', Emo Court, Co Laois. Emo Court was designed by James Gandon as the seat of the Earls of Portarlington; it became a Jesuit novitiate in the 20th century and then a private house. It is now looked after by the Office of Public Works and is open to the public from April to October.

A resource book with worksheets has been produced by local teachers to assist school visits to the house and demesne, and the website (www.emocourt.net) is an extensive resource for research on Emo Court itself. There are also detailed sections on related 19th century topics such as food and the life of servants and on the photographer Father Frank Browne who spent many years at Emo.

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The Emo Court Project contd.

Laois Education Centre *continued from previous page.*

Local schools participated in a Transition Year module that involved History, Art, Science, Geography and English teachers. This module could be adapted to other locations and is available on the website.

A project using Emo Court as a basis for research was offered to schools by Laois Education Centre in autumn 2008.

This resulted in the production of models of the house and gardens, written work, plays, artwork, films and living history. The Office of Public Works mounted an exhibition of the pupils' work in Emo Court in spring 2009.

Laois Education Centre has gathered a resource archive of books, maps, census details, photocopied articles and DVDs relevant to Emo Court. This material (including the website) is also available on CD on request from Laois Education Centre, as is the resource book.



Friends of Londiani Kenya - Photographic Exhibition

Three teachers from Laois, Marie Moran (Principal of St Aengus Post Primary Mountrath), Éadaoin Doherty and Maigs Stanley (both primary teachers in Abbeylaxey) travelled to Londiani Kenya to work with a charity 'Friends of Londiani' during the summer of 2007. During their time there they worked with other volunteers on building classrooms, hosting summer camps for local children and the surrounding villages, and installing water tanks for a number of families.

Friends of Londiani is a registered charity which works in participation with the people of Londiani (Kenya) and its surrounding villages to develop and complete sustainable community projects. This enables and empowers local people to achieve an improved quality of life based on their values and become the authors of their own development. Friends of Londiani work in the Kipkelion district (population 160,000) in partnership with rural communities and involves itself in areas of water, education and health projects improving medical facilities and promoting the awareness of health topics such as HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Laois Education Centre is currently hosting the exhibition of pictures taken by Marie Moran during her time in Londiani which reflect some of the projects and life in Londiani. This photographic exhibition was

officially launched in Laois Education Centre in February 2009 by Rotimi Adebari, former mayor of Portlaoise. Rotimi was the first African born to be elected as Mayor in Ireland. The exhibition was attended by many of Marie's school colleagues, friends, family and by many people from around the country that volunteered with her in Kenya, some local teachers and members of the public. Friends of Londiani are willing to visit schools and give a presentation of the work they do in Kenya. Their presentation is designed for the CSPE units of "The Community" and "Ireland & the World" with an emphasis on the core concepts of **Rights and Responsibility, Human Dignity and Development**. Any school interested in using this CSPE presentation should contact the CSPE Co-ordinator Rose Hennessy at rosehennessy@friendsoflondiani.com. Details are also available from Laois Education Centre.

Laois Education Centre will make this exhibition available to other Centres who wish to exhibit it from September 2009 onwards.





Kildare Education Centre

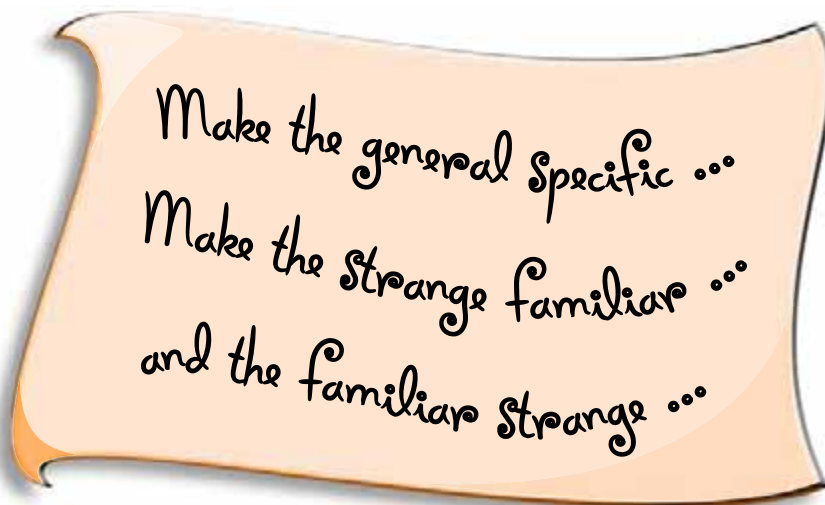
Using Culture Boxes to Develop Cultural / Intercultural Awareness in the Modern Language Class

The Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative (MLPSI) recently continued its modular programme of CPD with a third module which focused on the 'Integration of the Modern Language with History, Geography, Science (SESE) and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) - with Special Emphasis on the Cultural/Intercultural Strand of the Modern Language Curriculum'.

Module 3 builds on the areas previously covered by the Modern Languages CPD programme: Active Learning (Module 1) and Implementing Core Principles of the Modern Language Curriculum (Module 2) which addressed the areas of progression, differentiation and assessment. Teachers new to the MLPSI can access the booklets and supporting documents which accompanied Module 1 and Module 2 from the CPD section of the MLPSI website (www.mlpsi.ie).

This module also incorporates the transverse approaches and methodologies which run through the entire programme: planning, teaching through the target language, cross-curricular integration, using ICT, incorporating the use of My European Language Portfolio (My ELP) and exploring various topics.

This article features an exploration of one of the strategies which can be employed in the development of the Cultural/Intercultural Strand of the Modern Language Curriculum – Using "Culture Boxes".



- 'Culture box' as a random collection of artefacts and documents

Teachers can develop a school 'culture box' as opportunities arise: trips abroad, visitors, continental markets, foreign trainee teachers - like a treasure trove - this is an undefined collection of items and artefacts from the target country or countries, built over time, with contributions from pupils as well as teachers and possibly with help from a partner school in the target country. All colleagues and pupils may be reminded to contribute to it when they plan visits to the target country through a 'Wanted for our xxx culture box' notice placed in the staff room. A 'Wanted' notice could also be placed on the school notice board or the Modern Language notice board for all to see, including parents. Children will also specifically be reminded to bring back items and photos from visits abroad or to places with connections with the target country(ies).

Two different meanings can be given to the term 'culture boxes'. On the one hand a culture box can be a random collection of target culture artefacts, realia and 'primary' documents in general. On the other hand it can also be a more deliberate selection of artefacts, items, documents and images which are chosen to reflect a particular individual, a group or even a country. In any case, whether a 'random collection' or a

'deliberate selection', culture boxes provide an invaluable starting point for the practical 'exploration' of or the 'representation' of a given culture. Culture boxes help make 'the general' - be it a country, a region or a local place - 'specific' through the physical presence of items and images from daily life.



Suggested content of a school's target country Culture Box (random collection)

- maps (in the target language): world, Europe, target country, regions, capital, other
- calendars
- school items: school journal, time table, canteen menu, copies, school bag, school books, class rules, copies, school bag, pencil case, school books,.....
- children's or young teen magazine
- football magazine, football scarf or merchandising
- mail order catalogue or department store/supermarket/hypermarket literature
- packaging (biscuits or other typical foods)
- actual food or drink items when possible (including typical sweets)
- stamps, receipts, tickets, brochures, menus, ...
- game from the target country (in particular more 'typical' games such as the French 'pétanque', the Italian 'bandiera', the Spanish 'paúelo', German card game 'Skat')
- music CDs
- young children's literature
- CD of photos of 'everyday life' scenes

Depending on circumstances, more 'specialised' boxes may be compiled for 'school life', 'the capital city' or a specific region, depending on links and opportunities. Visiting Modern Language Teachers will also most likely have their own 'culture box' to draw from. Possible activities based on this random collection of items:

enriching a language lesson with culturally appropriate artefacts and realia, such as a newspaper, train time-table, tickets, stamps, menu, football scarf, etc. used either by the teacher or by pupils in role plays and drama activities.

cultural awareness activity: a pupil or a group chooses an item from the box and explains why they find it interesting..

Example: Items to be compiled by the group

1. A specific number of postcards – what is shown on the postcard? – where are these places? – why did you pick them?
2. A magazine – is it for boys or girls? – is it a sports magazine? etc.
3. A ticket for public transport – is it for the metro, bus, train, what city? etc.
4. A menu – what type of restaurant is it? - what would you pick to eat there? etc.
5. A school related object – what is it- how is it similar/different to something you use?
6. A newspaper – what is it called? – is it a local newspaper? etc.
7. An ad - what is it for? A sports related item – what is it?
8. An item/object for children to enjoy/play with – what is it? etc.
9. An object used in the house – for cooking etc.
10. Other items/objects of your choosing – say why you picked them.

Sample of extension activities/ project work - being a 'cultural detective' activities

Exploring an artefact. See activity worksheet 'Something interesting from...' in the Cultural Awareness section of the MLPSI web site.

Suggestions for interesting artefacts from different target countries:



Example of *bombilla* from Argentina

Italy		Il misuratore per gli spaghetti - a wooden measure for gauging spaghetti portions I coriandoli - multicoloured confetti used for <i>Carnevale</i> celebrations
Spain		Una bota de vino - leather wine pouch Un abanico - fan
Argentina		Una bombilla - container to drink 'mate'
France		Un râteau à crêpes - wooden 'rake' used to make 'crêpes' Un moulin à fromage - rotating cheese grater Des osselets - 'little bones' traditional game
Switzerland		Un râteau à myrtille - a blueberry collecting rake
Germany		Der Ampelmann - pastry cutter



See the MLPSI website for more material on the following:

- Map reading activities
- Using Photographs/postcards
- Using Newspapers/magazines
- Food tasting activities
- Cooking activities
- Multisensory activities
- Cultural trails

At class level, pupils may also undertake to gather their own mini culture box or class collection of items from the country (stamps, coins, postcards, receipts, tickets, small games, stones, ... as well as photographs taken in the country). At an individual level, pupils may compile their own individual version of a 'culture box' in connection to the page on Things I have from other countries in the Dossier part of My European Language Portfolio. This page is provided as a starting point for pupils to both 'collect' items and also 'record' their significance to them.

Culture box as a deliberate selection of items and artefacts

The origin of this more deliberate type of culture box may be found in the selection of artefacts which have long been available to schools as one of the Development Education tools and methodologies. Items included in those 'culture kits' are carefully selected to 'make the global local' and raise children's awareness of the daily life and environment of children in the four corners of the world, including the 'India culture kit', the 'Kenya culture kit' (Christian Aid) etc...

The validity of using these 'culture kits' is based on a carefully guided exploration process as well as on the actual choice of artefacts and realia. It also allows movement beyond a one-sided 'cultural' perspective - discovering 'people over there' - to a reflective 'intercultural perspective'- i.e. 'what we learn about ourselves by learning about them...'

In the form of 'cultural shoe-boxes' this use of culture boxes was also the basis for a Council of Europe transnational school project aimed at developing intercultural awareness (Workshop 13 A, Genoa, Dec. 1993). In this project young teenagers were invited to compile and exchange 'shoe-boxes' to represent them in the eyes of their partners. These were used as a trigger for further exchanges and as a basis for reflection on differences and similarities, diversity and a sense of common belonging.

This personal, or class, 'culture box' is the basis for an activity designed to promote reflection about images and representations, personal and collective identity -including national identity-, belonging and diversity, perceptions and stereotypes.

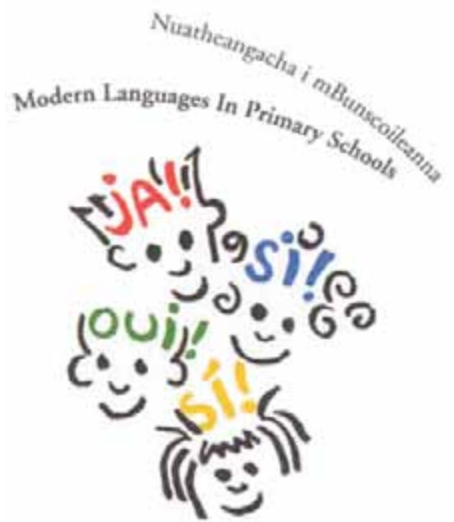
See a suggested Lesson Plan for the compilation and debriefing questions for 'Our own culture box' activity in a Modern Language class in the CPD 3 Lesson plans section - www.mlpsi.ie

See the activity 'Being Irish - Image versus reality' in the Development Perspectives - A Teacher's development Education Resource' published by KADE (Kerry Action for Development Education)

<http://www.ideaonline.ie/publications/documents/KADE%20Primary%20Pack%202025.pdf>

Contact your Development Education Centre to borrow Culture kits. Locate centres from the Irish Development Education Association website www.ideaonline.ie

See examples of 'Our own culture box' from primary classes in different countries in the Cultural/Intercultural section of the MLPSI website.



An Irish and Italian student engaged in conversation during a Comenius exchange programme.



Local History Project

Monaghan Education Centre

We were aware of a number of older people in our area with a very good knowledge of local history who had died and their knowledge had died with them as nobody had recorded it. We believe that people in their sixties or older are a unique group because many of them were born before electricity was installed in their homes, so their way of life was very similar to that experienced by their Great Grand Parents. They also lived through the period of great change ever with the introduction of the computer, the internet and technology in general. Many young people could not imagine how you could live without running water, television and the aforementioned mod cons.

In July 1999 we decided to take a third level University Student on a summer employment scheme for the specific purpose of putting in place a set of local history questionnaires to be distributed to all schools in Co. Monaghan. Wide consultation and research took place with a view to ensuring that all relevant topics were covered. It was intended that the questionnaires would be brought home by students who would interview and record older family members or neighbours. Because teachers were very busy with the implementation of the new curriculum we decided to hold the project until the new curriculum training was complete. So we decided to launch the project this year

We believe that there is a relatively short period of time to collect this knowledge from the people who remember it and for that reason we have recently launched this project in a number of schools throughout County Monaghan. We are delighted with the response we got as we have nearly half the schools in the county involved. Our aim is to get at least one set of questionnaires completed by every school. Different schools have taken different approaches as to how they get the questionnaires filled e.g. some schools invited a group of older people into the school to meet the group of students who were filling the questionnaires and the teachers involved feel that this had many positive outcomes. Our overall goal is to use the information gathered to develop a DVD of local history for the county which will compare and contrast customs, cures etc. from the different regions of the county. The Centre will make these DVDs available to all the schools in the county as an aid to teaching the local history section of the new curriculum.

We have involved a third level student from MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, who is on a project in Monaghan, She is storing the data electronically and producing reports from the data already received.

Ferrismacross Distri

Town or Village, Street

Parish, or is partly within and partly without a Parish

No. of Families in each House.	CLASS OF HOUSE.	No. of streets	Name of street
1	1 or 2, enter "4th"		
2, 3, or 4	"2nd"		
5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, or 11	"2nd"		
12 or over	"1st"		

(Col. 10.)	(Col. 11.)	(Col. 12.)	(Col. 13.)
5	3 rd	1	Aick
5	3 rd	1	Thoma
8	2 nd	1	Pat
8	2 nd	1	Franc
6	2 nd	1	Patric
7	2 nd	1	James
7	2 nd	1	Edwa
6	2 nd	1	H





Main Headings

A) The Locality

Town lands, Field names, Unusual land features, Railways/Canals, Post Offices, Cross-roads/Bridges, Museum, Rivers/Lakes, Landlords, Villages/Areas wiped out by famine, Cemetery Findings.

B) The People

Housing, Dominant Family Names, Nicknames, Migration, Famous Families, Occupations, Clothes, Travellers

C) Farming

Tractor, Implements/Tools, No./Size of Farms, Irish names for plants, Cures for Sick Animals, Good Luck Charms, Important Animals, Harvesting, Markets

D) Industries in Area

Who started them-History, Benefit to Community, Industries that have closed down

E) Characters and Events from the Past

Characters in Area, Talented people, Historic Buildings, Saints associated with Area, Ancient Monuments, Schools, Local Toys, Events from the Past, Local Heroes

F) Community

Cures, Superstitions, Celebrations/Festivities, Births/Deaths etc. Religious Practices, Weather, Social Groups, Social Events, Sport Hobbies, Supernatural, Food, Money, Language, Folklore, Prayers

G) Emigration

Countries (England, US, Australia, Other), Reasons for Returning from abroad

H) Day in life

Day in life of great grandfather /grandmother.



		HOUSES.		WALLS.	
Number of Houses	Are they built of stone?	Are they built of brick?	Are they built of wood?	Are they built of plaster?	Are they built of other materials?
7	yes	1	0	2	2
5	yes	1	0	2	2
9	yes	1	1	2	4
7	yes	1	0	2	3
12	yes	1	0	2	4
10	yes	1	0	2	3
11	yes	1	0	2	3
9	yes	1	0	2	3
7	yes	1	0	2	3
5	yes	1	0	2	3





An Innovative and Creative Conflict Resolution Programme for Schools

'S.A.L.T.' (Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk)

submitted by Drumcondra Education Centre

Conflict is a part of life. We spend hundreds of hours dealing with it: in families, relationships and places of work. The effects of conflict can be devastating - ruining lives, shattering families or creating 'toxic' workplace environments. Yet for all prevalence and chaos, we rarely have any training in how to handle it. We rely on an assortment of cultural and familial influences to teach us what to do. However, handled positively and constructively, a conflict situation can create understanding and personal growth, better communication and new insights into both our own and other people's personal strengths and human potential.

Today's society has moved a way from a hierarchical monothestic /single philosophy society to one which is multi-cultural / multi-faith and pluralistic where equality of views and respecting difference are the new cornerstones to policy making. This means old structures of authority are giving way to a new glue in our society - that of social-emotional understanding, self responsibility and a relational perspective to the behavioural issues that face our schools. This new reality challenges us to find new skills based on understanding the systemic nature of the issues that face us.

One of the difficulties to date in handling conflict issues, with young people in particular, is the assumption and misunderstanding that all such issues are 'behavioural' based. In

other words, if we can control and / or change the behaviour, the problem will be solved! However, the key to resolving conflict is to understand and acknowledge that it is fundamentally '**relational**' and that our **social and emotional intelligence skills** play a significant role in its resolution. The difficult behaviour is therefore a symptom and a manifestation of a deeper and more complex relational issue which must be addressed if the behaviour is to change. This requires a different approach - linking social emotional learning with a conflict resolution skills base.

Based on a perceived need for a new approach in our schools, the Drumcondra Education Centre has been working in collaboration with Ms Fiona McAuslan, conflict resolution expert and mediator, for a number of years in developing a research-based **process** and **programme** - **S.A.L.T. (Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk)** - for the up-skilling of primary school children in conflict resolution techniques. This interactive programme focuses on teaching students to handle and resolve their own rows and disputes independently. It involves teaching children in the age groups 4-8 and 8-12 how to recognise a conflict and the emotions they experience in conflict situations and how to negotiate effectively to create a better outcome for themselves and others. The objective is to help every

child develop their own set of skills to effectively deal with conflicts they may encounter in either the school yard or in the classroom.

Key aspects of S.A.L.T. include:

- ☒ A practical and easy introduction to **appropriate conflict resolution** skills for all the children in schools, regardless of age or background
- ☒ A framework for introducing a **whole-school programme** to minimize arguments and rows in the school yard and classroom
- ☒ **Conflict Assessment forms** to record incidents of conflict, assess children's involvement and identify appropriate follow-on actions
- ☒ **Step by step lessons** and colourful interactive teaching ideas so that children can now handle and resolve their own rows and disputes independently
- ☒ **Interactive and lively conflict stories** to enhance children's understanding of the reasons for conflict and to give them an accessible route in to talking about conflict and exploring its resolution
- ☒ Access to an **emotionally sound and structured programme** that will link children's social, emotional and behavioural education within any curriculum.



From such humble beginnings as the organising of a local workshop for teachers, the programme has gone from strength to strength. In the schools where it has been introduced, it has proved equally popular with teachers, students and parents. One of the key elements of 'S.A.L.T.' is the use of stories by the teacher to address various incidents of conflict familiar to children such as rows over games. The children are presented with "before" scenarios where the conflict escalates out of control and "after" scenarios where the characters use certain skills which lead to resolution of the conflict. Pupils also take part in role play and discussion and learn simple listening, talking and anger management skills with an emphasis on repetition. The message from the programme is that in everyday life things will go wrong but that it is how we deal with the problem and how we handle the situation and others which is essential to a positive resolution for all concerned. The S.A.L.T. programme gives young people the skills to think about a situation rather than overreacting to it. It's about learning to act in the crisis of the moment so that they don't react badly. The programme is very important in the social education of every child from an early age and it contains the potential to deliver long term benefits to society at large.

A key element in the delivery of the programme is the up-skilling of teachers in its delivery in the classroom. Teacher training in the S.A.L.T. process continues to be provided through the Drumcondra Education Centre's Spring and Autumn local courses programme and its face-to-face and online Summer Course Programme. In 2010 it is hoped to

commence the development of an equivalent research-based programme for use in post-primary schools.

Drumcondra Education Centre hosted an Education Conference on October 6th, 2009 on the topic of conflict resolution in schools: Is there a better way? - exploring positive approaches to conflict in our schools. The aim of this event was to initiate discussion and debate on this important personal and organisational issue, which impacts on all members of the school community. Further information on the S.A.L.T. programme and training is available on the Drumcondra Education Centre website at: www.ecdrumcondra.ie and by e-mail at info@ecdrumcondra.ie

Dr. Eileen O'Connor
Director
Drumcondra Education Centre

Fiona McAuslan is a recognised conflict resolution expert, working for many organisations including The Family Mediation Service and The Clanwilliam Institute in Ireland. She has an M.A. in Conflict Resolution from University College, Dublin and has partnered with Drumcondra Education Centre to create conflict resolution skills training for the Irish Education System. Her most recent publication 'The Resolving Book Series', published by Veritas, was launched by Fergus Finlay, Bernardos, in the Drumcondra Education Centre on April 13th 2010. The Creative Solutions to Conflict for Primary Schools: The SALT Programme pack is available from Outside the Box Learning Resources and Learning Horizons. Outside the Box Learning Resources, Jigginstown Commercial Centre, Naas, Co. Kildare. Tel.: 045-8563444 www.otb.ie or info@outsidetheboxlearning.com Learning Horizons: 44 Laurel Park, Clondalkin. D 22





The Nature of Sligo



Sligo Education Centre

Four Sligo schools take part in Kids' Own artist-in-residence programme in partnership with Sligo Education Centre.

With the support of Sligo Education Centre, and funded by The Arts Council's New Work Award, Kids' Own Publishing Partnership undertook a residency programme over sixteen weeks, which placed five artists in four Sligo schools to embark on a creative exploration of their local environment.

The residency aimed to use the theme of the *Nature of Sligo* as a means to develop children's capacity for creative thinking and artistic skills, while also enabling meaningful integrated learning across a wide spectrum of curriculum subjects from SESE to Creative Writing to PE.

The artists involved in this programme were Sinead Aldridge, Christine Mackey, Cathal Roche, Kate Wilson, and Yvonne Cullivan, and the participating schools were Sooley N.S., Coolbock N.S., Scoil Náisiúnta Bhríde, Carns and St. Edwards N.S.

The artists, teachers and children worked collaboratively to develop their own interpretation of the themes afforded by the project.

The truly innovative nature of this project lies in the fact that to a large degree the children directed the process themselves. The outcomes were not prescribed from the start, but rather emerged through creative and collaborative investigation. The

results represent a truly genuine line of enquiry on the part of participants.

Artists and teachers recognised that a level of trust was required in order for this to be successful. The teachers involved in the project were very positive about the process-driven approach, but the theme of the project was also crucial in the way that it lent itself very well to integration across the curriculum.

The richness and variety of the work produced in each of the schools demonstrate the breadth of creative possibilities that can be afforded by one core theme, in this case, 'Nature'. A cross the four schools, this was interpreted very differently.

Christine Mackey, at Sooley N.S., focused specifically on drawing and developing the children's skill and critical ability in this area. But field trips and observation of the natural environment meant that a breadth of curricular areas were covered from geography and the natural environment, geometry, spatial awareness and hand-eye coordination, to creative writing and editing.

Sinead Aldridge at Coolbock National School, used a variety of media and activity to explore ideas around 'constructs' from nests and beehives in the natural environment to modern architecture. The children created a willow dome in the school garden, practised origami techniques, and worked towards the design and construction of their own 3-dimensional 'den'. As part of the creative process, the children's work

included mathematical concerns, mixing of colours, construction, geometry and observation of wildlife, among many other things.

At Scoil Náisiúnta Bhríde, artist Yvonne Cullivan worked with children to explore nature in terms of spaces within themselves as well as the local environment around them. In the first phase weather became a predominant theme, while in the latter part of the residency, children explored their inner and outer worlds, creating mixed media portraits, mindmaps and 3-dimensional constructs of spaces of their own imagining. Among the curricular areas that this touched on were ideas about mapping and geography, spatial awareness and social studies.

At St Edwards N.S. the residency was divided between two artists, Cathal Roche and Kate Wilson. Starting with the theme of 'Transport', students from 4th and 5th class conducted historical research into the used and disused railways in Co. Sligo and from this, created a virtual network on Google Earth. From this network the children traced journeys, which were projected onto the whiteboard and used as a musical score for 17 consecutive performers, each line having its own tonality or 'group of notes'. In phase two the children created 'sound drawings' which responded to the work of phase one and used their own paintings to create movement scores, which were physicalised and performed over a map of the train lines on the

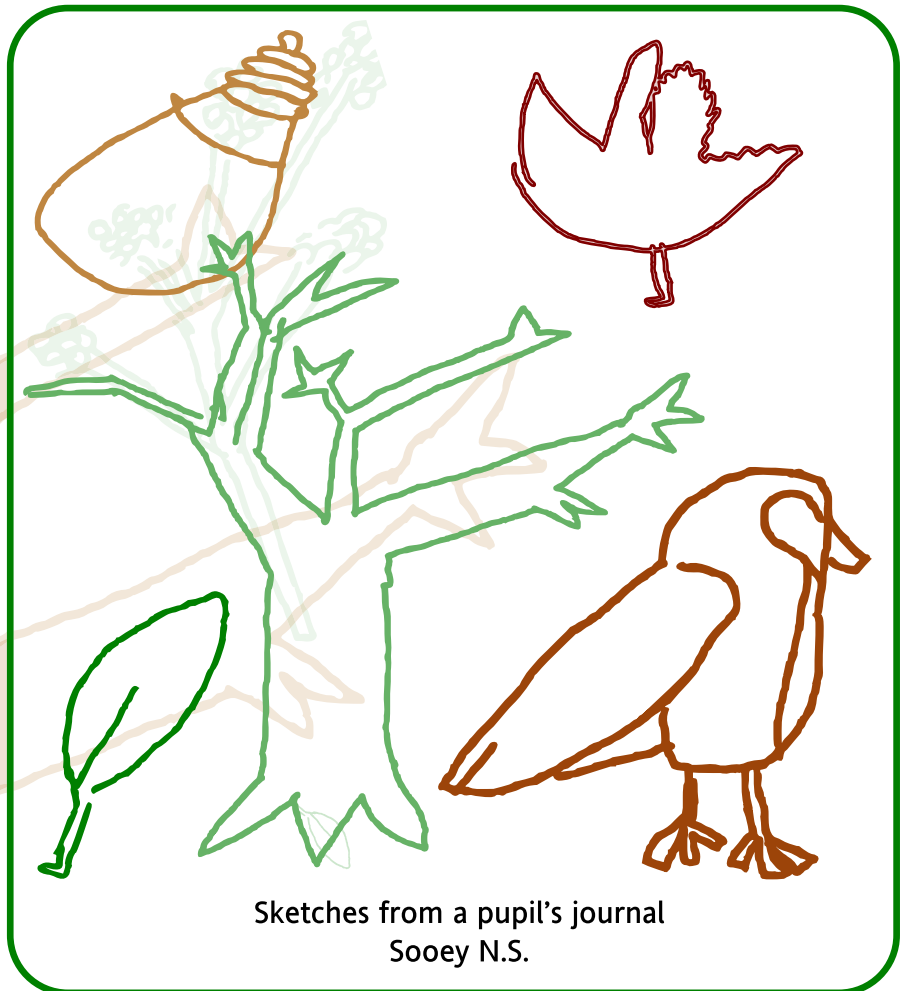


school hall floor. A range of curricular areas were naturally included in this project from geography and history to physical education and spatial awareness to musical/sound composition and maths.

Vice-principal, Siobhán Grimes, described the successes of the project as “The beautiful work left behind after the project, the confidence developed by the children in assessing their own work and the very unique experiences they had while working with the artists.”

A more detailed explanation of the creative process from each of the artists and teachers can be found at <http://journal.kidsown.ie>

In October 2009 Kids' Own published a booklet outlining all the processes and outcomes of the *Nature of Sligo* project which is available to all schools in the area. It is intended that this work will be presented to an audience of teachers and artists in the Sligo Education Centre.



Sketches from a pupil's journal
Soeey N.S.



'Construction' in Nature



A Photo in Stroll

By A. Walker

This resource was developed through the Resources Development Service of Navan Education Centre for schools in the area. It tests map-reading skills and local knowledge. School clusters in any part of the country could have a resource similar to this.

Read the story and follow it on the map. Say where each picture was taken by writing the correct number beside it.

It was a bright evening in May when I took a short walk from Navan's newest bridge to Poolboy Bridge where the Blackwater meets the River Boyne - a distance of about one and a half kilometres. I walked with the flow of the river towards the town, the busy N3 road on my left. I had my digital camera and every now and then I stopped to take a snap. After walking about 500 metres, on my left I could see the tall sculpture known as *The Five Provinces*. It has stood there since 1990. Meanwhile, in the river a lone swan was swimming gracefully. Further on, pointing the camera directly across the river, I took a picture of a Norman motte. This is

submitted by Navan Education Centre

one of two mottes in the Navan area which were built during the Norman conquest of *Ríocht na Mí* around 1171. Just beyond the mound and slightly obscured by a tree and shrubs, I could see top of Athlumney Castle. Continuing my walk, I soon approached the railway viaduct - with its 6 arches - two on the opposite bank of the river and two arches spanning the river itself. The N3 and Academy Street pass under the fifth and sixth arches respectively. On my left a road sign under the bridge gave motorists advanced notice of the approaching junction with the N51. This is the main route between the North East and the West of Ireland via Navan and the town of Athboy.



The Fifth Province sculpted by Richard King 1990

The inscription reads: "This steel structure is symbolic of the ideal for the cultural integration of all the people of Ireland. The growth form is composed of four branches and a central upright stem which symbolises the flowering of the spirit of hope and peace."



Athlumney Motte

This is one of two mottes in Navan going back to the Norman conquest. At first it had a wooden structure. Later it belonged



to the Dowdall family who built Athlumney Castle. They lived there until after the Battle of the Boyne (1690) when they burnt it down and fled to France. *Navan Motte* is on the west side of the town of Navan - just off the N51.



N3 Junction with the N51

Where does the N51 take you travelling North East?



A sign at the junction tells motorists coming from the town that they are approaching the N3 where they should take a left for Cavan (via Kells and Virginia) and take a right for Dublin. Soon I was at the 'New Bridge', only about one hundred metres from the confluence of the two rivers. I photographed the date plaque on the wall of the bridge. At the other end of the 'New Bridge' there is an old mill wheel which has been preserved - although it is no longer turning. After crossing the road, I looked back and took a snap of the bridge and mill wheel. Fifty metres further on, I found myself admiring the neat, landscaped public garden

area just beside Poolboy Bridge. The garden is shaped to resemble the prow of a ship protruding into the water where the two rivers meet. This is Navan's meeting of the Waters. Some people believe that 'Navan' got its English name from the Irish words - *The Rivers - Na hAibhneacha*. (Pronouncing the *bh* as 'v'). I stood and looked at the polished stone-and-metal sculpture in the small garden. This abstract sculpture is open to personal interpretation. It could represent a sundial, or perhaps a turntable! I took a snap of Poolboy bridge from the garden. Then I crossed the bridge and looked across the wide expanse of water to take

another photograph of the meeting of the waters. I also took a picture of the landscaped garden from the North East side. From that angle you can see that Navan is built on a hill overlooking the river. The street running downhill to the river is Watergate Street. As its name implies, one of Navan's medieval gates once breached the old town wall right here. Poolboy (*An Poll Buí*) Bridge was, for centuries, the only bridge for the townspeople until the New Bridge was opened in 1756. People could go across to the Athlumney side when the water level was low, using a shallow ford near to where the Four provinces sculpture now stands.

The Railway Viaduct



The medieval Poolboy Bridge



The Meeting of the Waters



The two Rivers

The Garden Sculpture



What does it suggest to you?

The Meeting of the Waters from far side of Poolboy



Looking South

Approaching the N3



A graceful swan on the Boyne



Mill wheel at East end of 'New Bridge'



the plaque on the New Bridge

Turn to the next page for questions and activities.



Navan Quiz ?

1756 the Year the New Bridge was Built

1. Which two rivers meet in Navan?
2. How many years old is the 'New Bridge' at Athlumney?
3. Which river is crossed by Poolboy Bridge?
4. Counting 2 bridges at Kilcarn (the old and new bridges), how many bridges cross the two main rivers at Navan?
5. On which National Route is Navan situated?
6. If you took the N3 out of Navan and drove towards Cavan, which town would you drive through first?
7. If you were a motorist and you took the N51 road from Navan, heading to the West of Ireland, which Co. Meath town would you meet first?
8. Name the tall 'sculpture' that is about 1 km outside Navan?
9. How many arches are there on the railway viaduct?
10. Which Norman family lived in Athlumney Castle until the reign of king Henry VIII?



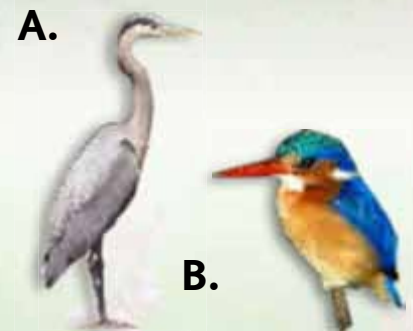
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

1. George II was king of England and the Penal Laws were in full force.
2. Benjamin Franklin was busy inventing electrical gadgets.
3. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born.
4. The engineer John McAdam was born. Tarmacadam is called after him.
5. John Smeaton produced the world's first high quality cement which could harden even under water.

Which kind of transport would you say, first crossed the New Bridge at Navan? Research into transport around 1750. Was steam transport used at that time?

River Birds

One of these birds is a *Kingfisher* and the other is a *Heron*. Both of these birds can be seen among the reeds and vegetation on the banks of the Boyne and Blackwater rivers near Navan. Can you say which one is which? Find out what you can about each bird.



Wildflowers that grow on old walls.

The next time you are out walking near the river or near an old wall, look and see if you can spot the *Red Valerian* - a wildflower that likes to grow among rocks.





it's about *time!*

LIMERICK EDUCATION CENTRE CELEBRATES THE LAUNCH OF TIME IN TRANSITION

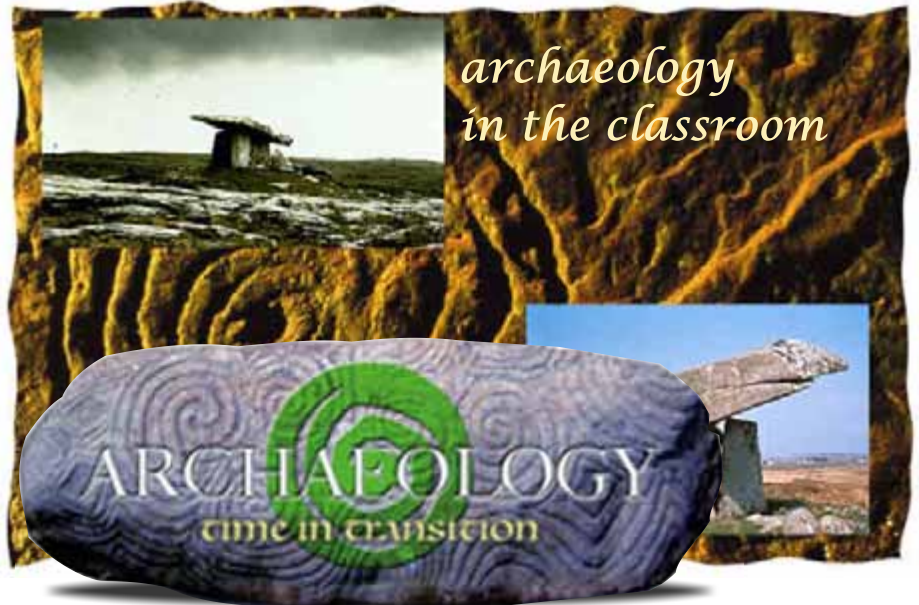
On Friday November 13th 2009 Limerick Education Centre in association with the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government launched the most recent in a series of resources to promote awareness of archaeology in the classroom. *Time in Transition: It's about Time 2* was designed specifically as a resource to support Transition Year students. It aims to inform the students about archaeology in an engaging and interactive way. As archaeology is a very practical subject, it is hoped that the students will readily engage with it and acquire the skills and knowledge to be able to appreciate the richness of their local heritage.

This multi-media resource pack is divided into three **Themes**: *Worship and Commemoration, Lifestyles and Living and Archaeology at Work*. Each theme has four **Units** with each unit comprising of two **Lessons**. Each unit discusses a specific topic related to the overall theme. The first lesson in each unit focuses on key facts and skills with the second lesson offering a visual presentation in support. A website, www.itsabouttime.ie has been developed to serve as a portal for further information about the two resources and as a means for downloading both *Time in Transition* and its precursor *Archaeology in the Classroom: It's About Time*; the resource dedicated to the primary sector.

Speaking at the launch of the resource in Glenstal Abbey School, Murroe, Co. Limerick Minister for the Environment, Mr. John Gormley welcomed the collaboration between Limerick Education Centre and archaeologists from the National

Monuments Section of his department. He stated that such collaboration was extremely beneficial and the outcome of such collaboration was evident in the excellent resource that he was pleased to recommend to all Transition Year teachers.

www.itsabouttime.ie



Left picture: Minister Gormley with members of the design team. Seated (L to R) Mr. John Gormley, Minister for the Environment, Ms. Mary Sleeman, Consultant Archaeologist Standing: Mr. Mark O'Connor, IT Design, Mr. Denis Power, Project Archaeologist, Mr. Joe O'Connell and Ms. Fiona Shanley (Limerick Education Centre), Mr. Matt Kelleher, Project Archaeologist.



Right picture: Minister Gormley with members of the Management Committee of Limerick EC: Seated (L to R) Mr. John Gormley, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Mr. Patrick Hanley, Chairperson, Management Committee, Limerick Education Centre Standing: (L to R) Ms. Mairead Vallely, Mr. Cathal De Paor, Ms. Maree McCarthy, Ms. Elizabeth Maxwell, Mr. Joe O'Connell (Director), Mr. Thomas Hardy, Ms. Mary McNeice O'Regan, Ms. Brid Quinlan.



GALWAY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FESTIVAL

Galway Education Centre



2009 marked Galway Education Centre's twelfth year of involvement with the Galway Science and Technology Festival – the highlight of the fortnight-long event being the Festival Exhibition, which is attended by 20,000 first and second level pupils from all over the west. With the allocation of tickets for the Festival Exhibition taking on logistics close to a GAA provincial final, the success has been high-profile, but the detailed work of running a multi-sponsored festival has also thrown up a number of very important links to industry.

One of these is the Medtronic Scientist of the Future, under which schools in Galway and Medtronic, a Galway-based global leader in medical device technology, have worked through a mentoring system in which key engineers from Medtronic visit the schools and give help and guidance with projects and study. The partnership has given schools a real insight into one of the world growth areas in medicine and engineering – the design and operation of stents, the devices used all over the world to keep diseased blood vessels open. In many instances, stents have replaced the hugely invasive bypass operations speeding recovery times and lessening trauma for patients.

The linkage, which is sponsored by the Medtronic Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Medtronic, has given students from a number of Galway schools access to areas such as the 'Lean Sigma' concept in industry. Under the Scientist of the Future programme, national schools such as Lisheenkyle, Brierhill and St. Michael's, Mervue worked on 'Lean Sigma' – the discipline of improving production methods, reducing waste and maximising efficiencies in industry.

Part of this initiative meant that equipment was provided to the schools by the Medtronic Foundation. In the case of the Scientist of the Future, the students studied the forces at play on a production line, especially how these forces could be predicted and controlled in the case of precision medical device production. Speaking at an Awards Night in relation to the Scientist of the Future, Mr. Gerard Kilcommins, Vice President of Medtronic Global Vascular, said having seen the work

of the young Co. Galway students, he no longer had any doubt that we could successfully tackle the issue of having enough young people interested in science and engineering subjects to ensure Ireland's advantage in the key high-tech industrial sector. He had often wondered, he said, just where the necessary numbers of scientists and engineers of the future would come from, but having seen the degree of sophistication and understanding of the primary students showing their work on that night, he had no doubt. Mr. Kilcommins said that he had seen very young people discussing crucial concepts for the future of industry, and with great familiarity. Among these was the whole 'Lean Sigma' area.

"It does give me a lot of confidence about where we are going to find the scientists and engineers of the future. I really cannot think of a better initiative in which Medtronic could be involved. These young

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Brierhill NS 2009 winners of the Lean Sigma Event with Gerry Kilcommins and Dorothy Kelly from Medtronic, Galway, Paul Sleem MC and their teacher Nessa Flaherty.



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people have shown that not alone are engineering and science important – but they can also be great fun.”

Students around Co. Galway are also involved in a healthy living initiative. The Medtronic Healthy Living programme is aimed at giving primary level students an early insight into the key roles diet, exercise and healthy living play in our lives.

Galway Education Centre coordinates this initiative in which students from schools such as Mercy Convent, Tuam; Oranmore Boys' School; Shantalla National School and Claregalway Educate Together, showed their work – involving areas like the study of blood vessels and circulation, sowing their own vegetable gardens, exercise, work on improving diet, and fitness. Gerard Kilcommins pointed out that work on areas such as diet, fitness and lifestyle generally, coincided with the mission of Medtronic, which was to use science and technology to help people who were sick or unhealthy.

Through the Healthy Living project, he pointed out, they also wanted to highlight what people could do in their own lives to live healthily. A key area was the development of healthy lifestyles among young people, and an appreciation of the role of areas like diet, fitness and not smoking, on living healthily and longer.

Websites:

Medtronichealthyliving.com and MedtronicSOTF.com



New Online Opportunities for Teachers Innovation from the Education Centre network

In 2009 Mayo Education Centre, in association with Carrick on Shannon, Kildare and Laois Education Centres embarked on a new journey of learning with the development of an initial Online Learning 20 Hour Summer Course (EPV day approved). This was a seminal development for the Education Centres involved. The cost of the development of this course from a content perspective and from a technical development perspective was borne by the four Education Centres involved, with Mayo Education Centre as lead development partner. The Online Learning Course was in Practical Projects in Primary Science. The content was developed by Declan Holmes who has a degree in Experimental Physics from National University of Ireland Galway and is a member of the Institute of Physics, the Irish Science Teachers Association and the American Association of Physics Teachers and works for Science Ireland. Art Ó Súilleabháin as Director of Mayo Education Centre, promoted and coordinated the project. The final course was placed on a Moodle platform for the delivery of the material.

The Practical Projects in Primary Science online learning course followed the models of best practice for online learning, where the 'learning resources are materials used to support learning, and consist of content and tools, or other means necessary to reach the learning objectives. (Bang and Dalsgaard 2009). This was part of the design concept of the course, where the initial materials and processes of each module was explored with a view to teachers engaging with the

course then personally explored a practical aspect of the course in the form of an experiment. (Sorensen & Ó Murchú, 2009) The course was designed to be useful to teachers but 'technology alone does not deliver educational success. It only becomes valuable in education if learners and teachers can do something useful with it' (OECD, 2001, p. 24). The way teachers engaged with the course became obvious as the modules were engaged with and comments were posted on various discussion forums.

"I followed the instructions as outlined in the lesson. When I pushed the skewer through the dark spots which had not stretched the balloon did not burst. Pretty impressive for 9 year olds to experience, will be doing this one next term." (Student on the online learning course 2009)

"This was a brilliant yet simple experiment that would be very informative for junior classes." (Student on the online learning course 2009)

"Completed this experiment and I think the children would really enjoy predicting the results of this experiment and also be surprised at the results. This could be used with any class and is really easy to carry out." (Student on the online learning course 2009)

The Online Learning course also recognised the importance of learning as a social process and offered possibilities for collaboration with other learners, for interaction with

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the learning content and for guidance from teachers and tutors. (Reding, 2003, p. 22). This became evident again from the engagement with the forums but was even more graphically evident from the photographs that participants submitted as part of their contribution to the forums.



As an initial venture into the field of Online Learning this was a hugely successful beginning. The success of the material and the methodology employed to deliver the material has been commented on constantly by the teachers engaging with the course and the Mayo Education Centre has received a stream of requests to make the material available on CD or otherwise to teachers. For various reasons, including the development costs, this is not possible. However, in line with these requests, the online course Practical Projects in Primary Science will be made available again to teachers who completed the course, in November 2009 and March 2010, to give these teachers the opportunity to use the material in a classroom situation. This will be a unique feature of the online courses from the Education Centre network and should prove to be an added-value component of these courses in the future.

Please be aware that a number of online courses (with epy day approval) are planned for 2010, in association with a number of other Education Centres. It is intended that online learning courses will be available in Practical Projects in Primary Arts, Dealing with Critical Incidents in

School, Fun with Mathematics & Appreciating the Visual Arts. Look out for these new developments at www.online.mayoeducationcentre.ie or just go to www.MayoEducationCentre.ie and click the link for Courses.

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Never too old for School

Grandparents Day in School

Mayo Education Centre

Intergenerational activities have become more popular in recent years and many schools celebrate their own events already. The Mayo Education Centre is encouraging schools to participate in this unique experience. We believe that such an event will have positive and lasting benefits for the children, the school and the community. During 2008, the Mayo Education Centre encouraged primary schools in Mayo to participate in this event and it was hugely successful.

Schools reported that it was one of the most positive community events that they had ever engaged in.

Moving forward with enthusiasm, but without funding, the Mayo Education Centre took the next step to promote and develop the project. Research was conducted to see who else was involved in the intergenerational movement. This led us to Age and Opportunity's Bealtaine Festival. The Bealtaine team (Dominic Campbell and

Rebecca McLaughlin) were delighted to come onboard to support and promote the project. Still progressing without funding, we advanced with something much more concrete - Experience!

Soon, we were sharing ideas and putting the wheels in motion to get this project nationwide. It's amazing the momentum those wheels built up because in the early New Year, Bealtaine introduced us to Mary Ryan from Castleknock Community



College. Mary had been the coordinator for Grandparents Day in their school for the past 10 years and she was keen to get involved. In the midst of all this activity a website was created to assist teachers or facilitators wishing to participate in the organisation of such a day. Check out:

www.grandparentsinschool.ie

Together we decided that the launch for National Grandparents Day in School would be the 1st of May, which coincided with the Bealtaine Festival. The Mayo Education Centre promoted the project in the Primary schools and Castleknock Community College in the Post Primary. On May 1st 2009 Leitir N.S, Islandeady, Castlebar and the Mayo Education Centre celebrated the launch of National Grandparents Day in School.

Grandparents were heartily welcomed by enthusiastic pupils who generously gave them a tour of their school and invited them to view some of their work. The pupils used this unique opportunity wisely and together both Grandparents and children went to work on their family trees.

Grandparents were rewarded for their wisdom and patience when the children entertained them with a concert. A special song as Gaeilge was created and performed called 'Seantuismitheoirí'. To add to the celebration Mamo Mc Donald, Honorary President of Age and Opportunity joined in the festivities. She shared her thoughts and experiences of being a Grandparent and on the positive elements of aging. Parents provided a tasty array of delectable homemade treats.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country Castleknock Community

College was celebrating ten years of Grandparents Day in their school. Through the wonderful invention of Skype, Art Ó Súilleabháin, Director of the Mayo Education Centre was able to converse with Mary Ryan, coordinator of Grandparents Day in Castleknock and all the students in the school, thus linking both events.

The excitement and heart warming emotion filled the May Day air. It was truly an event enjoyed by everyone involved. We are now equipped with the confidence to pursue with this wonderful project, which will strengthen communities and secure values and traditions.

We expect more intergenerational projects to develop within the school setting during 2009-2010. We hope to expand our partnership with other agencies to allow us to learn and grow together in promoting intergenerational activities. New ideas are immersing everyday and thanks to this website we can pass them on to those wishing to host such events or projects.

Grandparent's day in school is only a small part of a greater movement and initiative. We see the intergenerational relationship as the key factor and would like this project to be open to all older people. One such way to do this is to simply adopt a grandparent, be it a grandaunt or uncle or neighbour.

For further information or if you would like to share you ideas or experiences with us, please see www.grandparentsdayinschool.ie

This collaboration was developed by Mayo Education Centre, supported by Castleknock Community College and Bealtaine.



Rosaleen Ní Shúilleabháin
(Oifigeach na Gaeilge
& Oifigeach Forbartha
Ionad Oideachais Mhaigh Eo)



Kilkenny Education Centre NOTICE BOARD

STEPPING INTO KILKENNY'S HISTORY

To mark Kilkenny's 400 year old City status, Kilkenny Education Centre has developed a set of resources, about Kilkenny's history, for teachers and schools. Every primary school teacher in the county has received the resource pack, aimed at bringing Kilkenny 400 into every primary classroom.

The resource pack entitled, 'Stepping into Kilkenny's History' was written specifically for teachers. It contains a DVD ROM, an illustrated poster size map, and a book. In addition, each post primary school also received a set of the resources for its history department. The resource provides a substantial body of local resources for schools that the Department of Education and Science (DES) identifies as crucial to achieving the aims of the history programme. The material is designed with the teacher and pupil in mind, the various class levels within the primary school and the strands and strand units of the local studies section of the history curriculum.

President Mary McAleese officially launched the history project, 'Stepping into Kilkenny's History'

Kids' Own Solas Family Programme Publication (2010)

A guidebook to art galleries for children by children

Kilkenny Education Centre in collaboration with the Butler Art Gallery is working on a publication (in collaboration with Kids' Own) written and produced by children for children (from 5 – 12 years). This publication will teach the reader about art, art history and how children can best experience art galleries and collections, using the vehicle of the Butler Gallery, its art collection and the experience of the Solas Family Programme as a model. It allows children and their families to have an enriching, fulfilling experience in art galleries. The publication encourages follow on activities in the home, the classroom or the library.

The Project will reiterate the fact that the Butler Gallery's collection is a public collection for use and enjoyment by the nation, particularly by the people of Kilkenny city and county.





STAYING SAFE ON THE FARM - SLOGAN COMPETITION



Kilkenny and Kildare Education Centres in conjunction with the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), organised a Farm Safety Slogan Competition for students from primary schools. The competition was aimed at raising awareness among students and their families about safety issues on farms. Statistics from the HSA reveal that accidents on farms give rise to on average 18 deaths per year and generally account for 30% of all fatal accidents at work.

The initiative involved a slogan competition for primary school children, in providing the wording for posters to improve safety in the farming sector.

Students were asked to provide the wording for a poster on any one of the following areas:

- 1: Safety on tractors and/or farm machinery
- 2: Safety when dealing with farm animals
- 3: Safety of children on the farm
- 4: Safety of grand parents or other elderly persons on farms
- 5: Farm buildings
- 6: Water hazards on the farm

Some of the Slogans

**IF CHILDREN ARE ON THE FARM
SUPERVISION DOES NO HARM**

**FAN SLÁN ó Tarbh
Nó beidh tú Marbh**

**DON'T CLIMB ON THE SHED
YOU COULD END UP DEAD**

**Remember
Dangerous
Farm
Animals
Can Kill**



Visit by The Minister for Education and Science Batt O'Keeffe TD

The former Minister for Education and Science, Batt O'Keeffe TD, visited Kilkenny Education Centre and praised the work of the centre. A project that has caught the Minister's attention was a programme aimed at improving literacy in primary schools. The programme entitled, Reading Recovery, is an early intervention programme designed to reduce literacy problems in an education system. It provides intensive, individual help for any children, who, after a year of schooling have not responded to classroom teaching in reading and writing. The director of Kilkenny Education Centre emphasised that the programme is not solely concerned with improving children's reading and writing skills. "The term 'Recovery' implies a clear objective to help children acquire efficient patterns of learning which enable them, by the end of their supplementary programme, to work at the average level of their classmates and to continue to progress satisfactorily", he stated. Minister O'Keeffe saw at first hand, evidence of the improvement that the literacy programme can make. Two pupils, Natasha Curran and Shantelle Quigley, aged 6, from the Lake School, St John's Junior, read extracts from two books for the Minister. He congratulated the pupils and told them how proud he, as Minister for Education and Science, is of their achievements.

Education Conference for Kilkenny

Kilkenny held a major Education Conference for teachers, special needs assistants and members of Boards of Management. The Conference entitled, 'Supporting the Teacher in a Challenging Environment' was organized by Kilkenny Education Centre. Some of the leading voices on social and educational matters addressed the Conference. Dr. Garret Fitzgerald, former Taoiseach spoke about difficulties in society and how these are impacting on schools, Mr Fergus Finlay, CEO of Barnardos and Fr Peter Mc Verry also addressed the Conference. Dr Anne Looney, from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, also spoke at the Conference. Another significant speaker at the Conference was Dr Jean McNiff, who is a Professor of Education at York University.



Laptops: There is One for Everyone in the School

Scoil Naomh Fiachra, Kilkenny Microsoft E-School Project

Scoil Naomh Fiachra is a small, rural primary school in Kilkenny with a teaching Principal. The school has been involved in many ICT Projects over the years. It is trying to move towards what it calls 'e-maturity', and develop 21st century learning skills with its pupils and teachers.



The school is involved in a project with Microsoft that introduces one-to-one computing with Tablet PCs to its primary school pupils. Tablet PCs have the potential to transform the learning experience for pupils from a one classroom, one subject, one textbook environment to a more personalised, meaningful, self-directed and exciting one. The aim of the project is to provide pupils and teachers with a 'palette' of technological options, the skills to use them and an awareness of what are the appropriate situations for their use. Some of the objectives include harnessing the full potential of its pupils for individual and collaborative learning, to bring their out-of-school interests and

experience to bear on their learning and to do so on the basis of equality of access to technology. The project extends constructivist learning experiences across the curriculum and throughout the school year to change that and how our pupils learn, how the school operates as a learning community and how it interacts with the general community.

In summary, the project attempts to transform learning at school by creating an active and collaborative learning community of teachers, parents and pupils, to implement curriculum in a manner which develops 21st century learning skills and moves our pupils (and teachers) along the continuum towards e-maturity.



CESC

Ionad Oideachais Tacaíochta Chorcaí
Cork Education Support Centre

Redesigned Website

www.cesc.ie



Minister for Education and Science Batt O'Keefe TD formally launched the redesigned website of Cork Education Support Centre.



Cork Education Support Centre relaunch of Book Donation from Mercier Press to Primary Schools Nationwide. Minister Batt O'Keefe acknowledged the donation from Mercier Press and the distribution by the Education Centre Network of the books to Primary Schools. Pictured with the Minister at the launch is a pupil from Riverstown National School.

Cork Education Support Centre survives floods in Cork!

Flooding that caused damage to the south of the country forced the closure of the Cork Education Support Centre for a few days. Thankfully, little damage was done to the main building..





'Keep Safe' Programme

A HSA / ESB/ Donegal Education Centre project
which engages a multi agency approach to raising safety awareness for students



Members of the Steering group pictured are Christina Mc Eleney HSA, Eamonn Browne DCC, James Mc Hugh ESB, Kevin Flannery Bus Éireann, Garda Clive Treacy, Sally Bonner Donegal Education Centre, Tom Reilly ESB, Joanne Harman HSA, P.J Murphy, Inspector HSA

"Keep Safe" is a multi-agency safety promotional programme aimed at primary school children that was delivered on a pilot basis in Donegal in April and May 2008. "Keep Safe" is based on the highly successful "Bee Safe" programme (which has been in operation in Northern Ireland since 1990). The programme was coordinated by Donegal Education Centre in conjunction with Christina McEleney, Board member of the HSA and James McHugh, ESB Networks.

"Keep Safe" is a one-day event where children from local schools are invited to attend a central venue for either a morning or afternoon session, each lasting approximately two hours. At an event, each participating agency delivers a 10 minute interactive presentation and/or scenario. These can include live demonstrations, games, discussions etc. Groups of approximately 8 to 10 children engage with each scenario before moving directly on to the next scenario. At the "Keep Safe" events held in Donegal in April and May, 2008 – eleven agencies participated.

Participating agencies "Keep Safe" April and May 2008 were:

- An Garda Síochana
- Bus Éireann
- Irish Coast Guard
- Construction Industry Federation
- ESB Networks
- Donegal Fire Service
- Health and Safety Authority
- H. S.E.
- Donegal County Council (Road Safety)
- Teagasc
- Irish Water Safety

Safety themes of "Keep Safe" April and May 2008:

- Road cycle safety
- Seat belt safety
- Use of life jackets/Life buoys
- How the 999 number works
- Safety on building sites
- Safety with Electricity
- Dealing with emergencies
- Fire safety
- Pedestrian safety (Safe Cross Code)
- Bullying
- Water safety
- Farm safety
- Basic hazard awareness and risk assessment

OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAMME

The overarching aims of the programme were to assist children to:

- Become aware of personal safety in the home, in the school and in the community.
- Learn how to recognise hazards and minimise risks in everyday situations.
- Learn how to stay safe within the context of - for example: road safety, water safety and fire safety.
- Learn to how react to dangerous situations
- Make a contribution to crime prevention.
- Foster good citizenship.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES AND PARTNERS

The agencies that were engaged in the programme were:

- Bus Éireann
- Construction Industry Federation
- Donegal County Council,
- Donegal Education Centre
- ESB Networks
- Donegal Fire Service
- Garda Síochana
- Health and Safety Authority



- ☒ Health Services Executive
- ☒ Irish Coast Guard
- ☒ Irish Water Safety Organisations
- ☒ Feagasc.

The event was delivered in Donegal in April and May: the first event took place in Kilcar and the second in Clonmany. Eight schools participated in the two events, and approximately 190 primary school children attended the two events.

Participating schools – 4 South Donegal / 4 North Donegal :

- ☒ Scoil Chartha Naofa, Chill Charta
- ☒ Scoil Naisiunta na Carraige
- ☒ Cloontagh National School
- ☒ Scoil Phadraig, Rashenny
- ☒ Scoil Min na nAoire
- ☒ Scoil an Chaisil
- ☒ Clonmany National School
- ☒ Tiernasligo National School.

EVALUATION

The evaluation was undertaken by TSA Consultancy. The tasks and methods used are outlined below. Analysis of Questionnaires and Survey Findings

- ☒ Analysis was undertaken of questionnaires that were administered to Principals of participating schools
- ☒ Teachers of participating schools attending each event
- ☒ Schools attending each event (who were surveyed prior to their participation and following participation).
- ☒ Agencies participating in the event.

FOCUS GROUP AND CONSULTATIONS

A focus group was held with agencies that participated in the initiative. The purpose of the focus group was to generate views of the future development of the initiative as well as agencies' possible future involvement in terms of provision of

resources, delivery of actions, management and coordination of the initiative. This was undertaken at interim evaluation stage.

In addition to the focus group, some telephone consultations were undertaken with representatives of agencies that could not attend on the day.

DESK RESEARCH.

Desk research consisted of:

- ☒ Materials and minutes of meetings of the Keep Safe Steering Group, and
- ☒ Materials produced by the Bee Safe programme in Northern Ireland.

PROVISION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the data analysis stage and focus group findings, the evaluation made a number of recommendations for consideration by the Steering Group.

This programme provides an ideal learning experience for pupils as the events are of a high standard, interactive and enjoyable. A number of important safety messages are presented, tailored for the relevant age group. The overall message is personal safety.



The Incredible Years

Submitted
by Clare Education Centre

Clare Education Centre in conjunction with NEPS and the HSE assists schools to participate in the Incredible Years programme. To date three Clare schools have involved themselves in this excellent programme. Holy Family Junior School and Scoil Chríost Rí. Cloughleigh Rd. have completed the full programme while Holy Family Senior School are participating in the introductory phase. The Incredible Years is a research proven effective programme for reducing children's aggression and behaviour problems and increasing their social competence at home and at school.

The Incredible Years parent, teacher and child training series has two long range goals. The first is to reduce conduct problems in children and the second is to promote social, emotional and academic competence in children. It provides parents, teachers and children with the skills they need to prevent and reduce the occurrence of aggressive and oppositional behaviours. It targets children from 2 to 10 years who are at risk of or already showing aggressive, defiant, oppositional or impulsive behaviours.

Studies show that if intervention occurs early, when the child is still in pre-school or early school age, it is more effective and more likely to prevent a chronic pattern from developing.

Next page:
◆ Clare Education Centre
in Europe



Clare Education Centre in Europe

Clare Education Centre supports schools interested in partnerships with EU partners. In addition to both primary and second level schools the Centre has built up an extensive network of partnerships with other Pedagogic Centres throughout Europe.

The Centre is currently actively involved in two projects. These are CHOIR and F L I C K T H E S W I T C H . CHOIR, an acronym for Common Heritage Of Individual Regions, is a multilateral COMENIUS school project within the EU programme for lifelong learning. The objective of the partnership is to enhance the awareness of similarities and

differences among cultures of the participating countries in the minds of students, teachers and the community and to create an intercultural dialogue.

The CHOIR schools are from Austria, Denmark, Italy and Spain. The IRISH participant is St. Mochulla's National School, Tulla. Evaluation is managed by the Pedagogic Center Albertslund, Denmark. Clare Education Centre designed and hosts the CHOIR web site. The Clare school is responsible for the production of the Choir Dictionary containing 20 words and phrases in each country's language, under the headings: COLOURS, SALUTATIONS / PHRASES, QUESTIONS /

RESPONSES & NUMBERS. The CHOIR web site contains lesson plans etc. It also involved the participants teaching the European partners on aspects of their indigenous culture.



Brian Torpey, Principal, St. Mochulla's N.S. Tulla instructs teachers from Asturias, Italy, Denmark and Austria in the making of a St. Brigid's Cross.

Clare Teachers Embark on European Web 2.0 Project

Web site : www.sorurall.eu

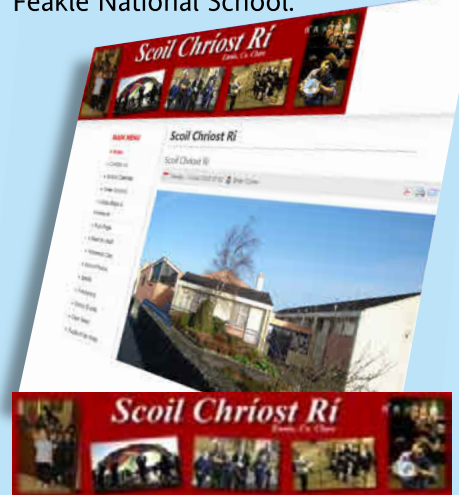


Teachers from seven Primary and two Secondary schools in Co. Clare have been taking part in workshops in Clare Education Centre on how to use the latest Web 2.0 applications like blogs, photo galleries and Skype and other open source tools for teaching and learning. Some of them will also be managing their

own web sites using the latest developments in content management tools which allow non-specialist users to generate and publish their own content online. This means that school web sites can be kept up to date with the latest school news including sports results, project work and other news from the school.

This initiative is part of the SoRuraLL project, a 2 year European Commission sponsored project which is investigating how schools and other educational bodies in rural parts of Europe can use the latest developments in internet technologies to breakdown barriers and access educational opportunities. SoRuraLL involves partners in Greece, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria and Poland as well as Ireland and next June the participating Clare schools will vote to select the Clare school project that best represents the work carried out by the Clare

schools to represent them at the SoRuraLL conference being held in Patras, Greece in September 2010. The Schools involved in this project are St Mochulla's National School Tulla, St Josephs Secondary School Tulla, Kilbane National School Broadford, Moveen National School, Moyasta National School, St John Bosco, Community College Kildysart, Christ Ri National School Cloughleigh, Broadford National School and Feakle National School.





Teacher Professional Communities

by Dublin West Education Centre



The concept and nomenclature of professional communities of learners have gathered pace in the last two decades. The idea is not new and indeed it can be argued that when groups of teachers came together in the early 1970's in study groups in Ireland to discuss new curricula and to make resources to support such curricula they engaged in professional learning communities before such activities attracted a label. The study groups became Teachers'/Education (Support) Centres so that today we have thirty centres placed strategically throughout the country. It is altogether fitting therefore that the management and coordination of Teacher Professional Networks (TPNs) for second level teachers and Teacher Professional Communities (TPCs) for primary teachers should form part of the work of education centres.

Innovative teachers frequently find themselves convening and participating in what are essentially professional learning communities. In 2007 Dublin West Education Centre with the support of the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Science created an opportunity to formalise such communities of

primary teachers under the umbrella of the education centre network and with the assistance in most cases of support programmes.

Initially the Primary Curriculum Support Programme and latterly the Primary Professional Development Service worked in collaboration with Dublin West and other education centres to create, develop and support communities of learners (TPCs). The stated purpose of the TPC was in the words of Fullan to "enable the collective development of new knowledge, skills and competencies, new resources and new shared identities and motivation to work together for change". A TPC is therefore a proactive support group of teacher learners who meet regularly and seek to share their learning with a view to developing their practice.

The goal of teachers' participation in a TPC is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals and to have a positive impact on children's learning. A TPC may comprise teachers from various local schools, or teachers from the same school who share a common challenge or purpose with regard to best practice in their teaching. Members of a TPC usually develop a shared vision for the group in relation to a theme

such as teaching in a multi-grade context, developing worthwhile SESE resources, creating artistic and dramatic learning opportunities in the context of an Arts or Drama circle or improving competence in Gaelic or another language.

In 2009 we had vibrant *Gaeilge* or *Tús Maith* TPCs in a number of Education Centres for instance in *Ionad Oideachais Iarthar Chorcaí is é an fócas a bhí acu ná tacú le múinteoirí lena gcuid Gaeilge labhartha i gcomhthéasc an tseomra ranga. Bhí seacht gcruinniú le ceathrar déag ar an meán ag gach cruinniú.* A number of TPCs addressed the worthwhile and rewarding challenge of 'enhancing teaching and learning' in the multi-class context. Several TPCs have emerged from the Maths Recovery programme and the Modern Languages Primary Teachers' Network. The Cork Arts Circle is one of the better known TPCs where an average of 22 teachers participate and create at monthly meetings. Some practical outcomes of a TPC focused on aspects of the SESE curriculum can be viewed on www.historyofmayo.com where life through the ages, landmarks, local poets and legends were all encountered.

As we enter an era when teachers will be expected to take more responsibility for their own continuing professional development and where interdependence may become the norm, professional learning communities of teachers will provide a forum for self-initiating learners working collaboratively with their peers. Evidence emanating from TPCs suggests that Irish primary teachers already have an advanced understanding of such communities of inquiry and improvement.

Gerard McHugh



Dublin West Education Centre



ICTs in the Primary School: Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century
Dublin West Education Centre has published a valuable resource for primary teachers entitled 'ICTs in the Primary School: Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century'. The main authors Robbie O'Leary and John O'Mahony, stalwart members of the Dublin West community, have demonstrated great vision, perseverance and courage in initiating the project and bringing it to fruition. Their insights, expertise and understanding of a complex and diverse field are demonstrated superbly as this new book comes alive while their commitment to and excitement about their subject is exhilarating. They are joined as authors by thirteen celebrated educators who have been at the forefront of ICT in education and whose contributions to teacher education and ICT have

ICTs in the Primary School

Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century

been immense. Kathryn Crowley, Neil O'Sullivan, Matt Reville, Clifford Brown, Leo Frost, Pat Brennan, Marty Holland, Simon Lewis, Seaghan Moriarty, Elizabeth Oldham, Deirdre Butler, Kate O'Connell and Michael Hallissey contributed thirteen superb and readable chapters in Section Two of the book complementing the seventeen chapters written by Robbie and John in Section One.

The book deals with the theory behind the practice but it is as a practical tool that teachers will find the text irresistible. It demystifies and makes accessible to teachers who do not profess to be experts in ICT topics such as the computer as a tool for word processing, project based learning, information handling, digital images and much more. It demonstrates how the internet, digital media, interactive whiteboard and computer networking can assist in the classroom. It addresses issues such as ICT in Special Needs, using technology in multigrade classes and web publishing for schools. Cognisance is given to the place of Literacy, Numeracy and Storytelling in a digital era.

This publication is timely, it is our responsibility to create opportunities for our children to become multinational citizens of Earth in this era of mass participation and collaboration; to do this it behoves us to organise their education around models appropriate to the early 21st century. The generation known as the net generation has already left primary school. Active creators of media content they spend their time searching, reading, scrutinising, authenticising,

collaborating and organising everything from their MP3 files to protest demonstrations. The generation following them, already in their teens, are even more digitally minded. They are authorities on the digital revolution that is changing every institution in our society, as teachers we need to understand how they think, otherwise we will be irrelevant.

The digital revolution heralds a time of great change not unlike the advent of the printing press, the automobile and the telephone that not only caused people to think and behave differently but also gave rise to new social orders. An advantage for us in this exciting age is that education is at the centre of this digital revolution. Consequently as we embark on a magnificent quest of real participatory active learning with our pupils using the principles and methodologies of our 1999 curriculum we will find the thirty chapters in this book an invaluable toolbox enlightening our journey. If every primary teacher in Ireland uses this publication we will be a lot closer to realising our aspiration of creating multinational citizens of Earth in this generation.

Gerard McHugh

ICTs in the Primary School: Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century can be purchased from Dublin West Education Centre. Please contact 01 4528000 for more information or visit www.dwec.ie to download an order form.



The ATECI

The ATECI is the umbrella organisation of the 21 full-time and 9 part-time Education Centres in Ireland. It represents the interest of the network as a whole including both part-time and full-time Directors, staff and management committees of all centres. The association has a remit

- (a) to act for and on behalf of member centres on all matters of policy as agreed by centres at AGM or EGM
- (b) to raise the profile of Centres
- (c) to be a partner at national level in the formulation of education policy

(d) to provide advice and support to Committees of Management and Directors of Centres.

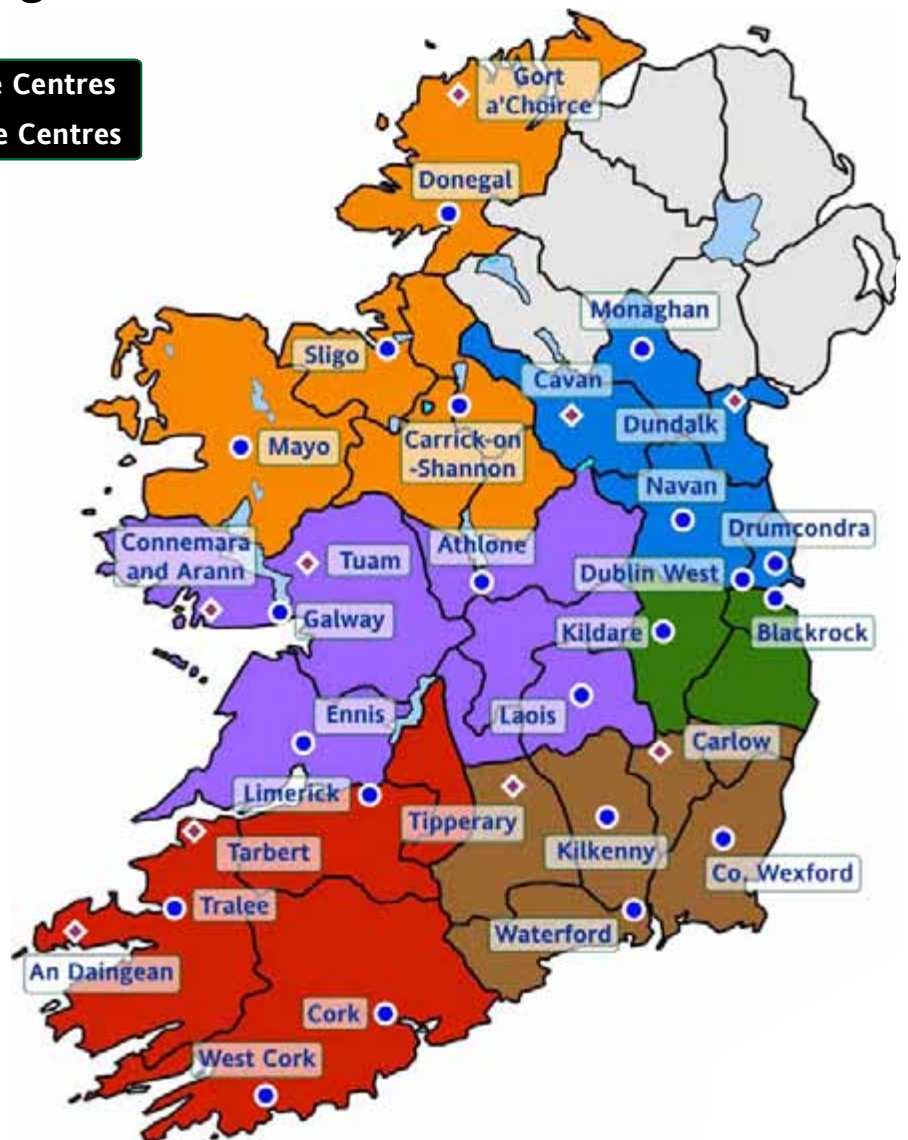
The executive of the Association meets six times a year but we have organised the network into a series of six regional groups. The regional groupings meet separately and work very closely together initiating collaborative projects which are often piloted and then shared with the network in general.

The map below details our 6 regional groupings.

ATECI Regions

● Full Time Centres
◆ Part Time Centres

- Region 1
- Region 2
- Region 3
- Region 4
- Region 5
- Region 6





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Carrick-on-Shannon Education Centre

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Cork Education Support Centre

The Rectory,
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Tel: (021) 4255600
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Blackrock Education Centre

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Clare Education Centre

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Invitation to Contribute

The **ATECI** wishes to publish *NASC* on a regular basis. Our intention is to further support teachers through the creative and imaginative use of print media. We would welcome feedback from teachers and others who would be interested in passing on to us their comments and suggestions and we also invite submissions for future publications. Please forward your views/submissions to the public relations officer of the **ATECI**, Gerard McHugh at the address given. Thank you for taking the time to read *NASC*. We hope you have enjoyed and benefited from the various articles. If you are interested in replicating any particular project your local Education Centre Director would be delighted to hear from you.

Please e-mail your responses to:

director@dweec.ie

or post to:

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Ionad Oideachais Chorca Dhuibhne

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An Daingean,
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National CPD programmes managed by, organised through and/or working in collaboration with Education Centres

Áiseanna Teagaisc na Gaeilge
Circus and Fairground Support Service
Project Maths
Home School Community Liaison Programme
ICT Support in association with N.C.T.E.
Modern Languages Primary Teachers' Network
National Behaviour Support Service
Primary Professional Development Service
Reading Recovery

Maths Recovery (PPDS)
School Completion Programme
School Development Planning Initiative (SLSS)
Leadership Development for Schools Programme
Second Level Support Service
Special Education Support Service
Social Personal & Health Education (SLSS)
T4
Walk Tall/Substance Misuse Prevention Programme (PPDS)
Child Abuse Prevention Programme (PPDS)
Centres also facilitate primary teachers trained outside
the state in preparation for Cáilíocht na Gaeilge

In recent years there has been a consolidation of almost twenty programmes/services which previously had an independent existence under the Second Level Support Service (SLSS). The list above reflects the position in the school year 2009/10.

In September 2010 there will be a further realignment when the Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS), the Second Level Support Service (SLSS) and the Leadership Development for Schools Programme (LDS) will cease to exist and will be replaced by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).