



General Teaching Council
for Northern Ireland

General Teaching Council for NI

termtalk

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termtalk



In this edition of **termtalk** the Council looks very much to the future, with the announcement of initiatives designed to give teachers a new voice in policy making and professional development.

The first of these initiatives, a Professional Development Bursary Pilot Scheme, will offer teachers bursaries of up to £1,000 to fund a variety of individually determined professional development activities. The notion of bursaries resonates with the Council's Code of Values and its advice to the Department in respect of Continuing Professional Development. It is hoped that this pilot will be the forerunner of a much bigger programme in the future.

The second initiative is a major survey of some 3,000 teachers. This will explore attitudes on a wide range of professional issues and the success of the survey will depend, to a great extent, on the co-operation from the members of the profession.

Running parallel with these initiatives will be the election process for a new Council. Work is presently underway to draw up the electoral register, details of which will issue in the near future. The election affords teachers a real opportunity to influence the direction of the Council over the next four years. I would encourage you all not just to use your vote but to consider standing for election. The Council has engaged Electoral Reform Services to run the election process itself.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a belated Happy New Year.

Eddie McArdle

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Registrar, GTCNI

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Professional Development in a New Era



The debate on the status of teachers and teaching has evolved over the years. It has been shaped in no small way by the prevailing political mood, economic trends and society's changing expectations. The pace of change in education is accelerating as the impact of globalisation becomes increasingly evident. Commentators warn not just of the economic consequences, but indeed the social challenges, that are likely to emerge if we do not adequately address the ever increasing demands of the knowledge economy.

Conscious of the need to ensure that teachers are adequately empowered to meet emerging demands, GTCNI continues to work to create the circumstances where teachers can readily identify, and more importantly address, their development needs. Having co-joined the profession in developing a new competence framework, the Council is now working to establish a professional development model which will provide a 'mixed

economy' approach, addressing individual, school-based and systemic needs.

The GTCNI is convinced that the outworkings of the Review of Public Administration, taken together with the ongoing Review of Teacher Education and allied to the enhanced connectivity created through the development of a managed ICT service, will provide a very real opportunity for a radical review of professional development. If participation in ongoing professional development is to become part of accepted professional practice the current definition of CPD needs to be broadened, and teachers must be given the time to engage in reflection and dialogue with colleagues.

The Council looks forward to working with its partners in the education service to develop an innovative, differentiated and dynamic approach to professional development, thus meeting the needs of those involved in the 'profession of professions': the teachers of Northern Ireland.

GTCNI - a new voice for teachers

GTCNI Notice Board

Information Seminars

The Council has just completed a series of 'Information Seminars' which were held at five venues across Northern Ireland. The seminars enabled those who attended to communicate face to face with Council members and officers. The Chairman of the Council, Eddie Ferguson commented; "The seminars provided a valuable opportunity for the Council to update registered teachers on our progress and discuss issues impacting upon the profession. We listened closely to the views expressed by teachers and have appreciated their thoughts on professional matters". Pictured are some of those who attended the seminars.



The Department of Education has attracted the prominent international educational e-learning conference, Xchange 2006, to Belfast in June. Xchange is a new, exciting, dynamic event in the educational ICT calendar, and aims to become the place to be for all leading educational ICT practitioners and experts. The inaugural event, Xchange 2005 was organised in association with Birmingham City Council and was held there in October 2005, during the UK Presidency of the EU.

Xchange 2006, in Belfast from 7th to 9th June 2006, will continue the unique format and ambitious nature of 2005, providing an innovative, inspirational and pioneering conference. Using wireless technologies, delegates will be able to engage with speakers through voting and questioning so that the collective knowledge and experiences of delegates is captured and shared. More details are available on www.xchange2006.com

Teacher Education Conference

The Council was well represented at the recent DE / DEL Teacher Education Conference, held in the City Hotel, Derry on the 21st and 22nd of November 2005. The recommendations contained in the reports made by the Council on Teacher Competences and CPD informed much of the debate and received widespread support. Indeed, a significant role for the Council was confirmed by Angela Smith, Minister for Education. Following on from this conference the two Departments will publish proposals for further consideration early in the New Year.

Professional Development Bursaries – Pilot Scheme



The Council is using this edition of **termtalk** to publicise its first Professional Development Bursaries Scheme. The scheme, which will begin in the Spring Term of 2006, will operate on a pilot basis and be open to all registered teachers in Northern Ireland. Following the piloting of the programme, the Council should be in a strong position to make the case that engagement in individualised CPD is essential for teachers' professional growth. Such schemes have operated in Scotland, England and Wales for a number of years with great success. It is therefore appropriate that teachers in Northern Ireland have access to similar professional development opportunities.

This pilot scheme is very much in keeping with the Council's philosophy that CPD should promote teacher enlightenment and empowerment. Teachers, as professionals, are entitled to exercise their personal judgement regarding the CPD which meets their own individually determined needs. For too long teacher professional development has been constrained by concentrating on whole-school needs and wider systemic initiatives. This is not to say that these are not important, however, there needs to be a place for



individualised CPD within the overall scheme of CPD provision.

Teachers are entitled to exercise professional autonomy and to explore areas of personal professional interest which they believe to be essential for professional growth. Furthermore, the Council believes that individualised CPD will promote and encourage professional creativity and innovation from which the wider education community can benefit. This type of opportunity will also help restore

morale and build confidence in that it allows individual teachers to, once again, pursue personal and career interests. It may also act as a staging post for further development work and even career specialisation.

As this is a pilot project there will be a limited number of bursaries available, around 60. So if you are interested in being part of the pilot please get in touch with the Council. Further details about the pilot scheme and how to contact the Council can be found on the back page of **termtalk**. **The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is the 27th February 2006.**



Something old, something

The revised curriculum and what it may mean for you in the near future

Conscious that significant curriculum changes are on the way, *termtalk* asked Carmel Gallagher, Curriculum and Assessment Manager at CCEA, to provide an overview of the revised curriculum and to examine the implications for teacher professionalism and practice.

Overview of curriculum changes

September 2007 marks the official change-over to the revised curriculum, which will be phased in over the following three to four years, up until 2010. At Key Stage 4 the shift towards a much more flexible curriculum can begin a year earlier. CCEA always refers to the 'revised' rather than the 'new' curriculum because, although there are some new elements, it contains a great deal that you are already familiar with. Indeed, it represents more of a shift in emphasis rather than any whole-scale change.

Gone will be the requirement to cover all the content that teachers have complained about over the last 15 years. Instead, minimum requirements place much greater emphasis on relevance and enjoyment as well as skills and capabilities. There will also be room for areas such as Personal Development at all key stages and Citizenship and Employability at Key Stages 3 and 4, which teachers have agreed are really important for young people.

It is estimated that 65% of the jobs we are preparing young people for do not yet even exist! So they will need to develop all the flexibility and skills they can to grasp the opportunities that come their way. The main message is about engaging young people more actively in their learning in order to foster the independence, skills and creativity to prosper in a rapidly changing world. With your help the revisions to the curriculum aim to achieve just that.

Teacher professionalism in the new curriculum context

In essence the revised curriculum restores to you, as the professional in the classroom, the freedom to respond to the needs of your pupils in ways you consider to be most relevant and stimulating for their particular context. Professionals in all fields keep abreast of the latest research and adjust practice accordingly, and the same is true for



education. But just as doctors rely on the health service to bring to their attention the latest in medical research or best practice in medical care, so it is CCEA's job, and that of other education support professionals, to bring to teachers' attention the latest in educational thinking and best practice. Accordingly, the key components of the revised curriculum - Connected Learning, Assessment for Learning, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, Personal Development, and Learning for Life and Work - are all based on recent educational research and are as much about methodology and best practice as about content. Many teachers are already doing a lot of what is proposed, and indeed have done so instinctively for a long time without actually giving it a specific name. For them, and for others to whom some of this is new, the research background informing the major components of the revised curriculum may help to make the case as to why these ideas and strategies are worth adopting.

The emphasis on Connected Learning, for example, emerges from neurological research that reveals how the brain continually seeks to make sense of new knowledge by connecting it to something familiar, relevant or already known. In educational terms it therefore makes good sense to explicitly connect up learning in whatever ways we can rather than leave this to chance.

The emphasis on Assessment for Learning derives from the work of the Assessment Reform Group made up of well

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respected experts, notably Professors Paul Black and Dylan William, who have provided really helpful insights into how ongoing formative assessment, in the form of learning intentions, open questioning, informed feedback and self and peer evaluation can help to build young people's learning power. This work and has been subjected to a number of very successful trials.

The emphasis on promoting Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities builds on the work Professor Carol McGuinness who has been working closely with CCEA for some time ensuring that the practical insights derived from the ACTS project (Activating Children's Thinking Skills) gets appropriately translated through the whole curriculum.

The emphasis on Personal Development at all key stages and Learning for Life and Work at post-primary level emerges from our own local research, (conducted on our behalf by the National Foundation for Educational Research), with 3,000 young people and their teachers over seven years from Year 7 through to Year 14. The consistent response from all year groups over this time was that, for school work to be relevant and meaningful, it needs to pay greater attention to real life and the future world of work, in particular to issues of Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability.



Phasing in gradual change at each key stage

So what does this mean for the professional in the classroom at different key stages?

➤ **At the new Foundation Stage**, teachers will have the freedom to teach at a pace which is developmentally appropriate for very young children, placing greater emphasis on play-based learning, personal, social and emotional development and oracy as a pre-requisite for the development of literacy and numeracy. A significant pilot project, The Early Years' Enriched Curriculum, has been running in over 100 schools, with research being conducted by Queen's University. The outcomes of the research will be used to inform the CPD support that is to be offered to all primary schools from 2006 and already a whole stream of support materials have been made available to pilot schools, including guidance on planning, numeracy, learning through play and learning outdoors. A DVD to illustrate best practice in literacy development is currently in production.

➤ **At Key Stages 1 and 2**, teachers will be encouraged to connect learning and to develop skills and capabilities across the six Learning Areas: The Arts, Language and Literacy, Maths and Numeracy, Personal Development, PE and The World Around Us. Guidance on planning for the revised curriculum as well as Ideas for Connecting Learning and materials to support Personal Development, will be made available to year groups of teachers as the curriculum is gradually phased in from Years 1 and 5 in 2007, Years 2 and 6 in 2008 and Years 3, 4 and 7 in 2009.



Something old, something

➤ **At Key Stage 3**, teachers will be expected to respond to statements of minimum requirements only, as opposed to detailed programmes of study, placing greater emphasis on skills development, relevance and enjoyment by making connections to Learning for Life and Work. Again, guidance on planning for the revised curriculum, support for all of the aspects of Learning for Life and Work, some Connected Themes showing how subjects can collaborate and some subject-specific support material, will be made available to year groups of teachers as the curriculum is gradually phased into Year 8 in 2007, Year 9 in 2008 and Year 10 in 2009.

➤ **At Key Stage 4**, the current requirements to study a subject from each Area of Study will be replaced from September 2006. Instead there will be new requirements to provide a core of Learning for Life and Work and Skills and Capabilities including - Communication, Using Mathematics, ICT, Problem-solving, Self Management and Working with Others - as well as provision for PE and RE. Schools can make provision for this core in whatever way they consider appropriate. Thereafter, schools are being encouraged, through the Costello arrangement, to offer a breadth of courses across academic and vocational pathways. Guidance will be provided on meeting the statutory requirements either through accredited courses or enrichment courses offered by schools.

Support to help managing change

A two tier support strategy is proposed with much greater emphasis than before on the whole-school dimension. While year groups of primary teachers and designated



post-primary teachers will be released for professional development courses, a major emphasis this time round is for schools themselves, as part of their internal school self-evaluation and development planning process, to engage with the key components of the revised curriculum during their exceptional closure days and to try these out in the classroom. As part of their school development plan, schools are encouraged to select and focus on one or more of the key components of the revised curriculum, with teachers trying out practical ideas in the classroom and sharing experiences with each other. When staff have gained some confidence in one area, for example skills and capabilities, the school might then move on to focus on another area, until such times as all major components have been addressed with the staff as a whole. Sample units of work will also be made available to illustrate how learning can be connected up more explicitly across the curriculum.

To support this two tier strategy, the education partners - CCEA, CCMS, C2K, DE, the ELBs, ETI, RTU and the Teacher Education Colleges - have been working closely together in the Partnership Management Board to ensure that effective resources and support are available for the planned roll-out of training from the autumn of 2006. Teams of curriculum and support officers have been working collaboratively over the past year, and more, to develop agreed CPD programmes and learning resources that aim to make professional development consistent for all teachers across Northern Ireland. CPD programmes will provide practical ideas, strategies and resources that are all about making



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teaching and learning in the classroom more relevant, enjoyable and exciting. These materials will be made directly available to schools for their own use on staff development days and it is intended that the majority will be available one year in advance of the first implementation requirements.

Assessing what we value as opposed to valuing what we assess

The final and perhaps the single most important component, of the revised curriculum is assessment. We are only too aware that assessment can make or break the curriculum which is why we have been working so hard to get this aspect right – to focus more on assessing what we value (skills, understanding and processes) as opposed to valuing what we assess, often just because it is easy to assess. For example, it is easier to assess recall and memorisation through a test than it is to assess thinking and processes through on-going challenges. The tendency has been to see assessment as an end product, an outcome, a test result or a final level that tends to be 'divorced' from the teaching and learning process.

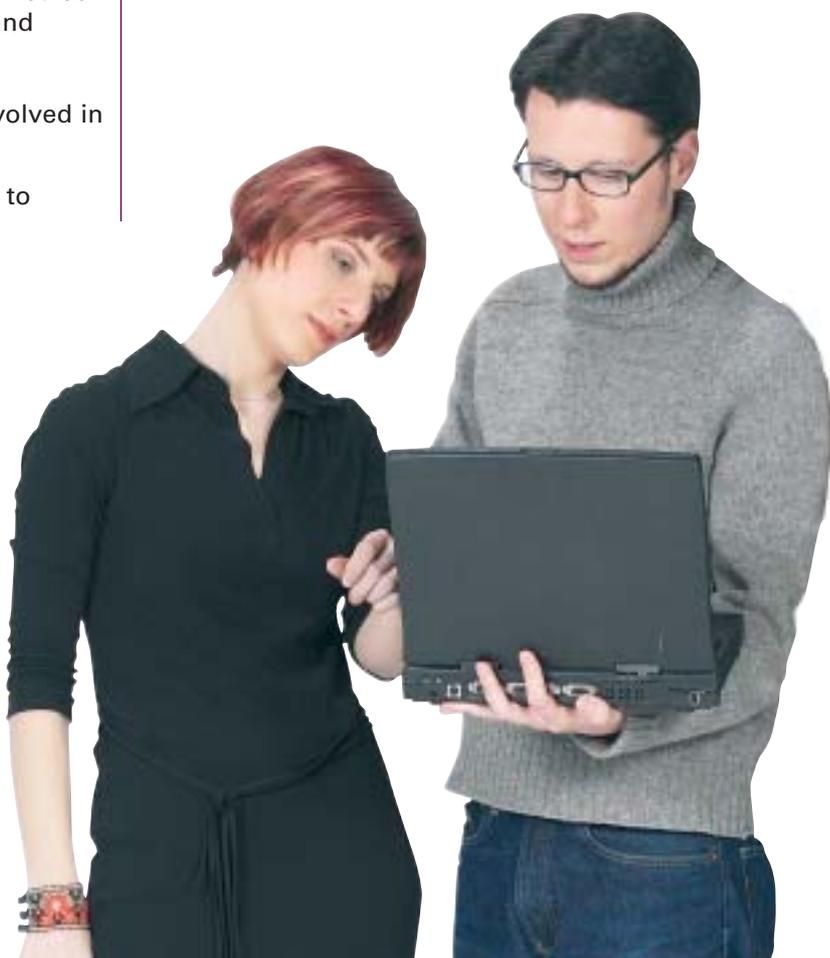
Research clearly demonstrates, however, that there are untold benefits for all pupils when Assessment for Learning strategies are adopted, including most importantly, raising pupils' self-esteem and promoting an ethos of 'you can do'. Assessment for Learning has, therefore, been identified as one of the cornerstones of the revised curriculum and extensive training will be provided to support the introduction of the key principles. Teachers will be encouraged to enable pupils to become actively involved in their own learning process, to ensure that pupils:

- have a clear idea about what it is they are trying to learn; by sharing, discussing and displaying clear learning intentions;
- agree how they can best demonstrate learning – by discussing what the teacher is looking for in the response or activity;
- feel comfortable in asking and responding to questions that encourage their own thinking, problem solving, decision making and ability to search for solutions;
- are encouraged to take risks and make mistakes, knowing that we sometimes learn best from these insights;
- receive qualitative feedback on how their work can be improved – noting aspects that have been done well and suggesting some that could be improved which pupils must follow up on; and

- have the opportunity to reflect on the process of learning, both individually and collectively, and also to understand more about the way they learn best.

Using these techniques it is hoped that assessment will transform its image from an end product to an on-going learning process; one which gives credit, as much to how young people learn and the skills they are developing, as to the content, outcomes and teaching. Learning and Assessment materials will be provided at each key stage to help teachers do this. The Pupil Profile should reflect the increased emphasis on skills and capabilities and the shift toward more formative assessment within the context of the revised curriculum. It will provide for pupils and parents a fuller picture than at present of pupil learning, progress and achievement in order that informed decisions can be made. The information provided in the Pupil Profile will be gathered from a range of assessment activities undertaken across all learning throughout the key stage.

In conclusion, to return the title of this article, something old, certainly, and probably nothing really new. The revised curriculum represents both research best practice and what we would like to see for all our young people and ourselves as teachers; a curriculum and assessment programme that motivates us and restores our professional creativity and enthusiasm for education.



'A Cut Above the Rest'



Many schools are already preparing to implement the revised curriculum. At Key Stage 4 a 'disapplication process' has been in operation for a number of years to allow schools some curriculum flexibility. In this article, John Lewis, Vice-Principal of Newtownabbey Community High School, describes a vocational curriculum initiative.

'Cutz' is the name of a new hair and beauty salon that has officially opened in Newtownabbey Community High School. This facility includes a reception area, nine dress outs, a discrete wash area, screened booths for beauty and manicure work and all the equipment needed for accredited or recreational courses in 'Salon and Reception Work'.

The salon was opened by leading Belfast and Bangor Hair Stylist David Aumonier, and was attended by guests, friends, staff, parents and pupils of the school and students from the East Antrim Institute of Further and Higher Education. David spoke encouragingly to the young people as they demonstrated their skills in the salon.

Plans for this project started two years ago when, under the 'Dissemination of Good Practice Initiative' of the N.E.E.L.B, the school attracted sufficient finance and support to enable it to propose a change of use for an underused Home Economics room. Following planning approval and the



At the salon opening: Rosemary Nicholl, Deputy Head of Curriculum Support (NEELB); Fiona Pride, Principal of NCHS; David Aumonier; Pamela Shields and Roy Logan from East Antrim Institute; John Lewis, Vice-Principal NCHS and Gerry Kelly, Secondary Officer (NEELB).

subsequent building work, the result is a 'state of the art' room with all necessary facilities for hair and beauty care, including appropriate lighting and safety flooring.

The salon will be used by pupils following Occupational Studies, NVQ courses, taster programmes as well as for preparations for school plays, functions and formals. The premises are also available for other schools, the local Further Education Institution and community and church groups.

The creation of the salon will enable the school to further its vocational educational programme which was started some six years ago. Currently at Key Stage 4, over twenty five per cent of pupils are 'disapplied' from the

Northern Ireland Curriculum, giving them the opportunity to follow vocational courses one day a week including salon and beauty work, catering, joinery, painting and decorating and motor vehicle studies. All of these courses lead to approved accreditation and complement other GCSE and Entry Level provision.

The school feels that its approach, in developing vocational programmes of this sort and working collaboratively with other schools and the local Further Education Institution, is one which not only enhances the learning of its pupils, but also assists the school move towards a state of readiness for the 'breadth and balance requirement' of the impending revised curriculum.

GCTNI Election 2006

Make your voice heard!

As the self-regulatory professional body for teachers in the Northern Ireland, the General Teaching Council is a representative grouping which includes all the education partners. Significantly, fourteen member of Council are directly elected by teachers themselves, reflecting the various constituencies that make up the profession: the nursery sector, special schools, primary and post-primary schools and also head teachers. It is this democratically elected element which gives the Council its legitimacy and authority to speak on behalf of the profession. This authority ensures that policy makers have to take cognisance of teachers' professional views, as articulated by the Council.

The current term of office for elected members expires in August 2006 and an election for the new serving teacher representatives, on Council, will take place in April 2006. All registered teachers have a vote in the election and will be assigned to a constituency which reflects the sector in which they work. Furthermore all registered teachers have the right to stand in the election to represent their particular constituency.



Electoral Reform Services (ERS) has been appointed to expedite the electoral process and to support the Returning Officer for the election. The main arrangements for the election are as follows:

- in February 2006 all registered teachers will receive a 'Notification of Election' and a letter asking them to check and confirm the professional constituency within which they are entitled to vote. At this stage registered teachers will also be informed of the nomination process permitting individuals to stand for election to represent a particular constituency;
- those registered teachers wishing to stand for election will be required to return a nomination form to the ERS by the 20th March 2006;
- ballot papers will be issued to all registered teachers on the electoral roll on the 28th April, with a closing date for of ballot papers of the 19th May 2006; and
- election results will be announced on the 24th May, with new members taking up their responsibilities in September 2006.

If you have any queries regarding the election process please contact the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland on (028) 90333390 or email info@gctni.org.uk

Scientists of the Future – The Rolls-Royce Science Prize

There has been a steady decline in the numbers of students studying pure sciences at school and undergraduate level for some time now. If we continue in this direction, the engineers and technicians of tomorrow at companies like Rolls-Royce may have to be recruited from overseas. How do we retain this pool of talent in Northern Ireland?

As a company, Rolls-Royce are investing in a number of community and education initiatives, but their flagship programme, for encouraging and rewarding excellence in science teaching, has just been launched for the second year.

The Rolls-Royce Science Prize is open to all schools and colleges in the UK and Republic of Ireland. Teachers are invited to submit science teaching proposals that address a particular need in their school or college by 24th February 2006, via the website, (see below for details). Nine finalists will be chosen to go through to the next round. They will be given £5,000 by Rolls-Royce to implement their projects, plus a mentor and a video



camera to guide and help them record the work for final judging. In addition the eventual winner will receive an extra £15,000 plus a day out with the Red Arrows, and the runner-up £10,000. In addition, there are awards of £1,000 each for 30 'Special Merit Award' winners.

Fleming Fulton School in Belfast was one of last year's finalists, and is currently working to implement their chosen project. Their submission is certainly a very original one, designed to create enthusiasm in a range of science subjects amongst pupils with special education needs.

Teachers in Fleming Fulton School are working with colleagues from Cedar House and Mitchell House Schools in Belfast to help develop a series of lessons based on the view of aliens visiting Earth for the first time, and how they would learn about science

through their exploration. Pupils take on the roles of the aliens and work together in teams. Their idea is for Key Stage 4 and rather appropriately named StarTreK4! In the interest of developing many skills, the activities involve role play, model making and problem solving investigations. They will develop PowerPoint presentation lessons with worksheets, and eventually all the resources will be accessed through the schools' website www.flemingfulton.org.uk.



Colin Press, their Rolls-Royce appointed mentor and the Regional Association for Science Education Officer, has made several visits to the school and says; "Fleming Fulton is a great school full of enthusiastic teachers and pupils determined to uphold and continue that great tradition of success by schools in Northern Ireland in prestigious competitions"

Those wanting more information about the science prize can call the dedicated teachers' helpline on 0800 028 0759 and register on www.rollsroyce.com/scienceprize to receive regular news and updates.



DreamLab Learning

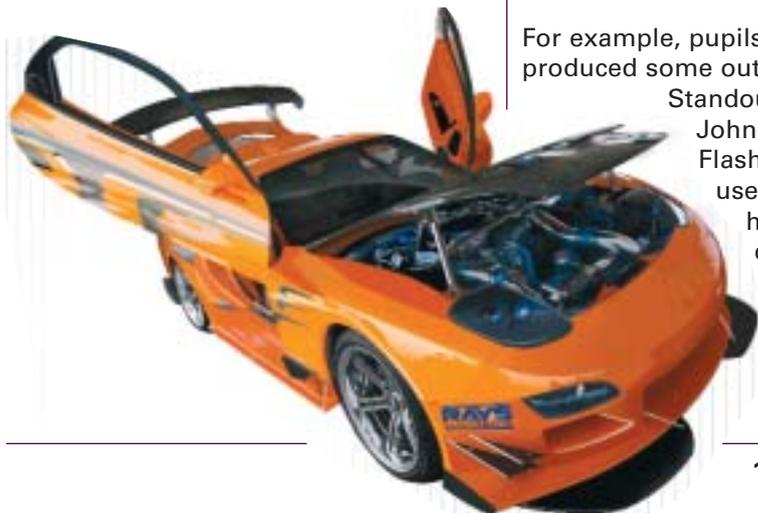
Pupils rarely have opportunities to use ICT creatively in school – according to inspection evidence. But now, a new project from Dream Ireland, a Belfast-based research and development organisation, is set to change all that.

The DreamLab Learning project will enable young people to have a chance to develop their digital, creative skills by using industry-standard digital kit and working with the best of professionals from the multimedia industry, who have high levels of expertise in art, media, music and moving image which they are willing to share. These specialists give up to 7 hours a week of their time to work with pupils in schools.

Not only is it highly creative and inspiring, but the work that the pupils create has a wider impact on them through increased motivation and improved attainment.



Supported by NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) and working with six post-primary schools across Northern Ireland: St Rose's High, Campbell College, St Pius X, North Coast Integrated,



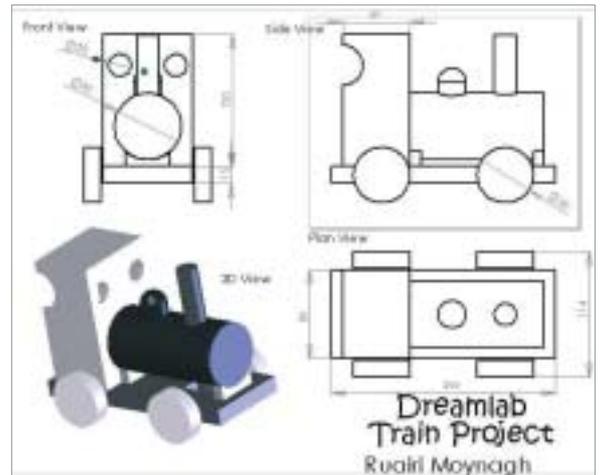
St Joseph's, Enniskillen and Castleterg High, DreamLab Learning aims, as Gary McCausland, project director, explains:

“to solve key learning challenges at a critical time for curriculum review in Northern Ireland and to create an innovative and sustainable learning model capable of transfer and replication throughout the UK”.

This work builds on the earlier very successful 'Dream Generation' project for 14-18 year olds pioneered in eleven schools in SELB and SEELB from 2002 to 2004, supported through their Creative Learning Centres - Studio ON in Crossnacreevey and AMMA in Armagh, and run under the DCAL 'Unlocking Creativity' initiative. The project set out to help schools, teachers and pupils “cope with the rate of change engendered by digital technologies”.

For example, pupils in Down High produced some outstanding work.

Standout projects included John Quinn's remarkable Flash Movie 'Age' which uses music, animation, humour and a very distinctive design style to depict the cycle of life and the 3 minute film 'Ghosts' written,



directed, shot and edited by 14 year old Amy Bonner. Elsewhere, pupils in Lagan College created a varied and highly original range of work. The award-winning website 'All in the Mix' combined the various skills that the students had developed and it eventually won the team a trip to Jamaica. Collaboration was again evident for the production of a broadcast quality music video for the Belfast collective 'Spree' which was of such quality that it would sit comfortably on MTV.

The new DreamLab Learning project is already underway in Northern Ireland and is connecting with schools in England involved in NESTA's National Collaborative initiative, see:

<http://www.nesta.org.uk/nationalcollaborative/> for more information on the National Collaborative.

For more information on DreamLab Learning please see: <http://www.dreamlabonline.com/> and contact Gary McCausland – gary@dream-ireland.com

Creating Opportunities



The Council is represented on the 'Taskforce' by its Senior Education Officer, Gerry Devlin. Gerry comments, "This is a timely initiative for GTCNI to be involved with, given that a NISRA Labour Force Survey indicates that over 21 per cent of the working population in Northern Ireland is disabled, to some extent. Although disabled teachers and students are now technically protected from discrimination with regard to education, employment and continuing professional development, there remains a significant amount of awareness raising work to be done on the issue." He

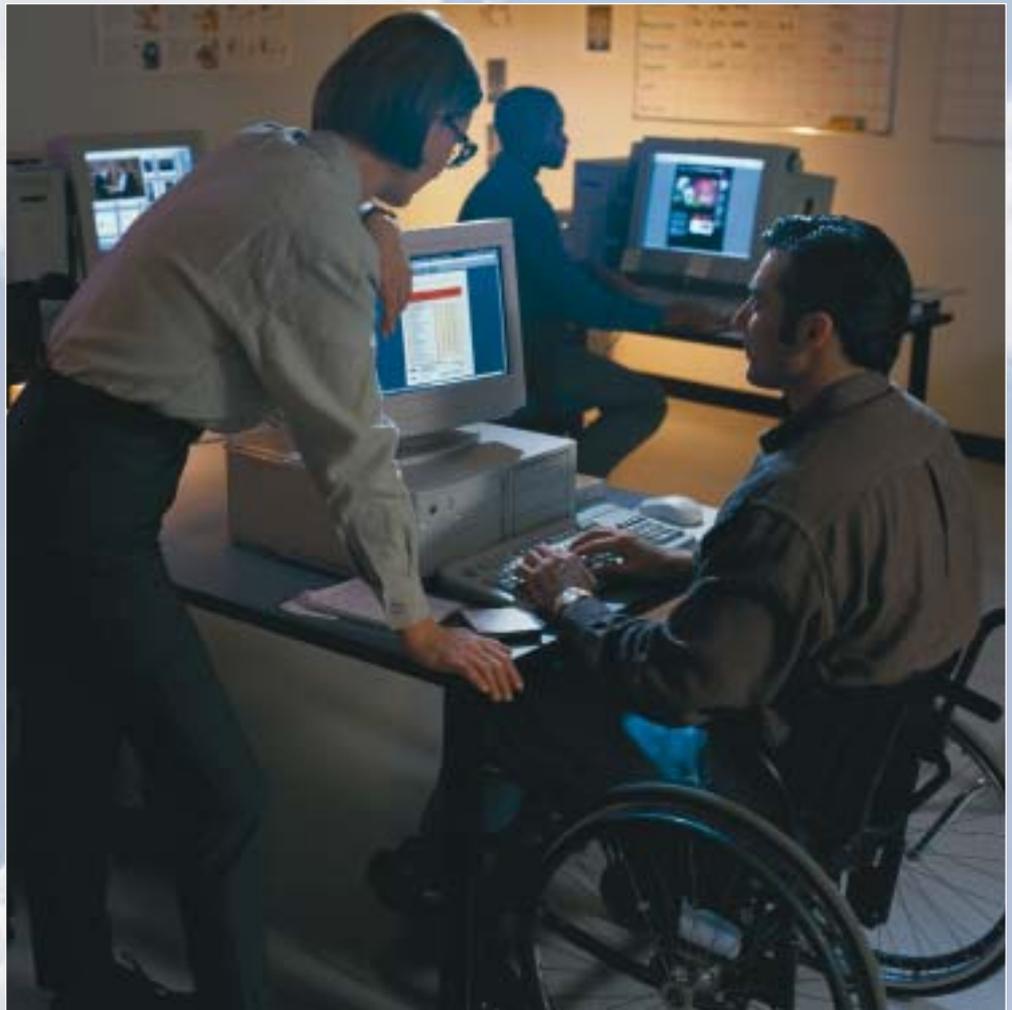
continues, "Recent legislative changes with regard to disability include an amendment to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to include trade and qualification bodies. However, even within this changing legislative environment policies and practices still have to be adapted to ensure that disability discrimination becomes a thing of the past, and that best practice prevails"

In the Northern Ireland context the Equality Commission has recently produced two revised codes of practice to help schools and employers meet their current legislative responsibilities.

To find out more information about the DDA and the Codes of Practice on Employment and Occupation, and Trade Organisations and Qualifications Bodies, please contact the Equality Commission: Tel 02890 500 600, Textphone: 02890 500589, email: information@equalityni.org or visit www.equalityni.org.

The Council in keeping with its Code of Values and commitment to inclusion in education is taking part in a 'Taskforce' which intends to draw up proposals to eliminate barriers which may prevent disabled people from entering the profession. At present, there is an under-representation of disabled people in teaching.

The 'Taskforce,' which is chaired by Professor Barry Carpenter and is supported by the Disability Rights Commission, is charged with raising awareness of current policies and practices that may cause difficulties for disabled students entering initial teacher education. It will also seek to develop a programme and strategy which will ensure that education partners are able to make cumulative and collective progress, leading to fewer barriers and more opportunities for people with disabilities entering the profession. It is hoped that this will go some way towards creating a more diverse and inclusive teaching population. Within the context of the new inclusion agenda, it is important that the profession models best practice. This will enable suitably qualified disabled people to embark on a career in teaching.



GTCNI Survey - Your thoughts count

GTCNI is a new voice for the teaching profession in Northern Ireland and it continues to work assiduously to ensure that the views of teachers on professional matters are heard by all the education partners.

It is with this in mind that the Council has commissioned a major research project to ascertain the views of registered teachers in Northern Ireland on a wide range of professional issues. It is envisaged that a representative sample of around 3000 teachers will be asked to complete a questionnaire which will be sent to home addresses sometime before the end of June 2006. As you can imagine, it is very important that as many teachers as possible complete the questionnaire to ensure a high response rate. This will guarantee the reliability of the data and demonstrate to policy makers that teachers, as a profession, are concerned about the nature and purposes of education and want their voices to be heard.

This is not the first time such a survey has been carried out. In England the GTC has carried out a similar survey of teachers, the results of which were published in June 2005. The wealth of data that the survey has generated has been of crucial importance for GTCE in helping it shape its policies in response to teachers' views. The results of the GTCE survey show that:

- the vast majority of teachers - over 80 per cent - identify the single biggest reward in teaching as being the satisfaction of helping children academically and personally;
- the main frustrations of teaching, as reported by teachers are: insufficient time to plan and prepare, a lack of work/life balance, the amount of paper work and the poor behaviour of some pupils; and
- the majority of teachers - over 70 per cent - see their career path in terms of strengthening and developing classroom practice.

GTCNI, in commissioning this large scale survey, wishes to ensure that its policy making processes are



evidentially informed and, most crucially, are responsive to the views of the profession that it seeks to serve.

This will, therefore, be a unique opportunity for you to make your voice heard. If you respond, as part of the representative sample, you will help to ensure that teachers in Northern Ireland have a strong, articulate voice that cannot be ignored or dismissed.



A Charter for Education

The Council first set out the rationale for a 'Charter for Education' following the launch of its Code of Values in October 2004. Speaking at that time, the Registrar noted that it was not enough for teachers alone to articulate their commitment to education, rather it was incumbent on all within the education service and beyond to acknowledge that society, as a whole, has a role to play in the education of our young people.

The Charter document which has emerged, following consultations with diverse stakeholders, seeks to establish a common understanding about the nature and purposes of education and the roles and responsibilities of pupils, parents and society. In drawing on the UNESCO report 'Learning the Treasure Within', the Charter argues against an overly utilitarian approach to education, but nonetheless also recognises that education is central to the knowledge economy. It is essential that common ground is established and that the moral purpose of education is reaffirmed, so that individuals and organisations can commit to ensuring that the conditions required to facilitate the processes of education are in place. To this end the Charter offers all within the education service an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to a shared future.

It is the responsibility of all to translate the undertakings contained in the Charter into actions that are supportive of its aspirations, and which will effectively facilitate their realisation. The creation of a system that ensures that young people and our society at large develop and prosper, requires that all involved in education meet their responsibilities,

and that we work in partnership to create tomorrow's prosperity and well being.

The Charter has already been endorsed by the Minister for Education Angela Smith, the Departments - DE and DEL - as well as employing authorities, teacher unions and other agencies. It is hoped to formally launch the Charter in the coming months. The full text of the Charter document is available on the Council's website under publications, at www.gtcni.org.uk

The Charter

This Charter confirms that education is the path to self-realisation and personal fulfilment, civic well-being and economic prosperity. We who are charged with facilitating the education of our children and young people dedicate ourselves to developing a world-class education system for Northern Ireland. We are committed to creating the culture and circumstances that ensure that all who seek empowerment, enrichment and affirmation through education are afforded both opportunities and support that they may:

- learn to know;
- learn to do;
- learn to be; and
- learn to live together.



n in Northern Ireland



In undertaking this task we:

- commit ourselves to the promotion of education as a liberating enterprise to be enjoyed by all;
- believe that education is a lifelong journey through which all can develop the ability to participate fully in society and lead lives that are both life creating and fulfilling;
- call for the development of an education service that ensures excellence for all, irrespective of ability or needs;
- acknowledge the primary role of parents, families and society in the context of education;
- affirm the contribution to society made by teachers and all others engaged in meeting the educational and developmental needs of young people;
- are committed to a culture of empowerment where the voice of the professional community is heard and respected;
- recognise the right of all engaged in the processes of education to on-going professional development appropriate to their needs;
- recognise the debilitating effects of social, cultural and economic deprivation and commit ourselves to addressing such issues;
- are committed to ensuring that the needs of the vulnerable are appropriately catered for in our system;
- are committed to ensuring that initiatives and programmes at all phases of education are appropriately funded; and
- believe that the basis of all sound policy development lies in consultation, appropriate research and data collation.

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