



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta  
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Bunscoil  
Primary



# Leading Out Seminar Series

## Seminar 2





# Overview of the day

## SEMINAR 2

#primarydevelopments

09:30 - 10:00	<b>Registration and networking opportunity</b>
10:00 - 10:15	<b>Welcome and Outline of the Leading Out Seminar Series</b> Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith, Chairperson, Early Childhood and Primary Board, NCCA
10:15 - 10:40	<b>The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework</b> Arlene Forster, Deputy CEO, NCCA
10:40 - 11:10	<b>'Agency and Flexibility' in a redeveloped primary school curriculum</b> Prof Emer Ring, Mary Immaculate College Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith, Irish National Teachers' Organisation Pairic Clerkin, Irish Primary Principals' Network
11:10 - 11:30	<b>Discussion</b>
11:30 - 11:35	<b>Comfort Break</b>
11:35 - 12:05	<b>'Professional Development' in a redeveloped primary school curriculum</b> Ciara O'Donnell, Professional Development Service for Teachers
12:05 - 12:35	<b>Panel Discussion</b>
12:35 - 13:00	<b>Next steps in Leading Out Seminar Series</b> Dr Patrick Sullivan, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, NCCA



# Welcome and Outline of the Leading Out Seminar Series

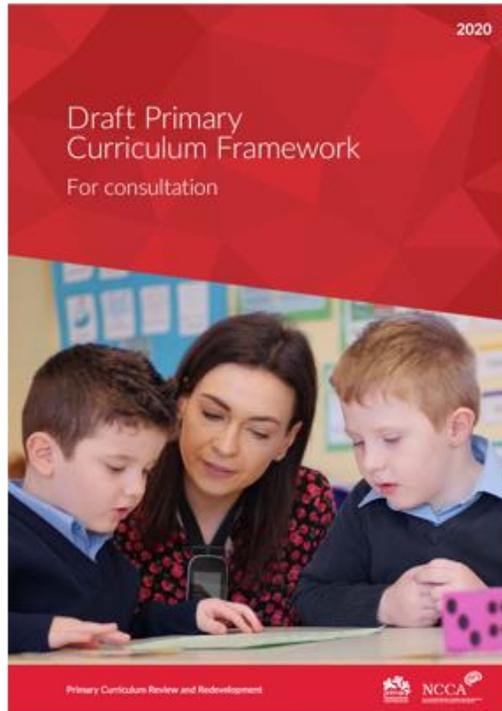
Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith



# Draft Primary Curriculum Framework

Arlene Forster, Deputy CEO

# Draft Primary Curriculum Framework live!



- February 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 – curriculum milestone in primary education
- Published at [www.ncca.ie/primary](http://www.ncca.ie/primary)
- Basis for an extensive consultation until October 2020
- Informed by
  - Research
  - Work with schools and preschools
  - Stakeholder engagement

## Key messages

- Building on the 1999 curriculum's successes while responding to challenges, changing needs and priorities
- Providing increased agency and flexibility for schools
- Making stronger connections in how and what children learn in preschool, primary and post-primary school
- Changing how the curriculum is structured and presented
- Taking account of emerging priorities for children's learning
- Supporting a variety of pedagogical approaches and strategies with assessment central to teaching and learning



Emergent phenomenon,  
something that happens through  
an always unique interplay of  
individual capacity and the social  
and material conditions by means  
of which people act.

(Priestley, 2015)

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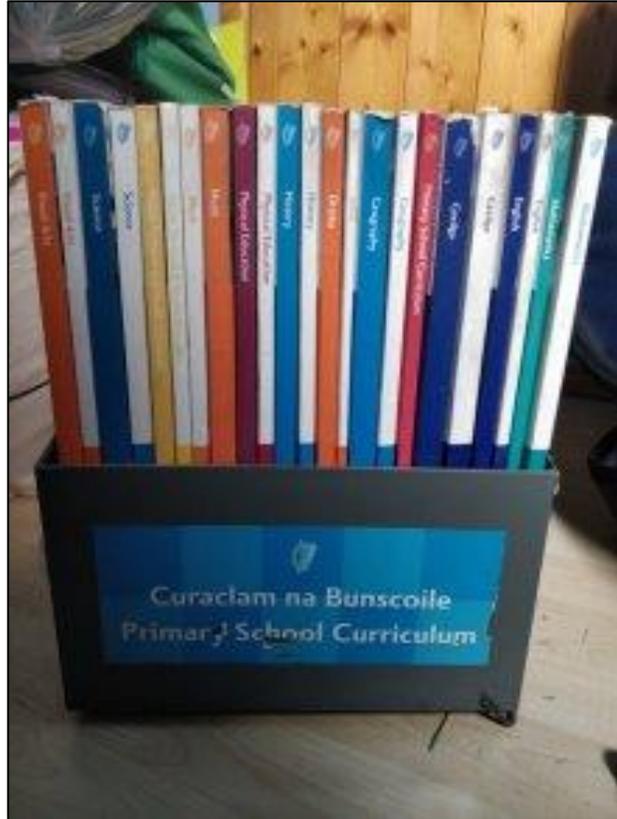
## Connections: Transitions, continuity and progression

Transitions within and across educational settings are one of a few universals of every child's life (Ramey & Ramey, 1999).

It is a time of accelerated developmental demands (Fabian & Dunlop, 2002).



# Curriculum structure and presentation

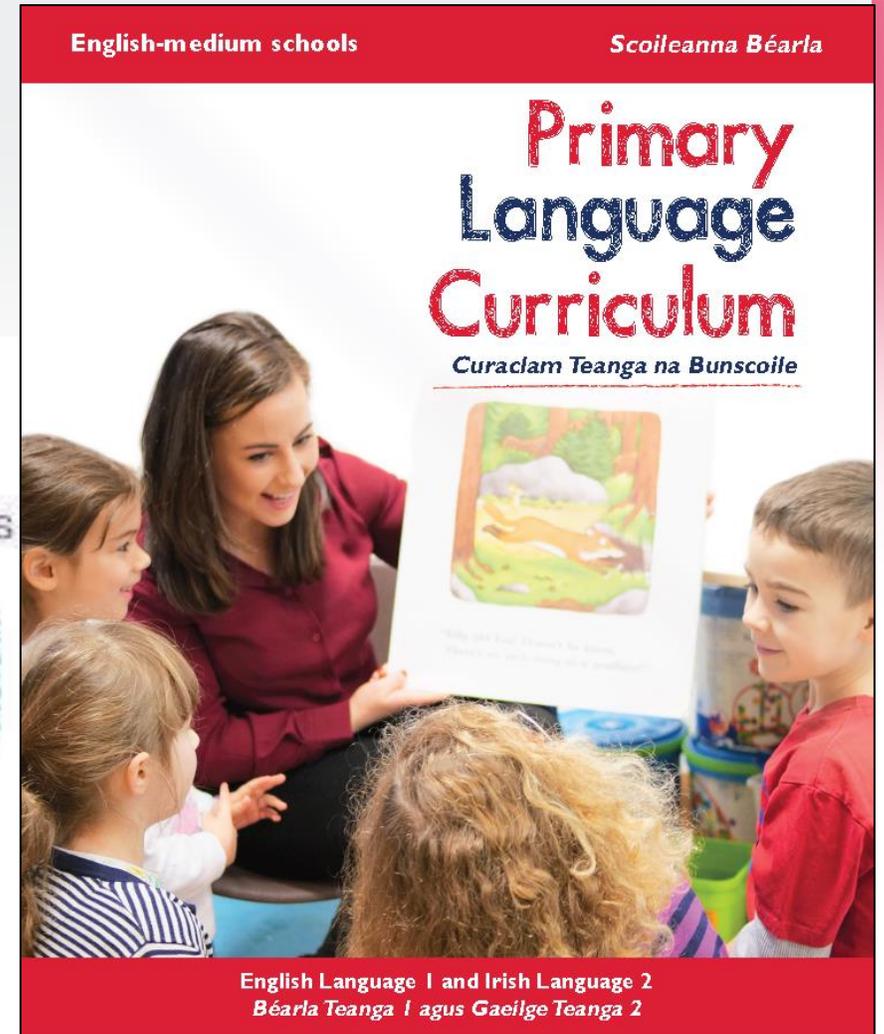


purpose

- 15 key issues
- 11 specific aims
- 25 general objectives
- 3 aims
- 215 subject broad objs
- 2 principles
- 15 learning principles
- 8 defining features
- 97 subject aims

Goal

Vision



# Emerging priorities for children's learning



## Curriculum areas and subjects

STAGES	CURRICULUM AREA	SUBJECTS	WELLBEING	ARTS EDUCATION	SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	RELIGIOUS/ETHICAL/MULTI-BELIEF EDUCATION - PATRON'S PROGRAMME
STAGES 1 AND 2 (JUNIOR INFANTS - 2 <sup>ND</sup> CLASS)	LANGUAGE (IRISH AND ENGLISH)	MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION				
STAGES 3 AND 4 (3 <sup>RD</sup> - 6 <sup>TH</sup> CLASS)	IRISH ENGLISH MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES	MATHEMATICS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION  SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND VALUES EDUCATION	VISUAL ARTS MUSIC DRAMA  (AND OTHER ASPECTS, E.G. DANCE, FILM AND DIGITAL MEDIA)	HISTORY GEOGRAPHY	RELIGIOUS/ETHICAL/MULTI-BELIEF EDUCATION - PATRON'S PROGRAMME

Proposed new aspects: Seven cross-curriculum competencies; five curriculum areas; modern foreign languages; digital technologies; ERB and Ethics; Wellbeing; Arts Education

# Pedagogy: Teaching, learning and assessment

- Curriculum integration
- Responsive pedagogy
- Inclusive practice
- Inquiry-based learning
- Play-based learning
- Assessment as central

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# Consultation on the draft framework

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## Strands

# Consultation

Focus groups and bi-lateral meetings

Online questionnaires

Working with schools

National consultative conference

Consulting with children

Written submissions



Visit our website: [www.ncca.ie/primary](http://www.ncca.ie/primary)

**Click:**  
**Have Your Say**

**Sign up for**  
**e-bulletins**

The screenshot shows the NCCA website's primary section. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Have Your Say', 'Contact Us', 'Visit the Curriculum Online Website', and language options 'English' and 'Gaeilge'. A search bar is also present. Below the navigation bar, there are several menu items: 'About Curriculum', 'Early Childhood', 'Primary', 'Junior Cycle', 'Senior Cycle', 'Latest News', and 'Publications and Research'. Under the 'Primary' menu item, there are sub-links: 'Primary Developments', 'Areas and Subjects', 'Assessment', 'Reporting and Transfer', 'Curriculum Planning', and 'Resources for Parents'. The main content area features a large image of two boys smiling. Below the image, the text reads: 'Home / Primary', 'Primary', and 'This section provides an overview of the NCCA's work to support children's learning from age 6 to age 12. The Irish primary education system aims to provide a holistic education to enable children to live their lives to the full and to realise their potential as unique individuals.' Below this, there are two columns. The first column is titled 'Primary Developments' and contains the text 'Keep up to date with all the developments in the primary curriculum.' and a 'Find out More' link. The second column is titled 'Areas and Subjects' and contains the text 'The curriculum is structured in six curricular areas with 11 subjects. You can access the state curriculum here.' and a 'Find out More' link. Each column has an accompanying image of children in a classroom setting.

## Opening discussion

How can organisations and agencies support/promote engagement during the consultation?

(p.5, *Leading Out* Report)





# Agency and Flexibility in a Redeveloped Primary Curriculum

Dr Emer Ring

Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith

Pairic Clerkin



**Dr Emer Ring**



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COLÁISTE MHIURE GAN SMÁL

# *Agency and Flexibility: A Vision for the Child in the Context of a Re-developed Curriculum*

*Prof Emer Ring,*

*Dean of Early Childhood and Teacher Education,*

*Mary Immaculate College,*

*Limerick*

*Tuesday February 25<sup>th</sup> 2020*

*National Council for Curriculum and Assessment: Leading Out Seminar 2*



# Overview

- **Introduction: Why Agency and Flexibility?**
- **Translating Research into Practice**
- **Conclusion: Democratising Education**

# Introduction: Why Agency and Flexibility?





PJ Gallagher, an Irish comedian, experienced school in the seventies and eighties in Ireland. In an interview in 2019 he stated:

*School was stripping the confidence off me all the time. Cause, going into school every day and they saying 'you're not trying', but I was, so you think you must be stupid. And then you go in and you're 'disruptive' and it's because you've got energy. And then you're good at stuff that they don't value so then you think you're useless. Interviewer: Or good at stuff that isn't assessed? Well yeah, and every time I was going it was stripping away the confidence, really stripping it away badly.*

(Neville 2020 citing Garrihy 2019, 00:13:07)



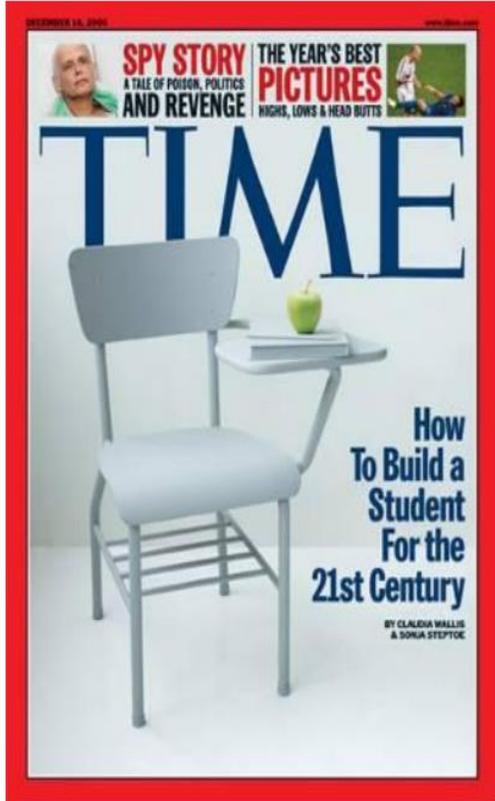
“Like this thing that makes me really nervous, like if I don’t have my hand up, that makes her want to pick me even more, but she knows you don’t know the answer, so technically like you don’t put your hand up because you don’t know the answer but then she picks you.” (Child in 6<sup>th</sup> class )



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“This is a story about ... whether an entire generation of kids will fail to make the grade in the global economy because they can’t think their way through abstract problems, work in teams, distinguish good information from bad, or speak a language other than [their own].”

*How to Build a Student for the 21st Century,*  
TIME Magazine, December 18, 2006

Education today is much more about **ways of thinking** which involve **creative and critical approaches** to **problem-solving and decision-making**. It is also about ways of working, **including communication and collaboration**, as well as the tools they require, such as **the capacity to recognise and exploit the potential of new technologies, or indeed, to avert their risks**. And last but not least, education is about **the capacity to live in a multi-faceted world as an active and engaged citizen**. These citizens **influence what they want to learn and how they want to learn it**, and it is this that shapes the role of educators.

(Schleicher 2019)

***creative and critical approaches***

***including communication and collaboration***

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***problem-solving and decision-making***

***influence what they want to  
learn and how they want to  
learn it***

# Translating Research into Practice

*A Melange or a Mosaic of Theories? How Theoretical Perspectives on Children's Learning and Development can Inform a Responsive Pedagogy in a Redeveloped Primary School Curriculum*

*(Ring, O'Sullivan, Burke and Ryan 2018)*





# The Agentic Child

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..the child...is  
viewed as a  
**capable** actor...  
who shares **power**  
with the adult.  
(Sorin 2005:19)

# Curriculum

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**Curriculum** for the agentic child is **co-constructed** through adult-child **collaboration**. **Adults guide** the learning process, based on their own learning, life experiences and resources... **Planning** based on **observation, recording** of children's **language, ideas and interests**, and **discussion** with children is indicative of a child's agency. **Assessment** based on portfolios containing work chosen by student and teacher, **interviews** with children about their learning, and **peer review...**  
(Sorin 2005:18)

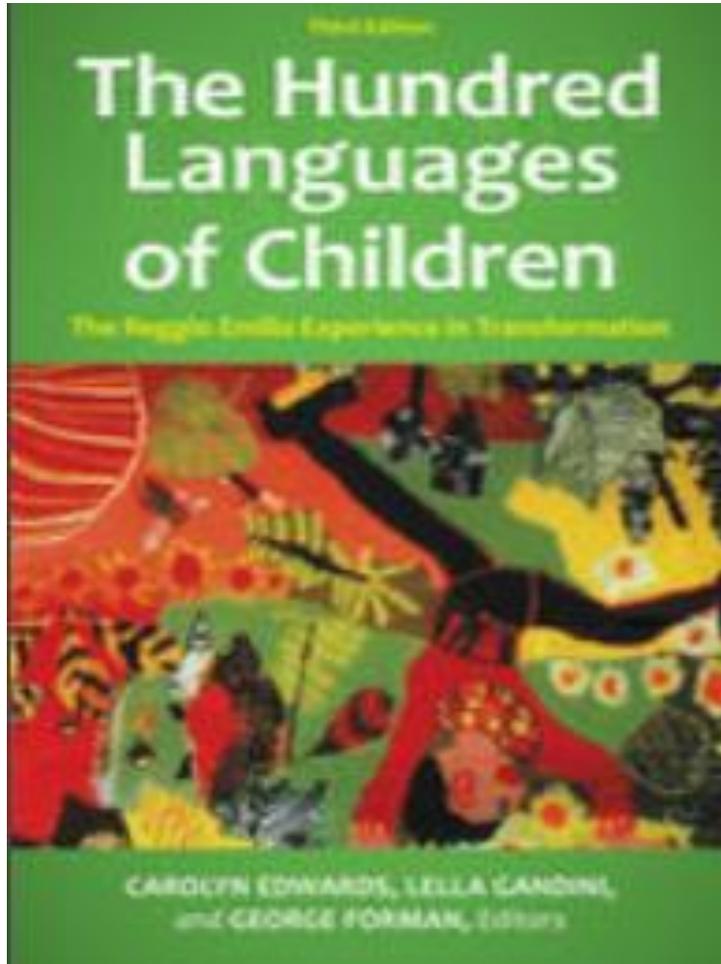
# The Teacher

**The Autonomy of  
the Teacher is  
Pivotal.**

**Shifting to 'I am  
doing this  
because...' from  
'I am doing this  
because I am  
expected to'**

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# Pedagogy



***It is important for pedagogy not to be the prisoner of too much certainty but instead be aware of both the relativity of its powers and the difficulties of translating its ideals into practice.***

***(Gandini 2012, p. 37)***



# a Commitment to Listening

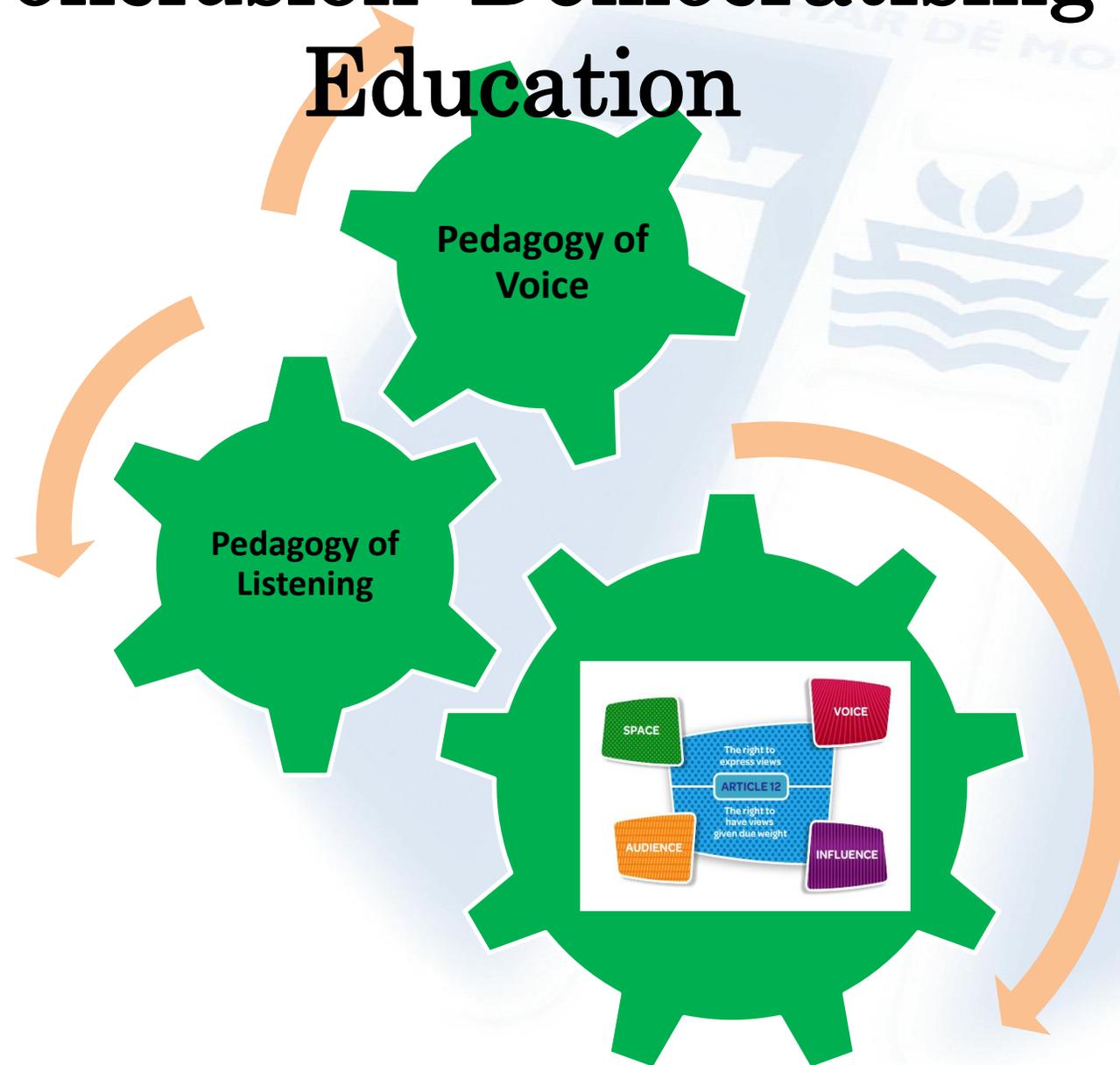


***Child: My dog got out last week and it took three days to find him.***

***Adult: Our dog is always digging under the fence, so we can't let him out unless he's on a leash. (shift response)***

***Adult: Oh no. Where did you finally find him? (support response)***

# Conclusion: Democratising Education



# References

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- Murphy, K. (2020) *You're not listening: What you're missing and why it matters*, London: Penguin – Image at [https://www.easons.com/youre-not-listening-kate-murphy-9781787300958?gclid=EAlaIqobChMIhZzYuYro5wIVWofVCh2ZmQKbEAQYAiABEgIb5vD\\_BwE](https://www.easons.com/youre-not-listening-kate-murphy-9781787300958?gclid=EAlaIqobChMIhZzYuYro5wIVWofVCh2ZmQKbEAQYAiABEgIb5vD_BwE)
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# References Images

- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/biwook/147626990/>
- <https://www.pinterest.ie/pin/845058317554247576/>
- Images not referenced from SIREN Films 2019/2020 subscription @ Mary Immaculate College
- Images of books referenced in Reference List.

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**Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith**

# Agency and Flexibility in a Redeveloped Primary School Curriculum

**Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith**

*Director of Education & Research, INTO*



Irish National Teachers' Organisation  
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann



cooperation

activism  
collaboration  
learning  
autonomy  
altruism judgement  
discretion expert  
knowledge  
participation



# What is Agency?

A belief in one's capacity to effect change

The capacity to make a difference

Agency is about being able to choose between options and being able to judge which option is most desirable in the wider context of the purpose of education. It's about meeting curricular goals and meeting local need.

(Priestly, Biesta & Robinson, 2015)



# What influences Agency?

Individual histories and experiences

Culture

Structure

Environment

Purposes of Education and Curricular goals



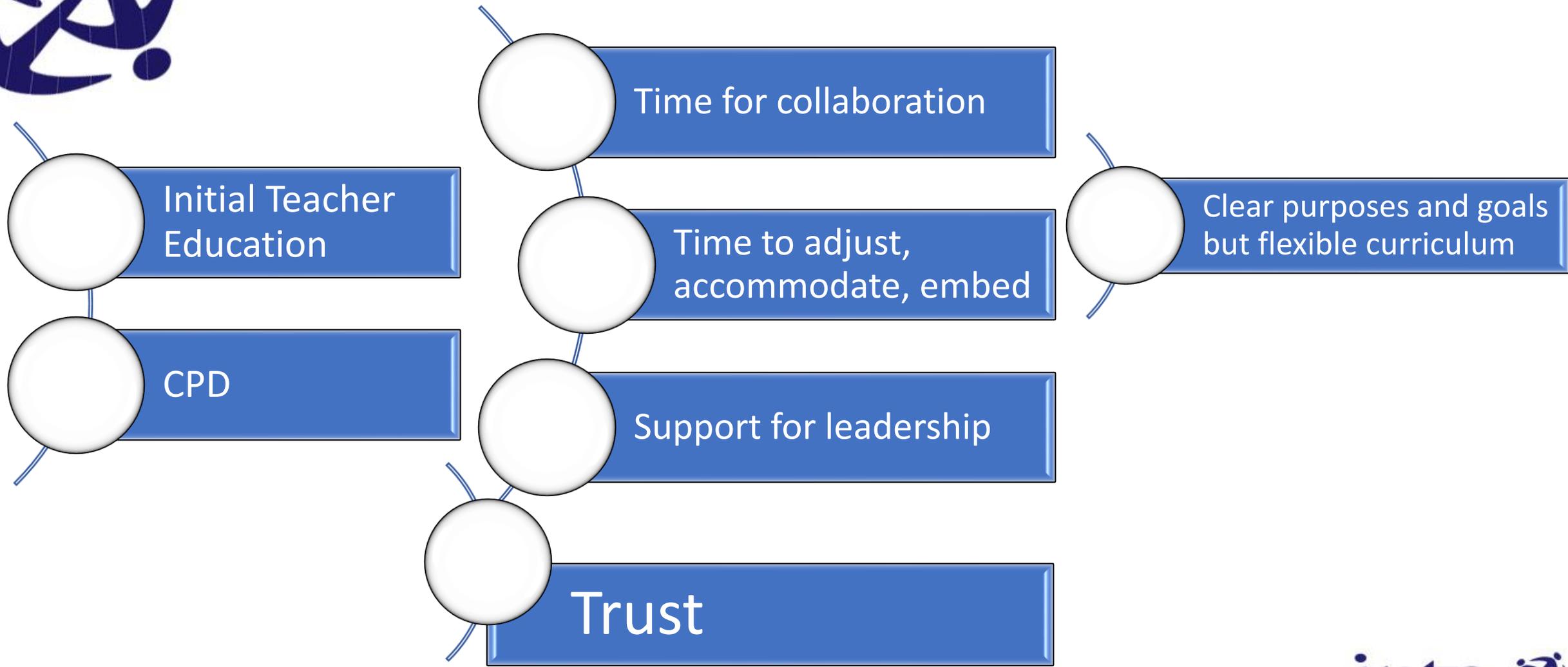
# Flexibility – Primary School Curriculum 1999

The curriculum outlines a detailed and structured framework of content that is comprehensive and **flexible**. (p.6)

The ability to think critically, to apply learning and to develop **flexibility** and creativity are also important factors in the success of the child's life. (p.7)

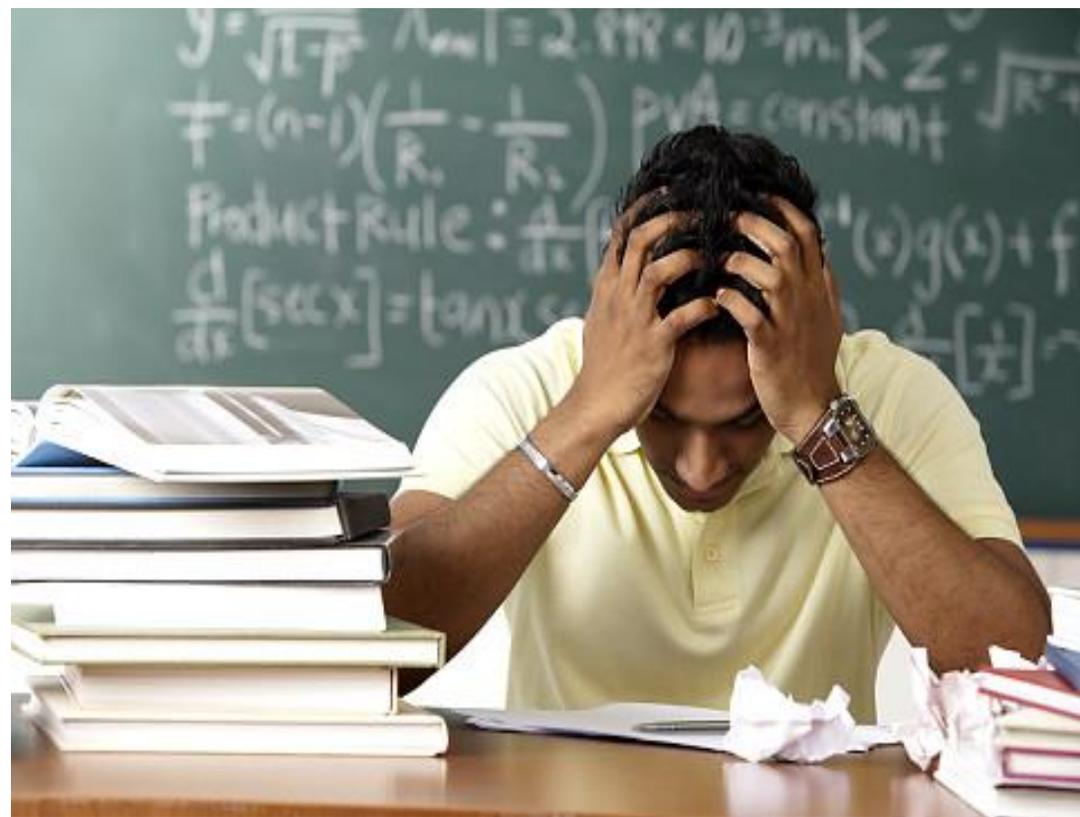
The curriculum offers the school and the teacher a **flexible** framework through which the learning requirements of all children may be addressed. (p.28)

A particularly important feature of the framework is the inclusion of a period of discretionary curriculum time. This affords the teacher and the school the **flexibility** to accommodate different school needs and circumstances and to provide for the differing aptitudes and abilities of the children it serves. (p. 68)





# Workload





“The most successful educating systems invest in developing their teacher as reflective, accomplished and enquiring professionals who are able to teach successfully in relation to current expectations, but who have the capacity to engage fully with the complexities of education and to be key actors in shaping and leading educational change”

(Donaldson, 2011, p.14)

*Go raibh maith agaibh*

*dnc@into.ie*

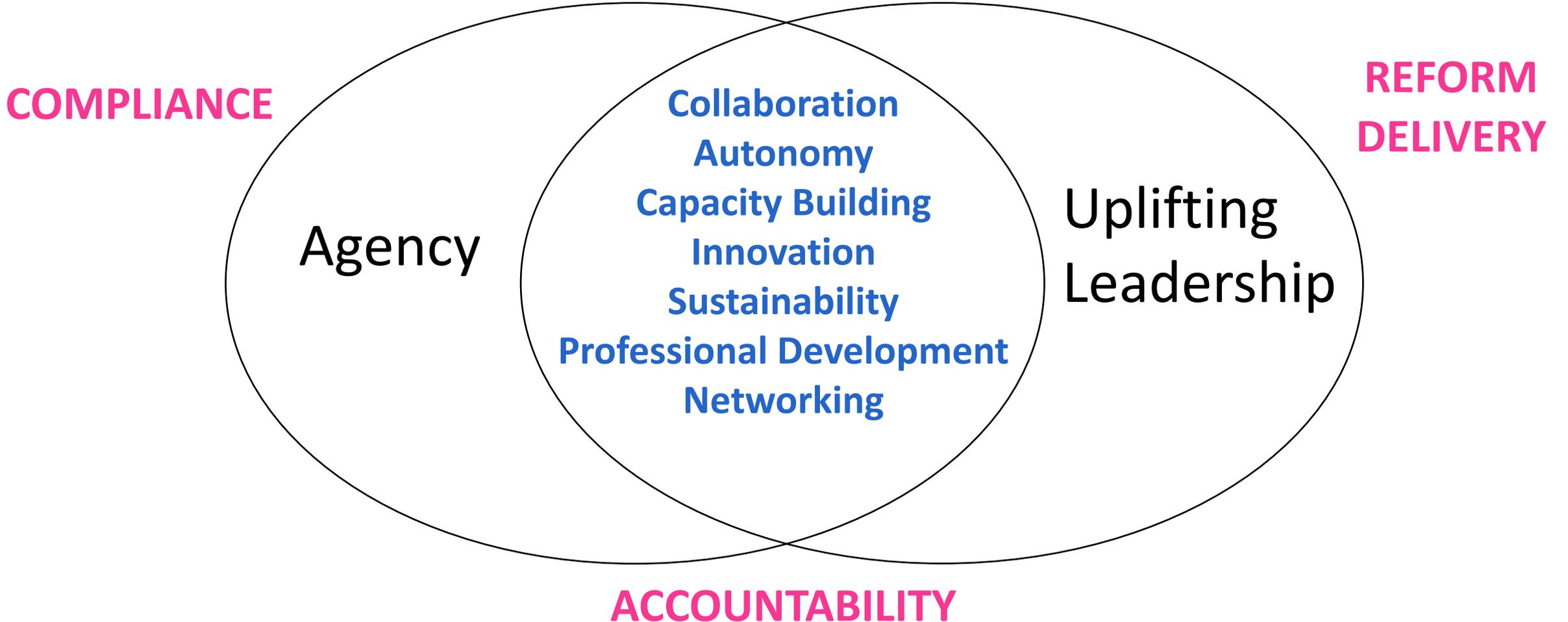
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# Pairic Clerkin

# Aligning Agency with Innovation and Uplifting Leadership



# Realising a vision for greater agency and flexibility in Irish primary schools





# Professional Development in a Redeveloped Primary School Curriculum

Ciara O'Donnell



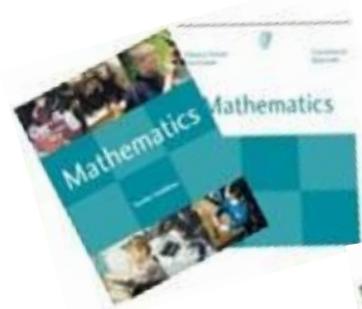
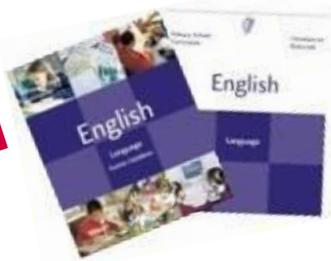
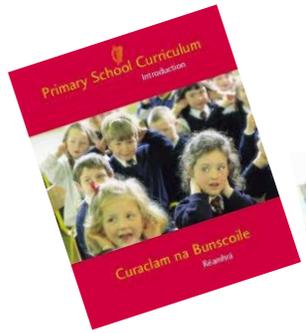
Professional Development Service for Teachers | An tSeirbhís um Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil do Mhúinteoirí



An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills

# Professional Learning and Development Supports

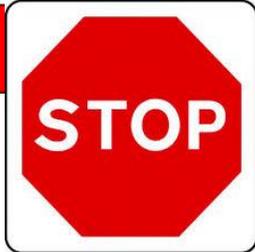
Ciara O' Donnell  
25<sup>th</sup> February 2020



2000

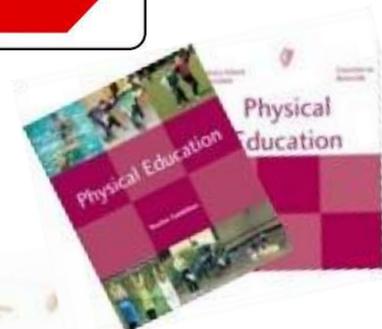
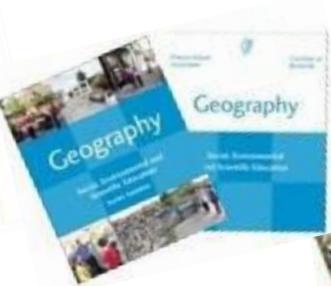


2004



2007

reform-saturation... potentially debilitating to efforts at further curriculum support and implementation'. ( Murchan et al. 2005)



# Back then : Professional Development

Of its time : Training events, isolated, subject centred, mainly transmissive in nature ( PCSP)

Follow up with in school facilitative planning ( SDPS)

2003 - PCSP Regional Curriculum Support Service – Cuiditheoireacht - facilitative and contextualised

Primary Professional Development Service : PCSP/ SPDS - Cuiditheoireacht – extended to include supports for DEIS 2007-2010

PDST – Literacy and Numeracy – cascade provision

# What was learned

- Overly ambitious roadmap (Murchan, Loxley & Johnston, 2009).
- “...the CPD provided by the support service (PCSP) was a success generally, but the evidence points to being more successful at information-giving than changing practice, something that is consistent with earlier evidence regarding short-term out-of-school courses” (Sugrue , 2011: 803)
- Over-reliance on episodic training models and a lack of contextualised learning settings (Granville, 2004; Loxley *et al.*, 2007; Conway *et al.*,2009).
- “...there is need for more school-based CPD, particularly in order to overcome the documented limitations of short out-of-school courses”  
(Sugrue,2011: 803)

## Where PD was found to be a lever for effective change

The continuous support from the Regional Curriculum Support Programme (RCSS) from 2003 promoted professional development as an integral part of teaching where curriculum implementation is an **ongoing process of improvement**. The report states that the introduction of a **sustained support model** enabled teachers to use the support in a developmental way, working with the Cuiditheoir over a period. The results showed that both teachers and Cuiditheoirí considered sustained support, as opposed to once-off interventions as the most effective approach. Teachers were more inclined to engage more fully when they knew that there was a follow-up visit to be made (DE Paor, 2007: 7-8)

## Where PD was found to be a lever for effective change

Sustained support has provided support to schools in a developmental way. This work in DEIS schools has **increased school capacity for self-improvement**. Teacher reaction is very positive. The service has affirmed teachers and has helped to **increase collaboration between teachers**. Class Modelling has had the greatest impact, especially **in a repeat visit or sustained support context**. A strong impact on teachers' curriculum implementation, whole-school implementation, and children's learning was also reported ( Weir & Archer,2011)

# Now – a different ask

Learning Outcomes, Broad areas of Learning , Competencies

Curriculum is not a product – e.g. a document, or scheme of work

Views curriculum as **social practice**, rather than as a list of content to be taught

Teachers as professional curriculum makers

- Viewing knowledge differently
- Viewing pedagogy differently
- Viewing assessment differently

62 The role of current system dynamics as barriers and drivers to curriculum making

## And so ....

Teachers need to be supported and resourced to engage in meaningful curriculum development processes....detailed decisions will be made at this local level, rather than prescribed from above, and need to be clearly related to curricular purposes and learning outcomes (Priestley ,2016 : 10)

# Hallmarks of Effective Professional Development during reform

- Acknowledges the change and levels of readiness of schools
- Contextualised, Collective , Coherent,
- Sustained , incremental approaches over time
- Central Involvement of school leaders
- An assortment of professional learning supports



*(Joyce and Showers ,1988 ; Little, J. W. 2001 ; OECD ,2003 ;Borko, 2004; Cordingley et al, 2005; Timperley et al, 2007; Loxley, Murchan & Johnston, 2009 ; Mujis et al. 2014)*

# 2 .Contextualised , Coherent and Collective

## CPD support cannot be a one size fits all

School-based professional development aimed at serving the aim of school development and which often involve groups of teachers from the same school working jointly on a problem or developing a programme ( OECD, 2005)

“...embeds pedagogical ‘knowledge how’ “...*needed by teachers to enable them to address the context specific and unique characteristic of every class, pupil, school...*”(McIntyre, 2005:359).

Professional development should form a meaningful piece **of a broader range of opportunities** for teacher learning and development (Desimone et al., 2002)

Opportunities for **collaborative and collective sharing of experiences** , reflection, professional conversations joint problem solving and grass roots problem solving

# approaches over time

- 
- Sustained support involves various forms of **deeper transformational modes of teacher professional learning** aimed at **building internal capacity** and enabling schools to drive and embed change as **independent communities of learners ( PDST, 2016)**
- By engaging in an iterative, collective process of professional inquiry, teachers and schools can begin to ***transform practice*** and ***improve student outcomes and learner experiences***. Sustained support as a model moves ***beyond a series of CPD ‘events’*** or workshops. It focuses on ***enablement***, countering the emergence of a dependency culture, through ***empowering*** schools to problem-solve and to draw on their own expertise within their own school context. ( PDST, 2018)

# Leadership for Curriculum Change

PDST Misneach

School based  
support

PDST Forbairt

PDST Tánaiste

PDST Comhar

# Sustained School Support

- ✓ Support for schools IN their schools
- ✓ Conceived and developed by their needs and those of the pupils
- ✓ Allows for true professional growth – awareness / autonomy/ agency/ experimentation/reflection and honing of practice
- ✓ Enables and builds internal capacity

## What can it look like ?

- Working with whole staffs
- Working with groups of teachers
- Working with school leaders (Principals, Deputy Principals, Middle Leaders)
- In-class modelling of pedagogical approaches



# CPD – Forms / Models

Purpose of Model	Examples of models of CPD which may fit within this category
Transmissive	Training models Deficit models Cascade model
Malleable	Award-bearing models Coaching/mentoring models Community of practice models
Transformative	Collaborative professional inquiry models

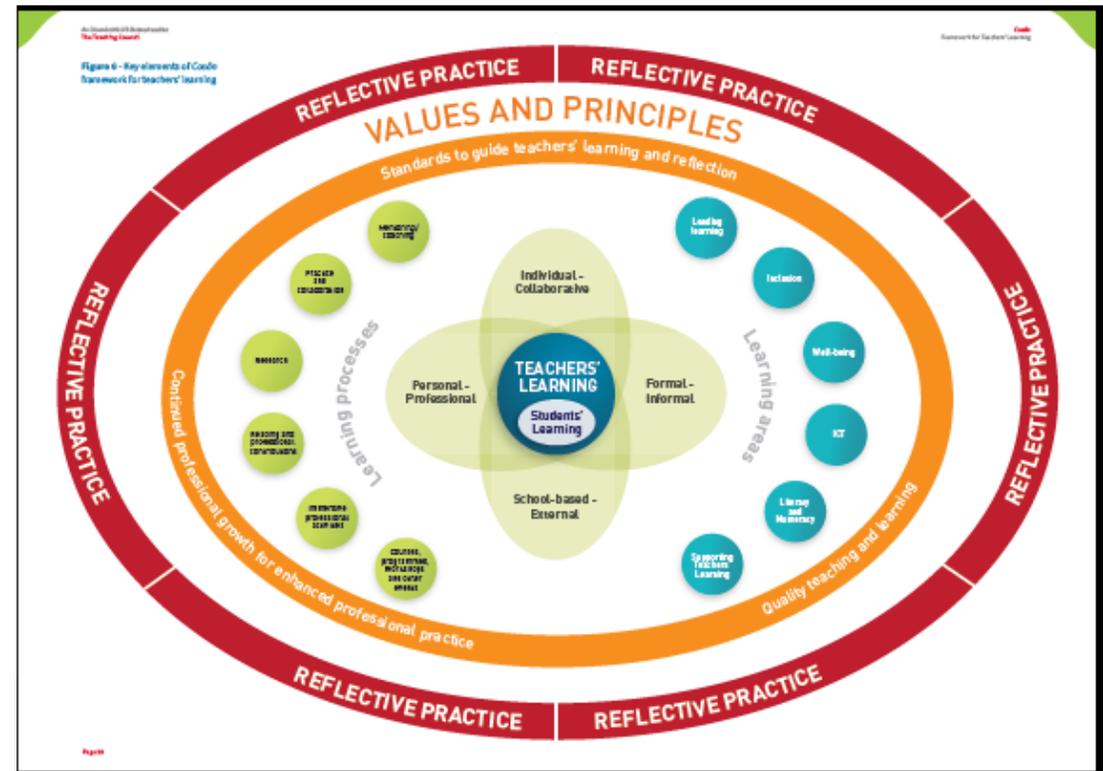
Increasing capacity for professional autonomy and teacher agency

↓

- Kennedy (2005:247); “Is the fundamental purpose of CPD to provide a means of transmission or to facilitate transformative practice?”

Kennedy, 2005, 2014

# 5. An assortment of professional learning opportunities



## A Final Word

The development of a systematic approach to curriculum change in tandem with learning outcomes has clear implications for the framing of policy at a macro-level, the role of meso-level policy development agencies, and practitioners engaging in school-based curriculum development at a micro-level (Preistley, 2016: 4)



# Panel discussion



# Plans for Future Engagement

Patrick Sullivan

# Dotmocracy activity

Timing and pacing

Securing Resources

Feasibility and Capacity building

Policy Alignment

Leadership

OTHER?



**If we were to collaborate successfully, what would we be doing and what would be the outcome?**

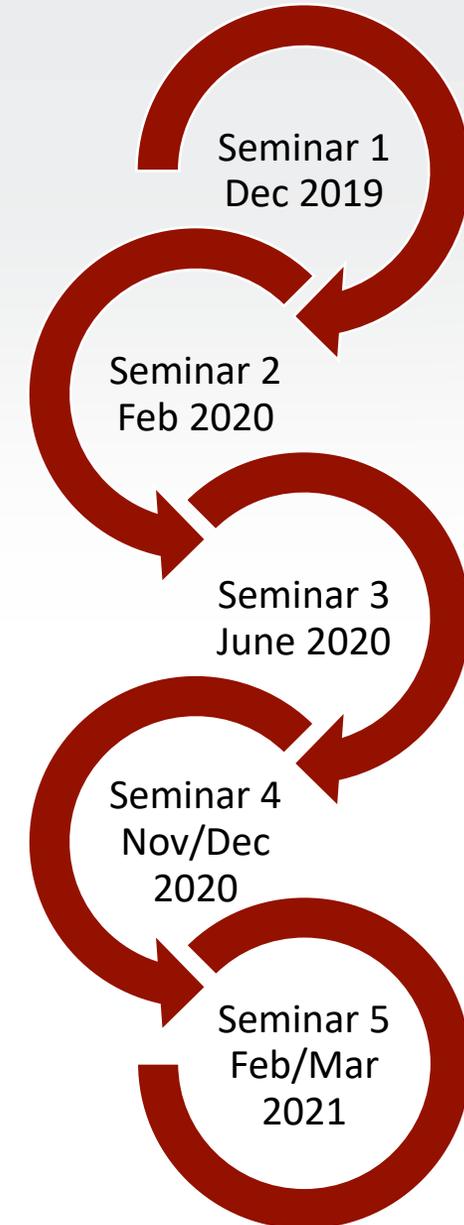


# Seminar series

Sustained engagement

Participant-led

Evolving





**Thank You!**

Event contact:  
[patrick.sullivan@ncca.ie](mailto:patrick.sullivan@ncca.ie)