

Tuesday, 28 February 2012

IMPORTANT POINTS RE LAUNCH OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME AND WEBSITE, 5TH MARCH 2012

- The Instructional Leadership Programme is a unique teacher-focused professional development programme in Ireland.
- The project has its origins in a series of seminars delivered by the world-renowned Canadian educationalist, Professor Barrie Bennett, to a group of 150 teachers and school leaders from the vocational school sector in March 2009.
- Professor Bennett was brought to Ireland by the Irish Vocational Education Association to work with teachers on ideas relating to fostering excellence in teaching and learning.
- His main areas of interest relate to the notion of instructional intelligence. This involves thinking about how teachers acquire an instructional repertoire of skills, tactics and strategies and how they wisely draw on that repertoire so as to affect student learning.
- The workshops, under the banner of the IVEA-led Instructional Leadership Programme, encouraged Irish teachers to acquire a language which they could use to classify their actions and interventions in the classroom and which would then enable them to articulate their practice and critique their methodologies.
- The workshops also focused on international research into effective classroom practice and how students learn.
- The reaction to the workshops was very positive. Teachers acquired an enhanced understanding of the power of various classroom skills, tactics and strategies. They were also more aware of how the wise selection of appropriate interventions could affect student learning for the better.
- Such was the success of this programme of workshops that two more cohorts of teachers were facilitated to participate in these programmes of workshops. This

time, teachers from community/ comprehensive and voluntary schools joined as well.

- The training has now reached some 400 teachers but they have in turn returned to their schools and colleges to acquaint other teachers with some aspects of the programme.
 - A national steering committee has also been formed, chaired by Ms Joan Russell, CEO of Co Cork VEC. This committee has refined thinking on instructional intelligence in the Irish context and has developed a programme of modules which teachers can access and use in their own school settings. A website, www.instructionalleadership.ie, has also been developed which will evolve into a repository of resources, lesson plans and video links focused on these key modules.
 - Key principles underpinning the Instructional Leadership Programme are very much in keeping with important policy developments led by Education and Skills Minister Ruairi Quinn TD. Such themes as promoting school self-evaluation, improving achievement in literacy and numeracy, enhancing the initial teacher education experience and improving the student learning experience at junior cycle require teachers to adopt a meaningfully reflective practice and to critically examine their thinking and actions in the classroom.
 - The Steering Committee of the programme at national level and the IVEA itself are pleased that Minister Quinn recognises the importance of the programme and will officially launch it and the website on Monday 5th March 2012 at a ceremony in the Mount Wolseley Hotel in Tullow.
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