

Civic, Social and Political Education

Report on Survey of Principals and Teachers

**to
NCCA**

**Nexus Research
Co-operative**

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NEXUS

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1 SURVEY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

A function of the review of CSPE is to collect baseline information on the operation of CSPE in schools. The survey of schools forms a central element of the monitoring and review of CSPE.

The main focus of the principals survey was on the implementation of CSPE and its implications for the school.

The principals' questionnaire comprised a range of pre-coded and open-ended questions covering the following themes:

- School profile (school type, gender mix, junior cycle enrolment etc);
- Organisational and resource implications of running CSPE;
- Situation of CSPE in the school;
- Need for follow through to CSPE at senior cycle.

The teachers' questionnaire comprised a range of pre-coded and open-ended questions covering the following issues:

- Teaching experience and qualifications;
- degree of involvement in teaching CSPE in 1st, 2nd, 3rd year;
- experience of in-service and support for CSPE.
- use and effectiveness of teaching methodologies;
- views and experiences of CSPE syllabus;
- need for follow through subject at Senior Cycle;
- impact of CSPE on students;
- experience of Action Project
- evaluation of broader CSPE related issues.

The questionnaire was posted to a representative sample of 300 second level schools. An explanatory covering letter to principals accompanied the questionnaire. The survey was posted out to schools in April 2002.

2 RESPONSE TO SURVEY

The following points summarise the response to the survey of principals and of teachers, both in terms of number of schools responding and the numbers of principals and CSPE teachers responding.

- 158 schools returning both principals' and teachers' questionnaires representing a 53% school response rate;
- 188 schools returning only principals' questionnaire representing a 63% principals' response rate;
- 580 CSPE teachers returning questionnaire representing a 33% CSPE teachers' response rate;
- 58 Schools returning neither principals nor teachers' questionnaire representing a 19% school non-response rate.

These response rates, both from principals and teachers are very high for a postal survey without follow-up.

3 PRINCIPALS' SURVEY

3.1 PROFILE OF SCHOOLS

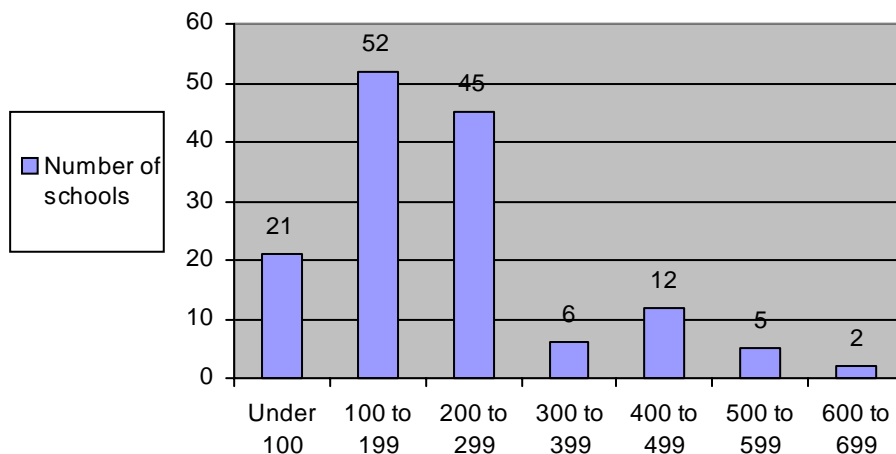
Some 60% of the schools were co-educational, 16% single-sex male and 34% single sex female schools.

Crosstabulation of school type by gender mix (principals' survey)

School type	School gender mix			Total
	Male	Female	Co-educational	
Secondary	28 25.5%	45 40.9%	37 33.6%	110 100.0%
Vocational		1 2.0%	50 98.0%	51 100.0%
Community	1 5.6%		17 94.4%	18 100.0%
Comprehensive	1 11.1%		8 88.9%	9 100.0%
Total	30 16.0%	46 24.5%	112 59.6%	188 100.0%

The schools had an average of 243 Junior Cycle students each. The distribution of responding schools by enrolment size is given in the following table.

Total Junior Cycle Enrolment by School



Just over a quarter of the schools had designated disadvantaged area status. (About one third of vocational, community or comprehensive schools.)

Crosstabulation of school type by whether designated disadvantaged area school

School type	Designated disadvantaged area school?		Total
	Yes	No	
Secondary	19 17.3%	91 82.7%	110 100.0%
Vocational	20 39.2%	31 60.8%	51 100.0%
Community	7 38.9%	11 61.1%	18 100.0%
Comprehensive	3 33.3%	6 66.7%	9 100.0%
Total	49 26.1%	139 73.9%	188 100.0%

Some 60% of schools had student councils, though the percentage it is notably lower in vocational schools.

Crosstabulation of school type by whether school has students' council

School type	Have students' council?		Total
	Yes	No	
Secondary	72 66.7%	36 33.3%	108 100.0%
Vocational	21 41.2%	30 58.8%	51 100.0%
Community	13 72.2%	5 27.8%	18 100.0%
Comprehensive	7 77.8%	2 22.2%	9 100.0%
Total	113 60.8%	73 39.2%	186 100.0%

3.2 TIME ALLOCATION TO CSPE

As evident from the following table, the vast majority of schools allocate 35-45 minutes per week (a single class period) to CSPE. Only two schools were adopting a modular approach to timetabling CSPE.

Time allocation to CSPE

Time allocation	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year
35-45 minutes per week for full year	176	178	175
60-90 minutes per week for full year	6	3	6
Other arrangement	1	1	3
35-45 minutes for 10 weeks	1	1	0

3.3 ORGANISATIONAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF CSPE

Principals were asked to comment on the organisational and resource implications of implementing CSPE in their school under a number of headings.

A) STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

The implications of CSPE on staffing are summarised in the following table.

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on staffing (categorised)

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on staffing (categorised)	Frequency	Valid Percent
Difficulty in finding staff willing to teach CSPE	57	41.0
No problems/difficulties	38	27.3
Lack of suitably qualified/trained staff	11	7.9
CSPE requires more teachers	5	3.6
Difficult - but nature of difficulty not specified	4	2.9
Adverse effects on other subjects/class time	4	2.9
Assign History/Geography teachers to CSPE	4	2.9
Teacher given CSPE class that they have for other subject	3	2.2
Re-assignment of Civics teachers	3	2.2
Rely on small number of motivated teachers	3	2.2
New teacher appointed	3	2.2
Staff with 'spare' time used	2	1.4
One teacher with responsibility for CSPE	1	.7
Need for more in-service/training	1	.7
Total	139	100.0
No information	49	
Total	188	

Though just over one quarter of principals reported no problems or difficulties, the single most common difficulty cited was the difficulty in finding staff willing to teach CSPE. The lack of suitably trained or qualified staff was the next most common difficulty cited.

"In this school it tends to be the younger, newer teachers who are most interested in CSPE. Often these are the very teachers who want to do things like LCA, TY coordination. So you are pulling out of the same people all the time. Older teachers who often have space on their timetable are just not interested."

B) ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The organisational implications of CSPE on timetabling are summarised in the table below. Though almost a third of principals reported no problems, 'curriculum

overload' was cited as a problem by the same number of principals. While this refers to a problem with the junior cycle curriculum as a whole rather than to something that is due specifically to CSPE, the taking of class time by CSPE from other subjects is cited by 15% of the principals who commented on this issue. An indicative comment was:

"I did manage to fit in the subject, though the timetable was overcrowded already."

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on timetabling issues (categorised)

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on timetabling issues (categorised)	Frequency	Valid Percent
No problems/difficulties	46	30.3
Curriculum/timetable overload	46	30.3
Period/time taken from other subjects	23	15.1
Difficulty in finding suitable teachers who are available	13	8.6
Difficulties of timetabling single class per week	9	5.9
Timetable CSPE with teacher that has class for other subject	7	4.6
Allocated time as per old Civics course	6	3.9
Meeting time difficult/impossible to find	2	1.3
Total	152	100.0
No information	36	
Total	188	

C) RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Just over two-thirds of principals who commented reported no particular problems or difficulties with respect to the implementation of CSPE on school resources. Some referred to shortages of course materials (texts, videos). The difficulty of getting teachers to take CSPE was again raised.

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on resources (categorised)

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on resources (categorised)	Frequency	Valid Percent
No problems/difficulties	83	68.0
Scarce/scant resources	14	11.5
More resource materials - texts, videos	10	8.2
Need for co-ordinator/post of responsibility	4	3.3
Difficult to get teachers to take CSPE	3	2.5
Lack of space	3	2.5
Photocopying costs	2	1.6
Teaching/meeting time	2	1.6
Need for more in-service/training	1	.8
Total	122	100.0
No information	66	
Total	188	

D) IMPLICATIONS OF CSPE IN-SERVICE

Considering issues relating to CSPE in-service, as evident from the table below, the main issues raised tend to relate to knock-on effects and problems of in-service happening during the school day (e.g. loss of teaching time, problems providing substitution cover).

"Disrupts the term - but appears to be very worthwhile."

"Satisfactory, except of course the general problem of substitution."

But this is a problem of in-service in general rather than something particular to CSPE.

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on in-service (categorised)

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on in-service (categorised)	Frequency	Valid Percent
No problems/difficulties	43	29.5
Disruptive because happens during school day	27	18.5
Problems of substitution cover	23	15.8
Teachers are released to attend in-service	17	11.6
Need for more in-service/training	17	11.6
Reduced teaching/class contact time	15	10.3
Some teachers unwilling to train for CSPE	4	2.7
Total	146	100.0
No information	42	
Total	188	

E) SPACE/ ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS

For most principals, there were no particular space or accommodation problems arising from the implementation of CSPE. A lack of storage space (for project materials) and a lack of non-classroom space was mentioned by a few principals.

"Resources are not so much a difficulty- it's just getting the time to use them and accommodation to store them."

"Classes are held in normal classrooms. The storing of projects is difficult."

**Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on space & accommodation
(categorised)**

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on space & accommodation (categorised)	Frequency	Valid Percent
No problems/difficulties	96	81.4
Lack of storage space	7	5.9
Lack of non-classroom space for active learning	7	5.9
Additional classrooms required	3	2.5
School suffers from general lack of space	5	4.2
Total	118	100.0
No information	70	
Total	188	

F) PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Finding time for planning meetings for CSPE presents problems for almost half the principals commenting on this issue.

"It is extremely difficult to find time within each school day, even with substitution cover."

"There's no formal structure for these meetings."

Timetabled meetings for CSPE are the exception. In many cases it is up to the CSPE teachers to organise meetings in their own time. Again this is an issue not particular to CSPE.

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on planning and co-ordination meetings (categorised)

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on planning and co-ordination meetings (categorised)	Frequency	Valid Percent
Difficult/impossible to find time for meetings	69	45.7
No problems/difficulties	25	16.6
Teachers meet in their own time	22	14.6
No/virtually no meetings held	14	9.3
Responsibility of co-ordinator	5	3.3
Time allowed/assigned for meetings	4	2.6
Included as part of regular staff/faculty meetings	4	2.6
Meetings timetabled	3	2.0
Meetings must take place outside school hours	3	2.0
Difficulties in assigning co-ordinator	2	1.3
Total	151	100.0
No information	37	
Total	188	

G) ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Finally, principals were asked to comment on any other organisational or resource issues arising from CSPE. Only a minority of principals raised issues under this heading, mainly relating to the difficulty in getting teachers to take CSPE.

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on other issues (categorised)

Organisation/resource implications of CSPE on other issues (categorised)	Frequency	Valid Percent
None	8	22.2
Difficulty in getting teachers to take CSPE	8	22.2
Increased workload for teachers	3	8.3
Negative impact on other subject teaching time	4	11.1
Students not motivated to engage in CSPE	2	5.6
Does not justify a separate/exam subject	4	11.1
Not sufficient teaching time allocated	5	13.9
Lack of planning/co-ordination time	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0
No information	152	
Total	188	

CONCLUSIONS ON RESOURCE AND ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING CSPE

The main conclusion relates to the difficulties principals encounter in finding staff willing and suitably trained to teach CSPE. Most of the other implications, such as curriculum overload and the knock-on effects of in-service during the school day, are not particular to the implementation of CSPE in itself.

3.3 ALLOCATION OF TEACHERS TO CSPE

Principals were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with three statements concerning the allocation of teachers to CSPE. Their responses are presented in the following table.

**Considering the allocation of teachers to CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond to the situation in your school:
(Principals responses)**

Statement	Yes, Definitely ✓	Yes, Probably ✓	Probably Not ✓	Definitely Not ✓
1) Teachers who express an interest in the subject are allocated to CSPE	53.6%	39.3%	6.0%	1.1%
2) CSPE teachers are allocated to class groups that they also have for another subject	23.7%	62.1%	12.4%	1.7%
3) The same teacher is allocated to the same class for the three years of the CSPE course	32.2%	51.1%	15.0%	1.7%

Over half of the principals indicated that teachers who expressed an interest in the subject were definitely allocated to CSPE. However the level of agreement with the other two statements is not as strong.

The principals' comments on these statements, summarised in the following table, suggest that the decision to allocate teachers to CSPE is constrained by a number of

factors, most prominently the fact that insufficient numbers of teachers express an interest in teaching CSPE.

Principals comments on the allocation of teachers to CSPE (categorised)

Comment on allocation of teachers to CSPE (categorised)	Frequency	Valid Percent
Insufficient teachers express interest in CSPE	26	24.8
Try to assign teacher they have for other subject	21	20.0
Cannot always assign teacher they have for other subject	16	15.2
Teachers with 'spare' time allocated to CSPE	11	10.5
Geography/History/English teacher assigned to CSPE	10	9.5
Staff turnover presents continuity problems	8	7.6
No specific problems/difficulties raised	6	5.7
One class per week awkward to timetable/low status	4	3.8
One/two teachers specialise in CSPE	3	2.9
Total	105	100.0
No information	83	
Total	188	

For some principals CSPE is assigned to teachers with unfilled slots in their timetable.

"CSPE is allocated to teachers who have spare capacity on their timetable."

"Teachers with time when their classes are allocated are considered for CSPE."

"Teachers may not be confident or interested in teaching CSPE, but find themselves faced with it out of the need to have the subject covered on the timetable."

"CSPE is a stand alone subject. Younger teachers appear to be timetabled for this more than senior established teachers. When timetabling is tight, CSPE is slotted in after other subjects requiring more time per week."

The practices of other principals are informed by the fact that few teachers volunteer to teach CSPE.

"Not many teachers express interest in CSPE."

"Only a small number of teachers are interested in teaching CSPE."

"My impression is that many of the teachers who teach CSPE experience it as somewhat of a burden. It is felt that many of the issues dealt with in CSPE were being well addressed previously."

Teachers timetabled for a class for certain other subjects may be approached by the principal to take on CSPE.

"Teacher who has the class group for History/Geography is asked to take the CSPE with that class group. If these teachers are not available on timetable for this class in 2/3 year, class may be assigned to a different teacher."

"CSPE mostly covered by History/English teachers."

"The Geography teachers take CSPE."

A reluctance on the part of some teachers to take the subject into 3rd year presents principals with another constraint.

"Increasingly made difficult to find teachers to teach the subject. Some prefer not to take it into 2nd or 3rd year. Therefore not always possible to have same teacher for 3 years."

"It takes a very experienced CSPE teacher to pick up a class successfully in 3rd year. Only new teachers have some CSPE in H.Dip."

However, despite these obstacles, some principals consider it very important to only allocate teachers to CSPE who have an interest in the subject.

"A big effort is made to use only the teachers who are interested in teaching CSPE and it will not be allocated to a teacher simply to fill up their hours or because no one else is available. As far as possible a teacher who takes a first year group will bring that group along for three years."

This provides flexibility which can be useful.

"It is not possible for a teacher to complete the programme unless they have flexibility of swapping occasionally between subjects which they teach the group. It is very difficult to establish a meaningful professional relationship with pupils who a teacher meets only once a week."

Some principals make efforts to ensure the teacher has the class group for a subject other than CSPE.

"We aim to give a teacher a class for which he/she has another subject- that happens for 2/3 of the classes in JC. We definitely try to have the same teacher remain with the class for the 3 years. It's easier if they are with the class for another subject."

Efforts may also be made to keep the same teacher with the class over the three years.

"We try to allocate CSPE to teachers interested in teaching the subject and where possible a teacher will hold the one group for 3 years."

But while desirable this is not always possible.

"Ideally teachers have them for another subject and continue. Not always practicable if staff changes or there is an increase in senior requirements which take experienced teachers out of junior classes."

"When staff are not permanent it is not possible to allocate teacher to class group for 3 years."

3.4 SUPPORT FOR AND RESOURCING OF CSPE

Principals were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with three statements concerning the support for and resourcing of CSPE in their school. Their responses to the statements are summarised in the following table.

Considering the management and co-ordination of CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond to the situation in your school (Principals responses)

Statement	Yes, Definitely ✓	Yes, Probably ✓	Probably Not ✓	Definitely Not ✓
1) Two teachers are always released for out-of-school in-service training	49.5%	36.8%	9.3%	4.4%
2) CSPE is timetabled to avoid avoids poor time-slots, e.g. the last class of the day	33.9%	28.8%	21.5%	15.8%
3) CSPE planning meetings are facilitated in the school	24.3%	38.1%	27.6%	9.9%
4) There is support from school management for active learning methodologies appropriate to CSPE	68.5%	29.3%	1.6%	0.5%

On the face of it, there is strong practical support from principals for CSPE. Almost half the responding principals were strongly supportive of releasing two teachers for CSPE in-service. Support is also strongly expressed by principals for active learning methodologies appropriate for CSPE. But in the case of facilitation of planning meetings and the avoidance of poor timetabling slots the support is not as apparent.

The bulk of the comments made by principals, summarised in the table below, relate to difficulties and frustrations in organising or providing for CSPE planning meetings.

Comment on support for and resourcing of CSPE in school (categorised)

Comment on support for and resourcing of CSPE in school (categorised)	Frequency	Valid Percent
No provision available for CSPE meetings/industrial dispute	21	30.4
CSPE timetabled like any other subject	16	23.2
Difficult/impossible to release 2 teachers for in-service	8	11.6
One 1/2 teachers involved in CSPE	6	8.7
Teachers released/encouraged to go in in-service	6	8.7
CSPE not taken seriously by teachers/management	5	7.2
CSPE planning meetings facilitated	3	4.3
CSPE must take whatever time slots available	2	2.9
CSPE co-ordinator in place	2	2.9
Total	69	100.0
No information/unclear answer	119	
Total	188	

As one principal explains, this is an endemic problem, not particular to CSPE, and one that has been exacerbated by the recent industrial relations climate.

"Planning time is a major issue in school management at this time. Courses such as JCSP, LCAP, LCVP, FETEC need planning time that is impossible to provide. The school year (167 days) is too short. Adequate days for planning on a meaningful basis must be provided. This can only be achieved by extending the school year with planning time built into it. It will have to be part of the productivity agreement negotiated between the unions and the DES."

"With an increasingly overloaded timetable, it is difficult to find time for faculty meetings of any description."

"It's a wonderful subject, but the week has only so many periods and between LCA, JCSP, special needs, SPHE etc. meetings- never mind planning meetings or where are we going meetings- it's very, very difficult to be fully supportive of them all and still keep parents happy with keeping students in school (i.e. not letting them home early due to meetings)"

Principals also refer to problems arising from having in-service during the school day.

"In-service (all) should take place on designated days to avoid disruption of school year and ensure entitlement to the students their right to be taught. The current system is overdue an overhaul and replacement."

"One teacher is always released and can inform the second teacher. Subs are impossible to get here."

If CSPE planning meetings happen, it is largely down to those teaching CSPE.

"Much of the planning is done by teachers after school as it has become impossible to release teachers for planning meetings during the school day."

"CSPE teachers tend to do their own thing. When co-operation is sought for anti-litter campaign or other, it is fully supported."

In a small number of cases it is clear that the value and role of CSPE as a subject has yet to be realised within the school.

"Overall value of the subject has yet to be established. This may cloud the support from management. However the subject is facilitated fairly in terms of timetabling and in-service release."

3.5 SITUATION OF CSPE IN THE SCHOOL

Principals were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with three statements concerning cross-curricular and broader issues relating to CSPE in their school. Their responses to the statements are summarised in the following table.

Considering cross-curricular and broader issues relating to CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond to the situation in your school (Principals responses)

Statement	Yes, Definitely ✓	Yes, Probably ✓	Probably Not ✓	Definitely Not ✓
1) CSPE teachers and teachers of other subjects are encouraged to work on collaborative projects	19.5%	47.6%	30.3%	2.7%
2) Other staff are briefed on the work of CSPE in the school	9.8%	31.1%	50.3%	8.7%
3) Parents are strongly urged to speak to the CSPE teacher at parent-teacher meetings	34.8%	29.3%	30.8%	5.0%

On the basis of these responses, a majority of responding principals are supportive in relation to encouraging collaborative work between CSPE and other teachers and hold that parents are encouraged to speak to CSPE teachers at parent-teacher meetings.

Follow-on comments from the principals on these statements indicates certain problems on the ground. A minority (31%) of principals made comments on this

question, with the most frequent comment relating to the current status of CSPE as a subject.

"CSPE is probably not taken as seriously as it is only allocated one class period per week and much of the work is thus disjointed."

"Many CSPE teachers see their role as merely filling a slot on the timetable. Parents do not value CSPE as a subject. Many students will not remain longer than 30 minutes in the JC exam."

"Parents don't regard CSPE as a full valid subject - yet!"

Issues relating to curriculum overload and lack of any provision for meeting or planning time within the school day arise again.

"While the aims and concepts referred to above are quite laudable, they do not reflect the reality of school life. In many ways CSPE has impaired an already overburdened and pressurised timetable and to expect activities suggested in 1) and 2) above to take place is considered unrealistic."

"Time for meetings and cross-curricular approaches are not possible in a crowded timetable. We cannot continue to try to shove in more and more initiatives (no matter how worthy they are) without the proper structure to carry them. Meetings, exams, in-service have to be catered for outside the teaching time."

"CSPE is seen as something that has to be done with the minimum amount of hassle, possible reason: curriculum overload."

In contrast to this, some principals seem taken aback that CSPE would be treated differently to any other subject.

"CSPE gets the same treatment as other subjects by teachers/parents etc."

"CSPE in our school is regarded on equal terms with all other subjects."

"CSPE is considered a subject full-stop! It gets the same recognition as other subjects. I do not believe in a hierarchy of subjects."

"CSPE is not singled out as a subject for discussion."

The briefing of other staff on CSPE may be problematic.

"While a few members of staff exhibit a high degree of commitment to the subject, others are hostile and do not wish to know about the subject or be involved in any way with it."

"Difficult to generate interest by other teachers, they have enough on their plate."

These meetings may be largely restricted to those staff teaching CSPE.

"CSPE tends to be the preserve of CSPE teachers. Teachers are aware of matters relating to CSPE but are not briefed on a formal basis."

In some cases briefing happens in relation to a specific event associated with CSPE.

"Briefing takes place on specific work, e.g. visitor or other action project."

"Projects that move outside the class are given a high profile. Visiting speakers are announced in school and welcomed on intercom with subject mentioned."

Collaboration and cross-curricular work may be limited for a number of reasons.

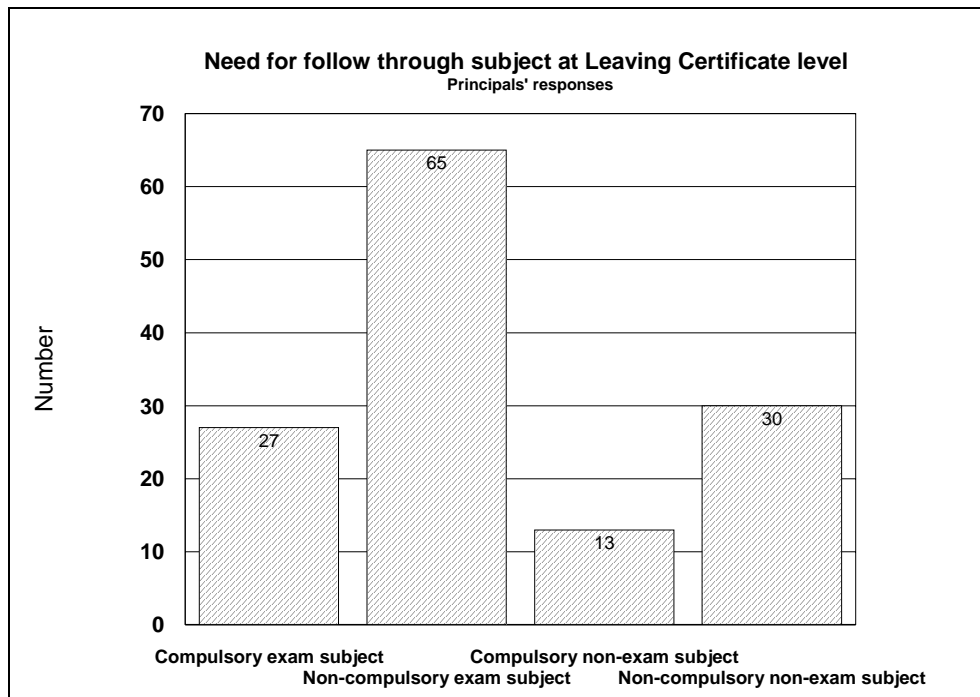
"Once again teaching is left to teachers. If they wish to collaborate on projects the decision is respected. Other staff are not briefed on the work of CSPE any more than they are briefed on the work of the Mathematics Department."

"There is a certain reluctance to get involved in cross-curricular teaching exacerbated by the industrial situation."

Many of the issues above relate to general problems of management and planning in a school. They also reflect the reality that internal subject planning and cross-curricular work are very underdeveloped and under-resourced in most schools.

3.6 NEED FOR FOLLOW THROUGH SUBJECT AT LEAVING CERTIFICATE LEVEL

Principals were asked to indicate whether they felt that a follow through subject at Leaving Certificate level would be necessary. Some 117 principals or 62% of all respondents expressed a need for some type of follow through subject. (Respondents could indicate more than one option, hence the total of answers is more than 117.)



This high level of support for a follow through subject at Leaving Certificate level represents a positive view of the role of the CSPE programme from the principals.

There was some support for the introduction of a compulsory exam or a compulsory non-exam subject at Leaving Certificate level (40 principals). The most favoured option however was a non-compulsory exam subject, open to all Leaving Certificate students (65 principals).

As evident from the table below, school type seems to have little bearing on the stated need for a follow through subject, except in the case of comprehensive schools.

Do you feel that there is a need for a follow through subject for CSPE by school type?

School Type	Number	%
Secondary	66	60%
Vocational	33	65%
Community	10	56%

Comprehensive	8	89%
Total	117	

Principals were then asked to indicate, from a number of options, the type of courses that would be appropriate. Their responses are summarised in the following table.

Which of the following courses would you recommend?

Course option	No.	% of Total	% of the 117 ¹
A full course in political education	23	12.2%	22.2%
A full course composed of modules such as sociology, politics, anthropology, philosophy	65	34.6%	55.6%
A short course similar to the CSPE at junior cycle	29	15.4%	24.8%
Other	3	1.6%	2.6%

Of the courses that principals expressed an interest in, a full course composed of modules such as sociology, politics, anthropology, philosophy was favoured by over one half (55.6%) of those principals who felt that a follow through subject at Leaving Certificate level would be necessary.

3.7 CONCLUSIONS TO PRINCIPALS' SURVEY

Some 188 principals returned the survey, a response rate of 63%. The schools had an average of 243 Junior Cycle students each. Just over one quarter of the schools had designated disadvantaged status.

Over 95% of schools allocate 35-45 minutes to CSPE per week.

CSPE is regarded as having the following resource and organisational impacts:

- Between one quarter and one third of principals indicate that there are little or no difficulties associated with *organising* CSPE.
- The single most common difficulty for principals in relation to *staffing* is related to finding staff willing to teach CSPE.
- Curriculum overload presents significant difficulties to principals in relation to *timetabling* the subject
- The implementation of CSPE presents few *resourcing* problems to the majority of principals
- The main issues raised relating to CSPE *in-service* tend to relate to knock-on effects and problems of in-service happening during the school day (e.g. loss of teaching time, problems of providing substitution cover).
- For most principals, there were no particular *space or accommodation* problems
- Finding time for *planning meetings* for CSPE presents problems for almost half the principals.

Over half of the principals indicated that teachers who expressed an interest in the subject were definitely allocated to CSPE. The decision to allocate teachers to CSPE is constrained by a number of factors, most prominently the fact that insufficient numbers of teachers express an interest in teaching CSPE.

1 Some 117 principals (62% of all respondents) felt that a follow through subject at Leaving Certificate level would be necessary.

Almost half the responding principals were strongly supportive of the release of two teachers for CSPE in-service. Principals strongly expressed their backing and that of school management in relation to supporting active learning methodologies appropriate to CSPE. But the support is not as apparent in the case of facilitation of planning meetings and the avoidance of poor timetabling slots.

A majority of responding principals are supportive in relation to encouraging collaborative work between CSPE and other teachers and hold that parents are encouraged to speak to CSPE teachers at parent-teacher meetings.

Principals are very supportive of a need for some type of follow through subject at Leaving Certificate level. There was some support for the introduction of a compulsory subject at Leaving Certificate level, however the most favoured option was a non-compulsory exam subject, open to all Leaving Certificate students.

4 TEACHERS' SURVEY

4.1 RESPONSE RATE TO THE SURVEY

In summary:

- The response rate in terms of schools responding to the teachers survey was 79%;
- Within the responding schools the response rate among the CSPE teachers was 40%, or a 33% response rate with respect to the total target population of CSPE teachers which includes schools where there were no questionnaires completed and returned;
- The response rate among CSPE teachers is somewhat higher in community and comprehensive schools compared to secondary schools and vocational schools.

The following three tables provide details of the response rate to the CSPE teachers survey in term of responding schools and teachers.

Number and percentage of CSPE teachers in survey target population and number of teachers responding to survey

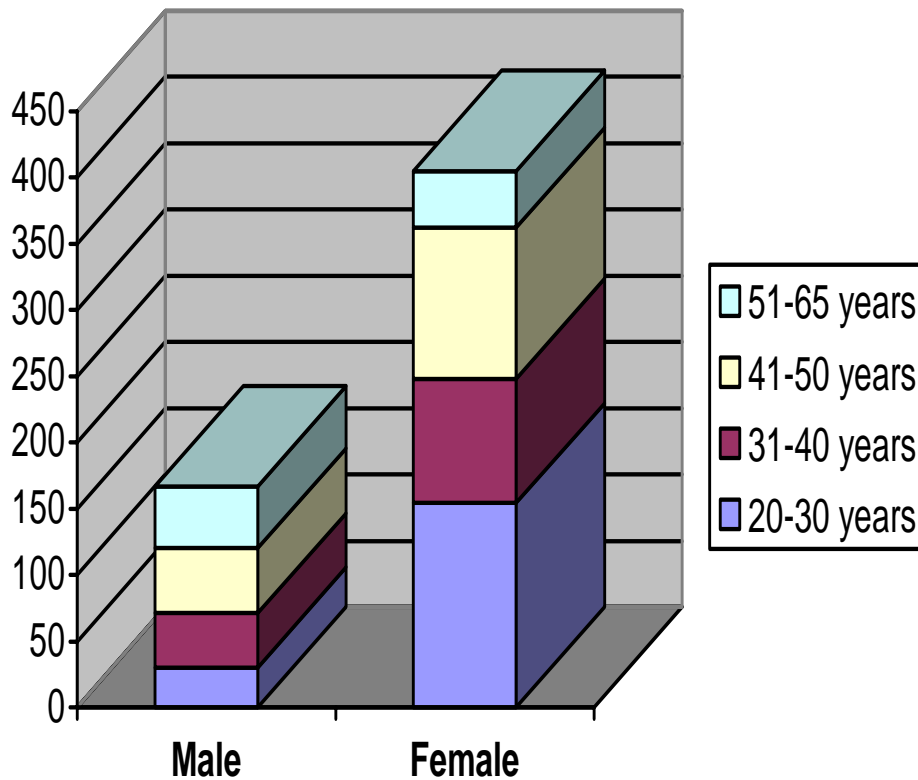
School type	Target	%	Number Responding	%	% Response rate
Secondary	1,099	61.7%	350	60.3%	32.8%
Vocational	377	36.9%	139	24.0%	36.9%
Community	227	25.6%	58	10.0%	25.6%
Comprehensive	79	41.8%	33	5.7%	41.8%
Total	1,782	100%	580	100%	32.5%
Number of schools	300	100%	237		79.0%

Given that there was no follow up to the survey the 33% response rate among CSPE teachers is very satisfactory. However it is important to note that the response rate from school to school varied widely.

4.2 TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS AND STATUS

The following chart shows the distribution of responding CSPE teachers by age and gender.

Distribution of responding CSPE teachers by age and gender

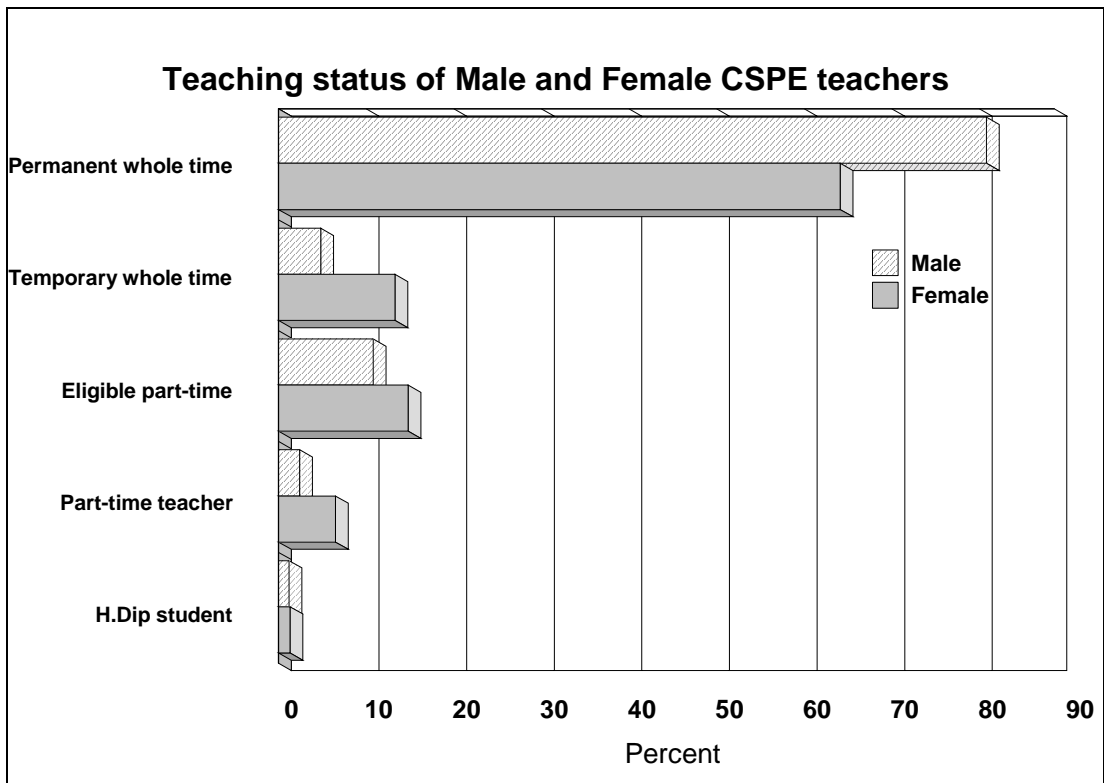


Over two-thirds of the responding CSPE teachers are female. The ratio of male to female teachers in the survey cohort is 1:2.4 (167 male teachers, 405 female teachers)². There are significantly more female CSPE teachers in the youngest age-group (18% of male teachers are aged 20 to 30 years, whereas 38% of female teachers are in the same age bracket). In contrast some 28% of male teachers are aged over 51 years, while 11% of female teachers are in this age group.

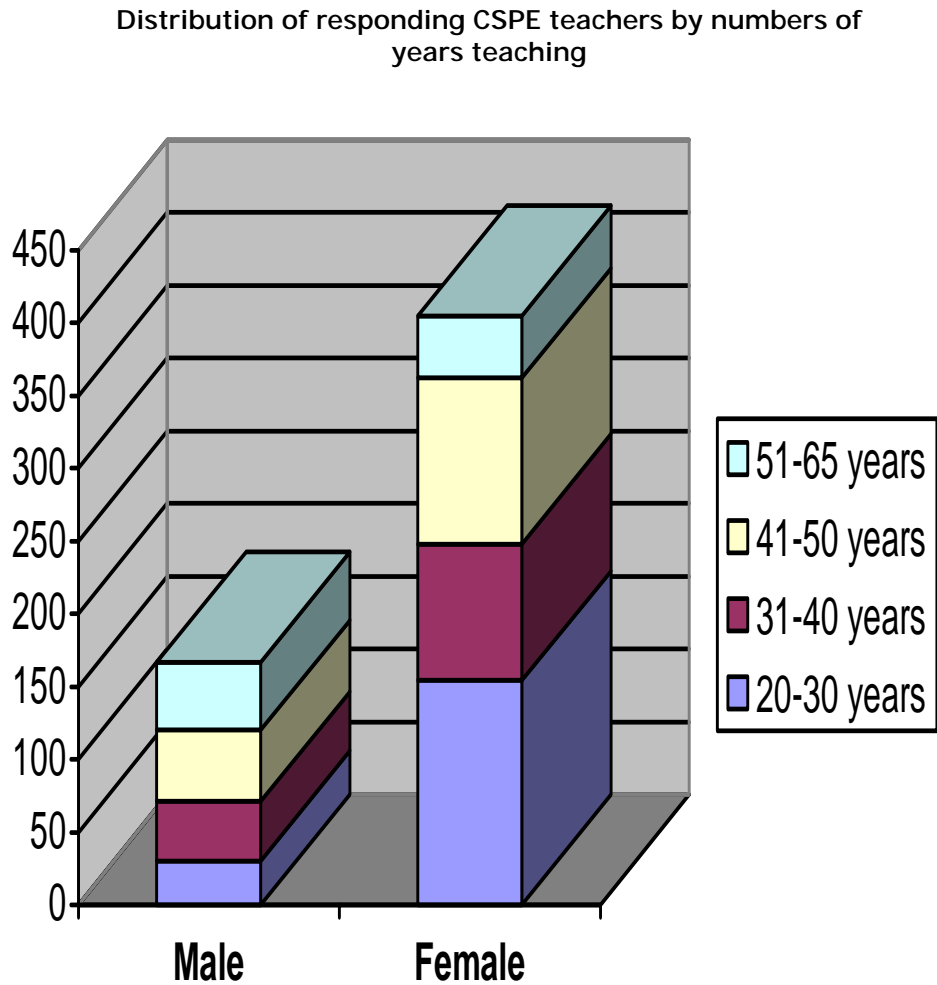
Differences are also evident in the distribution of current teaching status of CSPE teachers by gender. For example, the percentage of male CSPE teachers in permanent whole time employment is some twenty percentage points higher than for female CSPE teachers. This cannot be accounted for just by the higher proportion of female CSPE teachers in the youngest age-group, some of whom may be assumed to be in the early stages of career development.

2 For the academic year, 2000-2001, female teachers made up 58.2% of all post-primary teachers, male teachers 41.8%. The following table gives a breakdown of age of teachers in secondary and community and comprehensive schools.

Age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-70
Male	7.4%	24.7%	29.7%	31.3%	6.9%
Female	12.7%	36.0%	28.9%	18.8%	3.5%



These differences are also mirrored in the distribution of the number of years teaching in relation to gender. The following figure illustrates this distribution of CSPE teachers according to length of time teaching.



For female CSPE teachers the single largest category is the ‘1-5 years’ one, whereas for males it is the ‘20 years or more’ category. However the overall distribution appears to be ‘u-shaped’ with relatively low percentages in the middle ranges.

4.3 TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Three-quarters of CSPE teachers have arts degrees. There are relatively few CSPE teachers with commerce or science degrees.

Crosstabulation of teaching qualification - primary degree by gender

Teaching Qualification- Primary Degree - Categorized	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
B.A.	115 74.7%	289 74.9%	404 74.8%
B.Comm/BBS	7 4.5%	18 4.7%	25 4.6%
B.Sc	11 7.1%	21 5.4%	32 5.9%
B.Rel.Sc/B.Divinity/BA.Th	11 7.1%	24 6.2%	35 6.5%
B.Ed	3 1.9%	13 3.4%	16 3.0%
B.Mus		3 .8%	3 .6%
Diploma	2 1.3%	9 2.3%	11 2.0%
BA Phy.Ed.	1 .6%	4 1.0%	5 .9%
Other degree	4 2.6%	5 1.3%	9 1.7%
Total	154 100.0%	386 100.0%	540 100.0%

CSPE teachers have taken a wide range of final year subjects. History is the most common final year subject taken by male CSPE teachers (39%), followed by English (25%) and geography (22%). English is the most common final year subject taken by female CSPE teachers (30%), followed by history (26%), Irish (18%) and geography (16%).

Only a minority of teachers (26% of male teachers and 20% of female teachers) were pursuing what may be termed social science subjects (economics, sociology, politics or psychology).

Relatively few CSPE teachers took an elective course in CSPE as part of their pre-service training.

Crosstabulation of gender by whether took elective course in CPSE as part of in-service training

Take elective course in CPSE?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	4 6.9%	16 7.8%	20 7.6%
No	54 93.1%	188 92.2%	242 92.4%
Total	58 100.0%	204 100.0%	262 100.0%

a. Restricted to respondents with a maximum of 10 years teaching experience

A slightly larger number undertook the methods course in CSPE as part of their pre-service training, but the overall proportion is still small.

Crosstabulation of gender by whether took methods course in CPSE as part of in-service training

Took methods course in CSPE?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	5 8.6%	26 12.7%	31 11.8%
No	53 91.4%	178 87.3%	231 88.2%
Total	58 100.0%	204 100.0%	262 100.0%

a. Restricted to respondents with a maximum of 10 years teaching experience

In both cases, the percentage of female teachers opting for these options is higher than their male equivalents. This may well be due to the higher proportion of female teachers in the younger age-groups.

4.4 INITIATION TO TEACHING CSPE

Most CSPE teachers found that either they had a CSPE class on their timetable without being consulted or they were asked by the principal to take a CSPE class. In only about one fifth of cases did the teachers' appointment to the school include CSPE or the teacher asked to be given a CSPE class.

Crosstabulation of how first come to teach CSPE by gender

How first come to teach CSPE	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
I was given a CSPE class on my timetable	79 47.0%	201 49.8%	280 49.0%
I was asked by principal to take a CSPE class	59 35.1%	102 25.2%	161 28.1%
I asked to be given a CSPE class	18 10.7%	64 15.8%	82 14.3%
My appointment to school included CSPE	9 5.4%	28 6.9%	37 6.5%
Other means of coming to teach CSPE	3 1.8%	9 2.2%	12 2.1%
Total	168 100.0%	404 100.0%	572 100.0%

As the following table indicates, informal, peer to peer support was the main form of preparation for teaching CSPE. Just over a fifth of respondents indicated that they had participated in in-service as a form of preparation. However, this in-service training would generally have taken place in the years following their first experiences of teaching CSPE.

Initial preparations for teaching CSPE

Type of preparation	Number	%
1. Advice from colleagues	265	45.7%
2. Given the syllabus	186	32.1%
3. Attended in-service	131	22.6%
4. Given the books	99	17.1%
5. In-school induction	88	15.2%
6. No induction	59	10.2%
7. No advice	54	9.3%
8. Own preparations	26	4.5%
9. Preparations during College	21	3.6%
10. Meetings with CSPE team	10	1.7%
11. Involved in pilot	8	1.4%

As evident from the following table, about one fifth of the respondents were teaching CSPE for the first time, while nearly two-thirds had been teaching CSPE for less than three years. This suggests that there is a relatively high turnover of teachers taking CSPE.

Crosstabulation of number of years teaching CSPE by gender

Number of years teaching CSPE	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
1 year	34 20.4%	82 20.4%	116 20.4%
2 years	37 22.2%	83 20.7%	120 21.1%
3 years	38 22.8%	97 24.2%	135 23.8%
4 years	23 13.8%	56 14.0%	79 13.9%
5 years	21 12.6%	45 11.2%	66 11.6%
6 years	11 6.6%	27 6.7%	38 6.7%
7 years or more	3 1.8%	11 2.7%	14 2.5%
Total	167 100.0%	401 100.0%	568 100.0%

Just over a quarter of the teachers (to whom the question was applicable) had experience of teaching the old Civics course up to 1996.

4.5 EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT OF TEACHING CSPE

Considering the *time allocation* of CSPE in the schools, in almost 95% of cases CSPE was allocated a single period per week over the entire academic year.

Number of classes taken by teacher for CSPE

	First year	Second year	Third year
One class per teacher	74.9%	74.3%	73.4%
Two classes per teacher	19.4%	20.2%	21.3%
More than two classes	5.7%	5.5%	5.3%

For the most part, CSPE teachers tended to teach only one CSPE class in a year group.

CSPE teachers were *class tutors* to 18 first year class groups (5%); to 11 second year class groups (3%); and to 59 third year class groups (14%).

Considering *continuity of teaching staff*, some 41% of teachers taking first year class groups expected to take these classes into second year.

One quarter of teachers taking second year class groups had taught these classes since first year. Some 61% of teachers taking second year class groups expected to take these CSPE classes into third year.

Some 41% of teachers taking third year class groups had taught these classes since 1st year and 30% had taught these classes since second year.

Considering *teacher involvement with CSPE class for other subjects*, some 37% of teachers taking first year CSPE classes do not have the class for another subject. Where teachers have the CSPE class for another subject, the most common subjects they teach are English, History, Geography and Religious Education.

In second year, 40% of teachers with CSPE class groups do not teach their CSPE students for any other subject. In third year, some 39% of teachers with CSPE class groups do not teach any other subject to the class.

The main trends in relation to the extent of involvement in teaching CSPE are that:

- Teachers tend to have only one CSPE class in a year group.
- Very few teachers are class tutors to their CSPE class.
- Continuity of teaching staff over the three years is limited.
- Up to 60% of teachers have their CSPE class for another subject.

4.6 IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND SUPPORT

4.6.1 CSPE Pilot Project, 1993-1996

Almost one in five teachers (19.5%) stated that their school had been part of the CSPE Pilot Project, though one third stated that they did not know whether their school had been part of the pilot programme

4.6.2 CSPE In-Service Attendance

Somewhat over half of CSPE teachers had attended out of school in-service.

Crosstabulation of whether attended out-of-school in-service by gender

Attend out-of-school in-service?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	89 54.3%	240 59.7%	329 58.1%
No	75 45.7%	162 40.3%	237 41.9%
Total	164 100.0%	402 100.0%	566 100.0%

Most of the teachers who have attended in-service have been to one or two sessions.

If attended out-of-school in-service how many out of school courses did you attend?

How many out of school courses did you attend?	Frequency	Valid Percent
1	157	50.8
2	101	32.7
3	25	8.1
4	17	5.5
5	4	1.3
6	3	1.0
8	1	.3
12	1	.3
Total	309	100.0
No information	21	
Total	330	

A slightly lower percentage (46%) of CSPE teachers had attended in school in-service again with little gender differentiation.

Crosstabulation of whether attended in-school in-service by gender

Attended in-school in-service?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	76 46.3%	182 45.7%	258 45.9%
No	88 53.7%	216 54.3%	304 54.1%
Total	164 100.0%	398 100.0%	562 100.0%

The majority of teachers who had experienced in-school in-service had attended one or two in-school in-service courses.

How many in-school in-service courses did you attend?

How many in-service courses did you attend?	Frequency	Valid Percent
1	158	64.2
2	60	24.4
3	21	8.5
4	5	2.0
6	1	.4
10	1	.4
Total	246	100.0
No information	14	
Total	260	

A very low percentage (10%) of CSPE teachers had attended any non-DES organised in-service. This percentage may be an overestimate as in some cases respondents provided only incomplete details of the course attended and it is evident that not all courses would be the equivalent of in-services.

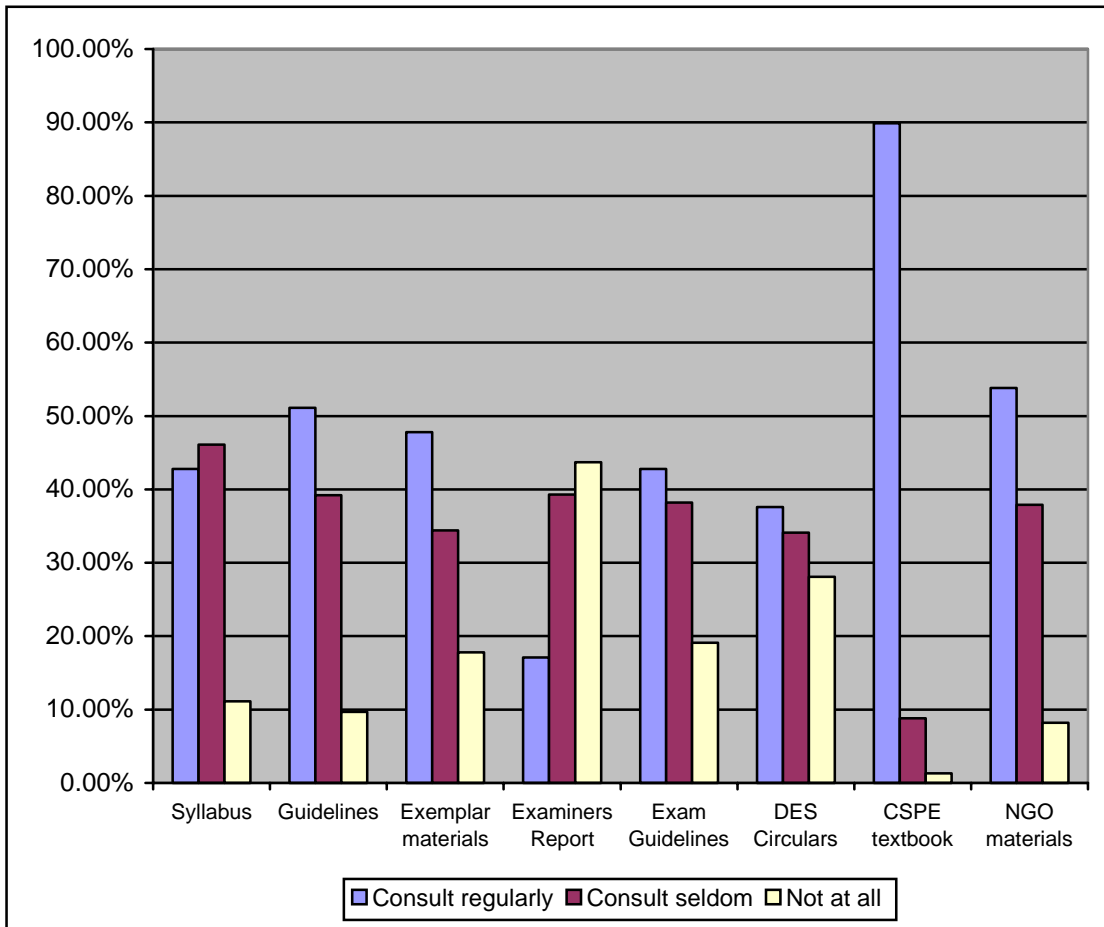
Crosstabulation of whether ever attended any other non-DES organised in-service by gender

Ever attended any other non-DES organised in-service?	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	9 5.4%	49 12.4%	58 10.3%
No	159 94.6%	347 87.6%	506 89.7%
Total	168 100.0%	396 100.0%	564 100.0%

4.7 USE AND VALUE OF CSPE COURSE MATERIAL

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they consulted with CSPE documents and to comment on any difficulties they had in accessing such documents. They were also asked to rate their usefulness in relation to planning their work.

How often would you consult the following CSPE documents?



The textbook is the most consulted CSPE document. There was a lack of consultation with DES circulars and the CSPE Chief Examiners Report. Some 16% of respondents indicated that they had difficulties in accessing certain CSPE resources.

In commenting on difficulties in accessing CSPE documents, many respondents pointed to specific resources available or in many cases unavailable to them in their school.

Comments on any difficulties in accessing CSPE documents

	No.	%	
❖ Difficulties accessing resource materials	23	25.6	
❖ Difficulties accessing examiners report	23	25.6	
1. Specific difficulties accessing certain documents/resources	❖ Difficulties accessing examination guidelines	23	25.6
	❖ Difficulties accessing syllabus	19	21.1
	❖ Difficulties accessing guidelines	19	21.1
	❖ Difficulties accessing DES circulars	17	18.9
	❖ Difficulties accessing textbook	12	13.3
	❖ Difficulties accessing NGO materials	12	13.3
2. Unaware of how or where to access them	31	34.4	
3. Unaware of their existence	25	27.8	
4. Each teacher should be supplied with all resources	9	10.0	
5. The DES do not send out enough resources	8	8.9	
6. Have to rely on others to pass on the information	8	8.9	
7. Few resources are available in the school	7	7.8	
8. Have to rely on my own initiative	4	4.4	
		90 responses	

Over one quarter of teachers who commented in this question indicated that they were unaware of the existence of certain documents.

"Didn't even know half of these existed."

"I have never seen any of these documents nor do I know where, if at all, they are in the school."

Another significant problem encountered in accessing these materials related to a lack of knowledge or awareness as to where the documents were kept or how a teachers could locate them. Hence teachers stated that the materials often "went missing" in the school or that there was no central point to which CSPE documents could be returned.

"Not readily available when required- mislaid- keys gone missing- other teachers moving the materials"

Other teachers used their own initiative to get hold of the CSPE documents.

"I had to send off for my own guidelines and syllabus."

The text book is rated as useful or very useful in planning their work by nearly all the teachers. Materials provided by non-governmental organisations are also considered of importance in planning CSPE classes.

How useful do you consider the following CSPE documents in relation to planning?

Documents	VERY USEFUL	USEFUL	NOT USEFUL	NOT A FACTOR
1) The CSPE syllabus	36.5%	49.7%	7.8%	5.9%
2) The CSPE guidelines	40.8%	48.7%	4.6%	5.7%
3) The CSPE exemplar/resource materials	37.8%	43.1%	8.8%	10.0%
4) The CSPE Chief Examiners Report	20.2%	44.4%	10.9%	24.6%
5) The CSPE Examination Guidelines	34.7%	46.7%	5.5%	13.1%
6) DES circulars relating to CSPE	22.6%	46.9%	10.8%	19.7%
7) CSPE textbook	61.6%	33.5%	3.8%	1.1%
8) Non-governmental resource materials for CSPE e.g. Trócaire, Focus Ireland etc.	49.6%	41.4%	2.5%	6.4%

These same resources are highlighted by respondents as useful tools in the planning and teaching of CSPE.

Comments on usefulness of CSPE documents

Comment	No.	%
1. Textbook central to CSPE	43	20.0
2. Importance of NGO material	34	15.8
3. CSPE textbook and materials lack detail	30	14.0
4. Limited time to work with the material	29	13.5
5. Important to vary approaches	27	12.6
6. Too much focus on documentation	23	10.7
7. Importance of Media/ Internet	21	9.8
8. School should provide better materials/ organisation	17	7.9
9. Syllabus and guidelines important in early days	15	7.0
10. Materials need to be updated	12	5.6
215 responses		

The usefulness of course documents and resources, such as NGO material, may be constrained by the limited time available to teachers for CSPE, both in class time and in preparation for class.

"Documents probably useful but I haven't had the time, or taken the time, to consult them. Too dependent on textbook. Single class per week doesn't encourage good preparation."

"As I have only one period per week with each class I have very little time to use documents, I mainly use the textbook."

Therefore some teachers stated that they used the textbook as the main framework for structuring class content. With more time available they would have supplemented the textbook and focused on other resources available, such as the Internet or materials available from NGOs such as Trócaire or Focus Ireland.

"The textbooks are good but you need to supplement them with other materials e.g. newspapers, videos, etc."

"Non-governmental resources are a lot more useful in the teaching of CSPE than those provided by the Department- isn't this a contradiction?"

Other teachers felt that there was an abundance of materials available.

"I would say that I sometimes feel 'swamped' with resources"

One teacher suggested that a dedicated website for CSPE would serve teachers, students and their parents well.

"Development of a CSPE website for teachers, students and parents should be strongly considered."

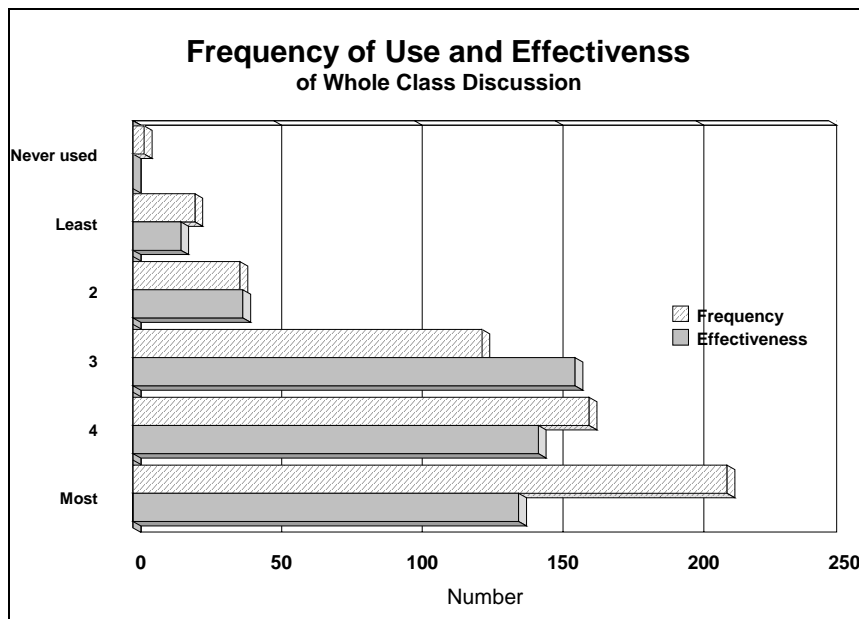
Another suggestion to deal with the problem of missing materials was that all teachers would receive a complete set of CSPE documents before they started to teach the subject.

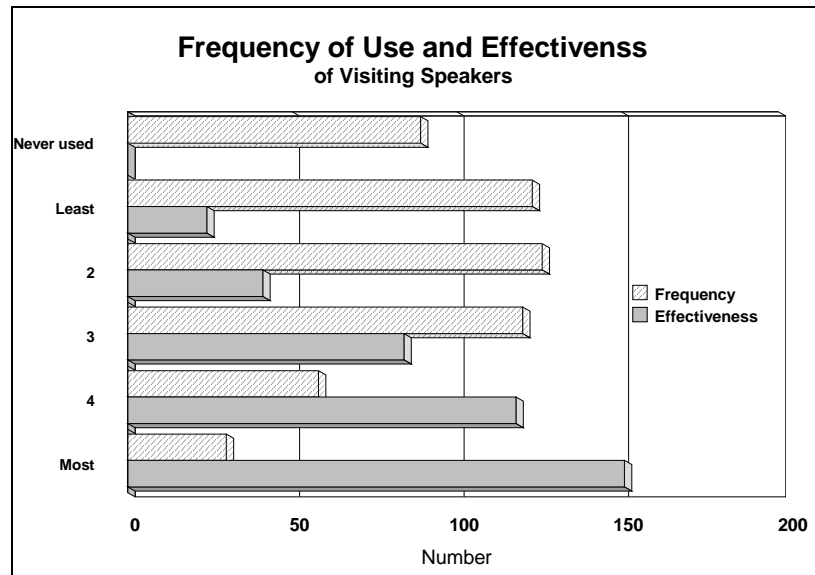
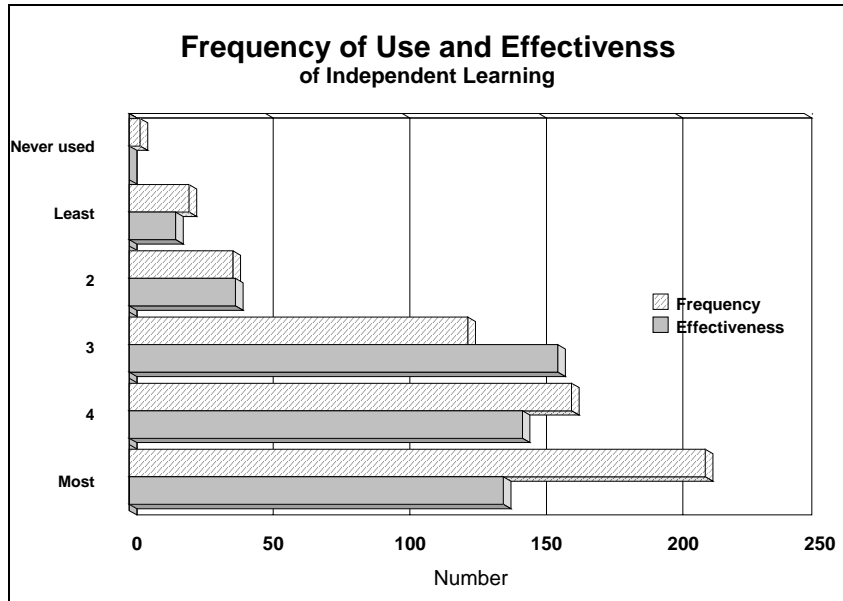
"Every new CSPE teacher should get a 'starter pack' containing these documents."

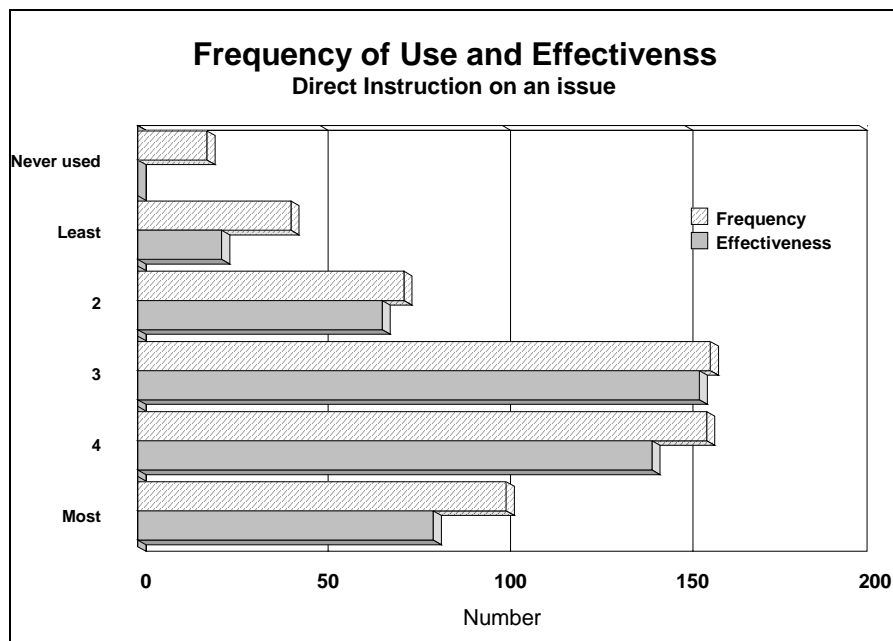
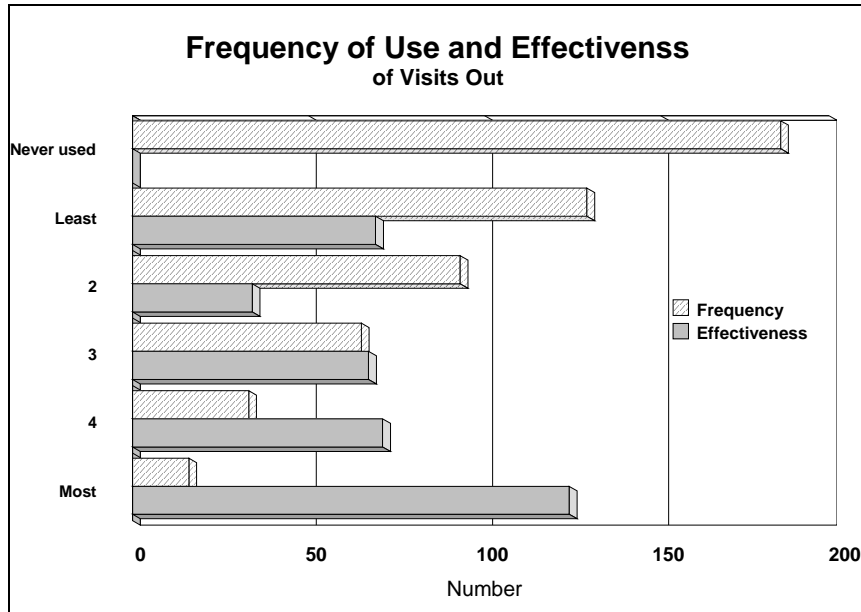
4.8 EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING CSPE

4.8.1 Use and Effectiveness of Teaching Methods

Teachers were asked to rate the frequency of use and effectiveness of various teaching methods. The following graphs show the most common rating for each method.







Active learning methodologies, especially whole class discussion and group/ team discussion are highlighted for frequency of use, while visiting speakers and visits out are highlighted for their effectiveness.

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements on how their teaching of CSPE is guided. Their responses are summarised in the following table.

Considering your teaching of CSPE, please indicate your extent of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

Statement	Strongly agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly disagree ✓	Not a factor ✓
1) My teaching of CSPE is primarily guided by a textbook	32.7%	35.6%	21.6%	8.0%	1.8%
2) My teaching of CSPE is guided by the syllabus document, the guidelines, and a textbook	27.8%	56.6%	10.7%	3.1%	1.8%
3) My teaching of CSPE is guided by the syllabus document and/or the guidelines with little or no reference to a text book	5.4%	13.9%	45.2%	28.2%	7.3%
4) My teaching of CSPE is guided by specific "current affairs" issues relevant to the course	20.9%	58.4%	13.4%	3.9%	3.4%
5) My teaching of CSPE is built around the seven core course concepts	43.2%	46.0%	7.0%	2.0%	1.8%

4.8.2 High Reliance on Textbook

The vast majority of respondents consider the textbook as the primary teaching aid in CSPE. Less than one in five teachers are guided by the syllabus or the guidelines with little or no reference to a text book.

When asked to comment on their experiences of teaching CSPE, again teachers highlight the importance of the textbook in their classroom contact.

Comments on teaching of CSPE

Comment	No.	%
1. The textbook defines classroom contact	60	30.9
2. Important to supplement textbook with current affairs	55	28.4
3. Difficult to implement active teaching methods due to lack of time	31	16.0
4. Current affairs and local issues dictate the class content	29	14.9
5. Textbook and materials in need of updating	24	12.4
6. Difficult to teach aspects of CSPE to a "weak" class	18	9.3
7. Over-representative amount of preparation necessary	11	5.7
8. Discipline difficulties mean only chalk and talk is possible	11	5.7
<i>194 responses</i>		

However the degree to which the textbook is supplemented by alternative materials depends on the time available to the teacher.

"With only one class period per week I usually use the textbook - supplemented by visitors, extra resource material, forays into media raised issues - making the students aware of issues."

"Only one class per week and sometimes miss it due to school events etc. so don't have time for above activities. Subject needs more time if it is to work in the future."

"I do not have the time with 2 other subjects to use other books/ documents."

It also depends on their degree of interest in the subject and their perception of its value.

"My teaching of CSPE is at best reluctant. I follow the textbook and track current affairs issues."

"For the subject to be encouraged and given full credit it needs to be taught by teachers who are enthusiastic about it. Not just passed over to anyone to teach as this impacts on the students who end up not covering the course and doing other work during CSPE time."

"I don't want to teach CSPE I have no interest in CSPE and I think that it is a total waste of time and should be taken off the curriculum"

"I consider CSPE a wonderful subject - for developing a social conscience. The 7 course concepts really cover everything - if properly handled the students should emerge well informed and capable of discussion on any topical issue."

Teachers with less experience of CSPE may rely more on the textbook.

"CSPE is a subject which I do not feel adequately trained to teach, therefore I rely on the textbook as a guide."

"Being unfamiliar with the course I have tended to rely heavily on a good textbook. I would be more "adventurous" if teaching another class."

"As a relative novice to teaching CSPE I depend on the textbook to guide me through the course, in line with department syllabus and guidelines."

A more typical approach is for the teacher to use the textbook as a backup.

"I constantly refer to the textbook as a guide, however I chop and change depending on what is topical."

"I use the textbook, but relate it to current affairs."

"I rely mostly on textbooks, keeping an eye on current affairs but always within the guidelines of the CSPE syllabus. This leaves scope for a wide range of topics."

Textbooks may also present problems for "weaker" students.

"Having had no previous training or experience in this subject I have relied heavily on exemplar material as a teaching aid. Textbooks are useful for teachers but are generally too advanced language wise for weaker students."

4.8.3 Active Learning Methodologies

Active learning methodologies, especially whole class discussion and group/ team discussion are highlighted for their importance but are often considered difficult to implement because of time constraints.

"Active methodologies and collaborative group work are by far the most effective pedagogical approaches."

"It is very difficult to teach CSPE to a 'lively class' as discussions are difficult etc., also weak students find it difficult. Textbook provides a solid foundation in an area that can be meandering. Current affairs - relevant when linked to a specific topic e.g. homelessness."

Such active learning methodologies may also be considered difficult to implement where there are problems of discipline within a class.

"My group have behavioural and discipline problems that would not allow much group discussions or role playing"

The motivation and interest of the students may also be an important factor.

"Current affairs do not interest weak students, they do not watch news or read newspapers and ridicule the suggestion to do so."

"My 1st year class are enthusiastic and enjoy discussion and taking the local papers for information, i.e. politics at present."

But more active learning approaches may offer advantages with 'weaker' classes.

"With weaker classes "topicality" is a big factor- environmental issues, elections... Action project takes up time so it is important."

Some teachers explain that they try to take an approach that reflects the interests of students.

"I normally seek out or derive from students current affairs issues relating to the core concepts- e.g. Discrimination (Holy Cross school, N.I.), Environment (Shut Sellafield Campaign) etc. and build the classes and action project around them. I believe this gives the students a sense of being active participatory citizens and often they see the results of their actions. textbook used for interesting background reading and facts."

"Depends on what the students are interested in as well, they enjoy human rights, media issues, e.g. treatment of women in Afghanistan."

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements on the CSPE course structure. Their responses are summarised in the following table.

On a positive note there is strong support for the CSPE syllabus and the underlying concepts. But it is striking that almost half of all respondents feel that it is impossible to complete the CSPE course in the recommended time.

Based on your experience of teaching the CSPE course, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Statement	Strongly Agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly Disagree ✓
1) It is essential that students develop a proper understanding of the seven CSPE course concepts	17.7%	56.8%	23.1%	2.5%
2) The CSPE syllabus is designed primarily to educate for and through citizenship rather than to teach about citizenship	19.7%	60.3%	17.9%	2.0%
3) The CSPE syllabus gives the teacher/students the freedom to select the relevant topics and issues that they would like to discuss in class	25.4%	55.3%	17.6%	1.8%
4) It is possible to complete the CSPE course within the recommended time (72 hours over 3 years stated in the syllabus)	14.6%	38.7%	27.3%	19.4%
5) Both active learning methods and traditional learning methods are essential if the CSPE syllabus is to be implemented successfully in class	38.7%	57.1%	3.8%	0.4%
6) The four units of study provide the most appropriate and effective way for Junior Certificate students to learn about CSPE	11.4%	69.6%	16.5%	2.5%
7) The CSPE Junior Certificate written examination papers have been consistent with the aims and objectives of the syllabus	11.2%	76.2%	10.9%	1.7%

Statement	Strongly Agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly Disagree ✓
8) There is a clear distinction between the aims, objectives, and content of the Civic, Social and Political Education syllabus and the SPHE syllabus	15.7%	57.0%	23.0%	4.3%

While time is considered a major constraint in completing the course, an overwhelming majority of respondents felt that it was essential to use both active learning methods and traditional learning methods if the CSPE syllabus is to be implemented successfully in class.

Over one quarter of respondents did not feel that there is a clear distinction between the aims, objectives, and content of the CSPE syllabus and the Social, Personal and Health Education syllabus.

Respondents were asked to comment on their experiences of teaching CSPE. The responses are grouped in the following table.

Comments on experiences of teaching CSPE

Comment	No.	%
1. One class per week is not enough to cover the syllabus	42	24.0
2. One class per week is not enough to complete the action project satisfactorily	40	22.9
3. The course content is not easily or always understood- the examination and syllabus are too difficult for weaker students	37	21.1
4. The CSPE course should be restructured/ subsumed into another subject	28	16.0
5. Unfamiliar with SPHE	27	15.4
6. SPHE overlaps with CSPE (and RE)	21	12.0
7. Using active learning methodologies is the most effective way of teaching CSPE	20	11.4
8. The demands of the exam inhibit the potential for experiential and action learning	19	10.9
9. CSPE takes valuable time from other subjects	19	10.9
<i>175 responses</i>		

The lack of sufficient time to complete the course is further reflected here. Problems managing the action project within the existing timetable arrangements are also highlighted.

In working with "weaker" students, there are extra difficulties in getting across difficult concepts.

"Completing the course in 72 hours is not possible with weaker students. The exam papers, and the language used in them, are completely inappropriate for the concept of a common level paper. To fail a weaker student is to make them a failed citizen."

"For weak students the course is impossible. What student who can barely do a foundation English exam is suppose to be able to attempt a common paper with an action report?"

Some respondents pointed to the need for a higher and ordinary paper as with other junior certificate subjects.

"There is a need for a higher/ ordinary syllabus, as many students with learning difficulties cannot deal with the written exam paper. While they can work actively in research, survey, etc. they cannot access/deal with the knowledge required on Europe, Government etc."

Time constraints meant that many teachers juggle the time they have with their CSPE class, especially where they teach the class for another subject as well.

"Where I have a class for both English and CSPE I use English classes for CSPE and I borrow them from another English teacher if I don't teach them English- I have to - particularly for the report and the action project itself"

Teachers expressed difficulties with how they were selected or "volunteered" to teach the subject.

"I see the relevance of the subject. It's more difficult to get the pupils to see it. The same teachers get 'lumbered' with it - usually female."

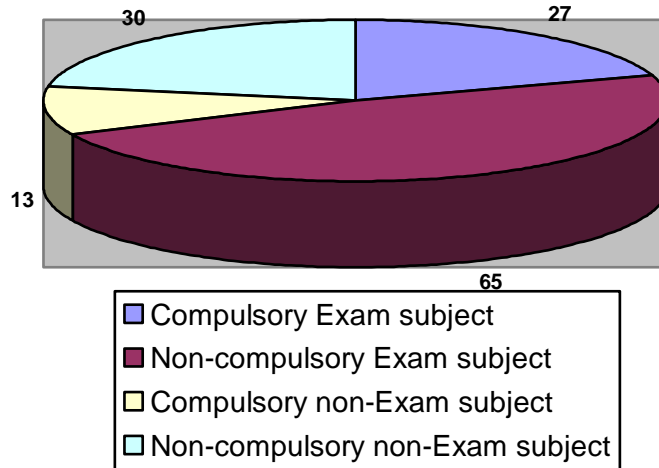
"I am very unhappy about teaching CSPE, it was dumped on me to make up my hours - I have received no in-service except one day - and if I could dump it on another teacher I would."

4.9 NEED FOR FOLLOW THROUGH SUBJECT AT LEAVING CERTIFICATE LEVEL

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt that a follow through subject at Leaving Certificate level would be necessary. In all 392 (68%) of respondents opted for (at least) one of the options depicted in the following table.

Need for follow through subject at Leaving Certificate level
(Teachers' responses)

Follow through subject at Leaving Certificate level



The most favoured option was a non-compulsory exam subject, open to all Leaving Certificate students (45.5%).

Teachers who felt there was a need for a follow through subject at Leaving Certificate level were asked to indicate the type of course that would be appropriate. The following table shows their responses.

If you agree that there is a need for a follow up course for CSPE at Leaving Certificate level, which type of course would you recommend?

Which type of course	Frequency	Valid Percent
Full course in political education	55	15.2
Full modular course with sociology, politics, philosophy etc	202	55.8
Short course similar to CSPE at junior cycle	98	27.1
Other type of course	7	1.9
Total	362	100.0
No information	30	
Total	392	

There was little support for a short course at Leaving Certificate level.

4.10 IMPACT OF CSPE ON STUDENTS

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with a series of statements on the manner in which CSPE could benefit their students.

Based on your experience of teaching the CSPE course, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Statement	Strongly Agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly Disagree ✓
1) CSPE helps develop students' confidence and self-esteem	21.2%	55.6%	20.3%	2.9%
2) CSPE helps promote co-operation and teamwork among participating students	31.1%	60.1%	6.9%	1.8%
3) CSPE helps students to experience real political/social action	26.7%	57.7%	13.1%	2.5%
4) CSPE promotes school community links	22.2%	59.2%	17.3%	1.3%
5) CSPE helps students to develop their communication skills	26.6%	65.1%	7.0%	1.3%
6) CSPE helps students to develop their problem solving and management skills	14.5%	56.4%	26.0%	3.1%
7) CSPE helps students to develop their ICT skills	7.1%	40.7%	44.3%	7.9%
8) CSPE helps students to develop their initiative and responsibility	20.9%	64.4%	13.1%	2.0%
9) CSPE helps students to develop greater political and social awareness	35.9%	58.3%	4.6%	1.3%
10) CSPE helps students to develop greater tolerance and understanding	19.9%	61.4%	16.4%	2.2%
11) CSPE helps students to develop their critical thinking skills and their skills of analysis	15.3%	63.1%	19.5%	2.2%
12) CSPE promotes the personal development of the student	23.4%	62.4%	12.0%	2.2%

The answering to this question indicates that respondents are very positive towards the potential impact of CSPE on their students. The only significant disagreement with any of the statements related to the potential of CSPE to contribute to the development of the ICT skills of students.

Communication skills were specifically highlighted as was the development of greater political and social awareness.

Respondents were then asked to comment on how they viewed the impact of CSPE on students. The responses are grouped in the following table.

Comments on impact of CSPE on students

	No.	%
1. CSPE promotes a sense of social and political responsibility	49	29.9
2. Insufficient time for impact on students' development of social/ political awareness	47	28.7
3. CSPE has little or no impact on student attitudes	30	18.3
4. The higher the academic ability of a class, the greater the impact of CSPE	28	17.1
5. Action learning is the real strength of CSPE	23	14.0
6. Students have a negative attitude to CSPE	17	10.4
7. Action Projects promote skills successfully	13	7.9
8. ICT is not fully exploited by CSPE and by the school	12	7.3
9. CSPE benefits the weaker students	10	6.1
10. CSPE needs to be continued into the Leaving Cert	7	4.3
164 responses		

While respondents were positive in their responses about the potential impact of the subject, many had strong reservations about whether this potential is being realised due to the way the subject is implemented and time constraints.

"Looking at the course content CSPE should promote most of the above. Maybe in a class of 15 or so, with 2 classes a week it would, but neither I nor the students have the resources to achieve the above. Again it is a class that has been put into an already overloaded timetable without the necessary facilities e.g. time, small classes."

With adequate time, some teachers considered that CSPE could have long-term benefits for students.

"When given sufficient time for students to become genuinely participatory citizens in class and action projects. I think it is an excellent opportunity for self-development, development of self-knowledge, esteem, tolerance of others and a sense of personal responsibility and most importantly, empowerment."

The need for support for CSPE teachers is highlighted.

"The students get a lot from CSPE. A lot however depends on the teaching of the subject. It is essential that teachers opt to teach this subject and are interested in it. New teachers in CSPE need more in-service training. Ultimately it will benefit the students."

Respondents again pointed to the difficulties they see "weak" students having with CSPE.

"In relation to their development of communication skills, I am very positive. However this is in relation to a manageable, co-operative and average class. Weaker students

need a lot more time to absorb the material in order to get what they should out of the subject. For them the project can be quite an ordeal."

On the other hand other teachers pointed to the active learning implicit in CSPE that can benefit the "weaker" students.

"Weak students do well in this subject as it relies heavily on active participation. Students can see their own success very quickly, do good for others (community and school). Praise is given to these students"

The perceived status of CSPE by students is important.

"CSPE doesn't have a lasting effect on the student's welfare. Students regard it as a doss subject and in my opinion they rarely see the point of it. I think many of them would find the above laughable."

"I think that having taught CSPE for 6 years that students perceive it as a 'doss' subject or just another exam. Students don't take it seriously except when coming close to exams. Attempts at new methods and active learning end up causing quite a bit of work for teachers and with kids not always taking these methods seriously. I have become completely disillusioned with CSPE I haven't seen weaker/shyer students lacking confidence really benefit. The only ones who do are the bright, confident, assertive ones and ones who look at it as an easy honour."

Some teachers believe that CSPE has no real status in their school and this has negative implications for the potential of the subject.

"There was no need to devise a 'wishy washy' subject in order to teach most of these skills. Political education if it is to be taught properly, should be put on a par with e.g. history. Paying lip service to it under the guise of CSPE serves no useful purpose."

4.11 THE ACTION PROJECT³

As evident from the following table, action projects are mainly completed in second and the third year of the course.

When would you tend to undertake the Action Project with your CSPE classes

When	%
1) During First Year	29.3%
2) During Second Year	70.4%
3) During Third Year	82.5%
<i>Percentages in table refer to the percentage of teachers with CSPE classes in the respective year group</i>	

Over one third of respondents felt that the action project should not be the main focus of the CSPE programme. At the same time, almost 90% of teachers felt that the action project presents them with enormous challenges concerning time and

3 An action project actively involves the student in undertaking tasks which extend the development of an issue or topic beyond the usual limits of textbooks and course materials. For example, students might undertake a survey of attitudes among all the students in the school to a particular issue, or they might research, organise and invite a guest speaker to talk to the class on a particular topic. (Page 7, CSPE Guidelines for Schools, Dept of Education, NCCA)

resources.⁴Based on your experience of the Action Project, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Statement	Strongly Agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly Disagree ✓
1) Action Projects should be a main focus of a CSPE Programme	25.4%	38.4%	31.3%	4.9%
2) Action projects present enormous challenges for teachers concerning time and resources	62.7%	25.8%	10.0%	1.5%
3)It is difficult to find suitable Action Projects	16.6%	22.0%	51.9%	9.5%
4) It is only possible to do one Action Project per year with each CSPE class	46.5%	41.8%	9.7%	1.9%
5) Group Action Projects are more appropriate than individual ones	47.2%	39.8%	10.9%	2.1%
6) Selection of a topic for the Action Project involves a discussion between teacher and class, leading to an agreed topic	48.7%	45.4%	4.8%	1.2%
7) The division of workload for the Action Project frequently means that not all tasks within a group are meaningful	36.0%	45.6%	17.5%	1.0%
8) Teachers receive adequate support from school management in maximising the potential of the action project	18.0%	44.1%	25.8%	12.1%

The vast majority of respondents also felt that the real implications of dividing work within a group can be challenging to ensure that the tasks are meaningful.

Respondents were also asked to comment on their experiences of the action project. The responses are grouped in the following table.

Comments on experiences of Action Project

Comment	No.	%
1. Too time consuming, inadequate time for preparation	64	37
2. Extra workload on teachers, teachers end up doing most of the work	63	36.4
3. Weak students need a lot of help with the project	21	12.1
4. Time consuming but worthwhile	18	10.4
5. Finding a suitable project and negotiating meaningful roles is difficult	18	10.4
6. Support from school management is inadequate	18	10.4
7. The highlight of CSPE, students can enjoy learning	13	7.5
8. Marks should be re-weighted away from action project	13	7.5
9. Need for vigilance against copying	11	6.4
10. Small groups doing the project together works out better than individual or whole class	10	5.8
11. Have not carried out a project yet	10	5.8
<i>173 responses</i>		

4 Changes were introduced in the current academic year by the DES that may alleviate some of the problems in this area. Specific changes have been made to the "Report on an Action Project" in order to make it more clear to students the necessary detail they should include and the marks available for each section to be completed.

The positive aspects for the students of being involved in active learning methodologies are highlighted.

"When a class does a class project and divides the work up, each group works at a different pace, so this needs to be borne in mind when planning classes. The feel good factor of a class project is usually very rewarding."

"There is a huge amount of work involved in completing Action Projects but the experience is invaluable to the students, whether its through visiting the Dáil, doing a little clear up, writing to a Trocáire worker, etc. I feel it's very successful despite the headaches."

Respondents pointed out that action projects create a large workload for teachers, that results quite often in themselves carrying out the bulk of the work for the students.

"The teacher devises the project. The teacher organises it- in fact 90% of the work that goes into the Action Project is done by the teacher. The students write them up after they have been given the information."

The lack of adequate time can impact very negatively on the ability of the teacher and group to gain the full potential from the experience.

"The action project is the bugbear for many teachers, not so much the actions involved- It all boils down to a miserly time allocation for CSPE- one period a week in our case. It just isn't enough."

Teachers consider that the action project (or report on the action project) presents challenges for the teacher dealing with "weak" students.

"For weak students the reality is they are not able to do the Action Project without major support."

"The Action Project is a worthwhile aspect of the course but weaker students find independent working in relation to analysis, teamwork etc. very difficult."

"Action Projects are ideal for average and above students, not for weaker students as they get overwhelmed with the project and the written examination can be neglected. Group work is not always suitable as certain students sit back and others do all the work."

Support from the school management can become an issue for completing the action project.

"Schools are not willing to give you extra class time for action projects, we wanted 3 classes for a guest speaker and had to fight to get 2. CSPE is just not seen as an important subject."

Difficulties in providing meaningful tasks for all students in a group is considered challenging by teachers.

"If they have a couple of tasks to do as part of a committee, they find it impossible to flesh it out into a project. Comments like "But I only washed the desks, what am I supposed to write."

Some respondents felt that there should be a tighter structure on the administration of the action project.

"Action Project should be indicated each year by DES as happens with woodwork, metalwork, etc."

Ongoing support for teachers is regarded as necessary to ensure that teachers can bring new ideas to the action project.

"The action project sometimes depends greatly on teachers enthusiasm and ideas- some students lose out."

"The difficulty with Action Projects seems to come from teachers who did not have the opportunity to do the in-service courses."

Teachers were asked to suggest their preferred weighting of marks between the action project and the examination. The following table summarises their responses.

Categorisation of suggested marking of CSPE components

Categorisation of marking CSPE components	Frequency	Valid Percent
Present weighting about right	200	38.5
Give exam and AP report equal marks	148	28.5
Give 100% marks to exam	9	1.7
Give 100% marks to AP report	6	1.2
Reverse present weighting - 60% to exam	89	17.1
Increase marks to AP report	40	7.7
Increase marks to exam	28	5.4
Total	520	100.0
No information	60	
Total	580	

The main issues raised in the comments on these suggestions concern:

- The dangers of collaboration between students and of teachers essentially doing the work, upon which the Action Project report is based;
- The fact that the current weighting to the exam does not adequately reflect the amount of time and effort in the three years class based coursework;
- Hard to devise marking scheme that can 'capture' benefits of active learning.

4.12 EVALUATION OF BROADER CSPE-RELATED ISSUES

4.12.1 Situation of CSPE in the school

At the end of the questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with a series of statements relating to the position of CSPE in their school. Their responses are summarised in the following table.

Considering the management and co-ordination of CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond the situation in your school

Statement	Yes, Definitely ✓	Yes, Probably ✓	Probably Not ✓	Definitely Not ✓
1) Two teachers are always released for out-of-school in-service training	29.9%	43.2%	15.6%	11.4%
2) CSPE teachers are allocated to class groups that they also have for another subject	11.1%	39.4%	37.2%	12.3%
3) The same teacher is allocated to the same class for the three years of the CSPE course	17.3%	36.4%	28.4%	18.0%
4) CSPE is timetabled to avoid poor time-slots, e.g. the last class of the day	8.5%	23.8%	40.3%	27.4%
5) Teachers who express an interest in the subject are allocated to CSPE	21.3%	53.1%	16.2%	9.4%
6) CSPE planning meetings are facilitated in the school	14.5%	32.2%	24.6%	28.6%
8) There is support from school management for active learning methodologies appropriate to CSPE	23.6%	52.3%	16.6%	7.5%
9) CSPE teachers and teachers of other subjects are encouraged to work on collaborative projects.	6.0%	22.4%	51.9%	19.7%
10) Other staff are briefed on the work of CSPE in the school	4.2%	15.6%	44.3%	36.0%
11) Parents are strongly urged to speak to the CSPE teacher at parent-teacher meetings	13.8%	28.4%	37.5%	20.3%
12) Following attendance at CSPE in-service, teachers are encouraged to provide an update to other CSPE teachers	20.5%	44.7%	22.7%	12.1%

A majority of teachers acknowledge that staff are not briefed on the work of CSPE in the school (80.3%), that planning meetings are not facilitated (53%), that CSPE is not timetabled to avoid poor time slots (68%). While this may well be also the case for many other subjects on the curriculum for Junior Certificate students, the particularities of CSPE would seem to demand a greater degree of support than is apparent.

On the other hand 76% feel there is support from school management for active learning methodologies appropriate to CSPE and 73% agree that two teachers are always released for out-of-school in service training.

4.12.2 Commentary from teachers on the broader CSPE-related issues

The vast majority of responding teachers in this section (a ratio of 5:1) of the questionnaire are dissatisfied by the current implementation of CSPE in their schools. This is quite clear from the range of informative comments. This however does not imply that teachers are mainly critical of the CSPE course, its aims, vision, methodologies and its potential to influence students.

The comments of the teachers on the implementation of CSPE in their schools illustrate that attitudes to and experiences of CSPE are largely dependent on the school setting and support available. A number of themes emerge from teachers comments.

CSPE AS A LOW STATUS SUBJECT IN COMPARISON TO OTHER EXAM SUBJECTS.

From the comments of many teachers it is apparent that CSPE may not have the status of other Junior Certificate subjects in school.

"Subject isn't taken seriously by a lot of the staff. Staff who aren't involved are not interested in CSPE."

"While the school, teachers and management are very supportive of the 'action' element of CSPE- it is considered a 'poor relation' by many, principally those who don't teach it and are sceptical of it."

"The majority of teachers do not know what CSPE involves. It is treated as an extra subject, unlike English or Irish it is considered an extra subject of no particular value."

Awareness of the subject among parents is low and it may not be valued as a subject.

"Parents are urged to come but generally don't as CSPE doesn't seem to be valued by many of them."

"Parents don't know what CSPE is about and only meet when the teacher brings it up in connection with the other subject they have."

It can be perceived as a timetable filler.

"CSPE, at the moment is used as a timetable filler resulting in new teachers coming to the subject each year. I am the only staff member who attended in-service (out of 9 CSPE teachers) and am constantly asked to help. This would never happen in another subject. I also tend to get third years who I did not have in first or second year. many of these have not got a project done as the previous teacher was not comfortable doing one."

"CSPE is a bit of a lottery. Whatever teacher from a small group are given classes to fill up the timetable. Very few would volunteer to teach CSPE. I asked at the beginning of the course not to be considered for subject but get it on my timetable."

"It would help to have the same class, for the three years but it doesn't usually happen. CSPE is something of a marginal subject in my school behind other "more" important subjects."

INTEREST AND COMMITMENT TO CSPE

There are divergent attitudes among teachers towards CSPE.

"Very worthwhile subject area - great for communication skills etc. to be developed. Student more informed especially on their rights, rights of others and their responsibilities. Good introduction to how democratic politics works - good support for developing good community involvement and responsibility for our environment."

"CSPE is seen by many students as a doss class once a week through no fault of the teacher or the school. Teachers have to fight a lonely battle sometimes to justify it's existence oftentimes not sure of it's real value themselves. In an already crammed timetable I wouldn't mind not having to teach it."

Teachers themselves are aware that if they are not interested and engaged by the subject that they cannot do it justice.

I am teaching 2nd year CSPE and have had no training in or outside school for it. I feel it is 'dumped' on me and I have a negative attitude toward the subject. I feel isolated and do not know what I am doing. Because of this I tend to teach from the text and have class discussions regarding the text. it is hard to be enthusiastic about a subject dumped on me and in which I have no interest.

It appears that teachers' disposition towards the subject is greatly influenced by the degree of choice that they have in coming to teach CSPE.

"A teacher is given CSPE regardless of interest in the subject. This shouldn't be the case."

"Any teacher could be timetabled to teach CSPE with no experience whatsoever- this could even be timetabled for a 2nd or 3rd year class."

A fact compounded by the limited class contact time that may be involved.

"As the time allocated is only one period per week, teachers are usually allocated a CSPE class if there is space on their timetable. Any co-ordinating/ research/ familiarisation of the subject is done by CSPE teachers on their own time - with little encouragement or interest from school management. Most teachers discover that they are timetabled for the subject on September 1st, without prior notice."

"I do not enjoy teaching CSPE - it is so pressurised with just one class period per week when you have serious exam classes as well. Trying to get action projects completed on time is a nightmare."

"It would help to have the same class, for the three years but it doesn't usually happen. CSPE is something of a marginal subject in my school behind other "more" important subjects."

IN-SERVICE TRAINING NEEDS

While the percentage of teachers who have received in-service is relatively high there would still appear to be problems especially in respect of pre-service training and also in regard to continuing in-service training.

The problem for teachers who didn't get the initial in-service - in-service should be available to any teacher starting CSPE. Even when it became available in my 3rd year teaching the course - I wasn't released for it. It would have been better in 3rd year than not at all. I feel I've been teaching the course without adequate in-service."

"In-service was good for a while but seems to have 'dried up' now that the course is implemented. This is unfortunate as most new teachers get some CSPE classes and they haven't had any training at all in some cases, just pick it up from the rest of us as they go along."

It is evident that teachers feel at a loss by having to teach CSPE before they receive appropriate training.

"All teachers taking CSPE should immediately attend an in-service and more than two teachers should be released to attend. I have waited 2 years to be released and am still waiting. These in-service are not held frequent enough."

"Six years on and I discover that there was in-service training! Is there a national co-ordinator for CSPE and if so why hasn't he/she visited my school? I feel justifiably angry about the fact that this subject simply appeared on my timetable. In particular, the action project requires serious time and effort on my part at a crucial time during the lead-up to the exams. weaker students struggle with the AP report and I have had to provide lunch times for extra CSPE classes to facilitate these weaker students on a one-to-one basis. This subject is important but it shouldn't have been foisted upon overworked teachers. Teachers can not be expected to deliver in the absence of adequate in-service and resources."

USE OF CSPE COURSE MATERIALS

Teachers' views on the quality of CSPE course materials cannot be considered in isolation. For example lack of in-service or pre-service training will affect the way teachers use resources.

I am teaching 2nd year CSPE and have had no training in or outside school for it. I feel it is 'dumped' on me and I have a negative attitude toward the subject. I feel isolated and do not know what I am doing. Because of this I tend to teach from the text and have class discussions regarding the text. It is hard to be enthusiastic about a subject dumped on me and in which I have no interest.

Lack of class contact time is also a critical factor.

"Please come up with a more relevant, narrowed down course which challenges the students and does not leave all of the work to the teachers. Decent textbooks, resources etc. are unavailable at present. I dislike this subject due to this and one class period per week is disastrous."

Some teachers also feel that the textbook is now outdated.

"While I initially thought CSPE was a superb course I can now honestly say that the course material, the syllabus etc. is out-dated and clichéd. The concepts do not relate to the modern Irish teenager of our times. The state of current affairs is sharply in contrast with the concepts in the book. I love the theory behind the course but in practice I think it is dull, plastic and lacking serious content."

On a positive note, the majority of teachers express commitment to the active learning methods of CSPE and try to make the subject topical and relevant to their students through use of newspapers, videos and other media and multimedia resources. A large number of teachers also go to the trouble of finding useful teaching resources from a variety of NGO sources which are considered very useful.

"I like to make the subject relevant to students. We use newspapers, current affairs as springboards for class debate/ discussion on issues ranging from Irish political system to human rights abuses. Students enjoy this approach and it gets every involved"

"Non-government resource materials are stimulating and provide direct, useful information - students can source information and then use it later on."

"I use the exemplar material in class every day and NGO material is very useful for project work and discussion and information on current issues."

MANAGEMENT OF THE ACTION PROJECT

Almost two thirds of teachers consider that the Action Project should be the main focus of the CSPE Programme. Problems raised by teachers in relation to the Action Project relate to the practicalities of completing the project with a class group in a limited time, rather than with the idea of the Action Project itself. The main difficulties raised relate to the extra workload involved and the time pressures of completing the projects.

"I do not enjoy teaching CSPE - it is so pressurised with just one class period per week when you have serious exam classes as well. Trying to get action projects completed on time is a nightmare."

"Action Projects can be difficult to manage when you only have a class for CSPE. Difficult to organise students when you do not see them for another subject. Difficult at times to keep a high profile for CSPE in the school."

"CSPE is not seen as important as other subjects. This is understandable due to the fact that the subject is allocated such little time on the timetable. It is very difficult for a teacher who only teaches CSPE to a class to cover the material and do the Action Project. I feel that a teacher should not be given CSPE to teach unless they teach another subject to that class, so that time can be borrowed for CSPE when it comes to the time for completion of the Action Project. This can then be paid back when the project is done. Despite this recommendation, it doesn't often happen."

IMPORTANCE AND BENEFIT OF CSPE TO STUDENTS

Despite these problems many teachers, including some of those who cite problems, see the value of CSPE. More than two thirds of the CSPE teachers believe that CSPE has an important impact on students' attitudes. From their responses it is apparent that CSPE is valued because it presents an opportunity within the Junior Certificate curriculum to discuss issues, share and develop opinions as well as offering students skills for life.

"CSPE is essential to the development of young people. I feel it needs more support and encouragement from the department and from school staff. Teachers tend look down on it which affects students perceptions as well."

"CSPE is a very worthwhile and valuable subject in education today. I wish I had a course like this when I was in school as the information learnt is so beneficial and important to students of today's society."

"Very worthwhile subject area - great for communication skills etc. to be developed. Student more informed especially on their rights, rights of others and their responsibilities. Good introduction to how democratic politics works - good support for developing good community involvement and responsibility for our environment."

One teacher's comment succinctly expresses the combined effect of the above shortcomings and their consequences.

"1) The total lack of continuation re. Teachers and CSPE classes, 2) Putting teachers who haven't the slightest bit of interest in CSPE to teach classes. 3) not allowing access to in-service. 4) no provision given for CSPE meetings etc. - despite my best efforts. Problems that are prevalent all the time and leading to anti/negative news regarding CSPE from students and teachers alike. Concerned for the future of CSPE if this continues."

Over two thirds of teachers expressed strong interest in seeing CSPE followed up as a Leaving Certificate subject, for the students themselves as well as for the status of the subject in the eyes of the school and parents.

"While CSPE is given good standing in my school, many parents consider it to be an inconvenience as it is not carried on to Leaving Certificate level."

"I look forward to the day when CSPE is an optional subject for Leaving Cert. It would be a welcome addition to the curriculum in this school."

4.13 POINTS OF COMPARISON BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' AND TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

There were a number of common question elements shared by the two questionnaires. These concerned the allocation of teachers to CSPE, support for and resourcing of CSPE in the school, and cross-curricular and broader issues relating to CSPE.

COMMON ELEMENTS (1-3)

Considering the responses to the statements concerning the allocation of teachers to CSPE, as evident from the following table, the principals have a somewhat more idealised view of the process than the teachers. So while 86% of principals agree with the statement that "CSPE teachers are allocated to class groups that they also have for another subject" only 51% of the teachers concur.

**Considering the allocation of teachers to CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond to the situation in your school:
(Principals and teachers responses)**

	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
1) Teachers who express an interest in the subject are allocated to CSPE				
Principals	53.6%	39.3%	6.0%	1.1%
Teachers	21.3%	53.1%	16.2%	9.4%
2) CSPE teachers are allocated to class groups that they also have for another subject	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
Principals	23.7%	62.1%	12.4%	1.7%
Teachers	11.1%	39.4%	37.2%	12.3%
3) The same teacher is allocated to the same class for the three years of the CSPE course	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
Principals	32.2%	51.1%	15.0%	1.7%
Teachers	17.3%	36.4%	28.4%	18.0%

COMMON ELEMENTS (4-7)

A similar pattern is evident considering the responses of the principals and the teachers to support for CSPE in terms of release for in-service, facilitation of planning meetings and timetabling. So while 63% of principals agree with the statement that “CSPE is timetabled to avoid avoids poor time-slots, e.g. the last class of the day” under 33% of teachers agree.

Considering support for and resourcing of CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond the situation in your school (Principals and teachers responses)

4) Two teachers are always released for out-of-school in-service training	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
	Principals	49.5%	36.8%	9.3%
Teachers	29.9%	43.2%	15.6%	11.4%
5) CSPE is timetabled to avoid avoids poor time-slots, e.g. the last class of the day	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
	Principals	33.9%	28.8%	21.5%
Teachers	8.5%	23.8%	40.3%	27.4%
6) CSPE planning meetings are facilitated in the school	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
	Principals	24.3%	38.1%	27.6%
Teachers	14.5%	32.2%	24.6%	28.6%
7) There is support from school management for active learning methodologies appropriate to CSPE	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
	Principals	68.5%	29.3%	1.6%
Teachers	23.6%	52.3%	16.6%	7.5%

COMMON ELEMENTS (8-10)

Considering cross-curricular and broader issues relating to CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond the situation in your school (Principals and teachers responses)

8) CSPE teachers and teachers of other subjects are encouraged to work on collaborative projects	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
	Principals	19.5%	47.6%	30.3%
Teachers	6.0%	22.4%	51.9%	19.7%
9) Other staff are briefed on the work of CSPE in the school	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
	Principals	9.8%	31.1%	50.3%
Teachers	4.2%	15.6%	44.3%	36.0%
10) Parents are strongly urged to speak to the CSPE teacher at parent-teacher meetings	Yes, Definitely	Yes, Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not
	Principals	34.8%	29.3%	30.8%
Teachers	13.8%	28.4%	37.5%	20.3%

On cross-curricular and broader issues relating to CSPE a majority of teachers feel that there is little encouragement for briefing other staff on CSPE, for collaborative work between staff on CSPE and for CSPE to figure prominently at parent-teacher meetings. However this situation may not be peculiar to CSPE.

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

5.1.1 Profile of Schools and CSPE Teachers

Over two-thirds of 580 CSPE teachers responding to the survey teachers are female. There are also more female CSPE teachers in the youngest age-group.

Three-quarters of CSPE teachers have arts degrees. There are relatively few CSPE teachers with commerce or science degrees, about one fifth have social science degrees. History, English, Geography and Irish are the most common final year subjects taken by CSPE teachers.

Relatively few CSPE teachers took an elective course in CSPE or undertook the methods course in CSPE as part of their pre-service training.

5.1.2 Allocation of staff and time to CSPE

Though just over one quarter of principals reported no problems or difficulties, the single most common difficulty cited was the difficulty in finding staff willing to teach CSPE. The lack of suitably trained or qualified staff was the next most common difficulty cited.

For principals, the decision to allocate teachers to CSPE is constrained by a number of factors, most prominently the fact that not sufficient teachers express an interest in teaching CSPE. Other issues raised by principals relate to problems of curriculum overload and CSPE taking time from other subjects.

Most CSPE teachers found that they had a CSPE class on their timetable or were asked by the principal to take a CSPE class. In only about one fifth of cases did the teachers appointment to the school include CSPE or the teacher asked to be given a CSPE class. Teachers expressed difficulties with how they were selected or "volunteered" to teach the subject.

The vast majority of schools allocate 35-45 minutes per week (in a single class period) to CSPE.

Principals were asked to comment on the organisational and resource implications of implementing CSPE in their school under a number of headings.

Considering the time allocation of CSPE in the schools in almost 95% of cases (in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) CSPE was allocated a single period per week over the entire academic year. Almost half of responding teachers feel that it is impossible to complete the teaching of the CSPE course in the recommended time.

Relatively few CSPE teachers are class tutors to the class groups they take for CSPE. Also a significant minority of teachers only have the class group for CSPE.

5.1.3 In-Service for CSPE

Informal, peer to peer support was the main form of preparation for teaching CSPE. In-service generally happens in the years following their first experiences of teaching CSPE.

About one half of CSPE teachers had attended in-service, which given the turnover of teachers taking the subject is relatively high. A very low percentage (10%) of CSPE teachers had attended any non-DES organised in-service.

Considering issues relating to CSPE in-service, the main issues raised by principals tend to relate to knock-on effects and problems of in-service happening during the school day. But this is a problem of in-service in general rather than something peculiar to CSPE.

5.1.4 Organisational and Resource Implications of Implementing CSPE

Finding time for planning meetings for CSPE presents problems for almost half the principals commenting on this issue. Principals also made reference to problems arising from having in-service during the school day. For teachers there is a disproportionate administrative/logistical workload for a subject that typically is undertaken on a one period per week basis.

5.1.5 Use and Value of CSPE Course Materials

The textbook is the most consulted CSPE document while there was a lack of consultation with DES circulars and the CSPE Chief Examiners Report. Some 16% of respondents pointed to difficulties in accessing certain CSPE resources. With some materials being unavailable or accessible to them in their school.

Teachers commented that access to and the usefulness of course documents and resources, such as NGO material, is constrained by the limited time available to them for CSPE, both in class time and in preparation.

Active learning methodologies, especially whole class discussion and group/ team discussion are highlighted for frequency of use, while visiting speakers and visits out are highlighted for their effectiveness. Active learning methodologies, especially whole class discussion and group/ team discussion are highlighted for their importance but are sometimes considered difficult to implement because of time constraints.

Over one quarter of respondents did not feel that there is a clear distinction between the aims, objectives, and content of the CSPE syllabus and the Social, Personal and Health Education syllabus

5.1.6 The Action Project

Almost two thirds of respondents felt that the action project should be the main focus of the CSPE programme. At the same time, almost 90% of teachers felt that the action project presents them with enormous challenges concerning time and resources. Teachers had conflicting opinions on the value of the action project for "weak" students. Some teachers expressed the fear that the action project had the potential to be abused by both teachers and students.

The positive aspects for the students of being involved in active learning methodologies is highlighted.

5.1.7 Impact of CSPE on Students

Teachers are very positive towards the potential impact of CSPE on their students but many had strong reservations about whether this potential is being fully realised due to the way the subject is structured. With adequate time and good management support, some teachers considered that CSPE could have long-term benefits for students. But without this support even teachers who have some enthusiasm for the subject feel under pressure.

5.1.8 Need for Follow-on Subject to CSPE at Leaving Certificate Level

Almost two-thirds of responding teachers and principals felt there was a need for a follow through subject to CSPE at Leaving Certificate level. The most favoured option was a non-compulsory exam subject, open to all Leaving Certificate students. There was very little support for the introduction of a compulsory subject at Leaving Certificate level or for a short course at Leaving Certificate level.

5.1.9 Status and Role of CSPE in the School

Many teachers believed that CSPE has no real status in their school and this has negative implications for the potential of the subject. Some principals are also not yet convinced of its value. Because it is a short course subject it is not perceived as being of having the same importance as mainstream Junior Certificate exam subjects. This in turn affects the way teachers are allocated to the subject and is compounded by the lack of interest in the subject by colleagues and even by some of those teaching CSPE. The fact that teachers may only benefit from in-service after they have been teaching CSPE for some time does not help matters.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1 Introduction

While some of the issues raised above are particular to CSPE there are many issues emerging that are to do with the management and the curricula at junior cycle as a whole. This section will highlight in as far as possible those issues particular to CSPE. However these issues arise from a broader operational environment, in which for example provisions for cross-curricular work and subject planning meetings are under-developed and under-resourced.

The following two sections synthesise the critical factors from the viewpoint of the principals and the teachers in ensuring a successful or a problematic experience of CSPE in the school.

5.2.2 Problematic experience

From the survey, problems relating to CSPE are evident when:

- Assigning teachers who are neither interested in nor qualified to teach CSPE;
- Assigning teachers to CSPE classes who have little other contact with or knowledge of the class group;

- Teachers, principals, students and parents considering CSPE as a low status subject and timetable ‘filler’;
- Failing to ensure continuity of CSPE teaching staff with CSPE class groups over the period of the junior cycle;
- Teachers are not released for in-service;
- CSPE resource material is not obtained and disseminated to CSPE teachers (especially teachers new to CSPE);
- Not making CSPE ‘visible’ in the school and the staff room, via planning meetings or dissemination of CSPE related activities;

5.2.3 Recommendations

From the survey, the following recommendation emerge:

- Teachers should only be assigned to CSPE who have expressed an interest in teaching the subject and have received some training;
- CSPE should be positioned in a time slot that ensures it does not suffer from class time erosion;
- CSPE teachers should know their students through other subject class contact time;
- A positive profile for CSPE must be developed in the school and in the staff room;
- Where possible all efforts should be made to ensure teachers take the same class group for CSPE through from first year to the Junior Certificate exam;
- Occasional swapping of time between subjects should be allowed to facilitate project work, active learning methodologies, or even completion of syllabus;
- Teachers should have the benefit of pre-service before they commence teaching CSPE;
- Efforts should be made to allow teachers to attend in-service (in-school, out-of-school and non-DES);
- An easily accessible (in a number of ways) bank of CSPE resource material (including a CSPE ‘starter pack’) needs to be provided and CSPE teachers must be made aware of this;
- Timetabled planning meetings should be facilitated for CSPE teachers;
- A forum needs to be provided where CSPE teachers can collaborate/ disseminate information with colleagues;

5.2.4 Discussion

As highlighted above, the successful delivery of CSPE is dependent on a number of factors. As with all subjects, the role and influence of school management is critical in determining its success. However, in many instances, the capacity of principals to follow good practice is limited by a number of factors sometimes outside their control. These include:

- Availability of suitably qualified or interested teachers;
- An “overloaded” curriculum at Junior Cert. Level;
- The lack of time and resourcing for subject planning meetings and cross-curricular activities;
- Substitution cover for teachers in-service;

- The lack of a follow-through subject at Leaving Certificate level (with its implications for parental and student interest in the subject)

It must also be noted that the nature of CSPE, as a short compulsory course, requiring a large number of teachers, presents particular challenges to school management. Indeed, facilitating a short course that has such a strong practical focus on human rights (through the Action Projects and active learning methodologies) may challenge the very culture and structure of a school.

Yet, despite these very real challenges it is clear from this survey that both principals and teachers alike are positively disposed to CSPE and are committed to its core concepts, vision and methodologies. They also see its potential benefits to students, although pressures of time and problems at school management level can sometimes mitigate against the full benefits being realised. The majority of principals and students would like to see the subject being followed through to Leaving Certificate level and so help in it achieving a higher status and profile.

ANNEX 1: PRINCIPAL'S AND TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRES⁵

CSPE PRINCIPAL'S QUESTIONNAIRE

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Please note that all the information you supply will be treated as confidential.
 Only school principals should complete this questionnaire.

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SECTION 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Q. 1 Please indicate your school type:

(tick box opposite item) ✓

Secondary (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehensive (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q. 2 Please indicate whether the school is:

(tick box opposite item) ✓

Male (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Co-educational (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q. 3 Please indicate total number of Junior Certificate students currently in the following year groups:

	Total
First Year (1)	<input type="text"/>
Second Year (2)	<input type="text"/>
Third Year (3)	<input type="text"/>

Q. 4 Is your school designated a "Disadvantaged area school" by the Department of Education and Science?

(tick box opposite 'Yes' or 'No') ✓

Yes (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
No (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q. 5 Do you have an established and functioning Students' Council in your school?

(tick box opposite 'Yes' or 'No') ✓

Yes (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
No (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 2: PROVIDING FOR CSPE IN YOUR SCHOOL

Q. 6 In which academic year was CSPE introduced in your school?

(tick box opposite item) ✓

1996/1997 (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
1997/1998 (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>

5 Note, the page breaks in this publication do not necessarily correspond with the those in the printed questionnaires due to layout constraints of the report.

Q. 7 Please indicate how time is allocated to the teaching of CSPE in **First Year** within your school: e.g. 40 mins/week for the full year, 80mins/fortnightly for the full year, 80mins/weekly for half year, one weekly module per term.

Q. 8 Please indicate how time is allocated to the teaching of CSPE in **Second Year** within your school: e.g. 40 mins/week for the full year, 80mins/fortnightly for the full year, 80mins/weekly for half year, one weekly module per term.

Q. 9 Please indicate how time is allocated to the teaching of CSPE in **Third Year** within your school: e.g. 40 mins/week for the full year, 80mins/fortnightly for the full year, 80mins/weekly for half year, one weekly module per term.

Q. 10 What were/are the organisational and resource implications of implementing CSPE in your school under the following headings?

A. Staffing	
B. Timetabling issues	
C. Resources	
D. In-service training	
E. Space/accommodation	
F. Planning/Co-ordination meetings	
G. Other <i>(Please specify)</i> _____	

Q. 11 Considering the allocation of teachers to CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond to **the situation in your school**:
(in each case ✓ the box that applies)

Statement	Yes, Definitely ✓	Yes, Probably ✓	Probably Not ✓	Definitely Not ✓
1) Teachers who express an interest in the subject are allocated to CSPE				
2) CSPE teachers are allocated to class groups that they also have for another subject				
3) The same teacher is allocated to the same class for the three years of the CSPE course				

Q. 12 Comment on the above?

Q. 13 Considering support for and resourcing of CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond to **the situation in your school**:
(in each case ✓ the box that applies)

Statement	Yes, Definitely ✓	Yes, Probably ✓	Probably Not ✓	Definitely Not ✓
1) Two teachers are always released for CSPE out-of-school in-service				
2) CSPE is timetabled to avoid poor time-slots, e.g. the last class of the day				
3) CSPE planning meetings are facilitated in the school.				
4) There is support from school management for active learning methodologies appropriate to CSPE				

Q. 14 Comment on the above?

Q. 15 Considering cross-curricular and broader issues relating to CSPE, please indicate the extent to which the following statements correspond to **the situation in your school:**
(in each case ✓ the box that applies)

Statement	Yes, Definitely ✓	Yes, Probably ✓	Probably Not ✓	Definitely Not ✓
1) CSPE teachers and teachers of other subjects are encouraged to work on collaborative projects.				
2) Other staff are briefed on the work of CSPE in the school				
3) Parents are strongly urged to speak to the CSPE teacher at parent-teacher meetings				

Q. 16 Comment on the above?

Q. 17 Do you feel that there is a need for a follow through subject for CSPE at Leaving Certificate (established) level?
(✓ all boxes that apply)

	Yes	No
Compulsory examination subject for all Leaving Certificate (established) students		
An optional examination subject for all Leaving Certificate (established) students		
Compulsory non-examination subject for all Leaving Certificate (established) students		
An optional non-examination subject for all Leaving Certificate (established) students		

Q. 18 If **Yes**, which one of the following types of course would you recommend?
(✓ the box that applies)

- 1) A full course in Political Education
- 2) A full course composed of modules such as sociology, politics, anthropology, philosophy
- 3) A short course similar to the CSPE course at junior cycle
- 4) Other *(Please specify below)*

Thank you for your co-operation

Please return this questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope provided
 to: NCCA, 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

CSPE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

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 Please note that all the information you supply will be treated as confidential.
 This questionnaire should be completed only by teachers currently teaching CSPE
 =====

SECTION 1: TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Q.1 Are you: (✓ box that applies)
 (1) Male (2) Female

Q.2 Into which of the following age-groups do you fall? (✓ the box that applies)

1) 20-30	3) 41-50	
2) 31-40	4) 51-65	

Q.3 What is your current teaching status? (✓ the box that applies)

1) Permanent whole time	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Temporary whole time	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Eligible Part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Part-time teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) H. Dip student	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Student teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Other (describe below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.4 How many years have you been teaching? (✓ the box that applies)

1) Training/probation year	<input type="checkbox"/>	4) 11-15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) 1-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	5) 16-20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) 6-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	6) 20+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q.5 Please state:

1) Your primary degree	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
2) Your teaching qualification (if not part of your primary degree e.g. H. Dip. Ed)	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
3) Subjects taken in the 1st year of your primary degree	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
4) Subjects taken in the final year of your primary degree	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
5) Any further post-graduate qualification/s	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

For teachers entering the profession after 1993 did you in your pre-service training take:

Q.6 An elective course in CSPE (✓ *the box that applies*)
 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not applicable

Q.7 A methods course in CSPE (✓ *the box that applies*)
 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not applicable

SECTION 2: DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHING CSPE

Q.8 How did you first come to teach CSPE in this school? (✓ *the box that applies*)

- 1) My appointment to this school included teaching CSPE
- 2) I asked to be given a CSPE class
- 3) I was asked by the Principal to take a CSPE class
- 4) I was given a CSPE class on my timetable
- 5) Other – please describe below

Q.9 When you were first timetabled to teach CSPE, what did your initial preparations consist of? (for instance, did you receive advice from colleagues, were you given the syllabus, was there in-school induction available, etc.)

Q.10 Please circle below the total number of years you have been teaching CSPE:
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7+

Q.11 Did you teach the previous Civics course at any time during 1966-1996?
 (✓ *the box that applies*)
 (1) Yes (2) No (3) Not applicable

SECTION 2.1: DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHING CSPE: FIRST YEAR

Q.12 Please indicate which of the following describes the time allocated to the teaching of CSPE in **First Year** within your school (✓ *the box that applies*)

	One Class Period	Double Class Period
1) Weekly for the full academic year		
2) Weekly for two terms of the academic year		
3) Weekly for one term of the academic year		
4) Fortnightly for the full academic year		
5) Fortnightly for two terms of the academic year		
6) Fortnightly for one term of the academic year		

Q.13 If other time allocation, please describe

--

Q.14 Please circle below the number of First Year class groups that you currently have for CSPE:

1 2 3 4 5 6 0

If 0, go to Q. 18

Q.15 Do you have these CSPE class groups for any other subject/s? *(if not, leave blank)*

	No. of other subjects	List of other subjects
CSPE Class 1		
CSPE Class 2		
CSPE Class 3		
CSPE Class 4		
CSPE Class 5		
CSPE Class 6		

Q.16 Are you a class tutor to any of these CSPE classes? (✓ the box that applies)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
CSPE Class 1			CSPE Class 4		
CSPE Class 2			CSPE Class 5		
CSPE Class 3			CSPE Class 6		

Q.17 How many of your existing First Year CSPE classes do you expect to take through to Second Year? (✓ the box that applies)

	Yes	No	Don't Know		Yes	No	Don't Know
CSPE Class 1				CSPE Class 4			
CSPE Class 2				CSPE Class 5			
CSPE Class 3				CSPE Class 6			

SECTION 2.2: DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHING CSPE: SECOND YEAR

Q.18 Please indicate which of the following describes the time allocated to the teaching of CSPE in **Second Year** within your school (✓ the box that applies)

	One Class Period	Double Class Period
1) Weekly for the full academic year		
2) Weekly for two terms of the academic year		
3) Weekly for one term of the academic year		
4) Fortnightly for the full academic year		
5) Fortnightly for two terms of the academic year		
6) Fortnightly for one term of the academic year		

Q.19 If other time allocation, please describe

Q.20 Please circle below the number of Second Year class groups that you currently have for CSPE.

1 2 3 4 5 6 0

If 0, go to Q. 25

Q.21 Do you have these class groups for any other subject/s? (if not, leave blank)

	No. of other subjects	List of other subjects
CSPE Class 1		
CSPE Class 2		
CSPE Class 3		
CSPE		

	No. of other subjects	List of other subjects
Class 4		
CSPE Class 5		
CSPE Class 6		

Q.22 Are you a class tutor to any of these classes? (✓ the box that applies)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
CSPE Class 1			CSPE Class 4		
CSPE Class 2			CSPE Class 5		
CSPE Class 3			CSPE Class 6		

Q.23 Have you taught any of these class groups for CSPE in the previous year? (✓ the box that applies)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
CSPE Class 1			CSPE Class 4		
CSPE Class 2			CSPE Class 5		
CSPE Class 3			CSPE Class 6		

Q.24 How many of your existing Second Year CSPE classes do you expect to take through to Third Year? (✓ the box that applies)

	Yes	No	Don't Know		Yes	No	Don't Know
CSPE Class 1				CSPE Class 4			
CSPE Class 2				CSPE Class 5			
CSPE Class 3				CSPE Class 6			

SECTION 2.3: DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHING CSPE: THIRD YEAR

Q.25 Please indicate which of the following describes the time allocated to the teaching of CSPE in **Third Year** within your school (✓ the box that applies)

	One Class Period	Double Class Period
1) Weekly for the full academic year		
2) Weekly for two terms of the academic year		
3) Weekly for one term of the academic year		
4) Fortnightly for the full academic year		
5) Fortnightly for two terms of the academic year		

6) Fortnightly for one term of the academic year

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Q.26 If other time allocation, please describe

Q.27 Please circle below the number of Third Year class groups that you currently have for CSPE.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 0

If 0, go to Q. 31

Q.28 Do you have these class groups for any other subject/s? *(if not, leave blank)*

	No. of other subjects	List of other subjects
CSPE Class 1		
CSPE Class 2		
CSPE Class 3		
CSPE Class 4		
CSPE Class 5		
CSPE Class 6		

Q.29 Are you a class tutor to any of these classes? *(✓ the box that applies)*

	Yes	No		Yes	No
CSPE Class 1			CSPE Class 4		
CSPE Class 2			CSPE Class 5		
CSPE Class 3			CSPE Class 6		

Q.30 Have you taught any of these class groups for CSPE in the previous year?
(✓ the box that applies)

Since First Year	Since Second Year
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	Yes	No	Yes	No
CSPE Class 1				
CSPE Class 2				
CSPE Class 3				
CSPE Class 4				
CSPE Class 5				
CSPE Class 6				

SECTION 3: IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND SUPPORT

1993-1996

Q.31 Was your school part of the **CSPE Pilot Project** 1993-96?
(✓ the box that applies)

(1) Yes (2) No (3) Don't know

Q.32 If **Yes**, how many CSPE in-service training sessions did you attend during that time (1993-1996)? (write number in box)

Number

1996-2002

Q.33 Have you attended **out-of-school in-service** organised by the Department of Education and Science CSPE Support Service between 1996-2002?
(✓ the box that applies)

(1) Yes (2) No

Q.34 If **Yes**, how many courses did you attend? (write number in box)

Number

Q.35 Have you attended **in-school in-service** organised by the Department of Education and Science CSPE Support Service between 1996-2002?
(✓ the box that applies)

(1) Yes (2) No

Q.36 If **Yes**, how many courses did you attend? (write number in box)

Number

Q.37 Have you ever attended any **other CSPE related in-service** that was not directly organised by the Department of Education and Science CSPE Support Service?

(✓ the box that applies)

(1) Yes (2) No

Q.38 If **Yes**, please state the title of the in-service, the provider and the year:

Title of in-service	Name of in-service provider	Year of in-service

1.		
2.		
3.		

Q.39 How often would you consult the following **CSPE documents**?
(✓ the box that applies)

Documents	CONSULT REGULARLY	CONSULT SELDOM	NOT AT ALL
1) The CSPE syllabus			
2) The CSPE guidelines			
3) The CSPE exemplar/resource materials			
4) The CSPE Chief Examiners Report			
5) The CSPE Examination Guidelines			
6) DES circulars relating to CSPE			
7) CSPE textbook			
8) Non-governmental resource materials for CSPE e.g. Trócaire, Focus Ireland etc.			

Q.40 Have you ever had difficulties in accessing any of the above CSPE documents?

(✓ the box that applies)

(1) Yes (2) No

Q.41 If Yes, please comment:

Q.42 How useful would you consider the following **CSPE documents** in relation to planning? (✓ the box that applies)

Documents	VERY USEFUL	USEFUL	NOT USEFUL	NOT A FACTOR
1) The CSPE syllabus				
2) The CSPE guidelines				
3) The CSPE exemplar/resource materials				
4) The CSPE Chief Examiners Report				
5) The CSPE Examination Guidelines				

- 6) DES circulars relating to CSPE
- 7) CSPE textbook
- 8) Non-governmental resource materials for CSPE e.g. Trócaire, Focus Ireland etc.

Q.43 Please comment further on your use of the above documents:

SECTION 4: REFLECTING ON THE TEACHING OF CSPE

Q.44 In relation to the following teaching activities/methods, please indicate the methods that you use most frequently in your CSPE classes:

(circle the number that applies)

	Frequency of Use (0= Never) (1= Least frequent... 5= Most frequent)					Effectiveness (1= Least effective... 5= Most effective)					
	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1) Whole class discussion	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2) Group/team discussion	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3) Paired work	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4) Independent learning	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5) Report writing	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6) Use of ICT	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7) Visiting speaker(s)	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8) Visits out (local community, organisations, Dáil)	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9) Issue tracking (following an issue as it develops in the media)	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10) Drama/ Role Play	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11) Research/investigation	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12) Direct instruction on an issue	0	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Q.45 Considering your teaching of CSPE, please indicate your extent of agreement or disagreement with the following statements: (*✓ the box that applies*)

Statement	Strongly agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly disagree ✓	Not a factor ✓
1) My teaching of CSPE is primarily guided by a textbook					
2) My teaching of CSPE is guided by the syllabus document, the guidelines, and a textbook					
3) My teaching of CSPE is guided by the syllabus document and/or the guidelines with little or no reference to a text book					
4) My teaching of CSPE is guided by specific "current affairs" issues relevant to the course					
5) My teaching of CSPE is built around the seven course concepts					

Q.46 Please comment further on the above:

Q.47 Based on your experience of teaching the CSPE course, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: (*in each case ✓ the box that applies*)

Statement	Strongly Agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly Disagree ✓
1) The seven CSPE course concepts are relevant and easily understood by students				
2) The CSPE syllabus is designed primarily to educate for and through citizenship rather than to teach about citizenship				
3) The CSPE syllabus gives the teachers/students the freedom to select the relevant topics and issues that they would like to discuss in class				
4) It is possible to complete the CSPE course within the recommended time (72 hours over 3 years stated in the syllabus)				

Statement	Strongly Agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly Disagree ✓
5) Both active learning methods and traditional learning methods are essential if the CSPE syllabus is to be implemented successfully in class				
6) The four units of study, as they are described in the syllabus, provide the most appropriate and effective way for Junior Certificate students to learn about CSPE				
7) The CSPE Junior Certificate written examination papers have been consistent with the aims and objectives of the syllabus				
8) A clear distinction can be drawn between the aims and objectives of the Civic, Social and Political Education syllabus and the Social, Personal and Health Education syllabus				

Q.48 Please comment further on any of the above:

Q.49 Do you feel that there is a need for a follow through subject for CSPE at Leaving Certificate (established) level? (✓ box in each case that applies)

	YES	NO
Compulsory examination subject for all Leaving Certificate (established) students		
An optional examination subject for Leaving Certificate (established) students		
Compulsory non-examination subject for all Leaving Certificate (established) students		
An optional non-examination subject for Leaving Certificate (established) students		

Q.50 If **Yes**, which one of the following types of course would you recommend? (✓ the one box that applies)

1) A full course in Political Education	
2) A full course composed of modules such as sociology, politics, anthropology, philosophy	
3) A short course similar to the CSPE course at junior cycle	
4) Other (Please specify below)	

SECTION 5: STUDENTS AND CSPE

Q.51 Based on your experience of CSPE, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: *(in each case ✓ the box that applies)*

Statement	Strongly Agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly Disagree ✓
1) CSPE helps to develop students' confidence and self esteem				
2) CSPE promotes co-operation and team work among participating students				
3) CSPE helps students to experience real political/social action				
4) CSPE promotes school/community links				
5) CSPE helps students to develop their communication skills				
6) CSPE helps students to develop their problem solving and management skills				
7) CSPE helps students to develop their ICT skills				
8) CSPE helps students to develop their initiative and responsibility				
9) CSPE helps students to develop greater political and social awareness				
10) CSPE helps students to develop greater tolerance and understanding				
11) CSPE helps students to develop their critical thinking skills and their skills of analysis				
12) CSPE promotes the personal development of the student				

Q.52 Please comment further on any of the above:

SECTION 6: ACTION PROJECTS

Q.53 When would you tend to complete action projects with your CSPE classes?
(✓ the one box that applies)

	Yes	No
1) During First Year		
2) During Second Year		

3) During Third Year

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Q.54 Based on your experience of the Action Project, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: *(in each case ✓ the box that applies)*

Statement	Strongly Agree ✓	Agree ✓	Disagree ✓	Strongly Disagree ✓
1) Action Projects should be a main focus of a CSPE Programme				
2) Action Projects present enormous challenges for teachers concerning time and resources				
3) it is difficult to find suitable Action Projects				
4) It is only possible to do one Action Project per year with each CSPE class				
5) Group Action Projects are more appropriate than individual Action Projects				
6) Selecting a topic for the Action Project involves a discussion between teacher and class, leading to an agreed topic				
7) The division of the workload for Action Projects frequently means that not all tasks within a group are meaningful				
8) Teachers receive adequate support from school management in maximising the potential of the action project				

Q.55 Please comment further on any of the above:

Q.56 Please indicate how you would consider weighting the following components of the CSPE course: *(put the % you think appropriate in the Your View box)*

	<i>Currently</i>	Your View
Report on an Action Project / Course work assessment book	<i>(60%)</i>	%
Final written examination	<i>(40%)</i>	%

Q.57 Please justify the rationale for your weighting:

SECTION 7: EVALUATION OF BROADER CSPE-RELATED ISSUES

Q.58 Considering the implementation of CSPE, please indicate the extent to which

the following statements correspond **the situation in your school:**

(in each case ✓ the box that applies)

Statement	Yes, Definitely ✓	Yes, Probably ✓	Probably Not ✓	Definitely Not ✓
1) Two teachers are always released for CSPE out-of-school in-service training				
2) CSPE teachers are allocated to class groups that they also have for another subject				
3) The same teacher is allocated to the same class for the three years of the CSPE course				
4) CSPE is timetabled to avoid poor time-slots, e.g. the last class of the day				
5) Teachers who express an interest in the subject are allocated to CSPE				
6) CSPE planning meetings are facilitated in the school				
8) There is support from school management for active learning methodologies appropriate to CSPE				
9) CSPE teachers and teachers of other subjects are encouraged to work on collaborative projects.				
10) Other staff are briefed on the work of CSPE in the school				
11) Parents are strongly urged to speak to the CSPE teacher at parent-teacher meetings				
12) Following attendance at CSPE in-service, teachers are encouraged to provide an update to other CSPE teachers				

Q. 19 Please comment further on any of the above

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Thank you for your co-operation

**Please return this questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope
provided to: NCCA, 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2**

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