NCCA

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

Key Skills Initiative: Phase three

Stories from the Learning Site

For discussion

September 2010

Contents

1. Introduction

Since September 2006 the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has been working with schools on the Key Skills Initiative. The initiative has developed in three main phases. **Phase one** had an exploratory focus set out in its aims

- to identify how the key skills can be more consciously and effectively embedded in the teaching of particular subjects, namely Mathematics, Biology, English, Irish, French and Spanish
- to explore what kinds of teaching methodologies are most appropriate for the fostering of these skills
- to identify challenges or difficulties encountered in embedding key skills
- to gather evidence from classroom practice to help inform NCCA policy and practice, particularly with regard to the review of subjects and the development of new subjects, short courses and transition units
- to inform and advise NCCA on the professional development needs of teachers (NCCA, 2008, p6).

The data collected during this phase of the work was qualitative, in the form of student and teacher reflections and some video material from classes. The conclusions reached were derived from working closely with teachers and by using quotes from their reflection sheets and from regular professional development events.

The focus of the research was on the individual subject teachers and what they did in the classroom to embed key skills in teaching and learning. A form[1] of action research was employed by the teachers in that they assessed the presence or absence of key skills in their classes using an end of class reflection sheet. They then tried out a methodology to embed the key skills, reflected on this and discussed it with a colleague. Students also recorded their reflections. These reflections were then analysed by

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[1] The teachers did not come up with a problem in their practice and then explore it in a cycle of action research; rather they were presented with a problem. How to embed key skills and looked a ways of solving this problem to inform policy.

NCCA education officers to look for patterns and to record findings from the work. The main findings that emerged from this phase of the work were

- the five key skills are relevant to each subject
- when key skills are the focus in planning for teaching then teaching becomes more learner-centred
- for teachers to be successful in embedding the key skills, they needed to be given opportunities to develop their own understanding and practice of the key skills
- changes in the curriculum and methods of assessment are necessary to successfully embed key skills
- teachers and students claim that a key skills approach to teaching contributes to effective learning (NCCA, 2008, p27).

The report also identified characteristics of the classroom where key skills were being successfully embedded. Common characteristics emerged such as, the use of a diverse range of methodologies, the promotion of a climate that values effort and encourages students to learn from mistakes and take risks, encouraging students to reflect on their learning. Additional information on specific methodologies used in the teaching of English, Modern Languages and Biology is further described in reports in these three subject areas (www.action.ncca.ie/en/key-skills/key-skills-toolkit).

Challenges were also highlighted such as the need to have time for reflective practice and to achieve change, the content heavy syllabuses, the impact of assessment and the need for professional development for teachers.

In **phase two** of the initiative the work focused on four strands
- developing learning activities
- introducing key skills across the whole school
- informing the review and development of senior cycle subjects
- sharing the learning. (NCCA, 2009, p6)

The report on phase two emphasised that *the classroom dimension was still central to the work, where teachers continued to explore the embedding of key skills in teaching and learning and developing learning activities that could be shared on the ACTION website* (ibid, p7). This phase of work

resulted in the development of a key skills toolkit which other schools and teachers can now access on www.action.ncca.ie/en/key-skills. Another important focus was to explore how a school could implement key skills across the curriculum on a whole school level. The focus was shifting from the individual teacher to the whole school. This report outlined some general conclusions on the process of change related to the following themes

- the need for time to achieve change
- leadership and support for change
- the need to invest and incentivise change
- motivation to change
- teachers as key agents of change, and
- implications for professional development (NCCA, 2009).

Again, the findings in this phase of the initiative were based on qualitative data in the form of reflection sheets, workshops and conversations with the key participants. The report acknowledges that *the embedding of key skills into teaching and learning requires change at many levels; the teacher's planning, the teacher's mediation of the curriculum, the student engagement with the curriculum, the teacher's relationship with his/her colleagues, the nature of leadership to name just a few* (ibid, p16). The report suggests that professional development cannot be seen as a once-off event or something teachers go out to, rather it needs to be *an integral part of the day-to-day practice* in the school (ibid, p22). It goes on to outline the need for teachers and students to consistently reflect on teaching and learning, and the need for teachers to be involved in professional learning communities.

Phase three of the initiative involved four schools working on implementing key skills within different whole-school settings, and in ways that are informed by the schools' current needs. Each of the schools was at different stages of working with key skills and each had a different approach. The four stories from these schools are outlined in section two of this report. Each of the stories provides practical suggestions for schools wishing to implement key skills in their own settings.

What emerges from these three phases of work on the Key Skills Initiative is a rich description of how key skills can be embedded in teaching and

learning in different settings. The message coming from all schools is the same—that this kind of teaching leads to better learning. When teachers use this approach to teaching, students are not rote learning for 'the Leaving' rather they are actively constructing their knowledge. Changes have also started to occur in assessment practices, with teachers moving towards assessment for learning approaches. Teachers have now integrated peer assessment, self assessment, questioning, wait time and other assessment for learning techniques.

This report is presented as a series of school stories from the learning site. The language in the stories is descriptive rather than directive, and will give other teachers a 'picture' of the work that they can dip into for inspiration in their teaching. Each story illustrates what is possible, provides a framework for planning, suggests tools for reflection and gives practical ideas and methodologies based on classroom practice that teachers can identify with. This work adheres to the notion that teaching is very context dependant, and that different contexts, different subjects, different students, different schools will all give rise to different interpretations of the 'story' presented.

2. School stories

Introduction

During 2009-2010 four schools from the senior cycle school network were invited to work with NCCA on a whole school approach to embedding key skills based on their proposals for the further development of key skills. All of these schools had previously been working with the NCCA on the Key Skills Initiative, generally through the involvement of individual teachers. In this phase of the work, NCCA was interested to see how a whole school approach to key skills could be implemented in different sized schools. What practical issues would this present? As the stories illustrate, different approaches were taken with each of the schools to meet their particular interests, needs and contexts. However a range of common tools and supports were used with all four schools. These included the Key Skills Toolkit (appendix 1), PowerPoint slides for professional development workshops, and sets of reflection tools for teachers and students as well as short videos which exemplify key skills in different classroom settings.

Each story presents a summary of how the work unfolded in each school and attempts to highlight what was distinctive in the way that key skills were promoted in different settings. The stories are presented under these headings:

1. What happened in 2009-2010
2. What worked well
3. Challenges
4. Moving forward.

2.1 Athlone Community College—embedding key skills in a large school

What happened in 2009-2010

This school has been involved in the Senior Cycle School Network since 2007 when a group of Transition Year teachers worked on developing a range of transition units. Arising from this work, the school became interested in learning more about key skills and requested an introductory seminar for the whole staff in November 2008. This prompted further interest among teachers and provided the NCCA with an opportunity to explore how key skills might be fostered with a large staff—65, and with a large student body—880 students.

While the Principal was very supportive of the whole staff gaining professional development in key skills it was agreed at the outset that it would not be possible, for practical reasons, to arrange whole staff meetings on a regular basis. It was decided that the initiative would begin with a whole staff seminar after which we could assess the number of teachers interested in working on this further and how best to proceed.

A two hour workshop was held on Aug 27th 2009 at which teachers were facilitated in exploring how they would foster two of the key skills within their Leaving Certificate classrooms—Information Processing and Critical and Creative Thinking. They were also introduced to the reflection process and provided with reflection tools. They had access to a number of resources and ideas to try out in their classrooms. Six weeks later, one of the teachers arranged a lunch time meeting for teachers to discuss what they had tried out and to share their experiences to date. Thirteen teachers attended this meeting and found during the course of the session that they had a lot to learn from each other. They were keen to continue this journey. This group included different subject teachers and had a range of experiences in the school.

The NCCA team discussed this with the Principal to discuss how these teachers might be supported and it was agreed that a series of seminars would be provided for interested key skills teachers during the year at a local venue between 4.15pm and 6.30pm. These were held in November

2009, March 2010 and June 2010. A further meeting was facilitated by the school team in January. A core group of between ten and twelve teachers attended all of these meetings. A different key skill was examined at each workshop, with a balance between sharing new ideas to explore that skill and encouraging teachers to share their classroom experiences.

All the teachers agreed to try out the ideas with their students, some deciding to focus on just one or two classes and others deciding to adopt a key skills focus in teaching all their students. Interestingly, as the year progressed all of the teachers reflected that the key skills approaches has influenced most of their teaching. They took one or two skills at a time and worked on developing that skill(s) with their students. By the end of the year they had worked on all five key skills. They reported that when key skills became the focus in planning for teaching it led to two significant changes. Teaching became more student-centred rather than content-driven and teachers moved away from 'chalk and talk' to more diverse and active learning methodologies. When asked how their teaching had changed comments such as the following were offered

> *I am now more conscious of how I teach. I am critical of my methods. I am forcing myself to vary my teaching approaches.*
> *I'm more focused on teaching students how to learn rather than just teaching the topic.*

Teachers used the reflection tools developed by the project—for both themselves and their students—and found this to be extremely useful. These reflections provided a rich bank of experiences which were shared at the workshops and other meetings. Some of the teachers went a step further and asked their students to use a learning journal in which they reflected on what they were learning, including the skills. This journal was used at the end of class each day. One teacher said *I now ask them to say what they have learned at the end of each lesson.* Another teacher asked her students to use their English copies to write about what they had learned and how they found the learning.

What worked well

Teachers self-selected for the project

The teachers who participated in this work self-selected, motivated by a common desire to improve their teaching and make learning more effective. They were open to trying out new ideas and to sharing their experiences with each other. When asked to explain their reason for attending the key skills workshops (in their own time) their responses included:

> *I want to try to improve my teaching skill and to be more effective.*
> *I want to find ways of making Maths class more interesting for my students.*
> *I would like to give my students more control of their learning.*
> *I want to make my subject more enjoyable and interactive.*

The teachers showed great motivation and commitment to the process not only through their attendance at the workshops but also through their participation in buddy meetings, informal staff room meetings and through informal sharing of teaching resources.

Strong teacher leadership emerged from within the group

Within the group, one teacher emerged as a leader who kept the whole process moving and fulfilled an important communication role—arranging meetings, disseminating resources, purchasing materials for use in promoting key skills, liaising with the NCCA, etc. She also arranged regular lunchtime 'buddy' meetings of the group which enabled ongoing reflection and cross curricular sharing of ideas. This led to a heightened awareness of the value of peer support amongst the entire group. By November they all agreed *buddy meetings are a great help.*

Teachers saw immediate benefits

While the teachers were advised to introduce new methods slowly and not to expect immediate success, the teachers were delighted to see that the strategies did work and they noticed almost immediate positive impacts. For them, they said that teaching was now more learner centred; *I'm more focused on teaching students how to learn rather than just teaching the topic. I now ask at the end of class, what they have learned.* They started to use more varied teaching approaches; *My approach has changed. I now*

think about how I will teach the materials, e.g. will I use drama methodologies, group work, and peer teaching? The work prompted them to become more reflective practitioners*; I'm conscious of how I teach. I am critical of my methods. I am forcing myself to vary teaching methods. It's more interesting.* And finally, they felt greater enthusiasm and motivation; *Overall it's been very motivating for me personally. It's keeping me and my approach fresh. The students enjoy the classes more and so do I!* The students also responded very positively. Teachers' observations included:

> *The students are giving great feedback, they love it.*
> *Students see learning as valuable in itself—not just a means towards points.*
> *Students are more actively involved in their own learning. They have more ownership of classroom activities.*
> *Now the class is working as 'We' instead of 'I' and 'Them'.   The atmosphere is more relaxed and friendly.*
> *A lot of students' results have improved.*

Student's comments echoed these views. Sample reflections included:

> *I like this way of learning because we're interacting more and you learn more things.*
> *I like this way of learning because it's fun.*
> *I like this way of learning because I get a chance to speak out and interact with my classmates.*
> *It's easier to learn.*

Good balance of external support and internal dynamics

This school highlights the importance of striking the right balance between providing support from outside and promoting internal collegial support. Both worked well in this school and provide a good model of professional development which can inform future work. NCCA inputs were vital in providing the initial ideas (which teachers then adapted), in setting up the reflection and action process, in challenging the group to think outside the box, and in offering reassurance and affirming the good work that was happening. The practical nature of the workshops and of all the ideas presented is very important. The provision of a small grant was another important factor that contributed to the success of the initiative. This money

was used to purchase some reading materials, a 'key skills' cupboard for the staff room which holds all the key skills materials, two data projectors, flip charts (to enable student peer teaching), and some software to enable interactive and cooperative learning in specific subjects. The grant also funded some light refreshments for lunchtime buddy meetings.

Side by side with external support, internal peer support was fostered through the buddy meetings and the day to day interaction and collaboration that occurred between the participating teachers. At the end of the year they said, *Learning from other colleagues has been one of the best aspects of this. It's important to be open to ideas from other colleagues. We can learn so much from each other.*

Challenges

A core group of teachers has gained significant confidence and competence in key skills. The main challenge now is to find ways of extending the learning and enthusiasm to a wider number of staff. In a large school such as this, a whole school approach will take time and an incremental approach is needed. Some ideas for moving forward are set out below. Other challenges identified by teachers in this school echo those already recorded in previous reports[2], such as the need for new ways of assessing students which support key skills development, the need to start embedding key skills at junior cycle, and the challenge of making time for reflective practice.

Moving forward

The teachers involved in this initiative are fully convinced of the benefits of this work. They would like to pursue it further and hope to continue to explore new ways of embedding key skills (both with NCCA input and on their own). They would also like to encourage more of their colleagues to get involved. They have already succeeded in raising awareness and interest in this work amongst the wider staff. *Talk about key skills is already a common part of staff room conversation. A week doesn't go by but we are talking about it at my table. Those of us doing the key skills are always*

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[2] See Draft interim report on key skills at senior cycle. May 2008

sharing ideas and handouts with the others. Another teacher wrote *A renewed enthusiasm has spilled over into the whole school environment.*

All the teachers agree that it would be good to encourage more teachers to get formally on board. With this in mind, they plan to provide an overview of what they have done and the benefits of it, at a staff meeting when the school reopens, in September 2010. They also plan to include key skills development as an agenda item in all future subject planning meetings. In this way, they hope to encourage more teachers to try out the key skills ideas. The teachers who have participated in the key skills work are all willing to act as mentors to those who want to try out new ideas. In addition, they hope to continue to find more and better ways of sharing ideas and resources between staff, via buddy meetings and possibly blogging.

The school has now expressed interest in working on developments at junior cycle.

2.2 Nagle College, Cork—Supporting Flexible Learning Profiles through key skills

What happened in 2009/2010

Nagle College is an urban secondary school with 160 boys and 8 girls. The staff has been actively involved in the Senior Cycle School Network since 2006 when they began working on the Flexible Learning Profiles (FLPs) initiative. It was this work that led them to express an interest in promoting a whole staff approach to key skills. They believed that the Key Skills Framework could provide a scaffold which would support more personalised and student centred teaching and learning and thus provide one important element of their FLP vision.

At the beginning of the school year, the school Principal and Deputy Principal scheduled three half-day workshops (September 2nd, 2009, November 10th 2009 and April 19th 2010) which were attended by all staff and facilitated by the NCCA. The workshops all followed a similar structure.

1. Teachers shared ideas of what has worked for them in developing the key skills.
2. NCCA provided a presentation of classroom strategies related to developing one or two skills (mainly developed with other key skills teachers).
3. Teachers identified and discussed ideas they would take away from the workshop and try out.
4. Reflection tools, handouts, worksheets and templates were shared.
5. The workshops were evaluated.

All the teachers agreed to try out the ideas presented at the workshops and there was a particular interest in working with transition year students, although not exclusively. The TY students were also piloting two new transition units *(Learn Smart* and *It's Your Future)* both of which have a strong emphasis on developing key skills, and particularly skills related to personal effectiveness. The teachers were keen to take a slow and measured approach to change and so they took one or two skills at a time and tried out the ideas related to developing that skill(s) with their students. By the end of the year they had worked on all five key skills. Repeatedly, teachers commented that the embedding of key skills across the curriculum

energised them to explore different and creative teaching methodologies to meet the needs of a diversity of students. They said that *The variety of methodologies used leads to more interesting classes and outcomes.* The Deputy Principal commented that *It has helped to rebalance learning putting the individual at the centre. It has made us much more creative as teachers.* The work with transition year students spilled over to other classes as teachers became more confident and convinced of the benefits of this work.

Staff used the reflection tools developed by the project—for both themselves and their students—and found these to be extremely useful and insightful. *The key skills process has been hugely important because it got teachers thinking about what they are doing. It shook us all up as professionals.* Interestingly, the teachers noticed that the TY students became more skilled in reflecting on their learning throughout the year. Their Guidance teacher commented that *They* (the students) *now have a language and concepts to discuss their own learning. There's definitely much more evidence of self-directed learning and being able to reflect on their learning.*

In December, 2009 three teachers allowed a film company to record key skills in action within different classes and the film crew interviewed a selection of teachers and students. These can be downloaded at www.action.ncca.ie, in the key skills section

What worked well

Staff readiness to embrace key skills

Teachers already working on FLPs in the school saw the development of key skills as an important element in advancing the FLP work. In this context they saw key skills as part of a bigger picture. This initiative was a practical way of moving towards realising a shared vision of more personalised and student-centred learning. The staff was already very aware and supportive of the FLP work and well disposed to working on this project. However, the staff did need to be convinced that key skills could work in the context of a diverse student body, some of whom were seen as poorly motivated and presenting challenging behaviour.

It was vital that the workshops related to the expressed needs of teachers and provided practical ideas for working with a wide range of abilities and approaches to learning. Teachers quickly bought into key skills when they saw that they had a practical focus, rooted in the experience of teachers. The practical nature of the training was appreciated by the staff, with comments like,

> *I like the concrete examples—they inspire me.*
> *I liked the clear demonstration of key skills in the ideas and resources presented.*
> *Thanks, some of the worksheets are excellent. I've taken away lots of practical suggestions.*

The process has led to greater collegial support within the staff as teachers now reflect more on what they are doing and share their reflections with each other, mostly informally over coffee in the staffroom. *We haven't been very good at organising formal buddy meetings but we are always talking about key skills in the staff room and people are good at sharing their resources.*

Management was supportive
Several teachers quietly promoted the initiative in this school from an early stage. It was clear from feedback gathered at each workshop that all the staff were trying out the ideas and making changes within their classrooms—albeit in different ways and at different paces. The Deputy Principal played a vital role in affirming the value of the work (setting it in the wider context of the FLP project), in organising the staff seminars and in reminding the staff about key skills throughout the year. The Principal was equally supportive, as shown by the investment of staff time made available for the workshops and the interest he showed in the process. The work in developing key skills and the FLP initiative are information items on the agenda at all staff meetings.

Change in student behaviour
As with the other schools, students in Nagle College responded extremely positively to this initiative. Teachers were delighted and sometimes surprised by their reactions.

The teachers observed that

> *Overall they are more motivated. They remember material covered.*
>
> *Students became more confident and more effective communicators.*
>
> *They are now able to work effectively in groups.*
>
> *Improved performance.*
>
> *Students appear happier—more interested.*
>
> *Fewer discipline issues.*
>
> *Students now have a language to discuss their learning and the skills they are developing.*
>
> *Critical thinking and personal responsibility for learning are hugely improved.*

The students' feedback was gathered in various ways—through questionnaires, discussion and in one-to-one interviews. The majority of students agreed that they enjoyed learning more and found they learned better when teachers used a key skills focus.

> *I liked this way of working because it was less boring and a lot more work can be done working in groups.*
>
> *I think this is a good way of learning. I found it easier than reading pages of notes.*
>
> *I like this way of learning as it got me thinking.*
>
> *I learned how to work in groups. I learned that my classmates can help me.*
>
> *I like it because it let's us think for ourselves.*
>
> *I improved my communication skills—I learned how to have a discussion and listen to people.*
>
> *I like this way of learning because it makes me understand the topic better.*

Challenges

This school is very committed to keeping the energy alive and continuing the journey towards more student centred teaching and learning. There is an appetite for continuous upskillling and the teachers want to continue to gain fresh perspectives and ideas to help them in their classrooms. In

particular, they are keen to continue to develop their understanding of and confidence in embedding key skills within all teaching and learning. According to the Deputy Principal *The key skills have been hugely important because it got teachers thinking about what they are doing. It shook us all up as professionals.* A teacher commented that *It's important that we don't go back to chalk and talk.* In this context, the school wonders what might happen without the external support offered by NCCA staff. The end of year report concludes *How sustainable it is in the medium term is difficult to know. However it must be said that projects like this have great potential to stimulate change in the system, but they need to be resourced and supported like this one.*

Moving forward

The fostering of key skills within the school had been very valuable in the context of promoting more personalised and student centred learning. The Deputy Principal observed that *Using the key skills as a supporting scaffold gave the FLP project a very practical and robust supportive structure and it puts the learner at the centre of education not the subject.*

The school has expressed interest in working with the NCCA in maintaining a key skills approach across the curriculum during the coming year as well as working on other aspects of senior cycle development. In addition, this school is now involved in the consultation on the future of junior cycle.

2.3 Athy Community College—Teachers leading key skills development across the whole school

This is a co-educational school with 235 students. The school has been involved in the Key Skills Initiative since September 2006 and in developing Flexible Learning Profiles for the same period. Two teachers have taken lead roles in this work over this time.

What happened in 2009-2010

Since September 2006 two teachers in this school have been embedding key skills in their teaching and learning in Maths and Biology. On their initiative the whole staff became involved in the work in January 2009. Both teachers are very knowledgeable in the area of key skills and in the learning methodologies that can be used to embed key skills in teaching and learning. During the past school year the work was entirely led and supported by these two teachers. While NCCA personnel were present at the staff professional development days in January and April 2009, the events were led by the liaison teachers. At the January workshop, they used examples from their own subject areas, Biology and Mathematics, to illustrate what is possible when key skills are used as a framework for planning teaching and learning. Staff support this work on key skills as they reported that their students were happier to learn and were achieving more in their subjects than before the Key Skills Initiative began. This enhanced learning was due to a number of factors, the teacher engagement, the use of ICT in the classroom, the use of team work and so on.

At the April staff event, the leaders used reflections from the teachers and their students from various subject areas. This proved very powerful and feedback from the session was very positive.

When the staff first embarked on adopting the key skills on a whole staff basis, teachers met as a group once a month for one class and brought along their own reflections and reflection sheets from the students. This generated a lot of paper and was not as focused as the team would have liked. Some people did not get to contribute and the leaders were under pressure to support and give feedback to all individual teachers. To facilitate a more accessible form of sharing of ideas, the team set up a blog using

www.blogger.com in September 2009. (See appendix 2 for a selection of posts from the Blog.)

The concept of imagery in poetry is often difficult to grasp. I've found that this type of graphic organiser really works. I ask each student to bring in at least one representation of an image in poem by the poet being studied - in this case Robert Frost. Sometimes students draw their own, some bring magazine cut-outs, a photograph or an image sourced on the internet. The most memorable ever brought in were a real lace doily and a real fishing hook (Elizabeth Bishop). Then some students mount them as a poster which we display in the classroom and refer to when revising. It's really effective.

Monday, December 7, 2009

Figure 1 – Sample blog entry on *Information Processing*

At the end of the year the liaison person reported that

> *The idea is that all staff can use the blog to share ideas and read each others ideas more easily. Last year reflections were written during a meeting once a month but staff rarely read other teachers reflections. The blog will allow staff to quickly scan through what other colleagues are doing.*

The wide range of key skills ideas shared on the blog, and the wide range

of teachers who used it, shows that the blog was a very useful tool for sharing ideas and it could be expanded to facilitate discussions both between teachers in this school and with other schools.

The way in which teachers used and shared ideas for teaching through the blog is just one illustration of the way in which key skills has become a part of the daily conversation, culture and practice in the school. Key skills are now truly embedded in the school culture. This is also illustrated by the fact that *parents were informed about key skills at our open night. They were given a presentation on teaching and learning in our school focusing on key skills and the effect on teaching and learning. The incoming first year parents were also given a presentation on key skills*.

What worked well

Teachers themselves led staff professional development

The impact in the school of using key skills for planning for teaching and learning has been significant and widespread. Without doubt, the critical component in the success of the initiative has been the role taken by the two teacher leaders. Both the Principal and Deputy Principal agreed that *having our own teachers lead professional development events was very significant. We have the expertise in our own staff, and it is more relevant when we are talking about our students. This was a wonderful opportunity for us as a staff to sit down together and share our ideas for teaching and learning with each other. It really motivated the staff*. For more feedback go to the key skills section on www.action.ncca.ie and look for the link to leadership video.

This work has highlighted how a different model of professional development where schools (and teachers themselves) take responsibility for leading the process can be very successful. Professional development which is very context specific, in this instance, proved very powerful. Teachers shared resources, shared experiences and opened their professional work up to their colleagues. There were a number of motivating factors for teachers: the need to enhance and improve the achievement of students and their experience of learning; to refresh and invigorate their teaching; to provide a focus for staff professional development. Teachers felt they were *stuck in old habits* and needed to change.

The two teachers who took on leadership roles in the initiative both reported that the work has had a positive impact on their classroom teaching and on their wider professional lives. Both have spoken about their experience at a number of conferences and forums.

Management was supportive
It is very significant that the two teacher leaders who were central to this success received the public support of management. They also received some practical support, in terms of time and resources. This school presents a very good example of how, when given responsibility to lead change in school with colleagues, teachers can do so very successfully

The use of technology
This school used the grant provided by the NCCA to purchase a suite of netbooks on a portable trolley which are now used to facilitate more diverse teaching approaches across a range of subjects. In addition, a laptop was set up in the staffroom and is designated for key skills work. Teachers use this to blog, share learning activities and record their reflections.

Challenges
When asked about challenges the teacher leaders cited time as the major challenge. Management did allocate time for leading the work. This was considered very important. However, supporting individual teachers through feedback and advice is very time consuming, if it is to be done consistently and if it is to be subject specific. This is something that will be looked at in the school for next year. It may be necessary to set up smaller groups with more than two leaders. Being given time can also mean that your colleagues see this as your 'job' and so they are less likely to get involved and help. This presents a dilemma for management that is not easily resolved.

The label of 'expert' can also present a challenge, where the expertise in a given area is seen to lie with one or more individuals in the staff. This again presents a dilemma for management when the 'experts' are no longer available. If the 'experts' are seen to be very successful then other colleagues are not inclined to come forward and so on. The scaling up and leading of initiatives in schools is challenging, all the more so when this is

just one such initiative in the school.

Moving forward

As one teacher in this school reflected

> *The introduction of key skills to the school has brought about a change in our teachers that extends beyond the key skills area and has opened us up to the vast world of research that is out there to help students get the most out of their education.* .

This school is committed to continuing the work on key skills. They plan to develop the key skills area in the staff room with a computer and other resources. Here teachers can contribute to the blog and upload resources into subject specific areas. The availability of time to support and lead the work will also be examined.

2.4 St. Brigid's College, Callan—Key skills for first years

St. Brigid's College, Callan is a girl's school in a rural town with 450 students and has been working in collaboration with the NCCA on the Key Skills Framework since 2006. The school was the first from phase two to introduce key skills across the curriculum and this was brought about by the enthusiasm of the five teachers involved in the initiative from the start. During the school year 2008–2009, the agenda for Subject Department Planning Meetings was devoted to planning for effective teaching and learning. Teachers engaged in a subject specific mentoring system whereby they shared key skills methodologies and resources. They also participated in 'buddy meetings' which gave teachers the opportunity to collaborate with teachers from other subject departments.

What happened in 2009-2010

During the past school year the school decided to work on key skills with first year students. They called the process *The Learning to Learn Initiative*, with an emphasis on raising academic standards and nurturing independent learning. This initiative arose in response to teachers' views that, having worked on key skills in senior cycle, their introduction would be just as, if not more effective at junior cycle, in particular in the first year of secondary school. St. Brigid's wished to build on the success of the key skills project in terms of teachers' continued professional development and the noted benefits to students' experiences of learning. *First year is where learning habits are acquired, effective or ineffective. It is worthwhile to get them thinking about how they learn so that positive habits are acquired early.*

Three teacher leaders were assigned the role of Learning Mentor, each responsible for leading the initiative with one first year class group. Two of these leaders had already been involved with the Key Skills Framework since September 2007, while the third was relatively new to the framework. There were 64 first year students involved in the initiative. Initially, it was envisaged that a weekly period would be allocated on the timetable to

enable mentors to meet with students to explore the key skills and gather their reflections. Due to limitations with timetabling, each teacher was allocated their group for CSPE in addition to another subject. The rationale for selecting CSPE was that the CSPE curriculum was considered to have excellent scope for embedding the skills due to the subject matter and length of syllabus. Having class groups for two subjects meant that students could be given more opportunities to be exposed to the key skills.

Students were introduced to the concept of learning to learn at an induction day in September. They were all given a learning folder to record their experience of key skills in learning, with the following sections.

> **About me:** interests, favourite websites, music and so on.
>
> **The Learning Log:** in this section the students filled in a traffic light sheet at the end of each month to record how they were getting on in each of their subjects. This provided an insight into the learner's perception of what they saw as barriers to their learning, areas that they have found interesting, areas they would like more on, the degree of interest and so on. (See traffic light exercise, appendix 4.)
>
> **The Learning Showcase:** this section was sub-divided into the five key skills and students were asked to decide on a piece of work in any subject that showed how they were developing the key skills in that area. It was envisaged that this would be an area for learners to archive a range of artifacts, highlights of their learning. Parents, teachers and students could view this record of achievement. Students personalized their folders by adding pictures and so on to highlight their interests, hobbies, activities and personality.

Fig: 2 Me section of *Learning to Learn Folder*

The teacher leaders worked with students on building up the information in the folders.

Learning to Learn Induction Day

An Induction Day was held for all first year students engaging in the project on the 17th Sept 2009. This was hosted by an NCCA education officer and supported by the three teacher mentors. The session, scheduled for six class periods, was highly interactive with the aim of enthusing students about learning, and in particular learning through key skills. The school reported that having NCCA present on the day *brought the initiative credibility. The students felt they were involved in something innovative and 'important'.* The interactive activities such as People Bingo, Group Work and Poster Making motivated students and introduced them to the concept of having fun with learning.

Fig: 3 Students working together on induction day

Each skill was described to the students in broad terms and then students were organised into groups and asked to produce a poster to describe that skill. They then presented their posters to the whole group. This proved very successful in revealing misconceptions about skills and in getting students talking about their learning. One of the mentors was very effective at probing the misconceptions and drawing out examples from her own classes. While the teachers voiced their wish for outside support from NCCA, it was very evident on the day that initiatives such as this also need the local experience of the classroom teacher for communicating with students of this age. The difficulty with the language of the Key Skills Framework for students also became evident on the day. Fortunately, the teachers' previous involvement in key skills meant they were very comfortable with the language and were able to adapt it to suit first year students.

Fig: 4 Student poster on *Critical and Creative Thinking*

Fig: 5 Student poster on communicating

What worked well

Enthusiasm of both teachers and students

Teachers viewed the Learning to Learn initiative as a 'fresh start' with key skills in their teaching. While previous involvement with key skills had proved very successful within the school, teachers looked forward to the opportunity to introduce the key skills to younger students in the hope of yielding benefits in future years. In the students' opinions, the concept of key skills was thought to have real merit. The lead teacher commented that *The first years were so open and willing to engage in different methodologies. Unlike senior students, the idea of taking responsibility for their own learning is one which they understood and accepted.*

When the students understood the skills, they agreed that they were skills for life and were eager to participate in activities that would help them to acquire these skills. When engaging in methods such as group work and self/peer assessment, it was important to keep reiterating the benefits of these methods so that at all times students fully understood the purpose of learning in this way. Some students' comments serve to illustrate the development of key skills:

> *I think the key skills helped us talk more in class and gave us confidence to express our opinions.*
> *We learnt how to communicate which is really important for the future.*

Teachers also reported that students became competent in the language of key skills and that was central to helping students adjust their mindset and expectations around learning. For example, when discussing Critical Thinking one student explained *you must think through the problem* or for Working with Others another summed it up as follows: I*t is your responsibility to make everyone in the group contribute and not complain that you are doing all the work.* In the area of Personal Effectiveness, one class group, 1C devised the mantra *1C are doing it for themselves!*—a simple yet effective way of promoting the concept of students becoming more independent and taking responsibility for their learning.

The Traffic Light system encouraged students to reflect on their learning and in doing so take responsibility for their progress within subjects. Retaining school reports and formal assessment results in their folders

made them more aware of realistic goal setting between formal assessments. All first year students reported that they enjoyed learning through the key skills methods. Group work was a favourite as was the emphasis on communication skills; expressing opinions, discussion, presenting etc.

Effective school organisation

Allocating mentors to the teaching of CSPE in addition to another subject was helpful in terms of giving mentors the opportunity to employ key skills methodologies. The CSPE curriculum lent itself very well to active learning methodologies such as walking debates, group discussion and presentation of project work.

Key skills formed an integral part of teaching and learning strategies cited in subject plans and was noted by inspectors as being good practice. From September 2010, it is intended that all subject plans will have a section on the potential of key skills for subjects. Headings will include Rationale, Overview of Skills and Outcomes and practical examples of how key skills can be utilised in the subject in question.

Resourcing

Teacher leaders were encouraged and supported by management and every opportunity was taken to prioritise key skills formally at staff meetings. The Deputy Principal, who participated in the early stages of the Key Skills Initiative, assumed an active role in driving the initiative while teachers who had been involved in the same project supported the leaders in their work. Management supported teachers' work by purchasing Data Projectors for each of the three teacher leaders, which promoted the use of ICT in their teaching. The Principal said that

> *We are always about trying to improve teaching and learning in school. The process of teaching to learn in first year is an excellent attempt to get students to approach their learning differently, to think for themselves and to take responsibility for their own learning. It is and will continue to teach them skills not just for education but will be important tools for life skills also.*

Mentors classes were covered for substitution to allow for a number of

review meetings on the initiative to date.

Challenges

The language of key skills

The language of the Key Skills Framework was challenging for first year learners. This was signalled on the Induction Day when students struggled to comprehend the language surrounding concepts such as Information Processing and Being Personally Effective. Outcomes such as *differentiating the relevant from the irrelevant*, *organising information in a coherent way* and *being able to evaluate oneself* are difficult for this age group. One student commented that *the key skills have very complicated names and I still don't really know what they mean. The language is too complex, I didn't get a lot of it.*

The teacher leaders recommended that NCCA modify the language of key skills for a younger student body. They suggest that *Skills could be colour coded with visual graphics to appeal to the different kinds of learners. More accessible language for Being Personally Effective may be simply: 'Learning to Do it for Yourself'*

Design of folders

The folders were of poor quality and therefore did not serve the purpose envisaged by planners; that students would record samples of their key skills related work in order to document their progress and give a sense of achievement. The practice of recording the skills related to class work was also questioned by teachers as the initiative progressed. The students had the following to say about the folders:

> *I think the folders were badly designed and the space to input our work was too small. Everything fell out of my folder.*
> *The folders need to be more durable. I would limit the amount of subjects on the traffic lights sheet and make the spaces to write in bigger.*

The tearing out of pages from copies appeared futile and was not considered good practice as copies were falling apart and often the sample of work produced did not necessarily reflect the skill being used. For example, a group work exercise in English class whereby students are

asked to work together to formulate ideas for a creative essay might only result in bullet points on a page.

Both teachers and students considered the self assessment template a very beneficial aid for learning. Students complained however that the grids were too small to enable them to write in all aspects of courses covered. Written reflection sheets proved repetitious in nature in that students were tending to write the same response to methodologies across subjects, for example *It was fun*, *and I liked working as part of a group*. Teachers felt that reflecting on learning was best done in real time in the class and orally rather than in written format. Some teachers found that key skills have become so engrained into their teaching, that there is no need to 'formalise' it in such a way, in terms of filling folders. Other teachers who were less familiar with this work found the written reflection process valuable.

The role of the mentor

Both teachers and students consider the role of learning mentor as having real merit. It is an area the school would like to develop further as establishing support structures for effective learning is prioritised. Teachers also felt it would help identify students who were struggling with the transition into secondary school so that interventions could be put in place as soon as possible, while students felt secure that if they were having difficulty in any way, they would know who to talk to.

An area for further consideration however, is the concern expressed by mentors about students voicing their difficulties with certain teachers and subjects. Mentors felt conflicted and uncomfortable with the idea of approaching individual teachers. In this instance, students were encouraged to be more pro-active in terms of voicing their concerns directly with the teachers involved.

Scheduling key skills

While it was hoped that the implementation of skills would begin in September, on reflection, teachers decided to modify their expectations to allow students some 'settling' time. Where students were learning subjects for the first time, for example French, some basic knowledge had to be taught first before a skills focus could gain momentum.

Resourcing

Effective management of such an initiative, while worthwhile, proved challenging on the part of the teacher leaders, in terms of both planning and implementation. Teachers reported that they would have liked more resources developed externally to support different subject areas. *While teaching staff consider themselves very experienced in the employment of key skills strategies, we felt that the provision of subject specific support packs would be of great benefit to teachers.* The teacher leaders felt that the time commitment was considerable and more external support would have been welcome, as exemplified in the following quote;

> *Regular formal meetings to review progress, update management on issues arising and get support from NCCA personnel would be of benefit.*

Moving forward

It is the wish of both management and teachers of St. Brigid's College to continue with the Learning to Learn project next year as it is believed that there is much to be gained by students participating in an initiative that makes them more self-aware and responsible as individuals and as learners.

3. Conclusions

All of the schools explored how key skills might be embedded in teaching within a whole school setting, taking account of different local circumstances. The stories demonstrate that a whole school approach to key skills implementation can be successful. All the schools have testified that key skills have provided a lever for change which has had impacted positively on teaching and learning. While different approaches were used with all the schools some common benefits are clear. The initiative has promoted reflective professional practice and encouraged the sharing of ideas for teaching among teachers. It has stimulated innovative approaches by teachers in their teaching and as a consequence, it has promoted more engaged forms of learning among students. It has facilitated students in becoming more reflective about and more responsible for their own learning. And both teachers and students say it has led to better learning and improved results.

It is also clear that the reflective practice approach used and the model of professional development with which the teachers engaged were important factors in the benefits derived from the work. This is an important part of the learning from the initiative and merits some scrutiny in this concluding section. What exactly can we say worked well and what can other schools or the system learn from this?

To sum up the key learning from this phase of the work we can affirm

1. The importance of local support

In the first instance, school management needs to believe in the value of the work and give it practical and public support, such as providing staff development time, speaking about key skills to parents, displaying key skills posters around the school. In addition, support and leadership from even a small number of teachers is needed. When a teacher leader emerges within a staff s/he can be a key motivator in keeping other staff engaged in the process. All the schools in this initiative demonstrate a mix of both management-led and distributive leadership approaches seems to work best in leading this kind of change.

2. The value of external support

This initiative has also demonstrated the need for the correct balance between leadership from within the school and outside support. While change does not need to be centrally led and teachers can lead change within their own schools, they need to be supported in doing this. Most importantly, they need personal contact with an external professional who can provide practical support and give legitimacy to the work as needed. All the teachers agreed that a website or a set of training materials would not be enough to support them in making the changes that have occurred. A good relationship with someone 'from outside' is also needed. Schools welcomed the flexibility the small grant of €3,400 gave them in organising professional development locally.

3. The value of reflection

One of the most consistent benefits of the initiative which teachers mention is the value of having the opportunity to engage in reflection and the role of professional learning communities in that process. In some cases 'buddy meetings' happened formally and within the timetabled day while in other cases they happened over a cup of coffee in the staff room. In all cases, they played a key role in promoting reflection on teaching and in prompting the sharing of classroom ideas. More collegial sharing between schools might also have been useful as each school was working somewhat in isolation. It would be helpful to bring the four schools together into a network so that they can discuss ways of sharing their reflections and ideas.

4. The cyclical nature of professional development

A model of professional development has emerged which is school-based, context-specific and teacher-led, grounded on the principle of teachers as key agents of change. This kind of approach however, takes time and the NCCA has been working with teachers in these schools on key skills since 2006. The message from this work is that teachers need time to make sense of change in their practice. In order to do this they need to try out the change with their students in their classroom and to reflect on the process. They need time to revisit the change and to embed it into their practice. To achieve this they need to discuss the process with colleagues, students and individuals from outside their school. They also need time to grow

comfortable and confident with assuming positions of leadership in the school and among peers. The cyclical nature of professional change, while not a new idea by any means, had not been evident in professional development experiences of these teachers and schools to date.

5. Teachers need motivation to change

The first and main motivation to change is a desire to improve student learning and achievement. All schools saw a need to make teaching and learning more effective so that students could fulfil their learning potential. The second motivation is success. Very quickly, teachers could see that their key skills work was leading to greater student engagement in learning and improved student achievement. Thirdly, teachers are motivated by a desire to refresh and reinvigorate themselves professionally. The combination of professional development workshops and collegial support groups has met this need. Finally, this work has illustrated the role of small incentives as motivators for change. Sometimes teachers themselves benefited from these incentives (e.g. meeting time) but often teachers were satisfied when they saw their students benefiting from additional supports offered via the project (e.g. when data projectors or flipcharts enabled different kinds of learning).

6. *The Key Skills Framework is useful in changing practice*

The Key Skills Framework has proven itself to be flexible and robust enough to work for different subjects and for different school settings. Teachers like the fact that it is practically focused around learning outcomes and that it encourages creativity and reflection. The Key Skills Framework now needs to be given wider recognition in the system. Key skills need to be reflected in syllabuses and in assessment and to form part of teacher professional development and evaluation. A number of DES inspection reports have commended the key skills project, which is very welcome. For example, the History inspection report for Athy Community College has this to say

> *Meetings take place regularly and the minutes of meetings show a good level of reflective practice on a range of relevant issues including homework, motivating students and encouraging student achievement. Minutes show that meetings have also focused on teaching methodologies in the context of the NCCA's Key Skills*

Initiative. Exemplar lesson plans using active learning methodologies have been prepared by the department. This approach is highly commended as a very good support to teaching and learning. (History Inspection, April 2010)

Teachers reported that a strength of the Key Skills Framework is that it provides a focus for planning that is not content specific, or subject specific. They could share ideas on teaching and learning across disciplines, as was evident in the Blog on key skills. The key skills were also seen as relevant to both junior cycle and senior cycle students, albeit the need to adapt the language to suit the younger learner was also identified.

References

NCCA. 2008. *Key Skills at Senior Cycle: Draft interim report.*
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Appendix 1: Key Skills Toolkit

The NCCA key skills toolkit has been developed with teachers for schools who wish to implement key skills across the curriculum or for individual teachers who wish to 'dip' in and try some of the ideas. The toolkit is not a finished product and is added to as teachers in the NCCA school network develop learning activities. The material can be accessed through the NCCA action website www.action.ncca.ie

The toolkit is made up of the following;
The Key Skills Framework

In this document each of the five key skills is broken down into essential elements. These elements further describe the skill that students will develop. The key skills are also described in terms of learning outcomes - what students might show as evidence of achieving in the key skill.

Background reports

- Key Skills at Senior Cycle: Draft interim report (NCCA, May 2008)
- Key Skills Initiative: Report on phase two (NCCA, September 2009)
- Key Skills; Whole school implementation (NCCA, September 2010)

Tips on getting started

A document that outlines the process of introducing key skills in a school or classroom.

Unlocking learning using key skills an introducing for schools

This introductory PowerPoint presentation outlines the background to key skills. This presentation comes with supporting materials on setting up and running 'buddy meetings'. In addition, there are

templates for an activity for group work during the session. Typically, this session should last two hours.

PowerPoint presentations

Working with others

Critical and creative thinking

Communicating

Being personally effective

Information processing

These presentations outline the main elements of the key skill and give practical examples of how the key skill can be embedded in teaching and learning. Videos of students and teachers are used in these presentations. In addition, students and teacher reflections are used to illustrate the key skills in action.

Key skills booklets

To support each of these presentations there are booklets with practical tips and ideas that teachers from the school network have used to embed key skills.

Subject specific reports

These reports were generated by the work with teachers in the first phase of the initiative in;

- Biology
- Modern Languages
- English

Action research

Each of the presentations end with a short input on action research. Participants are encouraged to use four lenses to view their practice. That of their students, their colleagues, their own reflections and learnings from educational research. To support them in doing this, reflection sheets are provided. These reflection sheets have been tried and tested by teachers throughout the in initiative.

Tools for reflection

- a short teacher reflection sheet developed by teachers

working on embedding key skills.

- a short student reflection sheet that teachers used with students to get them reflecting on their learning.
- an end of class reflection sheet used to reflect on how key skills were embedded. Teachers used these to adapt the methodology until they felt they had achieved some degree of success.
- a reflections with my colleague sheet. Teachers found it useful to share ideas and reflect with a colleague.
- a student's reflection on their own learning sheet. Students to assess their own progress in developing the five key skills.

Supporting videos

Additional short videos are available for viewing in the following areas;

- Management and teachers talking about implementing key skills across the curriculum
- Teachers talking about key skills
- Students from a single sex girls school talking about key skills
- Students from a co-educational college talking about key skills
- Students from different schools talking about learning
- Key skills in a Transition Year class
- Key skills in a [woodwork]
- Methodology videos
  - Pictionary – using games for learning
  - Peer assessment
  - Using games for learning
  - Peer Teaching
  - Academic controversy
  - Quiz
  - Cooperative learning – jigsaw

Learning activities

On the action section of www.ncca.ie there are learning activities in the following areas. Activities have supporting materials and examples of student work and reflections from student and teachers;

- Academic Controversy English - King Lear
- Peer Teaching Biology - peer teaching
- Using Games for Learning Biology - short question revision
- ICT in Learning French - Using the internet for comprehension pair-work
- Project Based Learning Biology - research project
- Revising and preparing for exams Short question revision
- Oral Communication Spanish - Speed dating
- French - Find someone
- Gaeilge - Aimsigh duine
- Spanish – Speed dating
- Using Graphic Organisers Biology - Using graphic organisers

Poster

Large posters illustrating the five key skills and their elements for display in classrooms.

Appendix 2: Selection of posts from the Blog used to support key skills in case study 3

Critical and Creative Thinking - Haiku Poetry

This series of 2 classes was delivered by team teaching. I was unfamiliar with Haiku as an art form and learned with the first year students. After an introduction to the characteristics of an Haiku both teachers and students set about writing their own - based on the One Athy, One Book project - "Holes" by Louis Sachar.

In the follow-up class we each presented our poems and reflected upon them. I photcopied my homework and the class critiqued it. Initially, I was graded 10 out of 10; but after further reflection by the class my final mark was 8 out of 10. Reasons: students noted that I'd omitted a comma where it would have aided meaning and a very astute student noted that I'd deviated from the characteristic theme - i.e. nature. We all learned a lot from each other. Our work is being made into a poster for the classroom.

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Jigsaw/dominos maker

Just want to share the name of a program which allows you to create jigsaws, dominos and follow me cards with key facts, question & answer style. Its called Tarsia, just google it to find a download. I created a jigsaw using elements from graphing function and divided the class into four groups to solve the puzzle. It went down a treat. Next step is I'm going to teach them how to use it and they can make a jigsaw for each other! Lots of key skills being used, working with others, critical thinking, information processing.

Monday, March 15, 2010

Critical Thinking

Topic - Graphing Quadratic Functions. Students were given a solution to a question which had 5 mistakes. Working individually for five minutes students had to identify the errors and correct them. Then working in their groups (3 or 4) they were given a further 10 mins to share their ideas. Then each group was given the opportunity to report to the whole class. All students had a high level of success. Students were asked to mark the solution using blunder and slips as per marking schemes and the majority of students awarded the correct mark. This was a very useful exercise in showing students how to critically examine work in order to achieve a higher grade. Hopefully they will put it into practice!

Posted by Staff member at 8:47 PM 0 comments

Sunday, March 14, 2010

Table Quiz

I organized a table quiz for a 3rd year maths group; I arranged mixed ability teams of 3. The format of the quiz was slightly different to a regular quiz. There were 3 questions per round worth 1 mark (easy), 2 marks (mid range) and 3 marks (difficult). Students had to decide themselves who should answer each question and everyone had to answer one question per round. The nominated student from each team came and sat in the hotseats and wrote their answer on a sheet and showed me their solution. It was a great way to do a quiz because everyone had a chance to be involved. At the end of the class the students were able to pick out how they used the five key skills during the class.

Posted by Staff member at 12:02 PM 0 comments

Snowballing. Junior Business Studies

Topic: Factors to consider when selecting a method of transport.

Students are given a blank sheet of paper. They are asked

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to write down the factors that should be considered when selecting a method of transport. (There should be 5 factors). They write down as many as possible. They roll up the sheets of paper and place them in a box. Then each student takes out one from the box and they discuss the answers with the student beside them and they try to come up with all 5 factors.

Posted by Staff member at 3:28 PM 0 comments

Working with Others -Geography

At the end of the chapter on Volcanoes, Earthquakes and Fold Mountains students were given a crossword for revision. They were to work in twos to find the answers. Students were paired depending on their ability. Once they were given time to complete the crossword they then had to compare answers with another group. By doing this the whole class had the right answers and the questions were used as a follow up test in which all the students did very well.

Posted by Staff member at 3:16 PM 0 comments

Blind Date for revision

To revise the topic "digestion" the class was divided into boys/girls. In these groups each student had to come up with 10 different questions and have the answers as well. Each boy was then put at a table with a girl sitting opposite. The boys asked the questions first, after 1 minute the girls had to move to the next boy and answer 10 more questions until each girl had been with every boy!!! The boys then put the results up on the board. Then they switched roles with the girls asking the questions and the boys answering. The results were again put up on the board and the winning team got a prize. All students enjoyed this activity. The key skills used here were information processing, being personally effective, communication and working with others.

Posted by Staff member at 7:36 PM 0 comments

Appendix 3

Images from Portfolios – case study 4

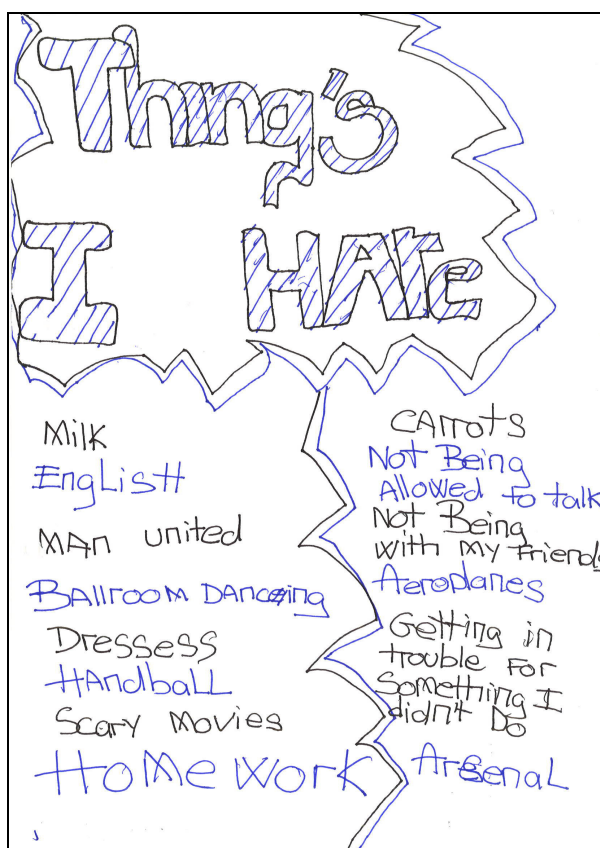Fig 1: Cover of a portfolio

Fig 2:Pages from the ME section

Fig 3: Traffic lighting in Learning Log section