



Educate  
Together

# Teacher News

## April 2013

Dear all,

Welcome to the April Teacher Newsletter.

The big news at the moment is that the results of the parental surveys, initiated by the DES, in response to the Forum on Pluralism and Patronage, are in. Of the 43 areas identified, there are recommendations for 25 Educate Together schools, 2 Community National Schools and one Gaelscoil.

The remaining 15 areas currently show insufficient demand.

This is a resounding endorsement of the Educate Together model and congratulations to all!

Fionnuala Ward  
Primary Education Officer



Left to right: Fionnuala Ward, Emer Nowlan, Masina Johnson, Paul Rowe, Luke O'Shaughnessy (national office) **Liz Morris**, author (Griffen Valley ETNS) and **Niamh McGuirk**, author (Donabate and Portrane ETNS)

## Think & Act!

With our partners, Pivotal Arts, Educate Together has developed and launched a new website, called Think and Act. This is a fantastic site with really useful resources and teaching ideas for 5<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> class.

Three age-appropriate, animated scenarios act as launching pads for a wide range of content in different curriculum areas, including the Learn Together. Social justice issues, such as migration and family reunification, feature strongly and the emphasis throughout is on critical thinking and fun activities. Be sure to check it out!

[www.thinkandact.ie](http://www.thinkandact.ie)

Congratulations to the authors Niamh McGuirk from Donabate and Portrane and Liz Morris from Griffen Valley. The website was launched by Frances Fitzgerald T.D. Minister for Children.

## Learn Together Evaluation

Educate Together has commissioned an evaluation of the Learn Together. The first phase, completed in association with DCU, is now over. Many thanks to the principals and Learn Together co-ordinators who made themselves available for interview. More details to follow.

# Ethos Conference 2012

It seems a long time ago now but our Ethos Conference in November was a great success and many thanks to all who attended. We fully appreciate that technology let us down somewhat and the Limerick group didn't get to hear all of Olivia O'Leary's talk. Many apologies! But by all accounts, the presentations and discussions for parents, teachers and Board members, in both venues, got people talking and arguing and you can't ask for more than that!



Pictured above: Deirdre O'Donoghue, (National Office) Olivia O'Leary (Guest Speaker) and Diarmaid Mac Aonghusa (Chair, Board of Directors) and a veritable host of teachers, Board members and parents!

## Certificate in Ethical and Multi-denominational Education

A reminder that our postgraduate Certificate in Ethical and Multi-denominational Education, run in association with St Patrick's College of Education, will begin again next October. This is a blended course, involving online and weekend seminars, and is eligible for the Teacher Fee Refund scheme.

For further information feel free to call us on 01 429 2500 or email us at [teachereducation@educatetogether.ie](mailto:teachereducation@educatetogether.ie) or visit our website:

[www.educatetogether.ie/support/postgraduate-certificate](http://www.educatetogether.ie/support/postgraduate-certificate)

## WANTED Presenters on the Learn Together in the Colleges of Education

Applications are now being accepted from teachers interested in presenting on any strand of the Learn Together in the Colleges of Education. Presenters will be paid and Educate Together will provide substitute cover on the day. CVs should be sent to [teachereducation@educatetogether.ie](mailto:teachereducation@educatetogether.ie), closing date Fri April 26th at 5 pm.

## AS GAELIGE

Educate Together is putting together a panel of people willing to engage with Irish-language media (Raidió na Gaeltachta, etc.). Educate Together regularly receives requests for such interviews and would like to broaden the range and breadth of speakers available. Support / training will be provided. Applications to [teachereducation@educatetogether.ie](mailto:teachereducation@educatetogether.ie)

# Secular Parents Group in Dalkey

The Secular Parents Group was formed in 2012 by a group of parents in Dalkey School Project National School. We hope to be of some support to the students, parents and their families as we muddle through the difficulties and delights of being Atheists, Humanists, Secularists, and all the other ways of describing being of no religion.

As parents, we selected Educate Together Schools as the best (and only) option available which values multiculturalism and a secular society, but even within Educate Together schools we found there to be a leaning towards respecting the main faiths of the world, while students in homes without faith were left outside the loop.

The Secular Parents Group hopes in our small way to begin to change the way we are viewed. We want to provide our children with the chance to realize that they are part of a large and ever-growing community. We hope that through the very positive support shown to us by our Principal, Miriam Hurley, our DSP NS Board of Management and the wonderful people of Educate Together that we can take positive steps together to make school a truly inclusive place for our children to grow and learn together.

We're planning our first family event in April, to coincide with Earth Day, to celebrate our shared identity and discuss the wonders of our world. For more details on this, and on our group we have a Facebook page: Secular Parents Group.

**Rachael Prendergast Spollen, Dalkey SP**

## Bridge21 Primary School Programme

Educate Together has worked with Bridge21 in Trinity for a number of second-level projects and will soon be involved in workshops for 5th / 6th class. These workshops aim to build technical and team-work skills by completing a multi-media project in an innovative learning space. Projects including making a movie, recording / editing sound and / or animation. A number of Educate Together primary schools have already booked, but there may be some dates still available. Contact Bridge21 directly for more info:

[primary@bridge21.ie](mailto:primary@bridge21.ie) 01 896 4099 [www.bridge21.ie](http://www.bridge21.ie)



## Yellow Flag Programme

The Yellow Flag intercultural programme is currently recruiting primary and secondary schools to participate in its next phase, beginning September 2013. The Yellow Flag provides a framework to develop a school environment, where diversity is valued and celebrated. To date, Castaheany and Aston Village have received Yellow Flags, with Midleton and Ardee currently working on theirs. The deadline for this round is May 1st. Contact Paula Madden on:

01-679 6577 [yellowflagprogramme@gmail.com](mailto:yellowflagprogramme@gmail.com)







# Learn Together Survey Results

Thanks once again to all 137 who completed our Teacher Survey. Results below:

## Have completed / accessed courses / supports

- 49.6% Introductory online course
- 18.3% Making a Difference online course
- 4.3% Addressing Homophobia face-to-face course
- 32.2% In-service
- 69.6% Resource Bank
- 35.7% Ethos Conference

## Feedback

- Courses / supports generally very useful
- Material should be available all year round
- Resource Bank difficult to access
- In-service should be practical as possible
- 96% interested in observing lesson during in-service
- More Gaeilge on website
- Free Learn Togethers
- 56% - 57% demand for either face-to-face or blended courses
- Practical resources for Learn Together
- Material adapted for students with SEN
- Facility to borrow books
- Over 50% have used lessons or parts of lessons developed by Educate Together

It was fantastic to get all that feedback and we're committed to taking as much as we can on board. Very briefly, here we go..

We've included more material as Gaeilge on our website. We will continue to source as many practical resources as possible. Lessons are being piloted right now on Responsible Pet Ownership for 3rd - 6th and we recently launched the Think and Act site. In-service is very much focussed on the practical. We're looking into the feasibility of giving out Learn Togethers for free, adapting material for students with SEN and ASD and we have applied to do a blended course this summer.

Unfortunately, due to funding issues, we cannot make courses available for free. We tried at one stage to make courses available at other holiday periods but this involved a significant investment of staff time, which simply wasn't sustainable. For technical reasons, it is better to keep the Resource Bank on our Moodle site, <http://learning.educatetogether.ie/> rather than the website, and we cannot facilitate a borrowing library, for fear of losing stock. However, now that we've moved into the city centre, we hope to open up the library, by appointment, to individuals or groups of Educate Together teachers (and we'll happily provide tea, coffee and biscuits!) And finally, if you come across useful material - lessons, ideas etc. - please let us know!