

SPRING | 2020



Educate
Together

Newsletter For Educate Together
Teachers and Boards of Management

Ethical Education Matters



Educate
Together



**INSPIRING
ACTIVE
STUDENTS**

**Positive Impacts of Ethical
Education:
Senior Cycle Review**

**Calendar of Events/
CPD**

**New CEO for
Educate Together**



Please Recycle

FREE DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION RESOURCES

Trócaire



Junior PRIMARY



Senior PRIMARY



Post PRIMARY

Trócaire's Development Education Team have just put the finishing touches to the third instalment of their three-year learning journey on the Global Goals, focusing on 'Protecting Families – Protecting the Planet'.

This year, the two focus countries for the resources are Kenya and Honduras. These resources covering early childhood, Primary, Post Primary are available online from trocaire.org/education/motherearth

GAME BASED LEARNING



Game-based learning is an excellent way for students to engage in a development education topic in a fun and innovative way. Games have the potential to foster within students a range of skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving and team-work.

Trócaire's Development Education team have created Development Education Games for Primary & Post Primary, download them for FREE at: trocaire.org/education/motherearth



Far Left: **The Exploitation Game** – Post Primary Development Education Game

Left: **Human Rights Defenders** – Primary Development Education game



Trócaire's award winning video game Project Honduras
trocaire.org/education/project-honduras

TRÓCAIRE GAME CHANGERS



BOARD GAME | CARD GAME | VIDEO GAME

Create a game. Change the world

A competition for young people who want to change the world and believe games are a way to do this!

Games submitted must include one of three themes: **Climate Justice | Human Rights | Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

Entries must be submitted by 03 April 2020 in one of the following categories: **Senior Primary | Post Primary | Youth Groups**

HOW ARE THE GAMES SUBMITTED?

Games can be created by an individual, group or class. The game must have been played by others; for example, friends, families, other young people in your class/youth group.

For game development guidelines, entry forms and examples of last year's game entries, log onto trocaire.org/gamechangers

For more information on Trócaire's Development Education resources please contact Mary Boyce on mary.boyce@trocaire.org

'Hello' from Incoming CEO Emer Nowlan

When I last featured in this Newsletter, in Autumn 2017, I reflected on some of the highlights of the ten years I had spent working in the national office. There were many firsts - the opening of the first Educate Together second-level schools, the first online summer courses for teachers, a fruitful partnership with the One Foundation, the first 'divested' primary schools, and so on.

Coming back after two and half years away, I see many more positive developments in the sector: the first Ethical Education summer school, Educate Together Ethos Standards and Guidelines and an accompanying School Self-Evaluation tool, and of course 16 new schools, providing thousands more Educate Together places for children who need them.

In particular it's great to see the continued development of strong partnerships – a new agreement to become trustee partners with City of Dublin ETB in two Dublin second-level schools, research relationships with DCU, UCD and the ESRI, and a significant partnership with the multinational software company Salesforce that has provided research, continuing professional development and resources for schools.

Paul Rowe: "a hard act to follow..."

It is a privilege to be passed the baton from Paul. A committed advocate for Educate Together for more than 20 years, he has worked tirelessly to transform the sector: from 10 schools to a network of over 100. From a thorn in the side of the Department of Education and Skills to a valued partner. He's a hard act to follow, and I am grateful to have such a committed team in the national office to work with in the transition, so that we can continue to build on the progress he has made.

Of course there are many challenges ahead. Providing child-centred, democratic education is not easy in an adult-centred, hierarchical system, especially when schools are under increasing and often competing pressures. We need to find better ways to support our growing network so that we can continue to lead the way in delivering truly equality-based education. And we need to do more to meet the ever-increasing demand for our schools, so that more children can benefit from our inclusive ethos. We also need to advocate for wider system reforms, such as the timely provision of good quality school buildings, better supports for children with additional needs, and improvements in teacher education.

New Strategy Statement

The new Strategy Statement 2019 – 2021 published by the Board of Directors last year sets out clear and ambitious goals. Achieving them will move us closer to realising the vision set out in the Educate Together Charter: 'a future where equality-based education is as freely available to parents as any other educational option they may choose'.

As we embark on this new and exciting phase in Educate Together's development, I hope that you will join me in working together to achieve our objectives – for the children in our schools, and for those that need them.

Educate Together's Strategic Goals 2019 - 2021

Goal 1: Quality and Capacity	Strengthen the network and shared values across Educate Together schools
Goal 2: Leadership	Be a leading voice for innovation and reform in education, continually striving for wider system change in Irish education
Goal 3: Growth	Increase the number of Educate Together school places at primary and second-level



Source: The Boy, the mole, the fox and the Horse, by Charlie Mackesy (2019)

www.charliemackesy.com

‘Thank You’ from Outgoing CEO Paul Rowe

Looking back over the past years as CEO, the overwhelming sense I have is one of great gratitude for having the opportunity to do something constructive and worthwhile with the time I've had in Educate Together. I feel grateful also to have had the opportunity to work with such passionate, committed and interesting people all along the way - Teachers; Principals; ANAs; Secretaries; Caretakers; Board of Management members; Parents Associations; Student Councils; Green Committees; Volunteers; Action Groups and Startups. My meetings with these important people often have been about challenges that needed to be overcome, but they have been a constant source of inspiration and energy.

There were many things I was asked to help with, from the negotiation of the Educate Together redeployment panel for teachers in a delegation with Sally Sheils in 1994, through the long battle to carve out a respected space for the Educate Together model in colleges of teacher education to the wonderful achievements of the last year. However, the two projects I am probably most glad about are the work to create the Learn Together curriculum (2000-2004) with Carmel Mulcahy, Frieda McGovern, Paddie Murphy and Mary Kelleher, and the work led by my successor Emer Nowlan and Fiona Richardson, to create the Blueprint for an Educate Together second-level school (2006-2009). I am sure that both these documents, as they evolve, will be recognised as seminal levers for change in the Irish education system. They are already garnering an international reputation and have inspired innovative projects in other countries.

I have very few regrets. Despite our best efforts, change in systems is often slow and requires a doggedness, courage and determination that has to be handed over year after year and is now part of Educate Together's DNA. Some targets we have set over the years have yet to be fully achieved and will require further years of effort. Many of these will require Educate Together to display a courage that is due to its new role as a mainstream partner in Irish education.

I am confident that Emer Nowlan will take Educate Together to the next stage with great skill, commitment and integrity. She has had a long involvement with Educate Together as a parent, board member, and as part of the National Office leadership team.

I'd like to thank all the readers of this newsletter for their kindness and integrity and the support that you have given me whilst leading Educate Together. It has been a tremendous privilege to have been given the opportunity to lead such an impressive organisation and to represent and learn from such dedicated and inspiring individuals.

Thank you.



SAVE THE DATE
SATURDAY
25 APRIL

The Network will gather at this year's AGM to make a formal thank you to Paul for his outstanding contributions to Irish education and dedicated and loyal service to Educate Together. Further details will be sent to members in the AGM communications.

Inspiring Active Students 2019

SECOND-LEVEL STUDENT EVENT

Orla Sadlier, National Office Communications Project Officer

Inspiring Active Students 2019, a Global Citizenship Skills Development and Capacity Building event for the students and staff of Educate Together's nationwide network of second-level schools, took place on Tuesday 3 December at the Helix, Dublin. The day-long event, comprising of discussions, a StudentMeet and workshops, was designed specifically to enhance student and teachers' awareness of the impact of active global citizenship and to support the building of skills necessary for campaigning and taking meaningful action.



Over 180 Students and Staff from 14 Schools attended

Attended by over 180 students and staff from 14 schools, the day began with a discussion with activist, Amal Azuddin, and her former teacher, Euan Girvan. Amal, a Somali refugee living in Scotland, was one of the 'Glasgow Girls'—a group of seven teenagers who campaigned against dawn raids and the detention and deportation of asylum seekers in Glasgow in 2005. Both teachers and students had the opportunity to learn about the action undertaken by Amal and how Euan, as her teacher, supported her, as they recounted their experiences from the 'Glasgow Girls' campaign.



Amal Azuddin and Euan Girvan at Educate Together's Inspiring Active Students

Wicklow ETSS also delivered a presentation about their work mobilizing students as part of the Schools' Climate Action Network; while students from Cork ETSL spoke about their 'Changemakers' projects.

The remainder of the day consisted of workshops designed to develop students' skills to plan and manage campaigns, popular amongst these were the graphic recording workshops where students gained some new creative recording skills.

“I now know not only that I can make a difference but exactly how to start”

“Today has been very special” said one student as the day came to an end. “The way society is at the minute, there's so much to be concerned and angry about that it can be hard to see how you can make any difference. Hearing Amal speak today, hearing from my fellow students, taking part in the workshops... I feel I now know not only that I can make a difference but exactly how to start.”

The Inspiring Active Students event was proudly supported by Educate Together, Worldwise Global Schools, Ireland's national Development Education programme for post-primary schools, and Salesforce.



Another Inspiring StudentMeet

This was followed by a StudentMeet, during which students shared a selection of the projects and actions they have been involved in with their school communities. These included: a celebration of Black History month at Kishoge Community College; the design and production of a reusable water bottle at Sandymount Park ETSS; and the development of an anti-bullying website at the newly opened Dublin North East ETSS. Students from Stepaside ETSS and North

As part of the Senior Cycle Ethical Education development process, researchers from UCD gathered the views and experiences of Educate Together second-level students and teachers in relation to Educate Together's newest Ethical Education Curriculum, taught at Senior Cycle.

Research finds Ethical Education helps student belonging at school and nurtures a positive school climate

SENIOR CYCLE ETHICAL EDUCATION

Dr Laura Dooley, Second Level Education Officer

The Senior Cycle Ethical Education Curriculum was developed in 2018 by Kishoge Community College Ethical Education teacher, Ciara Mc Mackin following advice and recommendations from the Ethical Education Senior Cycle Development Working Group. The development group included academics and teachers and was led by Educate Together Second-level Education Officer, Dr Laura Dooley. The curriculum was first introduced and taught in Educate Together schools with Senior Cycle students in September 2018 including Kishoge Community College, Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School and Ballymakenny College.

While the review is ongoing, the first academic journal article based on the research has been published. The article entitled, "The Implementation of an Ethical Education curriculum in secondary schools in Ireland" was written by Paula Prenderville, William Kinsella and Maria Bourke and is freely accessible. The paper outlines preliminary findings from the research based on interviews with principals and teachers exploring their experiences of the curriculum and its impact on school culture and organisation.

Preliminary findings

The findings of this research demonstrate the significant impact that Ethical Education is having in schools including supporting positive student and teacher relationships

and wellbeing, developing students' knowledge, awareness and skills and enhancing respectful and collaborative communication for teachers and students. It also underlines the value attached to Ethical Education Continual Professional Development provided by Educate Together National Office and the need for training in Ethical Education as part of Initial Teacher Education. See below for a further overview of findings.

- All teachers reported that learners enjoyed attending Ethical Education classes and that students experienced a greater sense of belonging and safety as a result of the Ethical Education curriculum. In particular, teachers reported that learners enjoyed discussing controversial and topical issues and learning about the world.
- Many believed that the curriculum had a positive effect in cultivating mutually respectful, equitable and collaborative relationships in learners' interactions.
- Staff relationships were also said to be positively impacted by the ethical agenda in the school.
- Teachers reported that students developed a range of moral and ethical skills by engaging in the Ethical Education curriculum as well as learning transferrable skills. The skills that teachers observed in students included



The findings of this research demonstrate the significant impact that Ethical Education is having in schools

- a greater understanding and awareness of themselves and others, critical thinking and reflection.
- The curriculum also enabled learners to share opinions, thoughts, views and beliefs through respectful communication, discussion and debate.
- This curriculum was also reported to cultivate well-being and that the Ethical Education class was viewed as a safe space for learners.
- Teachers highly value continual professional development provided by Educate Together National Office and would like more opportunities to collaborate and share with colleagues in other schools.



- Teachers described the strong collaboration and collegiality that existed among teachers working together in their school.
- Teachers require, and would benefit from, input on Ethical Education at Initial Teacher Education and Continual Professional Development levels.
- Although some teachers initially felt unprepared to teach the curriculum, this reduced with the experience gained by teaching it.

- A wish for Ethical Education to be "more visible in the schools" for all staff members was also expressed.

Speaking about the research, Second-level Education Officer, Dr Laura Dooley said

"These are very meaningful findings as they demonstrate that the aims of the Ethical Education Curriculum to enhance students' awareness and knowledge of ethical issues as well as developing their skills to communicate respectfully and critically reflect are being achieved. It's also heartening to hear that students are enjoying and benefiting from the curriculum as they continue their education at Senior Cycle."

Next Stage of the Research – Listening to Senior Cycle Students

Research with Senior Cycle students in the schools will inform the second phase of this research. Last May saw the first cohort of Educate Together second-level students sit the Leaving Certificate, some of whom were the first students to experience their full education in Educate Together schools. This Senior Cycle review will ensure that students and teachers have an impact on the curriculum being taught in Educate Together schools and underlines Educate Together's commitment to providing schools that are learner-centred, democratically run, co-educational and equality-based.

The ESRI are also currently conducting research with Junior Cycle Educate Together students with these findings due to be communicated at a special seminar event this May.

The Senior Cycle Ethical Education Draft Specification and Teacher Guide are available on the Educate Together second-level resource bank: <https://learning.educatetogether.ie/course/view.php?id=26>.

Bourke, M., Kinsella, W. & Prenderville, P. (2020). "The Implementation of an Ethical Education curriculum in secondary schools in Ireland". Education Sciences. DOI: 10.3390/educsci10010014 <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/10/1/14>



An important date for your 2020 diary

2020 Principals' Conference
Thursday 12th & Friday 13th March
2020 - Galway

Learn Together Assembly in Limerick School Project – a World of Wonder

THE LEARN TOGETHER CURRICULUM - SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

Cathy Keyes, Limerick School Project

Last November, the Senior Classes of Limerick School Project spent most of the day in the hall celebrating Planet Earth. We called our day 'World of Wonder'.

We started off with a discussion on Climate Action. The aim was to ensure that our senior pupils could join in the conversation surrounding this topic from an informed viewpoint, and to explore ways that we can reduce our carbon footprint at school and at home.

Once this important discussion took place we were able to move to the main emphasis of the day which was to appreciate the wonder of the planet we call home and to focus our attention on all that is marvelous, awesome and special about Earth.

We have many lessons and assemblies in school where we learn about how we can be positive environmental citizens, but this assembly, for the most part, was centered around appreciation and gratitude and we began to realise this appreciation is key to us being the best environmental citizens that we can.

We heard inspiring stories about sustainable practices from around the world, including Emmet, our guest speaker (who also happens to be a Dad in the school). Emmet did a super presentation about the wonder of animal life on land and in the sea. It was so interesting and we learned so much about animal adaptations. We even got to invent our own animal!

This was a jam-packed assembly which included a beautiful song called 'A Song for Planet Earth', stories called 'Thank you Earth' and 'A Letter from Mother Earth', as well as a forest visualisation. Finally, everyone wrote gratitude letters to Planet Earth noting all the things we're grateful for.

It really was a fantastic day. We are so proud about how environmentally-informed our pupils are, how interested they are in sustainable practices, how they support the Global Goals and how engaged they are on this type of school day when we all learn together.

If you would like to share a story of an aspect of Ethical Education in your schools, please email us at resources@educatetogether.ie. The next issue will be sent to schools in early May.



Red: A Crayon's Story

BOOK REVIEW

What's this book about?

This is a story about a crayon who is red but not very good at it. No matter what he tries, he just can't be red. Everyone around him tries to help and suggests different things but nothing works. Then, he meets a new friend who asks him to draw a blue ocean. He doesn't think he can do it but gives it a try. It turns out the crayon isn't red after all, he's blue and whatsmore, he's really good at being blue!

Why I think picturebooks work with older students

I really like this book. It's a simple story brought to life by vivid illustrations. Some people may believe that picturebooks can't be used in the classroom with second-level or older students but I strongly disagree. Picturebooks create wonderful opportunities for discussion and debate and challenge students to interpret the images displayed, engaging their critical thinking and reflection skills. Quite often in picturebooks the text and the images communicate different messages, and this book is no exception.

One page alone can lead into concepts such as 'power'

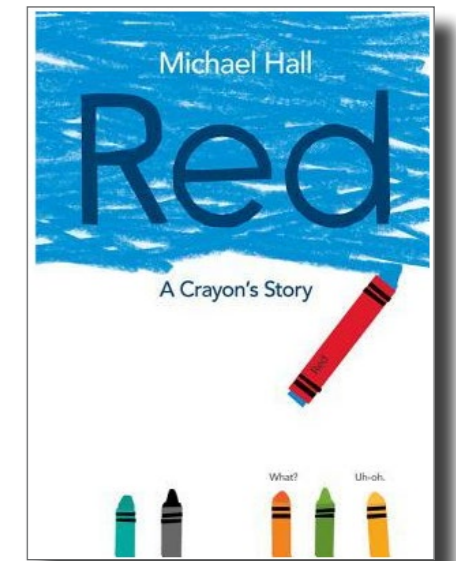
On the first page the text reads, "He was red" while the image displays a crayon that is clearly blue but with a red label that says "Red". Just taking this one page alone could provide a valuable starting point to discuss the importance and power of labels and the concept of power- do we accept the text or the image as truth? Sometimes we can believe things that are written (such as newspaper headlines) instead of considering the evidence and making up our own mind about something. Looking at or reading something uncritically can lead us to accept the wrong message or information.

Some other questions prompted by reading this book might include:

- Is it always easy to be ourselves?
- How do others' expectations of who we are influence us?
- Who gets to decide labels that are given to a person or group of people?
- Do we sometimes have one idea or message about a person or group of people that impacts our views and expectations of them? How might that be harmful for them and us?
- Is something wrong just because it's unusual or doesn't fit with our idea of it?
- Do you think it would be difficult to be different than everyone always thought you were? Why?
- How do you think the crayon felt when he discovered he was blue and not bad at being red, like everyone thought?

What Ethical Education strands does this book relate to?

Stories and images are a very helpful way of engaging students in discussion and critical thinking in the Ethical Education classroom. This book could be used as part of a lesson focused on the Beliefs and Worldviews or Different Teachings and Perspectives strands at Junior Cycle, the Identity and Inclusion or Power and Privilege strands at Senior Cycle or the Equality and Justice strand of the Learn Together.



Written and Illustrated by Michael Hall

Published by Greenwillow Books (2015)

Reviewed by Laura Dooley

This book was included in the Ethical Education resource pack that was given to all second-level schools at the start of the year.

Important Information about the Appointment of the Independent Assessors for Primary Recruitment

SCHOOL SUPPORT

We'll soon be coming into that time of year when Principals and Chairpersons start thinking about Redeployment Panels.

We've lots of information available on our website regarding the panel and recruitment process. All the relevant forms are available in easy to use online formats.

<https://www.educatetogether.ie/school-boards/approvals/>

Remember: Your Independent Assessor must be appointed before shortlisting takes place. This is a formal appointment by Educate Together as Patron (or your own Patron, if you have a local patron). Shortlisting must be completed by all three-persons on the selection panel. Not following this process can invalidate any appointment and any such appointments could be successfully challenged.

Once you know you're going to have a recruitment process, you can seek Patron Approval for the Independent Assessor using this form: <https://form.jotformeu.com/72134190422345>

If you've any questions about the above please contact Emily McKinlay emily.mckinlay@educatetogether.ie

What's Your View on the Learn Together Review?

A plea to all primary teachers and principals to give us your views on the Review of the Learn Together Curriculum. A new Learn Together curriculum will be making its way into your classroom in the next year or two, we need your input now to help this along.

The Review may result in changes to content, a different approach may be adopted, new methodologies included as well as planning documents included. This is your chance to have a say in all of this!

It's simple, scan the QR code below to go straight to the survey at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/STH78FZ>

The survey can take 5 mins or 20 minutes. It's entirely up to you! Most of the questions are multiple-choice. And for those questions which demand a more open response, answers can be one word, answers can be one paragraph.

Please fill it out! We need your help!

Further information contact Fionnuala: fionnuala.ward@educatetogether.ie



Over the past few months the National Office was delighted to facilitate Educate Together teachers to build restorative practices in a series of workshops facilitated by Michelle Stowe who specialises in Restorative Practice through her ConnectRP programme. The final workshop takes place on the 8th February. We hope that schools will invest further in this approach and continue their RP journey.

Below Michelle tells us about the defining feature of a fully restorative school. She has really enjoyed working with many Educate Together teachers and schools and supporting them in their commitment to restorative practice approaches.

Restorative Practice Workshops



Restorative Practice is a values-based philosophy; it aims to consciously build relationships, respond to harm / conflict in a way that honours relationships, and CONNECT us to our best selves and to one another (Stowe 2017)

I am very passionate about Restorative Practice, it illuminates who I want to be in the world, and I am delighted that it is gaining a lot of traction in the Irish education system over the past number of years.

Relationships are at the heart of effective teaching and learning

In my own experience, and as research shows, we need to move schools beyond a dialogue that focuses on Restorative Practice as a behaviour management strategy towards a conversation that focusses on relational classrooms. A restorative approach is about creating a culture that fosters connection and belonging; that prioritises relationships and values, such as empathy and accountability, over rules and punishment. Relationships are at the heart of effective teaching and learning and although educators are so often wonderful relationship-builders by nature, we need to consider ways to honour relationships in times of challenge.

A fully restorative school is guided by a relationship policy

A fully restorative school is guided by a relationship policy as opposed to a behaviour policy or code of behaviour. It is however healthy and authentic to grow such capacities and allow educators to attach their own meaning to the philosophy and practices over time, therefore allowing this to emerge. A school committed to the use of Restorative Practice might need continued support, regular quality CPD and reflective practice to assist them on their journey to becoming a restorative school community, in practice and policy. I am very grateful that I get to support schools along the way!

If you would like to find out more about Connect RP visit www.connectrp.ie



In the last newsletter, we suggested that Boards of Management should try to make time at each meeting to engage with the Educate Together Charter, and we suggested some teaser questions that a Board may use to facilitate a 5-minute discussion around the values outlined in the Charter.

The Educate Together Charter: Applying the Democratically Run Principle to Board Meetings

ETHOS UNCOVERED

The idea behind this reflection time is to allow members of the Board the space to focus their thoughts on the fundamental aims of the Educate Together Charter. Exploring tricky questions like this will be beneficial when/if the Board must deal with conflicting interpretations of the Charter.

Outlined below are five 5-minute grey area teasers for Boards:

- The students of 1st Year present the results of a democratic vote they have taken, requesting that the P.E. teacher facilitate different activities for boys and girls during each P.E. lesson. Does the school facilitate this request?
- The Board has funded free violin lessons during the school day for the children of 1st-6th classes. One family has opted their 2nd class child out of these music lessons. The child expresses a strong desire to participate in the lesson each week. Should the teacher allow her to participate?
- A teacher proposes organising a three-day trip to the European Parliament for students in 4th Year. The trip will cost €250 per student. There are 20 places on the trip and will request a €50 deposit to allocate places on a first come, first served basis. Does the Board approve this?
- A Transition Year student applies to a local primary school for work experience. Because the student is not yet 16, the Garda Vetting Bureau will not vet him, on the basis that children aged 15 and under should not be engaged in activities in a teaching / coaching / mentoring capacity. Should both schools still facilitate the placement?

These questions are proposed to facilitate regular, meaningful engagement with the Educate Together ethos, as outlined in the Charter. If you would like to suggest teasers that you would elicit thought-provoking discussions, please email them to our Ethos Guidance Officer – aoife.blood@educatetogether.ie.

Savings for your school from Folens Publishers



Educate Together continues its partnership with Folens Publishers which results in a discount for schools when they purchase books and literacy resources directly from Folens.

Additionally, for every order that an Educate Together school places directly with Folens the National Office receives a percentage rebate.

These partnerships are one of the benefits for schools in being part of a Network and donations like this to the National Office are very important to help us maintain services to schools,

Further information please contact: Sandra.irwingowran@educatetogether.ie

A termly column drawing teachers' attention to ethical issues that might arise during the upcoming term by Ethos Guidance Officer, Aoife Blood

Seasoned Advice: Spring

ETHOS UNCOVERED

Ramadan: Fasting

Ramadan (the most sacred month of the year in the Islamic faith) falls between 23 April and 23 May this year. Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam and involves abstaining from food and liquids (including water) from dawn to dusk during the season of Ramadan. During Ramadan, it is common practice for many healthy adults and pubescent young people to fast. The aim of the Ramadan fast is that Muslims will have an increased focus on worship, spiritual reflection and self-improvement. Because it is the month when the Qur'an (translated as the literal speech of God) was revealed, Muslims are encouraged to spend more time than usual reading the Qur'an.

Accommodations for students may be necessary

While the positive outcomes of prolonged fasting are strongly promoted in Islam, the physical side effects may result in sleepiness, mood swings and headaches in the initial few days of adjustment, and may have an impact on students' enthusiasm/ability for some activities, e.g. P.E. Good practice would be for school leaders to ask parents/guardians to make them aware of children who are fasting in order to make arrangements, if necessary for any accommodations by the school during this period. For example, schools may consider allowing fasting Muslim students to spend break times in a space other than the canteen where food is present, where practicable.

As observation of fasting is limited to pubescent young people and adults, the above advice is more applicable to second level schools and the senior classes of primary schools in some cases.

School Calendar

When your staff is agreeing the calendar for the 2020/2021 school year, why not take a look at the major festivals of some of the religions that are represented within your school community? Could some discretionary days be allocated to some of these festivals?



“...the physical side effects may result in sleepiness, mood swings and headaches in the initial few days of adjustment, and may have an impact on students' enthusiasm/ability for some activities”

Searching for ideas and support for enhancing student involvement in your school?

Check out the newly developed website and resources from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs at <https://www.ourvoicesourschools.ie/>



Living the Educate Together Charter in Gorey ETNS

Twice a year in Gorey ETNS teachers select children who exemplify emotional competencies intrinsic to the Educate Together Charter and ethos. The principal then photographs each student and their image is displayed in the main corridor of the school. In this way the school gives expression to the Educate Together ethos/Charter and acknowledges the commitment demonstrated by many students.

Mary Foley Gorey ETNS

If you would like to share how your school gives expression to the Educate Together Charter please email resources@educatetogether.ie

Please feel free to send in your review of a book or resource that you've used to teach Ethical Education. The review doesn't have to be either good or bad! And the book or resource doesn't need to be newly-published.

King and King

BOOK REVIEW



Written and Illustrated by Linda de Haan & Stern Nijland

Reviewed by Fionnuala Ward

This is a book about falling in love. A king and queen are desperately trying to marry their son off to a princess, any princess. These princesses come from far and wide to be presented to the prince and each is rejected for various reasons. In the end the prince ends up falling for the brother of one of the princesses. They get married and, yes indeed, live happily ever after.

I so dislike this book. Where to start? Well, with the portrayal of every female character in the story, beginning with the prince's mother. On one page, the queen is depicted close up, her hair scraggly, unkempt, dishevelled, beads of sweat are falling from her forehead and her tongue is out.

And then we get to the princesses, who are depicted in a variety of unflattering, one-dimensional ways: fat, pompous, silly, knock-kneed, teeth askew, cross-eyed and oddly enough with abnormal limbs.

This book annoys me because it congratulates itself on placing LGBT issues firmly within a fairy-tale context, effectively shouting from the barricades 'Look how we're subverting the genre; How clever are WE?' while at the same time affirming and validating a whole range of misogynist stereotypes.

There are better books out there with LGBT themes. And oh yes, I hate the illustrations.

Educate Together Secondary School Wicklow (ETSS Wicklow) is taking the lead in bringing to Wicklow an educational activity popular in schools and universities across the world. We are hosting a Model United Nations event with a difference. Usually these events are organised for older students, but this event is for first and second-year students and it is taking place on Friday 27 March partly at the school and partly in the Glenview Hotel.

Model United Nations Conference in Wicklow

ETSS Wicklow Model United Nations Team



Educate Together Secondary School Wicklow Model United Nations team in good spirits ahead of the Wicklow convention in March

This innovation by Wicklow's newest secondary school is turning into a truly national event with schools from Galway, Cork, Louth and Dublin joining a number of Wicklow Schools to help students work on an interesting skill set: drafting documents, critical thinking, teamwork, deliberation, negotiation, conflict resolution, research skills and leadership skills. Key goals of the ethical education programme for Educate Together Secondary Schools are to promote democracy and cross-cultural respect and understanding.

Students will play various UN roles – secretariat, country delegate, administrators, United Nations Press Officers, Security Council members and presidential roles in various assemblies. This is a complex event in terms of preparation, but the result is that learning springs to life as students simulate debates on major world issues from the perspectives of a diverse number of countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Sweden and the Russian Federation. The great challenge for students is that they have to represent the point of view of those countries when debating topics like climate change, terrorism, human rights and nuclear disarmament. These points of views can differ greatly from their own and this experience helps develop a much deeper understanding of

the difficulties of international relations and the importance of diplomatic approaches when working towards solutions for complex world issues.

A number of training sessions are being organised in Wicklow and Dublin in the weeks ahead to help students prepare. They will learn to take effective notes, listen actively, show empathy and develop the ability to see issues from multiple perspectives.

Model United Nations helps students grow in confidence, build their persuasive skills and develop the ability to show grace under pressure. Of course, it is also a super way to learn about current affairs, network with students from other schools and build public speaking skills.

What makes this new Model United Nations event even extra special is that it includes a declamation competition. This is where students give versions of famous speeches from films or from history – it is a brilliant challenge for students who want to further enhance their public speaking and an extremely entertaining event for everyone at the conference.

Thank you to all the schools supporting our event and best of luck to every student involved in the various roles – we look forward to hearing how this great educational activity works out in March.

A big thank you to Salesforce

We've just submitted our final report for the grant received from Salesforce.org in 2018. The grant period finished at the end of 2019 and allowed us to do some wonderful work to build and strengthen our network. Some of those projects, such as the development of the ethos SSE Quality Framework and Ethos Guidance for Educate Together schools are reaching their final stages.

Here's a snapshot in numbers of what the grant allowed Educate Together to do over the past year:

Greater school access to meet the demand



Developing teachers' capacity and skills



598 participants + 90 schools reached through 39 professional development events

NCCA and JCT are seeking examples of good practice in supporting Student Voices in schools

As part of an increased focus on Student Voices, the NCCA and JCT are looking for examples of good practice to promote across schools. Send details of the activities, actions and campaigns that students are involved and participating in in your schools to the NCCA and JCT! You can share your examples by emailing info@jct.ie and/or info@ncca.ie. Don't forget to keep Laura (second-level) and Fionnuala (primary level) in Educate Together National Office informed too!

Laura.dooley@educatetogether.ie
fionnuala.ward@educatetogether.ie



PORTRAIT

GROUP

SIBLINGS

All photographers are trained professionals and Garda vetted.

BOOK YOUR SCHOOL PHOTO SESSION TODAY

From Ireland's longest established photography company.

Prices starting from just €8.
A wide selection of options available.

An extensive selection of studio backdrops to choose from.
Very generous rate of commission offered on sales.

Email: schools@lafayette.ie

Tel: 01 429 5740
021 453 6197
048 8224 3773

www.lafayette.ie

Group Insurance Scheme Working to Reduce School Insurance Premiums

Over 50% of our schools are signed-up, will you join them?

Brady Insurance are offering zero brokerage fees and significant rebates from their commission, as a once off offer for schools who transfer in 2020. Signing up with Brady also results in a much-needed annual donation to the National Office. The donation which is used to maintain support and service to schools is relative to the number of schools signed up: in 2019 this amounted to €5,000.

"We switched to Brady Insurance after reading about the National Office partnership. It was straightforward and no different to getting a quote any other year. Claire was really helpful and even managed the transfer of insurance to our new school building. I'd encourage other schools to transfer, the partnership provides vital funding to the National Office and hopefully we'll see reduced premiums in the future." - Stephen, Chairperson Citywest ETNS

Transferring is easy - print a transfer form (link below) onto your school headed paper, complete and return to Claire Dumbrell in Brady Insurance.

For more information contact claire@bradyinsurance.ie or call 01 5676797.

To download the transfer form, go to <https://www.educatetogether.ie/about/brady-insurance/>.

Media Scene Technology



Since 1997 we have offered schools and colleges an economical and efficient I.T service.

At www.mediascene.ie we can offer:-

MiTouch Interactive LED Touchscreens – choice of 55", 65" (most popular), 75" or 86"
Now with 5 Year Peace of Mind Warranty

MiTouch Interactive Touchscreens since 2011
Visualisers – best choice at www.visualisers.ie
Projector replacement with 3 year warranty
Tidiest and most professional Installation & Support Team



Media Scene Technology Tel:01-2755800
email: sales@mediascene.ie

Ethical Education Teachers of the Year Awards 2020



Educate Together National Office will again celebrate the work and commitment of teachers in the Network at this year's Ethical Education Teachers of the Year Awards.

The purpose of the Awards is to affirm and celebrate the good practice in teaching the Ethical Education and Learn Together curriculums in Educate Together primary and second-level schools. This year's awards ceremony will also include a special keynote presentation by a specialist in Ethical Education.

Details of how to register to attend and make nominations will be circulated by email in the coming weeks so keep an eye out for that. Anyone can nominate Educate Together teacher(s) and decisions will be made based on responses to the questions below. So get your thinking caps on about nominations!

- Who do you think an Educate Together Teacher of the Year Award should go to?
- Give 3 examples of good practice in teaching and learning around Ethical Education that this teacher(s) has demonstrated.

Further information from Laura Dooley laura.dooley@educatetogether.ie or Fionnuala Ward fionnuala.ward@educatetogether.ie

15 YEARS
Our World
IRISH AID AWARDS

Irish Aid
An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

OUR WORLD IRISH AID AWARDS 2020

"A BETTER WORLD"

The Our World Irish Aid Awards has been a key part of my teaching over the past few years. As a Learning Support teacher for 5th and 6th class, I see it as a great opportunity to build communication skills, teamwork, confidence and student ownership over their own learning. It is also a wonderful way to integrate global citizenship themes into the life of the pupils in a meaningful and exciting way.

Participating in the Our World Irish Aid Awards has allowed our pupils to learn about people living all around the globe, the issues that may be affecting their lives, how these issues link with our lives in Ireland and come up with actions that we can do to try to make a positive difference to the world around us. The focus on taking action is the key driver encouraging me to participate in the awards again and again. I think it is imperative that our pupils learn about these 'big issues' but it is simultaneously critical that we, as educators, guide them in their role as global citizens in how to take action locally that can have wider knock-on effects.

I would thoroughly recommend the awards to any teacher regardless of their context. While obviously an exciting initiative for a whole class to engage in, my colleagues and I have found that delivering Learning Support or SEN provision through the context of a project like this can really enhance the experience and enjoyment of everyone involved (including the teachers!).

– **Cecelia Gavigan**
Balbriggan Educate Together National School,
Balbriggan, Co. Dublin

Irish Aid, Ireland's overseas development cooperation programme, invites you and your class or school to participate in the Our World Irish Aid Awards. This year's theme "A Better World," enables pupils to learn about the United Nations 17 Global Goals and how Irish Aid is working hard to improve the lives of people in developing countries.

Currently in its 15th year, the Awards asks primary pupils in 3rd to 6th class to develop a project that makes a connection to their lives and one or more of the global goals.

To brainstorm topics for your project, explore our online (downloadable) resources here:

www.ourworldirishaidawards.ie

These helpful tools include a fun and engaging pupils' magazine as well as curriculum linked lesson plans, both which are available in Irish.



SUBMIT YOUR PROJECTS BY POST OR EMAIL:

Address: The Our World Irish Aid Awards, Real Nation, 24 Arran Quay, Dublin 7, D07 W620

Email: ourworld@realnation.ie

You can find out more information on our website or by ringing our project office at 01 522 4834

Submit by 3rd April 2020

The Global Goals, also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 goals adopted by the United Nations that address the challenges we face globally, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, peace and justice.



Educate Together CPD Calendar 2020

CPD & Events 2020	Date	For	Location
● BoM Training: The Board as a Corporate Entity	29/02/2020	All BoM	Galway
●● Nominations for Board of Directors - Closing Date	01/03/2020		
●● Learn Together Review - Teacher Survey - Closing Date	02/03/2020	Teachers	
●● Ethos Quality Framework Pilot - Training Day 4	05/03/2020	SSE Lead	DCU, Dublin
● BoM Training: The Board as a Corporate Entity	7/3/2020	All BoM	Limerick
● BoM Training: The Board as a Corporate Entity	21/3/2020	All BoM	Waterford
●● Educate Together Ethics Bowl	March TBC	2L Schools	Cork
●● Primary StudentMeet (details tbc)	March TBC	Primary	TBC
● 2020 Educate Together Principals Conference	12/13 March	All Principals	Galway
● Educate Together AGM	25 April	All BoM	Bremore ETSS
●●● Global Citizenship Education Student Showcase	28 April	2L Schools	Bremore ETSS
●●● Teachers of the Year Award	May	All	TBC
●● Primary CPD	May	Primary	TBC
●● Second-Level CPD	May	2L Schools	TBC
●●● Ethos SSE Pilot - Seminar	May	All	DCU, Dublin

Key

●	Teachers
●	Board of Management
●	Students
●	Principals / Deputy Principals
●	Important deadline

To book a place on any of these events, email info@educatetogether.ie

Educate Together AGM

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) this year is taking place on 25th April 2020 in Bremore Educate Together Secondary School, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

The AGM is an opportunity for members to shape the policies of Educate Together for the coming year. Policy motions direct the organisation in its dealings with partners in education, including the Department of Education and Skills. They are also a way of ensuring that members' concerns inform decision making by the Board of Directors.

New Standing Orders rules were presented at a National Members Forum held at Glasnevin Educate Together NS on the 12th October, 2019.

Each Educate Together member was sent instructions via email regarding submission of motions the deadline for which has now closed. Each member was also sent nomination forms for the Educate Together Board of Directors – the deadline for receipt of nominations is 1 March 2020.

We hope that every member of Educate Together is represented at the AGM.

For further information regarding the AGM contact agm@educatetogether.ie

- To submit an article to the next newsletter, email resources@educatetogether.ie
- Cover image: Second-Level Students attending the Inspiring Active Citizens event at The Helix last November.
- Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and should not be read as constituting official Educate Together policy unless otherwise stated.