

ACTIVATE

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The Newsletter of the Association of CSPE Teachers (ACT)

Supporting Citizenship Education in Ireland

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www.cspeteachers.ie



At National Conference, from left, Philip Irwin, President ASTI and Vice Chair Association of CSPE Teachers, Jeanne Barrett, Chair ACT, Gerry Quinn, President TUI.

Future of CSPE

From November, proposals from Dept of Education. Note CSPE references. These proposals have not yet been accepted by teacher unions:

- *That the Junior Cycle Student Award (JCSA) will be State certified.
- *That 60 per cent of the assessment for all subjects would be undertaken by the State Exams Commission (SEC).
- *That 40 per cent of the JCSA would be school-based assessment.
- *That external moderation would be undertaken by the SEC through sampling of (10-15%) school-based assessments.
- *That 300 hours would be ring-fenced for mandatory wellbeing education including CSPE and PE.
- *Retention of CSPE as an exam subject (it will also be a short course subject).

Inservice

We are offering regional inservice as follows,

Feb 2015 Political Literacy- Key Terms, Concepts, Political Jargon and Reporting on Action Projects and Assessment in CSPE. All workshops 7pm-9pm.

Cork Teachers' Support Centre, Thurs 5th Feb; Co. Wexford Education Centre Enniscorthy, Mon 9th Feb; Waterford Teachers' Centre Tues 24th Feb; Blackrock Education Centre Thurs 26th Feb.

Booking for all except Blackrock – email

act@esatclear.ie with contact details and desired venue. For Blackrock online booking here: <http://booking.blackrockec.ie/event/view?id=1300>

Coming in April 2015

Numeracy and CSPE/Preparing for the Exam Paper Dublin West Education Centre, Co. Wexford Education Centre Enniscorthy, Cork Teachers' Support Centre, Waterford Teachers' Centre.

Membership Matters

Renewals for 2014/2015 are now overdue. As decided at last October's AGM the membership fee is now €25. Send to Brendan O'Regan, Ticknock Lane, Arklow, Co. Wicklow. Renewal form enclosed if you are not up to date. Also check address label.

News

CSO Competitions

Two CSPE-related competitions from the Central Statistics Office. The statistical poster competition and the John Hooper Medal for

Statistics <http://www.cso.ie/en/newsandevents/johnhoopermedalforstatistics2015competition/>

Registration date this Friday January 23rd and The Alice Perry Medal - apps4gaps competition <http://www.apps4gaps.ie/> Registration date Friday, February 6th.

Both competitions are open to secondary schools and apps4gaps has student (any level) and open prizes so students or teachers could enter themselves.

Press Release

Our press release following our Conference in October.

At its Annual Conference in Airfield, Dundrum, on Saturday 11th October 2014, the delegates expressed support for CSPE as a subject in the Junior Certificate. They stressed the importance of mandatory citizenship education for all students in the country. The Chairperson of the Association, Jeanne Barrett stated that "government plans to downgrade the status of CSPE by making it an optional short course will undermine citizenship education in Ireland. This would be the first time since 1966 that Civics/CSPE would not be an essential part of every students' education at Junior Cycle." The open forum session of the conference was addressed by the Presidents of both Second Level Teachers Unions. Philip Irwin, President of ASTI noted, "the exceptional quality of the educational experience in CSPE, as evidenced by the high placing of Irish students in the International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS) 2011 report". He further noted the, "innovative emphasis on project work (60% of total marks) and the fact that CSPE was externally assessed gave it credibility and integrity." Gerry Quinn, TUI President highlighted the importance of the TUI and ASTI cooperating as Trade Unions against the attempted imposition of unsound changes to the Junior Cycle by the Government. He also stated that "subjects including CSPE show how teachers are already using progressive and imaginative teaching and learning strategies". The conference was also addressed by Médecins Sans Frontières, UNICEF, ICTU's Youth Connect, The Human Rights Commission, The Red Cross, Young Social Innovators, Concern, The Equality Authority, and The Holocaust Education Trust of Ireland.

Response to CSPE Paper 2014

Members of the Association met in June to discuss this year's exam paper and the following statement was issued:

We give the paper a broad welcome. It was well balanced and diverse in terms of the concepts involved in CSPE.

The paper was particularly topical this year – e.g. questions on the new Court of Appeal, cyberbullying, Nelson Mandela, and especially on local and European elections.

The question on spoiling votes was unusual and interesting. There were some challenging questions, e.g. Section 1 Part 3, on the new court and by laws. The short questions placed quite an emphasis on knowledge of law and politics.

The picture question in Part 1 was predictable enough but manageable. Those pictured were all Irish politicians. Of course Frances Fitzgerald is no longer Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, but the question does say that the politicians pictured 'are or have been' in these positions.

There was also a discrepancy in Section 1 between the marks allocated for each question (19) and the total indicated on the front of the paper (18).

In Section 3 the question on Road Safety links initially to the concept of law, but the question as it proceeds is more about safety than law.

UNICEF Competitions

Currently there are two UNICEF activities relevant to CSPE – a photo competition

(www.pictureyourrights.com) and the 'It's About Us' initiative (www.unicef.ie/itsaboutus/) which includes reports from the 2014 Youth Summit in Dublin.

Action Project Idea: Mock Trial at the High Court *by Máire O'Higgins*

Larkin Community College is a second level ETB DEIS school in Dublin's inner city. Senior Counsel, Michéal O'Higgins invited a class of third year students from Larkin to experience a Mock trial in the High Court. He was sent a formal invitation by students to come to the school and share his insights on the life and times of a barrister and to explain what a Mock trial was.

He wrote to say he would visit the school and he sent a copy of the Book of Evidence for students to prepare before the Trial. When he came to Larkin Community College he spoke about his love for his work and the important role he played in serving people. He then went on to explain what a Book of Evidence was. To prepare for our visit to the Four Courts, students took on the different roles of the characters in the Trial based on the Book of Evidence. They also researched Bunreacht na hÉireann and the roles of those in our society that uphold the Laws of the Land. The research was exciting and important because our students were the ones being put on trial.

On the evening of the Mock Trial students and staff took the Luas from Abbey Street to the Four Courts. We walked through scanners, into the Four Courts building, down the long corridor of the Courts and stood in the majestic Round Hall. We waited to be called into Court Room 4. It was late afternoon and the day was drawing to a close. The day was over for the legal eagles but the kind team gathered by Micheál for Larkin stayed on to do one more duty of service to their citizens. We were solemnly called into Court Room 4. Students were instructed to sit in various places; the jury to the right, the witnesses and the defendant to the left; observers to the centre back and the recording secretary to the top of the Court Room, to sit under the Judge. I watched as students were settled into their seats. For all of us taking part there was a sense that we were now in the hands of the Law. This was the moment that we truly could empathise with someone who entered the Court system. The system was now at work.

There were four barristers who took up opposing places and positions. We were asked to "All rise" for the Judge. The Judge came to the bench. He sat and turned to a student sitting beside a microphone in the jury box. He asked the student his name and then asked if he would accept the responsibility of being appointed the jury foreman. The student agreed to this.

The witnesses were sworn in and the Trial began. The case was about a girl who had stolen a box of chocolates. The witnesses were questioned and cross-examined. Some students were terrified.

Others enjoyed the excitement of the experience. The Junior and Senior Counsels along with the Judge took the whole matter very seriously.

After the questioning, the prosecution and defence summed up for the jury. The jury listened with rapture and solemnity. They enjoyed the summing up though they seemed reluctant to express their pleasure for fear of missing a vital piece of information.

The Judge then asked the jury to reach a verdict, a unanimous verdict. The jury foreman said that the defendant was guilty, implying that the verdict had been unanimous. The Judge took the jury foreman's word for it and sentenced the defendant accordingly. The defendant tried to defend herself. The Judge was having none of it as was the protocol of the Trial. As a teacher I noticed that some of the jurors were conferring and seemed aggrieved. The Judge left the Chambers. The trial was over.

After the Judge left one of the jurors asked if the jury foreman had the right to declare a unanimous verdict when they had not agreed to one. The barrister he asked said that this fact should lead to a mistrial. I suggested to the shy students who hadn't spoken up during the Trial that the lesson they may learn from the experience was to speak up when an injustice was being done. They agreed.

On behalf of students and staff in Larkin Community College, thank you to Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell, Michael O'Higgins SC, Barry Ward BL, Dean Kelly BL, Alice Harrison BL, Sarah Moorehead SC, as well as Jeanne McDonagh, PRO for the Bar Council, who helped organise the mock trial with my brother Micheál P. O'Higgins SC.

Fuller version at www.cspeteachers.ie/projects.html

Software/Websites Useful for CSPE

Photostory

Free software from Microsoft for making slide shows with still images, possibility of adding captions, music and/or narration – e.g. famous political faces.

<http://www.microsoft.com/en-ie/download/details.aspx?id=11132>



Blendspace

Online resource gathering and presentation tool.

www.blendspace.com

Sway

New online presentation tool from Microsoft

www.sway.com

Wordsearch Maker

One of many free tools for making wordsearches – e.g. course concepts, key terms.

http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/word_search/

Puzzle-Maker

Make your own crosswords – key terms, political literacy.

<http://www.puzzle-maker.com/CW/>

Worksheets

Make a variety of worksheets e.g. word unscrambling key terms, political literacy.

<http://www.schoolexpress.com/>

Wordle

Make your own word clouds

www.wordle.net

Graphic Organisers

Use templates to suit your topic. Plenty of free examples online. Try image search.

<http://www.pdst.ie/node/2827>

Mind Maps

Create your own mind maps for brainstorming and more – e.g. work on Action Projects.

<https://bubbl.us/>

Image Generator

Add funny or meaningful captions to images

<https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>

Animoto

Make your own videos and slideshows . Take free trial or sign up for free account and apply for educational account.

<https://animoto.com/>

Google Slides

Create presentations online – very like Powerpoint, work stored in cloud/Google Drive.

<http://www.google.ie/slides/about/>

Activate is published once per school term by the Association of CSPE Teachers—supporting citizenship education in Ireland. Articles and letters for publication should be sent to the editor, Brendan O'Regan, Ticknock Lane, Arklow, Co. Wicklow, or emailed to act@esatclear.ie