

Working towards the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in Coláiste Iognáid for 2013-2018

Literacy and Numeracy – For Learning and Life
Coláiste Iognáid

Introduction

The circular letter 0056/2011 states clearly that literacy and numeracy are among the most important skills taught in our schools. They are fundamental to a person's ability to succeed in education, to gain fulfilling employment and to lead a satisfying and rewarding life. The national strategy emphasises the important roles that schools, teachers and parents play in fully developing these skills. The Programme for Government makes clear that the Government is determined that all young people will leave school able to read, communicate orally, in writing and in digital media, and able to understand and use mathematics in their everyday lives and in further learning. *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life* sets out how we will work to achieve these crucially important goals over the period to 2020. It sets ambitious targets and describes the actions that we must take to improve the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy.

The *National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020* states that "Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media." It asserts that "Numeracy is not limited to the ability to use numbers, to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Numeracy encompasses the ability to use mathematical understanding and skills to solve problems and meet the demands of day-to-day living in complex social settings. To have this ability, a young person needs to be able to think and communicate quantitatively, to make sense of data, to have a spatial awareness, to understand patterns and sequences, and to recognise situations where mathematical reasoning can be applied to solve problems."

The Government are keen to ensure that every young person leaving school is to be literate and numerate. The *National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020* states that young people and adults who do not have adequate literacy and mathematical skills cannot participate fully in schooling or in further and higher education, and they have fewer opportunities to take up satisfying jobs and careers. It further points out that missing out on the skills of literacy and numeracy or failing to develop these skills to the best of each person's capability is not just

a loss for the individual: it is also an enormous loss for all of us in Irish society. Mastering the skills of literacy and numeracy brings with it many social, economic and health benefits for the individual and society as a whole. Having young people who can apply mathematical understanding in a growing range of economic, technical, scientific, social and other contexts is essential if we are to ensure employment and economic prosperity in the future. Statistics show us that children who do not learn to read, write and communicate effectively are more likely to leave school early and in later life to be unemployed or in low skilled jobs, to have poorer emotional and physical health, to have limited earning power, and are more likely to be imprisoned. The implementation of this National strategy in Coláiste Iognáid is premised on the strong belief that developing good literacy and numeracy skills among all young people is fundamental to the life chances of each individual and essential to the quality and equity of Irish society.

Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

To promote and enhance a productive school environment that fosters developing numeracy and literacy, Coláiste Iognáid are currently in the process of putting together a whole school approach that will allow us to embrace this new challenge in developing and improving these key skills in our students. We envisage this happening by continuing to promote a productive school culture that establishes high expectations for teachers and students and aligns highly effective teaching practices with resource allocation to improve literacy and numeracy. To allow the effective implementation of this strategy, we as a school felt it was best to concentrate on our current first years, and work the strategy up the school. We have put together a proposal which will allow for teachers to embrace the strategy and facilitate the smooth integration into every classroom.

Proposed Literacy Strategies for 2013-2018

The promotion of 'reading for pleasure' – to improve the school based experience of reading for all students

Whole school Strategies

- 'Drop Everything and Read' programme – once a week/ every day for a set period or as an extended programme – once a fortnight for school year
- First years and TY – carry 'a book in your bag' to encourage reading during supervised classes
- With new school building - improved whole school access to the library for borrowing and reading books
- Creation of collection of books for SEN students and struggling/reluctant readers to allow students access to reading books at their own level – both hard copy and e-readers to allow for visual and audio access to texts
- Metacognition: Teaching of specific strategies for reading comprehension such as retrieving, questioning, inferring, synthesising, predicting and critically evaluating through class discussion, group work and independent work
- Provision of daily newspapers in the library
- Access to alternative reading – graphic novels, magazines, newspaper supplements, leaflets etc. to encourage reluctant readers
- Production of school magazine coordinated and produced by TY and edited by teaching staff
- Creation of a RED (books I have read) wall in the school to encourage students to respond to and recommend books to each other in their own way
- Creation of *Recommended Book List* for display in the School and on school website
- 'Word of the Day'/'Phrase of the Week' for display on School Notice boards – both in English and as Gaeilge
- Parental notification of literacy strategies in place for better home-school collaboration and support
- Engagement of parents and past-pupils in literacy workshops as deemed appropriate by teaching staff

For the future

- Provision of quiet reading spaces around school
- More access to school library for all students
- Scheduled time for reading every day at students own level
- Carry a book in your bag – whole school involvement
- Wi-Fi access to eBooks on school server
- Increased use of online media such as 'web blogs' in the classroom

The development of specific strategies to be used in all classrooms in order to improve student subject literacy

First Year Strategies – 2013/2014

- Use of personal learning profiles in the classroom.
- Creation of Individual Reading Logs in the library.
- Intensive reading programme early in first year to boost reading age.
- Use of KWL in the classroom (What do I know? What do I want to know? What have I learned?). Introduction of free writing (about topic at beginning of class) and summary writing of learning (at end of class) to promote student writing fluency and vocabulary acquisition. Great Assessment for Learning tool too!
- Standardised note taking system across all subject areas - good study skills.
- Creation of keyword vocabulary books with generalised definitions to promote cross-curricular usage of vocabulary/ Inclusion of templates for 'keyword lists' into staff diaries
- Standardised approach to spelling, writing, copybook layout across all subject areas.
- Standardised spelling/grammar correction policy.
- Modelled reading for a short period of every class
- Inclusion of co-operative learning/ reciprocal teaching in classroom environment – to promote reading for meaning and information (main idea/questioning the text/ prediction/ summarising)
- Specific teaching of information retrieval skills from text books, library books and internet. How does my text book work? Where can I access accurate information on the internet? Creation of project boxes with topic specific materials available in library to direct safe and relevant information retrieval
- Inter-class debating

Working specifically with students with additional literacy needs

- Tailored listening training programme
- Tailored writing skills development programme
- Teaching specific reading strategies to improve student access to texts
- Team teaching
- Paired reading or cross age peer tutoring – senior to junior cycle/ junior cycle to primary level
- Appropriate IT software usage

The standardised testing of first year students' literacy levels: This will include the collation of data from primary school and the placement exam, alongside in-school standardised testing – followed by subsequent re-testing during or at end of first year and second year to monitor student progress and efficacy of strategies in place.

School based events for the school wide promotion of literacy and numeracy

- Writer visits to school
- Book Drive
- Creative Writing Competitions –both School and National level
- Participation in 'in-school' and online events for World Book Day and World Book Night
- Participation in World Book Night events (senior school)
- Book Club – at Junior and Senior Level
- Creative Writing group
- Debating Society
- School based Readathon
- Participation in CBI (Children's Books Ireland) Book Awards
- Specific teacher training in the area of literacy, numeracy and differentiation from 2013-2018

Proposed Numeracy Strategies for 2013-2018

Whole School approach to Numeracy Strategy for 2013-2018

Teachers to be encouraged to be good role models for numeracy by showcasing to students the way they use mathematics in their professional life as well as specific content areas pointing out the need to avoid sharing any personal “math phobias” or a personal dislike of mathematics.

The development of specific strategies to be used in 1st Year Maths classrooms in order to improve student numeracy (2013-2018) to be employed daily, weekly or monthly – as appropriate

- Creation of keyword vocabulary books with generalised definitions to promote cross-curricular usage of vocabulary/ Inclusion of templates for ‘keyword lists’ into staff diaries
- Use of KWL in the classroom (What do I know? What do I want to know? What have I learned?). Use of LUVE2CU in the classroom (Look at the question/Underline the important keywords/Visualise the problem with a sketch , flowchart etc/Estimate an answer/Choose the numbers and calculate the answer/Check your answers against the estimate/ You have completed your task)
- Generate awareness of common maths misconceptions so that these can be targeted over the course of the school year
- Pair work and group work/ receiving a group grade (once a week)
- Solving open ended questions and providing multiple solutions to those problems (once a week)
- Use maths in a way that relates to a work setting (once a month)
- Oral defence of a problem – students working individually or in groups present solutions to problems/ defend one solution over another (once a month)
- Participating in maths games/ competitions/ maths teams (inter-school and in-school levels)
- Encourage students to use multiple representations of data whenever possible
- Use of school tablets for maths classes to encourage increased representations of data
- Recording of the numeracy moments in the classroom.
- Parental notification of numeracy strategies in place for better home-school collaboration and support
- Engagement of parents and past-pupils in numeracy workshops as deemed appropriate by teaching staff

The development of cross-curricular strategies for improving numeracy across the 1st year school curriculum during 2013-2018

- Gather/create examples/samples of material of mathematical connection to their own subject area – magazine articles, newspaper articles, journals to show students that maths is relevant to all disciplines.

- Use maths in a way that relates to the subject area – Identify areas where students can use maths in other classrooms or extra-curricular activities –: timing/ measuring/ record keeping/ chart making/ graph plotting for representing data/ pattern, connection and proportion recognition.

Working specifically with students with additional numeracy needs

- Team teaching
- Pair and group work
- Cross age peer tutoring– senior to junior cycle/ junior cycle to primary level
- Appropriate IT software usage

The standardised testing of first year students' numeracy levels: This will include the collation of data from primary school and the placement exam, alongside in-school standardised testing – followed by subsequent re-testing during or at end of first year and second year to monitor student progress and efficacy of strategies in place.