

Conference 2011



This year's **Annual Conference and AGM** of the Association will take place on Saturday Oct 15th 2011 in Isaac's Hotel, Dublin 1 (beside Busaras). Guest speaker will be Maurice Manning (pictured on left), President of the Irish Human Rights

Commission. There will be workshops on Action Projects, CSPE Inspection, the Environment, Democracy, CSPE and IT, Human Rights and Trócaire's new interactive resource on climate change. Information and booking forms were sent to schools in mid-September. The form and brochure are also be available for download at www.cspeteachers.ie, and bookings can be posted (see brochure for address), or emailed to act@esatclear.ie.

Human Rights Commission

The Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) will facilitate one of the workshops at our Annual Conference, and the President of the Commission, Maurice Manning, will be our keynote speaker. The website of the IHRC (www.ihrc.ie) has a human rights education section, within which there is a section for schools. Recently it was announced that the IHRC would be amalgamated with the Equality Authority.

Eco-Unesco

ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards is an all-Ireland programme that recognises and rewards young people who raise environmental awareness and improve the environment. It is open to young people between 10 - 18 years of age. Project registration deadline: End of November 2011. See: www.ecounesco.ie

New Trócaire Resource

Climate Change: A call for stewardship and global solidarity.

This EU funded project is aimed at secondary school teachers.

The project is focused on the Millennium Development Goals- in particular Goal 7, environmental sustainability and Goal 8, global partnership.

This white board resource has specifically been designed for CSPE teachers and looks at the concepts of **Interdependence** and **Stewardship**. The **skills based** lessons presented within this resource will facilitate the students to develop a deeper understanding of environmental sustainability and ensure a knowledgeable and reflective approach to their **action project**. Qualified education officers from Trócaire will be available to **visit your school** to facilitate an interactive workshop to get your project up and running.

For any questions or suggestions about the resource, please contact: Aoife McTernan, Education Officer

Tel: 353-1-6293333 Ext: 324

Direct line: 353-1-6549124

* This resource will also feature at Trócaire's workshop at our Annual Conference (see over)

Membership matters

Memberships for 2011/2012 are now due. Send €20 to Brendan O'Regan, Ticknock Lane, Arklow, Co. Wicklow. Renewal form enclosed. Check envelope label for status.

News

Vincentian Partnership

At this year's Annual Conference the workshop on democracy issues will be given by guests from the Vincentian Partnership. Their workshops in the past have been very popular. Their website (<http://www.vpsj.ie/>) has many useful resources for CSPE – on their home page they have made available a guide to this year's presidential election, to the upcoming by-election in Dublin West and to the two referenda that will take place on the same day – Thursday October 27th. Their sister site www.vote.ie has lots of resources also, including materials relating to their voter education programme.

New Trócaire Website

Trocaire's new website is designed to give prominence to the online tasks that are most popular with supporters so that they can complete them in a more simple and visual way. Visitors can easily find and access the information and tasks they need. For example, people can make a donation to the East Africa appeal and find out the latest about the situation there, while teachers can download relevant education resources for their classroom. There's also a blog section (<http://www.trocaire.org/blog>) which now features more visual content and gives an overview of the organisation's current activities in a single place online. There's more focus on video, imagery and multimedia. Video now has a large permanent space on the homepage alongside sharing and social media tools such as Facebook.

Concern Activities

At the start of the school year Concern issued a booklet to schools outlining their range of educational activities for the year ahead; These include the long running Concern Debates (see www.concerndebates.net) - which include training days Sept-Nov 2011. Campaign Academy aims to motivate students to be creative in changing the world – there are workshops Oct 2011 – April 2012, dealing with topics including media and lobbying skills. Current campaigns relate to climate change (www.stopclimatechaos.ie) and the Millennium Development Goals (www.actnow2015.ie) . The 2012 Creative Writing Competition will be launched in January 2012, and there will be writing workshops in February. Meanwhile the winning and other selected entries will be published in book form in November 2011. See www.concern.net/writingcompetition for more details. The annual Concern Fast will take place on November 10th 2011 – see www.concernfast.ie . To request a guest speaker contact Dee Clare, School Liaison Officer – 01-4791320, dee.clare@concern.net

The Basics

On our own website www.cspeteachers.ie you can keep up with the latest CSPE news and resources, Action Project Ideas, videos etc

There are some other essential sites for teachers of CSPE, especially those new to the subject. The NCCA's Curriculum Online site has a large range of resources and guidelines, on the course content and on managing the subject:

[http://www.curriculumonline.ie/en/Post-Primary-Curriculum/Junior-Cycle-Curriculum/Junior-Certificate-Subjects/Civic, Social and Political Education/](http://www.curriculumonline.ie/en/Post-Primary-Curriculum/Junior-Cycle-Curriculum/Junior-Certificate-Subjects/Civic-Social-and-Political-Education/)

The site of the CSPE Support Service also contains essential material: <http://cspe.slss.ie/>

For CSPE Exam Papers, Marking Schemes and Chief Examiners' Reports: www.examinations.ie

Action Project Ideas - Presidential Election

The upcoming presidential election (Thurs Oct 27th) provides an ideal opportunity for an Action Project – the core concept of democracy is obviously central, and there's an excellent chance to learn about voting, including the PR system which will be very easy to see in operation because of the small number of candidates (five at the time of writing). There are many tasks to be carried out and many skills to be used. Such a project could easily become inflated so it will be important to proceed with moderation!

Suggested approaches:

- Class could be divided into small groups, with each group being responsible for tracking the progress of a particular candidate. The group could study the candidate's literature, their political broadcasts on TV, their websites etc. The group or spokesperson for the group could give progress reports to the full class.
- The class could do research and presentations on the Presidency itself, looking for example at the constitutional provisions. (see news item over on Vincentian partnership for resources).
- A brief introduction to the PR system of voting could be organized.
- A mock election could be organized, in the class or the whole school, using the names of the actual candidates.
- When the real election is over the voting patterns could be analysed, paying particular attention to the transfer of votes.
- At the end of polling day, polling booth officials may hand over the large mock ballot paper they use as information for voters – this is a useful visual aid for the any election.

* Check www.cspeteachers.ie for updates/ideas/information.

Exam Paper Response June 2011

Members of the Association of CSPE Teachers met in June to respond to this year's CSPE Paper. The response was conveyed to and featured in the national media.

The Association of CSPE Teachers gives a broad welcome to this year's CSPE paper. It was fair, though a little more bland and less imaginative than last year. The paper had welcome topical elements, including a substantial question on the forthcoming presidential election, and the opening question on significant public buildings, including the White House and Buckingham Palace, topical because of recent state visits. Useful visual clues were given - e.g. Irish flag over Aras an Uachtaráin. This opening question showing pictures of buildings was unusual in that this question usually shows pictures of well-known public figures. Buildings did feature on a previous CSPE paper but this was many years ago. The political content of the paper was relatively low, apart from the presidential question (e.g. nothing on political parties). Students were asked about terms such as "Ceann Comhairle", "Ombudsman" and "Presiding Officer" - the latter in particular was a challenging question for young people. It would have been better to have asked about the "Ombudsman for Children". Unusually there was no question on individuals - e.g. public figures, human rights campaigners etc. The "Electric Car" question was a good question on the environment, and students were required to show an understanding of the concept of "stewardship", a core concept for CSPE. The question was diffused somewhat by bringing in other campaigns like "Power of One" and "Earth Hour". The question on employment rights of young people was relevant, but the stimulus material given was too wordy and dense. The question on naming "two rights" was not as closely related to the text as it should have been. The question on Africa took as its starting point the website homepage of "Africa Also Smiles", which was a good approach as young people are so web-savvy. The last section, with the longer questions, was well balanced. It was good to see questions where the students could respond by making posters. This will suit students who do well when expressing themselves visually. There was a good combination of local, national and international issues in this section.

(The exam paper is available at www.examinations.ie)

Student Consultation

A Consultation with Young People on Reform of the Junior Cycle (Government Publications, July 2011)



In November 2010 NCCA was involved in a consultation process with Dáil na nÓg during which representatives from Comhairlí na nÓg around the country debated the reform of the Junior Cycle. The report of the event was launched in July 2011. The report, and other related resources are available on the NCCA website - www.ncca.ie

Here are some extracts as they related to CSPE:

"Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), English and Maths were the only subjects that young people agreed should be compulsory at Junior Cycle level. But they recommended that improvements should be made to the present forms of SPHE and CSPE."

"...if SPHE and CSPE were to be compulsory, students would like these subjects to be restructured and improved"

"Many participants called for the improvement of certain subjects currently taught at Junior Cycle level. In general, students would like more PE, SPHE and CSPE classes."

"A number of young people would like CSPE to be taught in a more structured way."

"... subjects and activities deemed easy to learn were sports, music, SPHE, CSPE, Maths, Irish and French."

"Almost all Senior Cycle students agreed that English, maths, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) should be compulsory subjects at Junior Cycle level. However, many students would like the present forms of SPHE and CSPE to be restructured, taught differently and allocated more time"

"Many participants would like more CSPE classes and the option of having an advanced level within the subject so more can be learned."

The full report can be accessed here:

http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Post-Primary_Education/Junior_Cycle/Junior_cycle_developments/D%C3%A1il_na_n%C3%93g_report_.pdf

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, Arklow CBS, Co. Wicklow, or emailed to act@esatclear.ie