

A whole school approach to Instructional Leadership at Naas Community College.

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Instructional Leadership (IL) has become an integral part of the culture of Naas Community College in just three, short years. It is a prominent part of the teaching and learning in our school, and as such, there is a lot invested in this area in terms of time, effort and finance.

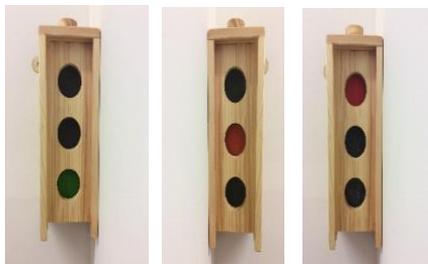
Ensuring engagement in IL on a whole school level requires an abundance of trust.

Our principal, Ciarán Keegan, and our deputy principal, Sarah Buckley, are both graduates of the IL Programme. They have invested a lot of their time, and the school budget to ensure that staff are trained in IL, and in turn, that IL becomes ingrained in our culture. So far, nine of our staff have been involved in the IL Programme.

Trust is evident again, in our management trusting those who are participating in the IL Programme to share their new knowledge and methodologies with the whole staff. This is carried out in our school through a Teaching and Learning club. We meet once a month before school to demonstrate our strategy of the month, be it Teams Games Tournaments, Graffiti, Ghost Walks, etc, and to reflect on the previous month's strategy.

However, we find that explaining a tactic in T&L club is only one step towards sharing our knowledge, and it has proved much more effective to observe teachers using such tactics in class. For this reason, management at Nass CC have allocated two Croke park hours to allow teachers to get involved in peer collaboration and observation, therefore, encouraging the spread of IL strategies and tactics.

For this to work, we have wooden traffic lights outside each classroom, which can be switched from green, to orange, to red, to indicate the teacher's availability for observation.



The traffic lights are a permanent feature of all classrooms, and indicate as follows:

Green: You are welcome to observe this lesson.

Orange: You are welcome to observe, but I am trying something new.

Red: Please do not observe this lesson. (During class tests, etc.)

We also have a green light for each day of the week in the staffroom, where teachers can write the time of the lesson they would like invite others to observe. The IL team use this space to invite others to see them use the strategy of the month, also.

Once again, the importance of trust is evident in peer collaboration. For this to work, and for staff to truly learn from each other, we must trust that our colleagues are observing to learn, and to

improve. We have a 'no criticism' policy to ensure that teachers do not feel they are being assessed. We hope that once trust is firmly established, that teachers will become comfortable in asking for, and offering each other advice.