

## Chemistry is All Around Network Workshop on "Student's Motivation" Limerick (Ireland) 27th September 2012

### Minutes

#### Participants

Name	Institution
Marie Walsh	Limerick Institute of Technology
Diane Condon	Ard Scoil Ris
James Ring	Limerick Civic Trust
Maria Sheehan	St Caiman's School
Michelle Herbert	Hazelwood College
Brian Dillon	Castleconnell National School
Michelle Starr	National Centre for Excellence in Maths and Science Teaching and Learning
Angela Gammell	St Joseph's Spanish Point
Claire McDonnell	Dublin Institute of Technology
David Sutton	Limerick Institute of Technology
Rose Lawlor	Ard Scoil Ris
Grace Kenny	Castleconnell National School
Ciara NiDhrisceal	Gaelcholaiste Luimnigh
Mairead Glynn	Tallaght Community School

**Venue:** Limerick Institute of Technology, Main Boardroom, Moylish Campus

#### Minutes

**Apologies:** Kathleen Lough, Brendan O'Sullivan

**Welcome:** Marie Walsh welcomed the teachers and experts to Limerick Institute of Technology and to the first meeting of the whole Irish team. The participants introduced themselves and their affiliations.

**Presentation of the Project:** As this was the first meeting of the whole group the aims and objectives of the project were presented to the team by Marie Walsh (presentation attached).

The presentation outlined the development of the project and the members of the partnership. It reiterated the aims of the project and the different phases across the three years of the project's anticipated lifetime. The teachers and experts were also give some indication of the progress to date, and were provided with a list of the items uploaded onto the portal by Limerick Institute of Technology. Some clarification about the role of the teachers and experts was achieved. They were also briefed on the future activities of the partnership.

#### **Presentation of teachers' and experts' comments about the papers and publications on Student's Motivation uploaded by Partners on the Project Portal**

The participants who had chosen to comment on papers and publications on Student's Motivation spoke in turn about their perceptions of the material. These included materials posted on the portal from the partners in Spain, Bulgaria, Belgium, Portugal, Czeck Republic, Turkey, Greece, Italy and Poland.



Each participant spoke about the paper and/or publication that they had reviewed. With regard to the papers, there was a disparity in length, quality and referencing between different papers. It was recommended that there be agreement among the partners about standardising the length, currency and detail in such papers. In addition each should be appropriately referenced. Some of the papers generated a lot of positive comment. Some of the publications were also inspiring in their reportage of well-conducted initiatives and research.

### **Presentation of teachers' and experts' comments about the teaching resources uploaded by Partners on the Project Portal**

Most participants had chosen at least one Teaching Resource to review. They regularly expressed difficulty with choosing the items. Some had difficulty with translation of the partner reviews, and others were disappointed that while the review could be translated the actual resources couldn't all be translated.

As each participant took to the floor to show their chosen resources to the other teachers and experts, we were able to gain an impression of the various resources and form opinions about their useability, relevance to the Irish curriculum and general usefulness. As with the papers and publications there was an obvious disparity in quality and relevance. Some of the materials were out-of-date, with one website having a number of links of which about 70% do not work.

It was agreed that if the resources could be mapped to the curriculum their usefulness would become more apparent. It was acknowledged that some of the resources would be more applicable for chemistry/science promotion rather than teaching (especially within an exam-driven curriculum).

### **Discussion on the national availability of ICT resources to teach chemistry and science at different levels and on the difficulty of selecting suitable teaching resources**

The participants were given the list of twenty five resources uploaded by Limerick Institute of Technology to the portal. Most were familiar with some, but not all, of these resources. Many expressed the opinion that they would now use these resources in school as some of them had obvious links to various stages of the Irish curriculum. Others would be relevant to the Irish Transition Year, which is not bound by an exam syllabus.

The proximity of Ireland to the UK means that a lot of material used here originates in the UK. Even the *iChemistry* professional development initiative for Irish chemistry teachers includes many links to UK-sourced materials.

All agreed that the quality of national materials is improving, and that mapping to the national curriculum is an advantage. The teachers were most attracted to the visual, interactive content on websites. They also appreciated resources that they could use in class, via interactive whiteboards and other supports, but also direct the students to for additional work at home.

### **Identification of the most appropriate resources for each school level to be proposed to associated schools for a trial during the next school year**

As the items were presented it became evident that some resources had engaged their reviewers more than others. The participants identified the following as being particularly attractive and potentially useful:

X-Science – paper from University of Genoa – inspiring to link lessons to cinema.

General Chemistry on Line from University of Dartmouth

Materials for special uses – from Chemistry is All Around web portal

Science Kids

Chemistry of Things (still under construction? but already useful)

An Introduction to Chemistry by Mark Bishop

Chemistry for Life

Disappointment was expressed about the lack of primary school materials. Even Radar's Chem4Kids was misleading as it was for an older age group.

The comments were collected for collation in preparation for the virtual meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The teachers and experts also completed the evaluation forms. The meeting concluded with an acknowledgement of appreciation by Marie Walsh for the work done by the participants to date.