



**Oide**

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim  
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí  
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional  
Learning of School Leaders  
and Teachers

# The Primary NQT Voice Survey Report

2023.2024



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## **Introduction**

Oide, the school support service was formed in September 2023 from the integration of four existing support services, namely the Centre for School Leadership (CSL), Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). In a role formerly fulfilled by the NIPT, the Droichead Induction Division now operationalises Droichead, the Teaching Council's integrated professional induction framework for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). To date within the primary sector, over 8,771 Professional Support Team (PST) members from 2,406 schools have been trained by the Droichead Induction Division (formerly NIPT) to support NQTs through their Droichead induction process. In the 2023.2024 academic year, 2,408 primary-level NQTs from 1,316 schools applied to commence the Droichead process.

The Droichead Induction Division gathered comprehensive data from primary NQTs who had applied to engage in the Droichead process during the 2023.2024 academic year by means of a questionnaire, which was shared with all these NQTs via email on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024. The purpose of the NQT Voice Questionnaire was to afford NQTs who had engaged in Droichead in the 2023.2024 academic year the opportunity to proffer authentic, candid, insightful and valuable feedback about their lived experiences of the Droichead induction process. The information gleaned could then be used, as required by the Droichead Induction Division to support the enhancement of the Droichead process for future NQTs and to inform and augment the support and training provided to schools, school leaders and PST members going forward.

Following the initial email invitation to complete the NQT Voice Questionnaire, a reminder email was issued on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to all primary-level NQTs who had applied to engage in the Droichead process during the 2023.2024 school year. Additionally, the X social media account operated by the Droichead Induction Division was used to further prompt NQTs to accept this invitation to provide feedback on their Droichead induction experiences. NQTs were also encouraged to complete the questionnaire during the final two weeks of cluster meeting delivery to NQTs (13<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> May 2024). Principals and PST members were invited to remind NQTs about the questionnaire at PST training days and at various other professional learning events (i.e. Droichead



Refresher Events and Droichead Information Sessions for Principals) that took place during the applicable time period. In total, 288 NQTs (11.96% of all primary NQTs contacted) responded to the questionnaire, one of whom provided feedback using the Irish language version of the questionnaire, with an average time of 29:15 minutes taken to complete it. The NQT Voice Questionnaire was created cross-sectorally and the same questions were asked of both primary and post-primary NQTs, apart from a small number of sector-specific questions pertaining, in the main to preparation for teaching and learning at primary level. The questionnaire examined the Droichead experience of NQTs, gathering data in relation to key aspects of the process, namely:

- Droichead Setting and Timeline
- Strand A: Observations, Professional Conversations, Induction Activities and Preparation for Teaching and Learning
- Strand B: Cluster Meetings and Additional Professional Learning Activities
- Reflections and Taisce: Portfolio-based Learning
- NQT Concerns and Supports
- Words of Wisdom for NQTs and PST Members

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) agreement between the Teaching Council and Oide, the email addresses for NQTs contacted were shared by the Teaching Council with the Droichead Induction Division.

This report will catalogue the findings from all data collected, collated and analysed using the headings listed above.

## **Section 1: Droichead Setting and Timeline**

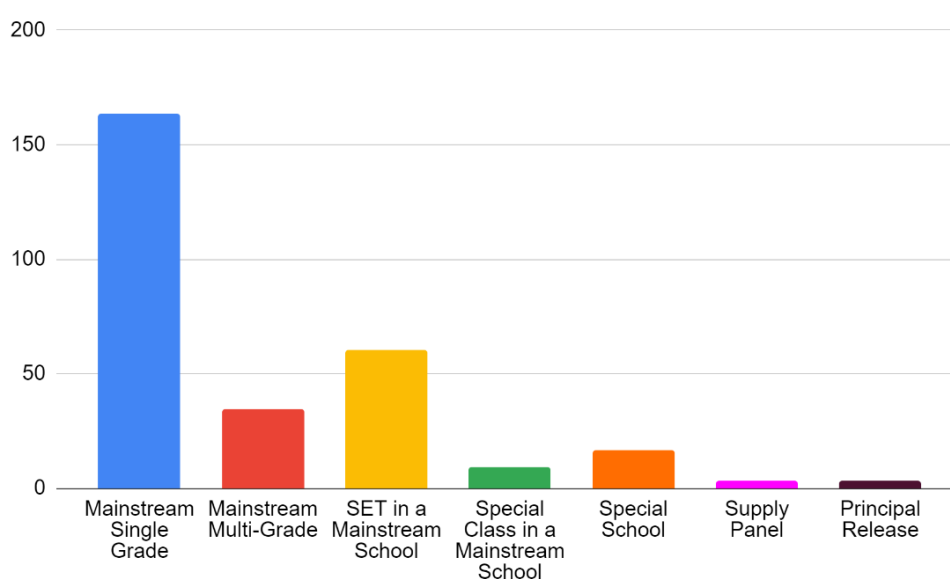
Section one of the NQT Voice Questionnaire explored the settings in which Droichead took place, the timeline for the process, how the schedule of induction activities was indicated to NQTs, if quarterly reviews took place throughout the Droichead induction period and finally, the number of PST members involved in supporting the NQT for the duration of the process.



## 1.1 Droichead Settings

Most respondents were working in English-medium schools (90.6%) with the remainder working in Gaelscoileanna or scoileanna sa Ghaeltacht. The data in relation to the number of respondents teaching in schools with DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) or non-DEIS status and those working in special schools indicates that a greater number of respondents (61.1%) were employed in non-DEIS schools and that just 10.4% of respondents were teaching in special schools.

Within their school settings, 56.6% of respondents engaged in the Droichead process while teaching a single-grade mainstream class, followed by 20.8% who worked in a Special Education Teacher (SET) role in a mainstream primary school and a further 11.8% reporting engagement in the process while teaching a multi-grade class. Of the other types of settings, those working in special schools or in a special class within a mainstream school accounted for 5.6% and 3.1% of respondents respectively, with the remaining cohorts employed on supply panels (1.05%) or in principal release posts (1.05%). The final two categories, permitting NQTs employed in such positions to complete the Droichead process, were introduced as exceptional timebound measures to ameliorate the challenge of filling such vacancies, due to a teacher supply shortage. These measures commenced on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and are due to remain in place until the end of the 2024.2025 academic year.



**Figure 1:** In which class setting did your Droichead process take place?



## 1.2 Duration of Droichead Process

Almost 71% of respondents had completed their Droichead process at the time of their NQT Voice questionnaire submission, with the largest cohort confirming that they had engaged in the process for the three terms of the academic year (48.3%). Marginally less (43.8%) had engaged in the process for a period that extended over two consecutive school terms, with just below 8% reporting completion of the Droichead process within one school term only.



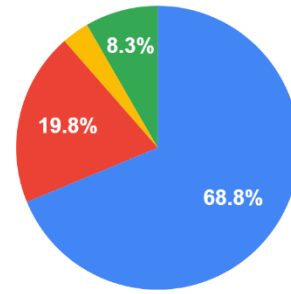
**Figure 2:** What was the duration of your Droichead process?

## 1.3 Droichead Outline Plans and Quarterly Reviews

The respondents were then asked if they had used a Droichead Outline Plan (this is a timeline of activities which incorporates the commencement and proposed conclusion dates of an NQT's Droichead process, induction activities, quarterly reviews and PST/NQT meetings and is a requirement as set out in section 1.1.7 of *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* [The Teaching Council, 2017]). Of the NQTs who responded to the questionnaire, 90.3% had employed an outline plan to support their Droichead process.

In relation to the development of their outline plan, of those who had utilised a plan, just below 69% of respondents had co-designed this plan in collaboration with their PST, while 19.8% indicated that their PST had created the plan independently of any input from the NQT. However, 3.1% conveyed in their responses that they had developed the plan themselves, while the remaining NQTs indicated that they did not have an outline plan to support their engagement in the process.

- It was devised in collaboration with my PST
- My PST devised the plan
- I devised it myself
- Not applicable as I did not have a Droichead Outline Plan

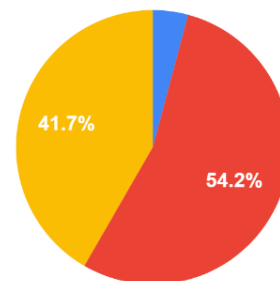


**Figure 3:** Who devised your Droichead Outline Plan?

The holding of quarterly review meetings between NQTs and PST members is an important element of the Droichead process and 92% of respondents reported that they had engaged in quarterly reviews with their PST.

During the period of their Droichead process, 54.2% of questionnaire respondents noted that they were supported by two PST members, 41.7% indicated being supported by three or more PST members, while the remaining 4.1% had worked with one PST member only. In the third group mentioned above, perhaps one PST member was the main support, but others were available if needed, depending on the individual needs of the NQT.

- One PST member
- Two PST members
- Three or more PST members



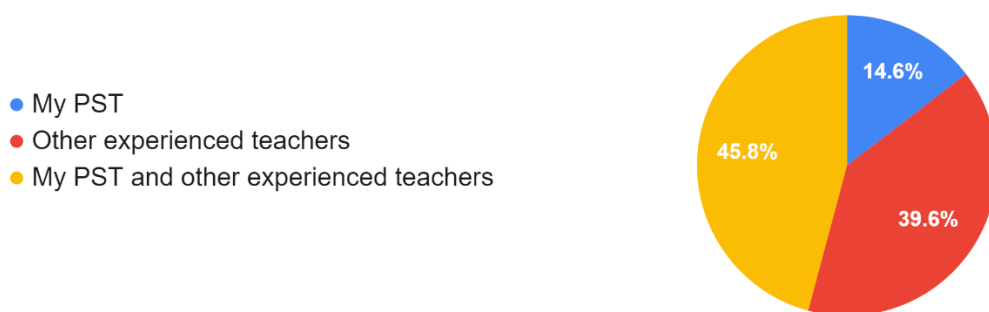
**Figure 4:** How many PST members supported you during your Droichead process?

## **Section 2: Strand A**

This section of the NQT Voice Questionnaire explored elements of Strand A of the Droichead process, which involves school-based induction where the NQT is supported by a team of experienced colleagues (Professional Support Team [PST] members). NQTs are central to the Droichead process; their needs, throughout the process, should first and foremost be identified, prioritised and supported. NQTs' experiences of observations during Droichead, the identification of emerging needs, induction activities engaged in and how these activities were recorded were probed. NQTs were also asked to identify topics discussed during professional conversations with experienced colleagues and to indicate how long they spent on preparation for teaching and learning each week.

### **2.1 Observations**

When asked about observations, 45.8% of NQTs indicated that they had observed both a PST member and another experienced teacher, 39.6% had observed other teachers, who were not serving as PST members, and 14.6% had observed solely members of their PST.



**Figure 5:** *As part of your Droichead process, who did you observe?*

Further analysis revealed that 26.4% had observed a PST member teaching once, with a marginally higher cohort of 28.8% having observed a PST member twice. Forty NQTs (13.9%) recorded observing PST members on either three or four occasions while four NQTs reported having observed a PST member five or more times. However, close to a third had not observed a PST member during their Droichead process.



**Figure 6:** How many times did you observe a member of your PST during Droichead?

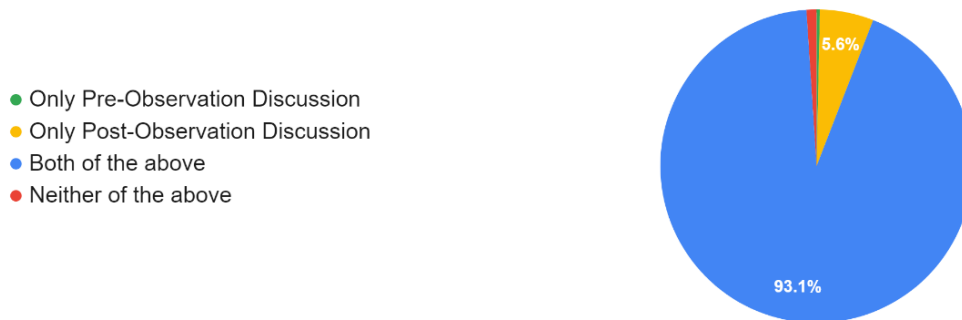
Of those who had observed other experienced teachers, namely colleagues who were not serving as PST members, 35.1% denoted having observed another teacher twice, closely followed by a cohort who had availed of between three and four opportunities to observe other teachers (30.9%), falling to 19.4% for those who had been afforded just a single opportunity to observe a more experienced colleague. Twenty-four NQTs (8.3%) observed a non-PST member colleague on five or more occasions during their Droichead process.



**Figure 7:** How many times did you observe another teacher during your Droichead process?

When invited to indicate the number of times they were observed by a member of their PST, as detailed in Table 11 in the Appendix, most respondents (64.6%) reported having been observed twice, with less than half of that figure (29.5%) indicating having been observed on either three or four occasions. Responses indicated that 93.8% of participants reported engaging in pre-observation discussions, while an even higher percentage (98.6%) noted involvement in post-observation conversations. The observation process involves three stages, namely pre-observation discussion, observation and post-observation conversation. A small number of NQTs (5.6%) had engaged in the final two stages of that process only, while three NQTs indicated

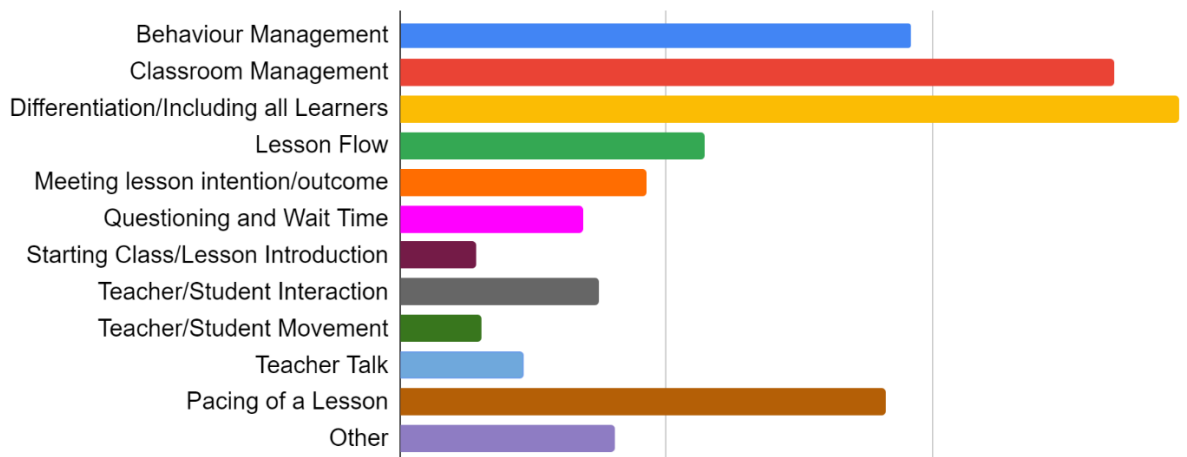
experiencing only the observation itself and neither the pre-observation discussion beforehand nor the post-observation meeting recommended to take place thereafter.



**Figure 8:** *Did you engage in the three-stage approach to observation?*

With regards to maintaining records of observations, 92% of questionnaire respondents confirmed use of an observation template when observing a PST member or other experienced teacher while 92.7% reported having completed a post-observation record (action plan) following observation by a PST member.

The majority of NQTs (95.5%) who responded to the questionnaire had collaborated with their PST members at the pre-observation stage to identify a topic or area of need upon which to focus during said observations. Questionnaire respondents were invited to select all applicable topics identified as a focus or foci for observations from the list provided, as well as recording any further areas attended to that did not feature on this list. While differentiation/including all learners, classroom management and behaviour management were the three most common topics focused upon during observations, all areas of need chosen by NQTs in collaboration with their PST members as a focus or foci for observations are portrayed below.



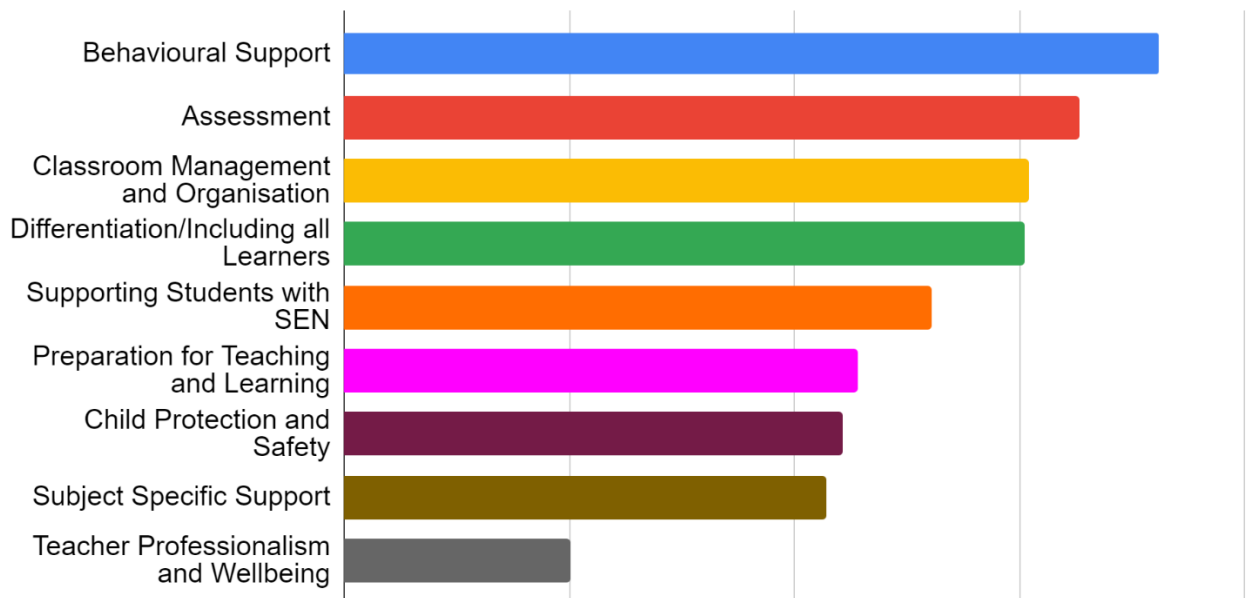
**Figure 9:** *If a focus for your observations was identified, what was it?*

Among some of the other areas of focus for observations reported by NQTs in their questionnaire responses and as laid out in Table 16 in the Appendix were assessment, transitions, múineadh na Gaeilge, literacy, pupil progression, station teaching, appropriate pitching of lesson content, the new Primary Maths Curriculum, use of WALT and WILF, language consistency, suitability of learning methodologies and activities, development of learner independence, active learning, group-work, various other curricular areas and appropriate choice and use of resources.

## 2.2 Professional Conversations

When invited to comment on professional conversations, excluding those that occurred as part of the three-stage observation process, 94.4% of questionnaire responses indicated that they had engaged in professional conversations with experienced colleagues about a variety of topics.

In their ranking of topics discussed during such professional conversations in order of those discussed most often to those least explored from a choice of nine areas provided on the questionnaire, the five most common issues examined in order of frequency included behavioural support, assessment, classroom management and organisation, differentiation/including all learners and supporting students with special educational needs, followed by preparation for teaching and learning, child protection and safety and, subject-specific support.



**Figure 10:** What topics were discussed during professional conversations?

### 2.3 Induction Activities

Observation is just one element of Strand A and NQTs were invited to list other induction activities engaged in at school level during the Droichead process. Such activities are in-school supports which have been put in place to meet an NQT's needs and are unique to each NQT's individual process. Among the myriad of induction activities reported by NQT respondents, the most frequently mentioned were specific school support received from both the principal teacher and experienced colleagues (40.6%), courses and training events attended (31.2%, encompassing both specified and non-specified categories), PST meetings (25.7%), special education support and training (11.1%), extra-curricular activities (6.6%) and whole-staff meetings (6.6%) with a comprehensive itemisation of in-school induction activities reported by respondents set out in Table 18 in the Appendix.

Regarding their engagement in, access to and perspective on in-school induction activities, aside from observations, NQTs voiced comments such as the following:

*'I was given the opportunity to visit another local school with very well-established special classes to get a feel for what their day looks like. I found this opportunity to be the best thing I have done during my Droichead process.'*

*'We had a meeting to welcome all the new teachers to the school to detail school rules,*

*expectations, procedures etc. This was extremely helpful.'*

*'Working with colleagues in collaborative planning sessions allowed me to share ideas, receive constructive feedback and integrate effective practices into my lesson plans.'*

*'I had regular informal conversations with PST members and other members of staff. These conversations varied based on my needs e.g., prior to parent-teacher meetings, assessment, behaviour management etc.'*

Reflecting on the value of the various induction activities facilitated at school level, 81.6% of respondents expressed that the particular induction activities in which they engaged categorically supported their specific needs, with a further 13.5% recording that induction activities helped their needs to some extent. The remaining cohort of almost 5% indicated that the induction activities in which they participated did not meet their unique professional learning needs as NQTs.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their emerging needs and subsequent associated induction activities were recorded in a dedicated document, commonly referred to as the Droichead Standards and Induction Plan. 79.2% of questionnaire respondents confirmed the employment of such a document to maintain a record of their emerging needs and induction activities, with one-fifth of respondents therefore not maintaining such a written record of their emerging needs and associated induction activities.

A reflective sample of those additional comments as articulated by NQT Voice Questionnaire respondents regarding their various perspectives on in-school induction activities is included below, with common themes identified in these contributions set out in Table 21 in the Appendix also.

*'My school didn't have formalised induction activities, rather the whole school were exceptionally open and giving of their time for questions and encouragement.'*

*'As SET teacher I took opportunities to observe other teachers, including SET, delivering lessons and spent a lot of time researching resources and preparing.'*

*'It was really helpful, because I got a clear picture about the students, and it helped to set up my targets and choose the right teaching methods.'*



*'I had a very supportive and approachable PST who engaged with me and supported me throughout my Droichead process.'*

## 2.4 Preparation for Teaching and Learning

This second section of the questionnaire concluded by querying the length of time that NQTs typically devoted to preparation for teaching and learning each week, with responses ranging from between four and six hours for the largest cohort of respondents (39.9%), followed by between two and three hours weekly for almost 32% of the NQTs and just over one-quarter of all questionnaire responses (25.4%) indicating that in excess of seven hours allotted to preparation for teaching and learning was customary for them during the Droichead process. Further analysis reveals that among that third cohort, 11.5% were routinely spending nine hours and beyond undertaking preparatory work. A minority (3%) of responses denoted allocating the shortest time of one hour to preparation for teaching and learning.



**Figure 11:** How long did you spend each week on preparation for teaching and learning?

## Section 3: Strand B

Section three of the NQT Voice questionnaire explored Strand B of the Droichead process, involving the elements of Droichead that NQTs must complete outside of school, including cluster meetings and other professional learning activities. NQTs are required to attend one cluster meeting per term for the duration of their Droichead process and engage in a minimum of one other professional learning activity.

### 3.1 Cluster Meetings

When asked to evaluate the helpfulness of cluster meetings, over two-thirds of respondents expressed a positive response, with a total of 67.4% deeming cluster

meetings to be either very helpful or helpful. Almost one-fifth (19.8%) of respondents found the cluster meeting neither helpful nor unhelpful.



**Figure 12:** What is your overall evaluation of the cluster meetings?

NQTs were invited to identify additional topics that they considered would be beneficial to address at future cluster meetings. Of the diverse range of topics suggested by the questionnaire respondents, those that featured most predominantly in order of frequency of proposition were preparation and planning (62), wellbeing (39), classroom management and organisation (33), parental interaction/parent-teacher meetings (31), practical suggestions regarding teaching methodologies, resources and subject-specific ideas (26), managing behaviour (25), special educational needs including cluster meetings specific to those teaching in SET, special classes and special school contexts (25), differentiation/including all learners (24), assessment (22) and various aspects of the Droichead process (22) itself. Although they did not submit suggestions for additional topics for future cluster meetings, seventeen respondents commended the current content of cluster meetings as helpful, relevant and useful. Table 23 in the Appendix provides a comprehensive summary of all suggestions submitted, ranked in accordance with prevalence of proposition.

Several detailed contributions, that reflect those articulated by the wider body of NQT respondents and further illustrate and explicate the suggestions for additional cluster meeting topics put forward are included below:

*'I thought the third cluster meeting was beneficial as it talked about teacher wellbeing but that should be emphasised in earlier cluster meetings.'*

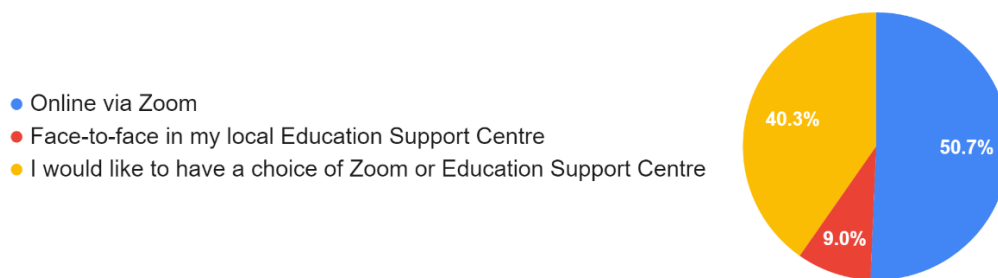
*'Discussing ways to tailor instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils and how to support and differentiate where there are multiple diagnosed and non-diagnosed needs. UDL is a very new area and it would be great to get more information about it.'*

*'All topics discussed were of relevance and beneficial. The explanation of the Droichead process in the first meeting was helpful. The topics discussed are ones that are most useful to NQTs, in my opinion.'*

*'I got the most from hearing personal experiences from other NQTs and the facilitators so more activities to encourage that during cluster meetings.'*

*'I would like to have had more discussion between NQTs on challenges we faced so we don't feel like we are on our own, particularly since I was the only NQT in my school.'*

In expressing their preferred format for cluster meeting engagement, just above half (50.7%) of the respondents cited online facilitation via Zoom as their primary preference, with a further 40.3% indicating that affording them a choice between either online or face-to-face engagement in their local Education Support Centre was optimal. A much smaller cohort of twenty-six respondents (9%) indicated face-to-face cluster meeting participation as their preferred option.



**Figure 13:** What is your preference for engaging in cluster meetings?

### 3.2 Other Professional Learning Activities

*Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* (Teaching Council, 2017, p.6) states that:

*'NQTs should also engage in one other professional learning activity, identified by themselves in accordance with their professional learning needs, in consultation with the PST. Typical learning activities might be, for example, participation in a workshop, a meeting of a Teacher Professional Network (subject association), an online/blended learning activity, attendance at a conference, Féilte etc.'*

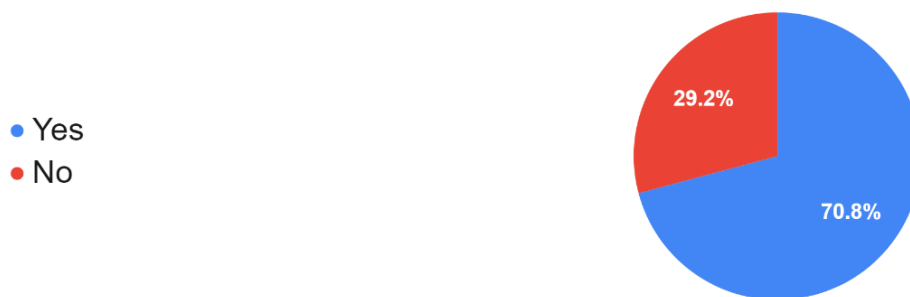
On analysis of the catalogue of professional learning activities in which NQTs indicated they had engaged during the Droichead process, it was evident that respondents had

participated in a wide range of activities, with almost half of the participants (49.3%) reporting having exceeded the requirement to attend a minimum of one other additional professional learning activity as stipulated in Droichead policy. While 23.3% of respondents did not provide any detail in relation to the other professional learning activities attended and 2.1% indicated no engagement at the time of questionnaire completion, the remaining responses portrayed the diverse miscellany of professional development events attended by the NQT respondents. Online engagement was indicated in 30.2% of responses while accessing courses facilitated by Droichead Induction and the Education Support Centres of Ireland (ESCI) and its network of local Education Support Centres was specified by 9% and 6.9% of respondents respectively. However, it merits note that most respondents did not denote any further detail beyond the topic/s pertaining to the professional learning event/s that they engaged in.

Numeracy ranked among the most popular theme that emerged from response analysis, with 18.4% of NQTs reporting engagement in numeracy-related professional learning events, followed by special education (14.2%), literacy (8.7%), health and wellbeing (8.3%), classroom management and organisation (6.3%) and planning and preparation (4.5%). Attendance at various conferences was reported by ten NQTs, including Féilte and the INTO Annual Congress.

A comprehensive summary of key professional learning activities engaged in by NQT respondents is set out in the Appendix in Table 24 and ranked in accordance with prevalence of reportage in questionnaire submissions.

The majority of NQTs (70.8%) indicated that the decision in relation to the chosen other professional learning activity or activities in which they engaged was a collaborative one, explored with their PST.



**Figure 14:** Did you decide your professional learning activity collaboratively with your PST?

Furthermore 81.3% also noted that the professional learning activity in which they engaged categorically attended to one of their emerging needs, with a further 14.6% imparting the view that their emerging needs were addressed to a certain extent by their participation in such a professional learning activity.



**Figure 15:** Did your professional learning activity address one of your emerging needs?

NQTs were given the opportunity to share any further comments they wished to impart in relation to their chosen professional learning activity or activities. Only 10% of respondents chose to do so, with some taking the opportunity to comment further on cluster meetings. A selection of the more detailed additional statements articulated by those respondents is set out below. Further detail and insight summarising the themes ascertained from these additional comments is outlined in Table 26 in the Appendix.

*‘It was a very beneficial course and it gave me the confidence to teach RSE in the classroom.’*

*‘It was really helpful as I got lots of tips and useful resources.’*

*‘The course I completed on classroom and behaviour management was useful in learning some new strategies which I adopted in the classroom.’*

*'My professional learning activity made me realise how much there is to know about literacy and how much more I need to learn about it.'*

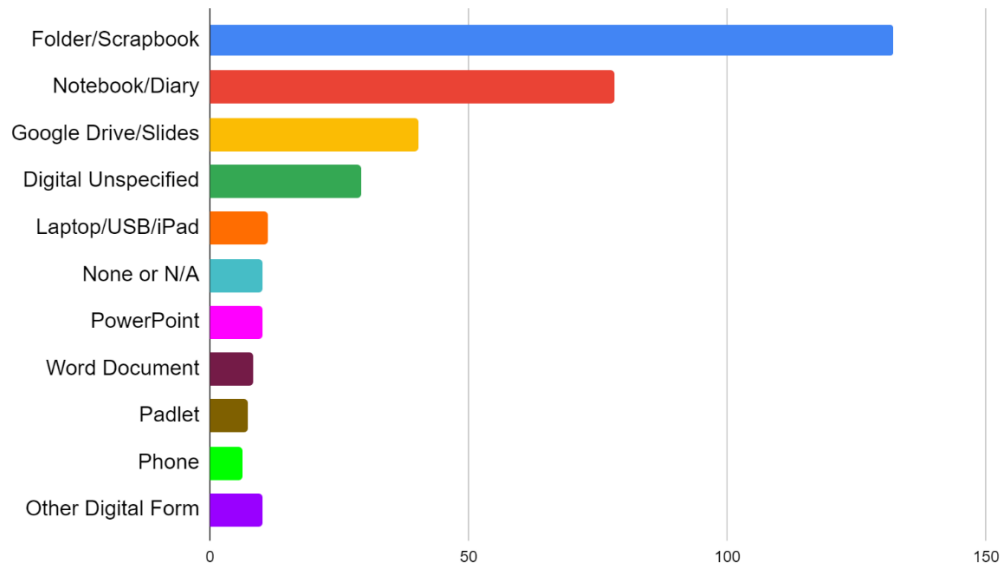
## **Section 4: Reflections and Taisce**

In this section of the questionnaire, portfolio-based learning (Taisce) was explored.

*'Engaging in the process of portfolio-based learning enables the NQT to reflect on their professional learning in a way that suits them and identify and plan for areas in which they may need further support or guidance' (Teaching Council, 2017, p.5).*

### **4.1 Taisce Format**

The vast majority (97.2%) of NQTs compiled a Taisce during their Droichead process. As the format of Taisce is chosen by NQTs according to individual preference and learning style, a wide variety of approaches to Taisce was indicated. Hard copy format, such as a folder, notebook or diary was the most popular (selected by 210 NQTs), while 121 respondents indicated using a digital style of storage and presentation. The figures above indicate that some NQTs maintained a Taisce across more than one format. While almost one-quarter of respondents who had employed a digital approach (29) were not specific in their responses, those who provided detail recorded using Google Drive/Sheets, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, Padlet, personal laptop, phone or iPad devices, blogs, Microsoft OneDrive, Canva, Instagram and Symbaloo, in descending order of popularity as detailed in Table 28 in the Appendix. A small cohort of thirty-five NQTs reported recording Taisce in multiple forms, using either multiple digital approaches, multiple hard copy records or, as with twenty-five NQTs, a combination of the above to record their reflections. Just 3% reported not having maintained a Taisce during their Droichead process.



**Figure 16:** How/where did you record your Taisce e.g. in a notebook, blog etc.?

62.8% of NQTs who responded to the questionnaire stated that they had chosen to share an element of their Taisce portfolio-based learning with their PST.



**Figure 17:** Did you choose to share elements of your Taisce with your PST?

The majority of respondents (91.7%) reported that reflections from their Taisce were beneficial to their daily professional practice.



**Figure 18:** Do reflections from your Taisce benefit your professional practice?

## 4.2 Perspectives on Taisce

NQTs were invited to express additional comments in relation to maintaining their Taisce with forty-eight of the respondents choosing to do so. Among the responses submitted were the following statements:

*'I found it helped to look back and see the progress throughout the year. It helped me to reflect and to look at how far I had come since the start of my Droichead journey.'*

*'I really enjoy looking back at all the of the learning that took place and reflecting on the process. I hope to continue it for the rest of my NQT year.'*

*'I was really proud of how much I engaged with it and my PST shared it with my principal as it was good work. It was an interesting and rewarding addition to the teaching process.'*

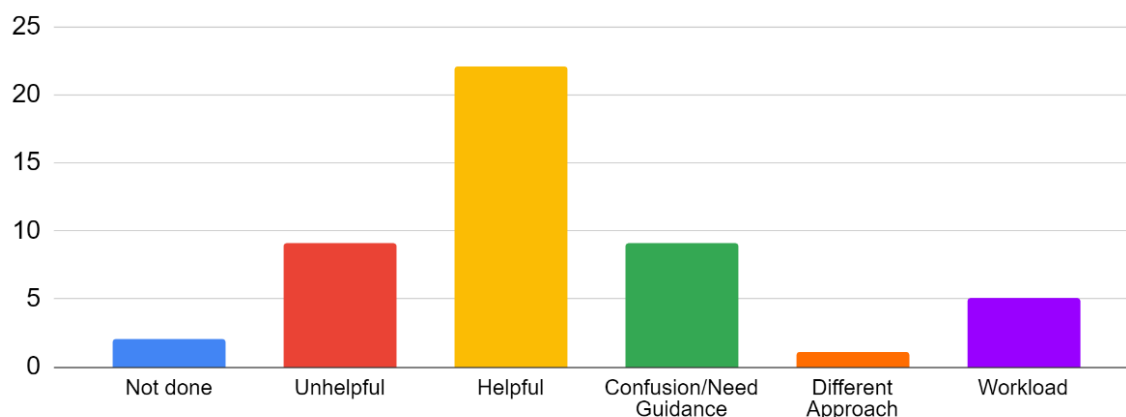
*'Great bank of resources and any learnings to take from the Droichead process that will inform and help future teaching.'*

Alongside these appraisals of Taisce was an articulated need for further guidance, clarity, enhanced communication and a review of approach in relation to portfolio-based learning during the Droichead process.

*'I think the way Taisce is framed encourages students to think of it as a one-off requirement for Droichead. While the idea of Taisce being open-ended is accessible, a more structured approach to developing reflective practice habits would be better, even if it's as simple as building the habit of reflecting each day/week what your high and low points were.'*

A visual summation of the perspectives on Taisce as reported in the additional comments submitted by those NQTs who opted to do so is displayed in Figure 19 below, with all comments listed in Table 31 in the Appendix also.





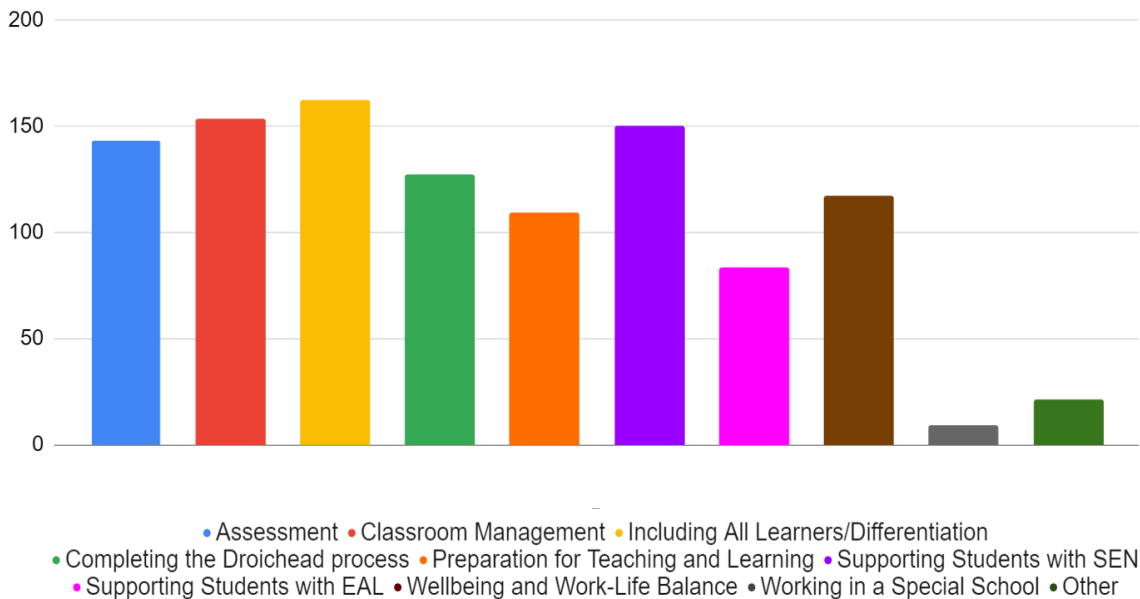
**Figure 19:** Any further comments regarding your Taisce?

## **Section 5: NQT Concerns and Supports**

Section five explored NQT concerns throughout the process, as well as various supports available to them which they may have accessed. It also explored whether NQTs and PSTs had availed of Droichead release time as is available to all schools engaging in the Droichead process. Use of social media and the NIPT and/or Oide websites as additional NQT supports was examined, while NQTs were also asked about the most beneficial and challenging elements of the process and if they had any further comments to add regarding their experience of the Droichead induction process.

### **5.1 NQT Concerns**

This section began by asking NQTs about their primary concerns during their Droichead process. Respondents were permitted to select more than one area and were also given the option to add an additional area of concern if required, with the distribution of data submitted depicted below.



**Figure 20:** What were your main concerns during your first year of teaching?

While including all learners/differentiation (56.3%), classroom management (53.1%), supporting students with SEN (52.1%), assessment (49.6%) and completion of the Droichead process (44.1%) featured most predominantly in the responses inputted from the options provided, additional areas of concern expressed by smaller cohorts of NQTs (7.3%) included parental interactions (seven NQTs), the learning curve/managing the unknown (four responses), paperwork (three NQTs), teaching in a special class (two responses) with behavioural issues, managing curricular change, difficult staff relations, SNA challenges and pressure to cover all curricular content each recorded once in responses analysed. Some NQTs described in detail the additional concerns that they experienced.

*'I found it overwhelming trying to adapt to a setting in which I had no practical experience.'*

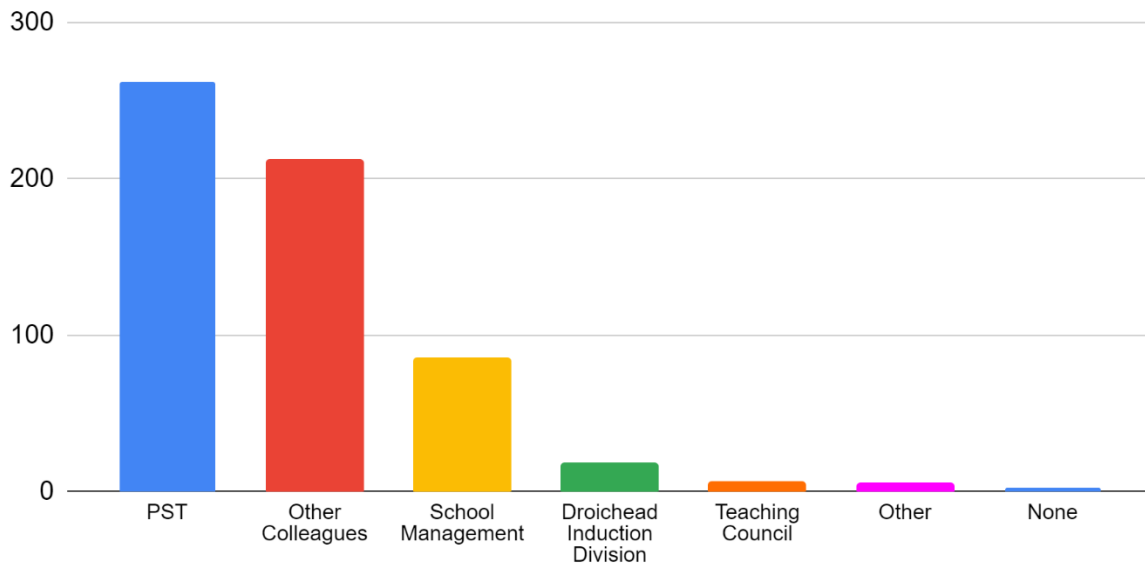
*'Managing the changes of the new curriculum while navigating a new role as an NQT.'*

*'How to approach communicating and dealing with difficult parents.'*

## 5.2 NQT Supports and Release Time

In order to address the concerns above, NQTs sought support from others throughout the process, with 90.9% seeking support from their PST and 73.6% from their teaching colleagues. School management, the Droichead Induction Division and the Teaching Council were also designated by NQTs as sources of support. Additional responses

included fellow NQTs and the INTO with one NQT reporting not seeking any support and another respondent indicating that despite seeking support from various sources in relation to a specific concern, minimal assistance was received.



**Figure 21:** *If you had an issue or concern during your Droichead process,*

Release time, with substitute cover, is automatically provided by the Department of Education to support the school-based elements of the Droichead process. This release time is in line with the Department of Education’s guidelines. NQTs were asked if their schools had availed of this release time, with 65.6% confirming that release time had been utilised. It is acknowledged however that NQTs may not always be aware of whether substitute cover was accessed and claimed for via the school’s online claims system.



**Figure 22:** *Did your school avail of ‘Droichead Release Time’ to support you?*

During the 2023.2024 academic year, NQTs initially had access to online resources on the NIPT website ([www.teacherinduction.ie](http://www.teacherinduction.ie)) until the newly-constructed Oide website and specifically, the section pertaining to Droichead operated by the Droichead Induction Division ([www.oide.ie/droichead](http://www.oide.ie/droichead)), launched in March 2024, after which time NQTs could utilise either website for additional support in relation to Droichead and the induction process for the remainder of the school year. Key supports were replicated across both websites. The question posed in relation to frequency of access to Droichead Induction website support did not distinguish between which website the respondents had visited. Almost all NQTs (96.6%) had visited either one of the Droichead Induction websites at least once over the course of their Droichead process, with just above 40% of NQTs who completed the questionnaire noting that they had accessed either one or both Droichead websites five or more times. A small cohort of 3.4% (10 NQTs) conveyed not having utilised this website support whatsoever during the period in which they engaged in the Droichead induction process.



**Figure 23:** How many times did you visit the Droichead Induction websites during your Droichead process?

Social media interactions were also explored. When asked which social media platform(s) would reach most NQTs, Instagram was the most commonly identified, with 83% of respondents selecting it as most popular among the platforms listed, with TikTok and Facebook ranked second and third, chosen by 30.2% and 11.1% of questionnaire respondents respectively. ‘Other’ was an available option to this question and was chosen by nineteen NQTs, of which six reported not using social media at all.



**Figure 24:** In your opinion which social media platform(s) reach most NQTs?

### 5.3 Beneficial Aspects of the Droichead Process

The questionnaire also asked NQTs what they considered to be the most beneficial aspect of the Droichead process. Participants were permitted to submit more than one answer. Predominant among responses submitted were observations, cited by 60% of respondents as the most beneficial aspect of Droichead, closely followed by the support and guidance received from experienced colleagues, identified by 57.3% of NQTs in their responses. Collaboration with experienced colleagues, the opportunity to meet and interact with fellow NQTs and cluster meetings ranked as the next three most valued elements of the Droichead process. A reflective sample of NQT comments shown below and further elucidated in Table 34 in the Appendix.

Regarding the most beneficial aspect of the Droichead process, among the NQT comments articulated and reflecting the sentiments of the respondent body were statements such as the following:

*‘The process was supportive, open and honest and I felt comfortable going to many members of staff if I needed support. For example, if I needed support with literacy there was a staff member who had done further study in this area who could help me. Furthermore, we had communities of practice during my Droichead process which were so helpful for professional development and building relationships in my school.’*

*‘Ba é ag breathnú ar mhúinteoirí eile an chuid is fearr den phróiseas, dar liom.’*

*‘The level of release time was excellent. My school took full advantage of it and from speaking to peers I really feel so lucky that they enabled me to observe all class levels and some twice if I wanted to see certain subjects.’*

*'Being able to link up with other professionals and teachers through the cluster meetings was great. It has been nice to have reassurance that there are other NQTs facing the same challenges as me. It was very helpful hearing how others dealt with challenges.'*

*'I enjoyed when the PST members observed me as it helped me work on areas but it also highlighted my strengths as a teacher.'*

#### **5.4 Challenging Aspects of the Droichead Process**

Respondents were then asked to identify aspects of the Droichead process that they found most challenging, with scope to submit more than one answer provided. Foremost by far among the challenges reported was planning, an aspect considered most challenging by half of the NQT respondents (50%) and in particular the requirement to engage in short-term planning on a weekly basis for the duration of the Droichead process, specified by 103 NQTs of this cohort (34.8%), with many elaborating on the requirement and describing it as time-consuming, onerous, intense and unrealistic in the following terms:

*'The most challenging part of my Droichead process was completing the weekly plans on top of everything else.'*

*'Planning was the most challenging. I spent twenty-four weeks completing Droichead. I spent every weekend of those twenty-four weeks planning. It was extremely tough. I believe weekly planning is beneficial for the first month or two, however, I do not think it is necessary to complete weekly plans for the whole duration.'*

*'Bhí se dúshlánach pleanáil sheachtainiúil a dhéanamh le linn an phróisis ar fad.'*

Among the plethora of additional challenges identified in NQT responses, further common responses reported in descending order of incidence included a general comment on paperwork as posing the greatest challenge (10.8%), closely followed by being observed (9.7%), cluster meetings (8%), workload and time management (6.9%), wellbeing and/or maintenance of a healthy work-life balance (5.6%), difficult relationships with PST members and/or colleagues (2.7%), pressure to meet expectations and keep pace with requirements (2.7%), engagement in reflection and maintenance of Taisce (2.7%), the length of the process (2.4%) and differentiation/including all learners/meeting additional needs (2.1%). A reflective

sample of additional NQT comments expressed is set out below and further elucidated in Table 36 in the Appendix.

Regarding the most challenging aspect of the Droichead process, among the additional NQT comments expressed were the following statements as a representative sample of all such comments submitted:

*'The nervousness associated with being observed while teaching.'*

*'Putting pressure on myself when I shouldn't have. I now know it's a supportive process rather than a testing one.'*

*'Reflecting on my own practice - although it was very beneficial to do so.'*

Conversely, nine NQTs conveyed having had no challenges associated with the process to report and a further eight respondents instead elaborated on Droichead as an enjoyable, manageable, straightforward and beneficial process with a supportive, well-organised and accessible structure.

*'The Droichead process was not challenging and the supportive structures and the way it is organised makes it highly accessible.'*

*'I have not come across anything challenging as my PST members and non-PST members have been very supportive.'*

*'It was a very enjoyable and manageable process. I had a very positive experience.'*

## 5.5 Additional Comments

To conclude section five, NQTs were asked if they had any additional comments that they wished to impart in relation to their Droichead experience, with forty-four NQTs (15%) electing to do so. A diverse range of responses were submitted but it was noted that many of the comments portrayed Droichead in positive terms, describing the process as *'an invaluable experience'*, *'a fantastic means of support for NQTs'*, *'extremely beneficial'* and *'a thoroughly rewarding professional learning experience'*. However, common threads perceived among other responses included cluster meetings, deemed unnecessary and too lengthy in duration; the weekly planning requirement as conflicting with the approach to planning at school level and precluding collaboration with colleagues; additional stress and anxiety experienced; the consistency of Droichead implementation across schools; the length of the process

with one NQT stating that *'it should be a maximum of 60 days'*, a judgement of variation in process duration as *'not fair that there are different time lengths for NQTs to complete Droichead'* with another conveying having to *'complete the Droichead process until the end of the school year, even though I have had no difficulties'*, contributions advocating for process completion prior to the final month of the year; and, a need for further information in relation to the Droichead process itself.

A minority of NQTs reported experiencing challenges working with their PST members and some NQTs working in SET positions would have liked if more specific support in the area of special needs was made available to them. As indicated previously, NQTs valued the opportunity to observe greatly and commented that they would have liked more opportunities to engage in varied observations. Some NQTs also noted that they found the booking system for cluster meeting inconvenient.

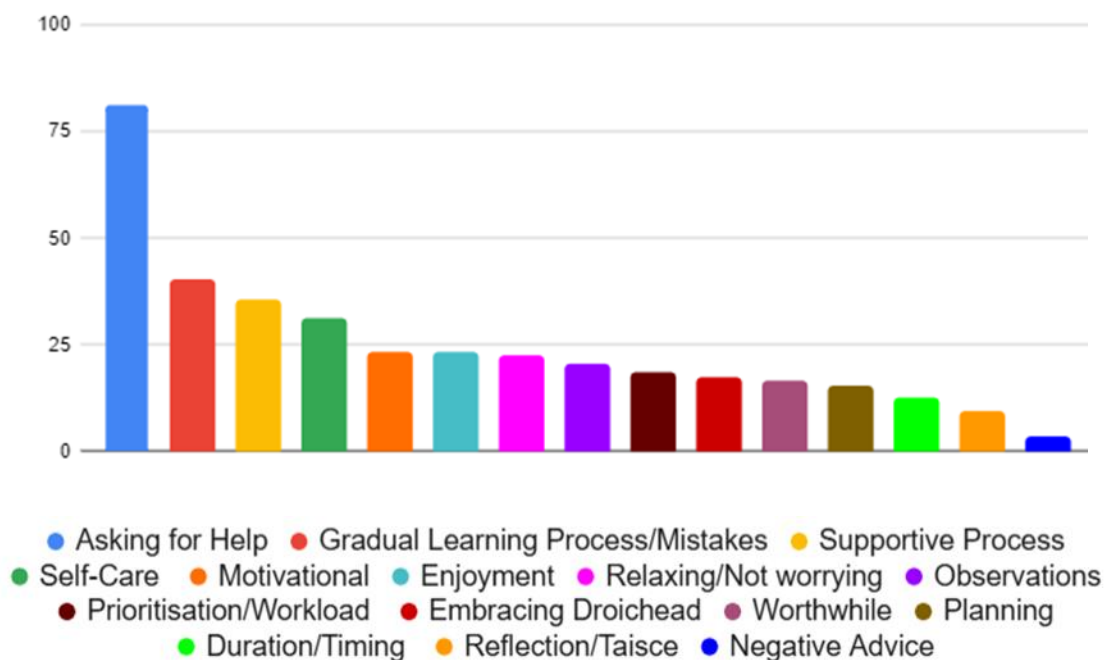
A detailed list of all responses received is listed in Table 38 in the Appendix.

## **Section 6: Words of Wisdom for Future NQTs and PST Members**

### **6.1 Words of Wisdom for Future NQTs**

In the final section of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to proffer their words of wisdom for NQTs who engage in the Droichead process in the future, with the majority of NQTs (93.7%) electing to do so. The insight, guidance, recommendations, perceptions and inspiration shared was diverse in content but positive in nature. In descending order of incidence, these words of wisdom encompassed such themes as seeking help when needed; the gradual learning process involved; the support that will be received; the importance of self-care; statements of reassurance and empowerment; enjoyment to be had; alleviation of stress and worry; observational opportunities as invaluable; criticality of prioritisation and workload management; embracing the Droichead process; the merit to be gained; planning guidance; timing and duration of the process and the value of reflective practice and Taisce. Key themes identified in words of wisdom shared are presented below followed by a sample of responses submitted, which are listed comprehensively in Table 39 in the Appendix.





**Figure 25:** What words of wisdom would you like to share with future NQTs

To inform, guide, advise and inspire NQTs who will engage in the Droichead process in the future, questionnaire respondents inputted words of wisdom such as:

*'Stay on top of what you need to do so that you have more time do what you like to do!'*

*'Only do what you can do. Look after yourself first because you can only do the best job teaching when you are at your best.'*

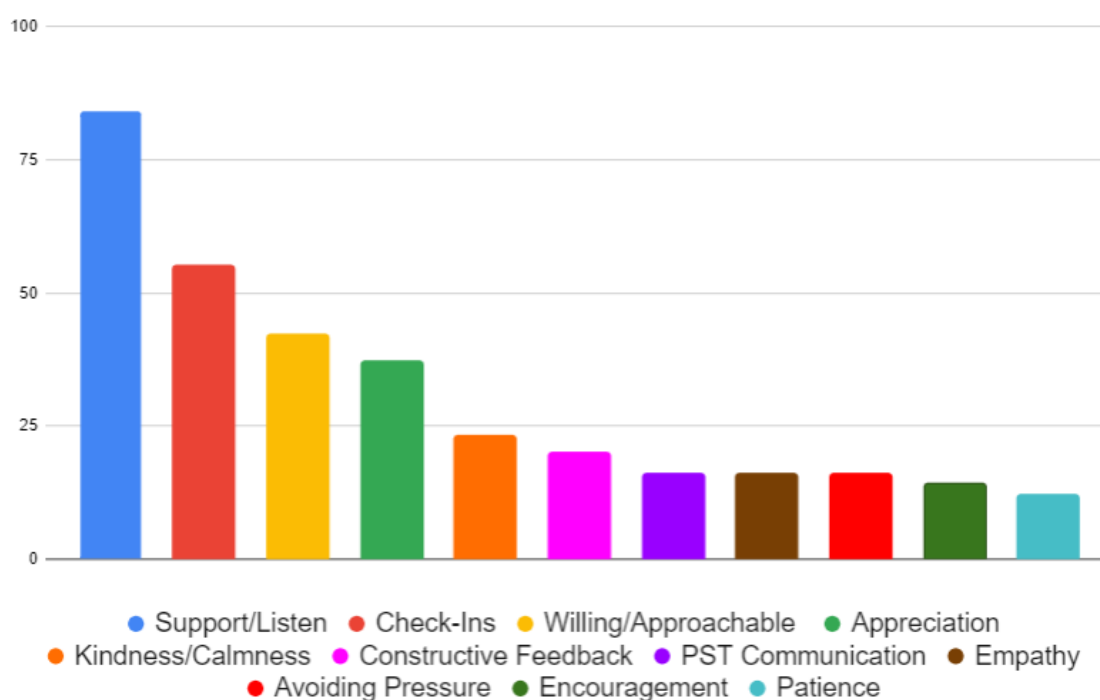
*'Don't sweat the small stuff. Listen to your students. Build relationships. Ask about their football matches, their new pencil cases, their haircuts. Have confidence that your training will look after the rest. And don't beat yourself up - you'll mess up, but as long as you know you have, you're halfway there!'*

*'You are not on placement and the whole experience should be supportive. Take the opportunity to ask all the questions you need to! Choose an area in your teaching that you genuinely want to improve on, don't pick something you are comfortable with. You will benefit more from making mistakes and having support around you to guide you!'*

*'Observe other teachers at every chance-this is the best way to learn tips and tricks and it will more than likely be the last time you will see someone else teaching for you!'*

## 6.2 Words of Wisdom for Future PST Members

The final question invited respondents the opportunity to proffer some words of wisdom to PST members who will support NQTs through the Droichead process in the future and once again, a majority of NQTs (89.6%) availed of that opportunity. Drawing on their own Droichead experience and ordered in accordance with the frequency to which topics were mentioned, advice shared addressed the need to listen, support, help and guide NQTs; the necessity to regularly check in with NQTs; a willing and approachable demeanour where NQTs are made to feel valued, prioritised, respected and central to the process; a kind, gentle, pleasant approach; provision of constructive feedback; the importance of encouragement; an ability to empathise with the NQT; a caution against generating additional pressure and stress; and patience, to afford time and space for mistakes, learning and progress to occur. For a large cohort, words of wisdom took the form of appreciation to their own PST members for the support, advice and guidance received. Common threads identified in words of wisdom offered to future PST members are presented below along with a selective sample of responses submitted, which are listed comprehensively in Table 40 in the Appendix.



**Figure 26:** What words of wisdom would you like to share with PST members

To guide, commend, counsel and inform PST members in their support of future NQTs, questionnaire respondents expressed such words of wisdom as:

*'The support and encouragement were really appreciated. They made me feel so at ease by saying they are constantly learning with teaching too.'*

*'Make sure you listen to the NQT's wishes and needs in order to best support them.'*

*'Thank you for sharing your knowledge with us, you may not think you're sharing much but having the opportunity to observe you in a classroom setting helped me so much with classroom management. Thank you for knocking on the classroom door before and after school to just check everything is ok and if I needed anything.'*

*'Check in with them now and again, they may seem fine on the outside, but inside; they may need a shoulder or a non-judgmental ear to offer advice and compassion.'*

## **Section 7: Summary and Recommendations**

This report compiled data gathered from the NQT Voice Survey of 2023.2024. Of the 2,408 potential NQT respondents who had applied to the Teaching Council to complete their Droichead process during 2023.2024, a total of 288 responded. While this number of responses was lower than hoped, there was a 50% increase in responses compared to the previous academic year, thus creating a larger sample size and greater abundance of data to collate, analyse and from which to draw conclusions.

NQTs engaging in the Droichead process did so in a variety of settings, with the majority of respondents working in English-medium schools (90.6%), a larger proportion teaching in non-DEIS schools (61.1%) than in those classified as having DEIS status and just 10.4% of NQT respondents employed in special school contexts.

The largest cohort (56.6%) taught in single-grade classes in mainstream schools, with a further 11.8% of respondents reporting having engaged in the process while teaching in a multi-grade situation. A significant group (20.8%) served in SET positions in mainstream schools and a further 8.7% were working in either special classes in mainstream schools or employed in special school settings. Furthermore, the small cohort of just 2.1% of NQTs who were employed in the newly-permitted categories of supply panels or principal release posts merits mention as this exceptional measure will prevail for the 2024.2025 academic year.

Almost 71% of respondents had completed their Droichead process prior to submitting the NQT Voice Survey 2023.2024 i.e. between 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

In relation to the duration of the Droichead process, the largest cohort confirmed engagement in the process across the three-term duration of the academic year (48.3%). 8% of respondents reported completing their Droichead process within one school term only which amounts to a very brief induction period and is an absolute minimum in terms of fulfilment of all requisite criteria to successfully complete the process. 90.3% of NQTs recorded that they had utilised a Droichead Outline Plan to create and record a timeline of their induction activities, as stipulated in *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* (Teaching Council, 2017, p.6) which requires that ‘a Droichead outline plan is created by the PST, in consultation with the NQT’. 19.8% of those who had employed such a plan cited that their PST had created it independently of any NQT input and 3.1% conveying that they had developed the plan themselves. It is worth noting an increase of 8%, from 61% in June 2023 to 69% in June 2024, of NQTs who reported having had direct input into the co-development of their Droichead Outline Plan.

Communication regarding the conduct of quarterly reviews as a crucial element of the Droichead process and timeline has been successful with 92% of questionnaire respondents having reported engagement in quarterly review meetings with their PST.

When asked to identify the most beneficial aspect of their Droichead induction process, observations surpassed all other responses, with 60% of respondents opting to elect observations as the primary benefit of the process, pronouncing both observations of experienced colleagues and the experience of being observed as enlightening, useful, validating, empowering, encouraging, inspiring, constructive and supportive.

The majority of NQTs observed experienced colleagues twice and were themselves observed by PST members on two occasions, as is the minimum recommendation. Almost all NQTs (95.5%) who responded to the survey had collaborated with their PST members at the pre-observation stage to identify a topic or area of need upon which to focus during said observations, while Droichead Induction templates were utilised by the vast majority of respondents both when observing an experienced teacher (92%) and when completing a post-observation action plan following observation by a PST member (92.7%). Differentiation/including all learners, classroom management and behaviour management were the three most popular areas focused upon during



observations, with the very same topics, along with that of assessment, ranking highest among topics on which professional conversations (excluding those that occurred as part of the three-stage observational process) with experienced colleagues were based. Curiously, the topic of teacher professionalism and wellbeing was cited as the area least explored during such professional conversations.

The diverse range of induction activities in which NQTs engaged within their school contexts is notable, indicating the commendable efforts being made at school level to organise and offer not alone substantial but tailored support to NQTs. 95.1% affirmed induction activities as addressing their emerging needs either partially or fully. NQTs largely acknowledged the value and criticality of preparation for teaching and learning but commented on the requirement to engage in short-term planning on a weekly basis, specifically identifying it as the most challenging aspect of their Droichead process in 36% of responses. 61% designated the broader category of planning and paperwork as their greatest challenge during Droichead and many comments described the weekly planning requirement as time-consuming and onerous. Time spent weekly on preparation for teaching and learning correlated with comments made, with 40% devoting between four and six hours, 14% a timescale of between seven and eight hours and almost 12% dedicating nine hours or more to preparatory activities.

Over two-thirds of NQTs (67.4%) deemed cluster meetings to be helpful with attendance at cluster meetings ranking fifth in the aspects of Droichead considered as most beneficial by respondents in their submissions and the opportunity to interact with fellow NQTs, to air challenges, share experiences, glean ideas, gather advice and give and receive support in the context of cluster meetings cited as particularly valued.

A number of NQTs called for the organisation and delivery of cluster meetings specific to those teaching in SET roles, special classes and in special schools.

Regarding the logistical aspects of cluster meetings, the online format remains the more popular at just above 50%. However, 40% of respondents articulated a preference for a choice between either online delivery or attendance at their local Education Support Centre, indicating that for the Droichead Induction Division, delivering cluster meetings in both formats appears optimal at present. Over 70% cited their professional learning activity as collaboratively chosen between themselves and

their PST, implying that 30% made that decision independently. Most NQTs (81.3%) judged their professional learning activity as meeting an emerging professional need.

Portfolio-based learning in the form of Taisce enabled many NQTs to engage in honest and open reflections on their teaching and learning. Over 97% of NQTs had maintained a Taisce in a diverse range of formats, in accordance with individual preference and learning style as outlined in Droichead policy. A substantial 91.7% of respondents declared their engagement in reflective practice beneficial to their daily professional practice in some way. The primary areas of concern noted by NQTs in descending order of identification included differentiation/including all learners, classroom management, supporting students with SEN, assessment, completion of the Droichead process, wellbeing and work-life balance, preparation for teaching and learning and supporting pupils with EAL. Revision of this particular question to garner greater precision and detail in future research efforts and engender more conclusive extrapolation is advised.

The majority of NQTs reported feeling well-supported during their Droichead process and had accessed support from a variety of sources, including from PST members, other colleagues, school management, the Droichead Induction Division, the Teaching Council, fellow NQTs and the INTO. PST support was highly acclaimed and sincerely appreciated by the majority of respondents. NQTs are central to the Droichead process and their needs should first and foremost be identified, prioritised and supported throughout their induction period, an important message worthy of reiteration to all involved in facilitation of the Droichead process to future NQT cohorts.

Accessing online support from [www.teacherinduction.ie](http://www.teacherinduction.ie), the website formerly operated by the NIPT, and/or [www.oide.ie/droichead](http://www.oide.ie/droichead), the recently launched website of the Droichead Induction Division on at least one occasion was confirmed by almost 97% of NQTs.

As befits the Primary NQT Voice Survey Report, the final words are left to the NQT voice itself to not alone advise, inspire and embolden those who will serve as PST members in the future...

*'You have a huge impact on how NQTs view their first months in the profession. Be honest, be patient and show them the joy of this profession! You have a wealth of*



*knowledge. Share your wisdom and tailor your support to help NQTs blossom. Thanks for volunteering to help the next generation of teachers!*

...but also to guide, encourage and empower the NQTs of tomorrow.

*'Every teacher was in your shoes at one point so it's ok to feel lost. Nobody knows everything in the beginning. Every day is a new learning and teaching day. Make the most of all the support you have and do not be afraid to ask for help! Your PST members are amazing - they are there to support and guide you along the way. They just want to help you become the best teacher you can be. But remember to look after yourself too. You cannot pour from an empty cup! This is YOUR learning journey-Droichead is what you make of it so throw yourself in completely, embrace the learning and have fun with your very first class. You have got this!'*



## **References**

Teaching Council (2017) *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework*. <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2023/08/droichead-the-integrated-professional-induction-policy.pdf> (Accessed 30th June 2024)





## Appendix: NQT Voice Questionnaire Responses

### Section 1: Droichead Setting and Timeline

#### Q.1

**Table 1:** School Category

School Category	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
English-medium school	261	90.6%
Gaelscoileanna/Scoileanna sa Ghaeltacht	27	9.4%

#### Q.2

**Table 2:** Status of School: DEIS or Non-DEIS School

DEIS Status	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
DEIS	112	38.9%
Non-DEIS	176	61.1%

#### Q.3

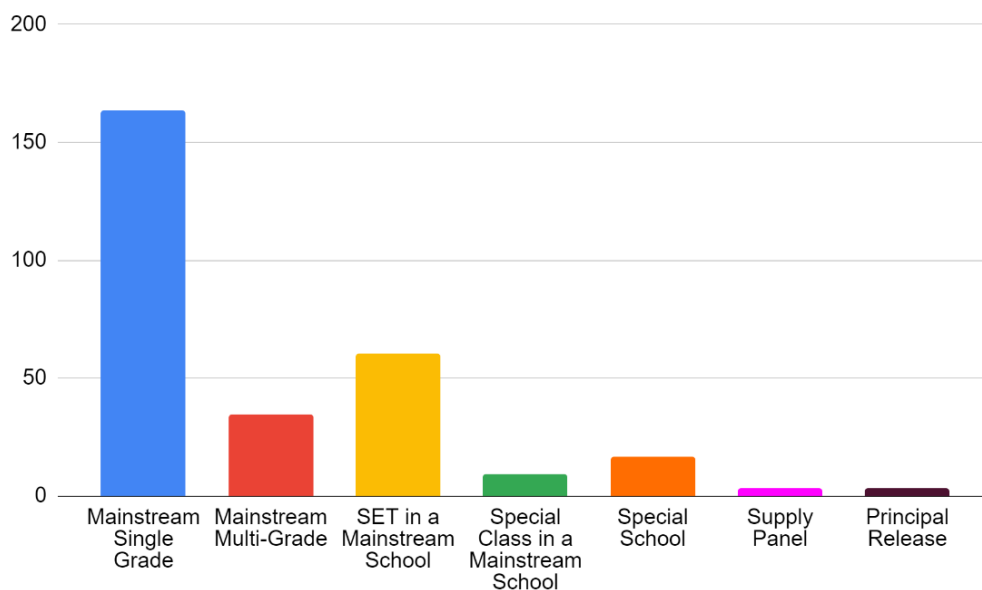
**Table 3:** Did you engage in your Droichead process in a special school?

Special School Status	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
Special School	30	10.4%
Non-Special School	258	89.6%

#### Q.4

**Table 4:** In which class setting did your Droichead process take place?

Class Setting	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Mainstream: Single Grade	163	56.6%
Mainstream: Multi-grade	34	20.8%
SET in a Mainstream School	60	11.8%
Special Class in a Mainstream School	9	3.1%
Special School	16	5.6%
Supply Panel	3	1.05%
Principal Release Post	3	1.05%



**Figure 1:** In which class setting did your Droichead process take place?

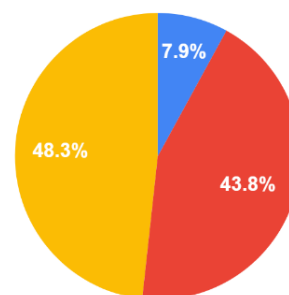
**Q.5**

**Table 5:** Have you completed your Droichead process?

Completion of Droichead Process	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	204	70.8%
No	84	29.2%

**Q.6**

- One term
- Two terms
- Three terms



**Figure 2:** What was/is the duration of your Droichead process?

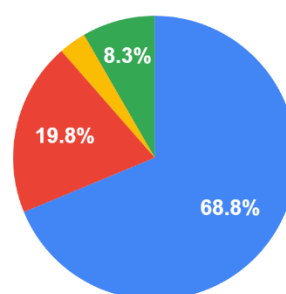
### Q.7

**Table 6:** Did you have a Droichead Outline Plan?

Droichead Outline Plan	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	260	90.3%
No	28	9.7%

### Q.8

- It was devised in collaboration with my PST
- My PST devised the plan
- I devised it myself
- Not applicable as I did not have a Droichead Outline Plan



**Figure 3:** Who devised your Droichead Outline Plan?

### Q.9

**Table 7:** Did you have quarterly reviews/meetings with your PST where the Droichead process was discussed with you?

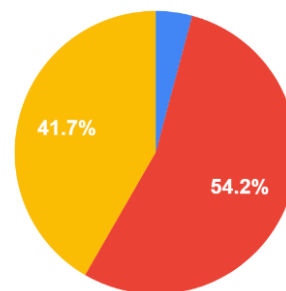
Quarterly Review Meetings	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	264	91.7%
No	24	8.3%

### Q.10

**Table 8:** How many PST members supported you during your Droichead process?

Number of PST who supported NQT during Droichead process	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
One PST member	12	4.2%
Two PST members	156	54.2%
Three or more PST members	120	41.6%

- One PST member
- Two PST members
- Three or more PST members

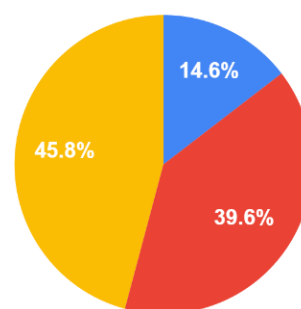


**Figure 4:** How many PST members supported you during your Droichead process?

## **Section 2: Strand A**

### **Q.11**

- My PST
- Other experienced teachers
- My PST and other experienced teachers



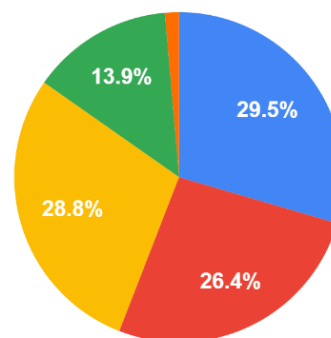
**Figure 5:** As part of your Droichead process who did you observe?

### **Q.12**

**Table 9:** How many times did you observe a member of your PST during your Droichead process?

Observation of a PST member	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Zero	85	29.5%
Once	76	26.4%
Twice	83	28.8%
Three-four times	40	13.9%
Five times or more	4	1.4%

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3-4
- 5 or more times



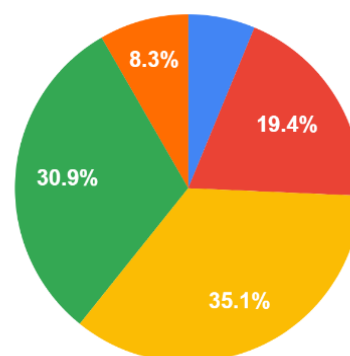
**Figure 6:** How many times did you observe a member of your PST during your Droichead process?

**Q.13**

**Table 10:** How many times did you observe another teacher (not PST members) during your Droichead process?

Observation of another teacher (non-PST member)	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Zero	18	6.3%
Once	56	19.4%
Twice	101	35.1%
Three-four times	89	30.9%
Five times or more	24	8.3%

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3-4
- 5 or more times



**Figure 7:** How many times did you observe another teacher during your Droichead process?

#### Q.14

**Table 11:** How many times were you observed by a member of your PST?

Observation by a PST member	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Zero	2	0.7%
Once	6	2.1%
Twice	186	64.6%
Three-four times	85	29.5%
Five times or more	9	3.1%

#### Q.15

**Table 12:** As part of the process, did you engage in pre-observation and post-observation discussions?

Pre-Observation Discussion	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	270	93.8%
No	18	6.2%
Post-Observation Discussion	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	284	98.6%
No	4	1.4%

#### Q.16

**Table 13:** Did you use an observation template when observing an experienced teacher and/or a post-observation record (action plan)?

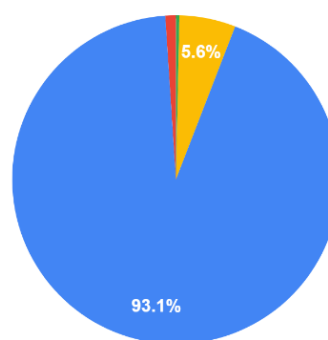
Observation Template	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	265	92%
No	23	8%
Post-Observation Record	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	267	92.7%
No	21	7.3%

**Q.17**

**Table 14:** Did you engage in the three-stage approach to observation?

Engagement in 3-Stage Approach to Observation	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Pre-Observation stage only	1	0.3%
Post-Observation stage only	16	5.6%
Both of the Above	268	93.1%
Neither of the Above	3	1%

- Only Pre-Observation Discussion
- Only Post-Observation Discussion
- Both of the above
- Neither of the above



**Figure 8:** Did you engage in the three-stage approach to observation?

**Q.18**

**Table 15:** Did you identify a focus/topic/area of need for your observations in collaboration with your PST?

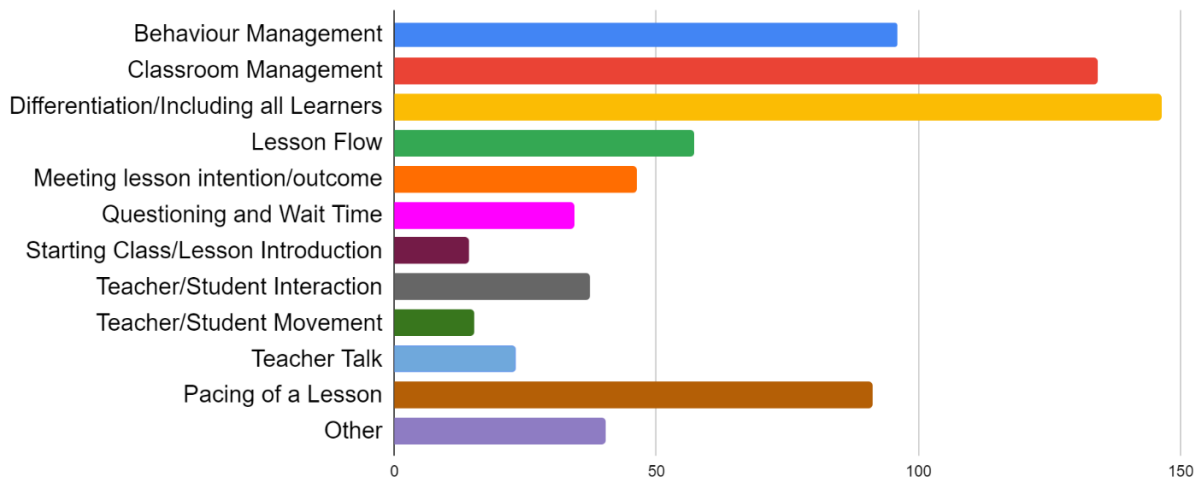
Droichead Outline Plan	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	275	95.5%
No	13	4.5%

## Q.19

**Table 16:** If a focus for your observations was identified, what was it?

Focus for Observations (Some multiple responses were submitted)	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents	Further Insights
Differentiation/Including all Learners	146	19%	
Classroom Management	134	46.5%	
Behaviour Management	96	50.6%	
Timing/Pacing of a Lesson	91	31.6%	
Lesson Flow	57	19.8%	
Meeting Lesson Intention/ Lesson Outcome	46	15.9%	
Teacher/Student Interaction	37	12.8%	
Questioning and Wait Time	34	11.8%	
Teacher Talk	23	7.9%	
Teacher/Student Movement	15	5.2%	
Class/Lesson Introduction	14	4.8%	
Other	40	13.8%	Including other topics such as WALT/WILF (3), pitching of content (3), lesson transitions (3), pupil progression (1), assessment (5), múineadh na Gaeilge (4), station teaching (1), various curricular areas (6), language consistency (1), independent learning (2), new primary maths curriculum (1), active learning (1), group-work (1), apt learning activities (1), literacy (4), range of teaching strategies (2), use, choice and suitability of resources (1).





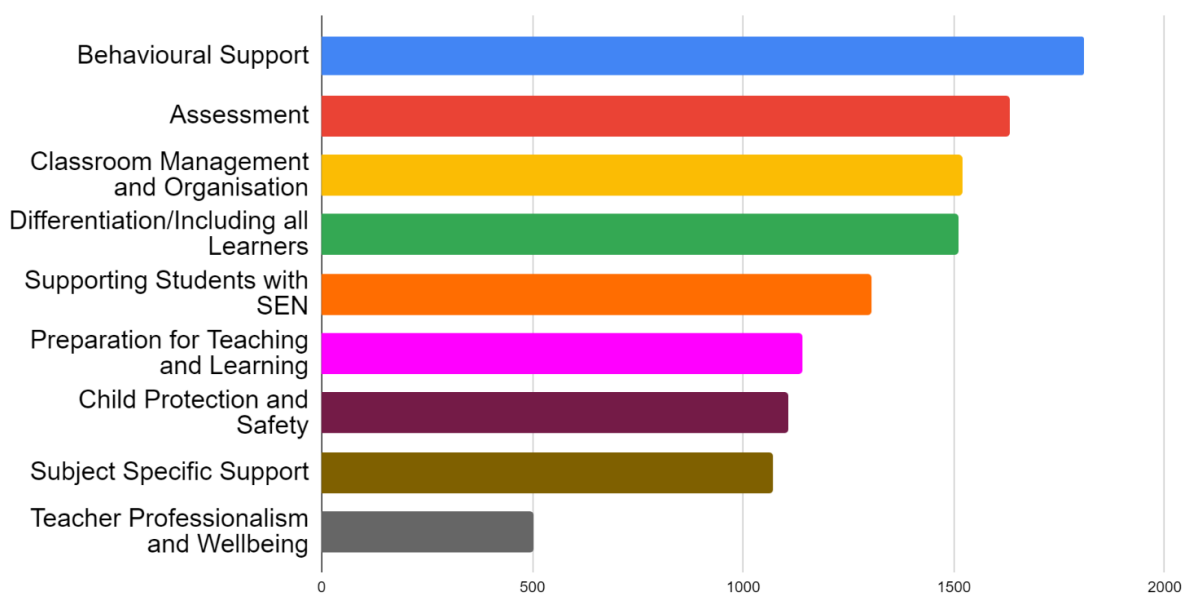
**Figure 9:** If a focus for your observations was identified, what was it?

**Q.20**

**Table 17:** Outside of the observation process, did you engage in other professional conversations?

Other Professional Conversations	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	272	94.4%
No	16	5.6%

**Q.21**



**Figure 10:** What topics were discussed during professional conversations?

**Q.22**

**Table 18:** Other than observations, what in-school induction activities did you engage in?

Induction Activities	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Further Insights/Notes
<b>PST Meetings</b>	74	25.7%	PST meetings were held on both a formal and informal basis. Regular meetings were specifically indicated by 8 NQTs.
<b>Non-Specific Courses/Training</b>	32	11.1%	Non-specific courses/training events included face-to-face workshops, online webinars (10) and guest speakers delivering in-school training (2).
<b>Specific Courses/ Training</b>	58	20.1%	Based on such topics as Maths (23), Classroom Management/Organisation (5), Literacy Lift-Off (4), Restorative Practice (3), Planning and Preparation (2), Multi-Grade Teaching (2), Child Protection and Safety (2), Emotional Regulation (2), Assessment (2), P.E. (2), RSE (2) and a range of other areas also.
<b>Principal/ School Support</b>	117	40.6%	Including professional conversations and informal discussions (36), collaborative planning and preparation (19), introduction to the school/fellow NQTs/ welcome pack (17), Croke Park hours (16), classroom management and organisation (8), digital technologies (7), standardised testing (7), team-teaching (5), co-teaching (4), policy guidance (11), sacramental preparation (4), subject-specific support (6), station teaching (3), guided reading (3), wellbeing (2) and a myriad of other supports reported also.
<b>Special Education Support/Training</b>	32	11.1%	Including support from SET colleagues (15), planning and preparation for SET (8), ASD (4), General SEN training courses (3), Maths Recovery (3), school visits, (3), Talkboost (2), NCSE Training (2), Reading Recovery (1), Dyslexia Screening (1) and Severe and Profound GLD (1).
<b>School Events</b>	14	4.9%	Including initiatives such as Seachtain na Gaeilge (2), Active Schools (2), Amber Flag/wellbeing initiatives (2), Christmas

			preparations (1) and Incredible Edibles (1).
Extra-Curricular Activities	19	6.6%	Sport/G.A.A. (6), outings (5), homework club (1), choir (1) and yoga (1) specified.
Support with Parental Interaction	13	4.5%	Support in advance of Parent-Teacher meetings (9), with report writing (3) and a parental presentation (1) also indicated.
Other Aspects of Droichead	5	1.7%	Droichead-related supports included guidance on reflection (3) and Taisce (2).
Whole-Staff Meetings	19	6.6%	Whole-Staff meetings featured highly as an induction activity specified by NQTs.
None	19	6.6%	Among those who reported an absence of in-school induction activities, 16 NQTs recorded no activities, while 3 NQTs reported no knowledge of such activities.

### Q.23

**Table 19:** Did you and/or your PST record your emerging needs and induction activities in a dedicated document?

Use of Droichead Standards and Induction Plan document	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	228	79.2%
No	60	20.8%

### Q.24

**Table 20:** Did the induction activities support your individual needs as an NQT?

Individual Needs as an NQT met by Induction Activities	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	235	81.6%
No	14	4.9%
Somewhat	39	13.5%

**Q.25**

**Table 21:** Any further comments regarding the induction activities you engaged in?

Further Comments regarding Induction Activities	
Category	Number of Responses (Total: 21)
Useful/Helpful	7
Observation of Experienced Teachers	3
PST (Positive)	3
Support, advice and encouragement	2
PST (Negative)	2
CPD Courses/Webinars	2
Work-Life Balance/Wellbeing	1
Music/Religious Events	1

**Q.26**



**Figure 11:** How long did you spend weekly on preparation for teaching and learning?

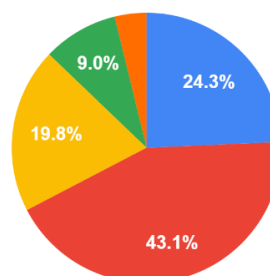
## Section 3: Strand B

### Q.27

**Table 22:** What is your overall evaluation of the cluster meetings?

Evaluation of cluster meetings	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Very helpful	70	24.3%
Helpful	124	43.1%
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	57	19.8%
Unhelpful	26	9%
Very unhelpful	11	3.8%

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Unhelpful
- Very unhelpful



**Figure 12:** What is your overall evaluation of the cluster meetings?

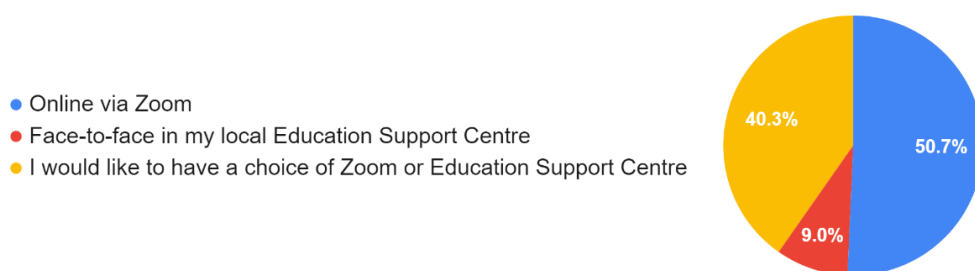
### Q.28

**Table 23:** What topics would be useful to address at cluster meetings in the future?

Topics to address at cluster meetings in the future			
*Some respondents submitted multiple responses			
Category	No. of Respondents	Category	No. of Respondents
Preparation and Planning	62	Cluster meetings helpful/relevant	17
Wellbeing including work-life balance, stress management, burnout, mental health, mindfulness and supports	39	Aspects of Employment including applications, interview process and skills, panels, pay and contracts	11
Classroom Management/Organisation	33	Time Management/Prioritisation	8
Parental Interaction/Parent Teacher Meetings/Discussing difficult issues	31	Transitions: student teacher to NQT	8
		Report Writing	8
Teaching Methodologies/Resources/ Practical and subject-specific ideas	26	Cluster meetings unhelpful, scripted, lectures, prior knowledge of content	7
Behaviour Management/Social and	25	Cluster meetings specific to role	5

Emotional support		and/or different subject areas	
Special Educational Needs including special class and special school contexts, planning specific to SET, Assessment of Need, continuum of support, dyslexia and EAL support	25	Taisce and Reflection	5
		Interaction with fellow NQTs	4
		NQT Choice of Topics/Different Cluster Meetings to choose from	3
Differentiation/Including all Learners/ Universal Design for Learning	24	NQT Question Time: in-person questions, open Q&A sessions	3
None/Not Applicable/Unsure	24	Working with SNAs	3
Droichead Process including school obligations, role of PST, complaints procedure, induction activity options, records, Form D and post-Droichead.	22	CPD	2
		Teacher Professionalism	2
		Staff/-Relations/Approaching colleagues for help and advice	2
Assessment/Record-Keeping/ Standardised Testing	22	Other Topics i.e. Homework; Role of the Principal, Child Protection	3 (1 of each)

**Q.29**



**Figure 13:** What is your preference for engaging in cluster meetings?

**Q.30**

**Table 24:** Apart from cluster meetings, what other professional learning activity or activities did you engage in?

Category of Additional Professional Learning Activity	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Further Insights/Notes <small>*Some respondents attended multiple APLAs</small>
Online CPD events	87	30.2%	Combined specific and non-specific professional learning events.
Non-Specific Courses	67	23.3%	Including 44 recorded as online courses and 12 identified as non-specific Oide/NIPT CPD courses.
Numeracy/Maths/STEM	53	18.4%	Including Primary Maths Curriculum Inservice Day (15), IZAK (3), Maths Recovery (3), STEM (3), Mata sa Rang (3), Digital Technologies in Numeracy (1), Inclusive Maths (1), Maths4All (1), Playful Numeracy (1).

<b>Special Education</b>	41	14.2%	ASD/Autism (11), SET Planning (8), Preparation for SET (6), Severe and Profound GLD (2), Dyslexia (3), EAL (2), NCSE (2), TD SNAP (1), Lámh (1), Children's Disability Network Team Role (1), NEPS (1), PECS (1), PICA (1), Dyspraxia (1), AAC (1), Talk Boost training (1), Sign Language (1) and Gross and Fine Motor Skills (1).
<b>Oide/NIPT CPD courses</b>	26	9%	Courses specifically identified as Oide/NIPT professional learning events includes both specific and non-specific courses/webinars.
<b>Literacy/Primary Language Curriculum</b>	25	8.7%	Including Phonics (4), Accelerated Reader Programme (1), UFLI (1), Heggerty Phonemic Awareness (2), Critical Literacy (1), Comprehension (1), Decodable Readers (1), Heart words (1) Poetry (1), Write to Read (1) and Struggling Spellers (1).
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	24	8.3%	Including Restorative Practice (4), MindUP (1), RSE (2), Mindfulness (2), First Aid (3), Bereavement (3), Mental Health (1), Vicarious Trauma Training (1), Stress (1), Outdoor Classroom (1).
<b>Local Education Support Centre CPD events</b>	20	6.9%	Specified attendance at courses in local Education Support Centres-both specific and non-specific CPD.
<b>Classroom Management and Organisation</b>	18	6.3%	
<b>Planning and Preparation</b>	13	4.5%	
<b>Behaviour Management</b>	11	3.5%	Including Emotional Coaching (3), Incredible Years Training Programme (2), Managing Challenging Behaviour (2), Conflict Resolution (1), Anti-Bullying (1) and Helping Hands (1).
<b>Conference/Congress</b>	10	3.5%	Féilte (6), non-specified conferences (3) and INTO Congress (1) attended.
<b>Gaeilge</b>	8	2.7%	Including Múineadh na Gaeilge sa Bhunscoil (3), Gaeilge Bheo (1), Gaeilge Neamhfhoirmiúil (1) agus Corpoideachas trí Ghaeilge (1).
<b>Assessment</b>	6	2.1%	
<b>Differentiation/UDL</b>	5	1.7%	Universal Design for Learning (2)
<b>Other</b>	23	8%	Other CPD courses listed included Digital Technologies (4), Physical Education (4), Multi-grade Teaching



			(3), Handwriting (1), Learn Together (1), Anti-Racism (1), Modern Foreign Languages (1), Drama (1), Sacramental Preparation (1), Peer Evaluation (1), Aistear (1), Flipped Classroom (1), Questioning (1), Reflection (1) and Research (1).
No APLA at time of questionnaire completion	6	2.1%	

### Q.31



**Figure 14:** Did you decide on your professional learning activity in collaboration with your PST?

### Q.32

**Table 25:** Did your professional learning activity address one of your emerging needs?

Emerging Need met by Additional Professional Learning Activity	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	234	81.3%
No	12	4.2%
Somewhat	42	14.5%





**Figure 15:** Did your professional learning activity address one of your emerging needs?

**Q.33**

**Table 26:** Any further comments regarding your professional learning activity?

Further Comment Regarding Additional Professional Learning Activity			
*72 responses of which 28 submitted comments			
Category	No. of Respondents	Category	No. of Respondents
No/None/Not Applicable	48	Advice from PST/Principal	1
Helpful/Beneficial/Useful/Insightful	13	Differentiation	1
Cluster Meetings Unhelpful	4	Preference for Face-to-Face	1
Behaviour/Classroom Management	3	Opportunity to learn from experienced professionals	1
Literacy/Numeracy	2		
Observations/Contradictory Feedback	1	Féilte	1

- It's a huge opportunity to learn from other teaching professionals.
- It was a very beneficial course and gave me the confidence to teach RSE in the classroom.
- I will continue to attend CPD webinars as they are very useful.
- Cluster meetings were unhelpful.
- Really helpful as I got lots of tips and useful resources.
- I think a face-to-face course would have been more useful. I probably need to do some role play (as much as I would be uncomfortable doing it).
- Very helpful, with some key learnings to take forward.
- It was useful to identify strategies for teaching multiple needs across multiple curricula.
- Very helpful and useful in my setting.
- My PST advised me to do the planning ones, IEP and Maths Recovery.
- I found it very beneficial as an NQT.
- I enjoyed it. It was very helpful for planning.
- I'd highly recommend becoming familiar with Accelerated Reader and Mata sa Rang.
- Cluster meetings should only be done once and PST recommend an NQT do more.
- It was thoroughly beneficial and worthwhile.
- I found the cluster meetings a bit vague and information that I knew already. They should



focus more on where to find good sites for lesson plans such as Topmarks and Scoilnet. I am in a special school where concrete objects are needed in the room.

- The course I completed on classroom and behaviour management was useful in learning some new strategies which I adopted in the classroom.
- Cluster meetings were a complete waste of time-every NQT I discussed this with agreed that we learned nothing and it took away from our preparation time for class the next day.
- Féilte - it was very good and highly engaging.
- My professional learning activity made me realise how much there is to know about literacy and how much more I need to learn about it.
- I was observed by three different people but the feedback from previous observations was not read or reviewed. Although I was addressing improvements and implementing the feedback, it was not taken into consideration in the next observation. This meant the feedback was sometimes contradictory.

## **Section 4: Reflections and Taisce**

### **Q.34**

**Table 27:** Did you maintain a Taisce?

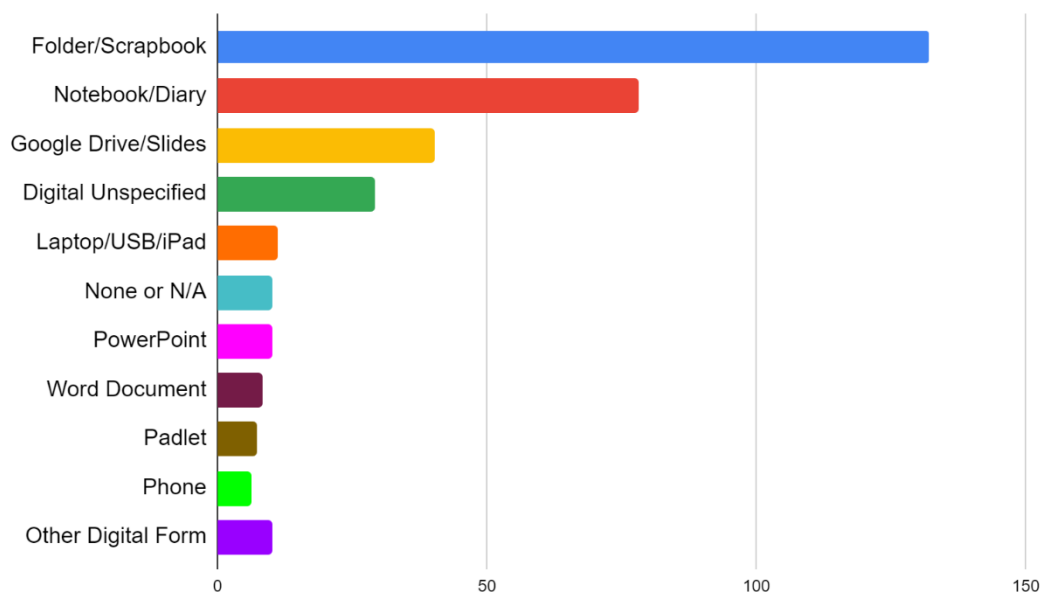
<b>Taisce</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Yes</b>	280	97.2%
<b>No</b>	8	2.8%

### **Q.35**

**Table 28:** How/where did you record your Taisce e.g. in a notebook, blog etc.?

<b>Format of Taisce</b>					
*35 respondents reported recording their Taisce using multiple digital approaches, multiple hard copy formats or both.					
<b>Category</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>		
<b>Hard Copy format (total)</b>	<b>210</b>	Padlet	7		
Folder/Binder/Scrapbook	132	Phone	6		
Notebook/Diary	78	<b>Other Digital Forms</b> i.e.	<b>10</b>		
<b>Digital format (total)</b>	<b>121</b>			Blog	3
Google Drive/Sheets	40			Microsoft OneDrive	2

Digital Folder/Portfolio Unspecified	29	Canva	2
Laptop/USB/iPad	11	Instagram	2
Microsoft PowerPoint	10	Symbaloo	1
Did not have a Taisce	10	<b>Multiple Formats*</b>	<b>35</b>
Microsoft Word Document	8	<b>Digital and Hard Copy*</b>	<b>25</b>



**Figure 16:** How/where did you record your Taisce e.g. in a notebook, blog etc.?

### Q.36

**Table 29:** Did you choose to share elements of your Taisce with your PST?

Chose to share elements of Taisce with PST	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	181	62.8%
No	107	37.2%



**Figure 17:** Did you choose to share elements of your Taisce with your PST?

**Q.37**

**Table 30:** Do reflections from your Taisce benefit your professional practice?

Taisce reflections and benefit to professional practice	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	189	65.6%
No	24	26.1%
Somewhat	75	8.3%



**Figure 18:** Do reflections from your Taisce benefit your professional practice?

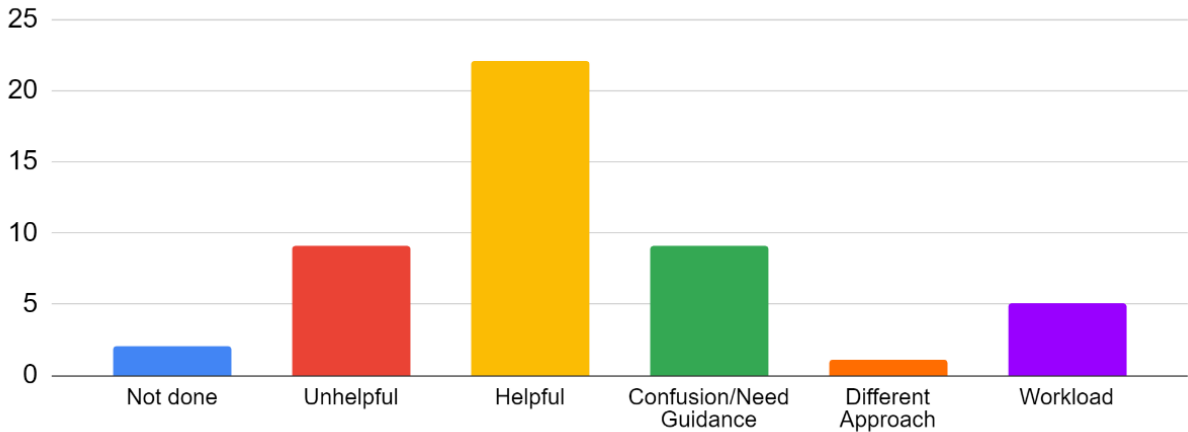
### Q.38

**Table 31:** Do you have any further comments regarding your Taisce?

Further Comments regarding Taisce
Sample of Common Responses from NQTs in relation to Taisce *44 respondents submitted additional comments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I found it helped to look back and see the progress throughout the year. It helped me to reflect and to look at how far I had come since the start of my Droichead journey.</li><li>• There are elements of Taisce that I will maintain after Droichead.</li><li>• It's a great resource and it will be good to look back on my reflections in the future.</li><li>• I don't feel it is beneficial as I do not think I will ever look back at it. I think the learning experiences are enough without having the additional need to record it. We already have enough work and challenges in our first year as NQTs.</li><li>• Nobody did it.</li><li>• It isn't particularly helpful and requires time that you don't have. It felt like an extra task to have to complete.</li><li>• I think the way Taisce is framed encourages students to think of it as a one-off requirement for Droichead. While the idea of Taisce being open-ended is accessible, a more structured approach to developing reflective practice habits would be better, even if it's as simple as building the habit of reflecting each day/week what your high and low points were.</li><li>• Very helpful to have this while doing Droichead.</li><li>• As we have to do reflections on our school planning in general, I found myself repeating myself in Taisce and did not find it very beneficial as I was doing the work twice.</li><li>• It was confusing in terms of what exactly was required. More guidance would be helpful.</li><li>• I really enjoy looking back at all the of the learning that took place and reflecting on the process. I hope to continue it for the rest of my NQT year.</li><li>• I don't think it is necessary and it is a huge waste of time. NQTs already have enough to be doing regarding paperwork and it is a HUGE change from college, therefore Taisce was an additional pressure to complete which was completely unnecessary.</li><li>• I was constantly reflecting during my weekly reflections so it felt like I was doubling up with Taisce.</li></ul>

- Taisce mainly contains highly critical, vague outcomes and statements of one PST member. Do not find these specific enough to be helpful.
- It was nice to see an overview of engaging and useful resources/activities from the year.
- I was really proud of how much I engaged with it and my PST shared it with my principal as it was good work. It was an interesting and rewarding addition to the teaching process.
- I think it would be beneficial to see samples of Taisce work.
- I think there was some miscommunication about the purpose of the Taisce, at my last PST meeting the PST thought that my Taisce was primarily about resources I would carry forward, whereas I saw it more as a record of things I had done. Much of the material was applicable to both, but it seemed unclear.
- Fortnightly/monthly reflections would be more beneficial, rather than weekly. I found it useful to reflect when needed. However, I didn't feel it was meaningful every week.
- It was useful to have all documents and resources in one place that I could access wherever I was.
- Taisce was difficult to engage with as there was already such a high volume of paperwork.
- We were told keeping a Taisce was optional.
- More guidance as to the layout of Taisce would be beneficial because the open-ended nature of it made it difficult to determine what should or should not be included.
- Great bank of resources and any learnings to take from the Droichead process that will inform and help future teaching.
- Examples of documents from other NQTs would have been useful in the beginning to understand how it should be recorded.
- It is very beneficial and insightful to keep track of your professional progress.
- Ensuring that NQTs have freedom on how they complete Taisce would be really helpful.
- This is something I have maintained and I find very helpful.
- My PST and I had different ideas about my Taisce.
- For my Taisce I used Google Docs and printed it to be shared with my PST as instructed by my school. I was informed I had to have a printed folder for my Taisce. I think I would have preferred a handwritten journal but this was not given as an option by my school.





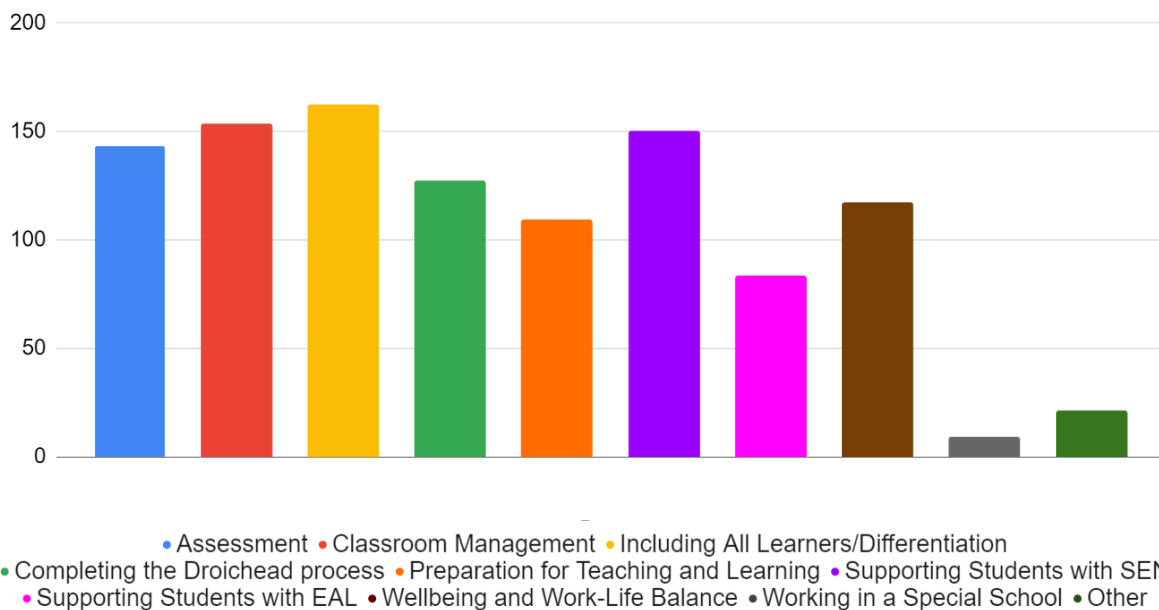
**Figure 19:** Any further comments regarding your Taisce?

## **Section 5: NQT Concerns and Supports**

### **Q.39**

**Table 32:** What were your main concerns during your first year of teaching?

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Including all Learners/Differentiation	162	56.3%
Classroom Management	153	53.1%
Supporting Students with SEN	150	52.1%
Assessment	143	49.6%
Completing the Droichead Process	127	44.1%
Wellbeing and Work-Life Balance	117	40.6%
Preparation for Teaching and Learning	109	37.8%
Supporting Students with EAL	83	28.8%
Working in a Special School	9	3.1%
Other Areas of Concern i.e. parental interaction (7), the learning curve/managing the unknown (4), volume of paperwork (3), teaching in a special class (2), dealing with behavioural issues (1), managing curricular change (1), difficult staff relations (1), SNA challenges (1) and the pressure to cover all curricular content (1)	21	7.3%



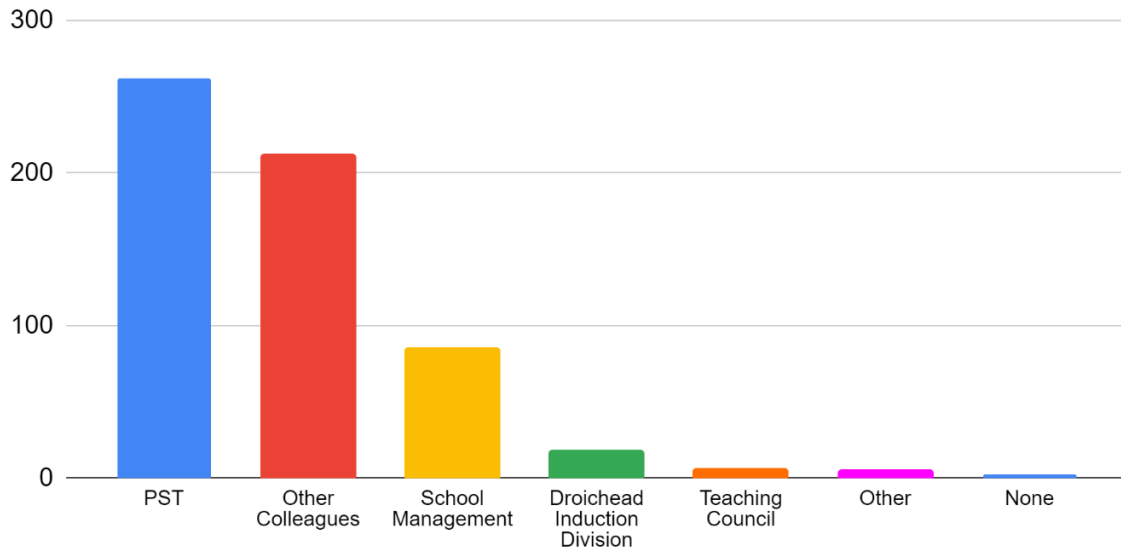
**Figure 20:** What were your main concerns during your first year of teaching?

#### Q.40

**Table 33:** If you had an issue or concern during your Droichead process, from which of the following did you seek support?

Support during Droichead process	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
PST	262	90.9%
Other Colleagues	212	73.6%
School Management	85	29.5%
Droichead Induction Division	18	6.3%
The Teaching Council	6	2.1%
Other (including INTO and fellow NQTs)	5	1.7%
None	2	0.7%





**Figure 21:** If you had an issue or concern during your Droichead process, from which of the following did you seek support?

**Q.41**



**Figure 22:** Did your school avail of 'Droichead Release Time' to support you?

**Q.42**

**Table 34:** What was the most beneficial part of your Droichead process?

Most Beneficial Aspects of the Droichead process	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Further Insights/Notes [288 responses, many citing multiple aspects]
Observations	167	60%	Analysis of these 167 responses reveals 131 reports of observations of experienced teachers, 22 pre- and post-observation discussions and feedback and 14 who named being observed as most beneficial.

Support from and Prof Conversation with experienced colleagues	165	57.3%	This included 97 who referenced support, guidance and professional conversations with PST.
Collaborating with experienced colleagues	12	4.2%	
Meeting, conversing and sharing with other NQTs	11	3.8%	
Cluster Meetings	8	2.8%	Of these NQTs, 6 specified the opportunity to interact with fellow NQTs at cluster meetings as most beneficial, 1 identified Cluster Meeting 3 and 1 NQT who indicated the in-person nature of Cluster Meeting 1 as most valuable.
Reflective Practice/Taisce	6	2.1%	1 NQT cited Taisce as the most beneficial aspect of Droichead.
Process positive in general	5	1.7%	2 NQTs who specified the structure provided by the Droichead process.
Support and Advice on Preparation and Planning	4	1.4%	
Not beneficial	3	1%	1 NQT viewed the process as formulaic and was obliged to take responsibility for the process and timeline due lack of school support.
Professional Learning that occurred in practice	3	1%	
Wellbeing/Work-Life Balance	2	0.7%	
Other	4	1.4%	Comprising opportunity to work in the SET setting (1), Droichead release time (1), visiting another school (1) and parental support (1).

#### Q.43

**Table 35:** What was the most challenging part of your Droichead process?

Most Challenging Aspects of the Droichead process	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Further Insights/Notes [288 responses, many citing multiple aspects]
Planning	143	50%	103 NQTs specified weekly planning and 5 NQTs reported having to convert weekly plans into fortnightly plans as

			required within their school settings.
<b>Paperwork</b>	31	10.8%	Single word response with no further details provided but some may relate to weekly planning as above and others to Droichead paperwork requirements.
<b>Being Observed/Feedback</b>	28	9.7%	Including comments regarding stressful/daunting nature of observations (6), colleagues conducting observations (5), frequency/pressure of 'inspections'/'being inspected' (3), scheduling observations (1), illness preventing observation taking place (1), inter-school observation (1), decision-making regarding focus of observation (1), feedback/recommendation (1) and managing a difficult PST member (1).
<b>Cluster Meetings</b>	23	8%	Of those who provided detail, challenges pertained to booking and securing a place locally (5), requirement to attend one cluster meeting per term (1), repetitive nature of meetings 2 and 3 (1), time wasted (1) and early start time (1).
<b>Workload and Time Management</b>	20	6.9%	Divided between workload (11) and time management (9).
<b>Wellbeing/Work-Life Balance</b>	16	5.6%	Further analysed as work-life balance (11), stress (4) and mental health (1).
<b>No challenges experienced</b>	9	3.1%	
<b>Difficult Relationship with PST/Colleagues/School</b>	8	2.7%	Including PST being too busy/providing insufficient support (5), an inexperienced PST (1) perception as overly-critical (2).
<b>Pressure/Expectations</b>	8	2.7%	Pressure to keep pace with school day/events (3), cover curricular content (2), self-imposed (1), high standards (1) and intense process in own school (1).
<b>Reflection/Taisce</b>	8	2.7%	
<b>Enjoyable/Supportive/Useful Process</b>	8	2.7%	Including comments on the enjoyable, beneficial and manageable nature of the process (4) along with its supportive, well organised and accessible structure (4).
<b>Length of the Process</b>	7	2.4%	Descriptions including protracted year-long duration (4), repetitive process (1),



			unnecessary continuation into term 3 (1) and comparison with peers who experienced a Droichead process of shorter duration (1).
Differentiation/Including all Learners/Managing needs	6	2.1%	
Teaching in an SET setting	5	1.7%	
Droichead process generally	5	1.7%	
Managing Behaviour	4	1.4%	
Assessment	4	1.4%	
Mismatch between Droichead as expected and in reality	3	1%	All of which were positive comments regarding an expectation of observation as equating with their experience of placement inspection as opposed to the supportive collaborative, reflective and formative nature of the Droichead observation process as experienced in reality.
Oide website	3	1%	Comments included difficulties navigating website (2) and poor website design (1).
Induction activities/APLAs	3	1%	
Access to information/clarity regarding Droichead process	2	0.07%	
Other	1 of each	0.4% each	An assortment of additional comments related to frequency of PST meetings (1), working in an inadequate school building (1), completing Droichead in different schools (1), skill development (1), discrepancies between school approaches (1), seeking help (1) and transition from student teacher to the role of NQT (1).

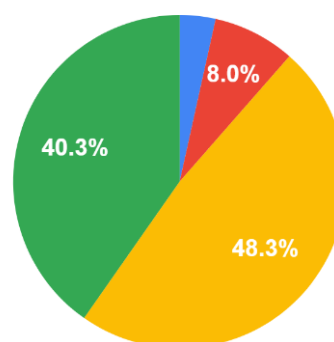


**Q.44**

**Table 36:** How many times did you visit the Droichead Induction websites ([www.teacherinduction.ie](http://www.teacherinduction.ie) and/or [www.oide.ie/droichead](http://www.oide.ie/droichead)) during your Droichead process?

Number of Visits to one/both Droichead Induction websites	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Never	10	3.4%
Once	23	8%
2-4 times	139	48.3%
5 or more times	116	40.3%

- Never
- Once
- 2-4 times
- 5 or more times



**Figure 23:** How many times did you visit the Droichead Induction websites ([www.teacherinduction.ie](http://www.teacherinduction.ie) and/or [www.oide.ie/droichead](http://www.oide.ie/droichead)) during your Droichead process?

**Q.45**

**Table 37:** In your opinion which social media platform(s) reach most NQTs?

Number of Visits to one/both Droichead Induction websites	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Facebook	32	11.1%
X	28	9.7%
TikTok	87	30.2%

<b>Instagram</b>	239	83%
<b>Other</b>	19	6.6%
Other comments included None/Not Applicable (5); Not a user of social media/not everyone follows social media (6); Unsure/níl a fhios agam (6); Snapchat (1) and E-mail (1).		



**Figure 24:** In your opinion which social media platform(s) reach most NQTs?

## **Section 6: Words of Wisdom for Future NQTs and PST Members**

### **Q.46**

**Table 38:** Is there anything else that you would like to share about your Droichead experience?

<b>Further Comments regarding the Droichead Experience</b>
<p><b>Sample of common responses from NQTs in relation their Droichead experience</b></p> <p><i>*40 respondents submitted additional comments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I had a fantastic Droichead experience. My PST and staff in the school could not have been more helpful. Such a nice school community where everyone was willing to help me if needed.</li> <li>• It is very mainstream focused; my mentor was more helpful than the cluster meetings.</li> <li>• Overall, it was a very positive experience. Although a very busy and challenging time in regards to workload and paper work, I felt my PST members and the school in general were very supportive and made the process meaningful.</li> <li>• It is a great process that really helps to ease you into the role of teacher and being part of the school community. I am hugely thankful to my PST members and school for facilitating me and it was an invaluable experience.</li> <li>• It's a fantastic means of support for NQTs that I really benefitted from and without it, I do not think</li> </ul>

that I would have had as much confidence in asking for support.

- I would worry about the overall consistency of the programme. I feel I had a much more positive and supportive experience than most my classmates.
- Cluster meetings should only be done once and PST should recommend an NQT to do more.
- The cluster meetings were highly informative but could be done in 1/1.5 hours instead of 2 hours.
- It should be a maximum of 60 days - no longer is needed, we learned how to plan for 4 years.
- Process should not continue into June which is extremely busy with more important things.
- I don't believe it is fair that there are different time lengths for NQTs to complete the Droichead process. Personally, my school is requiring that I complete the Droichead process until the end of the school year (June), even though I have had no difficulty or issues during my process, whereas others can complete the process much sooner.
- I think there should be more detailed information provided to NQTs prior to commencing Droichead so they know what to expect.
- A Droichead handbook with clear instructions about what is expected from the teacher during the process. I found it unclear what Droichead specific documents I had to keep.
- Planning requirements should match the planning that is done in the school - it was very difficult to establish a routine as a teacher when having to do weekly plans just for Droichead.
- Planning and reflections are quite useless past the first few weeks. They become monotonous and have very little benefit. Weekly plans were very time-consuming.
- I felt it was mentally draining, but not because of the process, more because of the lack of support I had from my PST. I feel schools should be inspected on this. I didn't even have a calendar to say when I would be observed, I was just told to go and sort it out. There should be proof of the school engaging properly with the NQTs doing Droichead. It took nearly a month for me to get feedback from one of them. Something more needs to be done in the way of schools getting checked to see that they are doing it correctly.
- It took a lot of time which could have been better spent preparing for teaching.
- I loved my NQT year and I also hated it. I had PST members who made me feel really supported and others who unfortunately made me feel like I was still a student teacher in that I was being examined. I think schools need to be more selective in who they nominate as PST members. For example, what is the point of the principal being one if they are too busy to engage in anything Droichead related? I got mixed messages on what Droichead was about. I had 2 PST members who made me feel like I was working with them to improve from where I was starting to where I want to be. I felt I could talk to them like I could any other colleague but I had 2 other PST members



where the dynamic felt more like it did during placement. I felt like I should hide aspects of my experience from them and that Droichead was simply a pass/fail exercise.

- I don't think this process was needed. It causes additional stress and pressure to NQTs. We have all completed school placement; therefore, I do not see the need for us to be observed again. The extra paperwork again is not needed and added too much extra stress and anxiety.
- I found the initial registration process overly cumbersome. I was so overwhelmed at school in September and then I had to negotiate between The Teaching Council, Oide and Drumcondra Education Centre emails. I was very nervous that I was overlooking something. I also had to wait quite a while to attend Cluster 1 meeting as they were fully booked in Term 1.
- This process is professional hazing. It created an unworkable environment, planning outside of school for an average of 30 hours per week, prevented me from accessing an allowance for my role of responsibility, and has caused me to leave the profession entirely. It should be integrated into teaching colleges immediately, where there would be oversight as to what is actually happening to the teachers engaging in this process.
- I would like it to be more focused on observing experienced teachers in a wider range of settings and ages.

#### Q.47

**Table 39:** What words of wisdom would you like to share with future NQTs who engage in the Droichead process?

Words of Wisdom for Future NQTs	
270 responses were submitted by respondents. A reflective sample of all comments is listed below, duplicate comments have been removed.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone really is so supportive and willing to help you.</li> <li>• Look at the amount of people who have got through it. You can too.</li> <li>• Try to get in as many observations as you can.</li> <li>• Have your yearly plan printed on your desk so you can refer to it.</li> <li>• An online Taisce is easier to maintain.</li> <li>• It's a nicer and more supportive process compared to placement.</li> <li>• It's ok to make mistakes and learn from them.</li> <li>• It's challenging but worth it. You can get it done in 60 days.</li> <li>• Mind yourself, it isn't stressful when you break your workload down.</li> <li>• Take nearly the year to do it, ask for help when you need it.</li> <li>• Try to maintain a good work life balance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay calm!</li> <li>• Enjoy the small wins.</li> <li>• Look after yourself.</li> <li>• Be prepared.</li> <li>• Keep on top of planning.</li> <li>• Give time to mindfulness.</li> <li>• Chat to other NQTs.</li> <li>• Don't stress, enjoy it!</li> <li>• Keep breathing.</li> <li>• Just keep going.</li> <li>• It's a learning experience.</li> </ul>





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You don't know everything and you won't for a while.</li> <li>• Do it in a school where NQTs and Droichead are celebrated.</li> <li>• Engage with the process as much as possible.</li> <li>• Take advice and be willing to ask questions often.</li> <li>• Engage with other members of staff as much as possible.</li> <li>• Take everything one day at a time, Rome wasn't built in a day.</li> <li>• Be good at time management regarding the weekly planning.</li> <li>• A problem shared is a problem halved!</li> <li>• Research how the process should be undertaken.</li> <li>• Talk to someone who has completed the process and start it early.</li> <li>• Take the opportunity to learn from those who are experienced.</li> <li>• Talk to your PST as much as possible, they are there to help.</li> <li>• Ask for help, nobody expects you to know it all in your first year.</li> <li>• Asking for help is a sign of strength – no question is a silly one!</li> <li>• Do planning and preparation little and often-don't let it build up.</li> <li>• Be brave-ask for as much help as you need- no one is judging you!</li> <li>• It is great to have this opportunity to develop professionally.</li> <li>• Take time for yourself and know that you are trying your best.</li> <li>• Go home on time, you can't pour from an empty cup!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a to do list.</li> <li>• Have regular routines.</li> <li>• All you can do is your best.</li> <li>• Be open.</li> <li>• Be kind to yourself.</li> <li>• It is a really nice process.</li> <li>• It's there to help you.</li> <li>• Avail of support.</li> <li>• It flies by!</li> <li>• Take each week as it comes.</li> <li>• You can do it!</li> <li>• Keep a Taisce.</li> <li>• Stick with it. It's worth it!</li> <li>• Trust the process.</li> <li>• Glac am duit féin.</li> <li>• Reflecting really does help.</li> <li>• Observations are valuable!</li> <li>• Switch off when you need to,</li> <li>• Try to get sleep!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay on top of what you NEED to do so that you have more time to do what you LIKE to do!</li> <li>• Look after yourself first because you can do the best job teaching only when you are at your best.</li> <li>• You will learn good and bad things about your teaching but that will improve you as a professional.</li> <li>• Relax, even though it is stressful now, you will be fine. Don't be afraid of imposter syndrome.</li> <li>• Use this time to learn as much as you can from others. Remember you have passed placement and Droichead is there to help you transition into your new role as a teacher.</li> <li>• It may seem like another "tick-the-box" but it is more beneficial to fully engage with Droichead and your PST and you will get a lot out of the whole process.</li> <li>• It is not something to stress over, it makes your first year easier as the PST are dedicated to supporting you. It is personal to your needs.</li> <li>• Start as early as possible, it's more supportive and getting observed is not like placement.</li> <li>• It is okay to feel like you do not know what you are doing sometimes.</li> <li>• Take heart in the graph. You'll know which one I mean when you see it. You will question your career choice but it definitely gets better and while the days seem to drag out during those tough times, you'll walk in on a Monday in May and realise you didn't think twice about the vague notes you jotted down</li> </ul>	



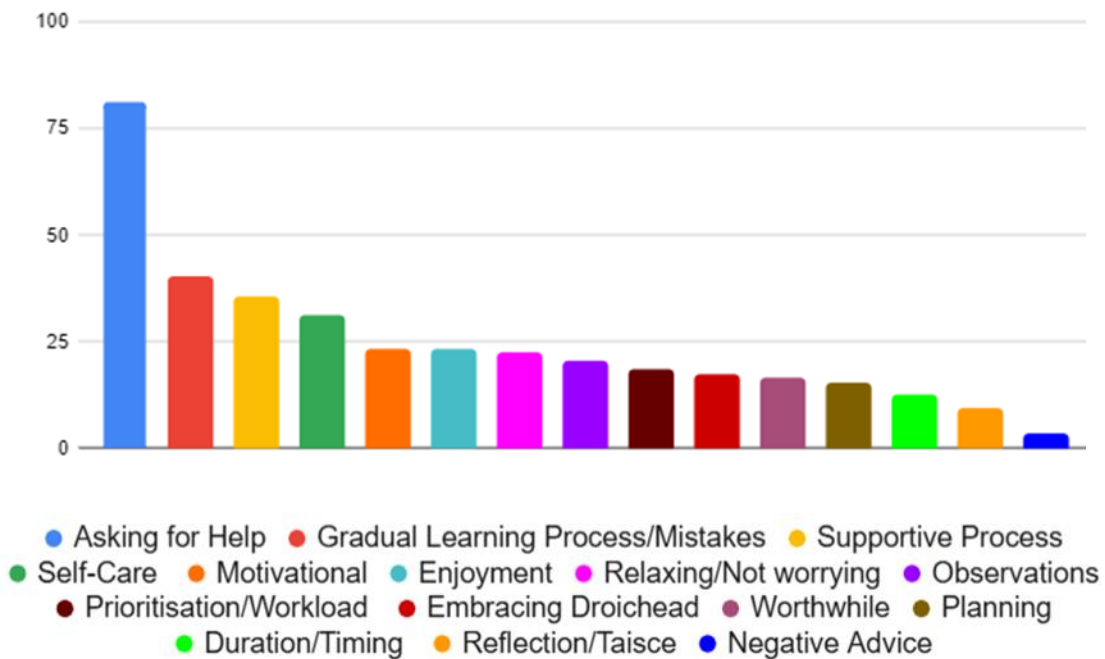
for lessons and somehow have everything prepared.

- Everyone is starting out on their journey and it's not a shame to ask for advice; it's a strength.
- Do not complete the programme half-heartedly. It is there to help guide you when completing your first year as a teacher. Ensure the plans are completed to the best of your ability, because it will be the children who will suffer the consequence at the end of the day.
- Remind yourself that it is a continual learning process and that it is okay to ask questions to contribute to your learning and knowledge. Every day is a school day.
- Droichead isn't as daunting as you think. Utilise all the support that is provided to you.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Every successful teacher was in your shoes at one point so it's ok to feel lost and unprepared. It is all part of the learning process. Just like you would like your pupils to ask you for help when unsure about something, all staff members are more than happy to help you when you need it.
- Make the most of it, your PST is there to help. It's a great opportunity to ask questions you have.
- Observe other teachers at every given chance as this is the best way to learn tips and tricks and it will more than likely be one of the last times you will see someone else teaching for you!
- Develop relationships with parents early on as that has helped me so much in certain situations in order to understand more clearly and get a holistic view of the child in order to make a plan of action.
- Embrace the learning experience with patience, connect with the wider staff/students, be organised, maintain a work-life balance, use resources, seek feedback and engage in the school community.
- Your PST members are amazing - make the most out of the support you have and do not be afraid to ask for help! Do as many observations on other teachers as possible, you would be surprised just how much you can learn from them. Remember - the benefits of having a work-life balance really does get taken for granted at times but you have to look after yourself. You cannot pour from an empty cup!
- Mark what you get done as you go so your Cuntas Míosiúl is easier to fill in at end of the month.
- Start it as early as possible as there are so many events and activities on in school during the year that sometimes things need to be moved. Ensure that you have enough time to get everything done.
- Droichead is a headache but it has to be done and then teaching can actually become enjoyable.
- Be strong and know you can stand up for yourself, if you're not happy about something, log it and discuss it with your PST. If it continues, put in a complaint.
- It is a supportive process. While inspections are always daunting the PST members are very helpful and supportive throughout and it is nothing like inspections while on placement.
- The paperwork is heavy, but limit the amount of time you spend on it. Make time for yourself and REST! You need to stand in front of kids all day and only so much paperwork will help with that..



- Ensure you have a committed and determined PST team that care about and are invested in your process. Don't try to be the 'yes' person and take everything on. It is okay to say 'no' once in a while.
- Flexibility is a valuable trait in teaching. Be open to adjusting your strategies and methods based on what you learn through the Droichead process and your experiences in the classroom.
- Droichead is an ideal opportunity to engage with experienced colleagues. Take advice on board with an open mind and accept that as an NQT, experience matters.
- Remember that the ultimate goal of Droichead is to help you become the best teacher you can be.
- Keep the bigger picture in mind and stay focused on your long-term goals as an educator.
- You are not on placement anymore and the whole experience should be supportive. Take the opportunity to ask all the questions you need to! Choose an area in your teaching that you genuinely want to improve on, you will benefit more from making mistakes and having support around you to guide you in the right direction!
- Don't sweat the small stuff. Listen to your students. Build relationships. Ask about that football match, the new pencil case, a haircut. Have confidence that your training will look after the rest. And don't beat yourself up - you'll mess up, but as long as you know you have, you're halfway there!
- Engage with PST members regularly and avail of services and courses on the Oide website.
- This is about YOUR learning and your PST members are there to support you and guide you along the way. You will not be judged at all. They just want to help you become the best teacher you can be.
- Don't let Droichead take over your life. It isn't placement and it shouldn't feel like it is! You will burn out if you treat it that way. Don't let anyone make you feel like it's 'normal' to be overly stressed. It should be about identifying the kind of teacher you want to be and recognising areas of your practice that need to be honed in order for you to become that teacher. It is your journey after all.





**Figure 25:** What words of wisdom would you like to share with future NQTs who engage in the Droichead process?

**Q.48**

**Table 40:** What words of wisdom would you like to share with PST members who support NQTs through the process in the future?

Words of Wisdom for PST Members Supporting Future NQTs	
258 responses were submitted by respondents.	
A reflective sample of all comments is listed below, duplicate comments have been removed.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have a wealth of knowledge, so please share it with NQTs.</li> <li>Be available for both formal and informal conversations with NQTs.</li> <li>Try to make the process as positive as it can be.</li> <li>Give them lots of opportunities to observe other teachers.</li> <li>Set out a clear plan for each term.</li> <li>Support the NQT by treating them like any other member of staff.</li> <li>Allow the NQT's needs to lead the process.</li> <li>Share more resources with NQTs, do not only have meetings.</li> <li>Prepare some tips and tricks that might help the NQT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put yourself in our shoes.</li> <li>Empower the NQT.</li> <li>Explain everything.</li> <li>Provide guidance on Taisce.</li> <li>Be a listening ear.</li> <li>Bí cuidiúil!</li> <li>Treat them gently</li> <li>Please be kind!</li> <li>Be a friendly face.</li> </ul>

- Everyone in general is doing their best.
- Make the NQT feel comfortable during observations.
- Encourage them to share if they are struggling.
- Gentle words of encouragement can make a big difference.
- Thanks for volunteering to help the next generation of teachers!
- Your time, professionalism and dedication are highly appreciated.
- Thanks for being someone I could rely on during stressful times.
- Thank you for answering every question, no matter how silly!
- Your collaboration is so beneficial-thanks for giving us your time.
- Don't make NQTs feel like a burden for asking for help.
- NQTs are under pressure dealing with a huge change from college.
- Share your wisdom and tailor your support to help NQTs blossom.
- We are not experts, so please don't mind our questions!!
- Critique rather than criticise. Positive praise raises confidence.
- Be patient! It's a big learning curve after a hectic period of study.
- It can be hard for the NQT to come to you. Go to them!
- Schedule the meetings at regular intervals.
- Keep checking in, even when Droichead is over.
- Teaching advice should come before planning concerns.
- Be more aware of Droichead release time.

- Be kind to yourself too!
- Stay calm!
- Be specific with advice.
- You're doing a great job!
- You are stars!
- Your role is really valued.
- Keep up the good work!
- Thank you!
- Check in regularly.
- Ask if we are ok.
- Don't be too formal.
- Please go easy on them.
- Make time available for us.
- Be approachable!
- Celebrate progress.
- Just be there.
- Give clear information.
- Don't add to the pressure!
- Give detailed feedback.
- Check in with us more.
- Be prepared for your NQT.

- We were all at the beginning once, everything is new to an NQT and there is a lot of learning to do in a year so please be patient with us.
- Remember you were once an NQT and be the support that you needed in your first year! The first year of teaching is very overwhelming and some people might be afraid to ask for help. Simply checking in on your NQT regularly and asking how they are can be a huge support to them!
- Support them in all areas and make it accessible and easy for them to approach you with anything.
- Have empathy, and be supportive regardless of how silly the question may be.



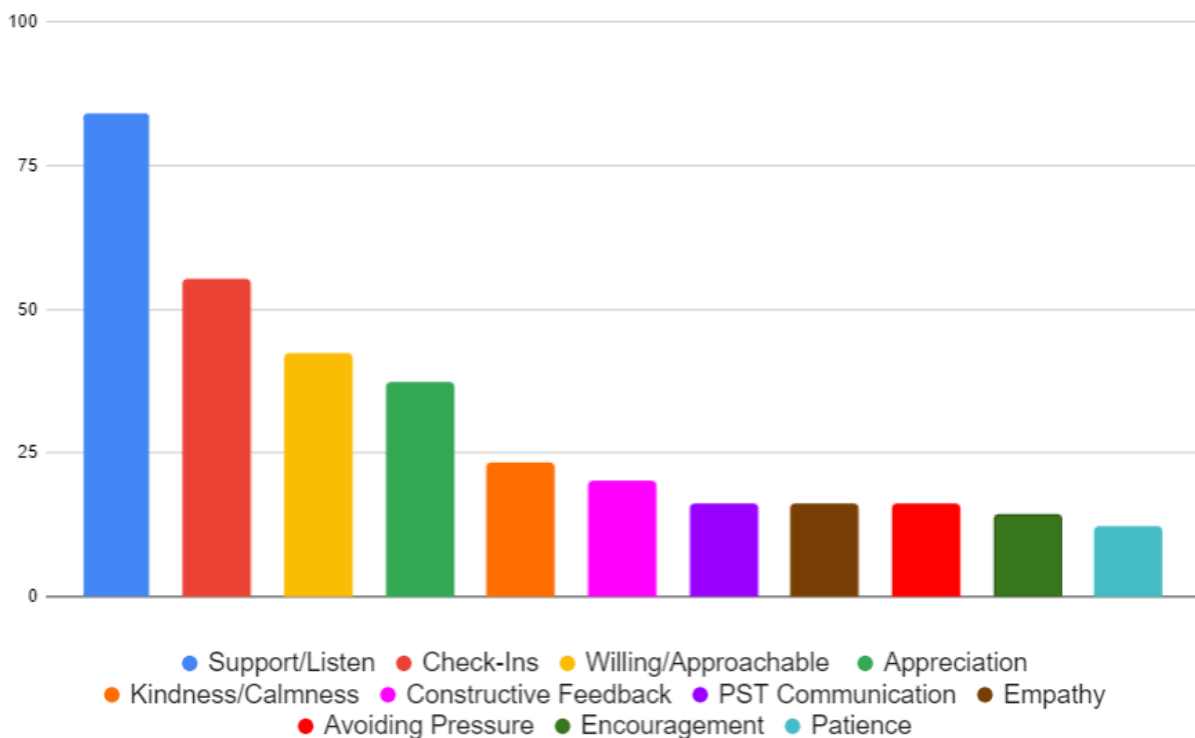
- Be kind, understanding and supportive. Offer encouragement and positive feedback.
- They made me feel so at ease by saying they are constantly learning with teaching too.
- Share your own personal failings and challenges from your teaching career. Many NQTs feel a sense of being an imposter during their first year of teaching.
- It's hard. NQTs are as nervous about starting in a new job as they are about teaching itself.
- Be supportive and honest - constructive criticism is welcome and increases an NQT's confidence as they can identify what they are doing well as well as what they can improve on.
- Make sure you listen to the NQT's wishes and needs in order to support them.
- The best teachers are those who show you where to look, but don't tell you what to see.
- If you don't have an answer to a question asked by the NQT, try to direct them to someone or somewhere they could find an answer to the question.
- Make the NQT you are observing feel comfortable to ask questions about Droichead and teaching.
- Support them and take into account that they are working extremely hard every day as it is. Have a solution-based approach. Don't create hurdles for the NQT that are unnecessary or create stress.
- Being an NQT is daunting but a supportive PST can make all the difference.
- Address their planning needs and ensure they have appropriate templates for the school.
- Do not engage in the process unless you are willing to share feedback and information in a clear way. The teachers doing Droichead are already fully qualified teachers, often with experience in teaching. They deserve basic respect and for their queries and meetings to be handled professionally.
- It is very daunting to have someone you work with to only come into your room for one lesson and discuss your concerns once or twice in a meeting. Get to know your NQT and their perspective of the class behaviour and abilities throughout the year as they may have made massive progress with their class but it may not be obvious during one observation or meeting. Also, all advice given to an NQT after one observation should be shared with the other PST members as PST members can contradict each other and criticise NQT for not doing or using something after another PST advised not to.
- Be supportive, available and attentive. Try put the NQTs at ease if they are nervous, and make it clear it is not like college placement inspections.
- Be a source of contact and support for the NQT. There are times where the whole thing seems daunting and overwhelming and all you need is for someone to tell you it will all blow over.
- Be flexible. Things change in schools and we have to try to be helpful for NQTs. Sticking to strict guidelines can be more damaging than good.
- Give as much feedback as possible, offer suggestions and showcase how to apply them.

- You are critical to the success of the NQT. I was so lucky with my team who both have children and both were so intelligent, experienced, compassionate and flexible. They were a lifeline some days. Similarly, don't be afraid to pair your NQT with a teacher not on the PST but might offer solidarity. It's not passing the buck to suggest a coffee or chat with another teacher that might provide a similar experience they can share with.
- Check in with NQTs but let them have some independence to come to you if they need help too
- Offer an open door to the NQT for anything they may need help or advice with during Droichead.
- Be open to ideas from the NQT. Have high expectations but be sound and understanding.
- Support the NQT with all areas of school life, like parent-teacher meetings, dealing with external agencies, admin etc. There are so many new challenges and tasks not experienced on placement.
- Make yourself available to answer questions as some NQTs may feel like they are bothering you.
- Be mindful that the type of teacher you are may not be the type of teacher I am. Inspire us, laugh with us, empathise with us, build us up! There are some over-confident NQTs who need to taper it back but most are coming from college with no idea what they are doing and just want someone to help them.
- Consider the specific context and challenges of the NQT's class when giving feedback and advice.
- Please be mindful of how stressful a process this is for NQTs. Have a schedule of Droichead prepared as uncertainty adds to this anxiety. Check in with them regularly and not just for observations.
- It is vital to remember that the NQT is doing more planning than other teachers, as well as organising resources, teaching their class and doing other Droichead activities, so try not to put pressure on having plans by certain dates and having things perfect etc.
- Encourage creativity. Support NQTs in trying out new and innovative teaching methods.
- The Droichead outline plan helps to structure the process so please provide it as soon as possible.
- Thank you for sharing your knowledge, you may not think you're sharing much but the opportunity to observe you helped me so much with classroom management. Thank you for knocking on the classroom door before and after school to just check if everything was ok and if I needed anything.
- What a far superior system to anxiously waiting all year for the knock on the door from the cigire!
- Be open and flexible. Please don't make them feel like Droichead is a hassle to you (chances are they already feel this). Model your process of when you make mistakes - it was so reassuring to know experienced teachers still get it wrong sometimes.
- Remember that the NQT is eager to impress and reluctant to say 'no', they are on a life-long journey and you have to be invested in their process 100%. Check in with them, they may seem fine on the outside, but inside; they may need a shoulder or a non-judgmental ear to offer advice and compassion.
- NQTs are trying very hard and there will be areas that they find difficult. Make sure this is something



that is addressed in a manner that does not deflate the confidence of the NQT.

- You have a huge impact on how NQTs view their first months in the profession. Be honest, be patient and show them the joy of this profession!
- Sticking your head in the door every so often to ask if everything is going ok can be very reassuring. This can promote the conversation the NQT wants to have but may be holding back because they feel the PST member may be too busy at the time. It opens the floor for the conversations to happen.
- A simple text asking how are you getting on if you're based in a big school means a lot.
- Ask the NQT how they are in a space where they can talk comfortably. Many are suffering in silence.
- Check in with your NQT about planning, assessment parent-teacher meetings and report-writing.
- Not all NQTs know what is needed to complete the Droichead process and a meeting at the start to outline expectations would be helpful.
- Don't be too overbearing, give the NQT space. Allow them to learn and grow without being under a microscope. They're adults who are fully qualified, so treat them like that!



**Figure 26** What words of wisdom would you like to share with PST Members who support NQTs through the process in the future?

