Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Droichead

Professional Learning for Professional Support Team (PST) Members

Reflective Learning Log

Day One

Activity 1: Compass Check

The space below is for your private reflections on your understanding of the Droichead process:

Where am I now?

What am I excited about?

What will support me?

What wisdom will help guide me?

Activity 2:
Exploring the Droichead Policy

When you read through the following section of the Droichead policy, what words, phrases, or ideas stand out most to you? Why?

Record your thoughts in the space provided

The Droichead process is an integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers… it recognises that induction is a distinct phase of the continuum of teacher education, a socialisation process into the teaching profession… to address the needs of teachers as they begin their careers. The main objective of the Droichead process is to support the professional learning of the NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career. Following the Droichead process, a declaration is made by the NQT that [they are] ready to move to the next phase on the continuum of teacher education. A joint declaration is made by the teacher and experienced colleagues, following collective reflection, that through their engagement in Droichead, they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process. There are two key strands of the Droichead process as an integrated induction framework… The first strand is a school-based induction one (Strand A), through which the NQT is supported by experienced colleagues. The second strand is made up of additional professional learning activities (Strand B), which involves attendance at NQT cluster meetings in local education centres, and one other professional learning activity, related to the needs of the NQT. (Teaching Council 2017, p. 3)	Additional Notes

Activity 3:
The Value of Supporting NQTs

Based on your reading, what benefits does mentoring provide?

Breakout Room 1

DQA Panel Report (2022)

5.7.2 In nearly half of schools visited NQTs got an opportunity to observe above the minimum of two observations set out in policy. Observations are a fundamental element of the Droichead policy and NQTs recognised that this was of notable benefit to their professional development. In five schools, NQTs spoke about how observations provided them with reassurance and gave them confidence in their practice.

5.7.6 The impact of observations was multi-faceted and mutually beneficial, some of the benefits identified were:

– In almost all schools visited, observations were based on NQTs' needs. NQTs felt that their practice was affirmed and, as a result, they gained confidence. NQTs perceived the observation of colleagues as important and reported gained a great deal from observing more experienced teachers.

– Notably, NQTs spoke about the value of observing a more experienced teacher teach their class group as very beneficial. Some NQTs noted that they would like an opportunity to engage in more observations. One PST member also reported that "it can be even more beneficial for an experienced teacher to go in and teach in the NQTs class, because she could be trying to juggle behaviour management, special needs, differentiation, and teach her lesson. She can see the experienced teacher doing all of them and dealing with her children".

Breakout Room 2

DEEPEN Report (2021)

It is understood and agreed globally that... the support of a mentor and opportunities to collaborate with other teachers, observe other teachers and attend professional development programmes with other teachers (Kearney, 2014).

'Professional conversations' were seen as being most worthwhile, followed by the 'professional learning activity' and 'observations' process. When the PST members provided constructive feedback, advice, guidance and shared knowledge in a spirit of collaboration and collegiality, the NQTs felt that Droichead provided a firm foundation for their teaching career.

PST members... are 'critical friends', or 'anamchairde (advisors)' and role models for NQTs, not only in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, but more importantly as professional role models who embody and exemplify the role of a professional teacher. PST members consider that the most effective use of time allocated to Droichead is in relation to 'Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice' followed by 'Professional conversations with the PST'.

…School leaders consider their participation in the PST to be an integral part of their role... it affords them opportunities to support, mentor and help NQTs, to get to know the staff and to ensure a management input into the mentoring of NQTs.

Helms-Lorenz et al., (2016) reported that it is the quality of the mentoring, and not the duration, that leads to the growth of positive dispositions and skills.

NQTs report that when ample communication is afforded, they feel valued and appreciated as colleagues.

Breakout Room 3

A Teacher's Guide to Effective Mentoring (2017)

Mutual benefits of mentoring

There are potentially many benefits of mentoring for both mentor and new teacher as well as benefits for the school, the system and the profession. Having opportunities to offer deep, practical knowledge, both pedagogical content and experience, can be a very rewarding and mutually beneficial aspect of effective mentoring.

Other significant benefits include:

- an increase in the rate of professional growth, self-reflection and problem solving capacity for both mentor and new teacher
- an increase in confidence, self-esteem, morale and sense of identity
- opportunities for learning new skills, teaching strategies and communication techniques, including how to engage in rigorous evidence-informed conversations
- a greater sense of inclusion or reduced feelings of isolation
- opportunities for close collaboration, shared challenges and the sense of achievement that comes from successfully working through such challenges
- learning from frequent opportunities to talk about teaching and learning, students, strategies and successes as well as challenge
- opportunities to capture and analyse evidence of student learning, leading to professional insights for both the mentor and new teacher
- developing a sense of belonging, as a contributor to the school and its community.

Activity 4:
Considering Professional Practice

How do we, as teachers, demonstrate our professional practice?

Engagement in Professional Learning Activities and School-Based Induction	
Commitment to Quality Teaching and Learning	
Engagement with Reflective Practice Individually	
Engagement with Reflective Practice Collaboratively	

Activity 5:
The Droichead Outline Plan

Droichead - Outline Plan Calendar Template (with key) - 2025.2026

Sep 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Oct 2025						
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Nov 2025						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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Dec 2025						
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28	29	30	31			

Jan 2026						
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Feb 2026						
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Mar 2026						
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29	30	31				

Apr 2026						
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26	27	28	29	30		

May 2026						
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June 2026						
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Please Note

- NQTs must attend one **cluster meeting** per term during their Droichead process.
- 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.
- NQTs should familiarise themselves with '***Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework***' March 2017.
- The Droichead Induction Division will communicate with schools on a regular basis to ensure that up-to-date information is available to PSTs and NQTs.

Induction Activities		Observation *by* the NQT
		Observation *of* the NQT
		Other Induction Activities
Meetings		Professional Support Team
		PST & NQT(s)
		Quarterly Review
WholeStaff		Droichead Information
		School Holidays

Date Confirmation Email Received: **Tentative End Date:**	**PST Members Supporting NQT:**
Cluster Meeting Dates:	**Other Professional Learning Activity:**
Observation *by* the NQT:	**Observation *of* the NQT:**

Activity 6: Professional Conversations and Induction Activities

Use the boxes below to reflect on professional conversations and induction activities.

What aspects of school life and/or professional practice might an NQT bring to a 'professional conversation'?

1. communication with parents
2. extending learning opportunities for exceptionally-abled pupils in reading

What would be indicators of good practice?

1. teachers use parent-teacher meetings and other communication with parents constructively to support parents' meaningful involvement in their children's education (LAOS 2022, p.32)
2. teachers are aware of pupils' individual learning needs, interests and abilities, and adapt learning and teaching practices accordingly (LAOS 2022, p.31)

How might school context impact/ influence the induction activities?

1. The school has a specific communication policy which includes use of digital communication platforms and information about parent-teacher meetings
2. The school has digital reading software available which can be used to extend learning opportunities in reading for pupils

What would be appropriate Induction Activities to support the NQT in this scenario?

Activity 7:
Building Professional Relationships

What are the elements of an effective professional relationship?

Professional relationships are most effective when...

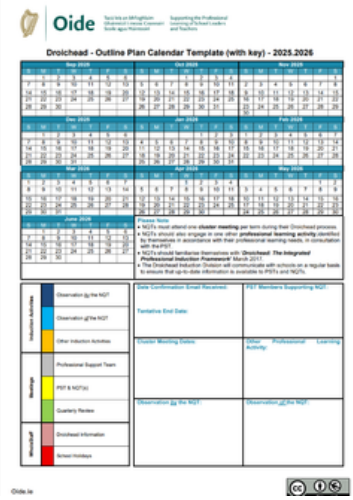
Activity 8:
Listening Activity

Follow the instructions of the facilitator...

Activity 9:
APLA Case Study

What Additional Professional Learning Activity could Fiona attend?

Please refer to the Droichead Outline Plan on p.7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Droichead - Outline Plan Calendar Template (with key) - 2025.2026

Activity 10:
Day One Reflection

What are your key takeaways about:

1. The Droichead Process
2. The Role of the PST
3. Empowering NQTs

Day Two

Activity 11: Observing the Lesson

Teacher: Fiona **Subject:** Maths **Stage:** 1
Class: Junior Infants

Strand: Shape and Space I **Focus of Observation:** Questioning Techniques

Fiona introduced the lesson by telling the children they would be learning about four 2D shapes. She began with the circle, displaying a large image of one on the interactive whiteboard. She asked, “This is a circle, isn’t it?” and followed with, “Can anyone see something that’s a circle in the room?” After two children responded, she moved on.

Children were placed in small groups and given shape packs. Fiona asked each group to take out the circle and feel its edge. With several pupils, including those with EAL, she used simple recall-style questions such as, "Does this shape have corners?” and “Does it feel round to you?” She followed a similar routine for the other shapes.

For other groups, Fiona attempted to extend thinking by asking comparison and reasoning questions like: “How is this shape different from the triangle?”, “Why do you think this one is a rectangle and not a square?”. Some pupils struggled to respond, while others engaged with support.

She then used magnetic posters to display the four shapes on the board. She explained that the children would take turns coming up to talk about them. However, she remained at the front, asking questions like, “Is this the square?” and “Can you see the triangle?” while pointing herself. Most of the responses came from the whole class in chorus, and no individual children came up to the board.

For the next activity, children worked in groups to sort the four shapes onto A3 mats. Fiona had prepared a variety of materials for this task. As she moved around the room, she interacted with groups by asking questions such as, “Is that a rectangle?” and “Did you put that in the right place?”. She occasionally probed further with, “How do you know?”. She encouraged them to finish the task and praised completed group work. The final activity—creating pictures using the four shapes—was planned but postponed due to time constraints. Fiona explained that they would complete this the following day.

Based on your reading of the lesson description, answer the questions below.

Considering the focus of the lesson (questioning techniques), what would you like to discuss with Fiona following this lesson?

What are the strengths in Fiona's practice?

What areas are there for development?

How would you discuss those areas for development with Fiona?

What area/s would you prioritise? Why?

Activity 12:
Post-observation Role Play

Imagine you are the PST who is supporting “Fiona”. Use the questions below to engage in a post-observation discussion.

How do you think the lesson went? Why do you say so?

What worked well?

What did you consider when preparing this lesson? (Context)

Were there any surprises?

Were any elements of the lesson more or less engaging?

Do you think the needs of the learners were met? How do you know?

What did you learn from teaching that class/lesson?

If you could teach this again, what, if anything, would you do differently? Why?

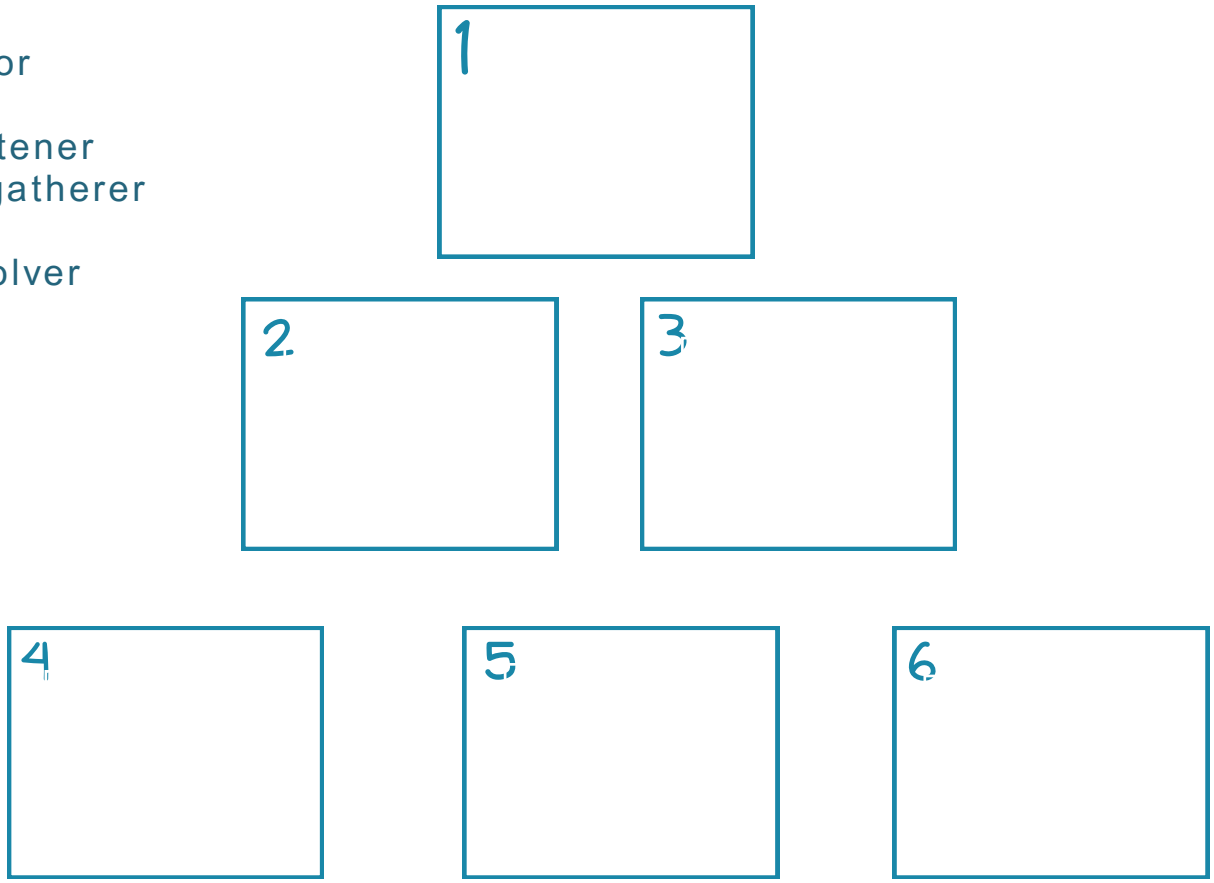
(adapted from Horn & Metter-Armijo (2011) and Randal & Thornton (2001))

Record your thoughts below.

Activity 13: Triangle Ranking

Outline the roles from 1-6 you feel are the most important as a PST member.

- Facilitator
- Advocate
- Collaborator
- Instructor
- Trusted listener
- Evidence gatherer
- Leader
- Problem solver
- Learner



(Horn and Metler-Armijo 2011)

Activity 14:
Putting Theory into Practice

Read the scenario assigned and discuss how you would approach the situation described.

Breakout Room 1

1. The principal informs the PST that an additional NQT will be joining the staff in January. Currently, there are two PST members supporting five NQTs.

2. A fellow staff member asks: “After the NQT observed my class, they had questions about differentiation but is that your role to support them?”

Breakout Room 2

3. An NQT says: “I missed Cluster Meeting 1 in Term 1. What are my options?”

4. The Deputy Principal doesn’t have a substitute teacher to cover a PST member’s class for their scheduled NQT observation this afternoon.

Breakout Room 3

5. A PST member has noted that after two observations the NQT is not taking on board the advice and support given.

6. An NQT approaches a PST member to say that they overheard another PST member discussing their classroom practice with other staff members.

Breakout Room 4

7. A PST member receives a question from an NQT: "What’s the best way to approach my first parent teacher meeting? I want to make it meaningful, but I’m not sure where to start."

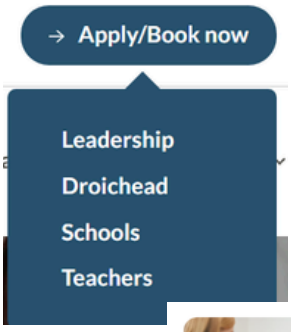
8. NQT: I think I’ll use our school closure PLE day as my one other professional learning activity for Strand B?

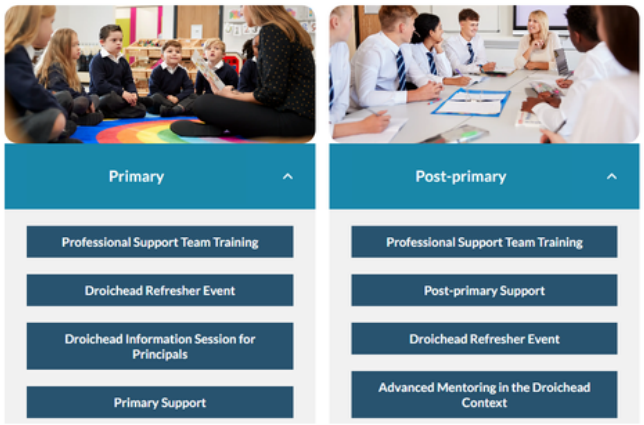
Activity 15:
Website Resources

Follow the steps below to access some of our additional resources.

1 Apply/Book Now

1. Open your web browser and go to https://www.oide.ie
2. On the homepage, locate the top navigation menu.
3. Hover over “Apply / Book Now”
4. From the dropdown menu, select ‘Droichead’.
5. Choose your specific route of access.
6. Select the relevant professional learning event you wish to register for.





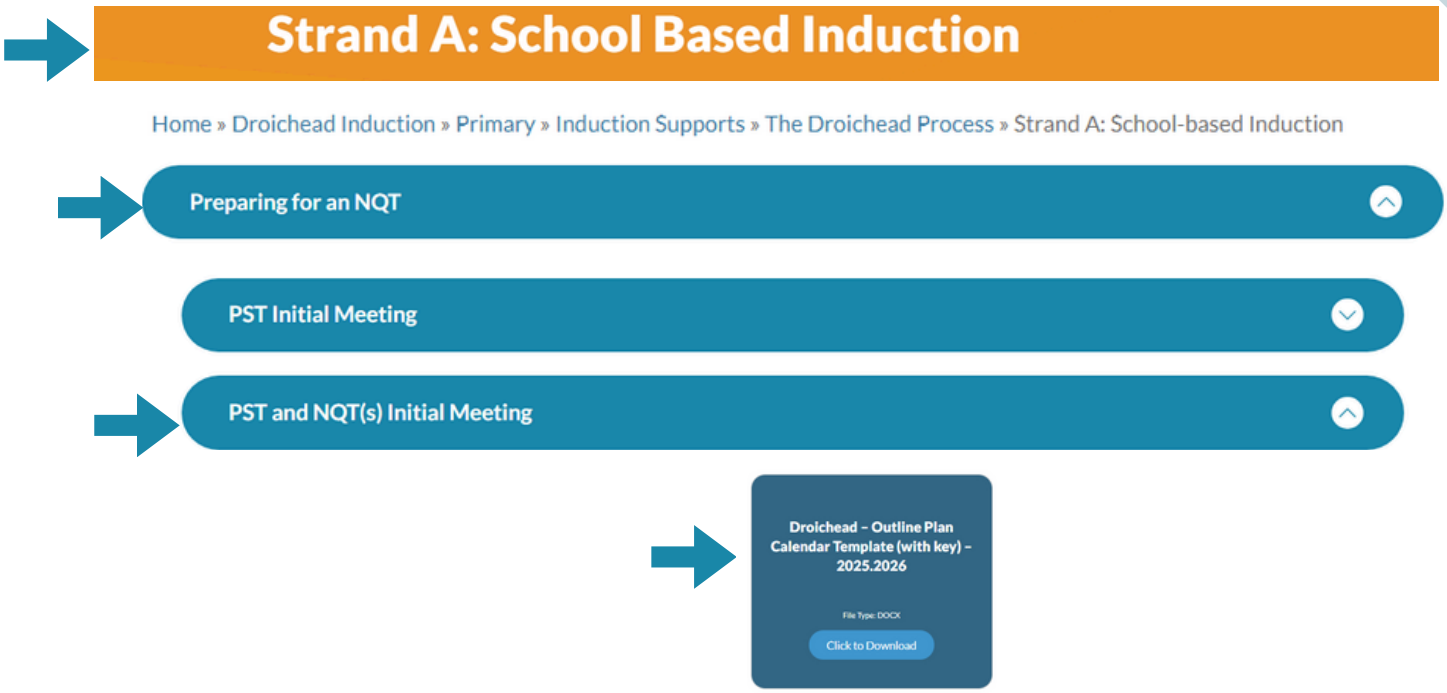
✅ Task: Jot down one event you might like to attend in the future.

2 News and Updates

1. Open your web browser and go to https://www.oide.ie/droichead/home/
2. Locate the News & Updates tile by following these steps
   Home> Droichead Induction> News & Updates

✅ Task: Make a note of the two most recent news posts. How are they relevant to your role as PST member?

3 Droichead Outline Plan



✅ Task: Identify one other resource in this section and suggest how it might support your professional support team in your school.

4 The Droichead Process

Go back to the Droichead homepage and navigate to 'Induction Supports'.

📌 Breadcrumbs:
Home> Droichead Induction> Primary> Induction Supports> The Droichead Process

✅ Task: What resources are available regarding Cluster Meetings?
✅ Task: How could these resources assist you in your role?

Activity 16:
Day Two Reflection

What are your key takeaways about:

1. The Droichead Process
2. The Role of the PST
3. Empowering NQTs

Notes

Stop and Jot

Notes

Appendix 1:
Case Study (Primary)

Fiona is a newly qualified teacher who has recently started her first teaching position in your school. She has a contract for 12.5 hours per week for the full school year and will be teaching Junior Infants. As a member of the PST, you will be supporting Fiona and have arranged a meeting to collaboratively draft the outline plan with her.

A few weeks into the school year, Fiona approaches you to ask for support with choosing her "One Other Professional Learning Activity" as part of Strand B of the Droichead process. She explains that she is unsure what would be suitable and mentions that she's interested in integrating more collaborative learning activities into her lessons. However, she would like some guidance around identifying a relevant professional learning activity.

Fiona has three weeks left in the school and is anxious to complete the Droichead process during this time. Several meetings with the PST have been rescheduled or cancelled during the year for a variety of reasons.
The members of the PST are satisfied that Fiona has engaged in the process, however they feel she has not sufficiently progressed. Therefore, they are not happy to sign the joint declaration. Fiona disagrees as she feels she has completed all required elements of the process.