

MEET THE TEAM

Lorraine Downey is the head of the Learner Support and Engagement Service. Prior to this, she was the ESOL Development Officer in City of Dublin ETB and worked with centres, schools and colleges in relation to English language and intercultural education initiatives. She has represented City of Dublin ETB on national working groups and committees, including chairing the English Language Support Teachers' Association (ELSTA) and the QQI Broad Standards for Languages Working Group.

She is currently undertaking doctoral research on the inclusion of learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Further Education and Training.



lorraine.downey@cdetb.ie

John Poole has worked in English language teaching for over 30 years, nearly half a which has been with the City of Dublin ETB. He is very aware of the excellent service being provided to ESOL learners in classes across FET but believes we could be doing much more to support those of our learners, who do not have English as their first language and who are enrolled in a wide range of our other courses where they and their teachers, trainers and tutors can face challenges arising from a language deficit. .

John is working on a number of projects related to English language and linguistic diversity. He is currently piloting assessments for learners entering the Early Learning and Care programme in some of our FE colleges and in the Adult Education Service.



john.poole@cdetb.ie

Sneha Sarcar' experience in the field of education spans across countries that include India, UK, and Ireland. A Double Masters Graduate, she is an active advocate for Mental Health, Inclusivity and Safe Spaces for Victims of Sexual Harassment.

As an immigrant person of colour, Sneha's driving forces include the recognition of ethnicity, diversity, culture and combatting racism.

Working towards providing visibility and representation and amplifying the learner voice, Sneha is currently leading the team on the development of the learner survey. By focusing on key themes that play a significant role throughout their journey, the learner survey will shed light on what learners believe is working well and what can be improved on.



sneha.sarcar@cdetb.ie

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Mary Stokes is a Guidance Counsellor, and Adult Guidance Service Coordinator with experience in Post Primary schools, Colleges of Further Education, community and recovery programmes and third level access programmes, and extensive experience in the development of national policy and practice support to FET Guidance provision. Mary was significantly involved in the establishment of countrywide ETB Adult Education Guidance Services (AEGS), and that model of adult career guidance delivery. From 2016 until 2022, Mary was seconded from City of Dublin (Inner City) AEGS to the National Centre for Guidance in Education to support development of policy and practice in career guidance in FET. Mary is committed to the person, to equity, opportunity, and the facilitation of informed choices in lifelong education and careers, while her priority is to support the development of collaborative and cooperative services to ensure inclusion and appropriate supports for all those interested in learning and training across the lifespan. Mary is the team lead on Recognition of Prior Learning and represents City of Dublin ETB on the RPL Network.



mary.stokes1@cdetb.ie



garreth.tierney@cdetb.ie

Garreth Tierney has worked in the City of Dublin ETB for over 20 years. Most of this time has been in City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB) as a Liaison Officer across areas of Dublin. This work consisted of supporting and developing community-based youth project, services and youth Clubs. Youth services play a crucial role in the lives of many young people across the city, Garreth believes strongly that young people need supports, opportunities and encouragement to develop and become lifelong learners.

Garreth is leading on a number of projects related to Disability Support and Learning Support

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

On February 21, 1952, five university students died and 100s more were injured during a massive protest to have Bangla recognised alongside Urdu as a national language of the recently created Pakistan. From the founding of the Bangladeshi state, the students' sacrifice on behalf of their mother language has been a national holiday.



In 1999, UNESCO chose the same date for International Mother Language Day with the objective of recognising the importance of mother languages in forming cultural identity, while promoting linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism in a world where 100s of mother tongues face extinction annually.

Linguistic diversity in Ireland

Irish society is incredibly diverse, especially so in relation to the numbers of languages spoken and used. The 2016 Census showed that 612,018 Irish residents spoke a language other than English or Irish at home. It is estimated that there are more than 200 languages spoken or used in Ireland. While we do not currently have any data regarding the linguistic diversity of our learners or staff in City of Dublin ETB, we know that a significant minority of learners in our FET programmes are multilingual.

To mark International Mother Language Day, we organised two initiatives, one aimed at learners and one for staff to raise awareness of and validate linguistic diversity and the link between language, identity and belonging.

Share Your Words- a competition for learners celebrating mother tongues and learners' linguistic identities

In the Share Your Words competition we invited learners to share a favourite poem, song lyric or piece of spoken word in their mother tongue, along with a brief text explaining why it was special to them. We were delighted with the response – a big thank you to the **17** learners who contributed and the teachers and tutors who facilitated the contributions. We had contributions in Arabic, Croatian, Dari, English, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Somali, Spanish and Ukrainian. Song lyrics was the most popular choice but some contributors chose poetry and we even had two original poems!

All the contributors' names were entered in a draw and the lucky winners were:

- DS, a learner in the Mountjoy Education Centre
- Rohid Samedi, Cabra Youthreach
- Scott Higgins, Cabra Youthreach

You can check out all of this year's submissions on [Padlet](#). We plan to make this an annual event.

RECENT WEBINARS

Validating and Esteeming our Learners' Mother Languages in an English-speaking learning environment

Date: Tuesday 21 February

[Click to access recording of webinar](#)

REMEMBER!

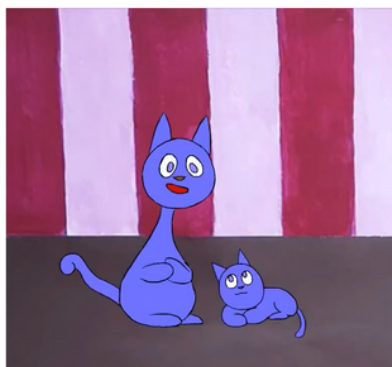
Webinar recordings, slides and additional resources for PD events are uploaded to CDU Moodle site
Contact CDU Librarian Dr Eva Hornung
eva.hornung@cdu.cdetsb.ie
to register for access

Dr. Francesca La Morgia, the founding director of Mother Tongues was our guest speaker for this webinar to mark International Mother Language Day. A linguist, lecturer and researcher, Dr La Morgia's talk explored the place of mother languages when a learner is studying new subjects in a different language. She spoke about the connection between language and identity, the many benefits of bi/multilingualism for individuals and society and engaged us all in rich and reflective discussions on linguistic diversity and how it relates to our work as educators.



Did you know that students on Colaiste Dhulaigh CFE's Animation course worked with Mother Tongues to develop their animated series for RTE Jr?

Click on the images to watch their wonderful animations. Amazing work from both teams of students!



CDCFE Animation - RTEjr Mother Tongues Podcast - German
cdcfe 18 subscribers [Subscribe](#)



Credits:

Lauren Woods
Phoebe Kane
Gemma Graham
Ryan Hensman

Danielle Branagan
Geoff Laverty
Harry McCaul
Elina Vasiljeva

RECENT WEBINAR

"Access, Eligibilities, Entitlements and the Implications for entry to City of Dublin ETB FET Programs" Webinar

Date: Thursday February 23, 2023

[Click to access recording of webinar](#)

On February 23rd, Mary hosted an online PD event for staff of City of Dublin ETB to explore "**Access, Eligibilities, Entitlements and implications for entry to City of Dublin ETB FET Programs**". This event was planned in response to considerable and ongoing changes to eligibilities and entitlements for entry and access to FET programmes. Maintaining up to date information and ensuring the information used by centres for learner access to FET programmes demands vigilance and resources. During uncertain and changeable times, knowledge of the changes, developments and extensions, or restrictions to entitlements and eligibilities is central to the learner-centred approach in City of Dublin ETB provision.

The Learner Support and Engagement service of City of Dublin ETB centres recognise these challenges and hope to develop supports and resources for City of Dublin ETB staff who may need such information.

The event gave four perspectives from staff of City of Dublin ETB, with **Michelle Morrissey** Ballymun Adult Education Guidance and Information service, **Lorraine Goulding** Ballyfermot Training Centre, **Eilish O'Connor** Cathal Brugha Street College of Further Education and **Margaret Corbett** of Employer Engagement all giving their experienced inputs.

Encouraging a 'whole of City of Dublin ETB' approach the event attracted 37 registrations, and 32 attendees. These included staff from CFE Admissions, Administration, Training Centre Recruitment, as well as FET Guidance Counsellors and services and other support and information staff. The short post-event survey showed that attendees had improved confidence in their knowledge of the issues surrounding Access, Eligibilities, Entitlements. We plan to follow up this event to offer further clarity and support.

AsIam Conference 2023

"The AsIam conference was held on Saturday 4th February in the Grand Hotel Malahide. The theme of this year's conference was "Same Chance: Removing Barriers for Autistic People" and featured informative, thought-provoking and entertaining keynote speeches from Dr Peter Vermuelen, Dr Wenn Lawson, Robyn Steward and Chloe Hayden.



Exhibitors included Specialisterene which is a specialist consultancy for autistic people and people with ADHD, dyspraxia, dyslexia etc and supports individuals in preparing for employment.



Useful resources:

- [1800 seconds on Autism](#) (Podcast)
- [Different Not Less: A Neurodivergent's Guide to Embracing Your True Self and Finding Your Happily Ever After](#) by Chloe Hayden
- [The Autism friendly Guide to Self Employment](#) by Robyn Steward
- [The Autism Friendly Guide to Periods](#) by Robyn Steward
- [The Independent Woman's Handbook for Super Safe Living on the Autistic Spectrum](#) by Robyn Steward

Watch back the plenary sessions from the conference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1RQpwOyfJY>

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|---------|--|
| 0:36:50 | Iryna Sergiyenko, 'The impact of the war in Ukraine on the Ukrainian autistic community' |
| 0:55:12 | Dr Peter Vermuelen and Amanda McGuinness |
| 2:30:05 | Wenn Lawson |
| 5:29:20 | Robyn Steward 'Embracing Independence' |
| 6:20:44 | "Promoting positive mental health in Autistic children and young people"
Dr Cat Hughes (Middletown Centre for Autism)
Michael Ryan (Counsellor/Psychotherapist and author) |
| 7:44:45 | Voices of community (Kevin Hanly, Emma Davis, Cara Darmody) |
| 8:16:55 | Chloe Hayden (Author & 'Quinni' in Netflix show Heartbreak High) |

LEARNER SURVEY 2023



One of the functions of the Learner Supports and Engagement Service is to support the development of mechanisms to capture learner voice.

This year's survey has been designed in consultation with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment subgroup of the **Quality Assurance and Development Group**.

This year's survey focusses on three areas:

- Induction
- Extra-curricular activities
- Progression/course completion

The survey will be issued to learners in FET centres on **15th March**.

Each centre will be able to access the surveys completed by their own learners in the week following the survey deadline. Analysis of the survey results from all centres will take place in late spring/early summer and will be disseminated widely thereafter.

Key Dates

15 March:	Learner Survey issued to centres for distribution
21 April:	Survey closes
Week beginning 24 April:	Centres receive the results from their learners
May-June:	Aggregated results available, analysis of results, thematic reports issued to centres

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE

City of Dublin ETB has been providing a disability service in eight of our further education colleges in collaboration with the National Learning Network (NLN) for over 20 years.

This year the service is being extended across all colleges.

Our team, alongside the Psychological Services has had a number of meetings with the NLN recently and we're looking forward to working with them in relation to learner supports. We asked **Ronan Gilmurray (NLN)** the new manager of the service to explain what is that they offer, including some new initiatives coming on stream.



Who are we?

The Student Support Service (SSS) is a joint educational service provided by the City of Dublin ETB and the National Learning Network. The support service is currently available in eight Colleges of Further Education. Each college is supported by a **Disability Support Officer**.

What do we do?

The **Disability Support Officer** meets with and supports students throughout their time in college. The support service is centred on individual need and potential supports include:

- **Academic support**
- **Assistive Technology**
- **Learning support**
- **Examination support**
- **Individual Tailored Supports**

The DSS supports students who are having either a temporary or ongoing difficulty in accessing their continuing education. The aim of the service is to support students attending City of Dublin ETB colleges and to work in partnership with college staff (psychologist, guidance counsellor, internal support staff) and external agencies. Students can access a range of expertise that will enable a truly supportive, holistic educational experience.

All students who register with the service are offered one to one needs assessments. The relevant supports are then put in place based on the recommendations of these needs assessments. This is a free and confidential service.

For more information, contact:

Ronan Gilmurray

NLN/CDET B Disability Support Services
Manager

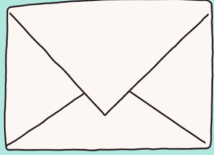
Tel: 087 336 3757

E-mail: ronan.gilmurray@nlm.ie

What's new in 2023?

- The DSS is expanding its services into a total of 13 City of Dublin ETB Colleges of Further Education.

CALLING ALL FET EDUCATORS



NEWSLETTER

We would love to share examples of innovative practice happening in centres relating to learner supports and learner engagement.

If you've contributed to, or led a project, initiative or event that is linked to any of the themes below, we'd love to hear about it and showcase it across the organisation. Or perhaps you've completed an assignment or research as part of studies you're undertaking that relates to learner support and engagement. If so, get in touch with us using [this link](#) and we'll feature it in a future edition.



Share

- Accessibility
- Disability
- Diversity
- Extracurricular/non-curricular events and initiatives for learners
- Inclusion
- Language
- Learner voice
- Learner leadership
- Literacy
- Universal Design (for Learning)
- Learner wellbeing

We can accept video, audio or text submissions.

UPCOMING SPORTS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

The City of Dublin ETB Sports and Cultural Council (SCC) promotes and co-ordinates sporting and cultural events for all full-time students. Sporting activities include a wide range of solo and team sports at both competitive and 'try-out' levels.

For enquiries on all events contact Richard Kelly at scc@cdetb.ie

Calendar of SCC events for March

Event	Date	Time	Location	Contact	Email
Swimming	08-Mar	12.00pm	(TBC)	Noel McDonagh, Ciaran Ryle	noel.mcdonagh@inchicore.cdetb.ie ciaran.ryle@inchicore.cdetb.ie
Basketball Finals	15-Mar	1.00pm	Tolka Rovers Basket ball	Richard Kelly / Liz Buttimer	richardkelly@kylemorecollege.ie elizabeth.buttimer@pcc.cdetb.ie
SCC Photography Competition	16-Mar			Martin Cregg	martinc.cregg@pearse.cdetb.ie
FE Variety Show (Stars on the Rise)	16-Mar	7.30pm	Inchicore College	Paul Doran	paul.doran@inchicore.cdetb.ie