Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Cultúr Scríbhneoireachta a Chothú í do Sheomra Ranga

PRIMARY RESOURCE
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Introduction

‘You can make anything by writing’
C.S Lewis

This manual will explore evidence-based best practices in order to support teachers as they develop a community of confident, motivated writers in their classrooms across English and Gaeilge. It presents a holistic approach, encompassing the fundamental aspects of teaching writing, whilst also acknowledging the reciprocal nature of oral language, reading and writing. Guidance is provided on how teachers may approach the teaching of writing in the contemporary classroom.

A ‘writing’ teacher can set the mood for this approach in a positive, productive manner, inviting his or her children to explore writing in meaningful, authentic ways, embracing and employing transparency, variety and engagement. To begin, teachers may ask questions such as:

**What is our current practice in relation to the teaching of writing in our school?**

**Cad é ár gcleachtas reatha maidir le teagasc na scribhneoireachta inár scoil?**

**What does writing look like in my classroom?**

**Cén chuma atá ar scribhneoireacht i mo sheomra ranga?**

In considering these questions, schools can reflect on current practices in their own schools and classrooms in relation to writing in their own unique and individual contexts.
Morrow and Gambrell (2019) provide a comprehensive compilation and review of the latest research findings and instructional practices in writing from a variety of expert contributors. Based on this research, three evidence-based best practices as outlined by Hicks (2019) in teaching writing are explored in this manual:

1. Supporting Writers’ Growth through Social Engagement as a Community of Writers
2. Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences and in many Genres
3. Making the Writing Process Transparent through Strategic and Explicit Instruction

(Hicks, 2019)

Using this Manual

Suggestions for the practical implementation of these practices are provided in English agus i nGaeilge. The three best practices are equally relevant and teachers have the autonomy to choose which aspects of each best practice to focus on, based on the needs of the children. Digital tools are referenced throughout the booklet and practical examples are shown as to how they can enhance the teaching and learning of writing. A companion padlet has been created with additional supports which be accessed at [https://tinyurl.com/PDSTWriting](https://tinyurl.com/PDSTWriting)
Symbols used in this Manual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*</th>
<th>Words with an asterisk are explained in the glossary (p.82)</th>
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<td>🛒</td>
<td>Additional suggestions and resources can be accessed on the companion padlet at <a href="https://tinyurl.com/PDSTWriting">https://tinyurl.com/PDSTWriting</a></td>
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**The Primary Language Curriculum and Transfer of Skills**

The Primary Language Curriculum is an integrated curriculum that makes connections across and within languages and that seeks to support the transfer of skills between languages. Children transfer certain skills and concepts from their first to their second language and to a third language in some instances. Identifying and focusing on skills that transfer across languages allows teachers to reinforce what has been taught in the school’s first language, using the second language (PLC, 2019). Oral language is fundamental to the development of reading, writing and learning across the curriculum in English and in Irish. Exposure to and the development of teanga ó bhéal, together with formal and informal reading experiences in Irish are key prerequisites to the development of both emergent and formal writing in Irish. This manual provides a guide to encourage teachers to reflect on and develop opportunities for transfer of skills between languages in their own context. The promotion and facilitation of transfer of skills is explored and developed in addition to practical suggestions.

**Learning Outcomes and Learning Experiences**

The learning outcomes for writing agus na torthaí foghlama for scribhneoireacht (PLC, 2019) compliment the three best practices. All of the writing outcomes are inextricably linked, including conventions of print, spelling, sentence structure and grammar, vocabulary, handwriting and presentation and can be developed through many practices and learning experiences. As learning outcomes are broad in nature, teachers may use their professional judgement and autonomy to identify aspects of the learning outcomes they wish to develop through appropriate learning experiences. Teachers can support children as they move towards developing learning outcomes in writing by providing learning experiences best suited to the needs of the children. In this manual, learning experiences are suggested to include a variety of practical activities and methodologies to support the teaching of the learning outcomes as teachers engage with the Primary Language Curriculum 2019.
Chapter 1: Supporting Writers’ Growth through Social Engagement

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Supporting Writers’ Growth through Social Engagement

‘Teachers should establish a supportive environment in their classroom to foster a community of writers who are motivated to write well’

(Graham, S. et al., 2012)

‘Teachers are largely responsible for creating a climate that is supportive and positive. The classroom needs to be a place where children are secure in the knowledge that their efforts are valued and problem solving is encouraged. There must be a time for children to reflect on their learning, to represent it in a way that is meaningful to them and to report to others what they learned.’

(First Steps Writing Resource book, 2013)

Writing is a communicative act and should be viewed in a social context. The primary goal of writing for young children is to learn to use writing effectively to communicate, to persuade, to inform, to learn, to reflect and also to entertain others. Sharing writing with one another, giving and receiving timely and specific feedback is what motivates children to write. Children experience success in a supportive, sustained community of writers in classrooms like this.

(Hicks, 2019)

The ‘writing classroom’ has a very important role in developing a community of learners that confer and share, draft and create, in a space where they are engaged with one another. Children who view themselves as ‘writers’ have been given the opportunity to spend time thinking about their writing, planning for it and sharing it with others.

In beginning to develop this Best Practice teachers can reflect on these questions:

How can we promote and foster social engagement in writing in the classroom?

Conas is féidir linn rannpháirtiocht shóisialta a chothú agus a chur chun cinn sa seomra ranga?
Socially engaging with one another throughout the writing process provides children with the opportunities to share their work in their own classrooms, and also with audiences beyond the classroom. The sharing of children’s work in the contemporary classroom can be enhanced by the use of technology. Children’s work can be shared and published in a variety of formats including e-books, blogs, podcasts, video and a virtual author’s chair.

There are specific elements that can support the promotion of an effective writing community with a shared set of social norms and mutual respect. These elements include:

- **Physical Environment**
- **Classroom Culture**
- **Opportunities for Writing**

In this section, suggestions for the practical implementation of these practices are provided in English agus i nGaeilge. This will allow teachers to reflect on opportunities for transfer of skills in their own contexts.

Chun tacú le cur i bhfeidhm praiticiúil na gnéithe seo cuirfear eispéiris foghlama ar fáil i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge. Tabharfaidh sé seo deis do mhúinteoirí machnamh a dhéanamh ar aistriú scileanna ina gcomhthéacs féin.

The integrated nature of language allows for the development of many learning outcomes in writing agus sa scríbhneoireacht as teachers work towards developing this best practice.

‘When students are excited to learn, teaching is a joy. Creating a classroom community that sparks enthusiasm for learning, and where each and every student is a valued contributor to this learning, can make that ideal a reality. Research on the relationships among classroom climate, student engagement, and achievement suggests that the culture of the classroom is shaped by many factors, including the attitudes and beliefs of the students and the teacher, the quality of classroom interactions, and the instructional practices employed by the teacher.’

(Malloy et al, 2019)
The Physical Environment

By enriching the physical environment of the classroom, multiple opportunities for engaging in writing are created. Suggestions for creating a rich physical environment are listed below.

Print rich environment:
- create a print rich environment that is meaningful and useful e.g. living charts, word lists, functional labels captions, class routines, jointly constructed reference charts and anchor charts
- displays that include a variety of vocabulary in different languages
- have a well-stocked library for children’s books with a range of different texts, newspapers, atlases, multimodal texts* and dual and second language texts. Include a special place for books the children have created so they can be re-read in the library
- display songs, poems and chants that the children are familiar with
- display a classroom ‘Topic Tree’* to scaffold ideas for writing and suggest forms of writing.

Classroom organisation:
- organise the classroom so that whole class, small group and individual activities can be conducted effectively
- cluster children’s desks so that groups can work together
- have a flipchart stand/easel where modelled and shared writing sessions can take place
- create a table/display board to display objects of personal interest/topic related resources
- provide an Author’s Chair*/corner where children can share their writing

Is the library well-stocked?
Is there a display area for childrens’ writing?
Have I thought about how best to organise my classroom?
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

- create a display space where children’s writing is shared and celebrated
- provide a listening corner with an iPad, laptop, CD player, CDs and headphones

Variety of resources:
- provide a variety of suitable writing resources to
- foster independent writing e.g. dictionaries, thesauruses, technology
- create dress-up boxes to allow spontaneous role play, to retell experiences, and experiment with new ideas and vocabulary
- have a variety of puppets and toys to encourage re-telling favourite stories
- provide a writing table or writing box with an assortment of writing implements and resources, e.g. scrap paper, notelets, postcards, crayons, markers, pencils, decorative pens etc. to encourage children to ‘have a go’
- have a choice of tools to enable children to record themselves speaking, that they can share with others. The recordings could be used for self-assessment and setting personal goals

Time to reflect: Have I created a physical environment that encourages children to write?
An Timpeallacht Fhisiciúil

Biúnn tionchar ag an timpeallacht foghlaíma ar an méid a fhoghlaimeann páistí agus conas a fhoghlaimeonn siad. Trí thimpeallacht fhisiciúil foghlaíma atá tarraingteach a chruthú sa seomra ranga, cuirfeach go leor deiseanna ar fáil do pháistí plé agus comhrá a dhéanamh.

Languages by their nature are interconnected. Developing skills in one language will help children to develop similar skills in another language, provided they have adequate exposure to the language, and adequate motivation and opportunities to engage with the language.

(Teaching for Transfer of Skills Across Languages, NCCA, 2019)

Is féidir an seomra ranga a eagrú le cumarsáid a spreagadh. Chomh maith leis na moltaí chun timpeallacht thacúil agus dearfach a chothú sa Bhéarla, seo roint moltaí a chuideoidh le timpeallacht fhisiciúil shaibhir a chruthú sa seomra ranga chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn.

Priotáin timpeall an seomra ranga

Moltar priontá a bheith feiceáil i dtimpeallacht an seomra ranga mar thacaíocht d’fhorbairt teanga na bpáistí, m.sh. fógraí gairide faoi shaol an seomra ranga, ainmneacha na bpáistí, fógraí (Cúinne na leabhar, Nimid ár láthair), póstaíreir le lipéid agus araile. Is fiú neart ábhair scríbhneoireachta a bheith ar taispeáint ar fud an seomra ranga ionas go rachaidh na páistí i dtaithí ar chineálacha éagsúla scríbhneoireachta, m.sh. teachtareachtaí, cárait, liostaí, foirmneacha, lipéid, póstaíreir, fógraí, treoracha, cuirí agus araile. Is fearr abairtí iomlána a úsáid sa Ghaeilge seachas focail aonarach agus liomladh saothar scríbhneoireachta.

Teaching for Transfer of Skills Across Languages, NCCA, 2019

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Taispeántais agus lipéid ilteangacha sa scoil (i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge)

Is fiú taispeántais agus lipéid ilteangacha a bheith le feiceáil i dtimpeallacht na scoile. Tá roinnt samplaí anseo.

Clár Gaeilge

Moltar clár Gaeilge a bheith le feiceáil i halla na scoile agus sna seomraí ranga a léirionn foclóir agus eiseamláirí teanga a bhaineann leis na téamaí, obair na bpáistí agus araile.

Réimse leathan téacsanna trí Ghaeilge

Is fiú réimse leathan téacsanna trí Ghaeilge a bheith ar fáil, m.sh. pictiúrleabhair, úrscéalta, nuachtáin, irisleabhair, leabhair deartha ag na páistí iad féin agus araile. Is féidir cumarsáid a bhunú ar théacsanna atá cumtha ag na páisti féin faoina saoil, m.sh. a nuacht phearsanta.

Rannta, dánta agus amhráin
Moltar rannta, dánta agus amhráin atá foghlamtha ag na páistí a bheith ar taispeáint ar na ballai. Cabhróidh sé seo le páistí cur amach a fháil ar struchtúir na teanga agus an teanga sin a úsáid i réimse comhthéacsanna.

Cúinne na Gaeilge
Eagraigh cúinne Gaeilge le ríomhairí glúine, iPAdanna, seinnteoir CD, CDanna agus cluasáin, frapaí agus araile. Cuir deiseanna rialta ar fáil do páistí éisteacht le raon taifeadtaí fuaime agus leabhair, leabhair a léamh, cluichí teanga a imirt, nó aon rud atá tarraingteach don pháiste.

Obair bheirte/ghrupa
Cuir go leor deiseanna cumarsáide ar fáil do pháistí chun an teanga a chleachtadh agus a úsáid i mbeirteanna nó i ngrúpaí beaga. Sealbhaítear an teanga trí chleachtadh a dhéanamh.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Classroom Culture

Teachers are largely responsible for creating a climate that is supportive and positive. The classroom needs to be a place where children are secure in the knowledge that their efforts are valued. Suggestions for creating a classroom culture that facilitates writing development are listed below.

- create a classroom culture of “have a go”
- believe that all children need to experience success as they engage in the process of writing
- develop an awareness and knowledge of cultural differences
- provide a balance in writing lessons between teacher-led activities, child-led activities and uninterrupted blocks of time where children are independent writers
- develop an awareness of whole class, small group and individual needs in relation to writing (know your class)
- provide time for sharing sessions that include children reading their work to others and providing meaningful feedback
- encourage children to set and review personal goals in writing and engage in the evaluation of their own progress
- develop and foster a culture of cooperative and collaborative writing
- ensure time is given for reflection, presentation and reporting of children’s writing
- hold high expectations for all children’s writing
- recognise the children as authors with their own unique voice

Time to reflect: Have I created a climate that is supportive and positive and where children are secure in the knowledge that their efforts are valued?
Cultúr Ranga

The teacher plays a pivotal role in supporting, promoting and fostering the transfer of skills between languages, second and other language learning in the classroom. The children’s role in the promotion of a positive language learning culture in the classroom is also important. Working together in a classroom where engagement in language learning is motivating, encouraged and valued means the above suggestions for developing classroom culture in English can easily be applied to the positive promotion of language learning in Gaeilge and other languages.

Fostering a positive disposition towards using the language and encouraging the use of Irish informally during the day supports the acquisition of the language. By teaching Irish effectively as L2, a foundation is laid for oral language, reading and writing on which the teaching of a third and possibly fourth language can be built later (PLC 2019).

Bí compordach leis an teanga!

Is é/í an múinteoir an phríomhchomhgháth na teanga i saol an pháiste ar scoil. Mar sin cabhróidh sé go mór le forbairt teanga an pháiste má tá dearadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge ag an múinteoir agus tá grá aici nó aige don teanga.

Tá sé an-tabhachtach atmaisfear ranga a léiríonn meas ar an bhfocal scríofa agus a chuireann luach ar dhearnaíocht hí scríbhneoireachta a chothú sa seomra ranga. Glac le himpíí mar chuid den phróiseas foilseachtaí agus spreag an pháiste chun dul sa seas san minic. Bionn easpa muiníní go minic ar pháistí Gaeilge a labhairt ach má tá atmaisféar sábháilte sa seomra ranga beidh fonn ar na páistí dul sa seas le freagraí míchearta.
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Gaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil
Múinteoir an Ghaeilge mar theanga bheo chumarsáide agus ni mar ábhar amháin.
Is féidir Gaeilge a úsáid:

- ag ócáidí rialta i rith an lae, m. sh. ag teacht isteach ar maidin, am lóin, ag dul abhaile. (plean samplach de nathanna cainte anseo)
- mar theanga bhainistíochta ranga, m.sh. An féidir leat an doras a oscaill le do thoil, a Mháire? Ar mhiste leat an fhuinneog a dhúnadh le do thoil, a Sheáin?
- le linn Seachtain na Gaeilge nó Céadaoin le Gaeilge, m.sh. comóritas ealaíne/céili/ceol Gaelach a chur ar siúl ag am lóin, Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine a roghnú, cluí chlois drámaíocht a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge?

Scafall mar thacaíocht!
Foghlaímionn páistí nathanna nó frásain nó focail a úsáidtear go minic i gcomhthéacsanna rialta, m.sh. Cé leis é? Is liomsa é. An bhfuil cead agam dul go dtí an leithreas? Oscail mo bhosca lóin le do thoil. Cén Ghaeilge atá ar ____?
Is fiú eiseamláiri teanga agus foclóir a bheith a theagmhail i dtementacht an tseomra ranga agus scoile.

Féach ar spléach-chártaí Snas ar Scéal atá le fáil ag:
http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/curriculum_microsite/snas_ar_sceal/

Aischothú dearfach
Moltar aischothú dearfach a thabhairt ar obair pearsanta na bpáistí go rialta. Is féidir leis an múinteoir agus na páistí an t-aischothú seo a chur ar fáil. Caithfear an teanga a bhaineann le haiseolas a mhuíneadh do na páistí roimhre agus múinleoireacht a dhéanamh ar an teanga sin.
Féach https://pdst.ie/node/5899
Cúraí luacha

Cuir cúraí luacha i bhfeidhm chun dea-iarrachtaí a mholadh, m.sh. m.sh. Gaeilgeoir den Scoth, Teastas Labhairt na Gaeilge, etc.

Tuilleadh eolais le fáil ag https://www.cogg.ie/cluichi-clois-spreag-an-ghaeilge-le-spraoi/

Éagsúlacht straitéiseí

Moltar úsáid a bhaint as raon straitéiseí éagsúla a úsáid chun páistí a spreagadh agus a gcumas cumarsáide a thorbaínt.

Tá raon acmhainní a thacóidh le teagasc na scribhneoireachta le fáil ag:
https://padlet.com/lisanicd/scribhneoireacht

Obair na bpáistí ar taispeáint sa timpeallacht

Is fiú obair na bpáistí a bheith ar taispeáint i dtimpeallacht an tseomra ranga agus na scoile, m.sh. póstaí, fógraí, dánta agus scéalta nua chumtha, ábhar détheanga agus araile.

Cúinne na Gaeilge

Moltar cúinne na Gaeilge a chur ar fáil ina bhfuil leabhair, cluichí teanga, riomhaire nó ionad éisteachta, frapáí, nó aon rud a bhíonn tarraingteach don pháiste.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Opportunities for Writing

Teachers need to provide daily time for children to engage in the act of composing text and sharing their writing with others. Suggestions for valuable opportunities for writing are listed below.

- avail of opportunities to link oral language, reading and writing within the disciplines (e.g. history, geography, science, art, physical education). Aspects of language that can be taught in these contexts include vocabulary and word choice, comprehension skills, knowledge of genre and writing processes
- model writing on a regular basis with explicit focus to
  - include a variety of approaches e.g. the 7 Step Approach
  - to Teaching a Genre and The Writing Workshop
    (See Best Practice: Making the Writing Process Transparent through Strategic and Explicit Instruction)
- establish free writing* as a basis for opportunities to practise writing regularly and as a method of assessment for learning
- encourage children to engage in speed writing* regularly. Give children the opportunity to discuss what they will write for a few minutes before they start.
- commit to daily engagement in the writing process
- give children a choice of topic and opportunities to write in a range of genre with a variety of methods including print and digital tools

Do the children know how to give meaningful feedback?

Have I timetabled for writing?
- emphasise the development of children’s voice and creativity in their writing
- provide opportunities for social interaction including responding to children’s writing through daily conferences and share sessions
- provide opportunities for children to learn the processes, craft and skills of writing through tailored, daily mini-lessons*
- use the gradual release of responsibility model and other appropriate teaching methodologies
- provide puppets, felt boards and toys to retell favourite stories, develop characters, setting etc. to improve children’s comprehension, vocabulary and imagination
- use high quality literature such as mentor texts* to underpin and support mini-lessons*
- provide a bank of mentor texts for each particular genre and refer to mentor authors*
- teach/display nursery rhymes, poems, songs, chants, raps so that children can hear and practise the structure and sounds as a foundation for writing skills
- read aloud to the children every day to improve comprehension, vocabulary and imagination
- use play as a medium to develop children’s writing, eg. at the doctor’s surgery (prescription), at the supermarket (shopping lists), at the restaurant (writing a menu, taking an order), at the post office (writing a postcard)

**Time to reflect:** Have I provided daily time for children to engage in the act of composing text and sharing their writing with others?
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Deiseanna Scríbhneoireachta

Tagann forbairt ar an scríbhneoireacht de réir a chéile agus tuigtear go dteastaíonn scafall óna páistí ionas go mbeidh siad in ann tabhairt faoin scríbhneoireacht go muiníneach. Déantar cleachtadh faoi threoir ar dtús, agus tóitear i dtreo na crutháiochta faoi mar a dhéantar le műineadh agus foghlaím na teanga labhartha. Déantar léitheoireacht agus scríbhneoireacht a fhörbairt ar bhealach chomhtháite.

Tá tábhacht ar leith ag baint le dul i dtaití agus cleachtadh a fháil ar réimse leathan téacsanna mar ullmhúchán don scríbhneoireacht.

Ní mór deiseanna a thabhairt do na páistí dul i dtaití ar chinéalacha éagsúla scríbhneoireachta sula dtugann siad féin faoi phíosa a scriobh. Is poireas céimnithe é seo agus tá sé fiorthábhachtach go bhfeiceann na páistí go bhfuil cupóir áirithe ag téacs. Tá réimse leathan téacsanna gur féidir le páisti tabhairt faoi sa scríbhneoireacht, m.sh liostai, litreacha, cáitai, dánta, cuireadh, teachtaireachtaí agus araile.

Téigh chuig e-Bulletin 2 - Writing to Socialise - Writing for Real chun neart samplaí scríbhneoireachta a theiceáil.

Saorscríbhneoireacht

Moltar deiseanna rialta a thabhairt do pháistí saorscríbhneoireacht a cleachtadh. Is féidir leo scriobh faoi rud ar bith gur mian leo. Ni chuir go mbeadh aon bhrú ar pháistí ‘méid’ áirithe a scriobh agus is féidir leis an bpáiste drogallach pictiúirí a úsáid chun an teachtaireacht a mhíniú. Tugann an saorscríbhneoireacht deis do mhúinteoirí measúnú a dhéanamh agus súil a cheinn a chruthú ar dhul chun cinn na bpáistí.

An múinteoir ag léamh os ard gach lá

Moltar go léadh an múinteoir os ard ar feedh tréimhse gach lá ar mhaithe le taitneamh, dearadh dearfach a chothú, saibhriú foclóra agus forbairt na samhlaiochta. Cloisifidh na páistí teácsanna a léamh ag léitheoir líofa agus cumasach. Lig do na páistí na leabhair a roghnú iad féin.
Cur chuige taithí teanga (Language experience approach)*

Is cur chuige é seo a thacaíonn agus a thugann scafell do pháistí de réir mar atá a gcuid scileanna scríbhneoireachta ag forbairt. Cruthaíonn an múinteoir agus na páistí an téacs le chéile agus díritear áirí na bpáistí ar ghnéithe áiríthe den scríbhneoireacht, mar shampla ainmneacha na bpáistí, litríú, poncaíocht, gnásanna cló. Is fiú tarraingt ar an téacs go rialta mar ábhar léitheoireachta agus le h-aghaidh gniomhaíochtaí teanga ó bhéal.

Téacsanna samplacha (Mentor texts)*

Is féidir leis an múinteoir úsáid a bhaint as samplaí ó éagsúlacht théacsanna agus údair chun gnéithe nó tréithe áiríthe teagaisc a léiriú. Tugann siad treoir agus tacaíocht do scríbhneoirí.

Saothair deartha ag na páistí iad féin

Is fiú deiseanna a chur ar fáil do pháistí a gcuid leabhair féin a chruthú, m.sh. an nuacht, scéalta, dánta agus araile. Is fiú deiseanna rialta a chur ar fáil dóibh saothair páistí eile a léamh chomh maith.

Leabhar pearsanta

Mar thacaíocht do pháistí agus iad ag scríobh, moltar leabhar pearsanta a bheith ag na páistí (go h-áirithe ó rang a 3 ar aghaigh). Is féidir feidhmeanna teanga/nathanna cainte agus liostaí focal bunaíthe ar théamaí, mothúcháin, dathanna, rudaí a thaitníonn/nach dtaitníonn leo a bhreacadh síos sa leabhar.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Téacsanna dátheangacha (dual language texts)
Tabhair deis do na páistí téacsanna dátheangacha a chruthú. Is féidir nathanna cainte agus struchtúir abairtí a bhaíneann leis na teangacha éagsúla a chur i gcomparáid lena chéile, rud a spreagann aistriú eolais agus a thorbráionn scileanna idir teangacha. Is féidir a leithéid de théacsanna a úsáid mar ábhar léitheoireachta amach anseo nó i gcomhair plé teanga ó bhéal. Tuilleadh eolais le fáil ag [https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/3ac44a69-57f9-49ea-80db-ebec76831111/PLC-Support-Materials_All-Strands-Final.pdf](https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/3ac44a69-57f9-49ea-80db-ebec76831111/PLC-Support-Materials_All-Strands-Final.pdf)

Sraith leabhar le Ciara Ní Dhuinn
Cló Mhaigh Eo

Opal Dunn, Cathy Gale, An Gúm
# Chapter 2: Writing for a Variety of Audiences and Purposes in many Genres

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Writing for a Variety of Audiences and Purposes and in many Genres

“Writing is a fundamental human activity. We write to fulfil many purposes in life: to create, amuse, inform, stay in touch, explain, understand, persuade, remember, learn, report, influence or discover new insights…. writing records our thinking, reaches through the mists of time and leaves our unique imprint (print or digital) on the world for generations to come.”

(Kennedy & Shiel, 2019)

It is advocated that children write for a variety of audiences and purposes and in many genres. In the PLC, (2019), Learning Outcome 6 refers to Purpose, Genre and Voice. The concept of ‘audience’ is referred to repeatedly in the learning outcome descriptor. The reciprocal nature of reading and writing is evident in that Learning Outcome 6 in writing is mirrored in the reading strand - Purpose, Genre and Voice.

Purpose and Genre

“The purpose of writing a text is to convey ideas … to another person or to record information for subsequent personal perusal, study, pleasure, etc.” (First Steps, 2013).

“Very few texts written are 'pure' with features that immediately identify them as having only one purpose. Most texts are hybrids because the writer has combined or manipulated forms, formats, media or modes to suit a particular purpose” (First Steps, 2013).
The process of writing begins when a writer recognises a purpose for writing a text. The purpose of the writing informs the child as to which genre best suits. When writing in a particular genre, children are supported to recognise a need for an authentic purpose for their writing.

Genre can be defined as categories of texts which can be identified by form, content, and style. The range of genre explored in this manual is aligned with those in the PLC (2019) which sets out a selection of written forms in order to recount, explain, entertain, inform, give instructions, narrate, persuade and justify opinions.

Each of the genre, while having a specific purpose, will also have a particular overall structure and certain specific language features or vocabulary which should be explicitly taught. (Adapted from Gibbons, 2015)

Once students are aware of the conventions of any of the genre, they will be able to manipulate them for their own purposes. They have the tools with which to be creative and autonomous. (Adapted from Gibbons, 2015)

Voice
In the PLC 2019 sense of voice refers to the development of the child's own voice and self-expression (PLC, 2019). Learning Outcome 6, stages 1 & 2, states that children develop an individual voice to share their thoughts, knowledge and experiences, while at stages 3 & 4, this outcome is further developed - use a variety of writing techniques to further develop and demonstrate an individual voice in their writing, including awareness of dialect. It is important to encourage children to progress beyond copying and rephrasing (Gardner, 2008), and affirm their voice by providing them with time to explore and develop their ideas and choices in all facets of the writing process.

Audience
The audience is the intended group of readers, listeners, and viewers that the writer, designer or speaker is addressing (PLC, 2019).

The audience for young writers must be genuine and authentic and as part of the writing process incorporating "sharing time" is essential. The classroom provides a real audience with a supportive and safe climate where young writers can feel secure in sharing their efforts. Teacher modelling of appropriate audience reaction, feedback and requirements for participation provides the foundation for enriching sharing. In the classroom context audience can take a variety of forms. Consider how pair work, group work, whole class, visitors to the classroom and online tools can provide a real audience.
As children develop as writers and write for more unfamiliar audiences, it is important that they are supported to explore the nuances that different audiences provide; audiences for engagement and appreciation or critical audiences who appraise, probe, motivate and advise.

By incorporating purpose, genre, voice and audience in their writing, children's writing will be meaningful and authentic.

For further information on the explicit teaching of genre refer to the PDST manual: *Writing Genre - A Structured Approach* and also the NCCA Writing Genres support materials for teachers at [https://tinyurl.com/PDSTWriting](https://tinyurl.com/PDSTWriting)
Why do children write?
When writing for authentic purposes, children share their thoughts and ideas in meaningful ways. There are many purposes for writing, for example to entertain, stay in touch, learn, instruct, inform or describe. Encourage children to acknowledge the purpose of their writing at the beginning of the process as this will inform the choice of genre and provide context for specific feedback.

Some of the purposes of writing and the way in which they link to genre as outlined in PLC/CTB (2019) Learning Outcome 6: Purpose, genre, and voice are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>The purpose is to</th>
<th>Séanra</th>
<th>An cuspóir atá leis ná</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recount</td>
<td>retell events</td>
<td>Athinsint</td>
<td>eachtraí a athinsint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>entertain</td>
<td>Insint</td>
<td>insint a dhéanamh nó siamsaíocht a chur ar fáil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>tell the way to do things</td>
<td>Scribhneoireacht ghnásúil</td>
<td>orduíthe nó céimeanna a thabhairt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>present factual information on a person, place, animal or thing</td>
<td>Tuairisc</td>
<td>daoine a chur ar an eolas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>persuade</td>
<td>Scribhneoireacht áititheach</td>
<td>rudaí a chur ina luí ar dhaoine nó údar a thabhairt le tuairímidí.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>explain how something came to be</td>
<td>Scribhneoireacht mhínithe</td>
<td>míniú a thabhairt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NCCA, 2019)
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Practical Implementation in the Classroom

A variety of suggestions are outlined below to support children in developing purpose in their writing.

**Mentor texts**: Mentor texts can be used as a means to identify and explore purpose. Highlight and discuss selected sentences and passages that demonstrate the intended purpose, using both published texts and children’s own writing if applicable.

Consider the use of focussed questions such as:

- *Why did the author write this text?*
- *What was the author’s intention?*
- *What is the author trying to do?*
- *What purpose does the text have?*

**Mentor texts across the curriculum**: Encourage children to compare purposes of texts from different disciplines; e.g. Compare scientific notes of observations of a volcanic explosion with historic notes of the same event.

**Mentor authors**: Discuss and categorise some well-known authors and the purposes behind their writing. Current authors and literature can be accessed at Childrens Books Ireland.

(Adapted from ILA Writer Workshop)

**Purposeful play**: Examples of writing from children’s play provides opportunities to explore purpose; e.g. shopping lists, menus, invitations etc.

**Analyse purpose**: Analyse the purpose of each of the genre.

For example: Analyse a written text – does the text fulfil the purpose? Does a recount retell events?

**Living charts**: Facilitate a class/group discussion on the purposes of writing. Make your own living chart using the children’s responses that can be continually added to.
Developing Purpose in Children’s Writing

Planning and drafting: Encourage the children to state clearly the purpose(s) of their text and the intended audience. Encourage children to select and use publishing formats that best suits the purpose e.g. website, video, portfolio.

- This is a card for Dad for his birthday
- I am writing an x on hand as reminder
- I am going to write to my granny/cousin to persuade her to…
- I’m going to design a menu for my café, a poster for my missing camera etc.

(Adapted from First Steps, 2013)

Identifying details: Discuss the inclusion of specific characters, information and events in the children’s texts. For example: The detail necessary in writing a scary narrative could include appropriate setting, atmosphere, character traits etc.

- Do they support the text in fulfilling its purpose?
- Are further details needed?

(Adapted from First Steps, 2013)

Language: Explore the effect purpose has on the language used in the text.

- Tone of the text: formal or informal
- Sentence structures: simple or elaborate
- Vocabulary: emotive or concise

(Adapted from First Steps, 2013)

Writing conventions and skills: Does the use of writing conventions and skills support the purpose of a text, both published writers’ texts and children’s own writing. For example: purposeful use of punctuation – exclamation mark, question mark etc.

- What conventions and skills are used to fulfil the purpose?
- Can the children use similar conventions and skills?

Conferencing: Provide opportunities for specific feedback or facilitate a discussion on whether the purpose of a text is clear.

- Child: Do you understand what I was trying to say in my writing?
- Is the purpose clear in my writing?
- Teacher: How could you strengthen the purpose?
- How could you make the purpose clearer?

Do the children have the opportunity to evaluate whether the text fulfilled its purpose?

Have we taught the children the purposes of writing?
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Cuspóir

The transfer of skills from one language to another can support children’s learning in both languages. Teachers can facilitate the transfer of skills and can provide opportunities for children to make clear links across languages (NCCA, 2019).

Tá sé tábhachtach go bhfeicfeadh na páistí go bhfuil cuspóir cinnte, tairbheach i scribhneoireacht na Gaeilge, gur cumarsáid thar aon ní eile atá tábhachtach agus iad i mbun pinn. Is féidir ceann ar bith de na samplaí thuas a úsáid sa Ghaeilge chomh maith ach bunús láidir teanga ó bhéal agus tacaíochtaí teanga eile a bheith ar fáil ón múinteoir agus ó théacsanna (físiúla, digiteacha, clóite srl). Chabhródh cur chuige uile-scoile maidir leis teagasc na scribhneoireachta le forbairt na bpáistí mar scribhneoirí.

Téacsanna agus údair shamplacha: Is gá go leor téacsanna samplacha a bheith ar fáil do na páistí agus iniúchadh a dhéanamh orthu chun cuspóir an údáir a aithint.

Ceisteanna samplacha:
- Cén fáth ar scríobh an t-údar an téacs seo?
- Cad a bhí ar intinn aige?
- Cén cuspóir atá leis an téacs seo?

Eispéaraí spraíúla: Tugann samplai scribhneoireachta ó spraoi na bpáistí deiseanna cuspóir a aithint mar shampla; liostaí siopadóireachta, biachláir, cuirí. riomhphoist srl.

Fócas ar Scribhneoireacht na bPáistí

Pleanáil agus dréachtú: Spreag na páistí chun cuspóir a gcuí scribhneoireacht a léiriú mar shampla:
- Tá mé ag scriobh cársa do mo mham dá lá breithe
- Tá mé ag scriobh nóta buíochais do m’aintín
- Tá mé ag scriobh póstaer do cheolchoirm na Nollag
- Tá mé ag scrobh bileog dátheangach mar tá mo mhadra cailte.

Teanga: Biónn tionchar ar leith ag an gcuspóir ar an teanga agus an struchtúr a úsáidtear sa téacs. Briathra sa mhodh ordaithe i gcás téacs gnáisúil.

Comhdháil: Is fiú deiseanna a sholáthar d'fhonn plé a dhéanamh leis an bpáiste faoina t(h)éacs i dtaobh soiléireacht an chuspóra.

An bhfuil an cuspóir sa scríbhneoireacht soiléir?
An bhféadfaíinn an cuspóir a threisiú?

Cur chuige taithí teanga (Language Experience Approach)*:
Cumfaidh na páistí abairtí d'fhonn cuspóirí éagsúla agus scriobhfaidh an múinteoir iad.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

**Cuspóir**

**Cén fáth a scriobhaimid?**

**Why do we write?**

**Cuspóir**

**To inform**

chun daoine a chur ar an eolas

**To instruct**

chun troir a thabhairt

**To persuade**

chun cur ina lui ar dhuine rud a dhéanamh

**Cén fáth a scriobhaimid?**

**To entertain**

chun siamsaiocht a chur ar fáil

**To retell events**

chun eachtrai a hathinsint

**To explain**

chun mhiú a thabhairt
Genre

This section on genre may be used in conjunction with The Writing Genre - A Structured Approach (PDST) available at Writing Genre - A Structured Approach and also Writing Genres, NCCA Support Material (2019).

Genre refers to a selection of Oral and Written forms in order to recount, explain, entertain, inform, give instructions, narrative, persuade and justify opinions. Oral Forms include but are not limited to, storytelling, drama, poetry, speeches, debates, film and digital media such as podcasts, videos, advertising, TV and radio broadcasts. More specifically, genres are types of multi-sentence oral or written texts that have become conventionalised for particular purposes. They have expected organisational patterns, as well as language features related to register, e.g. narrative, informational, persuasive and multi-genre.

(PLC 2019)

Learning Outcome 6 for Writing:
Purpose, Genre, and Voice
Stages 1 & 2: Explore and use the typical text structure and language features associated with a variety of genres
Stages 3 & 4: Use, analyse and evaluate the typical text structure and language features associated with a wide variety of genres

Genre refers to a means of categorising text. Genre can be viewed as relating to the broad social purpose of composing a text, as well as its broad format (Kennedy, Shiel, 2019). In the PLC, 2019, genre refers to a selection of oral and written forms listed here.

The processes, structures and strategies in the various genres should to be explicitly taught in order to make the process transparent for them.

When we teach the various genre structures to children we equip them with the tools and the confidence to manipulate various structures and be creative in their writing.

Madda et al. suggest that children are exposed to a “full scope of genres in order to develop their proficiency and versatility in using appropriate genre conventions” (2019). The purpose and intended audience of the text to be written will determine which genre to use.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Genre & Purpose

The purpose of writing informs the choice of genre, for example the purpose of a recount is to retell events. As children progress as writers, they should be afforded opportunities to select, use, analyse and evaluate the appropriateness of the genre to fulfil the purpose of their writing. Genre and purpose can be explored across the curriculum, for example reports can be written in history, geography or science lessons.

Genre & Form

In the PLC/CTB (2019):

**Genre** refers to a selection of oral and written forms in order to recount, explain, entertain, inform, give instructions, narrate, persuade and justify opinions.

**Form** refers to the published formats of a particular genre, e.g., poem, short story, play, novel, memo, email, film, etc.

Is féidir na foirm a chur leis i nGaeilge de réir mar a mhúintear iad.

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![Image](pdst.ie)
Purpose, Genre and Form

Purpose
To entertain my friends
_Halloween theme_

Genre
Procedural Text
- _bossy/action verbs_
- _Time connectives sequenced in order_

Form
Recipe
- _Gruesome recipe with illustrations_

The purpose will inform the genre.

The genre can take many forms

Does the text serve its purpose?
Did my text entertain my friends?

Practical Implementation in the Classroom

Consider approaches such as: 7 Steps to Teaching a Genre (Incorporating the Gradual Release of Responsibility) and/or The Writing Workshop - A Way of Writing (or a combination of both) to teach the various genre. These are further developed in Chapter 3 and teachers have the autonomy to choose aspects from both approaches to support the development of writing in the classroom.

These approaches can scaffold the children in the beginning phases and support children to find their voice as a writer and continue their development as creative, confident writers.

How do I approach the teaching of genre?

Use of authentic texts such as recipes, letters, diary entries, together with mentor texts* in various genre can be used to support children as they gain confidence in experimenting in the genre.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Seánra Scribhneoireachta

An bhfuil go leor samplaí feicthe ag na páistí i ngaeilge?

Engage children in the writing process in both languages as they are engaging with the various genres. It is important to reference the home languages even if children have not yet learned to read or write in them. In other words, the full linguistic repertoires of all children are continually activated, feeding into whatever activity is taking place (NCCA, 2019).
Cultúr Scribhneoireachta a Chothú i do Sheomra Ranga

Tabhair deis do na páistí na seánraí a chleachtadh sa Ghaeilge chomh maith. Cuir téacsanna samplacha sna seánraí éagsúla ar fáil. Cé go bhfuil an struchtúr céanna ag an seánaí sa dá teanga tugann scribhneoireacht mhúnlaith agus scribhneoireacht roinnt deis do na páistí teacht isteach ar théarmaíocht na Gaeilge. Tabhair deis dóibh téacsanna a scriobh le tacaíocht agus déan cinnte go bhfuil bunús láidir theanga ó bhéal ag na páistí. Úsáid na téarmaí céanna tríd an scóil leis na páistí agus iad ag plé leis na seánraí.

Téacsanna samplacha: Tabhair deis do na páistí scagadh a dhéanamh ar leabhair simplí Ghaeilge a bhfuil seánraí éagsúla le feiceáil iontu. Tríd na leabhair seo a phlé tugtar deis dóibh teacht isteach ar an teanga atá iontu agus na cosúlachtaí leis na seánraí Béarla a aimsiú.

Cairteacha beo: Sa Ghaeilge déan cárta beo nó ‘living chart’ atá leagtha amach mar an gcéanna leis an gceann Béarla chun go dtuigfidh na páistí go bhfuil an fráma céanna ag an seánra sin sa Ghaeilge.

Féach Na Seánrai Scribhneoireachta PDST agus ábhar tacaíochta Na Seánrai Scribhneoireachta NCCA (2019).
Teaching Genre

In this section the teaching of seven genre are explored under the following headings:

- an explanation
- a fact sheet (available as download)
- suggestions for the classroom
- samples of texts.

These suggestions are also suitable to use as Gaeilge.

Further information, ideas and resources are available at https://tinyurl.com/PDSTWriting

Narrative Texts

The purpose is to entertain. A narrative tells an imaginative story (some can be based on facts).

Main features of a narrative include defined characters, a setting, problem or complication, descriptive language and are usually in the past tense (NCCA, 2019).

- sequence pictures or paragraphs of the events in a story – story reconstruction
- retell part of a story then next child continues – story circle
- read a story to the children and ask them to identify each of the following: characters, setting, problem, resolution
- get into character using masks, pictures, puppets or props, children 'hotseat' the character - role play
- retell or write a story from a different point of view, for example Red Riding Hood was a naughty little girl who didn’t listen to her mother and was cruel to animals
- use the five senses to deepen children’s engagement and comprehension during a particular point in a story. Stop reading and ask the children: what can you see, smell, taste, hear and feel? Children could reply orally or in writing
- show only the pictures in a story book, ask children to tell the story by drawing on the information in the pictures
- set up a ‘listening station’ - groups of children listen to recorded stories or audiobooks
- PDST e-bulletin 1 focuses on the skills and language of describing. These activities and resources can be used to develop the language of describing in narrative writing and in other genre. The e-bulletin can be accessed on the PDST website.
Cultúr Scribhneoireachta a Chothú i do Sheomra Ranga

**Recount Texts**
The purpose is to retell events. Main features of a recount include events in time order, linking words to do with time, simple past tense (NCCA, 2019).

- create shared experiences that can then be re-told or written by children in pairs, small groups or recorded, for example blowing bubbles, PE or a school trip. Teacher scribes for children during shared writing and uses the subsequent text for reading activities
- provide pictures of shared events which can be sequenced in the correct order for retelling. Alternatively, in small groups write each event on a sentence strip, while another group sequence the strips
- teacher acts as a scribe and records class news in the form of a recount each day for a week – class diary. Display recounts, collate and include in the class library. Reread regularly. Older children may wish to keep their own weekly diary
- retell picture books to a partner or group
- encourage children to compose their own biographies, or recount the autobiographies of others: family members, sports people, musicians, etc. - (auto) biographies
- use simple templates or living charts to organise recounts. Children draw, label or write simple sentences about their news under headings such as ‘where, who, what, when, why’

A video showing a class engaging with report writing can be found on the PDST website, under the literacy and writing tab at **Recount Texts**.
create opportunities for shared experiences including, cooking, games, PE and art for the whole class. After the event write the procedure and share it with another class to trial. Request feedback on the procedure.

provide opportunities for children to give oral directions using the language ‘first, next, then, finally’, for example how to play a game in PE or maths.

take photographs or draw pictures, record and present procedures orally using PhotoStory 3, Audacity or other tools. These procedures can be shared with a variety of audiences, for example other classes/parents.

children label pictures or displays of materials.

provide a template for parents and invite them to share a favourite recipe or the rules of a favourite game with their child. Design and create a class book.

A video showing a class engaging with procedural texts can be found in ‘Examples of Children’s Language Learning’ under ‘Purpose, genre and voice’ at www.curriculumonline.ie.
Cultúr Scribhneireachta a Chotú i do Sheomra Ranga

Report Texts
The purpose is to present factual information on a person, place, animal or thing. Main features of a report include classification, description, summary, subject specific vocabulary and objective language (NCCA, 2019).

- create, label and display items, for example Irish animals, mini beasts, our favourite toys
- provide opportunities for children to play oral language games, encourage the use of descriptive language, for example I spy, Spot the Difference, Picture talks: Who am I? What am I? 20 questions, True or false
- invite a guest speaker to the class, children prepare questions in advance
- note interesting descriptive language on a living chart.
- create a living chart using facts and opinions encountered when reading. Teacher uses ‘think aloud’* to model determining fact from opinion

A video showing a class engaging with report writing can be found on the PDST website, under the literacy and writing tab at Recount Texts.

*Think aloud: a technique used to guide the mental processes of an individual by verbalizing thoughts aloud. It is a form of self-scaffolding that can help students understand how to solve problems and complete tasks.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

**Explanation Texts**

The purpose is to explain how something came to be. Main features include a definition, description of various parts, how or why it works and summary (NCCA, 2019).

- Model the use of cause and effect words: signal words that indicate cause and effect when giving oral explanations, for example so, makes, brings about, causes, results in, because, when…then. Create living charts with this vocabulary
- Provide opportunities for children to play oral language games that encourage the use of ‘cause and effect’ language, for example ‘Finish the Sentence’: When I didn’t do my homework… I left my bike in the rain so…
- Play barrier games for example, one child explains, the other child guesses what’s being explained
- Create displays with ‘wonder’ questions elicited from the children: I wonder why.. / I wonder how.. / we wonder if…
- Create mind maps, word webs and explanations for a given topic using sketch pads, [www.mindmeister.com](http://www.mindmeister.com) or mindmup app. Children research the topic to add more scientific information, or technical language.
- Use analogies to make comparisons, for example, the operations of a computer can be compared to the workings of the brain.
Exposition Texts
The purpose is to persuade. Main features include arguments for/against, evidence, conclusion, mainly timeless present tense and use of passives (NCCA, 2019).

- discuss persuasive phrases. Consider which phrases are most persuasive and what is it about the language that makes them so
- write letters to the teacher to justify a day off homework or extra yard time.
- encourage children’s input into school policies, for example policy regarding uniform or healthy eating
- analyse advertisements and leaflets to identify persuasive techniques
- organise debates with subject matter stemming from children’s current interests and knowledge
- analyse famous speeches for persuasive features and use these persuasive techniques, for example nominations for School Council, Green Flag committee, Class Captain
- create persuasive posters and advertisements for various in-school promotions, for example cake sales, walk to school, infomercials

Poster as persuasive text
Dán ar Powerpoint
Exposition text using ‘speech to text’ option on pages app on iPad
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Texts for Socialising
Writing is an important social practice and that there is an expectation they (the children) will join a community of writers who use writing for different purposes (First Steps, 2013).

- provide authentic contexts for children to write freely for social purposes, for example letterbox, message pads, notice boards
- role play conversations could occur, for example shopkeeper, post office, doctor’s surgery
- reinforce the use of courteous language and behaviours. Consider the use of puppets to model the language of socialising.
- provide opportunities for children to engage in activities which allow for both role and character to be explored, for example answering phone as mam or dad, taking on role and characteristics of teacher
- encourage the children to create a myriad of texts to socialise, for example missing posters, circus advertisements, birthday invitations, birthday cards, special occasion cards, postcards from holidays, emails and blogs, update social media pages for school, green schools committee

Further ideas regarding ‘Writing to Socialise’ can be found in e-bulletin 2 on the PDST website at: Writing to socialise - writing for real
Do we hear children’s voices in their writing?

Graves (1983) suggests that “voice…is the part of the self that pushed the writing ahead, the dynamo in the process. Take the voice away and the writing collapses of its own weight. There is no writing, just words following words.”

The child’s voice is what makes their writing unique, allowing them to have and share opinions, be creative and express their individuality.

As Grainger, T., Goouch, K., & Lambirth, A. (2005) suggest “there is no formula for voice”. The child’s writing voice can be developed by providing ‘choice’ in the writing process and can include all forms of text, talk and multimodal communication.

Encourage the child’s voice in their writing by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Crafting</th>
<th>Publishing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>choice of tools: pen, paper, digital tools: oral recordings, apps such as mindmup</td>
<td>choice of methods: bullet points, sentences, illustrations, graphic organisers</td>
<td>foster children’s awareness of text, for example printed/typed, visuals - sketched, cartoons, cut-outs or digital images, recordings, multimodal texts*, digital texts: eBooks, class blog, school website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choice of methods: bullet points, sentences, illustrations, graphic organisers</td>
<td>encourage children to communicate their humour, attitude, feelings and tone regarding topics and to develop their personal writing style</td>
<td>allow for differences in the amount, pace and length written</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sense of voice refers to the development of the child’s own voice and self-expression (agency) (PLC, 2019).

Learning Outcome 6: Purpose, Genre, and Voice

Stages 1 & 2: Develop an individual voice to share their thoughts, knowledge and experiences

Stages 3 & 4: Use a variety of writing techniques to further develop and demonstrate an individual voice in their writing, including awareness of dialect.
Practical Implementation
A variety of suggestions are outlined below to support children in developing voice in their writing.

Classroom culture: Support children in discovering and developing their own writing voice through a respectful, supportive class culture.

Freedom: Allow the children the freedom to write personal thoughts, feelings and topics that are important to them.

Mentor authors and texts*: Highlight and discuss selected sentences and passages that demonstrate voice, using both published texts and children’s own writing if applicable. Ask questions such as:
What do we learn about the author in this text?
How did we discover this?
Why do you think the author said that?

Time and support: Facilitate the development of a child’s sense of ‘personal voice’ and individual writing style by providing time and support, for example peer and teacher conferencing, writing buddies, writing circles

Class/school library: Include a wide variety of texts which promote inclusivity and reflect the languages, cultures and beliefs of all children. Encourage children to choose texts for the library, including texts from home. Make time & space for children’s recommendations using book swaps, book sells (Adapted from Coghlan, 2008).

Language of response: Teach the children the language of response, for example sentence starters which will support them in voicing their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Refer to the PDST E-bulletin Response and Author’s Intent for more ideas.

Are all voices respected in the classroom?
Are children provided with opportunities to share their voice?
Do children understand what ‘voice’ is?
Making choices: Provide scaffolding to support children’s in making choices for example topic tree*, expert lists* (Geiger, 2013) and allow time to confer with teacher/peer.

Materials: Provide a variety of materials for writing such as copybooks, A4, A3 pages: lined and unlined, coloured paper, post its, newspapers, paint, whiteboards, blackboards, screens, tablets, computers, phones, magazines, stencils.
Implements: pens, pencils, twistables, crayons, markers, chalk, stickers, highlighters, magnetic letters, foam letters and playdough.

Writing space: Co-create and decorate a space for writing. Consider space, light, comfort and accessibility of materials.

Developing Voice in Children’s Writing
Voice can be developed at any stage of the writing process and can be teacher-led/child-led/peer-led. Consider the following:

Dialect: Encourage children to use their own dialect in writing scripts and role-plays. Acknowledge occasions where the language may need to be a little more formal and the use of dialect may be inappropriate.

Development of voice: Provide opportunities to reread previous written texts and note any difference from their current voice.

Conferencing: Discuss whether the child’s voice is clear in the task using probing questions such as:

- What would you like to write about?
- How are you planning to go about this?
- How do you feel about this topic?
- Where can I see that in your text?
- Can you voice your opinion more clearly?
- What kind of language will you use to do this?
- Is there anything else you’d like to say about this topic?

Mechanics of Writing: Using picture books and big books discuss how the mechanics of writing can reveal ‘voice’, for example bold print, word choice, illustrations, intentional punctuation.
Teacher as scribe: Scribe texts with the children and encourage them to focus on thoughts and feelings.

Linguistic diversity: Provide opportunities to create texts in a home language or in dual, or multi-lingual texts.

Critical literacy: Recognise and discuss voices, images or vocabulary which portray prejudice, stereotyping or bias, for example explore newspaper reports, webpages or podcasts.

Poetry: Explore poetry to identify poet’s voice and compose poetry to share their own voice, feelings and personal response.

Self-assessment: Encourage self-assessment of the child’s use of voice using questions such as:

- Are my unique thoughts, ideas and tone clear?
- Does my chosen method of publication clearly convey my voice?

Annotate a text highlighting the areas where the child feels they have portrayed their voice.

- Why is this important to me?
- How do people know this is me?
- Can you hear my voice in this piece?

Suggested Activities

Text from a different point of view: Look at familiar narratives from a different point of view, for example the wolf in The Three Little Pigs, the witch in Snow White, the bears in Goldilocks.

What would … say? Use role-play, drama and improvisation to stimulate the development of voice, for example

- What would mammy say if you lost your coat?
- What would the teacher say if you won a competition?
I think/you think: Children write sentences about how they feel about various things and compare responses, for example write a sentence about dogs, school, night time, cars, dinner

Guess the author: Read passages from familiar authors

Can you hear the author’s voice?

What makes this author’s style unique to them?

Develop this by reading examples from the children’s writing

Can we hear the author’s voice in these examples?

Can we guess the author? (Adapted from First Steps, 2013)

Jump into a text: Encourage children to choose familiar texts and personalise them, for example change the setting, create an alternative ending, introduce new characters, alter characters, extend the story

Is féidir na smaointe thuas a úsáid sa Ghaeilge chomh maith.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Guth

“Literacy in a second language develops as in the first – globally, not linearly, and in a variety of rich contexts” (Rigg & Allen in Gibbons, 2015).

Tá sé tábhachtach béis a leagadh ar ghuth agus ar chruthaíocht an pháiste i scribhneoireacht na Gaeilge chomh maith. Is fiú fiú-théacsanna a bheith ar fáil do pháistí ina bhfuil a nghuthanna féin agus ‘ghuth’ an údair le cloisteáil iomtu chun é seo a shoiléirí dóibh. Ní mó rann le teanga a bhaineann le cumarsáid idirphéarsanta a mhuineadh go sonrach le go mbeidh misneach ag na páistí a nguthanna féin a chur in iúl.

**Fíor leabhair:** Cuir réimse leathan fíor leabhair ar fáil do na páistí in Gaeilge a bhfuil a nguthanna féin agus guth an údair le sonrú iomtu.

**Uirlís éagsúla:** Úsaid neart uirlísí scribhneoireachta sa cheacht scribhneoireachta Gaeilge: dathanna éagsúla, paipéir éagsúla: A3, A4, A5, nótaí, greamáin, ipad, riomhaire.

**Saorscribhneoireacht:** Cuir deisanna saorscribhneoireachta ar fáil do na páistí agus cuir tacaíochtaí teanga ar fáil dóibh mar shampla cairteanna beo, foclóir, póstaer, leabhair éagsúla

**Leabhair dhátheangacha:** Bain úsáid as leabhair dhátheangacha (nó ilteangacha) chun go mbeidh na páistí níos muinínne a nguthanna a chur in iúl.

**Suim na bpáistí:** Lig do na páistí a gcuid topaice féin a bhfuil suim acu iomtu a roghnú. Teastóidh neart scalfadh agus tacaíocht chun an teanga a chleachtadh.
Who are the children writing for?

Authentic communication for different audiences, both familiar and unfamiliar is essential when children engage in writing activities, their writing is designed for someone else to read (Hicks, 2019).

Classrooms provide a safe, supportive environment for the children to become both authors and audience. Accordingly, children need to learn to listen for details, ask questions and state what they like about the piece of writing (Kennedy & Shiel, 2019).

Pair work, group work, whole class, visitors to the classroom and online platforms provide audiences for the children.

**Learning Outcome 6 for Writing: Purpose, Genre, and Voice**

Stages 1 & 2: Draw and write with a sense of … audience

Stages 3 & 4: Create text … demonstrating an increasing understanding of the influence of the audience on their work

**Familiar Audiences** can include self, friends, siblings, relatives, pen pal, classroom toys, peers, teachers, principal or family friends, partners and other adults.

**Unfamiliar Audiences** can include public figures, school website, writing competitions, letter to political leader, newspaper or journal article.

*The audience is the intended group of readers, listeners, and viewers that the writer, designer or speaker is addressing* (PLC, 2019).
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Practical Implementation
Creating a supportive and positive classroom culture where children get a chance to share their writing and develop a sense of ‘audience’ is essential for writing development. Suggestions are outlined below to support children as they develop an awareness of ‘audience’ in their writing.

Sharing time: Provide sharing time during writing sessions where children can share their texts, with the whole class, in groups or pairs. Activities such as writing circles, writing buddies or partners as editors can provide enjoyable learning experiences. Agreed procedures for participation in sharing time are best established as a class (Adapted from NCCA, 2019).

Use of texts: Use texts to support children to see themselves as an ‘audience’. Suggested questions:
- Who is the intended audience?
- What did this text mean to you?
- Could it mean something else to others?
- What techniques did the author use to get your attention?
- What techniques did the author use to hold your attention?

The language of response and feedback: Teach the language of response and feedback so that children have the confidence to share their responses as an ‘audience’. Further ideas may be found in the PDST E-bulletin Response and Author’s Intent

Collaborative writing: Facilitate opportunities for children to write collaboratively so that they consider writing as a social, interactive act and engage with an audience throughout the writing process.
Developing a Sense of Audience in Children’s Writing

Modelling: Teacher models ‘audience’ in their writing by sharing their intended audience:

This is a card for Dad
I’d like to let the Taoiseach know that….
I am going to write to my granny/cousin to say…

Living charts: Create living charts outlining the specific language suitable for familiar and unfamiliar audiences for example a letter to granny describing a school tour will differ in language, tone and personal details from a letter to the principal.

Conventions of print: Discuss the use of appropriate conventions of print to provide clarity of text for the ‘audience’, for example the use of question marks, capitalisation, quotation marks and spacing

Publishing: Consider how to publish text in a manner that will best suit the audience and purpose, for example would it be best to make a poster display, send out a brochure or communicate online?

Digital technology: Use digital technology to provide an authentic link with an audience, familiar (family, grandparents) and unfamiliar (wider public) using tools and platforms appropriate to the audience. Ensure audience responses can be facilitated in a safe, supportive manner.

Author’s chair, or Cathaoir an Údair* can be a special area/place where children have an opportunity to showcase their texts (Graves and Hansen, 1983).

Feedback: Discuss if the intended message of the text is clear.

Is the message clear?
Are more details required?
What extra details does the reader need to know?
Should your language be formal or informal?
What do they find interesting - or how can you pique and maintain their interest?
Considering your audience, would this be better written in another language?

Self and Peer Assessment: Provide opportunities for the children to respond to texts using checklists, rubrics and other strategies such as ‘Two Stars and a Wish’, ‘What Went Well/Even Better If’ (WWW/EBI).
Suggested Activities to Develop a Sense of Audience

Personal writing: Discuss and compare the style used when writing for yourself and when writing for others, for example compare a shopping list for yourself with one that you would write if someone else is going to do the shopping. What would be different?

Class journal: Consider journal entries, which form part of a class diary, and are to be shared with a familiar audience. Decide on a special class object, for example a teddy, which the children take turns in bringing home. Children can, with help from an adult if necessary, write journal entries describing their adventures together. Senior classes could share a class diary, where each child writes an entry and the diary is passed on (adapted from First Steps, 2013).

Travelling journal: This journal can be shared with both familiar and unfamiliar audiences. Children create a 2D character and send it to their own or another school, a celebrity, a family member, a politician or anyone of interest. The recipient returns the 2D character along with a completed journal of the character’s adventures (adapted from The Flat Stanley Project, Hubert, 1995).

Greetings: Discuss and compare greetings, both orally and written. Draw the children’s attention to how they change depending on the audience, for example, greeting your friend, your granny or the principal.

Who will be my audience? In this activity children brainstorm and list possible audiences for their writing (adapted from First Steps, 2013).

Presentation to an audience: Create invitations and invite audiences such as parents, grandparents or other classes to a sharing session, where children have the opportunity to showcase their texts.

Change the audience: It can be beneficial for children to understand how text changes depending on the audience, for example a shared experience such as ‘The Class Picnic’ will be presented in different ways depending on the audience - principal, parents, friends or on the school website. Provide time to compare and discuss drafts so that the children see the variations depending on audience (adapted from First Steps, 2013).
Letters/Postcards: Writing letters and postcards to various people can be an authentic way of providing an ‘audience’ for the writer. Digital technology can be incorporated by the use of ‘key pals’, similar to pen pals.

Posters: Create posters for various purposes and audiences, in school, at home and for unknown audiences.

Advertising/junk mail: Discuss the target audience for different texts. Collect junk mail and discuss who the target audience may be and the techniques used to target the various audiences (adapted from First Steps, 2013).

Publish a newspaper: Encourage children to design a newspaper which can be shared with the school community. Each child’s specific areas of interest can be catered for. Children are reminded to consider the needs of the audience. Cuir téacsanna i nGaeilge agus i dteangacha eile san áireamh.

Share a text: Invite children in one class to create texts to be shared with another class. For example, children in the senior classes could create texts in the various genre for the junior classes. Children could research the interests of the junior classes and pitch the content and language of their texts appropriately.

Is féidir na samplaí thuas luaite a úsáid sa Ghaeilge chomh maith.
Is é an chuid is tábhachtaí den scribhneoireacht ná go mbeadh páistí ag roinnt a gcuid smaointe le daoine eile. Tá sé tábhachtach sa Ghaeilge chomh maith go bhfaighidh na páistí deis a bheith ag scriobh do lucht léite atá fior, taobh istigh agus taobh amuigh den seomra ranga.

Cuir deiseanna ar fáil do na páistí a gcuid téacsanna a roinnt leis an múinteoir agus leis na páistí eile sa ghrúpa nó sa rang. D’fhéadfadh páistí sna hardranganna a gcuid téascanna a a dhearadh agus a roinnt le páistí sna bunranganna chomh maith agus a mhalairt. Cuir téacsanna na bpáistí ar fáil ar shuíomh gréasáin na scoile do lucht léite níos leithne. Scriobh litir le chéile i nGaeilge agus seol í chuig duine cáiliúil mar shampla spóirt nó duine cáiliúil sa cheantar. Cuir cairde pinn ar bun le páistí i scoil eile.

**Comhdháil:** Tabhair deis do páistí a gcuid scribhneoireachta a roinnt lena chéile agus comhdhálacha a dhéanamh leis an múinteoir sa Ghaeilge freisin.

**Póstaer:** Cruthaigh póstaí nó fógraí simplí i nGaeilge le taispeáint lastigh agus lasmuigh den scoil.

**Ábhair suime ar leith:** Lig do na páistí téacsanna a scriobh i nGaeilge bunaithe ar a n-ábhair suime agus spreag iad na téacsanna a roinnt le páistí eile.

**Leabhair dátheangacha:** Cruthaigh téacsanna dátheangacha (nó itheangacha) le freastal ar lucht léite éagsúla.
Purpose, genre, voice and audience have been explored individually but there is a clear interconnection and interdependence between them in the process of writing. Children may begin with their purpose, with a strong personal opinion, with a favourite genre or with a particular audience in mind.

How could I explore and develop the interconnection and interdependence between purpose, genre, voice and audience?

- Facilitate discussion on purpose and audience and how this will inform which genre is most suitable.
- Encourage children to voice what they wish to say regarding a topic and how they wish to say it.
- Explore expectations for the task and provide supporting materials and activities.

(Adapted from Gardner, 2008)

‘By engaging students in a variety of writing activities - and encouraging them to explore the nuances that different audiences, purposes and genres will provide - teachers will help their students become more confident and capable in a variety of writing contexts’

(Hicks, 2019).
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

The diagram below details some connections between purpose, genre, voice and audience based on the topic of bees.
Many stimuli can be used to develop children’s creativity in their writing. Films, texts, posters, photographs, children’s artwork or pieces of music can all be useful.

**Pictures:** In groups/pairs, the children can use the stimulus for varying purposes: to inform, to amuse, to explain etc. and again encouraged to consider audience, voice and form.

**Writing prompts:** Children create their own lists and write about something from their own choosing. Writing prompts could also stem from class discussion. Encourage discussion of purpose and audience and knowledge of the various genre.

**Music:** Play a piece of music and ask children what they see and feel as they listen. They can record and discuss the various responses and this may provide a stimulus for an individual or a collaborative writing piece. ‘The Carnival of the Animals (Le Carnaval des Animaux)’, composed by Camille Saint-Saëns consists of 14 short movements and may provide a good starting point.

**Mentor texts:** Many children’s books explore writing and the vast creative possibilities it provides and these could stimulate discussion and writing. Some examples include ‘The Day the Crayons Quit’ by Drew Daywalt. ‘Once Upon an Ordinary School Day’ by Colin McNaughton. ‘Library Mouse #1’ by Daniel Kirk and ‘Author: A True Story’ by Helen Lester. Samples of mentor texts in English agus as Gaeilge in many forms and genre can be found on the Best Practices writing padlet.

**Digital stimuli:** Listed here are some websites providing visuals which may motivate talk and discussion and creativity in children’s writing. Mar gur spreagadh físiúla iad seo; d’fhéadfaí úsáid a bhaint astu sa Ghaeilge chomh maith agus tacaíocht bhreise a thabhairt do na páistí maidir le foclóir, nathanna srl.

www.pobble365.com  
www.literacyshed.com  
www.onceuponapicture.co.uk  
www.nationalgallery.ie  
https://explorify.wellcome.ac.uk/
Chapter 3: Making the Writing Process Transparent with Strategic and Explicit Instruction

7 Steps to Teaching a Genre ................................................................. 62

The Writing Workshop - A Way of Writing........................................ 69
Making the Writing Process Transparent with Strategic and Explicit Instruction

‘Strategy instruction involves explicitly and strategically teaching steps necessary for planning, revising and editing text’.

(Graham, S. and Perin, D., 2007)

Writing well involves more than simply documenting ideas as they come to mind. It is a process that requires the writer to think carefully about the purpose for writing, plan what to say, plan how to say it, and understand what the reader needs to know.

Teachers can help children become effective writers by teaching a variety of strategies for carrying out each component of the writing process and by supporting children in applying the strategies until they are able to do so independently.

Over time, children will develop a repertoire of strategies for writing. Teachers should explain and model the fluid nature in which the components of the writing process work together, so that children can learn to apply strategies flexibly - separately or in combination - when they write.

(Adapted from readingrockets.org)

Guidance is provided in this section on how teachers may approach the explicit teaching of writing using two suggested instructional frameworks - The Writing Workshop and the 7 Step Approach to Teaching a Genre. These frameworks, which incorporate the essential features of transparent and explicit instruction, may be used to support and scaffold children as they develop as writers.

Teachers have the autonomy to choose aspects from both instructional frameworks to support the development of writing in the classroom.
Suggested Instructional Frameworks and The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson and Gallagher, 1983) underpins these two frameworks. This involves moving children from a supportive context, where the teacher has a high degree of control (modelling), to a more independent context where the child has more control (independent application). The long-term goal is that all children can select and use writing processes flexibly and independently during any writing event.

(Adapted from First Steps Writing Resource Book)
The 7 steps to teaching a genre incorporates a variety of evidence-based approaches to teaching writing. Primarily, the 7 steps to teaching a genre draws on First Steps Writing which in turn combines a number of ideas to generate a practical approach to teaching writing in schools.

Research, including work of Graves and Johnson, informs and advocates a problem-solving approach to teaching writing. Emphasis is also placed on writing ‘for real’, that is, writing in meaningful contexts where children are writing for authentic purposes with a specific audience. It is important to note that this process is not necessarily a linear one, that different elements will be drawn upon at different times depending on the needs of the children, and the elements of writing that are being taught at any given time.
Step 1: Familiarisation

Familiarisation describes the ways in which teachers raise children's awareness and activate their prior knowledge. It involves children reading, discussing, listening to or viewing samples of the genre. Children should be given many opportunities to familiarise themselves with the genre through engagement in oral and reading activities associated with the genre e.g. exploration of sample displays (samples of a genre on flipcharts, posters) and through the exploration of mentor texts* in English agus in Gaeilge. Children will become aware of the features of the chosen genre, e.g. recounts/reports/expositions by:

- talking about the purpose
- identifying the possible intended audience
- drawing attention to the text organisation
- highlighting the type of language used

Step 2: Analysing and discovering the framework of a particular genre

Using a problem-solving approach, children discover and analyse the framework of a genre. There are two suggested approaches:

One text/direct model: Using an exemplar (on a flipchart, poster or slide), class discussion is facilitated to identify the particular features of the genre such as labelling the structure, e.g. beginning, middle and end and highlighting language features, e.g. adjectives, past tense words and time connectives.
**Multi-text model:** Using a variety of samples, children discuss the merits of each in terms of language used, structure, purpose, audience and voice.

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**A day out at the Beach!**

On Saturday I went to the beach in Tramore with my family because it was a beautiful day. In the morning I packed all my equipment into my blue sports bag. We set off at eleven o’clock. I was feeling very excited.

After an hour and a half, we reached our destination. As Dad parked the car in our usual spot near the beach I gathered my bag and my towel. First Barry and I raced down a narrow path to the sea. I could see the water glistening and glittering and felt the warm and under my bare feet. We were ecstatic. When Mam and Dad caught up we laid our towels out and Dad erected our striped sun umbrella.

After that we dashed down to the sea shore. I jumped back when the water came close to my toes. Eventually I was brave enough to leap into the freezing cold water! Barry and I played in the water and on the beach for what felt like hours.

Next, we ate our lunch. I was ravenous! When we had finished eating Mum and I went for a walk along the beach while Barry and Dad made an enormous hole in the ground. Then I built a immense castle beside the hole.

Soon afterwards the sun began to set over the water and Mam announced that it was time to go home. I was sad to leave the beach and slowly packed up all my shovels, buckets and my towel. I was exhausted after our really busy day.

Finally, we arrived home and I rang my granny to tell her all about our trip to the beach. I had an incredible day.

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**A Trip to the Beach**

Yesterday my family went to the beach. When we got to the beach, we went to the shop to buy a new shovel for Ciara.

After getting the shovel we went down to the beach. The sun was shining high in the sky. I was very excited. Then I played on the beach with Ciara.

Before lunch we went for a swim in the cold water. Ciara shrieked when Dad sneaked up behind her and poured a bucket of water over her head. I thought it was hilarious. Then he chased after me!

After lunch we built a mountain out of sand. I collected stones and shells to put around it. When we returned home we were tired but happy because we had so much fun.

---

**The Beach**

We went to the beach. It started to rain. In the morning it was sunny and we got into the sea. We had lunch, I ate an apple, and two cheese sandwiches and a yoghurt. I had a lemon cupcake too. We played in the waves. Then we had lunch. Then we built a huge sandcastle. We had fun at the beach. Then it started to rain. Then we drove home in the car. I ran to the car and put my towel and my bag in the boot. Then we went home.

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**Topic preparation**

Having completed familiarisation and discovery activities, prepare the children for writing on a particular topic. Provide adequate time for children to engage in topic preparation at all stages of writing.

Activities which support topic preparation, include:

- KWL
- Brainstorm
- Oral report
- Researching the topic
- Word banks
- Describing prompts
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Step 3: Modelled Writing

Modelled writing involves “the teacher composing texts in front of the class, thinking aloud about what is being done and explaining decisions” (Evans, in PDST The Writing Genre 2014).

Using a specific coloured marker and “thinking aloud”, write or scribe, to explicitly model how decisions are made about what content to include or omit and what language to use. Explain to the children that their role is to listen while the teacher’s role is to model the strategy. Expose children to several modelling sessions and have a clear focus for each session.

Think Aloud is a technique which allows the teacher to make the implicit thinking process explicit for her pupils, allowing them to improve their comprehension by understanding how and why a reader uses strategies. Using Think Aloud the teacher reads a passage, stopping periodically to “unlock her brain” for her children by verbalising what is going through her head as she applies a strategy.

(Adapted from Building Bridges of Understanding)

The use of props such as a hula-hoop or a ‘think aloud’ cap indicates the think aloud session.

For more information see https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/think_alouds
The explicit teaching of strategies modelled by the teacher can be enhanced by the use of technology. The use of the flipped classroom* where lessons are created in digital form and show the teacher modelling various strategies, are shared with the children, e.g. creating a describing word bank, developing story starters. Children can return to these regularly as a means of support.

Step 4: Shared Writing

Shared writing provides the teacher with an opportunity to encourage/introduce language features of the text such as language of conviction in persuasive writing and because children are focusing on the thinking–composing process without the additional task of transcribing, shared writing frees their imagination and helps them gain confidence in writing independently. Shared writing engages the children in talking, writing and reading within a particular genre, demonstrating that reading and writing are interdependent and support each other (Hornsby in PDST The Writing Genre 2014).

In shared writing, the children choose what they would like to write about (the topic) and the teacher acts as their scribe. First, they discuss the topic and then they work together to develop the writing. The teacher records the children’s writing ideas on a chart or interactive screen by modelling aspects of the writing process such as:

- concepts of print, e.g., left to right, spaces between words, punctuation
- approximate spelling of unfamiliar words by segmenting syllables, stretching sounds and matching letters to phonemes (a phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word)
- how to use the word wall for high-frequency words
- how to combine ideas and elaborate on them
- how to add description and build context.

The use of a different colour marker on the flip chart or white board signals to the children that they are contributing to this part of the writing session.

Step 5: Guided Writing

In guided writing, children compose text individually, with a partner or in a small group. The teacher’s role is to guide and support children, respond to them, and extend their thinking as they engage in creating their text. Guided writing provides the teacher with an opportunity to give explicit feedback through mini-lessons* and conferencing, enabling the children to reflect on their writing.
**Step 6: Independent Writing**

Students engage in independent writing at all phases of the writing process. Independent writing is not just ‘free choice’ writing but what the student does with their work as a result of the explicit instruction and scaffolds offered by the teacher (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Duke, Pearson, Strachan & Billman, 2011).

During independent writing, children produce their own written texts by drawing on knowledge and skills that have been taught and developed throughout the more supported teaching practices of modelled, shared and guided writing.

During independent writing, children might:

- engage in free writing*, including mark-making and scribbling during the emergent writing phase
- plan, draft, revise or edit their texts
- work on completing a final copy of published text
- compose a text related to an area of study set by the teacher, for example, an information report about an animal
- research a topic and take notes
- compose a text on a topic of their own choice
- consult with the teacher or peers for advice on their writing.

(Adapted from https://www.education.vic.gov.au/)

Independent writing experiences may also include journals, response logs, and reflections, as well as free writing*, which is uninterrupted writing of the child’s choice.

**Step 7: Presentation to an audience (publishing and celebrating work)**

‘From opportunities to read aloud during individual conferences to sharing in a small-group or during a whole-class author celebration, the teacher can provide her students with many opportunities for celebrating their work with classmates, peers, parents and other interested audiences’ (Hicks, 2019).
Children’s work can be presented and celebrated in a variety of formats: orally, in print and digitally. Suggestions include class books, author’s chair*, blogs, podcasts, digital stories, dual language books, and classroom and school notice boards.

See [https://pdst.ie/node/5892](https://pdst.ie/node/5892) for a variety of videos on 7 Steps to Teaching a Genre.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

The Writing Workshop - A Way of Writing

“During the Writing Workshop children learn how to be real writers and they are viewed as real writers. Teachers explicitly teach children how to work and learn actively as writers, through providing daily meaningful, authentic opportunities to write.”

(The Writing Workshop, NCCA Support Material, 2019)

Why the Writing Workshop?

Writing involves stages during which the writer chooses topics to write about, plans ideas, translates ideas into a first draft, and reviews what has been written. Children need repeated, explicit demonstrations of the processes involved in writing, with plenty of opportunities to practise and experiment. Planning for and teaching the writing process is essential for children to develop into independent writers. Communicating to children that the most important part of writing is the sharing of their thoughts and ideas and that lower-level skills such as grammar, spelling and punctuation can be dealt with when editing and publishing, can relieve their anxiety and increase children’s confidence and sense of self-efficacy.

Because writers are continually planning and revising as they write, a process approach to the teaching of writing is recommended. This emphasises the importance of thinking, inquiring, imagining, creating, communicating and exploring language through writing and gives equal attention to processes of writing and the written product. The Writing Workshop is an instructional framework for writing instruction and practice in the classroom that teachers can use to support children as writers.

(Adapted from The Writing Workshop, NCCA Support Material)

What is The Writing Workshop?

The Writing Workshop is a method of writing instruction that developed from the early work of Graves (1994), Murray (1972), and other researchers who found that teaching children to write for a variety of audiences and purposes was more effective than traditional writing instruction.

The Writing Workshop is a child-centred framework for teaching writing that is based on the idea that children learn to write best when they write frequently, for extended periods, on topics of their own choosing.

The Writing Workshop is designed for use in all class levels and can be tailored to meet developmental and curricular needs. The teacher acts as a mentor author*, modelling writing techniques and conferring with children as they move through the writing process. Direct writing instruction takes place in the form of a mini-lesson* at the beginning of each workshop and is
followed by active writing time, which can range from 20 - 45 minutes. Each workshop ends with a sharing of the children’s work.

(Adapted from: https://www.weareteachers.com/what-is-writing-workshop/)

Shared and interactive writing

Before children can be expected to engage in extended periods of independent writing, they must have regularly experienced shared writing sessions. Shared writing is explored in Step 4 of the 7 Step Approach to Teaching a Genre.

The Writing Workshop

What is the structure of the Writing Workshop?

- Mini-Lesson
- Independent Writing and Conferencing
- Sharing Session

There is not a prescribed time limit for each component, rather they are meant to be flexible and determined by children's needs on any given day.

(Adapted from The Writing Workshop, NCCA Support Material)
i. The mini-lesson (approx. 10 mins.)

(See videos 2 & 3 on mini-lessons from NCCA support materials The Writing Workshop)

A mini-lesson is a short lesson focused on one aspect of writing in which the teacher provides explicit instruction using a think-aloud. This is the teacher-directed portion of the writing workshop. The focus of the mini-lesson is guided by the identified needs of the children. Calkins, (1994) proposes that mini-lessons are a time to “gather the whole class in the meeting area to raise a concern, explore an issue, model a technique, or reinforce a strategy.”

In a mini-lesson, the teacher provides explicit instruction on:

- **Craft**
  - teaching a technique to enhance writing quality/style, e.g. using details, strong introduction and crafting an effective title

- **Convention**
  - teaching skills to improve the readability and fluency of the piece, e.g. grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure

- **Process**
  - teaching the steps in the writing process, e.g. choosing a topic, drafting, revising, editing and publishing

- **Organisational Technique**
  - teaching the routine of The Writing Workshop e.g. the structure of the Writing Workshop, how to use writing folders, rules for conferences and how to respond within a share session

(Adapted from NCCA support materials The Writing Workshop)

The following are some suggestions, which may be used in daily mini-lessons where teachers think aloud* and model how to:

- choose topics of personal significance and explore ideas
- draw ideas and then label elements of the picture
- write sentences related to the picture
- discuss ideas with an audience
- add to and refine ideas
- consider word choice and select interesting and apt vocabulary
- spell by segmenting sounds in words

(Adapted from: https://www.weareteachers.com/what-is-writing-workshop)
The four parts of a mini-lesson can include:

**Connection**
Activate children’s prior knowledge. Explain the relevance of what is being taught. Connect the day’s mini-lesson to something that was previously taught, something children did in another curricular area, or to something in real life. Recording key ideas on an anchor chart and displaying in the classroom provides a visual reminder for children.

*Suggested phrases:*
- Yesterday/Last week/Remember when we were working on…
- Today we are learning to …
- We are going to focus on this because
- This is important because …

**Teaching**
Explain, teach and model the specific focus of the mini-lesson, using a piece of the teacher’s own writing, children’s writing, or a published mentor* text. Establish the children’s understanding by asking questions such as “Did you notice how I…?” Conclude by referring again to the specific focus of the mini-lesson.

*Suggested phrases:*
- When I write…
- Watch me as I show you how I…
- Did you notice how I…
- When authors/children write…
- Let’s study this text together…
- Did you notice how the author…

**Active engagement**
Provide children with opportunities to practise the strategy just explained and modelled using their own writing or a sample piece of writing. Children could also discuss how they could use the strategy in their writing with their writing partner. While children are actively engaged, observe them to assess their understanding. Allow time for feedback and discussion.

*Suggested phrases:*
- Now it is your turn to try it…
- You (and your partner) are going to…
- I noticed how…
- Let’s see if you can…

**Transition**
Remind the children of the specific learning focus and ways in which they can apply this learning at any time in their writing. Refer to the anchor chart to reinforce their learning as children begin to write independently.

*Suggested phrases:*
- Today we learned to …
- Use the anchor chart if …
- Are you ready to begin…?
- Now it’s your turn to write …

(Adapted from: https://twowritingteachers.org/2017/08/03/minilessons-wwfundamentals)
ii. Independent Writing and Conferencing 20-30 minutes  
(see videos 4 & 5 on Independent Writing and Conferencing in Best Practices in Writing Padlet)

Check-in with children before the writing begins to ascertain where they are in the writing process – planning, discussing, drafting, revising, editing, evaluating, or publishing. Use hands-up, a clipboard, a notebook, a magnet chart or a pocket chart to determine where the children are in the process.

The check-in allows the teacher to evaluate how the children are progressing. It also creates accountability for the children and motivates the community of learners.  
(Adapted from https://www.weareteachers.com/what-is-writing-workshop)

During sustained, independent writing time, the teacher engages in conferences with individual children. Conferencing can involve up to 80% child talk and 20% teacher talk and can last up to 5 minutes. During conferencing, teachers use this one-to-one time to note specific concerns, enabling the teacher to plan for differentiated instruction and content for future lessons. At the end of independent writing time, allow children time to read over their writing and make changes, if necessary.

Suggested questions to ask during conferencing:
- What are you working on?
- Can you read me some of what you’ve written?
- Is there anything your partner or I can help you with?
- What are you going to do next?
iii Share Session (5-10 minutes)

(See videos 6 and 7 on share session in NCCA support materials, The Writing Workshop)

During the share session children have the opportunity to share their writing with others. In preparation for the share session, model appropriate questions and responses which children can use during the session. The share session provides the writer with positive feedback from a real, attentive and appreciative audience and increases children's confidence and motivation to write. In addition, the share session provides an opportunity to transfer fluency skills learned in reading by reading to their audience (whole class, partners, visitors or small groups) with appropriate pace, pitch, and expression. Children respond by listening for details. Consider using a peer assessment technique such as ‘What Went Well’ (WWW) and ‘Even Better If’ (EBI) to encourage children to ask questions, identify what they liked about the writing and offer suggestions as to how it might be improved.

Some authors’ questions could include:

- Tell me one thing you liked about my writing?
- Suggest one way I could improve my writing?
- Can you come up with a title for me?
- How could I change the ending?

(Adapted from NCCA support materials ‘The Writing Workshop’)

To ensure all children have an opportunity to share:

- note who has shared
- invite children to only share a section of their writing
- share in pairs where one child reads and another child listens
- encourage children to swap their work and read silently

(Adapted from https://www.weareteachers.com/what-is-writing-workshop/)

The Writing Workshop in action can be seen here https://vimeo.com/381176155 The Writing Workshop (PLC Seminar, 2019).

A Share Session can be seen here https://vimeo.com/381175698 The Share Session (PLC Seminar, 2019).
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

Guide to Transfer of Skills

Transfer of Skills in the Primary Language Curriculum
The Primary Language Curriculum is an integrated curriculum that makes connections across and within languages and that seeks to support the transfer of skills between languages (PLC, 2019).

Preparing for Transfer of Skills
Making initial links across languages involves identifying common and similar learning outcomes between languages, and planning activities to promote a transfer of skills. Preparing for a transfer of skills across languages does not necessarily mean that children will be engaging in identical activities in English and Irish. Children will be at different places in their early communication skills, language learning and development in both languages. The levels of expectation will therefore differ between children’s first and second languages.

Consider the following questions:

- understand the concepts and skills in the learning outcomes in the first language of the school.
- provide opportunities for practice of concepts and skills in the first language of the school.
- develop language awareness - make explicit to children, where possible, the connections and similarities between languages.
- provide children with adequate exposure to the second language.
- develop children’s teanga chumarsáide/language of communication through the teaching of frásáí, nathanna cainte agus foclóir so that children will be able to engage in the lesson.
- teach Gaeilge trí Ghaeilge in schools in which English is the medium of instruction.
- provide a literacy rich environment will support transfer of skills. See Chapter 1 for suggestions as to how to create and support a literacy rich environment.
- Understand and use the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model where children are exposed to the modelled, shared, guided and independent phases of instruction.
Practical Classroom Suggestions to promote a Transfer of Skills

The following are examples of activities which can be adapted, according to children’s ability, across languages to enable children to transfer their skills and knowledge from their first language to a second language.

Gaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil: Developing skills in one language will help children to develop similar skills in another language, provided they have adequate exposure to the language. Therefore, it is recommended that Gaeilge only be used by the teacher when teaching Gaeilge and in informal, daily interactions so that over time, children will acquire common familiar words and phrases in their second language.

Choosing a variety of topics/themes and planning a variety of activities in both languages to develop the topic/theme, e.g., my favourite toy/an bréagán is fearr liom. Activities may include making a very short oral presentation, developing vocabulary and word lists and engaging in written activities in both languages.

Engage children in the Language Experience Approach* which uses childrens’ oral language to develop basic vocabulary and key concepts about written language. The teacher acts as scribe. This can be carried out in both English and Gaeilge and can be used for future reading material and oral language activities.

Explicitly highlight the conventions of print across languages, by drawing children’s attention to left to right orientation, top to bottom orientation, front to back orientation and identification of the title, illustrations and author of texts. This can be done using large format books and picture books in both English and Gaeilge. While reading large format books, attention can also be drawn to the similarities in punctuation – full stop, capital letters, comma, question mark.

Use popular stories and fairy tales for literacy activities in both languages, e.g., Little Red Riding Hood/ Cochaillín Dearg.

Engage the children in similar activities across languages, e.g., prediction, sequencing of events, character descriptions, drama activities, questioning. Make comparisons between the English and Gaeilge versions of the story.
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

In teaching writing, aspects of each genre may be developed initially in the first language of the school. Work in the second language of the school may begin when a level of competence has been achieved and may initially focus more on modelled and shared writing sessions, where teachers can continue to expose children to a variety of written genres in both English and Gaeilge. As children develop their second language learning, teachers can encourage them to engage with a wider variety of genres. Finished pieces of children’s writing in Gaeilge may be very short. As each genre has an associated structure and language features, these remain the same across languages and the framework associated with the genre can be taught and developed in both languages.

Early genre writing can take many forms, for example an invitation to a birthday party, cards for different occasions, lists, a letter to Santa or notes.

Free writing* sessions in both English and Gaeilge enable children to experiment with a variety of genres and give them independence in making choices of topics to write about. It also gives children the opportunity to practise the skills of writing that have been explicitly taught to them during modelled, shared and guided writing sessions.

Engage children in the creation of dual language texts with the guidance of the teacher (see description of suggested steps involved). Writing dual language texts requires children to compare expressions and structures in each language, thereby prompting transfer of knowledge and skills across languages. These texts can be used as a basis for future reading material and oral language discussions. The completion of a dual language text may be completed over a lengthy period of time.

(Adapted from Teaching for Transfer of Skills Across Languages, NCCA)
Practical suggestions to promote the transfer of skills

Examples of transfer

Preparing for transfer of skills

The writing process:
- plan, draft, revise, edit, publish

Spelling strategies:
- e.g. sounding out, breaking into syllables, root words

Conventions of print:
- punctuation, e.g. full stops, commas, question marks, capital letters

Knowledge of genre:
- structures and language features

Initial sounds identification:
- Tá mé ag smaoineamh ar fhocal a thosaíonn le 'b' Cad d? 

Phonological awareness skills:
- Syllable segmentation - children tap their knees or clap each syllable while reciting poems or rhymes

Free writing* sessions in both English and Gaeilge enable children to experiment with a variety of genres and give them independence in making choices of topics to write about

Choosing a variety of topics/themes and planning a variety of activities in both languages to develop the topic/theme

Engage children in the Language Experience Approach* which uses children’s oral language to develop basic vocabulary and key concepts about written language

Use popular stories and fairy tales for literacy activities in both languages, e.g., Little Red Riding Hood/ Cochaillín Dearg

Engage children in the creation of dual language texts with the guidance of the teacher

Explicitly teach the same written genres in English and Gaeilge

Gaeilge neamhfoirmiúil - informal, daily interactions

Gaeilge trí Ghaeilge!

Create a literacy rich environment

Understand and use the Gradual Release of Responsibility model

Understand concepts & skills in L1

Provide adequate exposure to L2

Provide opportunities for practice of concepts and skills in L1

Develop language awareness

Provide opportunities for practice of concepts and skills in L1

Conventions of print:
- punctuation, e.g. full stops, commas, question marks, capital letters

Knowledge of genre:
- structures and language features

Initial sounds identification:
- Tá mé ag smaoineamh ar fhocal a thosaíonn le 'b' Cad d? 

Phonological awareness skills:
- Syllable segmentation - children tap their knees or clap each syllable while reciting poems or rhymes

Free writing* sessions in both English and Gaeilge enable children to experiment with a variety of genres and give them independence in making choices of topics to write about
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

**The Writing Process**
Próiseas na Scríbhneoireachta

- Children can transfer their knowledge of the steps of the writing process:
  - Plan, draft, revise, edit, publish
  - Pleadáil, dreachú, du star eagarthóireacht, cur i láthair

**Knowledge of Concepts**
Eolas Coincheapúil

- Amongst other concepts children can transfer:
  - Understanding that we write for a range of purposes
  - That writing is a form of communication
  - That they can bring their voice to their writing

**Spelling and word study**
Litriú agus staidéar ar fhocail

- Amongst other conventions of print children can transfer:
  - Left to right orientation
  - Punctuation: e.g. full stops, commas, question marks, capital letters
  - Paragraphs
  - Book handling skills

**Knowledge of Genre**
Eolas ar Sheánraí

- Amongst other conventions of print children can transfer:
  - The language features of the genre
  - The language features of the genre
  - The various forms of writing

**Phonological Awareness**
Feasacht Fóineolaíochta

- Amongst other phonological awareness skills children can transfer:
  - Identify rhyming words
  - Ability to segment and blend syllables and phonemes
  - Ability to hear sound units
  - Identifying initial sounds

**Conventions of Print**
Gnásanna Cló

- Amongst other conventions of print children can transfer:
  - Left to right orientation
  - Punctuation: e.g. full stops, commas, question marks, capital letters
  - Paragraphs
  - Book handling skills

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Sampleíd Aistriú sa Scríbhneoireacht (Examples of Transfer in Writing)

- Spelling skills and strategies which can transfer:
  - Letter names and formations
  - Ability to use of reference materials to check spellings and phonemes
  - Spelling strategies: e.g. sounding out, breaking into syllables, root words

- Children can transfer their knowledge of the steps of the writing process:
  - Pleadáil, dreachú, du star eagarthóireacht, cur i láthair

- Amongst other phonological awareness skills children can transfer:
  - Identify rhyming words
  - Ability to segment and blend syllables and phonemes
  - Ability to hear sound units
  - Identifying initial sounds

- Children can transfer their knowledge of genre:
  - The structures or framework of the genre
  - The language features of the genre
  - The various forms of writing

- Amongst other concepts children can transfer:
  - Understanding that we write for a range of purposes
  - That writing is a form of communication
  - That they can bring their voice to their writing

- Amongst other conventions of print children can transfer:
  - Left to right orientation
  - Punctuation: e.g. full stops, commas, question marks, capital letters
  - Paragraphs
  - Book handling skills
Conclusion

“The desire to write grows with writing.”
Erasmus

In the introduction to this manual, the opportunity was given to reflect on current practices relation to writing. The following questions were provided to prompt reflection:

What is our current practice in relation to the teaching of writing in our school?

Cad é ár gcleachtas reatha maidir le teagasc na scribhneoireachta inár scoil?

What does writing look like in my classroom?

Cén chuma atá ar scribhneoireacht i mo sheomra ranga?

In this manual, evidenced-based practices in teaching writing were explored, in order to support teachers as they develop a community of confident, motivated writers in their classrooms. A variety of learning experiences, resources and examples both in English and Gaeilge are provided.
Reflecting on these best practices the following questions may support you as you begin to engage with developing writing in the classroom and across the school:

- Where would I like to start?
- When will I start?
- What do I need to do next?
- How might this manual guide me?
Glossary

Author’s Chair/Cathaoir an Údair: Author’s Chair provides an opportunity for students to share their writing with others at any point in the writing process (Learn Alberta).

Expert list: An expert list is a list of topics that the children write outlining things they are expert at. It will be a list of things, people, or places that I know a lot about (Adapted from Geiger, 2013).

Flipped Classroom: The Flipped Classroom is a pedagogical approach in which traditional, class-based learning is inverted, so that students are introduced to learning material before class. Classroom time is then used to deepen understanding through discussion with peers and problem-solving activities facilitated by teachers (PDST, TIE).

Free writing/Saorscríbhneoireacht: Free writing allows children the opportunity to write freely without having to worry about corrections or other audiences and is a way of encouraging writers to have-a-go and play around with writing. This writing can be in many forms including notes, lists, diary entries, labelling drawings, which teachers may be invited to read. Free writing can inform teacher’s future planning (Adapted from First Steps, Writing Resource Book, 2013).

Heart map: A heart map is a representation of what matters to the children, mapping important memories, places, and people, to help them to write from the heart (Adapted from Heard 2016).

Language Experience Approach/Cur Chuige Taithí Teanga: The language experience approach integrates speaking and listening, reading and writing through the development of a written text (language experience charts) based on first hand experiences. Through scaffolded talk, the teacher supports students to document experiences and ideas, using familiar and expanded vocabulary, modelling ways in which their thoughts and words can be written down and later read (Accessed at: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx).

Mentor Texts and Mentor Authors/Téacsanna Samplacha agus Údair Shamplacha: A useful approach in explicitly teaching a particular strategy is the use of mentor texts and mentor authors. The teacher can use examples from a variety of texts and authors to demonstrate certain teaching points. Children can use these examples as a goal for their own writing (Kissel, 2013).

Mini-lesson: A mini-lesson is a short lesson focused on one aspect of writing in which the teacher provides explicit instruction using a think-aloud. The mini-lesson is often linked to high-quality children’s literature or a piece of the child’s own writing (NCCA, 2019).

Multimodal Texts: Multimodal texts include the combination of a variety of forms of communication, such as print text, visual images, audio and spoken word (PLC, 2015).
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom

**Topic tree/Foinse Smaointe:** The Topic Tree is a graphic organizer that helps young writers focus their topic by providing a visual representation of “branching off” from the main topic into more specific topics (Jamison, 2007).

**Speed Writing:** Speed writing is where children engage in writing at speed for short periods of time (up to five minutes). The aim is to write as many words as they can in the specified time, that can be read by another person (Adapted from First Steps, Writing Resource Book, 2013).

**Think Aloud:** Think Aloud is a technique which allows the teacher to make the implicit thinking process explicit for her pupils, allowing them to improve their comprehension by understanding how and why a reader uses these strategies. Using Think Aloud the teacher reads a passage, stopping periodically to 'unlock her brain’ for her children by verbalising what is going through her head as she applies a strategy (Building Bridges of Understanding, 2010).
References

- Curriculum Design Supports and Production Branch (CDSP) of Alberta Education, Strategies that Make a Difference, Author’s Chair. http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/ieptLibrary/documents/en/is/author%27s_chair.pdf
Fostering a Culture of Writing in the Classroom


Cultúr Scribhneireachta a Chóthú i do Sheomra Ranga

- Reading Rockets Website https://www.readingrockets.org/
- Two Writing Teachers Website https://twowritingteachers.org/2017/08/03/minilessons-wwfundamentals
The PDST is funded by the Teacher Education Section (TES) of the Department of Education (DE) and is managed by Dublin West Education Centre