

# LETTERKENNY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

## SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

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*An investigation into the impact of instructional leadership methodologies, specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work and teams games tournament on students' academic performance and wellbeing in a sample of Irish post primary history students.*

**Sinead Hegarty McGinley**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters of Arts in  
Learning & Teaching

Presented to:

Research Supervisor

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**School of Business**

**Letterkenny Institute of Technology**

Submission date:

31<sup>st</sup> July 2018

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## **Abstract**

**An investigation into the impact of instructional leadership methodologies, specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work and teams games tournament on students' academic performance and wellbeing in a sample of Irish Post Primary history students.**

**Sinead Hegarty McGinley**

This paper investigated the impact of instructional leadership methodologies specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work and teams games tournament on students' academic performance and wellbeing in a sample of Irish Post Primary history students.

A mixed methods methodology was employed for this research, with a total of 23 first year history students, both male and female, involved in the study. Data was collected using student questionnaires, teacher observation, testing and focus group interviews.

The major findings from this study suggest that the use of instructional leadership methodologies had a positive impact on students' academic performance and wellbeing in the classroom. Although learning outcomes were achieved using a didactic approach students showed more engagement and participation when a more active approach to teaching and learning was adopted. The findings show that students felt "safer" and more relaxed when a more collaborative approach to learning was implemented. The findings also suggest that instructional leadership methodologies can help to promote the key skills outlined in the new junior cycle framework.

The findings imply that teachers must reflect on how students learn best and adopt meaningful instructional practices that meet the needs of all learners. The challenge teachers face every day is how best to engage students. The findings suggest that teachers need to reflect on how to enhance their instructional repertoire to facilitate deep and meaningful learning. Teachers could use the information from this research to structure classroom experiences that promote student engagement and participation and challenge students' thinking by giving students safe challenges.

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## **Chapter 1- Introduction:**

This chapter provides an explanation and justification of the aims and objectives of this research paper. It describes the primary research site and research participants who will take part in the study.

### **1.1 Aim:**

The overall aim of my research is to investigate the impact of instructional leadership methodologies, specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work and teams games tournament on students academic performance and wellbeing in a sample of post primary history students. I have chosen this subject area because my school is a participant in the instructional leadership programme, initiated in the post primary sector in Ireland by the ETBI.

### **1.2 Instructional leadership program:**

The professional development programme that provided the framework for this research is known as instructional leadership. Barrie Bennett (Bennett, 2002 & 2010) developed the instructional leadership programme after thirty six years of teaching and personal reflection in the classroom and research and work with other educationalists. Bennett describes instructional leadership as the point at which the “art and science of instruction meet” (2010, p68). “Art” is the imaginative and expert ways that teachers use instructional leadership methodologies to meet the various needs of each student in their classroom. “Science” refers to the ability of teachers to use various teaching methodologies in order to create effective and engaging learning environments. Instructional leadership recognises the importance of teachers reflecting on their work and working collaboratively with others teachers to discuss progress (Bennett, 2010).

### **1.3 Purpose:**

It is against this background and in an attempt to improve teaching and learning, engage our students in the classroom and meet the demands of the new junior cycle that Donegal ETB have taken part in an initiative to introduce instructional leadership methodologies into the teaching and learning process. Instructional leadership involves teachers reflecting on how students learn and having an instructional “repertoire” that allows them to respond meaningfully to how and what students must learn (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008). It focuses on weaving together of instructional skills, tactics and strategies to engage students in a meaningful and ‘safe’ way in the classroom (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008). Bennett describes instructional leadership as “ the point at which the art and science of instruction meet and merges curriculum, assessment, knowledge of how students learn , instructional skills, tactics and strategies and theories of change” (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2003, p9). I graduated from the instructional leadership programme in 2016 and since then have worked closely with senior management in my school to implement these instructional skills, tactics and strategies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. I have recently been given the role of teaching and learning coordinator and have set up a ‘teaching and learning committee’ to lead and implement these changes in my school. I consider there to be a gap in research in relation to Irish schools regarding the impact of instructional leadership methodologies and I believe there is a need for this study to provide evidence to teachers within my own school about the impact of instructional leadership methodologies.

### **1.4 Research objectives:**

- To explore the benefits of using instructional leadership methodologies: framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work, team’s games tournament for students?
- To explore students perceptions of the traditional didactic approach to teaching and learning?
- To investigate if academic performance and student wellbeing is impacted using instructional leadership methodologies?
- To discover if there is a correlation between the skills promoted by instructional leadership methodologies and the principles and skills of new Junior Certificate

## **1.5 Research Site**

The research will take place in a non-denominational co-educational post primary school under the auspice of Donegal ETB. The school comprises of 557 students with 46 teachers and 9 special needs assistants. There are 10 special duties posts and 6 assistant principal posts. The school is a Deis school (delivering equality of opportunity in schools). The

Educational Research Centre's overall approach to identifying Deis schools was guided by the definition of educational disadvantage in the Education Act (1998), as: "the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from the education in schools".

As a result there are various supports in place to address educational disadvantage in our area, such as Home School Community Liaison, breakfast club, school completion programme, School book grants scheme, Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied and a national behaviour support services classroom. In terms of support 109 students have received psychological assessments, 35 students are getting resource hours and 20% of the student body are receiving additional support.

There are several indicators of disadvantage in the schools catchment area including a "28% level of unemployment, limited industry, emigration, low educational attainment due to early school leaving and a large number of single parent families" (School completion Programme, 2017 p1). Therefore this study aims to look at how we as teachers can maximise student learning, engagement, participation and overall wellbeing in the classroom.

## **1.6 Research Participants:**

I will carry out my research with a first year mixed ability history class, in post primary education, made up of 26 students. I decided to select this class for the research because they have not been exposed to instructional leadership methodologies before in their study of history and I believe this is important when carrying out the research. I will meet the class three times each week. The data collection will take place from March 2018 until the end of April 2018. I feel this will allow adequate time to gather the required data (Appendix H).

### **1.7 Structure of Thesis:**

The research paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is an introductory chapter which outlines the aim, objectives and background to the research. Chapter two examines the literature pertaining to instructional leadership and its methodologies. Chapter three outlines the methodology adopted to carry out this study and the ethical issues relating to this research. Chapter four analyses and discusses the findings of this research and is explained within the context of the literature review. Chapter five presents the conclusions and recommendations of the research.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review:**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The rationale of this research paper is to investigate the impact of instructional leadership methodologies specifically; framing questions and wait time, mind maps, group work and teams games tournament, on students' academic performance and wellbeing. The research will explore:

- Student's perceptions of using instructional leadership methodologies.
- Student's perceptions of the traditional didactic approach to teaching and learning.
- Has students 'academic performance in the subject being impacted using instructional leadership methodologies.
- Do the skills promoted in instructional leadership methodologies align with the skills put forward in the new junior cycle reform?

A recent survey carried out by Comhairle Na nOg (2017) outlines the views of 3,242 young people in Ireland aged between 12-17 years in relation to teaching and learning and their experiences in the classroom. The results of the survey showed that students prefer active learning methodologies with only 30 percent of students agreeing that teachers make learning interesting and fun. Students voiced concerns regarding an "exam focused" system with low levels of student centred and active learning methods in school which effects both student engagement and wellbeing. 75 percent of students who participated in the survey strongly agreed that they learn best when they take part in active learning. 74 percent of students highlighted class discussion as the best way to learn (so how was school today, 2017). Interestingly the opinions of the young people align very well with the philosophy that supports the new junior cycle (Comhairle na nOg, 2017).

Dr. Harold Hislop, chief inspector, Department of education (DES), (2015) reported that learning is about developing young people and preparing them for life-long learning. The Pisa report (2012) echoes this saying "education is not for what they know but for what they can do with what they know" (Dallat, p10, 2009) suggests that learning in schools should enable students to develop higher order thinking, to ask meaningful questions, to collaborate with others and to identify and solve problems. Hattie (2003) cited in 'teachers make a difference' (2015, p8) concurs with these views highlighting that "learning occurs when our brains are not passive recipients of stimuli and information but when they actively construct and interpret".

I believe the challenge we face as teachers today is to foster these skills in our students so that we can prepare them for 21<sup>st</sup> century living. I understand that encouraging teachers to engage in the process of asking questions and answering questions about how to enhance their teaching methodologies and skills is essential. My study will allow me to engage in action research in my own classroom to investigate the impact of instructional leadership methodologies on students learning and engagement in the subject of history. Sahlberg et al. (2012); Coulter & Nangle, (2015) advocate the importance of action research to engage teachers in reflective practice in order to meet the demands of educational reform. Gleeson et al. (2017) support this describing classroom action research as being critical to explore learning problems and find solutions. Thomas (2015) warns that action research can be placed low down in terms of research hierarchy as the objectives can often be small; however Whilty (2006) describes action research as an attempt to make a positive difference to the professional learning community. My study will involve action research within my own classroom to determine the impact of instructional leadership methodologies on students' academic performance and wellbeing.

## **2.2 How can we support learning?**

As early as the 1920's research on teaching methodologies began to develop and questions about how we learn best began. By the 1960's and 70's educationalists ( Piaget, 1953; Vygotsky, 1978; Skinner 1981) were questioning the effectiveness of the teacher led didactic approach to instruction and instead promoted a student centred active approach to learning (Mc Harg, 2009). Freire (1972) believed that when students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning they engage in more deeper and meaningful learning. Vygotsky (1978) and Tomlinson (1999) expressed the view that student learning is enhanced when they are in a learning environment that challenges them to think. Therefore I understand it to be the responsibility of the teacher to create learning environments that encourage discussion, interaction and collaborative learning (Miller,1989)

This aligns very well with instructional leadership methodologies (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008) which, promotes that teacher knowledge and understanding about the learning process is crucial for student achievement and success. Teachers must encourage students to develop skills to enable them to be self -directed learners (Wang 1980). This raises the question, what is excellent teaching and what represents a high quality learning environment? (Fook & Sidhu, 2015). Following a study of 'the learning challenges of higher education student's (Fook &

Sidhu, 2015) it was found that the following approaches contributed to the enhancement of teaching and learning; *active learning, deep learning, problem based learning and student centred learning*. Instructional leadership would promote the importance of similar pedagogies (Bennett, 2010). Boud (2000) promotes the importance of formative assessment to support learning and assist students to take responsibility for their learning and to develop the skills required for life-long learning. Bennett and Rolheiser (2008) suggest that “good” teachers will use a wide variety of teaching methodologies to make the subject matter more interesting and relevant to students and that address their different learning styles.

It is instinctive for teachers to take on a didactic approach to instruction when standing in front of a class to communicate their knowledge to students (Mc Harg, 2009). Lyons et al. (2003) study of a second year maths class found that teacher ‘chalk and talk’ was the main teaching methodology adopted. They reported that teachers associated learning with the rote learning of formulas and note taking rather than promoting creative and divergent thinking through discussion and collaborative learning. Smyth et al (2006) supports this view highlighting that teachers tend to focus more on traditional didactic methods. Sheehan’s (2003) study of a second year science class reports that the lesson was content and exam focused with emphasis placed on the transmission of knowledge and higher order skills were sacrificed at the expense of rote learning.

Mackey (1997) paints a similar picture reporting that teaching methodologies focus on the development of lower to middle cognitive development. So what is the impact for these students for their future educational journey? Professor Tom Collins (2007) alludes that students expect teachers to do the thinking for them and to link ideas together. Therefore students come to third level education unprepared for the intellectual challenges they face and this can cause many to ‘drop out’. Furthermore the OECD (1991) noted that over dependence on a didactic approach to teaching and learning alone will not enable Ireland to meet the enormous challenges that lie ahead in terms of curriculum reform, continuous professional development and school self -evaluation (Looking at our schools, 2016). Many Ministers for Education, along with NCCA (2010) in the new Junior Cycle reform have repeatedly raised concerns about the over emphasis of rote learning (Hislop, 2015) in classrooms and the desire to make learning more meaningful and engaging for students to develop the key skills needed for real life application. The action plan for education (DES, 2018) “aims to make the Irish education system the best in Europe by 2026” (p5). The first goal is to “improve the learning experience and success of learners” (p8). It recognises the importance of creating learning

environments where every child is given an opportunity to succeed and where student's needs are supported so that their full potential is reached. Student wellbeing and the development of critical thinking skills are also highlighted. Senior cycle education is also being reviewed at the present time (NCCA, 2018). The aim again is to “actively involve our young people in the learning process to prepare them for a future of learning” (p3). Deep learning, self-directed learning and a balance between skills and knowledge are highlighted. Teachers are asked to reflect on their instructional practices to assess if they can improve their classroom practices to help prepare our students for the future (NCCA, 2018). This raises the question will an over dependence on the didactic approach to teaching and learning equip our students with the skills essential for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Gleeson, 2012). Do instructional leadership methodologies provide a way forward for teachers to prepare our students for future learning and develop key skills essential for the future?

### **2.3 Student centred learning**

Research promotes the benefits in a move from a teacher-led to a student-led learning environment and acknowledges the importance of an active learning approach (Fernandez, Flores & Lima, 2012). This student centred, active learning approach to instruction is considered a transformation to the long established didactic styles and has obtained a growing acknowledgement (Lea, S.J 2003: Stephenson, D. 2003: Troy, T. 2003). In a student centred approach to learning, students are asked to be active participants in the construction of knowledge and the role of the teacher changes to one of a facilitator of learning (Lerkanen et al. 2016). There is an expectation on the part of the teacher to create meaningful and engaging classrooms, using a variety of teaching methodologies, that address the needs and learning styles of students and where students are encouraged to be actively engaged in the exploration and discovery of knowledge to develop key skills that are essential for life-long learning (Lerkanen et al. 2016). Cornelius & White (2007) promote the significance of a student centred approach to education describing the teachers role as guiding students learning by adopting active learning methodologies to allow students to be supported in their exploration of different topics, thus creating a shared relationship between teacher and student.

Lerkanen et al. (2016) suggest that when teachers are receptive to student's needs and welfare and develop a shared relationship to learning they create greater opportunities to motivate students to learn. Rojas, Drummond & Mercer (2003) found that in classrooms where the

integration of teacher led and student centred learning occurred students learned to develop the skills of critical thinking, discussing, explaining and negotiating as a result learning was promoted. Teachers must create classrooms where mistakes are allowed, where higher order questions skills are utilised and where students are encouraged to develop a positive academic self-concept (Hattie, 2003). Resnick, Michaels & O Connor (2010) support this view highlighting that students can learn how to engage in debates and powerful dialogue which ultimately engages them in more deeper and meaningful learning. Therefore the importance of social interaction is emphasised where students assemble their own knowledge and by explaining this learning and thinking to other students they encounter deep learning by acquiring new perspectives and interpretations and correcting misunderstandings (Webb et al., 2017).

Challenges to a student centred active approach to learning must also be noted. In Fook & Sidhu's (2015) study of students in higher education 14 percent of students surveyed said that they found this approach to learning challenging. Active learning implies extra work for students in terms of planning, discussion and intrinsic motivation. Personal reasons were also highlighted as barriers to active learning such as inability to talk in front of others, being shy and general lack of interest in the subject matter ( Fook & Sidhu, 2015). The study showed that some students still preferred the traditional passive, didactic methodologies in the classroom. They expressed the desire to listen to the teachers rather than to other students. In my study of instructional leadership methodologies this is a possibility that I want to explore further.

Van Wyk (2011) warns however that student's must be nurtured into any new student centred learning approach. Students are traditionally passive learners who are primarily used to a teacher centred didactic approach to education. Gonzalez, Jennings, Manriquez (2014) highlight that a period of time is needed for students to become competent in developing critical thinking and social skills. Aliusta and Ozer (2014) advocate that a student centred approach to learning can cause some students to feel anxious and uneasy if it is not introduced carefully and considerately. In terms of teachers attitude to a student centred approach to learning Sague et al. (2001) point out that the constraints and pressures of the current examination procedures and expectations of parents place a considerable obstacle for teachers to develop more creative and active pedagogies in the classroom. Callan (1997) identifies 'fear of change', classroom design and furniture, organisational factors and a culture of containment as the main barriers to change in teachers practice.

## **2.4 New Junior cycle**

The new junior cycle framework intends to provide for a broad and balanced development of the student, emphasising through its 24 statements of learning and key skills the need for a different understanding of learning. It seeks to strike a much better balance between students' skills and their attainment of knowledge (framework for junior cycle, 2015). The proposed reform of the Junior Cycle is based on the need for "fundamental changes in our approach to curriculum and assessment to improve the learning experiences of students" (The Travers 2 document, 2015 p5). Student wellbeing is also a mandatory part of the curriculum and I intend to investigate if instructional leadership methodologies play a part in contributing to student wellbeing in the history class.

The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 sets out a clear path of how teaching, learning and assessment procedures will progress in the first three years of secondary education "to ensure a learning experience for our young people that is appropriate to the needs of the 21st century" (framework for junior cycle 2015, p2). Teachers are asked to create learning environments that engage students actively in the learning process and where students cooperate more with their peers and engage in critical and divergent thinking. Under a new wellbeing initiative in the new junior cycle the importance of creating 'safe' learning environments is promoted. Dallat (2009) suggests that an ordered, yet relaxed interaction promotes greater commitment and engagement. Fullan (2011) echoes this view reporting that increasing teacher's instructional skills cause's motivation to increase and achievement means greater self -worth for everyone involved.



**Figure 2.1** Eight Key Skills of New Junior Cycle (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015)

In relation to my research question the main themes emerging from the literature is that there has been a pedagogical change in terms of new approaches to teaching and learning in recent years. A more active student centred approach is promoted over the traditional didactic and rote learning pedagogies. There is an anticipation from the department of education and science (DES) that modifications in schools practice must occur (junior cycle framework, 2015) to address these changes and give students the skills required for the 21st century. Also the importance of teacher's instructional practice is highlighted in order to facilitate these changes and to create effective and safe learning environments

## 2.5 Instructional Leadership

An important feature of Ireland's education system in recent years has been the huge change in many areas including new junior cycle reform; school self-evaluation and teacher's professional development (junior cycle framework, 2012). The development of the instructional leadership programme has coincided with this policy change. According to Bennett and Russell (2015) the instructional leadership programme puts forward a medium by which all this change can be realised. It advocates the use of active teaching methodologies to engage students in the construction of knowledge and to develop key skills that are essential for further education and for the world of work.

The instructional leadership programme was initiated in Ireland in 2012 by the then Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn and under the leadership of Joan Russell, CEO of Cork VEC. The programme hoped to lead "a transformation in teaching and learning" in Ireland (Russell, 2012). Dr. Barrie Bennett has become known as one of the leading advocates of "instructional intelligence" which aims to improve the "instructional repertoire" and "expertise" of teachers (Bennett, Rolheiser, 2008). The instructional leadership programme originates in Canada in the 1980's where Bennett played a huge role in transforming teaching and learning by promoting a student centred active approach to instruction. Bennett describes instructional intelligence as "a collective expertise that assures that all teachers and students are actively engaged in challenging, relevant and interesting learning situations that connect to their past experiences and engage them in constructing new experiences"(Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008, p8)

Teaching is becoming more complex and demanding and I believe teachers must engage in professional development and increase their repertoire of skills if they are to meet these demands and challenges. Teachers are asked to incorporate effective skills, tactics and strategies into their practice to maximise student learning (Bennett, Rolheiser, 2008). Prince (2004) supports this by describing active learning as the instructional methods used by teachers to help engage students in the learning process. For a person to continuously grow as a successful teacher, they must use an extensive array of diverse instructional approaches to meet the wide ranging requirements of students of different abilities. Literature on the enhancement of teacher's instructional proficiency has repeatedly highlighted that in recent years education has experienced a pedagogical shift in terms of new approaches to teaching and learning (McCabe & O'Connor, 2014). To develop and enhance student enthusiasm, achievement and



independent learning, innovative and active student centred methodologies are essential. Students are urged to acquire more responsibility and be more accountable for their learning and for peer learning. The need for a collective relationship between teacher and student is highlighted for effective student centred and meaningful education to occur (Prince, 2004). The instructional leader programme aims to build “relationships of learning” (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008); Bonwell & Eison (1991) suggest that student dialogue and debate in classrooms surpass any form of didactic instruction for the retention of knowledge, intrinsic motivation and cognitive development. A significant feature of student centred learning is the implementation of instructional practices by the teacher to integrate students in the learning process (Prince, 2004).

Fullan (2011) suggests that the teaching profession has become less personal and more collaborative. Teachers can develop their professional intelligence by increasing their effective instructional practices. Powell & Cody (2009) concur advocating that a successful learning environment is dependent on using “constructivist strategies, tools and practices” (p241). Therefore teachers must use an extensive array of learning methodologies to engage student of all abilities (Hattie, 2003). However this raises the question for me, of how to motivate teachers into willingly engaging in instructional leadership methodologies? Felder & Brent (1996) highlight that a student centred approach to teaching and learning requires a significant amount of effort. Could some teachers view reform as a criticism of the teaching profession? According to Bennett & Rolheiser (2008) a teachers ability to merge together instructional skills, tactics and strategies is what represents an effective learning environment. Morzano (2010) concurs with these findings pointing out that the instructional skills of teachers is the keystone to a school’s achievement. Teachers must have a profound knowledge of what students are learning and how students learn (Black et al, 2013). Li and Lam (2013) echo this view highlighting the need for a cooperative and shared relationship between teacher and student for effective student centred learning to occur.

Bennet (2010) reports that instructional leadership supports teachers on a journey to become knowledgeable in creating significant learning environments. The importance of teacher collaboration is highlighted by Bennett (2003) “progress cannot be sustained by individuals working alone; systematic links must be made across classrooms” (p14). Skipper (2005) however advocates that funding to provide further professional development during the school day is called for to assist teachers in improving their skills and expertise. Fullan (2011) warns that a combination of instructional skills, collaboration and inspiration are essential for whole

school reform. Intrinsic motivation comes from doing something well that is important to you; teachers want to be effective and make a difference in their student's lives and contribute to the betterment of society in general (Fullan, 2011). Hattie (2009) points out that good performing countries are effective because they have improved the entire teaching profession – “raising the bar for all” (Fullan, 2011 p12).

We remember

10% of what we read

20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

50% of what is discussed with others

80% of what we experience personally

95% of what we teach to someone else

William Glasser (cited in Junior Cycle Framework, 2015)

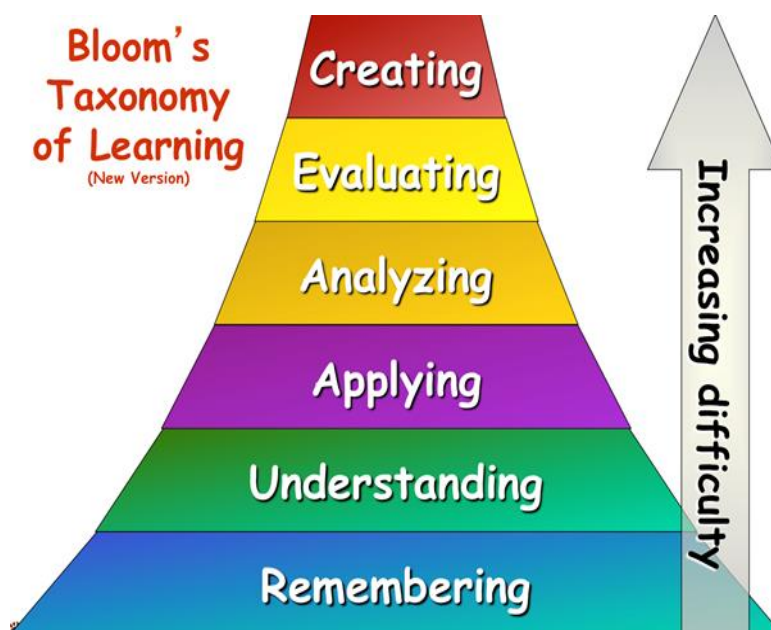
Leithwood (2007) in his study of leadership discovered that the best predictor of student success is improving the instructional skills and practices of teachers. This is supported by Saunders (2013) who implemented the instructional leadership programme, in a response to curriculum changes, in Western Australia. Participants reported a huge increase in the level of student engagement and ability to remain on task. Student interaction and cooperation in class was better and overall classroom management had improved. Teachers who had engaged in the instructional programme found that it enabled them to cater for various student's needs in class and proclaimed the student's academic performance was positively impacted. Marzano, Pickering & Pollack (2001) echo this indicating average learning increases of 27% for students whose teachers were skilled in instructional skills. House (2003) reached a similar conclusion advising that students who took part in active learning strategies attained higher grades in tests and displayed more positive attitudes to learning.

For the purposes of this study I will investigate the impact of the following instructional leadership methodologies; framing questions and wait time, mind maps, group work and teams games tournament. I believe the study is valid and worthwhile as it aims to improve the learning experience of my first year history students and also develop some of the key skills promoted in the new junior cycle. Bennett & Rolheiser (2008) point out that “the ability to integrate a variety of instructional skills is what defines us as teachers” (p22).

## 2.6 Framing questions & Wait time (instructional skill)

Framing questions is an instructional skill promoted by (Bennett, 2010) as a methodology to enhance the teaching and learning process and engage students in deep learning. Research promotes that effective and well-constructed questions lead to new insights, facilitate discussion, encourage creative thinking and stimulate investigation of the subject. On the other hand ineffective questioning can lead to confusion, threaten students and limit divergent thinking. (Tofade et al.2013). In a study into the effective use of questioning Sellappah (2013) found that teachers used lower ordering questioning 91.2% of the time.

Bennett (2010) reports that levels of thinking are one way teachers can respond to student’s needs. One particular taxonomy promoted by Bennett in relation to effective questioning is blooms taxonomy which I intend to incorporate into my lesson design. (Bloom, B.1956).



**Figure 2.2** Blooms Taxonomy of Learning (Bloom, 1956)

Blooms taxonomy equips teachers with a valuable scaffold to focus on higher order and divergent thinking. It provides a hierarchy of levels to assist in framing questions which can cater for the needs of all abilities thus creating an inclusive classroom (Bloom, B. 1972). Framing questions must be thought-provoking and engaging for students in a positive way Dallat (2009). Marzano et al (2001), concludes that when teachers are skilled in framing questions effectively students attainment of learning outcomes can increase by 22-23 percent. Teacher questioning has been advocated as one of the most valuable teaching skills to bring about genuine student learning (Carlsen, 1993; Roth, 1996; Smith, Blakeslee, & Anderson, 1993). Therefore it is crucial that teachers create learning environments that provide opportunities for students to ask and answer questions and to participate in classroom discussions. This process is essential for learning to occur. Furthermore student initiated questions are also highlighted to promote deep learning through analysis and critical thinking (Tofade, 2013).

A wait-time of at least three seconds, after asking a question, is promoted to allow students time to process what is being asked and to communicate their answer (Budd Rowe, M. 1972). Wait-time can influence the quality and quantity of the answer given (Bennett, 2010). The brain functions more effectively when it does not feel threatened and higher order questions inevitably require a longer time to process and formulate a response (Bennett, 2008). If a student is unable to answer a question after a specific length of time then it is recommended that the teacher adapt the question to make it less cognitively challenging (Tofade, 2013). The importance of students feeling 'safe' in the classroom is also highlighted. If a student does not feel psychologically safe in the class they will not express their thoughts and opinions aloud (Tofade, 2013).

## **2.7 Mind maps (instructional tactic)**

The use of mind maps are considered an instructional methodology that aims to promote a student centred approach to learning, remembering and making links between new information studies. Mind maps are graphic organisers that allow students to develop, express and review their ideas at the highest level of thinking. They can be used as an effective teaching tool to facilitate an active learning approach where students are actively engaged in constructing knowledge while at the same time enhancing the brains ability to store and recall information

(Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008). Mind maps can be used to assist inquiry and critical thinking (Bennett 2008). Tony Buzan (2005) pinpoints imagination and association as crucial elements in remembering information. The importance of students making associations with information that they already know is highlighted. Mind maps are a distinctive form of note taking and planning that make it easier for the student to remember things. They use colour and images to accelerate the imagination and the lines and curves used helps our memory to make associations. (Buzan 2005). Vaughan et al (2004) suggest that graphic organisers improve student learning as they force students to organise facts into a classification of the main ideas and by doing this helps improves their memory. Many studies have shown that mind maps can help students to better understand information (Dahbi, 2015). Robinson & Kiewa (1995) echo this stating that students found the use of mind maps more reader friendly and approachable. Mumin & Mahmud (2011) in their case study investigation found that the use of mind maps improved academic performance, presentation skills and student engagement. Bellanca (2007) found that the use of mind maps enable assessment of learning, assessment as learning and assessment for learning. Teachers can use mind maps to assess learning at various stages of the instruction process. Interestingly I recognise that the skills promoted when using mind maps align with the key skills highlighted in the new Junior Cycle such as; managing information, being creative, working with others and communicating.

## **2.8 Group work (instructional strategy)**

Calvin (1996) and Perkins (1995) argue that intelligence is greatly affected by social interaction. Instructional leadership aims to promote “relationships of learning” (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008). Bennett (2008) describes cooperative learning as a label for all small group instructional processes. There is a wide variety of cooperative learning approaches and research recognises that each has its own strengths and weaknesses. For the purposes of this study I will focus on the instructional strategy of group work.

Literature suggests that to maximise student learning, students must be actively engaged in the teaching and learning process (Marzano, 2010). Group work facilitates co-operative learning, social construction and the development of interpersonal skills (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008). Burke (2011) concurs with Bennett (2008) highlighting that group work and the skills associated with group work help prepare our students for the world or work. Johnson &

Johnson (1994) also suggest the importance of effective group work using the ‘five basic elements of effective group work’, which I will investigate in this study;

*Positive interdependence, Individual accountability, Processing the group’s academic and social effort, Collaborative skills, Fact to face interaction* (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008, p151)

The teacher is asked to cultivate an environment where students are responsible for their own learning and to encourage and support the learning of other students. Students must be sitting in groups to facilitate interaction and dialogue and the social skills of communication, listening and critical and divergent thinking are encouraged. The teacher must process and reflect on the effectiveness of the group work activity in terms of academic and collaborative interaction to determine the effects of the group work and to amend for future classes. (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Johnson and Johnson (1990) emphasise that providing a clear and meaningful goal is one of the most important characteristics of effective group work.

Recent studies (Shimazoe & Aldrich, 2010; Wiliam, 2012) support the view that discussions and group work can improve student learning and have a positive impact on student’s attitudes to school. Group work must be properly planned to be successful (Saborit et al. 2016). Bennett & Rolheiser (2008) point out that it takes” thoughtful work over time to achieve results” (p143). In a study of secondary teachers (Thanh, 2011) it was found that lack of interest and time constraints for preparation were the main reasons teachers did not consider group work as a methodology. Gilles & Boyle (2010) highlight teacher’s attitudes as a barrier to implementing group work suggesting that lack of knowledge, curricular demands and full timetables as being the main reasons.

## **2.9 Teams games tournament (TGT) (instructional strategy)**

TGT was created by David DeVries and Keith Edwards in 1973 (DeVries et al.1975). It is a cooperative learning methodology that enhances students’ academic achievement and promotes positive attitudes to education in a safe learning environment (Van Wyk, M. 2011: Bennet, B. 2008: Rolheiser, C. 2008). I will create two teams of two people, team A and team B. They will be given a deck of cards (with the joker removed) and a score sheet. One person from team A will pull a card from the pack and give it to team B. Team A then asks team B the corresponding question on the question sheet. If team A give the correct answer they receive two points on the score sheet. The card pulled should then be placed to one side and not put

back in the pack. Questions 10, 11 and 13 will receive three points as they require deeper thinking of analysis and synthesis (Bloom, B. 1956). Now team B picks a card and the game proceeds! Through the use of TGT I want to investigate the characteristics of successful cooperative learning such as individual accountability, collaborative skills, positive interdependence and face to face interaction (Johnson & Johnson 1994). As teachers the challenge we face daily is how best to engage students. We all recognise that engaged students are successful students. Evidence suggests that games are fun, motivational and also help students to learn while enjoying it. Students quickly realise they must pay attention in class to play the game (Harmandar & Cil, 2008)

TGT is an instructional strategy that helps to promote co-operative learning - each person must contribute to the group, it involves individual and shared efforts and gives students opportunities to develop and enhance skills which can be applicable to real life settings e.g. workplace, listening, communicating, teamwork, group work (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008). TGT allows students from all academic abilities to be socially included in the class in terms of teaching and learning thus creating an inclusive learning environment. This cooperative learning method pushes students learning to the highest level (De Vries et al. 1975). In a study carried out by Stevens, Slavin & Famish (1991) it was found that using TGT in class provided better results in terms of student achievement and retention. Altiparmak & Nakipoglu (2002) found similar results after a study of high school biology students. Student achievement and attitude to learning increased. Research promotes the use of cooperative learning methodologies and game playing to make learning fun, provide a support network for students and improve motivational levels and student efficacy with regards to learning (Ke & Grabowski, 2007).

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology:**

I will put forward a justification and rationale for using a pragmatist epistemological position for this study and as a result a mixed method approach to methodology, data collection and analysis. An explanation of the four data collection tools– questionnaires, testing, teacher observation and focus groups is also given.

#### **3.1 Research aim and objectives:**

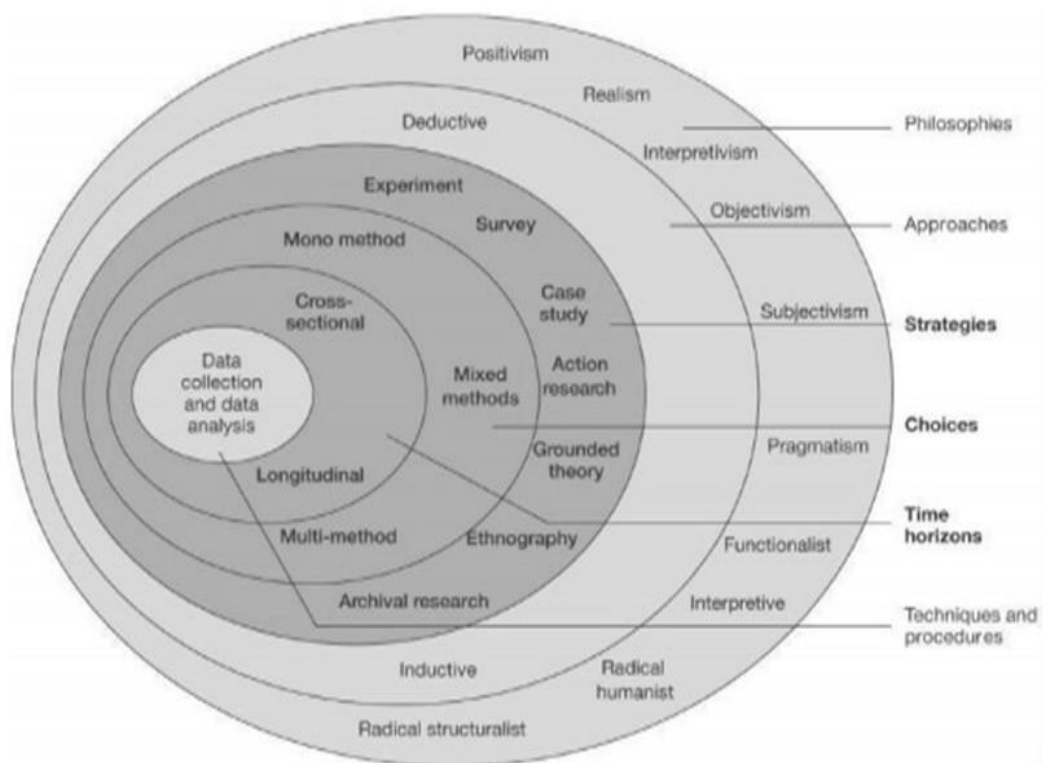
The aim of this research paper is to investigate the impact of instructional leadership methodologies specifically; framing questions and wait time, mind maps, group work and teams games tournament, on students’ academic performance and wellbeing. The research will explore:

- Student’s perceptions of using instructional leadership methodologies.
- Student’s perceptions of the traditional didactic approach to teaching and learning.
- Has students ‘academic performance in the subject being impacted using instructional leadership methodologies.
- Do the skills promoted in instructional leadership methodologies align with the skills put forward in the new junior cycle reform?

#### **3.2 Epistemological Position:**

I adopted a pragmatic approach in my research. Creswell (2014) reports that “pragmatism as a worldview arises out of actions, situations and consequences rather than antecedent conditions” (p, 10) and that there is a concern with what works, in seeking a solution to a problem. Saunders et al. (2007) cited in (Knox, 2004) describes a selection of theoretical concepts and demonstrates these in the outside layer of their research ‘onion’ (Figure 1). These classifications are the basic principles from which research methods are then advanced. While the diagram illustrates that there are several philosophical positions set along the epistemological range, my objective for this study is to employ a pragmatist approach.





**Figure 3.1** Research Onion (Saunders et al, 2009)

A pragmatist model (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Johnson et al, 2007) combines both numeric and descriptive accounts of data to meet the needs of the research and address the research questions fully. Creswell (2014) also declares that a pragmatic approach offers researchers access to various data collection methods and data analysis tools. As a result this pragmatist approach appealed to me for my research because I wanted my research to be ‘practice driven’ towards a realistic solution in a practical world (Feilzer, 2010). Suter (2005) echoes this saying what works best to answer the research question is the most valuable methodology to use in the investigation. Denscombe (2008) supports this view highlighting that pragmatism must deliver ‘useful’ answers to research questions. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) however recognise a constraint of a pragmatist approach arguing that it may only encourage incremental change rather than major change in society. Mertens (2003) alludes that pragmatic researchers sometimes are unable to provide a satisfactory answer to the research question, the effectiveness of the data gathered can be unclear.

Keeping these considerations in mind I believe a pragmatic approach provided a rational and workable research method to answer my research question, on the impact of instructional leadership methodologies on students' academic performance and wellbeing in the history class, as it stresses action, experimenting and is concerned with what works best in human experience (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Bryman (2012) states that society can only be fully understood by the participants who are taking part in the research that is being explored.

### **3.3 Mixed Methods**

Mixed methods is considered a new methodology beginning around the late 1980's based on the work from individuals in wide ranging disciplines such as the social sciences and education. Mixed methods have grown in importance and today can be found in journals across social and health sciences. I chose mixed methods because of its strength of attracting both qualitative and quantitative research and weakening the limits of both approaches. This form of research involves "collecting, analysing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon" (Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2007 p.265). Denscombe (2008) reports that a mixed method approach can provide a more comprehensive picture of the subject of study therefore overcoming the limitations and bias of single approaches. A limitation of mixed method research is that it requires a huge amount of time for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014) and interpreting and integrating the results can also be problematic. I overcame this by keeping my aim focussed. I used a convergent parallel mixed design (Creswell, 2014). In this approach I collected both qualitative and quantitative data, analysed them individually and then compared the results to see if the findings confirm or dispute each other. Teddlie & Tashakkori (2006) state that a parallel mixed design is when "qualitative and quantitative approaches run simultaneously but independently in addressing research questions" (Cohen et al. 2011 p25).

I taught '*Our roots in an ancient civilisation*' using the traditional didactic approach, students were seated in traditional rows and the class was teacher led. Students completed a quick response questionnaire at the end of each lesson to determine their perceptions about using this approach to teaching and learning. Teacher observation was used to monitor student's engagement with the topic, to examine if they were happy and content using this approach and to determine if they had adopted any of the key skills required by the new junior cycle reform.

Students carried out summative assessments at the end of the topic to assess their academic performance using this approach.

I then taught a second topic *'The middle Ages'* using only instructional leadership methodologies; specifically framing questions and wait-time, mind maps, group work and teams games tournament. Students were seated in groups to facilitate these methodologies and the lessons included a student centred and active learning approach. Students were asked to complete a quick response questionnaire at the end of each lesson to determine their perceptions about using instructional leadership methodologies. Teacher observation was used during the lesson to determine student engagement with the content, student wellbeing and to see if they were employing any of the key skills of the new junior cycle.

At the end of both modules students completed a questionnaire relating to the two teaching approaches. I compared student assessments results with the student questionnaires and focus group responses to determine the impact of these instructional leadership approaches on students' academic performance and wellbeing in my history class. I investigated if the skills promoted in instructional leadership methodologies aligned with the skills put forward in the new junior cycle reform. I remained open to recording and noting developments that occurred throughout each lesson.

This approach aligns with Ercikan and Roth (2006) who argue against the separation of research into qualitative and quantitative as this is neither meaningful nor valuable as there is congruency between the two. Reams and Twale (2008) concur that "mixed methods are necessary to uncover information and perspective, corroboration of data and render less biased and more accurate conclusions"(Cohen et al. 2011 p22).

I incorporated triangulation into my research as Denzin (1978) cited in (Cohen et al, 2007) p.291) defined triangulation as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon". I used a triangulation approach, which is said to enhance research validity, as it offers three methods of approach to data collection (Davidson, 2015). I believe it was necessary to engage in multiple qualitative research strategies during the research to ascertain how students and teachers felt using these new approaches in the classroom therefore ensuring validity and reliability as I could report my findings from the participants' perspectives (Geertz, 1974; cited in Cohen et al, 2014).

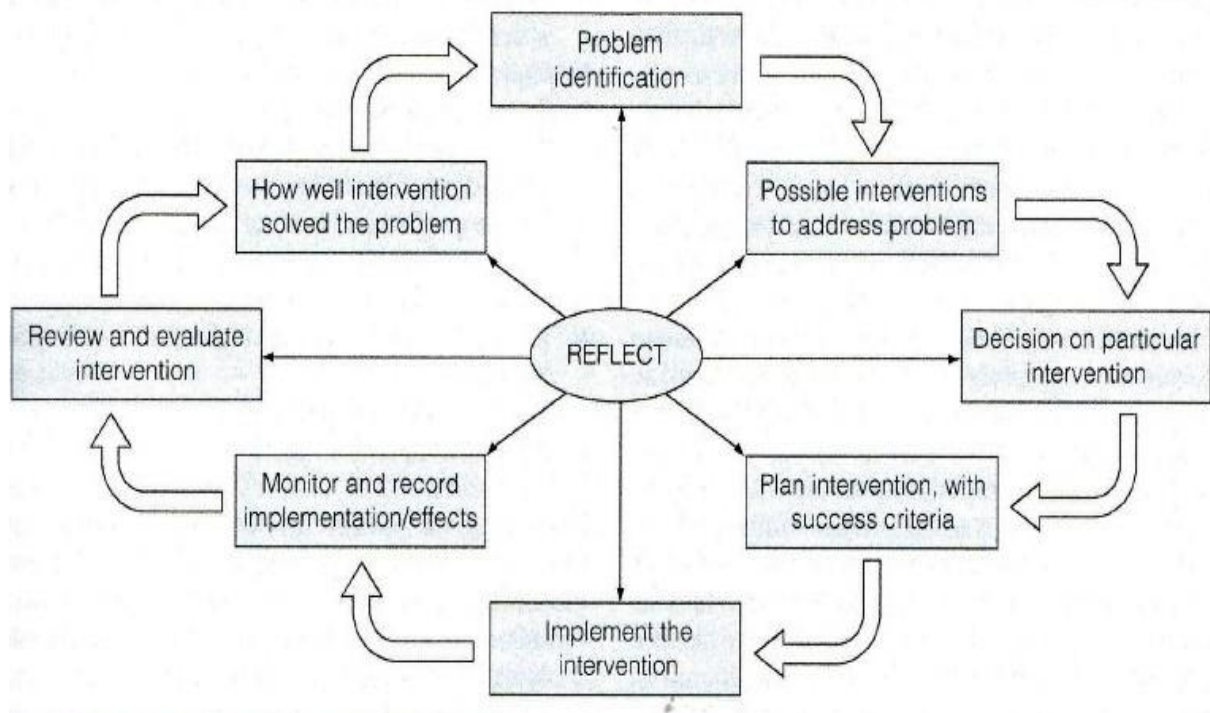
### **3.4 Action Research:**

I used action research which is described as “improving practice through improving learning, and articulating the reasons and potential significance of the research in the interests of helping us all to find better ways of living together successfully” (Mc Niff & Whitehead 2009 p20). Cohen et al. (2014) concur identifying action research as a way of finding out information that we didn’t already know. Mc Niff (2009) describes action research as identifying the reasons for the research, the methodology to achieve these purposes and recognising the importance of what has been discovered. Corey (1953) supports this, defining action research as the practice through which teachers reflect on their own practice to enhance and bring about improvements in the classroom. Teachers can use action research and reflection to further their practice in a series of continuous professional improvement (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1990). Johnson (1993) and Freeman (1998) concur that teachers should be researchers in their own classrooms. Francis (2012); Black & Wiliam (1998); Hattie (2003) promote the use of classroom research as a means of allowing teachers to improve professionally.

I employed this type of study because I believe it is a worthwhile and practical methodology to investigate the impact of instructional leadership methodologies in my classroom. Action research is “insider research” and I was the principal researcher who carried out the study in my own classroom. Action research offers many benefits to teachers, primarily that it increases their own confidence in the classroom, they become more aware of classroom issues, it encourages them to reflect on their practice and they can encompass a broader understanding of teaching and learning (Noffke & Zeichner 1987).

I wanted to explore the claims that instructional leadership methodologies have a positive impact on students. Mc Niff (2009) reports that action research is committed action that gives rise to knowledge. Kemmis and Target (1992) support this view emphasising that action research is research through which people work to better their own praxis. I remained open minded about the data I collected and I recorded my own personal observations regarding student progress and the changes that occurred (Zuber-Skerritt 1996).

While many representations of the action research cycle have emerged over time, I preferred Mc Niff’s eight-stage model of the action research process for my study:



**Figure 3.2:** Mc Niff, A Framework for action research cited in (Cohen et al.2011)

My research question was divided into research objectives some of which are quantitative and some qualitative. I believed it was more productive to see the relationship between both qualitative and quantitative methods as complimentary rather than fixed. Huang (2010) describes high quality action research as encompassing action, flexibility and significance.

<b>Research objective</b>	<b>Data Collection Strategies</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Reasons for</b>
Is academic performance impacted using instructional leadership methodologies?	Summative assessments (testing)	Quantitative	To discover students' academic achievements using the didactic approach and instructional leadership methodologies
Is student wellbeing affected?	Student questionnaire Teacher observation	Qualitative	To understand better students perceptions and feelings about using –

			instructional leadership methodologies and didactic approaches  To delve further into students perceptions and allow for more elaboration.
Is there an alignment between the skills used in instructional leadership methodologies and the principles and skills required by the new Junior Certificate curriculum?	Student questionnaire  Focus group	Qualitative	To determine the skills that students have acquired as a result of the action research intervention and to ascertain if these skills support the skills of the new junior cycle.

**Figure 2.1** Summary of Mixed Methods Approach

Critics of action research have said it can lack impartiality and can show evidence of bias (Avison & Woodharper 1991). Hodgkinson thought that "research was no place for an amateur" that there is "widespread ignorance" of "all phases of research procedure" (McTaggart, 1994 p330). A further weakness highlighted is that a teacher might begin research on a particular area of need, but find that the research may hamper their teaching as a result of concentrating too much on the research question. I am satisfied that I have chosen this particular method as it presents a clear and logical method that is easily followed and this adds a level of structure to the action research process. I believe my study is a fusion of practical and theoretical concerns; it is both action and research (Mc Niff 2002). I aimed to work with the students in my class in a collaborative process to enhance the teaching and learning process.

I developed an action plan to collect and bring together the data, specifically pre and post testing of students, student questionnaires, observation and focus groups. This enabled me to

look at my research question through “different lenses” (Sagor, 1992). Next the data was analysed. “If data collection is the heart of the research process, then data analysis is its soul” (Sagor, 1992, p. 11).

### **3.5 Data collection**

The overall aim of this research is to investigate the impact of instructional leadership methodologies specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind maps, group work, team games tournament, on post primary students’ academic performance and wellbeing in my classroom. The nature of the research question suggests that I needed to focus my data collection in a secondary school and with students who had not yet experienced instructional leadership methodologies in history class. To accomplish my research objectives I needed to liaise with students in order to investigate their opinions and experiences regarding the implementation of instructional leadership methodologies in the teaching and learning process. As a result of this I opted for four different types of data collection tools, questionnaires, focus groups, observation and student summative assessment tests in class.

### **3.6 Questionnaires:**

I used questionnaires to collect information from students regarding their opinions and experiences of using instructional leadership methodologies. I piloted the questionnaire to increase reliability, validity and practicability (Oppenheim, 1992; Morrison, 1993; Wilson & McLean, 1994). I created questionnaires that were understandable to my students and that produced information that was relevant and quantifiable for my results (Bell 2007). The aim of the student questionnaire was to discover if students enjoy using instructional leadership methodologies, are they more engaged in the learning processing and do they feel happy and secure in the classroom. The design of the questionnaire was laid out with clear instructions and comprised of closed questions in which they could choose their answers by multiple choices and there were two open ended questions to seek for a deeper analysis. Bryman (2012) emphasises the importance of providing clear instructions to participants on how to complete a multiple choice questionnaire. To validate results I aligned the questions with those asked in the questionnaires and focus group so that comparisons and contrasts could be made in the

analysis stage (Creswell, 2014). A colleague administered questionnaires to avoid bias and ensure validity and reliability.

A drawback of using a questionnaire includes probable delays in obtaining answers and the use of closed questions does not provide an opportunity for the researcher to delve deeper into issues that may surface at that time. Questionnaires can be complicated for those with communication and speech difficulties and it can be problematic to ask questions individually (Bryman, 2008).

### **3.7 Focus groups:**

A focus group was carried out to primarily get a deeper understanding of students' thoughts and feelings in relation to using instructional leadership in the classroom. The questions brought to the focus group involved a more in depth analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaire and I questions were created to allow for interaction between the group. The interaction between the group lead to further data and outcomes (Hyden & Bulow 2003). Lewis (1992) concurs that an honest exchange of information occurs when contributors are treated as professionals, inspired to share ideas and opinions. Kitzinger (1995) advises that focus groups may lead to only strong voices being heard and that if the group is created using more than one researcher, then issues surrounding confidentiality may result.

### **3.8 Observation:**

Observation allows the researcher to gather "live" data from naturally occurring social situations (Cohen et al 2007). Bryman (2012) describes observation as a superior form of data collection because it provides primary evidence rather than relying on second hand accounts. Robson (2000) points out that what people say they do is often quite different from what they actually do; therefore observation has the power to offer much more valid information. I believe observation gave me a more realistic account of students' perceptions and feelings in the classroom. I completed a pre-planned observation record sheet after each lesson, students were informed that they were observed and the observation will be highly structured. Lofland (1971) highlights the importance of writing up notes immediately after the class as this will help strengthen issues of reliability. As Adler & Adler (1994) advise that the observation should be non-interventionist and throughout the observation I did not try to effect the situation



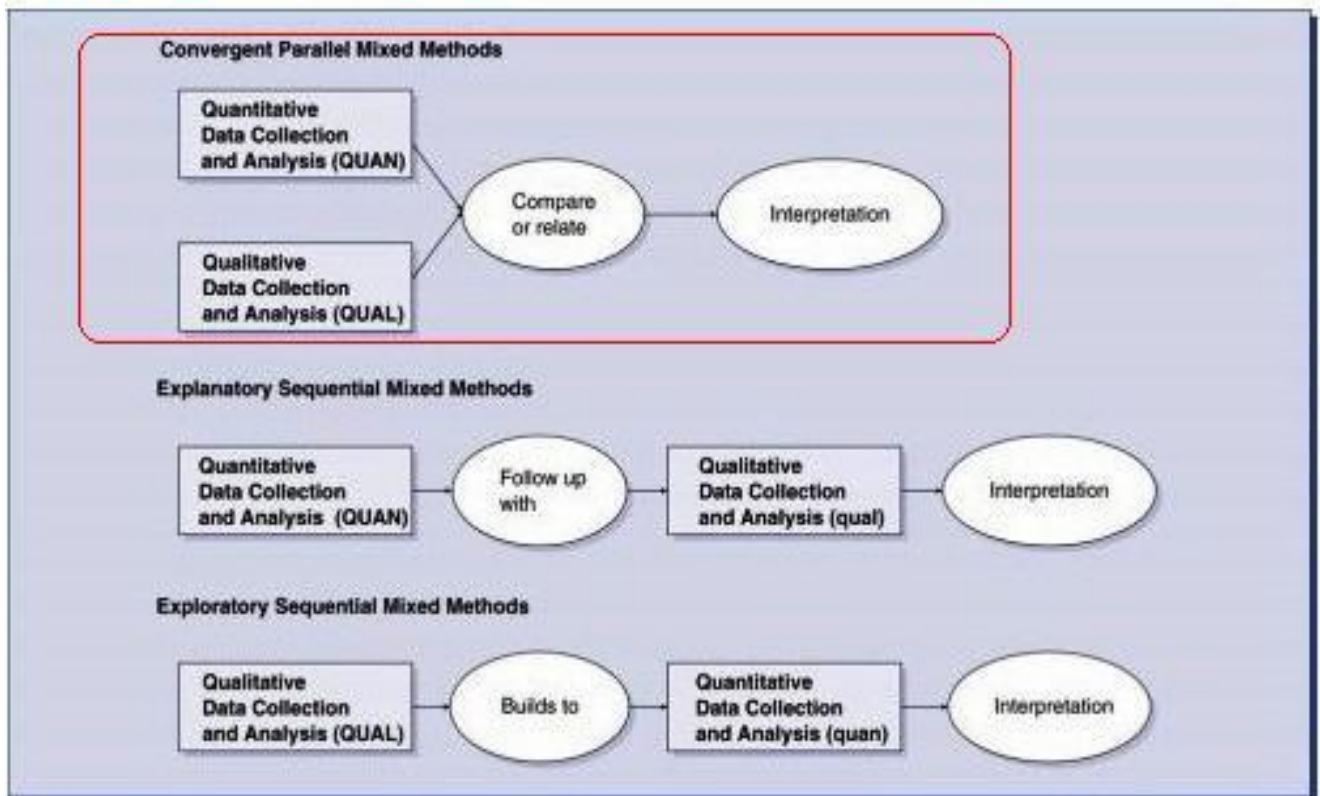
or the student's responses. I understood a number of observation classes to be essential so that I could document any changes in students' actions and engagement in learning throughout the research. Kirk & Miller (1986), suggest that researchers must record four kinds of observational data; 1) notes written during the observation, 2) lengthy notes made immediately after the observation, 3) journal notes to record any problems or issues during the research 4) a record of repeated analysis and interpretation. By implementing such a systematic means of recording and analysing information, reliability of data will be increased (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

### **3.9 Testing:**

I carried out testing at the end of the didactic module and at the end of the instructional leadership module. I implemented instructional leadership methodologies specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind maps, group work and team games tournament in my teaching and then carried out assessment testing to discover whether students had achieved the learning outcomes and ultimately whether grades have improved. I compared student's results in the didactic approach to teaching with students' results using instructional leadership methodologies to determine their impact on academic performance. Cohen et al. (2014) acknowledge that formative testing is designed to monitor students' progress during a programme. Binet (1905), cited in Cohen et al (2011), promotes tests as an authoritative way of collecting numerical data.

### **3.10 Data analysis**

The data collected was analysed using convergent parallel mixed methods design to assess the impact of instructional leadership methodologies specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind maps, group work, team games tournament. I used an inductive approach as it offers a clear and organised process for organising large amounts of qualitative data (Thomas, 2006). A challenge that faced in this convergent parallel mixed methods design was how to actually join or amalgamate the data. I used an approach called a side-by side comparison. Creswell (2014) suggests that the researcher will first convey the quantitative results and then deliberate the qualitative findings and ideas and then compare and contrast the results.



**Figure 3.3** Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Approach (Creswell, 2014)

The quantitative data will consist of pre-test (didactic approach) and post-test assessments (instructional leadership methodologies) carried out by the students in class. A qualitative analysis was required to examine the results of the questionnaires, focus group responses and observation. It is important that the research objectives promote the analysis (Cohen et al.2014). I used coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Kelle, 1995, Gibbs, 2007; Flick, 2009) as the interpretation of questionnaire responses and focus group responses to specific questions for the purpose of analysis. The practice of coding entailed classifying the data into a number of categories that allowed the findings to be categorised methodically (Bryman, 2012). Coding facilitated me to identify similar information and create a categorising system (Gibbs, 2007). The labels used for the organising of ideas and themes create codes. Bryman, (2012) concurs that codes are the title given to correspond to a set of comparable themes that can be studied in the data. I constructed a coding guide by transcribing individual answers and identifying thematic patterns. Each theme was assigned a colour code and all responses were included in the discovered themes.

### **3.11 Reliability and Validity:**

In order to ensure reliability and validity a triangulation approach was adopted. Creswell (2014) states that triangulation leads to “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (p. 126). I used similar themed questions in my data collection and I used the same questionnaire and focus group agenda. In this way the results from different data collection methods brought about convergence at the end. I analysed the qualitative data from my questionnaires, focus groups, observation and testing using the analysis methodology suggested by Creswell (2014). This approach involves six steps as outlined below;

1. Transcribe interviews, examine records, type up notes,
2. Identify themes in the information recorded
3. Begin the coding process- categorising and labelling data
4. Use the coding approach to produce themes from the data.
5. Connect the ideas and reports together.
6. Formulate an understanding of the data collected.

Educational research through action research does not yield knowledge that is universal (Cohen et al, 2014). It is about me in the present moment trying to enhance understanding and bring about improvements in my teaching through action research and to add to the existing body of knowledge in a meaningful way (Corey, 1953).

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations:**

I received permission from my Principal to carry out the research in my school. The research involved first year students, less than 18 years, therefore it was essential that voluntary informed, parental and then student consent is granted. I ensured that all participants and their parents were given the necessary information and have been supported in developing an acceptable understanding of the research (Cohen et al 2007). I am a registered member of the teaching council of Ireland and Garda Vetted.

I ensured that activities were prepared for students in the class who did not wish to take part in the study and their work was not included in my research. I ensured that all participants in the research understood the process and how their actions would be monitored and analysed for research (Fine & Sandstrom 1988). I conducted my study within an ethic of respect; all participants were treated fairly, sensitively and with dignity. I informed all participants of their right to withdraw from the research up to the stage of data analysis. I asked a colleague to administer questionnaires in my class to avoid bias and ensure validity and reliability (Morrison, 1996; cited; in Cohen at al, 2014).

Anonymity and confidentiality of all contributors involved was assured. I carried out my research with honesty and integrity, with as little disruption as possible. I adhered to my schools data protection policy when storing data. All information was stored on my computer at school and it was password protected. I am fully committed to the wellbeing, protection and safety of all participants. All data was collected, processed and saved in accordance with data protection legislation and in compliance with LYITS guidelines for Electronic data storage.

## **Chapter 4: Research Findings and Analysis:**

### **4.1 Research Objectives**

This chapter describes the analysis of data followed by a discussion of the research findings.

The findings relate to the research questions:

- To explore the benefits of using instructional leadership methodologies specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work, teams games tournament for students?
- To explore students perceptions of the traditional didactic approach to teaching and learning?
- To investigate if academic performance and student wellbeing is impacted using instructional leadership methodologies?
- To discover if there is a correlation between the skills promoted by instructional leadership methodologies and the principles and skills of new Junior Certificate

### **4.2 Key Themes**

The results presented are based on student questionnaires, focus group responses, teacher observation, and testing after each module. From the data gathered four key themes have emerged:

1. Student engagement and participation
2. Academic performance and student wellbeing
3. Collaborative learning
4. Attainment of junior cycle key skills

Quotations are taken directly from student responses in the focus group. Students also completed quick response questionnaires immediately after each lesson to determine their initial perceptions of the methodology used. Students completed a questionnaire at the end of the six weeks when both modules were completed. A focus group questionnaire was carried out with five students to provide in depth analyse of the methodologies employed. I have labelled the participants in the focus group student 1 2, 3, 4, 5 to respect their anonymity. Teacher observation results focused on the themes of student engagement, level of

participation, students’ responses, classroom discipline and attainment of junior cycle key skills.

### 4.3 Didactic approach: Module 1

I began my research by teaching a first year history module ‘*Our roots in an ancient civilisation*’ using the traditional didactic approach to teaching and learning. Students sat in rows and worked on their own for the class. The instruction was teacher led and lasted for three weeks.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year - Topic: Our Roots in Ancient Civilisation contd.</b>				
<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Methodology/ Resources</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To outline sources of evidence for Ancient Rome</li> <li>To explore and describe specified aspects of life in Ancient Rome (houses, food, family, work etc.)</li> <li>To explore the decline of Ancient Rome and reasons for it.</li> <li>To develop an understanding of the spread of Christianity in Rome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sources for Ancient Rome</li> <li>Pompeii</li> <li>Roman soldiers and the Roman Empire</li> <li>Houses</li> <li>Food and Clothes</li> <li>Burial Customs</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Entertainment</li> <li>Roman gods</li> <li>The Arrival of Christianity</li> <li>Legacy of Ancient Rome</li> </ul>	Students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List the sources of evidence for Ancient Rome</li> <li>Describe in detail specified aspect of life in Ancient Rome (as outlined in objectives)</li> <li>Write about the decline of Ancient Rome</li> <li>Outline the spread of Christianity in Rome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook</li> <li>Worksheets</li> <li>ICT — power points</li> <li>Talk &amp; Chalk</li> <li>DVD — Gladiator ]</li> <li>Documentary — Last Day in Pompeii (BBC)</li> <li>Note taking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written homework</li> <li>Written questions</li> <li>Written test</li> <li>Worksheets</li> </ul>
<b><i>Evaluation</i></b> Homework & written test.				

**Figure 4.1** Scheme of work – Didactic Approach Module One

#### 4.4 Instructional leadership methodologies: Module 2

I then introduced a second module ‘*The Middle Ages*’ using instructional leadership methodologies, which was student centred and incorporated active learning. This module was also taught over three weeks.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year - Topic: The Middle Ages</b> -using instructional leadership methodologies; framing questions & wait-time, mind maps, group work & teams games tournament				
<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Methodology/ Resources</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explain the feudal system and how it was used in the Middle Ages</li> <li>Describe a motte and bailey and stone castle and explore how it was defended, and attacked. Discuss the lives of the lord, lady and knight In the Middle Ages</li> <li>Develop an understanding of a medieval manor and what life was like on it</li> <li>Explore life in medieval towns by describing their homes and the dangers they had to face</li> <li>Describe a medieval monastery and outline the life of a monk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medieval Society and the Feudal System</li> <li>The Medieval Castle</li> <li>Pastimes</li> <li>Food and Dress</li> <li>Life in the Countryside</li> <li>Life in a Medieval Town</li> <li>The Guilds</li> <li>Medieval Churches and monastic life</li> <li>Ireland in the Middle Ages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students should be able to:</li> <li>Outline what the feudal system was</li> <li>Discuss in detail motte and bailey and a stone castle and their advantages and disadvantages.</li> <li>Describe how the above castles were defended and attacked</li> <li>Show a good understanding of a medieval manor and what daily life was like there</li> <li>Demonstrate a knowledge of medieval towns and the hazards people had to contend with</li> <li>Discuss why this period of time was so important in Ireland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framing questions &amp; wait-time</li> <li>Mind maps</li> <li>Group work</li> <li>Teams games tournament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher &amp; lower order questioning</li> <li>Mind maps</li> <li>Group work - Analyzing primary written sources from the Middle Ages</li> <li>Teams games tournament</li> <li>Written Test</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation</b> Testing, student engagement and responses, attainment of junior cycle key skills</p>				

**Figure 4.2** Scheme of work Instructional Leadership Methodologies Module Two

#### 4.5 Didactic Approach to teaching and learning

A didactic approach was employed to teach module 1 *'Our roots in an ancient civilisation'*. This was taught over a three week period, students received nine classes of instruction using this methodology. Students were seated in rows and in single desks working individually and instruction was teacher led. Students were required to have their school text book, copy book and note book for keywords. Teaching and learning focused on transmitting knowledge to students and giving them instructions of what to do in each lesson. (Appendix-lesson plans)

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	'How do we know so much about the Romans'
2	Life in Ancient Rome
3	Life in ancient Rome continued (arts & crafts, food, clothing)
4	'Pastimes and Entertainment in Ancient Rome
5	'Special study; A child in ancient Rome'
6	Religion & Roman gods
7	Burial Customs & the Arrival of Christianity in Ancient Rome
8	'How Rome was governed & the Roman army
9	'The fall of the Roman Empire and an exploration of "What the Romans did for us"'

**Figure 4.3** Content of Lessons- Didactic Approach Module One



#### 4.6 Instructional leadership approach to teaching and learning

Instructional leadership methodologies specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work and team games tournament were employed to teach module 2, *'The Middle Ages'*. A student centred approach was adopted over a three week period therefore students received nine classes of instruction using this methodology. Students were seated in groups of four at a table. The groupings were teacher structured to enable differentiated learning. Students were informed that they are allowed to talk with their “partners” at their table when carrying out tasks if they need to discuss or seek advice from them. Student interaction and communication was encouraged. However classroom discipline rules still applied.

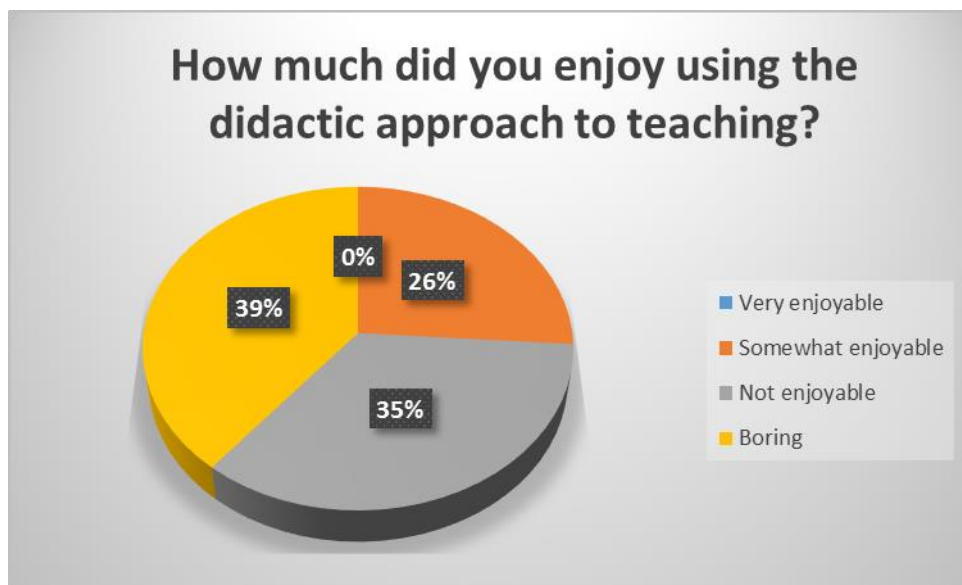
<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Medieval Society & Feudal System
2	The Medieval Castle
3	Defending & attacking a Medieval castle
4	The Lord & Lady of the Medieval castle
5, 6, 7	The Middle Ages – group work project
8,9	The Middle ages teams games tournament

**Figure 4.4** Content of Lessons – Instructional Leadership Module Two

#### 4.7 Student participation and engagement

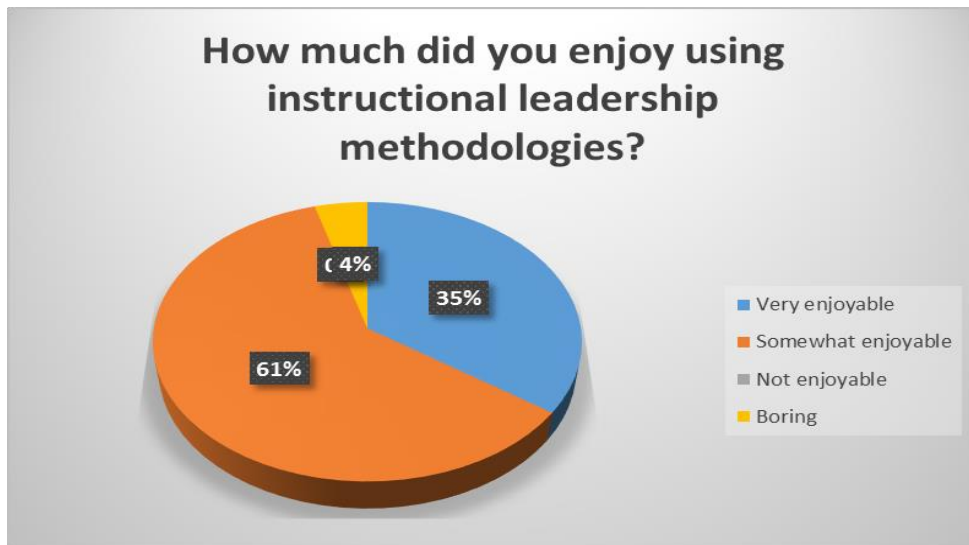
Research shows that when students are engaged and participate in the learning process deep learning occurs (Hattie, 2003). The responses of students that participated in the study are as follows:

When asked how much they enjoyed using the didactic approach to teaching and learning the findings show that out of 22 students surveyed 39 percent reported it to be boring while 35 percent found it not enjoyable. 26 percent found the didactic approach somewhat enjoyable and 0 percent found it very enjoyable.



**Figure 4.5** Student responses to didactic Approach

In contrast when students were asked about using instructional leadership active methodologies 96 percent of students reported that they enjoyed using them in class while only 4 percent of students reported it to be boring.



**Figure 4.6** Student responses to Instructional Leadership Methodologies

In the focus group the questions called for students to share their feelings regarding the didactic approach in module 1 and instructional leadership methodologies used in module 2. The comments from students support the findings from the questionnaire. These are quotes from students which reflect their feelings about the didactic approach to teaching;

Student 1-*“I can’t learn if I’m bored and not interested”*.

Student 2-*“the teacher does all the talking”*.

Student 3-*“the class seems much longer, just sitting there looking at the clock all the time”*.

Student 4- *“the same students answer the same questions all of the time”*

Student 5- *“I worked quicker in rows; we had no time to talk”*

In contrast when asked about instructional leadership methodologies students gave very positive comments;

Student 1-*“we can help each other sitting in groups but sitting by yourself I get bored and don’t listen”*.

Student 2- *“you have to think for yourself”*

Student 3- *“you can’t just fall asleep in class, you can’t just bluff it”*.

Student 4- *“the classes were more interesting because you got to be involved”*

Teacher observation also supports the findings of the focus group and questionnaire highlighting that student engagement and participation in module 1 using the didactic approach was fair with the same students putting their hands up and answering questions in the majority of the lessons. I observed that there was very little opportunity for students to participate in the class as it was content heavy and the teacher was doing all of the talking, all of the thinking and all of the work. McHarg (2009) agrees with these findings alluding that in the didactic process information is passed without provoking any brain activity. The classes did go to plan and the didactic methodology was useful to achieve the learning outcomes and get the information across to students (Sheehan, 2003) however results from the questionnaire and focus group affirm that students were not fully engaged and they were not given opportunities to participate in critical or divergent thinking. This supports the findings of Collins (2007) who cautions that students expect teachers to do all of the thinking for them.

The findings show that students engaged and participated more in the didactic module during lessons four and nine suggesting that maybe they related more to the subject matter of the lessons. Teacher observation showed that students were taking notes and appeared to be listening attentively but where they really thinking? There were no opportunities for discussion or interaction between students, everyone worked on their own therefore classroom discipline was excellent in all of the lessons however students lacked enthusiasm and interest in the tasks given. These findings support the findings of the Comhairle na nOg report (2017) where 75 percent of students agreed that they learn best through active learning and discussion in class. In terms of teacher welfare I observed that I got frustrated in some of the classes due to lack of student interest and motivation. I observed that students were told what to do and how to do it and they complied with teacher instructions. Where the instructional practices I was utilising contributing in some way to poor student engagement and participation in module 1?

In contrast teacher observation using instructional leadership methodologies suggests a more positive response from students in terms of engagement and participation. The findings from teacher observation show that student engagement, level of participation, student responses and the attainment of the junior cycle key skills were excellent using instructional leadership methodologies. I was delighted with the enthusiasm and creativity of the student's throughout the lessons. This may suggest that students had a sense of duty and responsibility for their work. Students who would normally be quiet where putting their hands up and asking questions.

I observed that some students showed a strong sense of decision making which encouraged and motivated other students at their table. Students were engaging in critical thinking and problem solving skills. However classroom discipline was a challenge in each lesson this suggests that students need time to develop the social skills necessary for collaborative and active learning. This supports the findings of Gonzalez, Jennings, Manriquez (2014) who highlight that time is needed for students to develop critical thinking and social skills. In terms of teacher welfare I felt more content and less frustrated as a result of more positive student engagement and participation in the tasks given however issues around classroom management were a challenge.

#### Framing questions & wait-time:

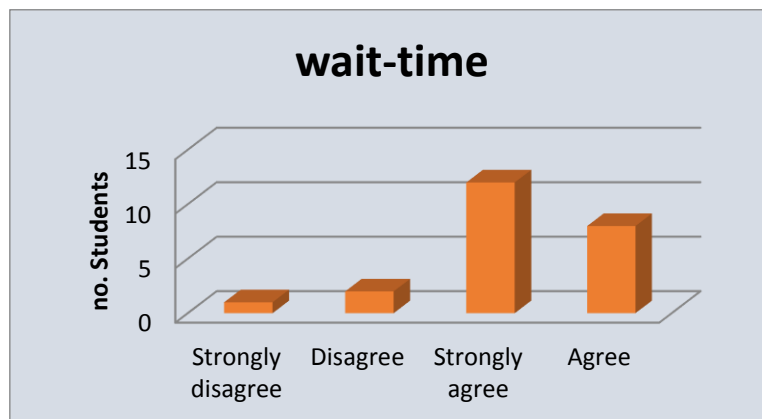
Throughout the lessons using instructional leadership methodologies -module 2, I made key changes to the way I framed and asked questions (Bloom, 1972; Bennett, 2010). I also introduced a wait-time of five seconds (Budd, 1972) to allow students to process the questions being asked and to develop their thinking skills. I introduced more open ended and problem solving questions to the lesson and I aimed to make my teaching more interactive by encouraging students to find the answers to questions themselves rather than the teacher telling them. I used Blooms taxonomy (Bloom, 1972) which provides a hierarchy of levels to cater for the needs of all students in my class.

The results of the student questionnaire show that 95 percent of the students agreed on the importance of effective teacher questioning skills to promote their learning and bring about greater student engagement. This aligns with Bennett (2010) who promotes framing questions as an instructional skill to engage students in deep learning. In contrast Tofade et al. (2013) argues that ineffective questioning can lead to confusion and limit thinking.



**Figure 4.7** Student Responses to Effective Questioning

Question three of the student questionnaire asked that if students were given more time could they answer the question better. The results show that 86 percent of students reported that the use of wait-time helps them to give better answers. Students agreed that it is much better to have time to actually process what the teacher is asking.



**Figure 4.8** Student responses to using Wait-Time

These findings are supported by the focus group responses. When asked about the importance of effective teacher questioning skills, students gave the following comments;

Student 1 *“it makes the information easier to understand”*

Student 2 *“it forces you to become more engaged in the class...it’s more interesting”*

Student 3 *“it forces you to think”*

Testing also supports these findings as 91 percent of students reported an increase in their academic performance following the inclusion of framing questions and wait-time in the

instruction. This confirms the findings of Marzano et al. (2001) who concludes that framing questions effectively can lead to higher attainment of learning intentions. Through teacher observation I realised that I had to make a big effort not to answer questions myself but to allow students time to think. I observed that on most occasions after being given time to reflect students did come up with answers themselves, which were even enhanced further through effective teacher questioning skills. This would suggest that more effort needs to be spent on improving effective questioning skills and allowing more wait-time in class to enhance students learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). I observed that through the use of framing questions and wait-time student engagement and participation in the lesson were enhanced. It facilitated an interactive classroom where students were encouraged and pushed to reach higher levels of thinking. I noticed that there was a shared learning which brought about greater engagement (Miller, 1989).

### Mind map

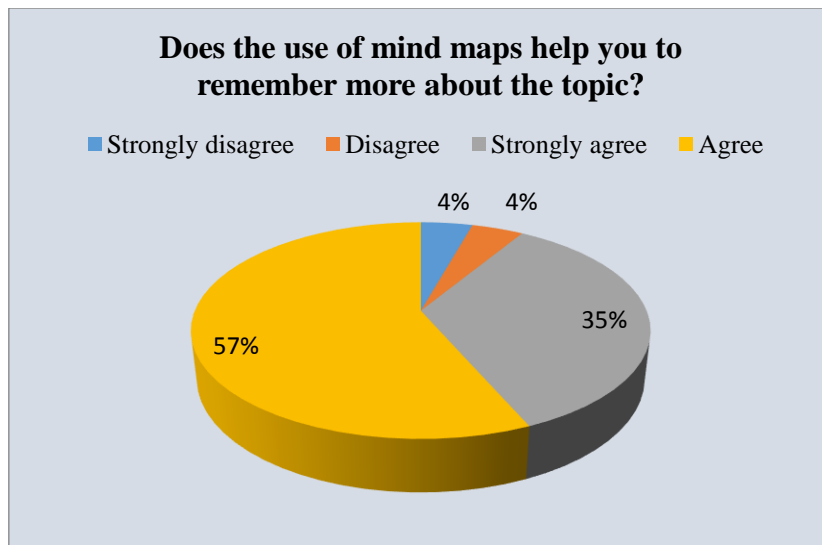
I introduced mind maps into four lessons in module 2. Mind maps are graphic organisers that allow students to develop, express and review their ideas at the highest level of thinking (Bennett 2008). Students were encouraged to use different colours for each key idea and images could be used to support their work (Buzan, 2005). Students began by analysing completed mind maps to determine what was expected from them and to assist them in their task.

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Mind map themes</b>
1	Feudal system & key people associated
2	Motte and bailey & stone castles
3	Attacking and defending medieval castles
4	The Lord & Lady of the medieval castle

**Figure 4.9** Themes for Mind Map Methodology

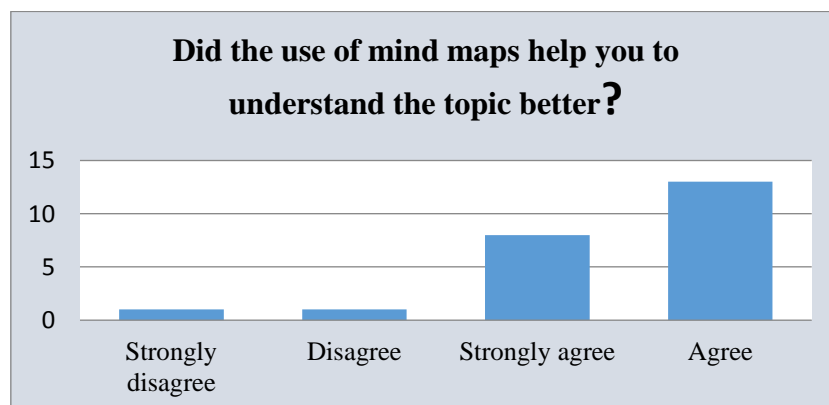
Students were asked if the use of mind maps helped them to remember more about the topic and the findings show that 87 percent of students reported that mind maps did help them to remember more information about the subject matter, while 13 percent of students said that they didn't like using mind maps. Focus group responses revealed that some students preferred writing full sentences with more detail. This suggests that maybe mind maps did

not suit their learning styles best (Gardner, 1991), therefore teachers need to employ various instructional methodologies to appeal to all learning styles and foster greater student engagement.



**Figure 4.10** Student Responses to the use of Mind Maps

When asked if the use of mind maps helped students to understand the information better the findings reveal that 91 percent students agreed while 4 percent strongly disagreed and 4 percent disagreed. Again this would suggest that mind maps may not suit the learning styles of all students and reinforces the importance of differentiated learning. These findings align with Bennett & Rolheiser (2008) who caution that “good” teachers must use a variety of teaching methodologies to address the different learning styles of our students and bring about great student engagement.



**Figure 4.11** Student Responses to the use of Mind Maps to understand the topic better.



Teacher observation revealed that students enjoyed working on the mind maps in class and student engagement and participation was described as “excellent”. Students were forced to think for themselves and it was a great methodology for formative assessment. I observed that I could tell straight away who was struggling to understand the topic. Most students struggled in lesson one with completing the mind map but this may have been due to the fact that it was a new skill that had to be learnt and developed. By lesson four, students were more comfortable and assured of what to do and this contributed to improved classroom management. It was also an advantage that all resources needed were pre-prepared and placed on each table to avoid confusion. I monitored the key skills of communication, working with others and being creative in action (framework for junior cycle, 2015). Overall mind maps had a positive impact on student engagement and participation; however the need to vary teaching methodologies to suit all students needs was highlighted.

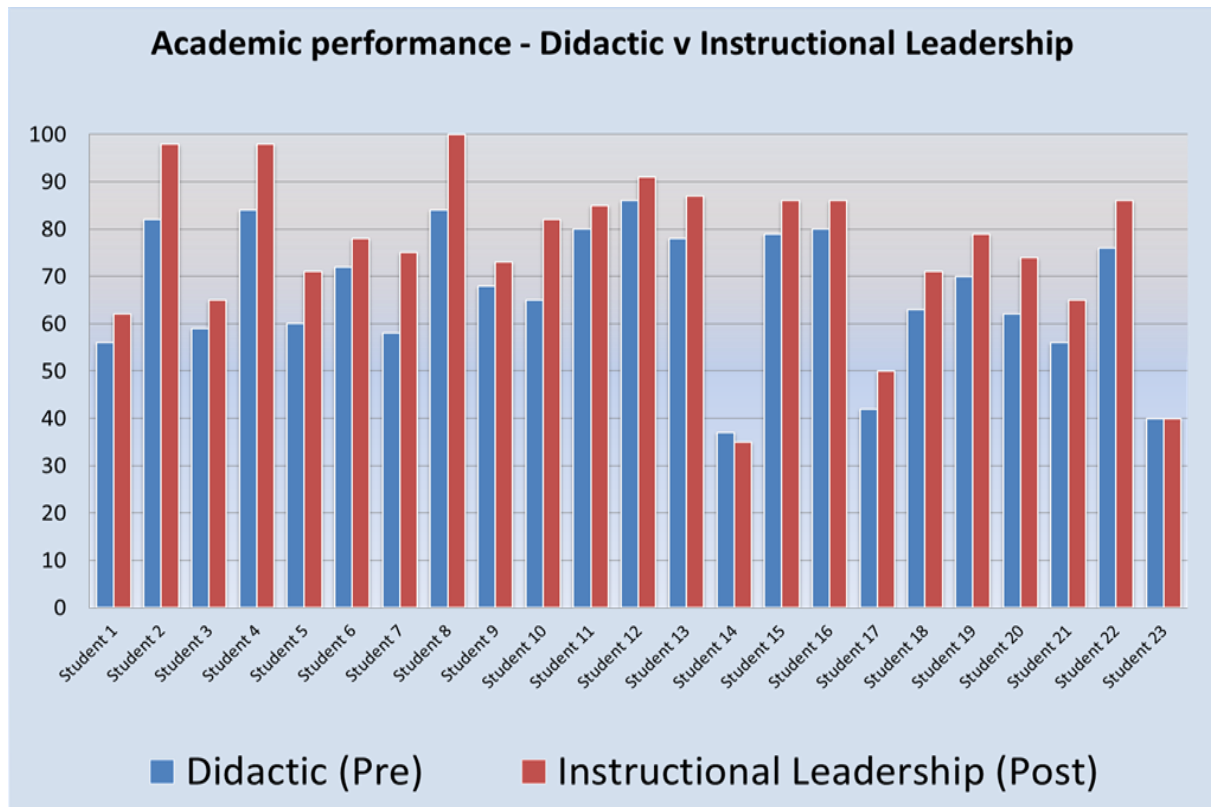
#### **4.8 Academic performance and student wellbeing**

Students completed a written test at the end of module 1-didactic approach and module 2-instructional leadership methodologies. Questions were posed in a similar fashion and the same time was allocated for both tests. The findings show that 91 per cent of students’ academic performance improved using instructional leadership methodologies. The grade of student 23 went up by only 1 percent after both interventions. This could be due to poor attendance during the implementation of each module.

In contrast student 14’s grade went down after module 2 using instructional leadership methodologies. Based on teacher observation and focus group responses this may be due to the fact that this student lacked confidence and possibly preferred the didactic approach to teaching more than instructional leadership methodologies. When asked about the didactic approach student 14 said “I like it because you have less work to do...you can just daydream if you want”. Some students can feel threatened by a sudden jump to a student centred approach to learning (Callan, 1997). This aligns with the findings of Van Wyk (2011) who cautions that students must be nurtured into any new student centred learning approach.

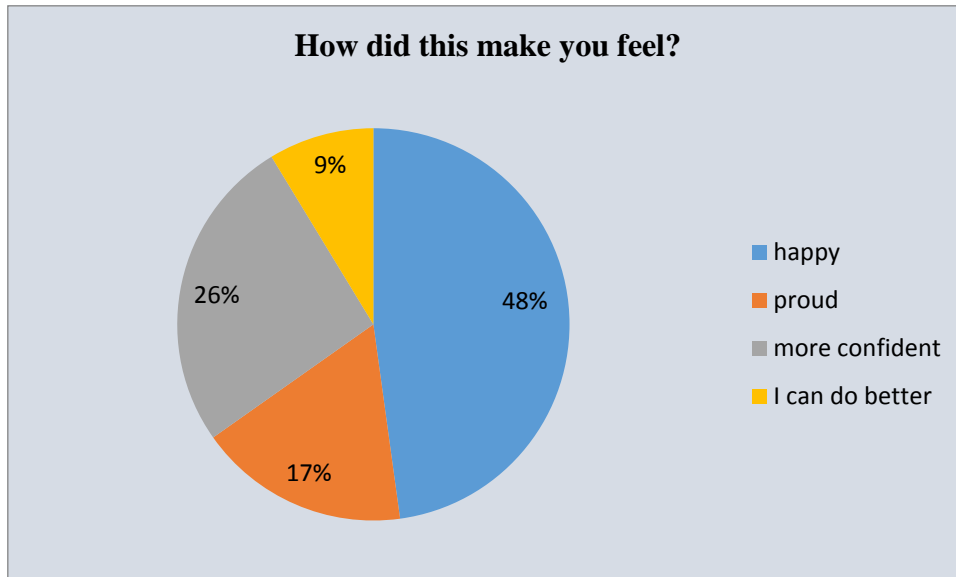
Overall the research shows that 96 percent of students reported that their academic performance improved using instructional leadership methodologies. This suggests that

teachers must constantly seek to develop their instructional practices to improve students' experiences and learning in school (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008).



**Figure 4.12** Students' Academic Performance in Module One 7 Module Two

Emotions can affect motivation for learning and academic performance (Mainhard et al. 2018). Students were asked how they felt when their grades improved. The results show that 48 percent of students reported that they were happy, 26 percent of students were more confident, 17 percent of students felt proud and 9 percent said they could do better next time.



**Figure 4.13** Students’ Emotional Responses to improved Grades

These findings are reinforced by focus group responses. When asked about the use instructional leadership methodologies in class students reported;

Student 1 *“You are not as worried if you get something wrong if you are sitting beside your friends”*

Student 2 *“it was fun.*

Student 3 *“I loved colouring in and using scissors... we never get to do that anymore”*

Student 4 *“I like having people beside me, who can help”*

The findings would suggest that students felt more comfortable and safe when they were sitting beside their friends and when a more collaborative approach to teaching and learning took place (Bennett, 2010).

In contrast when asked about the didactic approach to teaching students reported;

Student 1 *“We couldn’t ask our friends help or check our answers with anyone”*

Student 2 *“It was a hard class no one helped me”*

Student 3 *“I didn’t like sitting by myself”*

Teacher observation supports these findings highlighting that students enjoyed using more active learning methodologies in class and displayed more motivation, interest and engagement in the lessons. Students also reported that good teacher questioning and wait-time also means that students don’t get embarrassed in class if they don’t know the answer. The findings show that teacher instructional practices and behaviours can impact student wellbeing and enhance their academic self concept (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008).

#### **4.9 Collaborative learning**

Two collaborative instructional leadership methodologies were introduced in module 2; group work and teams games tournament.

##### Group work

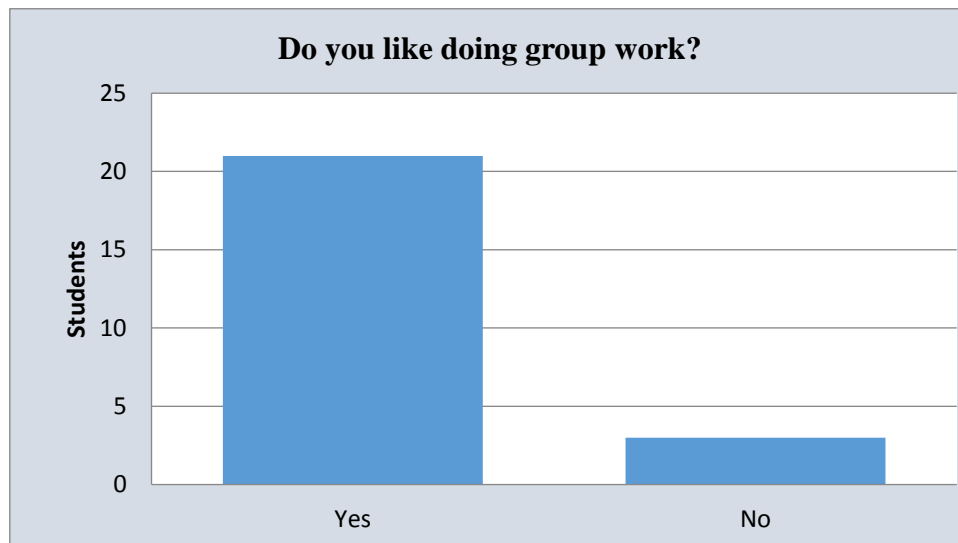
The class was divided into five groups of four and one group of three and randomly assigned tasks relating to the topic of the Middle Ages. The groups were teacher structured to allow for differentiated learning (Saborit et al.2016). Johnsons’ five basic elements of effective group work; *“individual accountability, positive interdependence, academic & social effort, collaborative skills, face to face interaction”* where also incorporated (Johnson & Johnson, 1994, p151). Students were informed that every member of the group was accountable for contributing to the process and actual presentation of the project at the end. The project continued over three classes.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>No. of people</b>
1	A Medieval Knight	4
2	The Medieval Manor	4
3	A Medieval Serf	4
4	A Medieval town	4
5	A medieval Craftsman	4
6	Crime & Punishment in the Middle Ages	3

**Figure 4.14** List of Groups and Topics to be studied

When asked if they liked doing group work the findings show that 91 percent of students said yes

While, 9 percent of students said no.



**Figure 4.15** Student Responses to using Group Work

Focus group responses however contradicted these findings as 60 percent of students reported that they didn't like group work. These are responses from students when asked why they didn't like group work;

Student 1      *"If some people are messing you get distracted"*

Student 4      *"It's no good if everyone doesn't pull their weight"*

Student 3      *"you might not like the people you are working with"*

Teacher observation revealed that for the most part the group work was successful. The strong students in each group did guide the weaker students and individual accountability and collaboration were heightened. Students showed that they were participating in the tasks and seemed to be having fun. Student 2 said "I like when we get to make our own choices". One student in particular often strayed off track and had to be supported by the teacher to get his task completed. The findings suggest that students do enjoy collaborative learning but only when the group work is structured very well and has strict rules and guidelines to make it successful (Gibbs, 1995). Student 5 reported *"the teacher needs to walk around the room to make sure everyone is doing what they are supposed to"*.

I observed that the junior cycle key skills of working with others, being creative and

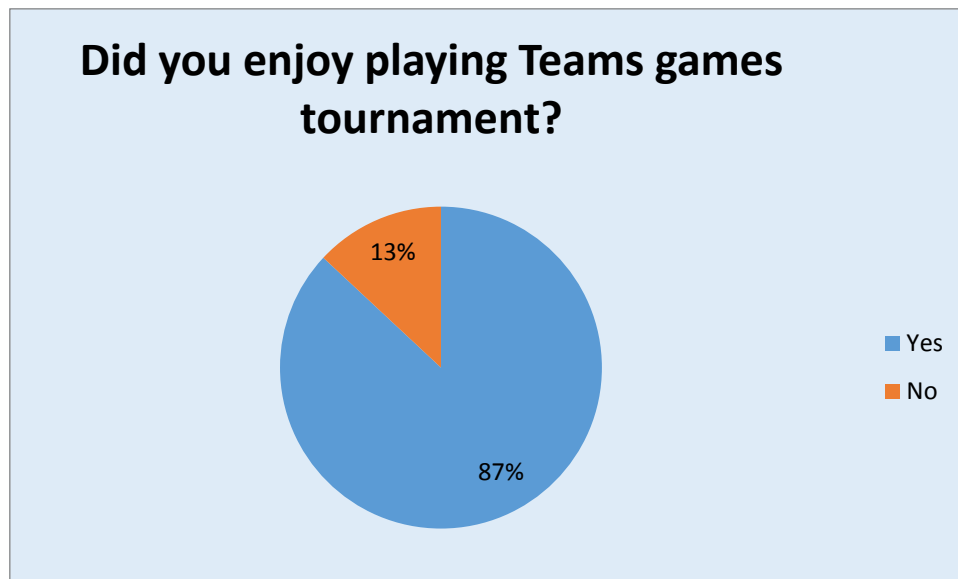
communicating where reinforced using this collaborative learning methodology. While it does take time to develop the social skills necessary to carry out effective group work and collaborative learning successfully, it does highlight the important role that teachers have to provide opportunities to develop these skills (Hislop, 2015). Where else will students develop the skills needed for the real world if not in school? (framework for junior cycle, 2015).

### Teams games tournament (TGT)

Teams games tournament is a collaborative learning strategy to help students to improve and accelerate their learning through playing games (DeVries et al.1975). It promotes positive attitudes to education in a safe learning environment (Van Wyk, 2011: Bennet & Rolheiser, 2008). Students were divided into teacher structured mixed ability groups of four to play the game. Students became active participants in a cooperative learning environment (Harmandar & Cil, 2008).

Four pages of questions were created from the topics covered in module 2 and each page was entitled: Hearts, Diamonds, Spades and Clubs. The same was done with the answer pages. Each table had two teams A and B and where given a pack of cards. One person from team A pulled a card from the pack and gave it to team B. Team B then asked team A the corresponding question on the question sheet. If team A gave the correct answer they received two points on the score sheet. Then Team A asked Team B a question and the game began. The game was played for two class periods.

When students were asked if they like playing TGT, 87 per cent of students said that they liked playing the game in class while 13 per cent said they didn't like TGT.



**Figure 4.16** Student Responses to using Teams games Tournament

Focus group responses confirm the findings of the questionnaire. When asked why they liked TGT the following responses were given by students;

Student 1 *"it's great craic"*

Student 2 *"it's very competitive... which forces you to learn...everyone is determined to win"*

Student 3 *" it makes you want to come to school so that you don't let your partner down"*

Student 4 *" you look forward to the class"*

Student 5 *"it gives a reason to learn"*.

Teacher observation reports that during the TGT strategy "the classroom was a hive of activity". 90 per cent of students were engaged and fully participating in the game. Peer learning and peer teaching were observed (Bennett, 2010). Students were asking questions, giving explanations, peer assessing and developing social skills. Overall the response to this collaborative learning strategy suggests that it had a positive impact on student learning. Testing also supports this with 96 percent of students reporting an improvement in their academic performance. In terms of classroom management the noise level was quite high as students became very competitive and engrossed in the game. But this was evidence of student

engagement and participation in the class. Students were helping and collaborating with each other to play the game.

#### **4.10 Attainment of Junior Cycle key skills**

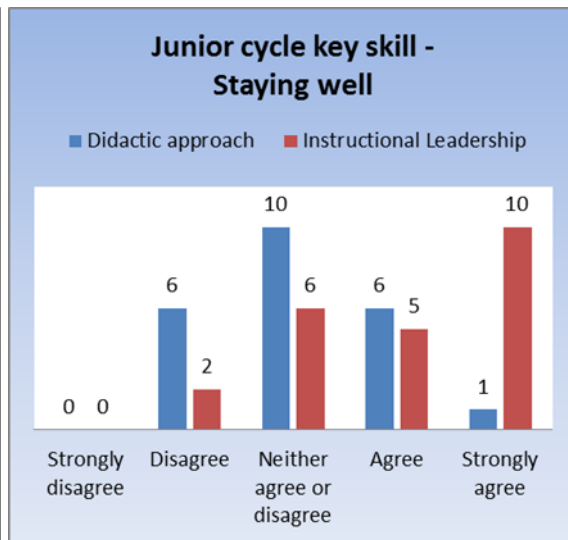
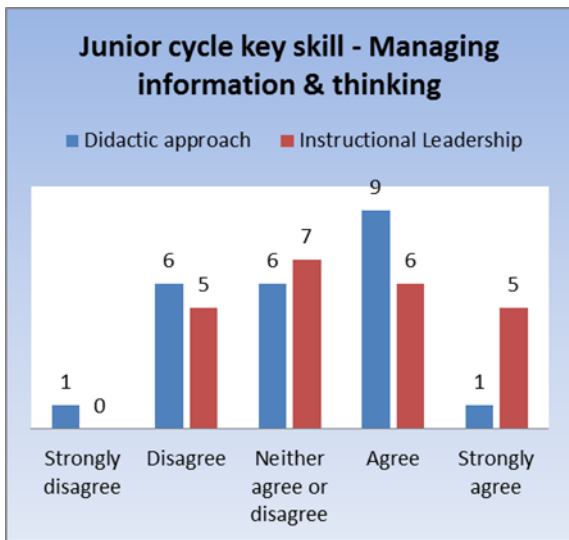
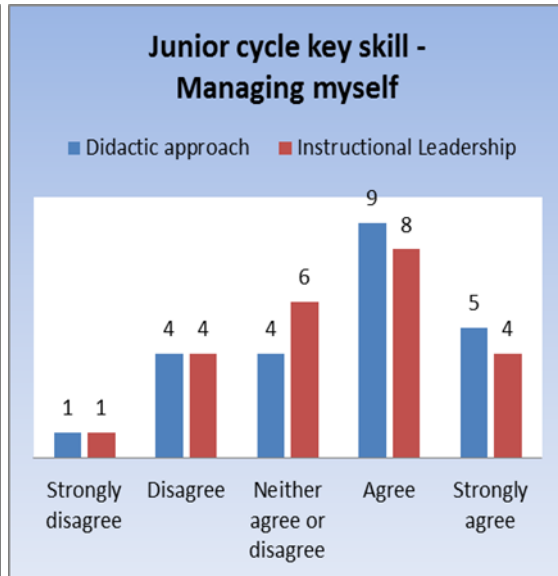
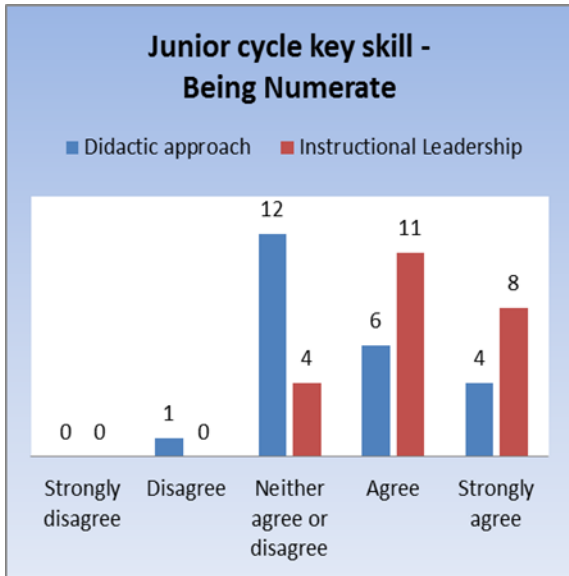
In relation to the attainment of the eight junior cycle key skills using the didactic approach and instructional leadership methodologies students were asked-

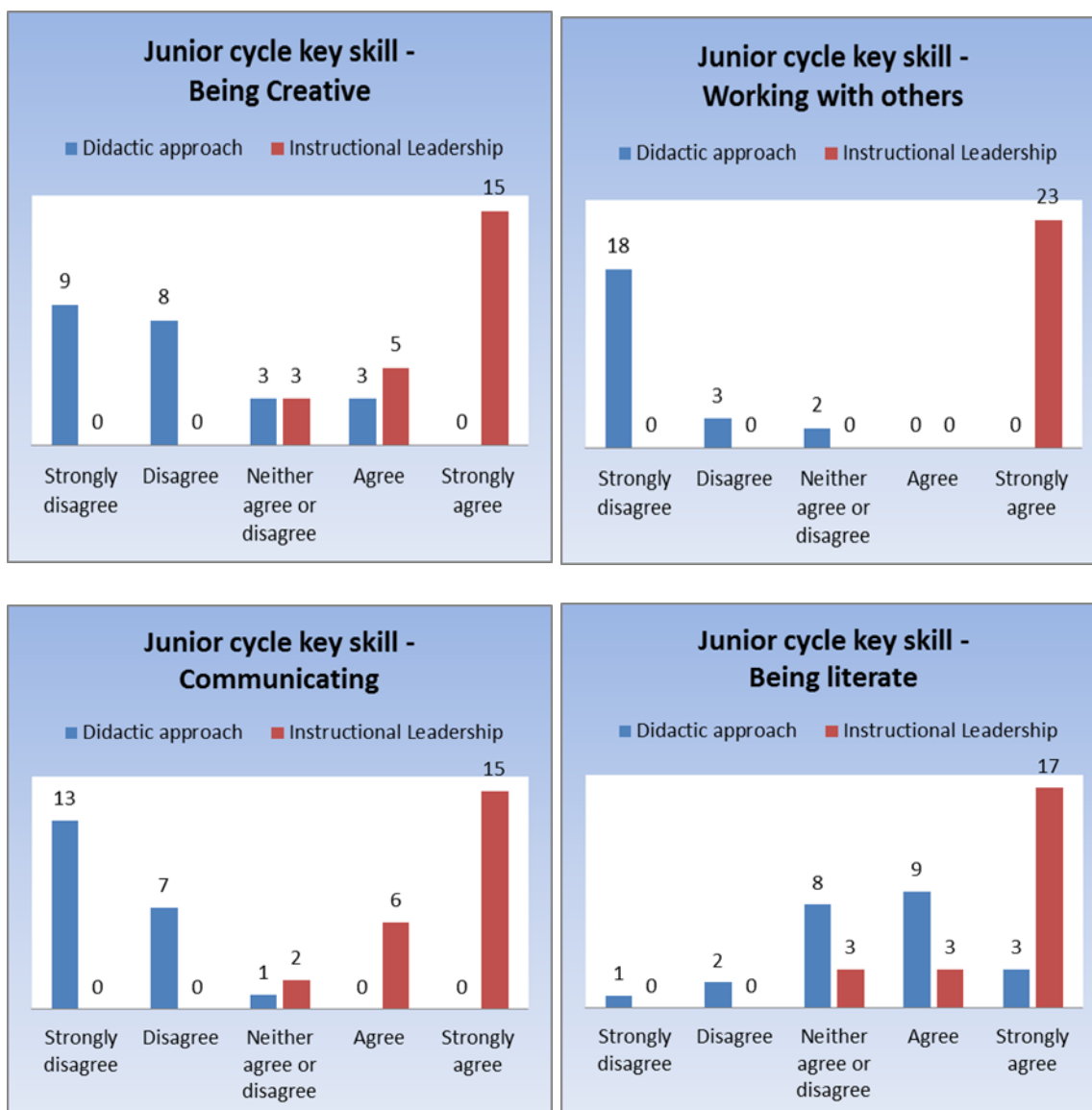
**How much did the didactic approach and instructional leadership methodologies help you to develop the junior cycle key skills of being numerate, managing myself, managing information and thinking, staying well, being creative, working with others, communicating and being literate?**

The findings from the student questionnaire suggest that instructional leadership methodologies promote the development of the junior cycle key skills more than the traditional didactic approach. In particular students reported that the skills of working with others, communicating and being creative were developed through the use of active learning strategies such as mind maps, group work and teams games tournament. Focus group responses also support these findings; one student reported *“instructional leadership methodologies help to develop communication skills which are better to get a job”*. Another student said *“active learning is more normal and reflects real life, name a job where to don’t have to talk to others”*

Teacher observation also promotes the use of instructional leadership methodologies for the development of these skills. In the didactic approach in module one I felt that I was doing all of the talking all of the time. Whereas in module two I felt that my role changed to become a facilitator of learning and student’s were doing more talking, thinking and sharing in the learning (Dallat, 2009).







**Figures 4.17** Student Responses to Attainment of Junior Cycle key Skills in both the didactic and Instructional Leadership Approaches.

The findings show that students support the use of instructional leadership methodologies in the development of the following key skills:

Key skill	% of students who support Instructional leadership to develop key skills
Working with others	100%
Communicating	91%
Being Creative	87%

Being literate	86%
Being numerate	82%
Staying well	65%
Managing myself	52%
Managing information & thinking	48%

**Figure 4.18** Development of Key Skills using Instructional Leadership Methodologies

Overall the research would suggest that the skills that students have acquired as a result of the action research intervention support the principles and skills of the new junior cycle (framework for junior cycle, 2015).

#### **4.11 Summary of findings**

The findings discussed above found that in this sample group of post primary, first year history students, the impact of instructional leadership methodologies, specifically; framing questions and wait-time, mind maps, group work and team's games tournament was positive in terms of students' academic performance and wellbeing. The results revealed that there is a positive correlation between the skills promoted by instructional leadership methodologies and the eight key skills outlined in the new junior cycle (2015). The importance of varying instructional practices to suit the learning styles of all students was also highlighted.

The study found that some students needed to be guided and nurtured into a more student centred approach to teaching and learning and that time is needed to develop the social skills required. However student engagement and participation was enhanced when a more student centred and collaborative approach to teaching and learning was adopted. The evidence suggests that students found that the use of instructional leadership methodologies helped to create a 'safe' learning environment that reinforced student wellbeing.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations**

This chapter will summarise the main conclusions based on the findings outlined in this research paper and present recommendations for additional study in this subject matter.

The aim of this research paper was;

- To explore the benefits of using instructional leadership methodologies specifically; framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work, teams games tournament for students?
- To explore students perceptions of the traditional didactic approach to teaching and learning?
- To investigate if academic performance and student wellbeing is impacted using instructional leadership methodologies?
- To discover if there is a correlation between the skills promoted by instructional leadership methodologies and the principles and skills of new Junior Certificate

This was done using student questionnaires, quick response questionnaires, teacher observation, focus group responses and testing following each module.

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The findings show that the instructional leadership methodologies employed had a positive impact on student's academic performance and wellbeing. The findings also suggest that the majority of students found the didactic approach to teaching and learning boring and not enjoyable and students showed poor levels of engagement and participation in the lessons. This view is furthered supported by the literature of Marzano (2010) and Bonwell & Eison (1991) who believe that student dialogue and debate in class surpass any form of didactic instruction in terms of knowledge and cognitive development. This aligns with Piaget (1953), Vygotsky (1978), Skinner (1981) who have for decades questioned the effectiveness of a teacher led didactic approach to instruction and instead promoted a more student centred active approach.

Furthermore the findings reveal that students need time to adapt to any new learning approach and they must be nurtured and supported in the beginning (Van Wyk, 2011). Therefore, when implementing instructional leadership methodologies teachers need to gradually introduce students to these new approaches (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2008). The results also found a strong correlation between the skills promoted by instructional leadership

methodologies and the principles and skills of the new junior cycle (2015). Tomlinson (1999) supports these findings highlighting that learning is enriched when students are in a learning environment that forces them to think and work with others.

Both the findings and literature suggest that students' academic performance and wellbeing is enhanced through active and collaborative learning methodologies (Saunders, 2013; Wood, 2007). However the findings also show that instructional leadership methodologies did not impact on every child in the same way. This may be due to different learning styles, personalities, levels of confidence or even attendance at school. The results of this research is not a new contribution to literature on student centred learning as many articles have obtained similar findings. However it does provide valuable insights within an Irish context particularly for ETB schools who have taken part in an initiative to introduce instructional leadership into the teaching and learning process. The results suggest that instructional leadership methodologies are a medium through which the change to a more student centred approach can be realised. It is hoped that this study has provided evidence and ideas to support teachers in the classroom and create positive learning experiences for all students.

## **5.2 Limitations of this study**

The ability of this study to answer the research questions confirms that the methodology chosen was appropriate. For the purpose of this study the limitations include the time constraints and resources available to meet the research objectives. These factors constrained the study to a restricted sample size and small sample location. With more time it would have been possible to include more students in the research which could lead to improved opportunities for generalisation of the results. Therefore in order to overcome this limitation I kept my aim focused.

The findings of this research paper are based on self-reported conclusions, teacher observation, student surveys, focus group responses and test scores. As a result I investigated and analysed the following instructional leadership methodologies; framing questions and wait time, mind maps, group work and teams games tournament. I carried out the research with my first year history class made up of 26 students. Due to lack of attendance only 23 students were able to participate in the study.

### 5.3 Recommendations

The reason for this research was to investigate the impact of instructional leadership methodologies on students' academic performance and wellbeing. A recommendation of this investigation is that further research should be undertaken within an Irish context on the impact of instructional leadership methodologies and student centred active learning. This study could be repeated and broadened by making the sample population size bigger by including first year students from all ETB schools in Ireland which would give further validity and reliability to the findings.

It is my understanding based on the findings that the introduction of instructional leadership methodologies was a positive experience for the majority of students involved in the research. Student academic performance and overall wellbeing was enhanced. I hope to provide teaching colleagues with evidence, which I have collected, regarding the impact of these methodologies and the impact of a traditional didactic approach to classroom instruction, with the view to enhancing teaching and learning within my own classroom and school. Fullan (2011) supports this by saying 'intrinsic energy' develops from doing something well and effectively that is important to you. Fullan et al, (1990) advocate that classroom improvement, teacher development and school improvement must be thoroughly linked if significant improvement in teaching and learning is to be achieved. Therefore adopting methodologies that engage students in the learning process and prepares them for 21st century living is essential (Bennett, 2014). The importance of reflective practice for teachers, individually and collectively, must be highlighted for skills and understanding of the teaching process to improve (skipper 2015). From a leadership perspective promoting and supporting opportunities for teachers to discuss their practice and engage in action research is recommended.

As a researcher I aimed to investigate if these practices worked. Promoting a high quality teaching and learning process is fundamental in the instructional leadership programme and the best way to get better learning is to improve the instructional practices of teachers (Bennett, 2010). The benefit of this is that students become motivated, engaged and more committed to the learning process. But can whole school progress happen by teachers working alone and in isolation? (Fullan, Bennett, Rolheiser, 1990). The challenge teacher's face is to extend and integrate improved instructional practices throughout the entire school community. Teachers need to rethink the way they plan and organise their lessons and have

an openness to change the roles that both educators and students play to enhance the learning process for all students (Fullan et al.1990). The findings of this study and the literature support the need to facilitate more teacher collaboration and reflective practice in order to share best practice about how our students learn best (Fullan ,2011). Black and Wiliam (1998) report that student achievement can only be improved if teachers rise to the challenge of teaching more effectively.

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**Appendices:**

**Appendix A**

**Observation Record Sheet**

<b>Date:</b>								
<b>Class:</b>								
<b>Teacher:</b>								
<b>Lesson aims &amp; objectives:</b>								
<b>Methodology used:</b>								
<b>Observation:</b> ( what actually happened in class, junior cycle skills used, student wellbeing)								
Student Engagement	Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of Participation	Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students Responses	Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior cycle key skills	Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom discipline	Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Interpretations &amp; Comments:</b> (Did the class go to plan/ Was the methodology useful/How did students react/ How did I feel about the class/ Where students engaged and thinking/ Would I do it the same way again/What would I do differently.								
<b>General Comments:</b> (things to remember going forward/ things to avoid going forward/ questions to ask students about the lesson.								

## Appendix B

### Post Research - Student Questionnaire

These questions address the topics that form the subject of the research. The questionnaire is a way for you to offer information about your experience using instructional leadership methodologies (framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work & teams games tournament) in history class.

1. In the lesson we used mind maps did it help you to understand the topic better?  
Strongly disagree        
  
Disagree                        
  
Agree                                
  
Strongly agree
  
2. Does the use of instructional leadership methodologies (framing questions & wait time, mind maps, group work & teams games tournament) encouraged you to take more responsibility for your own learning?  
  
Strongly disagree        
  
Disagree                        
  
Agree                                
  
Strongly agree
  
3. Does effective/good teacher questioning help you to learn better?  
Strongly disagree        
  
Disagree                        
  
Agree                                
  
Strongly agree
  
4. In the lesson I gave you more time to answer questions does this help you to answer the question better?  
  
Strongly disagree        
  
Disagree                        
  
Agree                                
  
Strongly agree

5. Does the use of 'wait time' help create a 'safer' learning environment for you?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

6. Does the use of mind maps help you to remember more about the topic?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

7. Do you like doing group work in class?

Yes  No

Please explain why/why not?

---

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8. Did you enjoy using the teams games tournament strategy?

Yes  No

Please explain your answer

---

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9. Did the implementation of instructional leadership methodologies help you to achieve better learning outcomes?

Yes  No

10. Have your grades improved using instructional leadership methodologies?

Yes

No

Please comment on how this made you feel?

Happy  Proud  More confident  I can do better

11. How much did you enjoy the history class when you sat in rows and worked by yourself?

Very enjoyable  Somewhat enjoyable  Not enjoyable  boring

12. How much did you enjoy the history class using instructional leadership methodologies ?

Very enjoyable  Somewhat enjoyable  Not enjoyable  boring

13. What was different about using instructional leadership methodologies compared to sitting in rows and working by yourself?

---



---

14. How much did the didactic approach to learning help you to develop the following Junior Cycle key skills

	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Being Numerate					
Managing Myself					
Managing information & thinking					
Staying well					
Being Creative					
Working with others					
Communicating					
Being Literate					

15. How much did instructional leadership methodologies help you to develop the following Junior Cycle key skills

	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Being Numerate					
Managing Myself					
Managing information & thinking					
Staying well					
Being Creative					
Working with others					
Communicating					
Being Literate					



## **Appendix D**

### **Information Sheet on Instructional Leadership- for parents**

Central to everything that we do as teachers is teaching and learning. We set standards for ourselves in the delivery of the curriculum and endeavour to make teaching and learning a positive experience for all students. To reinforce this XXXX College is a participant in the Instructional Leadership programme, initiated in the post primary sector in Ireland by the ETBI. This programme is facilitated by Professor Barrie Bennett, author of "Graphic Intelligence", "Classroom Management" and "Beyond Monet". This programme aims to:

- Encourage teachers to consciously change their teaching methods so as to maximise student learning.
- Facilitate the mindful and planned utilisation of teacher actions.
- Foster an understanding of how teacher actions can impact on student learning.
- Enhance classroom management.

Instructional leadership strategies place an emphasis on group work and cooperative learning. It aims to create a positive learning environment through the use of strategies, skills and tactics such as think-pair-share, mind maps, graphic organisers etc. Cross curricular learning is encouraged and the critical skills of independent learning and problem solving are encouraged. It focuses on the link between school self-evaluation and school improvement and primarily focuses on an action plan to enhance teaching and learning.

The ETBI envisage that these instructional methods, skills and tactics will eventually become common place in the repertoire of all professional teachers. It is expected that these teaching methods will help to make the learning experience a more enjoyable and successful one for our students.

This is why I have chosen as my research to investigate the impact of instructional leadership methodologies on students' academic performance and wellbeing. I want to develop an efficient way for students to practice material taught in class and to meet the learning outcomes.



## Appendix E

### Consent form- Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Sinead Hegarty. I am a teacher in XXXX College in XXXX. I am currently registered in The Masters of Arts in Teaching and Learning course in LYIT. I am conducting a research project entitled: *'An investigation into the impact of Instructional Leadership methodologies on student academic performance and wellbeing'*.

The research will consider the various recommended approaches for teachers focused on Instructional Leadership and the impact these approaches are having on students' academic performance, engagement in class and wellbeing. This research will consider how teachers as instructional leaders can further improve teaching, learning and student wellbeing in a positive learning environment. I intend to implement these teaching methodologies from the beginning of March and finishing in April 2018. It is expected that these teaching methods will make the learning experience a more enjoyable one and successful one for our students.

I would be grateful if you would agree to your child participating in short questionnaires, about their experience of instructional leadership methodologies, which will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Throughout the research confidentiality and anonymity is assured. In completing the questionnaires you should be aware that:

- Participation is entirely voluntary.
- Your child is free to withdraw from completing the questionnaires up to the data analysis stage.
- The contents of the questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential.
- Excerpts of the questionnaires may be made part of a final report; however your child will not be identified.
- The questionnaires will be held securely and will be destroyed on completion of the study.

**In ticking the box you are agreeing for your child to be a participant in the study.**

I would like to thank you in advance for your important contribution. If you wish to discuss any aspect of the study please do not hesitate to contact me at XXXX, or my supervisor can also be contacted at [galliganclaire@eircom.net](mailto:galliganclaire@eircom.net).

Yours sincerely

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Sinead Hegarty

(History Teacher)

## **Appendix F**

### **Consent form- student**

Dear Student

I am currently enrolled in The Masters of Arts in teaching and learning course in LYIT. I am carrying out a research project entitled: ‘An investigation into the impact of Instructional Leadership methodologies on student academic performance and wellbeing’.

The research will consider the various teaching methods that teachers use in the classroom to teach students and the impact these approaches are having on students’ results, engagement in class and wellbeing. This research will consider how teachers can further improve teaching, learning and student wellbeing in a positive learning environment. I intend to implement these teaching methods from the beginning of March 2018 and finishing in April 2018.

I would be grateful if you would agree to participate in a short questionnaire, about what you think about these new methodologies, which will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Throughout the research confidentiality and anonymity is assured. In completing the interview you should be aware that:

- Participation is entirely voluntary.
- You are free to withdraw from completing the questionnaire at any time.
- The contents of the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential.
- Excerpts of the questionnaire may be made part of a final report, however you will not be identified.
- The questionnaires will be held securely and will be destroyed on completion of the study.

**In ticking the box you are agreeing to be a participant in the study. □**

I would like to thank you in advance for your valuable contribution. If you wish to discuss any aspect of the study please do not hesitate to contact me at [sineadhegarty@donegaletb.ie](mailto:sineadhegarty@donegaletb.ie) or my supervisor Claire Galligan at [galliganclaire@eircom.net](mailto:galliganclaire@eircom.net).

Yours sincerely

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Sinead Hegarty (History Teacher)

## Appendix G

### Mixed Method Approach:

<b>QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH-</b>	<b>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH-</b>
<b><u>Quantitative data collection:</u></b>	<b><u>Qualitative data collection</u></b>
Testing- comparing didactic approach & instructional leadership approach	Student Questionnaire  Focus group  Observation
<b><u>Quantitative data analysis:</u></b>	<b><u>Qualitative data analysis</u></b>
Use assessment grades;  •For description-  To compare groups & variables	Use text and reflection,  • Coding- to develop themes & ideas

## Appendix H

### Time-line of events for Research:

Month:	Research schedule:
January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with principal to discuss research topic and to seek approval to carry it out.</li> <li>• Meet with supervisor regarding moving forward with research study</li> <li>• Ensure ethical guidelines and procedures are adhered to.</li> <li>• Seek consent from parents, students and teachers.</li> <li>• Complete final questionnaire, quick response questionnaire, focus group questions and observation record sheet for students.</li> </ul>
February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out literature review and methodology to fully investigate the aims of my research and how I will carry it out.</li> </ul>
March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piloting questionnaires and focus group questions</li> <li>• Carry out the traditional didactic approach to teaching &amp; learning (for 3 weeks)</li> <li>• Ask students to complete a quick response questionnaire at the end of each lesson.</li> <li>• Observe students reaction to didactic methodologies in my own class- keep a personal journal to record observations.</li> <li>• Carry out instructional leadership methodologies; framing questions and wait time, mind maps, group work &amp; TGT (for 3 weeks).</li> <li>• Ask students to complete a quick response questionnaire at the end of each lesson</li> <li>• Observe students reaction to new methodologies in my own class- keep a personal journal to record observations.</li> <li>• Conduct monthly assessments to monitor students' results and compare them with students results following the didactic approach to teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Record data.</li> </ul>
April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute student questionnaire regarding intervention</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out focus group questionnaire</li> <li>• Analyse and record data.</li> </ul>
May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inductive approach to data analysis of research findings.</li> <li>• Validity and reliability of research</li> </ul>
June 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write up results- research findings</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edit and proof read research project.</li> </ul>

## Appendix I

### Didactic Approach Lesson Plans

<b>Lesson Plans-</b>	<i>'Our roots in an Ancient Civilisation'-Ancient Rome</i>
<b>Duration-</b>	Three weeks – 9 classes
<b>Methodologies-</b>	Teacher exposition, chalk and talk, note taking, reading texts, power points, worksheets
<b>Resources-</b>	School textbook, power points, white board
<b>Seating plan-</b>	Students will be seated in rows and in single desks working individually. Instruction will be teacher led.

### The Roman Empire

**Lesson 1** 'How do we know so much about the Romans'?

**Key words:** Patrician, Plebeians, Roman Citizen, Freeborn men & women, slaves

#### Objectives:

1. Students will be able to list the sources of evidence for Ancient Rome
2. Students will be able to explain and write about the key words.

#### Materials Needed

- School textbook
- Data projector

### **Mental Set**

Student will be shown a 5 minute video clip depicting what life would have been like in Ancient Rome

### **Input and Modelling**

Through teacher exposition students will listen to information on ancient Rome and students will read extracts from their textbook

### **Practice**

Students will complete questions in their textbook relating to the lesson objectives. Students will write the keywords into their key word notebooks

### **Checking for Understanding**

The teacher will work around the classroom checking students work and correcting answers.

### **Feedback & Closure**

The teacher will summarise the main points of the lesson and write up student's homework on the board.

## **The Roman Empire**

### **Lesson 2**                      Life in Ancient Rome

**Key words:** Domus, Atrium, peristyle, murals, mosaics, graffiti, insulae, aqueducts, dole.

#### **Objectives:**

3. Students will be able to explain and write about the living conditions of rich and poor people who lived in ancient Rome.
4. Students will be able to identify what aqueducts looked like and what they were used for.
5. Students will be able to explain and write about the key words.

#### **Materials needed:**

- School textbook
- Student copy and keyword notebook
- White board
- Data projector

#### **Mental Set:**

Students will be shown pictures on the data projector of the domus and insulae and asked to write down what they see

#### **Input & modelling:**



The teacher will read from the textbook and explain to students important pieces of information relating to living conditions in ancient Rome. Teacher exposition of the key words relating to the lesson.

**Practice:**

Students will write an explanation of the key words into their key word notebooks. Students will write an account of the 'living conditions of a patrician and plebeian in ancient Rome'.

**Checking for understanding:**

Through oral questioning the teacher will ask questions relating to the lesson objectives. Teacher will check students account.

**Feedback & closure:**

The teacher will summarise the main points of the lesson and write up homework on the board.

**The Roman Empire**

**Lesson 3** Life in ancient Rome continued (arts & crafts, food, clothing)

**Keywords:** arts & crafts, frescos, potters, glass blowing, forum, Via Sacra, tunic, toga, palla.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to explain and write about arts and crafts in ancient Rome.
2. Students will be able to explain what the forum was and the significance of the via sacra.
3. Students will be able to describe what romans ate and the clothes they wore.

**Materials needed:**

- School textbook
- Data projector
- Power points

**Mental Set:**

Students will be asked to think about how we decorate our homes today? Student will then be asked to examine pictures of how the romans used arts and crafts to decorate their homes.

**Input & Modelling:**

Using Chalk and talk the teacher will explain to students the importance of the forum and via sacra to the romans.

**Practice:**

Student will be asked to read extracts from their own books relating to roman food and clothes and complete questions relating to these topics. Students will write the key words in to their key word notebook.

**Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will walk around the classroom and correct student's answers.

**Feedback & closure:**

The teacher will summarise the main points of the lesson relating to the lesson objectives and write up homework on the board.

## **The Roman Empire**

### **Lesson 4**                    ‘Pastimes and Entertainment in Ancient Rome’

**Keywords:**    **Circus Maximus, Chariot racing, Colosseum, Gladiators, ampitheatres, baths, strigil.**

**Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to compare different forms of entertainment in ancient Rome.
2. Students will be able to write an account about entertainment in ancient Rome under the following headings; circus maximus, colosseum, baths.

**Materials needed:**

- School textbook
- Power points

**Mental Set:**

Student will be asked to write down things they do today as entertainment?

**Input & modelling:**

Using a power point presentation the teacher will explain to students the difference ways that romans entertained themselves.

**Practice:**

Students will complete a worksheet with activities relating to the lesson objectives. Students will explain the key words and record them in their key word note book.

**Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will ask questions orally and check student's written work.

**Feedback & closure:**

The teacher will summarise the main points of the lesson and write up homework on the board.

## **The Roman Empire**

**Lesson 5** 'Special study; A child in ancient Rome'

**Keywords:** Wax tablets, grammar school, oratory, bulla, Plato, Aristotle.

### **Objectives:**

1. Student will be able to describe in detail the life of a child in ancient Rome referring to education, marriage, games played, differences between boys and girls.
2. Students will be able to explain the key words relating to the study.

### **Materials needed:**

- People in history special focus 'A child in Ancient Rome'
- School textbook

### **Mental set:**

Students will be asked to think about the life of a child in Ireland today in relation to marriage, gender equality, games played.

### **Input & modelling:**

The teacher will read the special study about a child in ancient Rome. Using teacher exposition students will learn about what it was like to be a child in ancient Rome.

### **Practice:**

Using their textbook and handout as an aid students will write a short essay entitled 'A child in ancient Rome'.

**Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will walk around the classroom to check that students understand what they have to do.

**Feedback & closure:**

The teacher will summarise the main points of the lesson and students will complete the essay for homework.

## **The Roman Empire**

### **Lesson 6** Religion & Roman gods

**Keywords:** pagan, shrine, altar, superstitious, roman gods, temple, haruspex, sacrifices.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to describe the religious beliefs of people in ancient Rome.
2. Students will identify what is meant by 'superstition' and 'sacrifices' in relation to the romans.
3. Students will be able to list the roman gods.

#### **Materials needed:**

- School textbook
- Power points
- White board

#### **Mental set:**

The teacher will show students pictures of the beautiful temples built by the romans to worship their gods e.g. temple of Jupiter

#### **Input & modelling:**

The teacher will explain the role played by religion in ancient Rome using a power point presentation. Examples of superstitious practices and sacrifices will also be explained.

#### **Practice:**

Students will take down notes from the whiteboard about the Roman gods and their temples. Students will answer questions on their textbook relating to the lesson objectives. Students will record the key words into their key word notebooks.



**Checking for understanding:**

Through teacher questioning and checking students work.

**Feedback & closure:**

The teacher will summarise the main points of the lesson and write up homework on the board.

## **The Roman Empire**

**Lesson 7** Burial Customs & the Arrival of Christianity in Ancient Rome

**Keywords** Styx, ferry fare, litter, sarcophagus, urn, Christianity, persecution, catacombs, Emperor Constantine.

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to explain in detail the burial customs in ancient Rome.
2. Student will be able to explain what a sarcophagus and urn were used for.
3. Students will identify how rich and poor romans were treated differently when they died.
4. Students will be able to explain the arrival of Christianity in ancient Rome.

### **Materials needed:**

- School text book
- Power point presentation

### **Input & modelling:**

Using a power point presentation the teacher will explain the burial customs in ancient Rome and how the romans treated their dead. The teacher will read for the textbook about how and why Christianity arrived in Rome and the influence of Emperor Constantine on Christianity in the 4th century.

### **Practice:**

Students will take notes down from the white board relating to the lesson objectives. Students will record the key words into their key word notebook.

**Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will ask questions relating to the lesson and check students copy books.

**Feedback & closure:**

The teacher will summarise the main points of the lesson referring back to the lesson objectives. The teacher will write the homework on the board.

## **The Roman Empire**

**Lesson 8** 'How Rome was governed & the Roman army'

**Key words:** Republic, consuls, senate, civil wars, empire, legions, centuries, legionaries, centuries, auxiliaries.

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to explain how Rome became a large empire.
2. Students will be able to recognise the important role played by the roman army to maintain the empire.
3. Students will be able to write about 'The life of a Roman Soldier'.

### **Materials Needed:**

- School textbook
- Power point presentation
- Special study handout ' A Roman Soldier'

### **Mental Set:**

Students will be shown a picture of a Roman soldier and asked to write down what they observe- e.g. weapons, clothes

### **Input & modelling:**

Using a map of the Roman Empire and a power point presentation the teacher will explain how Rome was ruled, how it became a Republic and how it took control of lands in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa to become the largest Empire in the world.

Students will read the special study handout about 'A Roman Soldier'.

**Practice:**

Students will complete written questions relating to the lesson objectives. Students will write an essay entitled 'The life of a Roman Soldier'.

**Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will correct student's questions and essay.

**Feedback & Closure:**

The teacher will recap on the main points of the lesson and clarify any further questions. The teacher will write the homework on the board- to finish the essay.

## **The Roman Empire**

**Lesson 9** ‘The fall of the Roman Empire and an exploration of “What the Romans did for us”?’

**Keyword:** Legacy

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to describe why the Roman Empire collapsed.
2. Students will be able to describe in detail the legacy of the Roman Empire- building & architecture, roads, aqueducts, central heating, shopping centres, the calendar.

### **Materials needed:**

- School text book
- Copy book

### **Mental set:**

Students will be asked to think back over our study of this module and to think of things the romans did that would have a positive impact on people’s lives.

### **Input & modelling:**

The teacher will explain the ‘legacy of the Romans’ and what things they handed down from the past to future generations.

### **Practice:**

Students will complete a worksheet relating to the lesson objectives.

**Checking for understanding:**

Students will complete a written test on the didactic module on Ancient Rome in the next lesson.

**Feedback & closure:**

Students will be encouraged to look over the notes and questions relating to the 9 lessons to revise for their test. The teacher will recap on any points raised before the test is handed out.

## Appendix J

### Instructional leadership lesson plans

#### Specifically the methodologies of framing questions & wait time, mind map, group work and team games tournament

Lesson Plans-	The Middle Ages
Duration-	Three weeks – 9 classes
Methodologies-	framing questions and wait time, mind maps, group work & teams games tournament
Resources-	School textbook, A4 sheets, markers, playing cards, score sheets, staplers, ipads/iphones.
Seating plan-	Students will be seated in groups of four at a table. The groupings will be teacher structured to enable differentiated learning.

The instruction will be **student centred** and involve **active learning methodologies** in each class. Students will be informed that they are allowed to **talk** with their “partners” at their table when carrying out tasks if they need to discuss or seek advice from them. However classroom discipline rules still apply.

### The Middle Ages

#### Lesson 1 Medieval Society & The Feudal System

**Key words:** Feudal system, fief, noble, Lord, Knight, peasant.

**Methodology:** Mind map/ framing questions & wait time

#### Objectives:

1. Students will be able to outline in detail what the feudal system was and how it worked.
2. Students will be able to describe the different people who made up the feudal system.



### **Materials Needed:**

- School text book
- A4 sheet
- Markers, pencil, rubber

### **Mental Set:**

Students will be shown different examples of mind maps, the teacher will explain how to do a mind map using the white board and the importance of using different colours, and images if desired, for each point.

### **Input & modelling:**

- Students will be given images of the knight, peasant, noble, Lord and asked to match the correct image to the correct person. Students will be asked to explain their answers to the students at their table.

One student from each table will present to the class their final answers and students will give feedback.

- Students will be asked to read an extract about the 'feudal system' and as a group explain in 4-5 sentences what they think the term means and why it worked so well.

### **Practice:**

Students will be asked to construct a mind map about the term feudal system and about the people who played a part in its operation. Students will be asked to use different colours for each new point. Students will be told they can draw images to support their mind map if they wish. The mind map must fit onto an A4 sheet.

### **Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will walk around the classroom checking for understanding. Students will be asked to discuss their mind map with the students at their table.

### **Feedback & Closure:**

The teacher will thank students for their work and ask students discuss at their tables three important pieces of information they learned today about the feudal system. Each table will give feedback to the class.

The teacher will collect the mind maps for assessment and write up the homework on the board.

## **The Middle Ages**

### **Lesson 2      The Medieval Castle**

**Keywords: Motte, Bailey, Moat, Keep, Portcullis, Turret,**

**Methodology: Mind map/ framing questions & wait-time**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to discuss in detail motte & bailey and stone castles and their advantages and disadvantages
2. Students will be able to draw a mind map highlighting important pieces of information about medieval castles.

#### **Materials needed:**

- Ipad/iphone
- School text book
- A4 sheet
- Markers, pencil

#### **Mental set:**

Students will be asked to search on-line to find images of stone castles in Ireland. Students will be asked to write down the name of a castle they found and why they like it?

#### **Input & modelling:**

- Using their text book students will write down what the following words mean; **Motte, Bailey, Moat** and to use them to label a diagram of a **motte and bailey castle**
- Students will compare an image of a motte and bailey castle with a stone castle and discuss their findings with the students at their table.
- Students will list 3 advantages and 3 disadvantages of both castles.

#### **Practice:**

Students will construct a mind map of motte & bailey and stone castles highlighting some of the key pieces of information learned. They will be encouraged to use colours and images to support their work.

**Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will walk around the classroom checking mind maps and assisting students.

\*\*The teacher will incorporate **effective questioning** to push higher order and divergent thinking. Students will be afforded an adequate **wait-time** to answer questions.

**Feedback & closure:**

Using **framing questions and wait-time** the teacher will get feedback from students to assess their understanding of the lesson objectives. The teacher will collect the mind maps to gain further insights into students' understanding.

The teacher will write up homework on the board.

## **The Middle Ages**

### **Lesson 3**     Defending & attacking a medieval castle

**Keywords:**            **Battlements, quicklime, drawbridge, barbican, siege, battering rams, mangonels, rope ladders, siege towers,**

**Methodology:** Mind map/ framing questions & wait time

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to describe how stone castles were defended and attacked.
2. Student will be able to draw a mind map explaining the key words and linking them to the defence and attack of medieval castles.

#### **Materials needed:**

- School text book
- Data projector
- A4 sheet
- Markers, pencil

#### **Input & modelling:**

Each table will be given a task to either attack a castle or defend a castle. Students will have to come up with a plan using a list of weapons to best achieve a positive outcome. Each table will present their plan to the class.

#### **Practice:**

Students will draw a mind map illustrating their understanding of how medieval castles were attacked and defended. Use of colour and images will be encouraged.

#### **Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will walk around the classroom assisting students that require further help. Framing questions and wait-time will be incorporated to push higher order and divergent thinking.

**Feedback & closure:**

Students will take turns to explain their mind maps to the other students at their table. The teacher will close the lesson and write up the homework on the board.

## **The Middle Ages**

### **Lesson 4      The Lord & Lady of the Medieval Castle**

**Keywords:**            **Estate Steward, bailiffs, judge, banquets, hawking, fosterage, embroidery.**

**Methodology:**        **Mind Maps/framing questions & wait-time**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to discuss the lives of the Lord and Lady in the middle ages.
2. Students will be able to contrast their lives to the lives of the peasants.
3. Students will be able to draw a mind map to show their understanding of the life of the Lord and Lady.

#### **Materials needed:**

- School textbook
- A4 Sheet
- Markers, pencil

#### **Input & modelling:**

Each table will be given a task of reporting for 'Highland radio news' on the life of the Lord and Lady in the middle ages. Each table must decide how best to do the report. Students can use their school textbook or ipad/iphone to help. Students will be randomly selected to read their report to the class.

Students will be guided in their task through effective teacher questioning.

#### **Practice:**

Students will draw a mind map showing their understanding of the key points and key words relating to the life of the Lord and Lady.

#### **Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will walk around the room checking for understanding and answering any questions.

#### **Feedback & closure:**

Students will give oral presentations to the students at their table explaining their mind maps. The teacher will close the lesson and write up the homework.

## The Middle Ages

### Lesson 5, 6, 7 Group work project

Students will be given a topic from the Middle Ages to research and present to the class in both written and oral format. There will be three 40 minute classes allocated to complete the group work project.

Group	Topic	No. of people
1	A Medieval Knight	4
2	The Medieval Manor	4
3	A Medieval Serf	4
4	A Medieval town	4
5	A medieval Craftsman	4
6	Crime & Punishment in the Middle Ages	3

**Keywords:** Page, squire, tournament, jousting, chivalry, open field farming, tithe, serf, pottage, charter, toll, curfew, guild, pillory & stocks.

**Methodology:** Group work/ framing questions & wait-time

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to engage in collaborative learning to research and present a project on a specific topic from the Middle Ages.
2. Students will be able to understand and answer questions relating to all the six projects that form the study.

#### **Materials needed:**

- School textbook
- A3 sheets
- Markers
- Glue
- Scissors
- Ipads/iphones
- Access to teachers computer & printer

### **Mental Set:**

Students will use a placemat to brain storm ideas for their project and then collaboratively agree on best option to present their information to the class. Students will be encouraged to use their skills of creativity and divergent thinking to create and display their project. The use of ICT will be permitted.

\*\*Roles and tasks will be agreed upon by the group with the teacher's assistance.

### **Input & modelling:**

- The teacher will act as a facilitator to guide and support student's independent thinking. Framing questions and wait-time will be used to push higher order thinking.
- Students will be encouraged to use their textbook and other handouts provided by the teacher to find relevant information.

### **Practice:**

Students will be allocated three classes in total to gather, analyse and write or type up their project.

### **Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will walk around the room guiding each group and making sure that everyone is fulfilling their role.

Each group will display their finished work on the classroom wall. The teacher will assess the project based on the information and skills developed by students.

### **Feedback & closure:**

Students will give feedback on the group work and their attainment of the lesson objectives. The teacher will thank students for their hard work and close the lessons.



## The Middle Ages

### Lesson 8 & 9 Teams Games Tournament (TGT)- Middle Ages

Team's games tournament is a collaborative learning strategy that aims to facilitate the development of key skills such as positive interdependence, individual accountability, face to face interaction, social skills and processing. It is also a fun and engaging way to study and remember important information.

Students will play the TGT answering questions from their study of the Middle Ages to date. The rules of TGT will be presented to the students using a power point presentation and teacher demonstration.

The TGT will run over two 40 minute classes and students will record their scores on a score sheet. The team with the highest score will receive an incentive of one no homework ticket.

The teacher will act as a facilitator of learning and students will engage in peer learning and peer teaching.

**Methodology:** Teams Games Tournament

#### **Materials needed:**

- Playing cards
- Questions and Answer sheets
- Score sheets
- Pencil
- Egg timer

#### **Input & modelling:**

Teams will be divided into team A and team B. Team A will pick a card and team B will ask the corresponding question on the question sheet. If the answer is correct they will receive 2 points, if it is wrong they will get no points. Then team B will pick a card and the game begins. The team with the highest score wins!

The tournament will run over two classes and a master score sheet will be filled in by the teacher.

#### **Checking for understanding:**

The teacher will walk around the classroom making sure that the games are played fairly and clarifying any difficulties.

**Feedback & closure:**

At the end of the second class each team will be told to add up their final scores and the winners will be announced. The teacher will ask students for feedback on the TGT. The teacher will close the lesson and write up the homework.

**APPENDIX K**