



## **Reflective Overview of CPD Session: LCA Visual Art Module**

### **Overview:**

This reflection synthesises my professional development from a CPD session dedicated to the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Visual Art module. The session aimed to enhance our understanding of the LCA programme's structure and the specific role of Visual Art as an area of creative study and exploration at post-primary level. Key expectations included exploring strategies for optimising student engagement, implementing continuous assessment, and fostering creative teaching approaches.

Personally, I sought to deepen my knowledge in these areas, especially since I have already submitted my planning documentation for both modules within the Visual Art curriculum, focusing on Identity and the Local Environment. Despite already running this elective, the training was pertinent in informing how I move forward with its application. The insights gained will guide my approach as I continue to work with my five LCA students, who are excelling in their experimentation, reflection, observational drawings, and other artistic practices linked to our lessons.

### **1. Differentiation Between General Education and Electives**

Throughout the session I expressed interest in the distinction between general education and elective modules. General education subjects within the LCA curriculum aim to provide students with broad knowledge, typically involving traditional learning and written exams. In contrast, electives like Visual Art focus on vocational training and skill development. These electives allow students to specialise in areas that are interest-driven, giving them opportunities for practical engagement and hands-on learning.

Visual Art, in particular, encourages creativity and individuality, pushing students to express themselves while learning artistic techniques. As it's an elective, the curriculum is more flexible, supporting a project-based approach that fosters independent learning, offering students the chance to build personal portfolios.

### **2. Continuous Assessment Strategies**

A significant portion of the session concentrated on assessment models for the LCA Visual Art module. Continuous assessment is pivotal in the module, providing students with more frequent and formative feedback. This system is different from traditional Leaving Certificate exams, which tend to emphasise summative assessment. The discussion explored how this approach benefits students by encouraging regular participation, ongoing reflection, and steady skill development over the course of the module.



The focus on process over product is a major distinction in LCA Visual Art. Students are evaluated not only on their final work but on their artistic journey, including research, problem-solving, and creative reflection. As a teacher, this CPD session helped me better understand how to scaffold learning activities that feed into the assessment structure, enabling students to reflect on their progress more consistently.

### **3. Pedagogical Approaches for Visual Art**

Through various workshop segments, I was able to engage with different pedagogical techniques that enhance the delivery of Visual Art as an elective. These included:

**Creative freedom:** The session underscored the importance of balancing guidance with autonomy. Students should be encouraged to explore their own creative ideas while still being supported through structured projects.

**Inclusive teaching:** Recognising the diverse needs of students, the session encouraged using a variety of teaching tools to reach different learning styles. Practical demonstrations, visual aids, and group discussions were highlighted as effective methods to engage students in the creative process.

**Cross-disciplinary learning:** Another insight was the value of linking Visual Art with other subjects. For example, bringing in elements of history, technology, or culture could enrich the creative process and broaden students' perspectives. This cross-curricular approach can help students see the relevance of their artwork beyond the classroom.

### **4. Student-Centred Learning and Classroom Environment**

The session provided important insights into creating a supportive classroom environment. In a subject like Visual Art, students can sometimes feel self-conscious about their creative output. The CPD highlighted the need for positive reinforcement and creating a safe space where students feel confident to express themselves artistically. This involves promoting collaboration and peer feedback while allowing room for individual exploration.

A discussion on student motivation and ownership of learning was also particularly useful. By offering students more choice and control over their projects, teachers can help them take more pride in their work, fostering intrinsic motivation. Allowing for personal connections to be made in art projects—such as incorporating elements of students' cultural backgrounds or personal interests—was suggested as a way to increase engagement.

### **5. Resource Management and Planning**

A segment of the CPD addressed the practical aspects of managing resources and materials. The elective nature of Visual Art means that the subject often requires specialised materials that



may not be readily available in the school. The session helped reinforce the importance of careful planning and budget management to ensure students have access to the necessary tools for their creative work.

We also explored how time management can be optimised for project work. Teachers were encouraged to break down larger projects into smaller, manageable tasks, making it easier for students to stay on track and complete work to a high standard. This approach ties into the continuous assessment model by allowing for ongoing evaluation and incremental feedback throughout the term.

### **Reflection on CPD Application**

The session has had a meaningful impact on how I plan to approach the LCA Visual Art module. My key takeaways include the need to continue to:

Tailor teaching methods to individual student needs, encouraging self-expression while guiding students through structured activities.

Implement more effective continuous assessment practices, ensuring students receive regular feedback and are encouraged to reflect on their learning journey.

Foster a classroom environment that prioritises creative risk-taking, allowing students to feel confident and engaged with their work.

The pedagogical strategies shared during the CPD will be instrumental in refining my teaching practice, and I aim to focus on enhancing student engagement, providing differentiated support, and improving outcomes for all learners in the LCA Visual Art elective.