



The official newsletter of i-TEACH (Teaching for Inclusion) Research Lab



TEACHERS USE OF AUTISM EVIDENCE

With increases in diagnoses of autism, research highlights a significant lack of support available to teachers for translating latest research evidence to the classroom. Read about [our research](#) on teachers access to appropriate evidence-based training and increased access to support professionals in a blog by Ms. Lorna Barry, who is wrapping up a four year programme of research. Good luck to Lorna in her viva this summer. Don't forget us when you become Dr. Barry!

CO-SPACE Wellbeing STUDY

Led by Dr Jennifer McMahon and a team of researchers from UL, Co-SPACE (COVID-19 Supporting Parents, Adolescents and Children during Epidemics) Ireland has been running since April 2020 and is one of the few studies that has tracked parents, children and adolescents wellbeing throughout the pandemic in Ireland. It is linked to a study of the same name in the the University of Oxford led by Professor Cathy Creswell. For latest updates see www.i-teach.ie/co-space

LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE BEWELL COLLABORATION

Working alongside Dr Jennifer McMahon & Dr Matthew Herring and funded by the National Institute of Studies in Education (NISE), PhD candidate Eibhlin Walsh's research programme focuses on school-based suicide prevention programmes for adolescents. One aspect of this research is to include the voice of young people in the development of school suicide interventions. Using a photo-voice approach they have been working with youth from Limerick Youth Service to access youth perspectives which will culminate in an exhibition in the Autumn during Limerick Mental Health Week in collaboration with the Limerick City Art Gallery. The project is well underway and the young people have been amazing. We are really looking forward to sharing the results of this project with you!

MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR DR JENNIFER MCMAHON

You are very welcome to our inaugural i-TEACH newsletter. It has been a challenging year for many so it's an even bigger achievement to have put this together (and huge thanks to our intern Ailish Burke on this) and to have so much to write about. One of the main goals of i-TEACH is to conduct research that matters and brings us closer to the goal of ensuring that all young people are included in school, and that schools have the capacity to make that a reality. To this end I am delighted that our researchers here in the lab are working closely with schools and other key stakeholders in capturing the experiences of young people and their families during COVID-19 and beyond. i-TEACH is tackling some of the big issues for schools and we look forward to another year of new insights and new applications of school innovation in mental health and inclusion.

Whats Inside

- Research Updates
- Summer Reads
- Focus on SEL
- Spotlight on Members
- Invited Talks & Publications

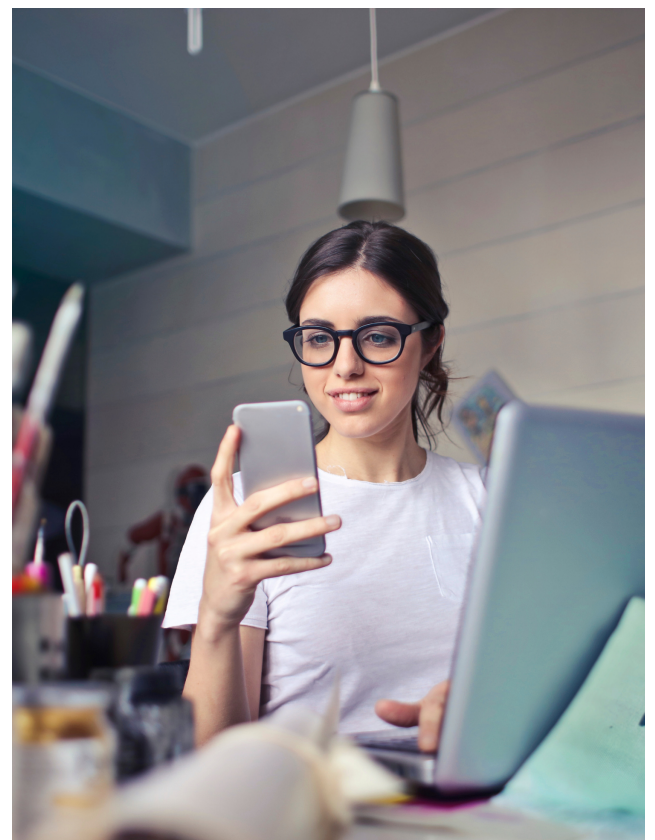




SUPERWELL

i-TEACH have teamed up with local Limerick School, Scoil Ide, Corbally to develop a school university partnership to develop a new framework for implementing interventions in wellbeing, SUPERWELL. Following on from the success of a previous partnership SUPERSEN this project seeks to identify evidence based interventions that can be implemented and evaluated in the school. For the second time the project is funded by the Teaching Council of Ireland John Coolahan Award and will be rolled out in Autumn 2020. Check out our website for updates. Ms Bebhinn Joyce, teacher and special educator in Scoil Ide has been central to the success of the project to date. Previous principal Grace Burke and current principal Ray D'Arcy are hugely supportive.

Pictured left are Jennifer & Bebhinn presenting at Féilte on SUPERSEN (pre COVID)



TACKLE YOUR FEELINGS – INNOVATION IN YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

i-TEACH are partnering with Tackle Your Feelings, Rugby Players Ireland. Tackle Your Feelings schools' campaign is an in-classroom programme for adolescents that is aided by a bespoke app which encourages teachers and students to explore resources and complete tasks and exercises. The campaign has 3 main aims:

- 1) Break down stigma around mental and emotional wellbeing.
- 2) Change behaviours and equip students with tools and techniques to proactively work on their mental wellbeing.
- 3) Create a movement whereby people become champions of the campaign message in their own communities.

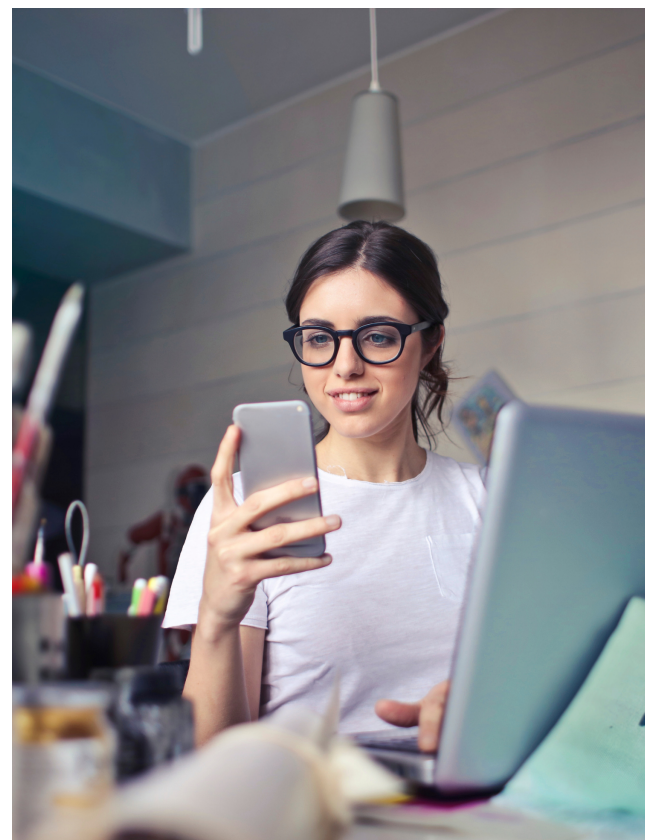
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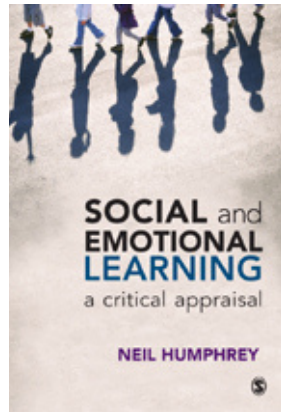
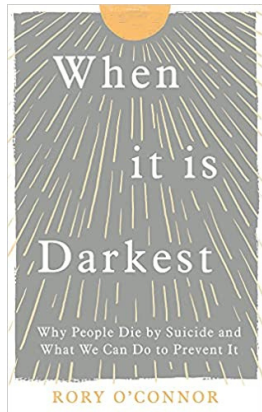
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LONLINESS IN ADOLESCENCE

Emma Kirwan is a psychology PhD candidate who recently joined the lab, and is researching loneliness in young adulthood. Loneliness is a growing issue for young adults and is under researched.

Emma recently attended the 18th Psychology Health and Medicine Conference from May 12th-14th. She also presented research in development poster on the protocol for her first Ph.D. study. The poster is titled 'Loneliness in young adulthood: a protocol for a scoping review of the quantitative and qualitative literature. Emma hopes that the results of this review will provide an up-to-date overview of the research on loneliness in young adults, to inform future research in the area. Emma is working with Spun Out and a team of researchers in UL on understanding loneliness in young adults. For more on Emmas research read her [latest newsletter here](#).



SUMMER READS

- When it is Darkest: Why People Die by Suicide and What We Can Do to Prevent It, by Dr Rory O' Connor
- Social and Emotional Learning: A Critical Appraisal by Dr Neil Humphrey

T-REX DIGITAL BADGE IN SCHOOL WELLBEING



For the last number of years Dr Jennifer McMahon has been the UL lead on a nationally funded initiative to promote evidence based practice for teachers. The platform www.t-rex.ie is a collaboration with Mary Immaculate College, National University of Galway and Marino Institute of Education and has many aspects that promote research literacy and knowledge exchange and is funded by the Teaching Council of Ireland, The National Forum for Teaching & Learning, The National Council for Curriculum & Assessment and the Centre for Effective Services.

Now T-REX is launching its first digital badge, the first digital badge to be accredited as part of the Teaching Councils Cosán framework - 'Reviewing research for School Wellbeing. The development team included the NCCA, the Teaching Council, the National Forum for Teaching & Learning, practicing teachers, colleagues from MIC and was led by Dr Jennifer McMahon. The pilot will run in the Autumn and we are excited to see what teachers think of it. T-REX is also to the second round of the Rethink Ireland fund which is very exciting. Check it out at www.t-rex.ie



FOCUS ON SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

In June Jennifer gave a virtual workshop on social emotional learning in the Limerick Let's Educate Secondary School, at the invitation of principal Mr. Eoin Shinnors.

What is Social Emotional Learning?

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success. People with strong social-emotional skills are better able to cope with everyday challenges and benefit academically, professionally, and socially.

Post pandemic the area of SEL has added importance and agencies such as National Psychological Service for Schools (NEPS) have highlighted this area. Jennifer discussed SEL strategies for schools. As part of the talk she discussed her research being conducted in i-TEACH in collaboration with Dr Elaine Kinsella, of the RISE lab at UL. She outlined the ways heroes can help young people regulate their emotions and inspire and model coping behaviours. Read more [about the research here](#) Jennifer also highlighted the work of Narrative 4, another i-TEACH partner and how SEL strategies can be embedded in a whole school approach that compliments existing structures and supports.



[Join the i-TEACH network.](#)
[Click here](#)

Next Issue....

Our team is expanding - Meet more of our researchers
Get updates on current and upcoming projects
New Articles on issues relating to school mental health

In the spotlight

Doctoral Candidate Lorna Barry



Lorna is an Irish Research Council-funded doctoral candidate in the i-TEACH lab supervised primarily by Dr Jennifer McMahon. The research team also includes Dr Jennifer Holloway, NUIG and Professor Stephen Gallagher, UL. Lorna's programme of research focuses on the understanding the adoption of autism interventions in school settings. Lorna became interested in this area due to experience working as a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA). While working with young autistic students and their families often consulted in schools and noticed that some teachers were not confident in implementing interventions identified as effective for teaching students with autism new skills for social, play and communication skills. Lorna is passionate to explore ways we could improve teacher preparedness for educating autistic students and support teachers and students to achieve better outcomes. The research programme extends existing lab research and Lorna hopes that the work will inform the development of future research in this area.

Doctoral Candidate Laura Neenan



Laura is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Psychology and a member of the i-TEACH lab and own a prestigious scholarship funded by the National Office for Suicide Prevention to conduct the work with i-TEACH. Supervised by Dr Jennifer McMahon, Laura's research programme aims to increase the evidence base and efficacy of specific interventions that can support teachers capacity to respond to students risk of suicide. This in part involves evaluating how SafeTALK affects pre-service teachers' knowledge of and capacity to respond to suicidal behaviours. SafeTALK is an internationally recognised gatekeeper-training programme that helps participants recognise a person with thoughts of suicide and connect them with resources who can help them in choosing to live. Laura is originally a qualified nurse and also has a masters in health promotion from NUIG. During the pandemic Laura took time out from her studies to take up a role as a contact tracer. We are very proud of Laura for answering Irelands call at this time! Other supervision team members include Professor Orla Muldoon, Psychology, UI and Dr Owen Doody, Nursing & Midwifery, UL.



Our members

Dr. Jennifer McMahon, Lorna Barry, Eibhlin Walsh, Laura Neenan, Christopher Shum, Emma Kirwan, Amanda O'Dwyer & Katie Brown
[Check out details on the i-TEACH team here](#)

Upcoming Events

CoSPACE Ireland presentation on Sept 8th for the Interdisciplinary Child Wellbeing Network based in Trinity College Dublin & St. Andrews

Co-SPACE/i-TEACH Autumn School mental health series...watch this space

Selected Conferences & Invited Talks

- Eibhlin presented at The National Suicide Research Foundation Virtual Seminar on suicide, Self-harm, and Mental Health, where she was awarded joint winner of the rapid-fire presentation in the youth mental health research category. Well done Eibhlin!
- Eibhlin also presented at the YOULEAD Research Webinar: Informing Policy, Changing Practice.
- Lorna presented at the Growing up in Ireland Annual Conference in October 2020, the Association of Behaviour Analysis International 15th Annual Autism Conference . Lorna was also the recipient of a Student/Trainee award from the INSAR committee for her attendance at the conference. Well done Lorna!
- Jennifer gave an invited talk on CoSPACE Ireland to the inaugural Mood Movement Network event. Jennifer is a co-investigator of the network that focuses on existing and emerging technologies that can support the mental health of young people. The thriving network is funded by the Irish Research Council and the Economic & Social Research Council, UK and is led by Dr Amanda Fitzgerald, UCD and Professor Cherie Amour, Queens.
- Mandy presented at the Psychological Society Ireland 17th annual Psychology, Health and Medicine in May 2020. Mandy is presenting at the 32nd International Congress of Psychology in July 2021.
- Christopher presented research at the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) Annual Conference in March 2020 titled 'The Motus Social Emotional Learning Program: A service evaluation on a primary school social emotional learning program for Irish early adolescents'.
- Christopher also presented a poster at the Psychology, Health and Medicine (PHM) Annual Conference in May 2021 from his PhD research titled 'A Protocol for Assessing the Relationship Between Social Emotional Skills and Cortisol Awakening Response Across Secondary School Transition' Collaborators: Dockray, S., McMahon, J.
- Jennifer gave an invited talk to the National Association of Principals & Deputy Principals Region 6 entitled 'Thriving at School: The practice and value of Social Emotional Learning' February 27th 2020
- Emma Kirwan presented a poster on her PhD research "Loneliness in young adulthood: a protocol for a scoping review of the quantitative and qualitative literature. (Online Poster: <https://osf.io/jfcmp/>). Collaborators: O'Súilleabháin, P., Burns, A., McMahon, J., Summerville, S., Creaven, A-M.
- Jennifer was invited to join the Interdisciplinary Child Wellbeing Network based in Trinity College Dublin & St. Andrew and will present data from CoSPACE Ireland to the network on Sept 8th.
- Eibhlin and Laura presented findings from their doctoral programmes of research in the Suicide Prevention in Schools category of the First Annual Suicide and Self-Harm Research Workshop on the island of Ireland, hosted by the National Suicide Research Foundation and collaborators.

Recent Publications

- McMahon, J., Gallagher, E. A., Walsh, E. H., & O'Connor, C. (2021). Experiences of remote education during COVID-19 and its relationship to the mental health of primary school children. *Irish Educational Studies*, 1-12.
- Hall, T., Ryan, M., McMahon, J., McGann, M., Egan, A., & Connolly, C. (2021). T-REX (Teachers' Research Exchange): Infrastructuring Teacher Researcher Collaboration Through an Open Educational Ecosystem. In *Handbook for Online Learning Contexts: Digital, Mobile and Open* (pp. 309-325). Springer, Cham.
- Connolly, C., Hall, T., Ryan, M., McMahon, J., McGann, M., & Egan, A. (2021). A fusion of research-informed teaching and teaching-informed research: Designing a scalable online ecosystem for new partnerships in educational research. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 37(1), 82-95.
- Kirwan, E., Ó'Súilleabháin, P. S., Burns, A., McMahon, J., Summerville, S., & Creaven, A. M. (2021). Loneliness in Young Adulthood: a Protocol for a Scoping Review of the Quantitative and Qualitative Literature.
- Barry, L., Holloway, J., & McMahon, J. (2020). A scoping review of the barriers and facilitators to the implementation of interventions in autism education. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 78, 101617.
- Walsh, E. H., Herring, M. P., & McMahon, J. (2020). A review of school-based suicide prevention programmes for adolescents and analysis of the role of contextual factors in prevention. Prospero. https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020168883