Samples of Questions from the Applied Maths National Seminar 1

Question: What books would you recommend, and will new textbooks be printed in advance of the rollout of the new specification?

Question: Will we have covered sufficient material to teach the new specification in September 2021?

Question: Will sample papers be available?

Question: Will the mathematical problems experienced during Seminar 1 get more difficult?

Question: How can I cover the complete content in an after school/out of timetable situation?

Question: How much time would you recommend teachers spend on the 'project'?

Question: What books would you recommend, and will new textbooks be printed in advance of the rollout of the new specification?

The PDST are not engaged in writing or producing textbooks and cannot recommend one textbook or author over another. Teachers should check with the various educational publishers to determine if new or updated copies of textbooks are or will be available. The PDST will share any material & resources it creates and will aim to develop dialogue and support at PLC meetings.

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Question: Will we have covered sufficient material to teach the new specification in September 2021?

By September 2021 we will have completed two national seminars, a first PLC session and 2 webinars. Strand 1, maths modelling, will have been addressed in both seminars. The teaching & learning strategies experienced in seminar 1, an introduction to Networks, mathematical modelling, sets the tone for all the seminars. The strategies demonstrated in the seminars, will help you to introduce new topics to students. Seminar 2 in April will further the understanding of Strand 2 material as well as commencing a look at Strand 3, mathematical modelling for the physical world. We will engage with teachers in a series of PLC meetings organised for March and deliver a 2nd Webinar in May. All in all, teachers should be well set to commence teaching Strand 2 or the more traditional Strand 3 material in September using a range of teaching and learning methodologies experienced during the support sessions. Further seminars & PLC's will take place in the autumn of 2021.

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Question: Will sample papers be available?

The responsibility for setting and marking the examination papers and any development of sample papers rests with the State Examination Committee. Typically, sample papers are produced in the autumn of 6th year. Outside of sample papers it is our intention to develop skills in how to set challenging questions in upcoming PLC's.

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Question: Will the mathematical problems experienced during Seminar 1 get more difficult?

Yes, the problems will get somewhat more difficult as we progress through the seminars to reflect the content and learning outcomes of the specification document. In seminar 1 we introduced maths modelling as you might introduce it to your own students. We encourage an early, though easy introduction for students so as not to overwhelm them as they engage with problem solving. We hope, in upcoming PLC's, to further develop approaches in maths modelling that will help to create and scaffold questions suitable for your classes.

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Question: How can I cover the complete content in an after school/out of timetable situation?

Like equivalent Leaving Certificate subjects the new Applied Maths Specification is designed to be taught in 180 hours class contact time. It has 4 strands which include networks, graph theory, dynamic programming & mathematical modelling. We cannot recommend how much time to assign per section/strand as the specification should be taught using a non-linear approach for strands 2,3,4 while being underpinned by strand 1. In an ideal world, applied maths would reside on the school timetable. However, the reality is that quite a few schools provide the subject outside the normal timetable. We would hope that teachers of applied maths in these circumstances would continue to participate with all elements of the roll-out and then determine how best to manage the time allocation for the subject outside of the timetable.

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Question: How much time would you recommend teachers spend on the 'project'?

The maths modelling project has a value of 20% of the final grade. As maths modelling underpins the three strands 2,3 & 4, the student will be engaging with and experience maths modelling over the course of the two-year cycle. As teachers, we encourage students to be resourceful, imaginative, able to work with others and to communicate effectively. We particularly encourage resilience, and the art of not giving up when one meets an unexpected challenge. Now as our students attend to their final project, we will have to gauge & monitor their progress, ensuring that they manage their time & planning while maintaining creativity, self-confidence & self-motivation. Past experiences would indicate that we may have difficulty in trying to dampen student's enthusiasm to refine, further refine, iterate & re-iterate to make the final solution as accurate as possible.

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