

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta

The Teaching Council



Title of Research Project: Delving into the Shadows of the Grinds Culture in Ireland - A Focus on Mathematics

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Relevant key words: Grinds culture; Post-primary; Teachers' perceptions; Mathematics.

Summary:

In this project we sought to seek and address the following research question: What are teachers' perceptions of the scale, nature and driving forces of the grinds culture that currently exists in mathematics? The data used to address this research question was gathered using an online survey designed by the authors and circulated to post-primary mathematics teachers in November 2020. Analysis of the data reveals that 77% of all respondents ($n = 305$) believed that there has been an increase in the uptake of mathematics grinds in Ireland in recent years. The three main contributing reasons that were identified by more than 80% of teachers as to why students get grinds were: students' motivation to secure extra bonus points, students' motivation to get into a college course, and parents'/guardians' motivation. While only 38% of responding teachers identified as currently giving grinds, the majority had a positive perception of the practice in mathematics. 71% agreed that they are necessary for some students and 82% agreed that they can increase students' confidence in the subject. However, many teachers also agreed that grinds can be a substitute for students who do not pay attention during class (52%) or for students who do not want to figure out solutions on their own (61%).

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