

**Title of Research Project:** Tús Maith? Exploring Student and Early Career Teachers' Attitudes to, and Experiences of, Teaching in a Post-Primary Irish Medium Immersion (IMI) Context.

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**Relevant key words:** Irish Immersion Education; pedagogy; content and language integrated education; professional development

#### **Summary:**

This project explored the experiences, challenges and opportunities for student and newly qualified post-primary teachers in the Irish immersion education environment. Our findings offer a range of insights and recommendations to support pedagogy and practice in this unique environment. The main findings suggest that teachers feel a keen sense of responsibility in the immersion context to be models of practice in the Irish language and to promote it as a meaningful mode of communication in school. The findings suggest concern about a lack of confidence in this area among NQTs and student teachers. Other key findings highlighted the difficulty in balancing content and language teaching in planning, instruction and assessment practices, and the connection between confidence in language of instruction and good practice and innovation in pedagogy. Four key recommendations are that:

- There should be significant investment in CPD in this area, across the continuum of teacher education, to build a knowledge base around best practice in, and conceptual awareness of, language and content integrated teaching.
- Research in the area of second language acquisition should be widely shared and accessible.
- Schools should identify mentors to offer guidance in language enrichment.
- School management should identify professional development support pathways on appointment of staff.

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