

Forde, Michael J, 2006, *The Introduction and Implementation of the Junior Certificate Schools programme: A Comparative Study.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This project is a comparative study based on the introduction and implementation of the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) in two second-level schools. The JCSP is a national programme which is currently operating in 174 schools throughout the country and which is specifically aimed at students who may leave school early or who show signs of failure at school. The study attempts, firstly, to investigate the causes of early school leaving from the case study schools and, secondly, to identify teacher perceptions in relation to a number of the issues surrounding the introduction and implementation of the programme.

In chapter one the contextual framework for the study is presented and the aims and objectives of the project are proposed. An overview of the system of second level schooling in the Republic of Ireland is outlined.

Chapter two presents a review of the literature relating to the subject area with emphasis on educational disadvantage and curricular interventions to counter early school leaving. The literature specifically relating to the JCSP since its inception is also explored.

Chapter three presents a brief discussion of the different forms of educational research and outlines the research instruments used in this study. These comprise a twenty-eight item co-ordinator questionnaire and a twenty-one item teacher questionnaire. The chapter also includes discussion on the piloting, distribution and analysis of the questionnaires, on the interpretation of the statistics and on scoring.

Chapter four presents an analysis of the research findings under key headings which include, the perceived causes of early school leaving from the school, respondents' perceptions of the JCSP programme's introduction and implementation and ways in which, in their opinion, the programme might be improved both at local and national level.

Based on the research findings as investigated and documented in chapter four, chapter five identifies successful strategies for introducing and implementing the JCSP programme in schools. Additionally, it highlights some of the difficulties involved in the process and proposes a number of recommendations on how those challenges might be addressed both at local level, in schools, and at national level in JCSP policy formation.