

INVESTIGATING THIRD LEVEL LECTURERS’ AWARENESS OF SECOND LEVEL CURRICULUM REFORM – FOUR YEARS ON

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This study details a further analysis of the transition of a second level curriculum reform to higher education in Ireland. At ICME 13, an initial study was presented by the authors investigating third level mathematics lecturers’ awareness of the second level reform. The findings determined that although many lecturers were mindful of the concept of Project Maths, they were not aware of the changes in full and how that affected their own course content, teaching and assessment strategies. This study is a follow-up to the original, and comparisons will be made with the 2015 data to see if the situation has changed.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The second level curriculum reform in Ireland entitled ‘Project Maths’ involved changes to what second level students learn in mathematics, how they learn it and how they are assessed. Changes were rolled out nationally on a phased basis from September 2010. Students who were taught and assessed through the new curriculum first entered third level education in September 2012. At ICME 13, an initial study was presented by the authors investigating mathematics lecturers’ ($n = 46$) awareness of Project Maths and whether they had made any adaptations to their course content, teaching and assessment approaches as a result of the new curriculum being introduced. The findings determined that although many lecturers were mindful of the concept of Project Maths, they were not aware of the changes in full and how they affected their own course content, teaching and assessment strategies. However, data collection for the initial study took place in 2015, a time when the reform was still very much in its infancy. For example, the phased implementation of Project Maths meant that it was 2017 before a cohort of students who had experienced all five strands of the reform for the duration of their second level education first entered third level education.

With this in mind, the current study (for which data collection took place in 2019) is a follow-up to the original study, with the same aims and objectives. The latest findings will be compared with the 2015 data to investigate how the reformed curriculum is now being received by mathematics lecturers ($n = 47$) at third level, their levels of familiarity (see Figure 1), and to determine whether changes have since been initiated to course content, teaching and assessment approaches as a result.

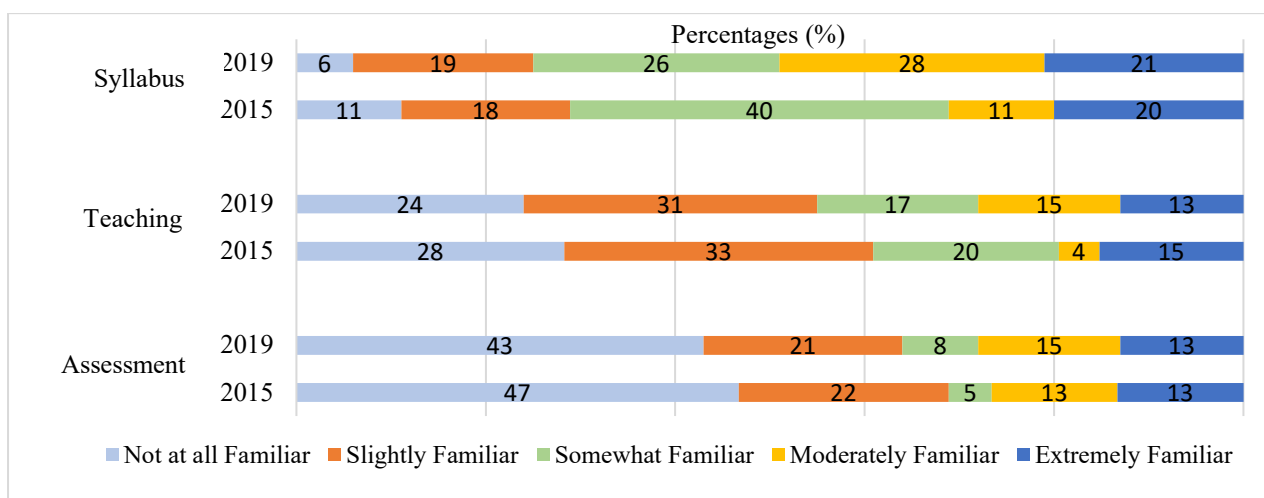


Figure 1: Third Level Lecturers’ Familiarity with Reform at Second Level (2015 versus 2019)