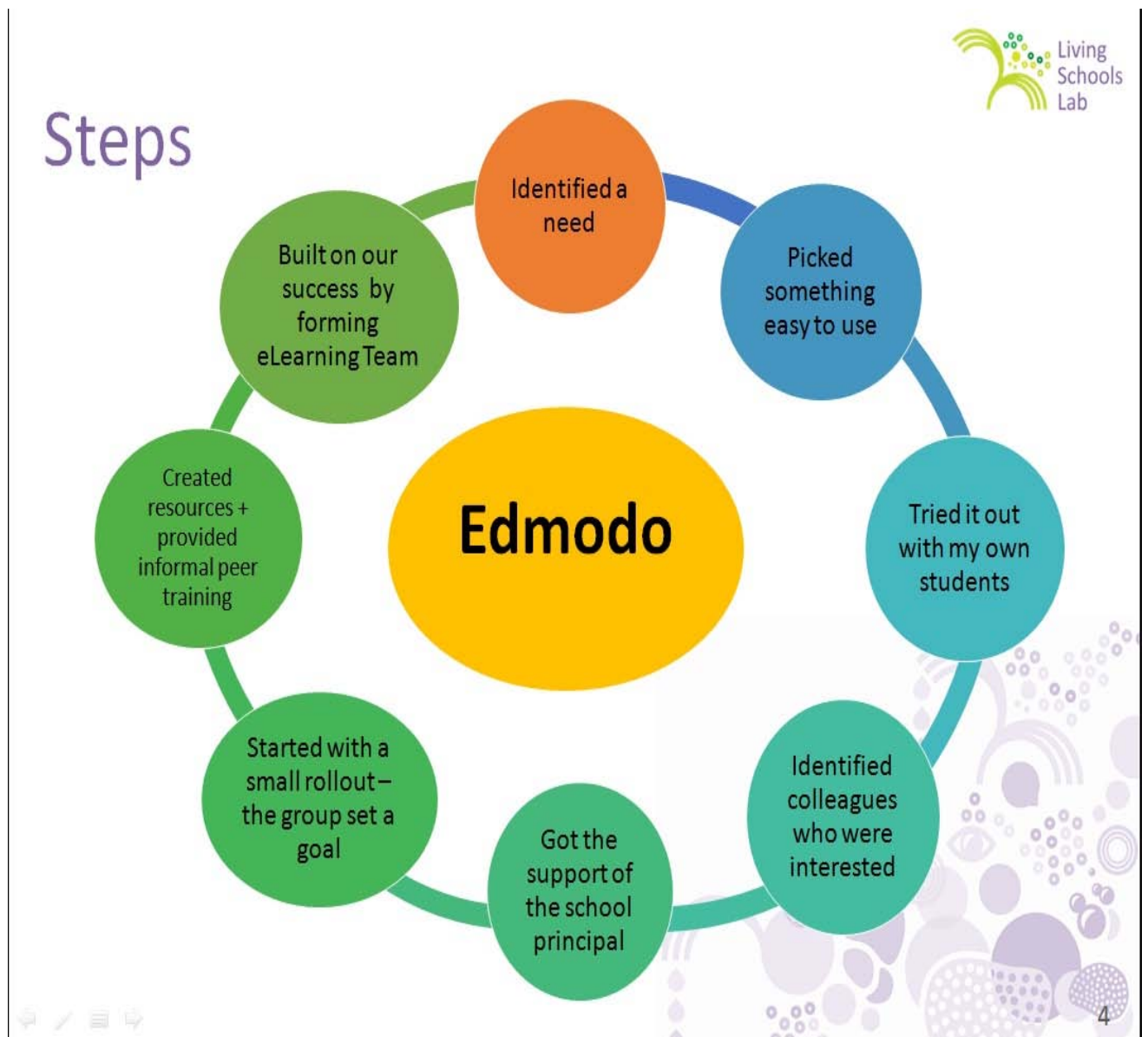


## How to introduce Edmodo to your school in 8 easy steps

“In Edmodo’s secure environment, teachers and pupils can collaborate, share content, and use educational apps to augment in-classroom learning. These powerful capabilities enable teachers to personalise learning for every pupil. Edmodo is free for teachers and pupils and always will be.”

Edmodo, January 2014.

At the Living Schools Lab Summer School on May 17th Ciarán Kennedy of St Patrick’s Boys School, Tuam, outlined how Edmodo, the free virtual learning management system has been successfully introduced in his school. Here are the steps he followed; perhaps they could work for you?



## Step 1: Identify a need

Ciarán wanted to improve learning and communication within the school. He selected Edmodo a virtual learning environment as a tool to engage students and provide virtual classrooms which could extend learning beyond the classroom walls. Edmodo is an easy to use communication platform which allows teachers to create and share digital resources. Edmodo is attractive to students and is also free and that too was a consideration in its selection!

## Step 2: Pick something easy to use

The beauty of a tool like Edmodo for the time-poor and hard pressed ICT coordinating teacher is that it requires little or no set up or administration. Each teacher simply sets up his or her own 'classroom'; the system generates an automatic code to give to the students and they login in. It's as simple as that, there's no messing around with email addresses or passwords, no admin or security to worry about.

Students like the tool as it has a friendly social networking look and feel to it. It is easy to use and they can log on after school when at home to continue their work. All communication is visible on the central forum so the teacher can be assured that no non-work chat will distract from the work at hand!

Parents can also be invited 'in' to see their child's work and progress. A parent code can be generated to encourage parents to see the work taking place but they cannot post to the forum. Engaging parents and involving them with their child's learning is an area that Ciarán hopes to develop in the coming school year.

## Step 3: Try it out with your own students

Whatever ICT tool you select you'll want to try it out with your own classes first. Edmodo is an ideal tool for sharing and displaying your teaching materials and lesson resources with your students. Moreover you can store your resources to reuse or re-purpose them for other courses and classes. However when students begin to collaborate, to create their own digital content and take charge of their own learning, you'll see the true power of a VLE like Edmodo.

## Step 4: Identify a small group of staff colleagues who will join you

If there is an [eLearning Team](#) in your school why not pitch the idea to them? Or if teaching in a primary school you could work with teachers in the same class level as you? Post primary teachers could work with same year teachers or perhaps same subject teachers to help not only share lesson plans and resources with one another but quickly build up a bank of resources that than be saved

and reused form year to year. A small working group will help to shape ideas and prepare the way for a successful rollout.

## **Step 5. Get the support of the School Principal**

As with all change in the school the support of school leadership will be required to integrate a tool like Edmodo into the culture of the school. The support of the school principal will help bring a whole school focus on using Edmodo for learning, teaching and organisational improvement. The principal can help by not alone making space in the staff meeting agenda for a regular short ICT-eLearning slot but could even use Edmodo to share planning documents or display staff resources in an Edmodo virtual staff meeting 'room'. The staff meeting is the ideal place for a 3 minute showcasing by a teacher of 'How I use Edmodo in my classroom to improve learning'.

## **Step 6. Start with a small rollout**

Each of the schools in our trial opted for a small scale rollout. In Ciarán's case 5 teachers joined him initially. They met for a peer training session and to decide on what the effective use of Edmodo in their classes meant to them. The small rollout would give the opportunity to the group to respond quickly to any glitches or problems should they arise. Interestingly, word of Edmodo spread throughout the school and students whose teachers were not part of the initial rollout were soon asking if they could use Edmodo in their classes. Before the end of the first term all 16 mainstream teachers in the school had joined the Edmodo experiment in Ciarán's school!

## **Step 7. Provide resources and peer training**

Edmodo has 'how to' videos, demo clips, FAQs and a community forum with helpful tips and advice on using the tool with your students. However most schools decided to update or adapt their own school materials before going 'mainstream' with the rest of the staff. This ensured that new teachers to the project had readymade tailored templates and guides to save them any unnecessary work. Materials included:

- Updating of the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- Drafting a letter to parents to advise them on why Edmodo was being introduced and how they could support their child's learning.
- Sharing age appropriate 'Responsible Use Rules' they had drafted with their students on the best use of Edmodo in the classroom and at home.
- Placing guide sheets and teaching tips on how to use Edmodo to improve learning in the school's new Edmodo 'staffroom'.
- Suggestions on handy apps to use with various subject disciplines and age groups.

Each of the schools also held informal Edmodo sessions to work with teachers joining the Edmodo rollout. Some created short screencasts which were handy for the other teachers; they could come back to them whenever suited them to review steps or Edmodo tips.

## Step 8. Build yourself an eLearning Team

Each of the schools in the Ireland Hub realised that to keep the momentum alive, and to encourage a school-wide integration of ICT into the daily classroom practice of teachers, there was a need to develop an eLearning Team and to begin to work on an eLearning Plan.

On the basis that it takes a village to raise a child, developing eLearning throughout the school needs to involve all the key stakeholders. A starting point was the forming of a small eLearning Team consisting of interested teachers and the principal who planned how to integrate ICT into the learning and teaching activities of the school.

The tools to assist schools in a systematic [eLearning Planning process](#) are all available in the eLearning Handbook. A copy was also sent to each school in 2009. The [eLearning Roadmap](#) and [Action Plan templates](#) were popular tools with our eLearning Teams, why not have a look and see if they can help you integrate ICT into the school curriculum and across the school?