

# JC TODAY

The Official Newsletter of Junior Cycle for Teachers

Issue 32 | May 2023

An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí  
Junior **CYCLE**  
for teachers



Welcome to the 32nd and final ever edition of JCToday! It's been a tremendous journey and a privilege, and all of us in JCT have enjoyed every minute of our work in supporting schools, school leaders and teachers, in implementing the Framework for Junior Cycle.



We hope that all of our readers have found JCToday to be an informative and helpful read over the years. Ending with an edition that has its focus on Inclusion is a fitting compliment to everyone that this newsletter has touched over its ten-year span, we were all in it together! As Director of JCT, I want to take this opportunity to thank all our readers, and all who engaged and worked with us over the last ten years to make it all happen.

On the 1st of September 2023, a new organisation will take over the reins from JCT. *Oide* will be the new Department of Education support service for schools, following the integration of the Centre for School Leadership, Junior Cycle for Teachers, the National Induction Programme for Teachers and the Professional Development Service for Teachers. Exciting times lie ahead. *Oide* is shaping up to be a truly all-encompassing, effective and responsive schools' support service. JCT has supported the work involved in getting *Oide* established and knows only too well the significant task that lies ahead of it. JCT wishes *Oide*, every school, centre for education, school leader and teacher, indeed all those that we served since 2013, every success in the future.

*Dr. Pádraig Kirk, Director*

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# Foreword

Welcome to the 32nd and final edition of our newsletter, JCToday. The theme for this summer edition is **Inclusion**. Over the next few pages, you will have a chance to delve into some of the supports that various JCT Teams have created and used in both elective and core CPD to support inclusion in the Junior Cycle classroom.



Inclusion is an essential element of the Junior Cycle Framework, as it ensures that all students are valued and supported within the educational system. One of the key ways in which this is promoted is through the emphasis on active and collaborative learning. This approach encourages students to work together in groups, sharing their ideas and learning from one another. This type of learning environment is particularly beneficial for students who may struggle in more traditional classroom settings, as it provides a more supportive and engaging learning experience.

The development of key skills such as critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving better equip students to succeed in an inclusive and modern world. I hope you will find the various articles in this final edition to be useful, informative and practical for your subject area.

As we look forward to *Oide* - a new support service for teachers and school leaders, I would like to extend a special word of thanks to all those who worked on and contributed to this newsletter since its inception. It has been a privilege to have been a part of it. Wishing everyone a well-deserved summer break.

*Liam Bannon*

*Editor*

Find out more about *Oide* at [www.oide.ie](http://www.oide.ie)



**Oide**

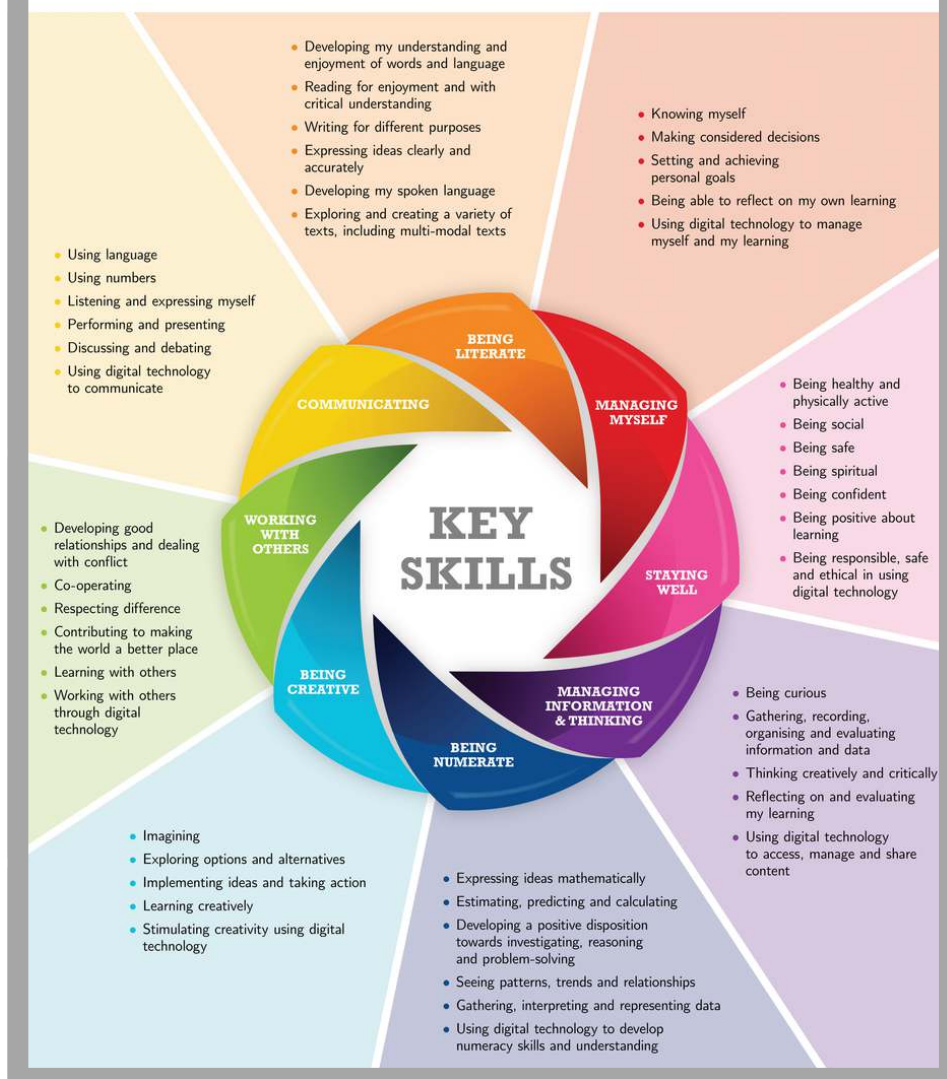
Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim  
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí  
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional  
Learning of School Leaders  
and Teachers

# Inclusion in Junior Cycle



## Key Skills of Junior Cycle



Click on the image to download



"Key skills help learners develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to face the many challenges in today's world. They also support students in learning how to learn and to take responsibility for their own learning."

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)

A key principle of Junior Cycle is that “the educational experience is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcomes for all”. The NCSE describes inclusion as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners. It involves removing barriers so that each learner will be enabled to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her schooling. An inclusive environment is identified as one that has a positive learning ethos, emphasises student participation and active engagement, and is committed to improving outcomes for all students (NCSE, 2011). The Junior Cycle English Team seeks to provide inclusive learning opportunities for our students which improve their learning outcomes and increases their confidence.

Over the years the Junior Cycle English Team has sought to support teachers in planning for learning in an inclusive classroom. Under the **“Planning”** section of the website, various resources have been added. For example: “Possible prompts to support planning and a unit of learning” includes possible prompts for including a wide variety of texts, including multi-modal, and a wide variety of assessment opportunities are also mentioned, including multiple-choice, peer-assessment, self-assessment, traditional pen and paper assessment and others. In this way, teachers are encouraged to consider inclusion at the planning stage so that its integration is more seamless. This section also includes sample templates to support planning for Level 3 and L2LPs within the same classroom.

Possible prompts to support planning a unit of learning

<p><b>Theme (optional):</b>          ‘For example, a year’s work might be organised around themes and/or central texts with other texts studied in broad contextual relation to them.’          (English Specification, p.10)</p> <p><b>Learning Outcomes / Aspects of Learning Outcomes in Focus:</b></p> <p><b>Level 3:</b>          Oral Language, Reading, Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have I identified students’ prior learning?</li> <li>• What key learning do I want students to engage with?</li> <li>• Have I included a balance across the three strands of Oral Language, Reading and Writing?</li> </ul> <p><b>Level 2 (if applicable):</b>          ‘Programme planning requires a collaborative approach, between students, their parents, subject teachers, learning support or resource teachers, special needs assistants, and other relevant professionals.’          (L2LPs Guidelines, p.4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Priority Learning Units and associated outcomes are in focus?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Year Group:</b></p> <p><b>Duration:</b></p> <p><b>Ongoing Assessment:</b>          ‘Assessment in Junior Cycle English will optimise the opportunity for students to become reflective and active participants in their learning and for teachers to support this.’          (Assessment Guidelines, p.16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the ongoing assessment align with the learning in focus?</li> <li>• What knowledge, understanding, skills and values/dispositions would I like my students to demonstrate having engaged with these Learning Outcomes?</li> </ul> <p><b>Other considerations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have I included a variety of assessment approaches – peer assessment, self-assessment, pen and paper, multiple-choice, extended writing etc.              ◦ (Success criteria for assessments are co-constructed with students)</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources / Supports:</b>          ‘Students are actively involved in the integrated skills of oral language, reading and writing and in discussing and comparing a wide variety of texts and forms of English.’          (English Specification, p.4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a wide variety of texts included? (Prescribed, non-prescribed, non-literary, multi-modal, diverse, representative etc.)</li> <li>• Consider how student interests might inform the selection of resources/supports.</li> </ul>
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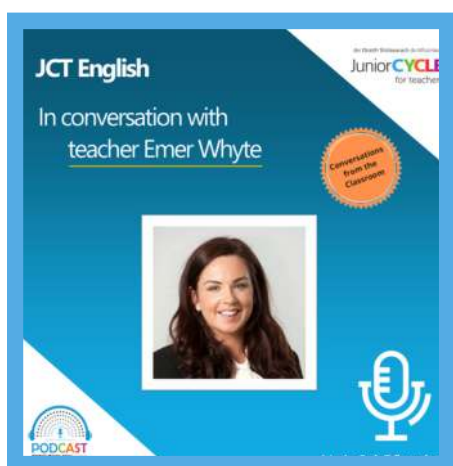
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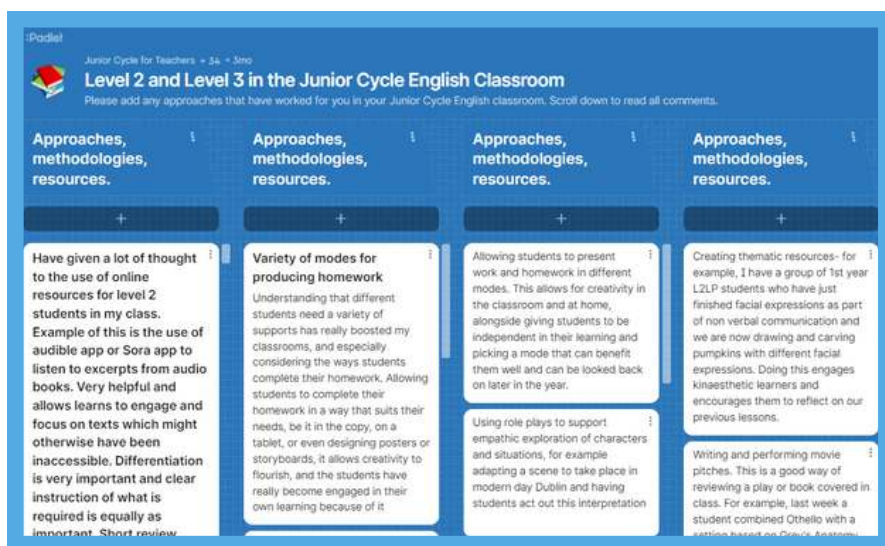
# English

With best practice and leading innovation in mind, session two of the Cluster Day 2021/2022 included the workshop **“Level 2 and Level 3 in the Junior Cycle English Classroom”**. The “Getting Started” section of this workshop includes a comprehensive explanation of the programme, the associated learning outcomes poster and links Level 2 learning outcomes with Level 3 learning outcomes. The “Teacher’s Perspective” section includes a podcast with English teacher, Emer Whyte, explaining how her department plans for, and integrates L2LPs and Level 3 in a mainstream classroom. A Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach to planning is discussed and other practical approaches to accessibility like font type and colour for resources, choice and flexibility of activities within the class setting and dual coding. The functionality of accessibility tools like the Immersive Reader and speech-to-text functions are also described.

Excerpts from the unit of learning and subject department plans are included to provide teachers with examples of how this works in a practical sense. The third section of this workshop includes audiograms from teachers and writers discussing the benefits of an audiobook. **LibriVox** is offered as one depository for accessing audiobooks. Finally, there is **a Padlet** where teachers could share what works for them.



*Click images to  
access supports*



Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is grounded in values of compassion, dignity, empathy, equality, inclusivity, respect and responsibility. Students come to learn in SPHE/RSE from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences and with diverse identities - diversity of abilities, beliefs, cultures, family backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, socio-economic circumstances etc. An inclusive SPHE/RSE classroom is one where students can encounter diversity in a respectful way. It is grounded in a view of the individual and individual differences as a resource that can enrich the lives and learning of each other.

Click to  
 access supports

Preparing to teach Post Primary SPHE/RSE

### What makes an inclusive SPHE/RSE classroom?

There is no such thing as a typical child or young person. Children and young people come to learning in SPHE/RSE from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences and with diverse identities. It's important to accept and celebrate each other and what makes us unique.

Think about all the diversities that are in your SPHE/RSE classroom - diversity of family backgrounds, abilities, gender identities, sexual orientations, socio-economic circumstances, cultures, beliefs, and much more.

**An inclusive SPHE/RSE classroom is one where students can encounter diversity in a respectful way. It is grounded in a view of the individual and individual differences as a resource that can enrich the lives and learning of each other.**

These strategies can help create a classroom where everyone has a sense of belonging.

- Develop caring relationships - get to know students' names as quickly as possible and show interest and concern for them both in and beyond your classroom.
- Establish a classroom contract and atmosphere that allows students to have honest discussions, be listened to respectfully and be open to hearing opinions and experiences that might be different to their own.
- Use respectful and compassionate language when talking about people and challenge students if they use disrespectful language or display discriminatory behaviours, even if they are 'joking' or 'slapping'. A good test for checking if language is respectful is to ask the students themselves if they would like the word to be used to describe someone they love.
- If a class appears to be relatively homogenous (for example, in terms of ethnicity, socio-economic background, etc.), teach your lesson while imagining a more diverse environment. For example, imagine how would you feel if someone from another culture/group was 'a fly on the wall' observing the teaching and learning? This will safeguard against slipping into 'othering' language.
- Support students to develop attitudes, knowledge and skills for recognising and addressing stereotypes, bias, unfairness and discrimination.
- When deciding on content and teaching methods, make sure to include different examples, scenarios, case studies, etc. that represent and reflect the spectrum of children and young people's lives, experiences and identities.
- Assume diversity in your student population, even if you don't see it - you may not see or be aware of many aspects of students' lives, identities or backgrounds. For example, teach with a consciousness that you have LGBTQ+ students in every class or students with LGBTQ+ friends, family or loved ones.
- Create an inclusive physical space by displaying images that reflect a diversity of young people's experiences, e.g. images of different family units, different kinds of relationships, information about youth services, health and wellbeing information, including information relevant for LGBTQ+ students.
- Allow all voices to be heard: Ensure that all students have equal opportunities to express their views respectfully and sensitively, bearing in mind students' differing levels of comfort, maturity and openness. Check in with them regularly that this is happening.
- Use inclusive, affirming and gender-neutral language.

www.curriculumonline.ie

NCCA

Preparing to teach Post Primary SPHE/RSE

### Choosing resources - questions to consider

There are extensive resources available to support teaching and learning in SPHE. Drawing on a variety of resources can be helpful in meeting the needs of a diverse range of students. However, thoughtful consideration of the resources you select to use is important. The following questions will support you as you make choices for your particular school and classroom setting.

- What learning outcome(s) will this resource help achieve? Is this resource relevant to the curriculum and to my plan of work?
- Is it relevant to my students' lives and needs? How do I know?
- On Student Voice and SPHE:**
- Will the resource appeal to my students? Will it be accessible to them - think about the language, layout, variety of media. Can I use or adapt the resource to enable students with SEN to engage in learning alongside their peers?
- Does the resource promote active and experiential learning? Will it prompt critical thinking, questioning, discussion and reflection?
- Is it age and stage appropriate? Remember that students frequently complain that SPHE materials are childish or patronising.
- Is it inclusive of the diversity of family forms, backgrounds, cultures and beliefs that exist? Does the resource respect the range of backgrounds and experiences in your class and in the wider community? Does it prompt students to consider different perspectives and viewpoints?
- Is it reinforcing or challenging bias and stereotypes in relation to gender, social class and ability/disability?
- Does it meaningfully reflect the lives of people of all gender and sexuality identities? Or are LGBTQ+ students invisible or treated as 'others'?
- Who has funded this resource? For example, is it funded by the drinks industry? The Department of Health has advised schools not to use any resources developed by organisations funded by the drinks industry (such as Drinkaware).
- Has the resource been created by a reputable source and include evidence-informed content and methodologies? If in doubt, always check it out.
- Is the resource seeking to promote a particular worldview, belief system or set of values?
- Does it confuse the distinctive role of SPHE and RE within the curriculum?
- Does the resource align with your school's RSE policy? When reviewing your RSE policy it is useful to include particular resources that your school uses as this is useful information for all SPHE teachers and particularly those coming new to the subject.

**Don't forget to check if the resource has already been used by another teacher with your students and be sure to evaluate any resources you use - both with your students and with other teachers.**

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NCCA



The NCCA's SPHE/RSE Toolkit contains resources to support teachers in progressing their professional development in SPHE/RSE independently, at a team or whole staff level. Useful resources in this SPHE/RSE Toolkit are **What makes an inclusive SPHE/RSE classroom?** and **Choosing resources - questions to consider**. Both provide guidance and support for teachers for creating an inclusive classroom where everyone has a sense of belonging.

Junior Cycle SPHE contributes to building a cohesive, compassionate and fair society, one that is inclusive of all abilities/disabilities, ethnicities, genders, religious beliefs/worldviews, sexualities and social classes.

# L1LPs/L2LPs

The Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) support the priority learning areas for students with low mild to high moderate General Learning Difficulty (GLD), while also advocating meaningful access, participation and challenge within mainstream subject classes at Junior cycle in post-primary school. Furthermore, it recognises that this cohort of students has strengths and talents that may enable them to engage with some of their learning at Level 3. The Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) support the priority learning areas for students with low moderate to severe and profound GLD. They may engage in the Level 1 programme in special school settings, special class settings, also in mainstream settings where appropriate. The L2LPs and L1LPs are underpinned by the same principles, statements of learning and key skills that form the structure of the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015).

L2LPs and L1LPs are designed to meet the strengths and needs of the student in the context of the student's school. School Leaders, Special Education Teachers (SETs) and mainstream subject teachers positively impact the enactment of L1LPs and L2LPs in a mainstream post-primary school.

Students with low mild to severe and profound GLD are not homogenous groups and will not achieve the same functioning level as their typically developing peers (Imray & Colley, 2017). 'The pathways they need to take and the time they need to achieve this may be different from their mainstream peers' (NCCA, 1991, p.18) . Students engaging in L1LPs and L2LPs may be working towards different learning goals within these junior cycle programmes and within mainstream class lessons and, where appropriate, through small group or one-to-one classes. It is acknowledged that it can be challenging at times for mainstream subject teachers to balance students' L2LPs and L1LPs learning while providing the same learning experiences as their peers.

Personalising learning is a feature of L1LPs, L2LPs and IEPs or Student Support Files (SSFs). These are an integral feature of the planning for the learning and teaching process that revolves around the student (NCCA, 2016). Relating a student's L2LP or L1LP to their SSF achieves a better fit between the programme and the students. Planning for L2LPs and/or L1LPs requires "a collaborative approach, between students, their parents, subject teachers, learning support or resource teachers, special needs assistants and other relevant professionals" (Ibid, p.13).

# L1LPs/L2LPs

Subject teachers play a crucial role in the academic, social and emotional progress and outcomes of all the students in their class, including students with special educational needs (SEN) engaging in L2LPs and L1LPs. Mainstream teachers are involved in the facilitation of planning and achievements of curricular learning targets set in SSFs for those engaging in L1LPs and L2LPs. This translates to teachers knowing and understanding a student's IEP/SSF (outlines a profile of the student's needs, strengths and interests, sets targets and monitors and reviews student outcomes) and being involved in the development and review of the student's individual L2LP/L1LP plan. Please click the image below to access material to support the collaborative design of a student's L2LP/L1LP plan.



*Click on the image above to access supports*

The following steps whilst not prescriptive, may be suggestive of steps that subject teachers may find useful to guide their active engagement and enactment of L1LPs and/or L2LPs in their mainstream classrooms.

## Step 1:

Teachers know and understand the students' Student Support File (SSF) that outlines a profile of students' strengths and learning needs in the context of L2LPs, in consultation with parents/guardians and SET.

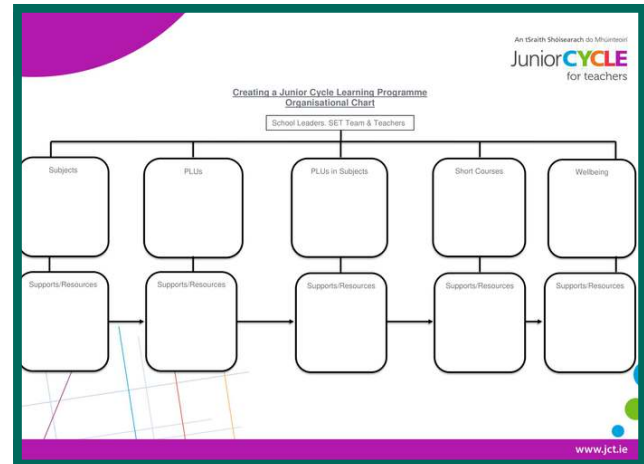
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# L1LPs/L2LPs

## Step 2:

Subject teacher(s) collaborate with School Leaders and SET to plan and create students' individual Level 2 and Level 1 Junior Cycle Learning Programme in the context of mainstream classes with their peers, and, where appropriate, through small group or one-to-one classes. Relating a student's L2LP/L1LP to their SSF achieves a better fit between the programme and the student's prior knowledge, learning achievements, special interests, and future aspirations.



*Click on the image to access supports*

## Step 3:

Subject teachers choose learning outcomes for students based on the SSF profile and their individual L2LP/L1LP. Teachers plan student learning experiences and activities that reflect these individual Learning Outcomes. Subject teachers could complete their own 'Planning with PLUs and Subjects' template including learning outcomes from PLUs and/or Short Course strands in the context of their common subject curriculum and in line with the student's profile and L2LP plan.

Subject teachers can also find linking documents for a wide range of curriculum specifications for Junior Cycle – suggested links to Learning Outcomes and L2LPs only (see link below as an example of suggested links between JC English learning outcomes and outcomes for L2LPs).

The image shows two overlapping documents. The foreground document is titled 'Linking Junior Cycle English with Level 2 Learning Programmes' and is a table with multiple columns and rows, detailing learning outcomes and their links to L2LPs. The background document is partially visible and appears to be another similar table. Both documents have a green header with the 'JuniorCYCLE' logo.

*Click on the images to access supports*

# L1LPs/L2LPs

## Step 4:

Subject department teachers should develop subject department plans for units of learning to include L2LPs/L1LPs (cross-PLU LOs and/or short course strand learning outcomes). These are suggestive of what could be achieved in a subject and mainstream subject teachers can consider them on an individual basis when planning lessons, learning experiences and activities in line with a student's SSF (curricular targets) and L2LP/L1LP plan.

## Step 5:

Subject teachers in collaboration with SET agree on time-frames to assess student learning and gather evidence for student portfolios, as well as review progress. Teachers design assessment tasks to generate evidence of learning. Success criteria enable the provision of feedback to help students plan for next steps in learning and are used in judging the evidence of learning. Evidence of learning of agreed learning outcomes are included in the portfolio and used to meet the requirements for L2 and L1 certification in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

## Step 6:

Subject teachers' reporting that provides meaningful and useful feedback on progress supports and underpins their ongoing teaching, learning and assessment. It helps parents/guardians understand what level their children have achieved in terms of their learning, what progress they have made to reach that level and what they need to learn next in order to progress their learning further.

## Step 7:

Collaboration with colleagues regarding final pieces of evidence of learning for portfolios and short course CBAs offers subject teachers enriching opportunities to quality-assure their judgements and develop confidence in relation to assessment and understanding of the learning needs and experiences of students engaging in L2LPs/L1LPs in the context of the Junior Cycle curriculum.

# Music

Recently at an L1LP/L2LPs sharing of practice, a Principal of a special school spoke of how her school is often described as 'catering for' students with additional needs. She felt strongly that this phrase does not depict her school or her role. In her own words, she 'enrols students' just like any other school. Her powerful words resonated with us all for many reasons. As a team, we create supports for students engaging with Junior Cycle at Level 3 and Level 2. We design the supports so that they are accessible to all, but see no difference in the students. Student progression is what drives our passion for teaching and learning, and, as we know, we always strive towards the creation and maintenance of an inclusive classroom.

In our recent webinar entitled, '**Celebrating Level 2 Learning in the Junior Cycle Music Classroom**', we explored the Why and What of level 2 learning. We had rich discussions with our three panelists, and together shared our lived experiences around planning, classroom practice, feedback and reporting. We then explored just some of our many supports created for students engaging with Level 2 Learning Programmes, available in both English and Irish. That evening, we were delighted to launch three new supports created for this celebration event.

Our **Music Interactive Planning Template** was created to support the music teacher when inclusively planning for students engaging in both Level 2 and Level 3 within the mainstream music classroom.

Our **Music Teacher Assessment Checkpoints document** will support music teachers in gathering evidence of students' learning in the Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs).

**MUSIC Interactive Planning Template**

The purpose of this resource is to support the music teacher when inclusively planning for students engaging in the Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) and students engaging at Level 3 within the mainstream music classroom. This document may be used to capture what learning outcomes will inform the intended learning, the design of learning experiences and how evidence of learning may contribute to the achievement of the Priority Learning Units (PLUs) at Level 2 and the demonstration of the learning at Level 3.

Year/Class Group: Name here	Student(s) participating in...	Term: Name/Dates here
Teacher: Name here	Level 2: Number here	Duration: x weeks
SEN Link: Name here	Level 3: Number here	

**Context/Prior Learning**  
A description of where the student learning is at, what they already know and any other relevant information

**Level 3 - Learning Outcomes in focus**

Strand: Procedural Knowledge	Choose a Procedural Knowledge Learning Outcome
Choose a Procedural Knowledge Learning Outcome	
Choose a Procedural Knowledge Learning Outcome	
Choose a Procedural Knowledge Learning Outcome	
Choose a Procedural Knowledge Learning Outcome	
Strand: Innovate and Ideate	Choose an Innovate and Ideate Learning Outcome
Choose an Innovate and Ideate Learning Outcome	
Choose an Innovate and Ideate Learning Outcome	
Choose an Innovate and Ideate Learning Outcome	
Choose an Innovate and Ideate Learning Outcome	
Strand: Culture and Context	Choose a Culture and Context Learning Outcome
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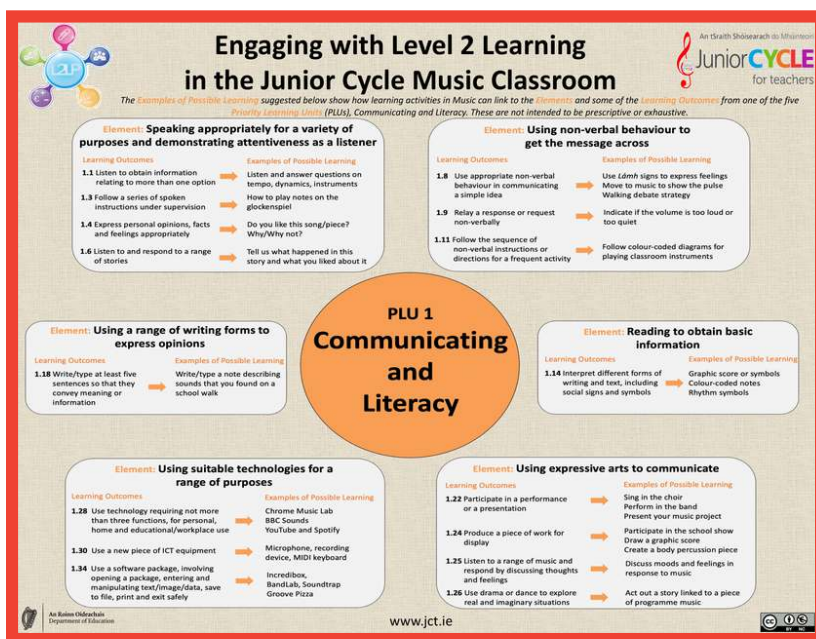
**Level 2 - Learning Outcomes**

Communication & Literacy	Choose a PLU 1 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 1 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 1 Learning Outcome
Choose a PLU 1 Learning Outcome			
Numeralcy	Choose a PLU 2 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 2 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 2 Learning Outcome
Choose a PLU 2 Learning Outcome			
Personal care	Choose a PLU 3 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 3 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 3 Learning Outcome
Choose a PLU 3 Learning Outcome			
Living in a community	Choose a PLU 4 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 4 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 4 Learning Outcome
Choose a PLU 4 Learning Outcome			
Preparing for work	Choose a PLU 5 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 5 Learning Outcome	Choose a PLU 5 Learning Outcome
Choose a PLU 5 Learning Outcome			

www.jct.ie/music

# Music

Our **Engaging with Level 2 Learning in the Junior Cycle Music Classroom poster** displays examples of possible learning linked to selected learning outcomes through the lens of the six elements from the Priority Learning Unit, 'Communicating and Literacy'. Teachers were then invited to identify possible learning linked to learning outcomes from other Priority Learning Units.



All our supports for students engaging with L2LPs are available to download from our website, some of which include our **Valentines celebration event**, our JCT Suite interactive resource and other classroom learning activities.

We all champion pedagogy that places the student at the centre of the learning, and always encourage colleagues to adapt our supports to suit their school context and their learners.

"INCLUSION IS NOT A STRATEGY TO HELP PEOPLE FIT INTO THE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES WHICH EXIST IN OUR SOCIETIES; IT IS ABOUT TRANSFORMING THOSE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES TO MAKE IT BETTER FOR EVERYONE. **INCLUSION IS ABOUT CREATING A BETTER WORLD FOR EVERYONE.**"

-DIANE RICHLER, PAST PRESIDENT, INCLUSION INTERNATIONAL

Music, being a universal language, is inclusive, creative and diverse. It is our aim to ensure that music as a junior cycle subject is accessible to all of our students and to celebrate their engagement in every aspect of its creation and appreciation.

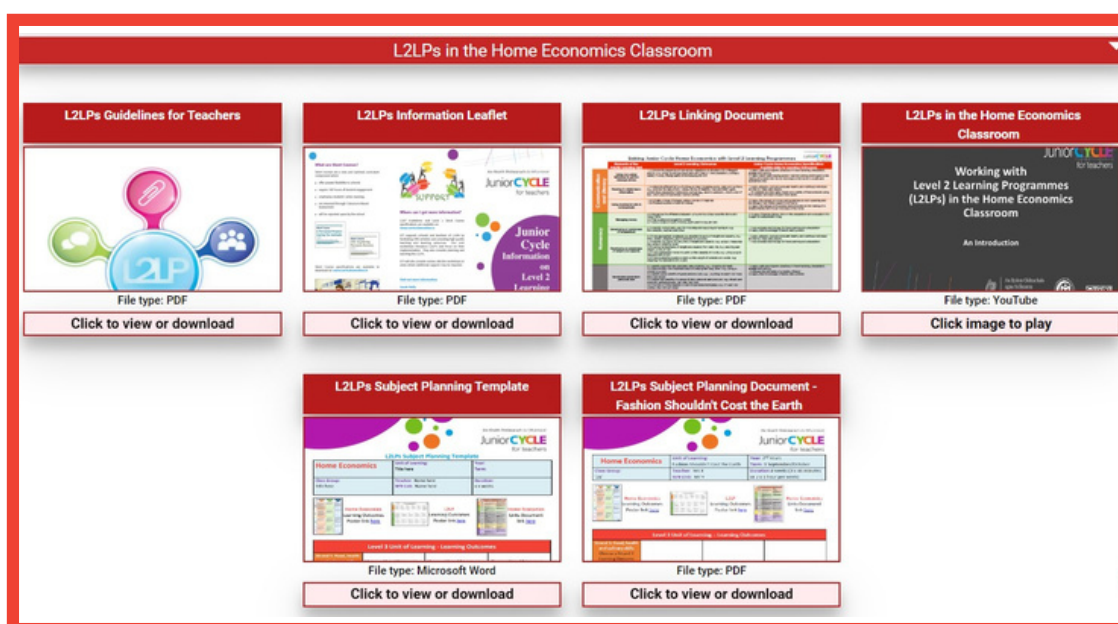


# Home Economics

Eight principles underpin the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015). Inclusive Education is one of these principles. The educational experience is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcomes for all.

According to the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 'Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) are suited to students with general learning disabilities in the higher-functioning moderate and low-functioning mild categories. The special needs of these students is such as to prevent them from accessing some or all of the subjects and short courses on offer at junior cycle that are broadly aligned with Level 3 NFQ.'

The **Planning Section** of the Home Economics section of [www.jct.ie](http://www.jct.ie) contains professional learning materials and supporting resources which may support teachers when planning for a student following L2LPs in their Home Economics classroom.



*Click on the image above to access supports*

# History

One of the key aspects of Junior Cycle History is the inclusion of all students which contributes to equality of opportunity, participation, and outcome for all. In February 2022 the NCCA published the Junior Cycle History Level 2 Short Course Specification. This course is designed for students who are following a Level 2 Learning Programme and may now be offered by schools to their students who are following L2LPs.

The course is designed for 100 hours of student engagement with one Classroom-Based Assessment. Student achievement will be determined by the teacher and there is no SEC examination at the end of third year. The Learning outcomes within the short course are set out in three interconnected strands which are outlined below:

- **Strand 1:** Being a historian introduces students to the nature of history as a discipline. It allows students to reflect on why history is important and relevant to their lives.
- **Strand 2:** Exploring the world through time allows students to explore the lives of people in the past and to see changes in how people lived over time. The strand allows for study in the context of the history of Ireland, Europe, and the wider world, and relevant learning set out in the Level 3 specification may be drawn upon here, subject to the needs and abilities of the learners.
- **Strand 3:** Researching the past in my place is focused on local history. Students are encouraged to explore how life has changed in their locality or community.



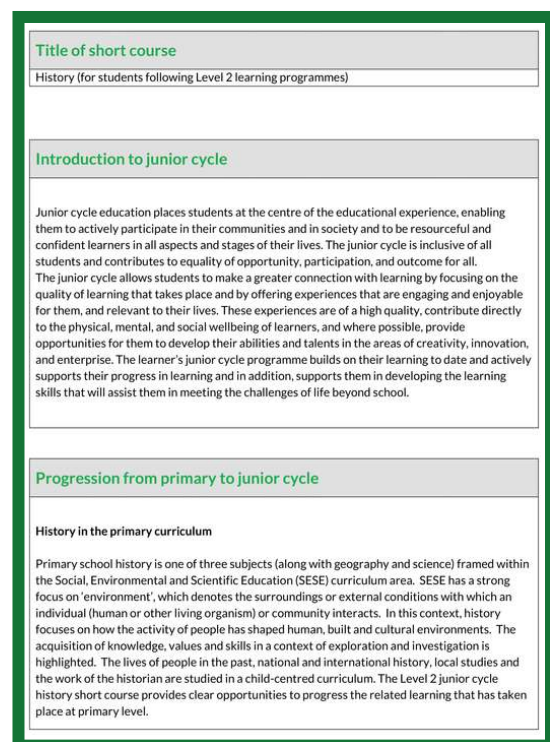
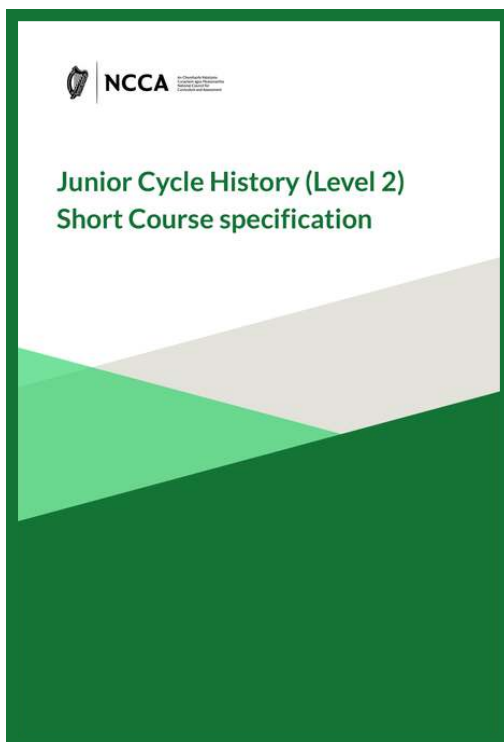
# History

## Classroom-Based Assessment: Looking at My Learning in History.

This Classroom-Based Assessment is a reflection task based on the participation and learning of the individual student throughout their study of history in this short course. For example, students may reflect on:

- key moments(s) of learning
- particular experience(s) they enjoyed
- their contribution to a specific task(s)
- personal achievements gained from their participation in this short course

Students will capture their various experiences through a learning log that will be presented upon completion of the short course. The learning log can be produced in any format that is appropriate for capturing the reflections of the students.



*Click on the images above  
to access the Specification*

# Geography

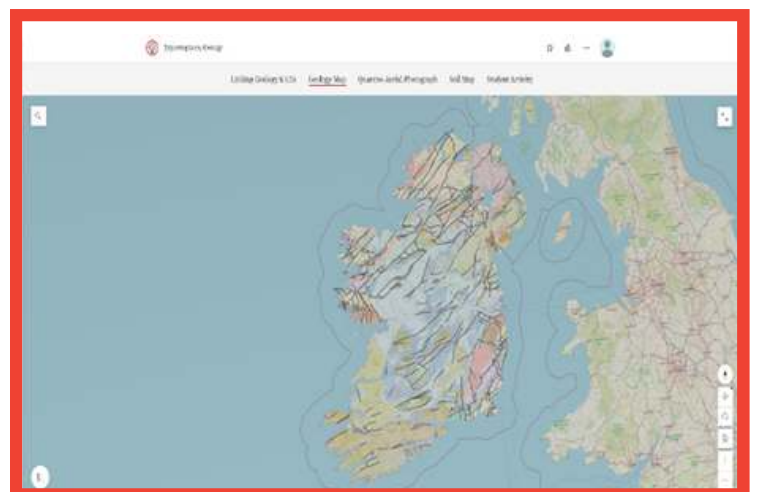
The way that people learn is as unique as our fingerprints.

Inclusive education, one of the eight principles of the Junior Cycle Framework (2015) refers to an educational experience which is inclusive of all students and contributes to quality of opportunity, participation for all and recognises that learners differ in what and how they learn.

Looking at Our School 2022 - A Quality Framework for Schools emphasises the need for all students to be meaningfully included in their school community. It recognises the high quality of teaching and learning that is inclusive, student-centred, informed and evidence-based, that supports young people to participate and to make progress in all areas of their learning and development. Geography provides multiple means of activities and experiences that allow our students to approach learning in different ways, bringing geography to life and making it accessible to all students.

Maps can bring geography to life in our classrooms because they are interactive, visual, and engaging. Working with OS maps, students can, for example, identify tourist attractions, transport networks and services in their local area. One way of doing this is by inputting their eircode into the OS map. Students can then use their local knowledge to begin to identify services and transport networks on the map. This engages all learners in our classrooms and supports student engagement with geographical skills as they interpret and observe OS maps.

To further explore local areas, our interactive geology and quarries aerial photograph can help students investigate local geology. By engaging with these resources students can find out information on rocks in their area, they will be able to see the process of quarrying and how the rock is being extracted from the site.

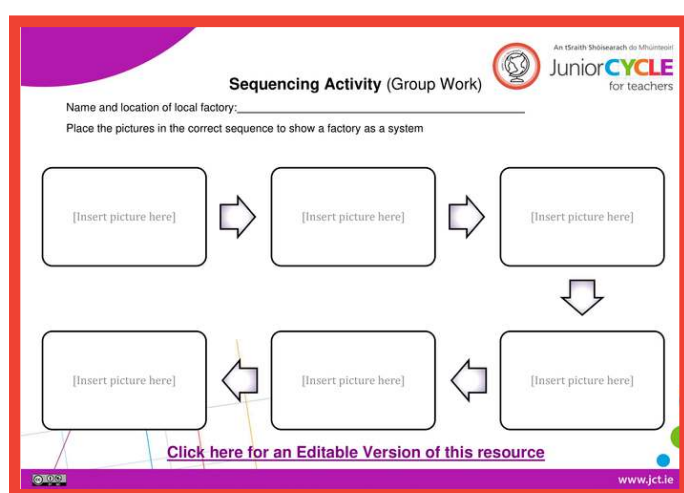


These visuals make it easier for students to make connections between rocks and human activities. Click on the image above to access our interactive maps.

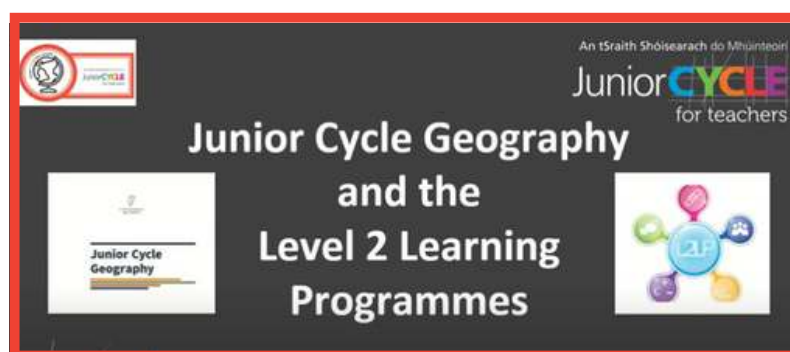


# Geography

**Sequencing activities** especially through pictures, is an effective way to include all abilities and learners in our classrooms. We used a sequencing activity to support students' understanding of the factory as a system and the interconnections between raw materials and manufactured goods. Click on the images below to access the template.



To further explore the inclusive geography classroom and to support planning for students who are following Level 2 Learning Programmes, our screencast 'Junior Cycle Geography and the Level 2 Learning Programmes' explores classroom practice and planning for the Level 2 Learning Programmes. It shows how students experiencing their learning at level 2 and can engage fully in a unit of learning to achieve their learning outcomes and reach their full potential.



*Click to play*

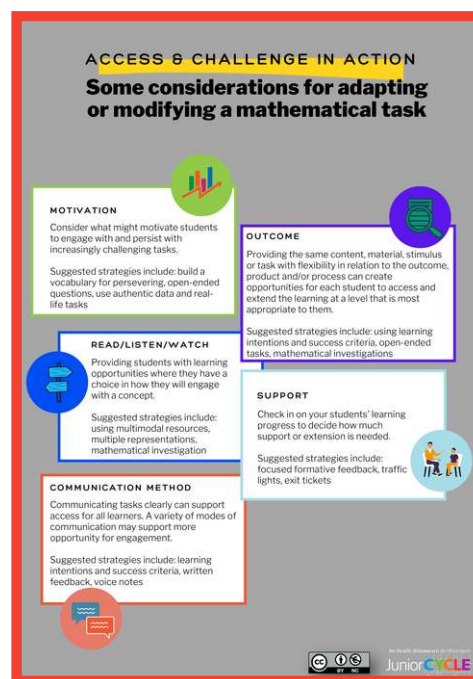
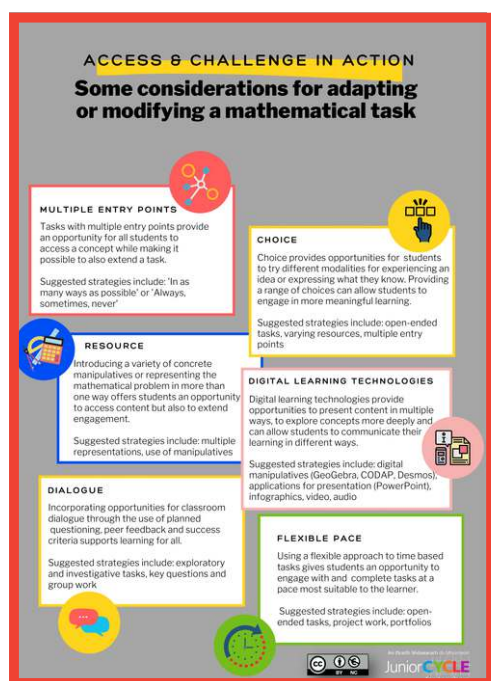
Finally, further supports on planning for L2LPs and all our geography resources can be accessed in the Geography Section of the JCT website under **Resources**.

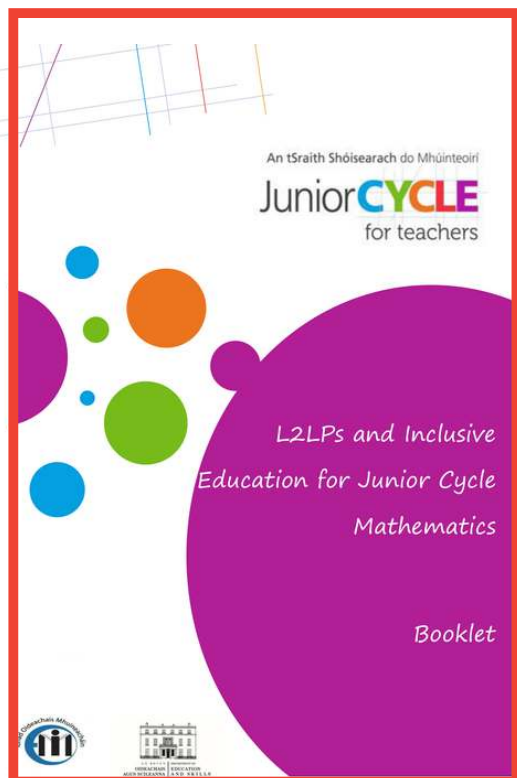
Inclusive education in Junior Cycle Maths aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, have access to mathematics education that is engaging, challenging, and relevant.

The mathematics team have integrated inclusive practices within our subject CPD days and provided teachers with a number of stand-alone resources to support inclusive practice, including a self-directed piece to support teachers unfamiliar with the level two learning programmes (L2LPs).

## Core Subject CPD:

Our **2022/2023 subject CPD** day focused on placing the student at the centre of the learning through providing access and challenge for all. We supported teachers in considering mathematical tasks and how these might be used and supported in the classroom or adapted, by providing access and challenge for all. An inclusive approach to junior cycle mathematics involves teachers using **a range of strategies** to cater to the diverse learning needs and abilities of their students. This can include the use of multiple entry points, variety in communication methods, group work and digital learning technologies. Inclusive education in Junior Cycle Maths involves recognising and addressing the barriers that some students may face in accessing mathematics education.





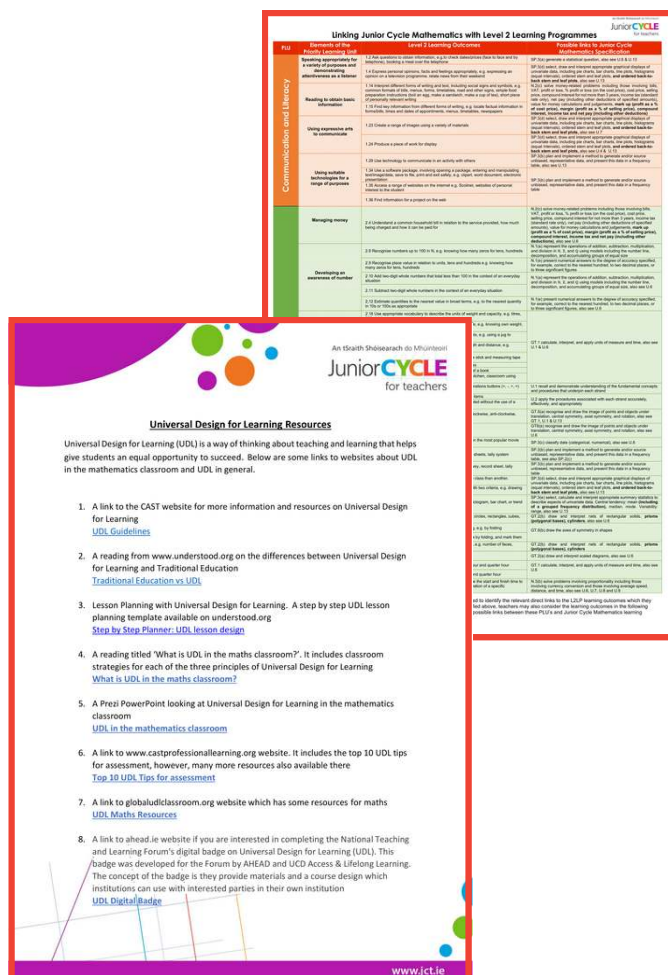
## Self-directed CPD:

In response to needs identified by teachers, we developed **a self-directed CPD resource** for teachers as a part of our subject CPD. This resource provided teachers with an overview of the Level Two Learning Programmes and offered support in making connections between learning for priority learning units and learning for the level 3 Junior Cycle Mathematics Specification. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) was considered as a possible support for inclusive education. UDL promotes the design of flexible learning environments that accommodate individual learning needs.

## Resources:

On the JCT Maths website we have provided **a linking resource** to explore connections between the L2LP PLU learning outcomes and the Junior Cycle Mathematics Specification learning outcomes.

We have also provided some examples of tasks with a unit of learning, and UDL resources.





# Religious Education

“Religious Education [RE] ... encourages respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living, including both the religious and non-religious response to human experience.”

(JC RE Specification, p.6).

This quotation is a useful entry point when considering the theme of inclusion in RE. The specification does not prioritise any one religious or non-religious worldview but is for all faiths and none.

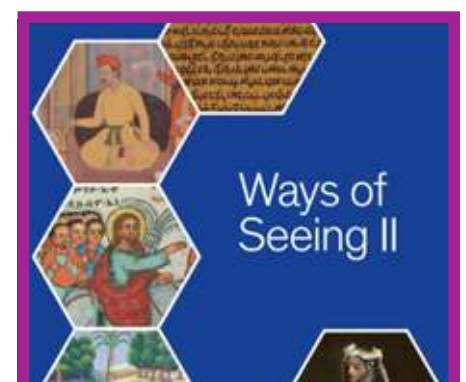
The quotation also signals RE’s value in positively contributing to an inclusive pluralist society. Through its engagement with different religious and non-religious traditions, RE plays a role in promoting recognition of what Sandra Cullen refers to as ‘our shared humanity’.

In JCT RE’s recent CPD event, ‘Ways of Seeing and Learning in the RE classroom’, we collaborated with Jenny Siung of Chester Beatty and Dr. Patricia Kieran of Mary Immaculate College to explore religious diversity and inclusive practices. This event began by reflecting on the richness of religious and belief plurality in Irish society and its implications for JCRE.

We explored how using sacred artefacts can support active and inclusive learning. The Chester Beatty resource Ways of Seeing II, designed in collaboration with JCT RE, aims to support learning about and from different world religions in the JCRE classroom. This resource provides links to different religious artefacts from the Chester Beatty collection relating to LOs 1.1, 1.8, 1.9, 2.3, 2.5 and 3.1.

There are also classroom materials developed, e.g., PowerPoint presentations for engagement with LO 2.3 ‘Stories, narratives, religious and non-religious’.

This resource can be accessed through **their website**.





# Religious Education

Dr. Kieran spoke to us about the benefits of using object-based learning [OBL] in the RE classroom, a methodology that is part of a dialogical approach to learning that aims to inspire wonder and curiosity. OBL supports inclusion by engaging all learners by providing time away from the dominant methods of learning such as reading and writing. The use of sacred artefacts from different religious and non-religious traditions in the RE classroom can support head, heart and hands learning for all learners.



Inclusion is very much a cornerstone of JCRE given how RE teachers work hard to include a rich and diverse range of worldviews as part of their students' learning.

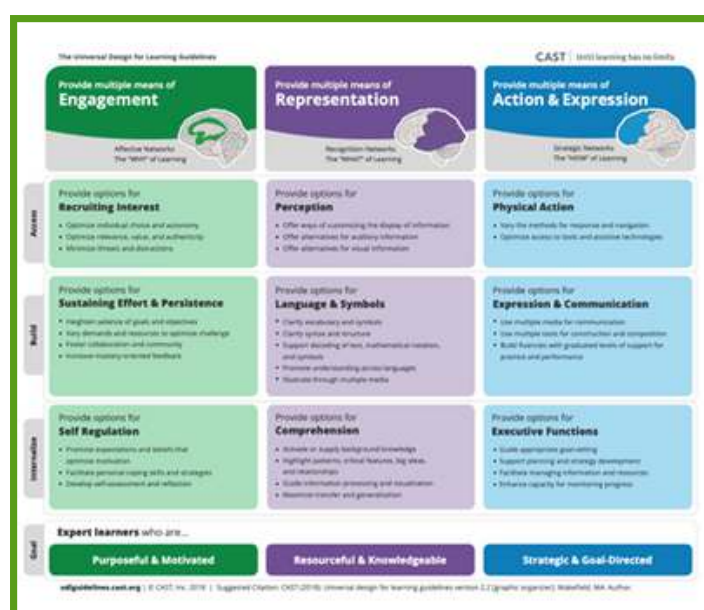


# Science

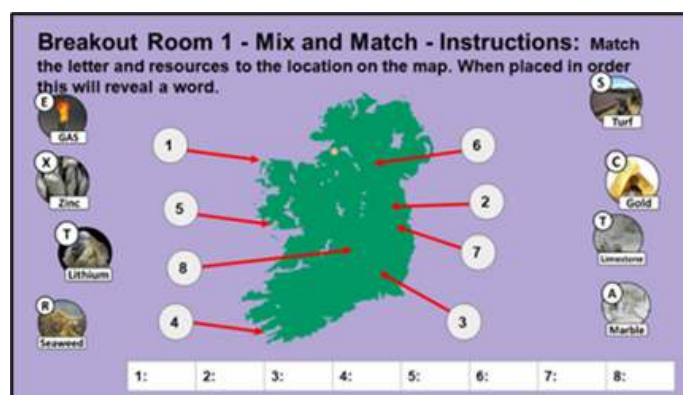
The aim of the team is to support and empower teachers of Junior Cycle Science to design rich and engaging learning experiences that will provide support, access, and challenge for each learner in their classroom. This will afford each learner in the classroom the opportunity to participate, experience success and reach their potential.

## Universal Design for Learning (UDL):

Learning outcomes facilitate planning for learning using universal design where the diverse needs of all students are considered from the beginning. 'The UDL Guidelines are a tool used in the implementation of Universal Design for Learning. These guidelines offer a set of concrete suggestions that can be applied to any discipline or domain to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities. (Centre for Applied Special Technology, 2022)



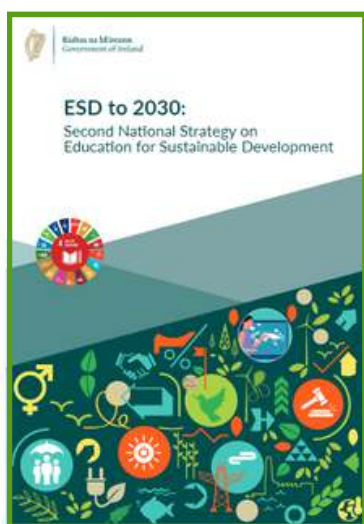
During **Cluster CPD 2022/2023**, teachers looked at various resources sourced around Ireland as an approach to engaging with CW10 allowing for the inclusion of every students' diverse geographical background, their prior learning, or their school's unique local context.



As part of **Cluster CPD 2020/2021**, we planned the learning experiences focused on bogs and oceans, supporting the idea of a local and community approach to teaching and learning. This makes the learning more relevant to the students and applies learning to unfamiliar contexts.

## Education for Sustainable Development 2030

**The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development** (ESD to 2030) 'provides a framework to steer and support the contribution that the education sector is making and will continue to make towards a sustainable future by 2030' (ESD to 2030, 2022, p.7). It offers insights into how teachers can be supported to inspire and empower young people with the competencies to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future. Inclusion is also a key tenet of this strategy.



The Strategy will aim to focus on values and promote inclusion as a means of empowering the individual and the community. It aims to promote a variety of pedagogical techniques that support inclusive and active learning, critical thinking, and the development of key skills, all of which underpin CPD resources designed by the JCT Science team. Sustainability and inclusion have featured, and continue to feature, in the planning and design of supports for Junior Cycle Science teachers.

## Using digital technologies to support inclusion:

Using digital technologies in the classroom offers opportunities for students to engage with their learning, monitor progress and communicate with their peers and teacher. Students can work at a pace best suited to their individual learning strengths and abilities.

There are several digital classroom supports on the **JCT Science website** which support the inclusion of each learner.

Among these is a suite of **Microsoft/Google Forms** containing assessments aligned to the learning outcomes. There are also supports on the JCT website on **how to build a Google site** and how to build a **Thinglink**. Students can use their own Google site as an e-portfolio and have a central location to store work, assignments, projects, class notes, or relevant research articles.

# Science

Another digital support includes a Genial.ly **on hazards of space exploration**. This houses information and learning experiences through a variety of media. This classroom resource allows students to choose their preferred way of engaging with the learning aligned to E&S8.

Similarly in our **digital resource on note-making** from Cluster 2021/2022, the content offers the opportunity for each learner to engage with and become proficient in the skill of note-making.



One highlight of this year's Cluster Day is the digital version of the **Hexagonal Thinking** assessment strategy. This can be used as a pen and paper-based learning experience and can be adapted to suit all learners by substituting images for keywords or simplifying key terms on the reverse to support students who may need some extra guidance or direction. **CODAP**, featured in Cluster 2021/2022, is another digital tool for looking at and analysing data which is also accessible to each learner.

Students' learning throughout their 3 years of Junior Cycle is supported by formative assessment, including actionable feedback, making assessment more inclusive of each learner. This was explored in this year's CPD.



Finally, the JCT Science team continues to support the professional development of Science teachers, seeking to support each learner by providing access and challenge for all in their classrooms.



# Visual Art

## 'Bringing Learning to Life: Supporting students following Level 2 Learning Programmes in the Visual Art Classroom'

*Inclusive Education: The educational experience is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcomes for all.*

Framework for Junior Cycle (2015).

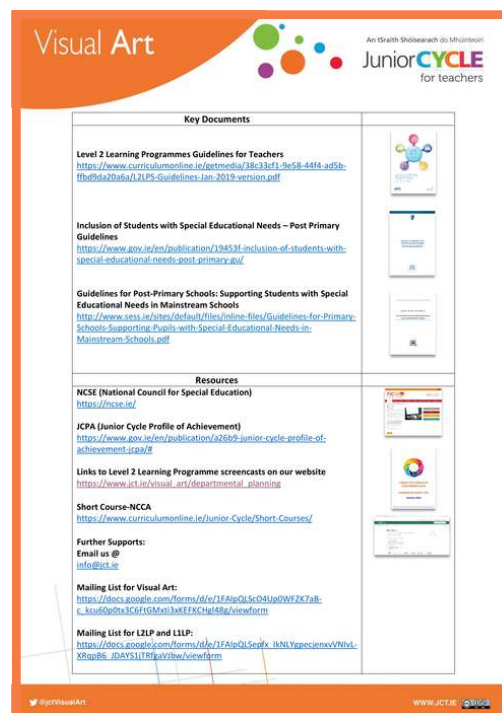
This year, the Visual Art team's primary focus for the Festival of Professional Learning online event was on Inclusivity. As part of this initiative, we broadcast an evening workshop entitled 'Bringing Learning to Life: Supporting students following Level 2 Learning Programmes in the Visual Art Classroom'.

The workshop aimed to assist Visual Art teachers in enhancing their knowledge of Level 2 Learning Programmes, who the programmes are designed for, and the structure of these programmes. Additionally, we delved into planning for teaching, learning and assessment, to cater to the diverse needs of all students in the Visual Art classroom.

We would like to highlight and share the resources that supported our learning in this year's online event. Please find a link to the recording below and the accompanying supporting document for your convenience.



*Click on the images above  
to access the supports*



Tagraíonn cuimsiú don chleachtas a chinntíonn go gcuirtear fáilte roimh chách, go nglactar leo, agus go mbíonn meas orthu beag beann ar a gcuid difríochtaí. Ciallaíonn sé difríochtaí a aithint, meas a léiriú orthu agus timpeallacht a chruthú ina bhfuil comhdheiseanna ag gach duine a bheith rannpháirteach agus rochtain a fháil ar na deiseanna, ar na hacmhainní agus ar an tacaíocht chéanna. Nuair a bhíonn rochtain ag gach scoláire ar na deiseanna céanna, is mó an seans go gcreidfí siad ina gcumas féin go n-éireoidh leo.

Tá an t-ionchuimsiú tábhachtach mar gheall ar an mothú muinteartha, glactha, pobail agus folláine a chothaíonn sé. Nuair a bhraitheann scoláirí go bhfuil siad cuimsithe, is mó an seans go nglacfaidh siad páirt sa rang, go gcuirfidh siad ceisteanna agus go nglacfaidh siad rioscaí, rud a fhágann go mbeidh torthaí acadúla níos fearr ann. Tá an smaoineamh seo á chur chun cinn ag an Dr Liam Printer a ghnóthaigh a dhochtúireacht trí staidéar a dhéanamh ar conas inspreagadh intreach scoláirí a mhéadú. Fuair sé amach nuair a mhothaíonn scoláirí níos gaolmhaire, go mbíonn siad níos inspreagtha go bunúsach chun an teanga a fhoghlaim agus chun leanúint lena staidéar uirthi.



Chun sochaí atá fíor-chuimsitheach a chruthú, tá sé ríthábhachtach dul i ngleic leis na bacainní a chuireann cosc ar ghrúpaí áirithe páirt iomlán a ghlacadh agus rochtain a fháil ar dheiseanna. Is gné den oideachas é an t-ionchuimsiú a ndéanann an SSM freastal uirthi go maith, i soláthar oiliúint-tí agus ár Laethanta FGL araon. Níl sa Dearadh Uilíoch don Fhoghlaim ach ceann amháin de na huirlisí a éascaíonn an coincheap seo agus a cheadaíonn é a úsáid i mbealach praiticiúil mar shampla, tá dathanna, méid agus cineál an chló a úsáidtear inár gcur i láthair ag teacht le dea-chleachtas Dearadh Uilíoch don Fhoghlaim.

# Gaeilge

Anuas air sin, cuirimid roghanna ar fáil do rannpháirtithe idir na gníomhaíochtaí a bhfuiltear ag súil leo a dhéanamh, cuirimid fotheidil ar fhíseáin, cuirimid an t-ábhar céanna ar fáil i bhformáidí éagsúla, cuirimid go leor bealaí ar fáil do rannpháirtithe an méid a d'fhoghlaim siad a chur in iúl ó bhéal trí na micreafóin a dhíbhálbhú, i scríbhinn tríd an áis chomhrá, trí theicneolaíocht trí úsáid a bhaint as cláir ar nós JamBoard, Mentimeter nó Sleamhnáin Google agus, ar deireadh, cuirimid go leor bealaí éagsúla foghlama ar fáil do rannpháirtithe ar nós deiseanna machnaimh, obair aonair, obair bheirte agus obair ghrúpa.



Trí ionchuimsiú i scoileanna a chur chun cinn, is féidir linn comhbhá, tuiscint agusfeasacht shóisialta a chothú, agus scileanna riachtanacha a thabhairt do scoláirí le go n-éireoidh leo i ndomhan atá ag éirí níos éagsúla gach uile lá. Is fúinne go léir atá sé, oideachasóirí, tuismitheoirí agus scoláirí araon, oibriú le chéile i dtreo sochaí níos cuimsithí agus níos cothroime.

An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí  
**JuniorCYCLE**  
 for teachers  
**Modern  
Foreign  
Languages**

- **Access and Challenge:** MFL teachers explored how planning for learning can respond to the variability of students in language classrooms by ensuring learning experiences are flexible enough to allow students access the learning at their own level while also being challenged at their level.
- **Level 2 Learning Programmes:** MFL teachers explored Level 2 Learning Programmes and a sequence of planning designed to be flexible enough to include all students in the MFL classroom learning, including students following Level 2 Learning Programmes.
- **Student Language Portfolio:** MFL teachers investigated the Student Language Portfolio and how it can be developed to support students' individual learning journeys and build a culture of inclusion in the MFL classroom.
- **Five Language Skills:** MFL teachers explored a self-guided resource to discover teaching strategies that support access and challenge in the five language skills.



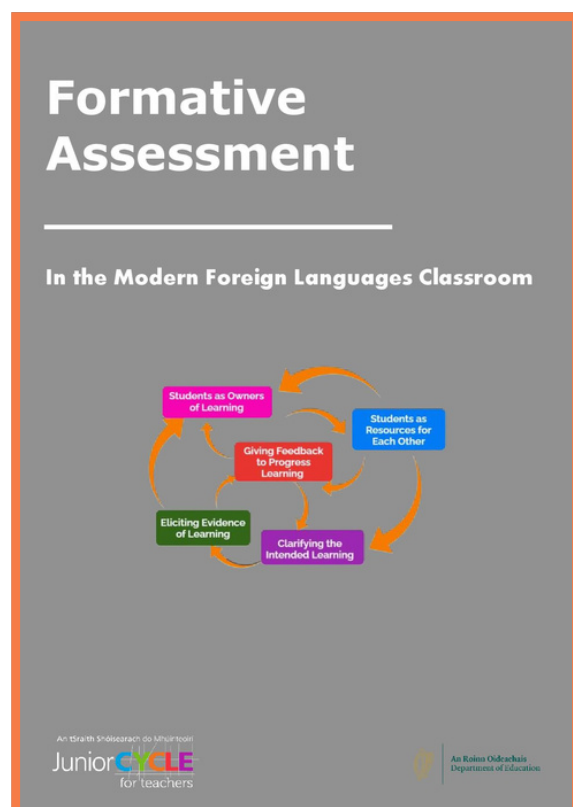


# Modern Foreign Languages

## Electives CPD:

The following elective workshops support an inclusive approach to teaching in the Modern Foreign Languages classroom.

- **Student autonomy in MFL:** In this recording of our recent online learning event with guest speaker, Dr Liam Printer, we discussed how student autonomy in the MFL classroom can be harnessed to support an inclusive culture and to support the development of intrinsic motivation in all students.
- **Formative Assessment in MFL:** Our suite of resources on formative assessment in Modern Foreign Languages supports teachers in implementing formative assessment in their everyday practice to support each individual student to understand and move their learning forward. Effective formative assessment techniques enable teachers to respond to a student's individual needs in learning and help to foster an inclusive culture in the classroom.



An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí  
JuniorCYCLE  
for teachers

**Modern Foreign Languages**

Four images of European landmarks are displayed in a row: Mont Saint-Michel, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, a European street scene, and a Gothic cathedral.

**Webinar: Curious About Questions?**

26<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30 pm

Logos for the Department of Education, Creative Commons, and other partners are at the bottom.

# Physical Education

Inclusion is about belonging to and participating in a diverse society. An inclusive environment is holistic and recognises the unique contributions an individual makes to the richness of a diverse community. Inclusive practice lays the foundation for each person's participation within a diverse community.

Inclusion in the classroom creates an environment where students feel a sense of belonging in the classroom regardless identity, learning preferences, or education.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in Ireland describes inclusion as '...a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners. It involves removing barriers so that each learner will be enabled to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her schooling' (NSCE, 2011)

"The Junior Cycle Physical Education specification aims to develop students as competent and confident physical activity participants in a range of physical activities." (JC PE 135-hour Specification, p.5). The provision of a broad and balanced programme in Physical Education is identified as important in supporting student agency where 'a range of contexts, critical reflection and choice' is available, (JC PE 135-hour Specification 2022, p.4).

Inclusion is at the heart of Physical Education, both in previous curricular options and in the new 135-hour specification. The JCT Physical Education team has supported inclusive practice in PE through both core CPD and electives.

## Core CPD 2021/2022

As part of core CPD in 2021/2022, session 3 focused on the inclusion of Level 2 students in mainstream PE lessons. All associated resources can be found on our Genially page.



*Click on the image above  
to access the Genially support.*

# Physical Education

## Students engaging with L2LPs in mainstream Physical Education:

### Video 1

**This video** showed this school's approach to planning for inclusion in PE for students engaging with Level 1 and/or Level 2 programmes. We heard from the different stakeholders such as the SEN coordinator, the head of PE and the classroom teacher on how a holistic approach ensures the success of the inclusive approach.

### Video 2

**This video** showed the classroom teachers approach to including elements from the Level 2 PLUs in the lesson alongside learning outcomes from the Level 3 specification. Tiered learning was used to ensure all students were appropriately challenged in the lesson and that there were opportunities for all students to progress their learning.



*Click on the images above to access Video 1 and Video 2*

## Elective webinars:

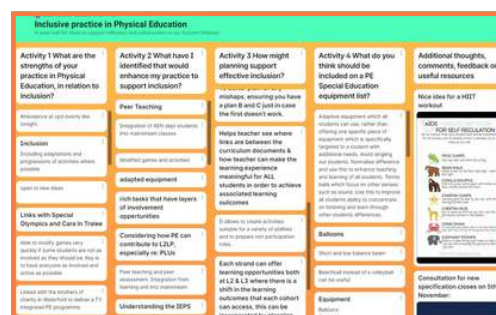
### Autumn 2021 and 2022

The webinar held in Autumn 2021 heard teacher voice from both special schools and mainstream schools who are engaging with the JCPE short course with their students from both Level 2 and Level 3. The second webinar held in Autumn 2022, followed up with teachers from the previous year's CPD to see how they had progressed their inclusive practice with their students.

**The associated recordings and Padlets for each webinar can be accessed below:**

Webinar 1: Autumn 2021 - [Padlet and Recording](#)

Webinar 2: Autumn 2022 - [Padlet and Recording](#)



# Arts in Junior Cycle



Arts in Junior Cycle aims to inspire, support and empower junior cycle teachers of all subjects to engage with and be enriched by the arts and learning. We strive to develop inclusive opportunities and experiences through accessible events that enable all individuals to engage fully.

The Arts in Junior Cycle team have launched their 2023 Summer Elective programme for the month of June. These workshops are available for teachers from all subject disciplines. There is a broad range of workshops over one, two and three days in a variety of locations around the country, offering a fantastic choice of experiential workshops in partnership with artists from various art forms.

To keep up to date with what is on offer for spring and summer, sign up to our **mailing list** and if you have any questions do not hesitate to email us at [info@artsinjuniorcycle.ie](mailto:info@artsinjuniorcycle.ie). We also invite you to explore our **website** where you will find podcasts and short films where we have a diverse range of arts practitioners talk to us about their work – the kinds of questions they ask themselves, the research they do, how they engage in problem-solving and how they communicate their message to an audience. There really is something for everyone here to spark curiosity and to be inspired! Our professional learning experiences embody the principles and key skills of the Junior Cycle Framework, offering a wide range of learning experiences for all and providing opportunities for participants to be creative and innovative.

We look forward to meeting you!



*Click on the image above  
to access the website*





# Arts in Junior Cycle Summer Elective Workshops 2023



Title	Workshop	Date & Venue	In partnership with
<b>Translations</b>	Introduction to Socially Engaged Art	<b>Tues 6th June</b> Stoneyford Community Centre, Co. Kilkenny	Arts Office Kilkenny County Council
<b>Rhythm &amp; Moves</b>	Dance Workshop	<b>Tues 6th &amp; Wed 7th June</b> Irish World Academy of Music & Dance, University of Limerick	IRISH WORLD ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DANCE DÁIMH CHUINNNE ÉIREANN since 1999
<b>Lights, Camera, Action!</b>	A Film Production Workshop	<b>Wed 7th, Thurs 8th &amp; Fri 9th June</b> Kilkenny Education Centre	YIFM Young Irish Film Makers
<b>The Magic of Musicals</b>	Musical Theatre Workshop	<b>Thurs 8th &amp; Fri 9th June</b> Gaiety School of Acting, Dublin	GSA GAIETY SCHOOL OF ACTING
<b>Contemporary Life Drawing</b>	Life Drawing Workshop	<b>Mon 12th &amp; Tues 13th June</b> Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts, Dublin	RHA ROYAL HIBERNIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS
<b>Your Story Starts Here</b>	Creative Writing Workshop	<b>Mon 12th &amp; Tues 13th June</b> Museum of Literature Ireland, Dublin	MOLI Museum of Literature Ireland
<b>Unearthing the Past</b>	A Hands-On Archaeology Experience	<b>Fri 16th June</b> Bective Abbey, Meath	SIA THE SCHOOL OF IRISH ARCHAEOLOGY Exploring the Past with our Future
<b>Figurative Oil Painting</b>	Oil Painting Workshop	<b>Mon 19th &amp; Tues 20th June</b> Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts, Dublin	RHA ROYAL HIBERNIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS
<b>Do Your Own Thing!</b>	Explore the Creative Process through word and image	<b>Thurs 22nd &amp; Fri 23rd June</b> Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin	IMMA IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



[www.artsinjuniorcycle.ie](http://www.artsinjuniorcycle.ie)

[@JuniorCycleArts](https://www.instagram.com/JuniorCycleArts)

To register for a workshop click the icon or scan the QR code Arts in Junior Cycle



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme  
2017-2022



An tsraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí  
JuniorCYCLE  
for teachers



# STE(A)M in Junior Cycle



The vision for the STE(A)M in Junior Cycle is to provide junior cycle teachers with rich STE(A)M CPD experiences in keeping with national and international best standards; this provision will allow for interdisciplinary responses to societal challenges in subject specific and cross-curricular contexts.

The 'STE(A)M in Action in Schools' initiative is in its second year. It was first launched to further support the development of STE(A)M thinking in schools, as the learning outcomes in specifications presented an opportunity for teachers to support students in connecting classroom learning to real-world contexts.

In September 2022, schools were invited by the JCT STE(A)M team to participate in the initiative. Over 30 schools from across the country were selected and every region was represented in this initiative. The selection included secondary, vocational, community and comprehensive schools. The range of schools selected to participate included mixed, single-sex, special schools, DEIS and non-DEIS schools and support was offered to teachers to cater to the diverse learning needs and abilities of their students. This year, the initiative was supported by advisors on the JCIS, Subject, Level 1 and Level 2 Learning programme and Wellbeing teams.

The 'STE(A)M in Action in Schools' initiative offered teachers the time and opportunity for collaboration between teachers in school from across subject disciplines. We were delighted to be joined by Science, Maths, Technologies, Geography, Visual Art, English and Home Economics teachers. The range of subject disciplines coming together added to the richness of learning in the initiative and offered opportunities to engage with STEM learning in new and innovative ways, as well as affording opportunities for including students that may not be studying the traditional STEM subjects.

Teachers were provided the opportunity to deepen their understanding of STE(A)M and to think about ways to encourage student choice and voice. The teachers were supported to help students make meaningful and authentic connections between learning in different subjects. This resulted in students and teachers implementing a small STE(A)M in Action Project in their school, and students were supported in connecting classroom learning with real world societal issues and problems.



# STE(A)M in Junior Cycle



In April 2023, a group of representatives made up of students and teachers from each school attended the 'Celebration of Learning' event in Tullamore. This was an opportunity for teachers and students to share their learning from their engagement in this initiative and to explore other STE(A)M in Action projects. Students and teachers were given the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of engaging with STE(A)M learning throughout the day. Students engaged with a variety of areas through their action projects, including biodiversity, the construction of their local greenway, data centres, fast fashion and sustainability, food security, sustainable energy, and water. Each project was reflective of their own school's context as students made connections to a societal challenge that was local to their school community. Many of the schools made connections with their local communities with some making connections with local businesses and primary schools.

Students and teachers were also given the opportunity to engage with more STE(A)M learning and thinking, thanks to our STE(A)M partners, ADAPT, AMGEN, BIAZA and WorldWide Global Schools, who hosted workshops on the day.

Why not find out more about the initiative and explore **some resources** which may be useful to stimulate STE(A)M thinking in your classroom!





# Begin

Begin again to the summoning birds  
to the sight of the light at the window,  
begin to the roar of morning traffic  
all along Pembroke Road.

Every beginning is a promise  
born in light and dying in dark  
determination and exaltation of springtime  
flowering the way to work.

Begin to the pageant of queuing girls  
the arrogant loneliness of swans in the canal  
bridges linking the past and future  
old friends passing though with us still.  
Begin to the loneliness that cannot end  
since it perhaps is what makes us begin,  
begin to wonder at unknown faces  
at crying birds in the sudden rain  
at branches stark in the willing sunlight  
at seagulls foraging for bread  
at couples sharing a sunny secret  
alone together while making good.

Though we live in a world that dreams of ending  
that always seems about to give in  
something that will not acknowledge conclusion  
insists that we forever begin.

Brendan Kennelly



An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí

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