Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Religious Education Core Day

Reflection on Implementation of Junior Cycle Religious Education / TYPS - Planning for TY Religious Education

Professional Learning Experience 2026 2027

CC BY NC

Check In



Since we last met, what successful change have you made to engage your students in classroom learning?

Learning Together, We Will…



reflect on the impact of implementing Junior Cycle Religious Education



explore the purpose, rationale, aims and planning considerations for Transition Year Religious Education



Circular 0062/2018

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The content prescribed in the syllabuses is intended to ensure that students are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and ***to the non-religious interpretation of life****.*

Section 2

Key Documents



Junior Cycle



Senior Cycle

Activating Thinking on Junior Cycle



- How has the experience of JC RE been for your students?
- What have been the key learning moments for you?
- What does effective inquiry-based practice in Religious Education involve, and how does it support student learning?

Time 15 mins

Early Enactment Review

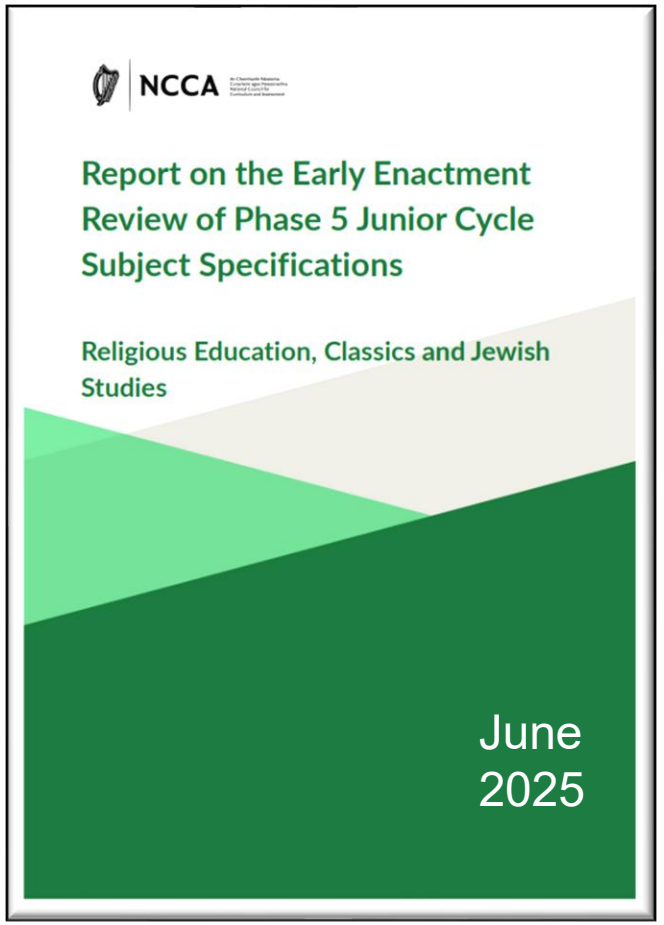
Feedback was gathered from school visits, online surveys and written submissions

Areas explored in the review:

- Working with the Specification
- Assessment
- Framework for Junior Cycle
- Inclusion and transition to Senior Cycle

Key findings:

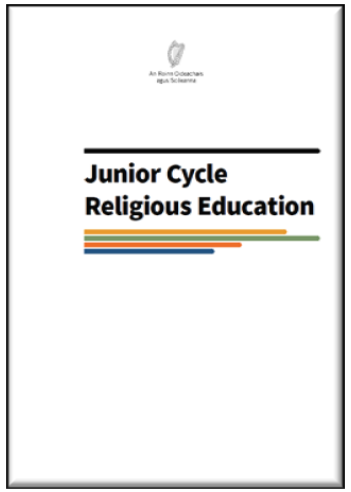
- Achieving the Aims of the Specification
- Working with Learning Outcomes
- Planning for Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Reporting



Recommendations

- Clarifying Learning Outcomes
- Developing Philosophical Thinking and Reflection
- Strengthening Curriculum Planning
- Enhancing Assessment for Learning

Planning with JC Learning Outcomes



Effective Planning for Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Learning Outcomes

1.4 investigate how Christianity has contributed to Irish culture and heritage
1.7 discuss the significance of non-religious rituals/celebrations for people's lives
2.2 consider responses from one major world religion and from a non-religious world-view to some big questions about the meaning of life, such as, How should we live?
3.1 examine different sources of values and ways in which the values of a person relate to their everyday life choices, their relationships, and their responsibilities to other

Key Learning

Students will

- identify symbols and sacred spaces associated with celebration and religious ritual in the Christian tradition
- understand the role of rituals in people's lives
- encounter ways in which people use symbols and rituals to express their relationship with God/gods and the Divine
- examine sources of values and how they relate to choices of a person of faith or from a non-religious world view

Ongoing Assessment

Students will

- choose one piece of stimulus
- share observations about this celebration in a group
- craft questions they would like to ask their peers
- research facts relating to that ceremony
- create a poster and share their learning with other groups

Learning Experiences

Students will

- Research and report on a religious/non-religious ceremony, and share their findings
- consider questions that they might ask the couple about the ceremony
- create an information poster and share their learning
- explore other non-religious and religious celebrations in a gallery walk activity
- using the reflection prompts to consider how people of faith or from a non-religious world view use symbols, rituals and sacred spaces to express their beliefs

Level 2 LP

1.2 Ask questions to obtain information
1.15 Find key information from different forms of writing
1.17 Write notes and messages needed for simple tasks

Reflection

Consider how symbols and rituals are used in a religious ceremony?
How can non -religious /religious rituals help people to express their beliefs?
How are different sources of values expressed through celebration?



Pause for Thought

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What challenges might teachers have encountered when engaging with Junior Cycle Religious Education?



Teacher Experience

> Consultation participants frequently mentioned students are gaining ‘religious literacy’ and becoming more aware of and respectful towards different religious beliefs and worldviews.

NCCA , Report on the Early Enactment Review of Phase 5 Junior Cycle Subject Specifications: Religious Education, Classics and Jewish Studies, (2025) p.8



Teacher Experience

> Opportunities to collaborate with other teachers were valued by teachers, whether that collaboration occurs with colleagues in school or in other settings.

NCCA , Report on the Early Enactment Review of Phase 5 Junior Cycle Subject Specifications: Religious Education, Classics and Jewish Studies, (2025) p.12

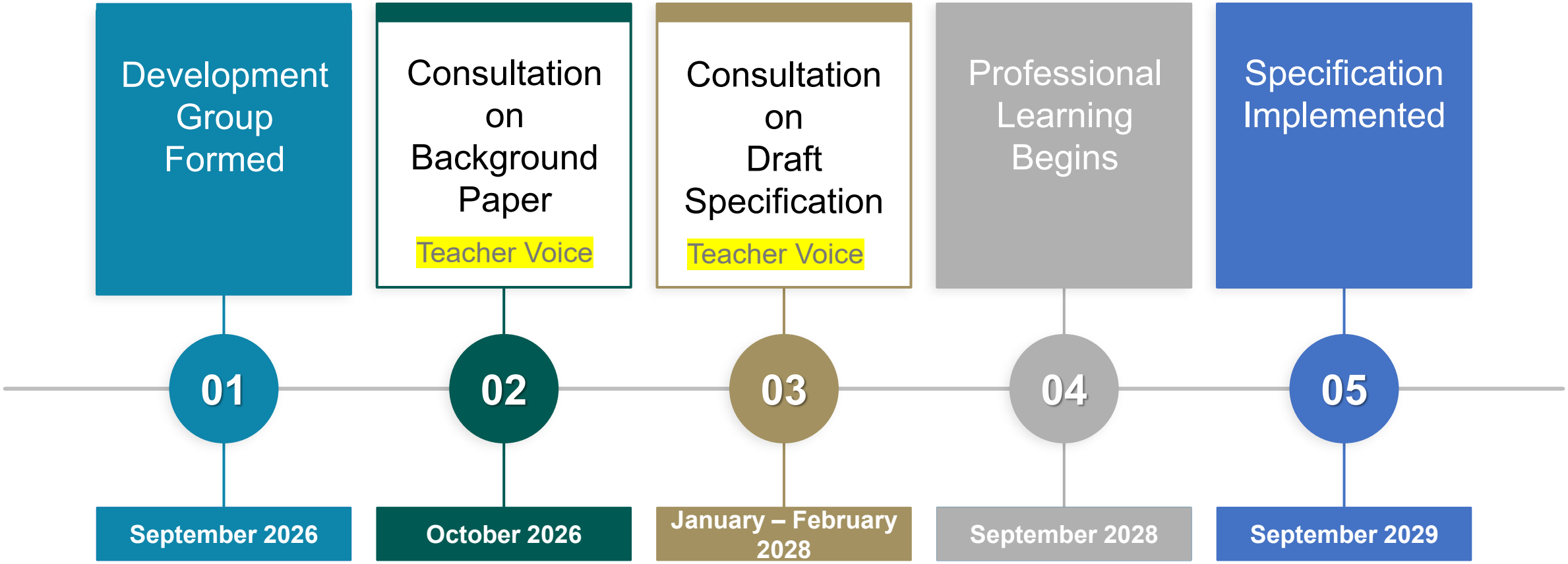


Student Experience

> Students frequently noted the relevance of the learning outcomes to their lives and enjoyed the opportunities they provide to discuss ‘big questions’ from different perspectives.

NCCA , Report on the Early Enactment Review of Phase 5 Junior Cycle Subject Specifications: Religious Education, Classics and Jewish Studies, (2025) p.11

Senior Cycle Redevelopment



Redevelopment of Senior Cycle

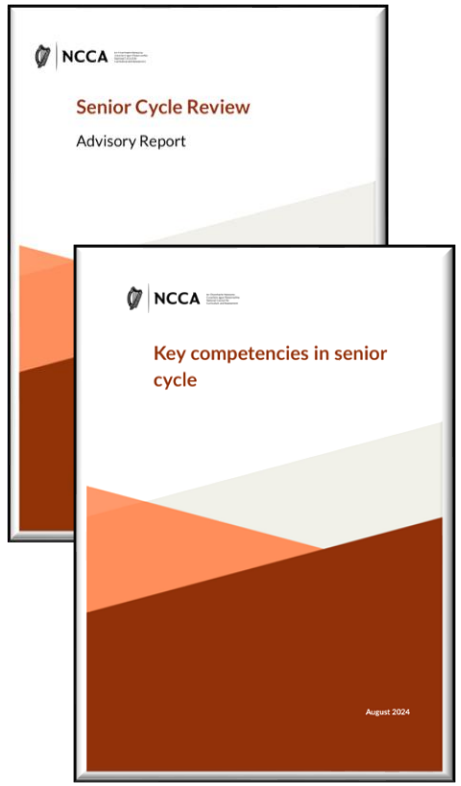
‘Equity and Excellence for All: where the student is the centre of their senior cycle experience’

Continue to educate the whole person

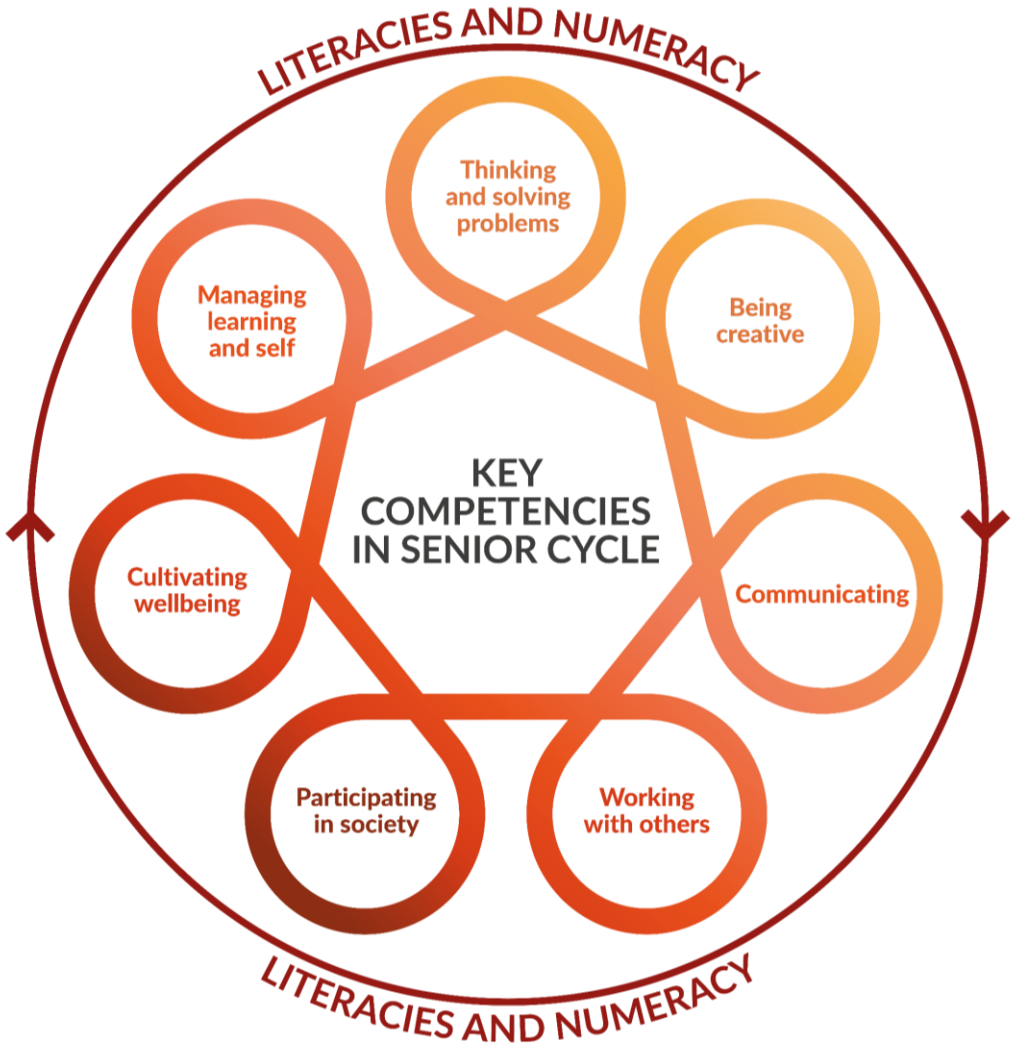
Help every student to become more enriched, engaged and competent

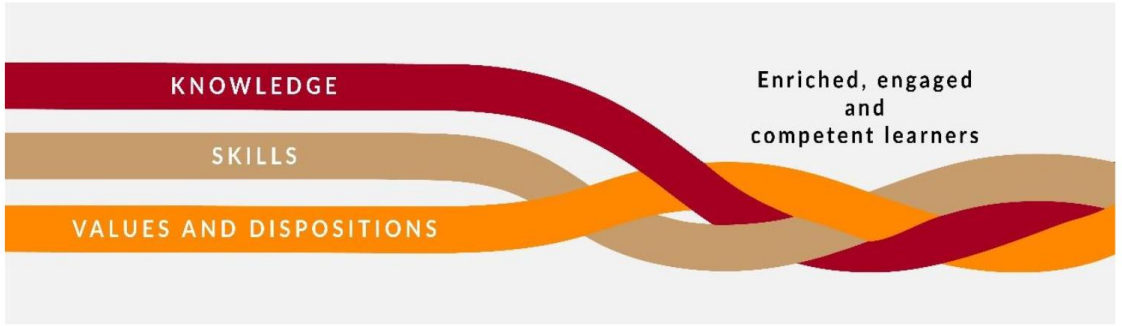
Serve collective as well as individual purposes in schools

Help students to access diverse futures



Key Competencies in Senior Cycle





(NCCA, 2024)



Pause for Thought

As we shift our focus towards Transition Year, what effective classroom practices can we continue from Junior Cycle RE into TY?





Purpose of Transition Year Programme Statement

> *The TY Programme Statement is designed around the development and learning of students moving from junior cycle into senior cycle, and as they prepare for their future lives as local, national and global citizens.*

Department of Education and Skills, Transition Year Programme Statement, (2024) p.7



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Rationale



TY offers

students time, space and autonomy to create meaningful educational experiences

TY enables

students to develop the capacity to respond to uncertainty, manage complexity, nurture personal interests and become agents of change

TY supports

students to become more adaptable, empathetic, competent and resilient human beings

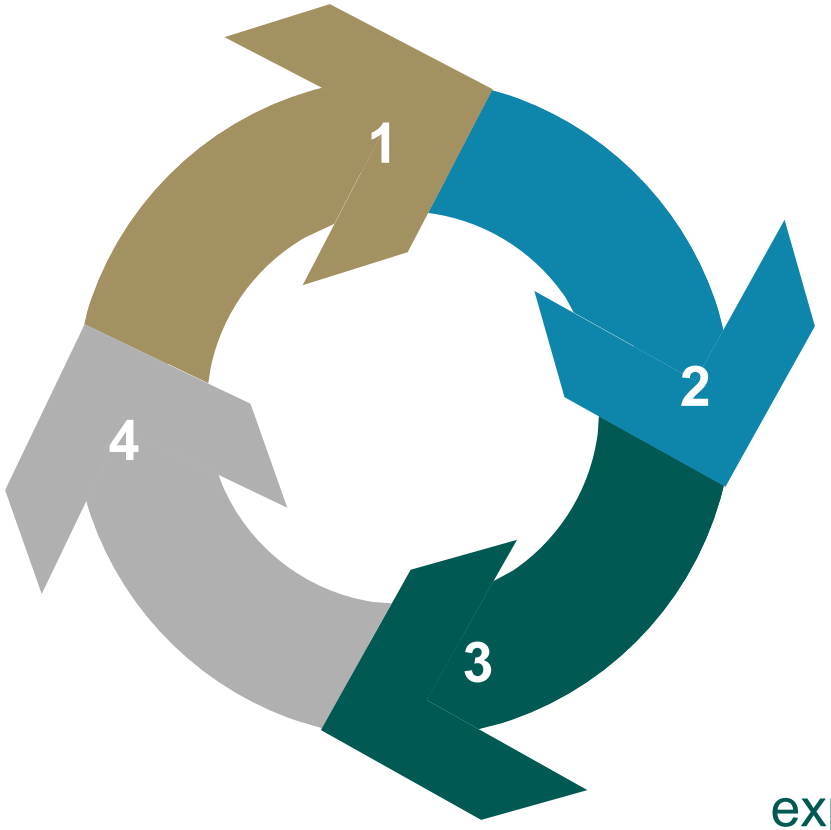


TY Aims

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Student Development

nurture the **development of the student as a whole person** by building on their previous experiences



Learning Experiences

create space and opportunities **for meaningful, enjoyable learning experiences** through which the key competencies of the student can be developed

Reflection and Renewal

support the learning and development of the student through **a reflection and renewal process** involving students, teachers, school leaders, parents and community partners

Student Awareness

expand awareness of diverse future pathways and **nurture the student's capacity to sustain their growth and development** through a process of lifelong learning

Progression and Continuity

> *It is important that TY is distinguished as a **standalone programme** while at the same time acknowledging **progression and continuity** in terms of student development and learning from **previous experiences** and into the remainder of senior cycle.*

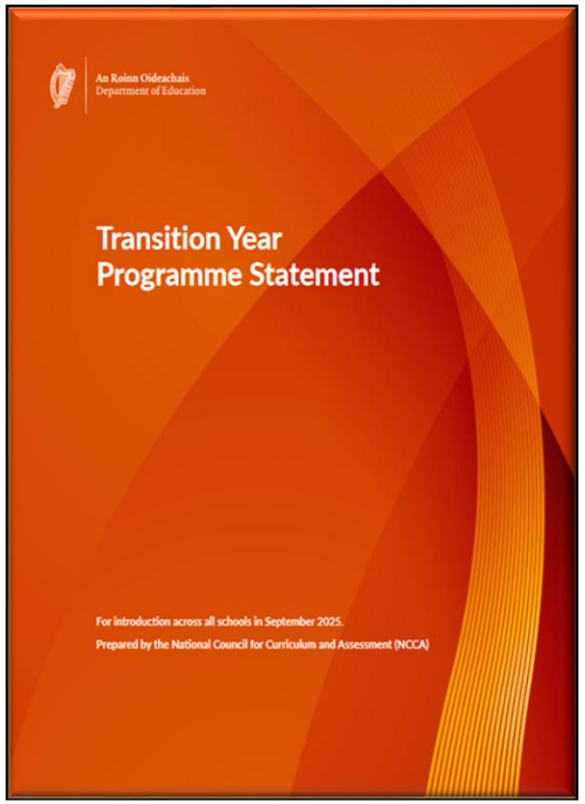
Department of Education and Skills, Transition Year Programme Statement, (2024) p. 20

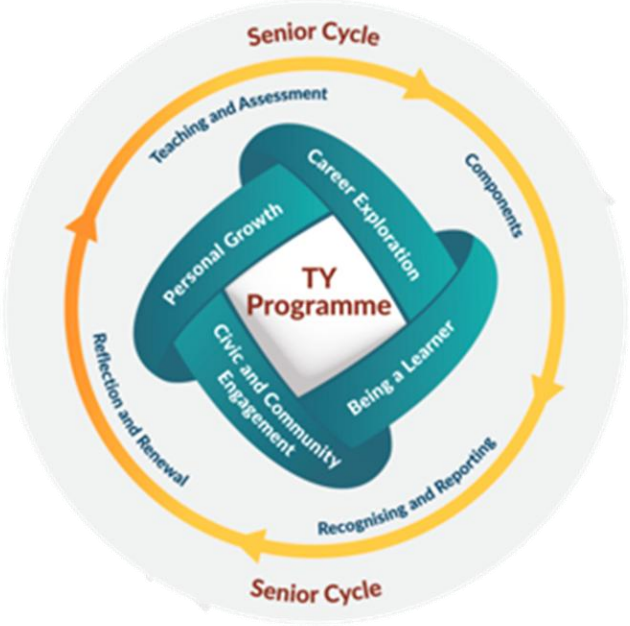


Opportunities of TY RE Classroom

What are the opportunities for student engagement in the TY RE classroom?

The TY Programme Statement



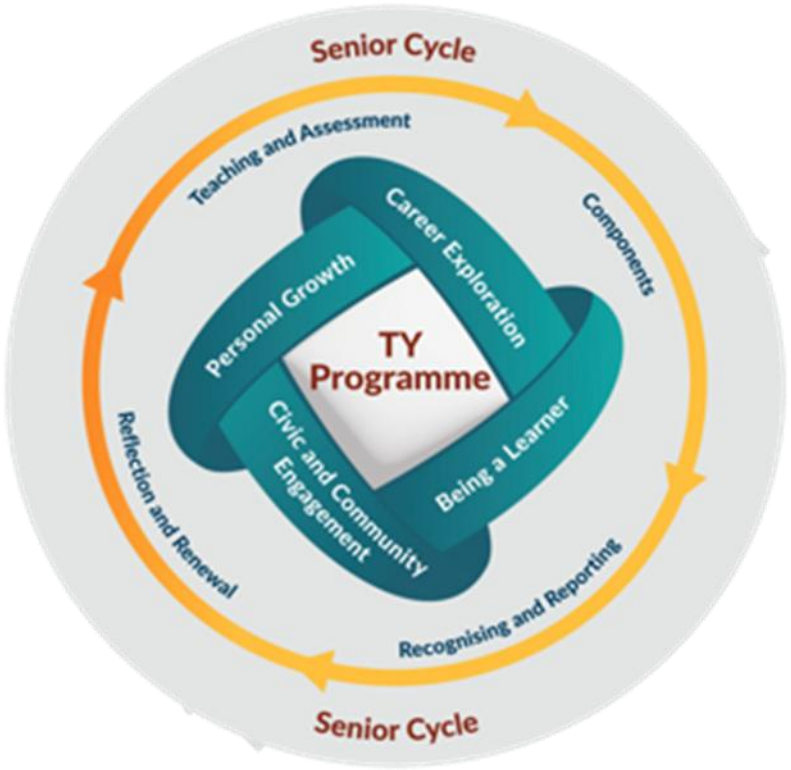


Curriculum Dimensions

Student Dimensions



Student Dimensions



Personal Growth

Being a Learner

Civic and Community Engagement

Career Exploration



Developmental Indicators and Student Experiences

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> *Developmental Indicators… are intended to* ***guide*** *the student and the school and* ***set out the parameters for the learning and development*** *of the student during TY.*

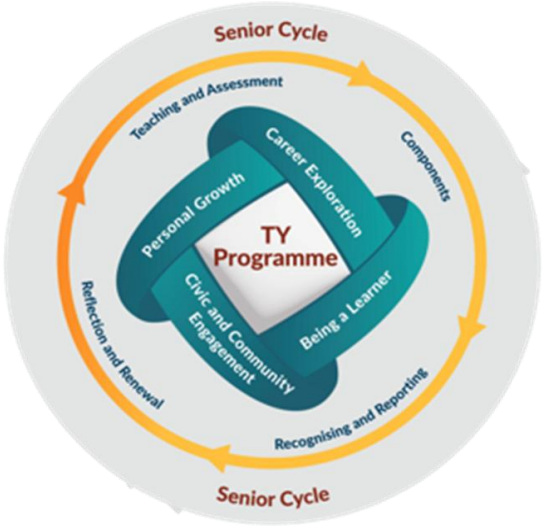
> *Student Experiences… are intended to provide a* ***variety of possible opportunities and contexts*** *to support student learning and development consistent with the developmental indicators.*

Department of Education, Transition Year Programme Statement, (2024) p.11



From Dimensions to Design: TY RE in Action

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- Personal Growth
- Being a Learner
- Civic and Community Engagement
- Career Exploration

Blue Sky Carousel

Join your assigned group.

Rotate through each station in the carousel.

At each station, generate ideas for learning experiences that you could design for TY Religious Education.

Record your ideas on the Flip Chart paper.



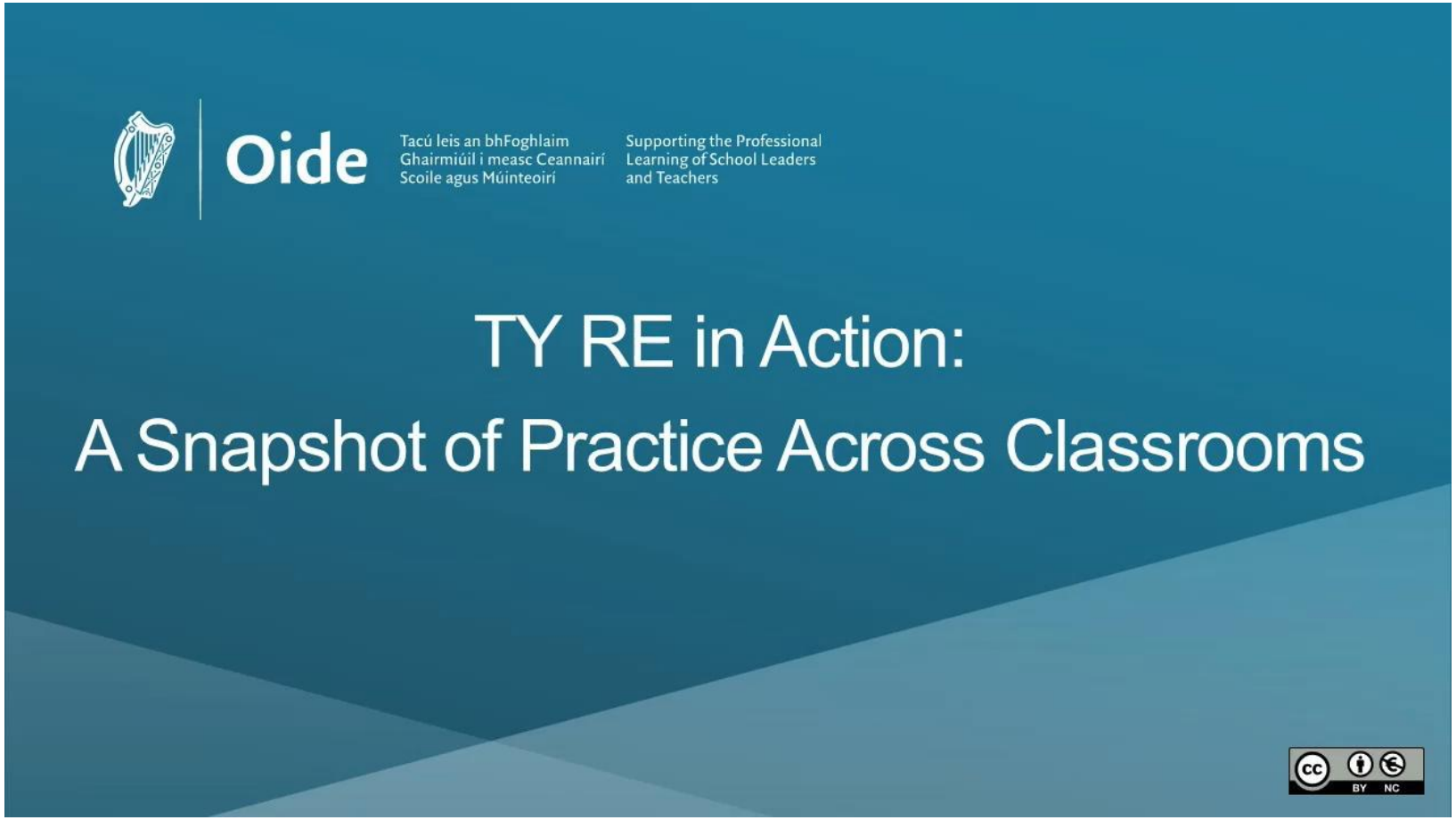
Time: 25 minutes

Learning Together, We Will…

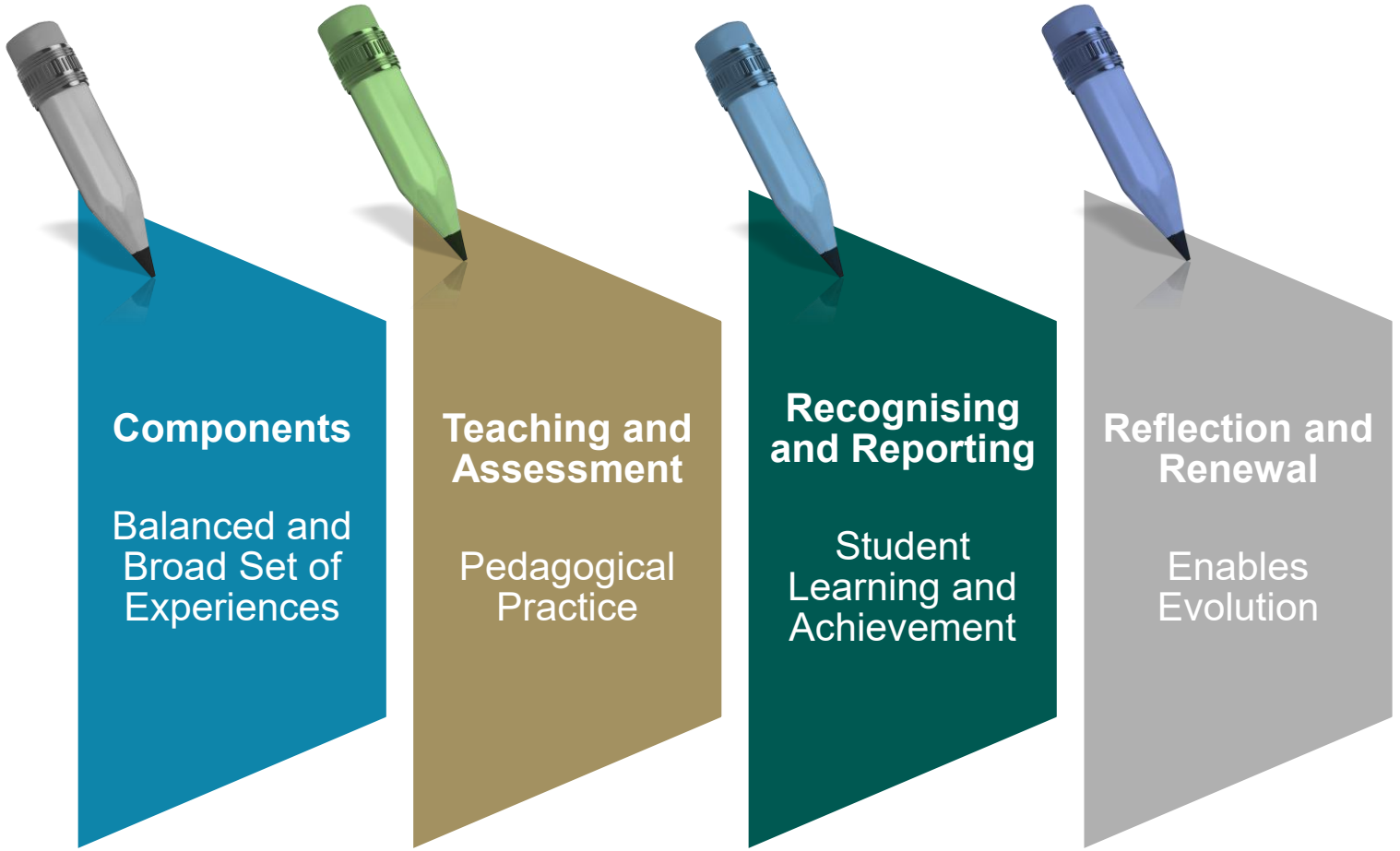


deepen our understanding of the Transition Year Programme Statement to inform the planning of student-centred learning experiences in the Transition Year Religious Education classroom

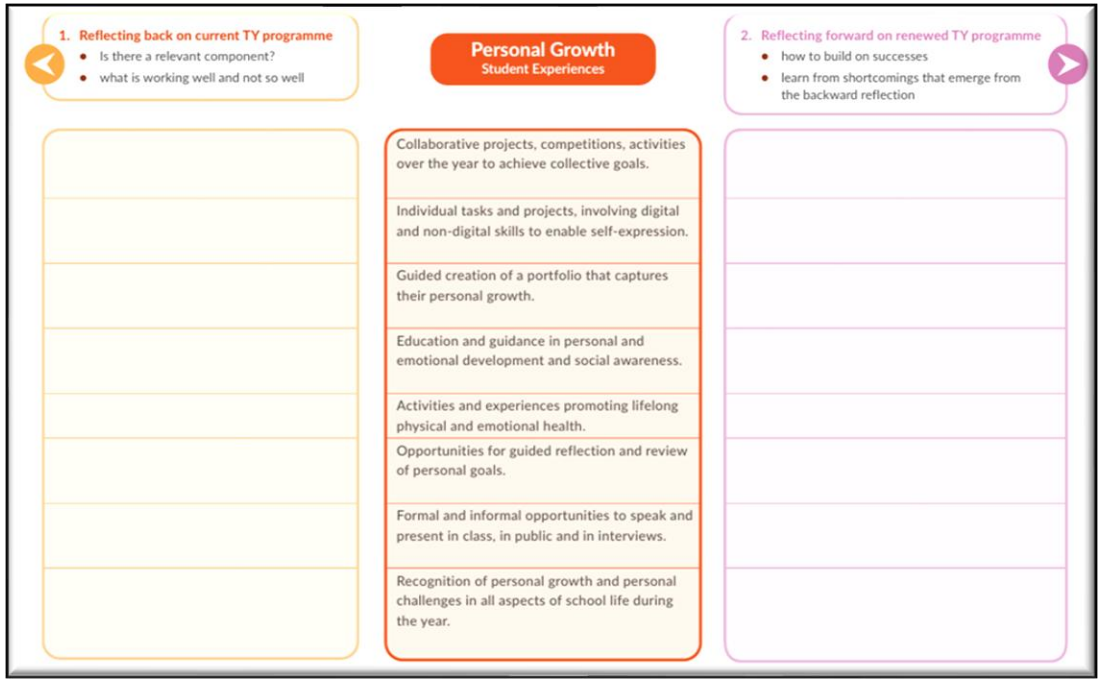
Windows into TY RE



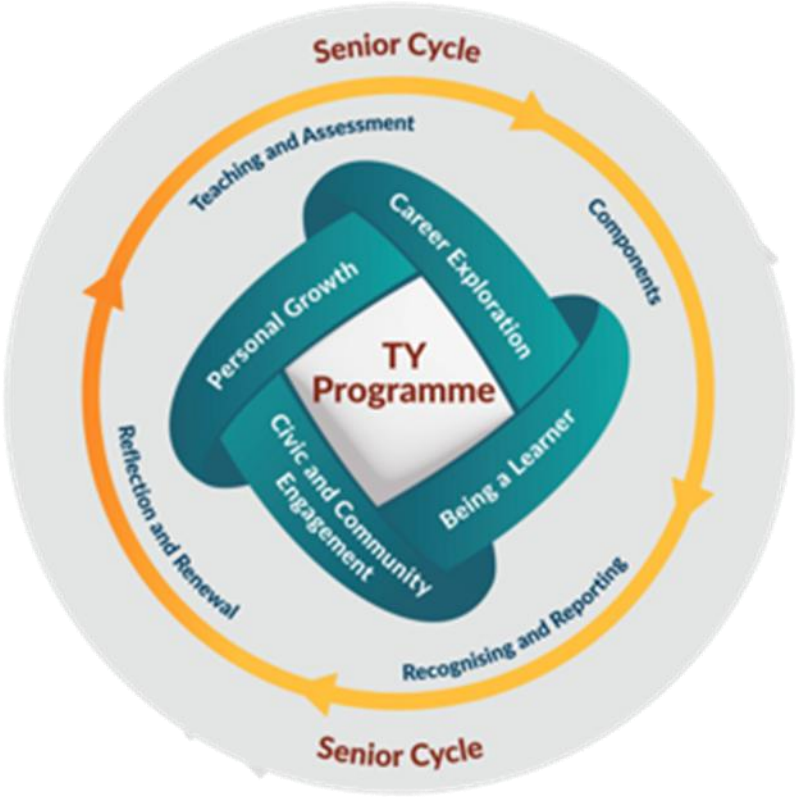
Exploring the Curriculum Dimensions



Reflecting and Renewing our TY Programme



1. Reflecting back on current TY programme • Is there a relevant component? • what is working well and not so well	Personal Growth Student Experiences	2. Reflecting forward on renewed TY programme • how to build on successes • learn from shortcomings that emerge from the backward reflection
	Collaborative projects, competitions, activities over the year to achieve collective goals.	
	Individual tasks and projects, involving digital and non-digital skills to enable self-expression.	
	Guided creation of a portfolio that captures their personal growth.	
	Education and guidance in personal and emotional development and social awareness.	
	Activities and experiences promoting lifelong physical and emotional health.	
	Opportunities for guided reflection and review of personal goals.	
	Formal and informal opportunities to speak and present in class, in public and in interviews.	
	Recognition of personal growth and personal challenges in all aspects of school life during the year.	



2025 - 2026

2026 - 2027

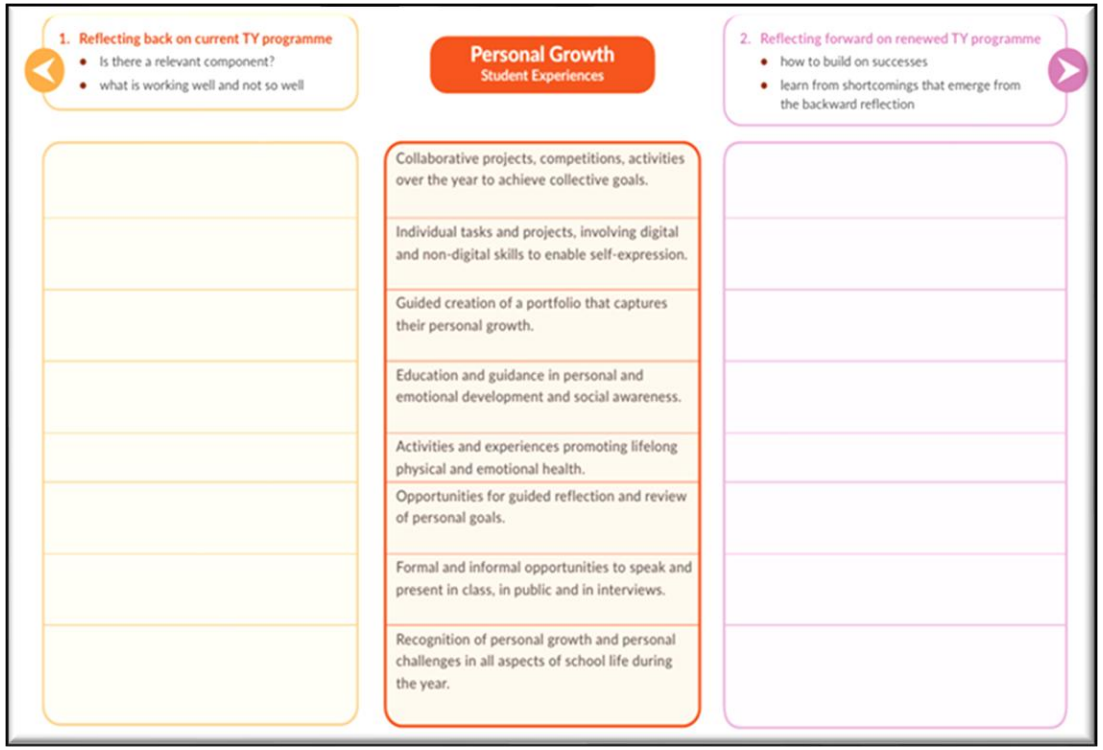
Reflecting on Student Dimensions

You will be assigned one student dimension in your subject department

Use the template to:

- Reflect on your current TY RE Module
- Reflect forward on renewed TY RE Module

Time – 20 minutes



2025 - 2026

2026 - 2027



Teaching and Assessment

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> *TY affords teachers the opportunity to be **innovative** in devising and delivering high quality **broad-based teaching** and assessment opportunities to support student learning.*

Department of Education and Skills, Transition Year Programme Statement, (2024) p. 20



Teaching and Assessment – Individual Classroom Practices

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- Appropriate student-centred approaches
- Planning for learning opportunities to support all students
- Preparation of appropriate resources and use of digital technologies
- Opportunities for students to work on extended tasks, such as projects and competitions
- Genuine and meaningful collaboration between students, both within and across TY components
- Creating and sharing of success criteria with students to enable peer and self-assessment
- The use of a variety of modes of assessment, for both summative and formative purposes
- Opportunities for students to experience success within and across curriculum components
- Constructive and timely feedback from the teacher designed to improve learning and development
- Effective questioning and opportunities for the student to give and use feedback



Teaching and Assessment – Think - Pair - Share - Square

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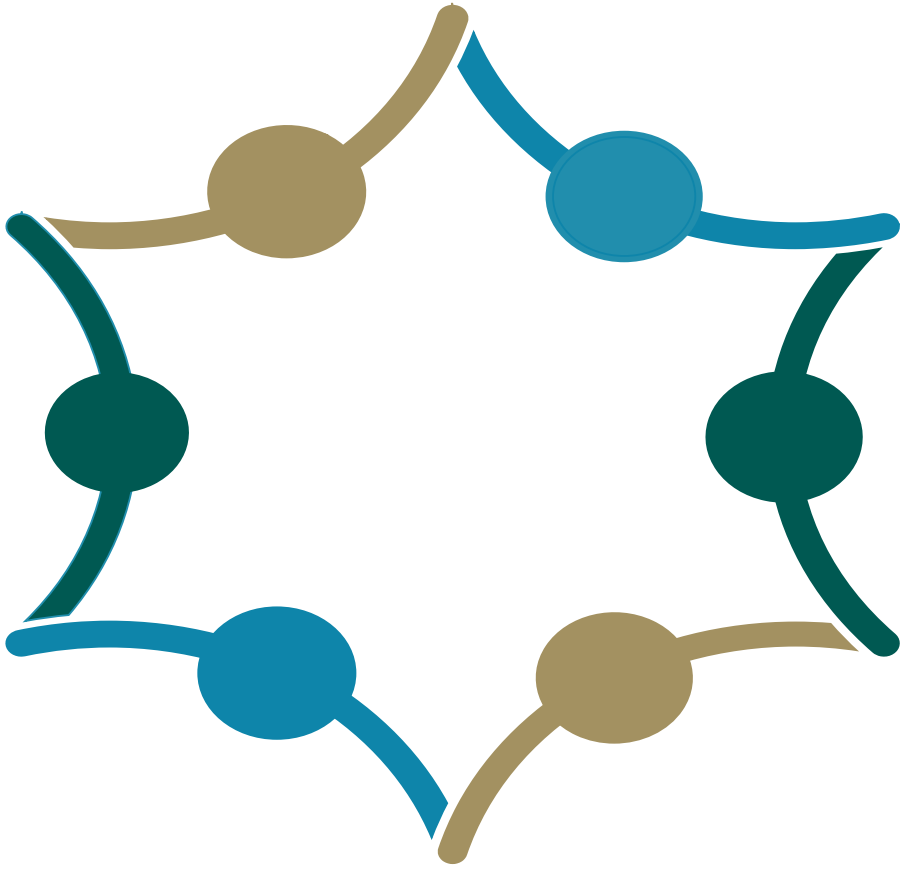
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- Constructive and timely feedback from the teacher designed to improve learning and development
- Effective questioning and opportunities for the student to give and use feedback

What are the hallmarks of your RE classroom practices, and how do they enhance student learning?

Planning a TY Module - Consider your School and Student Context

How many classes per year?

Themes for modules decided by the RE department?



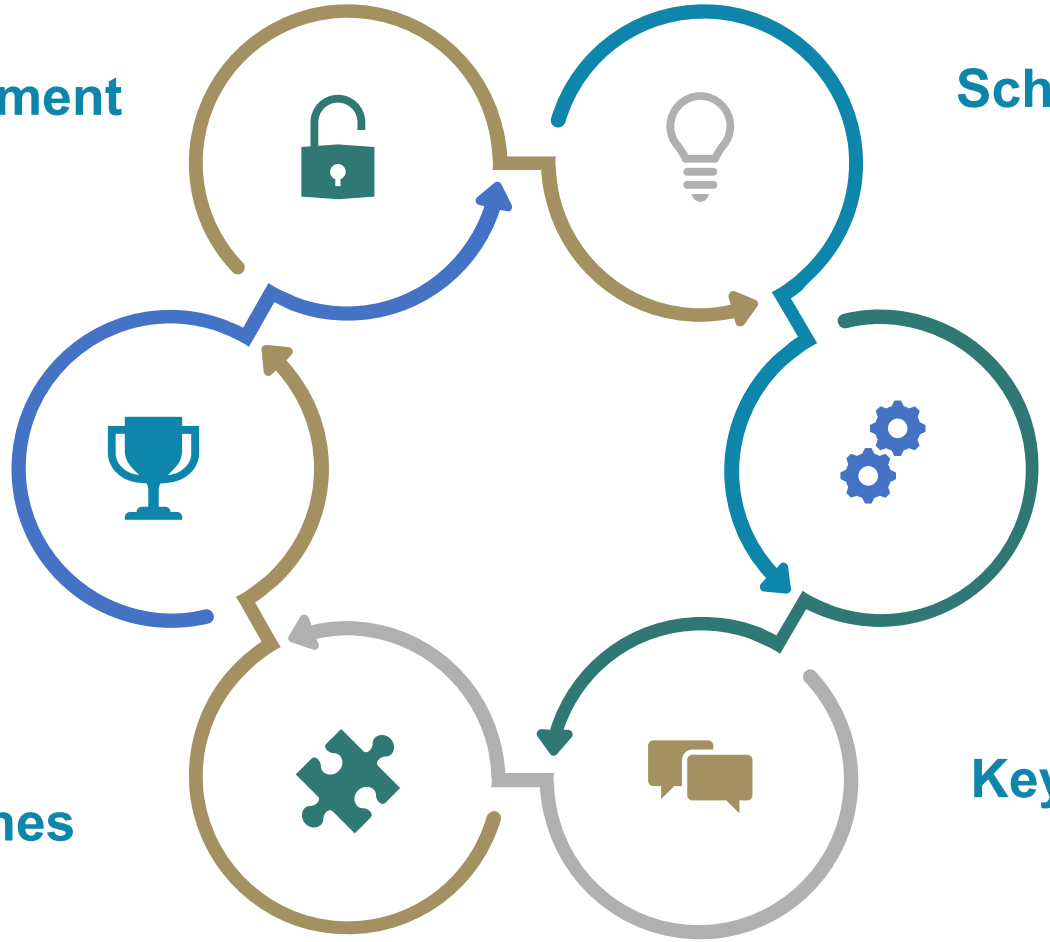
Prior knowledge?

Curious about other religions?

From another country or religious tradition/worldview?

From a non-religious worldview?

Student-Centered Learning: From Vision to Action



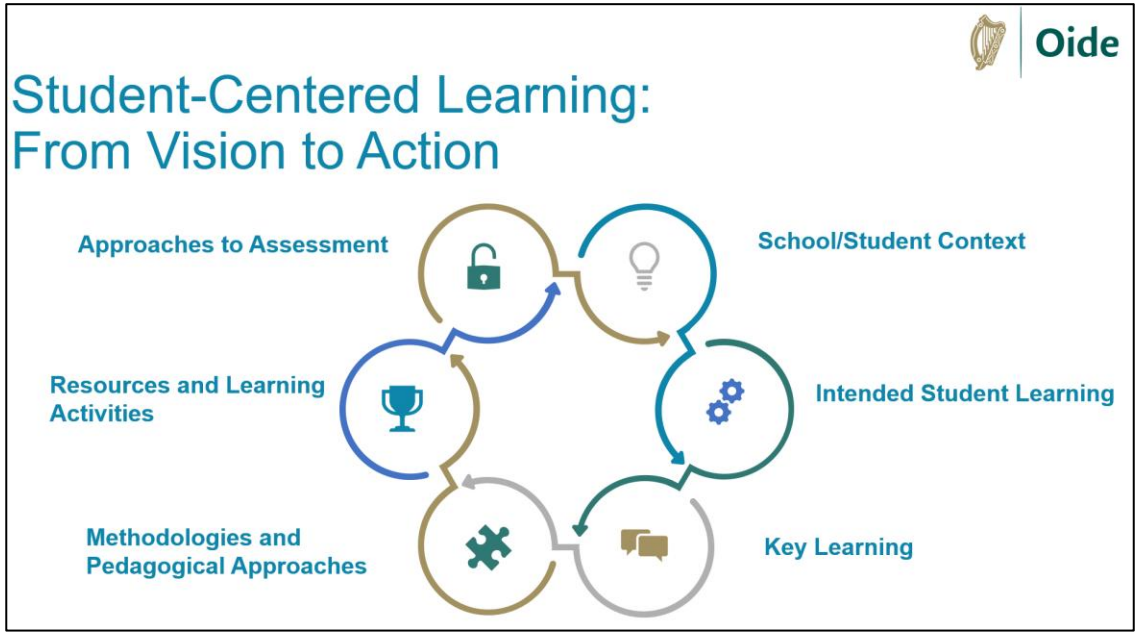
Extending the Learning

Join your assigned group.

Take a theme from our student-centred conversation and develop it into a plan for learning.

Record your plan on the Flip Chart paper.

Time: 20 minutes





Share the Learning - Elevator Pitch



Pitch your proposed learning experience.

Learning Together, We Will…



explore how individual classroom practices in TY RE can support inclusive, student-centered learning

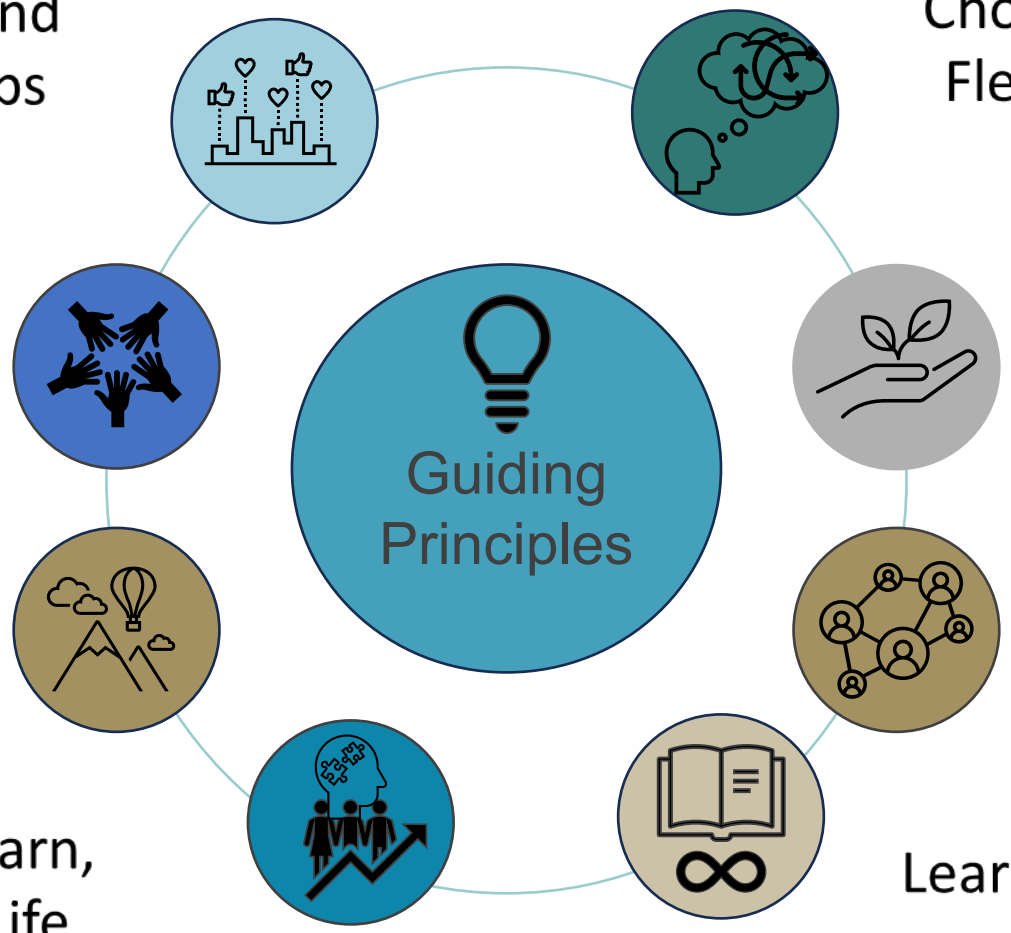


engage with resources that support inclusive practice



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Senior Cycle Guiding Principles



Wellbeing and Relationships

Choice and Flexibility

Inclusive Education and Diversity

Continuity and Transitions

Challenge, Engagement and Creativity

Participation and Citizenship

Learning to Learn, Learning for Life

Learning Environments and Partnerships



TY Programme Statement and Inclusion

> *The educational experience in Senior Cycle should be **inclusive of every student**, respond to their learning strengths and needs, and celebrate, value, and respect diversity.*

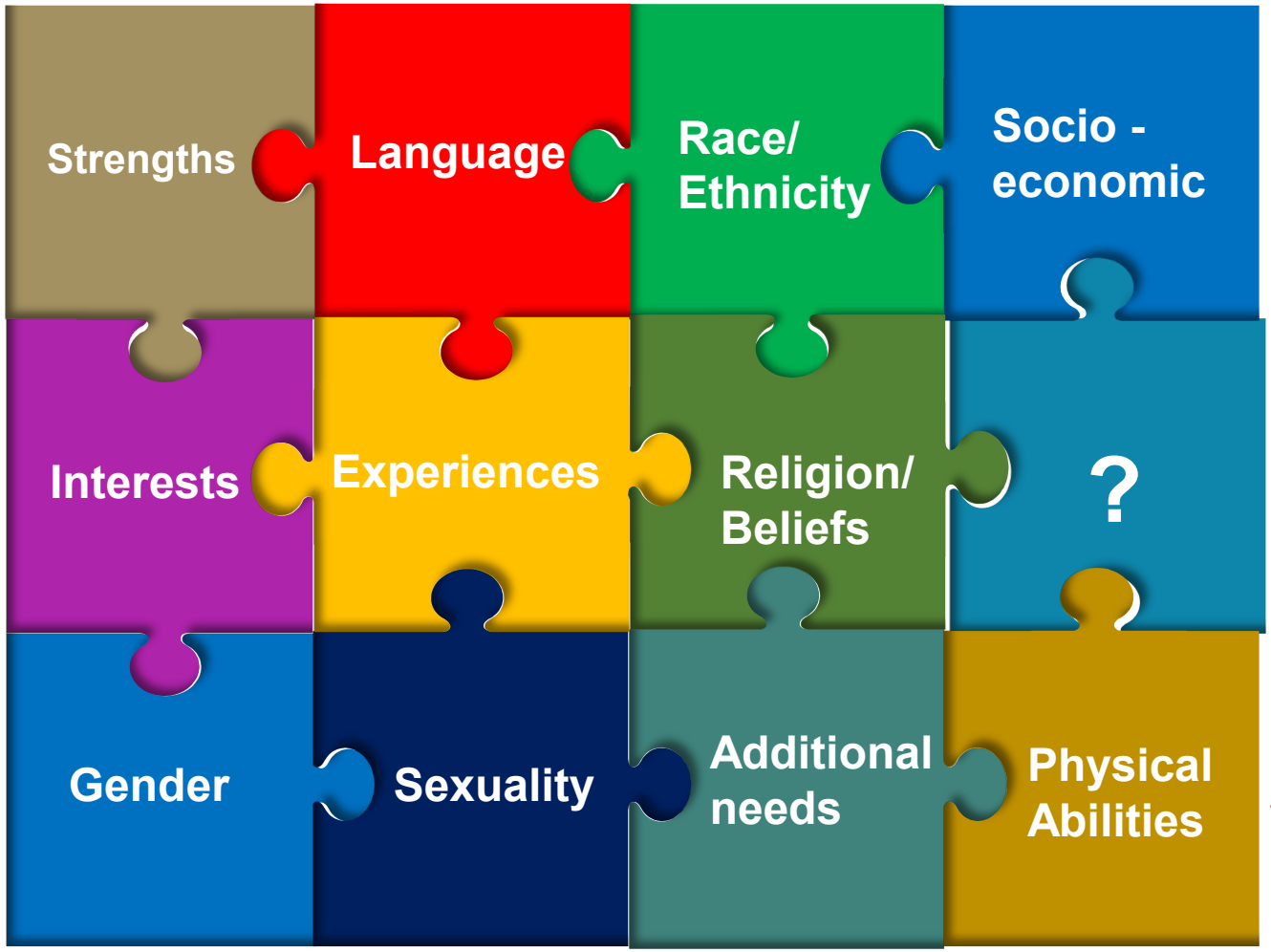
Department of Education and Skills, Transition Year Programme Statement, (2024) p. 3



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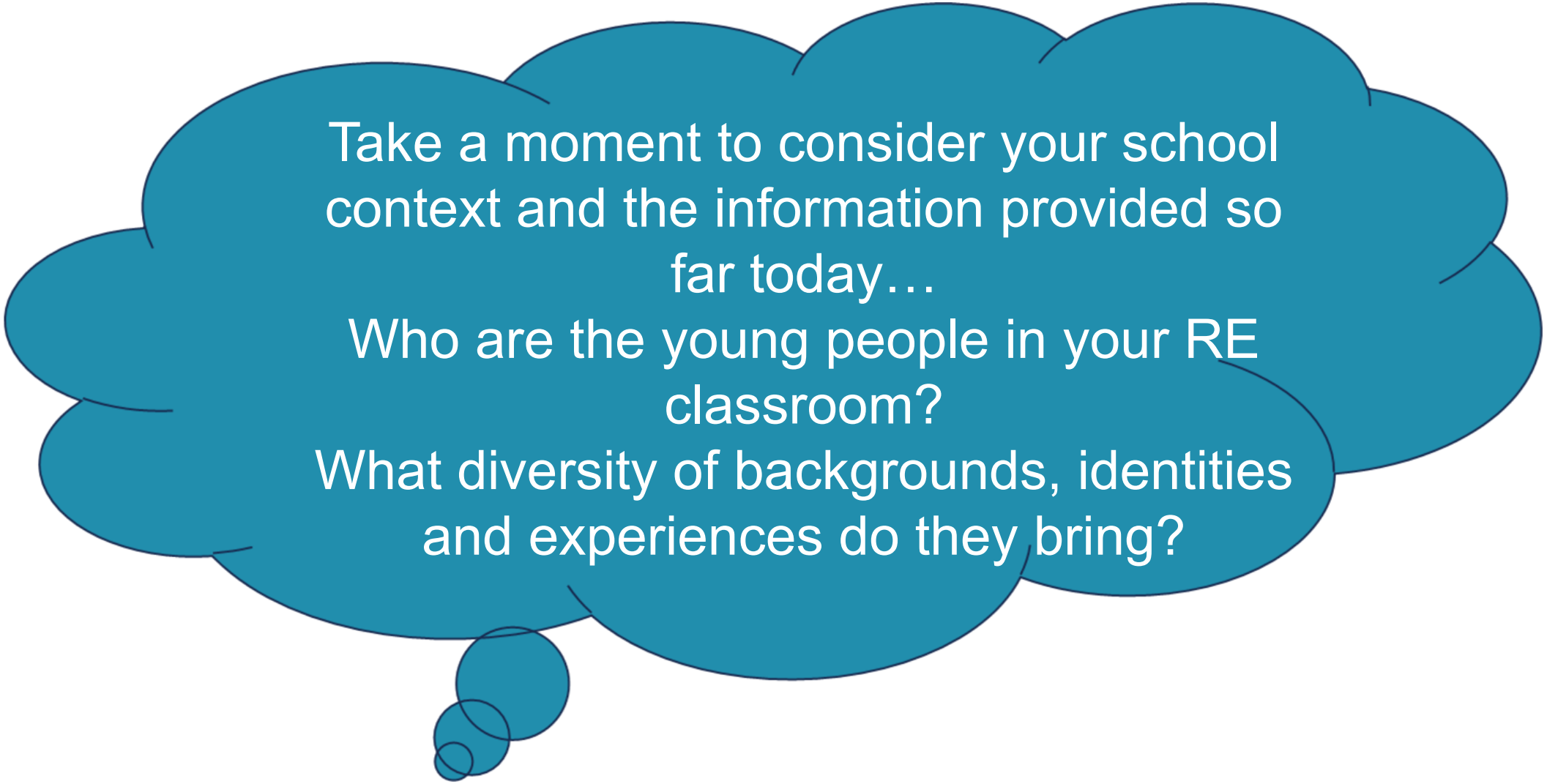
The Inclusive Classroom

Inclusive Education and Diversity





Our School, Our Context





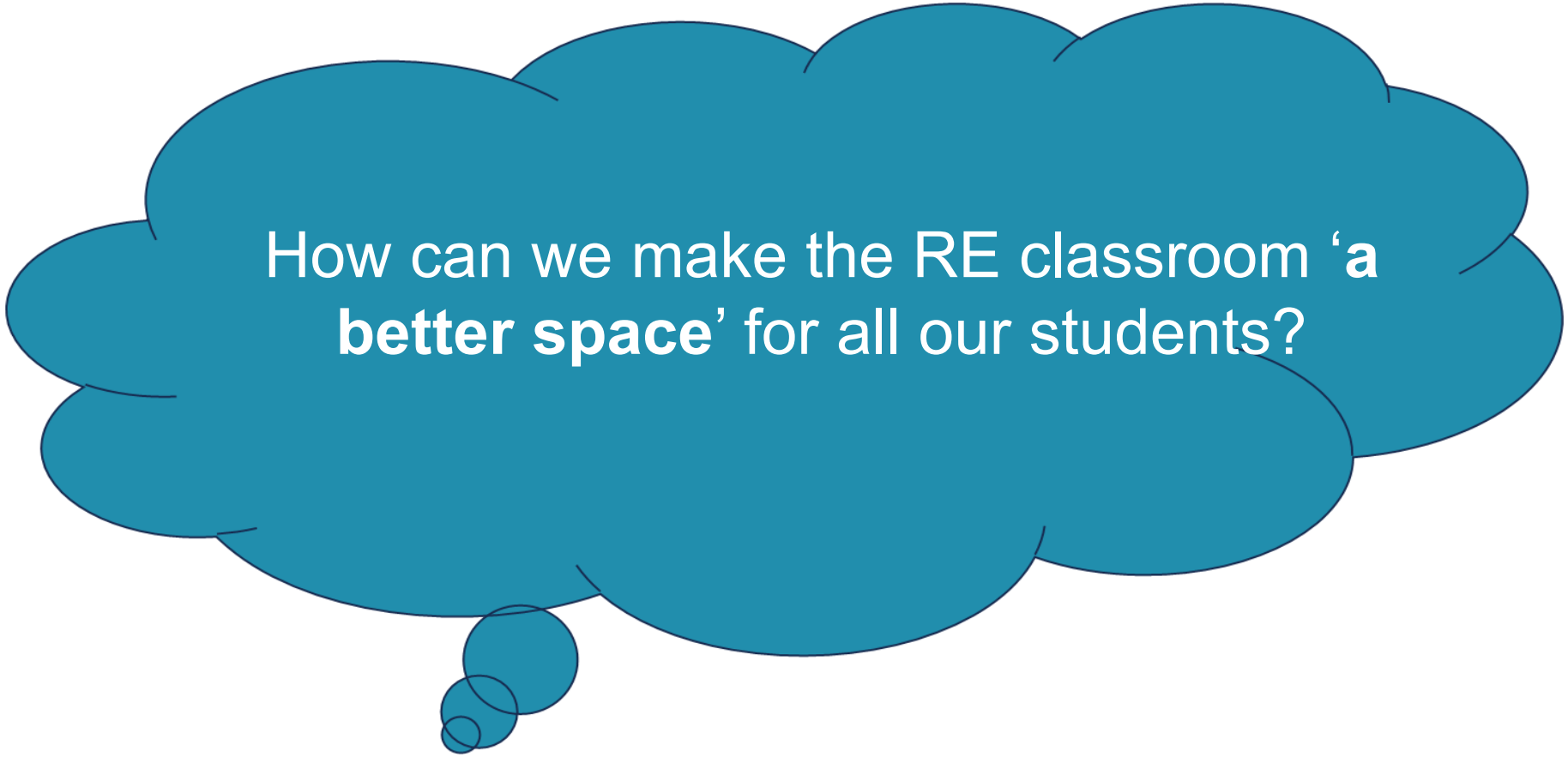
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Exploring Inclusion and Diversity

*Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a **better space** for everyone.*

Dr. George Dei, Kites and Roses (2023)

Pause for Thought



Benefits of Inclusive Approaches

Proactive rather than reactive

Enables all learners to fulfil their potential

Promotes innovation, problem-solving and new ways of thinking



Improves learning experiences for all

Opportunity for collaborative planning and co-teaching

Belonging

Extending and Progressing Potential Themes

How does engagement with the theme of Belonging, Beliefs and Values support the exploration of Inclusion and Diversity in the Religious Education classroom?

Spider Web Discussion Methodology

Teacher acts as Observer

Reflection

Create a Circle



Feedback

Discussion Question/Prompt

Observe and Record the Thread of Discussion

Allocate Time

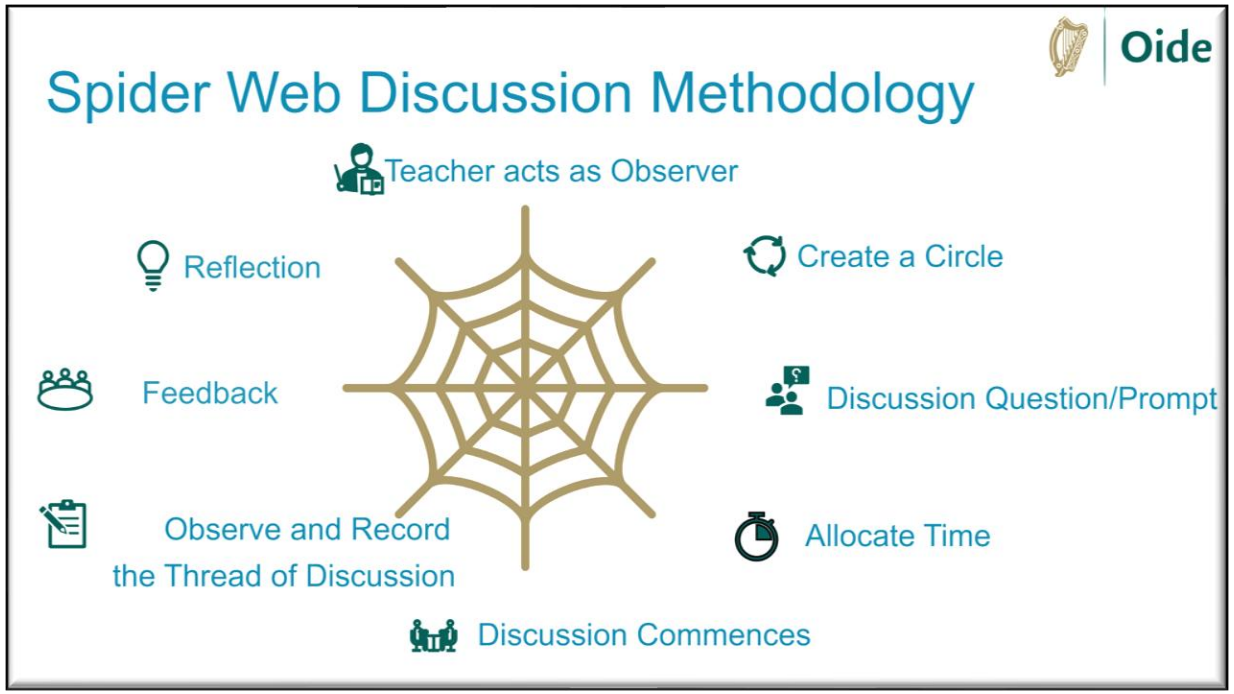
Discussion Commences

Spider Web Discussion

With your group select an Observer and begin a Spider Web Discussion.

As a group discuss how “Belonging, Beliefs and Values in Ireland Today” could be progressed to foster inclusion and diversity in the TY RE classroom

Time: 15 minutes



Today We Reflected

Recommendations

- Clarifying Learning Outcomes
- Developing Philosophical Thinking and Reflection
- Strengthening Curriculum Planning
- Enhancing Assessment for Learning

Learning Together Today, We…

- reflected on the impact of implementing Junior Cycle RE
- explored the purpose, rationale, aims and planning considerations for Transition Year RE
- deepened our understanding of the Transition Year Programme Statement to inform the planning of student-centred learning experiences in the Transition Year RE classroom
- explored how individual classroom practices in TY RE can support inclusive, student-centered learning and engaged with resources that support inclusive practice

In Learning Together Today, We Modelled…

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- Blue Sky Carousel Activity
- Gallery Walks
- Think-Pair-Share-Square
- Elevator Pitch
- Spider Web Discussion
- PowerPoint Presentation