Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Pathways: Supporting Guidance Counsellors for Inclusive 21st Century Student Progression

Full Day Face-to-Face (subsequently online) Professional Learning Day for Guidance Counsellors
2025/26 School Closure (Cluster) Days

Joanne Parry, Sinéad Duffy and Niamh Uí Thuama
Professional Learning Leaders in Guidance

CC BY NC

Structure of our Day

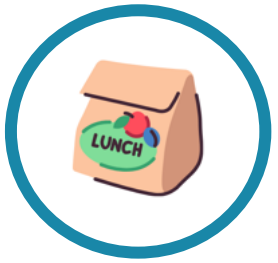
09:30 – 11:00

Supporting Students' Pathway Choices by Developing Key Competencies.

11:00 – 11:20

11:20 – 1pm

Understanding the Future of Work and Education – Policy, Labour Market and Industry Perspectives



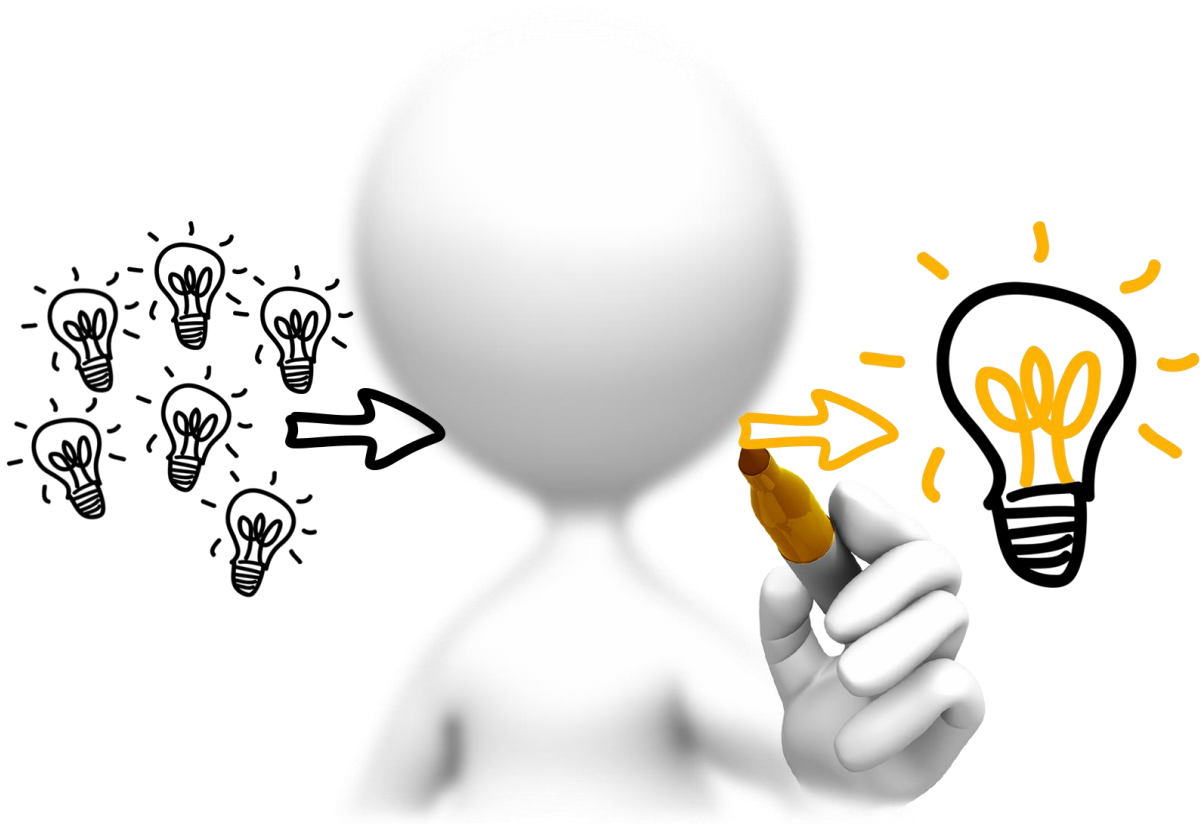
13:00 – 14:00

14:00 – 15:45

Building Inclusive Pathways
From Audit to Action in Whole-School Guidance

https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

Reflection



What key ideas are your take aways to bring to your WSG Team and Guidance Department?

p 3

https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

Icebreaker Activity

If you had to invent a brand-new job for the future (something that doesn't quite exist yet but might soon), what would it be?

Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Session One

Supporting Students' Pathway Choices by Developing Key Competencies

CC BY NC

By the end of session one, you will have…

- explored Senior Cycle key competencies and their role in career readiness and progression
- Considered employer expectations and future workforce demands
- examined the benefits and challenges of various post-school pathways and how to best support informed choices.

Connecting the Learning Journey

Messages we hear from students about readiness for pathways beyond school

Whole-school Guidance and Preparing Students for their Future

*'Guidance is, by definition, person-centred and **holistic**... Guidance **facilitates** and **empowers** individuals to make informed decisions and life choices.'*

DE Circular 01/2025, P1

*'WSG means that **all school personnel** ...have an important **role and responsibility to support students** with their personal, social, educational and career choices. WSG supports the implementation of a large and **varied range of activities and learning experiences** provided to students in a progressive, developmental sequence. '*

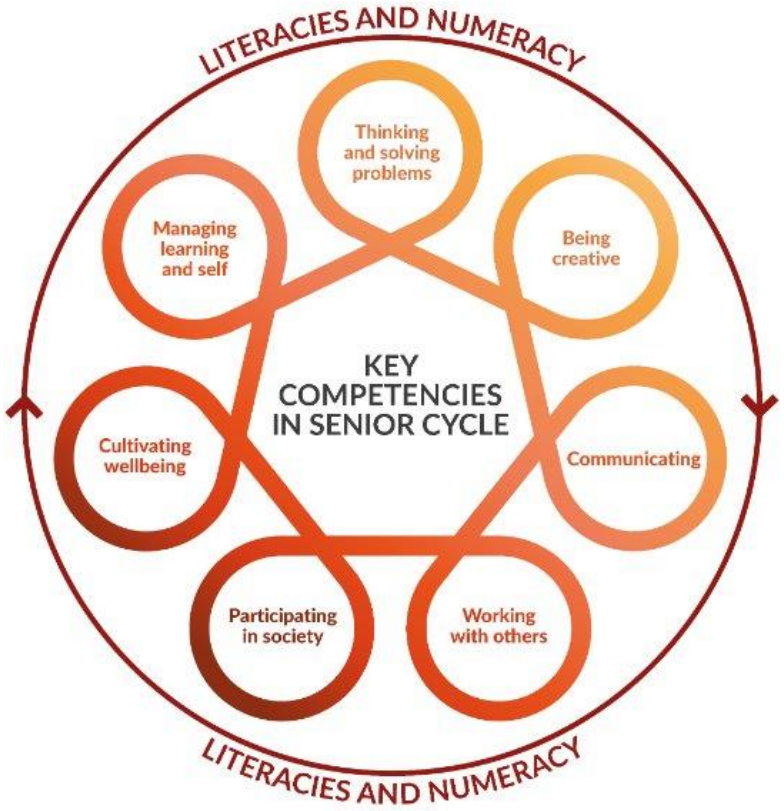
DE Circular 01/2025, p1-2

Career Readiness

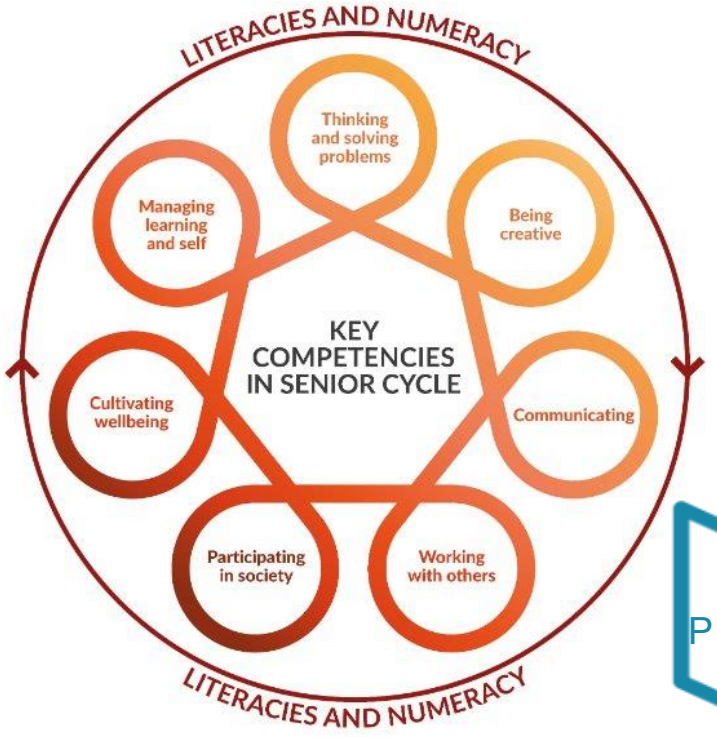
*'Through career education and guidance, young people are helped to **explore** and confirm their career ambitions, to develop the **skills** required to begin managing their career journeys and to gain first-hand **experience** of the world of work.'*

OECD, Indicators of Teenage Career Readiness, 2021, p.8.

Key Skills, and Key Competencies across the Continuum of Learning



Key Competencies Relevant to Guidance



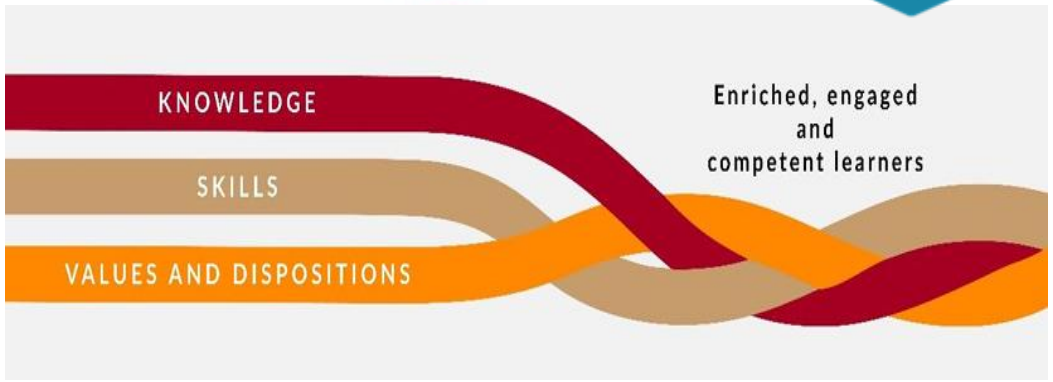
P 6- 14

*'Key competencies are an umbrella term which refers to the **knowledge**, **skills**, **values** and **dispositions** students develop during senior cycle.'*

NCCA, 2024 p.1

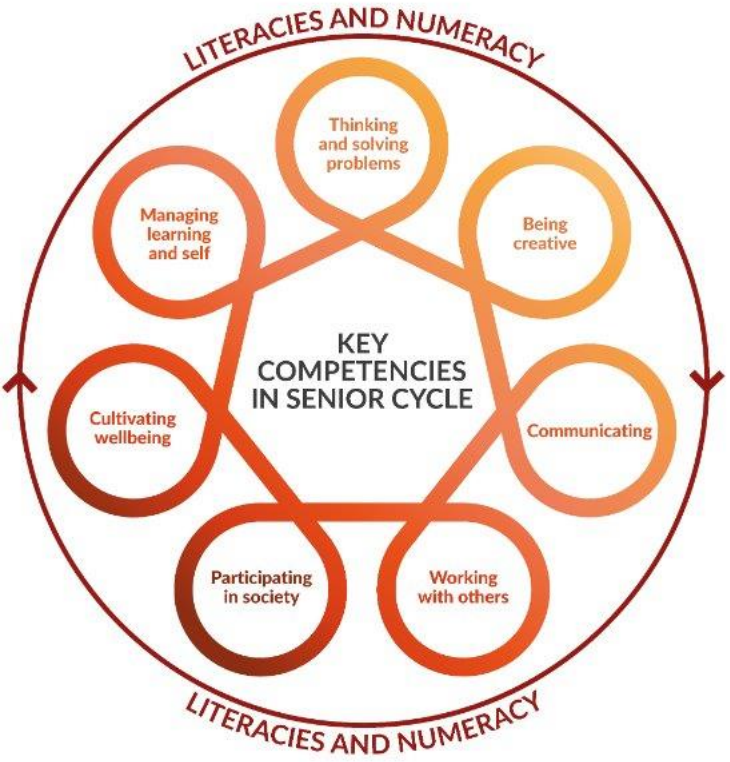
*'They come to life through the **learning experiences and pedagogies** teachers choose and through **students' responses** to them.'*

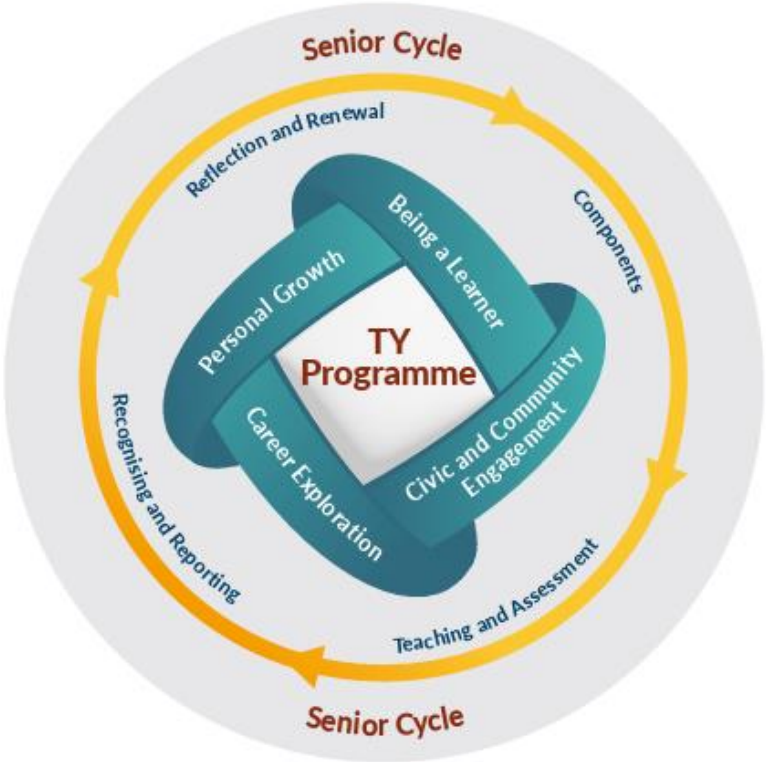
NCCA,, 2024, p.3.



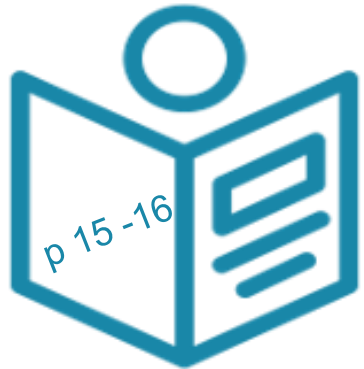
Are these relevant to the WSG programme?

Key Competencies Relevant to Guidance

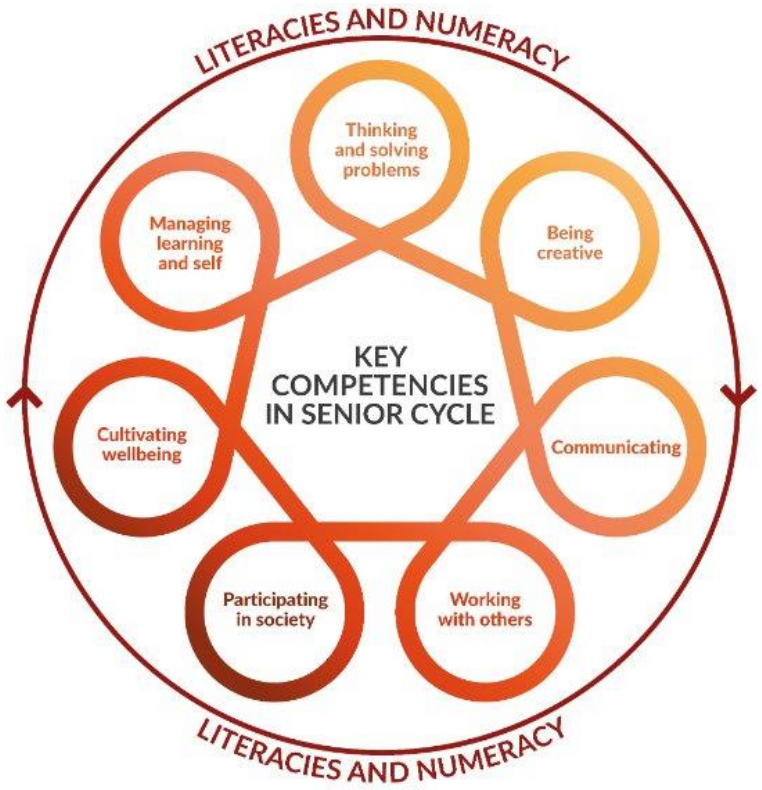




Student Dimension	Components	Guidance for accommodation of components
Career Exploration	**Work Placement** **Community Placement**	An appropriate and feasible balance of work-based and community-based placements. A time allocation amounting to the equivalent of two to four weeks of the programme is suggested.
	Career guidance	One class per week or classes timed to target key career-related learning or events during the year.
	Additional career-related experiences For example: guest speakers, tasters in apprenticeships/traineeships/ further education/higher education, information days, government supported developmental awards, certified short courses.	Some additional career-related experiences provided by the school may only arise during the year and would need to be notified to students, teachers and parents as soon as is practical.



Examining Key Competencies for Career Readiness in TY:



Question 1:	Question 2:	Question 3:
How is developing this competency **helpful** in building students' **career readiness**?	In what ways can this competency be **integrated** into TY WSG **planning or practice**?	What TY WSG **experiences** will allow students to actively **develop** and **demonstrate** this competency?

Examining Key Competencies for Career Readiness in TY:

Thinking and solving problems

1. Develop and use a **range of thinking strategies, values and dispositions** to develop and **respond critically** to questions and tasks and to **solve problems.**
2. **Identify** problems, come up with potential **solutions** and make **informed** decisions.
3. Apply **critical thinking** in both familiar and new situations.

NCCA 2024

https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

p 8 - 9

Thinking and solving problems

Modelling the Activity

Oide

Question 1:
How is developing this competency **helpful** in building students' **career readiness**?

Question 2:
In what ways can this competency be **integrated** into TY WSG **planning or practice**?

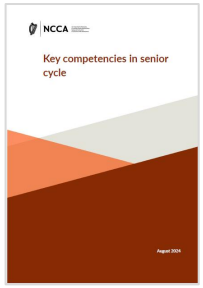
Question 3:
What TY WSG **experiences** will allow students to actively **develop** and **demonstrate** this competency?

Activity 1: Examining Key Competencies for Career Readiness

1. Read
2. Reflect
3. Collaborate

- develop and use a range of thinking strategies, values and dispositions to develop and respond critically to questions and tasks and to solve problems.
- identify problems, come up with potential solutions and make informed decisions.
- apply critical thinking in both familiar and new situations.

Thinking and solving problems



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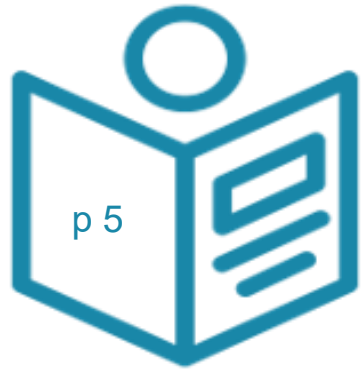
NCCA 2024

Guiding Question for Activity 1

Question 1:
How is developing this competency **helpful** in building students' **career readiness**?

Question 2:
In what ways can this competency be **integrated** into TY WSG **planning or practice**?

Question 3:
What TY WSG **experiences** will allow students to actively **develop** and **demonstrate** this competency?



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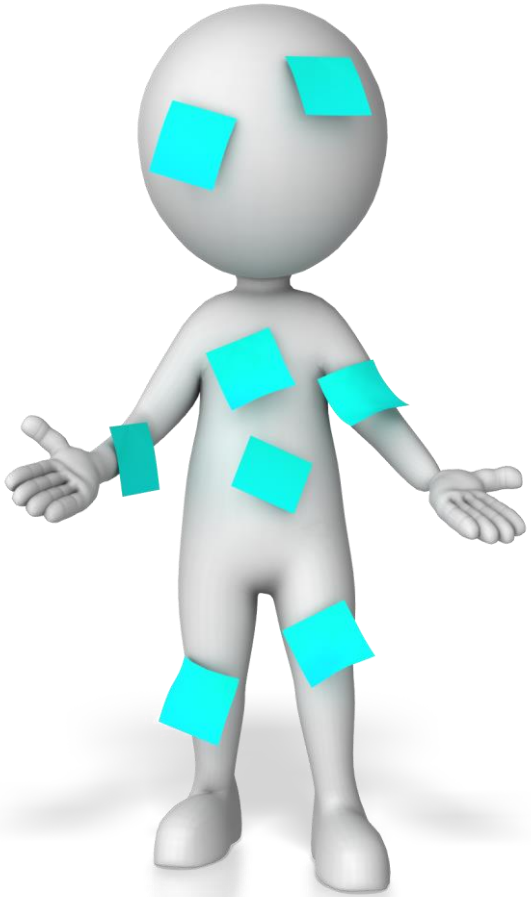
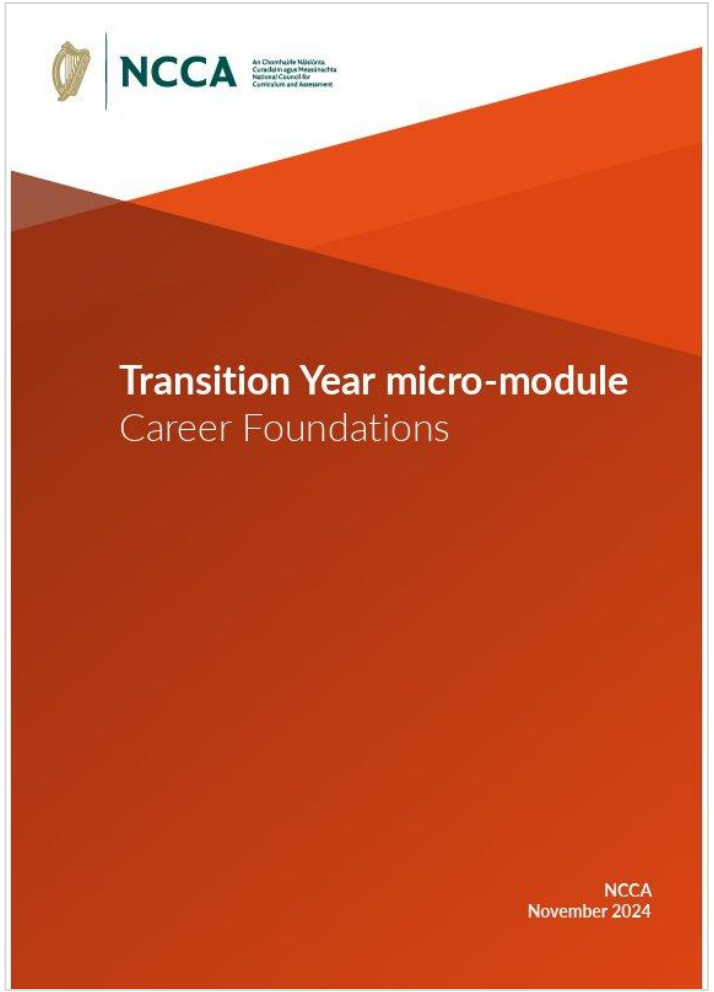
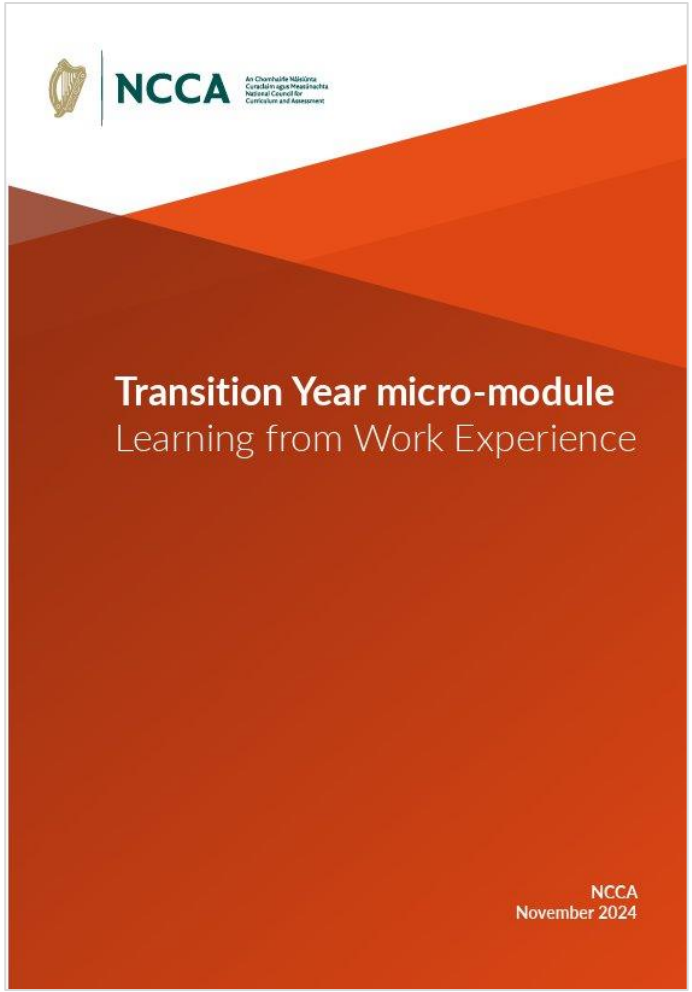
Reflection: Activity 1



Supporting Thinking and Solving Problem Skills in Guidance

https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

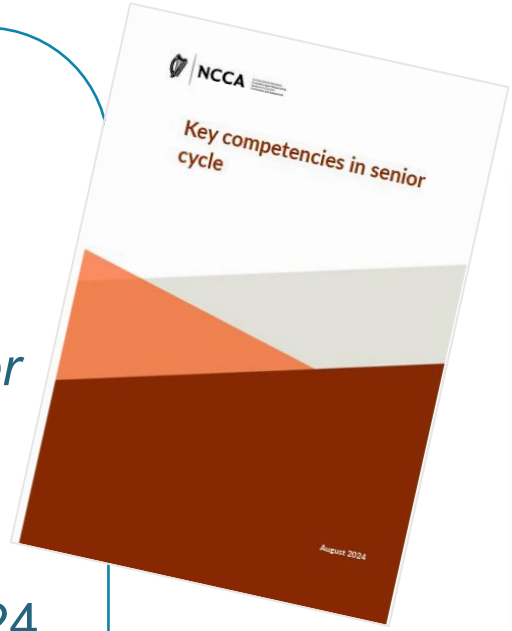




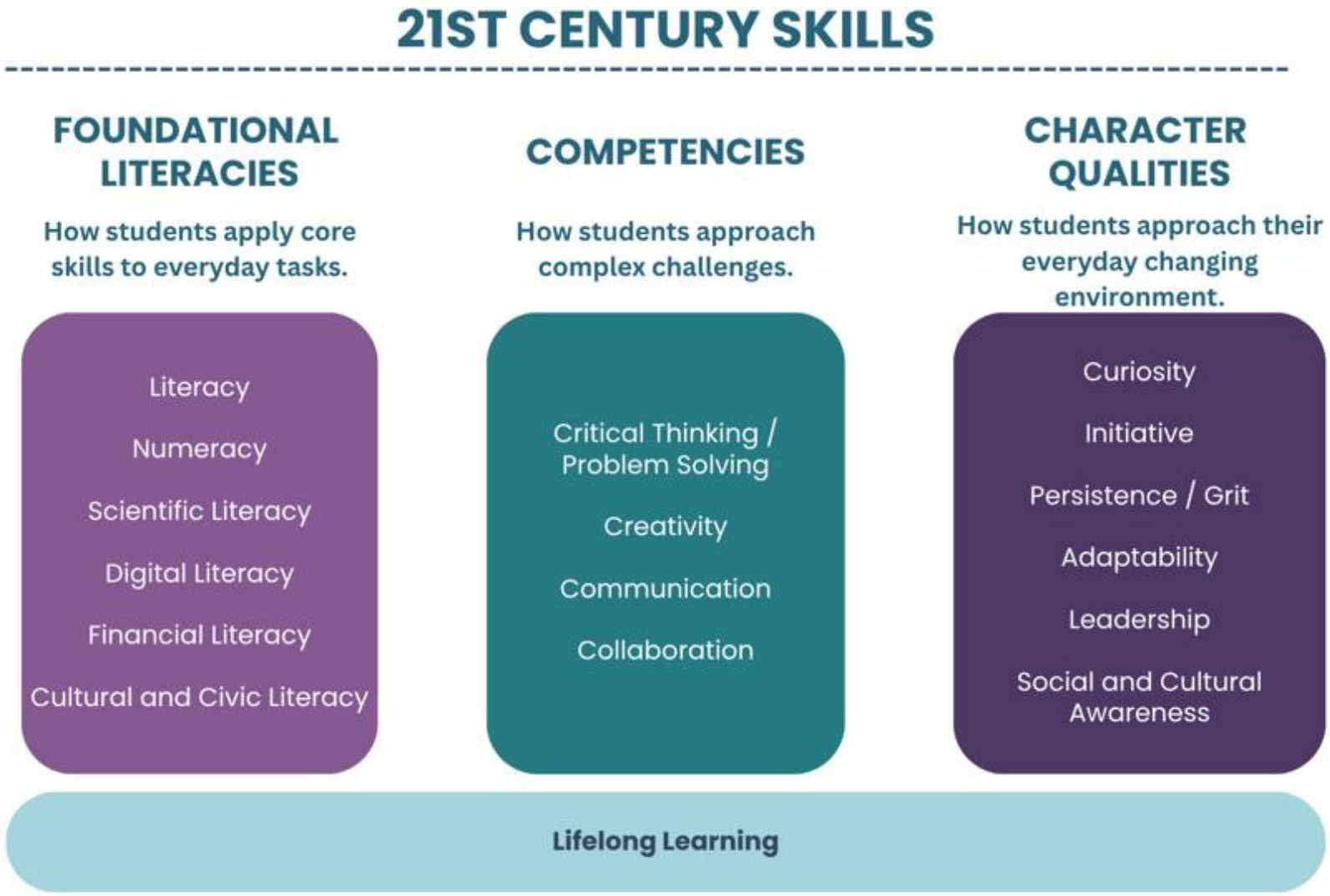
Guidance: Helping Student Flourish now and into the future

*Students whose key competencies are well-developed are better able to **understand** and **learn**; to **deal with and respond** to social opportunities and problems; to **make the transition** from school to further, adult and higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and/or the world of work; and to **embrace** adult life.*

NCCA, Key Competencies in Senior Cycle, 2024, p.2.



Skills for Success in 21st Century Pathways



Adapted from World Economic Forum, New Vision for Education, 2015.

Skills for Success in 21st Century Pathways

'21st Century learning environments are necessary in order to provide students with the appropriate ***knowledge****, but also to* ***prepare them with the skills*** *to* ***apply that knowledge*** *in real-life situations and to be* ***equipped*** *for full participation in society.'*

TCD, Why 21st Century Skills 2015, updated May 2022

Skills Valued by Employers

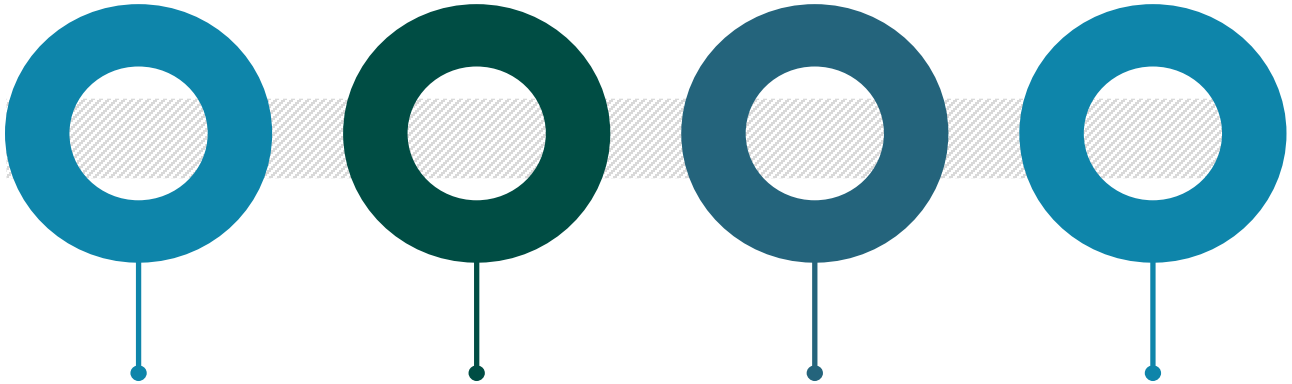
Employers in the Talent shortage survey 2024 reported difficulties in finding employees with these transferable skills:

- *reliability and self-discipline*
- *creativity and originality*
- *critical thinking and analysis*
- *reasoning and problem solving*
- *resilience and adaptability.*

Technology and Future Pathways

*'**Technological advancements** are impacting everything from employment, skills and wealth distribution to healthcare, education and public services. Among the most urgent of these impacts is the need to **reskill** and **upskill** people to **meet the demands of the economy of tomorrow**.'*

World Economic Forum 2025



Diverse Pathways

Oide

Micro-credentials

Traineeships

Volunteering

Gap Year

Study Abroad

Higher Education and Training

Further Education and Training

Apprenticeships

Work Experience

Internship

Youth Reach

Tertiary Degrees

HSE Day Services

National Learning Network

Access Programmes

PATH

Programme for Access to Higher Education

Benefits and Challenges of Diverse Pathways

Pathway

?

Advantages
Benefits

Barriers
Challenges

Insights
Considerations

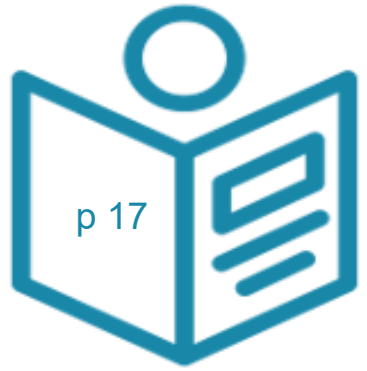
Further
Exploration?

Activity 2: Benefits and Challenges of Diverse Pathways

Pathway	Advantages Benefits	Barriers Challenges	Insights Considerations	Further Exploration?
Gap Year/ Volunteering	I can build more skills such as communication and responsibility. I can get clarity on my career goals.	I could risk losing momentum; I don't have the means to volunteer for 1 year so I will need a job too.	This could help me mature and reframe my goals – It will strengthen college or job readiness later.	It will give me an opportunity to research pathways and network with people.

Activity 2: Benefits and Challenges of Pathways

Advantages/benefits of this pathway	Barriers/challenges/misconceptions
Pathway:_____	
Considerations for me	Further exploration

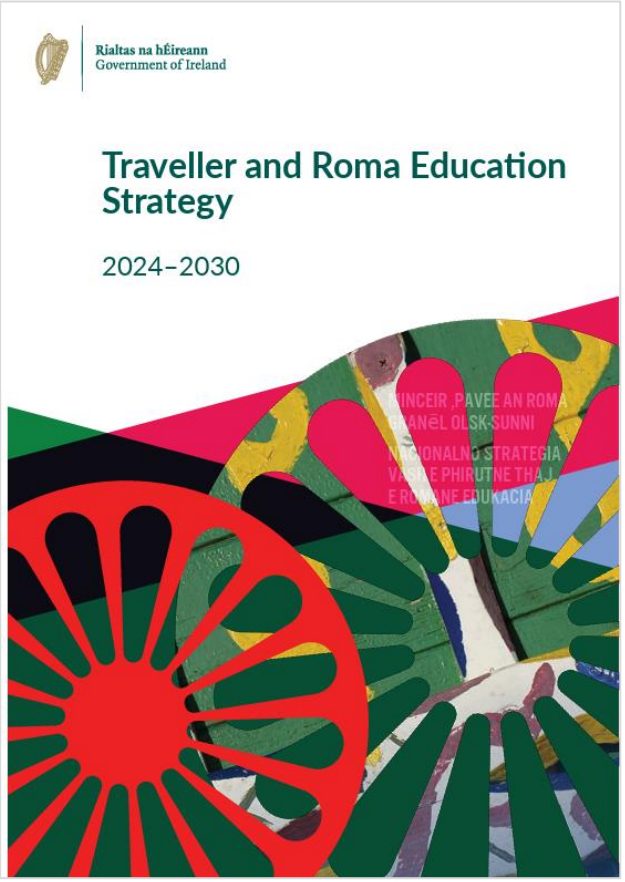


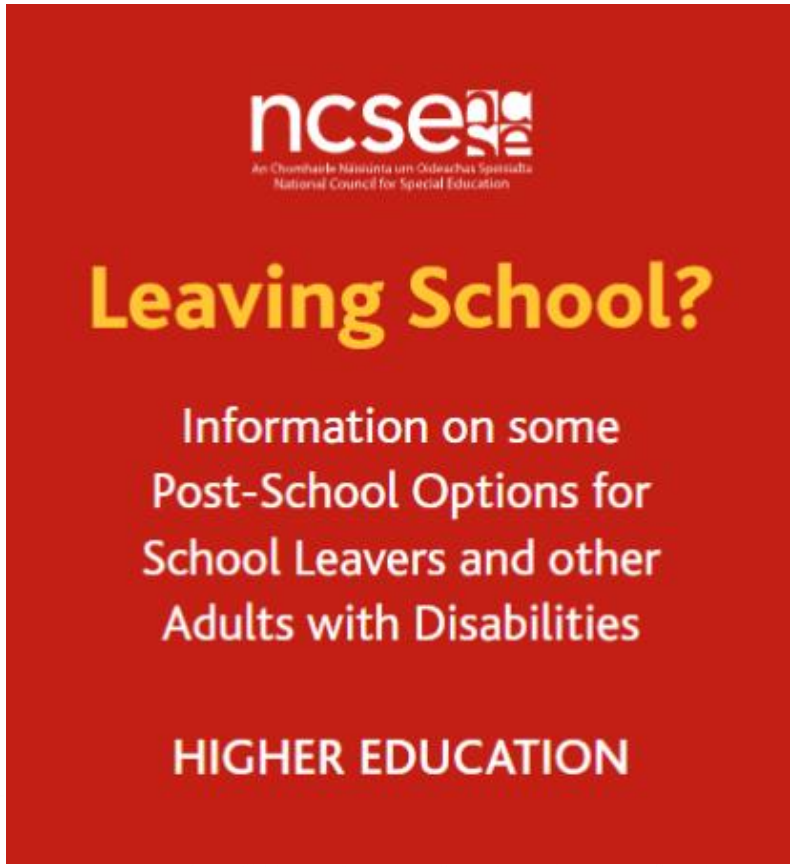
https://tinyurl.com/5n6xtxdj

Reflection on Pathways Activity 2

What practical steps could your school take to create a more balanced, inclusive narrative around post-school pathways?

Resources Supporting Inclusive Pathways





Publication

Reflections on inclusion in the Irish education system

From: Department of Education and Youth
Published on: 18 December 2024
Last updated on: 18 December 2024

1. Introduction
2. Inspection – a focus on inclusion
3. Special educational needs – towards an inclusive vision
4. Access – admission policies in an inclusive system
5. Specialist provision – special classes and inclusion
6. Inclusion – the importance of a positive school community
7. Attendance – the link with high-quality, responsive teaching
8. Responsive, flexible teaching – the role of assessment
9. Responsive, flexible teaching – A focus on skill development
10. Collaborative professional practice for high-quality, inclusive provision
11. Leadership for inclusion
12. In conclusion
13. Footnotes

Thriving in a Changing World

'What do we need to do to thrive and prosper in whatever the new world brings? The secret for a bright future seems to me to lie in ***flexibility*** *and in the* ***ability*** *to* ***reinvent*** *yourself……think about yourself as a bundle of* ***skills and capabilities****, not a defined role or profession'.*

Carol Stubbings, PwC Global Leader People and Organisation

Guidance: Supporting Student to Break the Barriers to Progression

Oide

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

– Howard Thurman

Recap on Session 1 you have:

- explored Senior Cycle competencies and their role in career readiness
- built on your understanding of employer expectations and future workforce demands
- examined the benefits and challenges of various post-school pathways.

Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Break

11.00pm – 11:20pm

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Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Session Two

Understanding the Future of Work and Education – Policy, Labour Market Trends, and Industry Perspectives

CC BY NC

By the end of session two you will have…

- explored national policy priorities relevant to pathways.
- investigated labour market trends using real-world data.
- collaborated to discuss strategies to integrate labour market information into your whole-school guidance programme.

The Future of Work
What skills will matter most?

Oide

- Problem-solving
- Emotional Intelligence
- Creativity
- Service Orientation
- Adaptability

‘Meta-skills’ like problem-solving and emotional intelligence are essential (SOLAS, 2020)

Digital, green, and demographic shifts are reshaping skills demands (OECD, 2023)

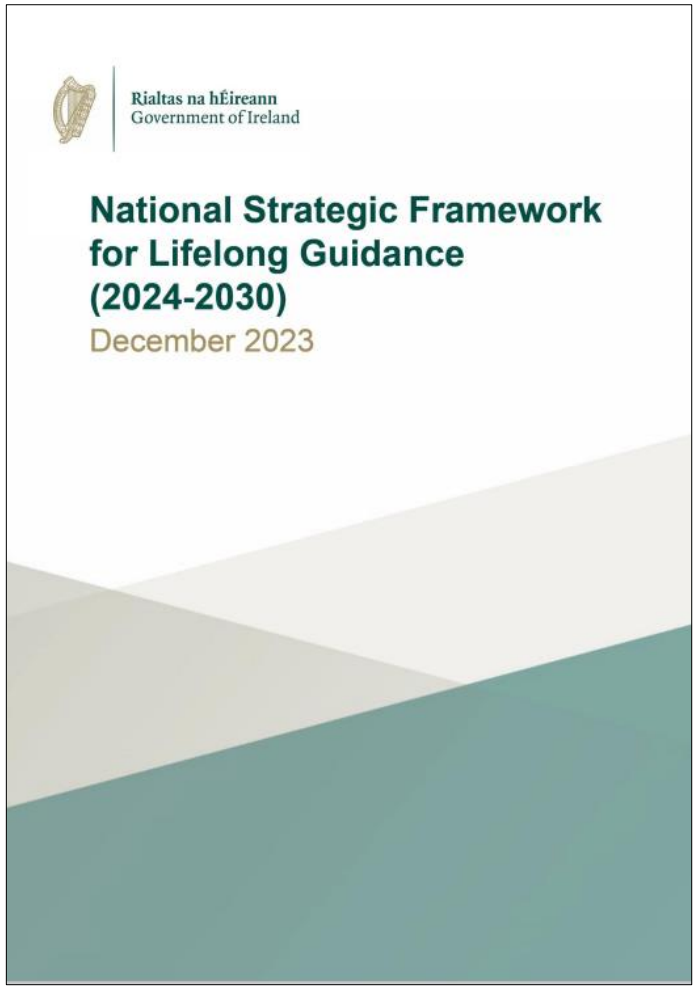
Stronger cognitive, social, and job-specific skills will help students thrive (OECD, 2023)

SOLAS Future FET Strategy (2020) & OECD Skills Strategy Ireland (2023)

The Pivotal Role of Guidance

'Guidance in the post-primary system must equip students not just with academic knowledge but with the competencies to navigate a world of work that is increasingly uncertain and evolving. The ability to adapt, continuously upskill, and make informed career decisions will be essential as traditional career pathways give way to more dynamic and fluid models of employment. The integration of guidance into the broader education system is key to ensuring students are empowered to take ownership of their learning and career progression.'

Government of Ireland (2024) National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance (2024-2030)



Key publications informing Pathways

Oide

Activity 3: Documents

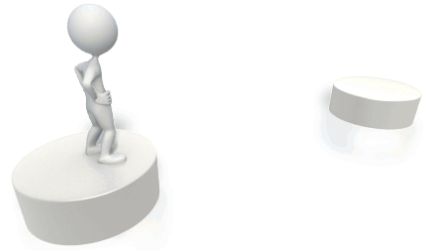
https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

STEP 1

Open the Profession Resource Pack Page 19 - 25

STEP 2

Read your assigned document extract



STEP 3

Use the suggested worksheet on Page 18 to elicit the key points from the document and the relevance of your extract to the work of the guidance counsellor

STEP 4

Collaborate to discuss your thoughts on the key messages in your document extract and how they can be applied to the guidance programme

Guiding Questions

What are the main ideas or goals in this document?

How is this information relevant to your work as a guidance counsellor?

What opportunities or challenges could arise when applying this document to your whole-school guidance programme?

Can you identify one practical way to integrate this learning into your work in supporting student pathways?

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Activity 3: Document Study Key Publications Informing Pathways	
Document Title:	
1. What are the main ideas or goals in this document?	2. How is this information relevant to your work as a guidance counsellor?
3. What opportunities or challenges could arise when applying this document to your 6-year guidance programme?	4. Can you identify one practical way to integrate this learning into your work in supporting student pathways?

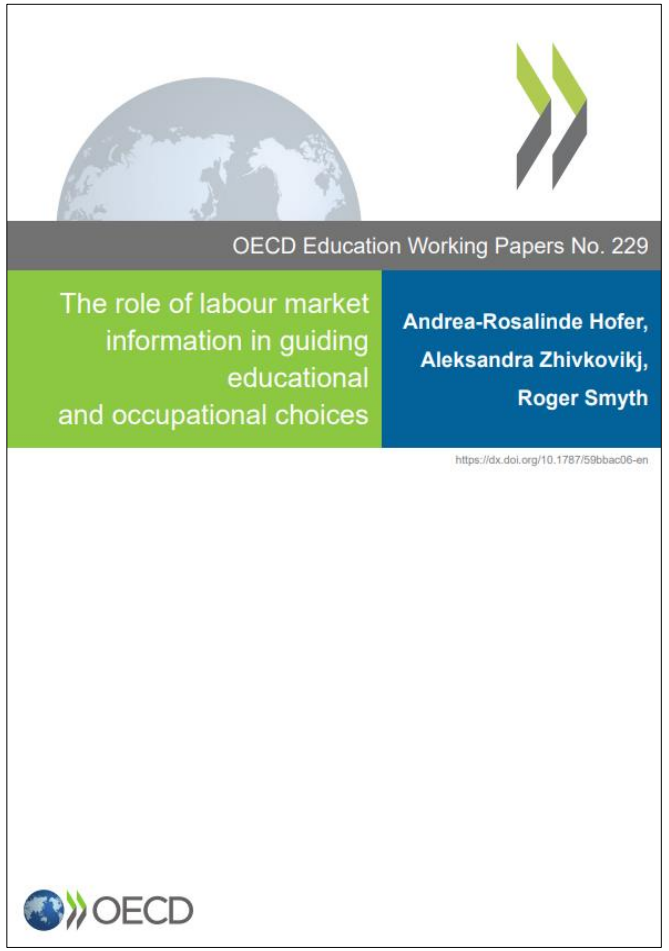
Reflections from key documents

How does the document connect to your work as a guidance counsellor — especially in terms of supporting diverse student pathways and preparing learners for the future of work?

Real World Guidance Resources
Labour Market Research

Oide

*'Labour market information, **embedded** in guidance, can help learners make post-secondary education choices that match their interests and aptitudes and lead to fulfilling employment'*



OECD (2020) The role of labour market information in guiding educational and occupational choices

p 26

Oide

EURES

Find a job in Europe - European Union

SKILLS CAMPAIGN Government of Ireland

Skills

EXPERT GROUP ON FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS

Home - Future Skills Ireland

SOLAS

SLMRU
Skills and Labour Market Research Unit
SOLAS | Skills and Labour Market Research Unit | Research

EmployAbility IRELAND

Find your Employability - Employability Ireland

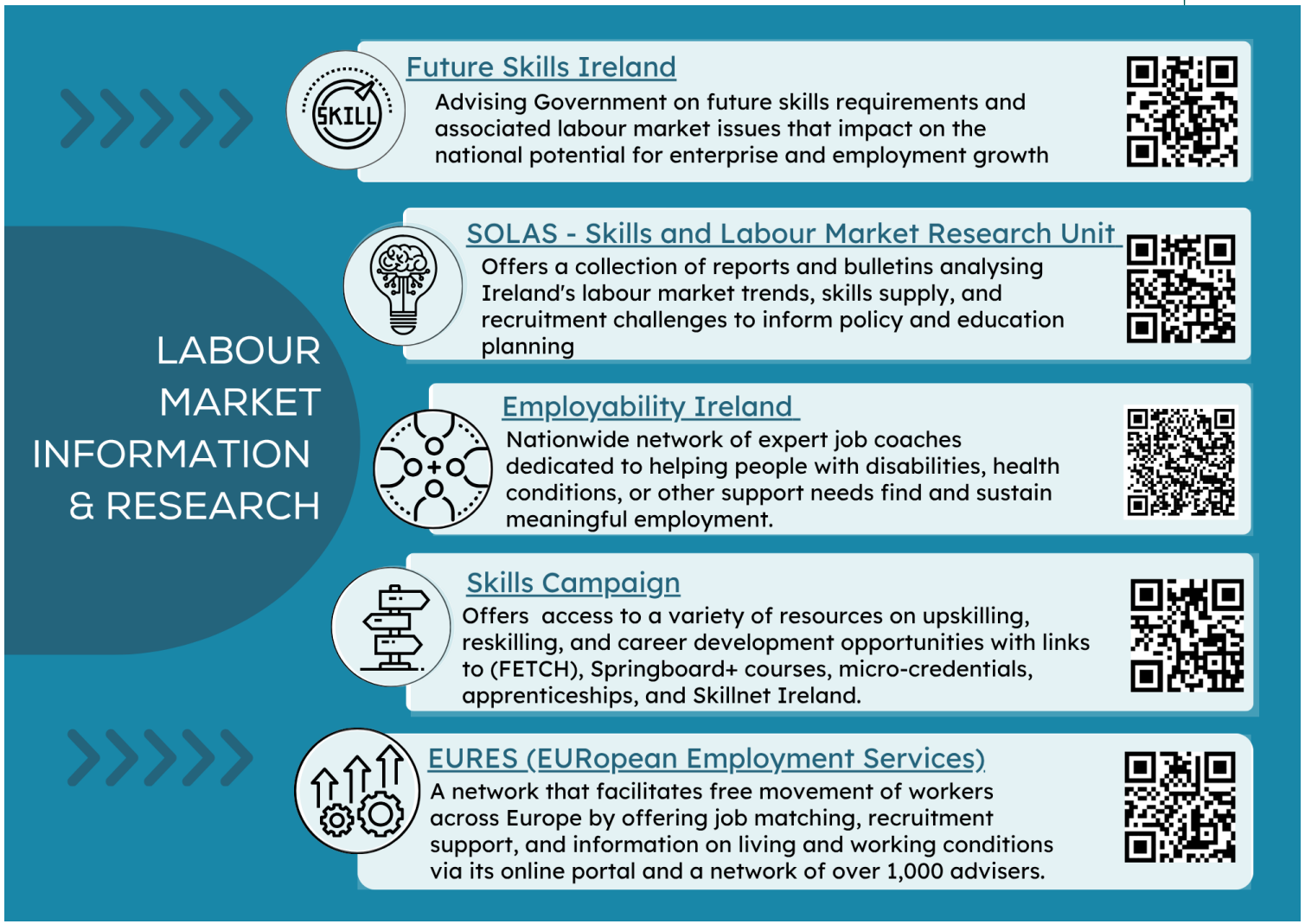
https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

Labour Market Information and Research

Supporting Guidance Counsellors to access LMI

https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

p 26



The Value of LMI to Guidance Counsellors

Oide

Potential Use of LMI

This pathway develops Y competencies needed for evolving jobs

These sectors are seeking adaptability, problem-solving, etc.

What skills, behaviours and dispositions are employers actually describing?

This course will lead to X job

These sectors are recruiting

What qualifications are needed?

Traditional Use of LMI

Seeking defined competencies, skills and values

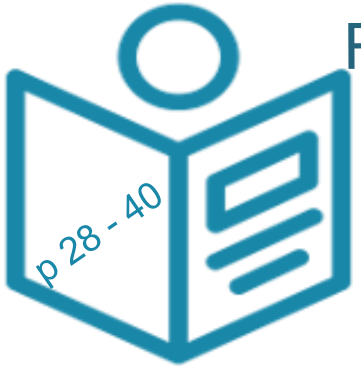
- ***Experience*** *of utilising M365 tools including SharePoint Lists / Forms etc. would be desirable but not essential.*
- *A 3rd level qualification in a relevant field would be desirable.*
- ***Excellent problem-solving skills****, with strong technical and analytic capabilities.*
- *A high* ***attention to detail*** *is critical, especially when recording and reporting information as this role is based in a highly regulated industry.*
- *A* ***good team player*** *with a* ***strong work ethic****, yet* ***capable of working on their own initiative*** *when the opportunity arises.*
- *Displays a sense of urgency with a* ***proactive*** *and* ***innovative*** *attitude.*
- *Excellent all-round* ***communication, presentation, and interpersonal skills****.*

Activity 4: Job Specifications

https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

STEP 1

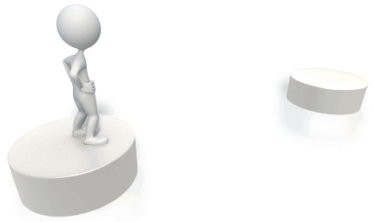
Open the Professional Resource Pack p. 28 - 40



Pathways Padlet of Resources

STEP 2

Read your assigned Job Specification



STEP 3

Use the suggested questions on P. 27 to support the identification of the employer's desired candidate competencies and cite evidence from the job specification

STEP 4

Collaborate to identify opportunities for development of competencies from this job specification across the 6-year guidance programme using the template provided

Sharing Insights from Employer Expectations

What competencies is the employer seeking in a candidate in your job advertisement?

How could the Guidance Counsellor proactively develop these competencies in guidance lessons over the five to six years?

Where are the opportunities to develop these competencies in whole-school guidance?

What small change could you make this year to reinforce one of these competencies in your school's guidance activities?

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From Job Advertisement to Guidance Programme – Embedding Key Competencies	
Job Title:	
1. What competencies is the employer seeking in a candidate in this job advertisement?	2. How could the Guidance Counsellor proactively develop these competencies in guidance lessons over the six years?
3. Where are the opportunities to develop these competencies in whole-school guidance; co-curricular and extra-curricular activities?	4. What small change could you make this year to reinforce one of these competencies in your school's guidance activities?

Labour Market Requirements		SC Key Competencies
Great communicator		Communicating
Proactive and Innovative		Being creative
Works well in a team		Working with others
Excellent problem-solving skills		Thinking and solving problems
Reliable		Managing learning and self

Building LMI into the 6-year Whole-School Guidance Programme

From 1st year to 6th year, where can the Whole-school Guidance programme develop labour market knowledge *and* the candidate competencies now sought in the labour market?

In session two, we have….

- explored national policy priorities and discussed key excepts from policy documents relevant to pathways
- researched labour market trends and industry perspectives
- examined strategies for building guidance competencies into your 6-year guidance programme using job specifications

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Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Lunch Break

1.00pm – 2.00pm

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Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Session Three

Building Inclusive Pathways

From *Audit* to *Action* in Whole-School Guidance

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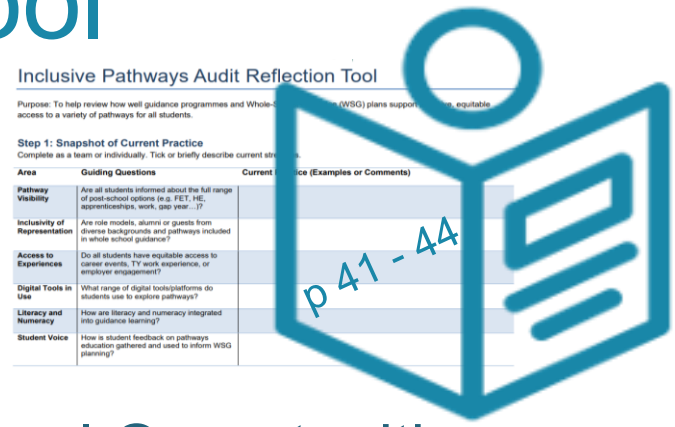
By the end of session three, you will have…

- explored a reflective tool to support development of inclusive pathways within whole school guidance
- collaborated with colleagues in improvement planning
- identified key takeaways for your guidance programme and whole school guidance planning.

Inclusive Pathways Audit Reflection Tool



Step 4: Priority Setting & Action Planning

Step 3: Whole School Opportunities

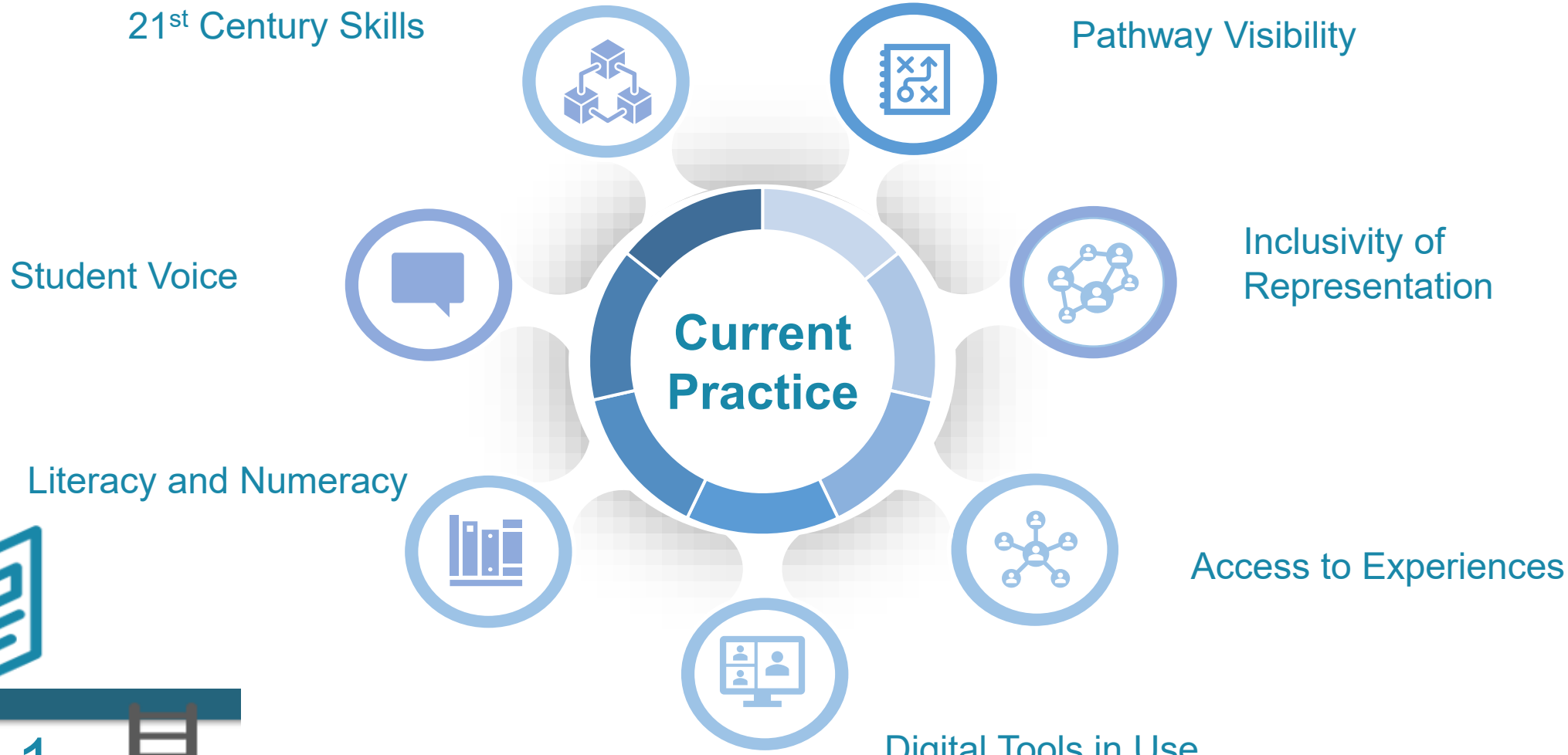
Step 2: Inclusive Guidance: Reflecting on Student Experiences

Step 1: Snapshot of Current Practice

https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

My Uni Life

Snapshot of Current Practice



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Step 1

Inclusive Guidance:
Reflecting on Student Experiences

Students with EAL

High-achieving students under pressure

Students in LCA

Students with SEN/AEN

Students in/leaving care

Students accessing the L1/L2 Learning Programmes

Early school leavers / at risk

Culturally diverse

Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds

Others who may emerge…

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Step 2

Embedding Inclusive Pathways across Whole School Guidance

- Subject Integration
- Student Leadership
- Parent/Guardian Engagement
- Junior Cycle
- Transition Year
- Senior Cycle
- Community Engagement

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Step 3

Priority Setting & Action Planning

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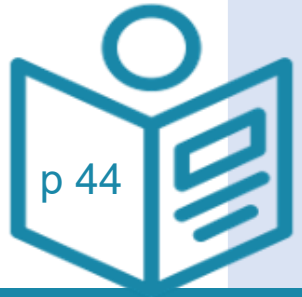
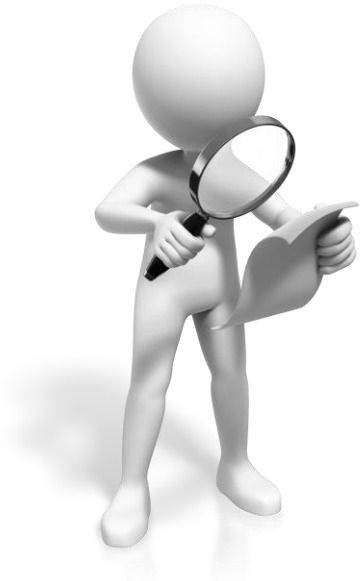
Ask	Plan	Do	Review
Identify Priority Area Chose one clear focus. Base this on data.	Define one or two SMART goals.	Plan small, manageable actions linked to the goal. Assign roles (who does what and by when).	Every term (or after the actions completed): - Check what's working. - Gather feedback - Decide what to adjust or build on next. - Keep simple notes to track actions and learning



Step 4

Case Studies – Activity 5

Each group will be assigned a case study where they will apply the Inclusive Pathways Audit Reflection Tool



Strengthening Inclusive Pathways

- **Case Study 1**
- **DEIS**
- **Medium sized urban town - Midlands**

Expanding Possibilities Through WSG

- **Case Study 2**
- **Non-DEIS Gaelcholáiste**
- **Rural townland in the Southwest**

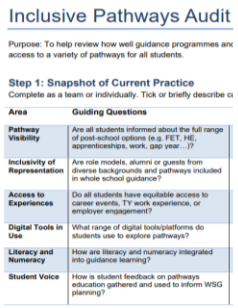
Broadening the Narrative of Success

- **Case Study 3**
- **Non-DEIS**
- **Growing commuter town close to a major city**

Spokespersons:

- One or two areas from the audit that really stood out in your discussion
- A challenge or gap the school in your case study is facing
- And one potential improvement action or idea you explored

Case Studies – Group Insights


Inclusive Pathways Audit

Purpose: To help review how well guidance programmes and access to a variety of pathways for all students.

Step 1: Snapshot of Current Practice

Complete as a team or individually. Tick or briefly describe c

Area	Guiding Questions
Pathway Visibility	Are all students informed about the full range of post-school options (e.g. FET, HE, apprenticeships, work, gap year…)?
Inclusivity of Representation	Are role models, alumni or guests from diverse backgrounds and pathways included in whole school guidance?
Access to Experiences	Do all students have equitable access to career events, TY work experience, or employer engagement?
Digital Tools in Use	What range of digital tools/platforms do students use to explore pathways?
Literacy and Numeracy	How are literacy and numeracy integrated into guidance learning?
Student Voice	How is student feedback on pathways education gathered and used to inform WSG planning?

Strengthening Inclusive Pathways

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- One or two areas from the audit that really stood out in your discussion
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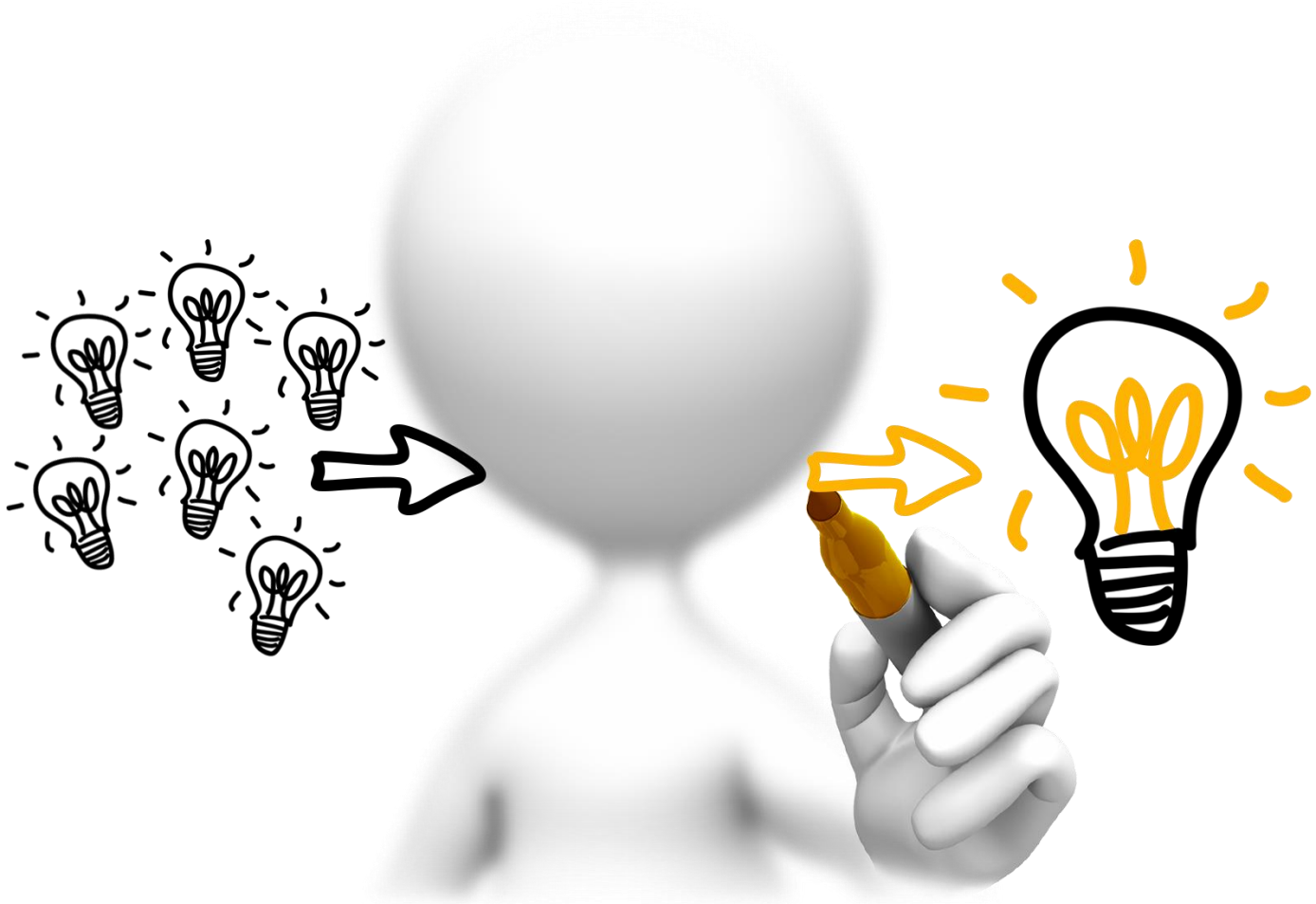
Recap and Reflection



What key ideas are your take away to bring to your WSG Team and Guidance Department?

p 3

https://tinyurl.com/kvu45hp2

Mailing list, School support, X

Post-primary
In School Support

Follow us on ***X*****:** @Oide_Guidance

Evaluation

https://registration.oide.ie/feedback

1. Click ‘Feedback’ (Top Right)
2. Select ‘Post-primary’
3. Select ‘Cluster PLE’
4. Select Language ‘English/Gaeilge’
5. Select Subject ‘Guidance’

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Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

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