Senior Cycle Redevelopment Planning for Change

Programme Support

Professional Learning Booklet 2025-2026

Contents

Introduction

Throughout the PLE, we will use the following icons to support engagement in the day:

Individual Activity

Pair Activity

Group Activity

Click to View

Pedagogical Strategy
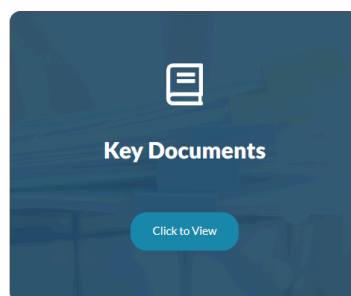
Writing Activity

Video Clip

Digital Strategy

Feedback

Programme Support Resources

https://oide.ie/post-primary/home/programmes-support/senior-cycle/professional-learning-materials/

News & Updates

Click to View

Key Documents

Click to View

Professional Learning Materials

Click to View

PLE Intentions

> To develop a shared understanding of the purpose of senior cycle education and reflect on our role in shaping curriculum change.

> To explore student engagement and how we can effectively engage students in the action verbs of redeveloped specifications and with senior cycle key competencies.

> To consider a whole school approach to supporting student engagement in effective learning experiences.

Reflection Tool

Throughout our PLE, will will use the following reflection tool to track our thinking:

Make a note of anything that you could:
- Keep
- Introduce
- Remove
- Adapt

Keep | Introduce | Remove | Adapt
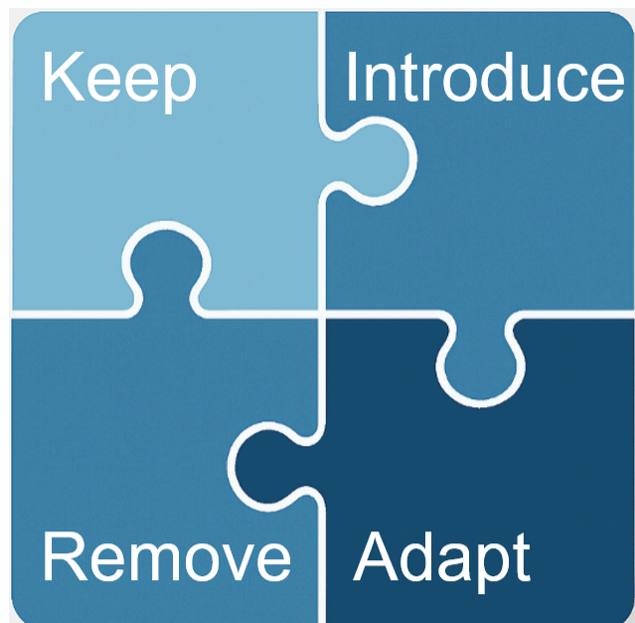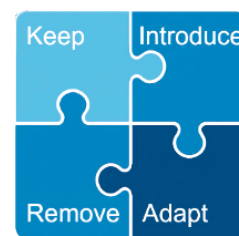
Reflecting on Session 1:

Reflecting on Session 2:

Reflecting on Session 3:

Key Documents

To access redeveloped senior cycle subjects and AAC guidelines visit:
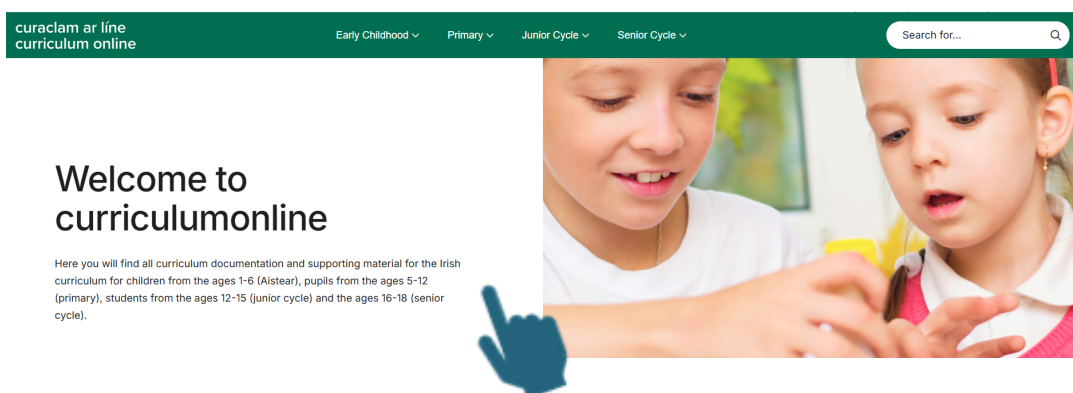
A Padlet has been created with key documents

![Oide logo] Oide — Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí — Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers
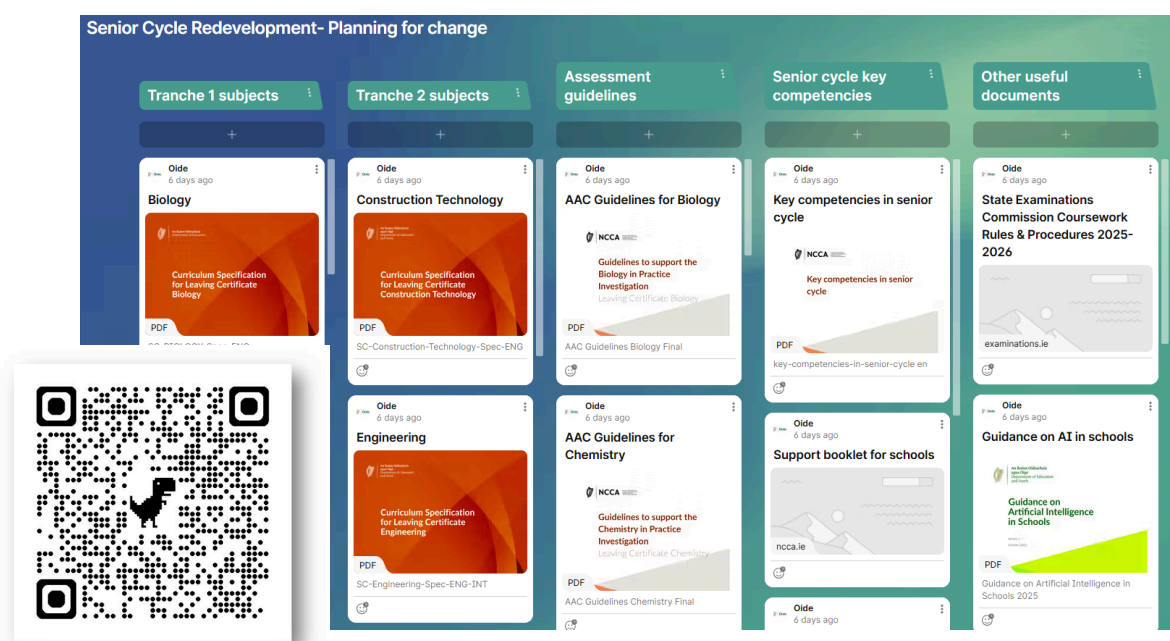
Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Developing your School Acceptable Use Policy

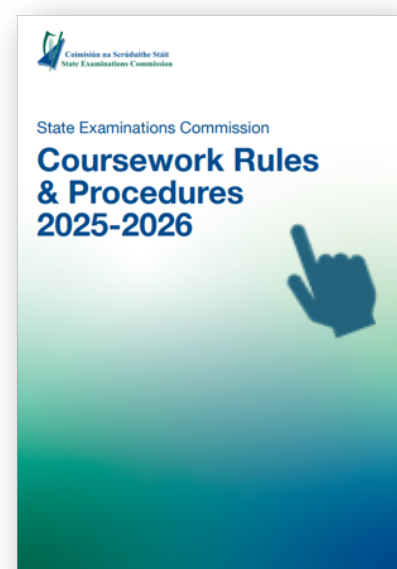An Acceptable Use Policy is an important document which addresses all **rights, privileges, responsibilities and sanctions** associated with the use of the internet and digital technologies within the school, including online and offline usage.

AUP Generator →

➤ **Using the AUP Generator Tool**   ⊕

👁 **Preview the AUP Generator Tool**   ⊕

📙 **AUP Guidelines**   ⊖

Information and guidance on developing an AUP for your school is available in the Webwise AUP Guidelines document.

Download the AUP Guidlines

Purpose of Education

Think about what you believe is the purpose of education for your students in this educational phase?

…analyses of 21st century challenges have led to a re-appraisal of what students need to learn in school to support them in the lives they are currently experiencing, as well as to prepare them for more uncertain future lives…

McGuinness, C (2023) Student Competencies in a Redeveloped Senior Cycle. p7

Diamond 9 Activity

- Record 12 words/phrases that illustrate the purpose of education for your students.
- Reduce the 12 words/phrases to 9.
- Rank the 9 responses into a diamond 9 placing the most important one at the top.
- Share the top three from the diamond 9.
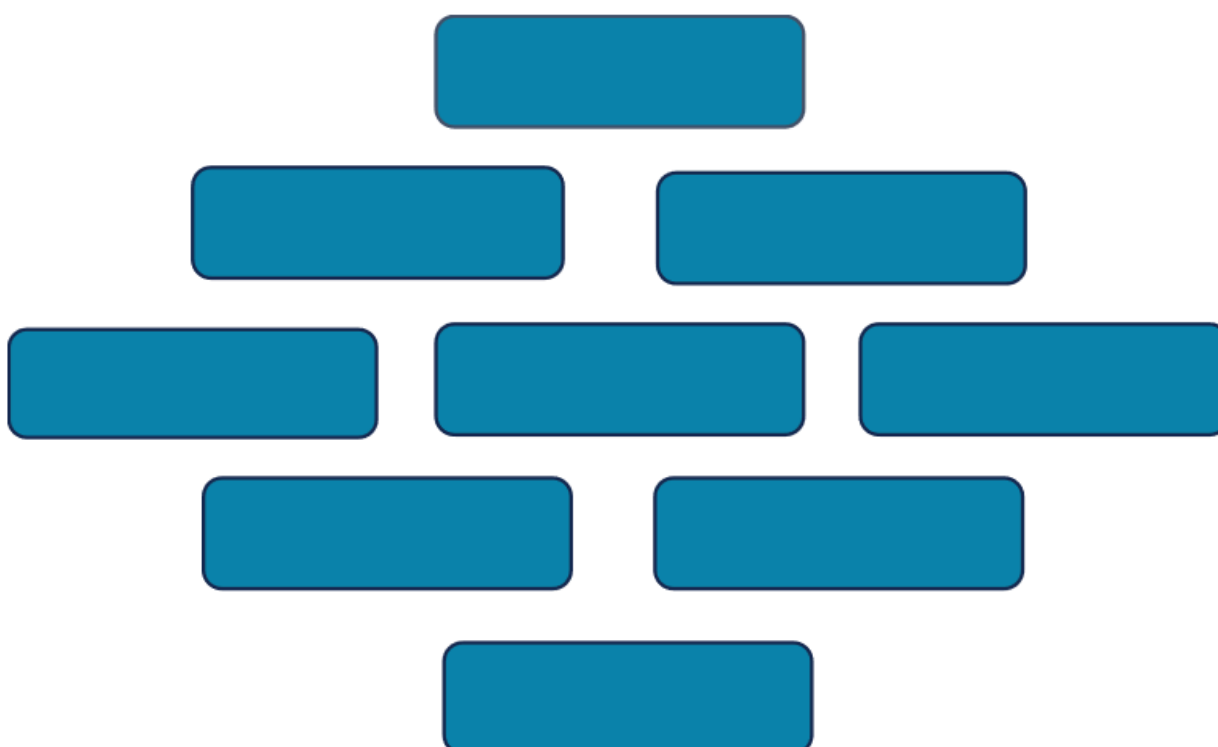
Your group's top three words or phrases:

Copi and Paste Video

Created by Daniel Martínez Lara and Rafa Cano Méndez

As you watch, consider how might you link it to the purpose of education?

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Student Engagement

How do you effectively engage students at Senior Cycle?

Effective Student Engagement

Spider Web Discussions

Students sit in a circle

Teacher sits outside the circle observing and mapping the conversation.

A discussion question or prompt is displayed for the students.

A set duration of time is allocated for the discussion and a timer is displayed.

The discussion of the question/prompt commences for the duration of the allocated time. The teacher does not intervene.

After the time is up, the teacher joins the circle and gives feedback on the discussion.

Teacher reveals the Spider Web diagram and highlights significant observations.

Collaboratively, students and teacher use the rubric to discuss feedback and reflect on the discussion.

Mapping the Spider Web Discussion

1) The teacher writes the names of the learners participating on a large page or board arranged in a circular shape.

2) Once the first student begins speaking, the teacher circles that student's name, as an indication of who has started the discussion.

Participant B

Participant A

Participant C
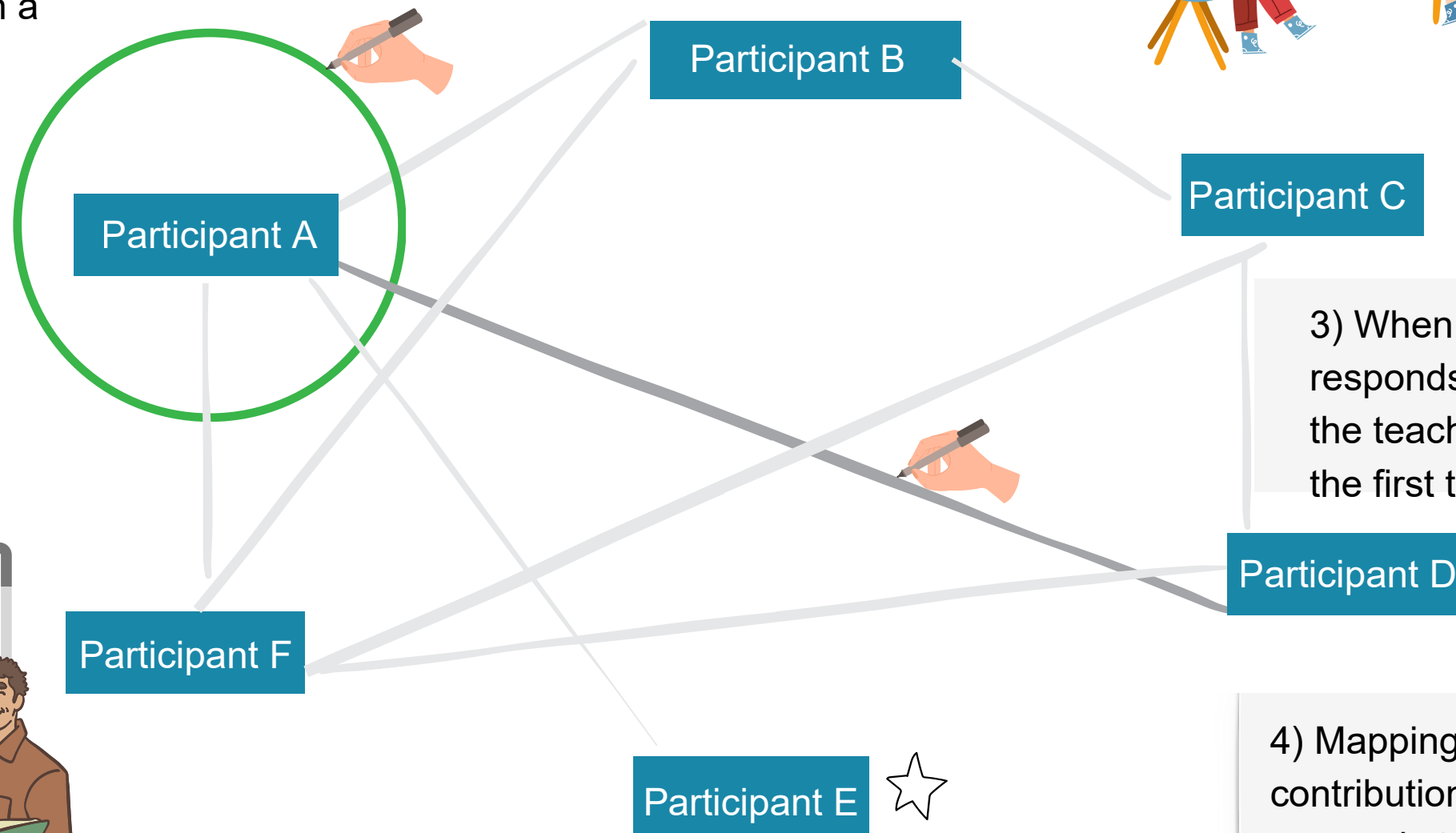
3) When the next student responds to the first student, the teacher draws a line from the first to the next and so on.
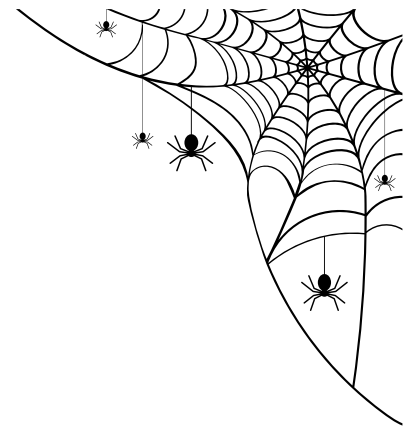
Participant D

Participant F

4) Mapping clear, relevant contributions, the teacher proceeds to draw the lines as the discussion develops.

Participant E

5) The teacher can add codes beside student names to acknowledge the quality of contributions.

6) Where heavy lines are visible after the discussion encourage students to reflect on the value of a democratic discussion process.

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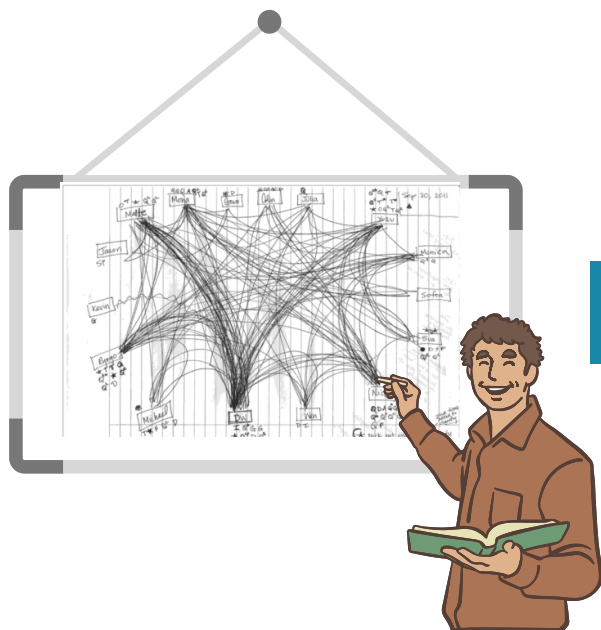
Spiderweb Discussion

In the image below you will see how a teacher assessed a spider web discussion. It can offer a great moment of reflection for the teacher and their students. Again, this can be adapted to suit your own context.
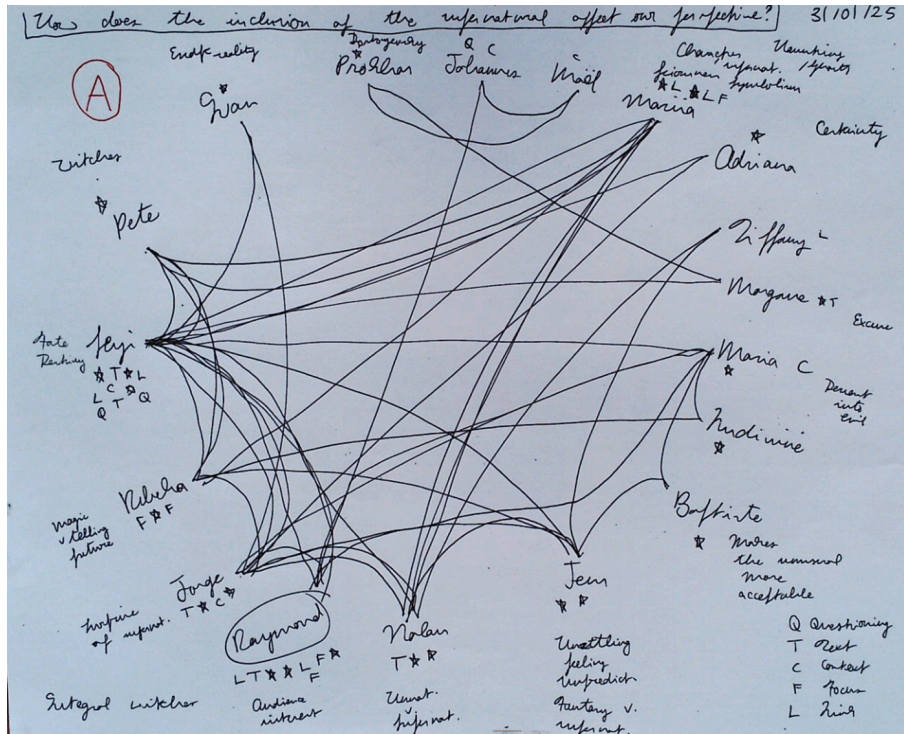
Labelling Student Contributions

The table below is a sample of coding that could be used in the Spiderweb Discussion. Again, it can be adapted to suit your context.

Code	Student Action
Q	Question posed
F	Follow on point
R	Reference made
A	Agreed with a point made
D	Disagreed with a point
L	Linking points back to the text

Igniting Student Engagement

Person A and B:

Describe a learner experience where your students were actively engaged in your Senior Cycle classroom.

Observer:

What was the learner experience?

What sparked student engagement?

How did the learner experience engage all learners?

Action Verbs in The Classroom

Spider Web Discussions

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After the time is up, the teacher joins the circle and gives feedback on the discussion.

Teacher reveals the Spider Web diagram and highlights significant observations.

Collaboratively, students and teacher use the rubric to discuss feedback and reflect on the discussion.

What actions verbs could be activated in your chosen learner experience?

How could these action verbs be activated in your classroom?

Worked example using Action Verbs

<div style="border:1px solid">

Spiderweb Discussion

Action Verb(s)

Verb(s): Develop and Evaluate

Develop - Evolve an idea or concept for planned work

Evaluate - Collect and examine evidence to make judgement and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a judgement; identify the limitations of evidence in conclusions; make judgements about the ideas, solutions or methods.

(Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate English, p.28)

Description of the learner experience that activates the action verb(s):

Students sit in a spiderweb discussion circle to explore the question: "To what extent is Macbeth responsible for his downfall, and how do other forces (Lady Macbeth, the witches, ambition, fate) contribute?"

Develop:

- Using a Flipped Classroom approach, students prepare by annotating key passages at home (e.g. Macbeth's soliloquies, Lady Macbeth's persuasion) and arrive ready to link textual evidence to broader concepts such as responsibility, morality, or manipulation.
- Through Think–Pair–Share, each student first reflects individually, then pairs to discuss, before evolving their idea in the spiderweb discussion by building on a peer's contribution.

Evaluate:

- Collect & Examine Evidence: In the spiderweb circle, students bring forward textual evidence and share it aloud. The teacher begins mapping contributions on the spiderweb chart.
- Peer-to-Peer Questioning: Students challenge and extend each other's points, making judgements about which evidence most strongly supports or weakens the claim of Macbeth's responsibility.
- Structured Debate Prompts: Students appraise different interpretations, weighing the strength of competing arguments. Prompts guide them to consider alternative readings and counterpoints.
- Spiderweb Chart as Final Component: The teacher reviews the completed spiderweb chart with the class, showing how ideas evolved, evidence was evaluated, and interpretations were connected. The chart becomes a visual record of collective reasoning, highlighting the interplay of the develop and evaluate action verbs.
- Reflection Question linked to the Key Competency *Thinking and Solving Problems* :"How did weighing different pieces of evidence and interpretations in our discussion help you make a more reasoned judgement about Macbeth's responsibility for his downfall?"

</div>

How could the learner experience effectively engage your students?

- Active Preparation (Flipped Classroom): By annotating passages at home, students arrive ready with evidence, which builds confidence and ensures richer contributions. This preparation creates agency and accountability to the discussion.
- Inclusive Participation (Think–Pair–Share): The structure guarantees that every student has a voice. Individual reflection scaffolds thinking, pairing builds confidence, and sharing in the circle allows ideas to evolve collaboratively.
- Collaborative Critical Thinking (Spiderweb Circle): Students are not passive recipients of teacher input. They actively construct meaning together. Peer-to-peer questioning and structured debate prompts supports them to challenge assumptions, weigh evidence, and refine judgements.
- Visible Progress (Spiderweb Chart): The chart provides a tangible record of collective reasoning. Students can see how their contributions connect to others, which motivates participation and highlights the value of collaboration.
- Key Competency Link (Thinking and Solving Problems): The reflection question explicitly ties the activity to the Senior Cycle key competency by encouraging critical thinking. This supports students to recognise that they are developing transferable skills beyond literary analysis.

KEY COMPETENCIES IN SENIOR CYCLE

Thinking and solving problems

- 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.

Managing learning and self

- develop strategies, values and dispositions which support their learning and their future life path.
- manage their own learning, with support from their teachers, other adults, their peers and technology.
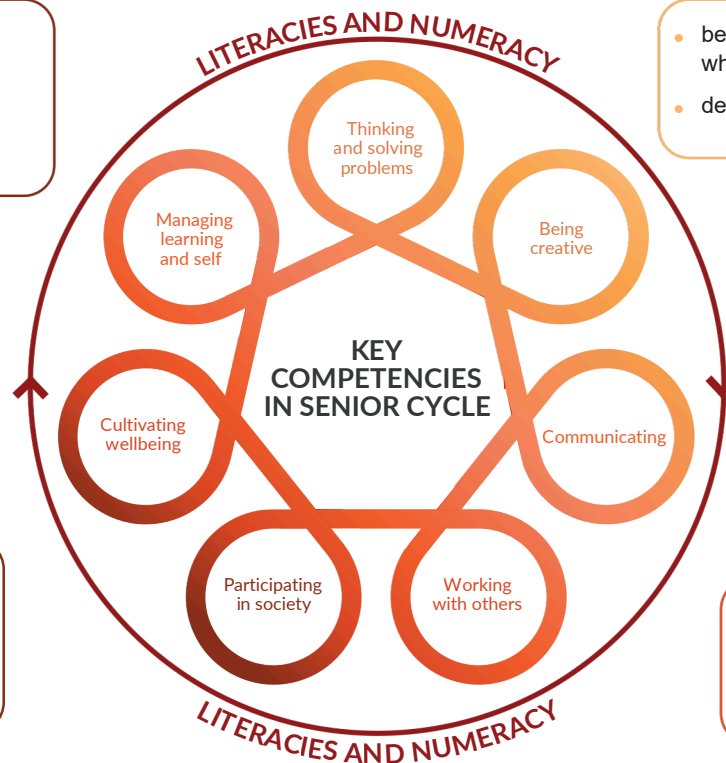
Cultivating wellbeing

- cultivate the wellbeing of self and others.
- develop values and dispositions which support wellbeing and the capacity to cope with and respond to challenges.

Participating in society

- develop values and dispositions which support meaningful participation.
- participate meaningfully in their schools, communities, and wider society.

Being creative

- be creative and develop a range of strategies and processes which support their creativity.
- develop values and dispositions which nurture their creativity.

Communicating

- deepen their understanding of various forms of communication and of the material they are studying.
- communicate meaningfully and effectively, using various tools and formats, for different purposes and audiences.
- develop habits and nurture dispositions which help them to communicate meaningfully and effectively.
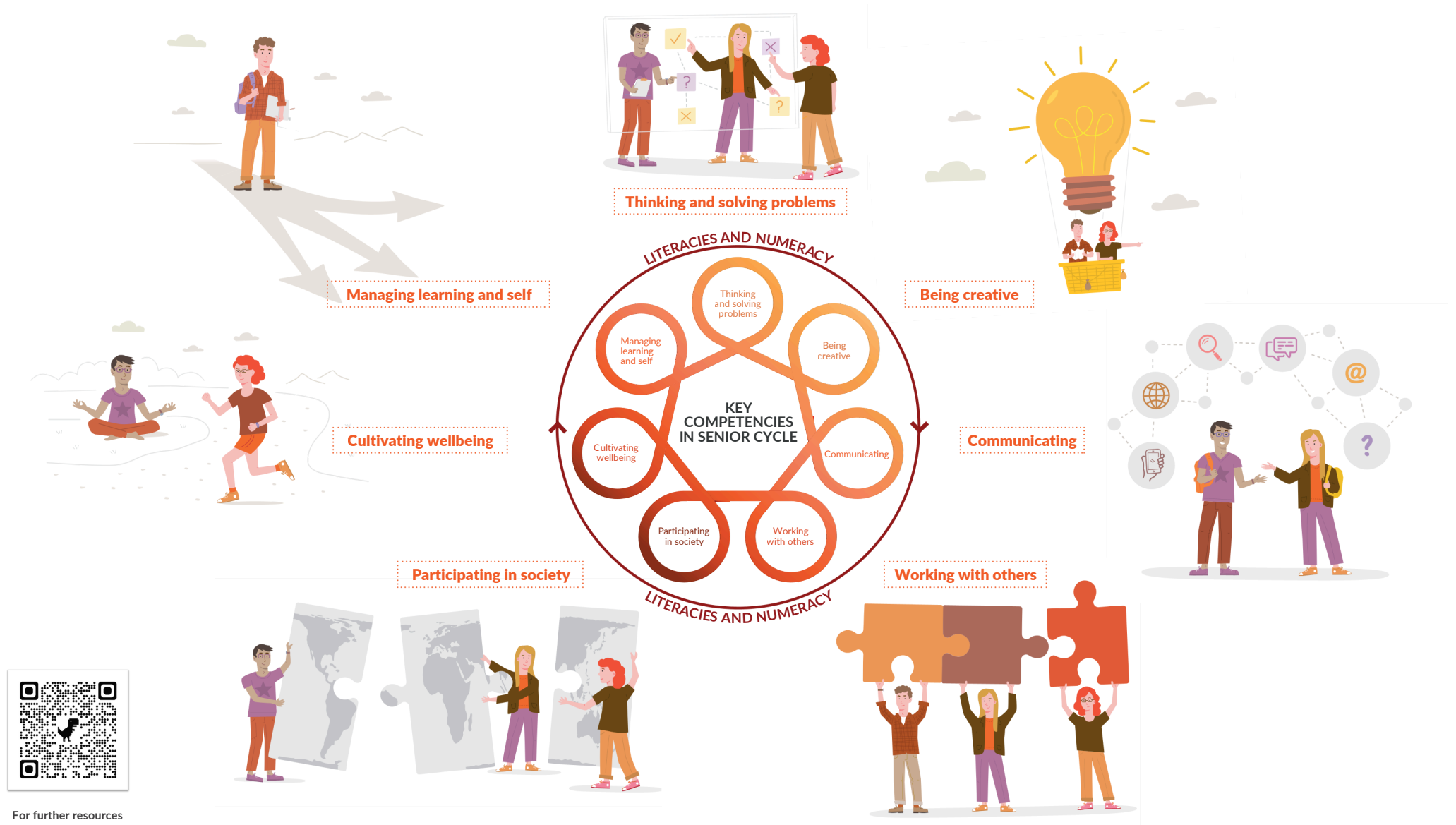
Working with others

- work co-operatively in pairs, groups and teams.
- develop strategies, values and dispositions which make working with others more meaningful.

LITERACIES AND NUMERACY

KEY COMPETENCIES IN SENIOR CYCLE

- Thinking and solving problems
- Being creative
- Communicating
- Working with others
- Participating in society
- Cultivating wellbeing
- Managing learning and self

LITERACIES AND NUMERACY

For further resources

ncca.ie/seniorcycle

NCCA
An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

KEY COMPETENCIES IN SENIOR CYCLE

Thinking and solving problems

Managing learning and self

Being creative

Cultivating wellbeing

Communicating

LITERACIES AND NUMERACY

Thinking and solving problems

Managing learning and self

Being creative

KEY COMPETENCIES IN SENIOR CYCLE

Cultivating wellbeing

Communicating

Participating in society

Working with others

LITERACIES AND NUMERACY

Participating in society

Working with others

For further resources

NCCA
An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

Key Competency Gallery Walk Activity

Key competencies in senior cycle

August 2024
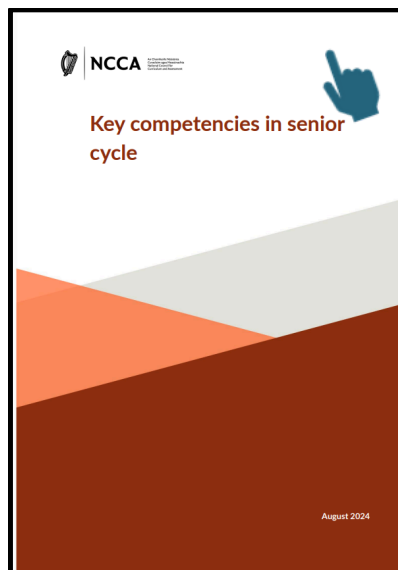
Using one of the examples from the igniting student engagement activity:

How are the attributes of one of the learning outcomes from a key competency brought to life?

Sustaining Student Engagement

Share how you might support students to engage in tasks using the headings below:

Getting started	Sustaining and supporting the learning	Managing multiple activities	Giving feedback	Completion

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1 What's most challenging about the process?

2. How should students record their progress?

3. How do you ensure deadlines are met?

4. How much research is too much?

Notes on shared experience

5. How do you encourage student reflection?

6. How do you deal with plagiarism?

7. When does correction become co-writing?

8. How do you maintain motivation throughout the process?

9. How can students research together?

10. Any other questions?

The Role of Teacher

Role of the teacher

The teacher has an important role to play in supporting and supervising student work on the Business Alive Investigative Study. Teaching and learning related to the additional assessment component should be integrated into ongoing classroom practice to maximise opportunities for students to achieve the learning outcomes of the specification and support the development of key competencies.

The release of the common brief by the SEC in term two of year one allows teachers to signpost the requirements and content of the brief from an early stage of learning in the subject. It will also facilitate teachers in planning for the integration of the AAC, as appropriate, into the natural flow of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Support may include:
- clarifying the requirements of the Business Alive Investigative Study brief
- helping students to understand how the brief issued by the State Examinations Commission for the Business Alive Investigative Study links to the Leaving Certificate Business specification
- identifying any particular areas of the specification that students may need to engage with in order to undertake the AAC

Senior Cycle Subjects | Curriculum Online
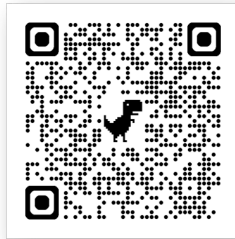
How does this support teachers?

What impact might it have on your practice?

Rules for the Use of AI in SEC Examinations Coursework

Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

State Examinations Commission
Coursework Rules & Procedures 2025-2026

Appendix 2 –
Rules for the Use of AI in SEC Examination Coursework

Introduction

Where Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (including software and applications) are used in State examination coursework, it must be conducted in a responsible and ethical manner. This is essential to maintain academic integrity and ensure that candidates' work reflects their own understanding and efforts. AI tools should **not** be used to generate coursework content. However, AI tools may assist in generating ideas, conducting research, or enhancing clarity, provided its use is clearly documented, in the same manner that all research sources are treated in coursework.

These rules set out the acceptable use and appropriate acknowledgment of AI tools in coursework.

SEC, Coursework Rules & Procedures 2025-2026, Appendix 2, pg. 33-36

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Scoile agus Múinteoirí · and Teachers

Research, Referencing and Reflection

Consider the prompts below and complete a placemat on your assigned topic.

What's working well?	Challenges

Actions

Opportunities

Priorities

1.

2.

3.

Subject Department Planning Time

In your subject department groups, reflect on the main aspects of today's PLE.

Consider how you are planning for learner experiences that engage your students at senior cycle.

Examine any upcoming unit of learning and reflect on the learner experiences you have designed that engage your students in their learning.

Key Competencies
Action Verbs
Coursework
AAC Guidelines
Research, Referencing, Reflection
Authentication

Additional Supports

Oide.ie

This section provides support, professional learning materials and information on post-primary subjects, programme support (including Junior Cycle, Transition Year, Senior Cycle, Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme) and supports for areas such as Inclusive Education, DEIS planning, Wellbeing Curriculum planning and Creativity in Education.

You will find information on professional learning events in these areas and be able to register for our various mailing lists. You will also find links to official documentation relating to post-primary education in Ireland, such as subject specifications, assessment guidelines, and recent Department of Education circular letters.

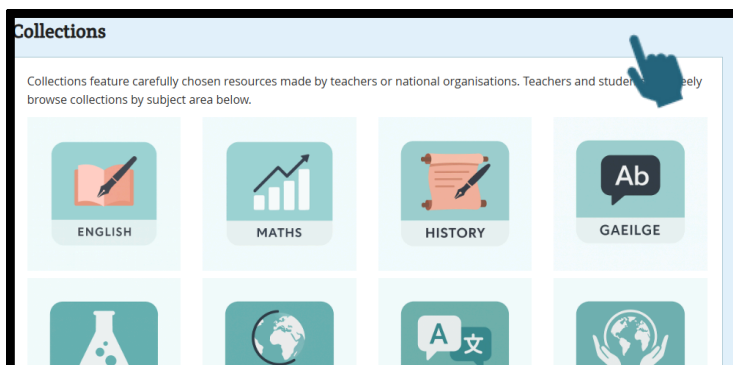We hope you find these supports helpful and we look forward to working with you in the future.

– Post-Primary Division Subject Areas –

Oide Technology in Education
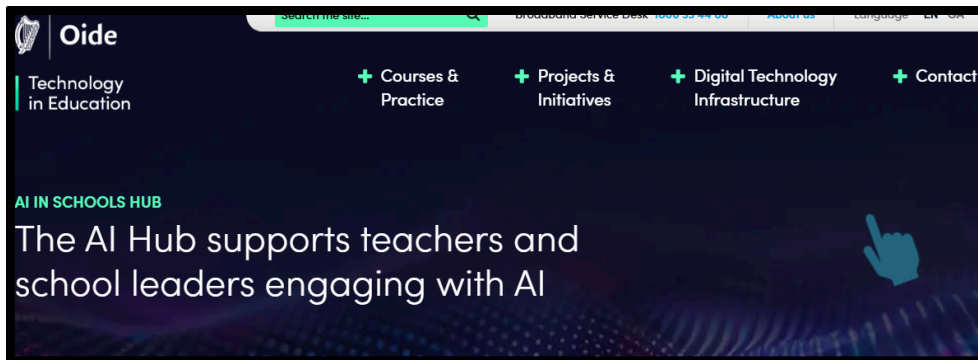
Scoilnet

NCCA

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This is a space for you to record strategies modelled, shared and created from today's PLE:

Notes