



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Senior Cycle Redevelopment Planning for Change

Programme Support

Professional Learning Booklet 2025-2026





Contents

Introduction.....	3
PLE Intentions	4
Reflection Tool	4
Key Documents	6
Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)	7
Purpose of Education	8
Diamond 9 Activity	9
Copi and Paste Video	10
What do We Want for our Students?.....	11
How are you embracing change?	12
Reflection on Change	13
Student Engagement	14
Effective Student Engagement	14
Mapping the Spider Web Discussion	15
Labelling Student Contributions	16
Igniting Student Engagement	17
Action Verbs in The Classroom	18
Worked Example using Action Verbs	19
Key Competencies in Senior Cycle	21
Key Competencies Gallery Walk Activity	23
Supporting Student Engagement in their Learning	24
Notes on Shared Experience	25
The Role of Teacher	26
Rules for the Use of AI in SEC Examination Coursework	26
Research, Referencing and Reflection	27
Subject Department Planning Time	28
Additional Supports	29
Bibliography	30
Record strategies modelled, shared and created	32
Notes	33





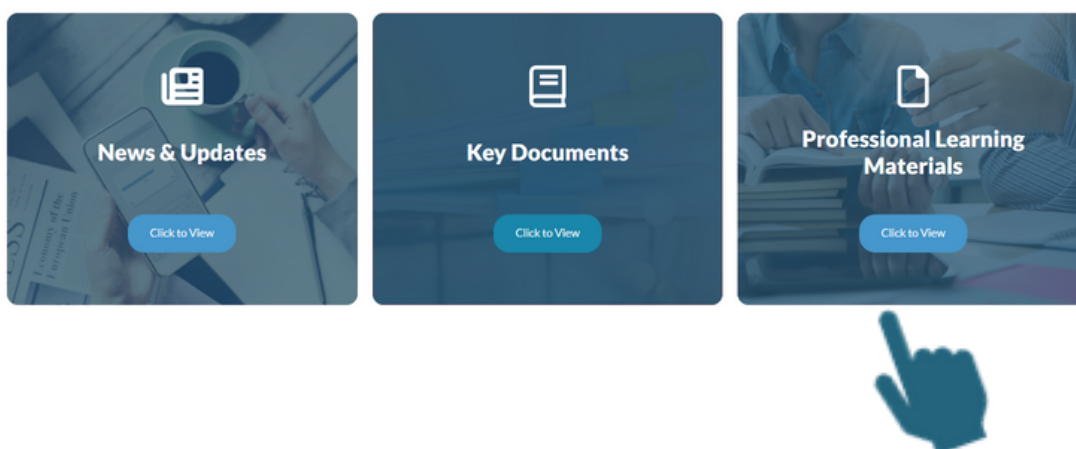
Introduction

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



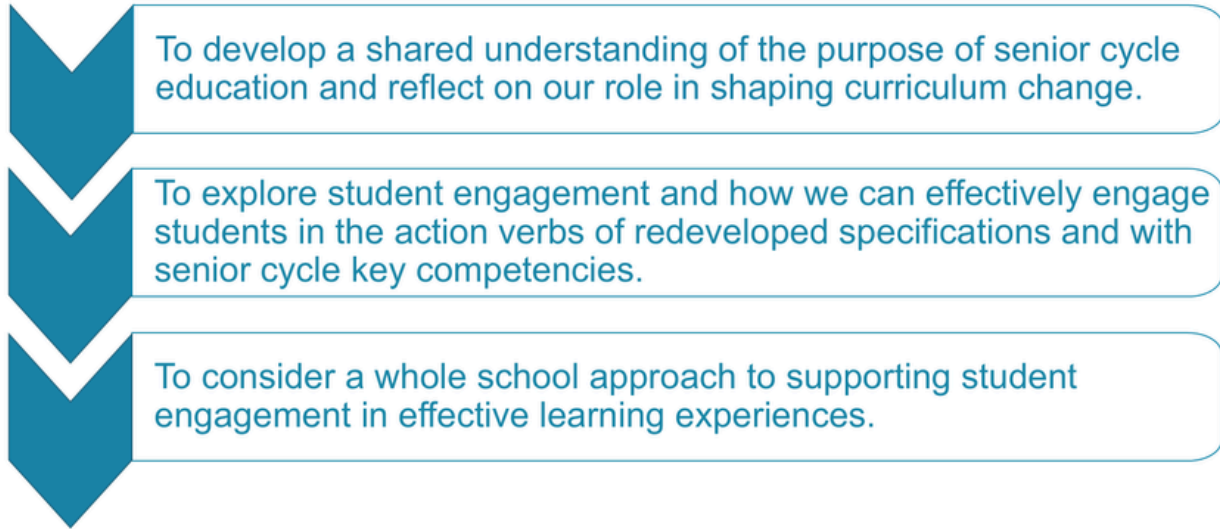
Programme Support Resources

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





PLE Intentions

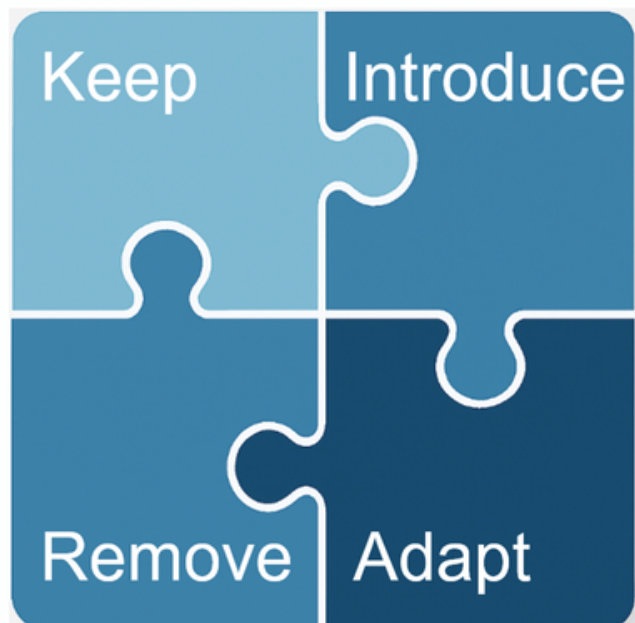


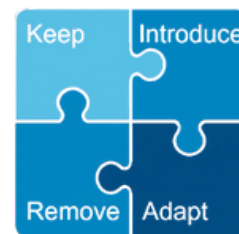
Reflection Tool

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

Make a note of anything that you could:

- Keep
- Introduce
- Remove
- Adapt





Reflecting on Session 1:

--	--	--	--

Reflecting on Session 2:

--	--	--	--

Reflecting on Session 3:

--	--	--	--



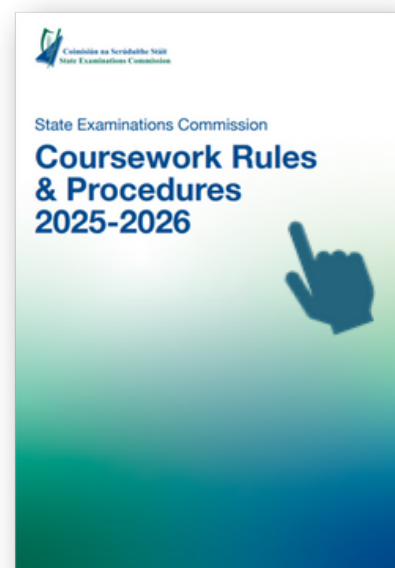
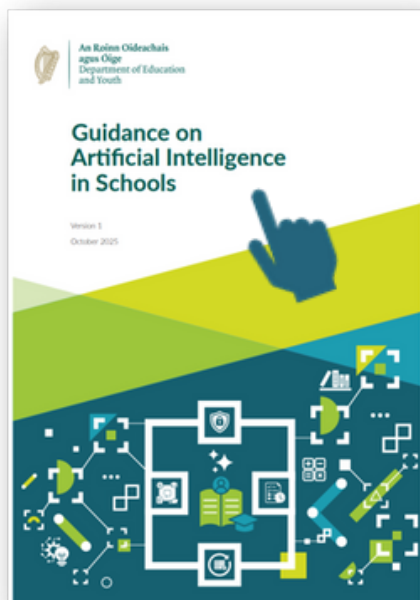
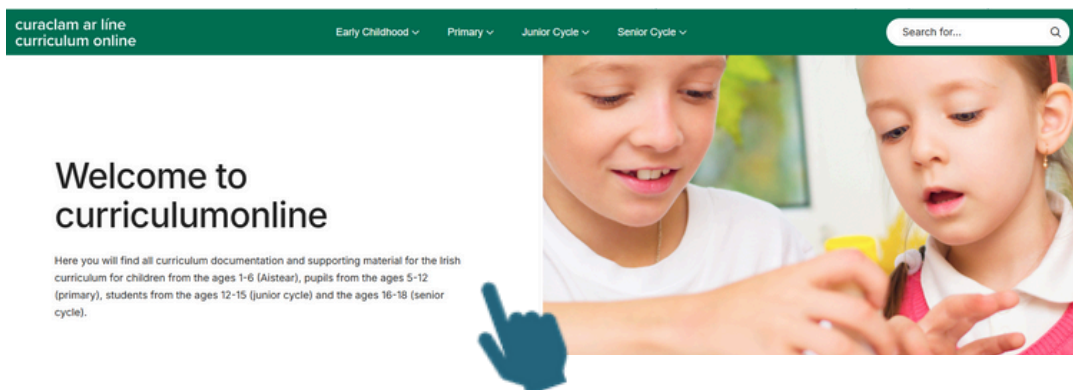
Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

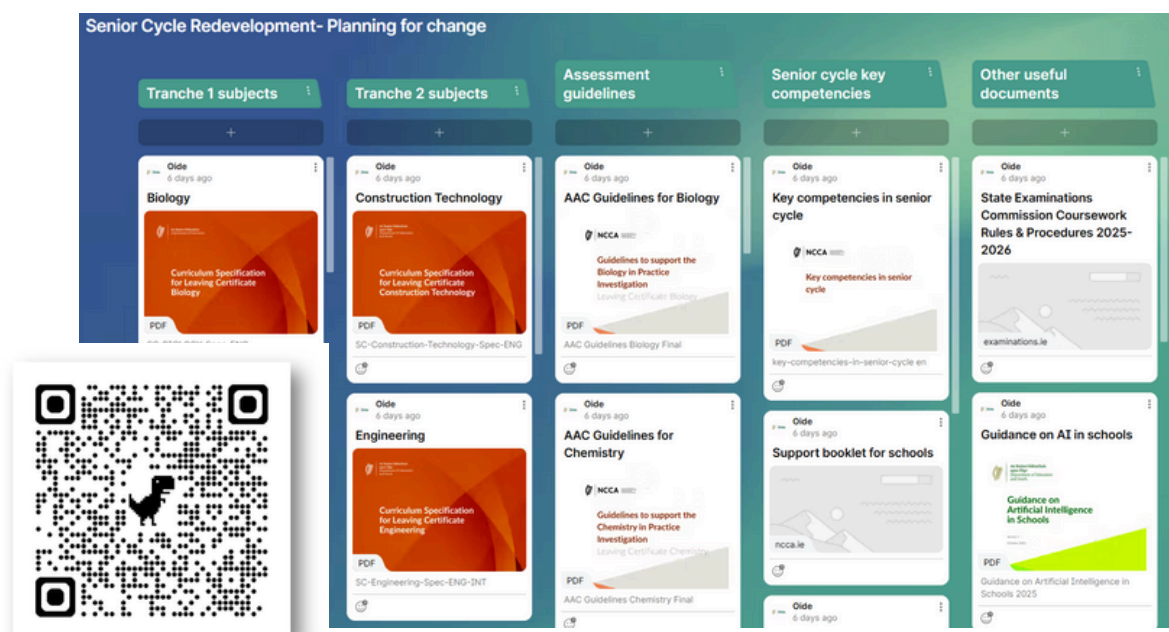
Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Key Documents

To access redeveloped senior cycle subjects and AAC guidelines visit:



A Padlet has been created
with key documents





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 Guidelines](#)





Purpose of Education

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



Student Competencies in a Redeveloped Senior Cycle

Carol McGuinness
Queen's University Belfast
c.mcguinness@qub.ac.uk

April 2023



...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...

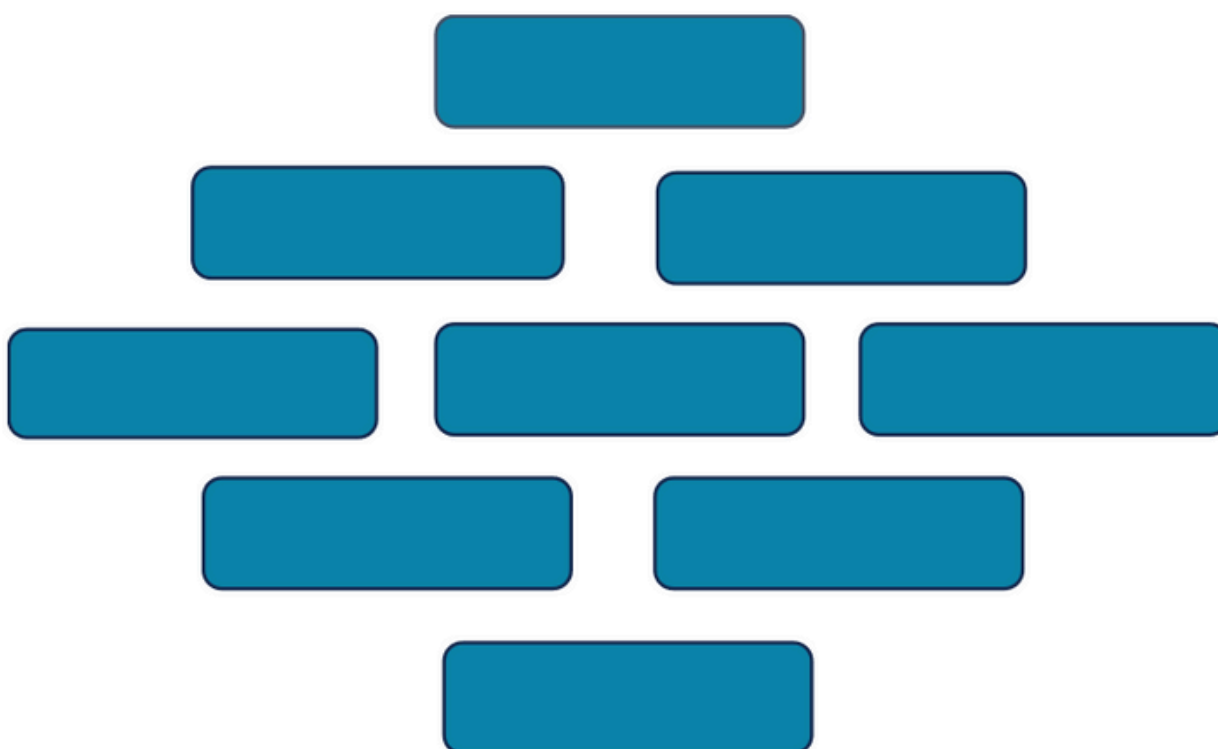


McGuinness, C (2023) Student Competencies in a Redeveloped Senior Cycle. p7



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

What moments have impacted on you?

How do they link to the purpose of education?



What do We Want for our Students?

Having completed the diamond nine activity and having reflected on the video, Copi and Paste, consider the following questions:

What do your students need to develop so they thrive now and into the future?

What opportunities are there in your classroom to make this happen?



How are you embracing change?



Source: Carol S. Dweck, PhD, Mindset, The New Psychology of Success



Change feels difficult: Start small. You don't have to try everything at once. Treat early attempts as practice, not failure.

You engage with change, even when it's challenging:
Expect some discomfort, it's part of learning. Use feedback to adjust, not to judge yourself. Keep going, even if progress feels slow.

You generally respond positively to change:
Stay open and curious. Be mindful that change can be uncomfortable for everyone. It is necessary for growth. Share what worked and what did not.



Reflection on Change

What do you notice?

What surprised you?

What impact does this have on your practice?



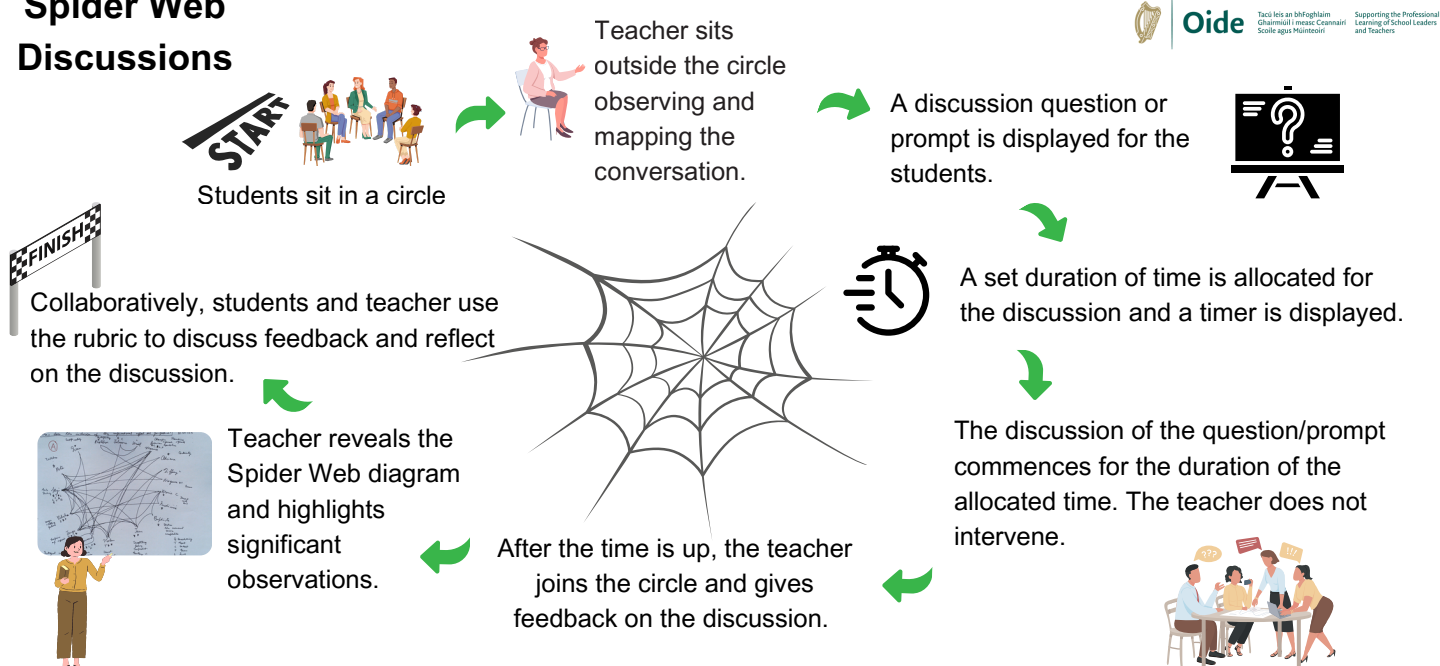
Student Engagement

How do you effectively engage students at Senior Cycle?

Effective Student Engagement

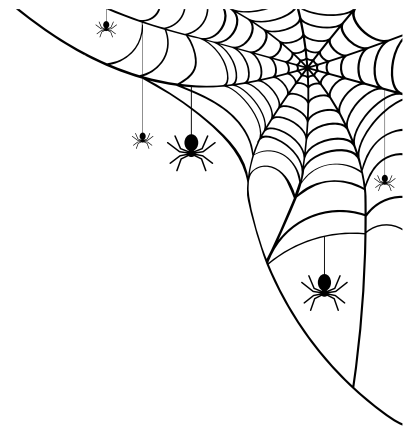


Spider Web Discussions



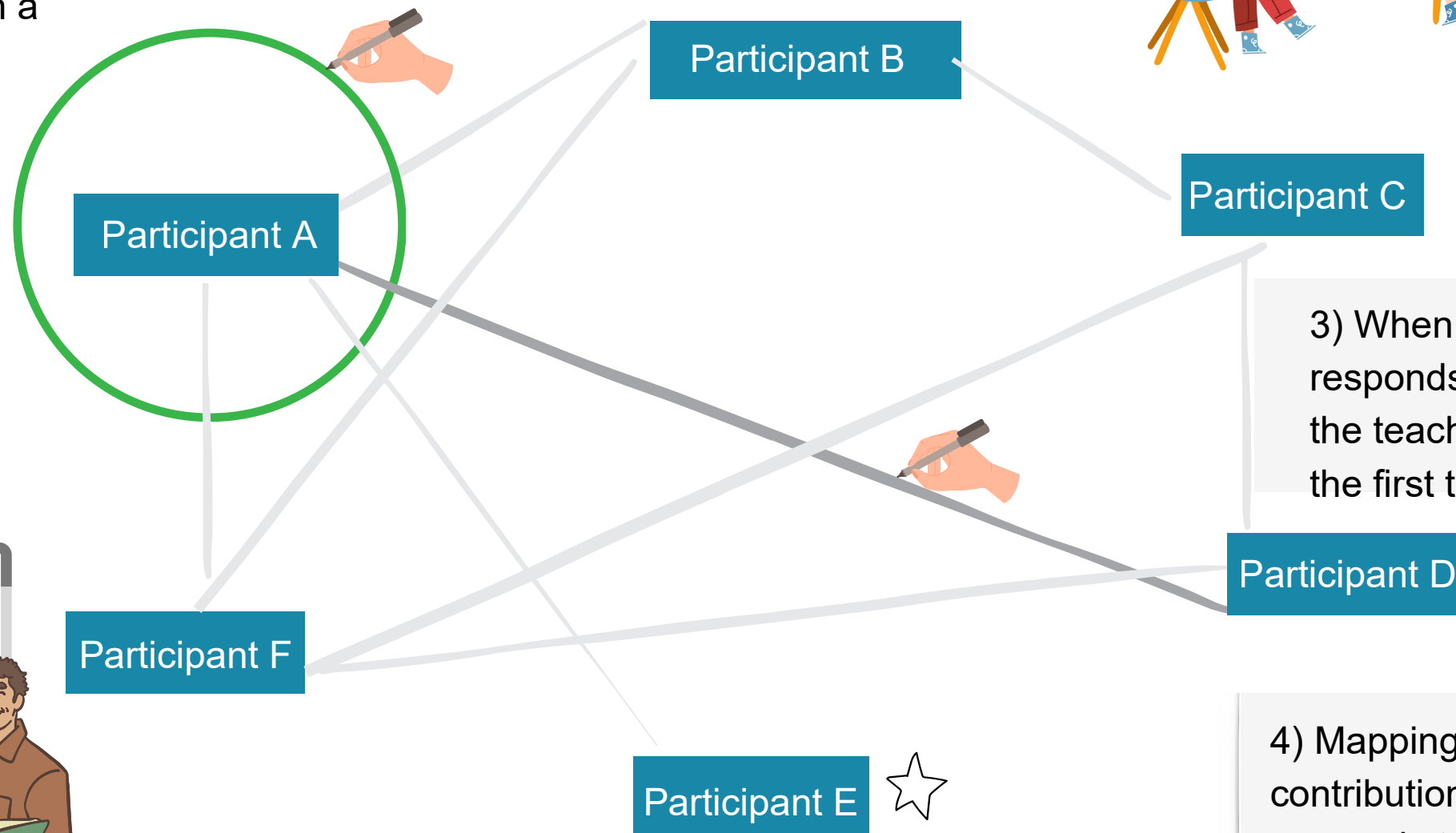


Mapping the Spider Web Discussion



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.

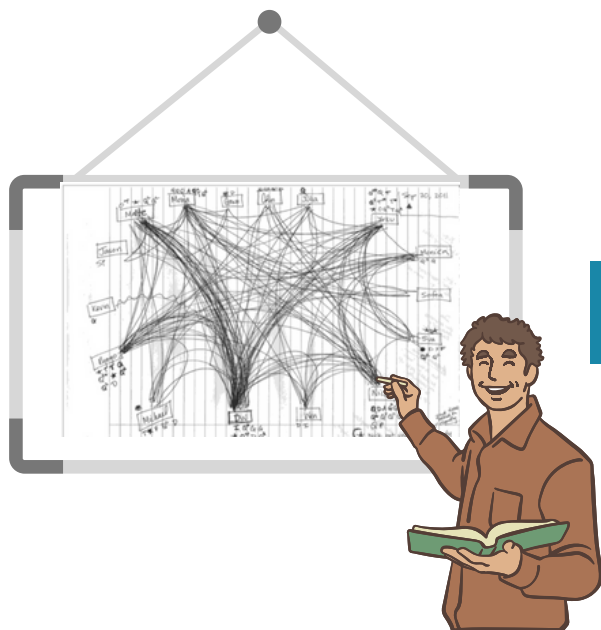


3) When the next student responds to the first student, the teacher draws a line from the first to the next and so on.

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

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

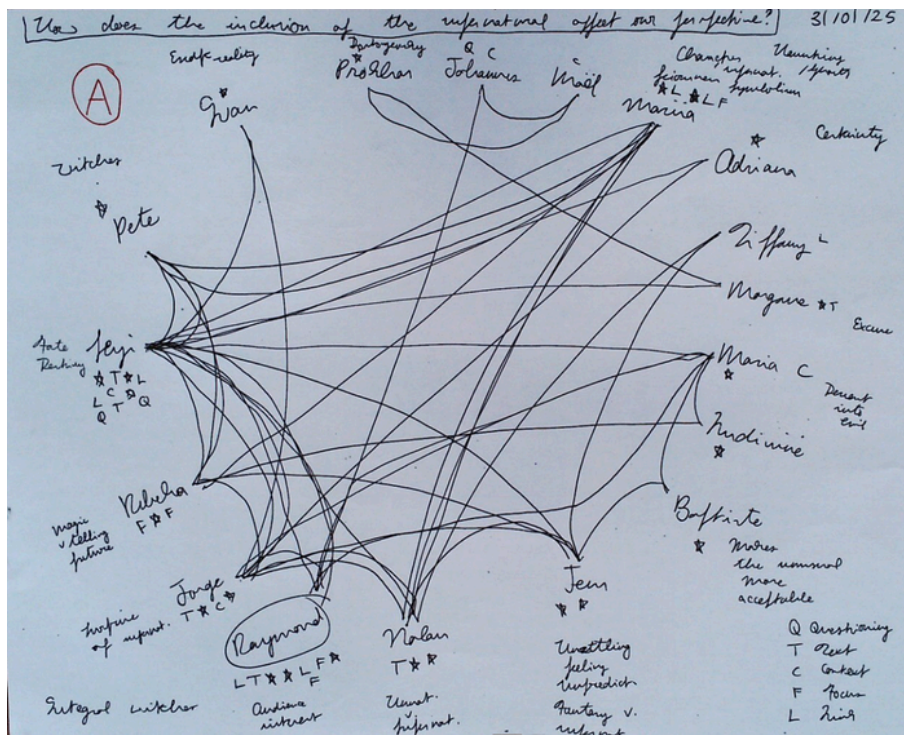
6) Where heavy lines are visible after the discussion encourage students to reflect on the value of a democratic discussion process.





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



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?

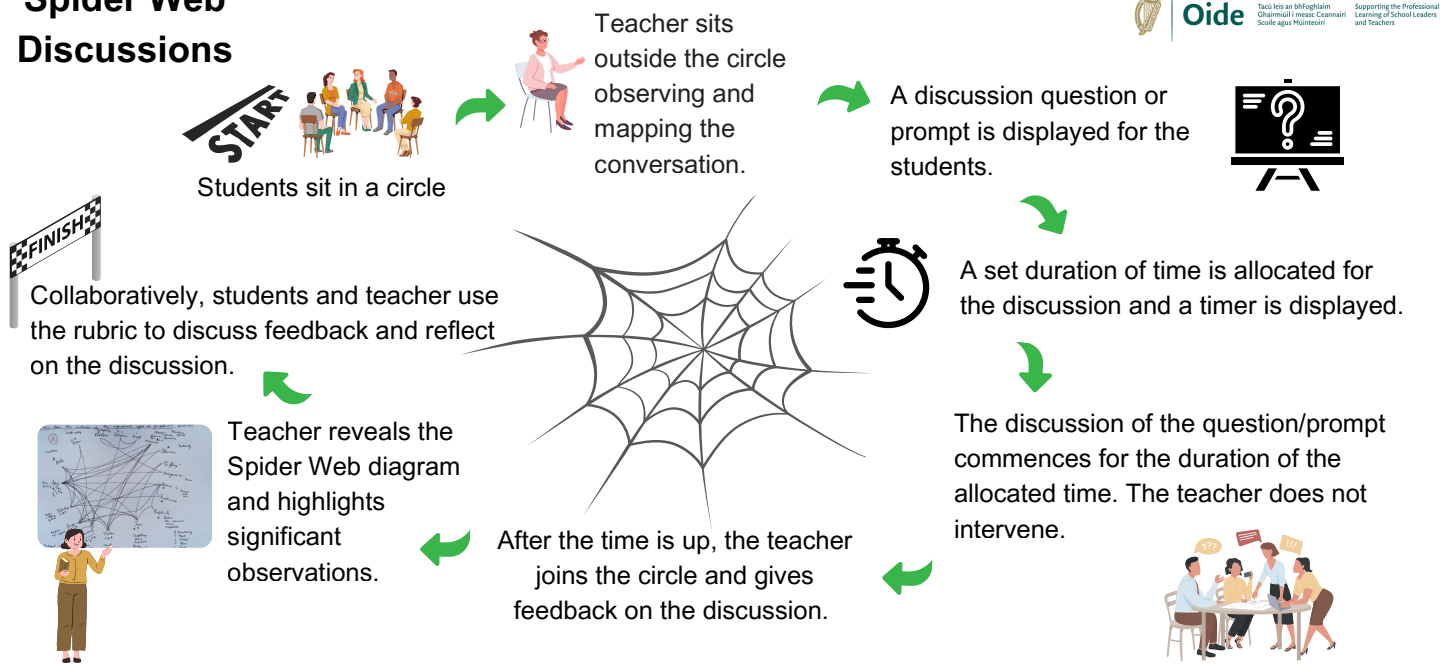
What sparked student engagement?

How did the learner experience engage all learners?



Action Verbs in The Classroom

Spider Web Discussions



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

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?”



Worked example continued

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

- 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

- 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.

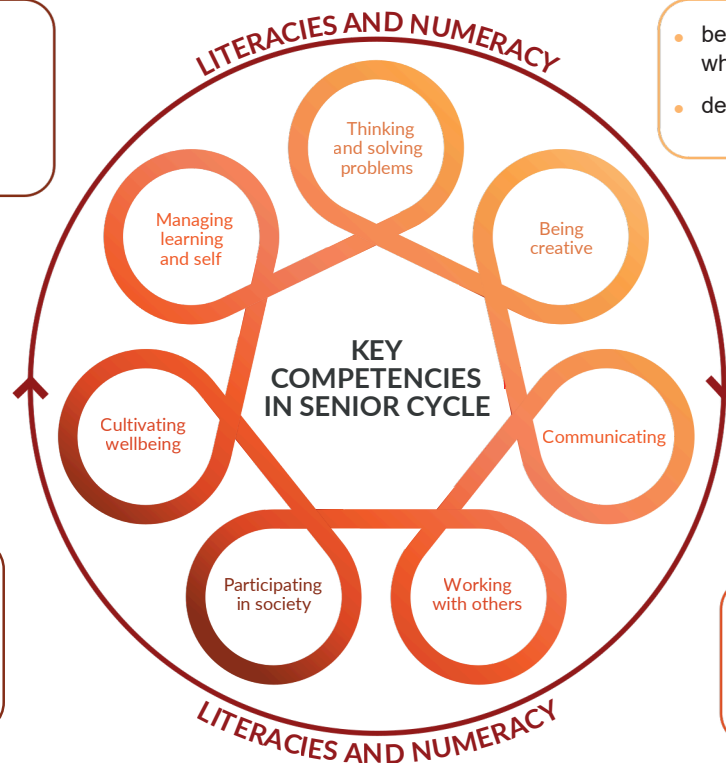
Managing learning and self

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

Cultivating wellbeing

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

Participating in society



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

Being creative

- 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.

Communicating

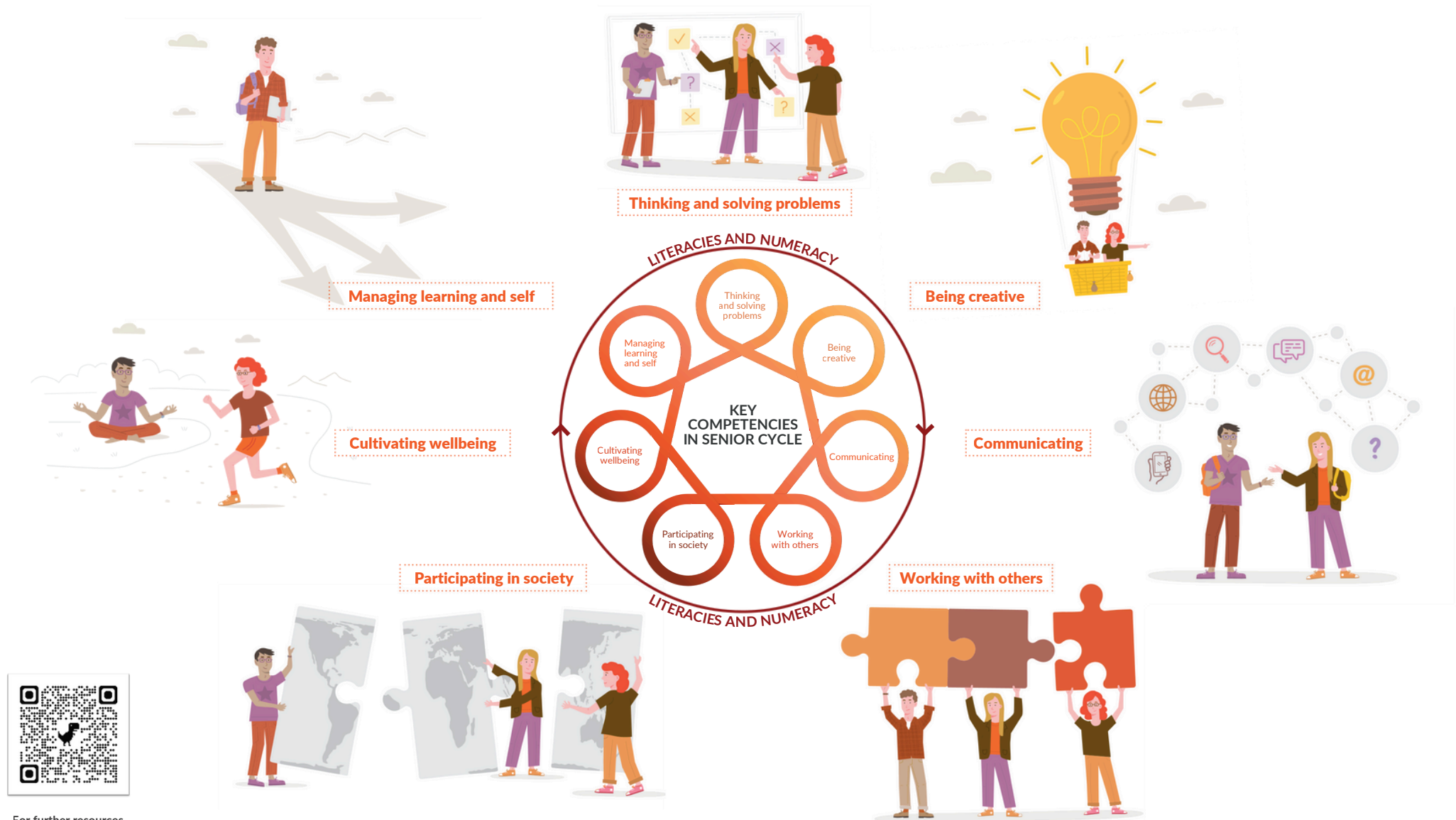
- work co-operatively in pairs, groups and teams.
- develop strategies, values and dispositions which make working with others more meaningful.

Working with others



For further resources

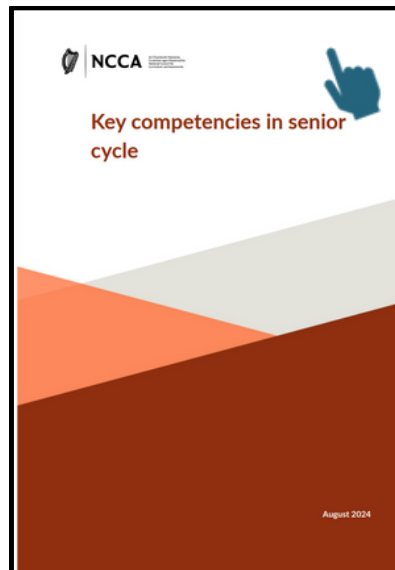
KEY COMPETENCIES IN SENIOR CYCLE



For further resources



Key Competency Gallery Walk Activity



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?



Supporting Student Engagement in their Learning

Discuss how you might support students to engage in a task using the headings below.

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



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?

10. Any other questions?

9. How can students research together?



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:

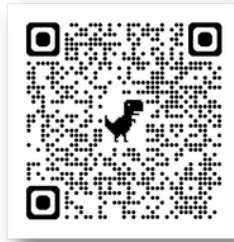
- clarifying the requirements of the Business Alive Investigative Study brief

- 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



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



Research, Referencing and Reflection

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

<p>What's working well?</p>	<p>Challenges</p> <p>Actions</p> <p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Priorities</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
-----------------------------	---	---



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



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

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.

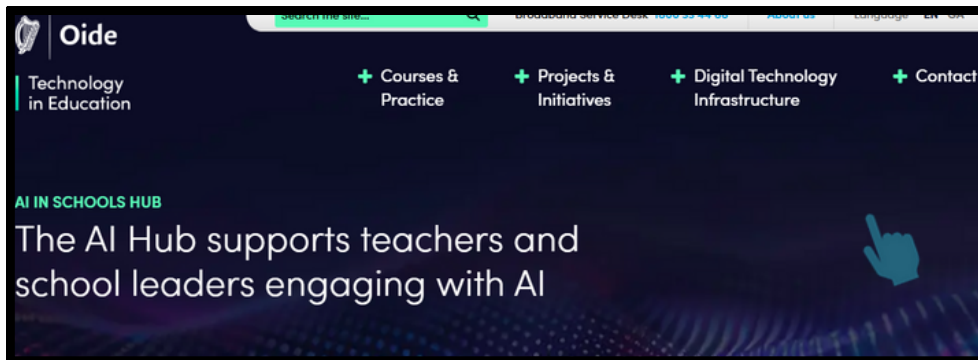
You will find information on professional learning events in these areas and be able to register for our various mailing lists. You will also find links to official documentation relating to post-primary education in Ireland, such as subject specifications, assessment guidelines, and recent Department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

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

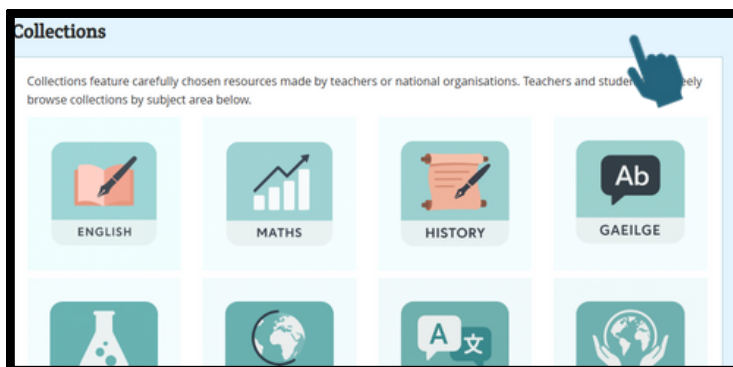


- Post-Primary Division Subject Areas -

Oide Technology in Education



Scoilnet



NCCA





Bibliography

CGMeetup. (2015). CGI animated short film “Alike” by Daniel Martínez Lara & Rafa Cano Méndez. YouTube video, 8:01. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDHlyrfMI_U

Department of Education and Youth. (2024). *Senior Cycle Redevelopment - Schools Information Note, May 2024 (Issue 5)*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/campaigns/senior-cycle-redevelopment/>

Department of Education and Youth. (2025). *Guidance on Artificial Intelligence in Schools*. Available at: https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/dee23cad/Guidance_on_Artificial_Intelligence_in_Schools_25.pdf

Department of Education and Youth. (2025). *Senior Cycle Redevelopment - Information Note to Schools, November 2025 (Issue 13)*. Available at: https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/99d04e36/Senior_Cycle_Redevelopment_Information_Note_to_Schools_13_November_2.pdf

Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.

Heaney, S. (1979). *Scaffolding*. In *Field Work*. London: Faber and Faber.

McGuinness, C. (2023). *Student Competencies in a Redeveloped Senior Cycle*. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/6268/key_competencies_report-senior-cycle_2023_en.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2019). *Senior Cycle Review: Consultation Document*. Available at: <https://ncca.ie/media/4024/sc-review-consultation-july-2019.pdf>

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2019). *Senior Cycle Review: Public Consultation, September 2019*. Available at: https://www.ncca.ie/media/4046/sc3_bulletin_english_919_web.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2022). *Leading and Supporting Change in Schools: A Discussion Paper*. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/2123/leading_and_supporting_change_in_schools_a_discussion_paper.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2024). *Guidelines to support the Action Project – Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development*. Available at: https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/73252104-823e-4a8f-9650-af1144adf110/AAC_Guidelines_LC-CASD_Final.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2024). *Guidelines to support the Biology in Practice Investigation – Leaving Certificate Biology*. Available at: https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/fc6493fa-f5d7-4c8e9c823fcd268ce1ba/AAC_Guidelines_Biology_Final.pdf



National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2024). *Guidelines to support the Completion of the Business Alive Investigative Study – Leaving Certificate Business*. Available at:

https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/875b16f7-be29-4c0e-acec-42eefcb88f75/AAC_Guidelines_LCBusiness_November-2024_EN.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2024). *Guidelines to support the Creativity in Practice Project – Leaving Certificate Drama, Film and Theatre Studies*. Available at:

https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/5a12aa18-f032-4dc6-b340-0746bdbe9f09/AAC_Guidelines_DFTS_EN.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2024). *Leaving Certificate Biology Specification*.

Available at: <https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/04e86311-7225-4cf3-a723-675e33154daf/SC-BIOLOGY-Spec-ENG.pdf>

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2024). *Leaving Certificate Business Specification*.

Available at: <https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/e81ccca9-fdf5-42e9-a291-52e9549820c9/SC-Business-Spec-ENG.pdf>

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2024). *Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development Specification*. Available at: <https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/df1d6c85-f630-436f-9383-7503b64d6ed5/SC-Climate-Action-Sustainable-Dev-Spec-ENG.pdf>

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2024). *Leaving Certificate Drama, Film and Theatre Studies Specification*. Available at: https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/a25c493e-1ab5-443f-a14e-b47180d2e14d/LC-Drama-Film-and-Theatre-Studies-Spec_EN.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2024). *TY Programme Statement*. Available at:

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/5849acbf-0326-487a-beec-3db6b5878470/TY-Programme-Statement-ENG-INT.pdf>

O'Donnell, S. (2018). *Upper Secondary Education in Nine Jurisdictions: Overview Report for the NCCA*.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). Available at: <https://ncca.ie/en/resources/upper-secondary-education-in-nine-jurisdictions-overview-report/>

OECD. (2020). *Education in Ireland: An OECD Assessment of the Senior Cycle Review, Implementing Education Policies*. Paris: OECD Publishing. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/636bc6c1-en>

Smyth, E., McCoy, S., & Banks, J. (2019). *Student, Teacher and Parent Perspectives on Senior Cycle Education*. Research Series Number 94. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). DOI:

<https://www.esri.ie/publications/student-teacher-and-parent-perspectives-on-senior-cycle-education>

State Examinations Commission (2025). *Coursework Rules and Procedures 2025/2026*. Available at:

<https://www.examinations.ie/docs/viewer.php?q=f6aceaad84e313de562fc03dc827478372eaaad9>

Webwise. (2025). *AUP Generator*. Available at: <https://www.webwise.ie/aup-2/>



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





Notes



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

