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Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Oracy and Collaboration in the Classroom



Our Focus for this Session:

- Exploring Senior Cycle Key Competencies, the Transition Year Programme Statement and Student Experiences
- Supporting oracy, collaboration and critical literacy in our English classrooms.

Oracy Across The Continuum of Learning



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Primary Language Curriculum 2019

Oral and social construction of meaning through **listening and speaking supports reading and writing** where the child is required to engage individually and to understand and respond in the **construction of meaning with written texts** (p.17)

Junior Cycle English Specification 2018

There is a strong focus on... the vital **importance of learning through oral language**. This makes the English classroom an active space, a **place of 'classroom talk'** where learners explore language and ideas as much through thinking and talking as through listening and writing (p. 9).

Transition Year Programme Statement 2025

Teaching and assessment... are characterized by '**...increased opportunities for student involvement, enjoyment and agency** in their own learning... (p.22)
'Formal and informal opportunities to speak and present in class, in public and in interviews.' (p. 13)

Leaving Certificate Syllabus 1999

The development of oracy is a significant aspiration of this syllabus
...approaches which emphasise dialogue, group-discussion... are strongly recommended. Students should be encouraged to **express their opinions, speculate and engage in argument** to foster their **capacity to think well** (p.7)

Senior Cycle Key Competencies



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Video Courtesy of NCCA

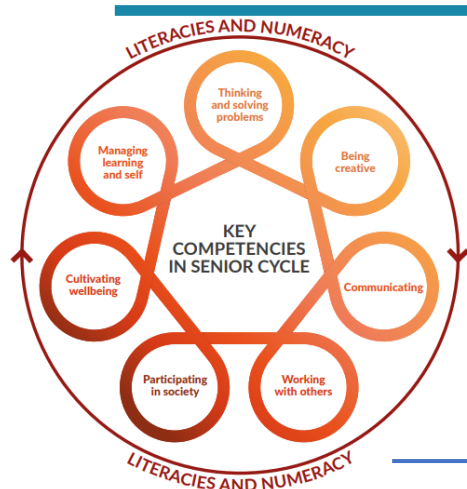
1. Take a moment to explore the Key Competencies.
2. Consider how oracy in the classroom can build student key competencies in Senior Cycle?



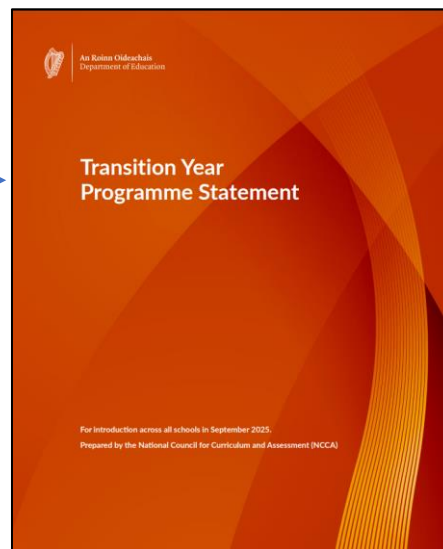
TY Programme Statement



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tinyurl.com/SCKeyDocs



Student Dimensions provide the foundations:

- Personal Growth – self-confidence, empathy, leadership
- Being a Learner – goal-setting, independent learning
- Civic & Community Engagement – social responsibility, inclusion
- Career Exploration – communication & presentation skills

Student Experiences



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Step 1: Reflect

- What's new to your TY English classroom?
- What experiences from previous TY programmes are worth keeping?
- What would you like to see in future TY English programmes?



PERSONAL GROWTH	BEING A LEARNER	CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	CAREER EXPLORATION
Developmental Indicators becoming more assured and confident about themselves as a person taking greater care of the health and wellbeing of themselves and others setting and reviewing goals for personal development and achievement having greater capacity to negotiate ethical dilemmas and reflect on personal values knowing how to make more informed decisions persevering longer with tasks, especially when challenging coming to see challenges as further opportunities for growth adapting better to groups and new social environments interacting with others with more empathy, both in person and online increasingly taking ownership of their own behaviour and decisions showing more initiative and leadership in school, at home and in the community	Developmental Indicators being more motivated to learn and seeing education as worthwhile and enjoyable setting learning goals and reviewing them regularly becoming more skilled with digital technologies, both as a user and a creator exploring their own personal interests having a greater appreciation of lifelong learning being more willing to learn from mistakes and expand their comfort zone acquiring more knowledge and skills relevant to their own cycle seeing the importance of feedback and placing more value on it increasing their capacity for independent and self-regulated learning being more open to trying a range of learning strategies broadening their communication and presentation skills expressing their own ideas more clearly while engaging with other people's ideas	Developmental Indicators being more caring and respectful relationships with people, places and nature having a greater appreciation and respect for human dignity and diversity developing their awareness and sense of empathy, identity and belonging recognising and engaging with complexity and ambiguity taking actions to live more sustainably showing more respect in their schools, communities, and society setting and reviewing goals for being an active citizen working more co-operatively with others and in teams becoming more involved with creative and cultural activities wanting to contribute to a more just world understanding better the interconnections of local, national, and global communities	Developmental Indicators being more informed of the links between education and career opportunities increasing their awareness of personal interests, abilities, values, and dispositions identifying and reviewing career-related goals and aspirations having a greater capacity to research and critically reflect upon career pathways improving their workplace knowledge and behaviours through first-hand experience acquiring more vocational, organisational and communication skills learning how to generate ideas and turn ideas into action improving their workplace knowledge and behaviours through first-hand experience having more awareness of the world of work and enterprise
Student Experiences 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 thinking, 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 the community recognition of personal growth and personal challenges in all aspects of school life during the year	Student Experiences continuity subjects and sampling of subjects with learning designed to develop senior cycle a variety of pedagogies consistent with the aims of the Programme Statement and supporting developmental indicators for all students meaningful learning opportunities that incorporate student input opportunities to build on student learning in the transition from junior to senior cycle assessment of their learning and development through a variety of forms such as teacher, peer and self-assessment, for both formative and summative purposes recognition of achievement across all areas of the curriculum guided creation of a portfolio that captures development of the student, and their progress as a learner a range of individual and team projects, activities and experiences that are meaningful and appropriately challenging	Student Experiences working with local or national organisations and businesses over the year opportunities to volunteer through community work and social placements education on sustainable development, including a meaningful action plan in a more sustainable world sharing of knowledge and skills within the school community and among community stakeholders guided creation of a portfolio that captures their own ideas more clearly while engaging with other people's ideas meaningful involvement with shaping school culture learning opportunities around empathy, diversity, and inclusion	Student Experiences work placements during the year guided reflective tasks on their experiences and placements in TY subjects and modules on the senior cycle curriculum that link to a range of future career guidance and classroom support on a range of future pathways guided creation of a portfolio capturing their reflections on career exploration a variety of learning opportunities that improve practical and vocational skills access to career-related events or learning environments guest speakers from a diversity of backgrounds and careers short, certified courses or micro-credentials opportunities for assessing attitudes and abilities



Step 2: Student Experience

- Consider the texts that have worked for you in the past or texts you would like to incorporate into your plan.
- How can you use the student experiences from the Programme Statement to support engagement with these texts. (You might like to consider a text, a student experience and relevant tasks or activities)
- Share your ideas on the paper provided to support the Gallery Walk in Step 3.





Step 3: Share & Explore

Take a moment to walk around consider what TY English looks like in different contexts. Note any activities you might adopt or adapt for your own classroom.





Collaborative Learning

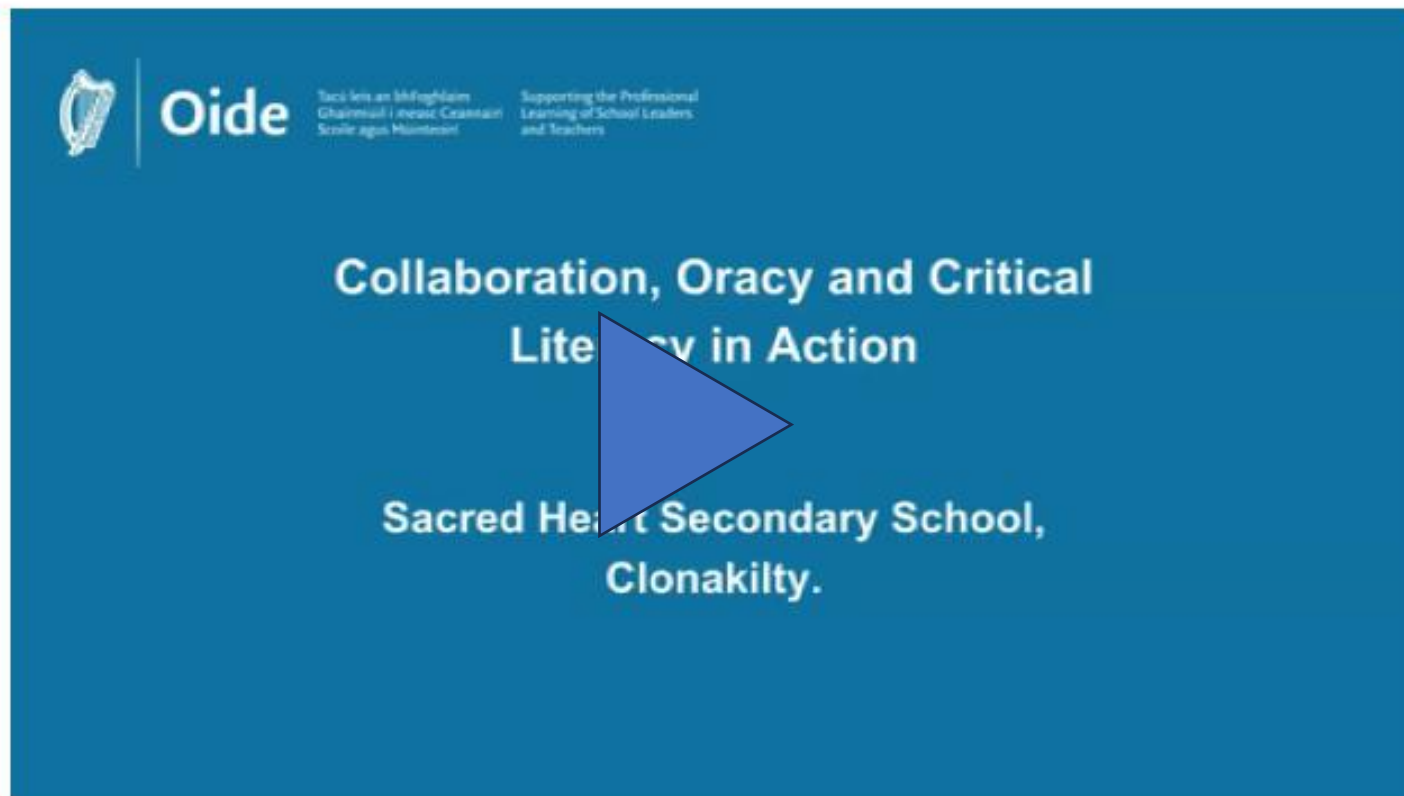
‘Through listening, speaking, discussion and collaboration, student agency and self-efficacy are developed both individually and in collaboration with others.’

(Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate English 2025, p. 10)





Voices from the Classroom



1. As you watch, consider how you might create spaces in your classroom for this kind of dialogic, reflective learning?
2. How might we support all learners to engage in these activities?



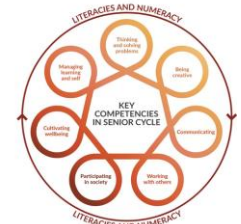
Oracy at Senior Cycle

"The development of oracy is a **significant aspiration of this syllabus**. To that end the development of methodological approaches which **emphasise dialogue, group-discussion, oral presentations and performances are strongly recommended**. Students should be encouraged to express their opinions, speculate and engage in argument to foster their capacity to think well."

(The Leaving Certificate Syllabus, 1999, p8.)

"The English classroom is an inclusive space for discussion, debate and argument. Oracy in the English classroom is **pivotal to the development of the skills and competencies required by students as they develop lifelong learning** and prepare for active involvement in the world around them - a world where they will ask critical questions, **interrogate** opinions, **respond** and **engage** empathetically, **create** imaginatively, **formulate** reasoned responses and **work collaboratively**."

(The Leaving Certificate English Specification, 2025, p.4)





Considering Types of Talk

*“The difference between the two functions of talk is that in **presentational talk** the speaker’s attention is primarily focussed on adjusting the language, content and manner to the needs of an audience, and in **exploratory talk** the speaker is more concerned with sorting out his or her own thoughts”*

(Douglas Barnes, 1992, p.7)





Learner Tasks

Task	Exploratory Talk	Presentational Talk	Additional Activities
Alternative Ending	Learners discuss alternative endings in a studied text. They nominate one to share.	Learners share nominated ending with the class or group.	Diamond Ranking. Dramatic performance or read through of new ending.

Consider the tasks in your own school context that you use to critically engage learners?

Exploratory Talk in the Classroom – Spider Web Discussion



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As you watch, consider how the students use talk to develop their thinking – not just show what they know?

A Window into Classroom Dialogue



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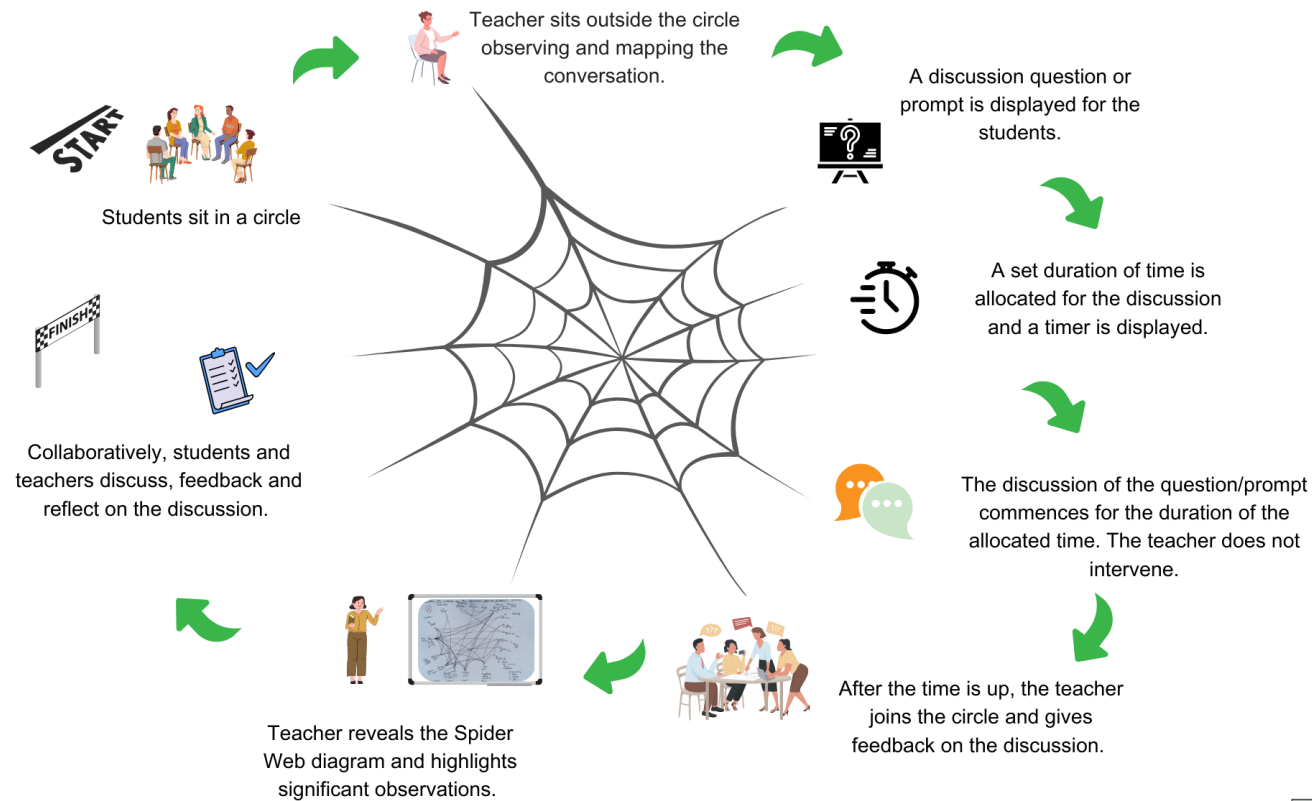


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Spider Web Discussions





An Approach to Assessment



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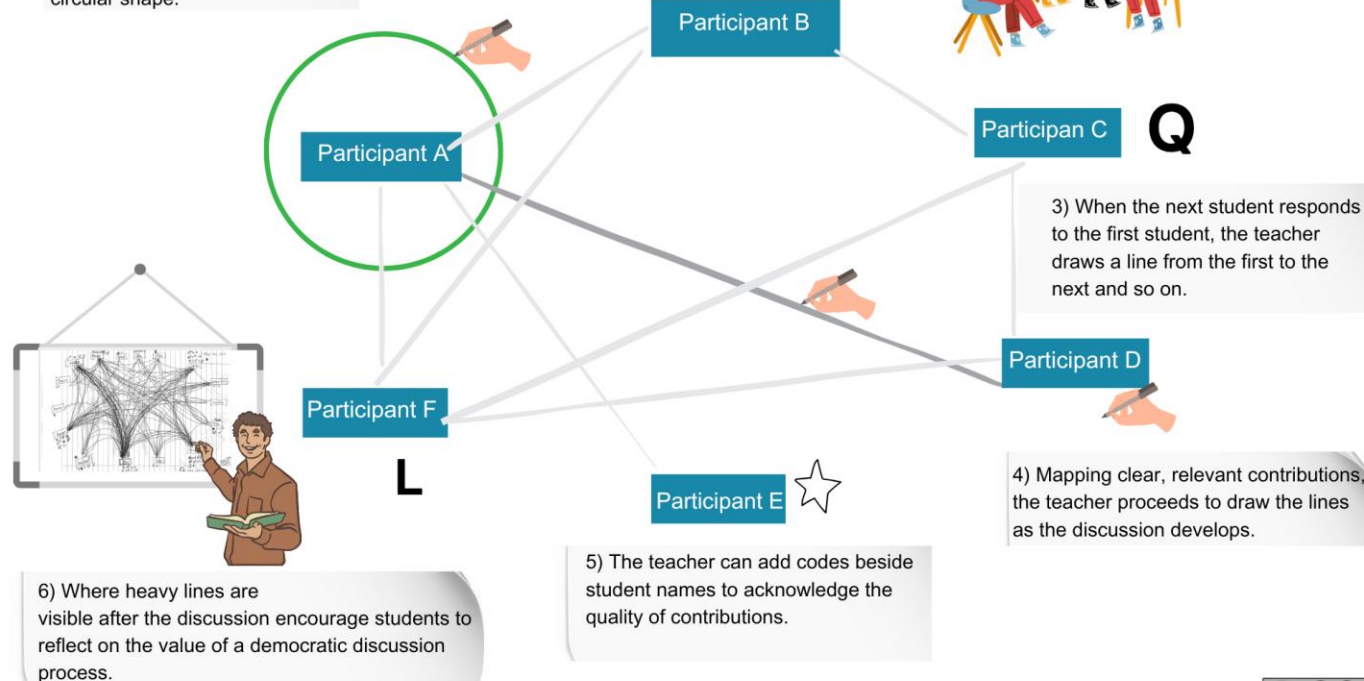
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Mapping the Spider Web Discussion

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.



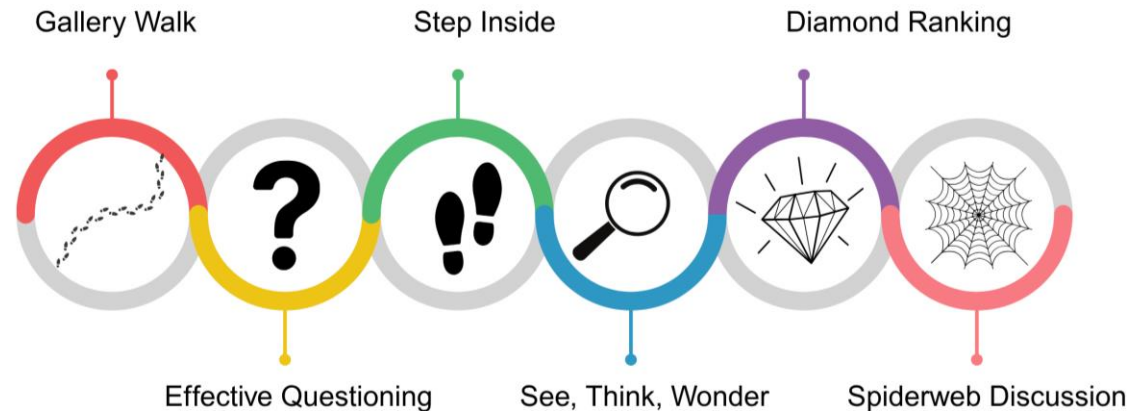
Adapting Oracy Strategies for an Inclusive Classroom



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How do you support all learners through strategies like Spider Web Discussions?

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Oracy and Progression – TY and Beyond



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Developmental Indicators across Student Dimensions

“Having greater capacity to negotiate ethical dilemmas and reflect on personal values.”

“Broadening their communication and presentation skills.”

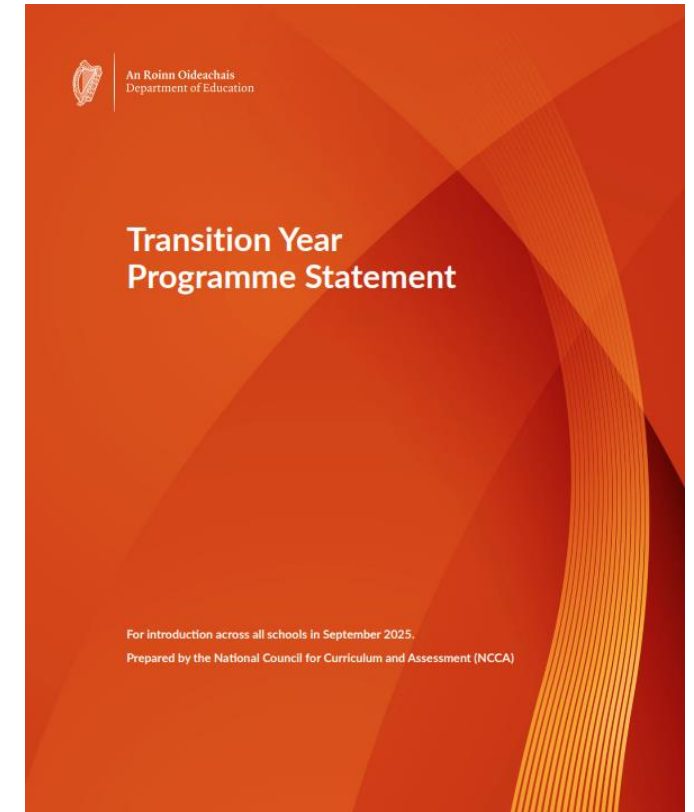
“Deepening their awareness and sense of empathy, identity and belonging.”

Student Experiences across Student Dimensions

“Formal and informal opportunities to speak and present in class, in public and in interviews.”

“Meaningful learning opportunities that incorporate student input.”

“Learning opportunities around empathy, diversity and inclusion.”



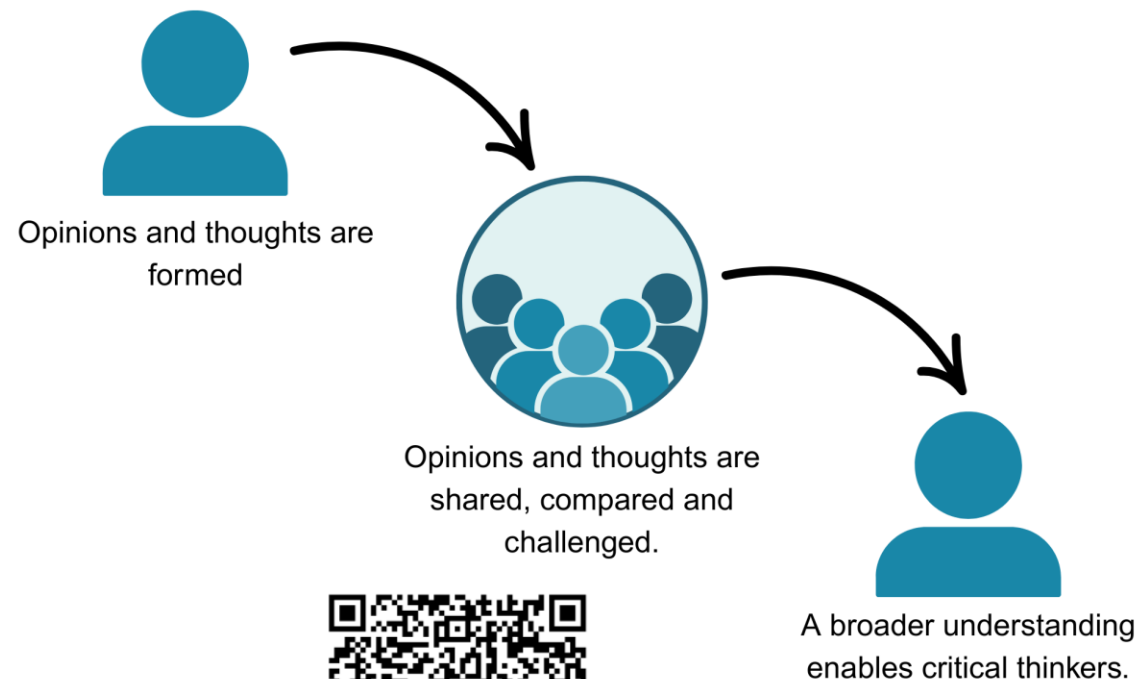
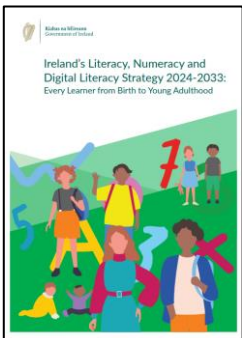
(Transition Year Programme Statement 2025)



Collaboration and Critical Literacy

“Offering enrichment and advanced opportunities keeps learners engaged and motivated, allowing them to excel and reach their full potential in a **climate of inclusivity and equity**. This benefits both individual learners and **enhances the classroom environment, promoting collaboration and peer learning.**”

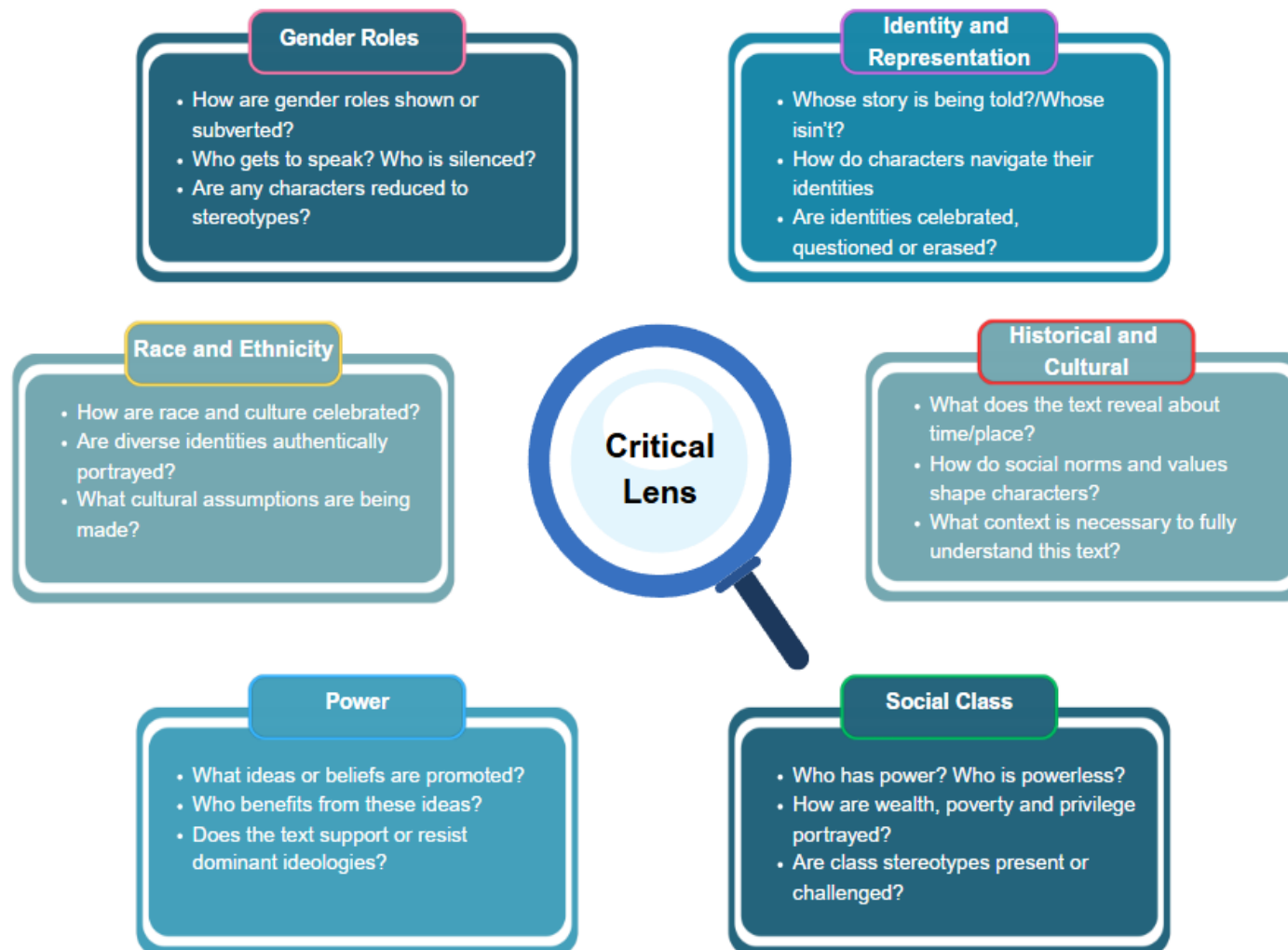
(Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033, p19)



[tinyurl.com/
OidePPLiteracyPadlet](https://tinyurl.com/OidePPLiteracyPadlet)



Collaborating with a Critical Lens





‘Step Inside’ with a Critical Lens



Captain Lawrence Oates

Image courtesy of The History Press

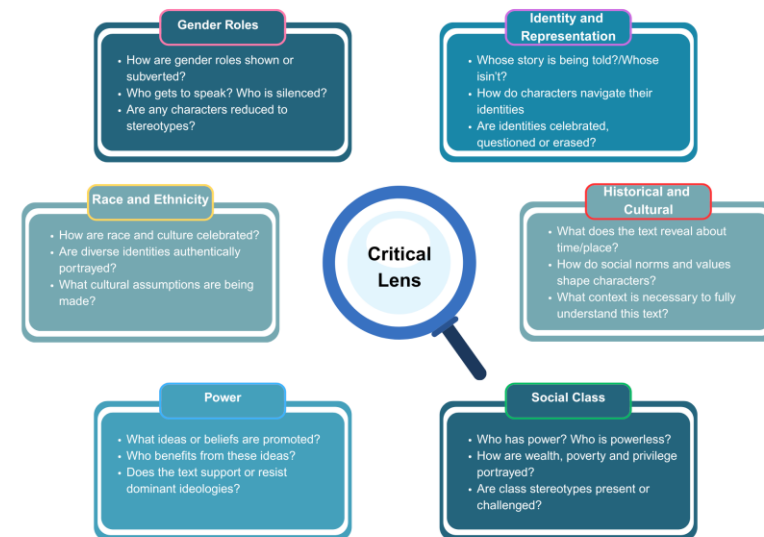
Note how Mahon ‘steps inside’ the dialogue of Captain Oates to bring the character to life.

‘I am just going outside and may be some time.’
The others nod, pretending not to know.
At the heart of the ridiculous, the sublime.
He leaves them reading and begins to climb,
Goading his ghost into the howling snow;
He is just going outside and may be some time’.

– Extract from Antarctica by Derek Mahon

He uses empathy and understanding to give the narrative context.

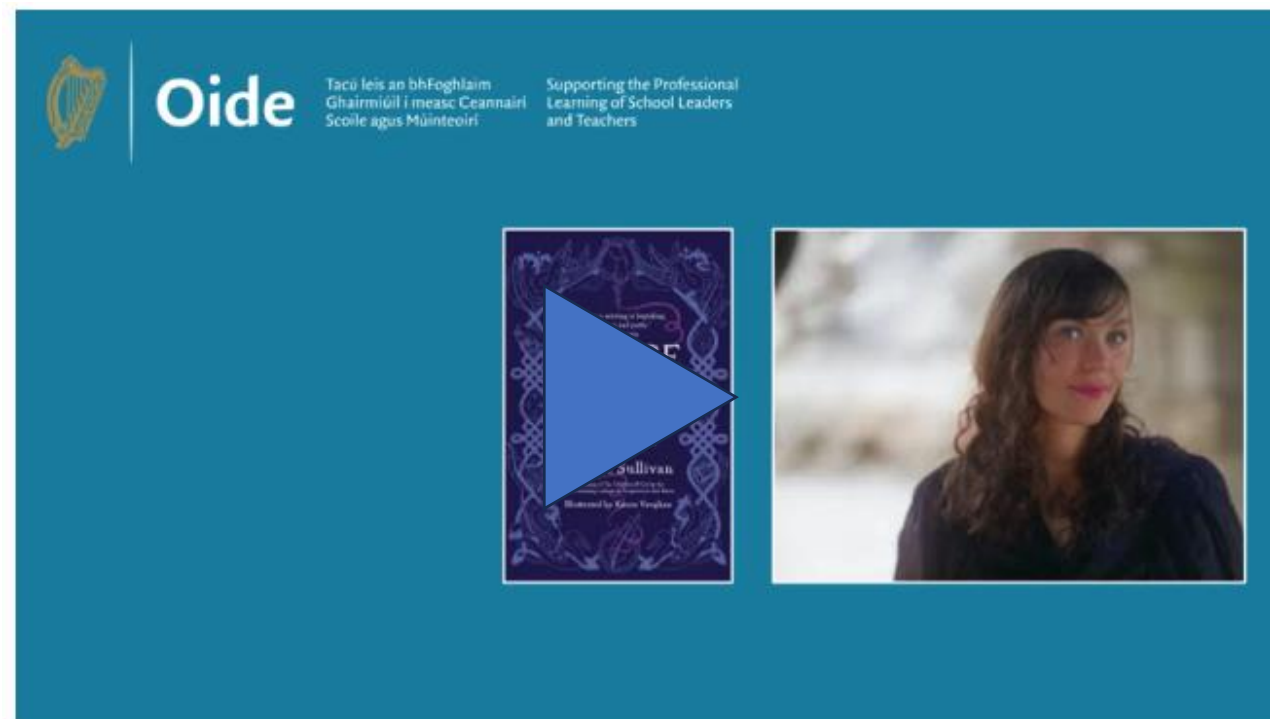
The use of third person narrative to give a different perspective.



Adapted from Freire (1973), Foucault (1980) and Shor (1999)



Deepening Talk for Learning



While you listen think about the benefits of stepping inside a character like Aífe?

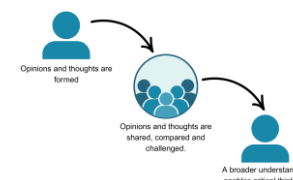


Choice and Learner Agency

Possible Creative Tasks for Critical Engagement

Dramatic Monologue:	Visual Poem or Art Response:	Podcast Snippet ‘Moral Dilemma’:	Review of an Evening With....:
Write and perform as a voice within or silenced by the text. Explore moral responsibility or complicity.	Use mixed media to show crises or epiphanies that the characters encounter in the text.	Create a “Moral Dilemma” podcast where you debate or reflect on the choices depicted in the texts.	You are reviewing a recital by an author. Consider how experiencing their texts read aloud affects your interpretation of their work.

1. What are the possible benefits of offering choice for learners when asking them to respond to texts?
2. What opportunities for critical engagement do tasks such as these provide for learners?





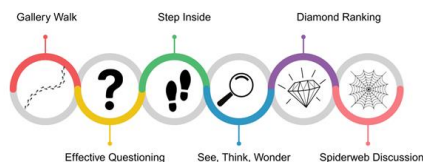
Deepening Talk for Learning



Task: Based on your chosen stimulus piece **create a task with an oral element**, which supports the students to adopt a different perspective.

Step 1: In your departments, think about how you might encourage meaningful discussion around the elements of characterisation in these poems.

- You may like to discuss some of the strategies explored today.
- How might you draw out critical engagement?
- What skills will your students need?





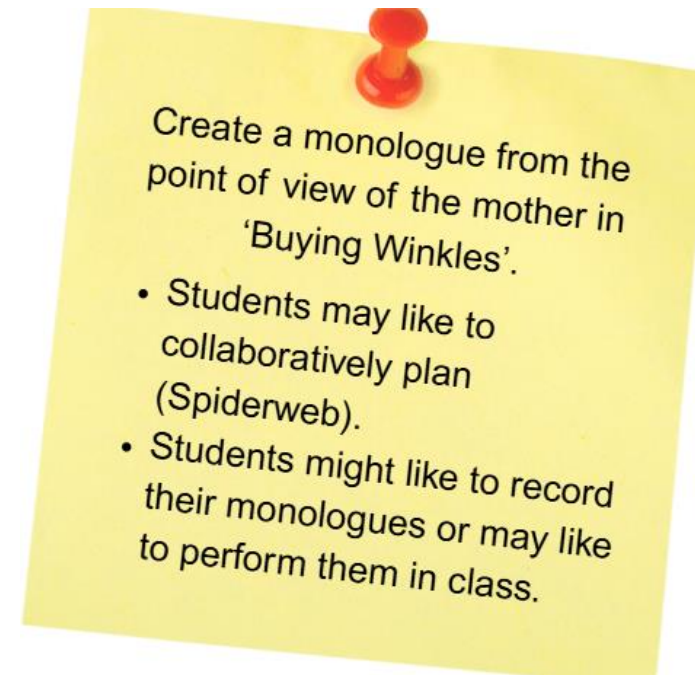
Deepening Talk for Learning

Step 2: Choose one of the characters you have discussed and **create a task with an oral element**, which supports the students to adopt a different perspective.

Points to consider:

- What is the purpose of your oral task?
- Does it build on a prior knowledge?
- Can student choice be built into the task?

Step 3: Share your tasks with the room.





Reflection

Reflection: How can you build on your practice based on the discussions and examples explored?

You may like to discuss:

- What opportunities students have for oracy, collaboration and exploratory talk?
- What routines or scaffolds we could use to support richer discussion?
- How this influences how we implement the TY programme – or prepare learners for Senior Cycle?





Break. See you at 2pm.



tinyurl.com/OideEnglishMailingList

