NCCA

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

Transition Year micro-module
Journalism

NCCA
August 2026

Contents

Transition year 1

Key competencies of senior cycle 2

Student Dimensions of Transition Year 3

Rationale 5

Aim 5

Time allocation 5

Learning Outcomes 6

Teaching for student learning 8

Assessment 10

Assessment Methods 10

Features of Quality 11

Reporting 12

Evaluating 13

Resources 13

Transition Year

Transition Year (TY) is a one-year optional programme available to all post-primary schools and is offered as part of the senior cycle experience. During senior cycle students develop a stronger sense of their identity, learning with and from their peers, teachers, other adults, and various media. Senior cycle educates the whole person.

Students' experiences in senior cycle should contribute to their intellectual, social and personal development and their overall wellbeing. During TY, students can develop more mature relationships with teachers and other adults and become active agents in designing their own educational experiences and their own contribution to society.

TY programmes offer a unique opportunity in senior cycle where schools and communities can collaborate to encourage young people to thrive now and into the future. TY offers time, space, and autonomy to create enjoyable and meaningful educational experiences that support students in senior cycle while facilitating their engagement with a broader range of pathways and possibilities. It equips young people with the supports and experiences to develop a greater capacity to respond to uncertainty, manage complexity, and become agents of positive, ethical change in society.

Key competencies of senior cycle

Key competencies is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop during senior cycle, which helps them to become more engaged, enriched and competent learners.

Further information on key competencies of senior cycle can be found on **ncca.ie**.

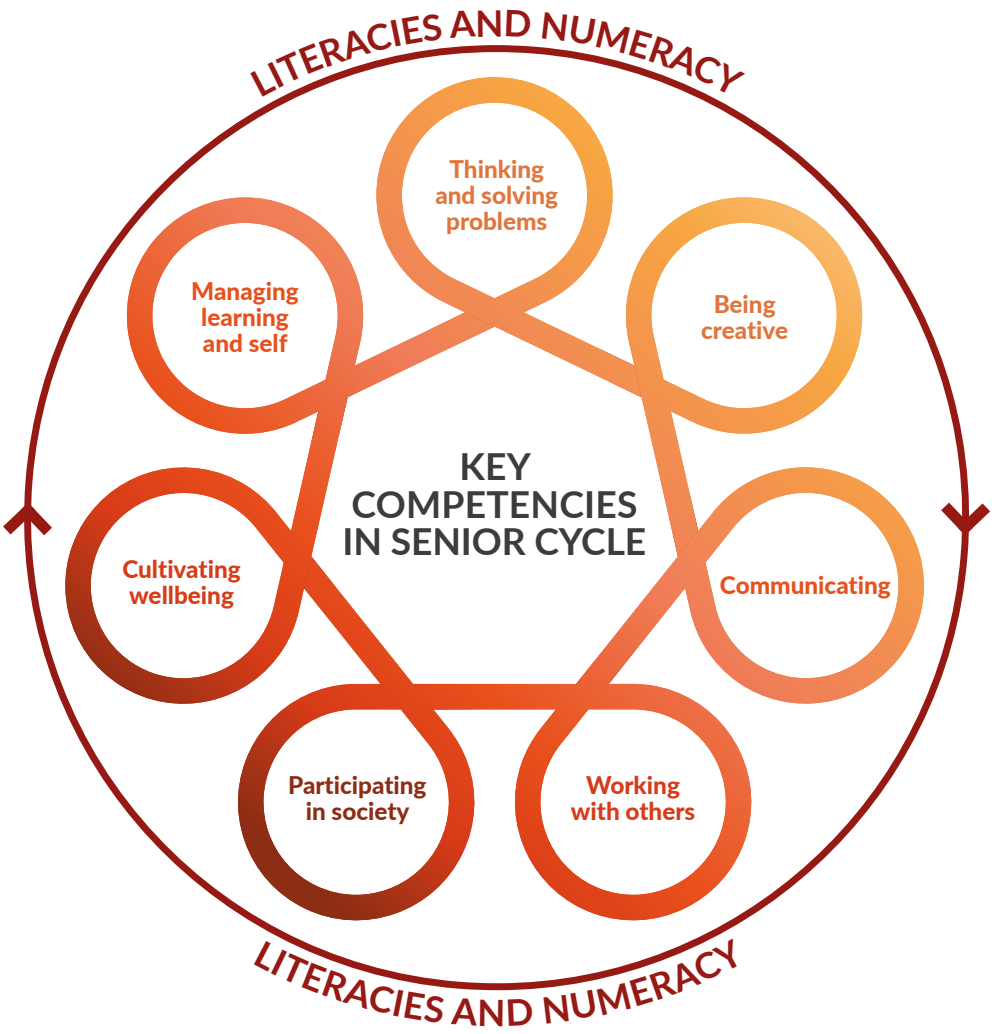

Figure 1: Key Competencies in Senior Cycle, supported by literacies and numeracy.

Student Dimensions of Transition Year

The Student Dimensions describe how students can develop in TY and the experiences that can support this development. The four Student Dimensions are:

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

The four Student Dimensions are designed to interlock in such a way that together they intersect with all seven key competencies of senior cycle. Each Student Dimension contains a set of developmental indicators and related student experiences.

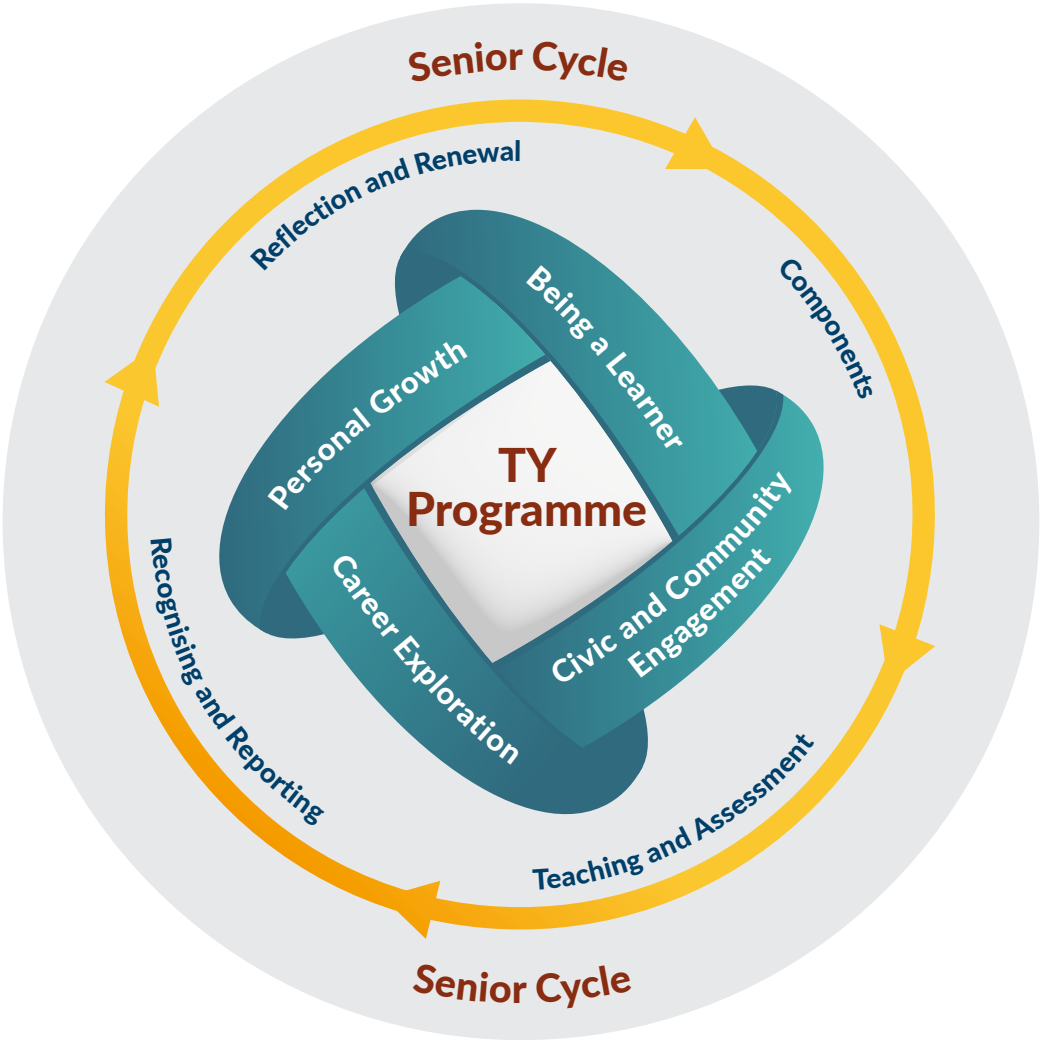

Figure 2: Overview of the Transition Year Programme Statement.

Further details can be found in the **Transition Year Programme Statement** (p.11-15)

Table 1 lists the developmental indicators that are most likely to be supported by student participation and engagement with this micro-module.

Table 1. Student Dimensions supported by the micro-module.

Student Dimension	Developmental Indicators most relevant to the micro-module
Personal Growth	• Persevering longer with tasks, especially when challenging. • Becoming more assured and confident about themselves as a person. • Knowing how to make more informed decisions.
Being a Learner	• Setting learning goals and reviewing them regularly. • Broadening their communication and presentation skills. • Expressing their own ideas more clearly while engaging with other people's ideas. • Becoming more skilled with digital technologies, both as a user and a creator.
Career Exploration	• Learning how to generate ideas and turn ideas into action Increasing their awareness of personal interests, aptitudes, values and dispositions • Acquiring more vocational, organisational and communication skills

Rationale

Journalism empowers students to explore, question and understand the world around them. And while technology has enabled more people to create and share news and information, journalism remains a specialised practice which depends on research, verification and ethical reporting. With the ability to communicate instantaneously through digital media and social platforms, comes the responsibility to share information ethically. To ensure they become responsible citizens and journalists, young people need to be able to evaluate sources, distinguish fact from opinion, and make informed, responsible decisions about what they read, watch, create and share.

This micro-module introduces students to the principles and practices of journalism while developing their media and information literacy. Through practical activities, both individual and collaborative, students explore how stories are researched, written and communicated to different audiences. They gain experience in researching, interviewing, drafting and editing, while considering the importance of accuracy, fairness, privacy and ethical considerations. This enables students to find their voice as they create their own content, and ultimately to gain confidence in expressing their ideas clearly and responsibly.

Aims

The aim of this micro-module is to

- Enable students to find and express their voice as informed communicators through the development and application of journalism skills.
- Develop students' understanding of audience, voice and the processes involved in creating authentic journalistic content.
- Foster students' understanding of the ethical responsibilities of journalism, including accuracy, fairness, privacy, bias and accountability.

Time allocation

This micro-module is designed for a minimum of 20 hours of class contact time. Professional judgement can be used to adapt the number of hours to take account of the nature of student engagement to include both class contact time and self-directed, independent learning.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes below are designed to promote teaching and learning that develop students' knowledge, skills, values and dispositions incrementally, enabling them to apply their key competencies to different situations as they progress. The right-hand column contains learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning. The left-hand column outlines specific areas that students learn about. Taken together, these provide clarity and coherence with the other sections of the micro-module.

The learning outcomes are numbered to support teacher planning. It does not imply any hierarchy of importance across the outcomes themselves.

Table 2. Learning outcomes.

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Foundations of journalism • the purpose of journalism, roles, audiences, platforms; what makes something news; core ethical principles; the value of drafting and editing. • ethical core issues: accuracy, fairness, attribution/crediting, consent, privacy.	**1.1** describe the role of journalism and identify factors that influence the newsworthiness of an event or issues for different audiences. **1.2** explain core ethical principles and apply them to journalistic decisions and content creation. **1.3** distinguish between fact, opinion, analysis, and speculation in journalistic content.
Conceptualising/ Finding a Voice • generating ideas; angles and possible questions. • considering various audiences. • different journalistic formats - article, blog, vlog, audio segment, short video, photo story. • defining purpose and experimenting with tone/ voice.	**2.1** develop story ideas from school/community life and select one based on news value and audience needs. **2.2** choose an appropriate format and outline an intended tone/voice and audience.
Developing / Researching • research skills: basic data/ desktop research; finding sources. • iterview skills: question preparation; note-taking. • verification: cross-check at least two sources, where feasible. • safe and responsible practices: permissions; safeguarding; digital footprint; use of AI.	**3.1** identify relevant, credible sources to support journalistic content. **3.2** gather information through interviews and research. **3.3** apply safe, responsible and ethical practices when gathering, using and sharing information.

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Editing • structure: Headlines/intros/ teasers, using appropriate structure incl. paragraphs. • audio/video scripting, captions; iterative drafting. • appropriate ways to give and receive constructive feedback. • editing checklist: structure, precision, tone, accuracy, ethics.	**4.1** create journalistic content that is appropriate to the chosen format, audience and purpose. **4.2** refine journalistic content to improve its accuracy, clarity and effectiveness. **4.3** present journalistic content in a form suitable for sharing with an intended audience.
Reflecting and ethics in practice • impact on subjects/audiences; bias and fairness; self-evaluation; portfolio. • final pieces: drafts, final piece and reflection.	**5.1** apply ethical principles to make and justify decisions in the creation of journalistic content. **5.2** evaluate how voice and format influence audience engagement and understanding.

Teaching for student learning

Teaching for student learning in TY requires a dynamic approach that prioritises student engagement, exploration, and development. The Curriculum Dimension for Teaching and Assessment identifies collective professional practice and classroom practice that can support student learning and development. In particular, teaching approaches in TY should develop the student in being a learner and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. The aims and learning outcomes of the micro-module will strongly influence the choice of teaching pedagogies.

Table 3 suggests activities to support students in realising the learning outcomes. The activities can be adapted and are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

Table 3. How learning outcomes are supported by the micro-module

Learning Outcomes	Aligned activities
1.1 – 1.3: Foundations of journalism	• **Newsroom warm-up:** Students sort headlines into news/feature/opinion Discuss what made them care/ had an impact. • **Ethics corners:** In small groups, students decide how to handle a privacy/consent dilemma; share rationales.
2.1 – 2.2: Conceptualising/ Finding a Voice	• **Idea sprint and angle swap:** Students brainstorm school/community stories They swap and re-angle to see new possibilities The class votes on story/ies with the strongest public interest value. • **Format lab:** Short stations (print, audio, video, photo) Students test telling the same story in two different formats; decide which best fits audience/purpose Students give each other feedback on their story and format choice
3.1 – 3.3: Developing / Researching	• **Interview workshop:** Students build question ladders Students practise follow-up questions in pairs The class does role-play interviewer/ interviewee perspectives. • **Verification relay:** Students work in groups to cross-check a claim using two sources Students track what is known/unknown,

Learning Outcomes	Aligned activities
4.1 – 4.3: Editing	• **Draft to Redraft:** Students work individually or in groups to produce a first draft of their piece (script, article etc.) They agree and apply the success criteria for editing checklist; highlight edits and explain changes. • **Peer-edit protocols:** Two stars & a wish TAG feedback (Tell something you like / Ask a question / Give a suggestion) Writer sets a focus for feedback. • **TY Newsroom Showcase:** Students publish/present one final piece and the process behind it in a class showcase, school website, noticeboard, or closed platform. They also present it in their TY Portfolio.
5.1 – 5.2: Reflecting & ethics in practice	• **Safeguarding & consent mini-clinic:** Permissions for images/audio, right of reply Dealing with minors/vulnerable subjects (school policies) Pre-publication ethics checklist introduced. • **Voice reflection:** Short commentary (written/audio/video) on voice choices (tone, word choice, angle) What changed through feedback, and why TY Portfolio curation.

Assessment

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting, using and reporting information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping students and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support student learning and provide information to teachers and students that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be modified in ways that best suit individual learners. By setting appropriate and engaging tasks, asking questions and giving feedback that promotes learner autonomy, assessment will support learning and promote progression, support the development of student key competencies and summarise achievement.

Assessment Methods

The assessment methods listed below are those most closely aligning with the aims, rationale and learning outcomes of the micro-module and also with the Teaching and Assessment section of the TY Programme Statement (p.20-22).

Portfolio assessment using a variety of formats, such as: presentations, text, interviews, which could include evidence of:

- the journalistic process and completed work;
- individual or group reflection; and
- critical reflection on strengths, values and learning.

Features of quality

Features of quality are the statements that support teachers and/or students in making judgements about the quality of student work for the purpose of awarding achievement. The feature of quality below are the criteria that will be used to assess the student learning and achievement at one of three levels over the course of the micro-module. The three levels are: Distinction, Merit, Achieved.

Table 4. Features of quality

Area of learning	Distinction	Merit	Achieved
Foundations of Journalism	Demonstrates a strong understanding of the role, purpose and formats of journalism	Demonstrates a good understanding of the role, purpose and formats of journalism	Demonstrates some understanding of the role, purpose and formats of journalism
Conceptualising/ Finding a Voice	Voice is clear, confident and consistently suited to audience and purpose. Choices relating to tone, format and angle are purposeful and clearly justified.	Voice is generally clear and most choices are consistently suited to audience and purpose. Choices relating to tone, format and angle are clearly justified.	Voice is attempted. Choices relating to tone, format and angle are sometimes evident.
Developing / Researching / Editing	Research is thorough and well supported by credible sources, with accurate attribution and verification where appropriate. Content is well organised, engaging and carefully refined to communicate ideas clearly and effectively.	Good evidence of research and mostly relevant sources, with some information verified and attribution. Content is generally well organised, with mostly accurate and appropriate language and some refinement evident.	Some research is evident. Basic sources are used with some information verified and limited attribution evident. There is evidence of basic content and structure, with some lapses and evidence of refinement is minimal.
Reflecting and ethics in practice	Ethical considerations are thoughtfully applied and clearly justified. Reflection demonstrates a deep understanding of audience impact, bias and personal learning.	Ethical considerations are sometimes considered and justified. Reflection demonstrates some understanding of audience impact, bias and personal learning.	Some basic awareness of ethical considerations and some reflection evident.

Reporting

The Transition Year Programme Statement (p.23-25) describes the three elements to reporting in TY programmes:

- The TY portfolio
- Student reflection
- School reporting.

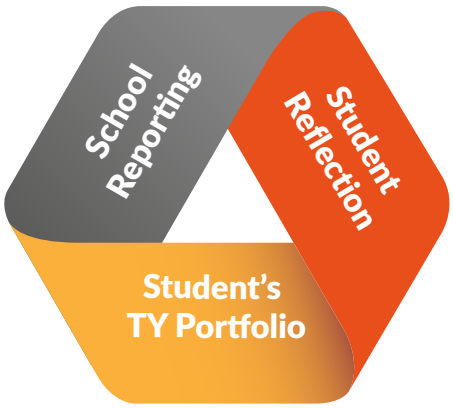

Figure 3: The three elements of reporting in TY.

The TY portfolio can be used as the portfolio for this micro-module, or a module-specific portfolio could be drawn upon to create an entry into their TY portfolio, as outlined in previous sections. Students can use their reflections to summarise the impact of this micro-module on their own learning and development.

The student's final piece of work could be assessed using the system of reporting employed for the school report. The features of quality for example could be adapted to align with the school's chosen system of reporting. Assessment of presentations and portfolios could also help to give a picture of student development across the Student Dimensions relevant to this micro-module.

Evaluating

Reflection and Renewal is a Curriculum Dimension that speaks to the importance of ongoing evaluation of the TY programme and of the components that comprise the programme. The purpose of evaluating the micro-module is to find out from both the students' and teacher's perspective, the success or otherwise of the module and how it can be improved for the future.

The evaluation of this micro-module may be achieved through a mix of verbal feedback, online evaluation, evaluation based on teacher feedback as part of TY programme evaluation, or other methods that may be suited to the school.

Resources

These resources are suggested supports for this micro-module and the list is not exhaustive. A number of providers have developed programmes for TY which focus on the development of a range of aspects of financial literacy. Teachers may consider using some of these programmes to support the student dimensions in the TY programme statement.

Sample links and resources

- Media Literacy Ireland resources **https://www.medialiteracyireland.ie**
- Webwise Media smart resources **https://www.webwise.ie/media-smart/**
- BBC Bitesize Introduction to media - news and journalism **Introduction to media - news and journalism - BBC Bitesize**
- BBC – Journalism, Conducting a Good Interview **English Language GCSE: Journalism - conducting a good interview - BBC Teach**
- BBC Bitesize - Top Tips for Spotting a News Story **Top 5 Tips to for Spotting a News Story - BBC Bitesize**
- Webwise Fake News **Explained: What is Fake news? | Social Media and Filter Bubbles**
- UNESCO's Journalism, 'fake news' and disinformation: a handbook for journalism education and training **https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265552**
- European Commission Media Literacy guidelines **https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission publishes-its-media-literacy-guidelines**

Additional general resources to support teaching and learning

- Webwise online safety supports **www.webwise.ie**
- Student-led resource on creating a podcast **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqBnKXQGZwQ**
- Oide resource for digital portfolios **Digital Portfolios - Oide Technology in Education**

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