Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Subject Learning and Assessment Review

Effective Facilitation of the SLAR Meeting Process

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Glossary of Terms

Formative Assessment (Framework p. 35-36)

The junior cycle will be underpinned by the further integration of formative assessment as a normal part of teaching and learning in classrooms. Formative assessment involves teachers and students reflecting on how learning is progressing and deciding next steps to ensure successful outcomes. A vital part of formative assessment is the feedback that teachers provide to their students. Through a range of assessment activities, the teacher helps the student to identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development. To facilitate the type of learning envisaged above, the role of the teacher and the dynamics of the teacher- student relationship will evolve. Teachers will place a greater emphasis on integrating assessment into their teaching so they can better monitor students' progress in learning and identify how they can support students to reflect on and critically analyse their own learning.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (Framework p. 46)

The JCPA will reward achievement across all areas of learning as applicable: Subjects, Short Courses, Wellbeing, Priority Learning Units, other areas of learning. The JCPA will draw upon and report on achievement across all elements of assessment including ongoing, formative assessment; Classroom-Based Assessments; and SEC grades which include results from the state-certified examinations and the Assessment Tasks. The JCPA will have a nationally determined format. It will be compiled by the school and received by students in the autumn following third year, when all assessment results from the SEC and the school are available and confirmed.

Learning Intentions and Learning Outcomes (NCCA Glossary of Terms)

Learning Intention: A learning intention for a lesson or series of lessons is a statement, created by the teacher, which describes clearly what the teacher wants the students to know, understand and be able to do as a result of the learning and teaching activities.

Learning Outcomes: Learning outcomes are statements in curriculum specifications to describe the understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning.

Success Criteria (NCCA Glossary of Terms) Success criteria are linked to learning intentions. They are developed by the teacher and/or the student and describe what success looks like. They help the teacher and student to make judgements about the quality of student learning.

Summative Assessment (NCCA Glossary of Terms) Assessment is summative when it is used to evaluate student learning at the end of the instructional process or of a period of learning. The purpose is to summarise the students' achievements and to determine whether and to what degree the students have demonstrated understanding of that learning by comparing it against agreed success criteria or features of quality.

Unit of Learning

A unit of learning links learning outcomes which clearly set out what the students should know, understand, and be able to do as a result of the learning and teaching activities within that unit.

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA)

Classroom-Based Assessments are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific tasks set out in the subject specification. The tasks are clearly described, as are the criteria for assessment to support teacher judgement. The criteria are found in the features of quality linked to each Classroom-Based Assessment. Although the assessment is similar to the formative assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of Classroom-Based Assessment the teacher's judgement is recorded for Subject Learning and Assessment Review and is used in the school's reporting to parents and students.

Features of Quality

The features of quality support student and teacher judgement of the Classroom-Based Assessments and are the criteria that will be used by teachers to assess the pieces of student work.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) Meetings

(Framework p. 39-40)

In Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings, teachers will share and discuss samples of their assessments of student work and build a common understanding about the quality of student learning. Each Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting will be subject-specific and will focus on the Classroom-Based Assessment undertaken by the particular year group.

Assessment Task (AT)

The Assessment Task is a written task completed by students during class time, which is not marked by the class teacher, but is sent to the State Examinations Commission for marking. The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and is related to the learning outcomes on which the second Classroom-Based Assessment is based.

Before the SLAR meeting

As a first step, teachers may find it helpful to review some of the relevant NCCA annotated examples prior to coming to decisions about their own students' work.

Once students have completed their Classroom-Based Assessment, the teacher will carry out a provisional assessment of the students' work based on the Features of Quality. These provisional assessments may be modified in light of the discussions that take place at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting.

The teacher will make a note of the descriptor allocated to each student and any other point they may wish or find useful to refer to during and after the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. This note will be for the teacher's own use. It might also be useful to make notes which could be referred to during the meeting.

In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of student's work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting.

During the SLAR meeting

The facilitator explains that the purpose of the meeting is to support consistency of judgement about students' work and to develop a common understanding about the quality of student learning. The value of the meeting in the provision of feedback to students on how they might improve their work should also be highlighted.

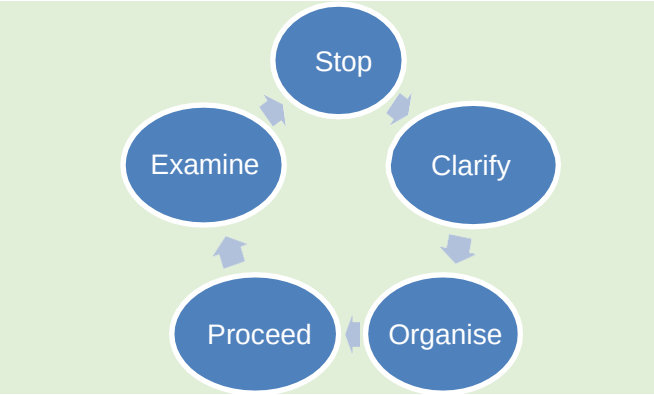
- The facilitator asks one member of staff to introduce a sample of work they have assessed Yet to meet expectations. Following a short introduction by the teacher, the facilitator leads a general discussion on the extent to which the student's work matches the relevant Features of Quality. If the meeting affirms the judgement, this is noted in the meeting record by the facilitator.
- Where there is a lack of agreement, the facilitator should refer to relevant annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA and, if appropriate, a couple of examples of student work that other teachers in the group have assessed and awarded that descriptor to.
- The facilitator should look to establish consensus during the discussion of examples, but the emphasis should be on developing teachers' professional knowledge and skills rather than on seeking unanimous agreement over every Feature of Quality in every example.
- The emphasis in affirming judgements during the review meetings should always be on a 'best fit' approach which allows teachers to agree the descriptor that 'on-balance' is most appropriate for the work being assessed.
- While reasonable time should be allowed for discussion, the facilitator should use his/her professional judgement to decide when it would be appropriate to proceed to the next sample.
- If possible, there should be discussion of at least two samples for each descriptor and the facilitator should ensure that each teacher has at least one of their samples discussed during the meeting.
- The process is repeated, in turn, with samples assessed as In line with expectations, Above expectations and Exceptional being discussed and shared in the group. At the end of the meeting, the facilitator briefly summarises the key points from the discussion.

Effective Questioning

How a question is posed can sometimes unintentionally put people off. Thinking about how you word questions can be important in opening up responses.
Some useful questions to use are:

- Tell us more about that…
- What has worked well here in terms of the Features of Quality?
- What are the strengths of this piece of work?
- What are the areas for development in the work?
- How could this work be improved?

SCOPE



Stop: If you feel the conversation has moved in an unhelpful direction, don't be afraid to stop the meeting and directly address what is happening. The longer something is allowed to rumble on, the more difficult it is to manage. Don't feel that you need to respond or react to things immediately. Allowing silence can be very powerful and will demonstrate that you are confident in your facilitation.

Clarify: It may be an idea to ask some questions to diagnose what is happening and why. Or it may be enough to simply allow yourself a moment to take stock of what is happening. Are participants confused by the process? Is there a greater underlying issue in relation to the process? Has the group fallen back into old ways of working?

Organise: Once you have taken a moment to understand what is going on, you can decide how best to deal with the situation. Possible approaches include: simple clarifications, reminding participants of the norms, documenting issues for discussion at the next department meeting, inviting others to offer their perspective. If the discussion about a topic has become particularly heated and it is difficult to reach consensus, suggest putting the topic 'on ice' and coming back to it later.

Proceed: Once you have allowed yourself a moment to clarify and organise, you will be ready to proceed. Phrases like "I think we may have a misunderstanding as to what we should be doing right now. I may not have been clear so I will run through the process again" or "John, I appreciate all the challenges you are having with your 2nd years. I think we should put behaviour management on the agenda for the next meeting. However, I am conscious of time and the purpose of today's meeting is…" or "It is great to see how engaged everyone is in the process. However, we agreed at the beginning that we wouldn't interrupt one another so can I ask that we stick to that agreement please."

Examine Progress: As the facilitator, you need to remain constantly alert and constantly review the progress of the group.

Adapted from Mike Clayton *Handling Resistance Pocket Book* and David Allen and Tina Blythe *Facilitating for Learning; tools for teacher groups of all kinds*

After the SLAR meeting

After the meeting, each teacher considers the assessment of their students' work based on the outcomes of the meeting and, where it is considered necessary, makes the appropriate adjustments to their provisional assessments. Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, the facilitator prepares their report of the meeting, focusing on the outcomes of the discussion of student work, and submits it to the school principal.

The facilitator may also ask teachers, should they wish, to contribute some student work to a bank of examples:

- to support the induction of new teachers
- to support future Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- to use with students and parents in demonstrating the standard of work achieved.

Suggestions from www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings

SLAR Meetings: Before, During and After

Before the SLAR Meeting	
Teachers will	
	Assess student work based on the Features of Quality. Review relevant NCCA annotated examples as necessary (www.curriculumonline.ie). Record the descriptor and any other relevant points that may be useful to refer to during the SLAR meeting. Identify one example, where possible, for each descriptor, to be used in the SLAR meeting. Submit details of samples of work for discussion to the facilitator before the SLAR meeting.
Facilitators will	
	Collect and copy samples of work submitted by teachers. Develop a running order for the SLAR meeting.
During the SLAR Meeting	
Teachers will	
	Introduce one sample at "Yet to Meet Expectations" level. Collaboratively review the piece of work. Make note of the implications of decisions made during the meeting for the rest of the student work that they have assessed. Focus on a 'best fit' approach which allows teachers to agree the descriptors that on-balance is most appropriate for the work being discussed. Repeat the process, in turn, for a sample at each of the other descriptors.
Facilitators will	
	Open the meeting with a focus on consistency of judgement and a common understanding about the quality of student learning. Highlight the value of the meeting in providing feedback to students. Lead the general discussion of samples of work and descriptors and note any decisions made. Look to establish consensus but focus on the development of professional knowledge and skills.
After the SLAR Meeting	
Teachers will	
	Consider the assessment of their students' work based on the SLAR meeting. Report their final descriptors for each student.
Facilitators will	
	Complete and submit the Facilitator's Report to the Principal. Reflect on what worked well or what could be improved upon in the next SLAR meeting. The Facilitator may also ask teachers, should they wish, to contribute some of their samples of student work to a bank of examples: • to support the induction of new teachers • to support future SLAR meetings • to use with students and parents in demonstrating the standard of work achieved

Scan the QR Code to access the NCCA SLAR Toolkit

Facilitator's Report

Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting

Subject:	Date/time
Attendance	
Key decisions taken	
Points of note for future review meetings	
Any further outcomes?	
Facilitator: Date:	

Discussing Student Work During SLAR Meetings

The **Facilitator** asks one teacher to introduce a sample of work they have assessed as **Yet to Meet Expectations.**

The **Teacher** presenting the piece gives a short introduction to the sample of work and the facilitator leads a general discussion on the extent to which the student's work matches the relevant **Features of Quality.** This **discussion** will involve input from all colleagues and will be **based on the Features of Quality**. The emphasis in affirming judgements during the SLAR meeting should always be on a **'best-fit'** approach which allows teachers to agree the Descriptor that **'on-balance'** is most appropriate for the work being assessed.

The **Facilitator** should **look to establish consensus** during the discussion of examples, but the emphasis should be on **developing teachers' professional knowledge and skills** rather than on seeking unanimous agreement over every Feature of Quality in every example. It is strongly recommended that teachers in the Subject Department use the SLAR meeting to develop collaboration and focus on teaching, assessment and learning.

Where there is agreement and the meeting affirms the provisional judgement, this is noted in the meeting record by the facilitator.

Where there is a **lack of agreement**, the facilitator **should refer to relevant annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA** and, if appropriate, an additional example of student work that other teachers in the group have assessed and awarded that descriptor to.

While reasonable time should be allowed for discussion, **the Facilitator should use his/her professional judgement to decide when it would be appropriate to proceed to the next sample**. The facilitator should endeavor to promote collaborative discussion and support discussions around teaching, assessment and learning. It may be useful to place a piece of work 'on ice' to support progressing the discussion.

The process above is repeated, in turn, with samples assessed as **In Line with Expectations**, **Above Expectations** and **Exceptional** being discussed and shared in the group.

At the end of the meeting, the facilitator briefly summarises the key points from the discussion. It is important that **each teacher notes the implications of the decisions made during the meeting** for the rest of the student work they have already assessed, particularly in the case of descriptors where their judgement did not align with the view of the majority of teachers at the meeting Teachers should also note any **feedback that might support student learning** moving forward

Adapted from: www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings

Student Cohort 2022– 2025 (2nd years in 2023/2024)

Arrangements for this cohort remain as per the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015).

Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in all subjects

Window for completion	Monday 30th October 2023 – Friday 10h May 2024
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Wednesday 15th May 2024
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Wednesday 22nd May 2024

Student Cohort 2021 – 2024 (3rd years in 2023/2024)

Classroom-Based Assessment 2 in Applied Technology, Engineering, Graphics and Wood Technology[1] (required)

Latest date for completion	Friday 6th October 2023
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 13th October 2023
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 20th October 2023

Classroom-Based Assessment 2 in Visual Art

Latest date for completion	Fri 17th November 2023
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Fri 24th November 2023
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Fri 1st December 2023

Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in Gaeilge

Latest date for completion	Fri 1st December 2023
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Fri 8th December 2023
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Fri 15th December 2023

Classroom-Based Assessment 2 in Gaeilge, Home Economics, Music

Latest date for completion	Fri 8th March 2024
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Mon 25th March 2024
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Fri 29th March 2024

Classroom-Based Assessment 2 in English, Science, Business Studies, Modern-Foreign Languages, Mathematics, History, Geography, Classics, Religious Education, Jewish Studies

Latest date for completion	Thurs 14th March 2024
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Mon 25th March 2024
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Fri 29th March 2024

Available at: Revised arrangements for the completion of Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) for students in third year and second year in 2023/2024

This document was updated in 2023 with the most up to date information. To clarify current dates, visit www.ncca.ie.

Student Work for SLAR Meeting: Teacher Template

Each teacher should submit four samples of student work for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting. Where feasible, these samples should **contain an example at each of the four descriptor levels.** The information will be used to create a running order for our upcoming Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting. As we may not have time to discuss all the samples, please number the pieces 1 to 4. Number 1 should indicate the sample that you would most like to discuss.

Please submit your samples with a copy of this template to me by _____

Name **of Teacher:**_____ **Class Group:** _____

Sample 1	**Format:** **Sample Shared via:** **Topic/Title:** **Provisional Descriptor:** **Preference for use at SLAR:** ☐
Sample 2	**Format:** **Sample Shared via:** **Topic/Title:** **Provisional Descriptor:** **Preference for use at SLAR:** ☐
Sample 3	**Format:** **Sample Shared via:** **Topic/Title:** **Provisional Descriptor:** **Preference for use at SLAR:** ☐
Sample 4	**Format:** **Sample Shared via:** **Topic/Title:** **Provisional Descriptor:** **Preference for use at SLAR:** ☐

Acceptable Usage Policies and Storing Student Work

During their Junior Cycle journey, students may produce work themselves and store it online or may have work recorded and stored by their teachers. In Business Studies, this occurs for example as part of CBA2, the presentation. In English, this occurs as part of the Oral Communication CBA.

In all instances teachers and schools are required to act in accordance with the school's Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP). The school's AUP must be cognisant of data and child protection guidelines. Boards of Management, School Management and teaching staff all have a role to play in the safe recording and storage of student work.

Section 1.13.2 of the Child Protection Procedures sets out the duties relating to 'data controllers' and states that the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 "requires both data controllers and data processors to protect the data they keep, and imposes on them a special duty of care in relation to the individuals about whom they keep such data." (page 12). Some Frequently Asked Questions regarding AUPs are dealt with at https://www.webwise.ie

'Samples of Oral Communication by students will be recorded for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. An example at each of the four descriptor levels, where feasible, will be needed for this purpose. Any audio or audio-visual recording device, such as a tablet, mobile phone, laptop or video camera, available in the school can be used for this purpose. The recording should take place with cognisance of child protection guidelines and in line with the school's acceptable use policy.'

Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages Assessment Guidelines p. 16

'Teachers' professional judgement underpinned by a good understanding of the Features of Quality, with knowledge of the students' strengths and areas for development, will be important factors in identifying the sample of students to be recorded. Any audio or audio-visual recording device, such as a tablet, mobile phone, laptop or video camera, available in the school can be used. School rather than personal devices should be used. The recording should take place with cognisance of child protection guidelines and in line with the school's acceptable use and GDPR policies.'

Junior Cycle English Assessment Guidelines p. 17

'In some instances, students' work, developed as part of the CBA process, may need to be recorded and/or stored online. For example, teachers will record samples of presentations made by students which will be used for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. In all instances, when recording and storing students' work, teachers and schools are required to act in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in force since 25 May 2018, and child protection requirements.'

Department of Education Circular 55/2019 p.18

Scan the QR Code to access the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for schools' website for further information on the above points.

SLAR Facilitator: Action Plan and Notes

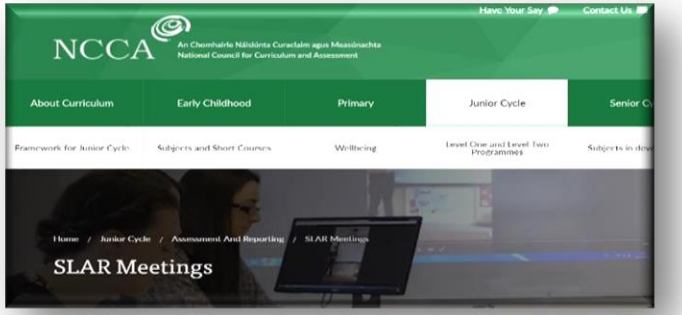
Action Point / Observation	Support for my Role as Facilitator	Support for Subject / Professional Learning

Key Websites Referenced in the Workshop

www.oide.ie is the home website for Oide, the support service for school leaders and teachers. You will find the SLAR supports under the 'Resources' tab of the Programmes Support section.

On the NCCA website www.curriculumonline.ie you will find the new **subject specifications, Assessment Guidelines** and **annotated examples of students' work**.

On the NCCA website www.ncca.ie you will find the **Assessment Toolkit** for Junior Cycle. The toolkit includes a range of assessment supports, advice and guidelines that will enable schools and teachers to engage with all aspects of assessment system (including SLARs) in an informed way, with confidence



Resources Referenced in the Recording

Circular Number: 0028/2023 (gov.ie)

Information Note TC 0006/2024

Circular Number: 0017/2020 (gov.ie)

Revised arrangements for the completion of Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) for students in third year and second year in 2023/2024 (ncca.ie)

SLAR Meetings (ncca.ie)

Notes