



**Oide**

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim  
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí  
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional  
Learning of School Leaders  
and Teachers

# Target Setting DEIS Action Planning Seminar

# Seminar Overview



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## Session 1

09:30 - 11:00

The Definition, value and purpose of a SMART Target.  
Considerations on the variety of data utilised in schools.  
Clarification on the types of data available to schools.  
Discussion on the methods used to capture such data.

Tea/Coffee 11:00 - 11:15

## Session 2

11:15 - 13:00

Exploration of the difference between a SMART target and an action.  
Discussion on actions and the importance of the focus on actions impacting learning and teaching.

Lunch 13:00 - 14:00

## Session 3

14:00 - 15:30

Considerations on the continuum of support, especially in relation to at-risk cohorts.  
Reflecting on target setting within your own school context.



# Learning Outcomes

By the end of this seminar participants will have:

- developed an understanding of SMART targets
- explored how to gather and analyse data from a variety of sources to support target setting
- investigated the definition of a SMART target
- established suitable cohorts for specific intentions and supports in their school context



# Padlet Wall

Our Padlet wall contains many resources relevant to DEIS Action Planning and can be accessed through the QR Code





# The "Why" of DEIS Action Planning

One of the five goals of the DEIS Plan 2017 is to *"improve the learning outcomes and experiences of pupils in DEIS schools."*

To achieve this, the DEIS Action Planning process empowers schools to meet the needs of the most at-risk students through effective target and action setting within eight key themes.

Highly effective teaching and learning, a core aspect of DEIS Action Planning, can have a transformative impact on the lives of at-risk students and contribute to breaking the cycle of disadvantage.





# Key Messages



Targets for DEIS Action planning should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed (SMART)



SMART Targets should be robust and evidence-based originating from varied sources of data



Targets should be clearly aimed at students requiring specific interventions and supports



SMART Targets should inform your actions and allocation of resources, which should impact Teaching and Learning.



# Introductions

Please introduce yourself outlining:

Your name

School

Current Role

Expectations from the day





# Session 1

# Meaningful data gathering and target setting

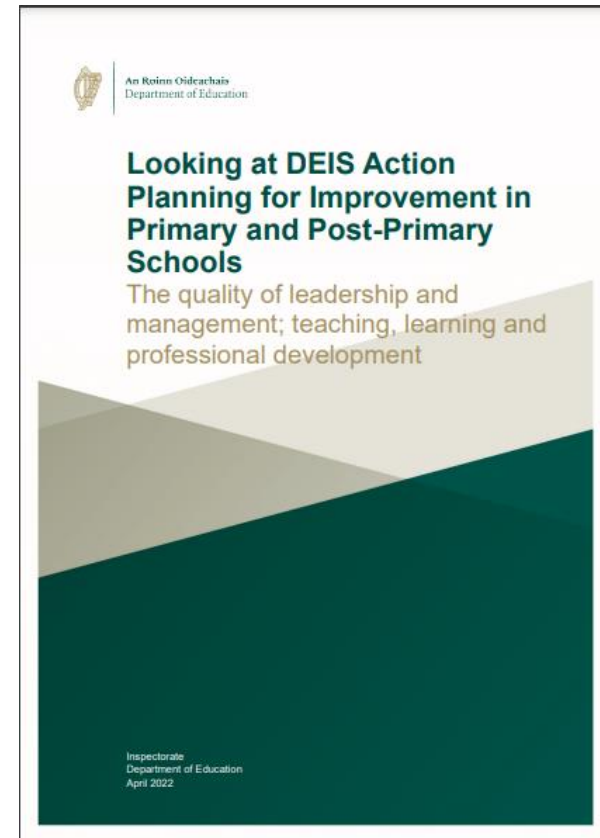




# Looking at DEIS Action Planning...

*“Some schools need further assistance in.... devising SMART Targets based on the data that are **meaningful and realistic** within their **specific contexts**. Devising SMART targets and understanding the data underpinning them remains a challenge for over a third of schools.”*

Department of Education, 2022, p.49





# SSE Six Step Process

From your experience, how do you engage with the six step process to set SMART targets within DEIS Action Planning?





# Walking through a target: Attendance

Step One: Identify the focus

To decrease (**verb**) the percentage of fifth year students with partial absences (**thing affected**).





# Step Two: Gather Evidence

1. Do **not collect too much** data – be concise and focussed.
2. Carefully consider **what information** you actually need.
3. What data do you **already have**?
4. Consider the **integrated nature of the themes** and **related issues** e.g. if attendance – also lates/partial days/retention risk etc.
5. Be clear about **WHO** you will need to get information from – how many, representation, types of data, etc.
6. Who has the **skills** to gather/collate/analyse data?





# Planning Data/Information Collection

*FAILING TO PLAN  
=  
PLANNING TO FAIL*

What should we consider before we start collecting our information?





# Data Gathering

What data sources do you most commonly use for SMART Target setting?





# Stakeholders

Gathering data from a variety of stakeholders during the target setting process can promote a diverse range of perspectives and insights.

**How do you gather data representative of the whole school community?**





# Quantitative Data Sources

State Examination Results

Classroom Based Assessment Results

Attendance Data

Retention Data

Standardised Testing Results

Surveys

Quantitative data can be measured, and given a numerical value.







# Qualitative Data Sources

Interviews

Surveys

Focus Groups

Teacher Observations

Teacher Reflections

Case Studies

Qualitative data provides insights on emotions and perceptions from key stakeholders including students and parents.





# Walking through a target: Attendance

Step two: Gather evidence

To decrease (**verb**) the percentage of fifth year students with partial absences (**thing affected**) from 40% (**baseline**)





# Student Voice

## Why gather student voice?

Article 12 of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child states:

*“State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”*



(Lundy Model of Participation, 2007)

## How can student voice inform DEIS Action Planning?

From a DEIS Action Planning perspective, gathering the perspectives of at-risk students allows schools to set meaningful targets and actions to meet the needs of these students.

# Student Voice Informing DEIS Action Planning



A school noticed that a cohort of students were failing to attend school regularly and felt that this cohort were at-risk for leaving school early. Having set both attendance and retention targets for this cohort, the school then organised a focus group to ascertain **why** this cohort were becoming increasingly disengaged from school.

From the focus group with these students, it transpired that the students were apathetic towards learning and found classwork monotonous. Further conversation with this cohort revealed that they did, however, enjoy project-based learning and group work. Based on feedback from the focus group with the cohort, the staff agreed that effective actions to meet the targets around this cohort were to implement project-based learning and increased group work in classes with these students.

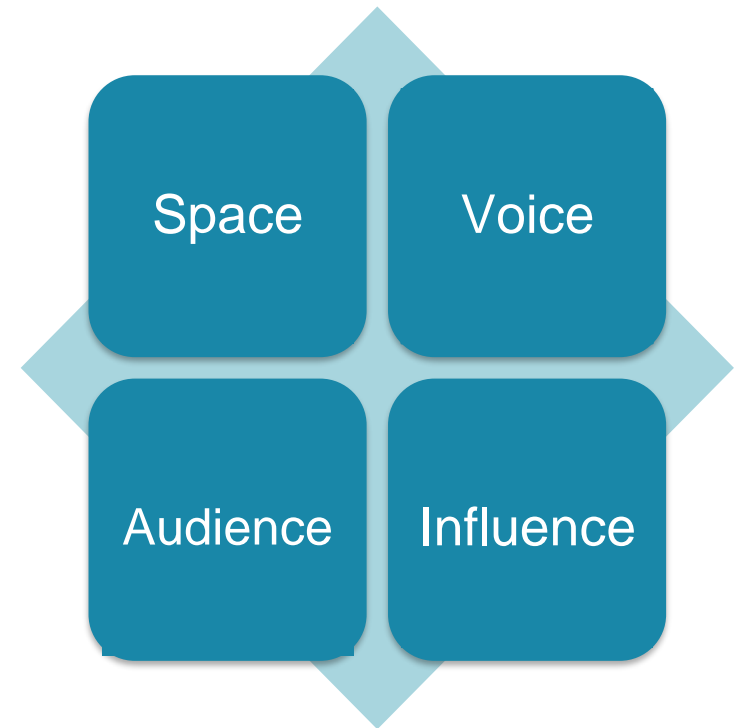
The actions were effective and contributed to the achievement of the targets set for this cohort.



# Focus Groups

A focus group is a specified cohort of students gathered together to discuss their insights into a certain topic or issue.

The outcomes of this qualitative data can assist with, and impact on the setting of specific SMART targets.



(Lundy Model of Participation, 2007)



# Activity: Focus Groups

Questions to consider before setting up your own focus group.





# The Why of Focus Groups

## Why Use Focus Groups?

- Pre-prepared questions
- Deeper and more detailed answers
- Less time consuming than one-on-one interviews
- Get different perspectives

## Considerations

- Is it representative?
- How many people (5-8)?
- How do we explain the purpose of the focus group to the participants and gather their consent to participate?
- Carefully plan the discussion areas
- How to record answers?
- Ensure all have an equal chance to speak
- Who is the best person to chair it?



## Scenario

A rural post-primary DEIS school collaborated with an urban post-primary DEIS school to progress DEIS target setting within literacy. The urban school's student body was composed of over 70 different nationalities, and had a "partnerships with parents" target to improve engagement with parents of displaced students. The rural school decided to include this target within their plan, despite having already excellent links with the small number of parents of displaced students within their school.

**What are the implications of this within DEIS Action Planning?**







# Activity: Focus Groups

Devise your own focus group framework.





# Walking through a target: Attendance

Step three: Analyse and make judgements

To decrease(**verb**) the percentage of fifth year students with partial absences (**thing affected**) from 40% (**baseline**) to 35% by the end of year one, 30% by the end of year two and 25% by the end of year three.

How could focus group data be used to ascertain **why** the students have partial absences and **how** these partial absences could be alleviated through effective teaching and learning?





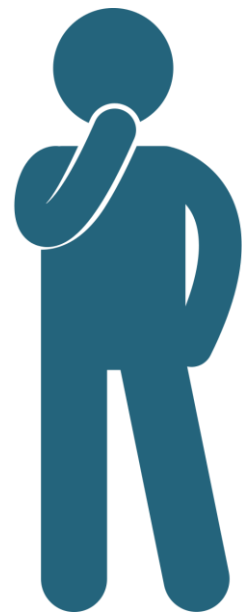
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# Session 2

# SMART Target Setting



# The Why of SMART Target Setting



Why meaningful and  
SMART?





# Experiences with SMART Target Setting



What is working well in setting SMART targets in your school?

What could be improved?

How could this be improved?





# Target Setting

What is **your** understanding of a target within DEIS Action Planning?





# Meaningful Targets

Key questions for schools to consider....

What do **we** want to improve?

Why do **we** want to improve this?

How can this be achieved?

Which students need to be targeted?





# What is a SMART Target?

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Realistic	Timed
Targets should aim to meet the needs of a clearly specified group	Targets should include data to facilitate measurement of the target	Targets should be achievable, informed by capturing the abilities of the targeted group	Targets should be appropriate for the targeted group and reflect the context of the school	Targets should clearly articulate when the target is expected to be achieved



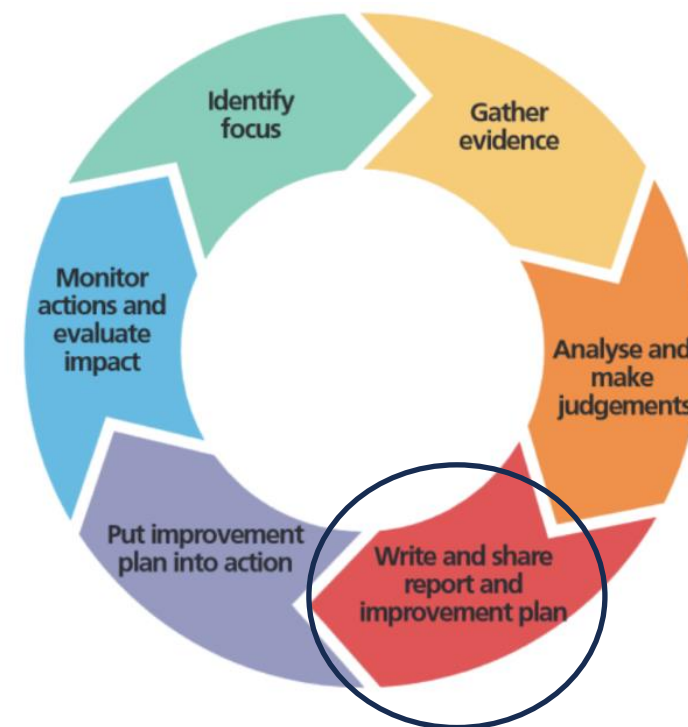


# Step Four: SMART Targets

Identify if the Targets given are SMART or not.

Give a reason for your answer.

Suggest a way to improve the targets which are not SMART.





# Activity: Is it a Target?

In your groups:

Identify if each of the statements are a target or not.

Provide a justification for your decision.





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# Session 3

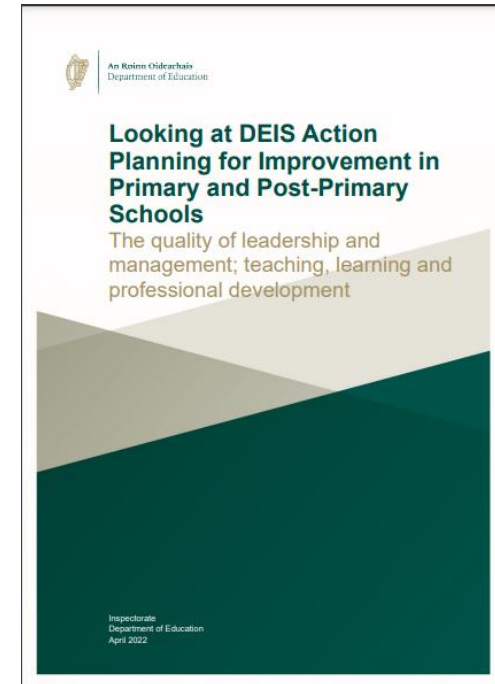
# Your Context, Your School



# Identification of At-Risk Cohorts

*“SMART targets should be set for the students on a categorised basis to ensure that they reflect the various cohorts of pupils/students within the school (e.g. pupils/students with English as an additional language, pupils/students who have poor attendance/punctuality; pupils/students with poor engagement in class; pupils/students underperforming in literacy/numeracy).”*

Department of Education, 2022, p.25.





# Identification of At-Risk Cohorts

How do you identify and integrate at-risk cohorts into SMART target setting in your school?



What data do you use to identify these at-risk groups?

# Identification of At-Risk Cohorts



Targets should meet the needs of students most at risk.

Consider at-risk students within your DEIS school context.

Consider your assigned DEIS theme.  
Devise a target within this theme to meet the needs of the at-risk students you have identified.





# Step Five: Putting the DEIS Plan into Action

Emphasising effective teaching and learning

Subject department meetings

Croke Park hours

Continuous professional development

Linking with digital planning

8 DEIS teams





# Step Six: Monitoring and Evaluating

Target:

To decrease(**verb**) the percentage of fifth year students with partial absences (**thing affected**) from 40% (**baseline**) to 35% by the end of year one, 30% by the end of year two and 25% by the end of year three.

What **impact** could the process of monitoring and evaluating have on this target?







# Reflecting on your DEIS Plan

Are the targets in your DEIS plan SMART?

Are the targets related to learner outcomes and experiences?

Are targets clearly aimed towards at-risk cohorts?





# Key Messages



Targets for DEIS Action planning should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed (SMART)



SMART Targets should be robust and evidence-based originating from varied sources of data



Targets should be clearly aimed at students requiring specific interventions and supports



SMART Targets should be inform your actions which should impact Teaching and Learning.



# Reflection

Reflect on your learning from today.

Consider your priorities for DEIS Action Planning.

Use the Diamond Nine template to list these in priority order.





# At the end of this seminar participants have:

- developed their understanding of SMART targets
- explored how to gather and analyse data from a variety of sources to support target setting
- investigated the definition of a SMART target
- established suitable cohorts for specific intentions and supports in their school context



# Evaluation



Post Primary DEIS Target Setting  
Seminar Feedback

