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Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme: Communication and Literacy

Curriculum area and modules

For introduction to schools in September 2024.

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Introduction

The Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme (SCL1LP) consists of a range of curriculum areas, each designed on a modular basis. There are four curriculum areas at the heart of the SCL1LP: Numeracy; Communication and Literacy; Personal Care; and, Electives.

The curriculum area of Communication and Literacy consists of three modules. It is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of teaching time/class contact time over two years. Each module is designed for approximately 60 hours of teaching time/class contact time.

Module title	Recommended hours per module
Exploring Communication	60
Communicating with others	60
Exploring Expression	60

Rationale

Communication is an umbrella term for all forms of receiving and expressing information including text,¹ symbols and visuals. Communication underpins all learning and enables students to interact with others and make sense of their world. It is very important for the purpose of living more independently. It is also inextricably linked to student wellbeing, happiness and self-esteem.

Communication focuses on connecting with others through text, listening, oral and written language, and other sign systems such as mathematics, art, sound, pictures, Braille and sign language. Literacy focuses on reading, writing and the process of constructing meaning from text.

The development of students' communication and literacy contributes to the development of key competencies in senior cycle and vice-versa. When this happens, all learning across senior cycle is supported and the development of important life skills that are essential to student independence are promoted. Students stand to benefit in many ways as they progress in their learning pathways and transition to life beyond school.

¹ Text refers to all modes of communication such as oral, gesture, sign, written, visual, electronic and digital means.



Continuity and progression

This curriculum area is designed to consolidate and progress communication and literacy skills and knowledge that students developed in junior cycle. This curriculum area is structured to provide continuity from the Level 1 Communication, Language and Literacy Priority Learning Unit (PLU) at junior cycle in order to enhance, progress and deepen learning in senior cycle. This helps to provide a continuous learning experience for students as they add to their competence in communication and literacy throughout senior cycle. It is important to make connections to prior learning at junior cycle and also to other senior cycle modules. This helps to reinforce and progress students' learning and enables them to develop a sense of achievement and confidence in their learning.

Teaching and learning

Students will need to be supported in their individual, preferred way of communicating. While students should experience many modes of communication, they should be enabled to communicate in ways that are most appropriate to them, to build upon their communicative ability. Supports may include augmentative and alternative communication aids such as embossed symbols, writing devices, electronic devices, visual and object cues.



Module: Exploring Communication

Module descriptor

Students will be supported in their learning as they demonstrate an awareness of, and react to, their environment, people and varying activities.

Students learn about

Communication

Identifying and expressing their wants and preferences while also identifying personal functions and needs in ways that are dignified and pro-social.

Students should be able to

- a. Demonstrate awareness of sensory stimuli in the learning environment
- b. Interact with familiar and unfamiliar people in their environment
- c. Respond to verbal and nonverbal cues relating to familiar communicative routines
- d. Respond to familiar questions and statements
- e. Express contentment, happiness, sadness or upset
- f. Communicate with a partner by using devices or other communicative means
- g. Communicate own interests, preferences, choices or opinions
- h. Communicate needs
- i. Communicate to ask questions
- j. Demonstrate an understanding of the use of gestures, tone and volume of vocalisations
- k. Maintain patterns of attending to stimuli, sensory stimuli, people and activities in their environment
- l. Show signs of anticipation and prediction to familiar activity when presented with stimuli and sensory stimuli.



Module: Communicating with others

Module descriptor

Student agency is promoted and nurtured in this module through increasing engagement with others and the student's environments.

Students learn about

Communicating with others

Demonstrating preferences, choice and the ability to follow instructions in a variety of interactions and settings.

Students should be able to

- a. Demonstrate choice to preferred activities and/or objects
- b. Request repetition, change of objects, activity
- c. Participate in turn taking with others
- d. Engage in a range of interactions and exchanges with others including in play
- e. Respond to increased use of words and vocabulary, spoken and in text
- f. Show signs of engagement and enjoyment to a text being shared
- g. Demonstrate recognition of some familiar words, symbols, visuals, signs and objects of reference
- h. Independently or with support, follow simple instructions, verbal and non-verbal.



Module: Exploring Expression

Module descriptor

The promotion of self-expression is supported here using text, symbols, pictures, visuals and music. Students identify, interact and explore various forms of text, symbols, visuals and sounds while also engaging and interacting with different materials or instruments across a range of domains.

Students learn about

Expression

Students engage with important letters and words personal to the student such as their initials or names. Students are active participants in their own work and learning,

Students should be able to

- a. Engage with the mechanics of creating a text, appropriate to the student
- b. Indicate enjoyment or dislike while creating an appropriate form of text, verbally or non-verbally
- c. Use a variety of materials and surfaces for creating texts
- d. Indicate or choose a material to create text
- e. Indicate verbally or non-verbally the understanding that texts, symbols, visuals and music carry meaning
- f. Show understanding of the left to right and top to bottom orientation of written text and page turning
- g. Indicate awareness of important and familiar letters, words, sounds, music, smells or tastes
- h. Engage with the creation of letters of personal importance
- i. Progressively use signs, symbols or text to share experiences, thoughts, opinions, preferences with others
- j. Demonstrate an ability to engage with the process of drawing with some level of control and direction.



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