

Placemat to support students to engage with learning in the physically distanced classroom and to engage with learning from home



This activity gives all students the opportunity to work individually, to share ideas and learn from each other.

Placemat in the physically distanced classroom

A shared presentation doc (PowerPoint, Google Slides, etc) with a placemat that a group of students can work on in real time. Three students take on roles of timekeeper, facilitator, and recorder. The timekeeper sets 3 mins (or a suitable length of time) on a timer and alerts the group when the time for individual work is up. The facilitator leads a discussion on what was written by each individual and helps the group come to a consensus. The recorder types the agreed group response in the centre of the placemat.

Extension: Combine with a ranking ladder activity where multiple answers are recorded in the centre but they are ranked. The facilitator could determine priority with a simple show of hands.

Placemat while engaging with learning from home

The whole class group logs on to a Zoom call. Each student is assigned a question to consider and a timer is started. Students privately write down their thoughts and when the timer sounds, the teacher breaks the students into breakout groups of 4 and sets the breakout session to end after 5 minutes. Two students take on roles of facilitator and recorder. The facilitator leads an oral discussion on what was written by each individual and helps the breakout group come to a consensus. The recorder makes note of the consensus. When the breakout session times out, the recorder feeds back to the whole group. The teacher (or a student) shares his/her screen during feedback and records the responses in real time on a suitable document.

Extension: When the whole group responses have been recorded, the teacher could use the poll feature on Zoom to determine priority as an alternative to using a ranking ladder.

*Placemat can be used to support Teaching, Learning and Assessment in *all* subjects as well as the Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) and the Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs)

Key Skills

- Managing Information and thinking
- Managing myself
- Communicating
- Working with others
- Being literate
- Being creative

Assessment

- This strategy facilitates effective discussions that elicit evidence of learning
- This strategy requires a consensus which is achieved by peer and teacher feedback
- This strategy activates students as learning resources for one another

Inclusion of all Learners

- Allocation of roles to meet strengths/support needs
- Can highlight prior knowledge/area of interest within a topic
- Develops opportunity to be multi-lingual
- Quick to model
- Can be completed in small groups, pairs or individually
- Peer support and tutoring
- Great visual aid to support highlight democratic classroom
- Individual sections springboard into enquiry-based activity
- Accessible - words, pictures, and audio

Resources

- One to one digital devices with internet connection



Further Information

https://jct.ie/wholeschool/classroom_strategies
[Placemat in Action](#)
[Sample template](#)
[L1LPs/L2LPs](#)

