

An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí

Junior **CYCLE** for teachers

MFL

Learning Log

2019/20



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Rationale for Today's Professional Learning Experience

The concept of student-centred learning underpins this Professional Learning Experience. Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Reporting are all connected and all influence each other in creating a learning experience that meets the needs and context of our students.

The approach to designing this experience follows the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a framework which allows us to optimise teaching and learning for all through multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression and multiple means of engagement.



udlguidelines.cast.org | © CAST, Inc. 2018 | Suggested Citation: CAST (2018). Universal design for learning guidelines version 2.2 [graphic organizer]. Wakefield, MA: Author.

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The Power of Protocols

Let's consider how we want to work together today.

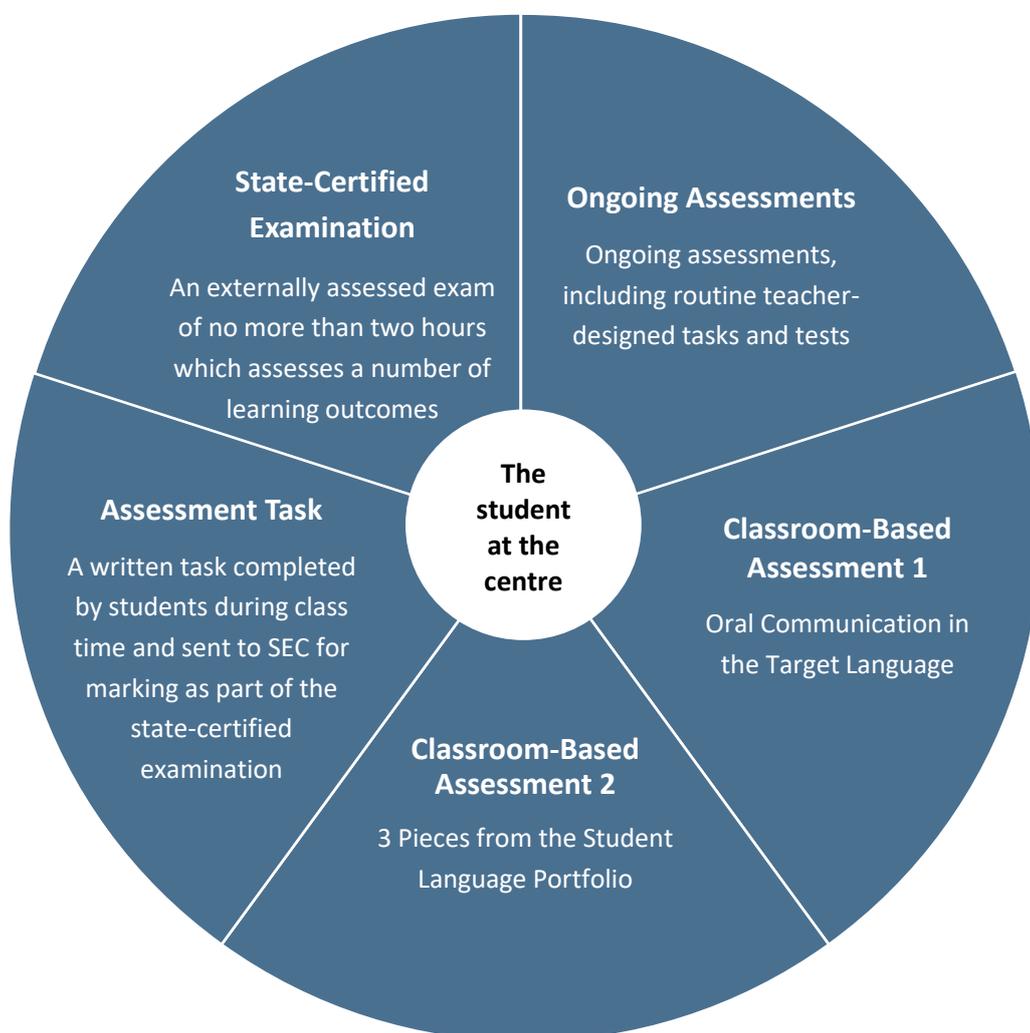
Further supports on establishing ways of working together as an MFL department can be found on www.jct.ie. Some of these quotes may prompt your discussion:

- 1) "In their transparency, protocols teach us habits that we wish we already had: to take the time to listen and notice, to take time to think about what we want to say, to work without rushing, to speak less (or speak up more), to give and receive graciously both forthright praise and forthright critique. [...] Some of them force the raising of questions, the suspension of judgement, and the withholding of response – all of these useful to learning at certain times" (McDonald et al, 2013, p. 7).
- 2) "So much of our knowledge of practice is tacit and becomes subject to critique only when we reflect on it in the company of others" (McDonald et al, 2013, p. 4).
- 3) "Given trust, a group of individuals can learn from one another and their work together even when the work creates discomfort – as work involving worthwhile learning often does" (McDonald et al, 2013, p. 14).
- 4) "Teachers identify and engage in CPD that develops their own practice, meets the needs of students and the school, and enhances collective practice" (Looking at Our School, 2016, p. 20).
- 5) "Teachers view collaboration as a means to improve student learning and to enhance their own professional development. They engage in constructive collaborative practice, and in collaborative review of practice" (Looking at our School, 2016, p. 20).

Assessment in Junior Cycle MFL: Placing Students at the Centre

The most significant change in the new Junior Cycle is in the area of assessment. There is a substantial body of research evidence to show that educational outcomes for students can be improved by broadening the approach to assessment. There is also a recognition that no single assessment event can provide evidence of the full range of student achievement. All assessment in Junior Cycle, formative or summative, moment-in-time or ongoing, SEC, NCCA or teacher-designed, should have as its primary purpose, the support of student learning.

Ongoing classroom assessment practices are of crucial importance in supporting student learning and promoting student achievement. Ongoing assessment involves practice that is both formative and summative. Formative assessment, complemented by summative assessment, will be a key feature of the new Junior Cycle (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, p. 35).



“Inclusive assessment refers to the design and use of fair and effective assessment methods and practices that enable all students to demonstrate to their full potential what they know, understand and can do” (Hockings, 2010, p.34).

Guiding Questions When Creating Effective Assessments

We aim for an assessment which is reliable, fair, valid, feasible and supports teaching and learning. The following guiding questions may support you when creating an assessment. **They are not prescriptive or exhaustive and will be a starting point when planning for assessment as an MFL department.**

Valid

- Am I assessing learning outcomes from the MFL specification?

Learning-Focused

- How does this assessment support student learning?
- Am I assessing the skills I hope to foster?

Relevant

- Is this assessment going to help students communicate in the target language?

Reliable

- Are the criteria for success consistent for all students?
- Are the instructions clear to the students?

Inclusive

- Am I giving all students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning to their full potential?

Transparent

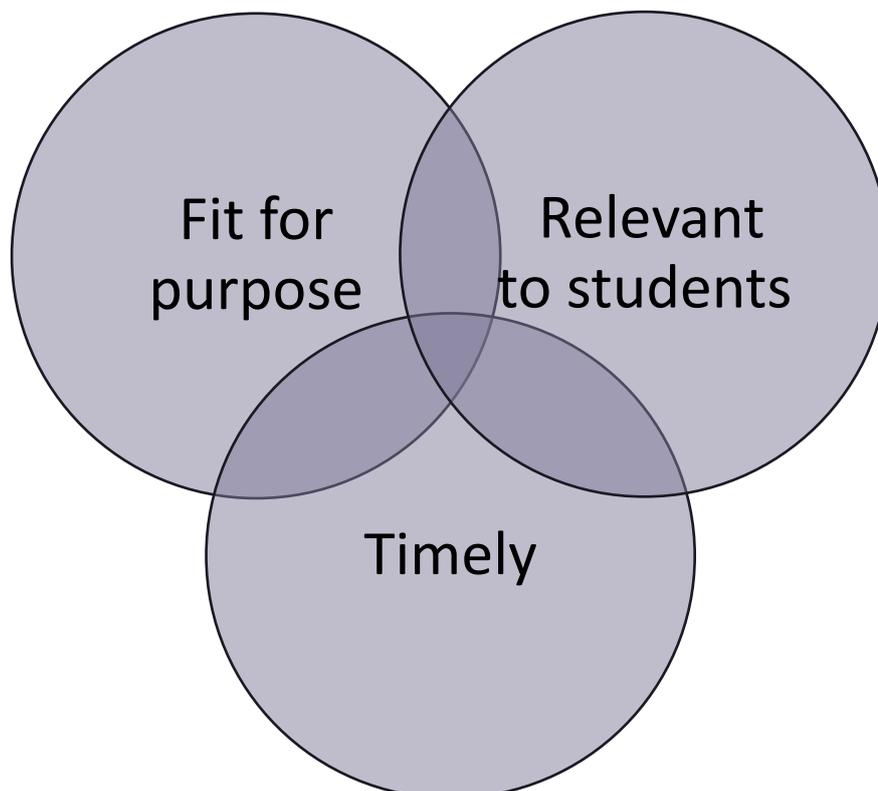
- Do students know what is expected of them?
- Are the criteria for success clear?

The above questions have been adapted from Brown, D. and Abeywickrama, 2010.

Creating Effective Assessments

The Junior Cycle places a strong emphasis on **assessment as part of the learning process**. This approach requires a more **varied approach** to assessment in ensuring that the assessment method or methods chosen are **fit for purpose, timely and relevant to the students** (MFL Specification, p. 18).

Consider the guiding questions on effective MFL assessments above and discuss them with reference to the three principles below.



Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is recognised as a key cornerstone of teacher professional development. The lenses through which we reflect today are based on Brookfield's lenses of reflective practice (Brookfield, S. (2017). *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*). He argues for the importance of critical reflection and offers four lenses through which to reflect:

1. **Our Autobiographies as Learners and Teachers** (self-review) – Our own experiences as learners can influence our behaviour as teachers and an ability to use our autobiographical lens will enable us to identify these personal drivers and therefore review our practices. We can begin to see our practice from the point of view of what our students experience.
2. **Our Students' Eyes** (student review) – Seeing ourselves through students' eyes provides valid and reliable evidence for our practices as teachers and in particular how and what students are learning. Are students interpreting and learning in the way we anticipated?
3. **Our Colleagues' Experiences** (peer review) – Sharing conversations about our teaching with trusted colleagues and their perceptions and experiences of what we do can yield useful insights.
4. **Theoretical Literature** (benchmarking) – Literature and research can help us to describe and understand our practice by offering multiple perspectives on familiar situations.

Discuss how each lens might support our practice as teachers.

Reflecting on the Classroom-Based Assessment Process: CBA 1

Carousel Activity:

- *Reflect on your experience of the Classroom-Based Assessment 1 process using the prompt at your table*
- *Share with your group: one thing that went well and one thing you would do differently*
- *Rotate to the next table and repeat the process.*

What went well?

Even better if?

Reflecting on the Classroom-Based Assessment Process: Through the Students' Eyes

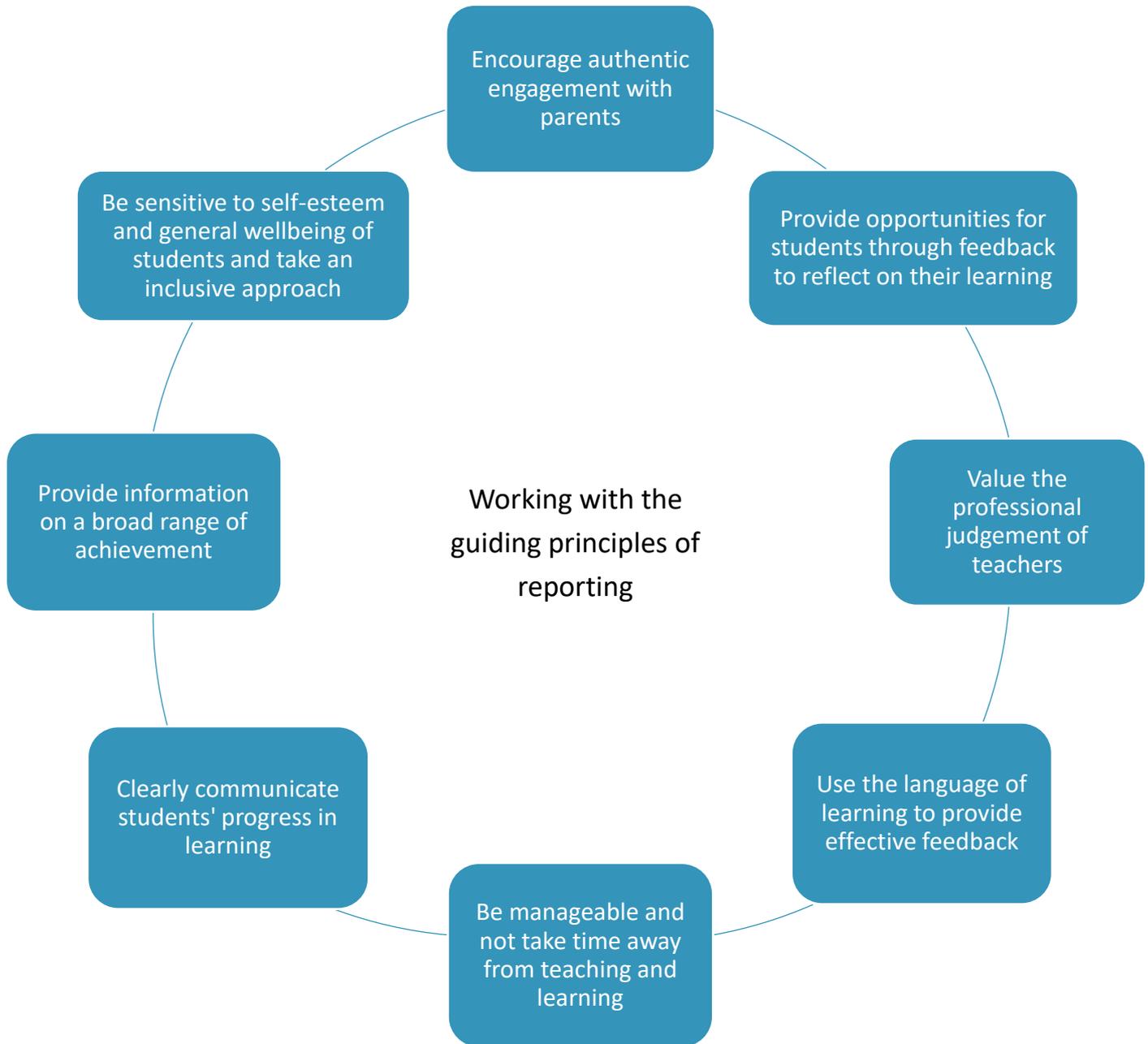
Watch the video of students sharing their experience of the Classroom-Based Assessment 1 and note your thoughts.

Reflection Moment: Feedback on Classroom-Based Assessment 1

“While the Classroom-Based Assessment is summative, it has a formative value and should be used as a tool to provide **feedback to teachers, students and parents on student progress and learning**” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 20).

What?	How?	When?
Feedback referred to the Features of Quality.		
Students reflected on their feedback.		
Students were encouraged to think about what they have learned and how they learned it.		
Students were encouraged to plan the next steps in their learning.		
Achievements were reported on to students.		
Students' achievements were reported on to parents/guardians.		

The Guiding Principles of Effective Reporting



<https://www.ncca.ie/media/3396/reporting-booklet.pdf>

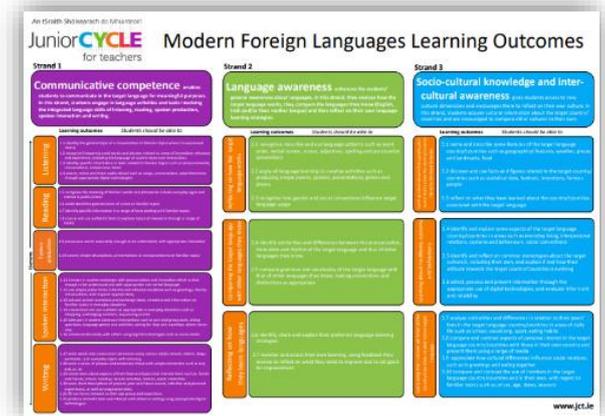
The Student Language Portfolio: Supporting Student Learning

Over the three years of Junior Cycle, each student develops a language portfolio. The student language portfolio focuses on the process of language learning and **places the learner at the centre of teaching, assessment and learning.**

It provides the MFL student with an opportunity to set personal learning goals across the five skills in strand one, to engage with and reflect on their language learning as outlined in strand two and to develop and document their sociocultural awareness, thereby supporting the learning outcomes in strand three. Using the student language portfolio supports formative assessment in the MFL classroom and facilitates students in showcasing their language-learning achievements (MFL Specification, p. 21).

Key Features of a Student Language Portfolio

The student language portfolio will include a broad range of items, such as written texts, projects, audio-visual materials, learning logs, student reflections and learning goals. It is recognised that in this context the student's created texts may be presented in different formats—handwritten, digital, multi-modal, and so on.



Consider the Student Language Portfolios and discuss the essential key features.

Effective Feedback

“The most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement is feedback. This does not mean using many tests and providing over-prescriptive directions. It means providing information about how and why the student understands and misunderstands, and what directions the student must take to improve” (John Hattie, *Influences on Student Learning*, Inaugural Lecture at the University of Auckland, 1999).

Feedback is critical to improving learning as it both influences students’ motivation to learn and their ability to do so.

Effective Feedback:

- Focuses on the quality of the student work
- Relates to agreed success criteria
- Identifies success and achievement
- Indicates suggestions for improvement
- Prompts student thinking
- Allows time for improvement to take place.

Feedback includes telling students what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. It also includes reminding students of what they were aiming to achieve (the learning intentions). Finally, high quality feedback is always given against explicit and agreed criteria for success (adapted from *Focus on Learning; Formative Feedback*, NCCA, 2015).

Discuss whether the feedback given is effective.

Effective Feedback in Action

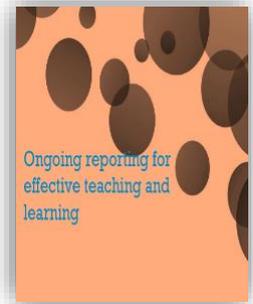
Complete the task.

Provide feedback on the task.

Reflect on the feedback you received; does it move your learning forward?

Reflecting on My Practice: Student Reflection in My Classroom

During the reporting process an important way of reducing how much the teacher needs to record is by involving students in reflecting about their learning and asking them to record their self-assessment of significant learning moments in their notebooks or portfolios (Ongoing Reporting for Effective Teaching and Learning, NCCA, p. 28).



	Do I?	How?	When?
I allow time for students to reflect on their progress at the end of a lesson/ set of lessons.			
I encourage students to think about what they have learned and how they learned it.			
I encourage students to plan the next steps in their learning.			
I provide questions and tools to help students reflect on their learning.			
I provide opportunities for students to self-assess as part of the reflective process.			
I allow time for students to reflect on feedback that they receive from me and their peers.			

Adapted from Ongoing Reporting for Effective Teaching and Learning, NCCA, 2015.

Reflecting Through the Theoretical Lens: Placing Students at the Centre

David Little is Associate Professor Emeritus and Fellow Emeritus at Trinity College, Dublin. He has been a regular contributor to the Council of Europe's language education projects since the 1980s. In 2010, the National University of Ireland awarded him an honorary doctorate in recognition of his contribution to language education in Ireland and further afield.



In this interview, Professor Little describes a learning-centred language classroom. The recording can be accessed in the Resources Section of our website.

Watch the extract and answer the corresponding questions.

The Learning-Centred Classroom

Consider how a learning-centred classroom supports the Key Skills and the Principles of Junior Cycle Education.



Classroom-Based Assessment 2: The Student Language Portfolio as Evidence of Learning

The second Classroom-Based Assessment offers students a chance to celebrate their achievements as language learners. In completing the second Classroom-Based Assessment, each student selects three texts for assessment from their portfolio (MFL Specification, p. 21).

The portfolio helps students to capture their language learning and develop cultural awareness; to reflect on their language development and to develop confidence in their communicative abilities in the target language (MFL Assessment Guidelines, p. 19).

Features of Quality for Classroom-Based Assessment 2

The Features of Quality are the criteria used to assess student work. They are broadly aligned with the A band (A1 to A2, basic user) of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Consider the sample of student work and use the Features of Quality to apply a provisional descriptor.

Reporting on Student Learning: Classroom-Based Assessment 2

Discuss how you might report on Classroom-Based Assessment 2.

The Assessment Task

Students complete a formal written Assessment Task to be submitted to the State Examinations Commission for marking along with the final examination for modern foreign languages. It is allocated 10% of the marks used to determine the grade awarded by the State Examinations Commission. The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and related to the learning outcomes on which the second Classroom-Based Assessment is based. The Assessment Task is devised from some or all of the following elements:

- A short stimulus in written, audio, audio-visual or multi-modal format to prepare for the written task.
- A written task that tests the students in
 - their ability to outline and/or discuss their experience of compiling a portfolio of language learning
 - their understanding and evaluation of that experience - their capacity to reflect on the skills they have developed
 - their understanding of a cultural aspect of the target language country about which there will be evidence of learning in the student's portfolio.

As the key purpose of the Assessment Task is to encourage student reflection on the process of language learning, the questions and answers will be in the language of schooling (MFL Specification, p. 23).

Discuss practical strategies which support student reflection in the MFL classroom.

The Final Examination

There will be one examination paper at a common level, set by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). Students will sit this written examination paper of up to two hours duration at the end of the third year. They will be required to engage with, demonstrate comprehension of, and respond to stimulus material, which will include an aural stimulus. **In any year, the learning outcomes to be assessed will constitute a sample of the outcomes from the tables of learning outcomes.** The aural component will be allocated 35% of the marks used to determine the grade awarded by the State Examinations Commission (MFL Specification, p. 23).

Assessing Learning Outcomes

Sample assessment material has been published by the NCCA and can be accessed at <https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Modern-Foreign-Languages>.

The sample material presented here has been prepared to support teacher professional development. It offers a broad indication of types and formats of assessment items that might be used to assess the learning outcomes in the Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages specification at a common level, but it is not a complete set of the types and formats that may be used. The items included should be read as examples of individual pieces of assessment material; they do not constitute full or partial examination papers. They are not full or partial questions from an examination paper, neither do they attempt to replicate how the examination paper might be laid out, for example, as an integrated booklet that includes the questions and the space for the student's responses.

Consider the different question types in the sample assessments.

*At your table, read the learning outcomes in focus for this assessment.
Consider the sample questions A.*

Which aspects of these learning outcomes are assessed directly?

Now consider the sample questions B. The learning outcomes in focus have changed.

Which aspects of these learning outcomes are assessed directly?

Consider how the focus on learning outcomes affects the types of questions asked.

Consider the learning outcomes in focus.

Engage with the material.

*Create an assessment **aligned to the learning outcomes in focus.***

Share with the group.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

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 (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, p. 46).

Consider how the JCPA will offer parents/guardians a clear and broad picture of their child's learning journey over the three years of Junior Cycle.

References

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- <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-ReportsGuidelines/Looking-at-Our-School-2016-A-Quality-Framework-for-Post-Primary-schools.pdf>
- https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf

Start-Stop-Continue

This page allows you to pause at key moments throughout the day to consider what actions you hope to take to move from newness to routine.

Session 1:

Session 2:

Session 3: