

An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí

Junior CYCLE for teachers

Learning Log

MFL

Clusters

2018 – 2019



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Working with the MFL Specification so far

Reflection Moment:

- *3 ways in which my classroom practice has changed with the new specification*
- *2 questions I have about the specification*
- *1 key thing I would like to learn more about today*



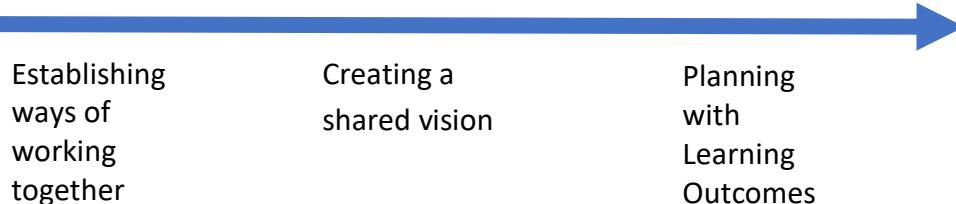
Aims of the MFL Specification

The MFL Specification encourages all students to:

- actively engage in language activities and tasks, developing the capacity to understand written and spoken language
- communicate effectively and confidently in the target language in familiar contexts through a range of media
- develop their capacity to use appropriate structures and vocabulary for the purposes of communication, both written and oral
- enjoy a language-learning experience that will facilitate and encourage them to continue learning languages in future
- be reflective and autonomous in their language learning, and become actively involved in monitoring and assessing their progress
- appreciate their own and other cultures
- develop skills that they can apply to other areas of study and to their lives.

Planning: Collaboration in Action

Reflection Moment: Collaboration...How are we doing?



When planning a unit of learning, we are guided by our Collaborative Planning Steps and our Steps for Integrating Learning Outcomes across the strands. On the following pages you will find supports you may wish to use and/or adapt to your needs when planning units of learning. These supports are not prescriptive.

In planning units of learning, our approach allows for collaboration as well as teacher autonomy.

When planning units of learning, a collaborative approach can help us in

- selecting learning outcomes
- exploring the key learning within a unit
- agreeing the assessment.

Teachers remain autonomous when

- choosing content to support the student learning
- creating tasks for and with their students
- selecting teaching and learning activities and methodologies which suit them and their students.

The templates may support you in planning units of learning. We have created interactive versions which include drop-down menus to make planning easier for you. They are available in portrait or landscape format here: https://www.jct.ie/modern_foreign_languages/planning_resources

Collaborative Planning Steps



Step 1

Consider age and stage of students



Step 2

Select the learning outcomes

What do I want my students to know, understand and
be able to do?



Step 3

**Integrate across the 3 strands using up to 4 learning outcomes
per unit (these are the learning outcomes in focus)**



Step 4

Align assessment with learning outcomes

How will I know they know?



Step 5

Consider appropriate teaching and learning activities

What will I do to get them there?

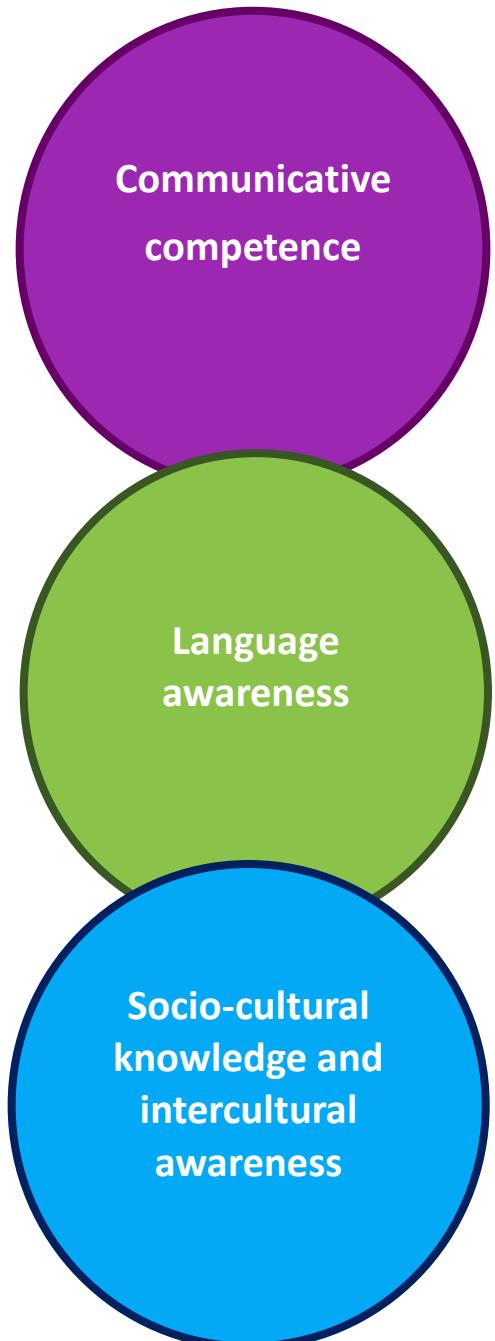
Guiding Questions on Integrating the Learning Outcomes across the Strands

How do I integrate the learning outcomes across the three strands?

These questions may help guide you through the process:

Strand 1:

- What do I want my students to be able to do in the target language at the end of this unit of learning?
- What is their age and stage in the learning process?
- What have they learned already and what do we want to learn next?
- Do I want to focus on a particular language skill or do I want to combine a receptive skill with a suitable productive skill?



Strand 2:

- What do they already know about learning languages that will help them?
- What do my students need to know/understand about the target language or about the process of language learning that will help them achieve this?

Strand 3:

- What is the authentic target language context where students would/could need to use those communicative outcomes?
- What do my students need/want to learn about life in the target language country/countries that is appropriate to their age and stage of learning?

Collaborative Planning Activity:

Year Group: Unit of Learning Title:	Term: Approximate Duration:
<p>Learning Outcomes in Focus (What do I want my students to know, understand and be able to do in the target language?)</p> <p>Strand 1 Communicative Competence Writing 1.20 write short descriptions of present, past and future events, activities and personal experiences, as well as imaginative texts</p> <p>Strand 2 Language Awareness Reflecting on how the TL works; 2.1 recognise, describe and use language patterns such as word order, verbal system, nouns, adjectives, spelling and punctuation conventions</p> <p>Strand 3 Socio-cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness Learning about relevant facts, people, places and history about the country related to the TL; 3.2 discover and use facts and figures related to the target country/countries such as statistical data, festivals, inventions, famous people</p> <p>Any Other Learning Outcomes in Focus for this Unit of Learning Choose a learning outcome.</p>	
<p>Discuss the student learning within these learning outcomes</p> <p>Assessment: (What learning should students be able to demonstrate within this unit?) Students can research and apply facts and figures about an aspect of the target language country that interests them. Students can write a short description about an event in the target language country. Students can use appropriate word order, verbal system, spelling and punctuation.</p>	
<p>Teaching & Learning Activities: (Plan the activities/methodologies. Consider the five language skills – Listening, Reading, Spoken production, Spoken interaction and Writing)</p>	
<p><i>*Activities recognise the integrated nature and sequence (receptive → productive) of second language acquisition</i></p>	
<p>Resources:</p>	
<p>Reflection: What worked well? Even better if... What other language development has taken place?</p>	

Notes on the planning process so far



Unit of Learning Templates

MFL Department Collaborative Planning Template (Portrait)

Year Group:	Term:
Unit of Learning Title:	Approximate Duration:
Learning Outcomes in Focus (What do I want my students to know, understand and be able to do in the target language?)	
Strand 1 Communicative Competence Writing 1.20 write short descriptions of present, past and future events, activities and personal experiences, as well as imaginative texts	
Strand 2 Language Awareness Reflecting on how the TL works; 2.1 recognise, describe and use language patterns such as word order, verbal system, nouns, adjectives, spelling and punctuation conventions	
Strand 3 Socio-cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness Learning about relevant facts, people, places and history about the country related to the TL; 3.2 discover and use facts and figures related to the target country/countries such as statistical data, festivals, inventions, famous people	
Any Other Learning Outcomes in Focus for this Unit of Learning Choose a learning outcome.	
<i>Discuss the student learning within these learning outcomes</i>	
Assessment: (What learning should students be able to demonstrate within this unit?)	
Teaching & Learning Activities: (Plan the activities/methodologies. Consider the five language skills – Listening, Reading, Spoken production, Spoken interaction and Writing)	
<i>*Activities recognise the integrated nature and sequence (receptive → productive) of second language acquisition</i>	
Resources:	
Reflection: What worked well? Even better if... What other language development has taken place?	

Learning Outcomes

Assessment

Learning Activities

MFL Department Collaborative Planning Template (Landscape)

Year Group: Unit of Learning Title:	Term :	Approximate Duration:		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment	Learning Activities		
<p>Learning Outcomes in Focus (What do I want my students to know, understand and be able to do in the target language?)</p> <p><u>Strand 1 Communicative Competence</u> Choose a learning outcome.</p> <p><u>Strand 2 Language Awareness</u> Choose a learning outcome.</p> <p><u>Strand 3 Socio-cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness</u> Choose a learning outcome.</p> <p><u>Any Other Learning Outcomes in Focus for this Unit of Learning</u> Choose a learning outcome.</p> <p><i>Discuss the student learning within these learning outcomes</i></p>	<p>Assessment: (What learning should students be able to demonstrate within this unit?)</p>	<p>Teaching & Learning Activities: (Plan the activities/methodologies. Consider the five language skills – Listening, Reading, Spoken production, Spoken interaction and Writing)</p>	<p>Resources:</p>	<p>Reflection:</p> <p>What worked well?</p> <p>Even better if...</p> <p>What other language development has taken place?</p>
		<p><i>*Activities recognise the integrated nature and sequence (receptive → productive) of second language acquisition</i></p>		

Planning in Action: Communicative Tasks and Activities:

Below you will find a completed planning template. In the yellow section decide which are tasks (T) and which are activities (A).

Year Group:	Term:
Unit of Learning Title:	Approximate Duration:
Learning Outcomes in Focus (What do I want my students to know, understand and be able to do in the target language?)	
Strand 1 Communicative Competence Writing 1.20 write short descriptions of present, past and future events, activities and personal experiences, as well as imaginative texts	
Strand 2 Language Awareness Reflecting on how the TL works; 2.1 recognise, describe and use language patterns such as word order, verbal system, nouns, adjectives, spelling and punctuation conventions	
Strand 3 Socio-cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness Learning about relevant facts, people, places and history about the country related to the TL; 3.2 discover and use facts and figures related to the target country/countries such as statistical data, festivals, inventions, famous people	
Any Other Learning Outcomes in Focus for this Unit of Learning Choose a learning outcome.	
Discuss the student learning within these learning outcomes	
Assessment: (What learning should students be able to demonstrate within this unit?) Students can research and apply facts and figures about an aspect of the target language country that interests them. Students can write a short description about an event in the target language country. Students can use appropriate word order, verbal system, spelling and punctuation.	
Teaching & Learning Activities: (Plan the activities/methodologies Consider the five language skills – Listening, Reading, Spoken production, Spoken interaction and Writing) - Students use placemats to explore what words/expressions they know and what they will need to learn. - Students listen to an audio stimulus or watch a video set at an event/festival. They complete a worksheet by filling in key information under given headings. - The teacher cuts up a brochure of a festival in the target language country. Students work in pairs or small groups. They read their section on their own and then work together to agree on a number of events they would like to attend. - Students work in pairs to ask each other about their favourite festival. - Students use facts and figures gathered through research to write a short article for the student magazine about an event or festival they imagine they are attending.	
<i>*Activities recognise the integrated nature and sequence (receptive → productive) of second language acquisition</i>	
Resources:	
Reflection: What worked well? Even better if... What other language development has taken place?	

Key Features of a Task

Use the space below to outline key features of tasks.



Tasks; Moving beyond Topics:

Language learning tasks are based on the ideology that the most effective way to teach a language is by engaging learners in real language use in the classroom (Willis and Willis, 2007), seeing language learners as language users from the beginning of their language learning journey. In order to complete tasks, learners must use their knowledge about the language, the communication strategies they have developed, and their understanding of the world including the target language country in order to achieve a specific goal in a particular context.

A task is not synonymous with an exercise or an activity. It goes beyond practising language forms and structures, orally or in writing. When language learners are engaged in tasks, they use language in order to achieve a goal, making language learning meaningful and tangible. Language learning and communicating are seen as two sides of the one coin (Little et al., 2017).

"One of the most valuable things we can give a learner: the confidence to have a go, even if their language resources are limited" (Willis and Willis, 2007).

Critique and Tweak This Task

Below you will find the completed collaborative planning section of a unit of learning. Considering the key features of a task, decide which aspects of the task (see presentation) need to be improved.

Year Group: 2 nd year	Term: 1
Unit of Learning Title:	Approximate Duration:
Learning Outcomes in Focus: (What do I want my students to know, understand and be able to do in the target language?)	
Strand 1 Communicative Competence Reading; 1.7 identify specific information in a range of texts dealing with familiar topics	
Strand 2 Language Awareness Reflecting on how they learn languages; 2.7 monitor and assess their own learning, using feedback they receive to reflect on what they need to improve and to set goals for improvement	
Strand 3 Socio-cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness Learning about traditions, customs and behaviours; 3.6 select, process and present information through the appropriate use of digital technologies, and evaluate it for truth and reliability	
Any Other Learning Outcomes in Focus for this Unit of Learning Writing 1.17 write words and create short sentences using various media (emails, letters, blogs, postcards...) on everyday topics with accuracy	
Discuss the student learning within these learning outcomes	
Assessment: (What learning should students be able to demonstrate within this unit?) Students can write simple news about themselves, using appropriate word order and punctuation. Students can share their news using an online platform. Students can identify a range of facts when they read news about their peers.	
Teaching & Learning Activities: (Plan the activities/methodologies. Consider the five language skills – Listening, Reading, Spoken production, Spoken interaction and Writing)	
<i>*Activities recognise the integrated nature and sequence (receptive → productive) of second language acquisition</i>	
Resources:	
Reflection: What worked well? Even better if... What other language development has taken place?	

10 Frequently Asked Questions on Planning

The following section contains frequently asked questions about planning. They are not exhaustive but may provide useful support.

1. How many learning outcomes are in each unit of learning? How many classes should be spent on a unit?

By focusing on 3-4 learning outcomes per unit it enables us to align assessment to the learning outcomes in focus. By selecting more than 4 learning outcomes we may end up assessing content instead of what students can **do** in the target language. We can revisit each learning outcome many times, there is no limit as such and we may focus on parts of the learning outcome in each unit of learning rather than *all* of the learning outcome. Some units may take 4 classes while others may take as many as 8 to 10. It depends on the group of students. Prior knowledge will also be a consideration. There is no limit to the number of units of learning an MFL department can plan. It is essential, however, that the 39 learning outcomes are covered throughout the three years of Junior Cycle.

2. Do teachers have freedom when selecting topics once they address the learning outcomes?

One of the key differences with Junior Cycle MFL is that all planning, as an MFL department, begins with learning outcomes. Teachers are then free to choose the content which best supports those learning outcomes in their classroom. Therefore, when we are planning a unit of learning, we start with a single learning outcome and then find complementary learning outcomes to build the unit. We need to be clear about what we want our students to **know, understand** and **be able to do** at the end of a period of learning. This approach is very much action-oriented.

Once we have chosen our learning outcomes we then decide **how** students will demonstrate their learning (align your assessment to your learning outcomes). As teachers we use a range of resources to support the intended learning.

3. Are there clear guidelines as to how much content/detail to cover in relation to a learning outcome?

You can revisit each learning outcome many times, there is no limit and you may focus on parts of that learning outcome in each unit rather than all of that learning outcome. When you return to that same learning outcome, the focus might be on a different part of that learning outcome. The duration varies depending on what is being taught and to what depth.

4. Will there be enough time across the three years to develop all 39 learning outcomes?

Yes, the MFL specification has been designed for 200 timetabled hours over the course of three years.

5. How many units of learning are there per year?

There is no minimum or maximum number of units of learning to be completed in any given year as long as the 39 learning outcomes are developed across the three years.

6. Are the new textbooks consistent with the new Junior Cycle?

When choosing learning outcomes the most important thing is to work from the specification. We can then use the textbook as one resource, among many, to support us in working towards achieving these outcomes. What we say is that the breadth of a specification cannot be fully reflected in a textbook alone. For this reason, we only recommend the judicious use of a textbook as one resource among many.

7. The learning outcomes state clearly "familiar topics". What are these?

Familiar topics refer to topics which are age and stage appropriate to students' language learning journey and are relevant to their interests and abilities. Topics which engage students in real-life purposeful use of the language should be considered. Topics that relate to the context in which students live will motivate and engage students as they are more willing to talk about, research and engage with topics which interest them.

8. What if a teacher wants or needs to spend longer with their group and the other MFL teachers are moving on to another unit?

The intention is that MFL teachers will work together to plan and use the same learning outcomes and the same assessment (see the blue section in the planning template). However, the teacher still has autonomy and freedom to tailor classes to their students. It is not envisaged that students and teachers will be doing the exact same thing at the exact same time in their respective classrooms.

9. If I am the only German teacher in my school, should I collaborate with the other language teachers?

For planning purposes, MFL teachers in a school should form an MFL department and plan collaboratively. For a sole MFL teacher in a school, it would be beneficial to collaborate with teachers from another school.

10. Does every unit of learning have to include tasks?

Every teacher has the autonomy to plan teaching and learning activities for their students. Tasks provide opportunities for students to use the language they have learned in a meaningful, purposeful context. This helps students to develop the ability to communicate effectively in the target language over time. Learning outcomes ensure that we focus on what students should be able to do (such as recognise/describe/use/explain etc.) in the target language. Tasks may be used at all stages of learning throughout the unit of learning to capture the learning outcomes in focus in a meaningful, communicative context.

The Student Language Portfolio

Before watching the video, consider key aspects of the Student Language Portfolio using the 5WH Strategy (Who/What/Where/When/Why/How) of the Student Language Portfolio.



Acceptable Use 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 Modern Foreign Languages, this may occur as part of normal classroom practice to capture teaching, learning and assessment. In all instances, teachers and schools are required to act in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). The school's AUP policy must be cognisant of data and Child Protection guidelines.

Supporting Reflection in the Language Classroom

Some of the following prompts may support you and your students in developing strategies for reflection.

Reflection for Action (before)

What can I already do in the language?
What do I know about the language that will help me?
What do I need to learn?
What am I learning to do?
What are my goals?
How will I know if I have achieved the learning?
What strategies can I already use to help me learn?
How will I demonstrate what I have learned?

Reflection in Action (during)

Do I understand what I am doing?
Do I know the success criteria?
What do I need to do to improve my work?
Do I need to make changes?
Am I working towards my goals?

Reflection on Action (after)

Have I achieved my learning intentions/goals?
The main thing I learned is
I liked/did not like this way of learning because
What skill(s) have I developed? / What skills do I need to improve?
What worked/did not work? Why?
What would I do differently next time? Why?
What further supports do I need to improve?

Reflection on Feedback

What have I learned?
What went well?
What can I improve upon?
What goal(s) am I setting for next time?
Do I have any questions about my feedback?

Adapted from resources created by Erasmus+ ATS2020 Project

Scaffolding Reflection for Students:

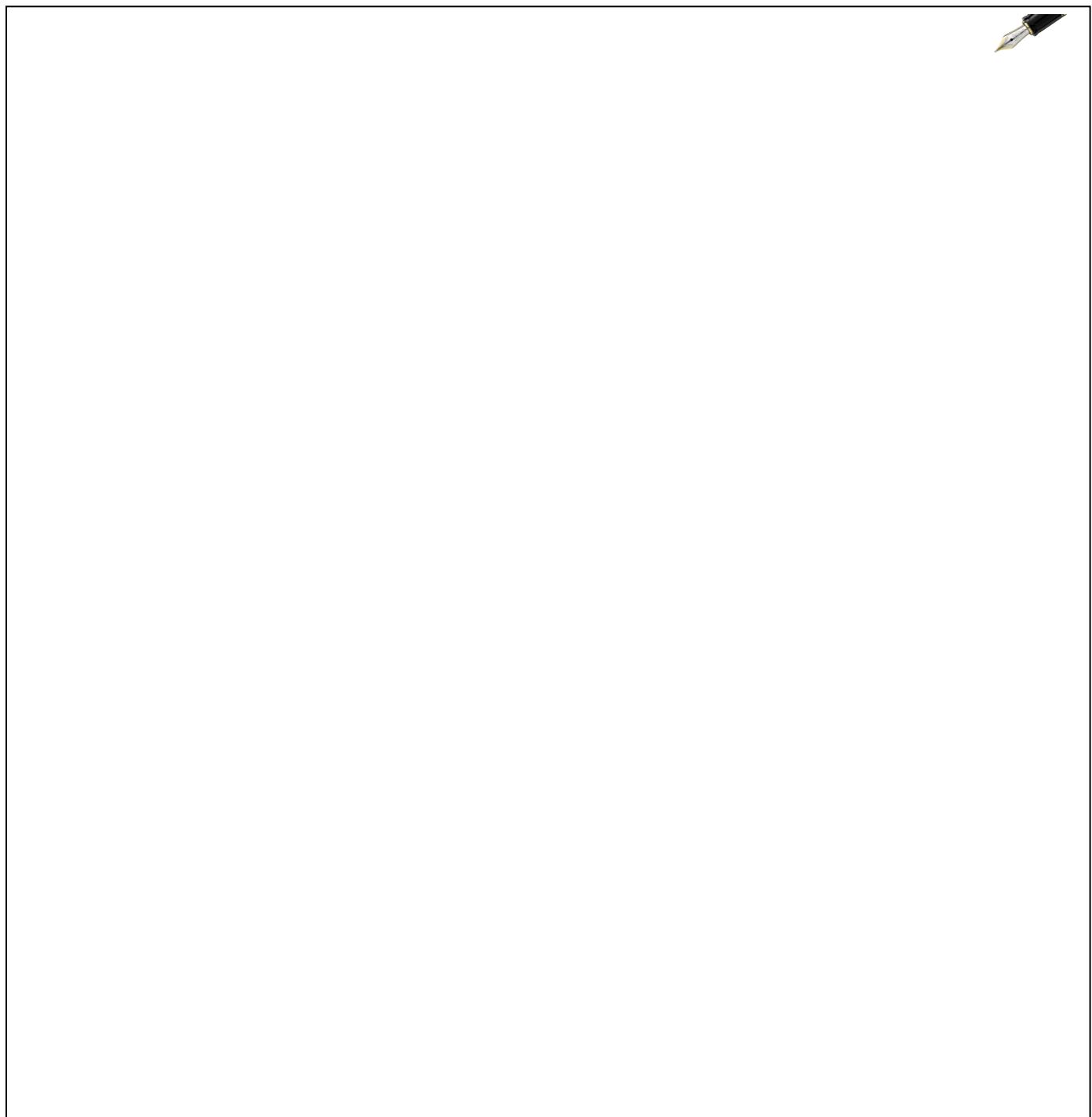
When developing the skill of reflection, students need to...

STOP

THINK

MAKE SENSE

EXPRESS



Classroom-Based Assessments: Teacher Preparation

In order to prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers should familiarise themselves with the following documentation:

- Junior Cycle MFL Specification
- Assessment Guidelines
- Assessment Toolkit
- annotated examples of student work (www.curriculumonline.ie).

Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Oral Communication is undertaken during a three-week timeframe within the window stipulated by the NCCA (fur further information see [Circular Letter 0079 /2018](#)).

Table 3: Completion of Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Oral Communication – indicative dates

Window for student completion of CBA1	7th January 2019 to 20th May 2019
Latest date for provisional award of descriptors by the teacher	Wednesday 22nd May 2019
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 24th May 2019

The information outlined below has been written to address Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings for MFL teachers (Assessment Guidelines, page 15).

Clarification for MFL Teachers

Scenario 1: If you teach in a school with more than one teacher of the modern foreign language in question:

- It is recommended that MFL teachers discuss the assessment with colleagues and plan for teaching and learning together. It will be important to set the times and dates for carrying out the assessment as early as possible.
- It is recommended that a date for a language-specific Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting is established to assist in the planning, implementation and review of the Classroom-Based Assessment.
- Once the school has decided this date, teachers and students can prepare for the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment.

Scenario 2: If you teach in a school with one teacher of the modern foreign language in question:

- It is recommended that the teacher discuss the assessment arrangements with their school facilitator/management with a view to contacting and coordinating with teachers of that modern foreign language from other, preferably nearby schools.
- The teacher can then plan any teaching and learning that may be required and along with their colleagues from other schools, agree a date for a language-specific SLAR meeting.
- A common timeframe for the SLAR should be agreed at the outset.

- Where possible, one school should host the SLAR meeting, with this school also supplying the facilitator. If a school is used, the location of the meeting should rotate between all schools involved for each successive year.

Scenario 3: If you are teacher of a modern foreign language who is not currently teaching the student cohort completing their Classroom-Based Assessment (second years):

- You may participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting with a colleague/colleagues, although you may not have samples of student work to bring to the SLAR.
- It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the Features of Quality for the CBA.
- It is recommended that you view the examples of student work on curriculumonline.ie



Features of Quality for CBA 1: Oral Communication

The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess student work as best fitting one of the descriptors below. They are broadly aligned with the A band (A1 to A2, basic user) of the CEFR. Students complete oral communication towards the end of year two and expectations of the standard they achieve will be at a level appropriate to their age and experience at that stage in their language learning in junior cycle (Assessment Guidelines, page 13).

Features of Quality: Oral Communication in the target language	
Exceptional A piece of work that reflects these features to a very high standard. The strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws.	Spoken production: the student's communication is very clear, with good fluency, accuracy and range of vocabulary Spoken interaction: the student understands and responds coherently and without undue effort to questions/prompts Language awareness: the student shows very good awareness of language patterns and conventions and self-corrects as appropriate
Above expectations A piece of work that reflects these features very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback might point to the necessity to address some aspects of the work in need of further attention but, on the whole the work is of a high standard.	Spoken production: the student's communication is clear, with reasonable fluency, accuracy and range of vocabulary Spoken interaction: the student shows good understanding and responds coherently to questions/prompts which are slowly and clearly articulated Language awareness: the student shows some awareness of language patterns and conventions and self-corrects occasionally
In line with expectations A piece of work that reflects most of these features well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention, but the work is generally competent.	Spoken production: the student's communication is clear enough to be understood, with limited fluency, accuracy and range of vocabulary Spoken interaction: the student shows some understanding and responds coherently, for the most part, to questions/prompts provided they are slowly and clearly articulated Language awareness: the student shows limited awareness of language patterns and conventions
Yet to meet expectations A piece of work that falls some way short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated features. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental shortcomings that need to be addressed.	Spoken production: the student's communication is limited to very basic words and phrases Spoken interaction: the student shows little understanding of or response to questions/prompts which are slowly and clearly articulated Language awareness: the student shows little or no awareness of language patterns and conventions

CBA 1: Applying a Provisional Descriptor

When using the Features of Quality to apply a descriptor, we begin with the descriptor ***Yet to meet Expectations***. If the student's oral communication fulfils all the features, we move to the next descriptor and so on, until we reach a descriptor that describes the student's piece of work "as best fitting one of the descriptors" (Assessment Guidelines, page 13).

- Review the student's sample of work, making notes during the process.
- Compare the student's sample to the Features of Quality, moving upwards from the descriptor ***Yet to meet expectations***.
- Apply the descriptor which best fits the student's sample.

Student Sample No.	Notes	Provisional Descriptor

Notes on the process of applying Features of Quality:



Feedback and Student Reflection

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in using CBA 1: Oral Communication to support learning. Feedback on the strengths of the student's work and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning. Students will further reflect on their learning and complete a student reflection which will include an account of the part students played and the materials or sources they accessed during their preparation and a short personal reflection on their Oral Communication.

School:	Student:	
TOPIC, ROLE PLAY OR STIMULUS		
How I used my language learning to date to prepare for the Oral Communication Classroom-Based Assessment:		
Personal reflection on the Oral Communication		
One important thing I learned from doing the task:	Things I would change or try to improve on:	
Student	Teacher:	Date:

Features of Quality for CBA 2: The Student Language Portfolio

The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess student work as best fitting one of the descriptors below. They are broadly aligned with the A band (A1 to A2, basic user) of the CEFR. **Students compile their portfolio over time and select their best texts towards the end of term one, year three. Expectations of the standard they achieve will be at a level appropriate to their age and experience at that stage in their language learning in junior cycle.**

Features of Quality: The Student Language Portfolio	
Exceptional A piece of work that reflects these features to a very high standard. The strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws.	Clarity: ideas are communicated clearly, with good fluency, accuracy and range of vocabulary Language awareness: the student shows very good awareness of language patterns and conventions and self corrects as appropriate Culture: at least one text shows impressive awareness of aspects of the target language country/countries and/or culture
Above expectations A piece of work that reflects these features very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback might point to the necessity to address some aspects of the work in need of further attention but, on the whole the work is of a high standard.	Clarity: ideas are communicated clearly, with reasonable fluency, accuracy and range of vocabulary Language awareness: the student shows some awareness of language patterns and conventions and self-corrects regularly Culture: at least one text shows good awareness of aspects of the target language country/countries and/or culture
In line with expectations A piece of work that reflects most of these features well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention, but the work is generally competent.	Clarity: ideas are communicated clearly enough to be understood, with limited fluency, accuracy and range of vocabulary Language awareness: the student shows limited awareness of language patterns and conventions Culture: at least one text shows some awareness of aspects of the target language country/countries and/or culture
Yet to meet expectations A piece of work that falls some way short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated features. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental shortcomings that need to be addressed.	Clarity: ideas are communicated in a very limited way, with little or no fluency and/or accuracy Language awareness: the student shows little or no awareness of language patterns and conventions Culture: the texts show little or no awareness of aspects of the target language country/countries or culture

CBA 2: Applying a Provisional Descriptor

When using the Features of Quality to apply a provisional descriptor, we begin with the descriptor ***Yet to meet Expectations***. If the student's samples meet all the features for this descriptor, we move to the next descriptor and so on, until we reach a descriptor that describes the student's pieces of work "as best fitting one of the descriptors" (Assessment Guidelines, page 13).

- Review each student's samples of work, taking notes during the process.
- Compare the student's samples to the Features of Quality, moving upwards from the descriptor ***Yet to meet Expectations***
- Apply the descriptor which best fits the student's samples.

Student Sample No.	Notes	Provisional Descriptor

Notes on the process of applying Features of Quality:



Feedback and Student Reflection

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in using CBA 2: Student Language Portfolio to support learning. Feedback on the strengths of the student's work and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning. Students will further reflect on their learning and complete a student reflection note.

The Student Language Portfolio: Template for Student Reflection Note		
School:	Student:	
TOPIC, ROLE PLAY OR STIMULUS		
I chose this text because....		
My assessment of my work		
What I learned from creating this text/item:	What would I do differently next time:	
Student:	Teacher:	Date:

The Assessment Task

The Assessment Task is directly related to Classroom-Based Assessment 2: Student Language Portfolio. Students undertake a written Assessment Task to be submitted to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) for marking. The Assessment Task consists of two stages: firstly, engaging with a piece of stimulus material to prepare for the written task; and secondly, reflecting upon and writing about their experiences as language learners. 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.

The Assessment Task will comprise of some or all of the following:

- Engagement with a short stimulus in visual, written, audio or audio-visual format to prepare for the written task.
- A written task that tests the students in one or more of the following:
 - their ability to outline and/or discuss their experience of compiling their Student Language Portfolio
 - 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 as explored in one or more texts in their Student Language Portfolio.



Collaboration in Action: Subject Learning and Assessment Review

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings enable teachers to collaboratively reach consistency in their judgments of student work against common, externally-set Features of Quality. Greater understanding of standards and expectations will develop over time as teachers come together in professional discussion to reflect on the quality of their own students' work, informed by the subject specification, assessment guidelines and other support material including annotated examples of students' work provided by the NCCA (Assessment Guidelines, p. 30).

The SLAR Process

Shared understanding of standards within junior cycle will arise through professional discussion in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings, where staff bring their own examples of student work and compare their judgements with other colleagues and with annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA.

Over time, this process will help develop a greater understanding of standards and ensure consistency of judgement about student performance. 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. Further details on managing and participating in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting are included in the Appendix and are available online at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slар-meetings> (Assessment Guidelines p. 15).

Experiencing the SLAR Process

You will see a SLAR Meeting in action. Each table will consider the SLAR through a different lens. Watch the extract through the lens assigned to your table, taking notes as you watch. Then, share your thoughts with your group.



Guidelines for a SLAR Meeting

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings enable teachers to collaboratively reach consistency in their judgments of student work against common, externally set Features of Quality. Greater understanding of standards and expectations will develop over time as teachers come together in professional discussion to reflect on the quality of their own students' work, informed by the subject specification, assessment guidelines and other support material including annotated examples of students' work provided by the NCCA.

Overview

The review process is centred on teachers discussing student work at structured meetings. It will play an important role in helping teachers to develop an understanding of standards and expectations by enabling them to reflect on the evidence of students' work and to share the learning and teaching strategies supporting that work.

The objectives of the review process are:

- to achieve greater consistency of teachers' judgement
- to provide better feedback to students
- to achieve greater alignment of judgements with expected standards
- to assure parents and others that students are receiving appropriate recognition of their achievements in line with standards and expectations.

The time for SLAR meetings will be provided for in the school calendar from the allocated 22 hours of professional time for each full-time teacher each year. One teacher (facilitator) of each subject will be allocated two additional hours by school management to prepare for and coordinate each SLAR meeting. This role will normally be rotated among the relevant teachers.

Each meeting will:

- be subject-specific
- last approximately two hours
- take place at a time as near as possible to the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment
- involve the review of student work related to a specific Classroom-Based Assessment.

Where there is only one teacher of a subject in a school, the teacher can be facilitated to participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another school. In the case of an Irish-medium school, that teacher of a subject can participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another Irish-medium school.

Facilitator's Guide

Teachers will fulfil the role of facilitator during Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings on a rotational basis. The facilitator will model effective questioning during the discussion of the samples of student work focusing on how well students' work matches the Features of Quality. During SLAR meetings, where it is not clearly evident which descriptor should apply, the group should look for the evidence in the student's work that matches all or nearly all of the Features of Quality associated with a particular descriptor.

This 'best fit' approach allows teachers at the review meeting to select the descriptor that best matches the work being assessed. The facilitator will submit a short report of the SLAR meeting to the school principal. Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution plan as the student's work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' work.

Before the 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.

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 meeting

The facilitator leads the meeting and keeps the record of the decisions made in a template, which is used to generate the report of the meeting. It is recommended that the meeting should generally follow this sequence:

- 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 providing 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 as **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 SLAR 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.
- It's 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.

After the 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 submits their report from the meeting focusing on the outcomes of the discussion of student work at the meeting 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.



Templates for Student Samples for a SLAR meeting

Each teacher should submit, where possible, four samples of student work for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting. Where feasible, these samples should **contain an example of each of the four descriptor levels**. The information will be used to create a running order for the SLAR meeting. Assign a number between 1 and 4 to all student samples, beginning with the sample you would like to discuss most in case there is not enough time to discuss all samples.

Please submit your samples with a copy of this template to your SLAR Facilitator on or before the agreed date.

Student Work for SLAR Meeting: Teacher Template		
SLAR Facilitator Name:		
Teacher Name:	Class Group:	
Sample 1	Format:	Sample Shared via:
	Topic>Title:	
	Provisional Descriptor:	
	Preference for use at SLAR:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sample 2	Format:	Sample Shared via:
	Topic>Title:	
	Provisional Descriptor:	
	Preference for use at SLAR:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sample 3	Format:	Sample Shared via:
	Topic>Title:	
	Provisional Descriptor:	
	Preference for use at SLAR:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sample 4	Format:	Sample Shared via:
	Topic>Title:	
	Provisional Descriptor:	
	Preference for use at SLAR:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Running Order of Samples- Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting

Running Order MFL SLAR					
Teacher's name	Item number	Provisional descriptor <i>Exceptional</i>	Provisional descriptor <i>Above expectations</i>	Provisional descriptor <i>In line with expectations</i>	Provisional descriptor <i>Yet to meet expectations</i>

Facilitator:

Date of the SLAR:

Junior Cycle Terminology

Assessment Task (AT)

The Assessment Task is a written task completed by students during class time, and is sent to the State Examinations Commission for marking. The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and is related to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment. The Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments and Assessment Task for each subject will provide all the necessary details and they are also available in the Assessment Toolkit.

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA)

Classroom-Based Assessments in subjects and short courses provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in ways not possible in a formal examination. Classroom-Based Assessments, facilitated by the classroom teacher, are undertaken by students in a defined time period, within class contact time and to a national timetable.

Features of Quality

Features of quality are the statements in the short course/subject specifications that support teachers in making judgements about the quality of student work for the purpose of awarding achievement grades for certification. As success criteria are closely linked to learning intentions and based on the day-to-day processes in the classroom, student learning will gradually come to reflect the requirements set out in the features of quality which are used for assessment and reporting purposes.

Formative Assessment

Assessment is formative when either formal or informal procedures are used to gather evidence of learning during the learning process and used to adapt teaching to meet student needs. The process permits teachers and students to collect information about student progress and to suggest adjustments to the teacher's approach to instruction and the student's approach to learning. Assessment for learning covers all aspects of formative assessment but has a particular focus on the student having an active role in his/her learning.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

The JCPA is the award that students will receive at the end of their junior cycle. The award will reward achievement across all areas of learning and assessment including ongoing, formative assessment; Classroom-Based Assessments; and SEC grades, which include results from the final examinations and the Assessment Tasks.

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 knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning.

Ongoing Assessment

As part of their classroom work, students engage in assessment activities that can be either formative or summative in nature. Teachers assess as part of their daily practice by observing and listening as students carry out tasks, by looking at what they write and make, and by considering how they respond to, frame and ask questions. Teachers use this assessment information to help students plan the next steps in their learning. Periodically, this assessment will be in more structured, formalised settings where teachers will

need to obtain a snapshot of the students' progress in order to make decisions on future planning and to report on progress. This may involve the students in doing projects, investigations, case studies and/or tests and may occur at defined points in the school calendar.

Specification

A subject or short course specification details the intended learning outcomes and how they can be achieved and demonstrated. The specification outlines how the learning in any subject or short course is linked to particular statements of learning and key skills.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) Meetings

Following the completion of a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers will engage in review meetings, where they will share and discuss samples of their assessments of student work and build common understanding about the quality of student learning.

Success Criteria

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

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.



Timeline for Junior Cycle MFL (Cohort 2017-2020)

Below you will find the timeline for the current cohort of MFL students. Key dates change for every cohort and will be issued by the NCCA on an annual basis.

