Junior Cycle Digital Media Literacy short course

Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment

First Edition

Contents

Introduction

This document, Junior Cycle Digital Media Literacy short course: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment, provides:

- General information on Classroom-Based Assessments

- Detail of the nature and scope of the Classroom-Based Assessment described in the specification for the Junior Cycle Digital Media Literacy short course.

- The Features of Quality used to describe the level of achievement in the Classroom-Based Assessment

- Guidelines for schools, teachers and students on completing the Classroom-Based Assessment

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the specification for the Junior Cycle Digital Media Literacy short course and the *Assessment Toolkit* for Junior Cycle. A detailed outline of assessment in Junior Cycle can be found in the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, which can be accessed at https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Framework-for-Junior-Cycle-2015.pdf.

In Junior Cycle short courses there will be a range of assessment approaches to complement learning. These will include ongoing assessments, including routine teacher-designed tasks and tests; ongoing assessment for students undertaking priority learning units at Level 2; and one classroom-based assessment.

Classroom-Based Assessments: General Information

Classroom-Based Assessments are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific task(s) set out in the NCCA short course specification or in the school developed short course specification. They are included within the time allocated for the short course, which is approximately 100 hours. The tasks are described and the Features of Quality, which support teacher judgement, are set out in these guidelines.

Although the assessment is similar to the ongoing assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of classroom-based assessment the teacher's judgement is used in the school's reporting to parents and students and may also be recorded for Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. Students prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment over a suggested period of time in second or third year. The results of other projects, homework or tests undertaken by the students in the course

of their normal classwork do not add up to the award of a descriptor for the Classroom-Based Assessment.

Deciding on the level of achievement

There are four level descriptors of achievement in each Classroom-Based Assessment: *Exceptional, Above expectations, In line with expectations,* and *Yet to meet expectations.*

Teachers use the Features of Quality, set out in these guidelines (p13), to decide the level of achievement in each Classroom-Based Assessment. The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following Descriptors:

Exceptional describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

Above expectations describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of the work in need of further attention or polishing, but on the whole the work is of a high standard.

In line with expectations describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

Yet to meet expectations describes a piece of work that falls someway short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. 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.

When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on-balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with *Yet to meet expectation*) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. Where it is not clearly evident which quality descriptor should apply, teachers must come to judgment, based on the evidence from the student's work, to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances.

Time for Classroom-Based Assessments

Classroom-Based Assessment is included within the time allocated for short courses, which is approximately 100 hours. This Classroom-Based Assessment is the culmination of the work undertaken in the four strands of the digital media literacy short course and should begin after work in the four strands has been completed. It is envisaged that preparation for and completion of this Classroom-Based Assessment takes place over approximately 6-8 hours of class time. Whilst the timing of Classroom-Based Assessment in short courses may vary from school to school, Classroom-Based assessments for reporting purposes in the JCPA cannot be conducted in first year.

School autonomy in preparing for the Classroom-Based Assessment

These guidelines set out a range of options for the Classroom-Based Assessment so that they can suit the particular needs and circumstances of students and the school. A variety of possibilities are presented as to how the final project can be completed, the nature of the project itself and the role the teacher plays in facilitating the students' project. Within the parameters set by the guidelines, the range of themes and topics for the assessment can be determined independently by the school, teachers and students.

Schools have the flexibility to adapt any NCCA short course to suit their particular needs and school context. If adapting the course, schools may also need to adapt the Classroom-Based Assessment, so that it reflects the learning their students undertook. Schools may also develop their own short course(s) and related Classroom-Based Assessment. Guidelines for schools who wish to develop their own short course(s) are available.

How the school supports the completion of the assessment

The school supports the completion of the assessments by:

- Ensuring that the NCCA *Specification* and *Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment* are provided to teachers

- Supporting teachers in recording the level Descriptors awarded to each student

- Retaining records and pieces of work, as appropriate, for the purposes of Subject Learning and Assessment Review

- Applying the guidelines for Subject Learning and Assessment Review

- Ensuring accessibility of assessment for all students

- Reporting the outcomes of Classroom-Based Assessments to students and their parents/guardians as part of the school's reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

In gathering evidence for assessment purposes within the Junior Cycle Short Courses, it is important that teachers use approaches which are sustainable and proportionate. As assessment is about empowering teachers to improve outcomes for students, it is important to ensure that too much paperwork and overly complex processes do not get in the way of learning and teaching. Any paperwork needs to support learning rather than becoming an end in itself.

While assessment judgements should be based on evidence drawn mainly from day-to-day learning and teaching there is no need to collect large folios of evidence to support this. In sharing learning intentions and success criteria or the features of quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers should highlight the role students can play in identifying quality evidence from their own work to be used for assessment purposes.

An efficient planning process which identifies when and how key aspects of learning will be captured as evidence for assessment is one way to ensure that assessment in short courses remains manageable and sustainable. This approach avoids excessive and inappropriate evidence being collected about student performance and allows for review meeting discussions to be taken forward in a structured way. It also avoids the pressure at the end of the course to search for and identify evidence to support judgements about overall performance.

To facilitate providing feedback to students during their engagement with assessment, the process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessments should be viewed as part of teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that teachers will guide, support and supervise throughout the process.

Support may include:

- Clarifying the requirements of the task

- Using annotated examples of student work to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the Features of Quality to students

- Providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the final project

- Providing supports for students with special educational needs (SEN).

Classroom-Based Assessment in Digital Media Literacy (short course)

Assessment in digital media literacy will be classroom-based. There is one Classroom-Based Assessment, which is the culmination of work undertaken in the four strands of the Digital Media Literacy short course. The Classroom-Based Assessment should begin after the work in the four strands has been completed. It is important to note that work completed in year one of Junior Cycle cannot be included for reporting in the JCPA.

Classroom-Based Assessment: Final Project

The final project is a significant piece of work that is presented/published in an appropriate digital format, and should be completed towards the end of the course. It can be based on any topic related to the course. This project will be published and should demonstrate engagement with learning outcomes across all four strands. As part of the Classroom-Based Assessment, students should demonstrate an awareness of how to remain safe online, how to respond to potentially harmful situations, the benefits and risks of social networking, and how to be a respectful and responsible online citizen.

The learning outcomes assessed through the final project will, to an extent, depend on the topic chosen and the medium of the presentation. Some that may be particularly relevant are:

Classroom-Based Assessment: Final Project
1.3; 1.4; 1.6; 1.7; 2.2; 2.3; 3.6; 3.7; 4.1; 4.2; 4.5

Whilst students may complete this project individually, in pairs or as part of a group, it is the student's individual role and contribution to the work that will be the focus of the assessment. Work which cannot be authenticated by the teacher cannot be accepted for assessment in the JCPA.

Guidelines for completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment:

The final project is a significant piece of work presented/published in an appropriate digital format. The student (or group of students) will identify a topic that is of interest to them. This topic can come

from within any of the four strands or from something that the students have a personal connection with. The topic might also arise from interests of a cross-curricular nature, e.g. from CSPE, SPHE and Coding. On completion, the project could be presented or published as a web page, a blog, a podcast, an oral presentation with supporting text/images, a wiki, a school resource or any other appropriate digital mode.

It is recommended that this assessment be completed over approximately six to eight hours of class time towards the end of the course. The early stages of preparation might include researching and establishing the particular area of interest, identifying the aims and goals of the project and the method of presentation or publication to be employed. It may necessitate visiting or interviewing experts from within and beyond the school, and may involve accessing content in different formats to ensure depth of understanding. Where these and other sources are used, it will be necessary to demonstrate appropriate and accurate referencing protocols. Students might be given the opportunity to present elements of their project to a suitable audience and appropriate format on completion of the work.

As part of the Classroom-Based Assessment, students should include reflections and comments on their experience of engaging with and communicating through online activity. For example, this reflection could encompass awareness of how to remain safe online, how to respond to potentially harmful situations, the benefits and risks of social networking, how to be a respectful and responsible online citizen and ways in which you can become an active citizen online.

The student could ask themselves questions such as:

- What personal information was a website/social media site looking for?

- What were the privacy settings for a particular chat site/website?

- How easy was it to navigate the website?

- What level of bias was the website presenting?

- How can I verify the information that I accessed on any website?

- What are the laws in Ireland on publishing content online and how do these laws compare to other countries?

- How do I report online bullying or intimidation?

- Was the content I was looking for easy to access?

While these reflections can be developed over the duration of the course, they should be incorporated into the final project and form part of the final presentation/publication in the format that is seen as most suitable and appropriate for capturing its essence.

Below are two samples of the type and scale of work expected for the Classroom-Based Assessment. These samples should not be seen as definitive, but rather as guidance for the kinds of projects that students might undertake in the Classroom-Based Assessment. Students are free to choose any topic, format and/or presentation style that captures the essence of the project.

- On the school website, publish a page on a policy for social media use in your school. This published material should detail the positive impact of and the challenges surrounding online social media. It should include infographics or videos or presentations detailing appropriate online behaviour. It should also set out a charter of online rights and responsibilities for young people and incorporate the facility for others to contribute through a blog.

- Design a survey on the attitudes of adults in your community to the use of social media. Publish the results of this survey, with awareness of the rights of the participants, the purpose of the survey, the intended audience and the different platforms with which to disseminate the information. The results of the survey should be presented using appropriate visuals/graphics/images and all stages of the planning and research should be clearly documented.

Classroom-Based Assessment: Advice for students

- You should choose a topic for the project that is of interest to you or your group and that you have a personal connection with

- This topic can come from something that was explored through this course or can come from another curricular area

- You are free to present and communicate the project in the format that you consider most suitable, but remember to consider your audience and the suitability of the format chosen

- You should keep a record of discussions, interviews, and other research as evidence to support your final findings and possible recommendations

- As you develop and refine the final project, take the time to ask your teacher and other students for feedback on how you are progressing. Use this feedback to reflect on your progress and to help you find ways to improve.

- The preparation phase of the Classroom-Based Assessment will be monitored by your teacher. Work which cannot be authenticated by your teacher cannot be accepted for assessment.

While this project may be undertaken as a group activity, it will be your individual role and contribution to the work that is the focus of assessment for the JCPA.

Deciding on the level of achievement

Features of Quality

Key Features of Quality in support of student and teacher judgement for the Classroom-Based Assessment are described here. The Features of Quality are the criteria used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following Descriptors:

Exceptional describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

Above expectations describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of the work in need of further attention or polishing, but, on the whole the work is of a high standard.

In line with expectations describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

Yet to meet expectations describes a piece of work that falls someway short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. 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 errors that need to be addressed.

Features of Quality: Digital Media Literacy: Final Project

Exceptional

Excellent understanding and use of the chosen digital format is demonstrated.

A very high level of creativity and originality is evident in the presentation/publication.

There is an excellent awareness of the ethical/legal issues around the respectful use of digital media texts.

Communication is very clear and convincing, displaying a comprehensive knowledge of the topic.

Above expectations

A high level of understanding and use of the chosen digital format is demonstrated.

A high level of creativity and originality is evident in the presentation/publication.

There is a very high level of awareness of the ethical/legal issues around the respectful use of digital media texts.

Communication is clear and convincing, displaying a very high level of knowledge of the topic.

In line with expectations

A good understanding and use of the chosen digital format is evident.

A reasonable level of creativity is evident in the presentation/publication.

There is good awareness of the ethical/legal issues around the respectful use of digital media texts.

Communication is clear for the most part, displaying a good knowledge of the topic.

Yet to meet expectations

Limited understanding and use of the chosen digital format is displayed.

The presentation/publication lacks creativity.

The presentation shows little awareness of the ethical/legal issues around the respectful use of digital media texts.

Communication is haphazard or poorly sustained and displays limited knowledge of the topic.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings

Shared understanding of standards within junior cycle short courses will arise through professional discussion in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. Teachers gather examples of student work and compare their judgements with other colleagues. Over time, this process will help develop a greater understanding of standards and ensure consistency of judgement about student performance.

Where there is a single teacher of a short course in a school, where feasible, the teacher will participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting with another school. The potential of ICT to support such meetings will be explored.

Further details on managing and participating in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting can be accessed at http://juniorcycle.ie/Assessment .

Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review each individual teacher re-considers the judgement they had made of their student's work, based on the outcomes of the meeting, and where necessary makes the appropriate adjustments to the level of achievement awarded to the work. The Descriptors awarded are used in reporting progress and achievement to parents and students as part of the school's reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Using feedback

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step to support learning. Students will be informed of the Descriptor they have been awarded once the review meeting has taken place and its outcomes have been processed. However, effective feedback goes beyond the naming of the Descripto awarded. Feedback on the strengths of the student's work, and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning. Further information on the use of feedback can be found at http://juniorcycle.ie/Assessment.

Querying a result

Queries in relation to the Descriptors awarded for the Classroom-Based Assessment, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school.