Short Course
Digital Media Literacy

Specification for Junior Cycle

June 2016

Contents

Introduction to junior cycle

Junior cycle education places students at the centre of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society, and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives. Junior cycle is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all.

Junior cycle allows students to make a strong connection with learning by focusing on the quality of learning that takes place and by offering experiences that are engaging and enjoyable for them, and relevant to their lives. These experiences are of a high quality, contribute to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of learners, and where possible, provide opportunities for them to develop their abilities and talents in the areas of creativity and enterprise. The student's junior cycle programme builds on their learning in primary school. It supports their further progress in learning. It helps students to develop the learning skills that can assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school.

Rationale

Young people are actively manipulating digital media to participate in social and cultural life. Making and sharing media has become an increasingly important feature of how young people communicate and engage with each other and with the wider world. For them, posting, linking, sharing and searching are among the ways they participate in their communities and socialise. This short course offers students opportunities to explore and discover the information and knowledge accessible online, enabling them to pursue their interests, to express themselves online and solve problems relevant to their lives.

In studying digital media, students learn to use digital technology, communication tools and the internet to engage in self-directed enquiry. As students develop their digital literacy skills, they improve their capacity to know what they are looking for, what information to ignore or discard, and how to identify what can be useful or significant. They learn to discriminate between the multiple sources of information available online and to challenge the views they find there. They learn how to create, collaborate and communicate effectively and to understand how and when digital technologies can best be used to support these processes.

Aim

This short course aims to extend and refine students' ability to use digital technology, communication tools, and the internet creatively, critically and safely, in support of their development, learning and capacity to participate effectively in social and community life.

Overview: Links

Tables 1 and 2 on the following pages show how digital media literacy is linked to central features of learning and teaching in junior cycle.

Digital media literacy and statements of learning

Table 1: Links between junior cycle digital media literacy and the statements of learning

Statement	Examples of related learning in the course
SOL 24: The student uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner.	Students work in teams to produce digital content on topics that are relevant to their lives.
SOL 3: The student creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts.	Students find, critically appraise, and use digital content. They will learn to navigate and make judgements about the quality and reliability of content online.
SOL 1: The student communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts in L1.	Students share, present and publish their stories, ideas and opinions in a personal and creative way using digital technology.

Digital media literacy and key skills

In addition to their specific content and knowledge, the subjects and short courses of junior cycle provide students with opportunities to develop a range of key skills. The junior cycle curriculum focuses on eight key skills.

Figure 1: Key skills of junior cycle

- Developing my understanding and enjoyment of words and language
- Reading for enjoyment and with critical understanding
- Writing for different purposes
- Expressing ideas clearly and accurately
- Developing my spoken language
- Exploring and creating a variety of texts, including multi-modal texts

- Knowing myself
- Making considered decisions
- Setting and achieving personal goals
- Being able to reflect on my own learning
- Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning

- Using language
- Using numbers
- Listening and expressing myself
- Performing and presenting
- Discussing and debating
- Using digital technology to communicate

- Being healthy and physically active
- Being social
- Being safe
- Being spiritual
- Being confident
- Being positive about learning
- Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Co-operating
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Learning with others
- Working with others through digital technology

KEY SKILLS

BEING LITERATE

COMMUNICATING

MANAGING MYSELF

WORKING WITH OTHERS

STAYING WELL

BEING CREATIVE

MANAGING INFORMATION & THINKING

BEING NUMERATE

- Being curious
- Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information and data
- Thinking creatively and critically
- Reflecting on and evaluating my learning
- Using digital technology to access, manage and share content

- Imagining
- Exploring options and alternatives
- Implementing ideas and taking action
- Learning creatively
- Stimulating creativity using digital technology

- Expressing ideas mathematically
- Estimating, predicting and calculating
- Developing a positive disposition towards investigating, reasoning and problem-solving
- Seeing patterns, trends and relationships
- Gathering, interpreting and representing data
- Using digital technology to develop numeracy skills and understanding

This course offers opportunities to support all key skills, but some are particularly significant. The examples below identify some of the elements that are related to learning activities in digital media literacy. Teachers can also build many of the other elements of particular key skills into their classroom planning.

Table 2: Links between junior cycle digital media literacy and key skills

Key skill	Key skill element	Student learning activity
Being creative	Stimulating creativity using digital technology	Students examine different digital technologies and communication tools to understand how they are used to convey messages.
Being literate	Exploring and creating a variety of texts, including multi-modal texts	Students plan, design and create digital artefacts in a variety of digital media formats.
Being numerate	Gathering, interpreting and representing data	Students can interpret and present content and their ideas graphically.
Communicating	Use digital technology to communicate	Students use digital technologies and communication tools and the internet to research topics of interest to them and to express, share and present their opinions on these topics, taking into account different audiences.
Managing information and thinking	Using digital technology to access, manage and share content	Students search for and evaluate content in different digital formats online.
Managing myself	Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning	Students use digital technologies and communication tools to keep an online learning diary and reflection journal.
Staying well	Being safe	Students develop a charter of online rights and responsibilities that define acceptable use of digital technologies in the school.
Working with others	Working with others through digital technology	Students work collaboratively using digital technologies.

Overview: Course

The specification for this junior cycle short course in digital media literacy develops in students a greater sense of what it takes to thrive in a digital environment through four inter-connected strands: **My digital world**; **Following my interests online**; **Checking the facts** and **Publishing myself**.

Strand 1: My digital world.

In this strand, students explore how and why to use digital technologies; investigate the ethical and legal issues around downloading media from the internet and develop an understanding of online safety for themselves and others.

Strand 2: Following my interests online.

In this strand, students will explore how digital texts are published and their various purposes; they will compare how similar information is presented in different formats and explore how to represent information using digital imagery.

Strand 3: Checking the facts.

In this strand, students will investigate how the choice of digital media influences and impacts on consumer patterns and explore the notion of bias and influence online.

Strand 4: Publishing myself.

In this strand, students investigate online rights and risks, demonstrate good standards and protocols for online sharing of information and learn to cite and reference accurately when using online sources.

It is not intended that this short course is undertaken in any particular order: teachers and students are free to explore the learning outcomes and the strands in an integrated approach, and in any order that is a best fit for the teaching and learning activities.

The Classroom-Based Assessment outlined below reflects the learning students undertake in this NCCA short course. 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.

The learning outcomes in this short course are aligned with the level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (Appendix 1).

The course has been designed for approximately 100 hours of student engagement.

Expectations for students

Expectations for students is an umbrella term that links learning outcomes with annotated examples of student work. For NCCA developed short courses, in some cases examples of work associated with a specific learning outcome or with a group of learning outcomes will be available. Schools who design their own short courses may wish to create a bank of examples of student work for discussion and for future reference.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that describe what knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate having completed this junior cycle short course in digital media literacy. The learning outcomes set out in the following tables apply to all students and represent outcomes for students at the end of their period of study (approximately 100 hours).

The outcomes are numbered within each strand. The numbering is intended to support teacher planning in the first instance and does not imply any hierarchy of importance across the outcomes themselves.

Strand 1: My digital world

Learning outcomes

Students learn about	Students should be able to
My digital life	1.1 describe how they use digital technologies, communication tools and the internet in their lives
	1.2 illustrate the advantages and disadvantages of using digital technologies, communication tools and the internet
	1.3 debate the ethical and legal issues around downloading music and video content from the internet
Respectful and responsible use	1.4 demonstrate an understanding of respectful use of digital media texts including concepts of copyright, fair use, plagiarism and intellectual property ownership
	1.5 discuss their personal safety concerns when using digital technologies, communication tools and the internet
	1.6 create a charter of online rights and responsibilities for the class
	1.7 describe appropriate responses to potentially harmful situations

Strand 2: Following my interests online

Learning outcomes

Students learn about	Students should be able to
What is digital content?	2.1 analyse the characteristics of digital media texts which make them different from analogue media texts
	2.2 demonstrate how digital media texts are published on the internet
Searching and evaluating	2.3 search the internet to gather information on a specific topic of interest
	2.4 compare information from various sources in order to evaluate its reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, and timeliness
Expressing through digital images	2.5 create a digital image montage from images sourced online
	2.6 present examples where image and video manipulation has been used in the media
	2.7 represent information about a topic that is relevant to their lives in graphic format

Strand 3: Checking the facts

Learning outcomes

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Digital media formats	3.1 analyse a piece of digital media text to identify the theme, purpose and audience
	3.2 analyse how the choice of digital media format influences the kind of information accessed/transmitted
	3.3 re-present a digital media text from one online format to another e.g. from video to blog
Looking for bias	3.4 act as a critical consumer by presenting digital media texts that highlight bias
	3.5 research the ownership of major websites and its impact on access and choice
The role of digital media in our society	3.6 give examples of how digital media texts can support citizenship and inform decision-making
	3.7 critique the role of digital technologies, communication tools, and the internet in a democratic society

Strand 4: Publishing myself

Learning outcomes

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Social media and me	4.1 outline the opportunities and risks presented by young people's use of social networks
	4.2 document young people's online rights – the right to information, free expression, protection of minors, and the role of parents, governments and civil society in enforcing their rights
	4.3 discuss the concept of privacy and its application by young people on social networks
	4.4 demonstrate how best to share personal information, express opinions and emotions online in a responsible and respectful manner
Following my passion	4.5 publish an item online presenting their views on a subject or topic that is relevant to their lives
	4.6 demonstrate an appropriate method for citing and referencing online-sourced material accurately
	4.7 document the planning and research history of the published work

Assessment and reporting

Essentially, the purpose of assessment and reporting at this stage of education is to support learning. This short course supports a wide variety of approaches to assessment. Some learning outcomes lend themselves to once-off assessment, others to assessment on an ongoing basis as students engage in different learning activities such as discussing, explaining, researching, presenting, planning and taking action. In these contexts, students with their teachers and peers reflect upon and make judgements about their own and others' learning by looking at the quality of particular pieces of work. They plan the next steps in their learning, based on feedback they give and receive. Ongoing assessment can support the student in their learning journey and in preparing for the Classroom-Based Assessment related to this short course.

It is envisaged that students will provide evidence of their learning in a variety of ways, including digital media, audio recordings and written pieces.

Assessment is most effective when it moves beyond marks and grades and reporting focuses not only on how the student has done in the past but on the next steps for further learning. Student progress and achievement in short courses, both in ongoing assessments and in the specific Classroom-Based Assessment relating to this short course will be communicated to parents in interim reporting and in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). To support teachers and schools, an Assessment Toolkit is available online. Along with the guide to the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) process, the Assessment Toolkit will include learning, teaching, assessment and reporting support material.

Classroom-Based Assessment

Classroom-Based Assessments are the occasions when the teacher assesses the students in the specific assessment(s) that are set out in the subject or short course specification. Junior cycle short courses will have one Classroom-Based Assessment. Where feasible, teachers of short courses will participate in learning and assessment review meetings.

Classroom-Based Assessment: Final project

The final project is a significant piece of work that can be 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 encompass 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.

These are examples of the type and scale of work expected for the Classroom-Based Assessment:

- 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.

Features of quality

The features of quality support student and teacher judgement of the Classroom-Based Assessments and are the criteria that will be used by teachers to assess the students' final project.

More detailed material on assessment and reporting in this junior cycle digital media literacy short course, including features of quality and details of the practical arrangements related to assessment of this Classroom-Based Assessment, will be available in separate assessment guidelines for digital media literacy. The guidelines will include, for example, the suggested length and formats for student pieces of work, and support in using 'on balance' judgement in relation to the features of quality.

Inclusive assessment

Inclusive assessment practices, whether as part of ongoing assessment or the Classroom-Based Assessment, are a key feature of teaching and learning in schools. Accommodations, e.g. the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the year.

Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable accommodations may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in the Classroom-Based Assessment.

Accommodations which enable all students to access curriculum and assessment are based on specific needs. For example, a student who cannot physically type may use free dictation software to complete ongoing assessments and the Classroom-Based Assessment. Equally, a student who cannot speak may sign/draw/write/type/create visuals and subtitles to present and communicate ideas. A student with a specific learning difficulty may benefit from having learning tasks and activities presented in a different way. Comprehensive guidelines on inclusion in post-primary schools are available here and guidelines for teachers of students with general learning disabilities are available here.

Appendix 1:
Level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications

This short course has been developed in alignment with the level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications. Usually, for Level 3 certification and awards, the knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.

NFQ Level	3
Knowledge *Breadth*	Knowledge moderately broad in range
Knowledge *Kind*	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements
Know-how and skill *Range*	Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools
Know-how and skill *Selectivity*	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems
Competence *Context*	Act within a limited range of contexts
Competence *Role*	Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogeneous groups
Competence *Learning to learn*	Learn to learn within a managed environment
Competence *Insight*	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour