The Key Skills of Junior Cycle

Getting started

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At the end of this session

You will be able to

- Identify the 6 key skills and their elements and learning outcomes

- identify different teaching and learning activities which students need to participate in to develop these skills

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The starting point for planning a new junior cycle programme

- Principles of Junior Cycle Education

- 24 Statements of Learning

- 6 Key Skills & literacy and numeracy

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Linking key skills with the wider context

1. Literacy and numeracy strategy

2. School Self Evaluation
   - focus on gathering evidence, reflection and action
   - focus on improving teaching and learning

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What are the benefits of key skills?

- More learner centred

- Students motivated and engaged

- Positive classroom dynamics

- Improved relationships

- More effective learning

Some teachers' comments

'Now I am more focused on the students not the content'

'Students take more responsibility and don't always look to me for the answers.'

'More students now participate actively in class. Before I heard the same few voices. Even those who never handed up homework are now reminding me to correct the homework!'

'Students are much more cooperative and their behaviour has improved.'

' I definitely find learning is more effective when you use the key skills. The students understand and remember what they've learned better.'

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And what do students say?

Listen to students talking about their
experience of developing this skill
What do you notice?

https://vimeo.com/ncca/review/16241627/d8156edd90

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Key Skills

Let's look at how one school has begun developing the key skills of Junior Cycle with their 1st year students

As you watch this video jot down your observations

https://vimeo.com/ncca/review/57252126/199df24714

Managing myself	Staying well	Communicating
• 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	• Being healthy, physical and active • Being social • Being safe • Being spiritual • Being confident • Being positive about learning • Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology	• Listening and expressing myself • Performing and presenting • Discussing and debating • Using language • Using number • Using digital technology to communicate
Being creative	**Working with others**	**Managing information and thinking**
• Imagining • Exploring options and alternatives • Implementing ideas and taking action • Learning creatively • Stimulating creativity 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	• 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

Starting with First Years

1ˢᵗ yr students induction programme
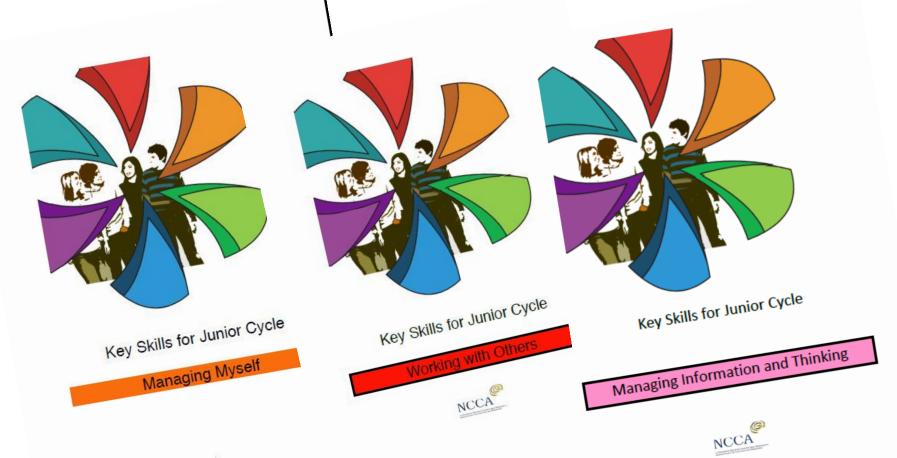
– Questionnaires, reflection activities

(Managing myself/Knowing myself)

- Teaching the skills and language needed for working together

- Student journals

- Classroom - posters, desk layout, L.O. board

- During lesson – language of key skills common place

- Parents - Input on key skills for parents of incoming 1ˢᵗ yrs

Have a look at toolkits on the website

Key Skills for Junior Cycle
Managing Myself

Key Skills for Junior Cycle
Working with Others

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Key Skills for Junior Cycle
Managing Information and Thinking

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Looking at a specific key skill

1. One element per group

Roles – Reader, Facilitator, Timekeeper, List-maker

1. Jigsaw Activity using the toolkits
2. Read through the ideas, one by one and discuss how these strategies could be used in your subject
3. Draw up a list of strategies that you all like best
4. Choose one to share with your colleagues and agree how you will 'teach' it

You have 15 minutes. Then you will jigsaw!

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Reflect and discuss

1. Identify some of the big ideas from today that you will follow up with your students

2. As a staff, how will you continue to carry the embedding of key skills forward?

3. How can this work be integrated with and used to support other initiatives, e.g. SSE?

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Key skills work best when

- Intentionally focused upon

- Included in your planning

- Both students and teachers are aware of skills to be developed

- There is an opportunity to reflect and discuss

Evolution not revolution

- Start small

- Be patient

- Reflect

- Work collaboratively

- Involve students

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NCCA Key Skills
Student reflection sheet

Topic:

Date:

1. Give a brief description of how you participated in class today

2. The main thing I learned is…

3. I liked/didn't like this way of learning because…

4. One thing I can do to improve my learning

NCCA Key Skills
Teacher reflection sheet

Select one approach, try it out and use this sheet to reflect on the class/classes

Class group:

Topic:

Date:

Teaching approach tried:

1. Give a brief description of the task you set for the students

2. Describe the students learning

3. Describe the key skills being developed

4. How might you improve on this approach or do it differently in the future?

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Practical supports for key skills in school

- Buddy Meetings

- Share resources

- Find a folder, shelf, cupboard or shared electronic folder or a combination of all!

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