Transition Year

This exemplar is part of a suite of three resources for reflecting on and renewing your school's TY programme

Reflecting on our Student Experiences

There are four Curriculum Dimensions in the revised TY Programme Statement (2024), one of which is Components. The purpose of this resource is to support your school in reflecting on how the components of your school's TY programme can be more aligned to the student experiences of each Student Dimension. There are four Student Dimensions intended to guide the student and the school in the learning and development of the student during TY.

The four Student Dimensions are: Personal Growth, Being a Learner, Civic and Community Engagement, and Career Exploration.

The four tables in this resource take each student experience from the four Student Dimensions. These **student experiences** are in the central column. The left-hand column then invites you to **reflect back on the student experiences** in relation to your current TY programme, based on the school's evaluation of the components within the current TY programme. The right-hand column then **reflects forward to how a renewed TY programme can support students more effectively across the student experiences**. This may involve, for example, retaining a component, removing a current component from the programme, modifying an existing approach or adding in a new component to give a better opportunity for the student to develop in line with the developmental indicators.

'An effective TY programme, which will be unique to each school, is one where every aspect of the curriculum serves to develop the student in harmony with the Student Dimensions.' (TY Programme Statement, 2024)

The exemplar below shows how the table could be used to begin the reflection and renewal process.

Graphical overview of the TY Programme Statement

The tables of student experiences are not intended to be exhaustive but to offer guidance to schools in their planning and in laying the foundations for their TY programme. While the developmental indicators set out the parameters for learning and development, students will develop in different ways and to varying degrees across each of the indicators. In this sense they also serve as reflective guidance for students.
(TY Programme Statement, 2024)
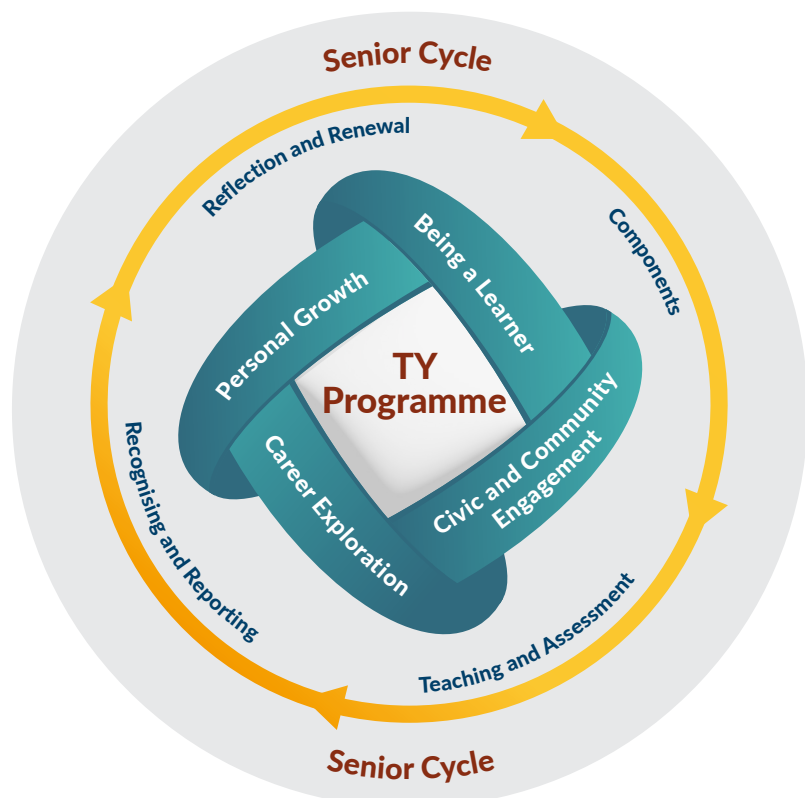
Personal Growth: Reflecting on Student Experiences

1. Reflecting back on current TY programme
- Is there a relevant component?
- what is working well and not so well

Personal Growth
Student Experiences

2. Reflecting forward on renewed TY programme
- how to build on successes
- learn from shortcomings that emerge from the backward reflection

Reflecting back on current TY programme	Personal Growth – Student Experiences	Reflecting forward on renewed TY programme
Science Competition (Scifest), Mini-company, TY musical all work well with high levels of engagement	Collaborative projects, competitions, activities over the year to achieve collective goals.	Continue to encourage team-oriented tasks across subjects
Perhaps not enough opportunities to build on the Socio-emotional workshops (SEW) and work experience diaries	Individual tasks and projects, involving digital and non-digital skills to enable self-expression.	Encourage more student reflections (Portfolio Development class) and student input in classrooms
No portfolio in current programme	Guided creation of a portfolio that captures their personal growth.	Use our existing digital tools to begin embedding the TY portfolio across the TY programme – goal setting, reflecting on developmental indicators, ..
SEW and faith development work well though perhaps a lack of opportunities for initiative or leadership in the local community	Education and guidance in personal and emotional development and social awareness.	Look at how SPHE can be integrated fully over next 2 years
PE/Activities each week, Socio-Emotional Workshops work well	Activities and experiences promoting lifelong physical and emotional health.	Continue with these experiences
No fixed timetabled opportunity –	Opportunities for guided reflection and review of personal goals.	Include the Portfolio Development class within the timetable – goal setting, reflecting on developmental indicators, ..
Part of classroom practice, TY awards night, student interview, Social entrepreneur competitions, mini-company	Formal and informal opportunities to speak and present in class, in public and in interviews.	Continue; perhaps TY students could speak more at info nights or to junior cycle students
School report, TY musical, TY awards night and student interview reflects how students have grown; perhaps what students find difficult on a personal level could be addressed.	Recognition of personal growth and personal challenges in all aspects of school life during the year.	Perhaps the portfolio reflections could emphasise how student can come to see challenges as further opportunities for growth.

Being a Learner: Reflecting on Student Experiences

1. Reflecting back on current TY programme
- Is there a relevant component?
- what is working well and not so well

Being a Learner
Student Experiences

2. Reflecting forward on renewed TY programme
- how to build on successes
- learn from shortcomings that emerge from the backward reflection

Reflecting back on current TY programme	Being a Learner: Student Experiences	Reflecting forward on renewed TY programme
The continuity and sampling work well, though Maths and Irish tend to be too focussed on exam material	Continuity subjects and sampling of subjects with learning designed to develop senior cycle key competencies.	Continue to review and evaluate with TY Core team and teachers, especially as updated subjects roll out.
The T&L is generally effective; formative approaches are consistent with the developmental indicators; perhaps more on effective learning strategies	A variety of pedagogies consistent with realising the aims of the Programme Statement and supporting developmental indicators for all students.	Continue to reflect on the collective and individual practices in the Curriculum Dimension: Teaching and Assessment; how can students develop better learning strategies?
Part of classroom practice, TY awards night, student interview, Competitions, mini-company	Meaningful learning opportunities that incorporate student input.	Perhaps check-in with students informally, in class and through the TY Coordinator.
The continuity from CBA to projects and independent learning in TY works well.	Opportunities to build on student learning in the transition from junior to senior cycle.	Review and evaluate with TY Core team and teachers.
Most components use a variety of assessment techniques – especially formative though perhaps success criteria could be used more in TY	Assessment of their learning and development through a variety of forms such as teacher, peer and self-assessment, for formative and summative purposes.	Review as a staff the collective practices in the TY Programme Statement over next year
School report, TY awards night and student interview reflects how students have developed	Recognition of achievement across all areas of the curriculum.	Review and evaluate with TY Core team and teachers. How to capture the unique student voice?
No portfolio in current TY programme	Guided creation of a portfolio that captures the student, and their progress as a learner.	Use our existing digital tools to begin embedding the TY portfolio across the TY programme – goal setting, reflecting on developmental indicators, ..
A diverse range of projects in the current TY programme	A range of individual and team projects, competitions, activities over the year that are manageable and appropriately challenging.	Review and evaluate with TY Core team and teachers.

Civic and Community Engagement: Reflecting on Student Experiences

1. Reflecting back on current TY programme
- Is there a relevant component?
- what is working well and not so well

Civic and Community Engagement
Student Experiences

2. Reflecting forward on renewed TY programme
- how to build on successes
- learn from shortcomings that emerge from the backward reflection

Reflecting back	Student Experiences	Reflecting forward
TY students engage with the Christmas shoebox appeal, PATH food for homelessness	Working with local or national organisations and businesses over the year.	Continue to offer opportunities and encourage students to seek out potential charities/ organisations
Good relationships with charities especially around humanitarian appeals.	Opportunities to volunteer through community work and social placement.	As above
ESD features across the TY curriculum but often students and teachers report overlap	Education on sustainable development, including a meaningful action for a more sustainable world.	TY core team to discuss how to best embed the sustainable action; explore possible supports such as the NCCA micro-module or local organisations
Very active involvement of students voluntarily and through the programme	Sharing of knowledge and skills within the school community and among community stakeholders.	Continue to offer opportunities and maintain flexibility
No portfolio in our current TYP	Guided creation of a portfolio that captures their civic and community engagement.	Use our existing digital tools to begin embedding the TY portfolio across the TY programme – goal setting, reflecting on developmental indicators
Currently a diverse range;	Projects, competitions, activities in the classroom, in school, at home, in local communities and in society.	Review and evaluate with TY Core team and teachers – student sourcing and involvement could be higher
Student newsletter and TY times are effective and popular;	Meaningful involvement with shaping school culture.	Perhaps ask a couple of students to take part in a specific meeting with the TY Core Team?
Happens organically; students tend not to have the language of how they develop;	Learning opportunities around empathy, diversity and inclusion.	SPHE timetabled will contribute; is there space for a specific empathy workshop/course?

Career Exploration: Reflecting on Student Experiences

1. Reflecting back on current TY programme
- Is there a relevant component?
- what is working well and not so well

Career Exploration
Student Experiences

2. Reflecting forward on renewed TY programme
- how to build on successes
- learn from shortcomings that emerge from the backward reflection

Reflecting back on current TY programme	Career Exploration Student Experiences	Reflecting forward on renewed TY programme
Generally hugely beneficial; Often students cannot find WP more related to their interests	Work placements during the year.	Students could be asked/ helped to try to source a WP outside their comfort zone
The prep in advance works well but de-briefing could be structured better	Guided reflective tasks on their experiences and placements in TY.	Explore if there are possible components to support this aspect of development in careers? Perhaps explore the NCCA micro-modules on careers
As highlighted above, sampling is strong but less so on links to careers	Subjects and modules on the senior cycle curriculum that link to future pathways.	Suggest to all teachers to emphasise potential career options associated with their subjects -whether continuity or sampling
Set classes each week work well; students sometimes report a lack of specific tasks	Career guidance and classroom support on future pathways.	Perhaps a set number of tasks to complete to support the guided reflective tasks
No portfolio in TY	Guided creation of a portfolio capturing their reflections on career exploration.	Portfolio Development class could encourage student reflection on careers through the TY portfolio
Career guidance provides this to a degree; mini-company and work placements support this;	A variety of learning opportunities that improve practical and vocational skills.	Perhaps look at a careers micro-module that can be adapted to our needs?
Open days in Higher Ed; Gaisce; Law Day; Law Day caters for a small number of TY students	Access to career-related events or learning environments.	Introduce Barista training to replace Law Day;
Guest speakers in careers, FE;	Guest speakers from a diversity of backgrounds and careers.	Bring in some former students for a significant learning day of career paths
First aid; ICDL in digital tech;	Short, certified courses or micro-credentials.	No scope at the moment for others
Career Match and the 16 possible career paths works well;	Opportunities for assessing aptitudes and abilities.	Continue to use for next programme