

# Level 1 Learning Programmes

Guidelines for Teachers



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## Part 1: Introduction

Since the introduction of the Junior Certificate in 1989, and subsequent developments in the curriculum at junior cycle such as the introduction of the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), many significant changes have occurred within Irish society. While there has always been diversity of needs among the junior cycle student population, the profile today of many of those with special educational needs reflects greater complexity and multi-layering of those needs.

Legislative and policy changes in the area of special education have served as the foundation for the drive towards inclusion and focused attention on the issue of equality and entitlement for students with special educational needs.

Under the terms of the Education Act (1998) the NCCA advises the Minister for Education and Skills on curriculum and assessment for students with a disability or other special educational needs. Although there are many different categories of special educational needs, the NCCA's initial work under this remit focused on students with general learning disabilities. In 2002, the NCCA developed and published *Draft Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities*.

This was followed by a consultation process where the partners in education were invited to give their feedback and comments on the draft guidelines. This feedback informed the final publication of the *Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities (2007)*.

That feedback also highlighted a gap in curriculum, assessment and certification provision at junior cycle for students within the mild to moderate range of general learning disabilities. The consultation found that there was a group of students who, even with the support of teachers using the most sophisticated approaches to differentiation (including the JCSP) could not access the mainstream junior cycle curriculum. A further, significant point made was that the curriculum was not fully appropriate for this group of students, who needed concerted support in personal, social and vocational development. The introduction of a new *Framework for Junior Cycle* in 2015 aimed to make the curriculum more accessible to students with special educational needs and to provide recognition of their learning through certification of achievement.

In keeping with the *Framework for Junior Cycle*, the NCCA introduced guidelines to assist post-primary and special schools in developing learning programmes to meet the specific needs of the students in question. The *Guidelines for Level Two Learning Programmes (L2LPs)* were developed with the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE) and a number of schools and settings already working with this group of students. Engagement in that work confirmed

the need for a more concerted approach to curriculum and assessment to meet the needs of the students in question. The guidelines for L2LPs emphasise the importance of these students being included with their peers as much as possible and as appropriate to their needs. Some of the students undertaking L2LPs are also able to follow parts of the junior cycle curriculum being followed by the majority of their peers, and where this is the case they are facilitated to do so. The guidelines for L2LPs were introduced in 2014 and assist teachers in planning teaching and learning. They feature activities to use in class across a range of subject/curriculum areas. They can be used in special schools with post-primary-aged students, post-primary schools and other educational settings. They are intended for use by all class/subject teachers.

The availability of L2LPs has been welcomed but, in turn, highlighted the fact that there was still a small cohort of students for whom specific programmes and certification were not available. **These are students who have learning disabilities in the range of low moderate to severe and profound.** It is for this group that **Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs)** have been developed. The fact that Level 1 on the National Framework of Qualifications refers to unconstrained awards allows for the recognition of any and all learning below Level 2.

Up to this point the students in question accessed the curriculum with the help of their teachers using the *Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities* mentioned above. A background paper setting out the case for L1LPs was developed in 2014 and, following a consultation process, has informed the development work on L1LPs. The NCCA has also worked with principals, teachers, parents/guardians and other professionals in the course of the development work. The voice of students has been heard through the advocacy of their parents/guardians and teachers and through the generation of examples of student work. The L1LP guidelines place the learning for students undertaking L1LPs in the context of the Junior Cycle Framework (Department of Education and Skills [DES], 2015) as for their typically-developing peers. This development also recognises and reports on that learning formally for the first time in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.

## Purpose of the guidelines

The purpose of the guidelines for L1LPs is to assist teachers in designing learning programmes to meet the specific needs of the students with learning needs in the range identified. The guidelines have been developed with a number of schools and settings already working with this group of students. The engagement with schools has highlighted many of the issues and challenges experienced in

meeting the needs of this group of students. It has also provided the opportunity to identify and explore examples of good practice in teaching and learning in this area and confirmed that the exemplification of student learning and achievement—a feature of NCCA’s junior cycle specifications—will also need to be a strong feature in assisting teachers and schools to meet the needs of these students.

## Structure of the guidelines

The guidelines are set out in six parts. Material for parts 1-5 of the guidelines are included in this document; part 6 is under development.

<b>Part 1</b>	Part 1 provides the background to L1LPs, introduces the guidelines, outlines the NCCA’s vision for L1LPs and explains the target cohort of students for the programmes. It sets out the relationship between L1LPs and post-primary curricula, including <i>Framework for Junior Cycle</i> (2015). It links the principles and features of L1LPs to the Junior Cycle Framework and to the principles of senior cycle education.
<b>Part 2</b>	Part 2 sets out some considerations for effective teaching and learning. When the guidelines are available online they are likely to be more extensive and will form part of the support material for teachers.
<b>Part 3</b>	Part 3 provides important learning for these students organised in six Priority Learning Units (PLUs). Students taking L1LPs are on a learning journey appropriate to them. To assist teachers, their parents/guardians and themselves in mapping the journey, seven pathways with descriptors are provided that illustrate where they are in relation to that pathway.
<b>Part 4</b>	Part 4 looks at assessment and reporting; how evidence of learning is generated and gathered in the learning programme.
<b>Part 5</b>	Part 5 will provide a range of sample learning programmes for individual students developed by schools working with the NCCA. Video material to illustrate student achievement in learning outcomes and at various levels of progression will also be provided.

Some of the support material for teachers detailed above is likely to be moved from these guidelines when the material is uploaded to the NCCA website [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie). Along with the guidelines themselves, such support material will be located in a Level 1 Toolkit.

## Vision for L1LPs

Students are at the centre of teaching and learning, and will have an educational experience that addresses their individual needs and enables them to live, participate in, learn, work and contribute with the greatest degree of autonomy to the communities in which they belong.

## Target group

Students taking L1LPs are likely to be at an early stage of cognitive development. Consultation involving parents/guardians, schools and other professionals working with the student will determine the suitability of L1LPs for the student. Some students may also have an identification of a learning disability which falls in the range of low moderate to severe and profound from an educational or clinical psychologist.

The majority of students with this level of learning disability are enrolled in special schools, with smaller class numbers and a higher ratio of staff to student. Others are in special classes in mainstream post-primary schools and a small number are included with their peers for some of the time in classes in mainstream schools. Each student has their own Individual Education Plan (IEP) with specific and realistic goals set out by the teacher in conjunction with parents/guardians and the multi-disciplinary team that may be working with the student. The IEP, along with baseline assessments, will be used as the starting point for learning. Students need time to acquire, consolidate and apply skills that other young people take for granted. The first step for their teachers is to find their strengths and areas needing improvement in order to plan their learning journey.

Each student is an individual with a unique set of strengths which needs to be acknowledged and celebrated. Students in this target group may engage in and display a level of enthusiasm similar to others who are making discoveries of their world for the first time. They use their own unique skills and talents to the best of their abilities. They may experience difficulty understanding the world



around them and their place within it. Students may also have challenges with expressive and receptive communication skills.

Many students will benefit from having more time to process information and transfer knowledge learned to different situations. They need to be given more time to reach a state of readiness to learn than their typically-developing peers. They may need support because of challenges presented by the spectrum of barriers to learning that face all learners—physical, health, social, learning-related or because they resist being challenged to do things for themselves. Extra provision may be needed to enable the students to fully access the environment around them.

The ways in which students in this target group learn may not follow the conventional linear path of development for their typically-developing peers. They may rely on their senses in different ways and, like all students, have great strengths in some areas and much fewer in others. Like their peers, they benefit from a range of learning, teaching and assessment approaches.

Students undertaking L1LPs require support from a range of educational and health professionals, who work collaboratively, sharing information about their therapeutic, medical and educational objectives in pursuit of maximising the potential of the student. Other students in this cohort may present as being more able because of their physical abilities. Clear guidelines with plenty of practice is needed for these students.

## L1LPs and the post-primary curriculum

### L1LPs and the *Framework for Junior Cycle*

The junior cycle is the final phase of compulsory education and it covers an important period in the lives of all young people. It is a time of change, of growth and development for students as they move from childhood towards early adulthood. All young people in junior cycle can display different degrees of maturity and rates of progress. It is acknowledged that the transition from childhood to adulthood, for this cohort of students, may not be the same as that of their typically-developing peers. However, they will be experiencing puberty and related emotional changes. As they come towards the end of their compulsory education inevitable changes in familiar and predictable routines will occur in their wider lives.

The *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015) is underpinned by eight principles, twenty-four statements of learning, and eight key skills. One way of delivering these principles is through offering L1LPs as an option at junior cycle. Students undertaking the L1LPs will experience some or all of the statements of learning and develop their skills through engagement with PLUs, short courses and other curriculum and learning experiences.

## L1LPs and the senior cycle curriculum

It is acknowledged that for some students undertaking L1LPs the period needed to complete their programme will extend beyond junior cycle. Students may choose to focus on some PLUs and short courses in junior cycle and complete the remainder as all or part of their senior cycle programme. Others may have achieved progress in all PLUs at junior cycle and continue to work towards successfully completing them at senior cycle.

Like the junior cycle, the senior cycle curriculum is underpinned by eight principles. Again, L1LPs offers one way of delivering on these principles, and ensuring students continue to build on the learning and skills developed at junior cycle while preparing for life beyond school.

### Links between principles and L1LPs

Junior cycle principles	Senior cycle principles	L1LPs
Learning to learn	Lifelong learning	Programmes are designed to address the learning needs of the student. They enable students to experience and develop skills that will support them to engage in their environment and community in life after school.
Choice and flexibility	Choice and flexibility	Programmes are flexible in nature and reflect the reality of the range of contexts and settings involved. As far as possible student choice is facilitated even where it is a 'supported' choice.
Quality	Quality	Programmes are subject to continual review, development and adjustment in the interest of the student and his/her holistic development.
Creativity and innovation	Creativity and innovation	Programmes give teachers and students the opportunity to

		engage in the curriculum in creative and innovative ways. They also enable students to explore and develop their creative talents.
Engagement and participation	Participation, relevance and enjoyment	Programmes have meaning for students, are enjoyable, and support them in achieving their potential. Learning connects to life outside of school. Consideration is given to the student's prior learning and experiences, personal and social development, and age-appropriateness.
Continuity and development	Continuity	Programmes are planned with a view to easing transitions that students face. A programme that builds on prior learning and supports students in making links within and across learning areas provides for continuity and opens up pathways for future learning.
Inclusive education	Inclusive education	Programmes are inclusive in their planning, design and operation. They are designed to meet the needs of the students to support his/her inclusion in the life of the school or setting, and their community.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing	Programmes are designed with the student at the centre. This enables the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing to be an integral part of the programme.

## Features of L1LPs

Features describe practices, approaches and elements you would expect to see at work in a learning programme. They may not be continuously in evidence, but reflect how the programmes are realised in schools and other settings. The features identified are neither exhaustive nor exclusive. While they allow for flexibility in the design and implementation of learning programmes, they also ensure a certain degree of coherence across them.

L1LPs emphasise that learning for the students in question:

- focuses on the student's communication, cognitive, life and functional skills as well as sensory needs that underpin all future learning
- must be meaningful and interesting for them, offering opportunities for them to build on what they can do rather than focusing on their disabilities
- is planned through a holistic approach and takes account of students' preferred sensory and learning channels and their ways of processing information.

## Part 2: Considerations for effective teaching and learning

The students in question have multiple and, in some cases, profound needs. In planning for teaching and learning, teachers and others in the multi-disciplinary team working with the student consider the following features:

### Student-centred teaching

All planning starts with the student at the centre. The student's strengths and needs should be identified in consultation with parents/guardians and the multidisciplinary team. As far as possible the student's own voice should be heard in setting goals and when decisions are made about which direction to take next in the learning journey. Using this information, along with the interests and motivators identified in the student's IEP, an L1LP will be planned that allows the learning outcomes from the PLUs to be made specific to the student. The L1LP will also outline the modes of teaching, learning and assessment appropriate to the student.

Critical to assessment of some students is the noting by family members of learning being transferred from school to home and by teachers (and other adults in school) where the reverse is observed. Above all, the learning needs to engage the student, motivating them to learn more and to find learning enjoyable.

### Meaningful learning

It is important that all learning experiences for students be as meaningful and relevant as possible. Thus judicious choices are made by teachers when deciding on appropriate curricular content for the student. Material chosen to illustrate and work with specific content should be age appropriate. If learning outcomes from a Level 2 PLU are chosen, then they may need to be adapted to suit the needs of the Level 1 student. Teaching should be practical and realistic using everyday experiences, materials and resources. Students working at this level may have difficulty retaining and transferring skills between different environments and situations. Repetitive and meaningful experiences will help to consolidate learning. Process-based teaching and learning is most successful, with specific skills being taught in context. Practitioners working with this group of students will also be aware that they need a lot of repetition and consolidation in order to transfer what is being learned from working memory to long-term memory.

## Learning environments

Care must be taken when setting up a learning opportunity. Some students may have sensory processing difficulties which may hinder their ability to fully engage with a learning experience. Light, sound and temperature can all have an effect on the environment and its conduciveness to learning. So, preparing food in the same room where young people are learning may affect their ability to focus on the lesson being taught, despite the fact that the meal preparation in itself might be a good learning opportunity.

Areas within the classroom can be set up to create an interactive and inviting place to learn with sensory, relaxation, feeding and table-top areas among others needed. It must be remembered that for some students an uncluttered, low-arousal environment gives them the best opportunity to learn without distraction, particularly for some of those on the ASD spectrum or with visual impairment.

## Materials and resources

Although the students may present at an early stage of cognitive development, it is important to remember that they are teenagers and that all materials and resources should, insofar as possible, be age-appropriate. They may respond very well to a toy or song aimed at a much younger child, however with good planning another more appropriate object or song may garner the same reaction and motivation.

The introduction of digital technology has revolutionised what is possible for all students in today's world. Augmentative technology, assistive technology and access to the internet provide great supports to students. However, use of technology should not be limited to its assistive features as all students can benefit by using digital technologies across the curriculum. All students also need to be supervised for effective use, and accessible material reviewed for suitability in line with a school's internet usage policy.

## Collaboration and family involvement

Programme planning requires a collaborative approach, between students, their parents, subject teachers, learning support or resource teachers, special needs assistants, and other relevant professionals. Teachers, SNAs and other professionals will all have developed very close relationships and understanding of those in their care. However, the importance of the family cannot be underestimated. The student may present very differently in school and at home, and family input is invaluable when compiling IEPs and learning goals. Priority needs should be thoroughly discussed with parents/guardians to ensure consistency of educational goal-setting. Time should be made for

fostering a close, supportive, trusting working relationship between school and home. This needs to be established in order to provide the best opportunity for the student.

## Observation

Much of the learning will take place over an extended period of time. Those working at this level need to experience activities repeatedly in order to consolidate their understanding. Staff need to use careful observational skills to track progress and development. Videos and photographs (with parental consent) can be invaluable in recording very minor responses which can be easily overlooked. Further guidelines on observation will be provided in the L1LP Toolkit.

## Language

Clear communication also aids learning. All adults working with students should use the same vocabulary when communicating verbally with students. The repetition of simple instructions, delivered in a calm clear voice supported with objects of reference, ISL<sup>1</sup>, Lámh<sup>2</sup>, or a visual communication system is necessary. The correct vocabulary and terminology relevant to each PLU should be used.

## Routine

A predictable and regular routine allows the student to feel safe, secure and to know what will happen next. Any element of the unknown or fear may hinder their ability to learn. Objects of reference, Lámh, ISL signs, visual schedules, communication passports and a classroom timetable can all help to keep structure and maintain security for the student. Consistently using certain areas of the classroom for specific activities enables students to identify what will happen next, e.g. always arranging chairs in a particular area of the classroom for musical activities. Opportunities to engage in unfamiliar or changing routines should be available to those students able to do so.

## Problem solving

Students need to develop skills that will help them navigate the world they live in. Learning to recognise problems in everyday situations, identify steps to solve the problem and work through these steps is a skill required across all areas of the students' lives. Therefore problem solving underpins all PLUs in the L1LPs.

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<sup>1</sup> Irish Sign Language is formally recognised in the Irish Sign Language Act of 2017. It is a visual language, not based on any spoken language. It is the term used to describe the sign language of the Republic of Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Lámh is a manual sign system based on Irish Sign Language (ISL) used by children and adults with intellectual disability and communication needs in Ireland. Lámh signs are always accompanied by speech.

## A note on planning for L1LPs

The learning experience for students participating in the L1LPs includes:

- the student's L1LP
- other learning experiences
- wellbeing
- elements of the student's personalised programme (IEP).

Schools and teachers are required to have documentation that shows evidence of planning for learning, assessment of learning, reflection and monitoring of students' learning. As every school is different there is no 'one fits all' template for this planning. However sample templates developed by schools participating in the pilot will be available as part of NCCA support materials for L1LPs.

All planning for students participating in the L1LPs should be student centred and the student's IEP is central to this process. Teachers should have yearly, termly and short-term plans. These plans should be working documents. Teachers should ensure that the plans support and evidence continuous reflection; assessment and monitoring of the student's learning; progression steps for students; and are adjusted accordingly to reflect this process.



## Part 3: Priority Learning Units (PLUs)

### Introduction

There are six Priority Learning Units (PLUs) at the heart of every L1LP. These PLUs explicitly identify and develop the key areas of learning needed to prepare the students for their future lives. Though presented as self-contained units when used as part of a learning programme these PLUs interconnect and overlap. The order in which the PLUs are presented is to assist teachers who are planning for L1LP and L2LP students.

Communication, language and literacy
Numeracy
Personal care and wellbeing
Being part of a community
The arts
Physical education

Each PLU is described in general terms, followed by a summary list of the main elements of each PLU set out in a table.

Each PLU is divided into elements and these elements have a number of associated learning outcomes which specify the knowledge, skills and attitudes students can demonstrate they have learned (see p. 23 for learning outcomes related to a PLU). The learning outcomes are presented in a sequence, reflecting cognitive demand, though not all students will progress in a linear fashion.

The learning outcomes developed for L1LPs are broadly aligned with the indicators at Level 1 of the National Framework of Qualifications (see Appendix C). The unconstrained nature of the learning outcomes facilitate differentiation upwards or downwards as required. Although teachers have the highest possible expectations for the students they teach, not all students have to achieve every PLU or indeed every learning outcome. The learning outcomes chosen for a student to work on are ones that the teacher identifies as being achievable and realistic, given the individual student's abilities and gaps in learning. They may also take considerable time to make progress on a learning outcome. Though some learning outcomes indicate that a student may need adult support to achieve the outcome, the aim is always to support the student towards as much independence as possible.

As each student is on an individual learning journey, a progression continuum has been developed with seven pathways of progression and descriptive indicators accompanying them (see p. 20). The continuum assists teachers, parents/guardians and students in keeping track of and understanding the journey the student is making and where they are on that journey. The continuum is set out in seven pathways—experiencing, attending, responding, initiating, acquiring, becoming fluent, and generalising—and for each of these there is a descriptor outlining what is involved at that pathway.

Along with the student’s IEP, the progression continuum supports the teacher in planning for next steps in teaching, learning and assessment. The support material planned for the L1LP Toolkit will further assist planning, offering examples of how other teachers have developed L1LPs for their students.

Learning in L1LPs will largely comprise of learning outcomes from PLUs. Apart from the PLUs, a second curricular component—which L1LPs have in common with all junior cycle programmes—is the short course<sup>3</sup>. Short courses relate to and can support the learning outcomes of the PLUs. They are curricular units developed to focus on a particular area of interest to students of junior cycle age. Level 1 short courses will also share these features and will provide students with access to as broad a range of curriculum areas as possible. Initially, the NCCA will develop a small number of short courses for use by schools. However, schools will also be free to develop their own following a template and guidelines developed by NCCA. Short courses may, in time, be developed by other organisations. Schools can decide on the short courses most suitable for their students – they may be subject-based or they may be thematic and cross-curricular in nature. They should always focus on topics that are age-appropriate for junior cycle students and on areas of interest to the students involved.

Students should be facilitated in applying their learning from one situation to another at every opportunity. This ensures that they consolidate their skills. Although repetition is essential to these students, learning should take place in varied learning environments in order to maintain student motivation and to judge whether a student is able to generalise his/her learning.

In planning for teaching, learning and assessment for a student undertaking a L1LP, a process similar to that for planning L2LPs is recommended. The following are the main features of that planning process:

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<sup>3</sup> See the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (DES, 2015) for more detail on short courses.

- The student's needs at the centre as informed by her/his areas of interests and the student's IEP as well as reports from parents/guardians and other professionals who work with the student.
- The application of the L1LP guidelines to the student's needs.
- The use of PLUs and their relevant learning outcomes for that student.
- The use of short courses and other curricular material to facilitate learning and provide a broad curriculum.
- The identification of teaching approaches to areas such as communication, language and literacy development for these students.
- The plan for gathering of evidence of work undertaken and learning achieved by the student.

See Figure 1 below for a visual representation of this process.

Figure 1: Supports for L1LP planning, teaching and assessment



## The progression continuum for L1LPs

The progression continuum describes, by way of pathways and descriptive indicators, the general learning journey the student is on. It is set out in detail below.

### Using the continuum

The progression continuum (Figure 2 below) consists of seven pathways, which describe, in broad terms, learning and development related to Level 1.

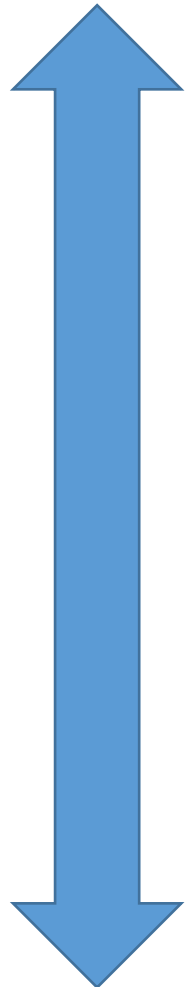
These pathways are written to reflect an order of progression, though students do not always develop intellectually or functionally in a linear fashion. Teachers can use the continuum to help them understand how a student is functioning in respect of their learning. Students may be on different pathways for different areas of learning or learning outcomes. The continuum supports teachers in identifying the next appropriate pathway for students in their learning journeys.

Examples of a student's functioning at each of the pathways captured on video will further illustrate the descriptors and give teachers a sense of what achievement looks like. These examples will be in the L1LPs toolkit.

The *experiencing* pathway presents a challenge to teachers in assessing whether or not the student has experienced a stimulus or event rather than being 'merely present'. Insofar as possible the stimulus or event should be deliberately chosen as the context in which planned and incidental teaching and learning take place. Any signs of 'noticing' should be noted and used to inform planning for future experiences and activities. For instance, a stimulus such as a sound, if presented continuously, may not be noticed by a student with profound needs or may cause him or her to 'shut down' in order to block it. By using an on-off pattern, where a stimulus is presented and removed several times, it becomes easier for the adult to determine whether the student has noticed it or not.

Sample videos provided in the toolkit will illustrate how skills and specific learning outcomes are taught in some settings. Of course the ways in which learning is facilitated will depend on the individual needs of the students.

Figure 2: The progression continuum



PROGRESSION PATHWAYS	The student...
EXPERIENCING	is present during a learning activity. S/he is exposed and/or aware and/or exposed to the learning environment. S/he is beginning to acclimatise to the learning environment such as objects, people, sounds and other sensory experiences.
ATTENDING	becomes attentive to and/or engaged with the learning activities presented by changing gesture, posture, vocalisation, eye gaze, movement etc. S/he is acclimatised to the learning environment.
RESPONDING	demonstrates capacity to actively or purposefully take an interest in the learning environment. S/he begins to indicate likes, dislikes or preferences. S/he actively responds to a learning activity with or without support.
INITIATING	shows curiosity about the learning environment. S/he actively and independently seeks opportunities to engage with and/or influence that environment.
ACQUIRING	demonstrates that knowledge, a concept or a skill is being learned. S/he explores and participates in the learning.
BECOMING FLUENT	moves towards fluency and accuracy in familiar learning contexts. S/he independently and consistently demonstrates recall mastery of the skill/concept/knowledge learned.
GENERALISING	transfers and applies learned skills, knowledge or concepts to familiar and unfamiliar contexts.

## PLUs for Level 1 Learning Programmes

The six PLUs identify and develop the main areas of learning for students undertaking L1LPs.

### PLU 1: Communication, language and literacy

#### Introduction

Communication underpins all learning and is fundamental to the capacity to transfer learning. Communication and language form the foundation for all other PLUs. Learning in this unit covers both verbal and non-verbal ways of receiving and giving information. Language development requires social interaction between the student and a communication partner. Some of the students in this cohort may first need to be alerted to the fact that they live in a world outside of their own body. Communication for these students can be enabled and progressed with aids like augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), e.g. visual and object cues, verbal prompts, facial expressions, gestures, sign language (such as ISL), electronic devices, Braille (or Moon<sup>4</sup>) and the written form. Through developing communication skills students enhance their social interactions and improve their self-esteem.

Students undertaking L1LPs should be exposed to a broad literacy experience. This definition of literacy includes multi-modal literacies encompassing spoken, printed, visual and digital literacies.

#### Elements of the PLU: Communication, language and literacy

- Developing communicative relationships
- Understanding
- Exploring and using
- Reading
- Written expression

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<sup>4</sup> Moon is a reading system of embossed symbols for the blind. It is claimed by its supporters to be easier to understand than Braille.

*A student will work on learning outcomes based on their strengths and needs as indicated in their IEP. A student may achieve a learning outcome at any one of the seven progression pathways. Curriculum content from any curricular area can be used to achieve the learning outcomes.*

<b>Element</b>	<b>Learning outcomes</b>
Developing communicative relationships	<p>Students can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Indicate awareness of sensory stimuli in the learning environment</li> <li>1.2 Establish consistent patterns of attending to stimuli/personnel/activities in the immediate environment</li> <li>1.3 Engage in an activity requiring joint attention with one or more people</li> <li>1.4 Demonstrate turn-taking with a communicative partner</li> <li>1.5 Show awareness of and/or use tone, body language, gestures, pace, vocalisations and volume to impact communication</li> <li>1.6 Initiate communication with a familiar adult and peers</li> <li>1.7 Engage in and enjoy a meaningful exchange with a communicative partner</li> </ul>
Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.8 Show recognition of personal and/or standardised objects of reference</li> <li>1.9 Respond to verbal and non-verbal cues related to familiar communicative routines</li> <li>1.10 Attend and respond to increased vocabulary in text<sup>5</sup></li> <li>1.11 Consistently respond to familiar factual questions</li> <li>1.12 Show signs of anticipating next steps in a familiar activity when presented with a stimulus</li> </ul>

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<sup>5</sup> Throughout the L1LP guidelines, 'text' includes all products of language use: oral, gesture, sign, written, visual, electronic and digital.

	<p>1.13 Predict outcomes for a familiar or unfamiliar story or event choosing from a range of possible outcomes</p>
Exploring and using	<p>1.14 Clearly indicate preferred objects and/or activities and refuse non-preferred items</p> <p>1.15 Request repetition and/or more of and/or change of objects or events</p> <p>1.16 Make a request and/or express a need, verbally or non-verbally</p> <p>1.17 Participate in the sharing of a familiar or personal story, activity or event</p> <p>1.18 Communicate to express feelings verbally or non-verbally</p> <p>1.19 Express interests and opinions through a range of verbal or non-verbal communication methods</p>
Reading	<p>1.20 Illustrate signs of engagement and enjoyment with stories, texts, poetry, funny or favourite reading material</p> <p>1.21 Choose and handle books, demonstrating familiarity with book-handling skills</p> <p>1.22 Show recognition and understanding of symbols, signs, logos, familiar words, letters or visual representations of items</p> <p>1.23 Seek meaning from combinations of signs, symbols or text for enjoyment or practical purposes</p> <p>1.24 Read a book, magazine or other text with understanding</p> <p>1.25 Recall a story read or personal experience using objects, marks, gestures or vocalisations</p>



Written expression	<p>1.26 Show enjoyment while making marks and or texts, and use gestures, sounds or words to focus attention on these, showing signs of understanding that texts carry meaning</p> <p>1.27 Engage in/with mechanics of mark-making exercises to create a form of text according to ability, using motor or eye-gaze skills as appropriate</p> <p>1.28 Explore a variety of implements <sup>6</sup>and surfaces<sup>7</sup> for creating texts</p> <p>1.29 Place marks, signs, symbols or texts in the correct sequence and/or with the correct orientation to infer meaning</p> <p>1.30 Use signs, symbols or text to share experiences, thoughts, opinions, preferences with peers with growing confidence</p>
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<sup>6</sup> Implements to include but not confined to any object capable of mark making, such as hands/feet, electronic device, wheelchair, crayon/pencil/paint, foam etc.

<sup>7</sup> Surfaces to include but not confined to any surface used for applying marks, such as paper, a digital device, floor, wall, desk etc.

## PLU 2: Numeracy

### Introduction

Everyday activities provide genuine opportunities for mathematical discovery—from matching cutlery items to pouring drinks and from coordinating clothes to preparing ingredients for cooking. As with all learning, activities related to this PLU need to be varied to allow for multiple ways of representing concepts, expressing understanding and engaging. The more practical and related to everyday actions or tasks the context is, the more enabling they are. Opportunities to use digital technologies in the classroom can further develop students' learning.

Numeracy is fundamental to daily living. The skills acquired through the Numeracy PLU translate across school, home and community life. Students undertaking L1LPs should be exposed to a broad numeracy experience. This unit is broken down into six elements; awareness of environment, pattern and sequence, developing number sense, shape and space, measures and data, and time.

Students use their senses to investigate, discover and explore objects and people using the concepts of shape, measure, time, pattern and sequence. Students need to experience a mathematically-rich environment. A key aspect of learning in this area is in supporting students to participate in real-life situations where the use of mathematics is relevant.

#### Elements of the PLU: Numeracy

- Awareness of environment
- Pattern and sequence
- Developing number sense
- Shape and space
- Measure and data
- Time

*A student will work on learning outcomes based on their strengths and needs as indicated in their IEP. A student may achieve a learning outcome at any one of the seven progression pathways. Curriculum content from any curricular area can be used to achieve the learning outcomes.*

Element	Learning outcomes Students can...
Awareness of environment	2.1 Discover and explore a range of objects/stimuli 2.2 Investigate objects/stimuli in motion 2.3 Recognise and/or show preferences for objects/stimuli 2.4 Match identical items that are familiar to the student 2.5 Recognise objects/stimuli that are the same and/or different in one or more ways 2.6 Participate in cause and effect activities <sup>8</sup> 2.7 Explore the concept of object permanence <sup>9</sup>
Pattern and sequence	2.8 Explore pattern through a variety of sensory experiences 2.9 Observe patterns in the student's environment 2.10 Engage with language, objects, symbols, signs and stimuli associated with ordering and sequencing which forms part of the student's daily routine 2.11 Participate in activities where the aim is to repeat patterns 2.12 Recognise and/or anticipate familiar activities or routines with predictable patterns and sequences
Developing number sense	2.13 Participate in counting activities 2.14 Explore and use familiar numerals 2.15 Explore the relationship between sets and numbers 2.16 Experiment with differences in quantity and the language associated with it <sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cause and effect refers to the understanding that there is a relationship between events or things, where one is the result of the other (e.g. turning on a light when going into a dark room).

<sup>9</sup> Object permanence is the understanding that objects continue to exist even when they cannot be observed (seen, heard, touched, smelled or sensed in any way).

<sup>10</sup> These activities underpin addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

	2.17 Explore the concepts of addition and subtraction
Shape and space	<p>2.18 Experiment with the movement of body parts in the immediate environment</p> <p>2.19 Participate in activities where the language of movement and position is used</p> <p>2.20 Explore the features and properties of 2D and 3D regular and irregular shapes through a variety of sensory experiences</p> <p>2.21 Recognise and/or identify shapes in the immediate and local environment</p>
Measures <sup>11</sup> and data	<p>2.22 Investigate objects and language in relation to measurement</p> <p>2.23 Participate in everyday activities associated with measurement in the student's environment</p> <p>2.24 Participate in a shopping experience <b>or</b> in an activity where real money is used functionally</p> <p>2.25 Participate in recording and displaying number and/or familiar data</p>
Time	<p>2.26 Engage with language, objects, symbols, signs, stimuli or activities associated with times of the day and/or days of the week</p> <p>2.27 Explore language, objects and stimuli associated with significant personal and cultural events in the student's life</p> <p>2.28 Participate in activities/actions that are used to transition from one event to the next or to show the passage of time, waiting or turn-taking</p> <p>2.29 Use instruments such as timers, visual timetables, objects of reference or clocks functionally</p>

<sup>11</sup> Categories in this element include of temperature, length, distance, weight, capacity and area.

## PLU 3: Personal care and wellbeing

### Introduction

In undertaking this PLU, students become aware of their own bodies, develop an understanding of routine bodily functions and take as much control as possible of their personal care and wellbeing. Care is something that is done with students, not to them, thus every care routine is an opportunity for learning, for involvement, and ultimately, where possible, for independence on the part of the student. They learn that they are valued for who they are. They are offered the chance of empowerment (making choices), increased self-esteem and as much autonomy as possible. Emotional and physical wellbeing are also enhanced through learning about food and nutrition as well as how to express feelings and stay safe in a range of contexts. Students identify and value their own skills and talents and learn to celebrate them.

#### Elements of the PLU: Personal care and wellbeing

- Self-awareness
- Personal care and hygiene
- Food and nutrition
- Emotional wellbeing
- Physical wellbeing
- Personal safety

*A student will work on learning outcomes based on their strengths and needs as indicated in their IEP. A student may achieve a learning outcome at any one of the seven progression pathways. Curriculum content from any curricular area can be used to achieve the learning outcomes.*

<b>Element</b>	<b>Learning outcomes</b> Students can...
Self-awareness	3.1 Demonstrate awareness of their own body 3.2 Show awareness of self in the immediate and/or wider environment 3.3 Recognise their own features as being unique to them 3.4 Demonstrate awareness of their own abilities and skills such as self-help skills or kindness to others 3.5 Exhibit perseverance and the motivation to develop and improve personal abilities and skills
Personal care and hygiene	3.6 Co-operate with adults who provide daily support 3.7 Participate in personal care routines 3.8 Indicate personal care needs or ask for help verbally or non-verbally 3.9 Make choices related to personal care 3.10 Complete personal care tasks independently
Food and nutrition	3.11 Use the senses to explore different types of foods 3.12 Show preferences for foods 3.13 Communicate hunger, thirst and messages such as 'more please' or 'no more' when being supported to eat and drink 3.14 Use eating and drinking utensils 3.15 Participate in preparing food 3.16 Demonstrate basic hygiene procedures around food 3.17 Follow safety rules for using kitchen equipment 3.18 Participate in making healthy snacks

	<p>3.19 Plan, shop for and prepare personalised healthy food (with support if necessary)</p>
Emotional wellbeing	<p>3.20 Express some feelings consistently (with or without intent) so that a familiar adult can respond appropriately</p> <p>3.21 Show interest in the feelings expressed by others and react appropriately</p> <p>3.22 Use coping strategies to self-regulate</p> <p>3.23 Show interest and enjoyment in being with particular peers or familiar adults especially while engaging in hobbies and extra-curricular activities</p>
Physical wellbeing	<p>3.24 Use the body to have an effect on objects in the environment</p> <p>3.25 Move to improve gross motor control of the body</p> <p>3.26 Practise fine motor control for self-help</p> <p>3.27 Participate in activities to develop a healthy lifestyle</p> <p>3.28 Identify preferred physical activities</p> <p>3.29 Demonstrate enjoyment of co-operating with peers in team games and group activities</p>
Personal safety	<p>3.30 Accept appropriate attention from others</p> <p>3.31 Differentiate between familiar and unfamiliar people</p> <p>3.32 Object to inappropriate attention and/or show awareness of another person/people who can help if uncomfortable in a situation</p>

	<p>3.33 Follow agreed social rules</p> <p>3.34 Show awareness of risks in familiar environments</p> <p>3.35 Recognise public and private places and how they are different</p> <p>3.36 Identify or name body parts using correct anatomical language</p> <p>3.37 Follow social conventions of privacy</p> <p>3.38 Demonstrate awareness of appropriate and inappropriate physical contact with others</p>
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## PLU 4: Being part of a community

### Introduction

This unit enables students to develop positive relationships with others in their community, whether that community be their family, school or the wider community in which they live. The core elements of socialising requires a process-based way of teaching. In this context, this PLU offers opportunities for students to spend curriculum time learning outside of school and to further work on the processes of communication they develop in the PLU Communication, language and literacy. They have opportunities to contribute to and participate in their community, use the facilities within it safely and appropriately, and to take care of it.

A key aspect of learning in this area takes students out into their communities. Supporting students who find change and transition difficult is essential here. Developing social scripts<sup>12</sup> for the students in advance, accompanied by photographs and/or audio or video recordings reduces anxiety and reassures them by making the unfamiliar less so. Some students find social interaction particularly challenging so where collaborative work or socialising with others present difficulties, they should be allowed to work in parallel with or alongside their peers and not forced to participate.

#### Elements of the PLU: Being part of a community

- Relating to others
- Using local facilities
- Transitioning between environments
- Being safe in the community
- Contributing to the community

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<sup>12</sup> Social scripts describe the physical environment students will visit, and include details of what the excursion will involve. They are often written in the first person, e.g. *When we climb the steps to the entrance I will be able to leave my bag in a room, where it will be safe until I get back.*

*A student will work on learning outcomes based on their strengths and needs as indicated in their IEP. A student may achieve a learning outcome at any one of the seven progression pathways. Curriculum content from any curricular area can be used to achieve the learning outcomes.*

<b>Element</b>	<b>Learning outcomes</b> Students can...
Relating to others	4.1 Express contentment in the company of others 4.2 Acknowledge unfamiliar people 4.3 Show enjoyment from an interaction with another person or other people, and show a desire for it to continue 4.4 Respond consistently to familiar people 4.5 Indicate/choose preferred companion(s) for different activities 4.6 Communicate an ability to connect people with their roles 4.7 Engage in supported activities on daily life skills 4.8 Be a member of one or more groups in or outside of school, actively participating where possible 4.9 Communicate ideas of what it means to be 'a friend'
Using local facilities	4.10 Participate appropriately in using different areas/rooms in their immediate environment 4.11 Visit and participate appropriately in using facilities in their environment 4.12 Demonstrate knowledge of where familiar items are stored/located in their environment 4.13 Make choices when using facilities 4.14 Show respect for items belonging to others and use them appropriately

<p>Transitioning between environments</p>	<p>4.15 Show recognition of being in familiar places</p> <p>4.16 Respond with curiosity to unfamiliar environments</p> <p>4.17 Co-operate in preparing for and transitioning to a new location</p> <p>4.18 Actively engage in transitioning to a new location</p> <p>4.19 Respond to cues (visual, verbal, gesture, sound) to locate familiar places</p> <p>4.20 Indicate a desire/request to leave a group or go to another place</p>
<p>Being safe in the community</p>	<p>4.21 Gain attention from an adult if feeling unsafe or uncomfortable</p> <p>4.22 Communicate 'No'</p> <p>4.23 Move/remain near to a carer/guardian when in unfamiliar places</p> <p>4.24 Observe rules of safety in different environments</p> <p>4.25 Show recognition of places and people in the community who can help us</p>
<p>Contributing to the community</p>	<p>4.26 Respond to positive reinforcement from others</p> <p>4.27 Behave appropriately in familiar routine or special events and where possible play their expected role within it</p> <p>4.28 Show awareness that actions have consequences</p> <p>4.29 Participate in the care of the immediate and local environment</p> <p>4.30 Engage in a task or job in the community</p>

## PLU 5: The arts

### Introduction

This unit covers the three areas of visual art, music and drama. Students are exposed to a rich and varied range of experiences using all of their senses. They are creatively engaged in learning and have opportunities to express their emotions, reactions and imaginations as an individual and as a member of a group. Due to the strong visual, auditory and tactile aspects of each of the three elements, students with visual and hearing impairments are included fully and successfully in learning. The arts can support all students in making sense of the world around them.

They learn about their own cultural heritage and traditions and that of others. Students are exposed to the work of artists, musicians and to the world of theatre and performance. Through the retelling of contemporary and historical events which become familiar, students become more secure and relaxed in their surroundings.

In all three elements an emphasis will be placed on experiencing, exploring and creating. It should be noted that the process and journey of creation is as important as the end product/performance.

#### Elements of the PLU: The arts

- Visual art
- Music
- Drama

*A student will work on learning outcomes based on their strengths and needs as indicated in their IEP. A student may achieve a learning outcome at any one of the seven progression pathways. Curriculum content from any curricular area can be used to achieve the learning outcomes.*

<b>Element</b>	<b>Learning outcomes</b>
Visual art	Students can...  5.1 Explore and experience a variety of mark-making tools, media and materials, surfaces and techniques, including using parts of the body  5.2 Show interest in coloured light, colour in the environment and in art materials

	<p>5.3 Look at and handle natural and manufactured objects with different textures, shapes and patterns</p> <p>5.4 Gather, explore and use 3D materials (new and recycled)</p> <p>5.5 Participate in creating art work based on real or imagined stimuli</p> <p>5.6 Use visual art to communicate, including the creative expression of emotion</p> <p>5.7 Work independently and/or collaboratively to produce a piece of art</p> <p>5.8 Observe, appreciate and/or react to the work of self and others, including the work of famous local or global artists</p>
Music	<p>5.9 Identify the source and direction of a sound</p> <p>5.10 Listen and respond to a wide range of sounds and music (environmental, body percussion, vocal, instrumental, digital, technological, from a variety of traditions and cultures)</p> <p>5.11 Respond to the elements of music (pitch, pulse, duration, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture, style, tempo)</p> <p>5.12 Experiment with creating vocal sounds</p> <p>5.13 Use parts of the body to make sounds by moving on/through a reactive environment<sup>13</sup></p> <p>5.14 Explore and use a variety of sound-making equipment</p> <p>5.15 Participate in choosing and/or making appropriate sounds for stories, events and celebrations</p> <p>5.16 Participate in group music-making activities</p>

<sup>13</sup> Reactive music adapts to a listener and their environment by using built-in sensors, e.g. camera, microphone, touch screen. In this way, listeners become part of the creative process.

	<p>5.17 Create short pieces of music using relevant digital technologies</p> <p>5.18 Link sounds to pictorial representations</p> <p>5.19 Play an uncomplicated tune on a chosen instrument</p>
Drama	<p>5.20 Show an awareness of being part of an audience</p> <p>5.21 Explore and react to props, costumes, actions and sensory stimuli in a dramatic context</p> <p>5.22 Participate in the re/telling of contemporary/historical/cultural events or stories through interactive games and/or dramatic activities</p> <p>5.23 Show an awareness of being part of an acting group</p> <p>5.24 Co-operate or work alongside/in parallel with others in making, choosing and using props, costumes and sets</p> <p>5.25 Work independently or collaboratively to produce a rehearsed piece of drama for an audience</p> <p>5.26 Express and/or identify emotions in a dramatic context</p>

## PLU 6: Physical education (PE)

### Introduction

Physical exercise and movement improve concentration, mood, sleeping and eating patterns. The ability to work as an individual, to develop personal skills and to work as a member of a team, are important aspects of PE.

The usual considerations apply when teachers are planning their students' PE learning activities. Issues such as safety, as well as students' medical and physical needs all need to be taken into account. Recommendations from a multidisciplinary team may need to be sought in choosing equipment and movement which are appropriate for students' needs.

At the beginning and end of each PE session, warm-up and cool-down periods which are important for anyone about to engage in physical exercise can be especially beneficial in awakening the senses before the lesson begins and relaxing the student, both physically and mentally, before returning to the classroom or moving on to other learning activities. Along with the recommendations from the multidisciplinary team mentioned above, advice about what is required for some students who need their limbs moved for them will be helpful. It is also important to note that the starting point for some students will be to tolerate the acoustics/smells/temperature of PE environments.

It is important that a positive attitude to a healthy lifestyle is promoted. Reflection on the amount of time students spend on physical activity, as well as on their dietary habits informs programmes that will provide the greatest benefits. Health-related physical activity that includes cardiovascular exercise where possible is vital to develop fitness levels, where it does not compromise underlying health conditions. Some students need motivation to engage in physical exercise. It is important that the reward offered should equate to and be adequate for the amount of effort required of the student.

The development of gross motor skills (the ability to control large muscles of the body for sitting, crawling, walking, running and other activities) and fine motor skills (smaller actions such as grasping a ball, holding a bat, picking up a bean bag) are important because they underpin not only learning within the PE PLU but other Level 1 PLUs. It should be noted that no particular equipment is necessary for developing gross motor skills.

Fundamental movement skills (FMS) are the foundational movement patterns that involve various body parts. They can be broken down into three categories—locomotor skills (running, hopping, swimming); balance skills (keeping the body in one place but balancing in different ways); and object skills (kicking, throwing, pushing). FMS are developed as the student participates in the PE PLU.

Students working on L1LPs should be given many opportunities to experience the fun, enjoyment and social aspects of physical exercise. In this area their sense of team and their participation as team members are desirable outcomes.

Elements of the PLU: Physical education (PE)

- Movement skills (athletics/gymnastics)
- Co-operative activity (games)
- Creative movement (dance)
- Aquatics

*A student will work on learning outcomes based on their strengths and needs as indicated in their IEP. A student may achieve a learning outcome at any one of the seven progression pathways. Curriculum content from any curricular area can be used to achieve the learning outcomes.*

Element	Learning outcomes Students can...
Movement skills (athletics/gymnastics)	<p>6.1 Move whole or some body parts (arms, head, track with eyes etc.) voluntarily</p> <p>6.2 Move whole or some body parts to explore immediate environment</p> <p>6.3 Move purposefully/with intent</p> <p>6.4 Develop consistent movements to have an effect on equipment or in response to a stimulus</p> <p>6.5 Refine gross motor skills, supported by equipment where appropriate</p> <p>6.6 Refine fine motor skills, supported by equipment where appropriate</p> <p>6.7 Move whole body or individual limbs in a range of directions and at different speeds<sup>14</sup></p> <p>6.8 Become aware of sensory signals as prompts for movement</p>

<sup>14</sup> In some instances this may include controlling the speed of a wheelchair.



	<p>6.9 Participate in activities which promote cardiovascular exercise and fitness</p>
Co-operative activity (games)	<p>6.10 Participate in physical activities in parallel with/alongside others</p> <p>6.11 Engage in an activity requiring joint attention with one or more people</p> <p>6.12 Explore equipment and/or elements of traditional and invented games or sports in circuit activities</p> <p>6.13 Participate in games with one or more people</p> <p>6.14 Show awareness of, or interest in, being part of a team</p> <p>6.15 Support and/or play sports for enjoyment as a member of the community (Special Olympics, representing class/school team etc.)</p>
Creative movement (dance)	<p>6.16 Observe the movements of another and attempt to copy or imitate with sight of self in a mirror<sup>15</sup></p> <p>6.17 Move whole or parts of body creatively in response to stimuli</p> <p>6.18 Develop awareness of pathways and directions of movement<sup>16</sup></p> <p>6.19 Link two or more movements to create a sequence of movements</p> <p>6.20 Interact with another/others to create co-ordinated movements</p> <p>6.21 Move with control/poise showing awareness of others and the environment</p> <p>6.22 Express emotional response to stimuli through movement</p>

<sup>15</sup> The ability to achieve this without sight of self is a later developmental step.

<sup>16</sup> In a straight line, around cones/markers in a zigzag direction, etc.

Aquatics	<p>6.23 Explore water in different situations and environments</p> <p>6.24 Enter and exit swimming pool safely</p> <p>6.25 Tolerate and adjust to water moving over body</p> <p>6.26 Explore the effects of water buoyancy on self/others and other objects/floatation devices</p> <p>6.27 Move through water in different directions—forwards, backwards, sideways, jumping, using swimming strokes etc.</p> <p>6.28 Practise breath control—blowing and holding breath</p> <p>6.29 Float on back and front in water</p> <p>6.30 Move on the flat of the back through water</p>
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## Part 4: Assessment and reporting

Assessment in education involves gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and can be used in a variety of ways. All assessment in junior cycle, formative or summative, moment-in-time or ongoing, SEC, NCCA or teacher-designed, should have as its primary purpose, the support of student learning. Research shows that the greatest benefits for students' learning occur when teachers provide effective feedback to students that helps them to understand how their learning can be improved.

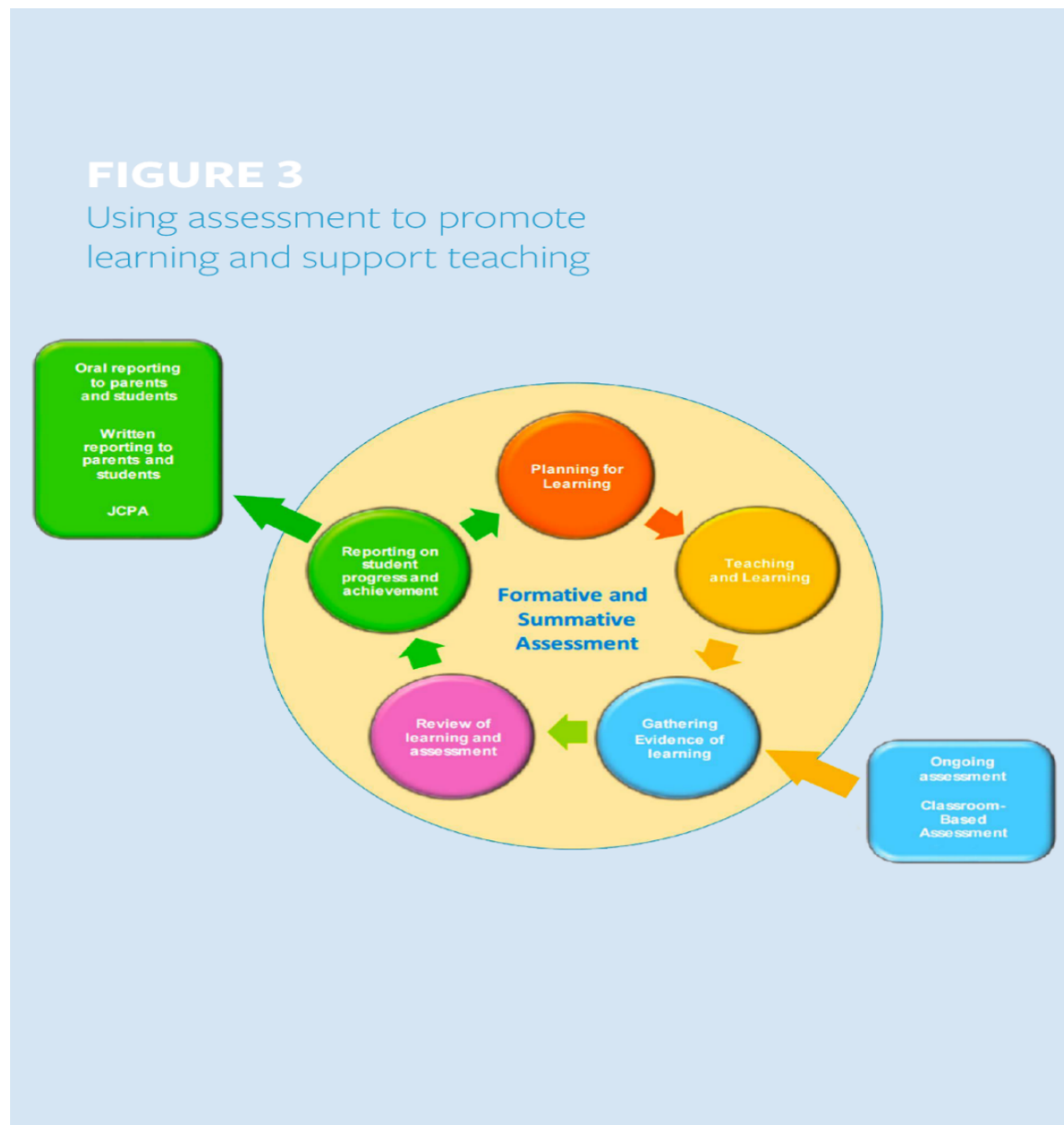
That is why consideration of approaches to quality learning cannot be separated from consideration of assessment. Ongoing classroom assessment practices are of crucial importance in supporting student learning and promoting student achievement. Ongoing assessment involves practice that is both formative and summative. Schools use a range of assessment methods for formative or summative purposes which emphasise the interlinked and complementary nature of the assessment process at junior cycle. These assessment practices build on existing good practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

Most of the assessment activities over the three years of junior cycle are formative in nature. Teachers use the learning outcomes from PLUs or short course specifications as a starting point for planning a unit of learning and to develop learning intentions and success criteria to be shared and discussed with their students as appropriate. The same approach will be taken for those students continuing to engage with L1LPs as all or part of their senior cycle programme.

These learning outcomes clearly set out what the students should know, understand, and be able to do as a result of the learning and teaching activities which they have undertaken during the course of junior cycle. As part of their daily practice, teachers continue to assess students' learning by observing and listening as students carry out tasks and by considering how they respond to questions.

Teachers use learning intentions and success criteria as the basis for providing feedback to help students plan their next steps in learning. Students are also encouraged to reflect on how they are progressing in their own learning and provide feedback to their teachers. In developing the capacity for self-management and self-awareness, students approach their learning more confidently and are better prepared to meet the challenges of life beyond school. To engage with assessment in the context of L1LPs and beyond and for more information on learning outcomes, learning intentions, success criteria and features of quality see the NCCA's junior cycle Assessment Toolkit.

Figure 3 illustrates how formative and summative assessment are linked. It provides a guide for teachers on how they might plan for learning, teaching and assessment at junior cycle.



## Assessment in Level 1 Learning Programmes

Assessment is an intrinsic part of any learning programme as it promotes learning and supports teaching. Having established where the students are starting from, they are supported in coming to terms with the new learning in the PLUs. Then, by receiving regular feedback on their learning progress, students know when they are successful in learning and when they need further assistance to make progress. Gaps in learning are viewed as opportunities for providing good information on the student's current levels of understanding or misunderstanding. Assessment must be authentic, real and purposeful. Teachers should enable students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways appropriate to their learning and communication strengths. The assessment generated by L1LP Priority Learning Units is classroom-based. Over the three years in junior cycle, students assemble evidence of their learning in a portfolio. Students submit this portfolio to their teachers and the students' work is assessed and reported on.

### Portfolio assessment

Schools working on the initial development of these guidelines identified portfolio assessment as an approach that is well-suited to the students in question and to the kinds of tasks involved in assessing work on PLUs. Portfolios provide students with concrete evidence of their progress and achievements, which they discuss, review and share with teachers, parents and peers as appropriate. This in turn enhances their self-esteem as active students. Portfolios can exist in hard copy and/or electronic form. An electronic portfolio, also known as an e-portfolio or digital portfolio, is a collection of a student's work created using word processing and other multimedia presentations. Examples of types of evidence of learning that might be included in the portfolio are:

- written work
- project work
- homework
- charts, diagrams, photographs
- audio or video recordings of the student's participation in an activity, event or achievement
- recordings of work in the arts.

## Assessing evidence of learning in L1LPs

On completion of a learning programme, students are expected to present evidence that they have successfully been facilitated in accessing and achieving the elements and learning outcomes pursued. The evidence can be presented in any of the forms or media above. Features of Quality, which are the criteria through which the student's work is assessed, will accompany the evidence of learning. These set out what the evidence should include/convey to demonstrate that the student has successfully met the relevant learning outcome/s. The example of Features of Quality is set out on the next page in the Observation/Assessment Sheet.

Evidence of learning can be generated through a wide range of assessment methods and in a variety of forms. The process through which evidence of learning is generated, gathered and judged is set out in Figure 4.

Sometimes evidence of learning can be captured by someone other than the teacher. It is helpful when others are able to help gather evidence of the student's learning even (and particularly) if it is demonstrated outside the classroom. This might include a parent/guardian, a therapist, SNA or other professional working with the student. Evidence of the learning observed should be passed to the teacher.

### Learning Outcome in focus:

<u>Junior Cycle Teacher Observation/Assessment Sheet</u>		
<u>Student name:</u> Sam		<u>Class:</u> Navy
		<u>Teacher:</u> Harry
<u>Learning outcomes in focus:</u> L1LPs		<u>Where was the student working?:</u> Community
<b>Code</b>	<b>Priority Learning Unit (PLU)</b>	Communication, language and literacy
1.7	<b>Element:</b>	Developing communicative relationships
	<b>Learning Outcome:</b>	Engage in and enjoy a meaningful exchange with a communicative partner.
<b>Code</b>	<b>Priority Learning Unit (PLU)</b>	Communication, language and literacy
1.16	<b>Element:</b>	Exploring and using
	<b>Learning Outcome:</b>	Make a request non verbally.
<b>Code</b>	<b>Priority Learning Unit (PLU)</b>	Numeracy
2.24	<b>Element:</b>	Measures and data
	<b>Learning Outcome:</b>	Participate in a shopping experience where real money is used functionally.
<u>Background:</u> Sam is working within the 'Becoming Fluent' stage of the progression continuum for this activity. He uses visual cues to communicate with others. He has practiced communicating his needs in school, and in the community. Sam likes having choices but needs time to decide. He enjoys being independent.		

Assessment Activity: A trip to the shop.

Features of quality: What do you want the students to do?

- To make a choice of product from a selection of 3 (crisps, ice-cream, apples) using PECS.
- To give the visual card to an adult independently (teacher/shop assistant).
- To get appropriate note from wallet to pay for chosen item.
- 

Observations: There is evidence of...

Sam selected a photograph of a green apple when in the local shop from a choice of (Tayto cheese and onion, Brunch and green apple) which were pre prepared. He needed 3 verbal prompts to with a 1 minute pause between each before handing the card to the teacher. Sam was given his apple. He independently took out his money and gave €10 note to the teacher (He also had a €5 note in his wallet). He waited for change and went back to the bus independently.

Next steps –            Work on making requests to unfamiliar people.  
                              Reduction in prompts and time.  
                              Rounding up to a lower price to select appropriate note.

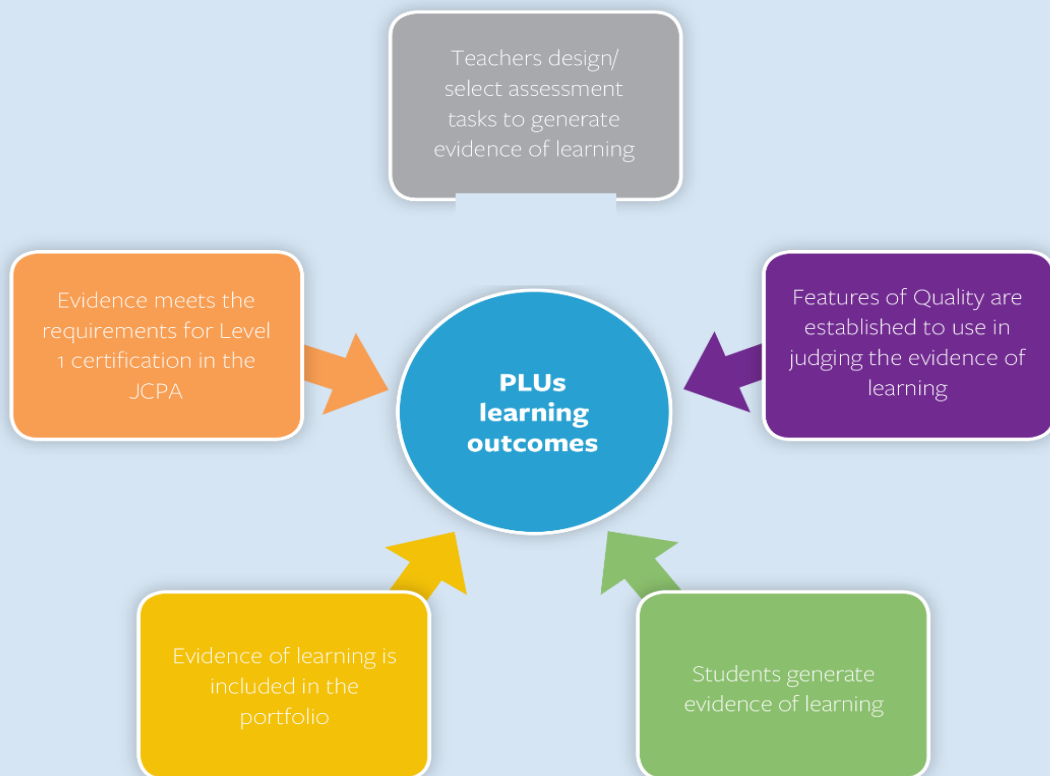
Assessment level (Junior Cycle level 1 only):

<i>Tick Current working level</i>	<b>Progression Pathways - Key</b>
	E - Experiencing
	A –Attending
	R - Responding
	I – Initiating
	AQ - Acquiring
□	BF -Becoming Fluent
	G - Generalising

Signed:

## FIGURE 4

The process of generating, gathering and judging evidence of learning at Level 1





## School reports

Effective reporting practice is sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students while providing honest and constructive feedback. Schools have responsibility for ensuring that all students, including students with special educational needs, can make progress with their learning and that progress is reported appropriately. In the main, this is achieved through differentiated learning and teaching approaches and, in the case of reporting, should feature progress made towards learning targets that have been identified and planned for by students, their parents, teachers and other professionals in the area of special needs involved. Schools should consider how they identify the progress of all students, including those who have special educational needs and are achieving at their own level of ability. In reporting the progress and achievement of students with special educational needs, particular care should be given to the impact that reporting progress using a set of descriptors will have on their self-esteem and motivation. For these students, schools may wish to adapt their reporting formats so that the emphasis is only on the qualitative comments about the progress made. As with all students, the reporting process should provide a focus on 'next steps' for learning with an opportunity, where appropriate, for the student and the parent to comment on the progress that has been made.

## Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement

The evidence of learning gathered in the L1LP portfolio will be presented for the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). The learning recognised in the JCPA will be broadly aligned with Level 1 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The JCPA will be issued by the school. Two curriculum components will feature in the award of the JCPA. They are the Priority Learning Units (PLUs) outlined earlier in these guidelines, and short courses as described on p. 18. As with PLUs, the content of short courses will be aligned with the learning indicators at Level 1 of the National Framework of Qualifications. The fact that requirements for the JCPA focus on PLUs and Level 1 short courses does not mean that students are completely confined to learning at Level 1. Where it meets the needs and abilities of the student involved, their school programme can also include curriculum components at other levels. For example, the student could take a PLU or short course at Level 2 and have their achievements at this level recognised as part of their JCPA also. An outline of the main features and requirements associated with a JCPA at Level 1 is presented in Table 1 on the following pages.

**Table 1: Features and requirements of L1LPs for certification through the JCPA**

<b>Key questions</b>	
What components are included in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)?	<p><b>1. Priority Learning Units</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication, language and literacy</li> <li>▪ Personal care and wellbeing</li> <li>▪ Being part of a community</li> <li>▪ Numeracy</li> <li>▪ The arts</li> <li>▪ Physical education</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Two NCCA- or school-developed short courses</b></p>
What time should be allocated to the components on the school timetable?	The time required to achieve each PLU will be dependent on the student’s strengths and needs. A guide for teachers is approximately 250 hours for each PLU and 100 hours for each short course.
Who specifies the curriculum and assessment arrangements to be followed?	<p>The NCCA has set out specifications and assessment arrangements for the PLUs in the <i>Guidelines for Level 1 Learning Programmes</i>.</p> <p>The NCCA will provide examples and templates where the short courses are being developed by schools.</p>
What role does the NCCA play in assessment?	<p>The NCCA, through the <i>Guidelines for Level 1 Learning Programmes</i> and L1LP Toolkit, provides schools with sample materials showing how to assess learning outcomes in PLUs.</p> <p>The NCCA, through examples of Level 1 short courses, will provide schools with sample materials on the assessment of short courses.</p>
What role do schools play in assessment for the JCPA?	<p>Assessment of PLUs and short courses and the awarding of the JCPA is school based.</p> <p>All students who have met the requirements for achievement outlined below in relation to PLUs and short courses have their learning recognised for each curriculum component in the JCPA.</p>

How will the components be recorded in the JCPA?	Achievement in both PLUs and Short Courses (Level 1) is on the basis of one of the following descriptors: <b>Successfully Completed</b> or <b>Progress Achieved</b> .
What are the requirements related to each descriptor?	<p>For <b>Successfully Completed</b> to be recorded on the JCPA for each PLU, the student must present evidence that indicates they have accessed all and achieved the majority of learning outcomes related to the PLU.</p> <p>For <b>Successfully Completed</b> to be recorded on the JCPA for each Level 1 short course, the student must present evidence that indicates they have successfully completed the Classroom-Based Assessment related to the short course.</p> <p>For <b>Progress Achieved</b> to be recorded on the JCPA for each PLU, the student must present evidence of learning that indicates the student has benefited from accessing some learning outcomes for that PLU.</p> <p>For <b>Progress Achieved</b> to be recorded on the JCPA for each Level 1 short course, the student must present evidence of learning that demonstrates the student has benefited from accessing some learning outcomes in the short course.</p>

## Certification at senior cycle

Students continuing their L1LPs at senior cycle will begin a new senior L1LPs portfolio to be presented at the end of their schooling. This portfolio will evidence new learning that builds on the student's prior learning at junior cycle. The student may focus on PLUs or short courses not engaged with at junior cycle, or work on PLUs where progress was achieved at junior cycle. The nature of certification of the senior L1LPs will be considered as part of the senior cycle review. The learning recognised in this certification will be broadly aligned with Level 1 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

## Part 5: From guidelines to learning programmes

### Introduction

These guidelines have been developed in collaboration with schools that have developed expertise and innovative practice based on their experience of what is appropriate and what works for the students in question. They are intended for use by all teachers and should also be accessible to a range of other personnel directly involved with the education of the student. These include parents/guardians, special needs assistants (SNAs), therapists, management staff, guidance counsellors and other relevant professionals.

The students in question participate in a range of settings: in various types of classes and groups in special schools, and in special classes in post-primary schools. One of the key ideas about learning programmes is that they should achieve as feasible a balance as possible between students encountering broad experiences and addressing their specific needs.

### The learning programme in action

To assist in planning learning programmes, the learning wheel, (Figure 5) offers a schema that places and relates the different elements of the guidelines. This learning wheel follows the same format as that used in the L2LPs but is tailored to the needs of students participating in the L1LPs. The learning programme revolves around the student. It is represented as concentric circles on a wheel to act as a visual reminder and reflective tool for teachers and students that emphasises the importance of maintaining a holistic view of the learning. The concentric circles, from the inside out, reflect the students, aspects of their learning such as the IEP, the categories of learning outcomes involved, the PLUs, potential curricular areas included in the programme, the assessment and qualifications dimension and, finally, some of the principles involved. The table following the diagram describes the elements of the wheel in greater detail.

## The learning wheel

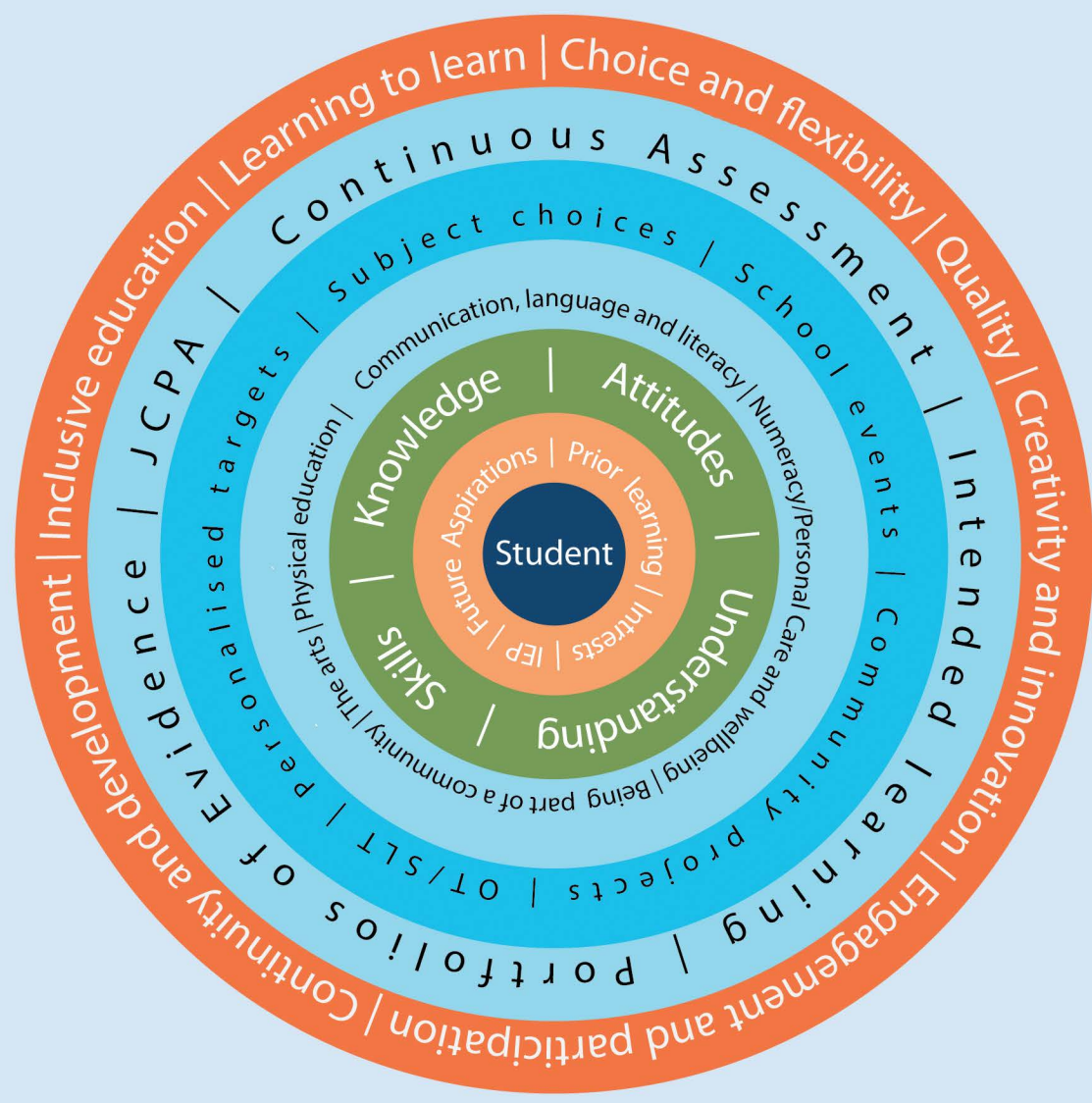
Figure 5: Insert wheel

At the centre of the wheel is the student.

1. **Establishing a baseline for learning:** The first thing to think about when planning a learning programme is what the student has already learned. The learner's prior knowledge, special interests, IEP, and future aspirations are considered at this stage.
2. **Knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes:** The next thing to think about is the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes we want the student to gain through the learning programme.
3. **Priority Learning Units:** Designing a learning programme involves selecting the most appropriate elements within each PLU for the student.
4. **Learning experiences:** The learning experiences for students participating in L1LPs offer a variety of ways in which the student can achieve the relevant learning outcomes.
5. **Evidence of learning and qualification:** A range of methods are used to gather evidence of the student's learning. On successful completion of the student's learning programme the JCPA is awarded.
6. **Principles:** The principles underscore the development and operation of the learning programmes.

# FIGURE 5

## Planning for learning: the learning wheel



## Some sample learning programmes

In developing some sample learning programmes that would demonstrate the guidelines in action, schools identified students from the relevant target group and generated a learning programme for them. The learning programmes describe a range of activities that schools are currently using with their students. The activities described in the sample learning programmes relate to the schools' own experiences in working towards L1LPs certification that is broadly aligned with Level 1 on the NFQ.

The sample learning programmes, written by teachers, describe the PLUs for each student. The PLUs are chosen with the specific profile and needs of the student in mind. In general, it is envisaged that a student's learning programme would run for the duration of junior cycle, and on completion this would lead to a JCPA. As mentioned earlier, it is acknowledged that, for some students, they may continue their L1LPs into senior cycle.

It should be emphasised that the learning programmes do not describe the totality of the student's learning. There are other learning activities and experiences the student might undertake over the course of junior cycle that may not be described in the learning programme.

Learning programmes can include learning that is curricular and extra-curricular.

# Learning Programme 1: Chris (Special School)

## Background

Chris is a gentle and affectionate 15-year-old boy. He lives at home with his mum, dad, twin brother and older sister. Chris has a very happy disposition and loves to be in the company of family, friends and familiar adults. At home Chris enjoys going for walks with his mum and the family dog, playing on his swing and watching Sesame Street on the iPad.

## Educational setting and services

Chris has a diagnosis of Down syndrome and a severe to profound learning disability. He is in a post-primary class of 4 students with severe to profound learning disabilities in a local special school with a population of 37 students. Chris' class are supported by 1 teacher and 2 full-time SNAs.

In school, Chris enjoys musical activities, intensive interaction, one-to-one communication activities, bouncing on the physio ball and a range of tactile-related activities (e.g. body brushing and Tacpac). Chris accesses his learning best through sensory-based lessons. His daily routine also incorporates recommendations from his speech and language therapist and occupational therapist.

The whole-school ethos emphasises the importance of valuing the uniqueness of each student, ensuring their needs are met and potential reached by focussing on developing and celebrating strengths, interests and talents. Regular input from a specialised psychology team supports school staff to use positive behaviour-support techniques to recognise the function of a behaviour, seeking and addressing the underlying communication from that student. This team work in collaboration with Chris' class team to support him with some of the things he finds more challenging at school, including transitioning and sensory-seeking behaviours.

Chris receives periodic input from the onsite occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists based on referrals from his class teacher (in collaboration with Chris' family). There is also a school nurse on site at all times for medical support. At present, apart from routine overnight respiratory support, Chris is in good medical health. Chris and his family also avail of the onsite respite facilities one evening each week and on occasional weekends. He is reported to enjoy his time here and has developed good relationships with the staff team.



## Communication

Chris' school fosters a 'total communication' approach that includes the use of objects of reference, photographs, symbols and Lámh signs throughout all areas. These approaches are then individualised for each student to suit their needs.

Chris indicates good understanding of the familiar daily routine and, when given adequate processing time, is developing a good receptive understanding of a limited number of familiar photographs (locations/activities/people). He offers and engages in excellent eye contact and appears to make choices using eye gaze when shown two familiar objects or photographs (the consistency of the application of this skill is still being assessed). Chris also demonstrates the ability to use a BIGmack or Big Point switch to participate in repeated phrases during circle time or request 'more' of an item or activity. Chris is currently working on generalising this skill to a range of activities and settings.

## Personality summary

Chris is a pleasure to teach and interact with. He has an infectious and hearty laugh that he happily shares during pleasurable joint activities with familiar friends, family and staff members. Chris easily develops unique relationships with individuals around him, reacting differently with each and demonstrating an appropriate uncertainty when interacting with a stranger. These strong relationships support Chris in his learning as he thrives during one-to-one interactions, seeking out eye contact, appropriate touch (reaching for your hands gently) and offering huge, warm smiles.

## Personalised learning

Before planning an appropriate learning journey for Chris using the Level 1 Learning Programme, it is important that his interests, strengths and needs are identified and understood. This is achieved most efficiently through meetings with his family and other professionals working with Chris. IEP meetings provide excellent opportunities for these discussions and creating targets. In Chris' school, IEP meetings are held in October and reviewed in May, with ongoing reviews, updates and communication between home and multi-disciplinary teams throughout the year.

The table below summarises some of Chris' identified interests, strengths and needs.

Interests	Strengths	Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throwing a ball (against wall or with a partner)</li> <li>• Foot spas</li> <li>• Sesame street</li> <li>• Movement activities (e.g. rocking , squeezing, swinging, bouncing etc)</li> <li>• Musical activities</li> <li>• Horse riding</li> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Deep pressure activities (e.g. body brushing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages well in 1:1 interactions with familiar adults</li> <li>• Good visual attendance to photographs</li> <li>• Responds well to praise</li> <li>• Some expressive use of a switch in circle times and meal times</li> <li>• Good gross motor skills and balance</li> <li>• Independent spoon feeding (when supported with chopping and portion control)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased formal expressive communication methods</li> <li>• Lots of proprioceptive input needed prior to learning</li> <li>• Wider range of interests/ motivating activities or items</li> <li>• Support to chop food and slow down eating rate for safe consumption</li> <li>• Dependent for adult support with all personal care needs</li> <li>• Reduced anxiety / uncertainty around transitions</li> </ul>

Through discussion with Chris' parents, other professionals and his class teacher, 3 priority learning needs were identified:

Priority learning needs:

1. **Receptive communication:** To attend to and respond to an increased photograph vocabulary.
2. **Expressive communication:** To communicate a choice between 2 items / activities (1 preferred and 1 non-preferred item/activity) using eye gaze to photographs/objects or switches.
3. **Increased range of experiences:** To widen range of, and access to, preferred activities with support and independently.

## Creating an effective learning environment for Chris

Chris needs to work one-to-one with a familiar adult to access and attend to most learning activities. He has a sociable nature and can enjoy joining the rest of the class at times for whole class routine circle times, although he tends to take movement breaks from these after around 3 minutes, walking round the classroom.

Chris has a lot of proprioceptive sensory needs which he often meets by rocking, squeezing his knees to his chest, making loud vocalisations or banging his head with his arm. To support Chris in positively meeting these needs and to increase engagement with the task, the adult working with Chris must support him to complete activities from his sensory diet (prescribed by the occupational therapist) at regular intervals throughout the day and before the learning begins.

His need for movement breaks can also make it difficult for Chris to stay seated at a table for a long duration. Therefore, activities planned for Chris include lots of movement or can be brought to him at various locations around the classroom (e.g. presenting items being explored in a tray that can be carried to a location on the floor).

Chris responds very well to routine and familiar activities. As much as possible, a routine based daily timetable is followed with familiar activities taught at the same time and in the same/similar place each week. Chris will always be shown a photograph of the activity that is about to start immediately before. Flexibility in timing is crucial to accommodate enough time for Chris to fully process what is happening/about to happen. The high staff to student ratio in Chris' class allows for this.

### The planning process

After Chris' priority learning needs have been identified, relevant learning outcomes from each PLU can be selected as part of the long-term plans for his learning journey. Learning outcomes selected will be suitable for addressing Chris' priority learning needs while also offering him access to a wide and varied curriculum. The diagram below outlines the planning process followed to create a relevant learning journey for Chris.

**Priority learning needs identified and IEP created**



**Relevant PLUs selected for long-term, thematic plans**



**Personalised targets developed in short-term plans**



**Cross-curricular activities designed**

Due to the dynamic needs and unpredictable nature of learners in Chris' school, his class teacher chooses to plan from September to the end of December initially, completing further planning from January to June after this period to allow time for her to assess student progress and develop the most relevant plans for each learner.

### **Long-term, thematic planning**

To ensure cross-curricular learning and engagement, Chris' school adapts a thematic approach in planning. The themes are differentiated for the primary and post-primary classes across the school, with post-primary themes selected to incorporate junior cycle topics. This allows for shared learning

between classes during mixed activities. At a class level, all students can enjoy and experience many of the same lessons as a group while working at an individual progression pathway with personalised targets.

Each theme lasts for half a term, allowing adequate time for learners to become familiar with the theme and demonstrate potential progression in their learning. When relevant learning outcomes have been selected for Chris, the class teacher allocates these to the most relevant half-term according to progression, need and relevance to the theme. For example, LO 3.18 'Participate in making healthy snacks' fits well with the school theme 'Healthy living' in January. The following table shows a snapshot example of thematic planning for Chris from January-June.

<b>PLU 3: Personal care and wellbeing</b>					
		<b>January-February</b>	<b>February-March</b>	<b>April-May</b>	<b>May-June</b>
<b>Theme:</b>		<b>Healthy living</b>	<b>Celebrations</b>	<b>This is me</b>	<b>Summer holidays</b>
Self-awareness	<b>LO</b>	3.4 Demonstrate awareness of their own abilities and skills such as self-help skills or kindness to others	3.1 Demonstrate awareness of their own body	3.3 Recognise their own features as being unique to them	3.2 Show awareness of self in the immediate and/or wider environment
	<b>PM</b>	Responding	Responding	Attending	Responding/Initiating
	<b>EA</b>	Encouragement of self-help skills: hygiene sensory trays	Exploring music and dance from different cultural celebrations	1:1 partner mirror-play	Sensory exploration of environments on visits to parks, beach and local area
Personal care and hygiene	<b>LO</b>	3.7 Participate in personal care routines	3.9 Make choices related to personal care	3.9 Make choices related to personal care	3.6 Co-operate with adults who provide daily support
	<b>PM</b>	Responding	Responding	Responding/Initiating	Generalising
	<b>EA</b>	Supported participation in toothbrushing, hair brushing and face washing during hygiene sensory tray activity	Demonstrating consistent preference for a flavour of toothpaste—lots of visual exposure to each tube	Begin to express preference for toothpaste flavour with eye pointing	Co-operating with adults during personal care tasks in various environments during class visits

Food and nutrition	<b>LO</b>	3.18 Participate in making healthy snacks	3.11 Use the senses to explore different types of foods	3.12 Show preferences for foods	3.15 Participate in preparing food
	<b>PM</b>	Attending	Responding	Responding	Attending/Responding
	<b>EA</b>	Weekly cooking lessons: smoothies, soup, stir fries, fruit salads, porridge bars etc.	Feeling, smelling, tasting, making foods related to themed cultural celebrations	Explore and record favourite foods as part of creating 'This is me' book	Participate in preparing picnic foods to take on class visits

**Key: LO—Learning outcome PM—Progression pathway EA—Example**

### Personalised, short-term targets

At the end of each half term, Chris' teacher reviews and records his progress. She then uses this information to adapt and personalise the identified learning outcomes for the following half term to suit Chris' stage on his learning journey. First the progression pathways identified in the long-term plans are reviewed to ensure they are the most appropriate reflection of the level he is currently working at (this varies across learning outcomes). A specific SMART target is then written for each learning outcome, detailing the features of quality required for successful completion.

At this stage in the planning process, Chris' teacher aligns targets for all students in Chris' class for each element of each PLU to allow for the development of whole-class or small-group activities with personalised goals.

An example of this planning can be found below.



<b>PLU 3: Personal care and wellbeing</b>					
<b>Element: Food and nutrition</b>					<b>Cuntas Miosuil</b>
Classmate 1	<b>LO</b>	3.18 Participate in making healthy snacks		<b>PM</b>	Attending
	<b>Features of Quality</b>	Classmate 1 will experience tasting, feeling and smelling a variety of fruits and vegetables used to make various healthy snacks over the half term. He will be supported (hand-over-hand) to stir and mash ingredients and activate equipment such as the blender using a switch control.			
	<b>EA</b>	Weekly food exploration/cooking lessons	<b>CCLR</b>	Healthy snacks	
Chris	<b>LO</b>	3.18 Participate in making healthy snacks		<b>PM</b>	Attending/Responding
	<b>Features of Quality</b>	Chris will experience tasting, feeling and smelling a variety of fruits and vegetables used to make various healthy snacks over the half term. He will be supported (hand-over-hand) to briefly stir or mash ingredients in a bowl. Chris will be encouraged to participate in using electrical equipment, such as the blender, using a switch control (switch held near to hand).			
	<b>EA</b>	Weekly food exploration/cooking lessons	<b>CCLR</b>	Healthy snacks	
Classmate 2	<b>LO</b>	3.18 Participate in making healthy snacks		<b>PM</b>	Acquiring/Becoming Fluent
	<b>Features of Quality</b>	Classmate 2 will follow visual and verbal instructions (with hand-over-hand support for fine motor skills such as chopping and grating) to work as part of a team to make a range of healthy snacks. She will explore each ingredient individually, identifying its symbol then tasting, smelling and feeling it before using it in the recipe.			
	<b>EA</b>	Following instructions (with support) to make a range of healthy snacks	<b>CCLR</b>	Healthy snacks	
Classmate 3	<b>LO</b>	3.18 Participate in making healthy snacks		<b>PM</b>	Acquiring
	<b>Features of Quality</b>	Classmate 3 will follow visual and verbal instructions (with close supervision and some hand-over-hand support for fine motor skills such as chopping and grating if needed for safety) to work as part of a team to make a range of healthy snacks. She will explore each ingredient individually, imitating its name then tasting, smelling and feeling it before using it in the recipe.			
	<b>EA</b>	Following instructions (with support) to make a range of healthy snacks	<b>CCLR</b>	Healthy snacks	

**Key: LO—Learning outcome PM—pa EA—Example pathway CCLR—Cross Curricular Learning Record**

## Cross Curricular Learning Records

After personalised targets are created for all students, cross-curricular activities are then designed that may incorporate teaching and learning for 2 or 3 targets at the same time. Activities are designed to incorporate the student's interests and are often linked to the theme for the half term, but only where this is beneficial in meeting the student's learning styles and needs. The activities are planned, tracked and assessed on a document called a 'Cross Curricular Learning Record'. Some examples of planning using cross curricular learning records created for Chris can be found in the following pages.

## Examples of Cross Curricular Learning Records

### Healthy snacks

<b>PLU</b>	<b>Personal care and wellbeing</b>
<b>Element</b>	Food and nutrition
<b>Learning outcome</b>	3.18 Participate in making healthy snacks
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Attending/Responding
<b>Features of Quality <sup>1</sup></b>	Chris will experience tasting, feeling and smelling a variety of fruits and vegetables used to make various healthy snacks over the half term. He will be supported (hand-over-hand) to briefly stir or mash ingredients in a bowl. Chris will be encouraged to participate in using electrical equipment, such as the blender using a switch control (switch held near to hand).
<b>PLU</b>	<b>Communication, language and literacy</b>
<b>Element</b>	Understanding
<b>Learning outcome</b>	1.10 Attend and respond to increased vocabulary in text
<b>pathway</b>	Acquiring
<b>Features of Quality <sup>2</sup></b>	Chris will visually attend to the familiar photograph (for a minimum of 3 seconds) for 'cooking' immediately before the activity starts and again immediately after it has started. During the cooking activity, Chris will

	visually attend to a photograph of ingredients held next to the actual item as he is feeling, tasting and exploring them.
<b>PLU</b>	<b>Communication, language and literacy</b>
<b>Element</b>	Exploring and using
<b>Learning outcome</b>	1.14 Clearly indicate preferred object and/or activities and refuse non-preferred items
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Responding
<b>Features of Quality</b> <sup>3</sup>	Chris will demonstrate consistency in his food preferences when offered the same items on four or more occasions by accepting and tasting the food item or pushing it away.
<b>Activity</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris will be shown the photograph for 'cooking' and told 'cooking time' before he is supported to put on a plastic apron.</li> <li>• When the cooking items are all out on the table and the activity is beginning, Chris will be shown the cooking photograph again and encouraged to come to the table. If he refuses, then a bowl and appropriate equipment will be brought to his location.</li> <li>• The teacher will introduce each ingredient to the group one at a time.</li> <li>• Chris will be given a small piece of each ingredient as they are introduced.</li> <li>• He will be supported to feel, smell, look at and eat the ingredients (preferences to be noted).</li> <li>• Chris will be supported with each part of the cooking process with hand-over-hand support or switch access as appropriate.</li> <li>• At the end of the activity Chris will be shown the sign for 'finished', his apron will be removed, and he will be shown the photograph for the next activity</li> </ul>	
<b>Support level</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1:1 support throughout for engagement.</li> <li>• Hand-over-hand support for cookery skills.</li> <li>• Physical prompting (holding loaded spoon/item out towards Chris) for food exploration.</li> </ul>	

## Physio ball bouncing

<b>PLU</b>	<b>Communication, language and literacy</b>
<b>Element</b>	Developing communicative relationships
<b>Learning outcome</b>	1.6 Initiate communication with a familiar adult and peers
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Responding/Initiating
<b>Features of Quality <sup>1</sup></b>	Chris will press a BIGmack switch to request 'more bounces' with some verbal and pointing prompts.
<b>PLU</b>	<b>Personal care and wellbeing</b>
<b>Element</b>	Physical wellbeing
<b>Learning outcome</b>	3.24 Use the body to have an effect on objects in the environment
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Initiating
<b>Features of Quality <sup>2</sup></b>	Chris will walk to the BIGmack switch (placed around 2 metres from him) and press it to request support to bounce on the ball.
<b>PLU</b>	<b>Numeracy</b>
<b>Element</b>	Developing number sense
<b>Learning outcome</b>	2.13 Participate in counting activities
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Attending/Responding
<b>Features of Quality <sup>3</sup></b>	Chris will demonstrate some recognition/familiarity with hearing the sequence 1-10 counted out loud by beginning to take back some of his own weight by the ninth or tenth count, showing awareness that the bounces are almost finished. He will do this 6 times out of 10.
<b>Activity</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris will be shown the physio ball photograph and told, 'Bouncing time Chris'.</li> <li>• The teacher will collect the ball and place it around 2/3 metres away from Chris.</li> <li>• Initially Chris will be supported to have 10 bounces on the ball when he approaches it, without making a formal request.</li> </ul>	

- When Chris approaches the ball again for more bounces the teacher will hold up the BIGmack switch (with a symbol for 'more' on top) to draw Chris' attention to it while the teacher says, 'Press for more bounces'.
- The teacher will repeat this verbal prompt and will point to the switch from a distance of around 1 metre.
- When Chris presses the switch he will be immediately rewarded with 10 more bounces on the physio ball.
- The process will be repeated with the teacher increasing her distance from the switch each time and fading verbal prompts.

**Support level**

Verbal and physical prompts (holding switch) initially, faded to reduced physical prompts (pointing to switch).

Full support on physio ball (holding hands to facilitate bounces to 10).

### End-of-day reflection circle time and routine

<b>PLU</b>	<b>Numeracy</b>
<b>Element</b>	Pattern and sequence
<b>Learning outcome</b>	2.10 Engage with language, objects, symbols, signs and stimuli associated with ordering and sequencing which forms part of the student's daily routine
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Responding
<b>Features of Quality <sup>1</sup></b>	Chris will be encouraged to demonstrate his understanding of the end of day routine by meeting Audrey next to the door to put his coat on during/at the end of the final circle time song. Chris will come to the door following visual and auditory prompts 6 times out of 10.
<b>PLU</b>	<b>Numeracy</b>
<b>Element</b>	Time

<b>Learning outcome</b>	2.26 Engage with language, objects, symbols, signs, stimuli or activities associated with times of the day and/or days of the week
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Responding
<b>Features of Quality <sup>2</sup></b>	Chris will demonstrate his understanding of the meaning of the end of day song after circle time by moving independently towards the door 3 times out of 5.
<b>PLU</b>	<b>The arts</b>
<b>Element</b>	Drama
<b>Learning outcome</b>	5.20 Show an awareness of being part of an audience
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Responding/Initiating
<b>Features of Quality <sup>3</sup></b>	Chris will visually attend to the majority of reflection videos of his own work as part of an audience during celebration assemblies and daily circle times. He will be supported to become aware of his peers around him and the praise they are offering him for his achievements through 1:1 support.

**Activity**

Chris will participate in the end-of-day routine the majority of the time. He will sit for part of circle time in his allocated seat. During reflection time Chris will attend to videos of his work visually and demonstrate a positive response (smiling, squealing) with clapping and praise. When he hears the going-home song, Chris will be supported by verbal, musical and some physical (Audrey standing in place) prompts to move to the door, be supported to put his coat on and then wait at the door/demonstrate his understanding that we are leaving soon.

**Support level**

Auditory prompts—end of day routine songs played in order

Verbal—Chris will be called to circle time/for his coat

Physical – if Chris does not move independently, he will be prompted by an adult telling him what is happening, giving him a count from 1-3 then taking both hands to help him up.

**Thematic sensory trays—Theme: Healthy living**

<b>PLU</b>	<b>Communication, language and literacy</b>
<b>Element</b>	Understanding
<b>Learning outcome</b>	1.12 Show signs of anticipating next steps in a familiar activity when presented with a stimulus
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Responding
<b>Features of Quality <sup>1</sup></b>	Chris will demonstrate his understanding of the next steps during weekly 'hygiene' lessons by consistently communicating his likes and dislikes for the various items (e.g. pushing un-preferred item away when it is shown/walking away from learning).
<b>PLU</b>	<b>Communication, language and literacy</b>
<b>Element</b>	Exploring and using
<b>Learning outcome</b>	1.19 Express interests and opinions through a range of verbal or non-verbal communication methods
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Responding
<b>Features of Quality <sup>2</sup></b>	Chris will consistently communicate his likes and dislikes for the various items (e.g. pushing un-preferred item away when it is shown/walking away from learning) explored during weekly hygiene lessons.
<b>PLU</b>	<b>Personal care and wellbeing</b>
<b>Elements</b>	Self awareness  Personal care and hygiene
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	3.4 Demonstrate awareness of their own abilities and skills such as self-help skills or kindness to others  3.7 Participate in personal care routines
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Responding

<b>Features of Quality</b> <sup>3</sup>	Chris will tolerate being supported to have his teeth and hair brushed, and his face and hands washed. Chris will look in the mirror during this activity, attending for a minimum of 10 seconds and will be encouraged to participate with hand-over-hand support for brief moments in each activity.
<b>Activity</b>	
During weekly 'hygiene' lessons, Chris will be supported to wash his hands and face; brush his hair and teeth; look at himself in the mirror and experience men's deodorant. Each activity will be introduced one at a time, with photographs alongside the objects. The brushing / washing will go on for the duration of a familiar song unless Chris indicates he would like the activity to stop.	
<b>Support level</b>	
1:1 support throughout the activity.  Hand-over-hand as tolerated.	



## Assessment process and evidence of learning

Chris' needs and progress are formatively assessed each day by his teacher through discussions with the class team. Any adaptations needed to the task or support offered are made immediately. To record a summative assessment of Chris' progress, an observation sheet is completed by Chris' teacher after a period identified by the class teacher as adequate to allow for Chris' learning (this is normally between 3-6 weeks depending on the familiarity and frequency of the activity).

In Chris' school these observations are recorded on a Cross Curricular Learning Record, next to details of curriculum links and targets as can be seen on the next double page (for anonymity, Chris' photographs have been removed from this copy).

Printed copies of the completed Cross Curricular Learning Records (with attached photos, links to videos and any relevant work such as art work or mark making) are filed into each student's portfolio folder. Electronic copies of Learning Records and all video evidence are kept in individual files on the class computer and backed up on the school hard drive regularly.

Students' portfolios are maintained by the class teacher and reviewed by the school principal twice each academic year. Post-primary teachers also meet termly to discuss, review and share teaching and learning.

## Resonance Board Learning Record

<b>PLU</b>	<b>The arts</b>
<b>Element</b>	Music
<b>Learning outcome</b>	5.11 Respond to the elements of music (pitch, pulse, duration, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture, style, tempo)
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Initiating/Acquiring
<b>Features of Quality <sup>1</sup></b>	Chris will demonstrate an understanding that the tempo of the drumming is going to increase by acting excited (squeezing knees/vocalising/smiling) after requesting more/when the drumming starts again. He will display a consistent response to the increase in tempo when the activity is repeated.
<b>PLU</b>	<b>Numeracy</b>
<b>Element</b>	Awareness of environment
<b>Learning outcome</b>	2.6 Participate in cause and effect activities
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Becoming fluent/Generalising
<b>Features of Quality <sup>2</sup></b>	Chris will demonstrate his understanding of the cause and effect response created by using a switch to request 'more' of a range of activities. Following 2-3 hand-over-hand prompts to use the switch initially at the start of an interaction, Chris will press the switch to request more independently 3 out of 5 times.
<b>PLU</b>	<b>Physical education</b>
<b>Element</b>	Movement skills
<b>Learning outcome</b>	6.2 Move whole or some body parts to explore immediate environment
<b>Progression pathway</b>	Becoming fluent
<b>Features of Quality <sup>3</sup></b>	Chris will approach the resonance board and position himself on or next to it independently. Chris will use various body parts to explore the vibration of the board. He will be encouraged to move his body in response to the movement of the location of the drumming on the resonance board.

<b>Activity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher will show Chris a photograph of the resonance board and say, 'Drumming time Chris'.</li> <li>• She will then collect the board and place it on the floor within 2 metres of Chris.</li> <li>• The teacher will then start drumming 2 boom sticks on the board loudly while counting to 5 slowly, increasing the tempo then saying 'stop' and stopping drumming.</li> <li>• The teacher will repeat this pattern.</li> <li>• Chris will be called verbally to the board but will be left to approach and position himself independently.</li> <li>• When Chris is settled on the board, he will be shown a switch with the 'more' symbol on top at the end of the drumming and supported hand-over-hand initially to press the switch.</li> <li>• After this initial turn, the prompts will be faded to verbal and reduced physical prompts as the activity continues (see below).</li> <li>• When Chris appears familiar with the routine of the activity, the placing of the boom sticks will be moved around the board to encourage further exploration.</li> </ul>
<b>Support level</b>
Initially support Chris with hand-over-hand use of the switch to introduce the activity then reduce this to verbal ('press for more') and physical (pointing to switch) prompts.

<b>Date</b>	6.2.2018	<b>Location &amp; setting</b>	Classroom: 2:2 small group sensory music lessons
<b>Observations</b>			
<p>When Chris is shown the photograph of the resonance board he attended to it well visually for around 20 seconds.</p> <p>When the resonance board was brought into the room, Chris immediately looked to it and tracked the board as it was moved into its location.</p> <p>Immediately when the teacher began to drum the boom sticks on the resonance board, Chris walked over to the board independently and sat on it smiling and looking between the sticks and the teacher.</p> <p>When the teacher completed a count to 5, she held the 'more' switch up to Chris, putting it into his line of vision saying 'press for more'. The switch was then placed in front of Chris. Chris quickly followed the familiar prompts and within 1 minute he pressed the switch. Chris demonstrated an awareness of the purpose of the switch by displaying anticipation through squeezing his knees tight to his chest, smiling, looking towards the teacher and making a squealing vocalisation.</p>			

Over the course of the activity the prompts to press the switch were reduced until the teacher was pointing to the switch at the end of counting to 5 and stopping the drumming (after around 10 cycles of the same repeated pattern). Chris consistently pressed the switch to request more within 2 minutes 4 times out of 5. (At one point, Chris did not press the switch but picked up and dropped one of the boom sticks. He was then reminded verbally by the teacher to ‘press for more’ while she pushed the switch closer to him. Chris responded by pressing the switch almost immediately and giggling when the drumming started.)

When Chris seemed settled into the routine (after around 5 minutes) then teacher began occasionally moving the placement of the sticks while drumming so they were closer to one side rather than the middle. After 2 rhythm patterns in this position, Chris shuffled himself, in a seated position, closer to the sticks. The same response was noted later.

### Learner’s response

Chris appears familiar with the activity, taking a quick interest in it and remaining engaged throughout. He seems to be developing a good understanding of the purpose of the ‘more’ switch; a skill he now uses in 3 different activities with varied levels of prompting. Chris demonstrates awareness of the routine of the activity (the tempo increasing over counts to 5 then stopping) and becomes increasingly excited as the speed builds.

### Evidence

Features of Quality	Observation	Evidence source & Location
1	Chris consistently responds to the increasing tempo of the drumming with pleasure and excitement. This response was repeated over several repetitions of the activity.	Video Desktop > Chris > Feb 2018 >Resonance board
2	Chris demonstrates a good understanding of the cause and effect response by consistently (4 times out of 5) pressing the switch to request ‘more’ in 3 different settings (with varied prompts).	Photo (attached)
3	Chris repeatedly moved his body independently to explore the activity in a way that he preferred (being as close as possible to the vibrations).	Video (see above)

### Notes/Next steps

- Chris has demonstrated great enjoyment and engagement with this activity—further musical/vibration-based activities should be incorporated into Chris’ learning programme.

- Chris is starting to generalise using a switch to request more—prompts should be consistent across all setting and activities to ensure skill development.

## Recognising progress and achievement

During the end of day circle time, Chris' class celebrate individual achievements for each student from that day. This may be shared verbally, through photographs taken on the iPad or by showing the whole class videos of the success. Chris does seem to show some awareness of verbal praise and clapping (often smiling) but he has the strongest response to seeing a video of his success followed by cheering and clapping. Chris becomes very excited by this, throwing his hands into the air and vocalising loudly.

This sharing is followed by a dance to a celebration song which Chris seems to enjoy, smiling and moving around a lot throughout. Details of achievements are outlined daily for Chris' parents in his home-school communication diary. Photographs will also be sent every few weeks to illustrate the progress discussed.

Fortnightly achievements are selected for each student and celebrated during assemblies with all post-primary classes. During this time a short photograph slideshow or video of Chris' work is shown. A familiar staff member from the class team will sit with Chris during this time to strengthen and reinforce the praise and ensure he understands that people are clapping for him at the appropriate time.

At the end of each half term, a DVD of photographs and videos is sent home with each student outlining and celebrating their work, achievements and favourite activities from that half term. On the last day the whole class watch these videos in school before they are sent home to reinforce the connection between home and school.

## Reflections on the Level 1 Learning Programme

### Chris' response

Chris and his classmates seemed to thoroughly enjoy the lessons designed for them as a part of the Level 1 Learning Programme. The relevance of targets and the wide range of activities accessed meant that students engaged well during most lessons when relevant support needs were met.

The incorporation of unconstrained learning outcomes and progression pathways in the Level 1 Learning Programme meant that Chris' class teacher was able to effectively record and capture all progress made, regardless of how 'small' a step in the student's learning journey each achievement may have appeared. Chris and his classmates all respond well to praise and enjoy any reason for a celebration, so benefitted greatly from this attention to detail!

Chris' parents have reported 'a big improvement in Chris' behaviour and communication' since the start of the programme. They described the lessons as 'very interesting', and support the programme fully.

## Implementation of the Level 1 Learning Programme

As this was the first time the school has used this curriculum, it took some time to become familiar with the terminology and structure. However, when the flexibility of this curriculum and thus, its accessibility to all learners, was truly understood, it became a powerful and useful tool to provide clear direction and a breadth of experiences to students' learning. The unconstrained nature of the learning outcomes, combined with differentiation through the progression pathways allows for a unique and personalised learning journey to be mapped out for each student. This personalisation is essential to create a learning programme that is not only engaging, but also relevant and meaningful for each student.

Planning and evidence collection templates were designed to suit the needs of the school and the working style of the class teacher. These were discussed in depth with the school principal, teaching team and adapted throughout the process.

## Next steps

For many students in Chris' school, the Level 1 Learning Programme will be accessed over 5 years. Having the adequate time to allow for real progress to be captured is necessary and a wonderful opportunity offered by this programme. However, over time the volume of evidence collected across the school will increase quickly. Currently the school uses class laptops and a school-wide external hard drive to store information and evidence safely. These sources of storage have a limited capacity and further sources of safe storage will need to be investigated in the future.

## Summary

The Level 1 Learning Programme offers students the opportunity to access a relevant, varied and engaging learning journey with national accreditation and celebration of achievement. It is extremely flexible in nature, so allows students to flourish in their own way, at their own pace with individual talents and strengths recognised along the way.

# Learning Programme 2: Tara (Special Class, Post-Primary School)

## Introduction

Tara is a fourteen-year-old friendly and determined student who has a positive and happy outlook. Tara has Down syndrome and is functioning at the low moderate range of general learning disability. She also has conductive sensorineural hearing loss and a congenital absence of her left hand. Tara wears a hearing aid (which has an associated microphone) and a prosthetic hand to assist with her impairments. Tara has significant speech and language needs and uses some Lámh signs to communicate with those around her. Lámh is supported and encouraged among students and teachers throughout the school environment in order to promote Tara's communication and inclusion.

Tara loves coming to school but also has a wide range of interests and hobbies. She loves music and dancing. She goes horse riding, swimming and enjoys helping out on the farm. Tara is also very sociable. She loves being in the company of others, especially spending time with friends or taking part in other socialising events such as parties or visiting her extended family. As Tara has a history of sleep apnoea she can become tired throughout the day especially if suffering from a cold or flu. Otherwise Tara loves being active in her environment.

Tara attends a post-primary school within a special class setting. This school is a DEIS rural community school with over 400 students. It provides the Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, JCSP and PLC FETAC level 5. The special class caters for students with moderate general learning disability. This classroom runs both the Level 1 and Level 2 Learning programme for its students. The special class is allocated one and a half teachers with access to an SNA. Tara spends the majority of the day in her base special class setting but avails of practical classroom settings for specific classes with the home economics, art and PE teacher. Tara attends a number of mainstream classes throughout the day and some small resource groups have weekly classes within the special class. Such timetables are formed in order to extend Tara's inclusion as much as possible.



## Personalised learning

Tara's IEP targets form the foundation of her personalised learning programme. The development of such targets involves a collaborative process with the special class teachers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapist, psychologist, SNA and parents. The configuration of the IEP targets occurs at a meeting with all relevant individuals at the start of the year. These targets are subsequently reviewed twice throughout the year. The class teachers also conduct informal fortnightly reviews to consolidate evaluations on the progression of targets and plan accordingly. This IEP contains Tara's strengths and weaknesses, which allow for the central areas of personalised learning.

This can be seen in the table below:

IEP	Strengths	Targets
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tara can communicate well using some Lámh signs and gestures.</li> <li>• Tara responds very well to visuals and has a very good visual memory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To continue to use and expand knowledge of Lámh signs when communicating with others.</li> <li>• Expand understanding of core vocabulary.</li> <li>• Develop understanding of prepositions.</li> </ul>
Social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tara is very polite and enjoys the company of others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use good eye contact when communicating with others</li> <li>• Will greet others appropriately all of the time.</li> </ul>
Personal care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tara can complete personal care routines such as using a tissue/covering her mouth and washing her hands independently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To independently complete personal care routines.</li> <li>• To recognise and follow social conventions of privacy.</li> </ul>
Motor skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tara is improving her dressing/eating skills with the use of her prosthesis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use prosthesis to assist in functioning during every day activities.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop fine motor for life skills (opening items, cutting, writing).</li> <li>• Develop coordination and balance for walking up and down stairs.</li> </ul>
Functional academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tara can read and write her own name.</li> <li>• Tara is very good at completing her calendar work.</li> <li>• Knows numbers from 1-15.</li> <li>• Can recognise some notes and coins.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify all coins and notes</li> <li>• Write her name and address independently.</li> </ul>

Based on these targets and her specific strengths, likes and motivations, the relevant elements from each PLU were selected to generate Tara’s learning programme. This then allows for specific teaching and learning resources and strategies to be formed to aid in the achievement of the IEP targets.

PLU	Elements	Learning outcomes	Links to junior cycle subjects/school activities	Link to Level 2 Learning Programme
<p><b>PLU 1:</b> Communication, language and literacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developing communicative relationships</li> </ul> <p>Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading</li> </ul>	<p>1.5 Show awareness of and use tone, body language, gesture, pace, vocalisations and volume to impact communication</p> <p>1.10 Attend and respond to increased vocabulary in text</p> <p>1.22 Show recognition and understanding of symbols, signs, visuals of items</p> <p>1.23 Seek meaning from a combination of signs, symbols or text for practical purposes</p>	<p>English and all subjects</p>	<p>A5 Participate in practical, formal and informal communications</p> <p>B2 Use appropriate non-verbal behaviour in communicating a simple idea</p> <p>B3 Relay a response or request non-verbally</p> <p>C1 Read common words that are commonly used and personally relevant</p> <p>B1 Identify a range of non-verbal communication methods</p> <p>B4 Respond to non-verbal signals and signs encountered in daily life</p>
<p><b>PLU 2:</b> Numeracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measure and data</li> </ul>	<p>2.24 Participate in a shopping experience</p>	<p>Shopping visits</p> <p>Maths</p>	<p>A1 Recognise frequently used Euro notes and coins</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shape and space</li> </ul>	2.19 Participate in activities where the language of movement and position is used.	<p>PE</p> <p>Home economics</p> <p>Geography</p>	<p>A2 Pay for an item correctly and count the change in a mock-up or real-life shopping transaction</p> <p>G1 Use appropriate vocabulary to describe direction</p> <p>G5 Use the body or body parts to move in a given direction</p> <p>G6 Move a range of objects in given directions</p>
<b>PLU 3:</b> Personal care and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personal care and hygiene</li> <li>▪ Personal safety</li> </ul>	<p>2.10 Complete personal care tasks independently</p> <p>2.35 Recognise public and private places and how they are different</p> <p>2.37 Follow social conventions of privacy</p> <p>2.38 Demonstrate awareness of appropriate and inappropriate physical contact with others</p>	<p>SPHE</p> <p>Science</p> <p>Home economics</p>	<p>A1 Identify essential daily personal care practice</p> <p>A2 Describe the most important ways of keeping the body clean</p> <p>A5 Maintain an agreed personal care plan</p> <p>F1 Identify the standard names of the sexual organs</p>

				<p>F2 Describe the functions of the sexual parts of the body</p> <p>F3 Recognise the physical and emotional changes that occur in girls and boys during adolescence</p> <p>F4 Recognise the difference between appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing feelings.</p>
<p><b>PLU 4:</b> Being part of a community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using local facilities</li> </ul>	<p>4.10 Participate appropriately in using different areas/rooms in their immediate environment</p> <p>4.11 Visit and participate appropriately in using facilities in their environment</p> <p>4.12 Demonstrate knowledge of where familiar items are stored</p>	<p>Green schools</p> <p>Therapeutic horse riding</p> <p>Home economics</p> <p>SPHE and all subjects</p>	<p><b>Preparing for work</b></p> <p>D1 Give examples of safe practices in three distinct workplaces</p> <p>D2 Use all tools and equipment correctly and safely in a range of practical classes</p> <p>D3 Describe and use electrical equipment correctly and safely in a range of practical classes</p> <p>D4 Store all tools, materials and equipment safely</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributing to the community</li> </ul>	4.30 Engage in a task or job in the community		<p>D5 List the different procedures for self-procedures for self-protection at work</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Living in a community</b></p> <p>C4 Participate in a school-based community project and record their participation.</p>
<b>PLU 5: The arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual art</li> <li>Music</li> </ul>	<p>5.5 Participate in creating art work based on real or imagined stimuli</p> <p>5.6 Use visual art to communicate, including the creative expression of emotion</p> <p>5.7 Work independently to produce a piece of work of art</p> <p>5.12 Experiment with creating vocal sounds</p> <p>5.18 Link sounds to pictorial representations</p>	<p>Art</p> <p>English</p> <p>Maths</p> <p>Music</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Communication and literacy</b></p> <p>E2 Create a range of images using a variety of materials</p> <p>E3 Produce a piece of work for display</p> <p>E1 Participate in a performance or a presentation</p>

		5.19 Play an uncomplicated tune on a chosen instrument		
<b>PLU 6:</b> Physical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Movement skills</li>   <li>▪ Creative movement</li> </ul>	6.5 Refine gross motor skills 6.6 Refine fine motor skills 6.16 Observe the movements of another and attempt to copy 6.19 Link two or more movements to create a sequence of movements	PE  Yoga	<b>Personal care</b> C4 Maintain an exercise routine in a well-structured environment  <b>Communication and literacy</b> E5 Use drama or dance to explore real and imaginary situations

# Teaching and learning

## Collaboration

The Level 1 Learning Programme allows for the process of collaboration across the post-primary school setting. Primarily, collaboration occurs between both special class teachers and the SNA. This teamwork allows for extensive planning, resource making and evidence gathering. To see the full benefits of collaboration, adequate planning time is necessary. The majority of teaching will take place in the base classroom for Tara but aspects of the programme also allows for collaboration across the whole school environment.

This collaboration can be seen between the special class and the relevant subject departments. The physical education teacher had the opportunity to engage in a full PLU while also linking in with the physical wellbeing element of the Personal care and wellbeing PLU. This ranged from group activities within the mainstream class to smaller group dance and yoga classes. The PLU The arts, along with related Communication, language and literacy aspects also allowed input from both the art teacher and the music teacher. When looking at elements from both Personal care and Being part of a community, the home economics teacher is also able to form a learning programme to promote independent living skills.

While there may be some aspects of the Level 1 Learning Programme that can be reinforced across some mainstream subjects, the actual teaching of such learning outcomes would require small-group settings with specific subject teachers or within the base special class. While linking learning outcomes to mainstream subjects is possible on paper, in reality this would not be feasible. Depending on the needs of the student, there is the possibility of completing aspects of the programme within a mainstream PE or art class but the majority of learning requires a smaller group setting.

The subject department teachers linked in with the special class teacher in terms of planning learning opportunities and strategies but also to compile evidence of learning. All evidence was stored in a portfolio. The possibility of gaining evidence from home was also used to consolidate the learning for Tara. This formed a sense of formative assessment through homework. Parents were informed through meetings or communicative journals about relevant learning outcomes and the possibilities of gathering evidence. Where the possibilities presented themselves parents observed learning outside the classroom and evidence was gathered and passed on to the teacher.



## Teaching strategies

### Differentiation

Tara enjoys being active and helping out in her environment. She loves interacting with others and responds really well to positive reinforcement. Tara also learns best through the process of modelling and with the use of visual structures. Based on these strengths as well as her interests, learning activities were developed to ensure her engagement and participation of the learning programme. For example, Tara would rely on Lámh signs for communication with others, social stories to understand her social surroundings and visual structures to assist her with transitions through her environment. Similarly, as Tara is very engaged with visual materials she is very motivated when working with an Ipad. The interaction with this ICT allows opportunities for the developing of communication, mathematical concepts and the engagement with different aspects of the arts. Due to ICT's wide range of use and its interactive multi-sensory properties, it allows for a great deal of learning for Tara.

As Tara is primarily working along the Becoming fluent and Generalising progression pathways, it was also important to allow for a broad and balanced programme. Some learning outcomes within the L1LP allowed extension to suit Tara's individual learning needs. Also in some instances, it was possible that a number of learning outcomes were referred to and used from the L2LP. Through differentiation, Tara can also complete the Level 2 short courses at an achievable level.

### Wider community

The Level 1 Learning Programme incorporates Tara's inclusion to the wider community. This enables her to work towards a number of learning outcomes while developing her independent living skills. As part of the PLU Being part of a community, Tara can visit local facilities by going on shopping trips to the local supermarket, cinema trips, using buses and going to restaurants/cafes. The aquatics element in the PE PLU will also allow Tara to engage with the local swimming centre. Tara also takes part in jobs in her school allowing her to contribute to its community. Tara takes part in 'Green-Schools' with other students by ensuring our school and community is litter free. The TY Gaisce group also link with Tara's class and run a range of activities once a week. The L1LP and L2LP short courses will also give Tara the opportunity to link up with the local garden centre, doctors, farm and vets, allowing for a further link with the community. As Tara takes part in therapeutic horse riding, her school has also linked in with the local stables and enabled her to take part in this activity as part of her curriculum in order to improve spatial awareness, concentration, balance, coordination,

strength as well as social communication. This involves learning about caring for horses as part of her short course.

## Tara's Priority Learning Units

### PLU 1: Communication, language and literacy

Communication, language and literacy is a major area of need for Tara. Tara's parents have expressed that the progression of Tara's communication is important for all her daily activities and express their desire that her understanding and expression is developed.

#### **Element: Developing communicative relationships/Understanding**

To develop Tara's communication, the school aims to extend personal and core vocabulary to include words associated with her wider and immediate environment. The communication of this vocabulary is done through Lámh. Her vocabulary is taught through pairing it with visuals and associated activities. When Tara looks through her talk book, she is encouraged to use her signs for familiar people, symbols, objects and activities. A number of teaching activities are completed throughout the day to encourage her use and understanding of such vocabulary. When indicating preferred activities, paint colours, shop items etc, Tara expresses a preference using her Lámh signs and will receive this preference after she has done so. She will also sign to request items or support using her Lámh signs e.g. asking for 'help please' when opening her yoghurt. Knowledge of vocabulary/signs is then extended through verbal instruction activities: 'Will you get the book on the shelf?' 'Will you get the butter from the fridge?' 'Where is the pencil?'

#### **Element: Reading**

For Tara to understand her environment around her it is important for her to have visuals to aid her comprehension with all that occurs on a daily basis. It is also important that she connects the visuals with their meanings. Using visual timetables Tara is able to understand what class/activity she will have next. Tara also responds to the meaning of these visuals by being excited when she sees the visuals for PE/cooking or sitting at her desk to do individual work etc. Tara also learns to follow a sequence of visuals in order to follow important instructions. This is important for systematic activities such as what to do when we hear the fire alarm and knowing the steps to follow for dressing yourself. Symbols found in her immediate environment are also taught to Tara; these include symbols such as toilet, wet floor, fire exit and stop. Meaning is given to these symbols by matching them to Lámh signs in the classroom. They are also taught through activities using these symbols in the local environment, e.g. stopping at stop signs, going through the fire exit during drill and recognising the toilet symbol for her toilets around the school.

## PLU 2: Numeracy

### **Element: Measure and data**

To improve Tara's recognition of money, matching activities were used. This was worked on using real money in order to promote generalisation of notes and coins outside the classroom. These activities ranged from matching coins to pictorial representations, matching coins to numerical/price symbols to working in the school shop and putting away coins into their assigned sections in the money box. Tara's recognition of money has progressed so she now extends this knowledge on her trips to purchase items in the school shop but also during our trips out to the local supermarket and café. It is during these events that Tara will look at the price symbol of an item and try and pick the corresponding notes/coins in her possession. This activity will be continually reinforced in order for Tara to continue to develop her ability to use real money in everyday contexts. Such shopping activities also allow for her development in a number of other learning outcomes across the PLUs as well as her social skills targets.

### **Element: Shape and space**

Tara demonstrates great ability with the language of movement. Both inside and outside the classroom Tara can follow instructions in terms of walking, sitting, running etc. When it comes to the language of position, Tara can find it difficult to understand these concepts. Therefore, prepositions are used throughout numerous tasks across the PLUs in order to develop Tara's awareness and understanding. To begin teaching the concepts, a number of games are played within the classroom. Using concrete materials such as a small ball and a box, Tara was asked to follow verbal instructions using prepositions: put the ball *in* the box, put the ball *behind* the box etc. Visuals and modelling are also used to reinforce the concept. Flashcard matching activities are also used to further strengthen her understanding. This activity was then further generalised to other tasks as part of her learning programme. For example Tara is taught to set a table setting in the classroom and is asked to place items using prepositions, e.g. put the fork *beside* the plate, put the cup *on* the saucer etc. This is also used during PE activities: kick the ball *between* the cones; stand *behind* the line; jump *over/under* the bar. An integrated approach to the use of these shape and space concepts will allow Tara a better opportunity to develop familiarity with the language.

## PLU 3: Personal care and wellbeing

### **Element: Personal care and hygiene**

An important aspect of Tara's education is to become as independent as possible. Tara's IEP targets reflect this in terms of personal care. Due to her physical disability, this can be a real challenge for Tara. Tara is encouraged daily to dress herself and take part in personal care routines. Visual approaches, modelling and different strategies are used to encourage and support Tara in this area. An example of this would be the flick approach when putting on her coat. Using a chair Tara puts her arms through the jacket sleeves and swings the jacket over her head independently. Dressing herself after using the toilet is also encouraged using verbal praise and rewards. A mirror is then used in order for Tara to identify areas that need to be focused on during her dressing attempt. This is an ongoing target for Tara and will be supported continuously until she masters these personal care tasks independently. Tara is continuously encouraged and motivated through positive reinforcement.

### **Element: Personal safety**

Tara does not recognise the difference between public and private places and the different behaviours associated with these. For Tara's own personal safety it is important to explicitly teach her what is appropriate and inappropriate. Once again teaching this is done through her strengths of visual processing. The teaching strategies used are social stories, visual matching activities, modelling, modelling videos and incidental learning. This also branches to how we appropriately greet people, especially people we do not know. These teaching methods are reinforced weekly in order for knowledge and awareness to be fully demonstrated and continued.

## PLU 4: Being part of a community

### **Element: Using local facilities**

For her home economics classes, Tara needs to relocate to the kitchen. In doing so, she is reminded using visuals of what she needs to bring with her—apron, rocker knife, lunchbox etc. Tara recognises the need to transition to a new environment and will thus make her own way and locate the home economics room. Within this different room, Tara will follow hygiene visuals by putting on her apron, tying back her hair and washing her hands before cooking. She participates in making a variety of snacks or meals and is assisted when necessary. With support, Tara recognises the function of the oven, toaster and oventop pans. She once again follows safety visuals of how to put saucepans on the oven top, what to use when taking items out of the oven and how to be careful when switching on/off cooking utensils. After participating in cooking Tara follows verbal and visual instructions to wash and put away the dishes and clean down her table. After a number of visits to the kitchen, Tara recognises where to store some kitchen utensils and will do so independently.

Within the base classroom, Tara has also become aware of the functions and behaviours associated with the different areas of the room. Following her visual timetable through repetition Tara is now aware of when break/lunch time is and will walk over to the lunch table and take out what she has to eat and drink. Similarly, after completing tasks, Tara chooses what sensory activity she would like to do. When she chooses the beanbag Tara knows to proceed to the relax area and lie down on the beanbag. Tara will then request to listen to her meditation music while she rests.

As part of her Level one short course, Tara also goes to visit the local pony stables. Here she gets to help out with feeding, grooming and exercising the ponies. She also gets to watch the professionals perform daily personal care routines and demonstrate what the health and safety risks are. As part of this course, Tara also had the opportunity to go to the local co-op and purchase food for the horses, thus allowing her to reinforce her numeracy learning outcomes.

### **Element: Contributing to the community**

As part of the Green-Schools initiative, Tara helps with ensuring our school is a green school. On our classroom's assigned day, Tara and a peer will go around the school and pick up any rubbish that is seen. This is completed inside and outside the school premises. Before this task was undertaken a PowerPoint social story and modelling video was shown to the students. This demonstrated that protective clothes needed to be worn and the safety reasons, while also displaying the task itself and the steps involved in the activity. This allowed Tara to gain awareness of the job and how to take part. Engaging in the job itself also allowed for further incidental learning opportunities for

communication, social skills, fine/gross motor and numeracy. For example greeting others during the task or answering questions like: 'What colour?' (is this can?) or following prepositions: 'Look *under* the table.'

Once a fortnight, Tara also helps in the school shop. Learning towards this goal began with visits inside the school shop and becoming familiar with the items. This was organised by asking frequent questions such as, 'Can I have a sandwich/bottle of water?' etc. Once understanding was gained, we progressed to helping out at break time. Initially students would point and say what they want in order to promote Tara's understanding. Tara will then proceed to locate and give them the item. Tara is supported in terms of the money but it is hoped that as a staged progressive challenge this will be introduced to her in the future, if deemed possible.

## PLU 5: The arts

### **Element: Visual art**

Using art as a means of expression allows Tara a way to reduce stress, improve awareness and enhance her communication. During art, Tara created work based on real stimuli through a multitude of materials and techniques. For example, with the use of paint and stencils Tara was able to create a butterfly painting independently. Similarly, Tara completed an art project on the season autumn. This also allowed for the opportunity of a full sensory experience whereby Tara engaged in a walk along a wooden area in order to choose her own leaf to use for the art project. This gave the opportunity to link with Tara's 'Being part of a community' unit whereby she had to engage in rules of road safety and transition between environments. With support, Tara then used air-drying clay to create an autumn leaf bowl.

Using visual art to communicate is a major aim for Tara in order to support her communication skills. One such way to achieve this was by forming a talk book which contains photographs of Tara's core vocabulary. This talk book was completed using a book creator app on her Ipad. It allowed Tara to learn and recognise vocabulary that she encounters on a daily basis but also as a means of communication with her peers. This talk book details Tara's likes and dislikes, family and friends. It is a means of others around her getting to know and understand her better. At times Tara was also supported in taking these photographs herself. These photographs also included pictures of her emotions, detailing what makes her happy, afraid, sad and angry. Using the photographs allows for Tara to communicate with others but also enforces recognition of her core vocabulary and encourages the development of her Lámh signs. Furthermore, Tara's learning of emotions through this talk book enabled Tara to create other art pieces depicting emotion. For example, Tara chose corresponding facial feature flashcards to the emotion asked by the teacher, and stuck these on to the empty paper plate faces that she was supported in creating.

### **Element: Music**

Music is a big passion of Tara's so it is an aim to incorporate music as much as possible, so her learning is enjoyable but also giving the possibility to use it as a support to achieve her potential. Tara's communication and use of Lámh signs are taught and reinforced through a multitude of age-appropriate songs. This also encourages her to experiment with vocal sounds of corresponding Lámh signs or other core vocabulary. Music also gives Tara the opportunity to get involved with extra-curricular activities, specifically that of the school choir. During the school Christmas mass Tara took



part in the choir and with support also played a small excerpt of 'Jingle Bells' on the keyboard for the school.

Teaching Tara about relevant sounds in her environment and associating them with the relevant stimuli also prepares her for transitioning to new environments. This matching activity used sounds associated with cars, church bells, animals, busy corridors, washing machines, pedestrian crossing sounds etc. This activity also allows her to recognise and build her awareness to stimuli in her environment while also giving her meaning to the world around her.

## PLU 6: Physical education

### **Element: Movement skills**

Refining fine motor skills is important for Tara in order for her to function in her surroundings. By developing such skills, she can also encourage further use of her prosthesis to aid her during everyday tasks. In order to develop such skills, Tara plays board games with particular fine motor/hand eye coordination properties or follows basic Lego designs which also helps with to the development of her number sense and mathematical concepts. During cooking classes, Tara is improving her skills at mixing, spooning and other fine motor skills. She is also becoming familiar with the use of a new piece of equipment specific to her needs—a rocker knife. Tara aims to continually develop the necessary movements to allow the knife to assist her with her cutting skills. Similarly, during art, Tara works on the use of a range of different tools such as pencils, paintbrushes, clothespins and scissors to create her art pieces. Throughout the day, Tara will also participate in tasks such as cleaning work areas, picking up small pieces of papers and opening and closing zips on her pencil case, lunch bag and coat. As a part of her mainstream PE class Tara also takes part in group exercise activities. Here she will work on her gross movement through warm up and cool down activities as well as a range of differing sports and games that are suitable and differentiated to Tara's ability.

### **Element: Creative movement**

As part of her timetable, Tara takes part in yoga. Here Tara engages with a range of movements that enable her to work on her balance, coordination and movement. Using modelling or visuals Tara is able to copy poses to the best of her ability and each week she increases her strength and confidence in improving her movement skills. Tara thoroughly enjoys this class as it also allows her to respond to music in a relaxing way. In certain weeks, the teacher incorporates sequences of movements to music in a dance style to further the movement and coordination skills. Each class is done with other students, so Tara also has the opportunity to interact and work on her communication skills.

# Assessment

## Recognising progress and achievement

Tara's progress is recognised on a daily basis. All teachers and SNAs that are part of Tara's education follow the strategy of positive reinforcement to encourage Tara's motivation in her work. This is done by continuous verbal praise and nonverbal communications. Tara is also awarded a star for her star chart after achieving work towards her goals. This feedback is consistent so Tara is aware of her learning goals and how to achieve these. A communication notebook for Tara's home is also used to detail her progress as well as what she enjoyed doing throughout the day. It is also school policy that achievement is awarded at the end of every school year. Tara is presented with certificates of achievement. During last year's ceremony, Tara was awarded for her great attendance throughout the year as well as her music contribution.

## Main assessment task/activities for evidence of learning

Tara's learning is assessed through teacher observation. The progress of IEP targets and PLU learning outcomes is observed in order to determine if these skills are achieved. These skills need to be generalised in a number of teaching activities and settings in order for the new skill to be fully attained. Tara is also assessed through performance tasks, after such skills are taught and Tara can then independently complete the task when presented with such stimuli or situations, for example putting objects beside/in/under, after instruction.

Tara's great artwork is also displayed in the classroom and in her art folder as evidence of learning. Tara's great music displays are also recorded and shown to her parents to share and recognise her achievements.

The main form of assessment is done through a portfolio. This holds all Tara's evidence of learning containing photographs and videos. This portfolio is done in hard copy and allows for Tara to look back over her achievements and show others all of her hard work and accomplishments. This is great for building Tara's self-esteem while also reinforcing communication skills. Due to the large amount of video-based evidence, the possibility of forming an e-portfolio will be explored further.

## Some reflections on learning

The introduction of the Level 1 Learning Programme has been a great success for Tara. Its establishment allows for a more student-centred approach in that a specific programme relevant to her identified needs and strengths can be worked towards as part of a certificate based curriculum. This curriculum allows her school to recognise her achievements with certification like the rest of Tara's mainstream post-primary peers. The school opened its special class with Tara's move into post-primary education and it is great that her school can now provide an education programme that is structured and focused on enjoyment, inclusion and participation. When Tara entered first year, we ran the Level 2 Learning Programme. Unfortunately, this was at a level that was not fully achievable for Tara. Through differentiation, she was able to work towards her needs alongside some of the learning outcomes, but overall it was just not fitting towards her level of learning. In contrast, the Level 1 allows for the link with Tara's IEP targets while allowing her to build on her other skills towards the generalising pathway of the continuum of progression.

As with the L2LP, collaboration between teachers is necessary. This can be a little more challenging in a mainstream setting. A means for sharing evidence and continuous communication is necessary. A continuous review of progression is imperative to insure targets are worked towards and achieved.

The L2LP students in the school enjoy the use of a hard copy of their portfolio as the majority of evidence can be stored in this folder. However, the collection of evidence for the L1LP is primarily video- and photograph-based. While a hard copy portfolio has been used and works well, an e-portfolio may be a better approach in order for the full viewing of the student's accomplishments. This form of portfolio would also allow for ease of access and portability as well as reducing storage.

Overall, the level of learning and the ability to fully link IEP targets with the L1LP makes it an immensely positive curriculum program for Tara. It allows her to build on what she knows while providing her with a meaningful learning programme.

## Learning Programme 3: Siobhan (Special School)

Siobhan is a 13-year-old student who attends a special school. She lives at home with her parents and her brother and sister. Her attendance at school is very good.

She has a current psychological assessment of global developmental delay and moderate general learning disability.

Siobhan is prone to seizure activity and carries Buccal Midazolam with her to and from school. The Buccal Midazolam is kept with the nurse during the school day. She travels to and from school on school transport and is supervised by a bus escort.

Siobhan enjoys school and is a good-natured, friendly, caring and sociable student. She has good auditory and visual memory and is capable of following instructions.

### Personalised learning

Siobhan's IEP is devised in collaboration between her parents, her class teacher, the SNAs and any relevant therapists. The IEP is devised at the beginning of the academic year and is reviewed on a termly basis.

The IEP identifies Siobhan's strengths, needs, interests and talents and forms the basis of creating a personalised learning programme that is relevant, meaningful and motivating.

The IEP is a collaborative and student-centred document and there are planned opportunities for Siobhan to make a contribution to her IEP and to express her ideas and opinions and to reflect on her progress.

## Summary of Siobhan's IEP targets

### Communication, language and literacy

- Speaking appropriately for a variety of purposes
- Demonstrating attentiveness as a listener
- Using non-verbal behaviour
- Reading to obtain basic information
- Using written forms to express opinion
- Using expressive arts to communicate

### Numeracy

- Managing money
- Awareness of number
- Using a calculator
- Awareness of time
- Spatial awareness
- Awareness of temperature
- Awareness of weight and capacity

### Personal care and wellbeing

- Making personal decisions
- Sexuality
- Stress management
- Develop good daily personal care
- Knowing how to stay safe

### Being part of a community

- Make choices when using local facilities e.g. local cafes
- Express contentment in the company of others

## The arts

- Participate in creating art work based on real or imagined stimuli—  
Create a poster for the Christmas coffee morning
- Work independently and/or collaboratively to produce a piece of art work

## Physical education

- Move whole or parts of body creatively in response to stimuli
- Develop awareness of pathways and direction of movement

## Overview of Siobhan's learning programme

<b>Priority Learning unit (PLU)</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Junior cycle subjects/school activities</b>
PLU 1: Communication, language and literacy	Developing communicative relationships	English and all subjects
PLU 2: Numeracy	Developing number sense	Maths, home economics and all subjects
PLU 3: Personal care and wellbeing	Personal care and hygiene	SPHE, PE, home economics and all subjects
PLU 4: Being part of a community	Using local facilities	SPHE, SESS, English, mathematics
PLU 5: The arts	Visual arts	Music, drama, visual arts
PLU 6: Physical education	Creative movement (dance)	SPHE, SESS



## Teaching and learning

Siobhan's learning takes place through differentiated approaches. There is flexible teaching and delivery of the curriculum and includes all dimensions of the spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, social and physical development.

The teaching and learning approaches facilitate Siobhan's participation and encourages her to be responsive, interactive and an active learner. There is a balance between one-to-one teaching, individual and group work. The teaching and learning environment provides functional opportunities for Siobhan to practise her learning and to learn new skills.

A high priority is given to developing communication skills, social interaction skills, problem-solving skills, vocational skills and life skills as part of lifelong learning and preparation for adult life.

### Differentiation

Activities, content, pace, methodologies and resources take into account the range of interests, needs and experiences of Siobhan. A visually-structured approach is used for Siobhan to optimise her learning. Most of Siobhan's learning experiences are school based and she works with her whole class, in small groups and on a one-to-one basis. The structuring of curriculum material by breaking down the learning outcomes into smaller, more achievable and clearly defined steps means that Siobhan achieves a greater level of success.

When differentiating, it is important to consider Siobhan's personality, motivation and concentration levels. The learning environment needs to be managed in a way that gives Siobhan clearly defined activities and reduces any difficulties she may have in her responses to learning. It is important to introduce choice, and to encourage decision making so that Siobhan is an active participant in her own learning.

### Use of ICT

ICT and digital technologies are used to support and provide additional learning opportunities for Siobhan and are particularly relevant to Siobhan as she is a visual learner.

The use of the interactive whiteboard and iPads are integrated into the curriculum and are highly motivating for Siobhan and they facilitate her working collaboratively with her peers. The use of technology offers Siobhan greater access to learning programmes. They are used in a planned and

structured way to support and reinforce Siobhan's learning in all subjects. This also provides her with opportunities to become independent and facilitates choice in her learning activities with her peers.

The use of ICT and digital technologies offer Siobhan an alternative way of exploring and gaining access to materials and information. It promotes interactive and multi-sensory learning and meets Siobhan's individual learning needs. They have enabled Siobhan to become more engaged and motivated. Siobhan finds the use of ICT and digital technologies fun and interesting and they provide her with a wealth of age-appropriate resources that are relevant and meaningful.

## Siobhan's Priority Learning Units

### PLU 1: Communication, language and literacy

#### **Element: Developing communicative relationships**

Learning outcomes: 1.3 Engage in an activity requiring joint attention with one or more people

1.7 Engage in and enjoy a meaningful exchange with a communicative partner

#### **Snapshot of some sample teaching and learning activities that cover this element**

Pathway: Responding

On a weekly basis Siobhan participates in Literacy Lift Off. In the language, reading, writing and comprehension stations Siobhan is engaged in small group work. This small group work provides a structure for turn taking, sharing ideas, listening to her peers and promoting a communicative relationship.

Priority is given to maximising Siobhan's use of oral language, and conversational skills are prompted and modelled in the group. Communication skills are vital for participation and achievement and include gestural, oral, written and pictorial.

Throughout the curriculum, Siobhan engages in meaningful exchanges with communicative partners. Oral language activities are integrated into all areas of the curriculum. She will spontaneously initiate interaction with her peers and familiar members of staff. She will actively seek out individuals and will engage in meaningful interactions and enjoys the company of her peers and adults. Siobhan is encouraged to use her oral language in meaningful exchanges in a variety of social situations, e.g. lunchtime and playtime.

Siobhan enjoys listening to stories with her peers and responds appropriately when asked questions. Siobhan enjoys working with her peers and responds well to positive feedback.

Siobhan's attention skills are improving and she enjoys sharing and working alongside her peers. She will participate in turn taking activities and will often comment about what her peers have said.

The use of pictures reinforces the learning environment and provides visual clues to access the lesson.

## PLU 2: Numeracy

### Element: Developing number sense

Learning outcomes: 2.13 Participate in counting activities

2.15 Explore the relationship between sets and numbers

### Snapshot of some sample teaching and learning activities that cover this element

Pathway: Responding

Siobhan works in the school shop on a regular basis, which provides real-life and functional opportunities to develop her number sense.

She is responsible for stock-taking activities including counting the drinks, chocolate, sweets and crisps etc. When Siobhan is organising the stock for the shop she counting the number of items in the set. She is able to identify the complement of a set.

Siobhan is able to match equivalent items and non-equivalent sets using one-to-one correspondence. She is able to match pairs of identical objects and can match equivalent and non-equivalent sets to expand her understanding of mathematical language of 'more than', 'less than', 'enough', 'as many as' in the real-life context of the school shop.

Throughout these aspects of the lessons, Siobhan is learning how to recognise, record and interpret data. The lessons are reinforced by question and answer plenary to assess Siobhan's recall and understanding of mathematical terminology, concepts and application.

Siobhan has many opportunities to use her counting skills throughout her school day.

Siobhan uses a 20 square to help her recognise numbers up to 20, and Numicon is used to reinforce the teaching of number and counting activities.

Working weekly in the school shop provides opportunities for Siobhan to use her mathematical skills and mathematical language in everyday life in a functional and meaningful way. Learning in this area includes coin recognition, giving change, sorting, matching, and practical problem-solving tasks, serving customers and working as part of a team with her peers. It furthermore creates an environment for a positive attitude towards numeracy as this is a highly motivating activity for Siobhan.

## PLU 3: Personal care and wellbeing

### Element: Personal care and hygiene

Learning outcomes: 3.6 Co operate with adults who provide daily support

3.7 Participate in personal care routines

### Snapshot of some sample teaching and learning activities that cover this element

Pathway: Responding

Siobhan follows daily personal care routines, e.g. brushing teeth, brushing her hair. She is encouraged to be as independent as possible to complete these tasks. She is responsible for collecting all personal care products before completing her daily care routines. She demonstrates an awareness of which personal care product to use and will indicate which one is to be used. Siobhan is becoming aware of her own basic hygiene needs and she practises completing these routines on a daily basis.

As part of the school's intimate care policy, two members of staff support all personal care routines. She cooperates and attends to regular routines for using the toilet. Siobhan will co-operate and participate in dressing and undressing routines and will require some verbal prompting to complete these tasks. Siobhan will follow hand washing routines before meal preparation and cooking. Siobhan takes pride in her appearance and is pleased when complimentary comments are made about her hairstyle and clothing.

Siobhan has a strong sense of being part of her class group and the school community and will co-operate with adults who offer her support. She responds to social cues for class and school routines and is able to carry out tasks in class and school with appropriate support. She is encouraged to express her likes and dislikes and to make choices throughout the school day.

## PLU 4: Being part of a community

### Element: Using local facilities

Learning outcomes: 4.11 Visit and participate appropriately in using facilities in their environment

4.13 Make choices when using local facilities e.g. local cafes

### Snapshot of some sample teaching and learning activities that cover this element

Pathway: Responding

The focus of the SPHE curriculum is to develop and maintain positive relationships with the world and people around them within the wider social context of the local community.

Siobhan has regular access to local cafes, restaurants, shops and local sports facilities.

Siobhan was part of a group who regularly participated in tennis lessons at the local tennis club. All these community-based activities consolidate Siobhan's learning and support her ability to generalise her learning in a variety of different settings. Siobhan is able to use her communication skills, her social interaction skills, her mathematical skills and her problem-solving skills. She is able to make choices when she is using the local cafes and restaurants in deciding what she wants. She understands the social rules of waiting and is very friendly and interested in the world around her.

It is a priority for Siobhan to access and use local amenities and facilities to support lifelong learning and a pathway for adult life. As she progresses through the senior cycle, her access to the community will increase. It is a focus of the senior curriculum within the school to show progression that is embedded in the priority attached to accessing, participating and contributing to the local community in practical, meaningful and motivating ways. All these dimensions contribute to Siobhan becoming an active and responsible citizen who can make a valuable contribution to her school and wider community, and participate fully in community life.

## PLU 5: The arts

### Element: Visual art

Learning outcomes: 5.7 Work independently and/or collaboratively to produce a piece of art—  
Create a poster for the parents' Christmas coffee morning

### Snapshot of some sample teaching and learning activities that cover this element

Pathway: Responding

Siobhan participated in creating a poster for the parents' Christmas coffee morning. With support to use the interactive whiteboard, topical images were located on the internet relating to holding a coffee morning, e.g. cakes, cups of tea and coffee etc. As part of a group, a set of collages were collaboratively made and displayed throughout the school to advertise the coffee morning. Great care was taken in creating the posters and they were displayed with great pride.

This topic provided the opportunity for Siobhan to explore the visual and sensory world by using a wide variety of stimulating visual and tactile materials. It enabled Siobhan to organise and express her ideas and feelings in a visual and tangible form.

The visual arts curriculum provides for creative experiences exploring, investigating, experimenting, designing and using a range of media to support Siobhan in understanding and interpreting the visual world and to develop an appreciation of it.

## PLU 6: Physical education

### Element: Creative movement (dance)

Learning outcomes: 6.17 Move whole or parts of body creatively in response to stimuli

6.18 Develop awareness of pathways and direction of movement

### Snapshot of some sample teaching and learning activities that cover this element

Pathway: Initiating

Physical education develops the body's strength and physical wellbeing and offers opportunities for physical development of body awareness, spatial awareness and safety. Physical education can improve fine and gross motor skills, self esteem, self confidence, listening skills, games skills, creativity and the ability to co-operate and communicate with others.

On a weekly basis, Siobhan participates in Zumba classes and is fully involved in the dance routines. Siobhan responds to the music and rhythmical sound of the music and simple movements are performed to the rhythmic timbre of the music. Through dance, Siobhan explores a range of exercises to experience how parts of her body move, spatial awareness and body actions. Dance also supports her balance, co-ordination and enjoyment at a sensory level.

She responds to the actions of her peers and peer-to-peer modelling is an intrinsic way that Siobhan has learnt the several dance routines.

She shows an interest in attempting to follow demonstrated actions, involving different parts of the body, e.g. clapping hands, swinging arms, moving from side to side and from left to right. She initiates a variety of travel actions, walking, standing, stay in line, follows the instructor's actions and attempts to change travel directions where appropriate. She shows reaction to alternating movement between levels: standing up, sit, down, reaching arms straight overhead.

Dance is a fundamental form of exercise and is exciting, relaxing and offers fun and enjoyment and is a medium to express ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Enjoyment of working together and responding to the beat of the music is an important aim of the dance curriculum.

Siobhan demonstrates enjoyment of working together with her peers in a shared activity. These lessons provide opportunities for engagement and participation for Siobhan and she thoroughly enjoys and is highly motivated by this aspect of the PE. curriculum.



## Recognising progress and achievement

Siobhan responds to positive feedback and she is delighted when she has completed a task successfully. Progress and achievement are recognised on a daily basis, and culminate in a whole-school assembly on a Friday afternoon where all achievements are celebrated. Siobhan loves to receive a 'Student of the week' certificate.

The class teacher will discuss with Siobhan their ideas on her achievements and how she might progress further. They start by agreeing on her targets and what will need to happen for her to be successful. At the end of the lessons Siobhan completes a self assessment checklist and this helps her to recognise her attainments and areas that require more work.

## Main assessment tasks/activities for evidence of learning

Assessment takes the form of plenary sessions at the end of the lessons. These question-and-answer sessions allow for assessment opportunities to check on what Siobhan has learnt during the lesson. The main assessment tool is teacher observation and it is important to record and monitor attainment and progress. There continue to be close links between the IEP targets and curriculum targets and these are monitored and assessed regularly by the teacher.

The evidence of learning include photographic, worksheets, use of ICT and the creation of artefacts. Siobhan has created a portfolio of work that reflects the work she has completed and achieved.

## Some reflections on the learning programme

The Level 1 Learning Programme has provided the school with an opportunity to work with this exciting new curriculum framework for our students. It has been particularly interesting to complete the case study as it has enabled me to collaborate closely with my colleagues. The case study has facilitated the tracking and monitoring of the PLUs learning outcomes with Siobhan.

# Learning Programme 4: Ciarán (Special School)

## Introduction

Ciarán is 15-years-old and has Down syndrome. He is functioning within the low moderate/severe learning range. Ciarán is a very fun-loving, affectionate and content student who enjoys attending school and is popular and liked by his peers. He has an older brother and sister who do not live at home—he resides with his parents and has a very close relationship with his grandfather who lives nearby.

Ciarán loves farming and music. He enjoys watching farming videos and listening to country music.

The school is a special school for students aged four to eighteen years. The school caters for students with severe/profound learning disabilities, moderate/multiple learning disabilities and for students with autism, and is a multi-denominational school.

It is divided into 4 areas: 7 junior classes, 6 senior classes, 6 classes for children with autism and 5 special care classes. Ciarán is a student in Senior 3—a class of 9 students.

Ciarán commenced SLT in the school in 2008. He was non-verbal and communicated by pointing, gesture and pulling adults to get what he wanted. SLT focused primarily on developing Ciarán's expressive skills, using a combination of:

- AAC in the form of Makaton signs
- encouraging verbal attempts of words he was signing (initially single words, then 2, 3 and 4 key word sentences as his skills improved)
- exercises to develop strength and mobility of jaw, lip and tongue muscles for improved articulation
- intensive articulation/phonology drill work
- increasing his awareness and use of 2 and 3 syllables in words.

In 2016, Ciarán's comprehension of language was assessed and found to be at a 5 ½ to 6 year old level. Expressively he can use 3-4 word sentences for most of the functions of communication on a daily basis. His speech intelligibility, although much improved, continues to be the area of greatest challenge for Ciarán. He continues to use Makaton signs, with reminding, to support his speech when intelligibility is poor.

Ciarán has Hirschsprung syndrome, a congenital hereditary condition affecting his bowel function. It has been difficult to toilet train Ciarán regarding bowel movements as a result. The school is consulting with his paediatrician, social worker, parents and district nurse in relation to toilet training.

Ciarán is always cheerful and eager to learn. He embraces new tasks and takes instruction well. Ciarán is a non-reader and is operating within the 1-5 number recognition and numeration level.

### Personalised learning

Ciarán has an individual bi-monthly plan which addresses his strengths and needs in relation to the Level 1 guidelines. It outlines the elements and learning outcomes he is working on and the strategies employed to deliver them.

Ciarán has an IEP drawn up with the collaboration of his parents and the professionals involved in his learning. It is reviewed by the class teacher monthly and twice yearly by the professionals involved in drawing it up. Time is taken to identify and discuss Ciarán's strengths, areas of priority and his interests as these will dictate the content of his IEP targets.

The priority learning targets identified for Ciarán in his IEP are:

**Target 1:** *Ciarán will pronounce three and four syllable words correctly with prompts and extend his sentences beyond one word when speaking throughout the day (corrected 100% of the time).*

**Teaching strategies:** When Ciarán is speaking incidentally, when telling his news and delivering messages etc throughout the day he will be corrected where necessary and also encouraged to extend his sentences beyond one word with prompting.

Use speech and language programme three times a week to help consolidate this skill.

**Target 2:** *Ciarán will learn to dress independently (t-shirt, jumper) 100% of the time.*

**Teaching strategies:** Ciarán will remove and put on socks, trousers, t-shirt and jumper and shoes independently three times a week using visual schedule with photographs, modelling and verbal prompts.

**Target 3:** *Develop knowledge of boundaries for what is acceptable in social settings.*

**Teaching strategies:** Use modelling to help Ciarán understand appropriate conversational skills with peers and with staff—he will use ‘high fives’ and handshakes instead of hugs and kisses when greeting people 100% of the time.

Use praise and encouragement when Ciarán behaves appropriately in social situations. Speak to staff regarding their behaviour with Ciarán to discourage immature and inappropriate behaviour. Ciarán will be given opportunities to chat with staff and peers throughout the day (news time, group work, break time etc).

**Target 4:** *Increase knowledge of time to the hour.*

**Teaching strategies:** Use interactive games and activities and printed differentiated activities to increase Ciarán’s awareness of an hour on an analogue clock.

Use interactive games and activities to name the numbers on a clock.

Use differentiated worksheets to teach Ciarán long and short hand on the clock

Present Ciarán with printed version of analogue clock and use cut and paste activities to help him complete the face (matching).

**Target 5:** *Match euro coins and notes 10c 20c 50c €1 €5 100% of the time.*

**Teaching strategies:** Use of interactive games and differentiated worksheets, 1:1 initially with fading prompts.

## Physiotherapist and occupational therapist

We have consulted an occupational therapist with regard to Ciarán’s weight as he is clinically obese and is steadily putting on weight. This can affect his daily living as he finds it difficult to take on and put on his socks and when we go on our daily walk he can sometimes struggle with breathlessness.

## Overview of learning programme Linked to PLUs, elements and links to junior cycle subject/school activities

<b>PLU</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Links to junior cycle subjects/school activities</b>
<b>PLU 1:</b> Communication, language and literacy	a) Developing communicative relationships	Group literacy lessons Morning news Assembly
<b>PLU 2:</b> Numeracy	e) Measures and data f) Time	Break times Toileting
<b>PLU 3:</b> Personal care and wellbeing	b) Personal care and hygiene  c) Food and nutrition	SPHE
<b>PLU 4:</b> Being part of a community	d) Relating to others	
<b>PLU 5:</b> The arts	a) Visual art	Music therapy Assembly
<b>PLU 6:</b> Physical education	a) Movement skills (athletics/gymnastics)	

## Teaching and learning

It is important to keep the curriculum appropriate and relevant to Ciarán and ensure that it is enjoyable as well as practical and applicable to his life as a young adult. The school is committed to providing a curriculum that best prepares students for adult life. Ciarán's learning plan was driven by his IEP goals and these were incorporated into his classroom activities. His goals will change over time as the skills and learning outcomes move towards helping him become a more independent adult.

As Ciarán is a non-reader/writer the curriculum was adapted to Ciarán's learning style through the use of visual and tactile materials. For Ciarán's learning we focussed increasingly on functional aspects of the curriculum and adapted it so that he is learning new skills and that these skills can be applied to his everyday life and life beyond the school. We used the TEACCH programme for timetables, schedules and adapted books to personalise them for his learning. We had social stories for behaviour and visual prompts were displayed throughout the classroom and school.

His matching tasks which were previously hand-over-hand on paper now became sock matching, cutlery matching, 3D colour matching tasks and velcro letter matching tasks. The T-Tap assessment kit (TEACCH) is very helpful in assessing the skills that students have and those that need to be addressed. It also provides tasks and checklists that can be easily replicated for your classroom.

The use of task boxes with fine motor and academic tasks led to certain independence for Ciarán as to up to that point he had always been handed his work to complete at his desk. The task boxes meant that he chose the task that he wished to complete – matching numbers, letters of his name, sequencing steps for teeth brushing are some examples.

Ciarán's learning took us out and about into the community, i.e. shopping trips, credit union visits, diner visits and trips to the theatre and cinema. He learned to carry his own money and pay for items independently. He also began a showering programme which involved appropriate videos regarding hygiene, social stories and a visual schedule which he followed whilst showering.

## Example of PLUs

### PLU 1: Communication, language and literacy

#### **Element: Developing communicative relationships**

- 1.7 Engage in and enjoy a meaningful exchange with a communicative partner

Ciarán is a very sociable young man who loves to chat and have fun. It can be difficult to understand what he is saying at times so he has developed a habit of using one word sentences supplemented with Makaton signs to answer questions and express opinions. His family, school staff and indeed peers can understand his pronunciations but out of the home and school environment it can be frustrating for him when people do not understand what he is trying to say.

Working closely with the speech and language therapist we devised a number of strategies for Ciarán. We used news time every morning to encourage him to use full sentences concentrating on his pronunciation of words. One sentence was enough to work on at any one time as he becomes frustrated when asked to repeat something a few times. Social group games with peers were very beneficial also. We created scenarios whereby Ciarán had to interact with classmates using questions or sentences i.e. you have a pain in your tummy, Sarah is the doctor – what are you going to tell her? You are thirsty. You want to tell your teacher – what do you say?

‘Color Cards: What’s Wrong?’ were excellent for this purpose. They consist of a set of photographs with something inappropriate or out of place and the students have to verbalise their ideas. We also incorporated the ‘Out and About’ CD-ROM which shows videos with people acting inappropriately in the community – this proved a very valuable and effective whiteboard board activity.

We found these exercises not only helped Ciarán express himself more clearly but as the months passed he has actually become more vocal in the classroom and his confidence has improved. We used the same strategy in assembly as he was using single words to answer questions. Ciarán was encouraged to provide more information to us i.e. what did you do at the weekend was invariably answered with ‘telly’. A more appropriate answer was modelled for Ciarán and he repeated it: ‘I watched telly’ and ‘I watched Mr. Bean’. Ciarán also relied on staff providing prompt answers to him when he could not pronounce a word—we were guilty of this and had to change how we spoke and interacted with him. He was encouraged to use other ways of letting us know what he was saying such as signs, pointing and gesturing.

## PLU 2: Numeracy

### Element: Measures and data

- 2.24 Participate in a shopping experience or in an activity where real money is used functionally

### Teaching and learning activities

The students bring in money every Friday for the tuck shop. The most senior classes run the tuck shop and calculate all the transactions. Ciarán is operating at a stage where he understands the idea of a transaction but has no concept of price, change and cannot estimate. He thoroughly enjoys taking part in this activity and is proud of his independence. He identifies the names of the coins given to him to spend and again in his change.

As mentioned in the PLU Being part of a community, he goes to the diner and pays for and receives change independently.

Ciarán is currently matching coins and notes using to-scale pictorial representations of notes and to scale plastic coins. He can get confused when presented with too many at any one time so we are working on consolidating 1c, 2c, 5c and €5, €10, €20. He is also matching picture to picture but needs verbal prompting at times. We also use task boxes to match real coins.

Ciarán often visits the credit union with his class and is instructed to queue, ask for amount needed and place it in a wallet for the teacher.

### Element: Time

- 2.29 Use instruments such as timers, visual timetables, objects of reference or clocks functionally

Ciarán is very aware of the passage of time. He is excellent at following a timetable and can predict activities that are a part of his daily and weekly timetable. Ciarán cannot read a clock so activities were based on teaching him very basic time-telling skills. We used blank faces and the class had to place the numbers and hands in the correct places. For Ciarán this began with matching all the numbers on the face gradually fading the prompts. He can place the numbers in the correct places with three numbers left blank but a visual prompt of a full clock face on the whiteboard is still needed.

We also worked on recognising and naming numbers 1-12. This consisted of bingo, matching worksheets, simple number activities on the whiteboard using Topmarks and Starfall.



## PLU 3: Personal care and wellbeing

### Element: Personal care and hygiene

- 3.10 Complete personal care tasks independently

#### Teaching and learning activities

As Ciarán is 15 years of age and his parents are elderly it was very important that we address some personal care skills with a goal to transferring these skills to his home life. We initially discussed a showering programme but it quickly became apparent that we needed to address more basic skills initially and it was decided that we would start Ciarán on a dressing programme. His academic work reflected this as his tasks were tailored to strengthen his fine motor and planning skills. We set up a task box system from TEACCH whereby each box had a symbol on it and I had matching symbols. At any given time during the day I could put my symbol on Ciarán's timetable and he would go to the task box shelf, match the symbol to the correct box and take the task box to his desk to complete the task. The task boxes contain activities such as posting, lacing, simple wooden jigsaws, cutting and pasting, clothes peg activities, tweezers activity, tracing, and matching and folding socks.

Alongside his fine motor skills development, Ciarán began a dressing programme in October starting with his jumper, t-shirt, trousers and socks. We used a social story with photos of Ciarán and photos of our school uniform. As Ciarán is quite overweight, taking on and off his socks proved very awkward and time consuming for him—he often became frustrated also. Ciarán needed one-to-one assistance with every item of clothing initially. We taught Ciarán how to undress first. When helping Ciarán dress himself, I always showed him the front and back of each item. I showed him the tag or the wording—he now knows to check and can recognise when he's put something on the wrong way. He still puts items on backwards sometimes but can correct when it is pointed out to him or questioned as to whether he thinks an item is on correctly. We use verbal prompting to help him correct any mistakes.

In February we began a showering programme alongside his dressing programme. Ciarán is quite independent in the shower but needs reinforcement when organising himself before showering (gathering shower gel, towel, fresh clothes etc). He uses a visual timetable and a pocket to ensure he completes every step. Each step is photographed and the photo 'posted' in the pocket when he has completed it. There will be a lot of collaboration with home, as he will have to transfer all of these skills to his home environment.

## **Element: Food and nutrition**

- 3.15 Participate in preparing food
- 3.16 Demonstrate basic hygiene procedures around food
- 3.17 Follow safety rules for using kitchen equipment
- 3.18 Participate in making healthy snacks
- 3.19 Plan, shop for and prepare personalised healthy food (with support if necessary)

### **Task: Making cheese and chive bread**

#### **Teaching and learning activities**

Ciarán has participated in cookery for a morning each fortnight for the past two school years. This has been of great benefit to Ciarán as a life skill in itself and also in terms of being part of a team, using technology and being responsible for his own safety and hygiene.

Over the two years in question, Ciarán has improved immensely in terms of his abilities—for example; when first coming to home economics, Ciarán would have to be told to first wash his hands and then told to put on his apron. Now Ciarán is simply asked, how will he get ready for cooking and he will tell you what he is going to do and will independently carry out these tasks.

Ciarán has gained good experience in using a wide range of kitchen utensils. In making his cheese and chive bread, he used the weighing scales, sieve, baking tin, measuring spoons, measuring jug, pastry blender, wooden spoon etc. Obviously for other dishes prepared in baking and for lunch each fortnight, the equipment and ingredients changes.

To date, Ciarán has also used a good selection of electrical kitchen appliances including the cooker, microwave, toaster, kettle, sandwich toaster, hand blender and electric whisk. He is well versed in being safe and clean while preparing food and is always delighted with what he makes.

Although Ciarán's reading and numeracy skills have improved, he still has difficulty with some areas in following his recipe, setting the electric oven temperature as he does not understand the high numbers involved and using his weighing scales accurately. For such difficulties as they arise, the recipe can be presented to Ciarán in picture format and he is encouraged to use the gas oven as he can identify the lower number settings for same and he can get help using his weighing scales if it becomes apparent that he is having a problem.

Being part of a team is very important in the home economics kitchen, getting units set up for cookery and cleaning up after cooking. In this area, Ciarán is very good. He can identify relevant equipment from pictures on his recipe sheet and knows where each piece is kept in the kitchen. He will set up for others in the class – if four people are in the class, Ciarán knows to take out four pieces of each item. This also applies to getting out ingredients.

Ciarán knows why we do certain things such as greasing baking trays, using oven gloves, using dry hands when handling electrical equipment, using a timer etc so it is not just a matter of having learned off these points by repetition; he can verbally explain the reasoning behind same.

Ciarán is being constantly stretched in terms of what is expected of him in class, yet is coached gently towards each new expectation in such a way as to ensure he succeeds and gains confidence, helping his self esteem and improving his life skills.

## PLU 4: Being part of a community

### Element: Relating to others

- 4.8 Be a member of one or more groups in or outside of school, actively participating where possible

### Teaching and learning activities

It is important that life skills, safety skills and community skills be a component to every child's teaching programme as they are vital to a child's real-life education and ability to live in the community. Generally this area will require additional attention from the family where possible. However generalisation is key with regard to this PLU. A student may be taught to say 'Hi' and look at his/her teacher but may not do the same for his/her family members, they may be able to stand in line at break time but find it difficult to stand in a queue at the supermarket.

Ciarán is a very sociable, friendly and entertaining young man. This made this PLU very easy to deliver for him. However he tends to be over-familiar with peers, staff and strangers at times and this is addressed in his IEP. He is encouraged to 'high five' or shake hands rather than hug and kiss people.

Ciarán visits the diner every month with his class. We have menus in the classroom for each student, and we discuss their food preferences in a group lesson the day before going to the restaurant. At this time we tend to try and influence healthy choices and encourage Ciarán and his classmates to try new foods. Ciarán orders his own food from the waitress and pays for his meal at the till himself. He will ask when paying if any change is required, as he is not able to calculate this independently. Members of staff are present at all times but he makes the transaction independently.

We visit the library monthly and although Ciarán is at the pre-reading stage, he loves leafing through books and having stories read to him. He will choose his own books and queue, hand in his books, wait for them to be scanned and take them from staff member. We discuss favourite topics before we visit the diner and as he prefers factual books we can direct him to the appropriate section so he is not lost in a sea of selection.

The school actively encourages group activities weekly, and to date Ciarán and his classmates have taken classes for duration of 6 weeks each: they included yoga, boxercise, jiving, 'couch to 5 km', 'try-a-tri', samba and archery. Ciarán was encouraged to participate fully in all activities to the best of his ability with staff only providing assistance if absolutely necessary. All of the activities involved working in groups and/or in twos.

Assembly is an important activity for this learning outcome as we can teach Ciarán the skills addressed his IEP in a safe, secure environment. Ciarán is aware of his speech impediment and can sometimes become embarrassed so this enables us to help Ciarán as he is comfortable and trusts the staff and his classmates.

## PLU 5: The arts

### Element: Visual art

#### 5.7 Work independently and/or collaboratively to produce a piece of art

##### Teaching and learning activities

A comprehensive arts education provides a rich and engaging curriculum that develops students' abilities to think, reason and understand the world and its cultures. It offers students opportunities to respond, perform, and create in the arts. The school employs the guidelines provided in the primary curriculum for visual art: Drawing; Paint and colour; Print; Work with clay; Fabric and fibre.

Ciarán is quite an imaginative student and thoroughly enjoys art classes. We explored three of the areas above: Drawing; Paint and colour; and Fabric and fibre using a wide variety of media such as colouring pencils and markers, paint, collage, and pencil; Ciarán immersed himself in the lessons with enthusiasm.

Drawing: Ciarán was encouraged to make marks with hard crayons and with soft crayons and to make rubbings of various textured surfaces. We used hands and fingers to make marks on a chosen surface; make choices about the colours used; and become increasingly creative about the variety of marks made.

Paint and colour: Painting within line constraints is difficult for Ciarán, so free painting worked well; both standing at easel and on paper whilst sitting. We used very simple line drawings to help Ciarán paint within the lines. Ciarán also explored smearing, flicking and spraying paint. The messier the better! We mixed paints in pots and by blowing through straws. Ciarán can consistently name four colours blue, red, green and black. If we add more colours to a colour-naming task he will get confused. We are working on consolidating white and yellow. The reading programme for autistic students devised and written by Joseph Porter is an excellent resource, and lends itself very well to learning colours. Other activities included rainbow collage, various colour-sorting activities, whiteboard colour matching and naming activities, threading coloured beads, colour-themed sensory tubs, pom-pom colour sort bottles, colour sort and posting box, mixing coloured water, and playing with coloured scarves (music therapy).

Fabric and fibre: Collage is an excellent activity for a student working at Ciarán's level as it lends itself to a degree of independent expression and it is often difficult to find tasks that provide this opportunity. Many different mediums were used such as paper, feathers, tissue, leaves and straws.

We also made St. Brigid's crosses, 3D Christmas trees and wreaths and a 3D map. Ciarán enjoyed a weaving paper activity and it lent itself very well to his fine motor development.

## PLU 6: Physical education

### Element: Movement skills (athletics/gymnastics)

- 6.7 Move whole body or individual limbs in a range of directions and at different speeds

As part of the Athletics module, Ciarán took part in throwing activities. Ciarán's gross motor skills are very good. With verbal instruction and visual aids, Ciarán is competent in working on his own during PE.

He is a visual learner and therefore videos/ demonstrations work well for him. At the beginning of the lesson I got Ciarán and his partner exploring different ways to throw the beanbag and ball. Ciarán enjoyed this as he got to use his imagination and come up with different throws. I praised him for coming up with many different types of throws.

During the ball activity, Ciarán struggled initially to throw for distance and didn't reach his partner. I decreased the distance between Ciarán and his partner and he was able to complete the pass without the ball dropping. His technique was very good during the overhead throw. He stepped forward with his left foot and followed through with the throw.

He then progressed onto the Javelin. I showed him a video of an Olympian throwing a javelin and I broke down the steps for him. I then demonstrated the Javelin throw for him outlining the position of the head, hands and feet. He found it difficult at the start to remember his footwork along with the throw itself, but by the end of the class he had mastered all three (head, hands, feet). He began throwing into a large hoop in the air and progressed onto a smaller one by the end of the class.



## Assessment

### **Recognising progress and achievement**

This is done consistently on a daily basis (verbal/physical re-enforcement, i.e. 'well done', high fives), on a weekly basis with 'Student of the week', prizes at assembly etc. Teachers will inform each other of a student's particular achievement and they will comment on it when they meet them.

### **Main assessment task/activities for evidence of learning**

A lot of our evidence of learning is in the form of video and photographs. Each student has a folder for each year of the programme and written evidence is stored here also. A portfolio of learning is then collated for each student, with checklists of the learning outcomes and elements covered throughout the year—all with corresponding evidence including the progression pathway of a particular element at the beginning and end of the year. We also hold two IEP meetings each year, and every IEP is assessed and amended if necessary on a monthly basis.

## Some reflections on learning

Learning is approached in a very broad and personal manner. The IEP is central to devising a learning plan for the student. The broad nature of the Level 1 programme lends itself very well to this type of learning and indeed planning for same. Ciarán is a non-reader and non-writer so the fact that the new Level 1 programme provides so much scope really opened up a new world of learning to him. Ciarán was able to help identify his strengths and needs and focus on them this year rather than trying to pigeonhole him into a more constrained curriculum. Ciarán loved file folder activities as they provide a definite beginning, middle and end to each task and they can be tailored and tweaked to each individual so that they are working independently at their level. Ciarán began with matching letters of his name, then moving on to tracing, copying and writing his name.

There were opportunities for student self-assessment as part of Ciarán's learning programme. Ciarán is very aware of when he is progressing and when he is not. We were very careful to present tasks and lessons at an appropriate pitch as to not discourage him but keep him engaged also. He thrived on verbal and physical praise.

Self-assessment depends on the cognitive level of the student but choices can be presented in any number of ways to enable the student to give their voice to their learning, from eye gaze technology; assistive technology aiding choice-making on an iPad; or choosing a picture or verbally.

## Appendix A: Glossary of action verbs

This glossary is designed to clarify the learning outcomes of the Level 1 Learning Programme.

Students can achieve learning outcomes at any of the progression pathways in a way that suits their individual learning journey. Appropriate levels of adult support for each task will be determined by the teacher, the student’s family and other professionals according to the individual needs of each student.

<b>Action verb</b>	<b>Within the context of their individualised learning journey, students should be able to...</b>
Accept	tolerate/allow an interaction or experience
Acknowledge	change behaviour in some way (gesture/eye gaze/vocalisation/speaking) to demonstrate an awareness of the presence of a person, object or stimulus
Anticipate	demonstrate an awareness of/predict what will happen next
Attend	direct attention (visual/tactile/auditory) to focus on a person, object or stimulus
Awareness	demonstrate understanding of a concept (e.g. object permanence—look for hidden object) <b>or</b> indicate the knowledge of the existence of a person, object or stimulus
Behave appropriately	act in a way that is expected in the surroundings/activity (e.g. sit with the class group at a table for snack while visiting a café). Teachers will determine what behaviour/role is appropriate for each student in different settings, considering their sensory, physical, emotional and cognitive processing strengths and needs.
Choose/Make choices	indicate a preference from given options using any text*
Communicate	adapt behaviour in a variety of ways including, but not limited to: vocalising, gesturing, moving eye gaze or use of text to convey a message
Co-operate	work with/willingly accept support from an adult or peers for a specific purpose
Create	be involved in the process of making something new
Demonstrate	behave in such a way as to display an awareness, skill or understanding
Differentiate	demonstrate an awareness of a difference between things/people (e.g. a student may behave differently when there is a new teacher in the room)
Discover	find/notice, something new, information about an object, stimulus, place or person
Engage	become involved in a task/process (through looking, touching, smelling, listening or tasting)

Exhibit	clearly display a behaviour/response
Experiment	trial or explore an activity/object in a variety of ways, with the potential of acquiring new learning
Explore	use the senses (in terms of touch, taste, sound, sight etc) to inquire into an item/concept/activity. The student may make new discoveries during this process.
Express	convey a feeling, opinion or message through any text <sup>*</sup> /reactive changes in behaviour
Follow	adhere to rules/conventions specific to an environment or activity (e.g. slowing down from a run to a walking pace in a supermarket in response to the teacher giving the instruction verbally and showing a 'walking' symbol)
Gather	be involved in any way with the process of collecting items
Handle	explore an item through touching/feeling it in some way. This may involve body parts other than the student's hands (e.g. feeling fur rubbed on their arm/cheek) if necessary to support the student's physical or sensory needs.
Identify	locate and/or specify who or what a person, object or stimulus is. This may be communicated using any text <sup>*</sup> .
Illustrate	display/show a response or behaviour as outlined in the learning outcome
Indicate	change behaviour in a way that identifies/communicates a response to an object, person, environment or stimulus using any text <sup>*</sup> . This may or may not be intentional communication (e.g. crying in response to a loud noise).
Initiate	start something. A student that initiates a communication/interaction with someone may do so in a wide variety of ways including seeking eye contact, reaching out to the person, vocalising or touching a familiar object of reference. The student may or may not have an awareness of joint attention in communication yet so may not look at the adult while behaving in these ways.
Interact	experience having an effect and/or being affected by an exchange with another person
Investigate	get to know more about an item, environment, person or stimulus through sensory exploration and examination (e.g. feeling/banging/listening to/smelling/squeezing)
Listen	focus auditory attention on the experience of sounds. Students may not always pay visual attention to the sound source.
Link	form an association between/connect two or more items, people, stimuli or actions
Look	visually attend to something. Some students may use their peripheral vision/an alternative area in their visual field to attend to an item.
Match	indicate an awareness of/identify a connection between items with common or identical features, meaning or qualities

Move	change position in space with or without support
Observe	show an awareness of and adhere to rules <b>or</b> visually notice/attend to a person, activity or stimulus
Participate	demonstrate any type of involvement in the learning activity
Play	perform/take part in a process, game or activity
Practise	repeatedly rehearse a skill or action. Students may show signs of improvement over a period of time.
Predict	indicate an awareness/knowledge of what will come next based on previous learning and experiences (e.g. when the teacher reaches into a bag of props at a certain point in a familiar story, the student reacts by screwing up and moving their face in anticipation of a water spray that is used at this point of the story).
Read	extract meaning from and demonstrate understanding of any form of text (e.g. looking at an object of reference for 'snack' then immediately turning head towards the snack cupboard expectantly)
Recall	show an awareness and recognition of past events (e.g. smiling when shown a video of an activity enjoyed that morning/identifying photographs of props used regularly to tell a familiar story)
Recognise	demonstrate understanding of/familiarity with a person, context, object or stimulus from previous experiences. The student may be able to use knowledge, gained from previous experiences, to identify a person, context, object or stimulus.
Request	use any text* to express a desire or need (e.g. pressing a BIGmack switch to request more bubbles to be blown)
Refine	clarify/improve a skill
Respond	change behaviour in some way (movement/shift in eye gaze/respond verbally/communicate through text/demonstrate emotions etc) in reaction to something or someone
Seek	search for/look out for something. This requires the student to focus their attention on the activity/task with intention and purpose.
Show	express awareness, understanding, knowledge or feelings through actions
Tolerate	allow/accept an experience. The student may still appear hesitant or unsure due to the challenges they face during such an experience (e.g. being sensitive to sounds in a noisy room) but they will allow for the experience to occur, even for a brief period.
Use	apply sensory awareness/skills/learning to a practical setting for a given function

## Appendix B: Glossary of L1LP terms

This glossary is intended to define and clarify terms from the guidelines for the Level 1 Learning Programme as they appear in this specification.

Anatomical language	Anatomical language refers to the accepted terms used in the field of human anatomy for parts of the body.
And/or	When a learning outcome includes ‘and/or’ the student may attain ‘Successful Completion’ of this learning outcome when they achieve one <b>or</b> both stated outcomes at any level on the progression pathways. The teacher must determine which aspects of the learning outcome are most suitable for each student.
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)	Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) refers to a wide range of methods used to <i>augment</i> (add to) or act as an <i>alternative</i> to speech. These methods may be aided (using external tools) or unaided (no tools required). Examples of unaided systems include signing, facial expression and gesture. Aided communication systems may include, but are not limited to, objects of reference, communication boards, symbols, photographs and various forms of voice output technology.
Book-handling skills	Book-handling skills include those of holding the book using the correct orientation, opening the book, page turning and so on.
Cause and effect	Cause and effect refers to the understanding that there is a relationship between events or

	things, where one is the result of the other (e.g. turning on a light when going into a dark room).
Communicative partner	The communicative partner is an individual engaged in the act of communicating in a concentrated way with a student undertaking L1LPs. Communicating intentionally is a very large step for some of these students. Communicative partners learn to 'read' the signs in the student that s/he is learning to communicate at a level of progression on the continuum.
Element	Elements outline the specific areas for learning covered within each Priority Learning Unit (PLU). For example, PLU 5: The arts is comprised of three elements: Visual art, Music and Drama. Teachers should include learning outcomes from all elements over the course of delivering the Level 1 Learning Programme to ensure students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
Features of Quality	Features of Quality are the criteria which are used by the teacher to support a judgement about whether learning outcomes have been achieved or not.
Generalising learning	Generalising learning is the term used to describe the stage when a student can be observed transferring learning in a specific context to other, less familiar or unfamiliar situations.
'How to' guidelines	It is envisaged that short pieces of additional support material will be provided on specific teaching approaches that are known to be

	effective with these students, for example, one for each PLU.
Joint attention	Joint attention is a situation where the individuals involved in the communication act both focus on the same object. It is more than just looking at an object; the individuals understand that they are attending to the same thing. For some students, eye contact or visual attention can be a challenge. In this case, joint attention may be achieved through the use of alternative senses (smell, taste, touch or hearing) so long as the student demonstrates an understanding that the experience is shared and their partner is smelling/feeling/hearing or tasting the same thing.
Learning intentions	A learning intention for a lesson or series of lessons is a statement, created by the teacher, that describes clearly what the teacher wants the students to know, understand, and be able to do as a result of learning and teaching activities.
Learning journey	The learning journey refers to the unique way each student accesses the Level 1 Learning Programme. Where possible, all students should have the opportunity to experience/attempt all of the learning outcomes in a way that is meaningful to them. Teachers, the student's family and multi-disciplinary professionals supporting the student will work together to identify which learning outcomes are to be prioritised, the pathway at which they may be accessed and the order in which they

	should be followed, based on the students learning strengths, needs and interests.
Learning outcomes (see also Unconstrained learning outcomes)	Learning outcomes specify the knowledge, skills and attitudes students can demonstrate they have learned within each element of a PLU. Learning outcomes are not expected to be followed in a linear manner but in a way that best suits the student. The unconstrained nature of the learning outcomes ensure flexibility for adaptation so that they can be made specific to the individual student to reflect their interests, strengths and needs.
Mark making	Students begin their journey towards writing by making marks. These can be made using body parts or a range of implements. Slowly the marks they make begin to have more meaning for them. This is an important step in learning to write.
Priority Learning Units (PLUs)	Priority Learning Units (PLUs) explicitly identify and develop the key areas of learning needed to prepare the students for their future lives. There are six PLUs in the Level 1 Learning Programme: Communication, language and literacy; Personal care and wellbeing; Being part of a community; Numeracy; The arts; and Physical education. Each PLU is then broken down into elements and then further into learning outcomes.
Process-based teaching and learning	Process-based teaching and learning is a holistic approach to teaching and learning that places a focus on the process of the



	learning rather than individual outcome targets. The L1LPs places an emphasis on 'real-world' learning for students participating in the L1LPs.
Self-regulation	Self-regulation as used here refers to the process by which students take charge of their behaviour. They gain self-control by being enabled to recognise triggers which provoke behaviours they want to change and by learning strategies which support them in self-regulation.
Sensory signals	Sensory signals include any source of sensory stimulation/output that may or may not elicit a response (e.g. sounds, tastes, smells, textures or images /lights).
Short courses	It is envisaged that schools will have autonomy to develop units of learning specifically to meet their students' needs. The themes will be appropriate to the chronological age of students and will reflect their interests. They will allow for cross-curricular learning and teaching and will have the learning outcomes of PLUs embedded in them.
Social conventions of privacy	Social conventions of privacy are societal 'norms' relating to behaviours, information and places which are considered private.
Social scripts	Social scripts describe the physical environment students will visit and details of what the excursion will involve. They are often written in the first person, e.g. 'When we climb the steps to the entrance I will be able to leave my bag in a room, where it will be safe until I get back'.

Specification	This term replaces the word 'syllabus'. A specification is an outline of the curriculum and assessment components of a subject or learning programme. Unlike a syllabus, learning outcomes are not content-driven but are statements that describe what understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning.
Standardised objects of reference	Standardised objects of reference are concrete, three-dimensional objects that have been standardised in the student's life to communicate, e.g. using a wooden spoon to indicate that it is 'time for cooking'.
Stimulus/Stimuli (plural)	A stimulus or stimuli can be defined as any object or event that may trigger a reaction of some sort. For example, a piece of music may trigger an emotional response, resulting in a student laughing.
Stories	Stories, in this context, are a connected series of events, invented or factual, that are recalled in sequence in any meaningful way. This may include picture books, sensory stories, massage stories, story trays, photo stories or the incorporation of any other items/approaches that are meaningful to the student.
Text	Throughout the L1LP guidelines, 'text' includes all products of language use: oral, gesture, sign, written, visual, electronic and digital.
Unconstrained learning outcomes	Unconstrained learning outcomes specify the knowledge, skills and attitudes students can demonstrate they have learned, expressed

	as broad statements which allow for a range of interpretation at school level to suit the students' needs.
Visual representations of items	Visual representations of items are picture systems which are used to standardise the student's communication. They are sometimes called augmentative communication systems. They are ONE form of augmentative communication systems

## Appendix C: Indicators at Level 1 of the National Framework of Qualifications

<b>Descriptor</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Level 1 Certificate
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>NFQ Level</b>	1
<b>Volume</b>	Small
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	Elementary knowledge
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	Demonstrable by recognition or recall
<b>Know-how and skill - range</b>	Demonstrate basic practical skills, and carry out directed activity using basic tools
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Perform processes that are repetitive and predictable
<b>Competence - context</b>	Act in closely defined and highly structured contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Act in a limited range of roles
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Learn to sequence learning tasks; learn to access and use a range of learning resources
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Begin to demonstrate awareness of independent role for self
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	Progression to programme leading to a Level 2 Certificate, or at a higher level if appropriate.



