

## Key Skills of Junior Cycle

Working with Others

## WORKING WITH OTHERS

This skill helps learners develop good relationships and to appreciate the value of cooperating to reach both collective and personal goals.

### Working with others

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

This resource offers some ideas that teachers can use to help learners develop the skill of working with others. No doubt you will find lots of additional ways to develop this skill. You will also notice that it links in with other key skills and with other resources and ideas on our website. Please send us your ideas too.



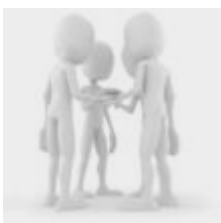
#### Movie

Watch this 1<sup>st</sup> year French class as they begin to develop the skill of working with each other <https://vimeo.com/ncca/review/100582740/d06c369577>

Before looking at the different elements of this skill, listen to students talking about their experience of working with others within the context of developing their key skills:

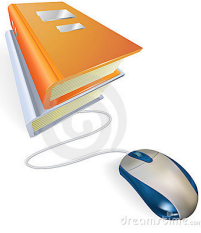
**'Students talking about Key Skills' ( 2 mins)**  
<https://vimeo.com/16241718>

As you watch this video, take a note of anything that particularly strikes you. Then pair up with a colleague and share what you've noted.



**Discuss:** What do you see as the benefits and the challenges of students working together towards shared learning goals?

Take 5 minutes, either alone or with a colleague, to draw up a list of the teaching and learning approaches that you have found most helpful in developing students' skills of working with each other.



## So what does the research tell us?

*'Students may work in groups in classrooms but they very seldom work as groups'*

Ken Richardson

*We remember*

*10% of what we read*

*20% of what we hear*

*30% of what we see*

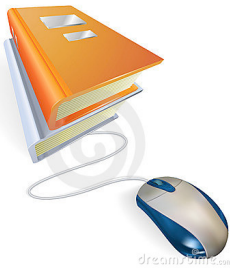
*50% of what is discussed with others*

*80% of what we experience personally*

*95% of what we teach to someone else*

William Glasser

Research on co-operative learning goes back over 100 years and suggests that when students work together, 'knee to knee and eye to eye', discussing, explaining, negotiating, agreeing, helping and encouraging each other, it has a positive impact on their achievement, self-esteem, and motivation for learning, and it helps develop their thinking and reasoning skills. In addition, it leads to more positive interpersonal relationships within the classroom. (David and Roger Johnson).



**For an overview of what the research says about Cooperative Learning go to**

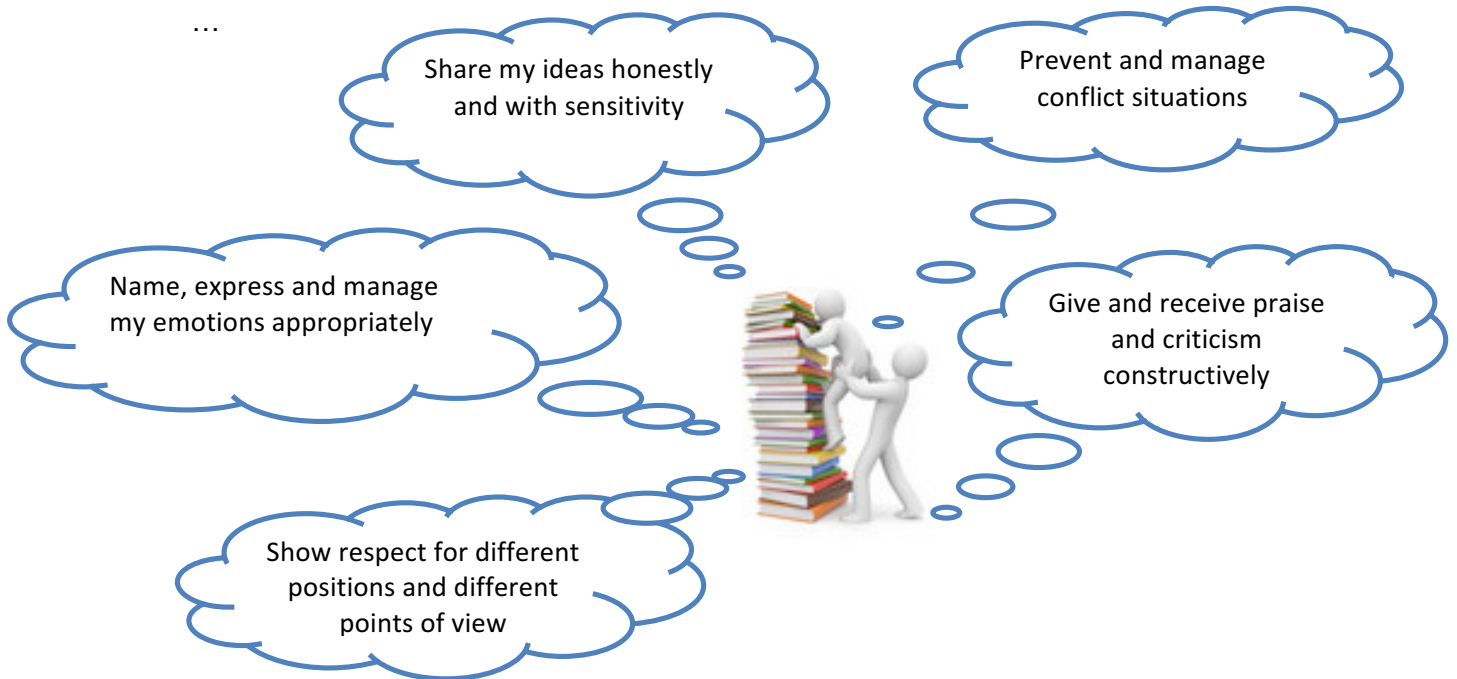
**[http://teachers.henrico.k12.va.us/staffdev/mcdonald\\_j/downloads/21st/comm/BenefitsOfCL/OverviewOfCoopLrng\\_Benefits.html](http://teachers.henrico.k12.va.us/staffdev/mcdonald_j/downloads/21st/comm/BenefitsOfCL/OverviewOfCoopLrng_Benefits.html)** or

Read *Cooperation in the Classroom*, Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, revised 1991.

## Developing good relationships and resolving conflict

The learning outcomes for this element are

...



### Discuss

What do you think are the three most important things a teacher can do to foster good relationships within the classroom?

### Some tips for fostering good relationships and managing conflict in the classroom

- Make your classroom a safe place in which to ask questions and discuss ideas.
- Agree ground rules for discussion early in the year and refer to them regularly.
- Appeal to students' better nature and remind them that off-hand remarks may offend or embarrass their classmates.
- Avoid opening up classroom discussions on issues until students have had an opportunity to research and explore the issue from a variety of perspectives.
- Expose students to multiple perspectives (see **Managing Information and Thinking Toolkit > Being Curious**).

- A key habit of mind the teacher seeks to develop in students is ‘**critical openness**’– both a disposition to be open-minded to others' views and the ability to subject them to critical study; both the willingness to suspend judgment and the ability ultimately to reach reasoned conclusions that are open to change.
- Point out to students the difference between **dialogue** and **debate**. Dialogue aims for understanding, enlargement of view, complicating one's thinking, and implies an openness to change. Dialogue requires real listening. It also requires humility. However, in a debate, students may listen only to support what they already think, or to find flaws in the opposing side.

*How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I am closed to, and even offended by, the contribution of others? (Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.)*

Take a look at the Teacher checklist – How positive a place is YOUR classroom?

**Staying Well Toolkit > Being positive about learning**

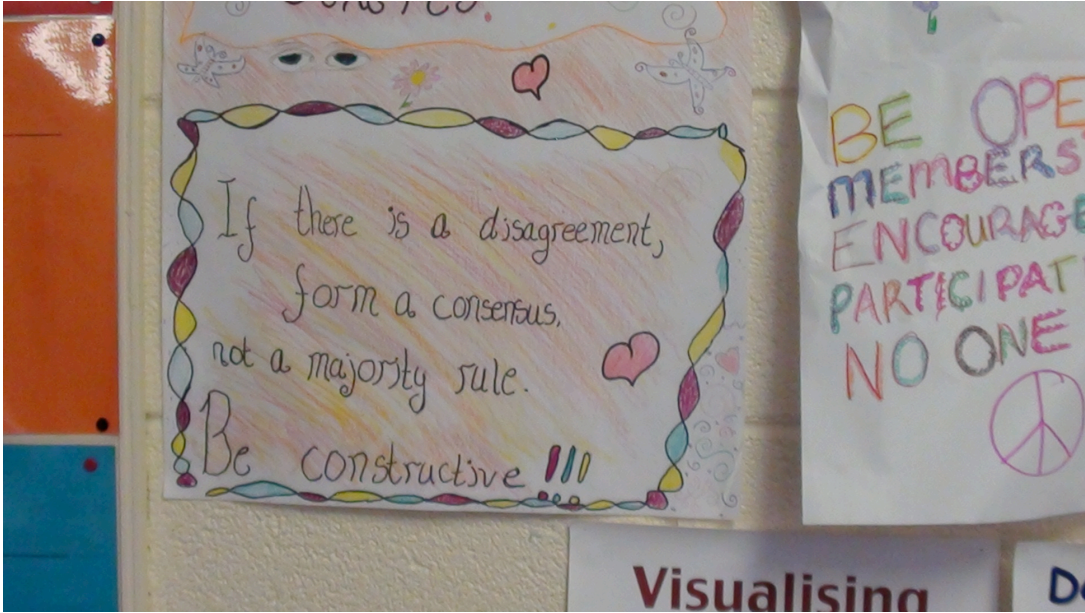


**Getting started with your students -  
practical classroom ideas**

**Agree a classroom charter or set of ground rules** - It's best if the students agree their own

| <b>Sample class ground rules</b>  |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each group member is responsible for completing the task</li> <li>▪ Each group member is responsible for making sure all the group members know and understand the answers</li> <li>▪ We are open to other's ideas</li> <li>▪ We take turns</li> <li>▪ We look at the speaker</li> <li>▪ We help each other</li> <li>▪ There are no put downs</li> <li>▪ We criticise ideas, not people</li> </ul> |

- We use quiet voices
- We include everyone and encourage everyone's participation.



**The social skills for working together need to be taught**

A number of studies have found that group work is positively related to achievement when group interaction is respectful and inclusive. However, group work is actually negatively related to achievement if group interaction is disrespectful or unequal. This can happen when students don't have the necessary social skills to interact positively with each other. Skills of listening, sharing, turn-taking, summarising different points of view and negotiating differences cannot be taken for granted.



Firstly, students must be able to **listen** to one another. One simple strategy which can help develop listening skills is to ask students to paraphrase what another student has said before allowing them to contribute a new idea. Paraphrasing can be helpful in any class. Encourage students to use phrases like these:

*Are you saying...?, In other words, what I think you're saying is...*

**Teach students a language for working together**

If students are starting out on group work it can also be useful to invite them to come up with a list of useful phrases that they can use when working together.

Here are some prompts to help get started:

*I think.... because* (i.e. when someone makes a statement they must justify it.)

*I agree/disagree because...*

*I'm not sure what you mean.*

*Do I understand you correctly, are you saying....?*

*Here's a way to remember this...*

*Would you like me to go over that again?*

*Let's take turns to make sure that everyone has a chance to speak.*

*Let's look at the other side of the argument for a minute.*

*Let's summarise our main ideas so far*

*Let's check to see if everyone agrees with what we've written down so far*

*Come on, let's keep moving!*

*Let's hear from someone who hasn't had a chance to speak yet?*

(Adapted from: *Cooperation in the Classroom*, Johnson, Johnson and Holobec)



## **Fish Bowl Listening Activity**

### **How it works**

1. Start off in small groups of between 4 and 6 people, who are asked to discuss a particular question or issue. Each group writes down their thoughts and views on a piece of flip chart paper with a marker for about 10-15 minutes.
2. The whole room then re-groups, moving their chairs into 2 circles: one circle is a large “fish-bowl” round the outside of the room and the other small circle is the “fish” in the middle of the room. This is a listening exercise.
3. The small circle is the fish, and one person from each original group should sit in this small circle and tell everyone in the room about what was discussed in their group. The fish are the only ones who can talk at this stage. One person in the fish group volunteers to write all the main ideas on a flip chart paper in the middle.
4. Students in the large circle are the fish-bowl and they are the listeners – they must listen very carefully to what the fish are saying, to check that this is an accurate description of the views put forward by their little groups

5. Any listener who disagrees with what is being said by the “spokes-fish” of their group, or wants to add something, can go up and tap them gently on the shoulder. This means that they will swap places.

**Variation:**

One variation is to have the fish bowl run for a certain period of time – say 15 minutes. The teacher stops the discussion in the fishbowl circle and invites those not in the inner circle to offer their comments or additions to what they are hearing in the inner circle

Adapted from <http://www.citehr.com/1849-fish-bowl-method-training.html>

**Use a T chart**

Another way of teaching the social skills needed for successful group work is to build a **T Chart** and keep it on view in the classroom. To do this you write the name of the skill to be practiced at the top the board. Create two columns. Label the left side ‘**Looks like**’ and the right side ‘**Sounds like**’. Then under each column ask the students to brainstorm examples for each side and write them down. A T chart on listening might look something like this.

| <b>Listening</b>  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Looks like</b>   | <b>Sounds like</b>                          |
| People look at the speaker<br>People look involved/interested<br>People might respond<br>People might show they agree/disagree/or respond<br>etc. | Not much noise<br>Not much movement<br>etc. |

**Speed debating** is another good methodology for encouraging listening skills

Check out **Communicating Toolkit > Discussing and debating** to find out more.



## Being able to give and receive praise constructively

When working with others there is also an important skill in being able to give and receive praise and criticism constructively.

### Five tips for students giving each other written feedback

1. The first time you read through your partner's piece of work hold off writing any comments. You don't want to swamp your partner with suggestions. You just want to focus on the main strengths and weaknesses.
2. Resist the temptation to correct things with a red pen. For example, if you notice that there are misspellings or mistakes in punctuation then just use a pencil to underline the problem but let the person fix it themselves.
3. Then try to decide
  - What has been done well
  - What has been less successful
  - One or two things they could do to improve their work
4. Make your comments as specific as possible, either using the margins or the bottom of the page.

Here are some examples of specific comments:

Rather than writing '*your ideas are vague*' write "*Could you explain this further?*" Or '*Can you give an example to show what you mean here?*'

Instead of writing "*this is confusing*" or "???" write something like '*You need to explain how this idea relates to the topic?*' or '*I'm not sure how this point supports your argument.*'

Rather than writing "*good*" write something like '*This is a really good opening paragraph and makes me want to read more.*' Or "*This is an excellent example and it helps to support your argument.*" Or '*I like how you sum up and then draw your own conclusion in the final paragraph.*' Or '*The ending is a bit abrupt. Could you think about how to improve the end to this story?*'

Rather than '*messy*' write something like '*Think about the accuracy and neatness of your graph*'

5. Be honest with each other and sensitive too! Never say or write something harsh or critical that will hurt another student's feelings.

Look at **Managing Myself > Being able to reflect on my learning** for more ideas on how students can begin to give each other constructive feedback.

Also check out [www.juniorcycle.ie/assessment](http://www.juniorcycle.ie/assessment) and go the section on **Ongoing Assessment** where you'll find more ideas on feedback.

### **Forming Critical Friends**

Students are paired with a peer for a one month period. During this time, they are aware that the purpose of working in pairs is to work together to help one another improve their written work. They are responsible for their own progress and that of their partner. On a weekly basis, they are asked to correct one another's written work and list the strengths and suggest areas of improvement. Students then go off and improve their work based on these suggestions.

Written work is then submitted to the teacher for formal grading. The teacher can also see the comments which have been offered and this allows the teacher to gauge the critical skills of the students, which can often provide even more insight into the student's level of understanding than their own completed essay. The teacher then awards the grade and either reinforces the recommendations or adds others. If you would like to introduce some additional motivation you could reward the most improved pair.

***Reflection from Practice:** When I used this approach with a Junior English group, I found the quality of their feedback to be surprising; in terms of being both honest and informative. In fact they put their observations more directly to one another than I could. For example, one student said 'I commented on this last week also. You are not taking my advice onboard!' In this instance, positive peer pressure worked to great effect. You know there is real progress being made the student says 'It's getting harder and harder to find mistakes' (English teacher)*



Watch this video to see students giving each other feedback

**Peer feedback – Students act as critical friends** (1 min 35

<https://vimeo.com/16240031>

**A Note of Caution:** Before adopting this approach, the students would need to have some experience in peer assessment strategies. They need to be very comfortable with both assessing and being assessed by their peers. They would also need to be

guided in their use of language and suitable comments to use when giving constructive feedback.

## Cooperating and learning with others

How can you make group work really work?



Dylan Wiliam sets out the benefits of learners working together and suggests how you can make sure that there are no 'passengers' through group goals and individual accountability. (2 mins 43)

**Movie**

<http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/videos/expertspeakers/collaborativelearningdylanwiliam.asp>



### **10 tips for successful group work**

1. Assign the groups yourself. Generally, each group should have a mix of abilities, gender, motivation levels etc. Do not put students with their friends unless you have a good reason to do so.
2. Start out with small groups (2/3) until students become skilful in group work. The shorter the time available, the smaller the learning group should be.
3. Assign each student a task or role within the group but rotate them frequently. It's best not to assign anyone the role of Reporter as then you can call on anyone from the group to report and everyone stays alert.
4. Graduate the tasks so that there are some tasks that everyone can do with ease and some more challenging tasks or questions. That way, everyone can contribute something to the group.
5. Make your expectations clear so that students know what you want them to do and how to behave.
6. Agree ground rules.
7. Teach the skills needed for group work such as listening skills, leadership skills (shared and rotated), conflict resolution skills, how to give feedback, how to encourage each other, etc.
8. Structure group work in such a way that students need each other in order to complete the task. This can be achieved in a number of ways:
  - a. Set a shared task or goal (e.g. all must agree a solution to a problem and make sure all group members can explain how it was arrived at).

- b. Force students to share resources within the group (e.g. one copybook or worksheet between each pair/small group).
  - c. Give each group member a complementary and different role.
  - d. Request one end product and give a shared reward or shared grade to the group.
9. Your role is to set the task, observe and monitor students working, to keep students focused on the task, and give positive feedback.
10. Finally, allow time for group reflection and evaluation of how well they did in completing the task and in working together.



**Movie**

**English class showing the use of roles within group work**

Take a look at this short video of students and see how many of these tips you notice them applying  
<http://vimeo.com/ncca/review/16245867/1e00e395ac>

**Some sample role cards for group work**

**Facilitator**

Your job is to make sure that the group stays on task and that everyone gets a chance to contribute their ideas. Check that everyone understands and agrees with the answers that your group has come up with.

**Note Taker**

Your role is to listen carefully and write the main ideas or answers agreed by the group. Even though you are taking notes, remember that you can also contribute to the discussion.

**Checker**

Your job is to make sure everyone understands the questions and can explain the groups' answers when the teacher asks. As the work moves along you should check that everyone is 'on board'. If a member of the group is lost you will ask another member to explain things to help them out.

**Time-keeper**

Your job is to keep an eye on the clock and make sure that the group does not get bogged down in one idea or question and not have enough time to complete the task. You may also need to let them know when they are straying away from the task.

**TIP** – Copy and laminate these cards and keep them handy for group work.

Remember to keep groups small to begin with. Three or four role cards usually work best. Other roles which might be useful are **Reader, Observer or Runner (the person who goes to other groups to get help when needed or goes to find information in a dictionary or other source).**



## Reviewing my Working Together skills – Student Checklist

| Today in class ...  | Always | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------|-----------|-------|
| I shared my ideas and information                         |        |           |       |
| I listened carefully to other students' ideas             |        |           |       |
| I summarised all our ideas and information                |        |           |       |
| I asked for help when I needed it                         |        |           |       |
| I helped the other members of my group to learn           |        |           |       |
| I made sure everyone in my group understood               |        |           |       |
| I helped keep the group on task                           |        |           |       |
| I encouraged and showed support to others                 |        |           |       |
| Three things I learned about working in groups today .... |        |           |       |
| I like/don't like this way of working because ...         |        |           |       |

Adapted from *Cooperation in the Classroom*, Johnson, Johnson and Holobec, 6:17, revised 1991)



## **Getting your students working together – some classroom ideas**

### **Think, Pair, Share**

1. The teacher poses a question and allows thinking time.
2. Students formulate an individual answer.
3. Students share the answer with a partner.
4. Listen carefully to each other's answer.
5. Create a new answer that is better than the initial attempts by building on each others ideas.

### **Square**

After students have done a think, pair and share then they can join another pair to form a square. This allows them build an even better answer by building on both pair's initial response.

### **Brainstorming and snowballing**

1. Students form groups and each group has a flip chart page and marker.
2. They brainstorm as many ideas as they can come up with in response to a question or prompt.
3. After a few minutes get each group to exchange their flip chart page with another group and see what they can learn from the other group, or what they would want to add.

### **Cooperative reading - Summarising pairs**

1. Students take turns reading and orally summarising paragraphs. To begin with, both skim read the entire text to get the gist of it.
2. Then both read the first paragraph.



3. One person summarises it (without looking at the text) while the other checks the paragraph for accuracy and offers prompts to help if anything is left out.
4. They then read the next paragraph and change roles until they have completed the text.

### **Cooperative threesomes**

This can be used to answer a set of questions or solve a set of problems.

Each student is assigned a role. For example, you could have a Reader (reads the problem aloud to the group), Recorder (summarises and records the agreed answers), Checker (checks to make sure that all group members understand the text and questions, and agree on the answers).

The group must work together to agree the answers and produce one set of answers. When the group is finished they can compare their answers with those of another group and discuss.

### **Working together on writing an essay**

1. Assign students to pairs. The essay title is given. Students describe to each other what they plan to write. They probe and discuss each other's ideas.
2. The students go away and think about their own essay.
3. Next day, the two students work together to write the first paragraph of each essay to ensure that they both have a good start.
4. Then they go away and draft their essays. When completed, the students proofread each others essay, making corrections and suggestions for revision.
5. The students redraft their essays, making the revisions.
6. The two students then reread each other essays and sign their names on each essay.

### **Maths pairs**

1. Assign students to pairs with a set of maths problems.
2. Person A reads the problem and explains step-by-step the steps and strategies required to solve it. Person B watches as A solves the problem and

checks the accuracy of the solution and provides help if it is needed. Then the roles reverse.

3. When two problems are completed, the pair checks their answers with another pair. If they do not agree, they must solve the problem until there is consensus.

### **Note-taking pairs**

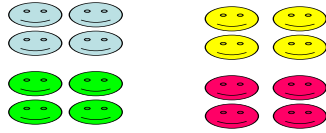
1. After a section of the course has been taught, the students are paired up (or arranged in small groups) and asked to create a set of notes that summarises the main points related to the topic. The teacher and students may agree the key headings first.
2. Then, together, they must agree what needs to be included in their notes. This gives them an opportunity to explain, discuss and synthesise the topic and make judgements about what is important and what is not. The students can use a range of sources to help them – their copy book, textbooks, the internet.
3. When all the pairs/groups have an agreed set of notes, then the teacher can lead a review session using the whiteboard to check that all the key points have been captured by everyone.
4. This approach can also be used when encountering new material. Students are assigned pairs, A and B. Each is asked to take notes on the topic being taught during the lesson. Every 10 minutes or so, the teacher stops the lesson and gets students to share their notes. Each person must take something from their partner's notes to improve their own notes.

### **Jigsaw learning**

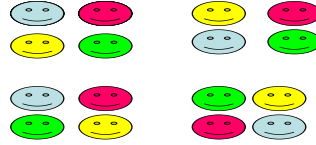
Jigsaw groups are a very effective way of organising group work. In this scenario, students are arranged into groups and each group is given a different subtopic related to the one topic. They must become 'expert' on their subtopic and agree how they are going to teach it to their classmates. When they are ready, the groups are mixed up so that there is now one expert on each subtopic in each group. They now take turns 'teaching' their subtopic to each person in the group.

## Jigsaw Technique

Step 1:



Step 2:



### Placemats

Place Mat is a form of collaborative learning that combines writing and dialogue to ensure accountability and involvement of all students. It involves groups of students working both alone and together around a single piece of paper to simultaneously come up with lots of alternative ideas.

Materials: Chart paper is preferable, but not necessary. Pens and Pencils.

The paper is divided up into pieces based on the number of member in the group with a central square or circle. (See samples on next page)

Steps:

1. Carefully construct the task or question. This will depend on the learning goals.

What are you aiming to do?

2. Assign students into small groups (3-4 works best)

3. Hand out the task/question with the place mat.

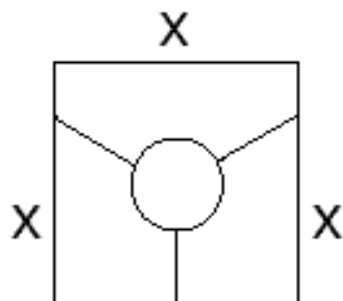
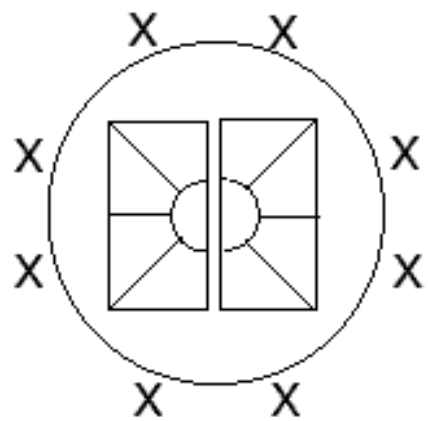
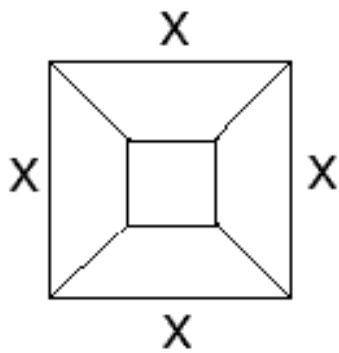
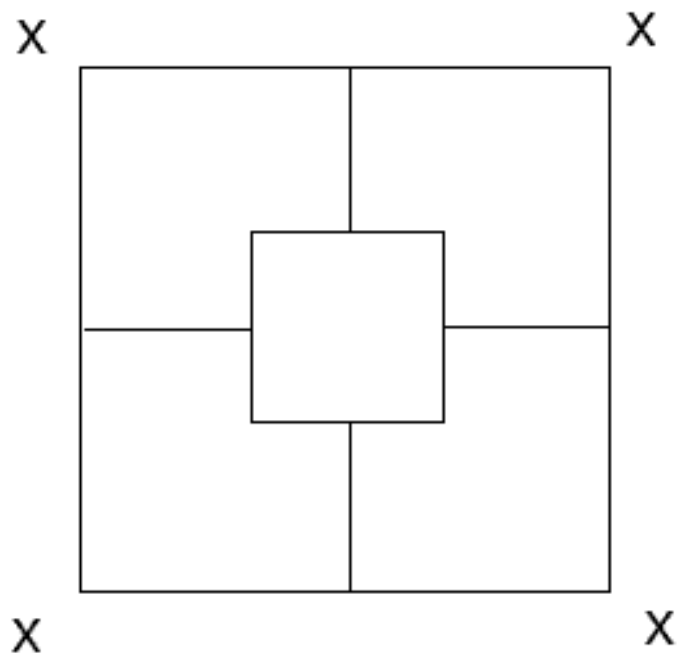
4. Students work alone first, using their section of the place mat to record their ideas.

5. Students share their ideas with the group and these are recorded in the centre of the page.

6. Sharing then takes place between groups.

(Adapted from Barrie Bennett, *Beyond Monet*)

This page shows different ways of designing your placemats depending on the number of students in each group. A large poster or flip chart paper works great. Each X represents a student.



**Working together for tests**

It has been shown that working together to prepare for tests can improve students' performance. This can work in a number of ways.

### **1. Helping each other revise for a test**

Divide students into groups. Then within each group different students agree to revise one topic and teach it to the others, attending to the key words, ideas, definitions. They must decide how best to teach their topic – using a poster, a summary handout or a graphic organiser. The next day they each take turns presenting their topic and answering questions on it. The aim is to ensure that everyone understands each topic and is prepared to answer questions on it in their test.

### **2. The backward test**

Give students test questions in advance. Then in small groups their task is to help each other to prepare to answer them in a test. The group should take turns in the role of Explainer (explaining how to answer the question) and Accuracy Checker (verifying that the Explainer is correct and seeking help as needed). The roles can be rotated until everyone understands the material on which they will be tested.

They might also agree the marking scheme for each question.

Then they take the test.

### **3. Students set their own test**

Students revise agreed topics and then in small groups they devise the questions and marking scheme for a class test. You can divide up the topics so that different groups come up with questions for different areas.

Then discuss their suggested questions and agree a set that will be used along with a marking scheme.

Finally, students complete the test and mark each other's work using the agreed marking scheme.

### **4. Students testing each other through quizzes and games**



Watch Athy students testing each other in groups to see how students can enjoy tests!

<https://vimeo.com/16241920>

**Movie**

## Let's get physical

Students select a key moment, theme or idea in a novel or an event in history and create a group sculpture (called a freeze frame) to represent it.



### Movie

Watch students in Cork use group work to create a freeze frame in their English class. <https://vimeo.com/16206974>

Another enjoyable way of integrating drama into group work is Forum Theatre. One group acts out a scene or situation in front of the others, who surround them in a circle. Those watching in the circle are able to stop the action and ask questions of the characters or make suggestions.

## Working together with graphic organisers



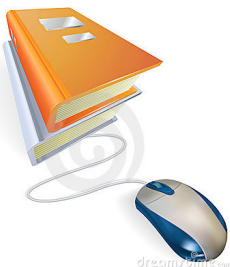
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SEIRBHÍIS TACÁOICHTA  
DARA LEIBHÉAL

### Using Graphic Organisers in Teaching and Learning



A graphic organiser is usually a one-page template with blank areas for the student to fill in with ideas or information. Students can use graphic organisers individually or in groups. These links provide useful templates and ideas on how you can use graphic organisers:

<http://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/GraphicOrganiserFinal.pdf>



### More ideas!

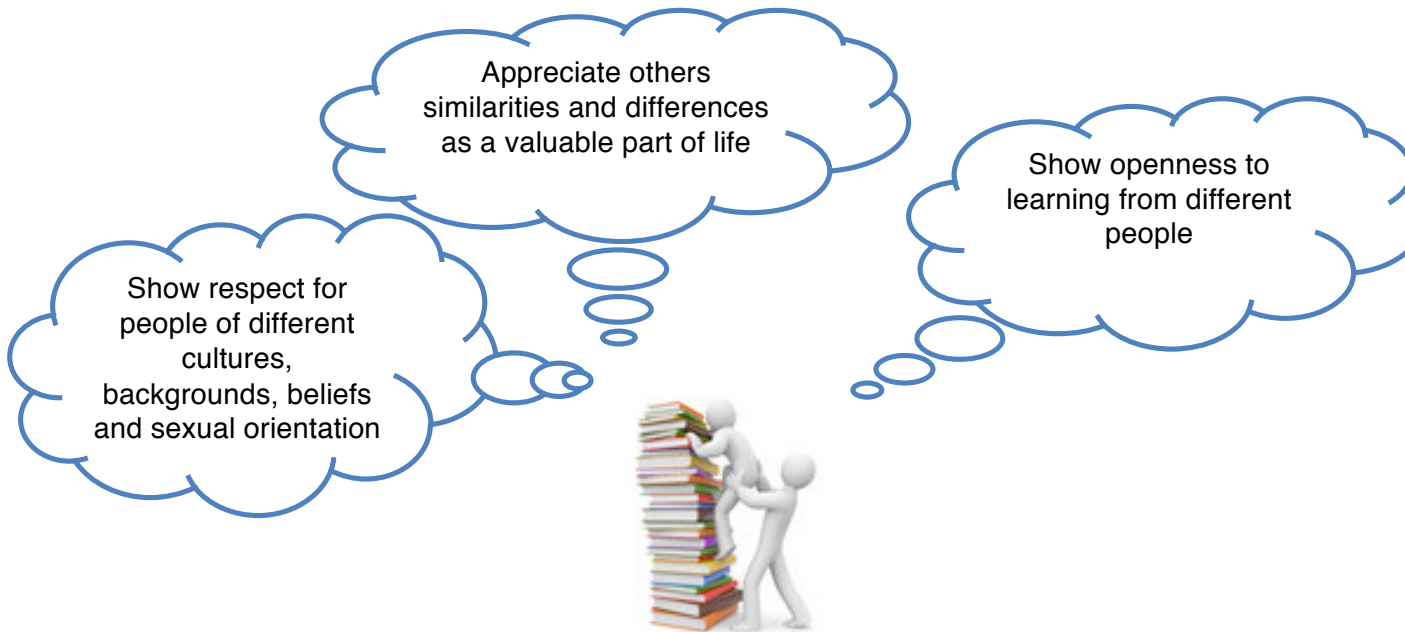
Additional cooperative learning methodologies developed by Barrie Bennett including Inside/Outside Circles; Place Mat; Four Corners; Graffiti; Three Step Interview; and Teams Games

Tournament can be found at this link:

[http://www.instructionalleadership.ie/Co-operative\\_Learning.aspx](http://www.instructionalleadership.ie/Co-operative_Learning.aspx)

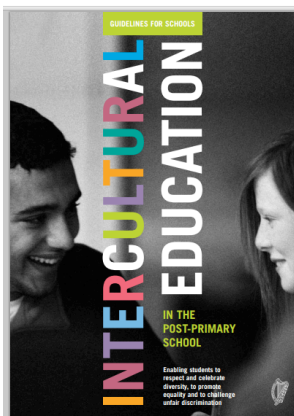
## Respecting Difference

*The learning outcomes of this element are*



Because all classrooms include students with diverse abilities, backgrounds, interests, learning preferences, cultures, beliefs, and other differences teachers and students alike need to develop the skill of respecting difference.

Think about the many different types of diversity that you encounter when working with your students. Make a list and share it with a colleague.



For ideas on building an inclusive and respectful classroom check out

*The NCCA's Guidelines for Intercultural Education in the Post Primary School*

[http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/publications/Interc%20Guide\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/publications/Interc%20Guide_Eng.pdf)



Also, check out *Managing Information and Thinking Toolkit > Being Curious > Helping your students consider different perspectives* for more ideas



## Respecting difference - practical classroom ideas

Let's look at some practical ways that you can help students respect each other and build an inclusive classroom.

Use this check list to prompt your thinking. What other ideas would you add?

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Students regularly work cooperatively during class time and get opportunities to learn from each other.                                       |  |
| All students get a chance to take on different roles and responsibilities within the class.   |  |
| I use differentiated teaching strategies to ensure that all students get a chance to participate and to succeed in classroom activity.        |  |
| I make a conscious effort to use inclusive language.  |  |
| I sometimes use small class surveys to learn about students' backgrounds, needs, interests and ways of learning.                              |  |
| I try to create a culturally diverse learning environment through resources, images and classroom displays.                                   |  |
| I try to include culturally diverse perspectives when planning materials.   |  |
| I regularly remind students of the value of looking at things from difference perspectives.   |  |
| I try to help all students develop a positive sense of their own identity while recognising the normality of diversity.                       |  |
| I use teaching methodologies that will encourage students' to be open to different ideas – discussion, group work, critical questioning, etc. |  |
| I show respect for every student, even those I don't like!  |  |
| I have a world map on the wall to remind us that we live in a global community.   |  |
| I display inspirational quotations by people from different cultures and backgrounds  |  |



## Some examples of critical questioning that you can use with your students

- What is your current understanding of (state issue)?
- Why do you think/feel that way?
- Where have your perceptions and understanding come from?
- How reliable is this information?
- Where have your images come from?
- What might be the role of the media in influencing how you see this situation?
- What about other influences – friends, family, religion?
- Can you imagine an alternative way of seeing this issue? What might it be like?



## Some questions to consider when teaching about another country or culture

- What am I hoping the students will learn? What's the key message I wish to convey?
- How much do I already know? What are my own images of the people and place? Where do they come from? How accurate are they?
- Can I anticipate the students' reaction?
- How can I teach about the place in a way that will enable the students identify with the people's experience?
- Do the materials represent the views and images that people hold about themselves?
- How would I feel if a teacher from this country were a 'fly on the wall'?
- When teaching about Southern countries, how can I avoid falling into negative stereotypes and projecting images of hopeless and helpless people?

## Contributing to making the world a better place

*The learning outcomes of this element are*

Believe in my ability to make a difference

Get involved in my community – including family, school, local, global, virtual – towards creating a better world

Think critically about the world and its problems and propose solutions

Use different technologies and digital media tools to give and receive feedback



*Teaching at its core is a moral profession. Scratch a good teacher and you will find a moral purpose. At the Faculty of Education, University of Toronto, we recently examined why people enter the teaching profession. In a random sample of 1,100 student teachers, the most frequently mentioned theme was **"to make a difference in the lives of students."***

Michael Fullan, article entitled 'Why teachers must become change agents'



Think about why you became a teacher. Was it to make a difference in the lives of students? Or perhaps to make a difference in the world?

Michael Fullan argues that in order to bring about change schools must first of all have a moral purpose. Moral purpose means acting with the intention of making a positive difference. What's the moral

purpose of your school? What's your moral purpose?

Now turning to your students, think about ways that you can help them believe in their ability to make a positive difference. Below are some ideas:

- Share stories of people who have made a positive difference in the world.
- Look for opportunities to bring a justice perspective to topics you are teaching.
- Encourage students to think critically and creatively about the world and its problems and propose solutions.
- When discussing problems or issues in class, prompt students to think about ways that ordinary people, like themselves, can make a difference.
- Encourage them to make connections with others who are working to make a difference.
- Convey to them a sense that no matter what career choice or walk of life they take, there will always be ways of influencing change and contributing to making the world a better place.
- Post a selection of inspirational quotations on a classroom notice board.
- Give students opportunities to take action for change in their school, in the local community and in the wider world.

Help students to understand the root causes of poverty and inequality by asking WHY? Here is one example of how to use the '5 whys' approach to delve deeper.

## The 5 whys



Q: "**Why** can't children go to school?"

A: "Because parents can't buy the books/uniform and pay fees"

Q: "**Why** are they too poor to pay for these?"

A: "Because they earn very little money."

Q: "**Why** are they getting such a poor wage?"

A: "The country is in debt and one of the conditions of getting a World Bank/IMF loan was cut backs in public services and so school fees have been introduced and privatization has led to lower wages and unemployment."

Q: "**Why** don't they join a trade union to demand better wages?"

A: "Because those in power know that they can exploit uneducated workers' desperate for a job"

## Using digital technology to learn collaboratively

*The learning outcomes of this element are*



### Using video to promote collaboration

There are numerous ways to enhance learning in junior cycle through the use of video that will promote responsible collaboration among students.

1. **Adapt a scene** from an event or a play or novel for screen. Take the murder scene from 'The Field' for example or the final scene from 'Of Mice and Men'. Allocate the roles of director, actors, script-writers, wardrobe supervisors and musical director (& whatever else you need). Your director will have to share his/her vision and the rest of the groups will then pitch their ideas. The group must first go over ground rules for successful creative meetings and agree to abide by them.

The criteria for the short film can be set by the teacher and the students to initiate the **style and content** of the piece. For example, you might want the film to concentrate on the tragic element of the story or on a particular point of view.

2. Use a video project to re-enact **a moment in history**.

3. Record an **interview** in the persona of an artist, a poet, a politician, a scientist, a business person. Again, students work in groups to collate information and either script the interview or you might allow students to answer ad lib in persona.
4. Create an **instructional video** for any aspect of the course that would be beneficial to a student's learning. A science experiment, a geography field study, or a guide to writing a successful essay are some ideas. Students prioritise the essential information in consultation with their peers and their teacher and co-operatively produce a 'How To' style video suitable for other students.
5. Using camcorders and editing software (Windows Movie Maker/ imovie) students film and edit a short film that can be displayed at their prize night or parents' night as well as uploaded to a schools' website or VLE.



## Movie

Use <http://monkeyjam.org/download> to create a 'stop-go animation'. This can be effective in interpreting a poem or piece of music.

<http://www.ifi.ie/learn/evening-courses/> is a useful resource for using film in education.

## Using audio to promote collaboration

Recording lines to a play, holding an interview or doing a voice-over for an advertisement can enhance both a students' learning and their collaborative skills. <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> contains a free download called 'audacity' that enables recording directly to a computer/laptop. The Audacity software also allows the user to import and edit track easily. You will also need to download LAME to convert audacity tracks to mp3. This is prompted when you go to the audacity website.

## Using communication spaces

If your school is using a VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) like Moodle, Fronter or Skillspace, you can create a forum for your subject area where students can leave comments. Again, this will need to be managed vigilantly and the expectations of good behaviour that exist within your school are equally if not even more applicable



here. Sanctions for abuse of forum protocol need to be defined within policy and the students need to be fully aware of this before forum activity begins.



### **IT Buddies**

Create a mentor group with students who have advanced IT skills or who, for example, have completed the ECDL course. This could be a TY or senior class who make themselves available one day a week to junior classes. It could also be a student whose IT and mentor skills comes to the attention of a teacher. Mentors can help Junior Cycle students set up email accounts or create power-point presentations or generally help them with ICT related homework. Where a teacher knows a class well this system can be replicated within a Junior Cycle group.

### **Respecting the rights & feelings of others online**

Students can create a project in the style of their choosing on how to stay safe on the internet, and how to promote healthy use of the internet and social networking.

Useful sites:

<http://stopcyberbullying.org/index2.php>

<http://staysafeonline.org/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13910067>

## Making it my own



Take a little time to think about how you can incorporate some of these ideas into your practice.

Consider maintaining a diary or blog noting your actions and how your students are responding. There is no need for this to be a secret.

Why not involve the students, and ask them to keep a journal too, and discuss it with you? And it would be great to share your experiences with some of your colleagues.

### Next steps

1. Review and list all the ideas in this resource or those you gathered whilst watching the short videos.
2. Identify one idea or a manageable number of ideas that you feel you could try out with your students.
3. Plan how you will develop those aspects with identified classes over a period of time. You might even consider how you might establish baselines for pupils' learning which will allow you to judge the impact and learning gain.
4. Over the next month, keep a diary/blog to record changes in the way you are planning and organising teaching and learning, the way you are agreeing outcomes and goals with learners, the ways in which you carry out assessments of learning and the ways in which you are gathering reflections and using the data arising.
5. Record also any benefits you notice for the students and for yourself. Talk to your colleagues and share your experiences and reflections.

Use of adapt these reflection sheets (appendix)

Don't forget to send us your ideas about what works!



## Student's reflection sheet

Class:

Topic:

Date:



Give a brief description of how you participated in class today

The main thing I learned is...

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

The skill/s I developed were...