Key Skills of Junior Cycle

Communicating

This key skill helps students develop good communication skills in all aspects of life, using a variety of media.

Communicating
1. **Listening and expressing myself** 2. **Performing and presenting** 3. **Discussing and debating** 4. **Using language** 5. **Using number** 6. **Using digital technology to communicate**

Here you'll find some tips and ideas teachers can use to help students develop their communication skills. 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 on our website.

Pick one of the elements related to Communicating and read through its learning outcomes.

Then brainstorm (either alone or with a colleague) this question:

Where do you see opportunities for developing this skill within your current day-to-day teaching?
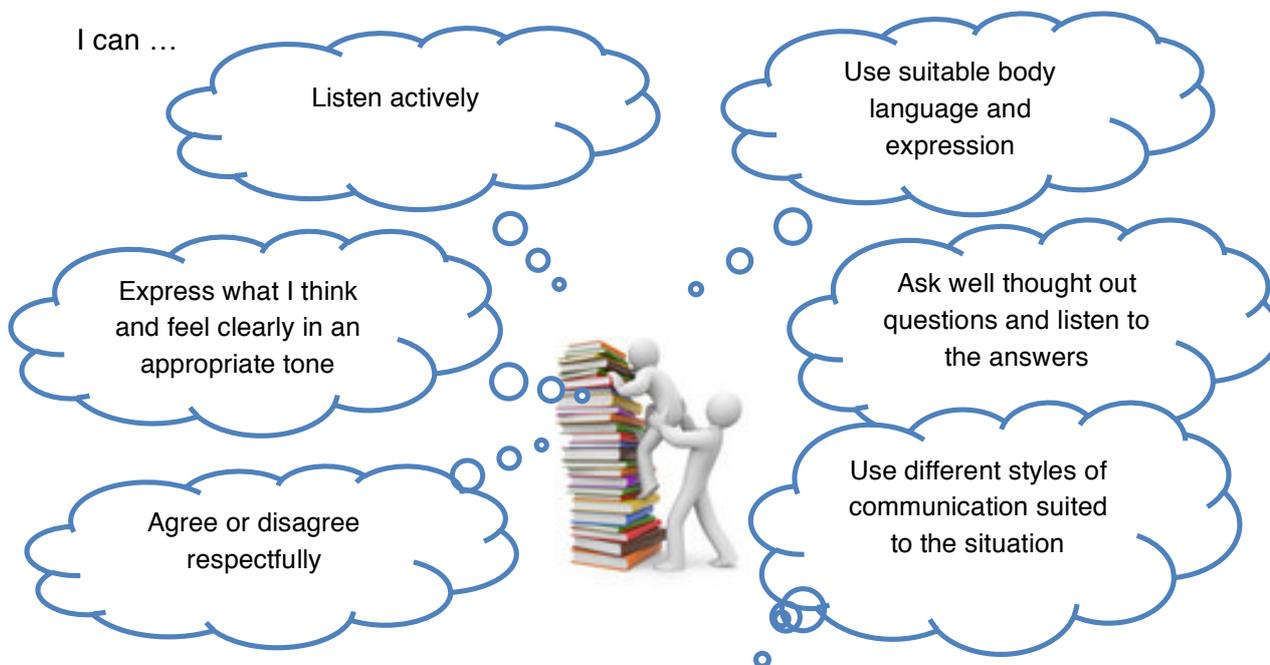
Don't forget to check out the final section, entitled **Making it my own**, which suggests practical steps for getting started and reflection tools for you and your students.

Listening and expressing myself

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." **Winston Churchill**.

The learning outcomes for this element are*:*

I can …

Listen actively

Use suitable body language and expression

Express what I think and feel clearly in an appropriate tone

Ask well thought out questions and listen to the answers

Agree or disagree respectfully

Use different styles of communication suited to the situation

How do you model good listening for your students?

I speak and listen respectfully to each individual	√
I let students finish what they are trying to say, and if they hesitate I encourage them to go on	√
I listen without judgements until the student has finished speaking	√
I express understanding and empathy, as appropriate	√
I care about each student in my class	√
I find something good to say about each student	√
I provide helpful feedback to each student	√
I listen to their feedback on how I can help them to learn better	√
I don't assume certain students are guilty or innocent before listening to the facts	√
I am able to apologize when I treat a student unfairly	√
My body language is consistent with my words? For example, if I ask 'how are you getting on?' then I listen to the response and don't look poised to rush off.	√

Promoting good listening

Here are some suggestions to help create a classroom in which students can listen and express themselves respectfully.

Each student is given a couple of minutes to think about a topic they could talk about easily for 1 minute, such as what they did over the weekend, their favourite movie/actor/sportsperson, or it might be related to a current topic of study.

The students will work in pairs through three activities. Alternatively, they can work in threes, with two talking and one observing and giving feedback.

Activity 1: The students face their partners and talk about their topic at the same time for 1 minute.

Activity 2: The students sit back to back with their partners and talk about their topic one at a time; the teacher will signal when it is time to changeover.

Activity 3: The students face each other and take turns talking about their topic one at a time; the teacher will signal when it is time to changeover.

Ask the students to reflect on the three activities and share their feelings. Some questions: How did you feel when you both spoke at the same time? How did you feel when you were talking but you couldn't see your partner? What was different about the third activity? Why?

Using the **Placemat technique**, ask the students to list the factors which they feel are important to show they are listening. Students work individually, first listing their factors on their section on the placemat. Then they share their ideas with their group and come up with the group's top five. Hang the placemats on the wall for all students to see each group's top five. Select the top five factors that occur most often and write these up as a classroom charter.

Videos on communicating

For ideas on improving listening and communication check out History Chanel – Secrets of Body Language   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dW9ztSUGY_Q

and David Coleman's website: www.davidcoleman.ie/talks . These short videos by David Coleman might be of interest – *The role of gestures, The importance of eye contact, How we use questions, The skills of echoing, Tone of voice.*

Top five traits of a good listener

(adapted from [www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm)](www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm)

1. **Pay attention**

   Look at the speaker directly. Put aside distracting thoughts. Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal. Notice the speaker's body language as well as what they are actually saying.

2. **Show that you're listening**

   Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention. Nod occasionally. Smile and use other facial expressions. Notice your posture and make sure it is open. . Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and uh huh.

3. **Provide feedback**

   As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.

   Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing: "Sounds like you are saying…,".

   Ask questions to clarify certain points. "What do you mean when you say?" "Is this what you mean?"

4. **Don't jump in**

   Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message. Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions.

   Don't interrupt with counter arguments.

5. **Respond appropriately**

   Be open, honest and sensitive in your response. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or putting him or her down.

   Treat the other person in a way that you think he or she would want to be treated.

   Tip:

   If you're finding it particularly difficult to concentrate on what someone is saying, try repeating their words mentally as they speak– this will reinforce their message and help you stay focused.

Key Skills of Junior Cycle
Working with Others

Go to the *Working with Others* toolkit for more listening and communicating activities.

Print off this poster at

http://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Active%20Listening.pdf

Some quick strategies that can be used in any class….

One way of helping students **to ask well thought-out questions and to listen to the answer** is to get students to read a passage or listen to or watch a short recording. Then instead of the teacher asking questions about the piece, invite the students to come up with really good questions to ask each other in pairs.

Fish bowl

Fishbowl activities encourage students to listen actively to their peers. A fishbowl gives the teacher an opportunity to hear the experiences, ideas, and feedback of students while giving the students an opportunity to be active in their learning.

How does it work?

1. Divide the class up into small groups. Each group writes down their thoughts and views on the particular question or topic on a piece of flip chart paper 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 contains the fish, and one person from each original group should sit in this small circle. The fish 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 from the fish group volunteers to facilitate the discussion amongst the fish.
3. 4. Students in the large outer circle are the fish-bowl and they are the listeners – they must listen very carefully to what the fish are saying. The other students standing in the outer circle listen to their views, noting what they agree with or disagree with but do not contribute until the inner group has finished their discussion.
4. After some time a listener who disagrees with what is being said or wants to add something to the discussion, can go up and tap a fish gently on the shoulder. This means that they will swap places.
5. Finally, the discussion is opened up to the whole class informing them that they can comment on or ask questions about the discussion points given.

Think-Pair- Share Square This strategy allows you to quickly engage the whole class.

Think: The students spend time in silence writing or thinking about their own ideas.

Pair: Students turn to the person next to them to discuss their ideas with a partner.

Share: Students share their answers with another group

Square: Two pairs work together as a new group to complete the task of agreeing on a response from the first two answers that the pairs have come up with.

 Back-to-back

Students sit on chairs in pairs back-to-back so that they are close enough to hear each other.

They decide who is A and who is B. A is given visual material and B is given pencil and paper.

A describes the visual to B, while B draws it, aiming to make a perfect replica which is the exact size and shape, complete with details and labelling. The person drawing is not allowed to peek and the person describing is not allowed to draw in the air with their fingers to help.

This is a cooperative listening exercise. B can ask as many questions as s/he likes and A's job is to be as helpful as possible.

When the time is up the partners compare the original with the attempted copy.

This could be used to draw diagrams in **geography** or **science**, or in **Maths** class to practice angles, lengths of lines, diameters, etc. or in **history** to draw significant places or adapted for **language class** where the directions and questioning is done using the target language.

Credit: Paul Ginnis, *The Teacher's Toolkit*, p 69

Read and Explain Pairs

This is an excellent strategy to use whenever you give material to students to read. Students are more likely to concentrate on the content in cooperative pairs than if they are reading individually or if the is teacher reading at the top of the class. This strategy is useful for any subject where dense information has to be absorbed and understood by students.
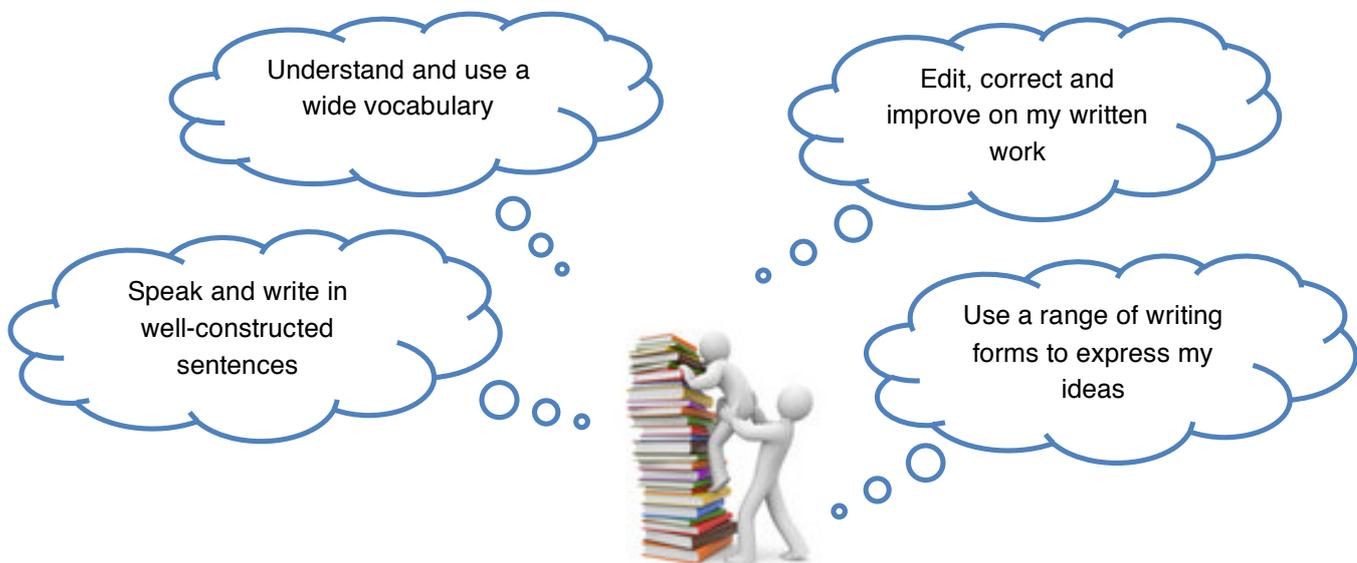
How does it work?

- Divide material into sections/paragraphs
- Students form pairs A and B

- Both read section one
- Assign roles:
- A is SUMMARISER whose job is to turn page down and summarise the contents of the paragraph in one's own words 39
- B is CHECKER whose job is to listen carefully and correct any mis-statements and add in anything omitted.
- Both read next section
- Reverse roles
- Continue until all the material is read and the general meaning agreed and understood by the pair

Using language

The learning outcomes of this element are:

Understand and use a wide vocabulary

Edit, correct and improve on my written work

Speak and write in well-constructed sentences

Use a range of writing forms to express my ideas

Here are some ways that students can use can improve their oral and written skills in any classroom setting.

Paragraph partying

Teacher writes a topic sentence onto a piece of paper. Students will work in groups of 4 to complete the assignment. The idea of the task is that each student takes turns in adding a well-constructed and informative sentence related to the topic in order to complete a good paragraph.

The teacher may decide to bring this strategy one level further by giving a provocative or controversial topic sentence as a way to elicit different viewpoints and opinions, thereby creating academic controversy.

For example, in a CSPE class where the class group have been discussing the Oireachtas, a teacher could use a leading statement such as, *"The Seanad should be abolished as it serves absolutely no purpose."*

Students would then be expected to argue this point within their group, again taking turns and contributing their ideas one by one. In this case, paragraph partying can be used to get the students to express their opinions on a topic and to respond to conflicting opinions.

Examples

Appendix 1

Paragraph Partying – Group Work

Each student is required to add detailed sentences in turn to complete a paragraph explaining the work of the St. Vincent De Paul Society in Ireland. Each Student must contribute a minimum of two sentences.

Opening Sentence:

The Saint Vincent De Paul Society is an international organisation that was founded in Paris on April 23, 1833.

St. Vincent De Paul is a non-profitable organisation that promotes self suffiencey.

The society was founded by Frederic Ozanam on 23rd April 1833. Fredric was born in Milan in 183.

The aims of the society are to fight poverty in all its forms through person to person interaction.

St. Vincent De Paul do not believe in forcing help onto people, but only give advice when asked for.

Frederic and his friends believed that Christian help and friendship were the best means of social justice. Frederic died at the age of 40 in 1853, Pope John Paul II, beatified him in 1997.

The needs of the people in the society are far greater than just financial help, so visits to the sick, lonely and imprisoned make up alot of their work.

Hazel Rachel
Shannon Nicole   Appendix 4

Paragraph Partying – Group Work

Each student is required to add detailed sentences in turn to complete a
paragraph giving the groups opinion on the following point:

"The Seanad should be abolished as it serves absolutely no purpose"

Each Student must contribute a minimum of 2 sentences

We are for the Seanad being abolished simply because
members of the Seanad can only initiate, and revise legislation
and can only make reccomendations but not amendments.
It costs the state around 20 million a year to staff and run
the Seanad when their is only 60 members. We think this
is disgraceful when 20 million is going to the Seanad
when their is only 60 members, when this money could
be going towards helping Ireland

With a single chamber, the process
of law making would be simpler and
less complex. Their would also be no
controversy between the Seanad and
the dáil.

The Seanad is more common in bigger
federal countries/countries with deep divisions
As a result Ireland does not need a Seanad.

Expanding headlines

The idea of this strategy is to encourage students to write more complex sentences. This can be used in the majority of subjects which need students to expand on answers more thoroughly.

In class, the teacher will write a short headline on the board and will then ask students, either individually or in groups, to expand on the headline using more detailed information. For example the teacher will write up, *"Magnitude 8 earthquake hits Pacific Ocean"*. Students would be expected to draw on their prior knowledge and vocabulary associated with this topic or the teacher may provide a word bank to assist them in the task. The students' task is to read the headline and then agree how they could continue to expand on it by providing more detailed and complex information. For example they might begin as follows: *"Last night an earthquake struck in the Pacific Ocean causing a Tsunami to hit the Solomon Islands wiping out three villages and killing up to 50 people."*

Verbal football

Explain to the class that they will be split into 2 teams and aim of the game is to test their knowledge and understanding.

As with all football matches the success of the team depends on training. Training involves the team going over the topic, checking facts and understanding with each other and memorising details that they may need to answer the teacher's questions.

When the training period is over, all books and notes are put away and the Captains of each team spin a coin to see who goes first. The team that kicks off gets the first question from the teacher. If they answer correctly within 5 seconds then they retain possession and another question is asked by the teacher. If they manage to answer 3 questions correctly in succession then it's a goal! Once a person has answered a question on the team they cannot answer again until everyone else on the team has had a go. If a player answers incorrectly then possession goes to the other team. Fouls are committed when someone answers out of turn and the referee (teacher) can use red and yellow cards. The winning team is the one with more goals at the end of the session.

Credit: Paul Ginnis, *The Teacher's Toolkit*, p 166

Some ideas to help students to understand and use a wide vocabulary

Listomania
List as many words connected to a topic or concept as you can. Students can have fun doing this electronically using apps and websites such as www.wordle.net.

Word of the day
Foster an awareness and love of words and language by writing up a word of the day at the beginning of class and encouraging students to use that word during class.

Pictionary
In small groups or pairs students are given a set of **key words** related to a topic that has been studied. The cards are facing down and each student takes turns in drawing a picture to represent the word while his/her partner or team mates have to guess what s/he is drawing against the clock.

Variation: Instead of having to draw the word, the students can pick up a card and explain it without using the word on the card and their team has to guess the word.

Websites

Puzzlemaker	Lots of different types of puzzles to make
Wordlearner	Crosswords, wordsearches, bingo, matching and more
Wordsearches	Make you own wordsearch
Skillwise	BBC educationl website to improve literacy and numeracy in adults
Quizlet	Flashcards, Games and Tests
Studystack	Flashcards, Matching, Crosswords, Tests, Quizzes
Wordle	Create your own Word Cloud
Tagxedo	Create your own Word Shape

Ideas on how to help students to **edit, correct and improve written work** can be found in the **Managing Myself** toolkit.

Here is some advice on getting started

Begin to build the skills of self-assessment through spoof assessment

Students won't automatically know how to assess their own work and this skill can be developed by looking at other pieces of work. Either photocopy a piece of work or project it on a screen. It can be a piece of work created by the teacher or an anonymous piece of work from a student in a previous class. Agree with the class how they might go about marking it. What would be the characteristics of a good answer? What are they looking out for? How would they assign marks? When the criteria for success and marking scheme have been agreed then set the students to work in pairs.

Working collaboratively, students have to identify the strengths and shortcomings (if any) of the piece of work, and mark it. In addition they must agree feedback comments beginning with phrases such as: '*This is good because*…' and *'Next time you might try…"*. Remind them that they must refer to the criteria for success when giving feedback.

Marking and evaluating their own work

Once students have become familiar with 'spoof' assessment (explained above), then they can begin to look more critically at their own work and you can begin to introduce peer assessment. Through 'spoof' assessment students have gained some skills in assessing work, and are clear on what a good piece of work looks like.

See sample template for self-assessment of a piece of written work.

Self-assessment for written work (e.g. essay)

Please think about each skill carefully and assess how well you think you did. Then score each one as follows:

Red:	Needs improving
Amber:	Average/okay
Green:	Good

Skill	Red	Amber	Green
Neat presentation			
Correct spelling			
Writing in your own words			
Did you use capital letters, full stops and commas well?			
Structure Does your work have an introduction, a middle and conclusion? Did you use paragraphs?			
Did you • give evidence or examples to back up each argument? • summarise and draw conclusions?			
Did you use your research skills to find information - the library, the internet, asking people for information, etc?			
Did you ask a friend to read it and offer suggestions on how it might be improved?			
Did you proof read your finished assignment and make changes before handing it up?			

Did you hand in the work on time?			

Adapted from www.geoffpettty.com

The learning outcomes of this element are:

Express my ideas and emotions through performance & presentation such as visual art, music, drama, design and graphics

Make choices about how I can best present my ideas to others, taking account of my audience

Communicate using a variety of styles, including role play, drama, posters and storytelling
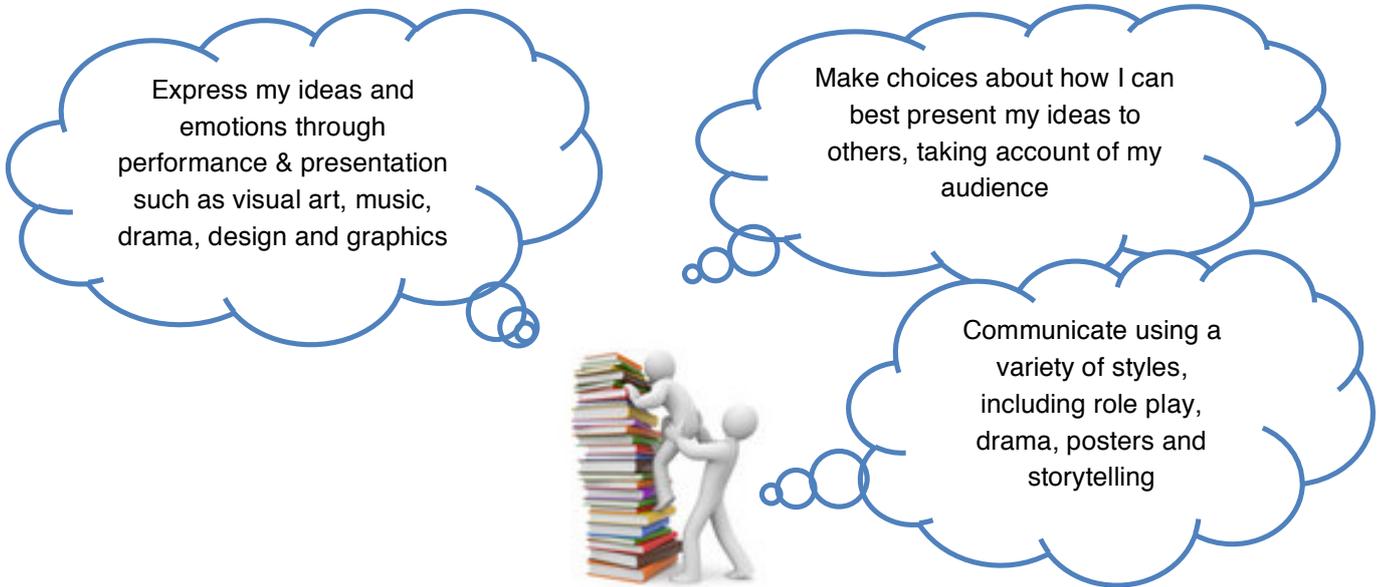
All students can benefit from expressing their knowledge, ideas and emotions through performance and presentation. Remember, students can 'perform' in many styles and forms suited to their subject and to their own personal choice. Consider some of the following methods as a form of presentation: speech, poster presentation, storytelling, demonstration of experiments, drama, role-play, rap, poetry or song. Digital technology also offers ways of presenting such as podcasting, videoing, blogging, Audacity, Prezi or PowerPoint.

It works best when students themselves decide how they will present their ideas to others.

Start gently to build confidence with some classroom games

Presenting to classmates can be very natural and easy for many students. However, it can be an intimidating experience for many students. The aim is to gradually build self-confidence within all students. Use games to gently and gradually introduce all students to speaking in front of their peers.

Here are some classroom games specifically aimed at students who may find class presentations difficult. The games begin by getting students comfortable talking in pairs and small groups.

Inner–outer circles

How it works

1. Number students 1 and 2. Put all the number 1's in an inner circle, all the 2's in an outer circle. All the 1's should be in an inner circle and facing the 2's in the outer circle. In other words, everyone should be face to face.

Inner-outer circle diagram
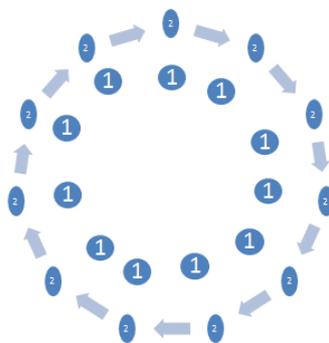
2. Photocopy these questions (or present on a data projector) and give a copy to the number 1's..

Sample questions for students

(Or you might devise subject-based questions based on a current topic students are familiar with.)

 a. What was the best movie you ever saw and why did you like it?

 b. What qualities make a good friend?

 c. What TV show do like or dislike and why?

 d. If you could choose, what job do you think would be the best? Or worst?

 e. Name three things you like about living in your area.

 f. Name three things you dislike about your area.

 g. What is the most fun you have ever had at school?

 h. Would you rather be good looking or rich?

 i. What do you want to be when you leave school?

 j. What are some things that scare you?

 k. If you could go back in history, who would you like to meet?

 l. If you were a type of animal, what would you be and why?

m.   What's your earliest memory?

n.   Is there something that most people don't know about you?

o.   If someone were to make a movie about your life, who would you hope would play you?

p.   If you could visit any country in the world, where would you go?

q.   What's your favourite food?

r.   Tell me a joke.

s.   If you won the lottery, what would be the first thing you would buy?

t.   What's your favourite childhood cartoon?

u.   What's your favourite sport?

v.   Would you rather watch a sitcom, a reality show, a police drama, a legal drama, or a medical drama? Or something else? Why?

3   Before you begin, you should set out some ground rules. Explain to the class that this is a speaking and listening exercise. As each person answers a question they must be listened to and respected.

4   For each question, students should exchange information with the person facing them. Then after each question the teacher says, "Inner circle move to the left." A question is asked for every rotation.

5   The teacher should float around the pairs. After every question the teacher might ask a student to repeat the answer they just heard. This may only take a few seconds but it is briefly introducing students to talking to their entire class.

A game of "That's true/ that's false."

1   Each student comes up with 10 sentences about a topic. Some are true, some are false.

2   Students mix randomly and everyone finds a partner. In each pair, one person says a sentence such as, "The hand is the part of the body that has the most bones". Their partner decides if it is true or false and says so. Then the partner takes a turn in reading a statement and invites the other student to say whether it is true or false.

3   After each round, the teacher asks a student to share their question and answer with the entire class. The teacher should attempt to draw further information out of the student. Such as, How many bones are in the hand? How many bones are

in the human body? This may only take 10- 20 seconds per student but it is gradually introducing each student to talking to their entire class.

4   Students drift on to find a different partner repeating the process until all the statements are finished and a good number of students have spoken to the class.

Speed dating

'Speed dating' is a commonly used method in language learning but it can be adapted for us in many different classes. It involves students sitting in pairs opposite each other and talking about themselves for two minutes. The teacher rings a bell at the end of two minutes and students move to find different partner and repeat the process.

Using Jigsaw for discussion

Jigsaw learning is another good way of developing confident communication skills within your class. Students are arranged into groups and each group is given a different topic or questions to discuss. They must participate in the discussion group and listen carefully. After a set time, they move around so that the groups are mixed up (as shown below). They now take turns summarizing the discussion that took place in their base group.

Jigsaw Technique
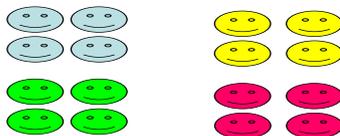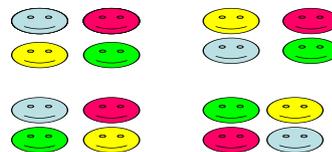
Building presentation skills

Ask students to think about the question - what are the important elements of a good presentation? In small groups come up with a set of tips.

Once the students have compiled their set of tips you can ask them to compare it with the following

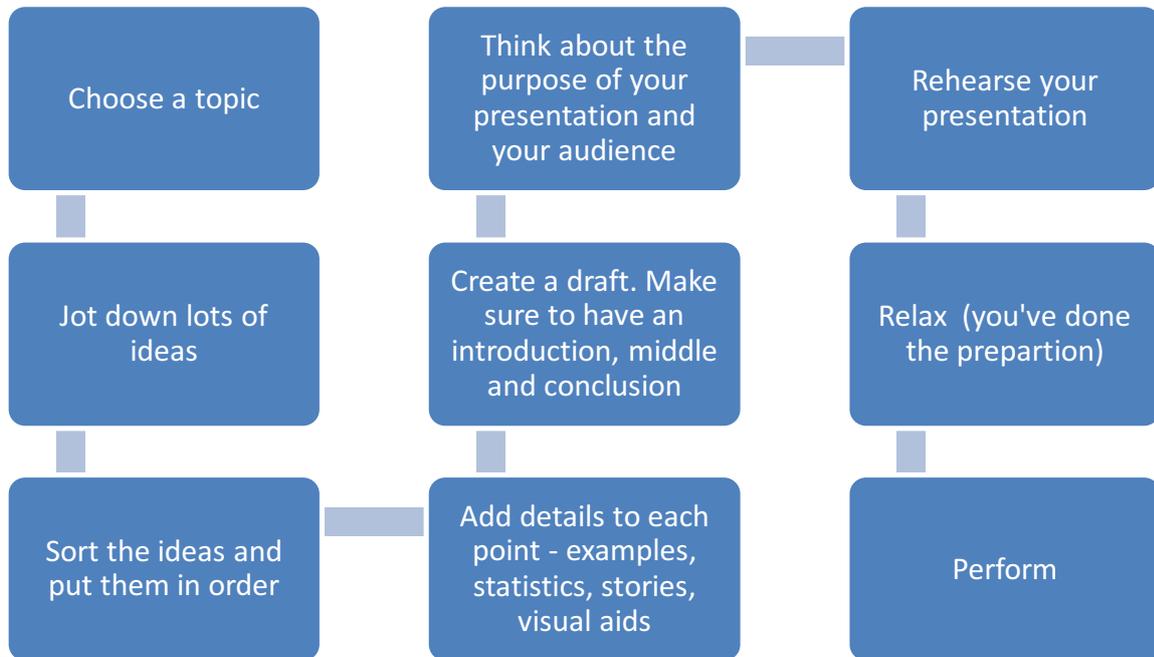| Some tips on an effective presentation |
| --- |
| An excellent presentation does not require a brilliant orator – anyone can do it. |
| Speak naturally and in your own accent. |
| Making a good presentation starts with good preparation. |
| Research your topic and know your subject |
| Be prepared. |
| A presentation needs a beginning, middle and end. |
| Make a dramatic opening to grab attention |
| The best presentations tell their audience things they didn't know and/or give them insights they didn't have. |
| Speak sufficiently loud so that the furthest member of your audience can hear you clearly. Take the opportunity to move around a little, which will help to command attention. |
| Look at your audience. Sweep your eyes around the room. Use visual aids. |
| Rehearse |
| Relax. Pause for a couple of moments before actually starting your delivery and take a breath between each part. |

Use short extracts of videos to show your students examples of good presentations.

Movie

Prepare a two minute presentation

Ask students to think of a topic of interest to them. For example, it might be a hobby, something they feel strongly about or it might be a topic related to a subject they are currently studying.

Then suggest that students follow these steps:

Choose a topic	Think about the purpose of your presentation and your audience	Rehearse your presentation
Jot down lots of ideas	Create a draft. Make sure to have an introduction, middle and conclusion	Relax (you've done the prepartion)
Sort the ideas and put them in order	Add details to each point - examples, statistics, stories, visual aids	Perform

Learning from the experts

Photocopy some quotes (or present on a data projector if available). Ask students to discuss what each quote means and how each quote may relate to their own presentation.

"There are always three speeches for every one you actually gave. The one you practiced, the one you gave, and the one you wish you gave." **Dale Carnegie**.

"It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech." **Mark Twain**.

"90% of how well the talk will go is determined before the speaker steps on the platform." **Somers White***.*

"The best way to conquer stage fright is to know what you're talking about." **Michael H Mescon***.*

"There are only two types of speakers in the world. 1. The nervous and 2. Liars."

Mark Twain.

Providing Peer Feedback on Presentations

Photocopy the following checklist (or present on a data projector if available).

Did the speaker…	🙂	🙁
Speak naturally in their own accent?		
Show they had prepared their presentation?		
Have a beginning, middle end?		
Tell their audience things they didn't know?		
Research their topic?		
Pause for a couple of moments before starting their delivery?		
Command attention?		
Sweep their eyes around their audience?		
Use their hands expressively?		
Make a dramatic opening to grab attention?		
Know their subject?		
Your overall comment on what was good and one thing that could be improved next time.		

Peer assessment of an oral presentation

Name of student presenting: …………………………………………….   Topic………………………………………..

		Comment Be sure to give helpful and constructive feedback
Content		
Structure – a beginning, middle and end.		
Ideas and logic		
Knowledge of the subject		
Delivery		
Body language and eye contact		
Voice – pace, volume, clarity		
Enthusiasm		
Use of visual aids, props or ICT		
Language		
Good choice of words, quotes, imagery		
Use of rhetorical questions, repetition, and dramatic statements		

Signed:

Adapted from *Supporting Active Teaching and Learning: Oral Presentations*, Transition Year Curriculum Support Service, 2000

Self-assessment of a presentation

One good thing about my presentation today …	One thing I could have done better…
I found it difficult to …	I might have done better if …

Next time I aim to…

Signed:

Date:

Using peer to peer presentations

Peer-to-peer presentation is a methodology that involves students teaching each other. This is very effective as students must understand a topic in order to teach it to their peers. This type of activity boosts self-confidence and also builds strong communication skills as students must think how best to transmit the information.

A sample lesson

1. Give students different topics to research and let them know they will have to teach/present their topic to a small group using a peer teaching method.

2. As teacher, you may provide the basic background information for each topic to the students. Students then plan how they will present their information individually or in small groups to other students.

3. Alternatively, you could allow the students to collect the background information by researching the topic in groups. Provide each group with specific tasks they must meet within a given time frame. Explain to them that every member of the group must present in some way.

4. Try not to force a student to perform. A quiet student or a student with poor social skills or speech difficulties may simply introduce the topic. Presentations do not have to be long. Some students may be happier presenting to a small group, others to the entire class. The teacher must try to gauge their confidence levels.

5. Encourage different methods of presentation. Visual aids will help students to present. This will remove some of the anxiety of public-speaking and help students think about how to structure the information so it makes sense to themselves and to their peers.

6. Remember students can present in many styles. Suggest using role play, speech, drama, posters, storytelling, experiments, rap, poetry or song. Alternatively consider using digital technology, such as podcasting, videoing, blogging, Audacity, Prezi or PowerPoint.

    Tip - Consider changing the classroom layout to reduce students' fears.

Examples of peer explaining in different subjects

English: Pupils teach poetic terms such as alliteration, assonance, symbol, simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, image, etc.

History: Pupils teach Roman terms such as forum, coliseum, senator, gladiator, ludus, emperor, stolla, palla, etc

Geography: Pupils teach river terms such as source, tributary, trunk, bed, delta, estuary, meander, ox bow lake, etc.

Science: Pupils teach definitions or scientific terminology

1. Students may research their term using a reference book or technology.
2. Students prepare to present using a poster.
3. Students then present to their peers as they explain their term using their poster.
4. Students write down what they are learning as the meanings are presented to them.

Using numbers and data

The learning outcomes of this element are:

Use numerical data for a range of different purposes

Present, interpret, and compare information and data using charts/diagrams

Discuss the following with your colleagues:

- How do you currently use numerical data in your classroom?
- Do students use numerical data for a range of different purposes?
- Do students present, interpret and compare information using diagrams or charts in class
- How might you incorporate the element of *Using Numbers and Data* into the particular subjects you teach?

Useful website resources

The National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) has developed useful classroom resources http://www.nbss.ie/model-of-support/level-1/literacy-learning-behaviour/academic-literacy-learning-and-study-skills-sup

Another useful site is the JCSP site http://www.jcspliteracy.ie/num_initiatives.php

The PDST site is also worth checking out http://cmsnew.pdst.ie/node/2835

Now let's look at some subject-specific classroom ideas to help students *use numerical data for a range of different purposes*

Irish and Modern Languages

Language café: Students divide into groups to plan a café. Suggested tasks are below. The menu items should reflect the target language e.g. French café could have croissants, etc. Students set up the café on a chosen day and act as customers and staff with all conversation in the target language. Students must be able to correctly add up the cost of purchases and to calculate what change is due. At the end of the day they can tot up their total income against expenses and find out if they made a profit.

Suggested tasks:

1. *Setting up the café.   2. Menu design and printing.*

3. *Pricing of items.   4. Purchasing of food and drink items.*

R.E. and CSPE

Many social justice and human rights topics can be explored using statistical data.
There are student-friendly materials on global issues at www.developmenteducation.ie.
Here are just a couple of useful links to get started:
http://www.developmenteducation.ie/consumption/
http://www.developmenteducation.ie/issues-and-topics/hunger-map/living_in_the_hollow_of_plenty_hunger_resource.pdf.
The Economic Policy Institute is another interesting website with topical information
http://www.epi.org/types/economic-snapshots/.

Students can also compile their own surveys to investigate opinions on topics related to their course.

Home Economics

Home Economics provides many opportunities for using numbers and data, such as:

- Working out quantities of ingredients needed for recipes. If you have to make double the normal quantity of a recipe, write out the new quantities of each ingredient.
- Calculating the cost of food items per unit.
- Being able to set the temperature and timer correctly on an oven.
- Examining statistical data on consumption habits, family income, social issues, etc.
- Surveying food labels for quantities of different ingredients, the net weight (excluding packaging), use by and best before dates, etc.

SPHE

In SPHE students can gather information through questionnaires, surveys and personal records and present the findings in graphic format. They also learn to interpret information presented in graphic form, for example, health and nutritional data about recommended daily intake of food types.

PE

Measure your pulse rate for one minute. Repeat the process twice and calculate your average pulse rate. Repeat this process at monthly intervals. Has your pulse rate changed? Does this indicate an improvement in fitness levels?

Use a trundle wheel to measure out a specific distance for a class race e.g. 100m. Record t

he time it takes each student to run the distance. Calculate the average time for the class.

History/English

Timelines are a useful strategy to record key moments or events from a novel, play or a history lesson in a sequential format. They can help students place events in chronological order and remember them more easily than pure text or bullet points.

English

Students can use a chart to show the different emotions or themes of a poem or a text. Or they can use a graph to plot the rising tension in a novel or play.

Now let's look at further ways to help your students *present, interpret, and compare information and data using charts/diagrams*

Flowcharts

A flowchart is a diagram constructed from connected shapes representing a process or a series of steps. Here is an example of a simple flowchart.
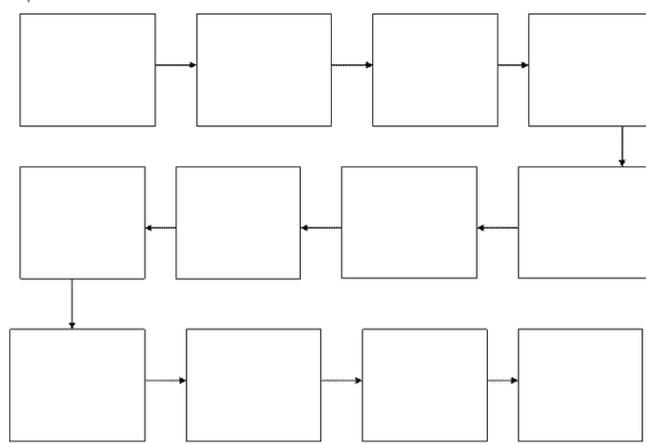

Flowcharts can be used to break down a complex process into individual steps in subjects such as Maths, Science, Home Economics, Business, languages, technology subjects and others, where a number of steps have to be followed.


For more ideas on how to use graphic organisers and mind-mapping to communicate ideas and thoughts (See *Managing Information and Thinking* toolkit p.18-21)

Decision Trees
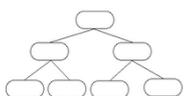
A decision tree diagram is a diagram that represents the possible consequences of a series of decisions in some situation. Begin by posing a question, problem or dilemma. Then identify possible answers. Then probe the consequences of taking each one.
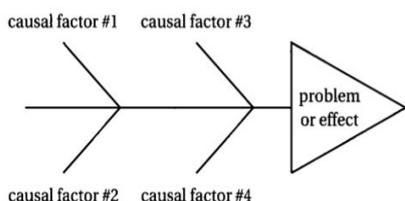
Fishbone diagrams

Fishbone diagrams are so-called because they resemble fishbones. A fishbone diagram is a graphical representation of the different factors that contribute to an effect. In a typical fishbone diagram, the effect is usually a problem to be resolved, and is placed at the "fish head". The causes of the effect are then laid out along the "bones", and classified into different types along the branches. Further causes can be laid out alongside further side branches.

Causal networks

Causal networks are diagrams that indicate causal connections using arrows. Here is a simple example where an arrow from A to B indicates that A is the cause of B.
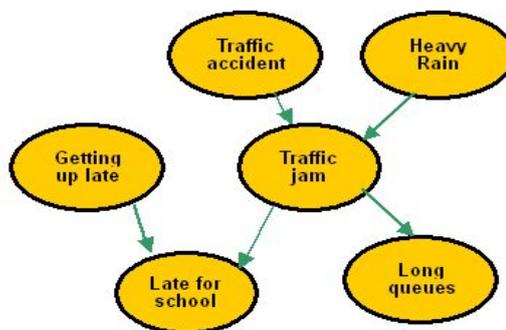
One advantage of these diagrams is that they give a big picture of the main causal factors leading to the effects and are very useful in brainstorming sessions.

Class activity - convert the content

You can select a discursive piece of writing from a newspaper or use a text that discusses a course related topic.

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How it works

Students read a piece of text that contains a discussion. Their task is to convert it into a mind map, a flow diagram or a storyboard.

To do this students must first track the key ideas and see the steps a writer takes in setting out a discussion and in reaching a conclusion.

Then to create their own discursive piece of writing on a given topic, students reverse the process, beginning with the mind map, flow diagram or storyboard before writing up their discussion. If the discussion is to be presented aloud, students may use these formats as cue cards. Converting information in this way can also be used as a study aid at home.

Using Information from Surveys

Science example

Take a class survey of inherited genetic traits. Give each student a worksheet with a table of ten genetic traits. Using a PowerPoint presentation to show each trait, students record whether they have the trait or not. The information for the whole class is compiled into a class set of results. This can then be used to make a pie chart or bar charts to visually illustrate the information.

Genetic Traits Survey   **Name:** _____   **Date:**

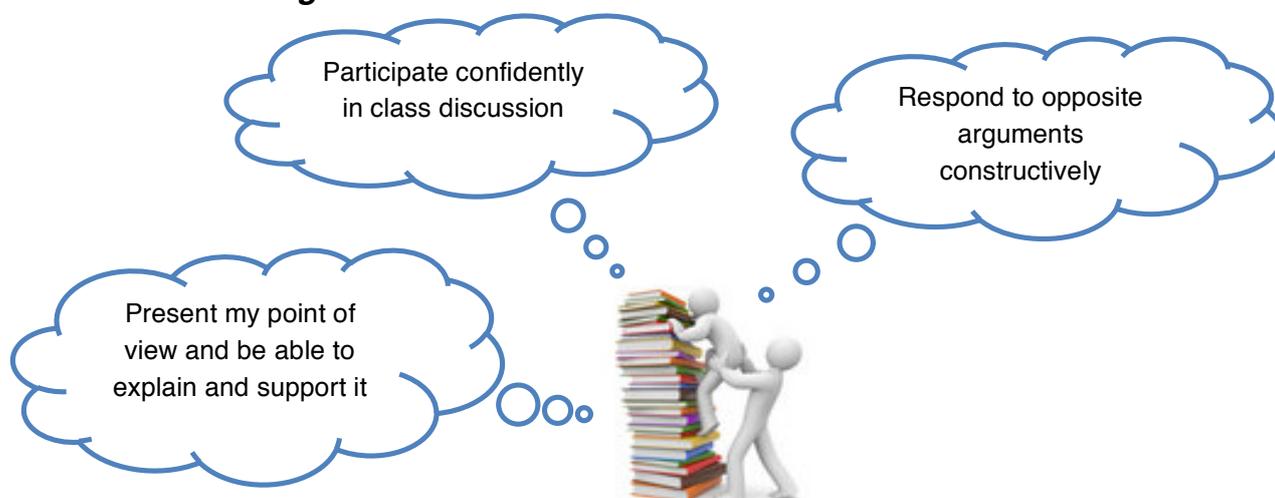| TRAIT	YES	NO
1. I have hitchhikers thumb		
2. I can roll my tongue		
3. I am right handed		
4. My earlobes are detached		
5. I have dimples		
6. I have freckles		
7. I have naturally curly hair		
8. I have a widows peak		
9. I cross my left thumb over my right when I clasp my hands together		
10. I can see the colours red and green		

Useful website resources

http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/01/great-infographic-making-tools-for.html

http://www.nbss.ie/sites/default/files/publications/summarising_maps_-
_comprehension_strategy_handout__copy_2.pdf

http://office.microsoft.com/en-001/excel-help/using-charts-and-diagrams-in-the-classroom-
HA001045092.aspx.

Discussing and debating

The learning outcomes of this element are:

Participate confidently
in class discussion

Respond to opposite
arguments
constructively

Present my point of
view and be able to
explain and support it

Prepared to discuss

Tell the students that the class will be discussing a certain topic the following day or give longer notice if more preparation is needed. Outline the form of the discussion and what he/she will be expected to contribute.

Direct the students to the material that will help them in the discussion, emphasising that every opinion will need to be backed up by a reasonable argument.

Pre-teach useful phrases such as:

I think that…..

I think this because….. (Evidence)

I know others have thought this too because…. (Quotations, anecdote, reference)

I know some people say ….. but my response to this is …… (Countering an argument)

I wonder what would have happened if…../I wonder what will happen when….

You can follow a selection of live debates at this website
http://www.debate.org/debates/education/.

Speed debating

Choose current affairs topics or school related topics and write lots of statements on postcards. For younger students, it is a good idea if they have researched some information on the chosen topics beforehand.

Examples: Homework is a pointless activity.

Reality TV programmes have an adverse effect on young people.

The school curriculum covers everything we need for life.

Teachers are redundant in the 21st century.

Students sit opposite each other in rows. The topic cards are face down on the desk. The students have 3 minutes between them to discuss the topic on the card.
After 3 minutes the bell rings and each student moves to the right.
They are each now seated at a different desk and with a new partner. They pick up the topic card on that desk and begin the process again.

To ensure that the students are staying on task, the teacher can pause the discussion at intervals and choose students to summarise the discussion they have had so far.
To complete the task, distribute large sheets of paper with the discussion topic written on it and ask students to write the most interesting statements/opinions they have made or heard under each topic.

Students can then use these discussion pages as springboards for their own writing on that given topic.

Variations:

1. Students are divided into A's and B's where A must agree with the thesis statement and B must disagree.
2. Invite the students to create interesting questions for discussion on a text or topic that they are studying.

Reflection task:

How well did I contribute to the discussion today?

How did I feel? Was it difficult or easy for me? Why?

What would have improved my contribution?

What would I do differently the next time?

Take your turn and say it thrice!

In trying to generate discussion or debate in a classroom, it can be frustrating when students feel they don't know what to say. Practising this activity is a fun way to build confidence for everyone while learning.

Students organise themselves into groups of 6.

A deck of discussion cards and a dice (optional) is given to each group. Each student is given a number corresponding to the numbers on the dice and they take turns in throwing the dice. When his/her number turns up, the student lifts a card from the deck and has to give 3 statements on that topic.

Depending on the subject area, this could be phrased as

 'Three things I know about this are...'

 'Three things I feel about this are…'

Where students are genuinely stuck for something to say, he/she can get a pass by substituting these phrases with, 'What I would like to find out about this is…', which they investigate at a later stage by either researching at home or asking in a group forum.

Flip a coin

This is a simple exercise encouraging the learner to give the two sides of an argument. Distribute disc-shaped pieces of card or paper. The student writes a piece of evidence in agreement with a given view on one side before turning it over and giving a piece of evidence opposing it on the other side. In groups, deciding the hierarchy of weight a particular argument gives to the view may prove an interesting task in formulating debate team material, particularly when students have counter-arguments at the ready with the flip of a coin!

Spot the technique

Ask the students to research speeches and to bring in a You Tube URL/audio or a text copy of one they particularly liked.

For example, they might search:
 World Debate Championship
Great speeches in world history
Martin Luther King, "I have a dream" speech
Barack Obama's speeches
Nelson Mandela's inaugural presidential speech
Steve Job's commencement speech at Stanford University, 2005
JK Rowling's commencement speech at Harvard University, 2011.

Each student has a bingo card (see sample below) featuring the techniques a speaker might use to persuade an audience. The student places an x on the technique when they hear it being used. Alternatively, students might have a series of cards with the techniques written on them and they raise them during the speech if they hear it being used.

They then turn to the student beside them and explain how they saw that technique being used in the speech. Their partner must understand how that technique was used before they can move on. This will ensure not only that the student understands the techniques involved but also that their conversation with their partner was clear and comprehensive.

Sample bingo card

Uses emotional language	Paints a picture with words	Appeals to the experience of the audience
Pauses for dramatic effect	Seems to speed up	Uses facial expression or gesture to emphasise a point
Asks rhetorical questions	Uses inclusive language like 'we'	Uses repetition of phrases or particular words
Uses antithesis: A contrast between two things	Addresses the audience	Concludes with a strong statement

Using digital technology to communicate

The learning outcomes of this element are:

Use digital technology creatively to present, interact with and share ideas for different audiences

Be respectful and responsible in my digital and online communications

Make decisions about how best to communicate for a particular purpose

Analysing successful speakers

Use a search engine to source 'motivational speeches', 'sporting speeches' or 'political speeches', or other interesting speeches.

Likewise searching for speeches from literature, from advertising or speeches that introduce the merits of others like an award ceremony (People of the Year Awards) can produce different styles of rhetoric.

The students might be divided into groups and given a specific area to research.

Group 1: Source motivational speeches (e.g. sport or commencement ceremonies).

Group 2: Investigate advertising campaigns for persuasive monologue.

Group 3: Search for speeches that introduce or praise the merits of others (Humanitarian/Sport Awards).

Group 4: Choose memorable speeches from history.

Group 5: Research literary speeches, picking ones that impressed you.

Some examples:

Is féidir linn speech http://ireland-living.blogspot.ie/2011/05/full-text-of-barack-obamas-speech-in.html

Willie John McBride – Rugby **motivationa**l speech
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRgeIhaFi44

Steven Fry's **opening speech** at the 2012 BAFTAs
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSN6gmv8IpE

Snippets of **political speeches** focused on leadership
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVOdYK029y0

Kenneth Branagh depicting Col Tim Collin's inspirational speech as he sends troops into Iraq
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpdeNcH1H8A

Kenneth Branagh in **Henry V** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAvmLDkAgAM

Mel Gibson, **Braveheart** http://www.monologuedb.com/dramatic-male-monologues/braveheart-william-wallace/

Pearl Harbour, **Roosevelt** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6YRYyWUE4s.

In class

In assessing the success of the speaker in communicating with the target audience, a teacher might first ask the students to note the reasons for their choice of speech. Prompts such as tone, imagery, relevance to audience, coherence, structure and rhythm could be given to initiate discussion at junior cycle level. The bingo cards (above, p. 32) could also be used here.

Using digital technology to record responses

By using a **voice-recording** device students can verbally respond to a given piece. Mobile phones, tablets, computers, apps (VoCal, AudioBoo) all provide methods of voice recording.

A handy device is an '*Easispeak*' microphone which has a USB link built in so the student/teacher can upload the audio easily to *Audacity*. Listening to oneself can initially be off-putting for a student but if managed sensitively (using headphones for example) it can foster confidence in a student's ability to communicate effectively.

Conduct **a radio style interview** as a means to access responses from a group or groups of students. Distribute roles to the students, interviewer and panel, and allow time for students to create/edit their responses. The interviewer then asks specific questions on the topic in question using an audio device to record and others respond with their opinion.

Podcasting

http://audacity.sourceforge.net/

http://www.voxopop.com/

http://voicethread.com/

http://www.podomatic.com/login

Digital presentations

PowerPoint, Keynote and Prezi, all provide engaging ways for a student to communicate their learning. Integrate the digital tools mentioned above (audio& video recording) by inserting them into an overall presentation when the topic is fully covered. A teacher could

provide a template in one of the presentation tools and get students to 'insert here' as required.

To borrow an idea from the gaming arena that many students are familiar with, the particular piece a student is responding to can form the visual part of the presentation while the student records a voice-over of their response to the aspects of the piece as it is happening

Video responses

Using a forum that students are very familiar with, a teacher might encourage a video blog as a means of response. Students can film themselves or each other reacting to a particular question or task designated by the teacher.

Blogging

Using the school's VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) or by using some of the educational blogging sites, for example, Edublog, teachers can set up a blog where students can record their responses. http://edublogs.com.

Mindmapping

Some of the digital tools that facilitate mind-mapping include:

Freemind: Click on the following link and then click on the green download box to easily download freemind on to your PC http://sourceforge.net/projects/freemind/.

Mind maple: http://www.mindmaple.com/.

If the learning outcome is an exercise in **oracy**, then the student can 'talk us through' the mind map, communicating how the ideas came to them and are linked.

Communicating with music

Adding music to a **slide-show** of photographs or a speech or presentation can enhance the experience. Well-chosen music is very effective. Consider the role of music in some of the sample speech videos already given.

Photojam: http://www.brothersoft.com/photojam-82511.html.

Imovie: http://www.apple.com/ie/ilife/imovie/

Ispring: http://www.ispringsolutions.com/.

Choose a piece of music to accompany a poetry reading or an episode from a novel or an account from history. Students read a piece aloud while the chosen track is played in the background. A mix of music can be created to catch the variation in tone and dramatic effect.

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. Check out **Getting Started with Junior Cycle Key skills** for guidance on *How to set up buddy meetings.*

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 develop and which would improve your students' learning in a significant way.

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 impact and learning gain.

4. Over the next month, keep a diary/blog to record changes in the way you help students manage their learning, agree outcomes and goals for students; the ways in which you carry out assessments of learning and the ways in which you record and use the data arising.

5. Record also any benefits you notice for students and for yourself. Share your reflections with appropriate colleagues.

Use or adapt the reflection sheets that follow.

Teacher reflection sheet

Class:

Topic:

Date:

Teaching approach tried:

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

2. What was the impact on the students? How did they respond?

3. What key skills were evident?

4. How might you improve this approach or adapt it for future use?

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…

Student's reflection sheet