



NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

Transition Year micro-module

Who do you want to be?

A personal development
micro-module for SPHE

NCCA
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Transition Year

Transition Year (TY) is a one-year optional programme available to all post-primary schools and is offered as part of the senior cycle experience. During senior cycle students develop a stronger sense of their identity, learning with and from their peers, teachers, other adults, and various media. Senior cycle educates the whole person.

Students' experiences in senior cycle should contribute to their intellectual, social and personal development and their overall wellbeing. During TY, students can develop more mature relationships with teachers and other adults and become active agents in designing their own educational experiences and their own contribution to society.

TY programmes offer a unique opportunity in senior cycle where schools and communities can collaborate to encourage young people to thrive now and into the future. TY offers time, space, and autonomy to create enjoyable and meaningful educational experiences that support students in senior cycle while facilitating their engagement with a broader range of pathways and possibilities. It equips young people with the supports and experiences to develop a greater capacity to respond to uncertainty, manage complexity, and become agents of positive, ethical change in society.

Key competencies of senior cycle

Key competencies is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop during senior cycle, which helps them to become more engaged, enriched and competent learners.

Further information on key competencies of senior cycle can be found on ncca.ie.

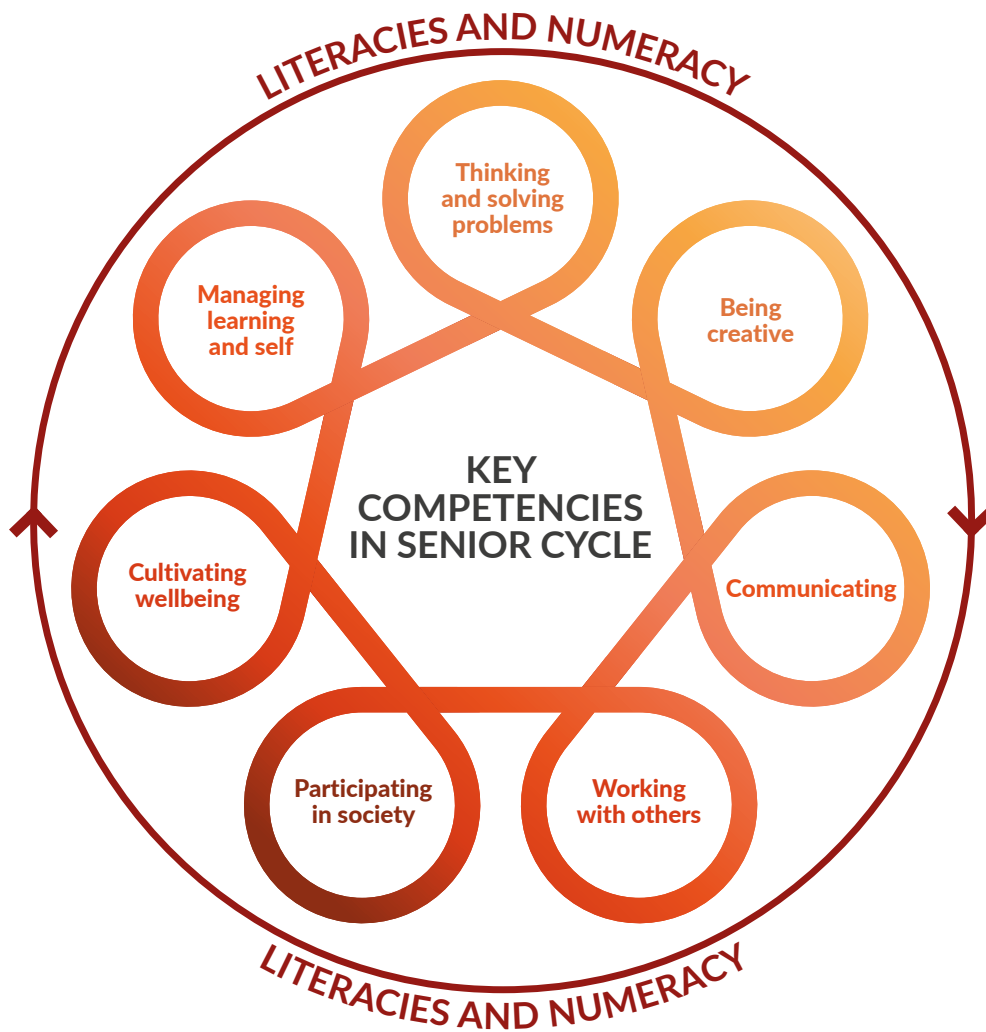


Figure 1: Key Competencies in Senior Cycle, supported by literacies and numeracy.

Student Dimensions of Transition Year

The Student Dimensions describe how students can develop in TY and the experiences that can support this development. The four Student Dimensions are:

- Personal Growth
- Being a Learner
- Civic and Community Engagement
- Career Exploration

Each Student Dimension contains a set of developmental indicators and related student experiences. The four Student Dimensions are designed to interlock in such a way that together they intersect with all seven key competencies of senior cycle.

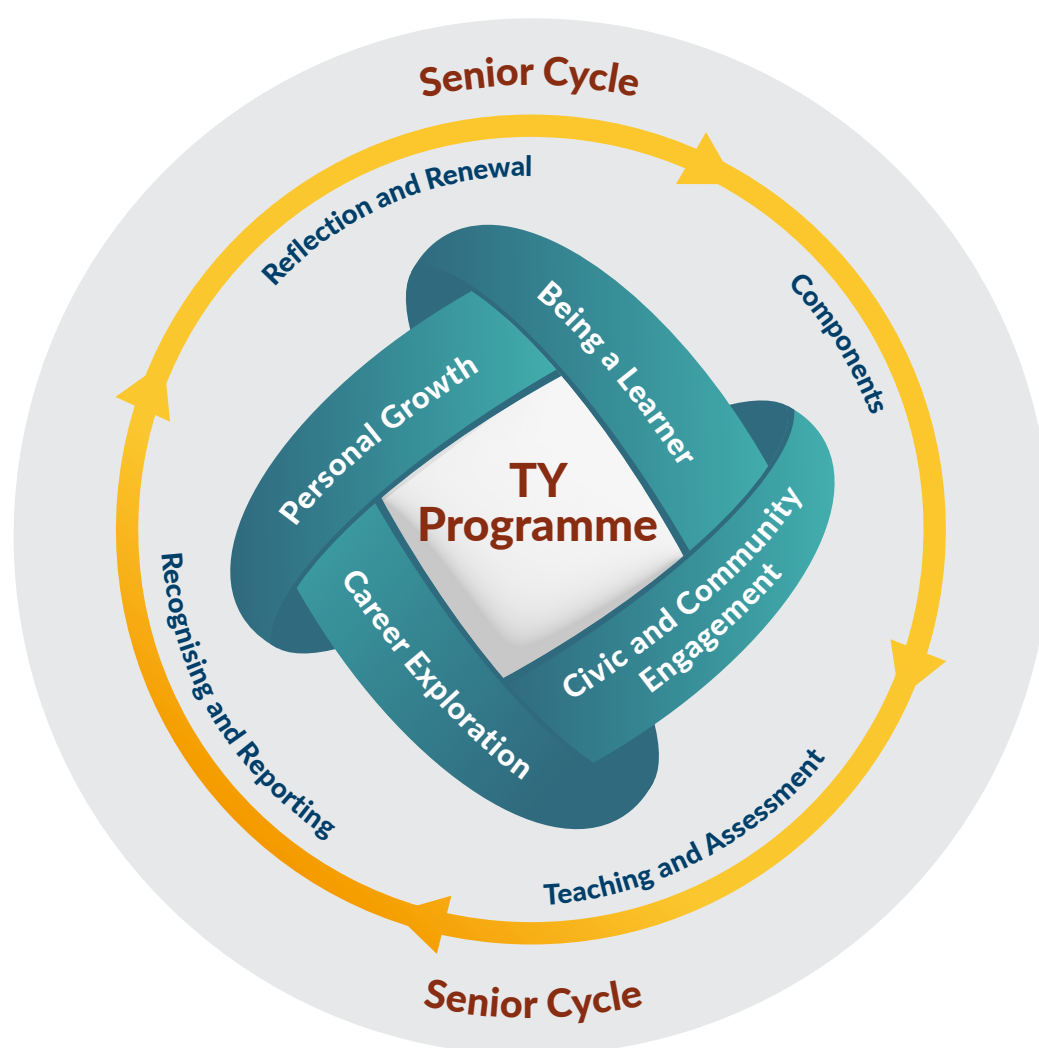


Figure 2: Overview of the Transition Year Programme Statement.

Further details can be found in the [Transition Year Programme Statement](#).

The four Student Dimensions are the foundations upon which TY programmes are designed. They describe how students can develop during TY. Table 1 lists the developmental indicators that are most likely to be supported by student participation and engagement with this micro-module.

Table 1. Student Dimensions supported by the micro-module.

Student Dimension	Developmental Indicators most relevant to the micro-module
Personal Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Becoming more assured and confident about themselves as a person
Career Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing their awareness of personal interests, aptitudes, values and dispositions

'What do you want to be when you leave school?' This is a common question we ask young people. However, a more fundamental question is *who do you want to be?* This module provides a space for young people to consider who they are, who they want to become and how they can be their best and truest selves.

In adolescence, the major developmental task for the young person is to figure out the kind of person they are becoming. This involves answering some fundamental questions including:

- What kind of person am I?
- How qualities are central to the core of who I am?
- What gives value and meaning to my life?
- What hopes and dreams do I have for my life?

This module supports students as they engage with these and other important questions, assisting them to develop a clearer sense of identity and confidence in who they are and the kind of person they want to become. In a world where young people are under pressure to conform, finding one's authentic self can reduce the stress and anxiety that can come from feeling a need to fit in with others' expectations or societal norms.

Through engagement in this module, students will also consider what and who has influenced who they are at this point in their lives; what/who can support them to become their best self into the future; and recognise the dynamic nature of the process of becoming, as our identities are always evolving. As young people grow in awareness of who they are and what really matters to them, they are more enabled to build a life of meaning and purpose. They can also make decisions that align with their values and recognise (without judgment) times when this might not have been the case.

This module is built upon an understanding that belonging to and feeling accepted by their peer groups is very important for most young people at this stage of their lives. It acknowledges that this can sometimes lead to compromising or concealing their true selves and at the same time supports students in becoming aware of these seemingly competing impulses – the need to belong and the desire to be themselves. Through engagement in the module students can learn how to balance these needs and gain reassurance that having confidence to be ourselves can be challenging, and is a life-long effort.

Finally, this module will complement and support learning linked to Career Exploration in TY and it provides a bridge to learning in Senior Cycle SPHE where students will deepen their understanding of self and others.

Aim

This module aims to support students' personal development, self-worth and self-confidence by exploring their unique identities, characteristics, values and aspirations, thus encouraging them to be their best selves.

Time allocation

The micro-module has been designed for 10 hours of class contact time. Teacher professional judgement can be used to adapt the number of hours to take account of the nature of student engagement to include class-contact time, reflection and self-directed, independent learning.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes below are designed to promote teaching and learning that develop students' knowledge, skills, values and dispositions incrementally. The right-hand column contains learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning. The left-hand column outlines specific areas that students learn about. Taken together, these provide clarity and coherence with the other sections of the micro-module.

The learning outcomes are numbered to support teacher planning. It does not imply any hierarchy of importance across the outcomes themselves.

Table 2. Learning outcomes.

Students learn about	Students should be able to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Their identity – what qualities are central to who they are? What aspects can change over time? ● Their values – what really matters to them, what has influenced their values and how do their values influence their daily life and decisions? ● Their influences – what influences contribute to shaping who they are and how they present themselves to the world? 	<p>1.1 Reflect on their unique identity, characteristics, values and aspirations and explore the influences that have shaped these</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does a life lived authentically look like? The role of authentic communication, setting boundaries and recognising and managing negative or harmful influences, etc. ● Barriers – such as people pleasing, the need for confirmation/ acceptance, a desire to belong, fear of judgment. 	<p>1.2 Discuss how they can balance and manage the need to belong and ‘fit in’ with their peer group and their efforts to forge their own identity</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The link between self-awareness and self-acceptance and being able to build positive relationships with others ● The power of kindness and how in supporting others we become our best selves 	<p>1.3 Consider the connection between being their best selves and nurturing healthy relationships with others</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ways to seek out and enhance positive influences in our lives ● Finding their tribe – identifying people who enable them to be their best self 	<p>1.4 Appreciate the value of positive influences in their lives and explore ways to enhance positive influences that can support them in being their best selves</p>

Teaching for student learning

Teaching for student learning in TY requires a dynamic approach that prioritises student engagement, exploration, and development. In particular, teaching approaches in TY should develop the student as a learner and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. The aims and learning outcomes of the micro-module will strongly influence the choice of teaching pedagogies.

Features of effective SPHE teaching and learning include:

- consultation with students to ascertain their needs, questions and concerns and using this information to plan teaching and learning aligned with the learning outcomes
- a focus not only on sharing strategies for building social and emotional skills but also on providing students with opportunities to practice these skills, reflect on their learning and grow in awareness of self and others
- fostering students' sense of self-efficacy by affirming their capacity to think critically and act responsibly
- providing opportunities to discuss values, attitudes and beliefs that support self-awareness, positive self-image and healthy relationships and behaviours
- modelling respect and empathy for a diversity of viewpoints and life-experiences
- the use of cooperative and experiential learning methodologies and scenarios that relate to the experiences of students.

For guidance on teaching SPHE and suitable methodologies see: [SPHE Toolkit \(curriculumonline.ie\)](https://www.curriculumonline.ie).

Table 3. How learning outcomes are supported by the micro-module. **The suggested activities below are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.**

Learning Outcomes	Aligned activities
<p>Students should be able to</p> <p>1.1 Reflect on their unique identity, characteristics, values and aspirations and explore the influences that have shaped these</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students create a personal identity chart. ● Students engage in activities to enable them to name and clarify their unique characteristics and personal values. ● Students map out the 'influencers' in their lives – past and present – noting one way that each one has influenced them. ● Students critically analyse social media content in small groups – considering its agendas, key messages, life-style that is portrayed, and possible negative/positive impacts. ● Students imagine themselves as a wise elder looking back on their lives and reflect on what will be the stand-out characteristics and/or achievements of their life.
<p>1.2 Discuss how they can balance and manage the need to belong and 'fit in' with their peer group and their efforts to forge their own identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students practice skills for authentic communication using scenarios relevant to their lives. ● Students consider situations where knowing and naming one's boundaries can be helpful and practise doing this through role-play. ● Students discuss barriers to being our true self, such as wanting to please others, a desire to fit in, fear of judgment, and in small groups discuss ways to overcome these.

Learning Outcomes	Aligned activities
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1.3 Consider the connection between being their best selves and nurturing healthy relationships with others

- Students consider scenarios in which the challenge of being true to oneself plays out in daily interactions and relationships and how to manage these.
- Students discuss the four fundamental life positions/beliefs we hold about ourselves and others – *I'm okay, You're okay; I'm Okay, You're not Okay; I'm not Okay, you're okay; and, I'm not okay, you're not okay'* and explore situations where these ways of interacting relate to their daily lives.

1.4 Appreciate the value of positive influences in their lives and explore ways to enhance positive influences that can support them in being their best selves

- Students reflect on people they admire in their lives and/or stories that inspire them and what is it that they admire.
 - Students discuss why choosing to interact with people who bring out the best in them is important and consider ways to increase such interactions (and how reduce and manage interactions that are not good for us).
 - Students create posters or cards with positive affirmations to help foster self-acceptance and to express gratitude to the people who inspire and support them.
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Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting, using and reporting information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping students and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support student learning and provide information to teachers and students that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be modified in ways that best suit individual learners. By setting appropriate and engaging tasks, asking questions and giving feedback that promotes learner autonomy, assessment will support learning and promote progression, support the development of student key competencies and summarise achievement.

Assessment Methods

The assessment methods listed below are those most closely aligning with the aims, rationale and learning outcomes of the micro-module and also with the Teaching and Assessment section of the TY Programme Statement.

Ways of assessing learning in this module include:

Reflection: Recording and gathering reflections on their learning enriches students' learning and enables them to recognise what they are learning, and how it might apply to their lives now or in the future. When encouraging student reflection, it is important to point out that this will not be marked or ranked and its main purpose is to support self-assessment of learning.

Classroom activities: Learning can be assessed by peer and teacher feedback on students' participation in classroom activities, such as role-plays, discussion of different scenarios and case-studies.

Pieces of work: More formal assessment is facilitated through the students' completion of pieces of work as part of ongoing classroom teaching and learning. This will facilitate the selection of two pieces of work, linked to this module, for inclusion in their TY portfolio. One piece might be a written reflection on a significant insight or skill gained through their learning and the other piece might be an item of classroom work – in written, digital, audio-visual or other mode – that marks significant learning for the student.

Guidance on supporting reflection and assessment within SPHE can be found at [SPHE teaching approaches \(curriculumonline.ie\)](#) and also at NCCA's [Focus on Learning webpage](#), in particular the [Formative Feedback](#) and [Student Reflection](#) booklets.

Reporting

The Transition Year Programme Statement describes the three elements to reporting in TY programmes:

- The TY portfolio
- Student reflection
- School reporting.

This module facilitates reporting on student learning in the three modes listed above. When reporting in SPHE, it is better to avoid marks or ranking, and instead provide feedback on the students' engagement in the learning and on the level of competency shown in completing classroom tasks and pieces of work.

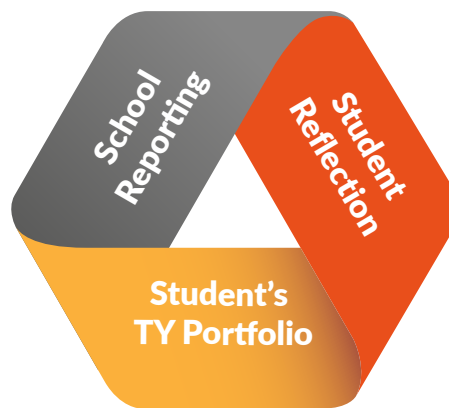


Figure 3: The three elements of reporting in TY.

Evaluating

Reflection and Renewal is a Curriculum Dimension that speaks to the importance of ongoing evaluation of the TY programme and of the components that comprise the programme. The purpose of evaluating the micro-module is to find out, from both the students' and teacher's perspective, the success or otherwise of the module and how it can be improved for the future.

The evaluation of this micro-module may be achieved through a mix of verbal feedback, online evaluation, evaluation based on teacher feedback as part of TY programme evaluation, or other methods that may be suited to the school.

Resources to support this micro-module are listed on the following page. **These suggestions are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.** They are provided to stimulate ideas about possible ways to engage with the learning outcomes.

For further guidance and resources to support planning for Transition Year SPHE www.curriculumonline.ie.

Resources

LO 1.1 Reflect on their unique identity, characteristics, values and aspirations and explore the influences that have shaped these

Sample links and resources

- [Identity Charts Teaching Strategy](#)
- [Life Stories: Exploring Identity with young people See section 1](#)
- [More than just a selfie programme:](#) Bodywhys –Lessons that examine the influence of social media on body image and self-esteem.
- [Supporting Your Student's Body Image Jigsaw.ie](#)
- [Mindful Social Media For Teens: A Practical Educator's Guide \(empoweringeducation.org\)](#)

LO 1.2 Discuss how teenagers can balance and manage their need to belong and 'fit in' with their peer group and their efforts to forge their own identity

Sample links and resources

- [Magazine article 'What does being your authentic self actually mean?'](#)
- [Friends: Rachel gets peer pressured at work.](#) Stimulus for discussion about every day difficulties of being true to ourselves
- Short video in which Mel Robbins advises – [Don't hold yourself back with what others think](#)

LO 1.3 Consider the connection between being their best selves and nurturing healthy relationships with others

Sample links and resources

- [Making Healthy Choices Unit 2 \(hse.ie\)](#) See page 78 Handout for practical 'refusal skills' to help students be true to themselves and say no when under pressure

LO 1.4 Appreciate the value of positive influences in their lives and explore ways to enhance positive influences that can support them in being their best selves

Sample links and resources

- [Self-Esteem Activities for Teens](#)
- [Can Helping Others Help You Find Meaning in Life?](#)
- Resources used in JC SPHE related to self-acceptance, expressing gratitude, showing kindness and 'Five a Day for Wellbeing' are also relevant.

Note: It is important to remind students of supports available (both within and outside of school) if any of the topics addressed in this module trigger upset.

Further resources (to be added by the school)

LO 1.1 Reflect on their unique identity, values and aspirations and explore the influences that have shaped these

LO 1.2 Discuss how teenagers can balance and manage their need to belong and 'fit in' with their peer group and their efforts to forge their own identity

LO 1.3 Consider the connection between being their best selves and nurturing healthy relationships with others

LO 1.4 Appreciate the value of positive influences in their lives and explore ways to enhance positive influences that can support them in being their best selves



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