



Key Skills for Junior Cycle

Managing Myself

MANAGING MYSELF

This skill helps learners to develop good relationships and to appreciate the value of cooperating to reach collective and personal goals. Students also learn to value diversity and to engage in collaborative work aimed at making the world a better place.

Managing myself – The elements

- Knowing myself
- Making considered decisions
- Setting and achieving personal goals
- Being able to reflect on my own learning
- Using ICT to manage myself and my learning

This resource offers some tips and ideas that teachers can use to help learners develop skills related to managing themselves. 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.

INTRODUCTION



Before looking at different elements of this skill brainstorm (either alone or with a colleague) this question:

Where do you see opportunities for developing students' skills of 'managing myself' within your current day to day teaching?



Movie

How can I reflect on that? Listen to Brian Boyd's suggestion that we need to teach young people **how to learn**. Do you agree?

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

In this resource you will find suggestions on how you can help students in:

1. Knowing themselves and recognising personal strengths and weaknesses
2. Making considered decisions
3. Setting and achieving personal goals
4. Being able to reflect on their learning
5. Using ICT to help manage their learning

There is also a final section entitled Making it my own which suggests how you, as a teacher, can get started.

This resource is a work in progress and will be expanded to include ideas on additional elements of this key skill. Please send us your ideas too.



Knowing myself: Recognising personal strengths & weaknesses



Movie

How are you intelligent? Listen to Brian Boyd explain why we may need to rethink our ideas around intelligence:

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

If you found this interesting why not also listen to ***Intelligence is not fixed?*** Here, Brian Boyd talks about the influence of Howard Gardner and Reuven Feuerstein on teaching. He asserts that all students have the ability to grow their intelligence and to become effective learners.

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



Getting started with your students - practical classroom ideas



Journaling

Invite students to keep a learning journal or write a blog about themselves and their learning with some prompt questions guided by the teacher. This can help them to identify learning goals, record evidence of success and reflect on their learning needs.

Some useful prompts

This week

I learned...

I was surprised by...

I was interested in...

What I liked most was...

What I found difficult was....

When I needed help I got help from

Something I did well...

The thing I'd most like to improve is ...

My target for next week is...

How do I spend my time?

Students can be given a timetable of their week and they agree to fill it in hour by hour keeping a record of what they do for a whole week. This task is intended to show students that their week is made up of hundreds of activities and opportunities for learning and that their learning is not just confined to school time. It will also help them see how much time they give to different interests and whether they give time to things and people they really value and enjoy.

What am I like? How am I smart?

Using the internet, students can access online interactive personality tests such as BBC's *What am I Like? Personality Test*.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/tvradio/programmes/whatamilike/prog_summary.shtml

Follow this link to find a useful worksheet which will help students reflect on their general interests and strengths:

<http://troup612resources.troup.k12.ga.us/Instructional%20Strategies%20&%20Resources/Differentiation/General%20Interest%20Inventory.pdf>

Adapted from Kryza, K., Stephens, J., Duncan, A. (2007). *Inspiring Middle and Secondary Learners*. California: Corwin Press.

Here's a multiple intelligence fun quiz for students:

<http://www.inspiringlearners.com/free-resources/surveysinterest-inventories/secondary-multiple-intelligences-survey>

What's my Style? Introduction to Learning Styles

Students can complete a questionnaire or quiz about learning styles using one of the links below. The strengths inherent in each learning style can be highlighted, as well as investigating the potential for growth once students have discovered their learning style.

The Learning Preferences Questionnaire: <http://www.inspiringlearners.com/free-resources/surveysinterest-inventories/secondary-learning-preferences-questionnaire>

Scroll down this page to find a learning styles questionnaire to help students check if their preferred style of learning is visual, auditory or kinesthetic:

<http://www.businessballs.com/vaklearningstylestest.htm>

Students can use the results of these assessments to discuss what makes people unique and where their own strengths lie.



You may find that many of your students are visual learners and will find it easier to learn and remember information using **Graphic Organisers**. Use these links to find useful templates and ideas:

http://generic.slss.ie/resource_category/view/65

http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/graphic_organizers

Making considered decisions

Decision-making is the process of choosing what to do by considering the possible consequences of different choices. While we all recognise that decision making skills are important for life and for learning, students often feel that they have very few opportunities to make decisions in school in relation to how and what they learn. Some studies have found that learners' belief in their own efficacy is the strongest single predictor of whether they will adopt strategies that make learning effective (*Learners for Life, Student Approaches to Learning*, Arteit et al 2003, pp 33-34). This points to the need for students to have a greater sense of control as they navigate their way through learning.

Decision making skills



A guide to involving children in decision-making. This booklet provides an overview of the importance of developing young people's decision making skills and offers a practical guide for engaging them in effective decision-making. Download it from: <http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/archive/2003-involving-children.pdf>

Also, check out http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_TED.htm for various decision making tools which you could adapt or use with your students.



Discuss

What opportunities does your subject area offer to support learners in developing their decision making skills? How could you build in more opportunities for informal/formal decision making within your classroom?

Some Tips

Research has not yet answered how best to teach decision-making skills but these are some approaches that are recommended.

Young people should be

- taught about how their emotions may influence their thinking and behaviour in the decision making process.
- encouraged to search for new information when making decisions.
- encouraged to reflect on 'real life' situations and decision making problems that reflect young people's interests and have relevance to their lives.
- provided with learning experiences where they have opportunities to recognize their own biases.
- provided with opportunities to practice and rehearse decision-making skills.
- provided with opportunities to work in pairs or small groups on relevant decision making problems.
- encouraged to appreciate that their decisions may impact on others.



Getting started with your students - practical classroom ideas

Think about giving students informal opportunities for decision making

- Do you offer students a choice in relation to the kind of assignments or homework that they do?
- Do you offer students the opportunity to decide when work will be completed or submitted for correction?
- Do students ever get to decide how they will be assessed – written test, oral presentation, a poster, group/individual tests, take home test/class tests etc.
- Do you encourage your students to agree the ground rules for how they will work together in class? Are these ground rules displayed in class?



Class Activities

1. Scenario decision making

Select a scenario where a person is engaged in a decision making process (for instance a character in a novel, a person in history, a business decision, or a moral dilemma)

Ask the students to

- describe the scenario
- discuss the young person's options
- suggest what might influence their eventual decision(s)
- decide what they think to be the correct decision and the reasons for it.

2. Card Ranking

Ranking is a thinking tool that gets students to prioritise and make judgments. Then it helps them to analyse and evaluate the criteria that they have used for making their judgments. This is also a good way of building skills in consensus decision making.

1. Students in small groups receive a set of cards with different statements on each. (For example: the characteristics needed for a job, the factors that led to the Second World War, the reasons why poverty exists in a world of plenty etc)
2. Students must discuss each statement and reach an agreement so that they can arrange them in order of importance/priority: 1, 2, 3.
3. Groups might then compare each other's ranking as a starting point for class discussion of the issue.
4. A debrief after this activity could be used to identify what factors most influenced the group in selecting their number 1. Students might also reflect on whether they were still pleased with their decision or what might they do differently the next time.

As an alternative, you can set a question and ask the participants to come up with a range of possible answers which they write on blank cards. Then they must rank their responses in order of priority with the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom.

3. Using different thinking hats

This tool was created by Edward de Bono in his book '**6 Thinking Hats**'. Each thinking hat represents a different perspective or thinking style.

By asking different students to take a different 'hat' you can help them to consider an issue from a number of perspectives. This helps students to move outside their habitual thinking style and see that there are many different ways of approaching a decision.

White hat	What is the available information? Where are the gaps?
Red hat	'What is your 'gut' reaction to this challenge/issue? How are you feeling about it? How might other people involved feel about it? What is your hunch/educated guess?
Black hat	Look at all the bad points/pitfalls, things that might go wrong in this scenario. Why might it not work?
Yellow hat	What are the positives/benefits of this scenario?
Green hat	What might be the benefits for yourself and others that might result from addressing this challenge,
Blue hat	If we do go ahead with this decision, what are the tasks that would have to be attended to, i.e. process tasks to make it happen?

How it works

- A scenario that requires a decision is identified.
- Each learner is assigned a 'hat' and the perspective that goes with that hat.
- Individually, they consider the scenario from that perspective.
- All of the students with a particular 'hat' discuss their responses in a group.

- Groups of six are then formed with a representative of each hat in it. The group listens to each perspective in turn and agrees a decision on the basis of the different inputs.
- Each group presents their decision to the class or to another group.

5. PMI: Positive, Minus, Interesting

This involves asking the students to think about a problem from the point of view of what's positive (reasons why something is a good idea), minus (why something won't work or is unwise) and implications (usually refers to the implications and possible outcomes – whether positive or negative).

6. CAF: Consider All Factors

This methodology encourages learners to think about all the relevant factors when making a decision or considering an idea.

How it works

1. The teacher explains the importance of considering all factors in decision-making and planning. For example, if an important factor is forgotten a route of action which may seem right at the time may ultimately turn out to be wrong.
2. A scenario is presented which requires a solution.
3. Students work in groups to identify all of the factors involved on a flip chart page.
4. Once the sheet has been completed, students can rotate in groups and view the factors which other groups have noted.
5. Students can then be given time to modify or add to their original factors, based on what other groups have written on their sheets.
6. Debrief afterwards in order to bring together all factors. Students might be encouraged to consider the possible implications of having forgotten to include certain factors for making an informed decision.

Setting and achieving personal goals



Class activities

Here are some ideas that other teachers have found useful in encouraging students to set goals and evaluate how they are progressing in achieving those goals:

My goals for this week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Goal completed & reward

My top 10 mistakes

You can use this activity when students have built up a certain amount of corrected work. They will realise that there are errors they keep making. The goal is to get rid of their recurrent errors and make them more aware of how they can evaluate and improve their work.

- a.** Explain the activity and tell them that it will help them to improve the standard of their work. Set the following homework. At home, students go through their work and make a list of their 10 most common errors.
- b.** In the next lesson, students in pairs compare their lists and report back to the class.
- c.** Tell students to keep their list handy whenever they are doing a written task, checking their work for each of those mistakes when they have finished. The goal is to reduce or eliminate their recurrent errors.
- d.** You can repeat this activity after a while and ask the students to compare their new list with the previous one. Encourage them to assess their progress by noting what they think they have improved and on what they need to do more work.

(Adapted from Peter May, *Exam Classes*, OUP)

Identifying my own difficulties

- a.** While monitoring a speaking or a writing activity or an experiment, have some slips of paper handy. Use these to record any problem areas you notice in the course of the activity
- b.** After the activity, spread the slips out on the floor or on a table and ask the students to 'claim' any they think they 'own'.
- c.** Ask students to discuss in pairs or small groups why they have claimed a particular slip, before conducting whole group feedback.
- d.** In the case of a large class, you can write the problem areas on the board and ask the students to copy down just the ones that they identified as their difficulties into their copies. Then facilitate whole group discussion around these and prompt students to come up with ways of overcoming their difficulties.

(Adapted from P. Davis et al., *Ways of Doing*, OUP)



Ways you can help students in setting and achieving learning goals

Goal setting takes very little time, literally a minute or two, and yet it has a marked effect on achievement. Giving students specific written or verbal goals prior to a lesson can improve student performance by as much as 2 grades. (Geoff Petty, *Evidence Based Teaching*, p 201)

Share the learning intention (WALT 'We are learning to')

Always ask yourself “*What do I want the students to learn, or to have experienced, by the end of the class?*” Then, at the start of class let your students know what they will learn and why (what’s the big picture?) Always refer to *both the content and skills* that you want them to learn. This enables students to know what they are aiming for and helps them become more active participants in their learning.

Examples:

‘I’m going to explain a commonly used method of budgetary control which some managers are very critical of. I will explain it positively but I want you to think of its weaknesses. By the end of class I want everyone to be able to explain four strengths and four weaknesses.’

‘I want you to work in small groups to design a poster that summarises all the key point in this topic and displays the main ideas as visually as possible.’

Share the criteria for success (WILT 'What I'm looking for')

Ensure that students know the criteria against which their work will be measured. A useful question to ask is *‘what will I need to look for to see that you have achieved the learning intention?’* Involve them in generating the success criteria.

For example, you might ask them to suggest: *‘What would a good answer look like?’* Avoid vague criteria such as *‘well written’* or *‘well laid out’*. Instead, help them to agree criteria such as: *‘Uses headings and paragraphs’*, *‘Uses facts and evidence to back up main ideas’*, *‘Has a clear opening, middle and concluding section’* etc. Then, when marking work, remember to stick to the pre-agreed criteria.

Being able to reflect on their learning



Getting started with your students - practical classroom ideas

Use this link to download a simple but effective tool to help your students reflect on what, and how, they are learning. These reflections can also provide you with important feedback: http://action.ncca.ie/media/1242/student_reflection.pdf

Having a conversation about learning with your students

Some useful questions

- What's going well? And not so well?
- Have you noticed what helps your learning and what blocks it or makes it difficult?
- Are you noticing any patterns in your learning?
- What will your next steps be?
- What do you need to help you?
- What would a teacher need to know about you to help you learn better?

Techniques which take just a few minutes at the end of class

Turn to a partner and take turns sharing – ‘*The thing I learned today is...*’
and/or ‘*the skill I developed today is...*’

One minute reflection – *Something I learned, a question I still have, something I'm not sure about.*

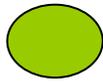
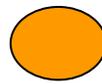
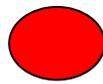
Complete three sentences (preferably in the learning journal) – ‘*What was good about this class, what didn't go well, what are my own thoughts on how I'm learning?*’

A variation of this could be to use a simple worksheet such as the following...

One thing I learned today ...	I enjoyed ...
I found it difficult to ...	I might have learned better if ...
In my next class I aim to...	

Traffic lighting

Another simple and effective idea is for students to use traffic light markers to label their work, green orange or red according to whether they think they have good, partial or little understanding of a topic. Students can then recognise the areas of learning where they need to concentrate their efforts or where they may need help.

Traffic light learning log				
Date:	Insert subject:	Good understanding	Some understanding	Very little understanding
Topics	List the main topics studied during the past week/month under each subject and decide how well you understand each topic by ticking a light			

Giving and receiving feedback

The most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement is feedback. The most simple prescription for improving education must be 'dollops of feedback'. This does not mean using many tests and providing over-prescriptive directions. It means providing information how and why the student understands and misunderstands, and what directions the student must take to improve.

John Hattie, *Influences on Student Learning*



Read

Teachers Make a Difference – What is the research evidence?

John Hattie:

http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/limestonecoast/files/pages/new%20page/PLC/teachers_make_a_difference.pdf

What works best: www.learningandteaching.info/teaching/what_works.htm



Movie

Listen to Dylan William explain the importance of good feedback and why feedback works better than praise or grades:

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

Listen to Geoff Petty explain the kind of information that students need to receive in their feedback: http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/medals_and_missions_feedback.html



DISCUSS

More than 50,000 studies have shown that the single biggest way to improve students' achievement is to provide feedback. Students who are given regular and constructive feedback show an effect size of 1.3 (a leap in improvement of more than 2 grades). Why do you think this is so?

What steps can you take to both seek and provide more and better feedback?



Problems arise with feedback when...

- Teachers give too little feedback (e.g. just a grade at the end of an assignment).
- Teachers give too much feedback (e.g. when everything is marked – grammar, spelling, content, ideas) and students are overwhelmed.
- Students don't know what they were aiming for and what was expected of them at the outset (i.e. the goal and the criteria for success were not shared before students set about doing the task).

Effective feedback happens when it

- is provided in the context of a genuine learning conversation.
- is given at the time of the learning so that learners can make improvements as they go.
- is initiated by the learner and in conjunction with self-and/or peer assessment.
- provides strategies that help the learner to improve.
- allows time for the learner to act on the feedback.

Feedback is a two-way street

*'The mistake I was making was seeing feedback as something teachers provided to students – they typically did not, although they made claims that they did it all the time, and most of the feedback they did provide was social and behavioural. It was only when I **discovered that feedback was most powerful when it is from the student to the teacher** that I started to understand it better. When teachers seek, or at least are open to, feedback from students as to what students know, what they understand, where they make errors, when they have misconceptions, when they are not engaged – then teaching and learning can be synchronized and powerful. Feedback to teachers helps make learning visible.'*

John Hattie, 2009, p 173.

Ask your students for feedback

Use this link to download a simple but effective tool to help your students reflect on what, and how, they are learning. These reflections can also provide you with important feedback: http://action.ncca.ie/media/1242/student_reflection.pdf



Remember that students can provide valuable feedback to each other too. In a given day, it is difficult for a teacher to give personal feedback to each student. So why not try encouraging students to give feedback to each other? Think about ways that you could enable this to happen?



Movie

Check out these short videos to see students giving feedback to each other.

Students giving feedback in Woodwork class:

<http://oldaction.ncca.ie/index.cfm?objectid=3A9A75A4-91BC-75FA-B8F1EE0C4FF7B0C2>

Students giving feedback to each other in English class:

<http://oldaction.ncca.ie/index.cfm?objectid=3A6AE1C7-0502-BB77-F9F26D4E8522CD5B>

Use this link to find examples of students' work and of how you can give student feedback across different subjects: <http://action.ncca.ie/post-primary.aspx>



This can printed off as a handout to help you think about how you can move towards giving your students better feedback

Judgmental Feedback <i>'Here is my measurement'</i>	Informative Feedback <i>'These are your goals, this is what you do well, and this is how to get better'</i>
<p>Characteristics of this feedback This feedback compares students with each other and encourages them to compete. The teacher gives grades, marks and comments that make conscious or unconscious comparisons with others.</p> <p>Effect on self-esteem Judgment makes students nervous and protective of the self-esteem. So students avoid risks and challenges. The self-esteem of high achieving students rises.</p> <p>Consequent learning strategies Surface learning is likely. Their eye is on the grade, not understanding, learning or the task. The student memorises, seeks short-cuts, copies, etc. Right answer syndrome.</p> <p>Students' learning theory Maladaptive and blaming learning theory 'Mistakes are shameful' 'Ability is the key and is inborn' 'It's only worth working if you get something out of it.'</p> <p>Effect on low achievers There is reduced effort, interest, persistence, self-esteem and self-belief. In some cases – 'Learned helplessness'. 'No matter what I do I'm bound to fail' The student withdraws and retreats hurt, rejecting the teachers, school, etc. Learning is seen as something for others.</p>	<p>Characteristics of this feedback There are clear assessment criteria and goals. Feedback consists of information about the extent to which these have been met. There are: Medals: for what they have done well Missions: showing how to improve</p> <p>Effect on self-esteem The student feels accepted, and that their efforts are being recognised and valued. Self-esteem and commitment tends to rise and there is increased emotional involvement in tasks.</p> <p>Consequent learning strategies Deep learning is more likely aimed at understanding and improvement. Their eyes are on the goals, assessment criteria, tasks and their missions. As esteem comes from effort, not comparative attainment, students are prepared to take risks and accept challenges.</p> <p>Students' learning theory Adaptive and blame free learning theory. 'Effort is the key and it's up to me'. 'Mistakes are useful as they help me learn'. 'Learning is an end in itself.'</p> <p>Effect on low achievers There is increased interest, effort, persistence, self-esteem and self-belief. In time: Learned resourcefulness. 'There must be a way around my difficulties and if I find it I will succeed'. Learning depends on time, effort, corrected practice and using right strategies.</p>

Adapted from: www.geoffpetty.com



Useful phrases when giving verbal feedback to your students

Avoid vague praise such as: *'Your essay was very good.'*

This does not tell the student what was good or indeed what could have been better.

Instead offer concrete comments such as *'Well done. I liked the way you structured your essay and used the first person to describe the events.'*

Then you could add *'You need to vary the sentence structure in your writing. Have another look and notice how you tend to start many sentences in the same way.'*

Focus on the task – *'This seems to be causing you a bit of difficulty...'*

Then go on to offer a helpful suggestion about how to approach the problem.

Acknowledge their feelings – *'I know it can be really frustrating when you get things wrong.'*

Focus your feedback on the effort they are making and different strategies they are using – *'Well done on sticking with it and trying different ways until you got it right.'*

Less praise – more encouragement: *'It's good to see that you remembered to ...', 'I'm impressed with the effort you're making...', I appreciate your cheerfulness'.*

Avoid undeserved or excessive praise – Students know when praise is merited. So make sure that your praise is honest.

Retiring hurt

When the classroom focuses on rewards, 'gold stars' or 'place in the class' ranking, then pupils look for ways to obtain the best marks, rather than become better learners. Or they simply seek to 'get by' and avoid difficult tasks. Or even worse, they simply give up and 'retire hurt'

Black and William, *Inside the Black Box*



Giving feedback on your student's written work

- a. Point out positive aspects of the work by using a symbol-based system.
- b. Point out errors, but don't correct them. You can underline or circle the errors and insert a prompt (such as 'more detail needed about...') or a symbol of your choice. In the case of languages, teachers might want to use symbols to highlight specific linguistic points such as spelling, tense, etc in the target language. Don't feel you have to comment upon or point out everything. This will simply serve to overwhelm students.
- c. Share the correction code with the students so that they will be able to understand your feedback.
- d. In your written comment, first indicate what the students did well. Use the same symbol you used on their work, so that they can relate the comment to the relevant section. Then, in the same way, comment on the errors. As much as possible, avoid just correcting them. And it is best to ask students questions that will make them think and correct their own mistakes.
- e. Make recommendations on next steps and/or ask questions that make them think what the appropriate next steps would be to improve their learning.
- f. It is also a good idea to check how students corrected their own errors, and what goals they set for themselves, praising and guiding them as appropriate.

'Giving marks, levels and grades lets students know how well they have performed (relative to others in their class). It doesn't tell them anything about the reasons behind that performance or help them to improve.'

Ian Smith, Making Feedback Count, 2007



Discuss the possible benefits of **comment only marking** with a colleague. Would you consider not giving grades to your students (even for a while) to see how comment only feedback might work?



Assessing their own learning - practical classroom ideas

Why not try some of these strategies?

- At the end of class – Ask students to give a one minute summary of what they have learned.
- In small groups, students take turns teaching different topics that have been studied in class. One person in each group acts as the ‘teacher’ while the others act as questioner. Roles can be swapped around for different topics so that everyone gets a chance to be the teacher.
- In small groups, students have to create a poster which sums up all the main points of information on a topic which they have recently learned about.
- Table Quiz – Students work in groups to develop questions on different topics which can be used in a table quiz to assess learning.
- Play 20 Questions – In small groups students have to question each other on a topic.
- Play Team Games Tournament (developed by Barrie Bennett):
http://www.instructionalleadership.ie/Co-operative_Learning.aspx



Assessment can be fun!

Watch this short video entitled *Using games for learning*:

<http://action.ncca.ie/key-skills-sample-activities.aspx>

Movie

You will find some self and peer assessment templates at the end of this document (pages 29-31)

Peer teaching and peer assessing



Movie

Listen to Dylan Wiliam review the benefits of self assessment and peer assessment as a key component of effective learning, and hear about some of the associated strategies:

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

Watch this short video to hear Irish students talk about their experience of *peer teaching* and its benefits. <http://action.ncca.ie/key-skills-sample-activities/peer-teaching.aspx>

Watch students in Kilkenny assess each other's work. As 'critical friends' they help each other in correcting their work and also suggest ways of improvement. The video is entitled 'Students giving feedback – critical friends.':

<http://oldaction.ncca.ie/index.cfm?objectid=3A6AE1C7-0502-BB77-F9F26D4E8522CD5B>

Watch Athy students in a video called '*Learning through questioning*' to see how students can enjoy testing each other:

<http://oldaction.ncca.ie/index.cfm?objectid=3A6AE1C7-0502-BB77-F9F26D4E8522CD5B>



Spoof assessment

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...*'.

Marking and evaluating their own work

Begin with 'spoof' assessment (explained above), asking all students to mark a piece of work created by the teacher or completed by a student in a previous year. This is best done in small groups with assessment criteria/marketing scheme. When students have gained some skills in assessing work, and are clear on what a good piece of work looks like, then you can begin to introduce the practice of *peer assessment*, where they comment on each other's work. (Some guidance on how to give constructive feedback is needed). Lastly, give students practice in *assessing their own work* (initially with a model answer and criteria), until they gradually develop the ability to evaluate their own work.

Peer assessment in groups

Well-managed peer feedback provides opportunities for collaborative learning and gives students a wide range of ideas about their work. It requires

- clarity regarding the success criteria for the piece of work under discussion.
- practice (led by the teacher through coaching, modeling and feedback).
- appropriate partners or groups (generally of similar ability).

Here's an approach that involves students in peer-assessment of any piece of completed work, small or large, in any subject. Having agreed on the criteria for success, each student carries out the assignment. When the assignment has been completed (over a period of time, overnight or in class), students are arranged in groups of three or four to view the material. They read and pass around each others work silently until all samples have been viewed by everyone in the group. The students then discuss any differences. They then mark each piece of work together using the agreed criteria, perhaps starting with one that best meets the criteria for success discussed. They can also provide a comment which names one thing that the student did well and one thing that could be improved upon next time.

Setting their own tests and agreeing the marking scheme

A number of studies have shown that students trained for examination by generating and answering their own questions out-perform comparable groups who are prepared in conventional ways. When students are encouraged to set questions and mark answers, this can help them to both understand the assessment process and to focus on efforts to improve.

Paul Black et al, *Assessment for Learning, Putting it into practice*, 2002

By setting their own tests, and agreeing the marking scheme, students learn what makes a good question and what makes a good answer. They also need to become familiar with the content and understand it in order to set questions. In addition, active involvement in the assessment process can also help students see themselves as having more control over their success and feel more empowered in improving their learning.



READ

Black and William published a seminal piece of research entitled 'Inside the Black Box', 1998 which you can download at this link:

http://blog.discoveryeducation.com/assessment/files/2009/02/blackbox_article.pdf

Find a summary of their ideas as well as some useful assessment proformas at this link:

http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/T_BlackandWilliam.html

Further reading

Assessment and Learning Pocketbook - Ian Smith - ISBN978-1-903776-75-9
Available online from Amazon or: sales@teacherspocketbook.co.uk

Using ICT to help manage my learning

Planning for learning

A practical exercise for encouraging students to plan their learning is to get them to use the **calendars** on their phone to enter important dates. These could be the due date of an assignment or reminders to study for tests. In the case of project work, students could be encouraged to set an alert/reminder on their phone at particular intervals to ensure they are keeping to task. They can also link the event to notes where chapter headings, interviews and other specified tasks can serve as markers to their progress.

You could begin by getting students to enter the dates of Mid-term breaks, Christmas and Easter holidays!

Why not get students to create events in **Microsoft Outlook**.

http://www.ehow.com/video_4982904_schedule-meeting-outlook.html

A cool, free App for reminders: VoCal XL

Simply record yourself giving a reminder through the VoCal App on your Smart phone. It prompts you to set a date and time as well as the frequency of alerts over a period of time. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55oPBK0dh9g>

Remember, teachers can easily promote the practice of being organised by displaying key date on a designated area of the board. Using ICT, this is easily done through 'stickies'. You can download stickies from: www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/stickies/ Once downloaded, you double click on the Stickies icon located on your notification bar (Bottom right hand side of your computer). It looks like a little yellow post-it! By recording reminders on the sticky it remains on your desktop until you remove it. Once your data projector is on, your desktop is visible to your students and they can be reminded of important information. You can encourage them to do this on their own computers at home too.

Using blogs to engage in my learning

Creating blogs are a great way to encourage students to think about their learning and express themselves in an organised way. The following link facilitates the online blogging service that the teacher can manage and utilise in a number of ways.

<http://edublogs.org/10-ways-to-use-your-edublog-to-teach/>

A good idea to begin with here is to set up a blog on the students' expectations on a given subject or topic. For example, you could say we are going to study a Shakespearean play next week called 'The Merchant Of Venice'. Ask the students to blog about their expectations of what this play will be about, whether they think it will be of interest to them and so on. Ask them to consider what they already know about Shakespeare and whether they have preconceived ideas about Shakespearean drama in general. This is all really useful in tracing the development of their response to the given topic and allows them to express their misgivings as well as their enthusiasm. Blogging also allows students to respond to the expectations of others. Students will learn the protocol of creating blogs that are inoffensive and respectful while still asserting their opinion. These guidelines must be given clearly and monitored.

Managing Learning through Dropbox

Apps:

Evernote.

icloud

Dropbox

Google drive

Skydrive

Sugar sync

Any/all of these applications allow you and students to store notes remotely on the internet for easy access.

<https://www.dropbox.com/> (Contains an instructional video)

This type of Cloud computing is great for keeping an eye on how a student is progressing in ICT based tasks. *(It might be a good idea to decide on one option to avoid confusion)*

- A student could be asked to respond to the questions on a text read in class in **blog or diary** form over a period of 2-3 days. To ensure that they are staying to task, the student saves their work in the 'Dropbox' at home, log into their dropbox

from the classroom computer and the teacher can assess their progress and iron out any issues the student may have with the task.

- A student could be asked to create revision key points in History/Geography/Science etc as homework every evening which can then be checked/finished off via dropbox in class the following day.
- Samples of students' work can be viewed as examples to other students via dropbox which will promote shared learning and peer collaboration.

Interactive Learning Strength Inventories

To help students begin thinking about the idea of managing their own learning, teachers could encourage students and if possible facilitate them in taking Learning Style Inventory tests online. Some are more suited for adults, others require emails and passwords to access the results, so pick the one you find most suitable to your class. The benefits of facilitating these in a computer class or within your own subject via a computer room is that you can help students understand confusing questions and also get an insight into their strengths through this discourse. This can also be done in pairs to aid learning strength awareness among peers. Once the inventory returns a particular learning strength, the student can click on that learning strength/preference for ideas that will best help them learn. Even disagreeing with the result produces the opportunity for the learner to tune into how best to manage their learning.

<https://www.iusb.edu/tutoring/barsch.php>

<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire>

<http://www.learning-styles-online.com/inventory/questions.php> (Need email & Password)

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? 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 (see ***Getting Started – 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 learners; 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 learners and for yourself. Share your reflections with appropriate colleagues.

Click here to find a reflection sheet that you can use to help you in this process:

http://action.ncca.ie/media/1257/teacher_reflection1.pdf

And here's one to use with a colleague http://action.ncca.ie/media/882/c_reflection2.pdf

Over time, take a look at the ideas on the Junior Cycle key skills website for each of the 6 key skills. Don't forget to send us your ideas about what works!

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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.geoffpetty.com

Assessing my group work skills

A lot

Sometimes

Not much

	A lot	Sometimes	Not much
I contributed my ideas and information			
I asked others for their ideas and information			
I listened to everyone's ideas			
I provided constructive feedback to others			
I asked for help from other group members			
I gave help and advice to other group members			
I played my role well within the group			
I gave my best effort			

Peer Assessment of a presentation

(To be used by students as they listen to each other's presentations)

Topic

Presented by.....

The main messages presented were...

.....

.....

.....

The best aspect of the project or presentation was... (and say why)

.....

.....

.....

One thing I learned ...

.....

.....

.....

A question I'm left with is...

.....

.....

Assessed by..... Class.....