Consulting students about subjects in the new Junior cycle

Purpose of the consultation: Background information for students

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) advises the Minister for Education and Skills about curriculum (what is taught in schools) and assessment (how to collect evidence about what students have learnt).

Right now, the NCCA is designing a new Junior Cycle. As part of this work, we are developing a new specification/version of all subjects in junior cycle. The new specification for English is already completed and now we are working on

- Business Studies
- Science
- Gaeilge.

We would like to hear your views about the big ideas that will inform the new specification in (Subject being focused on). Your teacher will show you a short PowerPoint presentation outlining the kinds of changes that are being considered in this subject. You will then have an opportunity to discuss these with your class mates.

Your teacher will help you to collate your feedback at the end of the class and you will be asked to send it back to us electronically by logging on to this link. We will use the feedback we receive from students to inform the development of the new specification in this subject.

We will acknowledge your participation in the consultation report and we will let you know when the report is available on line.

Thank you

Student consultation ç Planning for Focus group

In preparation for the focus group session, you will need:

- A copy of a copy of the background paper for this subject which is available on juniorcycle.ie under the Consultation banner.
- Six table mats made using butcher paper or large A3 sheets. Alternatively, the table mat design on Appendix 1 can be photocopied onto A3 paper and Appendix 2 demonstrates different group layouts when using it. Please write one of the following questions into each section of the table mat:
  - ² Ŝ I·ŃŜ ∃fI·Ř ű2 ăŜŜ X¢¢
  - We would like more of X¢¢
  - We would like less of XX¢
  - Assessment tasks are Ŝy?2èI·ōfŜ I·yŘ ø2ŃűKøKłfŜ XX¢ ² KèK ² Kè y2űK

- Stick four big sheets of paper on the classroom wall with one of the following sentences on the top of each one:
  - ² Ŝ I·ŃŜ ∃fI·Ř ű2 ăŜŜ X¢¢
  - We would like more of X¢¢
  - We would like less of XX¢
  - !ăăŜăăY˜Ŝyű Ŝy?2èI·ōfŜ I·yŘ ø2ŃűKøKłfŜ XX¢ ² KèK ² Kè y2űK

- Eight markers for the completion of wall charts.

- Six copies of the handout in Appendix 3, one for each group outlining the different roles

- Laptop and data projector to show PowerPoint presentation outlining the main features of the short course.

Focus group design

Divide the class into a maximum of six groups with not more than five students in each group.

Each group appoints

- A chairperson: poses the questions and keeps the group on task. He/she also ensures that each member of the group is heard.
- Note taker: ŭl·ʼ]Ŝă y2ŭŜă l·ō2dzŭ ǿKl·ŭ λă ăl·λŘ λy˜ŭKŜ ∃№2dzLJ 2y˜ŭKŜ LJl·LJŜ№ Ψŭl·ōfŜ Y˜l·ŭΩ ădzLJLJfλŜŘ to each group
- Timekeeper: keeps the group working within the time allocated
- Inputter: At the end of the session, this student inputs the main feedback agreed by the whole group into the survey monkey link supplied by the teacher.

(Each group is given a copy of Handout) 3

Activity 1: (5 minutes) Whole class activity

Brainstorm:

You are probably familiar with this subject already.

What do you enjoy most about learning in this subject? What would you change?

The responses can simply be acknowledged and/or recorded on a flip chart.

Activity 2: Table Mat Task (25 minutes)

Run through the relevant subject PowerPoint, using the notes included with each slide to give more details.

Complete the Table Mat Task in your group:

What are you glad to see included?

What would you like less of?

What would you like more of?

Would you find the assessment tasks enjoyable and worthwhile to do? Why? Why not?

Take 3 minutes at the end to agree the three most important points made in relation to each question

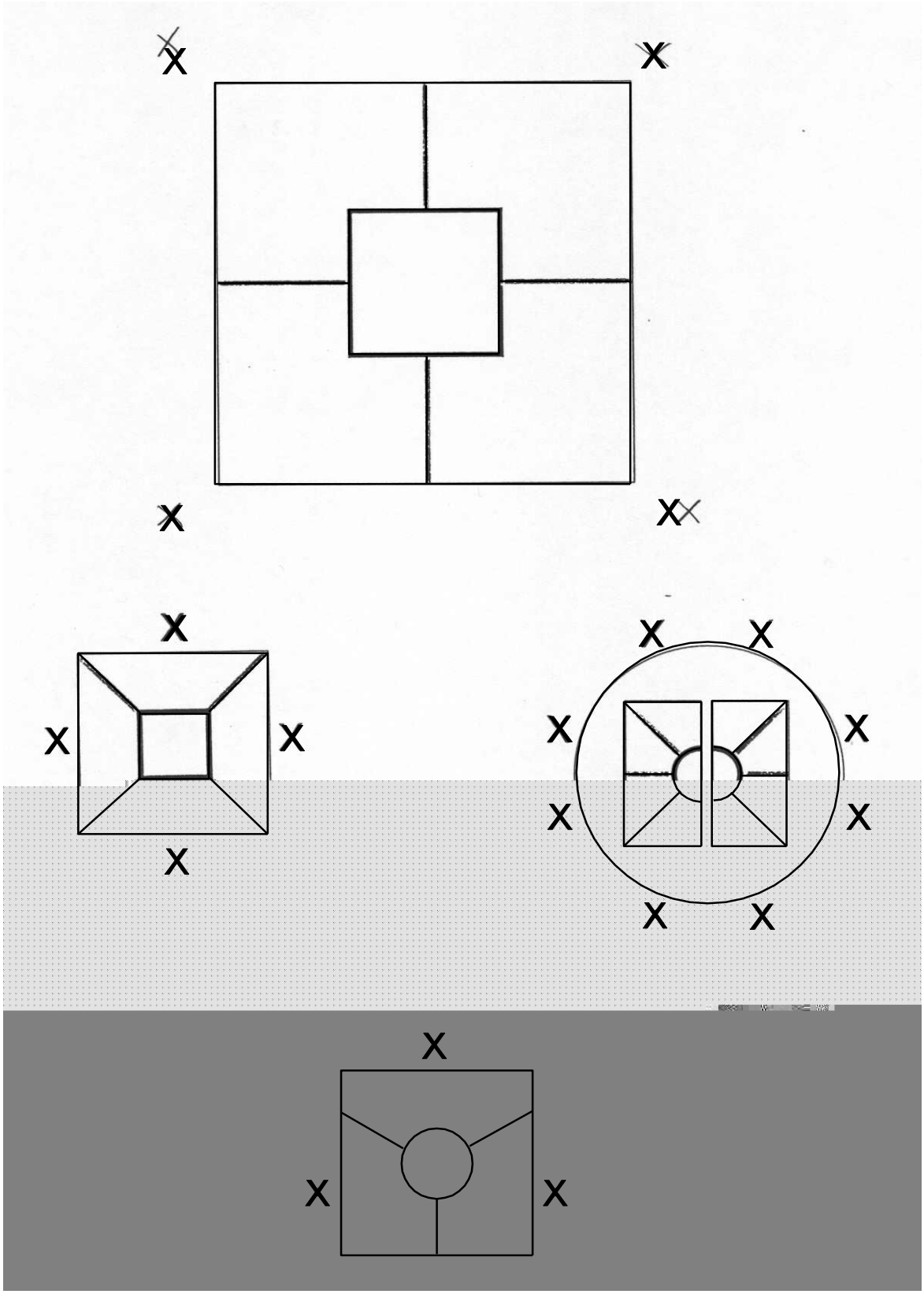
Activity 3: (10 minutes)

Each group adds their three agreed points to the relevant master sheets displayed on the wall of the classroom. If the point has already been included by another group, do not write it again. Simply put a tick beside it.

The class take this time to look over what has been written on the charts.

The responses should be given to the students who will be inputting the results of the focus group into the survey.
Thank you very much for participating. Your comments will form part of the consultation report which will be published early in the New Year. Your participation will be noted on the report. Once the consultation is finished, all of the feedback that we received will inform the final version of the new specification for this subject. . The student voice is very important in this regard.

Appendix 1 Table Mat Task (enlarge onto A3 paper)

What are you glad to see included?	What would youlike less of?
What would you like more of?	Would you find the assessment task enjoyable and worthwhile to do? Why? Why not?

Appendix 2 Table Mat Exercise