

## Key skills and assessment

Here are some ideas on how to incorporate the key skills into your assessment practices!

<b>Working with others</b>	<p>Here are some ways that students can <b>work with others</b> to help each other in revising a topic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Put the students into groups, divide up topics and each group works together to revise a different topic. Then <i>jigsaw</i> the groups so that students from different groups can learn from each other. (The Jigsaw methodology is explained in the <b>Working with Others toolkit</b> p.16)</li><li>• In small groups, students revise a topic and then decide how best to present a summary of this topic – using a poster, graphic organiser or hand-out. The next day they each take turns presenting their topic in small groups and answering questions on that topic.</li><li>• Use traffic lights to find out where the gaps are in students’ learning and then those who have indicated they understand a topic well (green) can help other students with an orange or red light. (See page p36 <b>Managing Information and Thinking toolkit</b> for Traffic Lighting hand-out)</li></ul>
<b>Managing Myself</b>	<p>In the weeks leading up to exams teachers can support students in setting goals, making plans, evaluating their progress towards achieving those goals (See ideas in <b>Managing Myself toolkit</b>)</p> <p>Teachers can ask students to identify where they have tended to make mistakes and compile their ‘Ten most common mistakes’ and encourage them to think about addressing these recurring mistakes in their next test.</p> <p>Students can also review the feedback they have received during recent weeks.</p>
<b>Staying Well</b>	<p>Helping students deal with pressure or anxieties related to exams is another important skill</p> <p>You can help develop students’ coping skills in lots of ways such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing constructive and positive feedback</li><li>• Promoting the idea that everyone can succeed</li><li>• Building student’s confidence</li><li>• Making sure students know what they are expected to learn and what you are looking for- what will a quality piece of work look like, i.e. what are the criteria for success?</li><li>• Encouraging them to help each other and work together so that everyone can succeed.</li><li>• Giving them a sense of ownership over the process. Consult with them and allow them to suggest how they would like to be assessed. Then assessment is not something that is done to them as ‘victims’.</li></ul>

<p><b>Helping students take more responsibility for their learning</b></p>	<p><b>A critical factor in student motivation is the degree of choice they feel they have in relation to their learning.</b></p> <p>How can you give students more choices in the assessment process?</p> <p>How about trying to offer students some choice about <i>how</i> they are assessed?</p> <p>Why not ask them to set some of the exam questions and agree the marking scheme?</p> <p>How about using a mix of written and oral tests (e.g. poster, interview, quiz, toastmasters, spotlight, etc)?</p> <p>How about a mix of in-class assessment with take-home tests?</p> <p>How about a mix of individual and group/paired tasks?</p> <p>Students can also take more responsibility by self and peer-assessing their tests and giving each other feedback.</p> <p><i>Studies show that students trained to prepare for exams by generating and then answering their own questions out-performed comparable groups who prepared in conventional ways. Preparation of test questions calls for and develops an overview of the topic. It also helps them to consider what's important, and what makes a good question. In thinking about what makes a good question for a test students need to have a clear understanding of the topic. It's also very motivating as students see that their ideas are valued.</i></p> <p>Black and Williams, 1998</p>
<p><b>Some strategies to help broaden your assessment activities while developing students' key skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questioning</li> <li>• Debate</li> <li>• Interview (3 step interview)</li> <li>• Toastmasters (students talk for 3 mins on a topic)</li> <li>• Spotlight (1 student answer questions from other students on a topic while others listen carefully to check if the response is accurate and full)</li> <li>• Learning logs/journals/blogs</li> <li>• Visual representations such as a graphic organiser or they produce a poster</li> <li>• Oral performance or presentation</li> <li>• Peer assessments</li> <li>• Self- assessments</li> <li>• Pair or group assessments</li> <li>• Quizzes and games (e.g. see videos on key skills website or check out Teams – Games – Tournament (TGT) Barrie Bennett)</li> <li>• Students make a podcast or video to demonstrate their learning or competence in a skill</li> <li>• Take home test</li> <li>• Open book test</li> <li>• The backward test (students are given the questions beforehand and work in groups to prepare for a test)</li> <li>• And lots more...</li> </ul>

- For a full overview of the Key Skills go to this link [http://www.juniorcycle.ie/NCCA\\_JuniorCycle/media/NCCA/Documents/Key/Key-Skills-Overview-Feb-2013.pdf](http://www.juniorcycle.ie/NCCA_JuniorCycle/media/NCCA/Documents/Key/Key-Skills-Overview-Feb-2013.pdf)