

A Framework for Junior Cycle

Spring 2013

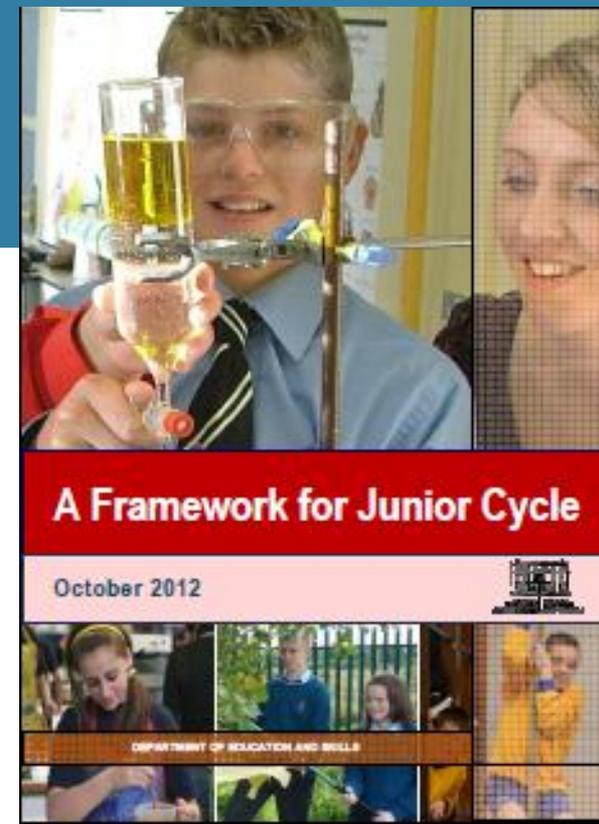


A Framework for Junior Cycle

- The *Framework*

- Published by Minister Quinn on 4th Oct, 2012
- Adopts many of the curricular changes in the NCCA's *Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle* (Nov 2011)
- More radical changes on how students' progress and learning are assessed
- A vote of confidence in teachers and schools, emphasising a broad and balanced approach to learning, better use of assessment and greater school autonomy

Junior Cycle reform requires that the Framework along with the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2011) and School Self-Evaluation (2012) are addressed as interlocked and parallel complementary policies



Outline of presentation

- What is the purpose of this meeting?
- Why change?
- Planning and Designing a Junior Cycle programme
- School Programmes for Junior Cycle
- Assessment, Reporting and Certification
- Quality Assurance
- What is happening to help implement the Framework?
- Opportunity to obtain your views

Information meeting for Principals and Deputy Principals – its purpose

- Management's views on Junior Cycle are given at monthly meetings of the Education Partners' Consultation Group
 - highlighted the need for information
- DES to brief Principals and Deputy Principals
 - A series of regional information meetings over next few months
 - Highlight the challenges and opportunities – particularly during the phasing-in period
- Acknowledge that change is not easy - it will require positive leadership and belief
- Not part of the formal CPD programme – which will examine issues that are particularly school-based – commence autumn 2013

Why is change needed?

- ESRI research highlights that some students
 - Not progressing in first year
 - Disengaging in second year
 - Not developing their particular skills and interests
- Junior Certificate terminal examination has driven learning
 - BUT it is no longer a high stakes exam
- PISA 2009 was a wake up call

Why change?

New JC programme should be:

- Teacher-led and learner-centred, guided by the Principals, Deputy Principal, BOM and staff, so as to:
 - place the quality of learning and teaching, along with appropriate assessment, at its centre
 - be responsive to the identified needs of the learners and their educational outcomes
 - provide teacher autonomy

Planning and Designing a JC programme

A JC programme should be guided by:

- Framework's:
 - 8 principles
 - 24 statements of learning
 - 8 key skills
- Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
- School Self-Evaluation Guidelines

Principles

- Quality
- Wellbeing
- Creativity and Innovation
- Choice and flexibility
- Engagement and participation
- Inclusive education
- Continuity and development
- Learning to Learn

Principle of Wellbeing

- The student experience contributes directly to their physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing and resilience. Learning takes place in a climate focused on collective wellbeing of school, community and society

Statements of Learning (S of L)

S of L describe what learners should know, understand, value and be able to do at end of JC

Traditionally – series of independent subjects with own aims and course objectives

Now JC programme is based on Principles, S of L and Skills which provide an integrated learning platform

Statements of Learning (contd.)

How can S of L and Skills be addressed through the suite of subjects, short courses, other learning experiences that concentrate on the learners and their learning needs?

Potentially very exciting and innovative BUT also worrying for teachers who are used to thinking from their own subject perspective

Teachers have to adopt this new autonomy and flexibility and, along with their colleagues, create a programme where S of L and Skills can be delivered through many contexts.

A Statement of Learning

- The student creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts

Discuss

A Statement of Learning

The student creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts

For example:

- Art Craft Design – artistic performance
- Classics, art
- Debating
- Digital Media
- English, Irish, Modern languages
- History, CSPE, Human Rights, Geography
- Music, maths
- Science, art
- Technical Graphics
- others

Key skills

- 8 key skills identified
 - Literacy, Numeracy, Managing Myself, Staying Well, Communicating, Being Creative, Managing Information and thinking and Working with Others
- Concentrate on development of skills v. absolute knowledge / content
- The pedagogical approach requires a relationship between
 - teacher and learners
 - learning, teaching and assessment

Skill: Working with Others

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Co-operating
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Learning with others
- Working with others through digital technology

Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2011) and the Framework for Junior Cycle (2012)

- Strategy identified JC reform as vital
- Sufficient time for L and N skills
- New language specifications should
 - Connect with learning outcomes in primary
 - Address literacy skills through a range of texts, including digital media
 - Address assessment of literacy skills
- Continue to implement new approaches through Project Maths
- Standardised tests in 2nd year
 - Natural progression from what is happening in primary
 - A tool to assist with quality assurance

SSE framework – a tool for change: Teaching and Learning in the Junior Cycle

TEACHING and LEARNING

Theme

**Learner
outcomes**

**Learning
experiences**

**Teachers'
practice**

Sub-themes

- Attainment of subject and programme objectives

- Learning environment
- Engagement in learning
- Learning to learn

- Preparation for teaching
- Teaching approaches
- Management of students
- Assessment

School Self Evaluation (SSE)

- SSE signalled in the L and N Strategy
- SSE an essential support for implementation of the Framework
- Schools to identify not only current good practice and but also where improvements and change are required
- SSE Guidelines focus on improving teaching and learning – initially in L and N
- Implementing new specifications require teachers to reflect on current practice and learner outcomes
- Evidence on learner progress – from a range of assessments, including standardised tests
- This is self-evaluation in practice
- School Improvement plan will complement the L and N plan and the plan to roll out the JC reforms

A School Programme for Junior Cycle

Given the Principles, Statements of Learning and Key Skills – what will this mean as a school is designing its programme?

- Give Principals and Teachers autonomy and flexibility
 - Inject their passion, create content through different types of learning situations
- Seek to incorporate cultural change for the better
- Require new approaches to learning, teaching and assessment
- Provide opportunities for learners to be involved not only in the design of the programme but also in what they learn
- Be mindful also of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and School Self-Evaluation

A School Programme in Junior Cycle

Schools will have the opportunity to choose from:

- 21 subjects:
 - Students' needs and interests
 - Teacher qualifications and interests
 - Facilities
 - Time available
 - Certification / non-certification
- Range of short courses developed by NCCA, schools or other sources - for certification / non-certification purposes
- Other learning experiences – Guidance, pastoral care, subjects, short courses, musicals, debating, sports etc – for non-certification
- Priority Learning Units (PLUs) – for group of students with special educational needs – for certification

Template for Subjects and Short Courses

The sections of the template refer to

- Title
- Introduction to junior cycle
- Aim
- Rationale
- Links (with statements of learning, literacy and numeracy, and key skills)
- Course overview
- Expectations for learners
- Assessment
- Planning and teaching

Subjects

New scenario:

- **Specifications (Syllabuses) (Level 3 of NFQ) will**
 - be outcomes based
 - incorporate examples of students' learning to illustrate to teachers the standards expected
- **English, Irish, Mathematics – for certification**
 - For all students
 - 240 hours minimum of engagement over the 3 years
- **Other subjects**
 - Minimum of approximately 200 hours of engagement over the 3 years

Short courses

- A range of short courses are being prepared by the NCCA at Level 3 of NFAQ
 - e.g. SPHE, CSPE, PE, Digital Media Literacy, Chinese, Programming/Coding, Artistic performance
- Schools, perhaps in collaboration with other schools, and others are free to develop their own short courses in accordance with NCCA specifications
- Approx. 100 hours of student engagement
- Substitute two short courses for one subject
 - Maximum of four short courses allowed for certification

Priority learning units (PLUs)

PRIORITY LEARNING UNITS (Level 2 of the NFAQ)

- Meet the learning and accreditation needs of a small number of students with learning disabilities
- PLUs - Social, pre-vocational and life skills
 - Communicating and literacy
 - Numeracy
 - Personal Care
 - Living in a community
 - Preparing for work

There will also be short courses available at Level 2

Other Educational Experiences

- Important part of students' development and key objective of JC reform
- Prioritised by schools:
 - Guidance
 - Aspects of pastoral care
 - Elements of religious education
 - Other learning initiatives – public speaking, student council, Gaisce award, Green Flag, Young Scientist, etc
 - For the first time, these learning experiences will be formally recognised and recorded in the school's reporting system

So what will a typical student study for certification?

- Minimum of 8 subjects to maximum of 10 subjects
- May substitute two short courses for a subject up to a maximum of 4 short courses
- Range of options for certification within a school (mindful of possible Senior Cycle choices) to reflect
 - the identified needs of students
 - the resources available

Why change assessment?

- Junior Cycle is no longer high stakes – 90% students complete LC
- Assessment works best when assessment for learning is the norm throughout the 3 years
- It will enable learners with the support of their teachers
 - to dialogue and be clear about outcomes
 - to recognise achievements
 - to explain their concerns as a normal part of learning
 - to overcome obstacles, improve and achieve to their full potential
- Teachers can motivate their learners to have high expectations that are realistic
- Can only assess a range of skills using a range of approaches

Why change assessment?

- A confidence vote in the professionalism of teachers
- Possibly the most rewarding aspect of JC change
- Assessment to improve (not to prove) learning
- Moving from terminal exam philosophy to a learning philosophy
- Current Junior Certificate examination phased out and replaced by a school-based assessment over an 8 year period

Assessment for School Certificate at end of junior cycle

- **Subjects**

- School-work component for all subjects completed in Year 2 and Year 3 (generally 40% of overall marks but may vary across subjects)
- Final assessment component for all subjects completed at the end of Year 3 (60% of marks)
- Final assessment component
 - An examination of no more than two hours
 - Two levels for English, Irish and Mathematics
 - Common level for all other subjects

Assessment at end of junior cycle

- **Subjects**

- Irish, English and Mathematics, for an interim period, final assessments - administered and marked by SEC
- Marks provided to school for combining with school-work component
- For all other subjects, for interim, papers set by SEC for final assessment component, marked by teachers using a SEC marking scheme
- NCCA assessment and moderation toolkit

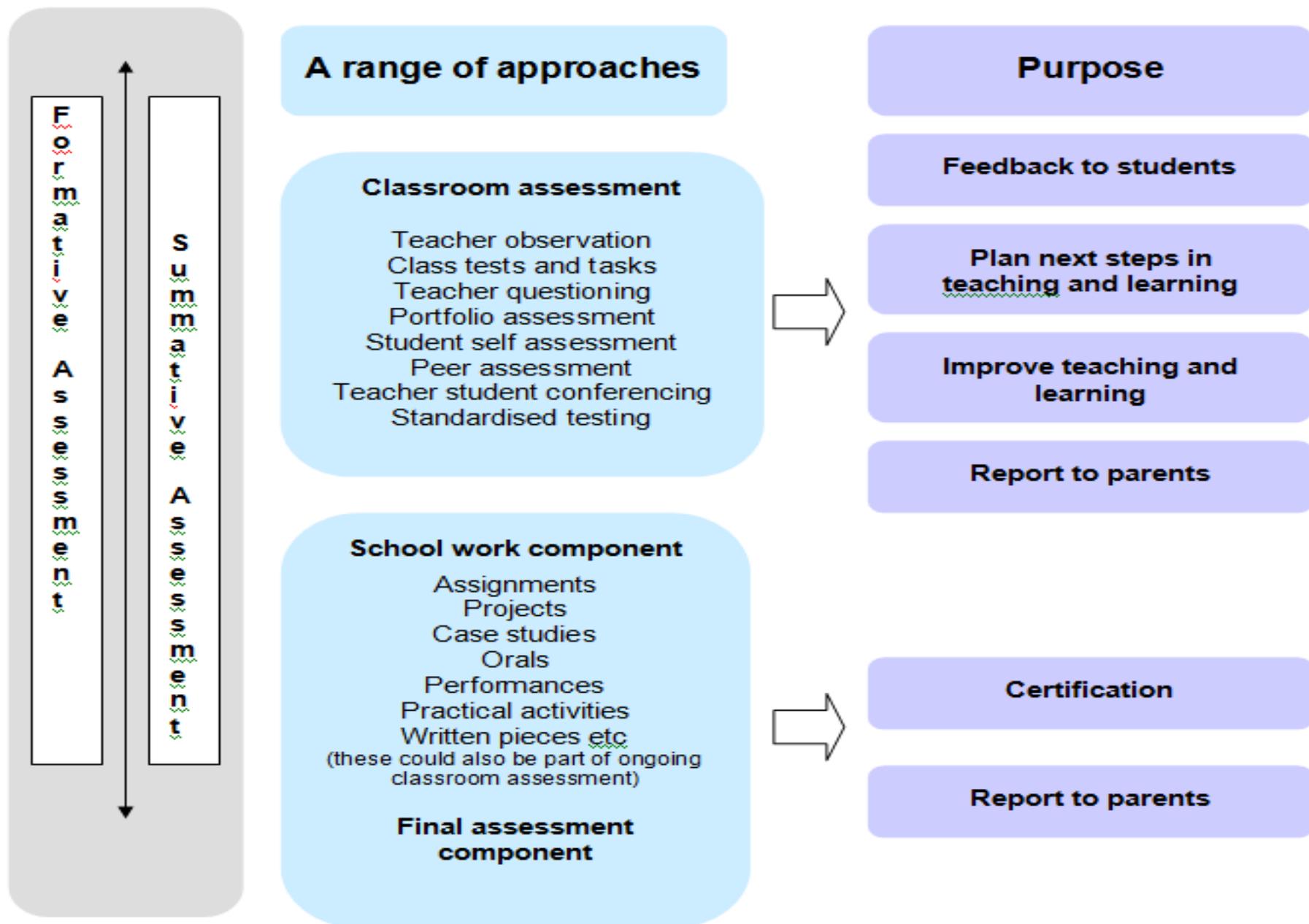
- **Short courses and PLUs**

- Assessment by school

Grades in the new school-based certification

- Grades for marking on a five-point scale
 - Not achieved 0% - 39%
 - Achieved 40% - 54%
 - Achieved with Merit 55% - 74%
 - Achieved with Higher Merit 75% - 89%
 - Achieved with Distinction 90% - 100%

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS AT JUNIOR CYCLE



Phasing of subjects and short courses – timetable for DES and NCCA

- Sept. 2014, first certification in 2017
 - English
 - NCCA and other short courses will be available
- Sept. 2015, first certification in 2018
 - Irish; Science; Business Studies
- Sept. 2016, first certification in 2019
 - Art, Craft, Design; Modern languages; Home Economics; Music; Geography
- Sept. 2017, first certification in 2020
 - Mathematics; Technology subjects; RE; Jewish Studies; Classics; History

Reporting

Best reporting is one that is continuous throughout JC if want to change learning, teaching and the way learners are assessed

In the autumn after 3rd year, a report provided to learners and parents -

- Achievement profile
 - Summary of learning experiences and achievements
- School certificate – issued by schools from Sept. 2017
 - Grades - combination of school work and final assessment (some from SEC, some from school in the transition period) awarded to student in between 8-10 subjects or equivalent

TIMEFRAME FOR INTRODUCING THE NEW REPORTING SYSTEM

**2012/13
to
2015/16**

**Junior Certificate
as usual**

2014/15

**New framework
for junior cycle
introduced for
first year
students**

2016/17 onwards

**School
Certificate issued
by school for
subjects and
short courses
(including results
from SEC) as
part of School
Reporting
System**

Quality assurance to support new junior cycle

Provided through a range of initiatives:

- Subject specifications with clear outcomes and examples of students' work to illustrate standards
- Standardised tests – information re 2nd year students' learning relative to the overall cohort
- New reporting system will include evidence of learning across subjects, short courses and other learning experiences
- No longer a high stakes examination setting
- Ultimate in QA is the quality of learning and there are opportunities for teachers in own school and networks to collaborate and share

Quality assurance at the end of junior cycle

- SEC will provide examination papers and marking schemes for subjects
- SEC will administer and mark Irish, English and Maths for interim period
- Internal moderation in schools in accordance with guidance on moderation – formally confirmed by principal
- Results awarded will be returned to DES – national monitoring of patterns
- DES will provide schools with Data Profile arising from its statistical analysis – advise the schools of patterns in the school's data relative to national trends

Quality assurance at the end of junior cycle (contd.)

- In the event of an unusual pattern of achievement
 - School will be informed
 - Advice and support provided to school on assessment /moderation, organisation of moderation meetings
 - External support may be provided to schools during moderation process
 - Evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment in the school may be carried out by the Inspectorate
- National and international benchmarking
 - Periodic National Assessment of Maths and English Reading in line with *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*
 - Continued participation in PISA

What Support will be available to schools?

- From NCCA www.ncca.ie
 - Specifications and exemplars for subjects/ short courses (involvement of 48 network schools)
 - Assessment and Moderation Toolkit
- SEC – assessment resources www.examinations.ie
- Schools and other organisation
 - Short courses, sharing of information
- CPD
- Education Partners – Consultation Group
 - Opportunity to inform DES of “on the ground” issues
 - Needs of Parents who will play a critical role in the successful implementation of the JC

New JC Team, led by Dr. Padraig Kirk

- Team commence in autumn 2013
- Principals and Deputy Principals
 - in curriculum leadership and assessment
- Teachers, Guidance Counsellors
 - CPD on structuring a programme within a school, on timetabling, learning and teaching and assessment methodologies etc

So what is happening?

- Important to stress – radical reform that is socially and economically relevant
- Information meetings – an overview + opportunity to hear your views
- Copies of Framework, letters to Principals and Teachers + Leaflet with Q + A for schools
- Schools should reflect on changes – in preparation for implementation of Framework, L and N Strategy and SSE
- This is good news which requires leadership to promote the changes and to instil in our teachers our belief in their professionalism and their dedication to the best interests of their learners

The new junior cycle.....

“will provide

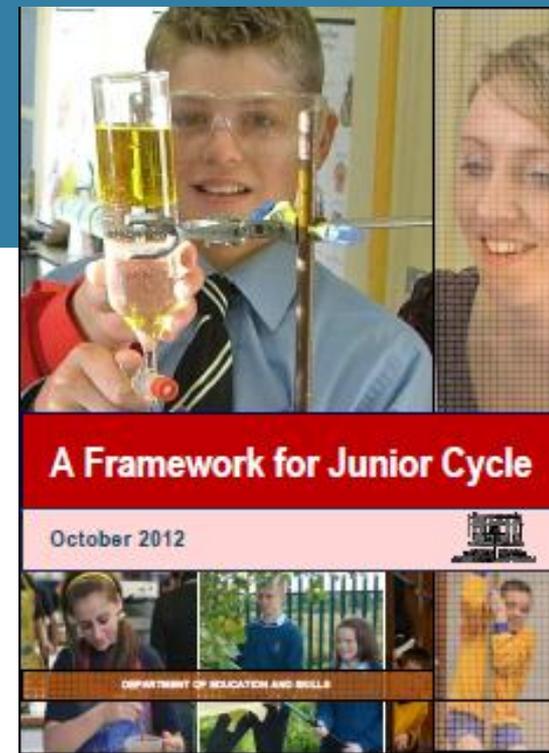
- a framework within which children can express the fullest range of their abilities....
- opportunity for growth and for a broader experience of education.
- real information on progress and ways of improvement for individual students.

will enable

- all students to achieve their full potential and be properly challenged in their learning, thereby raising educational standards.

Our children deserve nothing less.”

Ruairí Quinn, TD, Minister for Education and Skills



- What are your views?

juniorycleframework@education.gov.ie

Example of Programme

Student 2: 8 subjects+ 4 short courses

Subjects: English, Irish, Maths and Science

Options:

- History or French or Business Studies
- Music or Art or Technical Graphics
- MT (Wood) or Home Economics or Geography
- French or Geography or Art

Short Courses:

- Basic French or Local Studies or Programming/ Coding
- PE or Artistic Performance or CSPE
- Religious Education
- CSPE

Other Learning areas:

- SPHE, debating and Guidance