

Transition Unit

It's your future!
**Exploring options in further and
higher education**

Resource handbook

Acknowledgements

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Introduction to the handbook

The resource materials in this handbook accompany the Transition Unit *It's Your Future! Exploring Options in Further and Higher Education*. The unit aims to encourage students to consider further and higher education options after school. It is designed for use in Transition Year but can also be used at other stages in the senior cycle programme.

School is where students learn many of the knowledge, skills and competences needed throughout life. Transition Year and the start of senior cycle provide an important opportunity for students to learn about and plan for their future. Completing a Transition Unit on further and higher education is just one contribution that schools can make to encourage their students to reach their full potential. For many schools, this work begins from the first day that students attend school. It is intended that the unit will further enhance the work that is already underway.

National and international research shows that a school which values its students and is ambitious for all of them can make a big impact on young people's success in school and in future life. The Transition Unit aims to contribute to this positive environment. It also forms part of the initiatives that are underway in Ireland and more widely in the European Union to help students make good choices for the future.

The Transition Unit has four aims. They are to:

- encourage more students to progress to further and higher education
- enhance students' awareness of their own personal strengths, learning styles and abilities
- familiarise students with the range and type of education courses open to them, be it general or vocational, full-time or section-time, and at a range of points on the national framework of qualifications

- inform students on practical matters related to further study, including financial supports, learning and pastoral supports, getting accommodation and what student life is like after school.

The resource materials in this booklet can be adapted to accommodate the needs of diverse student groups and also to draw on nearby facilities and links, for example with local further and higher education colleges and other community resources. If local facilities allow, there can be a substantial web-based element to the unit. Students can complete activities online, in particular the sections requiring research and investigation.

A cross-curricular approach

As indicated in the descriptor, this unit has links with guidance and development initiatives already underway in junior and senior cycle. It may benefit some schools and students to adopt a cross-curricular approach to the unit, with two or more teachers participating in its delivery. For example, the guidance counsellor may share work on the unit with the Transition Year co-ordinator and/or teachers delivering Civic, Social and Political Education or Social, Personal and Health Education.

Advance planning

Suggestions for teachers on preparation and planning for the unit include:

- Arranging a timetable for the unit that allows for 45 hours of student work. This involves a combination of class time (c.38 hours), visiting speaker(s) and field trip. The unit can be offered, for example, in two double-classes each week for half the year (approx fifteen weeks) or one double-class for a full year (approx 30 weeks).
- Making early contact with personnel and services in the community who can contribute to the learning in the unit. For example, there may be a good motivational speaker from the local community who is willing to speak to the student group. Current students, lecturers and administrators in the local further and higher education colleges may also be willing to work with the students and answer their questions, particularly during the field day visit. Or there may be some knowledgeable people in local community services who are willing to make a contribution. There may also be local events and venues that can

be incorporated, for example an education or careers open day, taster courses or study evenings in local further/higher education colleges.

- Planning ways to encourage the student group to be creative and to 'think big'. The unit provides an opportunity for students to explore options that they may not have previously considered. It may also be the first time that students have focused at some length on their own place in the world and what they want out of life.

How this handbook is structured

The twelve sections of the summary outline in the unit descriptor are used to structure the resource materials in this handbook. A range of suggestions and materials are included.

There are three main parts to each section:

- A short introduction, which includes a suggested time length for the work involved
- The aims of the section
- Teacher guidelines, resource materials, references and student worksheets.

At the end of Sections 1, 6, 7, 8, there are reflection exercises that students can complete and insert in their journal along with completed worksheets, for review and final assessment.

Teachers may wish to adapt the materials to suit the needs and interests of their student group. For example, some teachers may judge it beneficial to spend several weeks on the workshop series in Section 1. In other cases additional time may be spent investigating course options or guidance and supports later on.

The handbook also includes an evaluation for teachers and students which can be completed in hard copy or online at www.hea.ie/access. The HEA and NCCA welcome all feedback on the unit and accompanying resources.

Introduction for students

Dear Student

This unit is about considering options in further and higher education after school and we hope you find it useful.

In your work on the unit you will have an opportunity to look at the advantages of further study after school. You will explore the range of options available and what you would need to do to get a place on a course that interests you. You will find out more about your own strengths and abilities and what kinds of further study might best suit you. You will also explore what life is like as a college student, some of the interesting opportunities that arise, and the various supports and guidance that are available.

As well as meeting people who can give you advice on going to college, you will do some research on aspects of further and higher education. What you find out should be of help over the coming years as you prepare to finish school and start on the rest of your life.

So, as you progress through the unit, keep an open mind, be creative, and think big! And don't forget to encourage your friends and the other students around you.

*'Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?'*

Extract from *The Summer Day* by M. Oliver

Section 1 Going to College: Why Bother?!

(i) Introduction

In this first section of the unit the teacher facilitates a series of discussion and activity-based workshops on the idea of students continuing their education after school. Perceived benefits, advantages and disadvantages of further study are also explored. Time required: Approx 4 double classes

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 1 are to encourage students to:

- review their own knowledge and perceptions about further study after school and about who goes to college (further and higher education)
- think about the benefits, advantages and disadvantages of further study, personally, for their families and in a wider social context.

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Workshop 1 of 3 Introducing the Unit

Support materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard, Worksheets 1.1, and 1.2

Arrangement of group: Students assembled as whole group or in groups of 3-4.

It is suggested that teachers take some time to introduce the unit to students and to explain what its aims are, what they hope will be gained by the students, and what kind of experiences and learning will take place over the coming weeks. As part of the introduction teachers may wish to refer to some of their own experiences in further or higher education. Each student is then asked to complete the exercise 'Imagining the future' (Worksheet 1.1).

Step 1 Each student is given a copy of worksheet 1.1 and asked to think ten years ahead in terms of events in their life, the people they will know or live with, or have as family and friends, and major achievements. The teacher may wish to suggest some possibilities under each heading or ask the group as a whole for some suggestions. Some interim markers may be suggested, such when the students leave school or their twenty-first birthday. Words or images can be used to complete the exercise.

Step 2 The students complete the exercise individually.

Step 3 In pairs/small groups, students are asked to share and compare their completed tri-pie, facilitated by the teacher.

Step 4 The Introduction to Students on page 7 can then be used to discuss the aims of the unit. Teachers may ask students to read the introduction and to get their reactions. On the flipchart/whiteboard answers and comments from the group as a whole are noted. Key questions are:

- Does anyone know any college students, in further and higher education? What are they doing, do they like it? Why/why not?
- Why would you go to college? Why wouldn't you go to college? The teacher introduces the rules of brainstorming and, under the two headings of 'Why go/advantages' and 'Why not go/disadvantages', all suggestions are gathered from the group and noted on the flipchart.

Step 5 In their small groups, students are asked to rank and prioritise each of the advantages and disadvantages (eg. top 3 of each). There is then a whole-group discussion what was prioritised under each heading and why. Students are asked to keep their notes as the group will return to these advantages and disadvantages later in the unit.

Step 6 In the final part of the first workshop the teacher introduces the article on the career to-date of Martin King. King is the well-known TV3 presenter and Today FM DJ. The accompanying worksheet contains an extract from a recent interview with King. He describes how he started from scratch and, with lots of determination, went on to develop a successful career. Along the way he had to ignore people who told him that he had to change who he was in order to be a success. Students are asked to give their reaction to what King has to say, using the accompanying questions.

Step 7 In groups of three, students get one copy of the two-page article and questions (Worksheet 1.2). The teacher asks each group to assign different people the roles of reader, checker and recorder. The reader is responsible for reading the article aloud to the rest of the group. The checker is responsible for reading out the questions and checking that the suggested answers are correct. The recorder is responsible for noting the agreed answer on the worksheet and subsequently feeding back the answers to the group as a whole.

Step 8 When each group has completed the task the questions are then discussed by the whole group.

What year is that?!

Where do you think YOU will be in 10 years?

EVENTS

PEOPLE
(relationships)

ACHIEVEMENTS

Worksheet 1.2

www.Tribune.ie

'I made tea for some real hotshots and I did it for 15 quid a week'

The affable presenter who put fun into forecasting is determined to bring more sunshine to the nation with his new morning show on TV3.



'So, when they raided, myself and two other guys jumped into the transmitter room," says TV3 weatherman and, apparently, rugged man of action, Martin King. "They were at the door, and they didn't knock politely in those days. They'd literally come through the plasterboard walls with sledgehammers in their hands. It was mad stuff!"

This is a flashback to the last recession; a day in the life of TV3's swashbuckling weather man, in the days before legally independent broadcasters, when he worked in pirate radio.

But how did the impenetrably bubbly Martin King, soon to be presenter of The Morning Show with Sybil and Martin, end up working in the slightly mad world of Irish radio pirates? "I wanted to be a football commentator," he explains, "and I thought maybe you started on radio, so I wrote to James Dillon at Big D. He interviewed me while he was on the air doing a show. 'Can you answer phones? How are you for making tea? Can people read your handwriting?' I was 14 or 15."

His hobby became a job when illness struck the family. "My dad was hospitalised. It was a very tough time for the whole house. It was depression and it affected him really badly," he falters a little, "I'm saying it to you and should feel comfortable talking about it and yet there's a stigma attached to it. Depression is something we've talked about on Midday [the daytime discussion show he co-hosted], but it's still not easy. Anyway, he ended up getting hospital care. It happened in the summer holidays and I decided I wasn't going to go back to school. I was 15 and the eldest and I thought I should take on the responsibility of bringing home some money. So I took a permanent job at the radio station. Now, I went back to school some time later, but at the time I was determined to do anything to help my mother. [Big D] had no one to open doors, or answer phones overnight, so I did it. I met some great people. I made tea for some real hot shots! And I did it for 15 quid a week."

A few years later, King (the name is a legacy from the pirate days, when all DJs had secret monikers; his real name is Martin Boyle) moved on to present a show on Sunshine, a bigger and brasher pirate, filled with mid-Atlantic accents and established by former Radio Caroline

DJs. "I learned so much there, but I also got some bad advice," he says. "I was told that if I wanted a career in broadcasting I needed to get rid of the accent, get rid of my friends, leave the area I lived in, and move to the southside [he's from Edenmore, on the north side of Dublin city]. I was absolutely devastated by that. I was about 19 or 20 and quite vulnerable, and I carried that bad advice around with me. I never moved or lost my friends, but when I went to 98FM a guy there asked me why I was putting on an accent. He told me that my speaking voice was fine and to concentrate on what I was saying, not how I was saying it. So I did. The shackles of putting on this phoney mid-Atlantic accent were taken away from me and I became a better broadcaster."

There is a pleasing similarity between Martin King in the flesh and Martin King off the telly, however. He's warm and funny and talks excitedly of the "Brady Bunch-style" family he has with his partner Jenny, a photographer (three of the five children are from previous relationships).

He's enjoyed his time with The Midday Show in which he engages in surprisingly heated debate on the issues of the day, alongside the guests and his fellow TV3 hosts ("we've changed Cantwell's name to Rantwell!") but it's possible his new job might suit him better. The Morning Show with Sybil and Martin, which he is to host alongside Xposé host Sybil Mulcahy, sounds much less adversarial.

"We'll be talking about things like parenting and relationships," he says. "They say that when poverty comes in the door, love goes out the window. Relationships are struggling. And we're conscious of all the troubles people are going through. People are losing their jobs and that unfortunate statistic means that more are watching daytime television. So we want to be as positive as we can. People are looking for inspirational television and we're hoping to offer some of that. We have a responsibility to our audience to treat them right."

And then he prepares to go collect his kids. The nine-year-old is set on an acting career, he tells me, and recently asked his teacher for a bigger section in the school play. He beams proudly at the thought. "No waiting around for a DJ not to turn up for him!"

3 May, 2009 Tribune Magazine

MARTIN KING – THE SECRET OF HIS SUCCESS?

- 1 Why do you think Martin King changed his name?
- 2 What was King told he had to get rid of if he wanted a career on the radio/TV?
- 3 Did Martin King have to change his accent to get his job on TV3?
- 4 Do you think Martin King has had an easy life so far? Why/why not?
- 5 Why do you think Martin King has done so well in his career?

Workshop 2 of 3

DVD on student access to further and higher education

At the beginning of the second workshop the teacher may wish to recap on the outcomes of the first workshop.

Students then view a DVD on student access to further and higher education. It is suggested that the teacher views the DVD in advance and is prepared to facilitate discussion on the people who feature in it.

Supporting materials: DVD, Worksheet 1.3

Arrangement of group: Arranged to facilitate viewing of the DVD.

DVD running time: 14 minutes

Content of the DVD

The central message of the DVD that everyone should have opportunities through education to reach their full potential as individuals and as members of a community and society.

In advance of showing the DVD teachers may wish to become familiar with/investigate:

- Current initiatives that are being undertaken within the school to promote access to and participation in higher education
- Established links and networks between the school and the regional further and higher education institutions
- Education-community links and collaboration
- Access initiatives that are being undertaken/promoted in the local area e.g. through the Local Development Partnership or Community Development Projects
- The nearest further and higher education institutions
 - Do these institutions have access programmes and activities?
 - Who is the point of contact?
- The number/percentage of students in the school who have progressed to further and higher education over the past five years.

Showing the DVD

In the classroom, a copy of Worksheet 1.3 is given to each student and it is explained that the DVD is about study after school and opportunities in further and higher education. The DVD features people who may not fit the expected profile of who goes on to college. The teacher may wish to begin by asking the group what, in their view, are the kind of people who go on to further and higher education. The students are then asked to listen to what the people in the DVD have to say and be ready to complete the worksheet at the end.

The people who feature in the DVD include:

- John who is the only person to go to college in his family, no one else went beyond Junior Certificate. He progressed from a multimedia programme in Dun Laoghaire

Senior College on to a diploma and then a degree course in Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology. He plans to move to Trinity College to do a Masters programme and then possibly a PhD.

- Derek from Limerick, a wheelchair user, who is studying History, Politics and Social Studies in the University of Limerick. He is also the Equality Officer for students in the university.
- Modesta from Zimbabwe, one of a family of seven children, living in Ireland without her family. She works full-time and is a part-time student in the Dublin Institute of Technology, taking a degree course in Business Studies.
- Thomas, who is blind, and who talks about the types of supports available for students with this type of disability in the University of Limerick.
- Catherine, a mature student, who left school at 16 and spent half her life wishing she was in art college. However, because she had dyslexia she left school before the Leaving Certificate and did a four-year apprenticeship in hairdressing. She has since gone back to higher education as a mature student and talks about the importance and positive impact of support for those with learning difficulties.
- Noreen who is from Cork and who relates her experience of being a Traveller in the education system. Her story gives us an indication of the often hidden impact of further education based in the community in promoting and accessing higher education adults and their children in disadvantaged communities. It was only after she married that she went back to education. This happened through her involvement in women's groups. She progressed from one level to the next and then to a certificate course in Community Development in University College Cork. She now plans to undertake the degree course in UCC.

After viewing the DVD ask each group to complete the short worksheet and then use the comments to start a discussion on the content of the piece.

Possible additional questions are:

- Did you learn anything new from this DVD?
- Did you know that some further education colleges and every higher education college have an Access Office? What sort of service do you think an Access Office provides?
- Did you know that there are supports available for those with learning difficulties/dyslexia?
- What did you think of the images in the DVD?
- What did you think was the main message of the DVD?

This may be an opportunity for teachers to acknowledge that there can be and that there are often difficulties along the path towards further and higher education. It is not always plain sailing.

Worksheet 1.3

Going on to further and higher education - DVD

1 Each of these students faces different challenges. What are they?

John (Multimedia student)	Derek (wheelchair user)
Modesta (from Zimbabwe)	Thomas (student with a visual disability)
Catherine (mature student)	Noreen (Traveller)

2 Which of the students has the hardest challenge, do you think? Why?

3 Why do you think these students have worked so hard to get into college?

4 Which one of the students in the DVD is the most inspiring, in your opinion? Why?

Workshop 3 of 3

'A level playing field?' The link between where people live and who goes to college

Accompanying materials: Worksheets 1.4 and 1.5

Arrangement of group: In whole group format

Guidelines

This workshop explores some of the questions surrounding under-representation in further and higher education. Students are invited to react to the figures on progress to higher education by postal area in Dublin. The information can be presented as an overhead or using Powerpoint. Following the discussion, there is a walking debate on the theme of 'Going to college. Myth versus Fact'.

Discussion of postal district information

Step 1 Introducing the information. The teacher presents the information on an overhead and asks students to study it for a moment and identify what the visual is showing. He/she can then confirm/clarify that it is the most up-to-date information available on the percentage of school leavers going to college per postal district in Dublin. Although the figures are available in this format for Dublin only, they illustrate the link between home address and who goes to college that is relevant to students around the country.

Step 2 Discussion of the data. A number of issues/questions to facilitate the discussion are suggested below; the teacher or volunteer student can note the groups' answers on a flipchart/whiteboard.

- (i) Look at the big difference in the rate of school leavers going to college in Ballyfermot versus Rathfarnham and in Rathmines versus Clondalkin. Why do you think this is?
- (ii) Does this information surprise you? Why/why not?
- (iii) Consider where you live at the moment, and your city/town. Do you think there might be similar differences in terms of where people live and who goes to college? [Ask for some possible examples similar to Rathfarnham vs Ballyfermot. At this point, if it is available, the teacher may be able to give some local information on participation rates linked to home address].

Walking debate: 'Who goes to college: Myth vs Fact' Worksheet 1.5

Step 3 For this part of the workshop, students are asked to leave their chairs/desks and a large space is cleared in the room. A sign marked 'TRUE' is placed/pinned on the right side of the room. 'FALSE' is pinned on the left side. The sign 'NOT SURE' is pinned/placed at a middle point in the room.

Step 4 The teacher has copies of Worksheet 1.5 which s/he does not as yet circulate to the class. The teacher explains that s/he is going to read out a number of statements about going to college. Some of the statements are true and some are false. As each statement is read out each student decides whether it is true or false. Those who think it is true go to the right side of the room. Those who think it is false go to the left side of the room. Those who are undecided go to the middle.

Step 5 After each statement is read out someone from each of the True/False groups is asked to explain their opinion. Then everyone is asked again if they still believe their original view and is given an opportunity to change position, including those who were undecided.

Step 6 When each statement has been debated students return to their seats and get a copy of the True/False statements. The teacher clarifies and provides additional information on some/all of the statements that were debated. Some interesting facts and figures for teachers are included on page 20.

Step 7 Students are asked to talk about the True/False worksheet at home that evening and get some views/reactions to the statements.

Admission rates to Higher Education by postal district (Dublin) 2004

	%
Rathfarnham-Clonskeagh	87
Rathmines-Terenure	86
Foxrock-Glencullen	83
Ballsbridge-Donnybrook	70
Ballyboden-Ballinteer	64
Tallaght-Firhouse	40
Kilmainham-Inchicore	33
South Inner City	30
Crumlin-Kimmage	29
Palmerstown	24
Clondalkin-Neilstown	23
Ballyfermot-Chapelizod	12

***Source: Who Went to College
in 2004?
HEA 2006***

Going to college TRUE OR FALSE

People who go to college are rich and brainy

Far more boys go to college than girls

You don't need a college education to get a good job

People who go to college earn more money later on

You need at least 400 points in your Leaving Cert to go to college.

People in college are broke all the time

People who go to college are rich and brainy

The most recent report on who goes to college in Ireland (HEA, 2006) shows that there is a wide diversity in the socio-economic background of students, although some groups are over-represented. The student cohort includes the sons of daughters of small farmers and manual workers as well as those from professional backgrounds. Regular studies on who goes to college in Ireland since the 1980s show a steady increase in the diversity of students going to college. Also, about a third of current students are have qualified for financial support from state, in the form of a grant or other funding.

Far more boys go to college than girls

In fact, more girls go to college than boys. Figures on the university sector compiled by the Higher Education Authority show that, overall, 59% of students are girls, compared to 41% of boys.

This trend is replicated in other countries, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) states that in 2007 an average of 59% of college graduates across OECD countries were women.

You don't need a college education to get a good job

Numerous international surveys (OECD, Universities UK, etc) show that those who have continued their education after school have a much wider choice in the work that they do, much better opportunities for promotion and/or change of career during their working life, and have a much higher rate of job satisfaction and sense of a good quality of life. There are exceptions to the rule, famous examples include Bill Cullen and Richard Branson, but overall, you are creating a lot more options and opportunities for yourself by continuing your education.

People who go to college earn more money later on

Again, survey after survey shows that those who continue their education earn more money than those who stop after school (OECD, etc). A recent report commissioned from the accountancy firm Price Waterhouse Coopers by Universities UK estimates that, over the course of their working lives, graduates earn 20-25% more than non-graduates.

You need at least 400 points in your Leaving Cert to go to college

A wide range of courses are available to students who achieved less than 400 points in their Leaving Certificate, and further education is a route for students who have completed the Leaving Certificate Applied. Often students can enter a particular course with a relatively low entry requirement and then progress to a degree and/or post-graduate course afterwards.

People in college are broke all the time

Most students work part-time when they are in college, and although money is not that plentiful, they generally still have enough to enjoy themselves. There are lots of ways for students to keep their costs down (see www.spunout.ie) and also lots of things that are subsidised or are offered special student rates, for example, food, drink, travel, sports facilities, nights out.

End of Section 1 Reflection on 'Going to College: Why Bother?!'

Questions for students, to be completed at the end of Section 1

1 What were the most interesting parts of the workshops you completed?

2 List 2-3 new things that you have learned from the work so far

3 You have heard the stories of several people in the articles and DVD. Who did you think was the most inspiring? Why?

Section 2 Thinking outside the box

(i) Introduction

In this section students think about what knowledge and skills they'd like to have gained by the end of the unit.

Time required: Approx 1 single class

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 2 are to

- encourage students to think in some detail about what they'd like to learn
- agree an outline plan with their teacher.

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Worksheet 2.1.

Selection of information brochures/books/prospectuses on careers, qualifications, study routes and local/regional further/higher education colleges (Optional)

Arrangement of group: Students assembled together with space to work individually.

Following the exploratory workshops on the idea of going to further or higher education, students are asked to think about their own individual learning goals. The planning worksheet may be completed by each student in class or in a one-to-one session with the teacher.

Step 1 A copy of the worksheet is distributed to each student. Before asking the group to complete the worksheet the teacher may wish to introduce each section, giving some examples. For instance, the theory of multiple intelligences and their link to particular study routes and careers may be explained. Or the teacher may wish to describe how an interest in the outdoors may orient someone towards a career in horticulture, agriculture or outdoor pursuits, among many. This may also be a stage where students are encouraged to be adventurous in their ideas for exploration. Examples from a list of the many possible careers and associated study routes may be given to encourage students to go for ambitious options, or exploration of the school's resource information on careers, qualifications and study routes. Finally, students can be reminded that the plan is not set in stone and may be revisited during the unit.

Step 2 The group is given 8-10 minutes to complete the worksheet which is then stored in each student's file for future reference.

Worksheet 2.1

Dear student

Over the coming weeks you will be exploring the possibility of progressing to further and/or higher education. Look at the questions that follow and take some time to think about what in particular you would like to gain from this unit.

Don't worry about being too definite, there will be an opportunity to change or add to your learning goals later on.

1 Getting clear on my own strengths, interests and abilities

I want to learn more about...	Who and what can help me achieve this

2 Learning about where and what I might study after school

I am interested in finding out about...	Who and what can help me achieve this

3 Practical things I want to know about going on to further and/or higher education

I want to find out about...	Who and what can help me achieve this

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section 3 'It's a big world...' Self-assessment of strengths, interests and abilities

(i) Introduction

In Section 3 students complete a number of tests that help them to learn more about their own strengths, interests and abilities. A primary goal in completing the tests is to provide a positive and affirming experience for each student.

Time required: Approx 2 double classes

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 3 are to:

- help students to learn more about their own personal strengths, interests and abilities
- encourage them to feel hopeful and confident about their future and the contribution they will be able to make in their personal and work life
- encourage them to be ambitious and imaginative about what they'd like to do with the next 5-10 years of their life

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Access to the internet. Worksheet 3.1

Arrangement of group: Students assembled with individual access to the internet.

As is the case with all self-assessment tests, they are only a broad indicator of possible interests and talents. There are a wide range of tests available, many of them online. Some are free, others require a fee, and some require teachers to complete training to administer them. **Four possible tests** are suggested below, based on the premises that the resources of each school vary, and also that many of those teaching the unit will have expertise in the area of interest-testing. There is a note accompanying each test, describing in brief what each test aims to do, particular attributes, internet links/sources to obtain the tests and matters relating to access and cost, where relevant.

The tests were selected with reference to Department of Education and Science guidelines, the Psychological Society of Ireland, the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) and current expertise and practice among guidance teachers. Teachers may wish to use other tests that they are familiar with, instead of those suggested here (**see note below).

Administering the tests

Step 1 The teacher explains the aims of the process and may find it useful to direct students to the introduction to self-assessment on the homepage of the Irish website www.careersportal.ie.

Step 2 Each student has a copy of Worksheet 3.1 and uses it to make notes of their results from each of their tests on Part 1 of the worksheet. Some time can be spent after each test discussing the results in general, what students think of them and of the test itself.

Step 3 When all of the tests have been completed, students complete the second and third parts of the worksheet. The information noted will be built upon in Section 4 of the unit.

****Note on alternative self-assessment tests**

As teachers may be aware, the Department of Education and Science circular 0099/2007 http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobservelet/cl0099_2007.doc provides a range of test choices under the heads of Guidance – Aptitude (2 tests) and Guidance – Interest (12 tests in all). A number of Irish-based companies provide access to the tests listed, including careers inventories and training in personality assessment.

A source in the Psychological Society of Ireland also suggests materials from a UK organisation called Team Focus Limited, www.teamfocus.co.uk. One example is the Sixteen Personality Factor - Adolescent Personality Questionnaire (16PFAPQ), which can be completed by people ranging from 11 years to 21 years of age. It can be used to generate personality profiles, identify current life difficulties, raise awareness, enhance motivation, and link personality traits to interests.

Suggested tests

1	<p>'What am I like?' BBC personality test http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/mind/surveys/whatamilike/index.shtml</p> <p>Notes Free online test, UK, fun/suitable as icebreaker. Takes c. 10 minutes to complete. Design of test has basis in science, developed as part of BBC Science and Nature: Human Body and Mind programme.</p>
2	<p>Interest Assessment www.qualifax.ie (link on homepage)</p> <p>Notes Free online test, <i>Ireland</i>. Takes c.10minutes to complete. Test asks respondents to choose 'either-or' from a list of questions on job/occupation/subject interests. A reader-friendly graph at the end shows results under seven headings. See extract from finished test below. There is also an explanation of what each heading means and the kinds of jobs that might suit particular interests, abilities and strengths.</p>
3	<p>Holland Self-Directed Search www.self-directed-search.com</p> <p>Notes Online test, with fee required. [cost per group/students]. USA. The test takes c.15 minutes to complete. J. Holland is an American psychologist who specialises in career interest work The test consists of five categories, the first of which is attractive because it asks respondents to imagine/daydream about what careers they'd like and then leads them through a large list of possible careers. Other categories include activities, competencies, occupations, and self-estimates.</p>
4	<p>Interest inventory – Career Directions www.careerdirections.ie</p> <p>Notes Free online test. Takes c.20 minutes to complete. An alternative to the Holland test if funds are not available. Not very user-friendly, particularly at the beginning (work is underway to improve it – complete by Sept 09?) Career directions website does contain other useful information on the range of available careers, however.</p>

Sample extract from BBC ‘What am I like?’ test

YOU		?	?	?
PLANNER				
NOT YOU		?	?	?
SPONTANEOUS				

Sample extract from Qualifax interest assessment

Results for:

Name: Breda

Your results! This profile shows a graph of your interest in seven work or career activities. Does one category stand out over the others? The long bars (high scores) show the type of activities you like best. More than one high score means a combination of interests.

Your Results:

- Outdoor:** *****
- Practical:** *****
- Scientific:** *****
- Creative:** *****
- Business:** *****
- Office:** *****
- People:** *****

Score

Worksheet 3.1 Summary of results from my self-assessment tests

Name: _____ Date: _____

1	<p>These are the things that I've learned about myself from the self-assessment tests: <i>eg I am good at... I am really interested in... I might find the following boring...</i></p>	
	Test 1	Test 2
	Test 3	Test 4
2	<p>The results point to a number of careers/jobs that I might like:</p>	
3	<p>Careers (and study routes) I'd like to explore further:</p>	

Section 4 'Okay, I'm good with animals...So what?'

(i) Introduction

In Section 4, students use the results from the self-assessment tests to explore careers and areas of further and higher education that might suit them after school.

Time required: Approx 2 double classes

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 4 are to:

- Help students to explore possible careers and associated study routes.
- Develop students' research skills using a range of sources, including the internet

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Copy of Worksheet 4.1 for each student.

Individual access to the internet.

Local/regional college prospectuses and other relevant hard-copy, audio-visual materials.

Arrangement of group: Students assembled with individual access to the internet.

Step 1 Using section 3 of the previous worksheet (3.1) students review the careers and study routes that they are interested in. Hopefully there will be at least two.

Step 2 Students do some additional research on their top 2-4 careers and associated study options. For instance, one student may have learned that they are good with animals and also love the outdoors. Possible careers include becoming a vet, a farmer, or working in an animal refuge. The student will:

- (i) research a job/career profile for each option
- (ii) find out what study route(s) are needed/available for each
- (iii) identify the location(s) of available courses in both further and higher education, as appropriate

Step 3 Students record their information on Worksheet 4.1.

Information sources include:

Career profiles

www.careersportal.ie

Good introductory website. Students can look up an A-Z listing of possible careers that contain substantial information, including interest areas that underpin each career. Eg a vet tends to be a naturalist and investigative. There are also links that students can follow to get more information. The site also lists the qualification(s) required.

www.careerdirections.ie

FAS website that also provides additional careers information in an A-Z listing. Images and short videos are also included for many entries. There is more detailed information on aspects of the job and also detailed information on qualifications and courses required, and

extensive extra links for more information, including links to some of the educational institutions providing qualifications and to professional bodies, where relevant.

www.spunout.ie

[Click on 'Work']. Website for students that gives some good introductory advice on exploring careers and study options. Also a heading 'Job insights' that includes descriptions of their job by people working in a particular field, eg artist, writer, solicitor, organic farmer.

www.gradireland.com

Information on options for graduates, entry routes to different careers, progression, salaries

Website of your regional college(s)

Many of the colleges you will investigate have useful careers information on their website. Some have a 'first destinations report' which gives information on what recent graduates from the college are doing.

www.recruitireland.com www.irishjobs.ie www.collegerecruiter.com

Study routes/options

www.qualifax.ie

Comprehensive Irish website listing study options by subject/career area. Includes further and higher education options.

www.gotocollege.ie

Website with information on courses and qualifications in further and higher education, including options in the UK. Also gives profiles of different colleges and some good links to topics of interest, eg doing an apprenticeship or going into sound engineering.

www.gradireland.com

Information on options for graduates, about different careers, entry routes, qualifications required, where to go for more advice. Gives interesting glimpse of perspective you might have as a graduate

Prospectuses for regional colleges, in hard copy and/or online

These will give details of the content of courses, how long each course is, what qualification(s) are available at the end, and so on

www.fetac.ie

Learners' page provides useful information and links to students considering further education.

www.nfq.ie

information on the national framework of qualifications, with a section for students/learners, including an FAQ section that gives tips on how to decide on courses/qualifications to take.

Worksheet 4.1

Exploring possible careers and study routes

Hopefully you have now identified a number of jobs/careers that you are interested in. Information about the job and the preparation needed will help you to decide if it's a route you'd like to follow.

Your teacher will give you suggestions on where to find information.

Career option 1:	
Reasons why I think I'd like this job:	
Qualification needed (<i>could be a range of options in further and higher education colleges</i>)	Where I could study (<i>likely to be range of options, local, national, abroad</i>)

Career option 2:	
Reasons why I think I'd like this job:	
Qualification needed	Where I could study

Career option 3:	
Reasons why I think I'd like this job:	
Qualification needed	Where I could study

Career option 4:	
Reasons why I think I'd like this job:	
Qualification needed	Where I could study

Section 5 Study routes: What, where, how?

(i) Introduction

In Section 5, students choose one possible job/career and, individually or in pairs or small groups, explore in more detail what subjects they would need to study and how they would secure a place on a course of their choice.

Time required: Approx 2 double classes

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 4 are to:

- Assist students to explore in some depth a possible career and associated study route(s)
- Assist students to identify the steps they need to take to prepare for entry to further/higher education
- Further develop students' research skills using a range of sources, including the internet

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Whiteboard/flipchart
Copy of Worksheet 5.1 for each student.
Individual access to the internet
Any other relevant hard-copy, and/or audio-visual materials available.

Arrangement of group: Students assembled with individual/small group access to the internet.

Step 1 At the beginning of the class, the teacher explains that, in small groups, the students are going to do some more in-depth research on one particular career/job and associated study routes. The teacher asks for a list of the careers/jobs students would like to investigate further and notes them on the whiteboard. The group can be reminded that the options chosen are not hard-and-fast, and they may change their mind several times about what they'd like to do before finishing school. Also, one of the myths behind choosing a particular course is that it locks someone into a specific career path. Students can be assured that the course they eventually choose is only one of many factors that will shape their career. The exercise in investigating a study route will, however, give them the know-how to investigate options.

Step 2 The teacher assigns the pairs/groups and distributes a copy of the information headings and Worksheet 5.1 to each group.

Step 3 Before beginning their work, the information headings are explained, with some examples. For instance, the teacher may want to show results of a sample search on a completed stair graph and give pointers on how answers to each of the

information questions can be found. Students can be reminded to check the content of different courses with the same name to ensure that they are suitable. Groups may be encouraged to find images and other visual examples related to the job/career under investigation.

Step 4 Tasks should be assigned to each student in a group, for example, one-two persons may look up answers to the qualifications questions, and another the answers to the preparation questions.

Section 5.1 Guide questions to assist students' information gathering

Qualifications

- What qualifications do you need to get the job/career you are researching?
- Is a post-graduate qualification needed?
- Are there other, optional qualifications you can also do?
- Can you get your qualification part-time as well as full-time?
- Do you need other experience as well as a qualification to get a job?
- Do you need to be a member of a professional body to get the job?
- Were you able to find any pictures of someone doing the job/career you are investigating?

Preparation

- About how many points are needed in your Leaving Certificate to get a place on a course(s) leading to the job/career you are researching?
- Are there many possible courses and/or locations where you can study? Make a list [and check the content of the courses to make sure they are what you are looking for]. You may want to look at what's available in Northern Ireland/the UK.
- Is there a further education as well as a higher education route to the job? If so, what are the various routes, and how could you get to where you want to go?
- Are there any special requirements, for example a portfolio, particular results/subjects in your Leaving Certificate or further education qualification, an interview?
- Are there Leaving Certificate subjects you could do that aren't compulsory but that you think would help you prepare for this job?
- Where and when do you apply for a place on the course(s)?

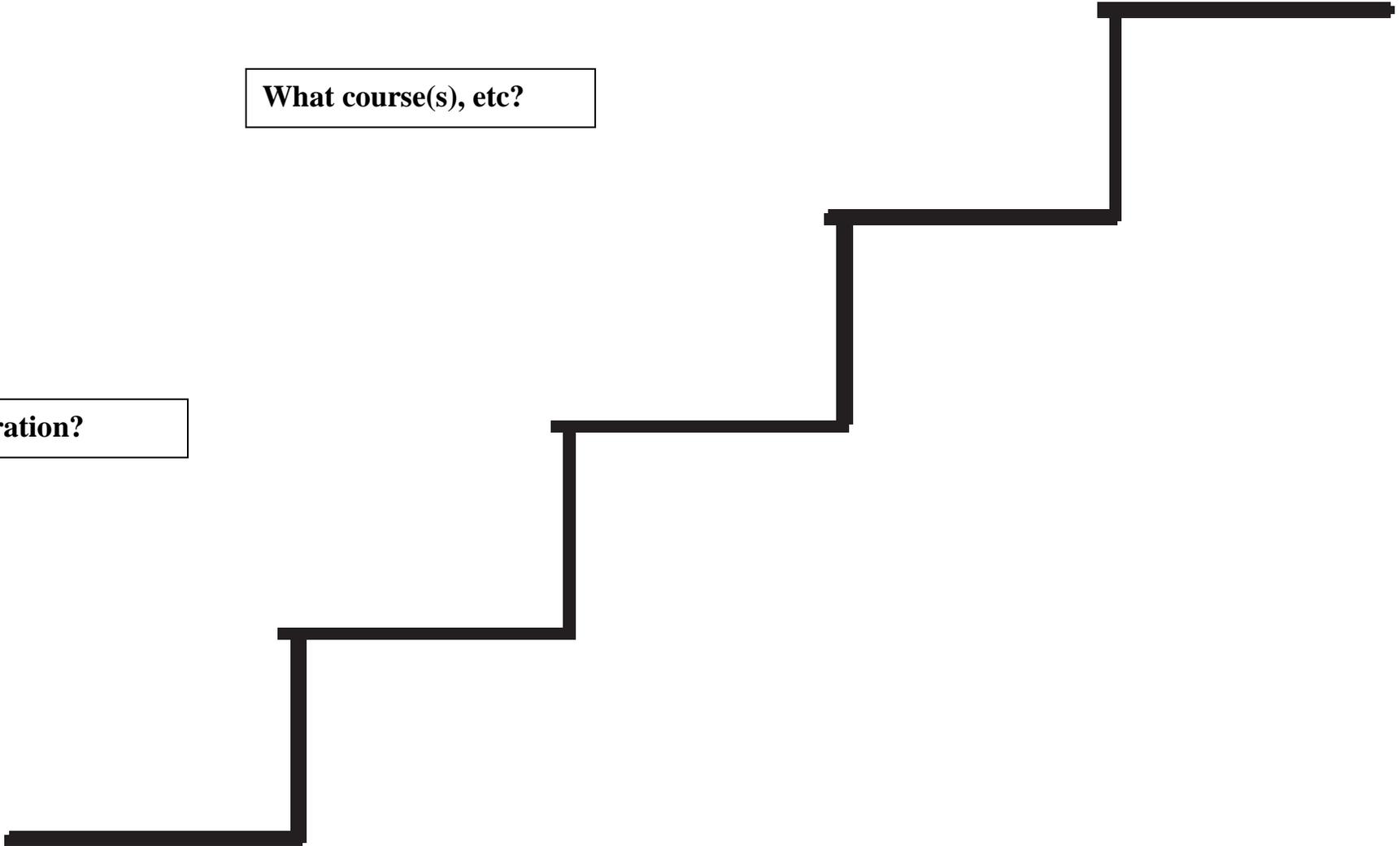
Worksheet 5.1 From here to there – preparation, course(s), job!

Job: _____

What course(s), etc?

Preparation?

Student in school



Section 6 Sharing information on study routes

(i) Introduction

In Section 6, students, in small groups, present a short infomercial on the career and study routes they investigated in the previous section.

Time required: 1- 2 double classes, depending on the number of groups presenting.

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 6 are to:

- Give students practice in presenting information to their peers in an interesting and user-friendly way
- Build confidence in speaking in front of a group

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Whiteboard/flipchart/overhead projector

Arrangement of group: Students in the same groups that they were in for Section 5.

Step 1 In introducing this session, the teacher explains that each pair/small group is going to prepare and present a 3-minute infomercial on the job and study route they investigated in the previous session. They are given materials to help them with their presentation – flipchart sheets and markers, or other suitable materials, and allocated 20 minutes to prepare the infomercial.

Step 2 In preparing the infomercial, each group is asked to imagine that they are preparing to present the information to someone their age who is not from Ireland. This student knows nothing about school or college and needs clear, step-by-step information on how they can become a teacher/farmer etc.

Step 3 Each group presents their infomercial and then takes questions from the rest of the group.

Step 4 When all of the infomercials have been completed, the teacher sums up what has been learned in the section and asks each student to complete the reflection exercise overleaf.

End of Section 6 Reflection on study routes

1 What was the most interesting part of the work on study routes?

2 List some things that you learned from the research you did

3 List some things that you learned from the research others did

4 Have you now ruled out any options for jobs/study? If so, why?

Section 7 Someone who has been there, done that...

(i) Introduction

In Section 7, students help to organise a talk by with a current or past student of further or higher education.

Time required: 1- 2 double classes (1 double class for talk itself).

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 7 are to:

- Further equip students with information on the advantages and benefits of further and higher education
- Enhance students' communication skills in listening and expressing opinions
- Develop students' organisation skills, including time-keeping and acting as hosts.

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Any equipment requested by the invited speaker
Refreshments (optional)

Arrangement of group: As whole-group, in semi-circle or other informal arrangement.

Step 1 At an earlier stage, the teacher has made contact with someone who is willing to speak to the student group and has insights into study options after school. The person may be a current or past college student and/or may have experience as a motivational speaker. A date and time for the visit is agreed.

Step 2 In advance of the visit the teacher may wish to discuss some of the following with the speaker:

- the age of the student group and overall interests
- some of the issues/areas of debate that have come up in the Unit so far
- allocating some time for questions and discussion

Step 3 In a class period before the speaker's visit the student group is given some outline information on the visiting speaker. The format of the visit is explained, and a student(s) may be assigned to meet/greet the visitor. Others may be assigned to duties such as organising refreshments, arranging the room before and after the visit, time-keeping, thanking the speaker and following up (eg thank you card).

Step 4 Based on the initial information about the speaker, students are asked to come up with some questions that they'd like to ask during the visit. These are noted on a flipchart/whiteboard. Other questions will occur on the day and students are encouraged to get the most out of the visit.

Step 5 During the visit, the teacher acts as facilitator.

Step 6 After the visit, students complete the reflection exercise.

End of Section 7 Reflection on visiting speaker

1 What, in your view, what the main message that the speaker wanted to get across?

2 What do you think was the biggest challenge the speaker faced in his/her life to date?

3 Was there anything about his/her story that really impressed you?

4 The main things I learned from today's speaker were...

Section 8 Nuts and bolts

(i) Introduction

In Section 8, students use a range of sources to research a relevant further/higher education topic and share their findings with each other.

Time required: Approx 4 double classes.

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 8 are to:

- Further equip students with practical information on supports available and what life is like as a student in further and higher education
- Further build students' ability to research, reflect on, and share information

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Access to the internet and other sources of information as selected/gathered by the teacher (eg knowledgeable people and services in the community, pamphlets, prospectuses and other text-based sources with a local/regional application)
Materials for students to make a presentation in a small group

Arrangement of group: In pairs or groups of three.

Step 1 The teacher explains the aims of the section and presents a list of possible topics for investigation. These can include:

- what student life is like and how to balance study and leisure, including part-time work, clubs, sport and entertainment in college
- additional access/progression routes (to higher education)
- available learning and pastoral supports
- disability support and accommodations
- student finance, including budgeting and sources of money advice
- accommodation
- transport
- studying abroad (including Erasmus) or in Northern Ireland

Based on the interests of the student group, the teacher may decide to choose from this list and/or include other topics. Pairs or small groups of students are assembled. The groups may opt for a particular topic or the topic may be assigned. It is also an option for groups to research the same topic and to compare their findings later.

Step 2 Each group is given the relevant sources sheet and any other sources that have been compiled. The teacher sets out the time available and explains that, after researching the topic, each group will share what they have found out by (peer) teaching the rest of the group. Some time will be available for each group to plan how they will teach the material to their 'pupils'.

Step 3 Each group works on their topic and the teacher moves from group to group, facilitating the work.

Step 4 When the allocated time is up, each group is provided with presentation materials (eg flip chart sheets, poster paper or Powerpoint facilities) and asked to prepare material on their topic, called eg. 'Money stuff for college: Essential things you need to know'. Each group has to decide how they are going to teach what they have found out. Creativity and teamwork are encouraged, for example, once the format is decided, each student takes responsibility for presenting an element or elements of the information in an interesting and inventive way, (eg. using drama, roleplay) rather than leaving it all to one person.

Step 5 Each group presents their material. At the end, there is a vote on whose material was the most informative and interesting. There is a small prize for the winning group(s).

Step 6 Everyone completes the reflection exercise for Section 8.

i Sources sheet Life as a student

Some questions to get you started:

- People often say that life as a student in college is very different to life at school. What do you think this means?
- What is exciting about being a student in college?
- What kinds of things can you do in college that you couldn't do if you were working, for instance?
- In college, what kinds of sports, clubs and entertainment can you participate in? (often for free!)
- Many students work part-time while in college, what kind of jobs do they get?
- Students get 3-4 months off in the summer. Find out some of the things they do they do in their time off.
- What would be on your list of the good and bad points of life as a student?

Some information sources

www.spunout.ie

Diverse information, articles and tips on how to enjoy life as a student and opportunities for work and leisure.

www.questforlearning.org

Website aiming to help all students going from school to college. Tips and advice on study skills, how teaching in college is different to school, and how students can excel in their studies.

Student services in your regional college(s)

Usually lots of information on the college website on student services, sports, clubs, gigs, travel opportunities, part-time work and so on. Also the health centre, student advisory centre, tutors, counselling services.

www.gotocollege.ie

[On homepage, click on 'Going to College', then 'Starting College'] Information and tips on making the transition to college, how you need to learn and study in new ways, articles and jargon-busters.

www.headstrong.ie

Information on mental health for young people, including links and suggestions on where to go to get help.

www.campus.ie

[On homepage, click on 'Surviving College'. Information and tips on studying, going out, and student lifestyle.

Google local press coverage and campus newsletters

As well as newsletters produced in your regional college(s) some regional newspapers have sections dedicated to student matters, news and so on, often written by students, for students.

Your teacher may have some additional suggestions on contacts in colleges or the community that you can use as a source of information.

i Sources sheet Additional access/progression routes

Some questions to get you started:

- There are some additional routes that students can use to get a place on a course in higher education. One example is the Higher Education Links Scheme, used by students in further education. Another is the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR). And there is the Supplementary Admissions Route. Why might a student be interested in using one of these routes?

Once you have found out a bit about each of these routes, choose one that you are interested in exploring further. For this route:

- How would a student go about applying for a place through this route? Are there particular conditions or requirements?
- Who would be a good person(s) to talk to if you wanted to find out more about the route you are exploring?
- What do you think would be the advantages of getting a college place through an alternative access/progression route?
- Are there disadvantages, in your view?

Some information sources

www.fetac.ie

[In 'Quick links', choose 'higher education links'] to get information on higher education links, including the Higher Education Links Scheme.

www.cao.ie

Central Applications Office website which gives information to students in further education who wish to apply for a place in higher education. Also has some information on other access routes.

www.hear.ie/en/HEAR

Section on the Higher Education Authority's website that gives that gives some background to the Higher Education Access Route and also a link to the most-up-to-date guide on the route, who can apply, when, how, and so on.

For information on the Supplementary Admissions Route for students with a disability, use Google, pages from Ireland to search for 'supplementary admissions route'. The first TCD url connects you to a comprehensive information brochure.

www.ahead.ie

[On homepage, click on 'Inclusive education information', then 'Accessing and participating in third level, then 'Admissions procedure'] Additional information on admissions to higher education for students with a disability.

Websites of your regional college(s)

These are a good source if they offer additional access routes. Look for reference/search for to the route you are exploring on the college webpage and also look up the access office and disability services. Check out the Admissions section as well.

Your teacher may have some additional suggestions on contacts in colleges or the community that you can use as a source of information.

i Sources sheet Learning support, pastoral support

Some questions to get you started:

- People often talk about how studying in college is different to studying in school. What do they mean, exactly?
- Supposing you are in your first term in college and you are finding one of the subjects hard. Who is the best person(s) to talk to, to sort things out?
- Is it possible to get extra help with your course?
- Supposing you are in your first year in college and something unexpected happens, like you have to move home or someone in your family gets seriously ill. Who in college can help you sort things out?
- Can you get help with your living arrangements or with money when you are in college?
- Supposing, while in college, you are feeling down or anxious or you have some other blip in your mental health. What service can help you and how do you contact them?
- Are there any good websites on studying and other stuff for students in college? Were you able to find anything interesting?

Some information sources

www.spunout.ie

Diverse information and tips on staying healthy in mind and body, and on where and how to get help when you need it.

www.questforlearning.org

Website aiming to help all students going from school to college. Tips and advice on study skills, how teaching in college is different to school, and how students can excel in their studies.

Student counselling service in your regional college(s)

Many have lots of information on the college website on counselling and help services, such as the health centre, the student advisory centre, class reps, mentor schemes, tutors, the chaplaincy, what is counselling, who should access it and how to go about making an appointment to talk to someone.

www.gotocollege.ie

[On homepage, click on 'Going to College', then 'Starting College'] Information and tips on making the transition to college, how you need to learn and study in new ways, articles and jargon-buster.

www.headstrong.ie

Information on mental health for young people, including links and suggestions on where to go to get help.

www.campus.ie

[On homepage, click on 'Surviving College'. Information and tips on studying, going out, and student lifestyle.

Your teacher may have some additional suggestions on contacts in colleges or the community that you can use as a source of information.

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Your teacher may have some additional suggestions on contacts in colleges or the community that you can use as a source of information.

i Sources sheet Disability support and accommodations

Some questions to get you started:

- If someone is interested in going to college and also happens to have a disability, where is the best place to start finding out about support (eg. financial, equipment, accommodations, additional access routes)? Are there good websites they can look up, organisations they can contact, people they can talk to? What would you recommend?
- What is the Supplementary Admissions Route and why has it been developed?
- Are there particular websites etc that offer support to people with a particular disability? eg a learning disability or a physical disability?
- When is the best time to let people in college services know that you have a disability? Is it when you start in college, or sometime before?
- What kind of services and equipment are available to students with a disability to help them succeed in college?
- What should a college student do if they are having difficulty with something?
- Are there many people with a disability studying in college at the moment?

Some information sources

www.ahead.ie

Irish website on going to college for students with a disability. Practical suggestions on where to find additional support. Also has an active blog and other useful links.

www.studentfinance.ie

Information on the Disability Fund, the main financial support for students with a disability

For information on the Supplementary Admissions Route for students with a disability, use Google to search 'supplementary admissions route' in pages from Ireland. Choose the first TCD url that comes up. This will download an information brochure on the route.

www.spunout.ie

Look up headings 'Disability' and 'Equality' for information on living with a disability.

www.studyabroadwithoutlimits.eu

Website on studying abroad for students with a disability that also provides an interesting perspective on what it's like for students with a disability studying in Ireland.

www.dyslexia.ie

Information and guidance for students with dyslexia and/or learning difficulties.

www.pwdi.ie

Website for People With a Disability in Ireland, particularly physical and learning disabilities.

www.gotocollege.ie

[Click on 'Disabled students', homepage] Detailed information and suggestions on accessing and succeeding in college for students with a disability.

Website of your regional college(s)

Many have information and advice, often through the access or disability office.

Your teacher may have some additional suggestions on contacts in colleges or the community that you can use as a source of information.

i Sources sheet Student finance

Some questions to help get you started:

- If someone is thinking of going to college then they need to know how to organise and handle money. Where is the best place to start exploring options? Are there good websites they can look up, organisations they can contact, people they can talk to? What would you recommend, from your research?
- Where are the good places to get money advice?
- List the different sorts of financial help people can get if they decide they want to go to college.
- Who can get a grant, and how do you apply?
- Has anybody estimated how much it costs to go to college? What has to be taken into consideration?
- Many students who are currently in college work part-time as a way of getting some extra money. What kind of work do they typically do, when and how much they can earn?
- What balance do you have to strike when you are a student and also working part-time?

Some information sources

www.studentfinance.ie

Website with information on the range of financial supports and funds available. Also has useful links to grant agencies, colleges and so on.

www.education.ie

[Click on link 'Students and trainees']

Government website with information to help students calculate if they are eligible for a grant.

www.qualifax.ie

Also has information on getting help with finances. Includes a 'ready reckoner' that gives an idea of how much of a grant you might be eligible for.

www.itsyourmoney.ie

[click on 'Starting College'] Useful information on what to consider money-wise when you are a student or about to become one, including how to open a student bank account.

www.mabs.ie

Useful guide to budgeting and managing your money, also some good leaflets and links.

www.spunout.ie

[Click on 'Money'] Information and tips on managing money when you are a student, how to spend less, ways of saving money and so on.

www.gotocollege.ie

[click on Hot Link 'funding options'. Summarises range of funding options available and suggests ways and means of getting funding.

Website of your regional college(s). Many have information on financial supports, often through the access office.

Student Yearbook and Career Directory (book, available in school or in many bookshops) Includes section on 'Grants, Scholarships, Money for College'

i Sources sheet Accommodation

Some questions to get you started:

- If someone wants to go to college and has to leave home to do so, where is the best place to start finding out about how to rent, organise TV hire, heating, bin collections, money and so on? Are there good websites they can look up, organisations they can contact, people they can talk to? What would you recommend, from your research??
- What are the accommodation options a student can choose? [You may want to research information for a particular college]
- What kind of prices can a student expect to pay for different accommodation?
- What are the advantages of living away from home?
- What are the disadvantages?
- If a student is starting college in September, when is the best time to start looking for accommodation?
- Can you find accommodation on the internet or would you recommend looking in person?

Some information sources

www.spunout.ie

Look up heading accommodation. Useful information and tips for students who potentially have to or want to live away from home.

www.collegecribs.ie

Website with lots of information and advice on choosing student accommodation, the steps you need to take, and a database of available accommodation and other useful links.

www.gotocollege.ie

[On homepage, click on 'Going to College', then on 'Accommodation'] Useful information on choosing accommodation, different options, and your legal rights. Also interesting articles and links

www.campus.ie

[On homepage, click on accommodation] Information and tips on living in student accommodation and how to survive. Also on your rights and responsibilities when you are renting accommodation and living with others, and useful contacts.

Website of your regional college(s)

Many colleges have an accommodation office, or someone who can help you to find suitable accommodation.

Your teacher may have some additional suggestions on contacts in colleges or the community that you can use as a source of information.

i Sources sheet Transport

[Students will likely be researching transport options to local/regional colleges]

Some questions to get you started:

- What are the various travel options students can use to get to college?
- When choosing what transport to use, what do students need to consider to help them decide? (eg distance, choice available, whether accessible transport is needed)
- What would you recommend as the best option(s), and why?
- Apart from getting to and from college, when else might a student need transport? What kind of transport is needed in these situations?
- Estimate how much transport (one or more options) would cost for a year (September-early June) for a student going to a particular college from where you live.
- Should travel and transport be a deciding factor in what college someone goes to? Why/why not?
- If someone has a long way to travel to college, how might this affect their study and life in general? What would help them to manage?

Some information sources

www.gotocollege.ie

[Click on 'Going to College' and then 'Travel']. Useful general information on the issue of transport, commuting and other travel as a student. Also gives suggestions on where to find out more locally.

Website of your regional college(s)

Likely to have useful information on travel options for students living in the region.

www.buseireann.ie

Through this website students can look up routes, times and prices.

www.irishrail.ie

Information on routes, times and prices

Google local bicycle shops for options and prices

Google car-pooling options, there may be a community initiative in your area

Your teacher may have some additional suggestions on contacts in colleges or the community that you can use as a source of information.

i Sources sheet Options for studying abroad

Some questions to get you started:

- Why do you think some students decide to do all of their study abroad? List as many reasons as you can.
- What do you think would be the advantages of studying abroad?
- What do you think would be disadvantages?
- Are there options for study in Northern Ireland? Give some examples of places and courses.
- What is Erasmus and how does it work?
- Do you think Erasmus sounds like an interesting option for someone?
- If you were to go on an Erasmus year while in college, where would you like to go?

Some information sources

www.gotocollege.ie

[click on 'Go to college' and then 'Study abroad'. Good information on studying abroad while a student. Including information on Erasmus, exchange programmes and studying in the UK. Also has case studies telling experience of students who have studied abroad.

www.studyabroadwithoutlimits.eu

Website for students with a disability on studying abroad

Includes interesting perspective on what it's like for students with a disability studying in Ireland!

www.eumatters.ie

Provides some information and a clip of a students talking about Erasmus, the programme which supports students who want to study for a year or more in a college elsewhere in Europe. But probably the best information is available from the International office in your local/regional college, eg www.nuigalway.ie/erasmus

www.campus.ie

[On homepage, click on 'Study abroad'] Information, suggestions and options on studying abroad. Also has tips on what to consider before deciding to study abroad.

Your teacher may have some additional suggestions on contacts in colleges or the community that you can use as a source of information.

End of Section 8 Reflection on 'Nuts and Bolts'

Questions for students, to be completed at the end of Section 8

1 What was the most interesting part of the 'nuts and bolts' work?

2 List 2-3 important things that you learned from the research

3 Is becoming a college student harder or easier than you thought? Why?

Section 9 Taking a look at the real thing

(i) Introduction

In Section 9, students go on a field trip to find out more about what it might be like to study and/or work in a particular environment.

Time required: 3-5 hours, depending on journey time and structure of the trip.

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 9 are to:

- Further equip students with practical information on supports, opportunities and what life is like while pursuing a particular study/career path
- Enhance students' skills in asking questions, listening, and critical thinking

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Briefing notes for field day, any other relevant information materials

There are a wide range of possibilities for the content and structure of the field trip, depending on the interests/needs of the student group, and the opportunities available locally or in the region. The trip may involve a visit to an environment where apprentices are working and studying. Or students may attend a formal or informal open day in a further or higher education institution. Or they may visit an employer who can give an insight into what it is like for a graduate in a new job.

If it is considered beneficial and, if resources allow, different field trips may be organised for small groups of students. The teacher may also wish to tailor the trip to suit particular interests or needs. For instance, a tour of facilities for people with a disability may be organised in the venue or current students can be briefed to talk to the students and answer their questions. To organise the most worthwhile day, advance arrangements for the structure and contents of the field trip will have been made early on in the unit and, in the days prior to the trip the students will do some preparation themselves. Some suggestions on this preparation are outlined below.

Step 1 In a class session before the field trip the teacher provides practical details about the trip, including the date, time, getting parental/guardians' permission (if necessary), travel arrangements, outline timetable for the trip, eating arrangements, planned return time and any other details.

Step 2 Students are asked to think about their expectations for the field trip, eg what the venue will be like, what the students/other people they meet will be like. The teacher notes the comments on the whiteboard, with positive comments on one side and any areas of concern on the other. The group is asked if they have any apprehensions about the day, and these are also noted. This is an opportunity for the teacher to clear up any misinformation or anxieties about the trip.

Step 3 In pairs or small groups, students are given 10 minutes to think of 3-5 questions they would like to ask/get answers to during the field trip. One student has the job of noting the questions for feedback to the whole group. The questions can be general or specific to individual students' study/career interests.

Step 4 The teacher notes the feedback from each group on the flipchart and asks the students to also note the questions they think would be useful and bring them on the day, along with a small notebook to make any notes.

Section 10

The real thing – Review

(i) Introduction

In Section 10, students review the field trip and discuss what they learned, who they met, how it has affected their knowledge and perceptions about a particular study and/or career path.

Time required: 1 single class

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 10 are to:

- Enable students to reflect on their experience during the field trip
- Enhance students' skills in critical thinking and evaluation

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Worksheet 10.1 any other information materials available from field day visit

Arrangement of group: Assembled as whole-group.

Step 1 During the first five minutes, the teacher gets some general feedback on the field trip(s) from the students. Then each student is given a copy of Worksheet 10.1 and asked to complete it.

Step 2 Each student is then asked to share their review comments with the student beside them.

Step 3 A tally of the feedback from Question 1 is taken (was the field trip excellent, good, average etc) and the teacher facilitates some whole-group discussion on the outcome, as well as noting any suggestions on how they day could have been improved.

1 How would you rate the field trip?
Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Not good <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Can you explain why?

2 What were the most interesting parts of the visit?

3 List 2-3 new things that you learned during the visit

4 What would you be interested in exploring further?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 11

Back to the future

(i) Introduction

In Section 11, students are encouraged to think about the future by drawing up a personal plan that sets out the steps they need to take to achieve their ambition in further or higher education. They will also note potential barriers to success and ways of overcoming these barriers. Two possible activities are included in this section, 'Back to the Future' and 'Brick in the Wall'.

Time required: 1 double class

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 11 are to:

- Encourage students to reflect on their current life and their hopes for the future
- Help students to think ahead and identify possible challenges and resolutions to these challenges

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard, Worksheets 1.1 and 2.1 for reference, Worksheet 11.1

Arrangement of group: Assembled with space to work individually.

Step 1 The teacher introduces the task for the session and asks the students to review the plan they made in Section 2. There is a short discussion on how the original plan now looks and an opportunity for the teacher to talk a bit about the role and function of plans. The teacher could introduce a saying like 'A week can be a long time in politics' and ask students what they think this means, using some practical examples from current news. Students can be reminded not to be surprised if they find themselves altering their plans numerous times between now and the end of their time at school.

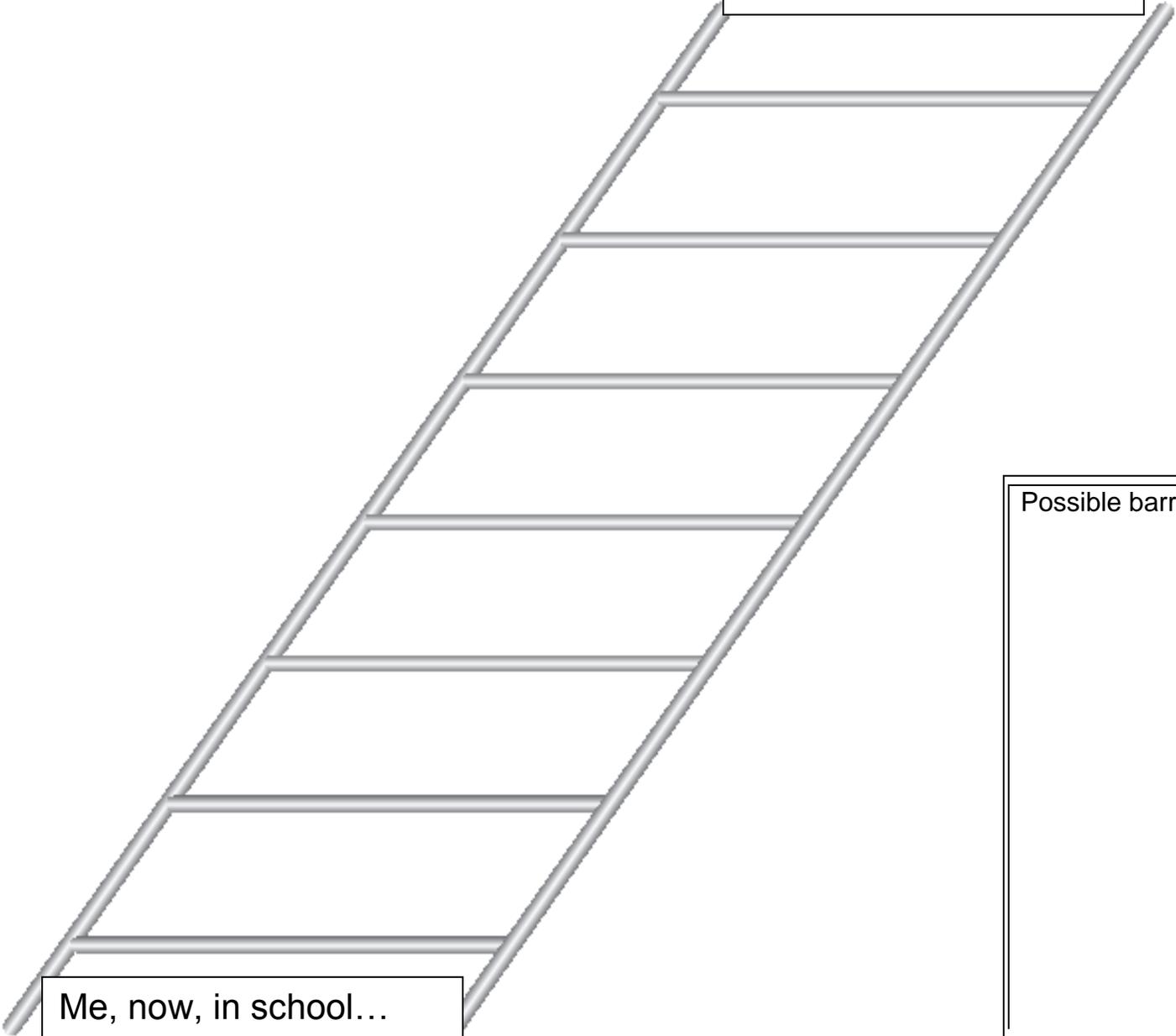
Step 2 Each student is given 5 minutes to make a list in their journal of their Top 5 career/study options. There is a short discussion on the most popular career emerging.

Step 3 Each student is then given a copy of Worksheet 11.1 and the teacher explains that, for each of the steps on the ladder they should write down they think they will need to do to reach their ambition (at the top of the ladder). The ambition they choose can be quite specific or can include a few options. Then, in the 'Barriers' column, students should note down the things that they think could hinder them getting to where they want to be, followed by some possible ways to overcome these barriers. 15 minutes is allocated to completing the worksheet.

Step 4 Working with the group as a whole, the teacher uses the whiteboard to make a list of all the barriers that students thought of, followed by possible solutions.

Step 5 The class concludes with an open discussion.

Where I want to be:



Me, now, in school...

Possible barriers	How overcome?

Section 11 Alternative activity - 'Brick in the Wall'

Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Blank cards need to be cut out in advance using 3 different colours

- yellow or orange for the bricks
- another colour for their aspirations
- another colour for the ladder to success
- sellotape or blu tac to stick the cards on the board

Arrangement of group: Assembled with space to work in groups.

Step 1 My Personal Goals – The teacher explains to the students that today they will be thinking about their goals and aspirations for when they leave school. They will also be thinking about what blocks might be getting in the way of them succeeding and what they can do to overcome these blocks.

Step 2 Each student is asked to write a personal goal for when they leave school. All of these goals are displayed across the top of the whiteboard using tape.

Step 3 My Brick Wall – The class is divided into 3 groups – one group will discuss what blockages stop you from learning and achieving your best potential **at school**, another group will discuss blockages **at home** and another will discuss blockages in **me personally** and in relation to **my friends**. (Depending on the size of the class 6 groups may be needed, with 2 groups discussing each topic)

Step 4 10 minutes are allocated for the discussion and for assigning roles (4) within each small group as follows: A *writer* (writes up the blockages on the yellow block cards) A *reporter* (will report back on behalf of the group). A *checker* (will check everyone knows what's happening and agrees what's being written up). A *time keeper* (makes sure task is completed on time). When the time is up the reporter will stick the group's bricks (4 or 5) on the board.

Step 5 My ladder to success – Returning to their groups, the students discuss what will help them get over the brick wall and achieve their goals on the other side.

Step 6 The process is repeated as before, rotating roles and agreeing a time. When the time is up the reporter from each group sticks their cards onto the board to form a ladder to success.

Step 7 The class concludes with an open discussion and some time for each student to reflect on what they learned.

This activity is also included in the Transition Unit '*Learn Smart*' which was developed increase students' awareness of how they can become more effective as learners - both at school and throughout their lives. It can downloaded at - <http://www.ncca.ie>

Section 12

Evaluation of the unit 'It's your future'

(i) Introduction

In Section 12 teachers and students evaluate what was gained by the unit and comment on its content and methodologies. Student folders/files are also prepared for assessment.

Time required: 1 double class

(ii) Aims

The aims of Section 12 are to:

- Give students' an opportunity to review the learning outcomes of the unit
- Gather feedback on the unit.

(iii) Guidelines and materials

Materials needed: Access to the internet or hard copy of unit evaluation form.

Arrangement of group: Assembled with individual access to the internet.

Step 1 The teacher introduces the final session on the unit in which students review their work on the unit and reflect on what they consider to be its highlights. Both teacher and students also complete an evaluation of the unit.

Step 2 Discussion on the outcomes of the unit. In small groups, students spend 2-3 minutes looking over their folder/file of completed work and deciding on what they thought was (i) the most useful part of the unit and (ii) the least useful part. They take it in turns to give their views, with a short explanation of why they chose what they did. Someone in each group then feeds back the comments to the group as a whole.

Step 3 The teacher introduces the content of the evaluation and deals with any issues/questions arising. Students are encouraged to give the fullest possible answers and to be as critical as they like. The forms are then completed by students and teacher(s).

Step 4 Students prepare their folders/files of work for assessment and submit them for appraisal, as appropriate.

For Teachers

Evaluation of unit

Can be completed online at <http://www.hea.ie/access> and emailed to access@hea.ie

1 What parts of the unit were most successful?

--

2 What parts did not work so well?

--

3 To what degree do you consider that the following were achieved?

	Rate on scale of 1-5	Comment
Learning outcomes		
Key skills		
Students were actively involved in learning		

4 If you were teaching this transition unit again, what changes would you make to:

Content:
Teaching methodologies:
Assessment:
Length and pace of the unit:

5 Were there any unexpected outcomes?

--

6 Are there specific parts of the unit that you would change when teaching it again?

--

Name: _____ School: _____

For Students

Evaluation of unit

Can be completed online at <http://www.hea.ie/access> and emailed to access@hea.ie

Please complete the following:

1 What I most enjoyed about this Transition Unit was....

2 The most interesting thing I learned was....

3 The unit is useful to me because...

4 What I least enjoyed about this unit was...

5 The things I found most difficult were...

6 If this unit was being taught to another group of students what changes, if any, would you suggest to make it better?

Name: _____ School: _____