

Pathways

Second Year
Unit 3: On the case

2024



Attention teachers:

The Pathways units aim to encourage students from diverse backgrounds to think about their career choices, the career decision making process and particularly to consider teaching as a desirable career.

These units are an initiative of the Path Project, which is funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), and based in the Institute of Education, Dublin City University (DCU).

There are 3 units for 2nd Year students, each approximately 2 hours duration:

- Unit 1: Types of smart
- Unit 2: Educator toolkit
- Unit 3: On the case

Some important points about how the Pathways unit's work:

- The slides are classroom ready.
- The teacher notes, with step-by-step guidance for the specific activity on each slide, can be accessed in the associated pdf.
- It is important to show slides in presentation mode (unless prompted to do otherwise in the teacher notes), as some activities depend on animation. Where there is animation on a slide, this is indicated in the teacher notes.

- When the text in the teacher notes is in italics, it is meant to be used by the teacher in speaking with students; when the text is not italicised, it is meant for the teacher only.
- There is very little preparation of materials required. Occasionally, and depending on your students, you might decide to photocopy worksheet slides in advance of class. In activities where preparation is required, you will be prompted on Slide 2 and in the teacher notes.

Thank you for engaging with the Pathways units!

Unit 3: On the case

Duration: Approx. 2 hours

Suggested learning intentions

We are learning to...

- discuss the challenges of school life and identify available supports
- recognise the different individuals/groups that make up a school community
- consider the reasons why school matters, ranking these in order of importance
- reflect on what we learned in our 2nd Year Pathways units

| SLIDES | ACTIVITY | What will we be doing? |
|--------|----------------|---|
| 3 | | Introduction to the icons |
| 4-10 | 1 | Looking at case studies of the different school experiences Discussing school-based challenges and available supports NB: Print copies of the case studies (Slides 5-9) in advance |
| 11 | 2 | Using case studies as the basis for identifying and discussing the roles and responsibilities of the different individuals/groups that make up a school community |
| 12-13 | 3 | Ranking the reasons why school matters Comparing school-based challenges with the potential challenges associated with not finishing school |
| 14 | 4 | Reflecting on what we learned in our 2 nd Year Pathways units |
| 15 | 5 | Checking in with the learning intentions |
| 16 | Extension task | Creating a school community booklet for incoming first year students |

Wellbeing Indicators

- Aware
- Connected
- Resilient
- Responsible

Key Skills

- Being literate
- Managing myself
- Staying well
- Managing information and thinking
- Working with others
- Communicating

Unit 3, Introduction

Hi, I'm Alex.
Nice to meet you!
I'm here to tell you that we use icons
(the small pictures below) in this unit.
These will help you to understand what
you will be doing during the different
activities.
Have fun (and learn lots)!



Individual work



Class
discussion



Pair work



Reading



Group work



Extension
activity



SLIDE 3



SLIDE 4

Teacher notes

NB: Print sufficient copies of the case studies (Slides 5-9) in advance of class.

We're going to look at case studies about different types of school experiences.

Give each student one case study.

As you read through your case study, underline or highlight any words or terms that you don't understand.

Divide the class into pairs – ideally each pair should have two different case studies.

Try to help each other with any tricky words/terms in your case studies.

Depending on your class, you may need to explain some of the following:

- transition (a period of change, for example, the move from primary to secondary school or from junior to senior cycle)
- Transition Year (one-year stand-alone programme that forms the first year of a three-year senior cycle in many secondary schools, see: [Transition Year](#))
- repeat (a year in school or one or more examinations)

- DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools – A government initiative which tries to make sure that all students, in every school, have the same educational advantages, see: [DEIS](#))
- Junior Cert (a term used to describe the Junior Cycle or Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement from the late 1980s until 2022)
- Intermediate Certificate (a term used to describe the Junior Cycle or Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement from the 1920s until the late 1980s)
- points (Leaving Certificate results, called ‘points’ because of the 8-point grading scale)

NB: The next steps in Activity 1 are given in the teacher notes for Slide 10.

Unit 3, Activity 1



Lena



My primary school experience was fine. It was an all-girls school. Then I went to a mixed school for secondary. I attended a DEIS school. They were probably challenging times. A lot of the students in the class group weren't as motivated as me. I always had the idea that I might want to go to college, and I suppose I was picked on quite a bit by some of the people in the class. That was often challenging.

If someone got better than me in the class in a test, they'd say 'Oh, I got better than you, the one who wants to go to Trinity [university]!' It was always 'What points did you get? What points did you get?' That was something that I wanted to keep to myself. It was challenging to go against the grain and try to be the one that was that bit different.

SLIDE 5

Unit 3, Activity 1



Aideen



In primary school, I was happy-go-lucky. I was good in school. I didn't really have any issues.

I found the transition to secondary school quite difficult on reflection. My dad passed away when I was in 2nd year and that kind of had a big impact on my association with school, getting through life things as well as school. It was just myself and my mum and my brother from the start of 2nd year. My mam was great, but it was definitely hard going. My younger brother was a bit of a nightmare as well, so I had that going on as well in the background.

I did get support when I came back to school after my dad died. Weirdly there were quite a few of us in the same year group who had lost a parent...about four of us. The Religion teacher put together a support group. There was quite a bit of support. I don't think I saw it as support at the time. I just thought that it was a bit weird!

I did settle into a groove – I settled in during Transition Year. But then, I was unlucky in 5th year in that I got glandular fever, and I missed quite a bit of school. I would have suffered with fatigue and things like that. I was playing catch-up for most of 6th year. It was hard going, but I knew I didn't want to repeat. Whatever I got, I got. I didn't want to be there any longer than I had to.

SLIDE 6

Unit 3, Activity 1



Dave



I never really liked school. It wasn't that I wasn't able for it. I just didn't have the interest.

Primary school wasn't too bad – I just got through it. First year in secondary school was okay, but I was a bit bored in 2nd year. I come from a farming background, so it wasn't too hard to persuade me to do something other than schoolwork. TV – all the good programmes were on, and I'd be procrastinating [delaying] the schoolwork and putting it off and not doing it. 3rd year, I lost interest completely. I broke my leg in February of that year. I could have gone back to school with the crutches, but I just didn't bother until about April. I didn't do any work to catch up or anything. I didn't do well in my Intermediate Certificate, as [Junior Cycle] was called then.

That was my experience of school. I just wasn't interested. You couldn't say anything to make me interested. I just wanted to leave and get a job and earn money. It wasn't to do with the school or teachers, it was just me. I wouldn't have been great at Maths, but the other subjects weren't too difficult, I just wasn't interested.

I could see nothing bar earning money. I knew I could get a job. I didn't see education as a path for me making money. I knew I could go on the building site and make money. I had done a stint on the building site over the previous summer. You can't put an old head on young shoulders.

SLIDE 7

Unit 3, Activity 1



Anna



When I started secondary school, I loved school. I took my work very seriously and everything. That was all great. I was doing really well in school. I did really well in my Junior Cert.

Then, thinking back, I think it was probably around 4th year when things started to flip a little bit for me. The usual kind of teenager things going on and other things going on. I feel like my schoolwork took a back seat in Transition Year. My parents were obviously really worried about what was going on.

I think it might...looking back it was just kind of normal things that teenagers go through when they are that age. My grades really started to slip. I kind of stopped caring as much as I did. I would have been very studious and would have spent all my time studying for my Junior Cert and then, all of sudden, there was this massive change. So, my mom and dad thought it would be a good idea to send me to [a different school] for 5th and 6th year. My older sister had been there, and she had done really well. But it didn't work out so well for me.

I was the youngest in my year. I think I was 16 and I was quite immature, and that particular school treated you like an adult. It was like college, there were lectures almost and I don't think I was ready for that. I just wasn't mature enough really. So that didn't go so well for me, and I ended up not doing a very good Leaving Cert at all. If you had looked at the kind of grades I had been getting [in Junior Cycle] and looked at my Leaving Cert, it was like a different child.

SLIDE 8

Unit 3, Activity 1



Nasir

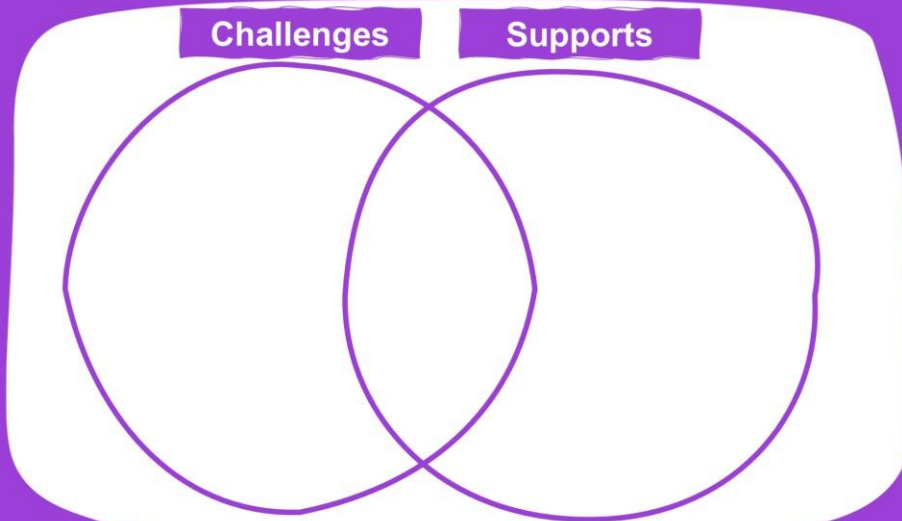


When I went into secondary school at first, I was very, very shy. I probably lacked social skills; it probably wasn't an environment that I felt completely comfortable in. I didn't like the swapping and the changing of classes. I didn't like to have to get to know lots of new teachers. I didn't want to get to know lots of new people, you know the people from lots of different primary schools. I found that very difficult. I would have gotten the homework done. Teachers probably didn't realise I was in the room half the time. The first part of my secondary school experience, I engaged when I had to engage and that was it.

When I got to fourth year and I had a little bit more freedom, I really became fully engaged in class activities. I found that I started to change for the better. I went on loads of school trips, made loads of more friends in my year, got to know teachers better. Teachers who would not have really known me...I made a connection with some of them.

The second half of secondary school was like a whole different me. I have to put that down to the teachers, the principal, the vice principal and my peers as well, they really contributed to that. Teachers were always very positive. They were a shoulder to cry on. They helped me in so many different ways, like you know you'd have teachers you could go to if you're feeling quite upset, if things weren't going right in your life and they will be more than happy to listen to you and try to give you some encouragement...

SLIDE 9



SLIDE 10

Teacher notes

Invite each pair to copy the Venn Diagram on the slide.

With your partner, read through your case studies.

Identify the challenges and supports experienced by the people in your case studies.

Summarise the challenges in the circle on the left of your Venn Diagram and the supports in the circle on the right. If you think something is both a challenge and a support, place this in the centre of your Venn Diagram, where the two circles overlap.

Depending on your class, you might want to give some initial prompts, as follows:

- Challenges: transition, peers
- Supports: parents
- Overlap: teachers

Take a few minutes on your own to think about your own school experiences to date. What, if any, challenges have you encountered? Did you get support from someone in

the school or outside of school? Are any of your experiences like those described in the case studies?

NB: This may be a good opportunity to share your own experiences of school (those you are comfortable sharing).

Talk to your partner about any school experiences that you are happy and comfortable to share.

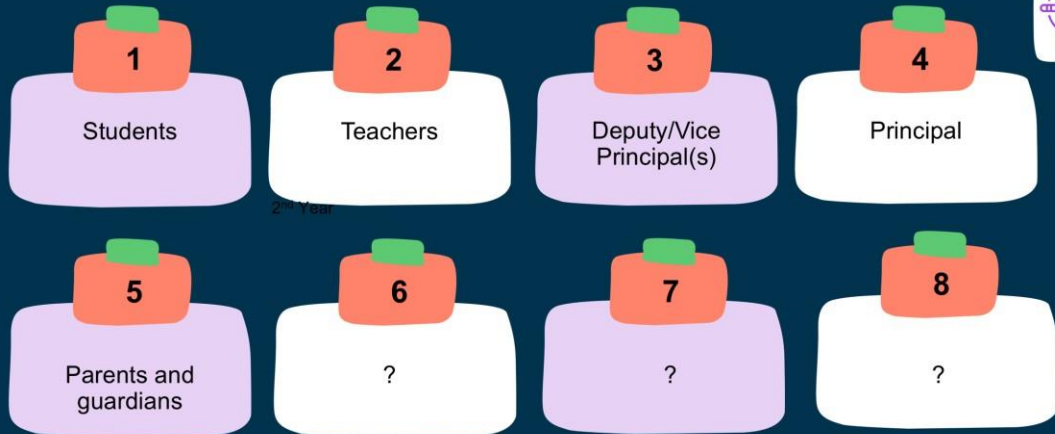
Add any new challenges and supports that come up in your conversation to your Venn Diagram.

Facilitate a selection of pairs to present their completed Venn Diagram.

Facilitate a whole class discussion using the following prompt questions:

- *The people in your case studies all have something in common – what do you think this is? [Answer: They are all now teachers]*
- *Are you surprised that they are all teachers? Why/why not?*

Unit 3, Activity 2



SLIDE 11

Teacher notes (1 animation at * Click)

In the case studies (Activity 1), several groups were mentioned as belonging to a school community (and were seen mainly as supports for students). These included students, teachers, deputy principal(s), principals and parents/guardians.

What other individuals or groups belong to the school community? [Possible answers: year head, guidance counsellor, chaplain, secretary, student council, parent's association, board of management]

Each of the individuals/groups in the school community has a different role and set of responsibilities. Pick at least three of the individuals/groups in the school community and write 1-2 sentences about their role and responsibilities. If you need help, ask a friend(s).

Take feedback from a selection of students, correcting or adding information where appropriate and highlighting where the roles and responsibilities of different individuals/groups involve interaction with others in the school community.

NB: This is a good opportunity to share how in your teaching role, you interact with different individuals/groups in your school community.

All jobs or careers involve dealing and interacting with a range of people, and teaching is no exception.



“ You can't put an old head on young shoulders. ”

Dave - teacher



SLIDE 12

Teacher notes (1 animation at * Click)

We met Dave in Activity 1.

What do you think that Dave meant when he said 'I didn't see education as a path for me...'

*** Click** to show a second quote from Dave's case study

Dave also said, 'You can't put an old head on young shoulders.' What do you think this means? [Answer: as a young person Dave didn't have the wisdom or maturity that came to him from experience and with age.]

Dave left school early. He trained as a plasterer and worked on building sites. In this role, he found he enjoyed training young apprentices. He always had a love of the Irish language and sent his own children to a Gaelscoil. When the school put on Irish classes for parents, Dave decided to give it a go. He later took Irish language classes with Conradh na Gaeilge (see: [Conradh na Gaeilge](#)), before deciding to do Junior Cycle Irish, then Leaving Certificate Irish, then a diploma and eventually a degree in Irish. Through it all, Dave juggled his job and his family commitments. Eventually he decided to change careers, got a job in a school and completed his Post-Graduate Masters (PME) in Education to qualify as teacher.

Dave left school when he was 16 years-old and qualified as an Irish-language teacher when he was in his 50s, in between he trained other people, took lots of classes and studied. Education turned out to be a path for him after all.



SLIDE 13

Teacher notes (1 animation at * Click)

As a teacher, Dave gravitates towards the students who are struggling. He recognises that this is because of his own life experience. He knows that while school might not be the most important thing for these students, he wants them to be happy enough to stick it out so that he can support them to make the most of their education. Dave obviously believes that school matters.

Divide the class into small groups.

In your group, discuss the reasons why going to school matters.

Take feedback from each group, recording their answers on the board.

NB: This may be a good opportunity to share why you think that school matters, with examples from your own time as a student and as a teacher.

Organise a class vote to decide on the nine best reasons why school matters.

* **Click** to show a Diamond 9 template.

Copy the Diamond 9 template from the slide (one copy per group).

Work together to rank the nine reasons why school matters in order of importance, where 1 is the most important and 5 is the least important.

Facilitate each group to explain their completed Diamond 9 and any debate that arose during their group discussion.

Facilitate a whole class discussion, using the following prompt questions:

- *What difficulties might a young person like yourselves face in life if they didn't finish school?*
- *How do these difficulties compare to the challenges associated with staying in school?*

Depending on your class, you might like to remind your students about the school-based challenges and supports identified in Activity 1 (Slide 10) and Activity 2 (Slide 11).

Unit 3, Activity 4



Imagine you have a suitcase especially for all that you have learned in the 2nd Year Pathways units.

Imagine packing your suitcase with words, images, symbols representing the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that you want to take with you into the future.

Imagine putting the things that you want to leave behind on the ground beside your suitcase (like old ideas, attitudes, misconceptions etc).

Imagine yourself leaving class with your suitcase.

Slide 14


Teacher notes

Read the text on the slide aloud, allowing sufficient time between each sentence for students to reflect quietly on their own.

Unit 3, Checking in with the learning intentions



Hello again!
How did you get on with Unit 3?

Did you learn to...? 

- discuss the challenges of school life and identify available supports
- recognise the different individuals/groups that make up a school community
- consider the reasons why school matters, ranking these in order of importance
- reflect on what we learned in our 2nd Year Pathways units

Slide 15

Teacher notes

Read each learning intention aloud.

Ask students to give you a thumbs up if they feel they have achieved the learning intention, a thumbs down if they still need some support and a fist if they are unsure.

Unit 3, Extension activity



Here's an idea for you.

Carry out more in-depth research about the roles and responsibilities of the different individuals/groups in your school community. Pay particular attention to how the various individuals/groups support students.

Create a school community booklet profiling these individuals/groups.

Make this booklet available to first year students to ease their transition from primary school.



SLIDE 16

Teacher notes

The extension activity suggested on this slide is linked to Activity 1 (Slide 10) and Activity 2 (Slide 11).

Path Project
Institute of Education
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