

## Opening Minds: implementing a competence-based curriculum

Opening Minds is a competence-based curriculum framework developed at the RSA which schools use to develop their individual competence-based work.

Since 2000 many schools have used the Opening Minds framework to create schemes for the development of competences and consistently record marked improvements in students' attainment, presentation, motivation, involvement and behaviour. What follows is distilled from the valuable experience of working with these schools, sharing in their successes, noting and helping to address any concerns.

Schools agree that whilst the process for the development and introduction of Opening Minds is very demanding, it is crucial to the long-term success of the work that individual schools determine their own route and engage in their own detailed planning.

Maintaining the focus on the competences is fundamental. Strategies to do so must be built into the planning process. Careful planning supported by ongoing evaluation will help to ensure the clear and consistent development of competences.

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Most schools develop their Opening Minds work through schemes of units, modules or projects which combine some or all subjects of the curriculum. A unit, module or project typically covers half a term, though there has to be some flexibility, given the variation in the length of half-terms.

For convenience only, 'unit' will be used here.

The unit will

- (a) develop competences from one or more categories
- (b) cover agreed content

The content is the vehicle for developing competences. It is not downgraded, but rather given a different context.

The two structures used most frequently in schools are:

- A. OM units taught in blocks of time by one or sometimes two teachers per group. Some subjects continue to have discrete time. Some primary schools plan all their time as their Opening Minds curriculum.
- B. An overriding theme links subjects with students moving to different teachers in a more traditional way. Subject boundaries are less precisely defined as competences are developed through exploration of the common theme.

## What initial decisions have to be made?

Once the decision to implement the Opening Minds [OM] competence-led curriculum has been taken in principle these elements need to be considered before the planning of units begins:

- In what year(s) will OM be introduced?
- Will all students in the year(s) be included?
- Which subject areas, and which teachers, will be directly involved?
- What percentage of timetable time will OM occupy? [We recommend a minimum of 30%]
- Will all teachers [in the team] teach all units?
- How will OM sessions be timetabled?
- What will be the arrangement of rooms and resources, including ICT?
- What time will be made available for planning?

All these factors will affect the planning of units in different ways, some more than others.

## Key elements in the development of units of work

It is unusual for subject teachers to have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the content of subject areas outside their own, of the concepts, of the methods used.

The team of teachers preparing the OM units will benefit from sharing their subject knowledge and expertise so that the team can build a greater understanding of what students experience in their different subject lessons. A day shadowing a student can also be helpful – if a little alarming!

Teaching out of subject can be a daunting experience and there may be times when the expertise of individual teachers in the team will be used to develop greater understanding of their methods through short training/sharing sessions. This will strengthen the team and build confidence.

It may also be useful for team members to analyse a typical [non-OM] lesson they have taught to determine which of the competences might have been developed in such a lesson. Pooling this information will help the team to understand how much they already have in common in developing competences in their students – though not yet in a systematic way. This will help in the planning of units and individual lessons.

At this stage it will also be helpful for the team to look at the competences and to start to interpret them in terms of what the implications are for the students' learning. [See also student-language competences on pages 18 and 19]

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## Relationship with the national curriculum

The experience of schools is that students participating in OM cover more ground, more thoroughly and with greater understanding than they do through the subject-based curriculum.

Often, year 7 students work on material that they would normally cover in years 8 or 9. The content of units will take into account national curriculum requirements. On the basis of current evidence all NC requirements will be met.

## Development of units

In the development of units throughout the year there must be a clear, methodical development of all categories of competences [though individual units may have a particular focus on one category only] and this should be attested and recorded.

It is likely that the starting points for the development of different units will arise out of the range of subject knowledge and expertise available within the team. How would this work?

An umbrella makes a useful analogy. There are spokes which both separate and join together different panels. All of these are attached to a handle. If the umbrella is the unit, the spokes are the supporting elements from different subject areas and the panels represent the content. The handle which holds them all together is the competence framework. Even when the umbrella is closed, and subject content is at that time less evident, the role and relevance of the competence framework does not change.

## Preparation

On the basis of schools' experience we recommend that some time in the first unit, or prior to it, is used to focus specifically on what competences are and how they can be developed. It is important that students understand initially, and carry this understanding with them, that developing competence is like being on a continuum. Competences are not 'done' - throughout our lives we continue to develop them.

Material specifically to support the introduction and understanding of the competences is available from the RSA. See page 6 for details.

## Why is this necessary?

Schools have found that it is very easy for the focus to shift away from the competences onto content. The school curriculum, after all, has been a content-based one for many years and the mindset can be difficult to adjust. Maintaining the focus on competences helps students to understand clearly how they are developing as competent people with a secure grasp of knowledge and understanding.

## Moving on

It may be helpful when deciding the basis of individual units to consider whether the unit will aim to focus on a particular category of competence or whether it will cover all equally.

Focusing on one category of competence can make it easier to determine how the content can be managed in such a way as to ensure that the competence focus is maintained and that the development of the competences will follow. It will not rule out the opportunity to identify other competences that have also been developed.

In preparing a unit with a focus on one category of competence the question that needs to be addressed is this: How shall we ensure that the process for the *exploration of the content* of the unit

will be planned in such a way as to guarantee that the *focus on the development of the competences* is clear and is maintained? This leads to the next question: How will individual lessons be planned and organised so that students develop and practise the competence strands being targeted?

For example, a unit which takes as its starting point the historical development of the local area may be well-suited to the exploration and development of Citizenship competences. A unit taking the creation and group presentation of a project such as 'My School' would be ideal for the development of Relating to People competences – although team/group work may well be included in all units. A unit about the planning and development of an adventure playground in a local park might use Managing Situations as its main competence focus. A unit looking at evidence about global issues such as climate change might have Managing Information as its main focus.

To reiterate, all these units would involve students in the development of a wide range of competences, but focusing on one category in each unit may help to sustain development and avoid the confusion that can arise from trying to cover up to 24 competence strands in every unit.

### Pulling the material together

Once a competence focus and a content base have been agreed the team can then pool knowledge and expertise by brainstorming ideas relating to the agreed topic. At this point, all subject areas will contribute and you will begin to see the possibilities of linking content from many different sources – resulting in the kind of connections that we have for years assumed students make through the subject-based curriculum, but with little evidence that it actually happens.

The brainstorming must include ideas about how best the topic can be developed to ensure that elements of the selected competence category are addressed. There is no need at this stage to cover all strands of the chosen category to a similar degree. The competence category is not going to be 'done'.

From the general, we move to the particular. Once the ideas, suggestions have been pooled with many possibilities emerging from the process, a unit has to be created. At this stage, it might be more helpful if two of the team, including one whose subject is closely related to the proposed content, take over the development of the unit. Two or three units can then be developed simultaneously by different pairs within the team, with the whole team meeting regularly to report and review progress and to allow everyone the opportunity to comment and make further contributions.

**Caution!** It is possible to extrapolate an almost infinite number of possibilities from each strand of each competence category. It is better to avoid doing so at this stage but to explore some possibilities with students at appropriate times. What *is* important is to extract from any competence strand elements that are important for your students to develop within the context of the unit or the individual lesson.

### The unit

Six or seven lessons.

Focus on one or more category of competences.

Content focus may initially be on one subject area but many will be included.

The development is likely to follow whatever pattern of SOW and individual lesson plans the team/school uses, possibly with some adaptation.

Flexibility is essential as lessons will often 'take off'.

## Resources

If the scheme of units has a linear design so that each lesson will be offered to six or seven groups simultaneously the team will have to ensure that there are sufficient resources to make this possible.

## What else does the team need to consider?

Teaching and learning styles, pages 16-17.

Competences in student-friendly language, pages 18-19.

The development and storage of all necessary resources for the units. How will competence development be recorded, attested and reported?

How, and how often, will individual students and groups of students review their competence development? We recommend that time for this is built into each unit and is firmly held to as it is an important part of the learning process. This also helps to ensure that the focus on competence development is maintained. See pages 11-15.

What records will students keep, for example with a log book/profile/using ICT?

It is not unusual for students involved in OM to want to continue work through break and/or lunch times. How easily could provision for this be accommodated in the school?

Rewards: what will be the basis for these and how will it relate to the whole-school policy? Will there be rewards, possibly including certificates, specifically for OM work and competence development?

## Room to teach

The opportunity to create a made-for-purpose space for Opening Minds work will vary from school to school. In schools where OM work takes place mainly in one or two dedicated spaces the layout and organisation of the spaces are determined by the demands of the teaching and learning styles.

Some factors to consider:

- flexibility
- need for ease of movement
- access to ITC, including whiteboard
- storage of, and access to, resources
- storage of, and access to, students' work
- tables to accommodate group work [round tables are very suitable and they help to break down the 'traditional' classroom image]
- 'free' space for working on the floor, drama work etc

- wet area
- display

You may be fortunate enough to be able to plan an OM space as part of a new build. The RSA has worked with teachers to design their 'ideal' OM space. One outcome of this work is an architectural drawing based on the brief produced at the RSA seminar on 30/03/06. [Link attached here].

## Flexibility

The first run-through of the OM units will help to identify what might need changing, deleting or further developing. Views on this may vary between different team members who have been covering the same unit. The team will benefit from regular meetings both for mutual support and to review progress. Different teachers will bring different expertise and it is quite likely that there will be some variation in the way units are presented and developed within the agreed framework.

## Additional supporting materials

The following are available from the RSA

### *Classroom materials folder - £25*

This folder has work specifically designed to introduce the idea of competences and of how they are developed- for use at the inception of Opening Minds work. It includes short exercises, a board game and a card game. All are printable from an included CD-ROM.

The folder also includes a project 'Coffetropolis' which focuses on global and ethical issues through exploring the problems of an imaginary city of the future. There are 12 'Mindprobes' each introduced by a short cartoon strip. Each Mindprobe has five sections of related activities.

### *Examples of schools' planning and units - £10*

This CD-ROM includes useful material from three of the project's pilot schools. There are examples of modules and planning sheets and other information from the schools on the early stages of development of their Opening Minds work.

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## Planning to ensure the development of competences in a unit of work

*These tables illustrate one way of teasing out the competence base of an imaginary unit. The work is not presented as a model but as a stimulus to ideas.*

**Step one:** extract the basic elements from the competence strands to be developed in the unit. Consider what this actually means for students' experience in lessons.

**Step two:** expand this into ideas/questions that will generate tasks and activities that will lead to, and ensure, the development of the chosen competences.

**Step three:** create tasks/activities.

**Step four:** consider ideas and format for reviewing

In the examples given, there are elements from many different subject areas but they are not separately identified here, as they might be in a fully worked out unit.

The (imaginary) scheme *Where I live* is typical of those developed by schools. *My School* is here assumed to be the first unit and takes as its content/experience base the transition from primary to secondary school. What is outlined here would cover a number of weeks and could clearly be expanded on similar lines.

The competence strands which are the focus for this unit are the first four from the *Managing Situations* category

Students would:

- understand the importance of managing their own time, and have developed preferred techniques for doing so
- understand what is meant by managing change, and have developed a range of techniques for use in varying situations
- understand the importance both of celebrating success and managing disappointment, and ways of handling these
- understand what is meant by being entrepreneurial and initiative-taking, and how to develop capacities for these

In addition the development of the four strands is broadly sequential – not essential, but useful – 'back-referencing' in the later parts.

Other competences will be developed in this work. It would be a useful exercise for the teaching team to identify these, and in the actual teaching of such a unit, for the students involved to do so.

### Review

The language used here is crucial if students are to be helped to understand and express their competence development clearly. Frame the starter statement or question in such a way as to lead to an appropriate response. Discuss this with students before they start. The process for students may well involve peer discussion in pairs or small groups.

Content areas: **E, H, G, RE, Art, Mus, Drama, PSHE**

**Step one**

Extracted basic elements	Related student elements
a. managing time	1. working out time needed for short and longer tasks, reviewing this and deciding why it worked or not 2. setting and working to deadlines
b. coping with change	3. analysing issues related to transition from primary to secondary school
c. highs and lows	4. consider how good things about changing school were celebrated and how problems or difficulties, were coped with
d. developing own ideas	5. plan how to make things better for next year's students who come to the school

**Step two**

Element of competence	Ideas for development/questions that will generate ideas for tasks
a. managing time	How do you know how long it will take to do something?  Sometimes tasks have to be completed to a deadline. Why? Get examples from students. Discussion: What do you do if you're given a deadline? Why are deadlines sometimes necessary? What happens if deadlines are not met? How do you plan, to make sure a deadline is met?  <b>Issues:</b> in group task: how allocating parts of task to individuals/pairs affects time needed; working out rough timings for different elements of task; need for one person to oversee progress – how would they do this?
b. coping with change	Transition: How were students 'prepared' at primary school, at new secondary school? What did teachers, parents, students, others do? What things were different? What things were unexpected?
c. highs and lows	Transition: What were the best bits about changing school? What were the most difficult things? Who helped you most to make it easier? Were there any special events? What kinds of things made you feel worried, excited, confused?
d. developing own ideas	What kinds of things would make changing from primary to secondary school easier/better? What could students in the secondary school do to help future intakes?

**Step three** (next page)

Element of competence	Resulting ideas for tasks and activities
a. managing time	<p>In an early lesson set a timed task (e.g. make a map of your journey to school from home), with the time allowed for the task deliberately too short; at the end of the specified time discuss issues e.g.:</p> <p>Who decides how long a task takes? Does everyone take the same time to complete a task? How did each group come to an agreement? How do you feel if you run out of time? How to resolve these issues?</p> <p>Set new task (e.g. make a map showing the school and at least three feeder primary schools) with groups of students determining their own timescale. When agreed times are reached students review how they got on. How good was their assessment of the time needed? If it was under, or over, why was this? [lack of experience, poor organisation, wrong allocation of time, lack of focus on task etc] What has been learned for setting timescales for future tasks?</p> <p>Set a new task with a deadline (e.g. Find out which primary schools everyone in the group came from and make a chart to illustrate this.) Give student groups 5 minutes to plan a strategy to complete the task in the given time. At the end, review both planning and outcomes.</p>
b. coping with change	<p>Step 1. On a large sheet make a chart listing as many things as you can about changing from primary to secondary school – brainstorm ideas for yourself. Step 2. Put a number from 1-10 next to each thing you've written down: 10 is for the very best things, 1 is for the worst things. Step 3. On a new sheet write everything as a list in order from 10 – 1, with 10 at the top of the page, down to 1 at the bottom. If two or more things have the same number, write them side by side. Step 4: Compare your chart with others. How many people have similar lists to yours? Step 5: Teacher writes up the complete list from student contributions. Numbers are collected in and a final 'class' order is reached (various ways of doing this – students might be consulted on the best way).</p>
c. highs and lows	<p>Select the top and bottom three from the class list. Group discussion: what was so good about the top three and what was so bad about the bottom three? Why do you think these 6 came out in these places? How did/do the top 3 make you feel? The bottom 3? What were the special things that that helped you to enjoy the top 3? How did you cope with the bottom 3? Design a poster to illustrate the top three things on the chart and your good feelings about them. Think of a title for your poster. Make up a Blues song, a rap or a poem explaining your feelings about the bottom 3 things on the chart. Think of a title.</p>
d. developing own ideas	<p>Group activity: Plan and make a booklet for new students coming to your school. How can you help them to enjoy the best bits about it and cope with the most difficult bits? Include a map showing your school and the routes to different primary schools. Think about the list of highs and lows. How might you bring these in and what will you say about them? Discuss and then share other ideas about things you might do to help.</p> <p>Improvise a scene in which you meet some students from a primary school who are obviously worried about coming to your school next year. What kinds of things do you say?</p> <p>Plan a presentation about your school that you can take to primary schools that send students to your school. Find out some things about the history of your school to include in your presentation. You may need to make things [props] for your presentation. Include this in your planning. When would be the best time to do this? How long should the presentation last? What kind of space will you need? When you've decided this, rehearse your presentation to make sure the length is right. If it's not, work out how to get it right. How and when will you contact the primary school(s) to arrange your visit?</p>

#### Step Four: Reviewing competence development

Think about what you have learned while you have been working on *My School*

What helps you to:

- a. get the time right when you're planning a job or a task?  
meet a deadline?
- b. manage better when there are big changes in your life?
- c. enjoy things that are good and cope with things that are not so good?
- d. think up and try out your own ideas about things?

How well can you do these things at the moment, do you think?

How might you get better at them?

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**Note:** this would not be a 'one-off' review. Different parts of the reviewing would be done at appropriate times during this section of the unit. This helps to develop learning and to sustain development and understanding of the competences.

At the end of the unit there would be a 'summary' review, looking back over the development of the agreed competence focus of the unit. The following pages suggest ways in which competences from either the Learning or Relating to People categories might be recorded and reported in a half-term unit called *My Life*.

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## Reviewing and recording competence development

Reviewing is an essential part of the students' experience in their understanding of the competences and their development of them.

In the course of a unit there will be many occasions when short reviewing and/or writing sessions will be appropriate. In order to ensure these sessions are not 'crowded out' it may be helpful if they are not all planned for the *end* of the timetabled lesson. At the end of the unit students may review and record their competence development, producing a summative sheet [see page 14] on which their statements will be attested by their teacher(s).

This sheet would then be reviewed at the end of the next unit and a new summative sheet produced adding to or modifying the statements in the light of further competence development in this unit.

The summative sheet, written by the student, with guidance and support, and attested by the teacher could then accompany whatever are the customary reporting documents, as the report on competence development.

Page 11 illustrates the kind of guidance that might be given to students.

Pages 12 and 13 illustrate ways in which students might report their formative development of different competences at different points during the unit. It is obviously artificial for an adult to produce a 'student's' completed sheet but it may serve a useful purpose in suggesting possibilities for your school.

## Recording your competence development

In some of your *Opening Minds* lessons your teacher will ask you to think about the competences you have been using and developing in the work you've been doing. You will use many different competences, probably some from each of the five groups.

When you fill in your competence sheets you need to say what it was you did that helped you to develop a particular competence. You might develop the same competence lots of times in different ways. Every time you do this you are adding to your 'competence'. It's important to think about the different ways you have been doing this for each competence that you have developed.

At the end of the unit read through each of your five competence sheets and try to sum up which ones you have developed during the unit.

Here's an example of the kind of thing you might write:

**Scheme: My Life  
Competences for Learning**

**Unit: Going Places**

In the 'Going Places' unit I had to do a lot of thinking about how to do things. I had to make choices about what I would include in different things, like photos, information. I also had to decide about colours, different letter sizes and which font to use. I had to design the layouts, do them on the computer and print them. I found that I could read maps easily and work out routes but I had to think about whether the best route was the same as the shortest one on the map. I liked working out how to do the leaflets and doing them on the computer. I enjoy doing practical things like that better than just writing.

These are the ways I have developed competences for learning. I think I have developed all of them in some ways, but mostly a, b, c and f.

My evidence is all in my 'Going Places' folder.

Your *Opening Minds* teacher will read your statement through and discuss with you what you've written.

At the end of the next unit you will write another statement like this, saying how you have developed some of these competences even more.

## Competences for Learning a,b,c,d,e,f

Date/Activity	Competence(s) developed	How the competences were developed	Evidence
15/09/2004 Making a travel brochure	b. learning to think c. using my creative talents f. using ICT	I had to decide what to put in the booklet, plan the layout, put it together on the computer and print it. I had to choose photos and try to make the writing make people want to go to different places.	Booklet in my 'Going Places' folder
3/10/2004 Designing a leaflet for new students to our school	b. learning to think c. using my creative talents d. enjoying my learning e. good writing f. using ICT	I had to work out what would make people want to come to our school and how to make it sound good. The leaflet had to look good so that people would want to read it. I had to choose photos and colours and which font to use for the text. I learned how to change the size of photos on the computer and how to print in reverse order.	Leaflet called 'Eltham Green is groovy!' in my 'Going Places' folder
19/10/2004 Planning the best route from our school to the Imperial War Museum	a. learning about my best learning styles b. learning to think d. using ICT	I found it easier to read a road map that was in colour than a black and white one. I could follow the roads OK but we had to go by car so I had to work out how to not go in one-way streets if they were going the wrong way, but different for coming back. I found the map I needed on the computer Multimap programme, then I printed it and marked my route on it. You had to be careful not to cover up the street names. Next week we are going to try the route out and see if it works ok.	Photocopy of route in 'Going Places' folder
26/10/04 Visit to Imperial War Museum	a. understanding how to learn b. learning to think	We went on my route, I had to tell the teacher which ways to turn. Some roads were very busy and we had to wait a long time. Miss asked what we could do about it. I said I did the shortest way, but maybe it wasn't the quickest, but you wouldn't know unless you tried other ways. I found a better way to come back and it was quicker even though it was longer.	Routes in my 'Going Places' folder. I put the different route in a different colour.

## Competences for Relating to People a,b,c,d,e,f

Date/Activity	Competence developed	How the competences were developed	Evidence
15/09/2004 Making a travel brochure	a. working with other people and getting things done b. working in a team f. managing conflict	We worked in threes because we were doing a set of brochures for different places but they had to be done in the same way, so we had to share our ideas and decide which ideas were the best. We had to get the brochures finished in three lessons. If we didn't agree we voted and we also tried some different things out before we decided what was best.	My travel brochure in my 'Getting About' folder. Copies of Peter's and Anna's brochure.
3/10/2004 Designing a leaflet for new students to our school	a. working with others d. different ways of communicating	We worked in pairs and I worked with Jonathan. We talked about how we were going to work. First we listed all our ideas then we each chose the best separately and then put them together. We decided it was better not to put too many different things in because it might put people off. Then we each did a leaflet and it was interesting to see how different they came out even though we had similar ideas.	My leaflet and Jonathan's leaflet in my 'Getting About' folder. Also a list of our ideas which ones we chose.
19/10/2004 Planning the best route from our school to the Imperial War Museum	a. relating to people c. developing other people	I worked with Jane and she didn't know how to read a road map properly so I had to show her and explain what the different things meant. Then we both worked out a route and Jane managed it OK but she took longer than me. Also I showed her how to find the right bit on the Multimap site by putting in the postcode which Miss gave us.	My copy of notes in Jane's folder about us working together
26/10/04 Visit to Imperial War Museum	a. relating to people e. managing relationships and helping	We met a lot of different people at the museum, all doing different jobs. Sometimes they asked us what we were doing and I explained about our project and why we were there. They were very helpful. Jane fell on the steps and cut her knee. She was upset and cried so I helped to make her feel. I spoke to one of the museum staff and she was very nice to us.	My report on the visit in my folder. My copy of Jane's notes about falling over and what happened.

## My Life: Going Places - my competence development summary

Name:

Date:

**Citizenship**

**Learning**

**Information**

**People**

**Situations**

**My teacher's comment**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (student) \_\_\_\_\_ (teacher)

## Opening Minds: teaching and learning styles

Opening Minds lessons are characterised by bustle, activity, productive noise, movement, debate – and cheerfulness.

Over the last few years many students have been interviewed or spoken with in lessons and this is what they say they value:

- time to complete work properly without being rushed
- setting one's own timescale
- not sitting in one chair and being talked at
- learning important things for life
- having 'our own' room
- not having so many teachers
- not having to carry stuff around all the time
- having fun
- teachers who are ready to admit there are things they don't know
- having more say in what we do
- doing presentations to parents, staff
- being able to carry on with projects in break and at lunchtime

Teachers say that OM lessons are very hard work but ultimately very rewarding. They value:

- much greater opportunity to get to know students really well
- better working relationships with students
- students taking control of their own learning
- students' ability to develop language which facilitates analysis of their own learning
- students completing more work and to a higher standard
- significantly improved motivation
- better behaviour
- greater achievement across the ability range
- students 'released'
- confidence of students to be challenging in a positive way
- working with and support of colleagues
- positive response of parents and visitors
- using teaching and learning styles developed in OM lessons for other lessons

## Interactive teaching

Teachers of subjects with a more obvious practical base – e.g. drama, music, PE – are usually more comfortable with lessons in which students move around and in which there is a busy, noisy atmosphere. Other teachers may well use interactive methods but it is all too easy to avoid them and to fall back on a more didactic approach in the belief that this is the only way to guarantee things are 'properly learned' (and also because it's easier). However, there is often a considerable mismatch between what is taught and what is learned. The evidence from Opening Minds is that interactive methods with a focus on competence development result in improved motivation, understanding, learning and retention.

Much work in Opening Minds lessons is typically done in groups. In these groups students' roles constantly change. It is much less easy to pick out students identified in the 'normal' curriculum as having special educational needs. Their contribution in OM lessons has often surprised teachers and led to some reassessment of what 'special needs' actually means.

Opening Minds teachers see themselves not primarily as the purveyors of knowledge – they are equipping their students to research and find what they need to know for the work in hand. The teacher is more of a facilitator, there to ensure that tasks are fully understood, that the necessary resources are easily available, that time is made for consideration of how competences are being developed, and for reviewing and recording.

Interactive whiteboards, if used well, are a valuable resource.

Key needs identified by teachers:

- being thoroughly organised and prepared
- ensuring that all resources are ready, easily available and adequate
- having the room set out in the way that best meets the demands of the lesson
- agreeing with students simple signals for pausing in their work to listen, end lesson etc
- open questioning
- willingness to be flexible
- willingness to be challenged
- willingness to be wrong or not to know
- support of team/colleagues with regular opportunities to meet

Lesson observations can be very helpful, especially for teachers less familiar with interactive ways of working.

### Footnote

Sometimes teachers not directly involved in OM work have characterised the students as 'arrogant' because of their unwillingness to accept anything they see as inappropriate to their OM style of working when they go into other lessons.

At the same time, many teachers value the experience of OM teaching and carry much of what they learn from it into their 'mainstream' teaching.

Mostly, teachers *covering* OM lessons have said that this is not difficult (as they expected) since the students know exactly what they're doing and are thoroughly organised.

### Competences in student language

This is one version of the competences in student language. There are many other possibilities, with further simplification an obvious option.

### Competences for Learning

***In this group of competences these are the things you should be trying to do and keep getting better at:***

- a. Getting to know about the ways you learn about things and which ways you find it easiest to learn (like reading, looking at pictures, talking, doing things); making sure you are always learning new things as you go through your life –we call this ‘lifelong learning’.
- b. Learning how to think about things so that you can work things out for yourself, think about ideas and the things you hear and read about
- c. Finding out about the things you are good at doing - all kinds of different things, like sport, art, music, design, drama, writing, planning, organising and so on. You should also be finding out the best ways you can use your talents or ‘creativity.’
- d. Getting to enjoy learning because it’s interesting and fun and because it helps you to understand yourself more.
- e. Becoming really good in writing, reading, maths and developing a good sense of the way everything fits into its own space
- f. Getting good at using computers and other technology and knowing about how they work.

### Competences for Citizenship

***In this group of competences these are the things you should be trying to do and keep getting better at:***

- a. Understanding about the ways people should behave towards each other and how the things you believe are right or not right affect the ways you can be a useful person in our society.
- b. Understanding how our society works – things like local and national government, businesses, and how you can be an ‘active citizen’ by getting involved in things that affect our society.
- c. Understanding that there are many different cultures in the world and in our own country and that it’s important to understand these and to show you respect and value different cultures and the people who are part of them.
- d. Understanding the effects - either good or bad – that technology has on the way we all live.
- e. Understanding how to manage some things in your own life, and what you need to be able to do this; understanding how to manage money.

### Competences for Relating to People

*In this group of competences these are the things you should be trying to do and keep getting better at:*

- a. Understanding how to work with and behave towards other people in all kinds of different situations, sometimes ones where you're in charge, sometimes when other people are in charge, and knowing how people together can get things done.
- b. Understanding how to work in a team of people and the different ways in which you can be a good team member.
- c. Understanding how you can help other people to get better at things - people of your own age or younger people.
- d. Knowing different ways of communicating with other people and how you choose the best way of doing this at different times in different circumstances.
- e. Being in control of your own emotions and managing your personal relationships well.
- f. Understanding ways you can make things better when there is a lot of stress or argument about things.

### Competences for Managing Situations

***In this group of competences these are the things you should be trying to do and keep getting better at:***

- a. Understanding why it's important to be able to manage your time well, and knowing different ways to do this.
- b. Sometimes we have to make - or we want to make – changes in our lives, or we are caught up in changes that other people make, so this competence is about finding different ways that you can manage different kinds of changes.
- c. Understanding the importance of celebrating good things that happen but also knowing how you cope when you are disappointed.
- d. Understanding how to develop your own ideas about things and how to use your ideas in effective ways.
- e. Understand about taking risks, and how you deal with risk and with and not being sure about things in lots of different circumstances.

### Competences for Managing Information

***In this group of competences these are the things you should be trying to do and keep getting better at:***

- a. Knowing different ways to find information you need, sort out what's important and what's not, and then use the information in whatever way you need to.
- b. Understanding how you think about information carefully and being able to come to your own decisions about what's being said.

## The Opening minds competences

### Competences for Learning

Students would:

- understand how to learn, taking account of their preferred learning styles, and understand the need to, and how to, manage their own learning throughout life
- have learned, systematically, to think
- have explored and reached an understanding of their own creative talents, and how best to make use of them
- have learned to enjoy and love learning for its own sake and as part of understanding themselves
- have achieved high standards in literacy, numeracy, and spatial understanding
- have achieved high standards of competence in handling information and communications technology and understand the underlying processes.

### Competences for Citizenship

Students would:

- have developed an understanding of ethics and values, how personal behaviour should be informed by these, and how to contribute to society
- understand how society, government and business work, and the importance of active citizenship
- understand cultural and community diversity, in both national and global contexts, and why these should be respected and valued
- understand the social implications of technology
- have developed an understanding of how to manage aspects of their own lives, and the techniques they might use to do so – including managing their financial affairs

### Competences for Relating to People

Students would:

- understand how to relate to other people in varying contexts in which they might find themselves, including those where they manage, or are managed by, others; and how to get things done
- understand how to operate in teams, and their own capacities for filling different team roles
- understand how to develop other people, whether as peer or teacher
- have developed a range of techniques for communicating by different means, and understand how and when to use them
- have developed competence in managing personal and emotional relationships
- understand and be able to use varying means of managing stress and conflict.

### Competences for Managing Situations

- Students would:
- 
- understand the importance of managing their own time, and have developed preferred techniques for doing so
- understand what is meant by managing change, and have developed a range of techniques for use in varying situations
- understand the importance both of celebrating success and managing disappointment, and ways of handling these
- understand what is meant by being entrepreneurial and initiative-taking, and how to develop capacities for these
- understand how to manage risk and uncertainty, the wide range of contexts in which these will be encountered, and techniques for managing them

### Competences for Managing Information

Students would:

- have developed a range of techniques for accessing, evaluating and differentiating information and have learned how to analyse, synthesise and apply it
- understand the importance of reflecting and applying critical judgement, and have learned how to do so