

A student's experience of Transition Year.

The following three students are currently enrolled in our Transition Year programme. They have kindly shared their experience of the programme.

**Rebecca Griffin:
My experience of Transition Year
28/3/2020**

Why did I Decide to do TY?

I decided to do TY for a number of reasons....

1. My older sister Jennifer did TY and she really enjoyed the experience.
2. I didn't know what career/course I wanted to choose, so therefore I didn't really know what subjects I needed.
 - TY gives you the opportunity and time to grow, develop and mature, different aspects such as the advantage of trying out different subjects e.g. Chemistry, physics is what really gives you an insight into what subjects suit you and what doesn't. I got to try out subjects I wouldn't have known anything about like Technology and Art which gives you a wider understanding of the work involved with those courses.
 - Careers class enabled me to develop important and necessary skills such as writing a CV, personal statements and researching a wide variety of courses and career options. Because of this I understand the different requirements needed and I know more about the Leaving Cert system and can make more informed choices about what course I chose to study and what that means for college.
 - Work experience also enabled me to understand more about the working life.
 - The e-portfolio has developed my reflective skills and I know realise how important it is to evaluate your performance in order to improve.
 - Industry visits are also a great advantage to experience. For e.g. Zimmer Biomet promoted the work of engineers and especially women working in STEM subjects.
3. I wanted to a break from the Junior Cert and constant studying. TY is a different more practical approach to learning and it is a nice change.
 - Most people think that TY is a doss, and you get no homework.
 - In my opinion it's your choice whether TY is a doss or isn't a doss.
 - You can take advantage of the plentiful opportunities given to you. The TY hub notifies you of different industry visits and events taking place.
 - You can volunteer for many things for example I took part in the TY drama group, the music group, the Gael Bhratach committee and many more.
 - There is a variety of different trips and activities for example there is music and drama but also more science related work such as CanSat. This ensures that TY is suitable for all people and whatever aspect you might be interested in.

My considerations in coming to my decision this time last year:

- In honesty, at first I thought that I wasn't going to do TY because I thought that staying an extra year in school wasn't necessary and that going straight into fifth year was the best

option for me. After more intense, indepth thought, I realised that I wasn't ready for the jump as I hadn't a clue what I wanted to choose career wise.

- In addition, I didn't know what subjects appealed to me and what was necessary for a particular course.
- One of the biggest factors in my choice of TY was the extra time and resources available to me. This allowed me to make a more informed decision about my future options.
- I also considered what I hoped to gain in TY such as personal development, maturity, responsibility, work experience and to be more organised. Having a clear plan what I wanted to achieve during TY was a key aspect of how I kept focus during the year and helped me benefit greatly from the whole experience.

How have I benefited from my TY year?

Personally:

- Overall I am so glad that I did TY.
- Achieved so many new skills (task skills, people skills and teamwork)
- Matured greatly as a person.
- Now I feel I am more prepared for the Leaving Cert. I have become more responsible and have developed my own opinions on a variety of matters due to class presentations and programme events.
- Greatly boosted my confidence.

Socially:

- Acquired many new friends.
- My teamwork skills have been enhanced by project work such as STEM Stars and mini company.

Academically:

- Some achievements, that I have gained are having a CV in English and Irish, a certificate in ICDL, have done work experience in a shop and have been part of a Biology group that entered a competition and won €1,000 for our school.
- Having completed the Cardiac First Responders course I have an important skill that could potentially save someone's life.
- My learning desire inspired me to volunteer for different groups such as the music group and TY drama both of which I enjoyed thoroughly.
- Industry visits for example to Zimmer Biomet in Shannon, gave me the chance to get a taste of what the working world is like especially for engineers.
- The different approach of learning made TY very interesting as it had a very practical side to it.
- My experience with the future leaders programme inspired me to be more involved in the GAA not only as a player but by becoming a Camogie and Go Games Football referee, I now know a lot of information and facts about the various aspects to GAA such as coaching, refereeing, Sports administration, event management and Performance Analysis e.t.c. I can now use this information to help my local club.
- By joining the Gael bhratach committee I participated in many different ways to help promote Irish speaking in our school for e.g. 24 hours as Gaeilge day.

Various opportunities afforded to me in TY:

There is abundant opportunities at your fingertips in TY. The year is very well organised and there is a variety of courses, trips, events and activities scheduled to take place throughout the whole year.

Trips:

- Birr Outdoor Education Centre, was where we stayed for two nights. We got to complete part of our Gaisce bronze award there.
- We had the amazing experience of the ploughing championships in Carlow.
- The Mock Trial in Ennis Court House as part of Law Education for Schools was very interesting as I got to enter a court for the first time.
- Our trip to Bridget's Garden in Roscahill Galway informed us about the life of a migrant and the various sustainable development goals.

Challenges\Competitions:

- Press pass- A journalism competition where you choose a topic to complete a submission on such as sports journalism, newspaper article, photo journalism, comment opinion piece e.t.c
- BOI Money smarts challenge- Business competition against other local schools about how to be smart with your money.
- Stem Stars competition- BD manufacturers of medicine and hospital equipment in Limerick hosted a competition where you were required to pick a health issue in society and make a video on your solution to the problem.
- Gaisce Bronze Award challenge- Requires you to go on an Adventure journey for 2 days and 1 night as well as your participation in an community involvement activity, personal skill activity and physical recreation activity each for 1 hour a week for 13 weeks and one activity of your choice for an added 13 weeks (26 weeks total).
- Young Social Innovators- Is a competition where, as a class, you decide on an issue in society that you regard as important and then come up with solutions to the problem or try raise awareness about the issue in your school and local community. You present your ideas and findings as an 2-3 minute presentation on stage as part of the YSI Speak Out. Here you are competing against various other schools for the best ideas and solutions.
- There are various other competitions that you can enter such as Maths, AILO Problem Solving, Generation Euro Students' Award, Action Aid Speech Writing competition all of which are posted on the TY hub.

Modern Languages:

- We were brought to view French and German films in Glór.
- Japanese- Have the experience of the new subject once a week.
- Chinese- Also once a week, it's a great opportunity to learn all about Chineses language and culture.

Work Experience:

- Get to choose where you want to work for 1 week twice a year.
- A great opportunity to see what career path would suit you best.

Activities/Programmes

- Include both inside and outside school.
- European Day of Languages- Try out breakfasts of foreign countries(France,Germany) and make posters about the different cultures
- Song school- Allowed us to create a song about whatever we wanted, we got to record the singing, write the lyrics, and play the music.
- Drum Kit workshop- Learned about the drums and each got a turn to try play them.
- DELL Digital Futures Programme- We were informed about the strong and growing digital influence on the world and the various jobs in the industry.
- Careers Day- Past students were invited back to the school for a day to talk and enlighten us about their course in college and their experience of that course.

Talks

- As part of TY mini company we listened to talks from people in Enterprise Ireland in the West County Hotel. We heard the stories of real life entrepreneurs such as the founder of Torpey hurleys John Torpey. This inspired our innovation and creativity for a unique idea to sell at our Christmas Market.
- Concern- We were educated about the poverty and hunger in 3rd world countries and how Concern helps people help themselves. We then had the opportunity to volunteer to fast for a day to raise money so that Concern can continue their work abroad.
- Modern Languages- We had a talk on studying modern languages at third level and careers in modern languages. Now I know the benefits of learning a second or third language and the career of an interpreter.
- Talk on Mindfulness and mental health- Cillian Keane shared with us his journey of his mental health and his ups and downs and how he overcame the challenges. He briefed us on what to do when you are feeling down and how to ask for help.

Musical

- Miss Saigon- Was a really enjoyable experience. There are multiple ways you can get involved based on what you enjoy doing such as working with the set crew, the light and sound, the Lead actors, the Choruses e.t.c

Industry Visits

- Zimmer Biomet in Shannon.
- J & J Vision Care in Limerick.
- Ericsson.

Courses

- Future leaders LGFA referee course- 'Grab your whistle'
- Cardiac First Responders course

My advice to a student embarking on TY

1. Make clear goals for what you want to achieve/gain during TY. It could be anything such as getting involved, speaking and presenting, boosting confidence, improving task, personal and social skills. This will help keep you focused and will facilitate the best outcomes and possible benefits assuming that you stick to your plan.
2. Volunteer for a wide range of activities, competitions, industry visits e.t.c. By checking the TY hub daily you can easily find things that interest you. You have nothing to lose by remaining open minded and don't opt out of too much as you might actually enjoy the experience.
3. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. Things like public speaking, presenting several times in front of people, getting involved in debates and group work are all examples of what really boosts your confidence.
4. Use your e-portfolio as a chance to self-evaluate and reflect on your learning experience. You can see your strengths, weaknesses, what you enjoy and don't enjoy because this way you can figure out how you can improve and truly benefit from your experience.
5. Give maximum effort to your projects/ presentations. You will learn presentation skills and how to be creative/use your initiative.
6. Keep recording class work and homework in your journal. This will ensure you keep track of all the events and activities you undertake, as well as what you learn in class. It will also assist you to upload/hand in assignments on time. The journal enables you to reflect on how you performed each week as a self-directed learner. You can showcase your skills for example your initiative, persistence, responsibility, perspective, self-discipline, learning desire, organisation, goal orientation and motivation.

7. Most importantly of all, enjoy your time in TY, it goes by so fast. There is an endless amount of opportunities and experiences where you can learn and have fun. Don't have any regrets about what you should and shouldn't have done. Your goal in TY is to be able to look back on the year and be proud of your achievements as well as understanding how much you have matured. You will have so much to bring forward and build on during your time in 5th and 6th year!

Ella Fitzpatrick
My Experience of Transition Year
28 / 03 / 2020

Hello everyone my name is Ella Fitzpatrick. Personally, I always knew that I was going to do Transition Year. I just couldn't bear the thought of going straight from Junior Cert into Leaving Cert and I also didn't know what subjects I wanted to do and I believed TY would help me with this.

I honestly didn't know what to expect from TY, I knew there was going to be activities and I would be able to try out all of the senior cycle subjects but other than that I didn't know much. Before TY, I thought of it as a chill year because it is in between 2 years which are focused on state exams. Having now experienced TY I would definitely not call it a chill year. I know that most of your teachers have probably drilled it into you, like they did with me, that TY is not a doss year and this couldn't be more true. After the first few months of TY I realised that it was going to be a hard year but in a different way to 3rd year. In TY most work is independent so you have to choose the topics you want to research rather than doing projects on material learnt in class. TY is also a very busy year. There is constantly something for you to do, so you should never really be bored. Whether it is going on an industry visit to Zimmer Biomet or J and J Visioncare or even just working on your e-portfolio or school journal.

By doing TY I have learnt so much more about the different career options that are available to me. From a young age I have been set on becoming a veterinary surgeon but TY has helped me to become aware of all of the other interests that I have. I am now still considering Veterinary but also a career in Maths or Music. I really enjoyed sampling all of the different subjects. They enabled me to learn more about what I would be doing in Leaving Cert if I chose them and prepare me for the next 2 years of school. This is especially important with the different sciences and business subjects. In order to be a vet, Chemistry is essential and Biology is important so in these two classes I learnt about the LC course and what I would have to study. In TY we have the subject business where we cover the three different senior cycle subjects, business, economics and accounting throughout the year. I really enjoyed this subject and I am now considering doing accounting for Leaving Cert. Having the opportunity to try out all of the different subjects I have narrowed my choices down to 4 - accounting as I said before, music, biology and chemistry.

TY has given me so many opportunities to meet new friends. Some of the people in my year which I'm friends with now I had never talked to before. This may seem surprising but in Junior Cycle all of the classes didn't mix very often but in TY students from different classes regularly meet each other. I believe that this is one of the main benefits of TY as I have become friends with people who I wouldn't have met otherwise.

I think TY is universal as there is something for everyone to do. All of the activities and events organised throughout the year are so different from each other which results in every student finding something that they will enjoy. Some of the various activities I have participated in are:

- the GAA Future Leaders Programme which I applied for in 3rd year, 26 students were picked and we are all in the same class. This programme focuses on all of the different aspects of sport including journalism and photography so if you aren't sporty I would still encourage you to think about doing this.
- the School Musical which by far was one of the highlights of my year
- Mini Company which we did in Business, this is where we got the opportunity to become entrepreneurs and produce and sell our own products in groups.
- and I also got to participate in the Law Education for Schools Course with James T Fahy, a practicing Barrister where my class and I went to the Courthouse in Ennis to learn about the Law and we also got the opportunity to act out a mock trial.

These are just a few of the activities I have participated in and all of these are so different from each other.

My advice for anybody going into TY would be to expect it to be a challenging year as I went in with the mindset that it was going to be easy and if I'm being honest when I got homework I was quite shocked. I don't have any more advice other than enjoy it because I remember being in your position wishing for 3rd year to be over and I can't believe that the time has gone so quickly.

Aoife McMahon
My Experience of Transition Year
28 / 03 / 2020

My name is Aoife McMahon. Before TY in Coláiste Muire, I was in a different school. It was co-educational and a lot smaller. Why did I chose to do TY in Coláiste Muire? I wanted to move into a new school environment and have more opportunities. I wanted to take a year to work on my learning abilities and further improve my work ethic. I wanted to become more responsible for my own work. Throughout TY, I have not been disappointed.

You might be reading this, and be in the exact position I was last year. You might be moving schools, or just moving from 3A to TY2. Trust me, I've been there. Your mind swarms with every possible scenario that could happen. The main thing I was worried about before coming to Coláiste Muire, was not having any friends. I barely knew anyone so I really thought not one person was going to talk to me. But the minute I sat down, girls were asking me questions and chatting, and even asking me did I want to go to lunch with them. You have to remember, the TY classes are mixed and matched too, so the girls in your class might not even know each other either. So in a way, everyone is new! Now, you might be reading this thinking "I'm not a very outgoing person, I don't speak until spoken to" Trust me, I never considered myself outgoing or talkative before I came here. The experience of moving to a new school has made me a more extroverted, chatty and more outgoing person.

Throughout TY, there are hundreds of ways to meet new girls and make friends. With all the trips and activities, you'll never be alone.

The benefits I have received from doing TY in Coláiste Muire are endless. You meet so many new people, whether you moved from a new school or have been here for the past three years. Personally, I have become more self-aware in and out of classroom settings. A lot of people say that you become lazy or bored during TY, but I think the opposite is the case! There are many 'out of classroom' activities but you know that you have to complete your school work too, it's a balance. You have probably heard this a thousand times, but it is really true that 'what you put into TY is what you'll get out of it'. There are so many different opportunities, competitions and activities available, that you will gain so much if you just sign up, or put in that bit of effort. The more opportunities you avail of and the more places you go to, the more things you see and the more girls you will meet.

Although Transition Year is stereotyped as a year full of trips and excursions, you still have work. And even though it isn't 'learning-off-definitions-work', you do get an insight into Leaving Cert subjects from the broad curriculum and the subject sampling blocks. Before TY, I never did art, technology, music and such subjects. The opportunity to try new subjects gives you the chance to explore the subjects in which you excel and maybe, for some, take on a subject for the Leaving Cert that you did not do for Junior Cycle. I know in my experience, the sampling blocks of different subjects influenced my subject choice for 5th year. As of now I've decided to do Biology instead of Geography, along with Home Economics and Economics. Biology really interested me more than Geography.

TY is a year for you to take action. The more effort you put into it, the more rewards to be gained. You have to take responsibility for your own work and your own personal development. It's a year you learn to take action without being told to. But most importantly TY is a year to have fun, so don't forget that!