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**NATECLA**  
*Island of Ireland Branch*





# **The Evaluation of the Steeping Stone Programme, (a pilot) 16+ Programme for Newcomers to Northern Ireland**

**Peer Reviewed**

**Forthcoming : Language and Education 2024**

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## NI-ESOL Landscape

**This lack of visibility and agency is not a particularly NI phenomenon, as refugee research continues to observe that refugee and asylum-seeking children are marked by their invisibility in educational policy and practice globally (McIntyre and Abrams 2022).**

**Such exclusions mean newcomers, refugees, and asylum seekers are subject to exclusionary policies and practices determined by immigration and welfare procedures and strategies. By doing this, all newcomers, including children, are therefore positioned through policy as a potential threat to national security and a drain on welfare resources (McIntyre and Abrams 2022).**

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## **The Steeping Stone Programme 16+ Learners**

**This project was born out of a gap identified by Conway Education Centre (CEC) and Extern Third Space in education provision for young people in the age bracket of 16-19 arriving in Northern Ireland.**

**Partnership with Conway Education Centre and Ulster University to develop education and wellbeing program for young people seeking sanctuary and unaccompanied minors.**

**The idea was to offer a more holistic approach to learning, with an understanding of possible trauma experienced by this group of young people and the barriers to education both including and beyond English Language skills.**

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**The programme's objectives and aims were the following:**

- **\*Provide a structured education programme to facilitate English language learning, increasing confidence and integration into NI society - Conway (CEC)**
  - **\*Provide tailored and innovative language assessment and intervention to identify and target specific areas of language need and accelerate English language development - UU**
  - **Provide personal development and wellbeing sessions to improve confidence and education/employability progression opportunities and create a sense of belonging – Ext**
  - **\*Provide a holistic and positive education experience which will equip participants with improved language skills and confidence – Conway (CEC)**
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## The Steeping Stone Programme 16+ Learners

### Structure

- **3 X 4 hour classes per week with 3 CEC ESOL tutors – 24 weeks**
- **1 X 4 hour personal development session per week with Third Space Keyworker**
- **1 X 1 hour linguistic session per week with UU linguistics volunteers**

**Plus:**

**Trips and outings**

- **3 X 1-1 sessions over 6 months (to look at wellbeing and hopes for future)**
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## The Steeping Stone Programme 16+ Learners

### Learners

- Syria, Iran, Somali, Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iraq
  - VPRS Resettlement Schemes, majority - Seeking Asylum
  - Various refugee champs (Jordan, Lebanon) – Deported – Denmark
  - Stable/Interrupted
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# 16+ ESOL

## ROUTES TO LEARNING

The 16+ programme at Glasgow Clyde College  
Teaching ESOL to separated children

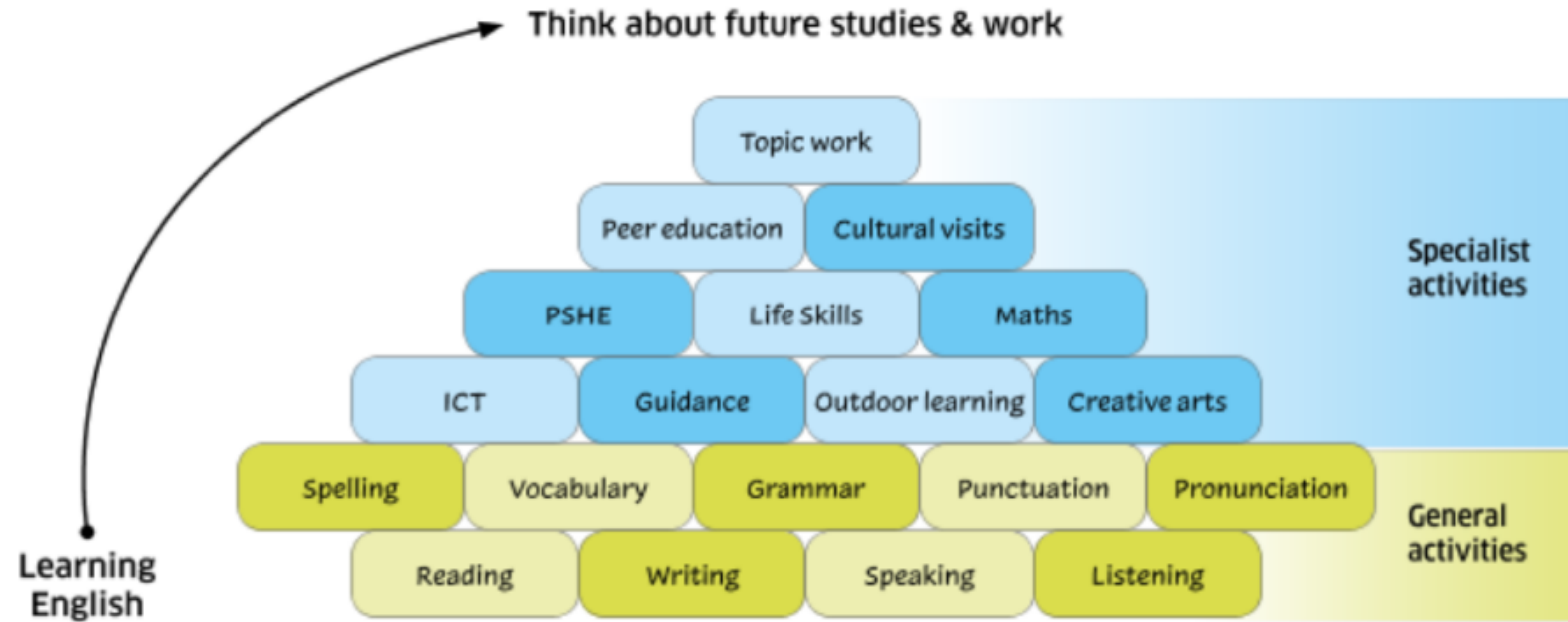
*in association with:*





# The Steeping Stone Programme +16 Learners

## WHAT WE DO

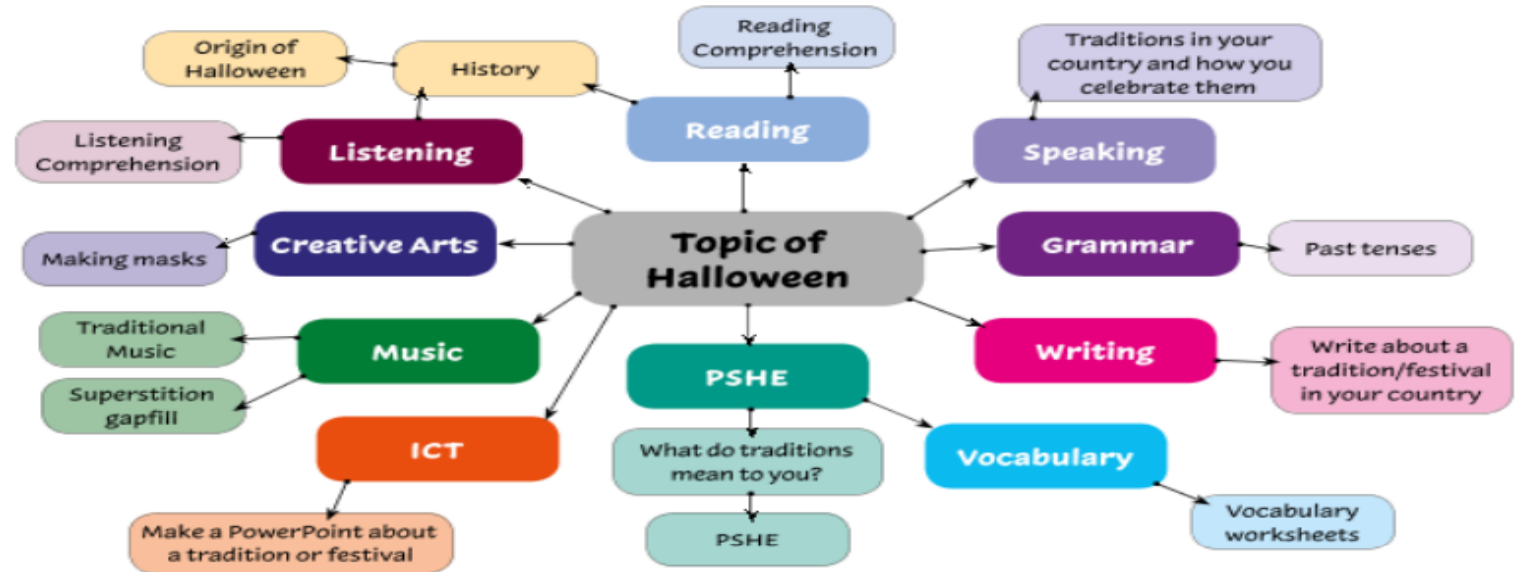


# The Steeping Stone Programme +16 Learners

## THE CURRICULUM

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

16+ESOL ROUTES TO LEARNING



# Decolonising ESOL Provision

The term "decolonised curriculum" refers to an educational approach that seeks to challenge and move away from traditional Eurocentric perspectives dominant in many curricula. It aims to incorporate diverse cultural, indigenous, and global perspectives, giving voice to marginalized and historically underrepresented groups.

Key elements of a decolonised curriculum may include:

1. **Diverse Perspectives:**
  2. **Critical Analysis:**
  3. **Local Relevance:**
  4. **Social Justice**
  5. **Multilingualism:**
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# Decolonising ESOL Provision

Decolonising ESOL provision for 16+ unaccompanied minors in Northern Ireland involved adapting teaching methods, materials, and outcomes to better suit the diverse backgrounds and needs of these learners. Strategies included:

## 1. Culturally Responsive Teaching:

- Incorporated the cultural backgrounds and experiences of unaccompanied minors into the curriculum.
- Used teaching materials that reflect the cultural diversity of the learners.

## 2. Trauma-Informed Pedagogy:

- Recognised and address the potential trauma experienced by unaccompanied minors. (Alek Palanac)
  - Created a safe and supportive learning environment that considers the emotional well-being of learners.
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# Decolonising ESOL Provision

## **3. Community Building:**

- Facilitated activities that encourage students to share their experiences and build a sense of community in the classroom. (Trust)
- Fostered peer support and collaboration among students.

## **4. Language Support Services:**

- Provided language support services to help unaccompanied minors bridge language gaps.
  - Offered additional support for learners with limited literacy in their first language.
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# Decolonising ESOL Provision

## **5. Flexible and Inclusive Pedagogy:**

- **Implemented teaching methods that accommodated various learning styles and preferences.**
- **Allowed for flexibility in assignments and assessments to address individual needs.**

## **6. Student-Centered Approaches:**

- **Encouraged student input and participation in the learning process.**
  - **Tailored instruction to the interests and aspirations of the learners.**
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# Decolonising ESOL Provision

## **7. Real-World Contexts:**

- Integrated real-world contexts into lessons to make language learning more relevant.
- Used practical examples that related to the everyday lives and experiences of unaccompanied minors.

## **8. Empowerment and Agency:**

- Promoted learner agency by involving students in decision-making processes regarding their education.
- Encouraged self-expression and self-advocacy.

## **9. Access to Holistic Support:**

- Ensured access to holistic support services, including mental health services and legal assistance.
  - Advocated for policies that support the well-being of unaccompanied minors in education.
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*Thank you for attending*

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