

Opportunities and Challenges Across Providers

60 minutes

Strand 1.2: Understanding my Progression Opportunities

Reflecting

Outcome LCW.M1.S2.PROG.5

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Reflect on whether prestige determines quality in education providers. Review outcome and cost data for two colleges offering the same Level 8 Computing course. Take a position and defend it with evidence rather than reputation.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M1.S2.PROG.5	investigate education and training opportunities available to students post-senior cycle.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Question whether higher points mean better quality for a course
- Use specific outcome and cost figures, not general reputation
- Avoid treating 'it depends on the person' as a substitute for looking at the figures

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Prestige	The reputation or status a provider carries in other people's eyes, often shaped by history, points, or brand rather than by what happens after you finish the course.	Choosing a college mainly because friends and family recognise the name
Graduate outcomes	What happens to people after they finish a course: employment, further study, earnings, and how long it took to land related work.	The share of graduates from a course who are in related work or further study nine months after finishing
Provider challenge	A real downside of studying with a particular provider: cost, travel, course length, weaker outcomes for that qualification, or a poor fit with how you learn.	A well-known provider that costs more to attend and shows weaker employment figures for the same award

BEFORE THE BELL

- Prepare printed copies of the class data pack if students will work from paper.
- Set up the guided opinion line on the IWB; no floor markers or tape required.
- Ensure students can open or create a short written entry in their Strand 1.2 portfolio folder for Provider Opportunities and Challenges.
- Run the opinion line in guided mode on the interactive whiteboard, so there is no need to clear floor space or set up a line across the room. Ask the students to place their markers in silence first, so that nobody is simply following a friend, and only then take two or three voices from each side of the line. Hold the think-about prompts back until that first round of argument has run, because they are more useful once the class has already committed to a position. Say plainly that moving a marker is a success rather than a climbdown, since the whole point of the activity is that a position can change when the figures arrive. If the first statement finishes early, you can add a short oral probe rather than a second round: ask whether a lower employment rate after graduation is a fair price for a more prestigious college name. Keep it to two or three quick voices and do not run the line again, because the writing later in the step needs its full time.
- On screen this lesson: opinion line.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
5 min	introduction	Getting Started
5 min	content	Key Terms
32 min	activity	Confront the Figures
8 min	content	Think About It
5 min	content	Take It Further
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Open by asking who has already been told that a higher-points college is automatically the better college. Do not correct anyone yet. The line and the data pack do that work.

Have the class data pack ready on the board for the main step so you are not typing figures live.

5 min Key Terms

Keep this brisk. Prestige is the word the opinion line will heat up; graduate outcomes and provider challenge are the tools for the write.

32 min Confront the Figures On screen: opinion line

SUGGESTED TIMING

- **0-8 min:** the opinion line on the one statement, the argument between the two sides, and an optional second placing of markers.
- **8-15 min:** put the data pack on the board, read it through together once, and ask which single cell most unsettles the prestige claim.
- **15-32 min:** silent writing into Provider Opportunities and Challenges.

LOOK-FORS IN THE WRITE

- At least two concrete figures, each with its unit attached.
- A clear challenge route *or* a clear concede route, rather than both attempted and neither finished.
- No "it depends on the person" unless a deciding figure is named alongside it.

The most common dodge is praise for "reputation" without any account of what that reputation is supposed to buy the graduate, and the answer to it is to send the student back to a specific row of the table.

If a student already started a provider comparison in an earlier Strand 1.2 lesson, they should open that file and add today's defended position to it. Anyone without one creates **Provider Opportunities and Challenges** fresh today. What you are assessing is whether they can confront figures that do not suit them, not how tidily they re-file old notes.

8 min Think About It

Keep this as pair talk, not a second essay. Spot any pair still using "it depends" and send them back to one cell in the table.

Optional: two volunteers read only the sentence where they either challenged or conceded, so the room hears both legitimate routes.

5 min Take It Further

Only for students who finish early with a complete main write. Stress comparable figures for the same award; mixed qualifications break the task.

5 min What you covered

Thirty-second board recap is enough. Remind students the document name is **Provider Opportunities and Challenges** in the Strand 1.2 folder so ALT 2 source material stays findable later.

TEACHING MOVES

- Circulate the room during pair discussions to redirect any use of vague statements back to the data table.
- Model referencing a specific cell from the data pack when demonstrating a defended argument.
- Allow time for students to hear opposing views before inviting position changes on the line.
- Emphasise that the main write should include at least one outcome or cost comparison.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students default to 'it depends on the person': Prompt them to name one figure from the table that matters more.
- Students ignore cost differences: Highlight how higher costs affect accessibility alongside outcomes.
- Students focus only on prestige in writing: Require inclusion of at least one data point from the pack.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Offer sentence starters that include placeholders for data references in the write.
- Extension: Encourage completion of the optional real course comparison using the CAO handbook.
- Support: Pair less confident students with peers to discuss one key figure together.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- Provider Opportunities Challenges: two providers, figures, and a defended position