



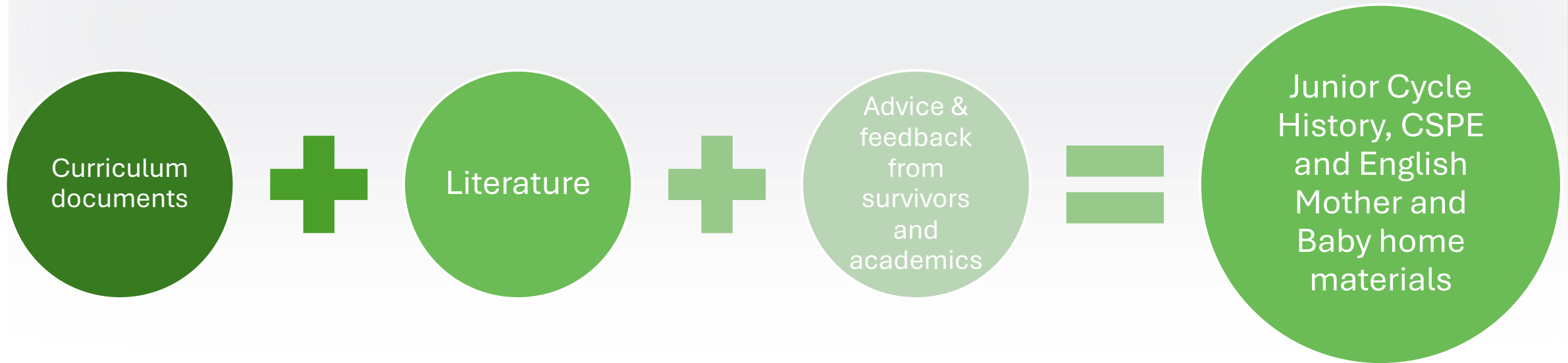
Mother and Baby homes

Mella Cusack

Ubuntu Dialogue Day, Maynooth University

15.01.25

Resource development: Methodology



- Review of junior cycle specifications

- Guidelines on controversial topics
- Materials on historic institutions
- Commission reports
- Books and articles
- Survivor testimonies

CLANN Project and Tuam Oral History Project

Steps:

1. Planning meetings with CLANN & TOHP
2. Draft materials to wider group of survivors
3. Feedback on materials
4. Report to CLANN & TOHP on the integration of feedback

Overview of the materials

HISTORY

LOs: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10, 1.11 & 2.0

Unit #	Outline
1:	Situates Mother and Baby homes in the context of the time and as one amongst a network of C20th institutions.
2:	Introduces the Tuam home as one example of a Mother and Baby home and unpacks the people/groups connected with this specific institution.
3:	Explores the experiences of the women and children in the Tuam home using oral history testimonies.
4:	Looks at work of the historian, Catherine Corless, her use of sources and decisions about the 796 children missing from/buried in the former site of the Tuam home.

Appendix 1: Suggested ideas for History CBA1 and CBA2

CIVIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION (CSPE)

LOs: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 2.5, 2.12, 3.1, 3.3, 3.7 & 3.14

Unit #	Outline
1:	<i>As per History</i>
2:	Considers the human rights implications of the Mother and Baby homes and the family separation system using case studies.

Appendix 1: Suggested ideas for the CSPE CBA

ENGLISH

A support for teachers who wish to design their own unit(s) of learning – includes a text list for teachers with books (fiction and non-fiction), drama, films/documentaries, podcast/radio, poetry, song, and survivor testimony.

CLANN Project and Tuam Oral History Project

Lived experience

Incredible level of expertise and knowledge

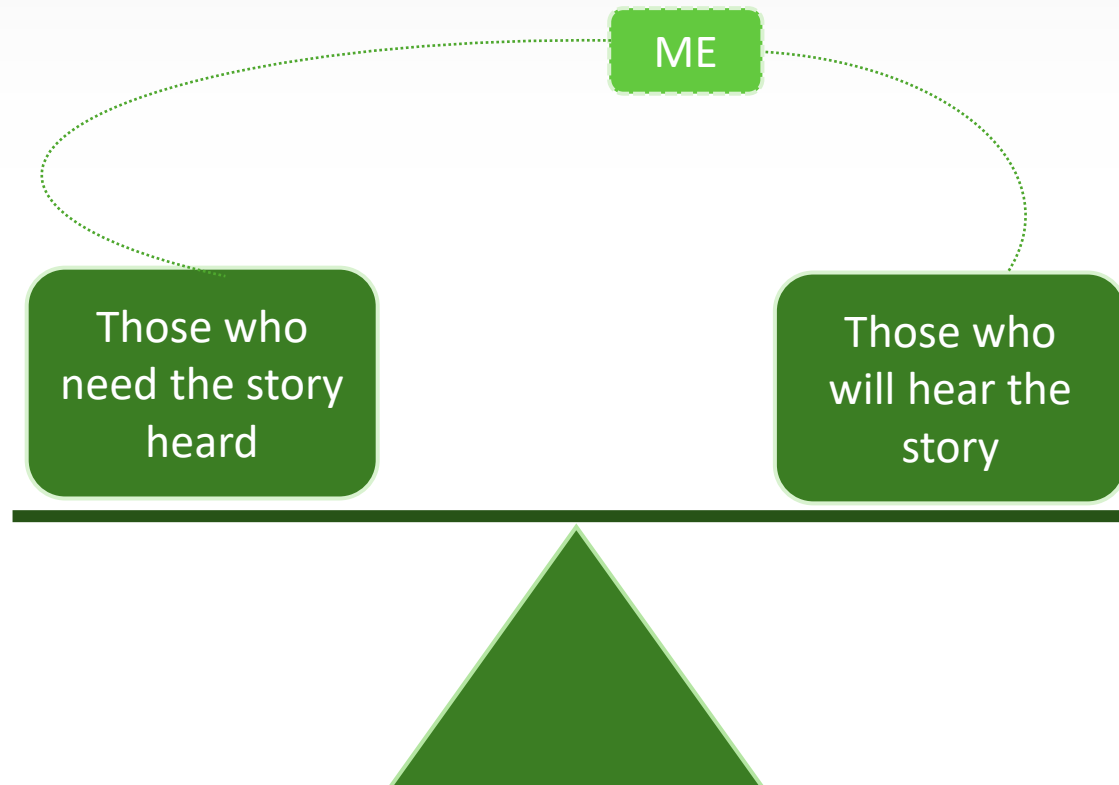
Advocates and activists

Belief in the power of education

- as memorialisation
- as defence against human rights abuses

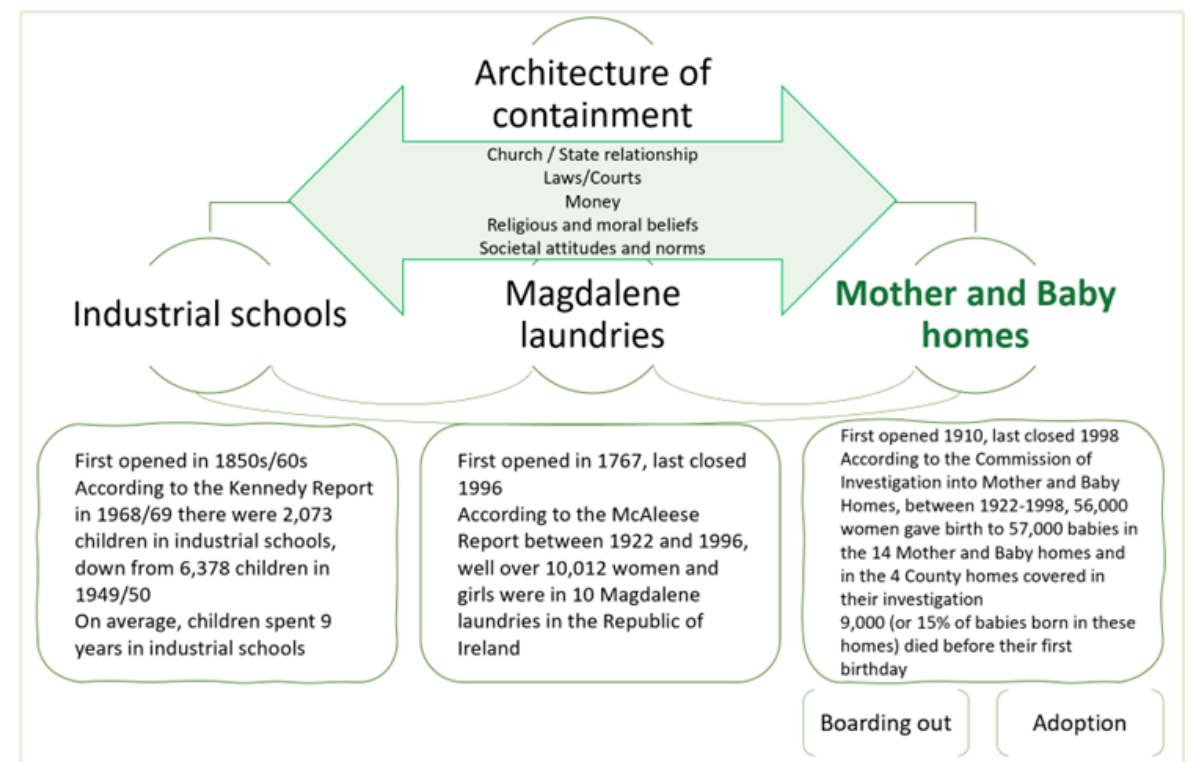
Schools - teachers and students

- Curriculum support for teachers
- Adaptable
- Mindful of:
 - inclusion
 - student voice
 - wellbeing



Integrated:

- Why Mother and Baby homes?
- Survivor-centred
- Depicting women
- Class, disability, ethnicity, race
- Commission of Investigation



Required compromise:

- Terminology
 - “home” v. Institution
 - Family separation system v. adoption/boarding out
- Number data
- Why Tuam?
- Perspective from the religious orders
- *“It’s time to stand up and tell the truth!”*

Activity 5: Responsibility

...It is easy, but not very accurate, to dismiss what happened in child care in the past as belonging to a past that has nothing to do with us; to demonise individual nuns and clerics or whole religious orders and blame ‘the Church’ for what happened; to distance ourselves from it and exonerate ourselves. **What happened was the collective responsibility of society.**

Sister Stanislaus Kennedy, social worker, activist and writer

Church and State colluded to write the constitution, the contract by which every citizen in society is bound. Therefore **responsibility ... lies with the Church and State regime, and not the Irish people.** ... We, as a society, were coercively controlled by Church and State to behave in ways that were contrary to our nature.
Laura Murphy, daughter of a Mother and Baby home survivor.



Activity 1 (CSPE U2): “...close to home...”

*Where after all, do universal Human Rights begin? In small places, close to **home** – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world.*

Eleanor Roosevelt, member of the committee responsible for drafting the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)



Video clip extracted from a film made for the Clann Project by Avondale Media Ltd.



Activity 7 (History U3): The real world



Peter Mulryan with his foster mother, University of Galway, Asset Id 13656, Archival Record Id TOHP,
<https://digital.library.universityofgalway.ie/p/ms/asset/13656>

I came out of St Mary's in Tuam at four and a half years of age. I remember that day clearly, but I have no memories, prior to that, of being in [the home]... It was 1949...February 1949 that I went out to the real world. I was boarded out [fostered] to a family that was approximately twenty miles from Galway. I was put into...the back of the ambulance. I couldn't look out the windows because the windows were high. ... It was scary. I had no one to talk to, I didn't know where I was going. We stopped at this house. It was a drizzly old day in the month of February – damp. I remember as I was going in at the back of the house, a two-storied house, to see the trees moving. I was scared of that because I hadn't seen anything like that before... Never saw trees moving in the wind like that. I went into the house anyway and there was a big fire down. There was a man and a woman there. The woman was in her seventies and her son was there, he was in his fifties. So that's who I was with – a farming community. ...I saw a dog then under the table and he wagging his tail. I was very scared then; I never saw a dog before. He didn't bark, he was moving around, he was quiet, I had never saw an animal. When you think of the children today at four and a half and the amount they know.

Extract from Mary Cunningham (2021), Oral Interview with Peter Mulryan, University of Galway, Asset Id 13671, Archival Record Id TOHP,
<https://digital.library.universityofgalway.ie/p/ms/asset/13671>



"The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to walk through water without getting wet." – Dr Rachel Naomi Remen

Vicarious traumatisation can occur as a result of bearing witness to the trauma experienced by another person or people.

"It happens not only because you care about people who have been hurt, but because you feel committed or responsible to help."
– Dr Laurie Pearlman & Dr Lisa McCann



"disrupted or damaged spirituality"
- Dr Laurie Pearlman



"opportunity to deepen and expand our humanity, a kind of vicarious transformation" –
Dr Laurie Pearlman

"It's not about feeling better, it's about getting better at feeling." – Dr Gabor Maté