

What were the aims of our research?

Students:

- To develop student's skillset to reflect on their student voice.
- To identify their student voice in everyday classroom scenarios.
- To create a better transition between the active learning methodologies embedded in classroom practices with those implemented in student voice engagement.
- To empower students to become self-directed learners and to take more ownership of their learning by placing student voice at the heart of the classroom.

Teachers:

- To raise awareness of the valuable role of student voice as an opportunity to not only reinforce and support learning, but as a means to prompt students to engage, consolidate learning and extend their voice into content planning and preparation.
- To create a better transition between the active learning methodologies embedded in classroom practices with student voice input.
- To embrace student voice in their selection of effective classroom tasks, topics and content.

Project team:

- To develop student's understanding and use of their voice in the classroom by placing already established active teaching methodologies as a core principle of student directed teaching and learning thus improving their overall student voice in the school community.

School:

- To instil a student orientated teaching and learning in our school and to maintain our vision of being a learning school with the view to continuing to develop the community of practice at JTBCS.
- To share best practice and encourage the sharing of ideas and the development of a culture of collaboration.



What was our focus?

Our focus was on developing student's skillset to reflect on their student voice and to create a better transition between the established active learning methodologies we have embedded in our classroom practices. We also aimed to empower students to become self-directed learners and to take more ownership of their learning by placing student voice at the heart of the classroom, thereby increasing student motivation and engagement. It grew organically from our progress made in the previous LSPs on effective questioning, reflection, success criteria and critical vocabulary. Our aim was to pilot and implement student-centred learning strategies which focused specifically on providing students space, voice, awareness (Lundy Model).

Space

HOW: Provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views.

- Have children's views been actively sought?
- Has there a safe space in which children can express themselves freely?
- Have steps been taken to ensure that all children can take part?

Voice

HOW: Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children's views.

- Have children been given the information they need to form a view?
- Do children know what they do not have to take part?
- Have children been given a range of options to how they might choose to express themselves?

Audience

HOW: Ensure that children's views are communicated to someone with the responsibility to listen.

- When a process for communicating children's views is being implemented?
- Do children know who their views are being communicated to?
- Does that person/body have the power to make decisions?

Influence

HOW: Ensure that children's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate.

- When the children's views considered by those with the power to effect change?
- Are there procedures in place that ensure that the children's views have been taken into account?
- Have the children and young people been provided with feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?

ROGER HART'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. *Practical Research in Education*, 10(3), 3-16.

The LAOS areas addressed

Learner outcomes:

- Students define student voice and input into class planning
- Students enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn, and expect to achieve as learners;
- Students have the necessary knowledge and skills to understand themselves and their relationships;

Learner experiences:

- Students demonstrate very high levels of interest and participation in learning
- Interactions amongst students and between students and teachers are very respectful and positive, and conducive to wellbeing;
- Students reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning;
- Students experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.
- Relationships and interactions in classrooms and learning areas support a co-operative and productive learning environment.

Teachers' individual practice:

- Teachers deliver highly effective instruction which is directed at eliciting deep student engagement.
- Teachers skilfully manage their own input to optimise student participation and response.
- Teachers engage with students' opinions, dispositions, and contexts, and modify their teaching practice to build on opportunities and address any limitations that they present. Teachers empower students to exploit these opportunities and overcome their limitations.

Teachers' collective /collaborative practice:

- Teachers view collaboration as a means to improve student learning and to enhance their own professional development. They engage in constructive collaborative practice.

Design and Implementation

The research included both quantitative and qualitative aspects; including survey distribution and analysis, in-class reflective practice, and in-depth semi-structured student focus group discussions. This gave depth to the research and allowed it to be rich and illuminative in nature.

The implementation stage was based on two 2nd Year classes and two 3rd Year classes and two 5th year groups, with teachers from a diverse range of subject areas. The aim was to evaluate the intervention after the implementation phase, with the intention of rolling it out to all staff members in September 2022, if it was deemed to be beneficial to deepening student voice and learning and improving student engagement and motivation in the classroom.

A pre-implementation student focus group discussion took place in December 2021, in which the students occupied their role as co-researchers and agents of curricular change in JTBCS by engaging in dialogue with the research team about student voice in the classroom.

We then entered the implementation phase of our research. This was conducted over a 6-week period, between the months of February to April 2022.

Prior to implementation in our classes, it was made explicit to the 2nd, 3rd & 5th Yr student cohorts that they played a central and crucial role in the research and that their experience of the intervention and feedback relating to its use was encouraged and welcomed. A student post-implementation survey and a post-implementation student focus group discussion were conducted, in April 2022, to place student voice at the core of our research and to evaluate the success of the intervention and to gain their insights on moving forward with it. It also provided a forum to offer students feedback on the research.

How we shared learning?

- It was made explicit to all involved; to the students and to the teachers on the SSE team.
- Covid restrictions impeded reaching the wider staff.
- Resumption of usual sharing at staff meetings will recommence September 2022.
- We aim to share the findings with the wider staff community in the first staff meeting September 2022 via a PowerPoint presentation.
- Our engagement in LSP12 and our focus on the area of student voice will be made available on our school website, easily seen by all students, parents and the wider public.
- The student surveys will also be also linked to our school website to increase the accessibility and ease of gathering data.



Findings

I think Student Voice is ...

Pre-Implementation

- important
- being able to share your opinion
- being able to speak up about something in school life
- hearing students and helping them by listening to their thoughts and opinions and implementing these changes
- students' opinions being considered in class and in school

Post Implementation

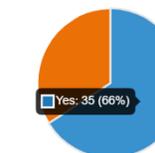
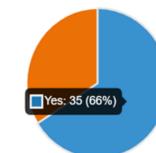
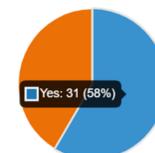
- the student's way of expressing their opinions toward certain subjects, what challenges they have and what questions and feedback they have.
- when students give their input and opinion in a class
- I think student voice is when students feel comfortable enough to voice their own opinions in class without feeling judged by their peers or teacher
- the ability for a student to speak up to a higher power about their needs and wants
- student voice is when students have concerns and they are brought to the attention of the teacher or the student council

Pre-Implementation

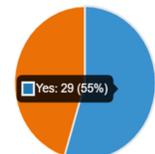
Do you feel you are given opportunities to express yourself in class?

Do you feel heard in class?

Do you use your voice in class?



Do you feel that you have a say in your learning?



How could this be improved?

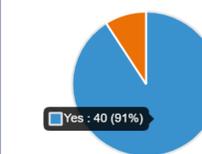
- More discussion
- Teachers could give options on how students want to learn e.g., by videos, by taking notes
- By letting us choose what chapter to learn next
- Doing regular check ins between students and the teacher on the topics
- If we were given more options or ways to learn things rather than just the one way the teacher prefers

Post-implementation

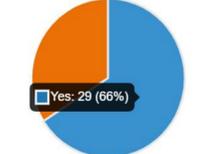
What is the purpose of you using your 'voice' and expressing yourself?

- It allows students to be somewhat involved and influential in their learning and curriculum.
- So you have a say in what you are learning
- It lets you get your opinion across and lets the teacher know how well you are getting on
- To feel confident enough in your learning and have a say in your own education.
- To make the most of our classes and to be comfortable to express our opinions

Has student voice been explicitly spoken about or discussed in class with any teacher before?



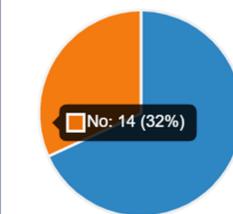
Do you feel you are given opportunities to express yourself in class?



When are you asked for your view on learning? Give an example please.

guidance counselor, line in French, reflective, whiteboards and using the tweetboard, french class, end of topics, end of class, teachers, class, number-line, cspe class, whiteboards, way, topic, class teachers, minority among our classes, reflection number, group of teachers

Do you feel that you have developed a good connection with your teachers?



What could be done to improve the connection between you and your teachers?

- A class where we could just talk about different ways of learning and teaching
- More discussion of contemporary and modern topics and subjects and the opportunity to show personal points of view.
- Talk to the students individually about what they are finding difficult and work with them as an individual and not as a class majority.

Based on the last 6 weeks, what three ways do you feel gave you the best opportunity to use your voice in the classroom?

- Mini whiteboards group work and reflection number line
- Kahoot, reflection number line, surveys and small tests at the end of chapters
- Whiteboards. Closing eyes for anonymous feedback.
- Tweet back, white boards and the reflective number line
- White boards success criteria and reflective number line to rate my learning
- Using the tweet board, talking among my classmates, and giving my opinion in class



Deeper thinking, Deeper learning



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