

Student Learner Voice Presentation

Bishopstown Community School

Overview of our engagement

- Before lockdown, we had nothing tied down. We were researching and testing the waters to see where we were at. We hoped the teacher and student audits would help and steer us. These were given out the beginning of February.
- We linked up with the Teaching and Learning group as both myself and Ger are involved with it so it made sense to anchor ourselves there.
- Lockdown came upon us which disrupted the progress of the project.
- Our main aim as a school was to help the students engage online and get familiar with the online learning. We had only received our Surfaces and were still getting used to the online platforms as well as trying to upskill. Students were facing the same challenges as well as feeling overwhelmed.
- Because we didn't have that face to face contact with students and parents we had to think about reaching out in another way.
- Because of this we organically moved into surveying. We surveyed Students, Parents and Teachers about how online learning was working as well as what devices students were using. As a result of this feedback changes were made as a result of this feedback (scheduling of classes, workload, live classes were preferred, a lot of students were using their phones and data which was causing some problems, others had some technological difficulties etc).
- When we came back in September focused on getting students up to speed with Outlook and Microsoft Teams as well as incorporating it into our everyday teaching and learning.
- Recently we had Student Focus Groups around the area of learning in the classroom. There were two Student Focus Groups one Junior and one Senior cycle. There were representatives from each class within each of the year groups throughout the school.
- These students were then asked to report back to their classes (religion, CSPE, SPHE, Wellbeing) with the main points that were discussed.

Challenges

- A big challenge has been giving feedback to teachers but especially students regarding the surveys or any changes made in school as a result of student input.
- This was highlighted recently when our Christmas Exams were moved a few weeks earlier. This happened as a result of an informal discussion between students and a teacher. However, both staff and students weren't aware of how this change came about.
- It was again highlighted in the Student Focus Group when a student said "we give information on a blank future that we can't see". This has highlighted this issue/challenge regarding feedback. They need and want to see that they are recognised for their input into school matters but that change does happen and that they are listened to.

Path forward

- As a result of the feedback from the Student Focus Group, we are installing a Student Learner Voice in the canteen to display results and feedback from surveys, Student Focus Groups etc.
- Surveys have been sent out to students and teachers regarding the Christmas Exams. We would like the students involved in the Student Focus Groups to analyse this data.
- We would also hope that down the line when students are surveyed or taking part in Student Focus Groups that they will recognise their input and acknowledge that their voice is being heard.
- As a result of the feedback from the Student Focus Groups the Teaching and Learning group will be looking at developing a more concrete template for our "Method of the Month" regarding reflection. Some students weren't sure what it meant to reflect on their learning. Interested teachers will be given a template to work from but will also provide training to their students on the concept and the language before embarking on this Method.
- Success for six months time would be when we survey another group or hold a student focus group that they will recognise their input and acknowledge that their voice is being heard.
- As a result of the feedback from the student focus groups The Teaching and Learning group will be looking at developing a template for our Method of the Term in January regarding reflection. Some students weren't sure what it meant to reflect on their learning. Will be giving some training to the students in the classrooms that are trialling this.