

St. Colman's Community College

School /College Name: St. Colman's Community College

Management Body: Cork County VEC

Subjects of teachers involved: English/ Learning Support/ SEN

Impact on professional learning:

There has been a great impact on teacher's professional learning especially in relation to effective new methodologies and strategies. It has given us an invaluable awareness and understanding/empathy of how individual students may feel when they are identified to answer a question on a given topic.

An awareness of how important it is for us to provide a safe environment for all our students, ideally balancing safety with accountability. The methodologies shown to us have also allowed us to provide an inclusive environment whereby all students can actively participate in a group scenario again the emphasis being on individual accountability whilst providing a safe environment for the more anxious/academically challenged student.

We have also found Barrie Bennett's ideas/strategies on classroom management to be very insightful. In particular how to diffuse a situation using a little humour rather than allowing a problem to escalate.

Impact on Student Learning:

Undoubtedly student learning has benefitted greatly with this programme. Structured groupwork has allowed and demanded the participation of all students in the classroom. The strategies allow for the inclusion of all students, some of whom would have in the past withdrawn from any type of group work. It has allowed students to actively share and discuss their ideas. It allows students to form their own views. It allows for students to be actively involved in the learning process. Students are no longer passive listeners/learners but now have an active role in the learning process. Students are more engaged and therefore willing to broaden their knowledge and expertise in the subject area.

The programme because of its huge emphasis on creating a safe classroom environment has given students who ordinarily would have avoided verbal participation a chance to participate because of strategies such as think pair share etc. before they have to answer individually to the teacher and the rest of their peers.

Step approach to dissemination (school/local level):

We have already given a presentation to a target group of colleagues in our school. The initial presentation was directed at colleagues working on our Team Teaching initiative. The staff involved were given a broad overview of the programme and then a more focussed presentation in the area of framing questions as well as a number of group work strategies. The staff involved took part in their own time and have agreed to apply the approach in some of their own classroom work.

Plan for future dissemination:

Plans are already in place to involve a much wider group of staff and our next presentation will take place in the next two to three weeks. We expect further staff to be enthusiastic about the approach as informal discussions are already taking place as word of the potential benefits spread. We have also discussed the preparation of charts and posters for staff room use that could be used to serve as promotional material for the project. The schools involvement in the project has been highlighted frequently at staff meetings and at meetings of the Board of Management.

