Student Voice and Engagement

St. Clair Catholic District School Board

April, 2013
"The teacher's job is to understand how the student thinks."
(Lucy West)
VOICE AND IDENTITY MEANS...

- recognizing roles and responsibilities in learning
- making personal connections
- valuing personal knowledge and experience and valuing that of others
- contributing and welcoming new ideas
- recognizing personal biases and advocating for self and others
- recognizing how personal views and views of others affect thinking
- seeking opportunities for purposeful self-expression
- posing questions of personal interest
- advocating for choice in learning opportunities
Engagement is “the extent to which students identify with and value schooling outcomes, have a sense of belonging at school, participate in academic and non-academic activities, strive to meet the formal requirements of schooling, and make a serious personal investment in learning”.

Identity + Voice = Engagement + Learning
Open to Learning Stance

... a willingness to observe, think and reflect.
What Have We Been Exploring?

How does making student thinking and learning visible provide opportunities for educators to learn from the student work?

How does it provide opportunities for students to reflect upon, share, and build upon their own and their peers’ learning?
Capturing Learning Where and When it Happens

- The Classroom Experience -

**Documentation** - student thinking and learning

**Pedagogical Documentation** - cyclical

**Pedagogy of Listening** - making student learning visible; dialogue, reflection, analysis
Students communicate about their learning
Students reflect and share their thinking
“Reflecting on their own thinking and the thinking of others helps students make important connections and internalize a deeper understanding of the math concepts involved.”

(Ontario Ministry of Education — The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1—8, Mathematics, p. 14)
Students use photos of their work to discuss and compare as a class.
Educators are finding the use of video and photos useful to document student thinking and actions.
“Learning from children’s voices allows us to know a deeper level of who children are as learners and, because we have that knowledge, to expand and enrich our sense of what it means to teach.”

Oldfather, 1995
Documentation is used as a way to connect and build upon student learning
Visible Thinking is Intentional

- Students orally articulate their thinking
- Students listen to other students articulate their thinking
- Students engage in discussions while forming their understandings
- Students demonstrate their thinking through the use of technology, manipulatives, or tools
- Students are made aware of their own thoughts and thought processes
- Student thinking is made visible in classroom discussions of all kinds
- Student feedback is increased through ongoing formative assessment

Hull, Balka & Harben-Miles, 2011
The Power of Collaboration

"Collaboration has been identified as the underlying learning pedagogy for the 21st century and highlighted as a key strategy to foster school success and student learning."

(The Power of "Co", Bliss)
Giving Weight to Student Voice through Dialogue

When engaging students in dialogue, we give their voice the weight required for them to develop critical thought as they clarify, articulate, justify and synthesize their ideas.

Dialogue involves responding to others’ ideas, sometimes in agreement, sometimes not. It is in this “bumping of ideas” that students’ knowledge and understanding will grow.
THINKING TOGETHER

CO PLAN
Learning has a specific context.

COOPERATE/SHARE
Learning is facilitated.

CO DEBRIEF
Learning is focused on reflection and discussion.

COLLABORATION
Learning is focused on a joint identification of next steps.

CO EXIST
Learning is done in isolation.

CO ANALYZE, CO REFLECT
Learning is focused on analyzing the quality and depth of the work.

CO INTEGRATE, CO INNOVATE, CO CREATE
Learning is focused on learning more about learning.

CO TEACHING, CO THINKING,
CO PROBLEM SOLVING, CO OBSERVING
Learning is situated in the teaching experience.

ACCOUNTABLE TALK

DISCOURSE

DIALOGUE
Seeing the Learning through the eyes of the students ... (Hattie, 2011)

Students have a voice in the process of identifying what helps their learning and well-being and the learning and well-being of others.
Student Engagement: A Leadership Priority
A principal's personal practice for understanding student perspective

Inspiration

David Booth "Components of a Literacy Program" Fall, 2012

Goal - Intersection of different types of data: Elaine Poirier and Victoria Bernhard
Multiple Measures of Data

Allows the prediction of actions/processes/programs that best meet the learning needs of all students.

Over time, demographic data indicate changes in the context of the school.

Tells us:
What processes/programs different groups of students like best.

Tells us: What processes/programs work best for different groups of students with respect to student learning.

Over time, school processes show how classrooms change.

Tells us:
If groups of students are “experiencing school” differently.

Tells us:
The impact of demographic factors and attitudes about the learning environment on student learning.

Tells us:
The impact of student perceptions of the learning environment on student learning.

Over time, perceptions can tell us about environmental improvements.

Over time, student learning data give information about student performance on different measures.

Tells us:
The impact of the program on student learning based upon perceptions of the program and on the processes used.


Bernhardt (2011)
The Rationale
Capitalize on the power of student efficacy
Capitalize on the power of teacher efficacy
(Leithwood, 2012)

Student Perspective

Teacher Perspective/Growth Mindset

Teacher Practice

Student Learning
The Questions

1. What helps you learn most in class?
2. Where do you still need help?
3. What makes you nervous about school?
4. What do you wish was different at school?
5. Tell me about a time you really enjoyed learning in your class?
6. Tell me about a project or activity where you learned about something that was really important to you?
The Process

1. Visit classroom (gr 4-8) and speak to the important role they have in steering their own learning. Remind them they have a great deal of knowledge about themselves that is helpful to teachers to plan for their success. We ensure they understand that it is important they take an active role in their learning by sharing their perspective with us so that we can change our teaching practice to better meet their needs.

2. Tell the students that once I put the question on the board, they are to take one minute and think quietly to answer the question with specific examples from school. They are to remain quiet for the first minute so that all students have the chance to arrive at their own answers. Then allow a think-pair-share to allow them to share their ideas for another minute. The teacher and I circulate the room listening to student responses.

3. Ask the class for volunteers to come to my office and share their ideas while being videotaped. Students are informed that all videos will be shared with the teachers so they can change teaching practice to better meet the needs of the students.
4. Watch the student videos with the teacher/CYW/PRT. Discuss patterns in responses and discuss what steps the teacher can take to address the identified student need or concerns. We discuss the Vividness Bias (Katz) and look at individual responses and trends.

5. I share 3 student videos at the beginning of each staff meeting so all staff can see the student responses and appreciate the information that comes from a student's perspective. Teachers are reminded each staff meeting that they are the most important predictors of student success and that their impact is even more significant in lower SES homes.

6. The process is continuing to evolve. My next step is to document the highlights of the student video and the discussion with the teacher to help create a permanent record that can be used later as a reference point.
Student Perception: What helps you at school?
Student Perception:
Where do you still need help at school?
Student Perception:
What stresses you about school?
How is this making a difference in the school?

Student reflection: "We like telling you how we feel."
Numerous student volunteers-introverts and extroverts

Teacher reflection: "Like hearing the hidden curriculum."
"What do we do next?"

Principal reflection: See a change in how staff view their students.
Where to go next?

What role does documentation have in solidifying this process in the long term?

How can I assess whether or not this process is having an impact on student performance?

Would this be a beneficial process to utilize with my parent community?

How does the growth vs fixed mindset tie into this process of embracing student voice/perspective? How does it fit in collaborating with teachers in reviewing student voice/perspective?
"It's not how to... it's how do we think about..."