

Whakatupuhia te reo, whakatupuhia te tamaiti

Clevedon School student voice case study

Introduction

In 2014, the Cognition Education Trust (CET) funded Whakatupuhia te reo, Whakatupuhia te tamaiti, a project investigating how student voice could be used to influence classroom and school wide decision making that accelerates student progress. Clevedon School took part in the project and their involvement is outlined below and includes:

- the student voice initiatives undertaken and progress made
- evidence collected and methods used
- identified enablers and challenges to progress
- key learning regarding the effective collection and use of student voice
- how the school used or trialled the student voice rubric – a key project outcome.

The case study information is drawn from a variety of data sources including:

- detailed notes from all workshops
- mid-phase school visits and interviews
- review of documents and evidence from each school
- an end of project group interview.

Clevedon School

Clevedon began the project with many established student voice practices. The collection and use of student voice is considered 'normal' practice within the school and a part of school culture. Strong leadership and established tools and processes for collecting and using voice reinforce and support expected practices. Practice is constantly evolving through leaders and teachers reflecting on and learning through their practice.

The overall goal of Clevedon's 2015/16 student voice action plan was to enhance teaching and learning outcomes through the collection and use of student voice. In Phase Two, Clevedon leaders and teachers built on existing practice by focusing on deliberate actions in response to student voice. Staff were asked to consider and respond to 'so what?' questions such as:

- What student voice have I collected?
- What is the data (student voice) telling me?
- What does this voice mean? What changes are required in response to this voice?
- If this activity was to be repeated later, what shifts will be evident?

Use of student voice rubric

Members of Clevedon student voice project team trialled the rubric by using it to assess the school's progress and performance under all the dimensions of the rubric. The evidence used in the assessment included teacher feedback and evidence drawn from across the school.

The assessment confirmed that the collection and use of student voice was embedded within many systems and processes within the school. However, it also highlighted some inconsistencies in practice and performance across the school and confirmed the school's focus on developing more consistent practices by teachers and students. The school's focus on deliberate acts of teaching in response to student voice collected was also supported.

Action informed by the assessment included:

- a future focus on building the assessment capability of students
- low performing areas being highlighted in the school's 2016 annual plan
- a continued school wide focus on formative assessment
- the inclusion of student voice initiatives in the school's three-year strategic plan.

Student voice activities and developments

Student voice activities and developments undertaken by Clevedon during Phase Two of the project are further described under each of the success dimensions in the rubric. Examples are provided of systems developed or expanded to ensure that student voice is used as an information source within classroom and school wide decision making.

Supportive environment

- On-going initiatives to ensure shared understanding across the school that 'good' learners are 'visible' learners.
- School wide systems and process are in place for gathering student voice at a class and school wide level. Further development of processes for formative data keeping will be a future focus.
- The collection and use of student voice is an embedded part of induction and professional development for new staff.
- Student voice is a regular item on the agenda for staff meetings.

Project staff report the relatively quick uptake of student voice practices by new staff to the school in part because expectations are clearly communicated in policy and expected practice is supported by established tools and systems.

Teaching and learning

- Students are intentionally taught how to be assessment capable.
- Student voice is routinely used by teachers as an information source to inform teaching and learning.
- Implementation and use of the 'so what' sheet (see below).

The 'so what' sheet requires teachers to document, within two weeks, the responses they have made to student voice collected. The sheets guide conversations between leaders and teachers on what has

been done differently. This dialogue has helped to identify multiple areas in which responses to student voice are being made (e.g. in assessment, planning, use of resources)

Summative analysis of the 'so what' sheets was undertaken in 2015 at a team and school wide level and plans were implemented in 2016 to address identified gaps. Areas of focus include teaching students how to give quality feedback to peers and development of the learner pit¹.

Assessment

- Further development of the document 'Assessment Capable Learners at Clevedon School' (see below) and further development of the assessment capable learner progressions.
- Further development of the capability of year 4-8 students to use assessment data to co-construct learning intentions, to use progressions to discuss their learning and to use assessment tools such as asTTle.
- Student voice on their assessment capability has been added as a criterion within OTJs and is used by teachers to inform their planning.
- Development of processes to enable student voice to inform teacher appraisals.

The document, 'Assessment Capable Learners at Clevedon School', provides benchmarks of student assessment capability at each year level. The benchmarks were developed through discussion and moderation across the year levels. This process helped to establish realistic standards for each level and built ownership over the process. The standards are constantly being revised through reflection on their use. More recently, the school has been focused on improving the quality of the evidence collected.

Evidence and evidence collection methods

During 2015, Clevedon undertook a meta-analysis of their student voice data to understand what key messages and direction for action were being indicated by their data. The data analysed included data from student focus groups and student surveys. The analysis reinforced the need to focus on the 'so what' question and what changes teachers make in response to the data.

Four areas of specific focus for 2016 were identified:

- further development of students' ability to understand success criteria
- use of learning progressions and dispositions by students
- provision of effective feedback for learning (from students to students)
- ensuring students have the time needed to act on feedback received.

The collection and use of student voice at Clevedon is highly integrated within existing systems and practice including monitoring and reporting. Given this, project staff reported that it was unlikely that the school would use the rubric for any additional monitoring and reporting of student voice data,

¹ By developing metacognitive skills, students are able to recognise when learning is hard (i.e. they are 'in the pit'). By being able to identify and articulate the skills and strategies they will use to get of the pit, students' progress to the next stage of their learning.

progress or outcomes. As with other schools in the project, the rubric was considered most valuable as a tool to guide regular reflection on practice and progress and to identify areas for development.

Evidence and evidence collection examples

This evidence provided by Clevedon has been used to underpin the indicators in the three dimensions of the student voice rubric. The material is intended to be examples of practice and as such is often evolving in nature. The materials provided are not meant to be viewed as exemplars but are examples of how Clevedon has approached student voice. The evidence can be viewed under the various indicators of the rubric <http://studentvoice.cognitioneducationtrust.org> and includes:

- Student voice activity plan
- Year 1 and 2 – student portfolio reflection
- Examples of student contribution to mid-year reports (years 6-8), Interim report – student sheet
- Reflection templates to collect student voice impact
- Weekly observation sheet and student voice gathering template
- Reading OTJs – Year 4-8 end year
- Assessment capable learners at Clevedon School, Student data document
- Year 5 assessment results and expectations
- Reporting on my learning – portfolio addition, reading (mid-year) and student reflection
- Setting SMART targets
- Annual plan 2015 – student voice section.

Enablers and challenges

Enablers and barriers to the collection and use of student voice identified through Clevedon School's involvement in Phase Two are as follows:

Enablers

- A consistent school wide approach
- Giving student voice attention, 'weight' and prominence (e.g. committing time and resources, making student voice a requirement within OTJs and appraisals)
- Enabling staff to progress their student voice practice at their own pace but within a clear set expectations and accountabilities
- Integrating student voice as a 'normal' part of existing practice, processes and systems
- Communicating how student voice links to other relevant initiatives
- The provision of necessary professional development.

Challenges

- Embedding understanding across the school that expected practice is the genuine use of voice - not just its collection
- Ensuring sufficient time is allocated to developing a common language of learning and common understanding of learning progressions across the school.
- Ensuring student voice remains embedded within school culture and daily practice; that it is understood as essential to how the schools 'lives and breathes.'