

Cognition Education Trust – Student voice video transcripts
Filmed Wed 06 April 2016

Whakatupuhia te reo, whakatupuhia te tamaiti:
Enhancing student voice to influence decision-making school-wide and accelerate student progress

Shane Ngatai, Principal, Rhode Street School

Clip 1 – How was the student voice rubric used?

Shane: The matrix [is] used really effectively at our school. A good example is a year ago we introduced it to our teachers, with the view that they would look at it and self-assess where they felt they were on the matrix with regard to implementing student voice. What we got out of that was some really good, robust discussion from our teachers. We got some shared understanding, and we also, as a school, I was able to make some deliberate acts of leadership, as Principal.

Clip 2 - What have you learnt about the effective use of student voice to accelerate learning?

To implement the matrix, school-wide, because I had a general understanding and a willingness for teachers to engage. From that process, we've developed our own set of competencies for our teachers, and linked it to our appraisal process. And they're sharing in a collaborative way, the strategies they're using to capture student voice, and they're also accompanying me to professional learning opportunities, at Cognition, to strengthen a school-wide approach and build a sustainable programme, with succession planning built in as well. From there we've taken our teacher voice and transferred it in to our learning spaces and started to capture what our children and our students want to say about their learning, building a skill set for them and having those deliberate acts of teaching so that they can understand how they can share their voice with us. From there we've created many exemplars and models and so forth, and the next stage has been sharing it with our parents, and that has been the most surprising and rewarding part of this whole project I guess is that our parents are asking 'Us how can we become more involved in our children's learning, by listening to what they're saying?' Opening that up with the advances in technology and the prices coming down, we've been able to create an online presence for parents to access student voice, for teachers to moderate that voice and create a model of whole school practice.

Clip 3 – Using the student voice rubric

So – where are we now? We've taken it to a collective, and that is our community of learning and we're part of twelve schools in the Hamilton region now. And we've got that as one of our key measurable outcomes is implementing the student voice matrix across those twelve schools.

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Jesse Lee, Teacher, Gladstone School

Clip 1 – How was the student voice rubric used?

Jesse: The first initial steps when we used it was to sit down with the senior management and the leadership team. We went through all the indicators in the rubric and kind of looked at the evidence that we could produce to justify the indicators and look at where the weaknesses and the strengths were within our school. After that we looked at in teams, so some of the teams went through different areas of the indicators, and they identified with different highlighting levels about what we could provide evidence for, what we needed to work on, in terms of strengths and development that we had for it. And then from that, it developed goals, and so in the school work goals came out of that where we looked at, so in terms of student voice what did we need to think about developing within our school. And then we made a decision as a leadership team which filtered down into the team level a little bit more and then we looked at breaking it up into our teams and how we were going to achieve them.

Clip 2 - What have you learnt about the effective use of student voice to accelerate learning?

Jesse: The biggest learning was around purpose. There's so many different ways and ideas that you can collect from students, and...but without a purpose they mean nothing to your practice – and so as a classroom teacher when you are thinking about a different indicator or a different development around the ideas in student voice, you want to think about what purpose does it have, what value is this going to add to my classroom. And so when I'm teaching year fives, it was different because of the way that they could communicate, was much more advanced than the children down in the junior school. And so when you're creating language and you're talking about assessment, and the children being able to identify their levels and the skills that they have in different curriculum areas, they can become a lot more engaging. But when I moved down to the junior school, there's a huge discourse change in mentality around teachers around what students can do – and so that changed a little bit of the purpose? The purpose became more about changing the discourse of the junior school teachers, so that they had an understanding that children that are five and six can also be trained and also understand where their learning is and where they're going, and so...that purpose then filters into the classroom and how we're going to do it.

Second clip 2

Jesse: It's made me think about being more open and being more transparent with students. The transparency and the understanding and the culture of the classroom is completely different because it creates interaction around learning, and openness for dialogue and

discussion. And like the oral language component of learning is so vast, but it's so critical for learning. And so as a teacher it's caused me to focus more on engaging the children in their learning. Because out of that they gather understanding and so therefore the dialogues that you have, they're not lost within what they're asked or required to do, in a sense. And what's really great about it is that once you start looking at assessment capability, the students are very aware of their levels, like you could ask them about their levels and they kind of know where they sit in a classroom and so what they can see is...you see the change in them because they become confident, and they're like whoa, I can see my progress and this is what I'm doing really well. And for them that's really encouraging, because they're aware they can see...they're no longer seen as a child that is below other students, in their learning, but they're propped up, as masters, or having mastery over something.

Clip 3 – Using the student voice rubric

Jesse: The usefulness is that it becomes an identification tool. It underpins particular indicators or concepts that you can do around student voice, and so then you can visibly see areas that you want to develop, areas that may be a weakness or a strength, and lately we've found that strengths are really important because that way you can identify what you're doing well, because a lot of schools are doing things around student voice, but they don't necessarily – it's not identified for them - and it gives like that positive affirmation and then looking at well then what do I need to develop now within the school?

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Laura Baddeley, Teacher, St John's school, Mairangi Bay

Clip 1 – How was the student voice rubric used?

Laura: I think the biggest change has been actually implementing it within our strategic plan into all of our documentation this year, as opposed to last year just bringing it into the school at a leadership level and introducing what student voice is within sort of the teacher / classroom level and through to the students. So, getting a shared language of student voice and what an effective learner is and all those conversations that happen around that. Then to move into a strategic level has been absolutely paramount I think, in which case then the leaders - the leaders of student voice and the leadership team - have then pushed that through the whole teaching system, and actually what I've found is that teachers are now using student voice in a variety of curriculum areas. And hopefully as the year's progress, we'll be using it in all curriculum areas.

Clip 2 - What have you learnt about the effective use of student voice to accelerate learning?

Laura: The start of this journey has been me thinking about me as a teacher and, sort of, what I expect of the children and really from the start it was realising that actually with my practice a couple of years ago when we started on this journey, was that you know it was open but my children didn't really know what they were learning, didn't really know or understand why. And so now I'm two years on in this journey and I think it's actually the children understanding being [a] collaborative approach, they understand why they're learning things, they're giving feedback to one other, and I'm actually changing my practises as a result of that, and so that's probably been the most powerful for me. And just thinking what can I do every day to improve, based on what they're saying to me, based on them looking at their own assessments and them talking to one another.

Second clip 2

think some teachers felt a little bit nervous, a little bit scared to actually think 'Oh gosh my children are saying this and that means I've got to then change' so I think by actually showing them the power of student voice, and how ultimately our goal is to improve student learning - that's the overall goal - and that if we work together, we can definitely improve.

Clip 3 – Using the student voice rubric

Laura: I feel that coming from a journey of not really having a huge understanding of student voice a couple of years ago, and my school at the time not having a huge understanding, thinking back, if I had that matrix two years ago, I'd have been able to highlight off, think

about, reflect where I'm at, where the school is at, and also celebrate the successes that we're already doing, because I think that was really important for us this year when we had the matrix was just to look at the things that we're doing really well. And then it becomes a starting point for where we want to go to.

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Edeh Sullivan, Deputy Principal, Clevedon School

Clip 1 – How was the student voice rubric used?

Edeh: We have, we used it with representatives from different year levels in the school, and we used it as a way of gauging where we're at so we checked to see if we had evidence around the different dimensions, and based on the evidence we had and the quality of what the evidence was telling us, we used the information to feed into our strategic plan and into what we needed to really concentrate on this year, because we'd used it near the end of last year.

Clip 2 - What have you learnt about the effective use of student voice to accelerate learning?

Edeh: I think we've been quite strategic about it so it's something that's implemented school-wide, and that's been helpful to make sure that it's not just pockets of kids that are developing these skills and attributes, but that it's school-wide there is a progress or progressions attached to it of what we expect to see. Staff have professional development around it, we've built it into other aspects of what we do so it's linked to our appraisal system, our teachers enquirer, elements have strong student voice that feeds into it, it's part of our OTJs, it's part of our assessments, it's kind of become a school-wide thing. When we have induction for new staff, student voice is a strong part of it because it's something we want to live and breathe, so we need to make sure that all our staff are on board because we want to make sure that every kids gets the same quality, no matter what class they go into.

Second clip 2

Edeh: Quite often at parent information meetings, or at any opportunity whether it's induction of new entrant parents into the school, we share John Hattie's research around visible learning and of course all those things that have the biggest effect on achievement, and a lot of that is around student assessment capability, so through sharing those things I think parents get a sense of why we do it, that it's not just something we've made up, it is based in research, and it is something that's going to have a positive impact on the children's learning, it's not just the latest and greatest thing to try.

Third clip 2

Edeh: I think teachers, we tread quite carefully when we first started because it was new, and it can be quite threatening or...it makes teachers a bit nervous, to get such feedback from - and to be expected to use the feedback - that kids give them, in their programmes,

but it's actually quite empowering because you're seeing a direct effect between what you teach and what is learned, so you're seeing whether there is a gap or whether that the gap is getting closed. So I think it's quite empowering, our teachers seem to want to have the student feedback, so yeah, no I think it has a positive impact in that area.

Clip 3 – Using the student voice rubric

Edeh: The rubric can be used in different ways, initially really to gauge we're you're at as a school, in your practise, and in the different dimensions to see what you need to do next. But you can use it to gauge your own progress, over the years, if you needed to. Teachers could use it for their own practise, to set goals around where they're at, to see where their students are at compared to the rubric, the examples are going to be excellent in terms of giving ideas, and different perspectives on how people have engaged with that particular dimension or that particular criteria, so hopefully it'll be quite useful in that sense.

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Stephanie Latto, Teacher, Clevedon School

Clip 1 – How was the student voice rubric used?

Stephanie: I use the matrix in my classroom to identify the gaps that I need to work on to make student voice in my class richer. And I also actually talk a lot with my students in my class about the purpose of why we're collecting student voice and how it will help them with their achievement later on.

Second clip 1

Stephanie: Well the research shows us that if kids are able to talk about their learning, they know where they are, where they're at, and that you actually show them the data, they'll actually start using it to be more effective, and even little things like start planning to go 'Oh actually I don't know that, that's my next step, I need to work on that to be better and to move to the next level on my rubric' - for example an Astal rubric, or on any assessment that they might be taking at the time.

Clip 2 - What have you learnt about the effective use of student voice to accelerate learning?

Stephanie: The students within my class have learnt over two years to be very good at being able to assess themselves. They're open to all the data that they're given, all the data is shared, the purpose is always shared with them, why we're collecting the data and what it's going to be used for. So we look at it together or in groups, we go from there, and they decide what their next learning steps might be as a group and then that gets put into the planning. So, I look at that planning and go 'OK, this is what I need to support them with' and that's where we go. We use all of the data, and we expect kids to be able to know it and tell us what they want to learn and to move from there.

Second clip 2

Stephanie: At the moment, the belief is – with especially the year eights – that they often go into a college system or a secondary system that doesn't support this. I say to my students and parents in regards to this, it's about - we're actually teaching them skills that go beyond the classroom. We're looking at - if you don't know something, go and find it yourself. Look on the internet, talk to experts, if you know what you need to be working on and you're looking at all of your data or your assessment or anything, then you have the choice to take the next step and that's what we want, we want kids to be able to go – 'Oh, I'm not too sure about that but I can go and find it'. We want them to be active in their learning, not just at primary school or college, you know, take that beyond that where we're teaching citizens, you know, for the future, that's what we want.

Clip 3 – Using the student voice rubric

Stephanie: We have the expectation that all kids can be assessment capable. It's about being appropriate with the age of the student that you have, so it's about working with them. All students can do it, no matter how young or how old. As a teacher it's your job to help them, guide them through the process. Don't keep information away from them, you need to give them information, you need to teach them about their learning, so that they can use it in the future. And yeah – get on board. It's where we're going, it's where we want to be. We want students to be assessment capable and know that they are important in the learning process.

Second clip 3

Stephanie: I'm always trying new things with, ah, student voice. I'm...yeah, this process has seen me go from 'Oh yeah, let's just dabble a little bit', um, but yeah, it's like, I expect the kids to be writing their report comments for our formal reports if they can, yeah I have such high expectations of my kids that, you know, I expect them and I want them to be basically informing me of all of their learning next steps. They should be telling me and then it's my job to help them along the way.