

Developing the Pupil Voice in School

Sparqs, 10th June 2016

- **Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland**
- Funded by the Scottish Funding Council since 2003 to support students and institutions by:
 - Supporting students to engage in enhancing their education.
 - Supporting institutions and students' association to have effective student engagement mechanisms and practices.
 - Supporting student engagement in national policy.
 - Supporting the development of a culture of student engagement across Scotland

Our Vision



Students are able to make a positive difference to they and their fellow classmates educational experience by helping shape the nature of learning, thus contributing to the success of Scotland's tertiary education sector.



Background



This year sparqs in conjunction with the Higher Education Academy delivered a series of *Learner Transition* events aimed at bringing together learners and staff from different educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities) to encourage a dialogue around:

- learner expectations of the curriculum
- the delivery of programmes of study
- potential barriers to successful progression

Background



Subject specific events held:

- Health Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Creative Industries
- Engineering

Events held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen



Delivery of the Project



The events were delivered by working in close partnership with institutional partners including agencies responsible for widening access and articulation as well as teaching staff from schools, colleges and universities.



Delivery of the Project

- University of Glasgow
- University of Edinburgh
- Edinburgh Napier University
- University of Abertay
- University of Dundee
- The Robert Gordon University
- Dundee and Angus College
- North East Scotland College
- Scottish Wider Access Programme
- ELRAH
- LIFT OFF
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Queensferry High School
- Broughton High School
- Drummond Community High School
- St Kentigan's Academy
- The Royal High School
- Whitehall Secondary School
- Denny High School
- St Augustine's
- Holy Rood High School

Common Themes to Emerge from the Events



- Expectations of higher standards of work
- Navigating the range of student services available in a large institution
- Difficulties adapting to independent learning
- Challenges of different assessment and examination practices



Developing the Pupil Voice in Schools



During one of the learner transition events a dialogue was started between sparqs and the assistant head teacher from Braeview Academy in Dundee.

The school expressed a real appetite from within to develop their existing pupil council into an autonomous body with real decision making powers.



Braeview Academy



sparqs' expertise in student engagement has been tested and refined in Scottish Further & Higher Education, and through our consultancy work in international projects.

Bringing through the voice of the learner in their education is at the heart of what we do.

It was agreed that we would work with the school around these issues.



Initial Project Aims



After consultation with the school it was agreed that the initial project aims were to:

- Increase the numbers of the students on the council
- Develop and integrate their representative structure into the curriculum
- Create a set of materials for use with school pupils
- Train new pupil representatives who would be active in the council



Background - Research



We took as a reference point the work undertaken by the University of Stirling and published by Scotland's Children's Commissioner:

How Young People's Participation in School Supports Achievement

Mannion, Sowerby and L'Anson, February 2015

Background - Research



We met with various academics and professionals from the sector to consult with them in order to further refine our material including:

- The University of Glasgow
- UWS
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Strathclyde

All of whom have all done work on pupil voice and representation in schools.



Background - Research



We also looked to build on existing research by academics and sector agencies.

We met with various professionals including:

- Education Scotland
- the Phoenix Education Trust
- Demos
- North Ayrshire Council



Curriculum for Excellence - context



We paid particular attention to the recent developments in the schools sector emphasising the importance of the citizenship aspect of the Curriculum for Excellence. In particular:

Enabling each child or young person to be a:

- successful learner
- confident individual
- responsible citizen
- effective contributor



Curriculum for Excellence - context



Developing the learner voice of school pupils through engagement in pupil councils and other in-school fora seeks to build students' abilities to:

- develop and communicate their own beliefs
- make reasoned evaluations
- make informed choices and decisions
- work in partnerships and in teams

This draws on capabilities from each of the four capacities of the curriculum for excellence.



Creation of Materials



All of the research we collected was used to create a unique set of materials for use within Schools. It was primarily focused on the pupil voice in secondary schools but the material can also be tailored for use in primary schools too.



Moving Forward



- We are returning to Braeview Academy in August for the start of the new academic term to do a full training session with newly elected pupil voice representatives as well as key staff members who will be supporting the council.
- Contact made with Dundee Council.
- Expanding the scope of the project further. Invited to a school in Ayrshire.
- Develop the dialogue started with the Trainee Teachers at UWS around a pilot scheme for trainee teachers to deliver pupil voice training in schools.





Developing the Pupil Voice in School

**For any further information
please contact sparqs**

Thank You!