

Chapter 41: Pedagogy Student Council Pastoral Care

May Fawaz ALmasad

Abstract: Voice not only means ‘having a say,’ but it also refers to the language, emotional components and non-verbal means used to express opinions. The notion of voice also encapsulates the idea of a particular point of view, not necessarily one that is universal.

1 Introduction

We need to understand and recognize that in order for the school to function as well as it can, students need to have a voice and to be able to contribute. Student voice is the opportunity to express their views on issues of concern to them in the school. It is equally important that they are listened to and encouraged to listen to each other and encouraged to take an active part promoting the aims and objectives of the school (Woods, 2012).

As part of the Capstone, I will describe three examples of student voice. I focused on pastoral care, pedagogy, and the student council. These three examples are very important in New Zealand schools. The principal and teachers work on this all of the time.

This project will have the following significant results: Firstly, I hope to introduce the use of student voice by the way of student council, new pedagogy in the classroom and pastoral care. In addition, we will discuss how to make instruction student-centered rather than teacher-centred, as it is now. It will also show how student voice helps to improve student’s motivation and engagement. Finally, it will show that the more opportunities students have for choice, control, and collaborative opportunity, the more motivated and engaged they are likely to be.

2 Literature Review

Voice includes the ideas, views and perspective of children and young people to be listened to by the teachers, in order to improve learning experiences (Parry, 2014). It is also suggested that student voice also has role in decision making (Mitra, 2003).

Children and young people do not speak as one – just like adults, they have different experiences, opinions and modes of expression. And some voices may be harder for adults to hear than others (Thomson, 2009).

Pastoral Care:

Pastoral Care of students is very important. Close, supportive relationships between students and teachers are related to engagement in classroom activities (Meehan, Hughes, & Cavell, 2003). Student–teacher relationships that are characterized by high conflict and dependency are associated with negative student behaviours, student grade repetition and peer rejection, (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Ladd & Burgess, 2001; Pianta et al, 1995). There are a few studies examining the relationship between the quality of student–teacher relationships and selfconcept (Verschueren, Doumen, & Buyse, 2012). One study of preschool children found that teacher–child interactions characterised by more positive child emotions were related to more positive self-perceptions in children. It is important for teachers to talk with their students, especially about their relationships and well-being.

Pedagogy:

The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) mandates the expectation for children and young people to participate in their learning and education. The vision of the New Zealand Curriculum is for children and young people to be confident, connected, actively involved lifelong learners. Students will be connected community members, participants and contributors, critical thinkers and informed decision makers (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). The principles of the New Zealand Curriculum relate specifically to how the curriculum will be developed for each school. In 'learning to learn' students are to reflect on their own learning. Community engagement states that the curriculum must have meaning for students and connect with their wider lives. The Inclusion principle ensures that students' learning needs are addressed (NZC, Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9). The New Zealand Curriculum clearly sets the expectation that children and young people and their voice are to be fully involved in their learning and in curriculum development.

The students give feedback to their teachers about their learning. The teachers change their teaching strategies. This creates an exciting learning environment and builds good relationships between staff and students.

Student Council:

Student council's allow children and young people the right to determine what issues they will speak about and act on. This requires some courage from school leaders and classroom teachers. School leaders also need to make sure that the council does not just involve an elite group of young people in change activities with the expectation that they know and can/will represent their peers. It is important to get a wide range of student perspectives.

A council meeting might begin with this inquiry: "What kind of a classroom community do we want to have?" Once the meetings are established, they become a weekly event. The class honors basic rules: To try to solve problems, not to use any put-downs, and to listen without interrupting. The students sit in a circle, gather data, and generate solutions. Often an agenda is posted on a bulletin board, inviting students to suggest topics. The student council can serve for all students in the school. We want to make our school a better place for study and to completely implement the values in our school which are to be on time, to be respectful and be responsible.

Regular communication between the Student Council and school management, staff and parents provide the basis for building a good and lasting relationship, based on trust and respect, between students and the rest of the school community. Much can be achieved where all members of the school community work together towards common **goals, and good** communication is vital if a common understanding is to be reached on what those goals are, and how best to achieve them. Good communication does not simply mean keeping the school management, teaching staff or Parents Association informed of planned activities; it also involves seeking their views and suggestions. It means consulting with, and sharing ideas listening to their suggestions and making sure that all sections of the school community understand the purpose and goals of the Student Council.

Having a teacher or a parent attend meeting of the Council on a regular basis also helps to improve communications and this may be provided for in the Board of Management rules. Also, the Principal may wish to address the Council from time to time on key issues affecting the school community (Woods,2002).

The establishment of a Council is not an end in itself, but rather offers all concerned an enhanced means of building partnership and effective communications within the school. It is important to stress the need for a Board of Management not only to listen to the Student Council but also to respond in a meaningful way to its concerns.

3 Methodologies

3.1 Research Approach and Design

In this study, a qualitative and quantitative research approach was taken. The researcher collected both descriptive and non-numerical data to obtain a deeper understand and a more comprehensive look at the effect of the students' voice in terms of classroom environment, school management and pastoral care.

3.2 The study samples

The targeted population for this study was selected from middle and high school students (35) and the students completed a survey on the Survey Monkey site.

3.3 Research Methods

In this study, information will be gathered by interviews, surveying and observation.^[1]_[SEP]

3.4 Interview

The information was collected and recorded through an open interview with Deputy Principal of Northcote College. Further information was gathered from discussions with five classroom teachers from Parnell School. The observations were recorded as notes. Additional information was gained from teaching procedures at Parnell School.

3.5 Survey

Through Survey Monkey, a sample of learners answered a questionnaire focusing on their opinions about student council. They answered questions about how principals and teachers follow some strategies which concentrate on students. By choosing a questionnaire, learners are free to express their feelings and express their opinions without hesitation or fear.

3.6 Observation

The researcher observed inside and outside the classrooms, recording what was noticed and also monitoring how learners use their voices to share their ideas and opinions.

3.4. Data Analysis

During data analysis, the researcher closely read the collected information and organized the data. The data was presented under each research method.

4 Results

4.1 Survey (Appendix A)

The survey asked a range of questions about student voice, relationships, pastoral care and the student council.



4.2 Interview

This interview(Appendix B) gave the researcher an insight into the importance of student voice in different ways, into the student council, pastoral care and to show a depth of understanding about the strategies that teachers use in their classes to develop student voice. The questions were as follows:

Do you think that students sharing their ideas and opinions is important? The Deputy Principal of Northcote College said, "Yes, I think it is very important for students to be able to share their ideas and opinions with us. It means that teachers know more about how the students learn, what they enjoy and what they are interested in. It means we will be better teachers and a better school if we understand our students."

Does the student council allow students to share their ideas? He replied, "The student council is a representative group made up of one person from each form class and this ensure that there are boys and girls as part of the group and also all year levels from 9 to 13. In theory any student who wants to raise an opinion, has questions or concerns is able to ask their classroom teachers, form teacher or Dean. However, if there are big issues or questions that students want to discuss, the student council is the place to bring these things up. This council also shares the information with Senior Leaders and works together with them."

What is Pastoral Care strategy at your school ? "All students from Year 9 to 13 are engaged in pastoral care for one period every Wednesday through term 1. Year 9 and 13 students spend the time together with each single Year 9 matched up with their allocated 'peer tutor' who is a Year 13 mentor. They engage in activities that help the Year 9 student grow in confidence and learn how the school works. The year 13 can also help with any problems they may be having or liaise with their form teacher. Year 10 and 11 students spend the pastoral care time learning about learning strategies, career competencies, CV building and life skills. The Year 12 students go through a Health program looking at education about drugs, alcohol, sex education, healthy relationships etc."

How do senior leaders include teachers and students voice? "Senior leaders include student opinions and student voice in decision making through several mechanisms in the school. One is the student representative on the Board of trustees, another is the student council, another is the prefect group and another is support services. Senior leaders get teacher feedback regularly through surveys, questionnaires and a 'post box' in the staffroom."

"Do you believe it is more important to look after whole students or teach them the subject? He said that, "he believes that unless a student has a healthy mind and a healthy body, then they will not be able to learn their academic material or curriculum objectives as well as they otherwise could. Increasing numbers of students are arriving at secondary school with specific learning needs and schools challenge is to address these needs as part of their learning." Then he explained that, "one of the best ways of student voice is that every teacher must give a survey to two of their classes throughout the year to get their feedback on the teacher's performance."

4.3 Observation

Observation means to watch someone or something carefully. From my observations in New Zealand classes I notice that they used padlet application to make contact with their students. Students could add reflections on the learning questions. Teachers also use teaching

strategies like "move and talk" where the students discuss their reasoning, "Do you agree or disagree?" Teachers use "wait time" to give students time to think and to respond. Teachers will give time for students to talk. Teachers also use "revoicing", "so you are saying?" to clarify the students thinking and understanding. The teacher will

seek examples from students, "Can anyone support this with an examples? Does anyone have a counterexample?" Another strategy is things using thumbs up. This is where students can indicate their level of understanding to the teacher. Thumbs down means, "no, I do not understand." A sideways thumb means that the students are "not too sure" or is unclear in his or her understanding. A thumbs up means that the student understands.

These are some examples which we noticed in the class.



5 Challenges/Suggestions

In K.S.A there is no time in the school day for principals to talk with and to work with their teachers or their students. We need to make time for this. Principals, teachers and students need time to be able listen and to talk about their ideas and their needs. We have to work on *Clear plan to regularly schedule weekly meetings with teachers and students and principals and teachers.

*The curriculum is too big and there is no flexibility in teaching practice. Teachers and principals need more flexibility to teach to students' needs.

*The school and classroom designs are very traditional and not flexible. We need to change the design of classrooms to be more comfortable for the students to be able to talk and share ideas.

6 Action steps in K.S.A:

*Principles and vice principals have opportunity to plan and change depending on their school needs, teachers and students.

*Weekly meeting times needs to be scheduled for students and teachers. We need to find time for that without effecting the students' learning time.

*Recommend making a student council by electing students from all classes fairly.

*Let students have to say in and a voice in their classrooms. *Allow for greater flexibility in curriculum and teaching practice *Plan for pastoral care throughout the year.

*Change the design of classrooms to be more comfortable for the students especially in primary schools.

*Student satisfaction is a fair measure of teaching.

*We need to understand student voice is the opportunity to express their views on issues of concern to them in the school.

*We also need to improve the relationships between student, teachers and students with principals and deputy principals.

It's time for teachers to know importance of students being able to participate in their learning and education.

*We need to support our students with 'learning to learn.'

*We also recommend communication between the Student Council and school management, staff and parents.

This provides the basis for building a good and lasting relationships, based on trust and respect between students and the rest of the school community.

7 Conclusions

The main objective of this study was to find out importance of student voice. Student voice is not only means having a say, but also refers to the language, emotional components and non-verbal means used to express opinions. Good communication does not simply mean keeping the school management, teaching staff or Parents' Association informed of any planned activities. It also involves seeking their views and suggestions. If there is a good communication in a school that means that there is voice for everyone.

***May's Reflection**

At the beginning of my research project I strongly thought that the student voice was just the Student Council. The sources that I consulted with has given me a better understanding of student voice. Student voice is much more than the student council. Student voice is inside the classes and involves the communication between the students and their teacher. Student voice is also communication between students, the principal and the deputy principals . I gained a lot of understanding not only about student voice but, most importantly, I learned from this research. The project threw light on my own processes, as a leader in the school. Now I am aware, that as a leader there is a lot of learning that has to be done inside and outside of the classroom. Finally, I can also now clearly see that to make progress in any area needs a lot of work and good clear planning. I will need to talk with students, teachers and parents. I will need to plan for how we can introduce 'student voice' to my school.

***Limitations**

The main limitation of this study was the language barrier. The language used and the 'Kiwis' accent was difficult for me to understand at times. That made it hard for me to get a complete understanding. Another limitation was being able to schedule the time to carry out this research with the students when they were in the classes. Finally, it was also challenging to find the time to talk with the teachers. Often, teachers have many additional meetings. So often, we just talked in their break times. This was a short time that they could spend explaining.

About the Teacher:

*AL-KHARJ College, Bachelor in Literature and Education in English Language.

*Deputy Principal in the fourth intermediate and the third Secondary school in Dilam - Second Term in 2017

*English teacher for Intermediate and secondary school in Dilam.

*English teacher for Intermediate school Najran, South Region of Saudi Arabia - First journey of teaching (2004).

Courses and Certificates

*Trimestral curriculum 2017

*Explaining manual plan for educational jobs 2017

*Problem prevention and cure in school society 2017

*Cloud storage 28/3/2016 -29/3/2016

*Strategies of classroom management 15/11/2014

*Basic of Active board 13/4/2015

*Resources management in the school society 18/3/2014 -19/3/2014

*Lesson planning 2/9/2014

*Learning and technology 1/4/2014 - 2/4/2014

*Cooperative learning 27/2/2011- 28/2/2011 *Classroom management (one week) 30/3/2007

Acknowledgments:

All gratitude is due my God who helped me to be here and see NZ and live this experience.

Firstly, I want to thank our mentors Lisa Morresey, MR.Colin Donald General Manager UACEL and all members of University of Auckland. Thanks also to all my colleagues for their support. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my father for everything he has done for me happened to me. I wish if he lived, he could see me now. (He spent more than 30 years as a teacher and principal). And to my mother for her endless love and sacrifice. All thanks to my lovely kids and for their struggles with me here. Also, to my sisters and my brother for the support they have given me. Special thanks to my student Atheer. Without all of these people, this would never have been possible.

Appendix A Survey

	Questions
1	I feel that I have a good relationship with school staff.
2	I receive encouraging comments from staff when I suggest some ideas.
3	Teachers are accessible to me if I have to express my opinion.
4	The principal and deputy principals are accessible to express my opinion or I have problem.

5	Student council do an active role in solving student problems.
6	If you are not a member would you like to become one.
7	This is a school that takes very good care of its students,
8	If I have a problem in school there is someone I can talk about it.
9	Do you think there is enough time assigned to the student council?

(Appendix B)**Interview questions**

- 1-Do you think that students sharing their ideas and opinions is important?
- 2- Does the student council allow students to share their ideas?
- 3-What is Pastoral Care strategy at your school ?
- 4-How do senior leader include teachers and students voice?
- 5-Do you believe it is more important to look after whole students or teach them the subject ?

References:

Books, articles and websites such as:

ASCD.org (Unknown). Giving Students-a-voice-in-the-classroom retrieved from (www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept96/vol54/num01/Giving-

Department of Education and Science (2002). Student councils a voice for students. Department of Education and Science, Dublin, Republic of Ireland. Retrieved from <https://www.google.co.nz/search?q=dublin&oq=dublin&aqs=chrome.69i57j0l5.2302j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

McFarland, L., Murray, E., & Phillipson, S. (2016). Student–teacher relationships and student self-concept: Relations with teacher and student gender. *Australian Journal of Education*, 60(1), 5-25.

Thomson, P. (2010). Involving children and young people in educational change: Possibilities and challenges. In Hargreaves (Ed.), *Second international handbook of educational change* (pp. 809-824). Dordrecht: Springer.

Toshalis, E. & Nakkula, M. (2012). Motivation, engagement, and student voice. *The*

Education Digest, 78(1), 29. Retrieved from <https://search-proquestcom.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/docview/1933093874>