

Embedding Student Partnership in Feedback Approaches



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About this Guide

Who is this guide for?

All Maynooth University staff who teach/support teaching



Time to read guide

5 mins

When should I use this guide?

Anytime you wish to gather feedback from students on their experiences of teaching and learning

What is Student Partnership? Why do we want to Embed it in Feedback Approaches?

The Student Feedback and Teaching Evaluation Initiative defines 'student partnership' in feedback as meaningful collaboration between students and teaching staff in the gathering of feedback from students on their experiences of teaching and learning. To achieve genuine partnership, rather than tokenistic involvement, students must participate in some aspects of decision making in the process of designing how you will gather feedback.

Tips for Embedding Student Partnership in Feedback Approaches

Clarity

Introduce students to what feedback is and what the processes involved in gathering it will entail (Cornwall, 2008). It might be useful to focus on the specific issues that you want students to provide information on rather than just talk generally about welcoming feedback, for example: 'in the last 15 minutes of next Tuesday's lecture we will ask you about your experiences of lectures so far this term, you might want to consider which aspects of the classes best assisted your learning and why'.

Be clear about:

Who will be involved - will all students be invited to give feedback, or will it be just a selection? If the latter, how will students be selected? Who will be collecting the feedback? Will feedback be anonymised and how will this anonymity be safeguarded?

What process will be used - when will students be asked for feedback? What methods will be used to gather feedback? Will students be able to make changes to the process used for gathering feedback after it begins?

How will feedback be responded to - specify when and how feedback will be responded to. Stick to your timeline and live up to the promises you make.

Explain what cannot be changed in response to student feedback and why. Being honest about limitations helps everyone to assess the value of participation.

Timing

Introduce students to feedback and partnership early in the semester and agree regular times for gathering and discussing feedback.

If scheduling feedback activities outside class time, be flexible to ensure students who need to work or who have caring responsibilities can participate.

Use some asynchronous methods to allow those with limited internet connectivity to participate when gathering feedback online.

Value

Explain to students why the ability to provide constructive feedback is a valuable skill for them to develop.

Provide relevant examples of where student feedback led to positive change.

Emphasise to students that gathering feedback is an essential teaching and learning activity but not all students will have the same experiences of teaching and learning, therefore it is important to hear from as many students as possible.

Inclusion

As you start to plan a feedback partnership, consider how you can gather feedback from as broad a range of students as possible and how you will encourage underrepresented groups to participate. If this is not considered from the start, efforts to promote student partnership may further exclude those already underrepresented (Mercer-Mapstone, 2019).

Explain to students that some groups have traditionally been more likely to participate in feedback processes than others, because of their specific educational and social experiences, and that we need to actively work to ensure that we hear all voices.

Connect with other University initiatives that promote inclusion.

Resources

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. 2016. **Forum Insight. Enhancement Theme: Assessment OF, FOR and AS Learning: Students as Partners in Assessment**

National Student Engagement Programme (NSTeP) **resources**

Student partnerships in quality Scotland (sparqs) **resources**

International Journal for Students as Partners **open access journal**

References

Arnstein, Sherry R. 1969. A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 35:4, pp. 216-224.

Chilvers, Lucy, *et al.* 2019. A student-staff partnership approach to course enhancement: principles for enabling dialogue through repurposing subject-specific materials and metaphors. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, (October) pp. 1-11.

Cornwall, Andrea. 2008. Unpacking 'participation': models, meanings and practices. *Community Development Journal*, 43:3, pp. 269-283.

Gibbs, Jacqueline, *et al.* 2019. Pedagogies of inclusion: a critical exploration of small-group teaching practice in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education* (online first view).

Mercer-Mapstone, Lucy, *et al.* 2019. Are we just engaging 'the usual suspects'? Challenges in and practical strategies for supporting equity and diversity in student-staff partnership initiatives. *Teaching in Higher Education* (online first view).

Wilson, Sean. 2020. 'From novelty to norm. Moving beyond exclusion and the double justification problem in student-faculty partnerships', in Lucy Mercer-Mapstone and Sophia Abbot (Eds) *The power of partnership: students, staff, and faculty revolutionizing higher education*. Elon, North Carolina: Elon University Centre for Engaged Learning.

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