



Senior Cycle Review: **Student Voice Process**

Rationale

The process outlined below is intended to provide guidance on eliciting information from students that will be used to inform Senior Cycle Review. In addition, it is hoped that schools will use the approach in the introductory session with 50-60 students as a model that might be adapted for future Student Voice sessions they would organise for students. Using this model Student Voice may increasingly be seen as involving more than a small representative sample of students. Student responses from the introductory session will be available for the school to use to inform their future development work in Student Voice activities and in senior cycle more generally.

The Process

The procedure for the Student Voice process within the Senior Cycle Review requires each mentor together with one other NCCA member of staff to visit each Network School for one day. During the visit NCCA staff will work with 50-60 students (including 10 second/ third years) for approximately one and a half hours. This **Introductory Session** will act as a warm-up activity for students who are involved in the three separate Focus Group discussions. Each **Focus Group** discussion will last 60 minutes.

In selecting the 50-60 students to take part in the **Introductory Session**, schools will ensure that the group is randomly selected from across the student cohort at senior cycle (including TY, LCA, LCVP and LCE programmes).



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The same criteria will also apply to the 10 Junior Cycle students identified to be part of the introductory activity.

Schools will provide parents/guardians and students with information sheets and consent forms in advance of the day. All students must have completed consent forms to complete the introductory session and the Focus Group activity. Students will also be told by the school that a random group of 30 students will be selected to take part in a follow-up discussion later that day.

Practical Arrangements for Introductory Activity

- In advance of the NCCA visit, an area will have been identified by the school for engaging 50/60 students in group discussion.
- The school will ensure that prior to the session, the room is set out with chairs and tables to accommodate 50/60 students comfortably in groups of 5/6. A wall area will also be needed to allow students to display their post-its following the discussion session.
- NCCA staff will provide material for the activity –pens/markers, post-its, question/prompt sheets for group discussion and wall posters for collating student post-it responses.
- Two/three members of school staff will be required to be present during the activity to support the organisation of the discussion.
- The 90-minute Introductory Session will include a general introduction- (15 minutes).
 - explanation of the purpose of session (slides)
 - the value of Student Voice (SV slides)
 - 'rules for engagement'



Introductory Session – Group Discussions

The NCCA facilitator will read out the first question and associated prompts (see Student Voice Question Sheet). She/he will start the discussion based on the prompts provided. Each group will work in pairs/ threes.

The NCCA Facilitator will indicate when there are two minutes out of the 10 minute discussion remaining for each question. At the end of ten minutes, each pair writes out their agreed points on the post-its provided. One member of the pair then places the group’s post-its under the relevant question on the wall.

This process is repeated for Question 2 and 3.

Whole Group Summary Session (15 minutes)

The final session is facilitated as a whole group discussion. NCCA staff provide a summary of the main points raised by the groups from the range of post-its on the wall. Students are asked to reflect on this feedback and consider anything which surprised them. Students have the opportunity to make any additional points or ask questions.

The students are informed that their feedback post-its will be used by school staff to inform further thinking on Senior Cycle/Student Voice developments.

NCCA staff then randomly choose 20 Senior Cycle Students and 10 Junior Cycle Students to participate in the Focus Group Sessions. Each member of the Focus Group will be provided with a slip for their teacher indicating that they have permission to be involved in the Focus Group together with the time and venue for the discussion.



Focus Group Discussions

The school should provide a quiet room for the purpose of the Focus Group set out in a round table format. Each Focus Group discussion will be audio recorded and notes will be taken by one of the NCCA staff. A summary note from all the Focus Group sessions will be sent to the ESRI for analysis.

The Focus Group discussions will each last for 50 minutes and use the questions from the Student Voice Question Sheet. The first three questions will have already been covered in the Introductory session but the Focus Group session will allow a deeper discussion of the opportunities and challenges raised. Tight time keeping will be required in order to cover all questions. The first 5 minutes of the sessions will provide for introductions as well as setting out the purpose of the Focus Group and a reminder of the importance of Student Voice to Senior Cycle Review.