Quick Guide to Student Voice

*LSE Education for Global Impact: We will **work in partnership with students** to ensure a more consistently excellent student experience, and develop an LSE educational offer for 2030 and beyond.* (LSE 2030 Strategy)

What do we mean by 'student voice'?

Student voice is the overarching term covering the multiple ways in which the School can gain insights from students that can be used to enhance education and the student experience. At its most basic level student voice can refer to the inclusion of students on departmental and School committees and working groups or feedback captured via end of course surveys. Sir Chris Husbands (Chair of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) Assessment Panel) identified ten lessons he felt should underpin the development of practice in light of the inaugural TEF exercise. In relation to the role of students within institutions he stated "genuine student involvement stood out". He clarified that by 'involvement' he was not referring simply to representation of students on committees and working groups, but rather "an embedded culture of engagement at every level". The purpose of this short guide is to offer a model that can form the basis for developing that 'embedded culture' and to signpost resources that colleagues can use to support student voice initiatives.

Student voice: a model of partnership

Healey, Flint and Harrington, (2014) draw on a diverse range of international and UK research to discuss at length the research and scholarship that underpins the case for working in partnership with students. As such their report and their model of students as partners in teaching and learning (Figure 1) provide a good starting point for colleagues wishing to develop a partnership approach to student voice.

Figure 1: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education – an overview model (Healey, Flint and Harrington, 2014)

Aspect	Description
Learning, teaching and assessment	Engaging students as teachers and assessors of both their own learning and that of their peers. Examples: students using online platforms to make collaborative lecture notes; students providing peer feedback on formative work.
Subject-based research and inquiry	Integrating enquiry-based learning across programmes, including carrying out independent research projects or working with teachers on projects. Examples: integrating research-led teaching across programmes; engaging students as assistants/interns to work on academics' research projects.
Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)	Working with students as partners in teaching and learning research projects, either working on projects with teachers or independently as change agents. Example – LSE Change Maker projects.
Curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy	Mid-term and end of course evaluations, including consultation on any changes proposed as a result of these evaluations; representation on departmental staff/student committees; consultation during initial planning stages for new courses/programmes; and programme/course reviews.

Many of the aspects outlined above may already be included to different extents in departmental practices. What is essential in terms of embedding student voice into these practices, however, is that contributions from students are captured systematically, evaluated appropriately and used to develop and enhance students' experiences and learning.

Benefits of a partnership approach to student voice

Research studies have identified three clusters of benefits for both students and staff:

- Engagement – e.g. greater responsibility taken by students for their own learning (Barnes et al., 2010); a stronger sense of community and belonging for students, alumni and staff (Chambers and Nagle, 2013).
- Awareness – e.g. increased awareness of the processes involved in learning to learn (Jarvis, Dickerson and Stockwell, 2014); greater awareness of the role of research and inquiry in shaping knowledges within higher education (Kuh, 2009)
- Enhancement – e.g. changed understanding of teaching and learning through experiencing different viewpoints (Cook-Sather, Bovill and Felton (2014); increased participation in extra-curricular activities designed to develop graduate skills and attributes (Jarvis, Dickerson and Stockwell, 2014).

What do we do next?

To support colleagues in developing their approach to student voice the School has developed resources that address:

- Reviewing and mapping current practices
- Planning to develop existing practices and/or develop new initiatives.

These resources are available from the 'Pedagogies and strategies' section of TLC resources website (https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Teaching-and-Learning-Centre/TLC-resource-materials/Pedagogies-and-strategies).

If you would like support with the reviewing and mapping process please consult your departmental adviser. Ideally students will be involved in this process and funding is available to evaluate the impact of the approach taken, and to produce case studies for use by other Departments.

References

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