Involving Students in Curriculum Evaluation

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**Please note that student work/interviews have been removed from this version of the presentation.**
Essential Questions:

• Formal and informal curriculum evaluation: What is it and how does it fit into the larger picture of school development?

• What different types of student participation in school processes exist? How might this provide schools with alternative “ways of knowing”?

• What strategies can schools use to involve students in curriculum evaluation processes?
  – Whole school / System
  – Grade level / Classroom
My story: self-evaluation as product vs. self-evaluation as process

- Messy
- Multiple modes of data collection
- Rich in perspectives

VS.

- Documents in binders exercise
- Separate from the “work” of schools
A sample self-evaluation process

See http://blogs.ibo.org/sharingpyp/2013/09/03/making-the-pyp-evaluation-process-meaningful/

Making the PYP evaluation process meaningful

by PYP Development Team on 2 September 2013 in News

How can pedagogical leaders structure the evaluation process to ensure it is meaningful and impacts on student learning?

I thought a lot about this question throughout the PYP evaluation process. Having just finished a lengthy CIS accreditation process, the school now needed to prepare itself for another evaluation phase. This meant staff had just spent time in groups, gathering evidence and writing summaries of findings. Another process using the same structures would have likely disengaged them, making evaluation an administrative task instead of an opportunity for school-based inquiry. In order to be meaningful, the PYP evaluation process needed to prove that it is far more than an exercise in coordination. Which it is. As John MacEachen writes, evaluation provides schools with the opportunity to improve teaching and learning, refine strategic planning and structure internal professional development opportunities for staff.

However, this opportunity is only as good as what we make of it. Think about the classroom experience: an ineffective learning engagement often turns off students no matter how engaging the content is. The task done through a modality that clashes with a child’s learning style ends in frustration. The discussion that values some students’ opinions over others creates a sense of ownership in some but not all students. So in the evaluation, just like in the classroom, our ability to construct meaningful experiences determines how successful we are in achieving our aims with members of the school community. Pedagogical leaders must be responsive and act flexibly toward the realities of the school context in order to turn the evaluation process into positive change.

So how did we attempt to remain agile during evaluation? A few key understandings guided our approach:

1. The PYP evaluation provides the opportunity to develop understanding of “inquiry as a stance” across the school.
Curriculum evaluation? Tuning in…

Turn and talk to someone next to you. What does curriculum evaluation mean for you?

Key word or phrase
What do we mean by self-evaluation?

Self-evaluation is, “a cyclical process whereby a school describes and assesses, on its own initiative and from a global quality-assurance concept, aspects of its own functioning in a systematic manner with the aim (if necessary) of arriving at specific improvement processes.” (Vanhoof and van Petegem, 2012, p. 50).

Figure 1 In search of continuous improvement

http://forestpolicypub.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/continuous-improvement.png
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![Figure 1 In search of continuous improvement](http://forestpolicypub.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/continuous-improvement.png)
What do we mean by self-evaluation?

Two key concepts drive self-evaluation processes:

- **School improvement**
- **Internal and external accountability**


Data generated by accountability processes supports schools in enhancing professional knowledge about best practice and in creating strategic interventions for development (Barber, 2004, p. 11).
Successful self-evaluation?

Key points:
• Focus on teaching and learning (SICI, 2003; OECD, 2013)
• Making curricular priorities and expectations explicit to the school community

“Improvement is indeed a misnomer if teachers and school leaders are unaware of where they are, where they’re going and how they will know if they’ve arrived.” (MacBeath, 2009, p. 144).
What have students got to do with it?

Key concepts:
School improvement
Accountability

Importance placed on teaching and learning

Formative, not summative evaluation of learning
Michael Fielding (2001) – Typology of Student Engagement

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Students as co-researchers</th>
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“Institutional Control” → Student Control
Common student engagement within evaluation processes

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Standardized assessments, student work, portfolios
No authentic student voice
Reflecting on your own schools

In your own school evaluation processes how are students engaged?

Students as:
- Data source
- Active respondents
- Co-researchers
- Researchers
Strategies discussed today:

- Perceptions around what it means to be a learner
- Individual unit assessments related to international mindedness
- POI review process using student comments
- Student council initiatives related to the curriculum
Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

The Visible Learner (Hattie, 2009)

Teaching and Learning

C3.5. Teaching and learning supports students to become actively responsible for their own learning.

C3.13. Teaching and learning engages students in reflecting on how, what and why they are learning.

http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/Pictures/web/x/t/f/opinion_main_230212.jpg
The Visible Learner (Hattie, 2009)

The visible learner is a student who:
• Can be their own teacher
• Can articulate what they are learning and why
• Can talk about how they are learning
• Can articulate their next learning steps
• Can use self-regulation strategies
• Is assessment capable
• Seeks, is resilient to and aspires to challenge
• Can set mastery goals
• Asks questions
• Sees errors as opportunities and is comfortable saying that they don’t know
• Knows what to do when they don’t know what to do
Assessing dispositions

- Schools often use student surveys to assess dispositions
- Limited to engagement and satisfaction

What is important is “the usefulness of the data for the purposes of the evaluation, and not the method from which it is obtained” (Robson, 2011, p. 188).

When working with young children, we need different research methods.
Strategy 1: using video

Sample student interviews: What makes a good learner?
Perceptions around what it means to be a learner
Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Coding the 11 responses (K-5)…

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<th>Think deeply</th>
<th>Share ideas</th>
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Be confident / Believe in yourself
Think deeply
Share ideas
Ask questions
Get better / challenge yourself
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Listen (to the teacher)
### Active vs. Passive

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*Perceptions around what it means to be a learner*
Strategy 2: Using visual methodologies

Researchers acknowledge that visual methodologies are appropriate for working with young children (Kendrick and McKay, 2004; Literat, 2013).
Draw a picture of yourself or someone else learning.

• What would you draw? Silent reflection.
Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Sample student drawing 1
Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Sample student drawing 2
Sample student drawing 3
Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Sample student drawing 4
Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Sample student drawing 5
Looking for patterns

- In school vs. out of school
- Alone vs. collaborative
- Inside vs. outside
- Teacher present vs. teacher absent
- “Subjects” represented
- Growth vs. fixed mindset

Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

http://www.freevector.com/site_media/preview_images/FreeVector-Square-Patterns-Set.jpg
Looking for patterns with students

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Focus group to analyze anonymized drawings
Students make recommendations for improvement
Assessing IM in the Written Curriculum (Units) through the Related Concepts

Written Curriculum

C2.4. The written curriculum identifies the knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed over time.

C2.8. The written curriculum provides opportunities for reflection on human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives.
International-mindedness as central to the curriculum

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right. (MTPYPH, p. 2)
Why drawings?

Researchers have found that student drawings are useful in tapping “class and gendered practices” in greater depth than with interviews alone (Pain, 2012, p. 307).
Assessing International-Mindedness / Diversity

• Case Study: “People explore to fulfill needs and wants and expand their understanding of the world.”

• Lines of inquiry:
  • Why people explore – case study (causation)
  • How past exploration has changed understanding of the world (change)
  • Common skills and attitudes used by explorers (connection)

Related Concepts: Exploration, Wants, Needs, Understanding, Consequence, Journey, Discovery
Student Drawings (Informal)

Sample student drawing 1

Sample student drawing 2
Unit assessments related to international mindedness

Color / Symbol / Image Routine

Sample student drawing 3

http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03d_UnderstandingRoutines.html
Unit assessments related to international mindedness

Color / Symbol / Image Routine

Sample student drawing 3
Student Drawings for Curricular Evaluation

- Students focused on geographic exploration
- Explorers predominantly portrayed as male
- Explorers predominantly portrayed as European/American

- Created “interventions” in case studies for the unit
- Ensured materials were available to broaden student perspectives (books / teacher-created texts)
Unit assessments related to international mindedness
Student Drawings for Curricular Evaluation

End of unit: All girls chose to portray an “explorer” as a female, often as themselves.

Sample student drawing 4

Sample student drawing 5
Turn and Talk

• We have used drawings as pre/post assessments for concepts such as home, work and family to assess IM.

• What other concepts do you think your school could collect information on using student drawings?

http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-e9AQIk3Ie4Q/USaxr8Y-eZI/AAAAAAAAAKk/EoJ6rhjNCpA/s1600/talking.jpg
Reviewing the Programme of Inquiry

**Collaborative Planning**

C1.1a. The programme of inquiry and all corresponding unit planners are the product of sustained collaborative work involving all the appropriate staff.

C1.1c. Planning at the school addresses all the essential elements to strengthen the transdisciplinary nature of the programme.

C1.7. Collaborative planning and reflection is informed by assessment of student work and learning.
Reviewing the Programme of Inquiry

• Student feedback on units taught so far during the year
• Two additional questions:
  • If you could learn about anything at school, what would it be?
  • What do you learn about outside of school?
POI Review process using student comments
POI Review – G2 “work” unit

- High level of student engagement in the task
- Using prior learning to improve learning of others in the school, e.g. recognition of learning community
The challenges in using student comments for curriculum evaluation – Kindergarten “homes” unit

Why not?
• “Because at home it is boring and I like to stay outside and school is my favorite.” – Dayna
• “Because sometimes my dad snores at home.” – Lukas

Why?
• “Because homes keep us safe.” – Sofia
• “Because I love the buildings and all the things I see.” – Anne Fleur
• “Because I already know about it.” – Arin
Uses for student feedback on the POI

- Removed units that seemed to have lukewarm “reviews” (student and teacher feedback)
- Including units that connect to children’s developmental interests
- Included more opportunities for science across the POI (adding LOIs about process skills, etc.)
Student council as research team

Need to give children practice co-researching for school improvement.

- What would enhance/enrich your school experience?

Students went back to class and developed a list of ideas to bring back to student council.
Student council as research team

From student feedback, it was collectively decided they wanted an event that allowed for:

- Exposure to new/uncommon activities during the school day
- A multi-age experience
- Longer sessions than usual “specialist” lessons
The event: “Elective Day”

Sample video 1
To summarize:

• Formal and informal curriculum evaluation: What is it and how does it fit into the larger picture of school development?

• What different types of student participation in school processes exist? How might this provide schools with alternative “ways of knowing”?

• What strategies can schools use to involve students in curriculum evaluation processes?
  – Whole school / System
  – Grade level / Classroom
To reflect on:

What can you do to encourage more active student participation during your school’s evaluation process?
Questions?
Thank you!
If you have any other questions/comments:
cmarschall@zis.ch