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Involving Students in Curriculum Evaluation

Carla Marschall, PYP/Middle School Curriculum Coordinator
Zurich International School, Switzerland

*****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



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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



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A sample self-evaluation process

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

SharingPYP blog

SharingPYP news, updates and best practice for PYP practitioners



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Making the PYP evaluation process meaningful

by PYP Development Team on 3 September 2013 in News



Carla Marschall, PYP Coordinator at the Zurich International School, Baden Campus, Switzerland

"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 evaluative 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 MacBeath](#) 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.



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Curriculum evaluation? Tuning in...

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

Key word or phrase



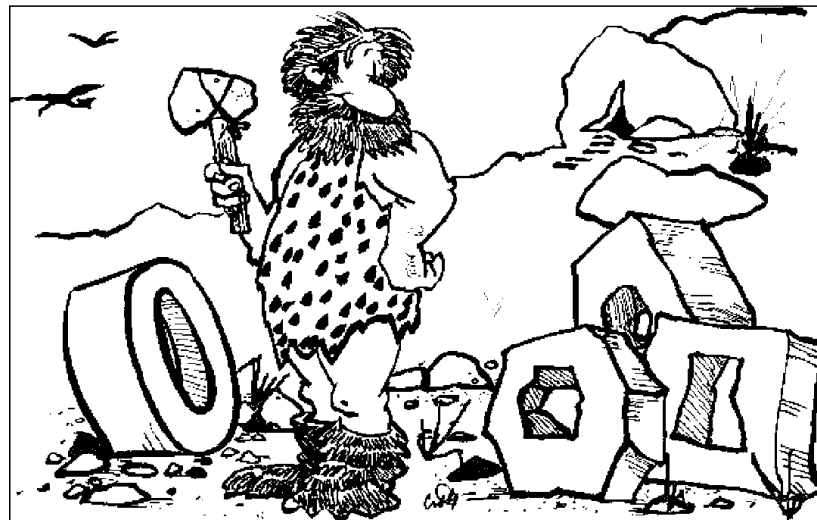


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What do we mean by self-evaluation?

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



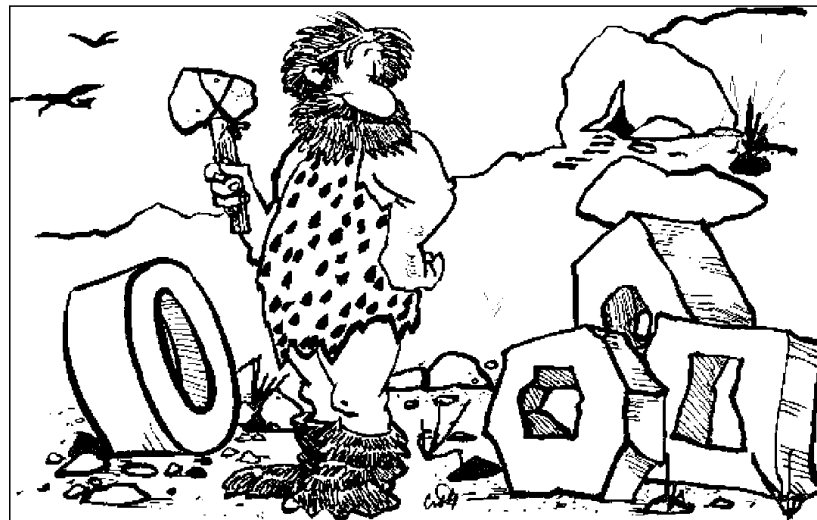


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Figure 1 In search of continuous improvement





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What do we mean by self-evaluation?

Two key concepts drive self-evaluation processes:

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

(Janssens and van Amelsvoort, 2008 in OECD, 2013, p. 410).

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).





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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).





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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



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Michael Fielding (2001) – Typology of Student Engagement

Students as data source	Students as active respondents	Students as co-researchers	Students as researchers
Students' data is used in self-evaluation processes to support arguments for development	Students respond to surveys, etc. to provide data specific to self-evaluation processes	Students co-inquire into how to improve the school with teachers, leadership, etc.	Students lead their own inquiries into how the school could improve (completely student driven)

“Institutional Control”

Student Control





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Common student engagement within evaluation processes

Students as data source	Students as active respondents	Students as co-researchers	Students as researchers
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Standardized assessments, student work, portfolios
No authentic student voice



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Reflecting on your own schools

In your own school evaluation processes how are students engaged?

Students as:

- Data source
- Active respondents
- Co-researchers
- Researchers





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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





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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.





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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

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



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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

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.



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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Strategy 1: using video

Sample student interviews: What makes a good learner?



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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Listen **people**

teacher **Asking** **questions**

thing **right** **work** **kind** **ideas** **Pay** **better**

attention **Get** **things** **right** **work** **kind** **ideas** **Pay** **better**

focused **Look** **attention** **Learner** **Read** **Share** **properly**

teachers **confident** **Helping** **Get** **ideas** **Pay** **better**

quickly **work** **kind** **thing** **ideas** **Pay** **better**

right **Giving** **others** **Behave** **Help** **Thinking** **Pay** **prepared**



Coding the 11 responses (K-5)...

Be confident / Believe in yourself	Think deeply	Share ideas	Ask questions	Get better / challenge yourself	Pay attention	Behave / do the right thing	Listen (to the teacher)
1	1	2	2	2	3	4	6
9%	9%	18%	18%	18%	27%	36%	55%

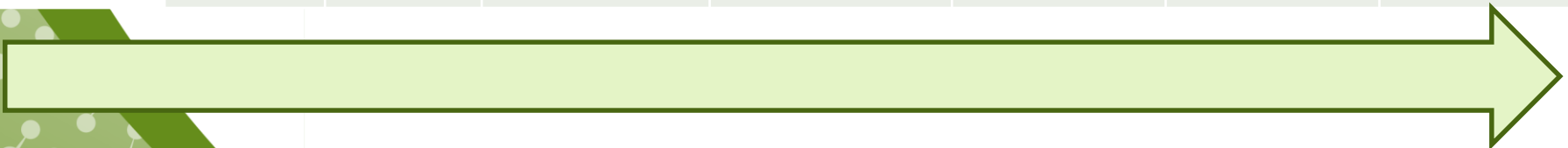


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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Active vs. Passive

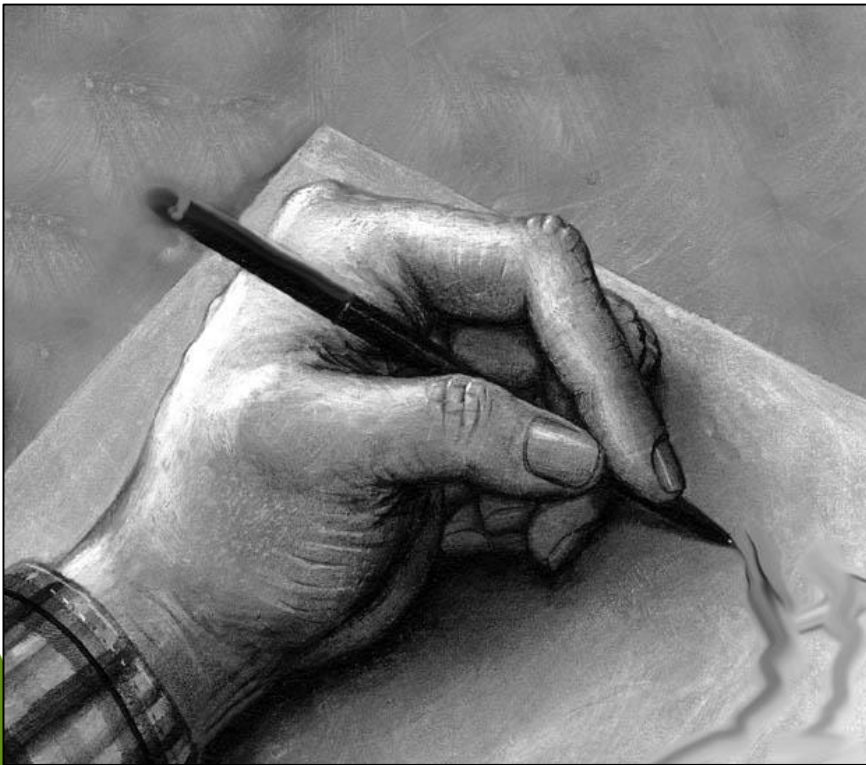
Be confident / Believe in yourself	Think deeply	Share ideas	Ask questions	Get better / challenge yourself	Pay attention	Behave / do the right thing	Listen (to the teacher)
1	1	2	2	2	3	4	6
9%	9%	18%	18%	18%	27%	36%	55%





Strategy 2: Using visual methodologies

Researchers acknowledge that visual methodologies are appropriate for working with young children (Kendrick and McKay, 2004; Literat, 2013).





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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Draw a picture of yourself or someone else learning.

- What would you draw? Silent reflection.



http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/multimedia/archive/00675/e9099bde-cb19-11e3-_675375c.jpg

http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-AcxoQMgtmlw/Ua1aKeScr1I/AAAAAAAAAE44/BOdOgW_djhQ/s1600/IMG_1329.jpg



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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Sample student drawing 1



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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Sample student drawing 2

Sample student drawing 3



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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Sample student drawing 4



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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





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Perceptions around what it means to be a learner

Looking for patterns *with students*

Students as data source	Students as active respondents	Students as co-researchers	Students as researchers
Students' data is used in self-evaluation processes to support arguments for development	Students respond to surveys, etc. to provide data specific to self-evaluation processes	Students co-inquire into how to improve the school with teachers, leadership, etc.	Students lead their own inquiries into how the school could improve (completely student driven)

Focus group to analyze anonymized drawings
Students make recommendations for improvement

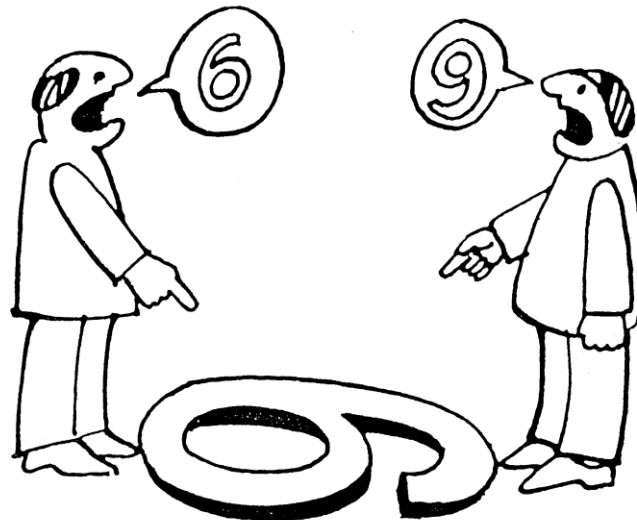


Assessing IM in the Written Curriculum (Units) through the Related Concepts

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.





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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



Color / Symbol / Image Routine

Sample student drawing 3

http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03d_UnderstandingRoutines.html



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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)



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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



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Unit assessments related to international mindedness

Sample student drawing
6

Sample student drawing
7

Sample student drawing 8



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Unit assessments related to international mindedness

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?





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POI review process using student comments

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.

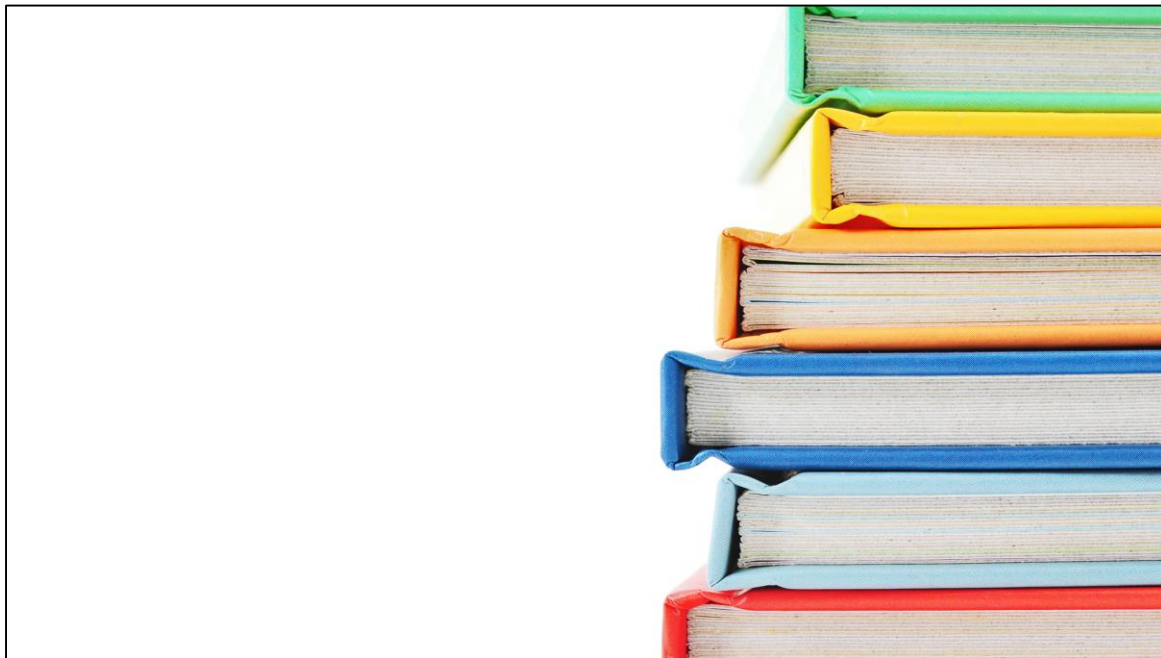
C1.1c. Planning at the school addresses all the essential elements to strengthen the transdisciplinary nature of the programme.

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?




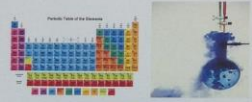


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POI review process using student comments

POI Review

How the World Works
Chemistry



Aya
RICCARDO
Bellomy
Carla
Even better if...
Learn about
Gos
Yeast and 9
Meylor
Coke
I liked the bread making experiment...
I liked love every experiment because it was all exciting.
I liked the bread making experiments...
I liked making an explosion
Mentos & coke was very exciting

How we organize ourselves
Maps and Orientation



Brigitte
Haya
Lara
oli
Even better if...
We could learn more about different types of maps
Even better would be that the unit was longer.
I liked when we made our own map of our bedroom.
I liked it when we did the map of our bedroom.
I liked how we learned about ecotymbms
I liked this unit we got to deize our own map.
It would be better if we got to make our own maps like
Use real compass
If we did a project like the...



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POI Review – G2 “work” unit

Sample video 1

- 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



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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.

Sample photo 1



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Student council initiatives related to the curriculum

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





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Student council initiatives related to the curriculum

The event: “Elective Day”

Sample video 1



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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”?
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To reflect on:

What can you do to encourage more active student participation during your school's evaluation process?





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Questions?





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Thank you!

If you have any other questions/comments:
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