

# Student Voice

## The Bridge to Learning

# Instructional Leadership



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Student Voice –  
the BRIDGE to learning

# Project Partners

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Ireland



Slovenia



Scotland



Hungary



**etbi**  
Education & Training  
Boards Ireland  
*Boird Oideachais &  
Ollsúna Éireann*

Netherlands



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# Project Aim

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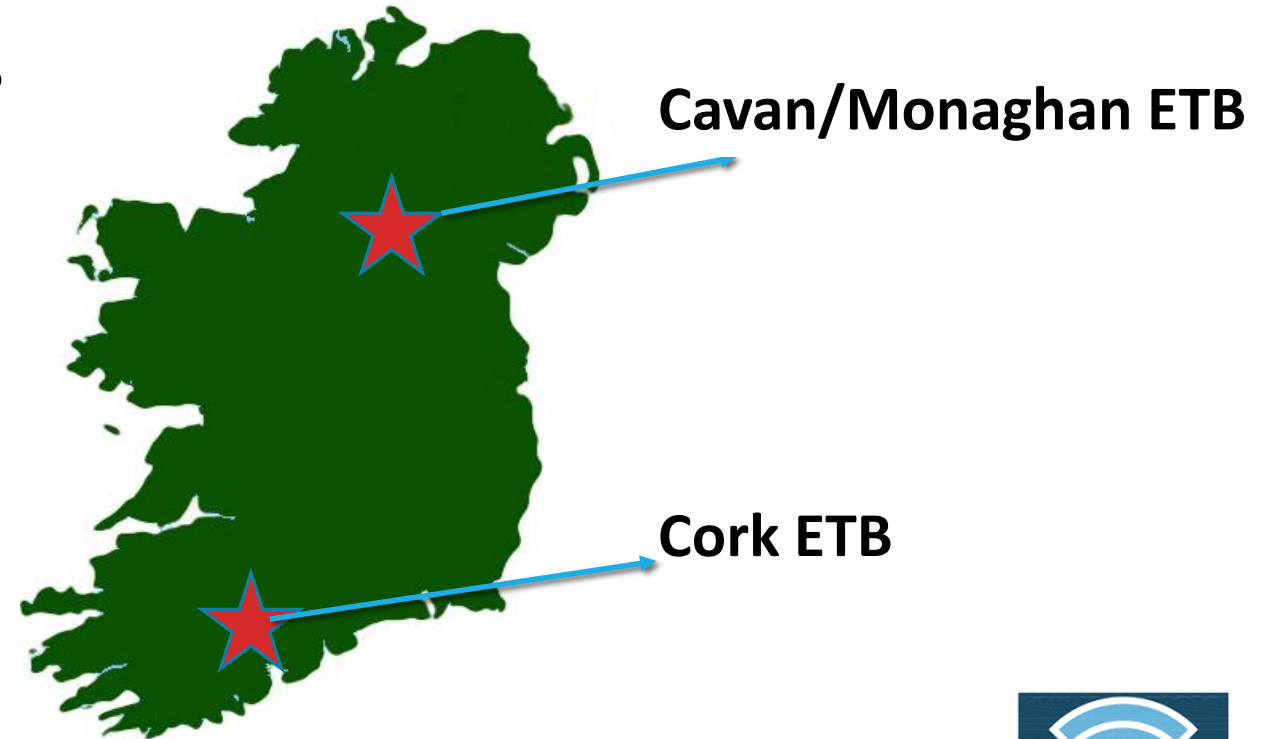
Develop different *models*  
*of working in partnership*  
*with students* in school and  
in the classroom



# Partners in Ireland

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- 2 Education and Training Boards
- 9 Schools
- NCCA and JCT



Boards Ireland  
An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí



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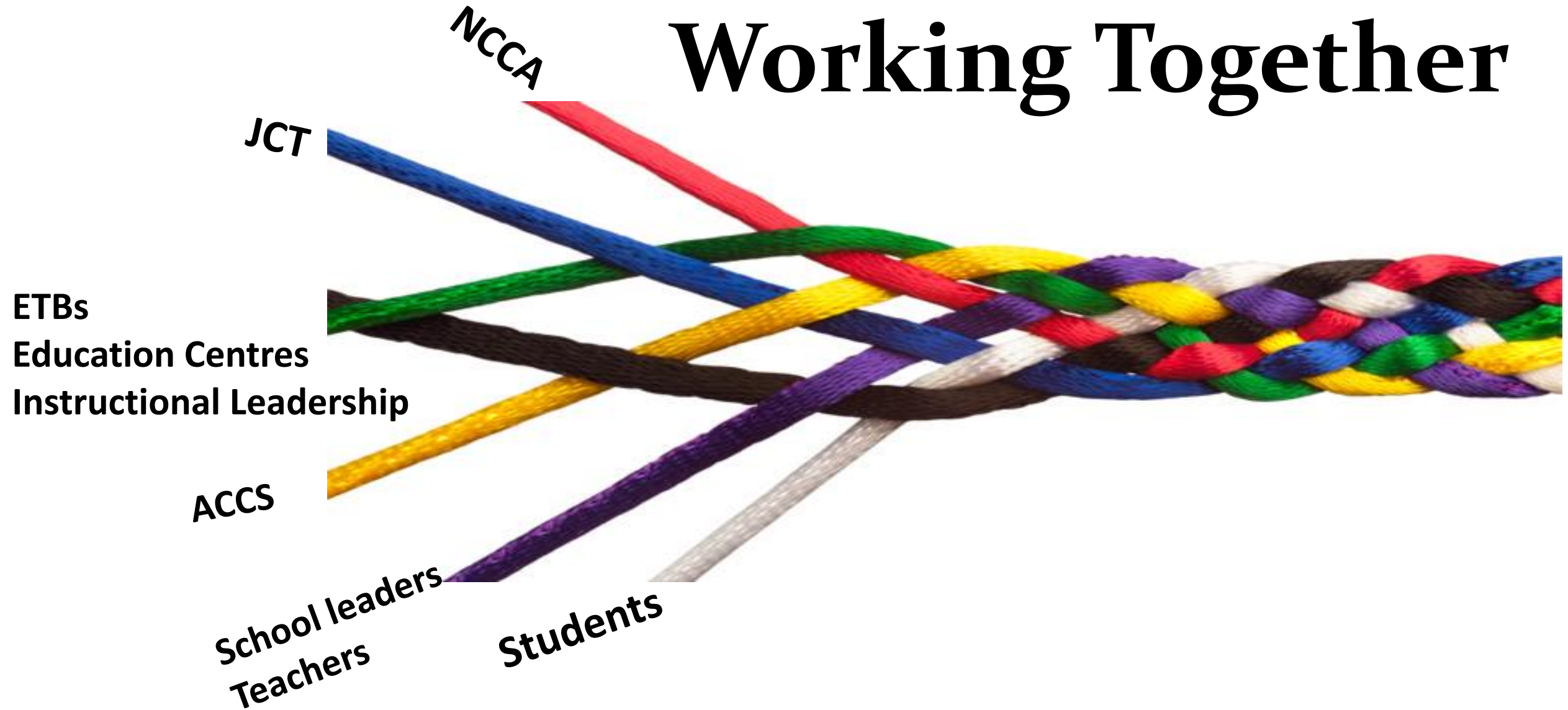
# Leading from the middle

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As **top-down** strategies are often inappropriate given the emphasis needed on professional and community action, yet with **bottom-up** strategies by themselves unable to achieve improvement at any significant scale, it is natural to focus strongly on the “**middle**” (Hargreaves and Ainscow, 2015).

- networks
- school clusters
- professional communities.

# Working Together



# Student Voice – Not a bolt-on!

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Building on what is happening already to promotes student voice?

**Student Voice**

Junior Cycle

Wellbeing

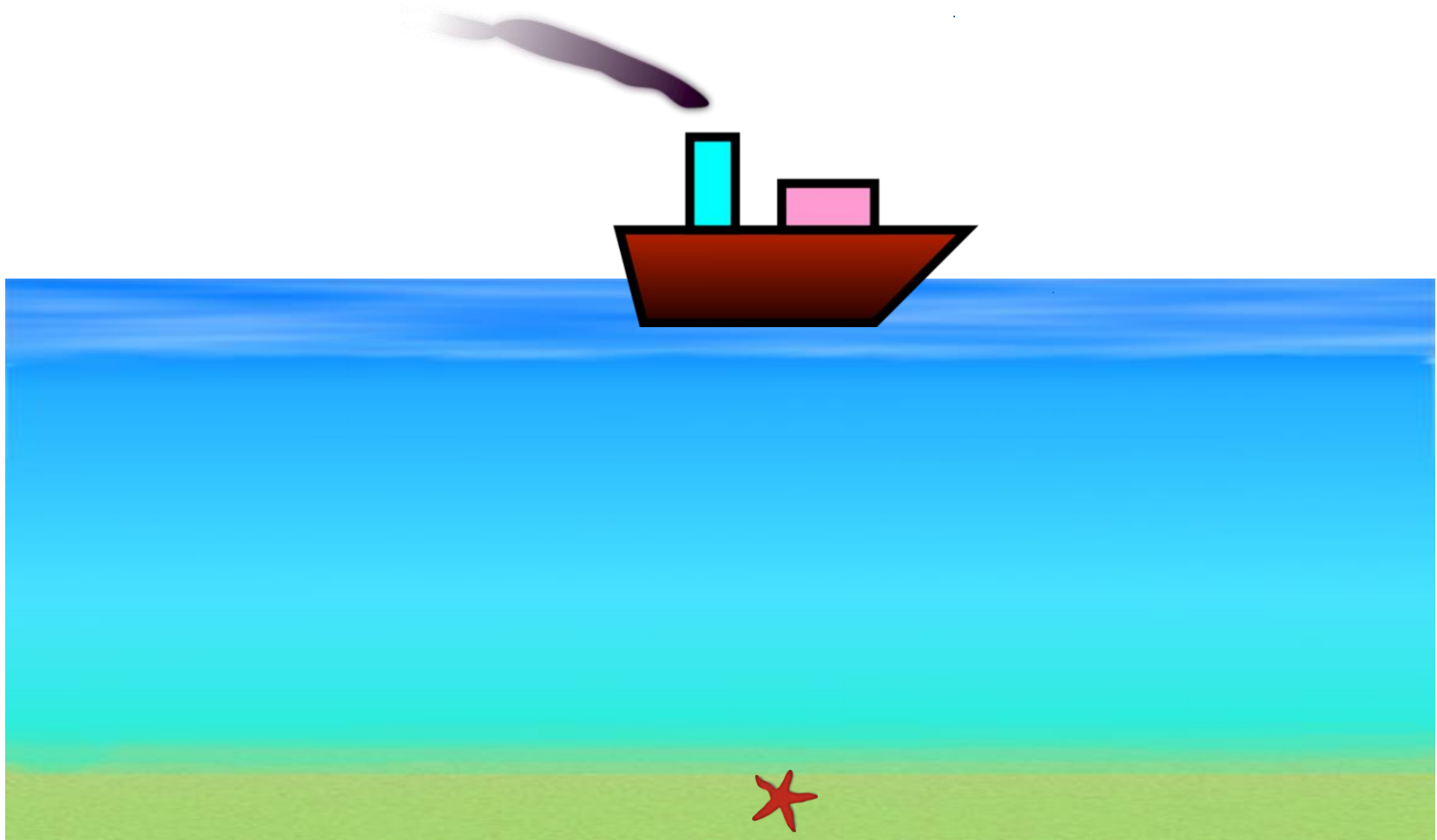
SSE

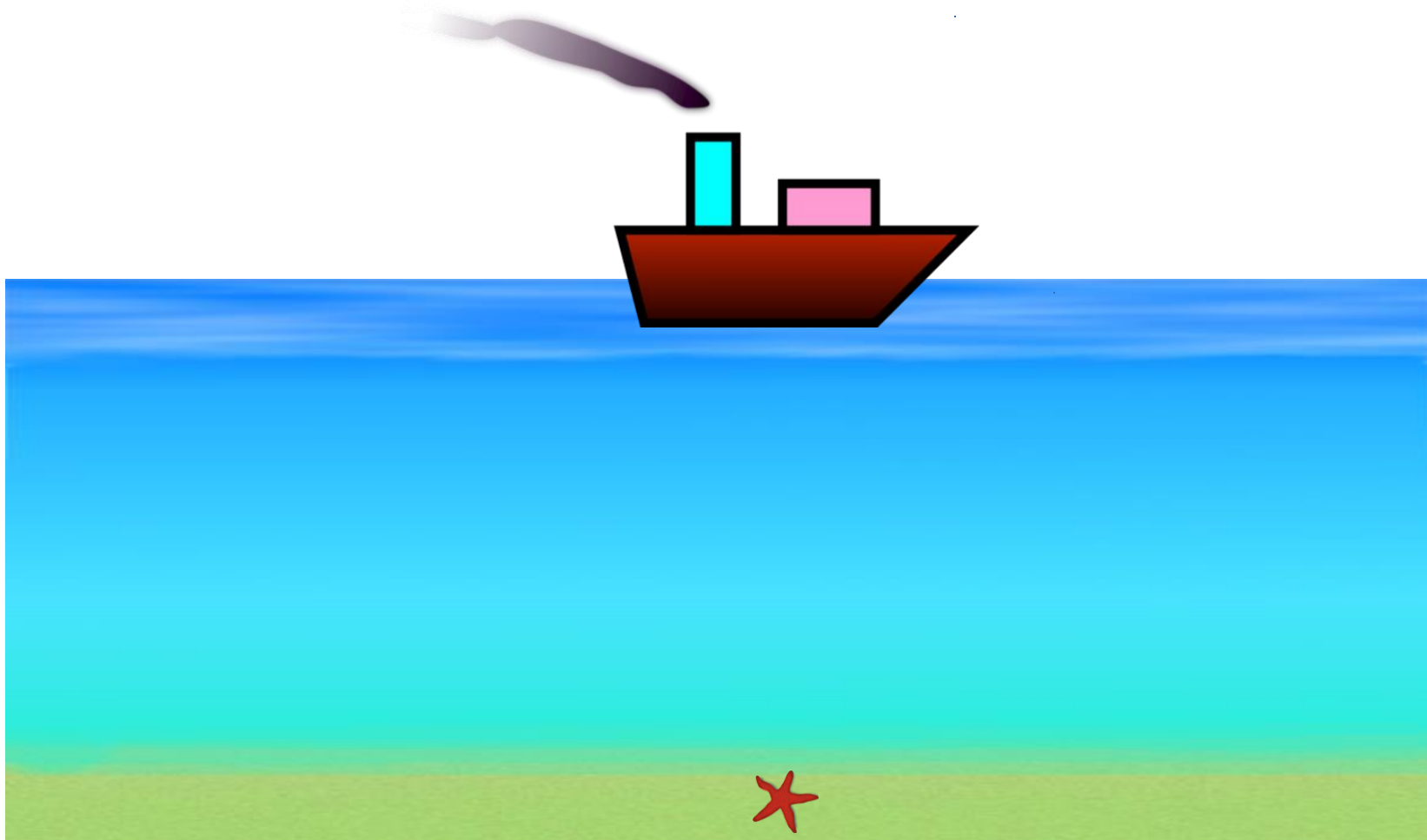
JCPA

Effective Questioning  
Feedback -Peer review

# Professional Learning – What works?







'Ruffling the calm of the ocean floor'- Hayward and Priestley (2004)

# Ruffling the calm of the ocean floor

## Professional Learning .....What works?

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- Teachers learn from each other.....not waiting for expert to provide answers
- Teachers have sense of real ownership- bottom up with top down support.
- Development is shaped by teachers to suit their own context
- Permission to make mistakes
- Clear vision -leadership
- Informed by research - Researchers and teachers work together
- Collaboration across school networks
- Partnership working across agencies.

# Ruffling the calm of the ocean floor

Ways of working with teachers

Collaborative  
approach

Focus on process  
& engagement

Model  
learning  
interactions

Experiential  
methodologies

Reflection as part  
of the learning  
process

# Sustainability

CPD that builds teachers' **capacity, knowledge and confidence**  
**in assessment**

Cultural change that activates student voice in a significant way  
and **avoids tokenism**

Authentic intellectual outputs-listening to **all voices**

**Link educational initiatives** meaningfully

# Reflection as part of the process



**Reflection  
day**

- Individual & collegial reflection
- Share journeys-successes and obstacles
- Exchange ideas
- Voice future supports needed

# Sample of tools used

## Individual reflection .....



What was your original motivation for being involved in this project?

Has this changed?

What are you hoping to achieve?



## Sharing Frame

1. What are you doing?
2. Why have you decided to work in this way?
3. How is it developing student voice?
4. How do you know?



## World Café



### Table Topics

1. Working with students
2. Power
3. Supports needed
4. Spreading the message



<b>Action</b>
<b>Support</b>
<b>Challenge</b>
<b>Big take home message</b>

## Table Discussion



How will we know the impact this project is having on your students?

What types of evidence might we use to capture this?

How will we plan for this?

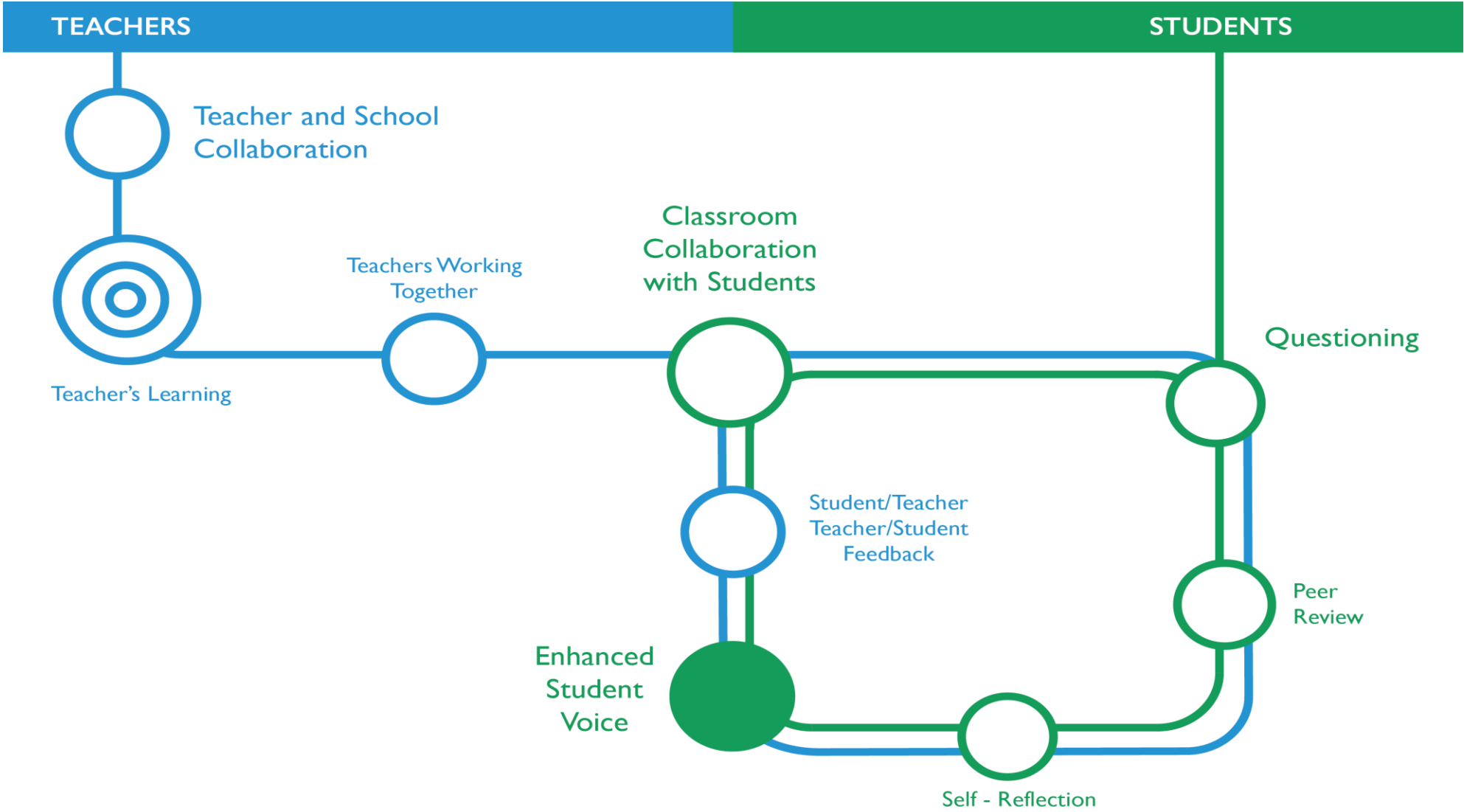


# Classroom Based Student Voice

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- Dialogue and discussion
- Feedback
- Self-evaluation
- Questioning
- Interaction within the classroom
- Collaborative learning
- Time for students to express themselves
- Reflect on the process of learning





IRELAND'S JOURNEY TO ENHANCED STUDENT VOICE

# School Wide – Student Voice

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- Buddying
- Student consultations
- Questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Student working groups
- Students as researchers
- Student forums
- Discussion platforms
- Debate groups



## ESRI: Emerging themes

Emer Smyth



# Student voice in Senior Cycle Review

**NCCA**

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta  
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment



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Education & Training  
Boards Ireland  
*Boird Oideachais &  
Ollúna Éireann*



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# Final thoughts- The Voices of Teachers

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## Teachers' Voices

.We are using some of the techniques used in the toolkit. We are continuing to reinforce the importance of sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria and we have even dabbled a bit with students creating their own Success Criteria and using it for Peer Assessment.

In my classroom last week I used Placemat and Marketplace in a 5th Year English lesson. Today I am introducing isolation to the same group in preparation for reading "By the bog of Cats" by Marina Carr. The students will partake in a Dotmocracy and will come up with statements from each isolated group. We will share this with each other using Post its. This will lead us nicely into reading the text and introducing Hester Swayne. (I hope!)

## Teacher Voices

'Involvement in the "Student Voice - a bridge to learning" project over the past 3 years has had a positive effect on the teaching learning and communication, both inside the classroom and to the wider school community.'

'Being involved in the student voice project has revolutionised my teaching. To see my students develop as independent thinkers and learners and becoming competent, confident people is the best outcome. My changed classroom practice means less discipline issues, better relationships with kids and increased collaboration with colleagues. The project may be coming to an end but the voice of our students will continue to grow and be counted.'

## Teachers Voices

I liked the notion that we could start from our own context and also work collaboratively with other schools. After that first day, I returned to my classroom and quickly realised how much of my lessons were dominated by my voice. I was quietly embarrassed. I started a journey of activating student voice within my classroom and on a wider school basis.

My work has been enriched by this process. I stepped out of my comfort zone and asked the students to reflect on how they learned in my lessons (I assured them I wouldn't be offended) and I became more conscious of the relationship between us that is conducive to learning.

I became more relaxed, the reality of their experiences informed my lesson preparation. I initiated more peer conversations, we designed success criteria collaboratively, my colleagues observed and recorded my lessons. I embraced it to see what the outcome would be and I have nothing but positive feedback to report. student voice has been embedded in my practice. It is not tokenistic, it is meaningful and honest.