

# Student Researchers: Increasing evaluation capacity through peer evaluation

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**NERUPI: Fostering Meaningful Student Voice**  
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# Why Student Researchers?

- Find a new, pro-active way to gather qualitative data on the impact of LH outreach activities delivered as part of Uni Connect.
- Student voice usually gathered via focus groups.
- Wanted broader and more honest student feedback.
- Participant Action Research approach
- Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – 1989.
- Still few studies / examples / little literature.

# What we did: Academic Year 2021/22

- Student Researcher groups in 4 schools, 1 college.
- Students in Years 9 & 10, Level 3 Years 1 & 2.
- 33 students took part – 21 boys / 12 girls.
- 3 visits planned starting before October half term.
- Delayed start until December mainly due to Covid.
- Meant less visits - 2 at 3 schools, 1 at 1 school.
- Student conference at the University - summer 2022.
- Collaboration with 3 other UC partnerships - HOP / Inspiring Choices / Sussex Learning Network.
  - Ran one college and one school group after Easter.

# How the SRs worked: A case study

- Students selected by their Head of Year for their '*confidence and ability to make the most of the task set*'.
- 8 Year 9 & 10 students – 4 each Year, UC/non-UC split.
- Initial 90 mins. workshop – Early February:
  - Involved a member of LH delivery team and the Careers Lead.
  - Included an icebreaker, naming the group 'Young Researchers', what questions students could ask their peers as well as how they would collect and report back the information.
  - Given freebies – notebooks, pens etc.
  - Year 10 divided their year group by tutor group to avoid duplication.
  - Year 9 mainly aimed to feedback back from their friendship group.
  - Gelled as a group and worked together well.
  - Students started planning their next steps, asked to gather feedback from peers on LH activities before our next visit.

## Session 2: Late March

- Students presented results as a PowerPoint presentation.
- Badges with the group's name, students wore them with pride.
- Gave them an identity, made other students curious.
- They had been meeting regularly, at least once a week.
- Regular meeting kept them motivated, always something to add in.
- Found it easy to ask their peers for feedback on activities.

*'They were really self-motivated as a group, I have not had to do any chasing around. Everyone is on board'.*

(Careers Lead)

*'We have been constantly feeding back information. If we had anything new, then we wouldn't necessarily forget the new information.'*

(Student)

The background of the slide is a dense, overlapping pattern of yellow smiley face emojis. Each emoji has a bright yellow circular face with two large black dots for eyes and a simple black curved line for a smiling mouth. The emojis are arranged in a way that they appear to be floating or stacked, creating a cheerful and positive visual theme.

# The Young researchers Evaluation and findings

## Session 2: Late March cont...

- Yr 10 fed back on a HE talk, Yr 9 on a My University activity.
- Collated responses and presented to us in a 15 slide-long PowerPoint – everyone contributed something.
  - Careers Lead impressed - extra points and a hot chocolate reward.
- What the students learnt from taking part:
  - Teamwork;
  - It improved their communication and confidence skills;
  - Time management;
  - Gather feedback as soon as possible, otherwise students forget;
  - Tell students beforehand that they are going to ask them questions;
  - Other students ‘mess around’ and do not always ‘take it seriously’;
  - Not all Form Tutors were supportive or ‘on board’.
- It was fun – they liked getting to work with people they did not usually work with and getting to know everyone.







# The student conference: mid-July

- An opportunity for the students to feed back their findings *directly* to LH.
- Certificate, £10 Amazon voucher reward, lunch - Pizza.
- Campus Tour – a big hit.
- Felt their presentation and feedback would help LH with the future delivery of programmes.
- Felt that their presentation had been well received.

*‘The students were inspiring and a true credit to their school’.*

*‘I enjoyed speaking my mind and having conversations with others in the room, it was a friendly environment’.*

*‘I loved it and would love to do it all again next year if I could’.*



# Lessons learnt: Do

- ✓ Provide school with a detailed brief of what the initiative involves and the skills and attributes the students will require to carry out the tasks.
- ✓ Get buy-in from key members of staff i.e., the Careers Lead, and ensure appropriate support is in place.
- ✓ Explain clearly to the students what they are being asked to do and why.
- ✓ Encourage students to use the question framework as a guide *only* and to use their own wording as appropriate.
- ✓ Encourage students to meet as a group in between sessions, with or without their teacher.
- ✓ Use student feedback, or lack of, as talking points to gain a deeper understanding of their issues and concerns relating their future.
- ✓ Arrange a day when students can share their findings more widely, i.e., feed back to their local partnership or SLT.
- ✓ Listen to the students feedback and act upon it.

# Lessons learnt: Don't

- X Give the students too many activities to gather feedback on.
- X Ask them to gather feedback on activities that were a long time ago or not substantial / memorable.
- X Expect to get all the students you ask for, in the right combination.
- X Expect the students to know why they are in the initial workshop.
- X Expect everyone to have been productive.
- X Expect everyone to turn up to follow-up sessions.
- X Expect the feedback to be neatly packaged / summed up in a PowerPoint or a word document; if it is then it's a bonus.
- X Rush your time with the students, recommend 90 minutes for the first session. One hour for follow-up sessions.
- X Require students to participate.
- X Involve Year 11 or 13 students.

# Resources

- Guidance for setting up and running Student Researchers in schools / colleges
- Timetables for long and short programmes
- Workshops – 1, 2 and 3
- Student Researchers peer questions
- Feedback guidance for student researchers
- Conference timetable
- End of day conference survey

All available on the LiNCHigher Future Focus website section  
Making Student Voices Heard at:

<http://thefuturefocus.co.uk/resources/student-researchers/>



