

Listening to the student ‘voice’

Description

Listen to the student ‘voice’ – give learners the chance to express their views about issues relating to their learning and welfare. Different approaches can be introduced at a low cost and be highly effective.

Countries

 Portugal

Why is this approach useful?

Young people need to be given opportunities to present their viewpoints. This might be, for example, in regard to the quality of provision, issues relating to student welfare (e.g. bullying) or to make suggestions for improving the provision. This is an important way of maintaining the engagement of students and avoiding disaffection if they feel that their opinions are not listened to or acted upon.

Why is it a quick win?

Opportunities for students to have their voice heard can be introduced at a very low cost. At its simplest level, this might involve setting up a ‘suggestions box’ or e-mail address young people can contact (if required, anonymously). Other methods include setting up a student council or holding regular student-staff meetings where young people can discuss what they like/don’t like about their VET pathway.

How to make this approach successful?

It is very important to not only invite the students to give their views, but also to respond to these and where appropriate to act. If young people feel that their voices are not heard or that their views are not addressed, this will lead to greater disaffection. Timely publication of the student’s view and a response from the provider is therefore important (e.g. suggestions received and response to these, minutes of student council/student-staff meetings).

Examples of measures using this approach

Weekly assemblies in a Portuguese second chance school

The second chance school of Matosinhos (Portugal) is an independent school run by an NGO in partnership with the relevant local and national authorities. It targets youths aged 15-25 who left school without obtaining the minimum qualifications to access employment or another education and training programme.

School rules are agreed each year with the learners as a way of fostering their engagement. Also, once a week students and staff all meet at an assembly where every person has a voice and a vote in the planning of school activities.

[Read good practice factsheet](#)

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