

School Self Evaluation Policy

Self Evaluation

Ardcoil Mhuire

Mackney

Ballinasloe

Roll No: 62890m

Introduction

The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Ardcoil Mhuire was undertaken during the school year 2012/2013. Literacy in a First Year Focus Group was analysed with a view to ascertain how best to ensure that the teaching and learning in all other subjects support the acquisition of literacy skills.

School context

Ardcoil Mhuire has students from the urban and rural hinterland. It is an all girls voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST. There are currently approximately 540 students. TY, LCVP, LCA and FETAC are all well established in the school.

Methodology

A five-member Literacy Self-Evaluation team was established. This team was comprised of the Principal, Deputy Principal, SEN Co-ordinator, Policy Co-ordinator and the Literacy Link Teacher. The information required was discussed and it was decided to focus on: STEN results, Leaving Cert and Junior Cert results, samples of students' work, questionnaires from staff, parents and students, staff feedback on pilot strategies and the whole school checklist. The objective of the exercise was to ascertain what areas the school is performing well in and what areas need improving. It was decided to use this group as a focus group as it was felt that they would be a representative sample and would accurately reflect the results of the group as a whole.

Profile of First Year Focus Group

This group is a mixed ability class with obvious extremes in the ability spectrum. Approximately half of the class would have a good general proficiency in reading, writing and comprehension. Their average grades and copy work would reflect this. In the second cohort, there are three students who receive learning support on a regular basis, while the other students display a weakness in areas like comprehension, punctuation, spelling and a lack of vocabulary. Of the three students who attend Learning Support, one has been assessed with Mild General Learning Disability and Speech and Language Impairment, the others have not been assessed but one in particular displays dyslexic tendencies.

Findings

Learner outcomes

- It was found from analysing the STEN results that our average students were below the national mean, whereas the high achievers were above the national average.
- All subject departments analysed Leaving Certificate results. The majority of subjects compare well to the national norms.
- Samples of written work in English from this group were gathered and analysed. Four areas were highlighted as being in need of improvement, comprehension, organization skills, punctuation and spelling.

Learner experience

The SSE group designed a student questionnaire on attitudes to literacy and engagement in learning. Hard copies were given to students and results were collated using Google forms.

Summary findings

The questionnaire revealed that while students enjoy listening and many like reading, however, a lack of self confidence means that they find it difficult to speak in class and prefer that if the occasion arises that they have to speak in class, that they are forewarned and have an opportunity to be prepared for the event. They also lacked confidence in their reading and writing abilities.

Teacher experience

The SSE group designed a questionnaire for staff on the subject of development of literacy skills. Hard copies were given to staff and results were collated using Google forms.

Summary findings

The questionnaire revealed many positive elements, including the fact that much focus is currently placed on developing literacy skills during class. Good attention was also paid to group work and suitable questioning. The following techniques could be improved upon: the use of editing checklists, problem solving strategies, comprehension strategies and peer teaching.

Summary of Self-Evaluation findings

Our school has strengths in the following areas:

- STEN scores for reading for high achievers are above the national norm.

- Attainment in the majority of subjects at Leaving Cert is above the national norm.
- There is a concerted effort to develop knowledge skills and literacy during lessons
- Students enjoy listening in class, especially to other students' stories and ideas
- 86% students enjoy reading and 73% enjoy writing
- 65% of students read at home and 100% have access to the internet

Our school has weaknesses in the following areas:

- STEN scores for average achievers are below the national norm.
- Comprehension and organisational skills need to be improved
- Punctuation and spelling also proved problematical
- Teachers need to employ editing checklists more regularly, 38% of staff never use editing checklists
- 57% of teachers never use problem solving strategies during their lessons
- One third of teachers do not use comprehension strategies
- Students' lack of self confidence is hindering their participation in class
- Communication with parents in terms of promoting literacy needs to be improved as one quarter of parents failed to respond to the questionnaire
- 59% of students do not like speaking in class

The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

- To use editing checklists to improve punctuation, presentation and organisation skills.
- The development of comprehension strategies across all subject areas.
- Promote oral literacy in class.

Legislative Requirements:

The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed:

- Whole School Guidance Plan
- Strategy on Attendance

(Both are works in progress)

Self Improvement Plan for Literacy

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Methodology

A Literacy Self-Evaluation team was established. The team analysed information from a wide variety of sources including: STEN results, Leaving Cert and Junior Cert results, samples of students' work, questionnaires from staff, parents and students, staff feedback on pilot strategies and the whole school checklist. The objective of the exercise was to ascertain what areas the school is performing well in and what areas need improving. It was decided to use this group as our focus group as it was felt that they would be a representative sample and would accurately reflect the results of the group as a whole.

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Action Plan

Strategy: First year teachers will use editing checklists in class for all written exercises

Activities: -Checklist printed in school journal

-Checklist in teachers pack

-Staff training for use of checklist

-Routine use of checklist in all classes

Objectives: -Improve punctuation, presentation & organisation skills

-85% of teachers using checklists in class

By Whom? All staff

Resources required: -Student journal

-Staff copy

-Posters

-PowerPoint

How we measure: -Samples of work

-Staff questionnaire

Review date: Nov 2014

Strategy: Development of comprehension strategies

Activities: Bug

Determining importance

Anticipation exercises

Objectives: -Promote effective comprehension skills in all students

Promote problem solving skills

-85% of teachers using comprehension strategies in class

By Whom? All staff

Resources required: Graphic organisers

KWL charts

Laminated posters

How we measure: -Samples of work

-Staff questionnaire

-Student questionnaire

Review date: Nov 2014

Strategy: Promote oral literacy in class

Activities: Pre reading activities

Objectives: -Improve students' attitudes towards speaking in class

-Staff are using pre-reading activities & promoting oral skills

-Reduce the number of students who do not like to speak in class to 44%

By Whom? All staff

Resources required: Pre reading resources

How we measure: -Student questionnaire

-Staff questionnaire

Review date: Nov 2014