

Student Learning Community

How do we provide opportunities for students to influence the learning in and beyond the classroom?

A Student Learning Community (SLC) brings together a group of students to focus on, inform and influence learning. They explore and promote new learning for peers, teachers and community.

Why have a Student Learning Community?

An SLC develops students' understanding of learning and expands their strategies for thinking, learning and working collaboratively.

(TfEL – 3.1 Teach students how to learn)

Students can create a culture where everyone inspires and encourages each other's learning.

(TfEL – 2.2 Build a community of learners)

SLCs can work beside adults as drivers for site learning priorities.

TfEL elements made visible through a Student Learning Community

Domain 2 Create safe conditions for rigorous learning	Domain 3 Develop expert learners	Domain 4 Personalise and connect learning
2.1 develop democratic relationships	3.1 teach students how to learn	4.1 build on learners' understandings
2.2 build a community of learners	3.2 foster deep understanding and skilful action	4.2 connect learning to students' lives and aspirations
2.3 negotiate learning	3.3 explore the construction of knowledge	4.3 apply and assess learning in authentic contexts
2.4 challenge students to achieve high standards with appropriate support	3.4 promote dialogue as a means of learning	4.4 communicate learning in multiple modes



I used to think you just talked, but now I know we have dialogue for learning. Our focus is building resilience in learning and how it will help students. The teacher says that effort is like taking the stairs, not the escalator. Year 4 student, SLC member, TfEL PILOT host school

SLC gives time for deeper inquiry into how the best learning outcomes can be achieved by encouraging all students to have a voice, listen to each other and share their ideas across the school... student voice that's all about learning. Teacher/SLC adult supporter, TfEL PILOT host school



Leader/teacher guide: Student Learning Community

■ Develop understanding ■ Into practice ■ Reflection ■ Where to next?

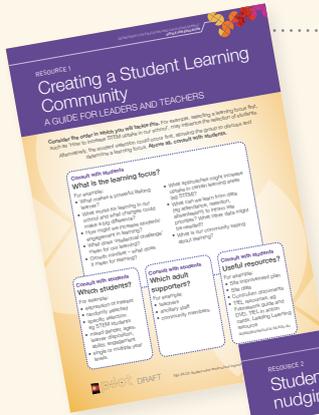
Process	Resource tools – a way in	Food for thought
1 As colleagues, develop common understandings of a Student Learning Community (SLC) and the benefits of bringing together groups of students to develop a learning focus.	1 Creating a Student Learning Community – a guide for leaders and teachers Components to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLC? What it is? What it isn't? • How is an SLC different to a Student Representative Council (SRC)? • How can a staff TLC/PLC be a model for students in an SLC?
2 Introduce the concept of an SLC to students and invite them to form an SLC with a learning focus.	2 Student Learning Community nudging questions Questions to challenge and prompt students' thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will students be consulted about the learning focus and involvement so that they can have opportunities to make a real difference to learning?
3 Support the SLC to develop its own protocols.	3 Student Learning Community meeting model – a guide for students A model to support students to remain focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can time and resources be provided for self-directed learning? • Who will be the adult supporters and what will be their roles?
4 Enable the SLC to meet regularly to discuss, develop and review their learning focus and commit to action.	4 Student Learning Community new perspectives Student voice tiles for 21C learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you challenge students to try different ways of thinking about learning?
5 Support the SLC to share new learning, findings, insights and ideas to influence others.	5 Student Learning Community influencing others Ways to share learnings for maximum impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you support students to share their learnings and recommendations as powerfully as possible?
REFLECTION Support the SLC to review and evaluate its effectiveness and the impact it is having on their own and others' learning.		<p>Prompts for students' reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was our learning focus and why did we choose it? • How do we know if we have made a difference? Can we show evidence of our influence?

Where to next?

Structure a process (eg *TfEL Framework guide* tan panels: Parking lot, p29 or New angles, p30) where the SLC considers new insights, and designs the learning focus for 'where to next?':

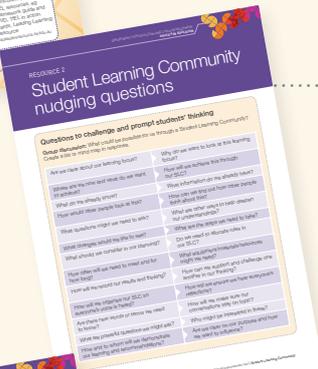
- Could the SLC engage students and teachers in action research, for example, by gathering data to start learning conversations and further inquiry?
- What new learning focus could be taken on by the SLC to contribute to a powerful learning culture or to site priorities?
- Could SLCs from other schools within a partnership collaborate to extend learnings and insights?

Resources



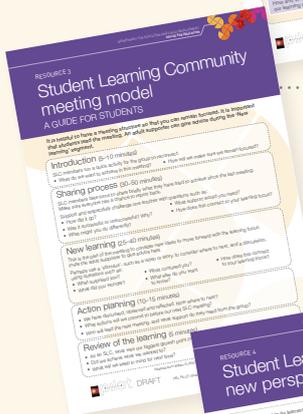
1 | Creating a Student Learning Community – a guide for leaders and teachers

Components to consider



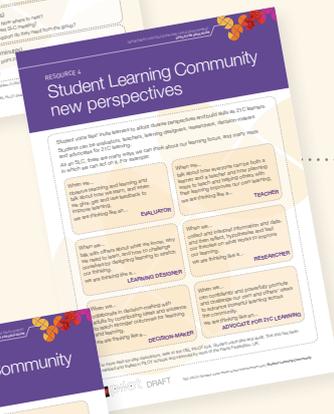
2 | Student Learning Community nudging questions

Questions to challenge and prompt students' thinking



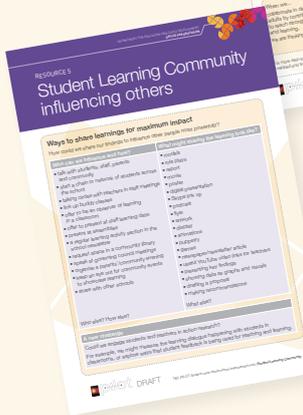
3 | Student Learning Community meeting model – a guide for students

A model to support students to remain focused



4 | Student Learning Community new perspectives

Student voice tiles for 21C learners



5 | Student Learning Community influencing others

Ways to share learnings for maximum impact



RESOURCE 1

Creating a Student Learning Community

A GUIDE FOR LEADERS AND TEACHERS

Consider the order in which you will tackle this. For example, selecting a learning focus first, such as ‘How to increase STEM uptake in our school’, may influence the selection of students.

Alternatively, the student selection could occur first, allowing the group to discuss and determine a learning focus. **Above all, consult with students.**

Consult with students

What is the learning focus?

For example:

- What makes a powerful lifelong learner?
- What works for learning in our school and what changes could make a big difference?
- How might we increase students’ engagement in learning?
- What does ‘intellectual challenge’ mean for our learning?
- Growth mindset – what does it mean for learning?
- What approaches might increase uptake in certain learning areas (eg STEM)?
- What can we learn from data (eg attendance, retention, absenteeism) to inform site priorities? What other data might be needed?
- What is our community saying about learning?

Consult with students

Which students?

For example:

- expression of interest
- randomly selected
- specific selection eg STEM students
- mixed gender, ages, learner disposition, ability, engagement
- single or multiple year levels.

Consult with students

Which adult supporters?

For example:

- teachers
- ancillary staff
- community members.

Consult with students

Useful resources?

For example:

- Site improvement plan
 - Site data
 - Curriculum documents
 - TfEL resources, eg Framework guide and DVD, TfEL in action cards, Leading Learning resource
- acleadersresource.sa.edu.au



RESOURCE 2

Student Learning Community nudging questions

Questions to challenge and prompt students' thinking

Group discussion: What could be possible for us through a Student Learning Community? Create a list or mind map in response.

Are we clear about our learning focus?	Why do we want to look at this learning focus?
Where are we now and what do we want to achieve?	How will we achieve this through our SLC?
What do we already know?	What information do we already have?
How would other people look at this?	How can we find out how other people think about this?
What questions might we need to ask?	What are other ways to help deepen our understandings?
What changes would we like to see?	What are the steps we need to take?
What should we consider in our planning?	Do we need to allocate roles in our SLC?
How often will we need to meet and for how long?	What equipment/materials/resources might we need?
How will we record our results and thinking?	How can we support and challenge one another in our thinking?
How will we organise our SLC so everyone's voice is heard?	How will we ensure we hear everyone's reflections?
Are there new words or terms we need to know?	How will we make sure our conversations stay on topic?
What are powerful questions we might ask?	Who might be interested in these?
How and to whom will we demonstrate our learning and recommendations?	Are we clear on our purpose and how we want to influence?



RESOURCE 3

Student Learning Community meeting model

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

It is helpful to have a meeting structure so that you can remain focused. It is important that students lead the meeting. An adult supporter can give advice during the 'New learning' segment.

Introduction (5–10 minutes)

SLC members run a quick activity for the group to reconnect:

- What do we want to achieve in this meeting?
- How will we make sure we remain focused?

Sharing process (30–50 minutes)

SLC members take turns to share briefly what they have tried to achieve since the last meeting. Make sure everyone has a chance to report back.

Support and respectfully challenge one another with questions such as:

- How did it go?
- Was it successful or unsuccessful? Why?
- What might you do differently?
- What support would you need?
- How does this connect to your learning focus?

New learning (25–40 minutes)

This is the part of the meeting to consider new ideas to move forward with the learning focus. Invite the adult supporter to give advice here.

Perhaps use a 'stimulus', such as a video or story, to consider where to next, and a discussion, using questions such as:

- What surprised you?
- What confused you?
- How does this connect to your learning focus?
- What did you wonder?
- What else do you want to know?

Action planning (10–15 minutes)

- We have discussed, observed and reflected. Now where to next?
- What actions will we commit to before our next SLC meeting?
- Who will lead the next meeting, and what support do they need from the group?

Review of the learning (5 minutes)

- As an SLC, what was our biggest growth point in today's meeting?
- Did we achieve what we wanted to?
- What will we keep in mind for next time?

Adapted from William D (2007) 'Changing Classroom Practice', *Educational Leadership* 65 (4), pp36–42



RESOURCE 4

Student Learning Community new perspectives

Student voice tiles* invite learners to adopt diverse perspectives and build skills as 21C learners.

Students can be evaluators, teachers, learning designers, researchers, decision-makers and advocates for 21C learning.

As an SLC, there are many ways we can think about our learning focus, and many ways in which we can act on it. For example:

When we...
observe teaching and learning and
talk about how we learn, and when
we give, get and use feedback to
improve learning,
we are thinking like an...

EVALUATOR

When we...
talk about how everyone can be both a
learner and a teacher and how planning
ways to teach and helping others with
their learning improves our own learning,
we are thinking like a...

TEACHER

When we...
talk with others about what we know, why
we need to learn, and how to challenge
ourselves by designing learning to stretch
our thinking,
we are thinking like a...

LEARNING DESIGNER

When we...
collect and interpret information and data,
and then reflect, hypothesise and test
our theories on what works to improve
our learning,
we are thinking like a...

RESEARCHER

When we...
collaborate in decision-making with
adults by contributing ideas and evidence
to reach stronger outcomes for teaching
and learning,
we are thinking like a...

DECISION-MAKER

When we...
can confidently and powerfully promote
and challenge our own and others' views
to advance powerful learning across
the community,
we are thinking like an...

ADVOCATE FOR 21C LEARNING

* For more step-by-step descriptors, refer to the TfEL PILOT tool, *Student voice tiles and audit*. This tool has been developed and trialled in PILOT schools and informed by work of the Harris Federation, UK.



RESOURCE 5

Student Learning Community influencing others

Ways to share learnings for maximum impact

How could we share our findings to influence other people most powerfully?

Who can we influence and how?	What might sharing the learning look like?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talk with students, staff, parents and community • start a chain or network of students across the school • talking circles with teachers in staff meetings • link up buddy classes • offer to be an observer of learning in a classroom • offer to present at staff learning days • present at assemblies • a regular learning activity section in the school newsletter • request space in a community library • speak at governing council meetings • organise a parents'/community evening • keep an eye out for community events to showcase learning • share with other schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • models • role plays • report • movie • poster • digital presentation • Skype link up • podcast • flyer • artwork • display • animations • puppetry • games • newspaper/newsletter article • useful YouTube video links for teachers • presenting key findings • showing data as graphs and visuals • drafting a proposal • making recommendations
Who else? How else?	What else?

A new challenge

Could we engage students and teachers in action research?

For example, we might measure the learning dialogue happening with students in classrooms, or explore ways that student feedback is being used for teaching and learning.