



Improving wellbeing through student participation at school: the student participation survey (SPS) for secondary schools: information pack

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IMPROVING WELLBEING THROUGH STUDENT PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL

The Student Participation Survey
(SPS) for Secondary Schools

INFORMATION PACK
[HARD COPY VERSION]



This **Survey Information Pack** (hard copy version) has been produced as part of an Australian Research Council Linkage project (LP140100540) titled, **'Improving Wellbeing through Student Participation at School'**.

The research was led by the **Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University** in partnership with the **NSW Department of Education, the Catholic Schools Office (Diocese of Lismore), and the Office of the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People.**

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For further information on the research see: bit.ly/ParticipationStudy



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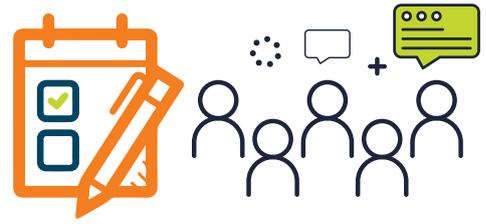
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SECTION 1



INTRODUCING THE STUDENT PARTICIPATION SURVEY (SPS)

The Student Participation Survey was developed as part of an Australian Research Council Linkage project, led by the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University in Australia, and titled, *Improving Wellbeing through Student Participation at School*.

The research comprised four phases:

PHASE 1: 142 policy and guideline documents from NSW government and Catholic education systems were analysed in relation to student participation

PHASE 2: Focus groups were undertaken with 177 students (Years 7-10) and individual interviews with 32 staff members (teachers, head teachers and principals) across ten government and Catholic schools in NSW. Nine education policy stakeholders from the government and Catholic education sectors were also interviewed. This phase aimed to explore current practices of student participation, along with the enablers and barriers.

PHASE 3: The findings from Phases 1 and 2 were used to develop a *Student Participation Survey (SPS)*, which was then tested twice for reliability and validity. A total of 536 students were involved in the tests.

PHASE 4: An on-line survey was administered to 1,435 Year 7-10 students from government and Catholic high schools across NSW. The survey incorporated the finalised *Student Participation Survey (SPS)*, along with other questions exploring the connections between participation and wellbeing at school.

The SPS was developed in Phases 3 and 4 of the study, engaging large samples of secondary students from government and Catholic high schools in regional and metropolitan New South Wales. Full details of the development and implementation of the SPS can be obtained in the Phase 3 and Phase 4 reports on the project, available at Centre for Children and Young People website: bit.ly/ParticipationStudy

The Student Participation Survey

The SPS is a survey for use in high schools. It is a **reliable and valid** survey designed to measure student participation across different areas of school life and to support schools in monitoring and improving their approaches to student participation. Being reliable and valid means the survey produces consistent and accurate scores each time it is used. The researchers who developed the survey used extensive statistical analyses to develop and refine it. Further information regarding reliability and validity can be found in the Phase 3 and 4 reports report at: bit.ly/ParticipationStudy

Administration

Any school staff member or academic researcher can administer the SPS to students in school settings. The person administering the SPS at your school needs to read the administration instructions (Section 4) before administering the survey with students.

If you are reading this, you have chosen to administer the **hard copy, paper-based version of the survey**.

Please note that choosing hard copy implementation means you will need to print enough copies of the SPS questions for students to complete.

The SPS is best completed by students in a classroom group setting. However, in this setting privacy and confidentiality should be provided for students so that the resulting data is consistent. For instance, if students feel 'watched' when answering the questions they may feel like it's a class test and answer questions in ways they perceive you want them to, instead of how they really think or feel.

Ethics

Given you are likely implementing the survey as part of routine school planning and improvement (i.e. you are not using the responses/data collected for anything else), it is unlikely your school or school system requires **formal ethics approval**. Nevertheless, the SPS implementation in your school still needs to be guided by an ethical framework – this means students' completion of the survey is voluntary, student names or any identifying information must **not** be collected. Students need to be informed the survey will be administered in class, their completion is voluntary, it won't be possible to identify individual students, and when and how the information gathered will be used and stored. **See final step of this document for ways to inform students of the findings.**

Please note that if researchers based in schools or elsewhere, like a University, would like to use the SPS as part of a formal **research project** involving your school they will need to obtain formal **ethics approval** from their university or organisation before proceeding, as well as ethics approval from the relevant school system.

Timing

In total, administration of the SPS with students will take approximately 20-30 minutes.

The SPS itself takes approximately 10-15 minutes for students to complete, with the remaining time used to explain the purpose of the survey and provide instructions to students.

Using a hard copy version of the survey includes another 5 minutes if you decide to ask students to tally their scores. Asking each student to tally their scores in the boxes provided on the survey will save staff time in preparing the data for the analysis stage.

SECTION 2



WHAT DOES THE STUDENT PARTICIPATION SURVEY MEASURE?

The Student Participation Survey (SPS) measures six elements of student participation at school using 38 items. The six elements of participation are:

- 1. VOICE ABOUT SCHOOLING** – the extent to which students have avenues to express their views about their schooling **9 QUESTIONS**
- 2. VOICE ABOUT ACTIVITIES** – the extent to which students have avenues to express their views about school activities outside the classroom **3 QUESTIONS**
- 3. HAVING A SAY WITH INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE** – the extent to which student views are heard and taken into consideration by influential people at school, such as the principal, deputy, SRC and other student leaders and teachers **5 QUESTIONS**
- 4. HAVING INFLUENCE** – the extent to which students report their views are listened to and have influence on decisions made at school about their learning and in school activities outside of the classroom **7 QUESTIONS**
- 5. HAVING CHOICE** – the extent to which students have choices regarding their learning, activities and other aspects of school life **5 QUESTIONS**
- 6. WORKING TOGETHER** – the extent to which students work with other students and with their teachers to makes changes at school **9 QUESTIONS**

The SPS uses a 5 point Likert Scale to indicate how strongly students agree with descriptor statements with 1 being Strongly disagree an 5 being Strongly agree. See next section for actual survey.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

SECTION 3

THE STUDENT PARTICIPATION SURVEY



Thanks for taking part in this survey.

You are helping us to learn how to make our school a better place for students like you!

We are going to ask you about your experiences at school.

First, some questions about you!

Are you:

- Female
- Male
- I describe my gender in a different way
- I'd rather not say right now

What Year are you in at school?

- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

All the following questions ask you to read a sentence at the side of the page then choose an answer that best suits you. Please use a tick in the tables below to show your responses to each of the questions.

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree;
4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

SET A: VOICE ABOUT SCHOOLING

Questions		1	2	3	4	5
At school, I usually get to say what I think about...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	How the classroom space is organised					
2	What I learn					
3	How I am taught					
4	How my work is assessed					
5	Homework					
6	Classroom rules					
7	What happens in home rooms or roll call groups					
8	How the school supports students					
9	How students are disciplined					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

SET B: VOICE ABOUT ACTIVITIES

Questions		1	2	3	4	5
In school activities, such as sporting teams, clubs, excursions, camps, fundraising and socials, I usually get to say what I think about...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
10	Which activities are offered					
11	How the activities are organised					
12	How often the activities happen					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

SET C: HAVING A SAY WITH INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

Questions		1	2	3	4	5
At school, I get the chance to say what I think...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
13	To the SRC and/or student leaders					
14	To the Principal					
15	To the Deputy					
16	In Year group or house meetings					
17	To my teachers outside of class time (such as in the playground, or in the teacher's office)					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

SET D: HAVING INFLUENCE

Questions		1	2	3	4	5
Most of the time in the classroom...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
18	My opinion is listened to by teachers					
19	My opinion is considered by teachers					
20	The teachers tell me how my opinion was used					
21	My opinion makes a difference and things change					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

SET E: HAVING INFLUENCE

Questions		1	2	3	4	5
Most of the time in school activities, such as sporting teams, clubs, excursions, camps, fundraising and socials...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
22	The teachers tell me how my opinion was used					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

SET F: HAVING INFLUENCE

Questions		1	2	3	4	5
At my school...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
23	Staff take notice of what students say to them					
24	Staff take students' opinions seriously					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

SET G: HAVING CHOICE

Questions		1	2	3	4	5
At my school I usually get a lot of choice about...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
25	How I present my school work (e.g., as an essay or poster)					
26	How I look					
27	Who I sit near					
28	The type of school activities I do (such as sports, camps, socials, plays)					
29	How much I get involved in school activities (such as sports, camps, socials, plays)					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

SET H: WORKING TOGETHER

Questions		1	2	3	4	5
In the classroom...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
30	My teachers and I often make decisions together about my learning					
31	My classmates and I often make decisions together about our learning					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

SET I: WORKING TOGETHER

Questions		1	2	3	4	5
In school activities such as sporting teams, clubs, excursions, camps, fundraising and socials ...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
32	My teachers and I often make decisions together					
33	My classmates and I often make decisions together					
34	Students sometimes contribute to the wider community (businesses, organisations, other schools etc.)					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

SET J: WORKING TOGETHER

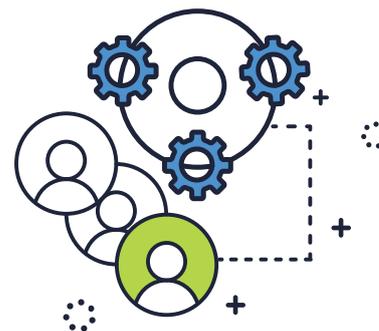
Questions		1	2	3	4	5
At my school...		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
35	Students work together outside of class time to get things changed at school					
36	Students work with teachers outside of class time to make things happen at school					
37	Students work with teachers to find a positive way forward					
38	Students usually make decisions with teachers in meetings					

TOTAL						
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

THANK YOU!



SECTION 4



HOW DO I ADMINISTER THE STUDENT PARTICIPATION SURVEY (SPS)?

The following provides you with a step-by-step guide for administering the Student Participation Survey at your school. Before you implement the survey, you will need to decide which students will complete it. Schools may decide to survey one particular year group, some students across year groups or all students. Information for students, parents and the school community should be provided about the survey prior to commencing.

When discussing the survey with the class, you might also like to explain to students how their survey responses will be used by the school, and when the students will hear feedback about the survey results.

As you are conducting the survey on paper-based copies **each student will need:**

- A pen or pencil
- One copy of the SPS (see Section 3 to print)

Instructions for students prior to commencing the SPS

Once you have recruited class/es each student has their own paper copy of the survey then read the following script to the class.

TEACHERS - SCRIPT TO READ TO STUDENTS PRIOR TO COMPLETING THE SPS:

You are taking part in a survey that is looking at your participation at school. This survey asks you questions about the different ways you participate at school, such as being able to have a voice, influence the way things are done, be involved in decisions, and in working together.

The survey will take you about 10-15 minutes to complete. We really value your input so please take your time to think about the questions. Your answers in the survey will be private and confidential, which means your name will not be connected to your answers, so please don't write your name on the survey.

The survey will ask you to read a sentence at the side of the page, and then choose an answer that best describes your experiences. With your pen or pencil please tick in the box next to the question to show whether you:

1 – strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 – neither agree nor disagree; 4 – agree or 5 – strongly agree.
Choose only one answer for each question.

Please start the survey now without talking to each other. If you need help with anything, please raise your hand.

Please note: If a student normally requires a teacher or teacher's assistant to support their learning then it is quite OK to have similar assistance to complete the survey.

Tallying the Survey with Students

If you would like students to assist in tallying their scores, then the following script needs to be read to students once the whole class has completed the SPS. It's your choice whether to involve students in this process, but it will help reduce the work involved for the person analysing the data (see following section for more details on tallying and analysis). Please note, there's a bit of maths involved so if younger students you might have a lesson on the calculation process before you implement the survey:

SCRIPT TO READ TO STUDENTS IMMEDIATELY AFTER COMPLETING THE SPS

Now that you have answered all the survey questions I'm going to ask you to tally your own survey results. Under each set of questions (Set A, Set B, Set C etc.) there is a single line of empty boxes titled 'TOTAL'. Please fill in the boxes for each set of questions as follows.

Starting with Set A, look down the 'Strongly Disagree' column and count how many times you put a tick in this column. Write the total number of ticks in the box at the bottom of the column. For example, if you have marked three ticks, write three in the box. If you didn't choose any 'Strongly Disagrees' write zero (0) in this first box (the same goes for the other columns too).

Then move to the 'Disagree' column for Set A and count the number times you ticked 'Disagree'. This column requires a bit of maths, as each "Disagree" tick is worth 2 points. So count how many 'Disagree' ticks you had for Set A and **multiply it by two**. So you may have had 3 ticks in the column so this would be $3 \times 2 = 6$. Write the total score (i.e. 6) for 'Disagree' in the box under the 'Disagree' column.

TOTAL			6			
-------	--	--	---	--	--	--

Each response for 'Neither Agree nor Disagree' is worth 3 points. So count how many responses you have in Set A for 'Neither agree nor disagree' and **multiply it by three**. So you may have 2 ticks in column, so this would be $2 \times 3 = 6$. Write your total in the box below 'Neither agree nor disagree'.

Each response for 'Agree' is worth 4 points. So count how many responses you have in Set A for 'Agree' and **multiply by four**. Write your total in the box below 'Agree'.

Each response for 'Strongly Agree' is worth 5 points. So count how many responses you have in Set A for 'Strongly Agree' and **multiply by five**. Write your total in the box below 'Strongly Agree'.

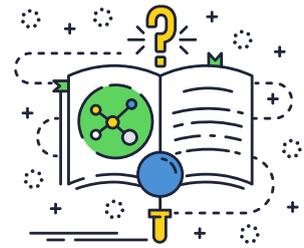
When you have done all of the columns for Set A, add together all of the numbers you have written. Write your total score for Set A in the little green box that sticks out on the left hand side of the page for this set. You may use a calculator to check your maths.

Repeat this process for Sets B to J.

Thank you. You are now finished the survey, and I will come around and collect these from you. I will let you know the results as soon as the analyses are completed.

Note: If you don't ask the students to tally their own scores, you will need to do this yourself manually, which will take longer.

SECTION 5



HOW CAN I SCORE, INTERPRET THE DATA, AND SHARE THE FINDINGS?

Overview:

These instructions have been developed to guide school staff on how to enter the student responses from the hard copy version of the Student Participation Survey into a Microsoft Excel file. It also provides specific instructions on how to calculate mean scores to interpret the students' responses.

Previously, you may have asked students to tally their scores for Sets A – J on the hard copy survey. If you did not ask students to do this, then a staff member should first complete this tallying step. Please see “Tallying the Survey with Students” (in Section 4) and script 2 for instructions on how to do so.

Step 1: Setting up a Spreadsheet for the Student Responses to the Student Participation Survey in Excel

First, open a blank Microsoft Excel sheet. Set-up 3 columns titled ‘Student’, ‘Gender’ and ‘Year level’. Then enter each students’ gender into the gender column (Male, Female, described differently, non-disclosure) and their Year at school (Year 7, 8, 9, 10) into the Year level column. Each student should have a horizontal row in the spreadsheet, see screen shot 1. Then label 10 columns “Set A” to “Set J” as shown in screen shot 1 below. Then begin entering the Set A – J total scores from each student’s hard copy survey into the spreadsheet.

Screen shot 1: Example Excel spreadsheet columns

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	Student	Gender	Year level	Set A	Set B	Set C	Set D	Set E	Set F	Set G	Set H	Set I	Set J
2	student 1												
3	student 2												
4	student 3												
5	student 4												
6	student 5												
7	student 6												
8	...etc												
9													
10													
11													

Step 2: Calculating the Total Scores and their Means for the Elements of Participation

Once the data is entered into the spreadsheet you first need to calculate the Total Scores for each of the six elements of participation using the following instructions.

1. WORKING TOGETHER:

First, create a new column at the end of your table called 'Working Together Total'. Then add the columns for Set H, Set I and Set J in this new column (all the answers in these column relates to students working together). To add these scores together in Excel click on the first empty cell under the column called 'Working Together Total'. Type an 'equals' symbol (=). Then click on the first cell with a score in it under 'Set H', then type in a plus symbol (+), then click on the first cell under Set I with a score in it, then type in a plus symbol (+), then click on the first cell with a score in it under 'Set J' (see example screen shot below). You are creating a formula that asks Excel to add together the scores for Sets H-J for this row. Your file should now look like this:

Screen shot 2: Calculating sets H, I, and J, for the 'working together' element of participation

Student	Gender	Year level	Set A	Set B	Set C	Set D	Set E	Set F	Set G	Set H	Set I	Set J	Working Together Total
student 1	female	7	25	3	8	4	1	2	3	7	4	7	=K2+L2+M2+
student 2	male	7	34	5	21	15	3	5	6	9	5	3	
student 3	female	9	15	7	11	8	2	3	7	10	2	5	
student 4	non-disclosure	10	28	12	14	11	4	9	10	21	8	12	
student 5	male	8	33	6	16	12	5	2	8	5	10	11	
student 6	described differently	8	18	9	21	6	1	5	6	10	2	3	
...etc													

Now Click 'Enter'. The sum of the first row for Sets H, I, and J should now be present in the first cell under the 'Working Together Total' column.

To add up the rest of the students' scores for 'Working Together Total' move your cursor to the bottom right of the cell that you have already done until it turns into a solid plus sign (+). Click on the plus sign and drag the mouse down to select all the cells in the column (down to the last line of data). Let go of the mouse button and each student's 'Working Together Total' score should appear automatically in the column (see screen shot 3 next page). If you cannot get this to work, use the calculating method above for each row of the H, I and J sets.

Screen shot 3: Totalling the final scores for the 'Working Together' element

Student	Gender	Year level	Set A	Set B	Set C	Set D	Set E	Set F	Set G	Set H	Set I	Set J	Working Together Total
student 1	female	7	25	3	8	4	1	2	3	7	4	7	18
student 2	male	7	34	5	21	15	3	5	6	9	5	3	17
student 3	female	9	15	7	11	8	2	3	7	10	2	5	17
student 4	non-disclosure	10	28	12	14	11	4	9	10	21	8	12	41
student 5	male	8	33	6	16	12	5	2	8	5	10	11	26
student 6	described differently	8	18	9	21	6	1	5	6	10	2	3	15
...etc													

Now to calculate the mean or average Working Together score we need to divide the Working Together total scores by 9, as there were 9 questions in the survey that measure Working Together. To do this use the following instructions:

Create a new column at the end of the table called 'Working Together Mean'. In the first cell in the new column type in an equals (=) symbol. Then click on the first working together total score. Then type in a forward slash (/), which tells Excel to divide. Then type on number 9. So in the cell you now have the correct formula:

Screen shot 4: Calculating the Mean score for the 'Working Together' element

	Year level	Set A	Set B	Set C	Set D	Set E	Set F	Set G	Set H	Set I	Set J	Working Together Total	Working Together Mean	
	7	25	3	8	4	1	2	3	7	4	7	18	=N2/9	
	7	34	5	21	15	3	5	6	9	5	3	17		
	9	15	7	11	8	2	3	7	10	2	5	17		
	10	28	12	14	11	4	9	10	21	8	12	41		
	8	33	6	16	12	5	2	8	5	10	11	26		
	erently	8	18	9	21	6	1	5	6	10	2	3	15	

Click 'Enter' and the mean score for the first student will now appear in the cell. Now to calculate the mean for the rest of the data, move your cursor to the bottom right of the cell with the 'Working Together Mean' score in it until it turns into a solid plus sign (+). Click on the plus sign and drag the mouse down to select all the cells to the last line of scores. Let go of the mouse button and the column of scores for 'Working Together Mean' should be present in your Working Together Mean column (see screen shot next page).

Screen shot 5: Totalling the final mean score for the 'Working Together' element

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
nt	Gender	Year level	Set A	Set B	Set C	Set D	Set E	Set F	Set G	Set H	Set I	Set J	Working Together Total	Working Together Mean
nt 1	female	7	25	3	8	4	1	2	3	7	4	7	18	2
nt 2	male	7	34	5	21	15	3	5	6	9	5	3	17	1.88888889
nt 3	female	9	15	7	11	8	2	3	7	10	2	5	17	1.88888889
nt 4	non-disclosure	10	28	12	14	11	4	9	10	21	8	12	41	4.55555556
nt 5	male	8	33	6	16	12	5	2	8	5	10	11	26	2.88888889
nt 6	described differently	8	18	9	21	6	1	5	6	10	2	3	15	1.66666667

To reduce the number of decimal places in the column of 'Working Together Mean' scores follow these instructions:

Go to the 'Home' tab in Excel. Hold your cursor over the first cell of the Working Together mean scores and drag down to select all the Working Together mean scores. Click on the 'Decrease Decimal' button (see inside the red circle on the screen shot 6 below) multiple times until there are only 2 decimal places shown in each cell. As you have selected all the Working together scores, you will notice when you do this that the scores will all reduce decimals at once.

Screen shot 6: Reducing the decimal places of the mean score

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	Student Gender	Year level	Set A	Set B	Set C	Set D	Set E	Set F	Set G	Set H	Set I	Set J	Working Together Total	Working Together Mean
2	student 1 female	7	25	3	8	4	1	2	3	7	4	7	33	3.67
3	student 2 male	7	34	5	21	15	3	5	6	9	5	3	17	1.88888889
4	student 3 female	9	15	7	11	8	2	3	7	10	2	5	17	1.88888889
5	student 4 non-disclosure	10	28	12	14	11	4	9	10	21	8	12	41	4.55555556
6	student 5 male	8	33	6	16	12	5	2	8	5	10	11	26	2.88888889
7	student 6 described differently	8	18	9	21	6	1	5	6	10	2	3	15	1.66666667
8	...etc													
9														
10														
11														
12														
13														

Now repeat the above steps using the following instructions for the 'Having Influence' element of participation:

2. HAVING INFLUENCE:

Add the columns for Set D, Set E and Set F into a new column called 'Having Influence Total'. Then create another new column next to the total called 'Having Influence Mean' and divide each total score in the new mean column by 7 as there are 7 survey questions which measure 'Having Influence'.

Screen shot 7: Totalling the mean score for the 'Having Influence' element

E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Set B	Set C	Set D	Set E	Set F	Set G	Set H	Set I	Set J	Working Together Total	Working Together Mean	Having Influence Total	Having Influence Mean	
3	8	4	1	2	3	7	4	7	18	2	7	1.0	
5	21	15	3	5	6	9	5	3	17	1.9	23	3.3	
7	11	8	2	3	7	10	2	5	17	1.9	13	1.9	
12	14	11	4	9	10	21	8	12	41	4.6	24	3.4	
6	16	12	5	2	8	5	10	11	26	2.9	19	2.7	
9	21	6	1	5	6	10	2	3	15	1.7	12	1.7	

For the remaining four elements of participation there is only one set of scores for each element so you do not need to create a total. All you need to do for these elements is create a new column next to the set and create a new the title for these columns as follows, and then calculate the mean scores:

- 1. VOICE ABOUT SCHOOLING:** Create a new column next to Set A and call it 'Voice about Schooling Mean'. Set A contains all the scores for Voice about Schooling. To calculate the mean scores divide the column by 9 as there are 9 survey questions that measure 'Voice about Schooling'.
- 2. VOICE ABOUT ACTIVITIES:** Create a new column next to Set B and call it 'Voice about Activities Mean'. Set B contains the three items for Voice about Activities. To calculate the mean scores divide the column by 3 as there are 3 survey questions that measure 'Voice about Activities', please see screen shot below.
- 3. HAVING A SAY WITH INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE (IP):** Create a new column next to Set C called 'Having a say with I.P. Mean'. Set C contains all the scores for 'Having a say with I.P.'. To calculate the mean scores divide the column by 5 as there are 5 survey questions that measure 'Having a Say with I.P.'.
- 4. HAVING CHOICE:** Create a new column next to Set G and call it 'Having Choice Mean'. Set G contains all the scores for 'Having Choice'. To calculate the mean score, divide the column of scores in Set G by 5 in the new column, as there are 5 survey questions that measure 'Having Choice'.

Screen shot 8: Calculating the mean scores for Sets A, B, C and G

				A: Voice about Schooling Mean	Set B	B: Voice about Activities Mean	Set C	C: Having a say with IP Mean	Set D	Set E	Set F	Set G	G: Having Choice Mean	Set H	Set I	Set J	Working Together
Student 1	female	7	25	2.8	3	1	8	1.6	4	1	2	3	0.6	7	4	7	
Student 2	male	7	34	3.8	5	1.7	21	4.2	15	3	5	6	1.2	9	5	3	
Student 3	female	9	15	1.7	7	2.3	11	2.2	8	2	3	7	1.4	10	2	5	
Student 4	non-disclosure	10	28	3.1	12	4	14	2.8	11	4	9	10	2	21	8	12	
Student 5	male	8	33	3.7	6	2	16	3.2	12	5	2	8	1.6	5	10	11	
Student 6	described differently	8	18	2	9	3	21	4.2	6	1	5	6	1.2	10	2	3	
etc																	

Step 3: Calculate the Mean Scores for each Element of Participation

In the previous step, Step 2, you have calculated a mean score for the six elements of participation for every student who completed the Student Participation Survey. Now you are going to calculate a mean score for each of the six elements of participation for the whole sample of students. To do this please follow these instructions:

In the blank cell below the last students' mean score for 'Working Together Mean' you will now calculate the mean of the whole column of data. Place the cursor in the first blank cell below the last student's mean score and go to the Formulas tab, click on the 'Autosum' drop down menu and select 'average' and then press 'enter' (see the red circle on the screen shots 9 below). The mean score for the whole column should now be reported in the cell. Repeat this process for the other five elements of participation: Having Influence, Having a Say with Influential People, Having Choice, Voice about Schooling and Voice About Activities. You will end up with six mean scores, one for each element of participation.

Screen shots 9: The 'average' button and calculating the total mean score across the whole sample for each element of participation

The screenshot shows the Excel ribbon with the 'Formulas' tab selected. The 'Autosum' button in the 'Function Library' group is circled in red. A dropdown menu is open, showing 'Average' as the selected option. The formula bar shows '=AVERAGE(O2:O7)'. Below the ribbon, a portion of the spreadsheet is visible, showing the 'Working Together Mean' column (O) and the 'Having Influence' column (P).

The screenshot shows a close-up of the spreadsheet. The formula bar at the top displays '=AVERAGE(E2:E7)'. The spreadsheet shows the following data for the 'Working Together Mean' column (O):

Student	Working Together Mean
Student 1	3.7
Student 2	1.9
Student 3	1.9
Student 4	4.6
Student 5	2.9
Student 6	1.7
Overall Mean	2.5

Step 4: Create your School's Participation Profile Plot

Print a hard copy of the 'Participation Profile Plot' (shown on p.22) and mark the mean scores on the grid in the relevant places for each of the six elements of participation. Following the page with the blank profile plot, there is an example of a completed profile plot to provide you with some ideas on how to plot your mean scores.

You now have a graph of the pattern of your school's mean scores for the six elements of participation.

Step 5: Interpret your School's Participation Profile Plot

The Participation Profile Plot is a graphical representation of your school's current performance on student participation, based on student reports. The plot shows the pattern of mean scores across the six elements of participation.

To interpret the means:

- The elements with the highest mean scores are those the school is doing best in with regard to student experience of participation. The elements with the lowest means are those the school is doing least well in regarding student experience of participation.
- Through planning, schools should aim to increase the mean scores across the elements of participation and implement the survey again at a later date to see how they are doing.



COMMENTARY ON THE EXAMPLE STUDENT PARTICIPATION PROFILE PLOT:

As shown in the example profile plot on the previous page, the example school has the highest mean score on the 'Voice about activities' (mean = 4.1) element of participation. This indicates that the students at the example school rate the school's performance on this element the strongest. The lowest mean score is for 'Having influence' (mean = 2.0). This indicates that that the students at the example school rate the school's performance on this element the weakest. The school could use this information to guide their policy and practices with regard to student participation. They could also re-run the survey over time to see how their student ratings of participation change over time, as they introduce new initiatives and processes regarding student participation.

Step 6: What Next? Suggestions for Engaging with Your Findings and Disseminating These

Acknowledge and act on student input

It is important to regularly communicate to the students and the school community on plans and changes that have arisen from student views.

As such, timely feedback following the survey should be provided to students.

What do the survey findings suggest about student participation at your school?

What might need to change?

How might the students be able to assist the school in exploring ways to improve participation?

Who do I contact if I have any further questions about administering, scoring or interpreting the SPS?

If you have any further questions about administering, scoring or interpreting the SPS at your school or in your research please contact Dr Donnah Anderson: (doanderson@csu.edu.au).

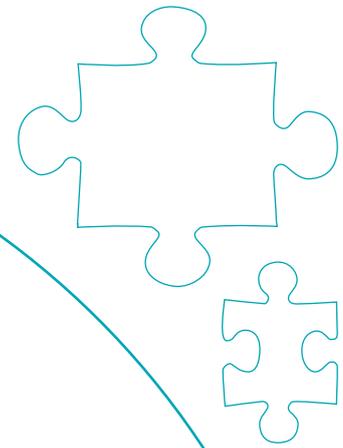
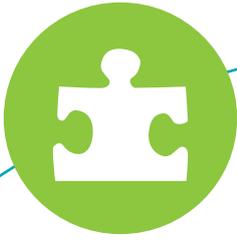
If you have questions regarding the ARC linkage project on Student Participation at School please contact Professor Anne Graham (anne.graham@scu.edu.au) or visit: bit.ly/ParticipationStudy

Moving forward with student participation at your school

The following resources may help:

Good Practice Guide: bit.ly/ParticipationStudy

Professional learning workshops for school staff: bit.ly/ParticipationStudy



FURTHER INFORMATION

This survey information pack has been developed from a Australian Research Council Linkage project [Grant no: LP140100540], led by the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University in partnership with the NSW Department of Education, the Catholic Schools Office (Diocese of Lismore), and the Office of the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People.

Several additional resources have been developed from this research to provide guidance on introducing, strengthening and monitoring student participation at school. These include:

- A comprehensive **Good Practice Guide** for supporting student participation at school
- A shorter **Quick Reference Guide** for supporting student participation at school
- **Video vignettes** on participation at school
- A series of **professional learning workshops** for school staff

Other research outputs include:

- Full reports for each phase of the study
- Short summaries of the findings from each phase

The above resources and documents are available at:

bit.ly/ParticipationStudy

For further information about this project please contact:

Professor Anne Graham

Email: anne.graham@scu.edu.au



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