

SAI Developing Your Practice Session 2: Student Partnership in Action

Ralph Armstrong-Astley
Student 2 Student Co-Ordinator, TCD



Agenda

1. Introducing S2S
2. Student Belonging and Success
3. Why Student Partnership
4. Students on boards and student onboarding
5. Training models
6. Case studies



Overview of Student2Student

Student Belonging through S2S:

- Mentors (c.650)
- Head Mentors (c.30)
- Peer Supporters (c.30)
- S2S Society Committee
- S2S Staff (3)
- Wider SCS team



SCS
Student Counselling Services

Mental Health

S2S
Student2Student

Social Belonging

SLD
Student Learning Development

Learning Development

	Braxton (academic perspective)	Kuh (student services' perspective)	O'Farrell (Irish student perspective)	Irish HEI Graduate Attributes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attainment of educational objectives Academic achievement Persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing award/graduating Achieving high academic attainment Progressing to a postgraduate programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disciplinary expertise
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition of general education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition of desired knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deepening learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect for knowledge and learning
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of academic confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills and competencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing your best, achieving personal potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication and influence Creativity and innovation
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal accomplishments Development of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement in educationally purposeful activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with the full college experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical and analytic thinking Independence and autonomy
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for adulthood and citizenship 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributing to society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Awareness
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post college performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing skills to maximise employability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional competence
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal development 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing personal attributes Socialising and making friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics and integrity Leadership and collaboration
8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being happy / satisfied 	

Defining Student Success



1. Achieving or surpassing a student's own expectations of their academic outcomes
2. Broadening their interests and engagement within their field of study and beyond it
3. Self-efficacy in study, writing and research
4. Gaining personal and professional development through co-curricular engagement/activities
5. Confidence in their capacity to contribute to their communities and/or broader society
6. Meeting or exceeding their career expectations
7. A sense of psychosocial development
8. Stronger sense of satisfaction with life

Defining Student Success

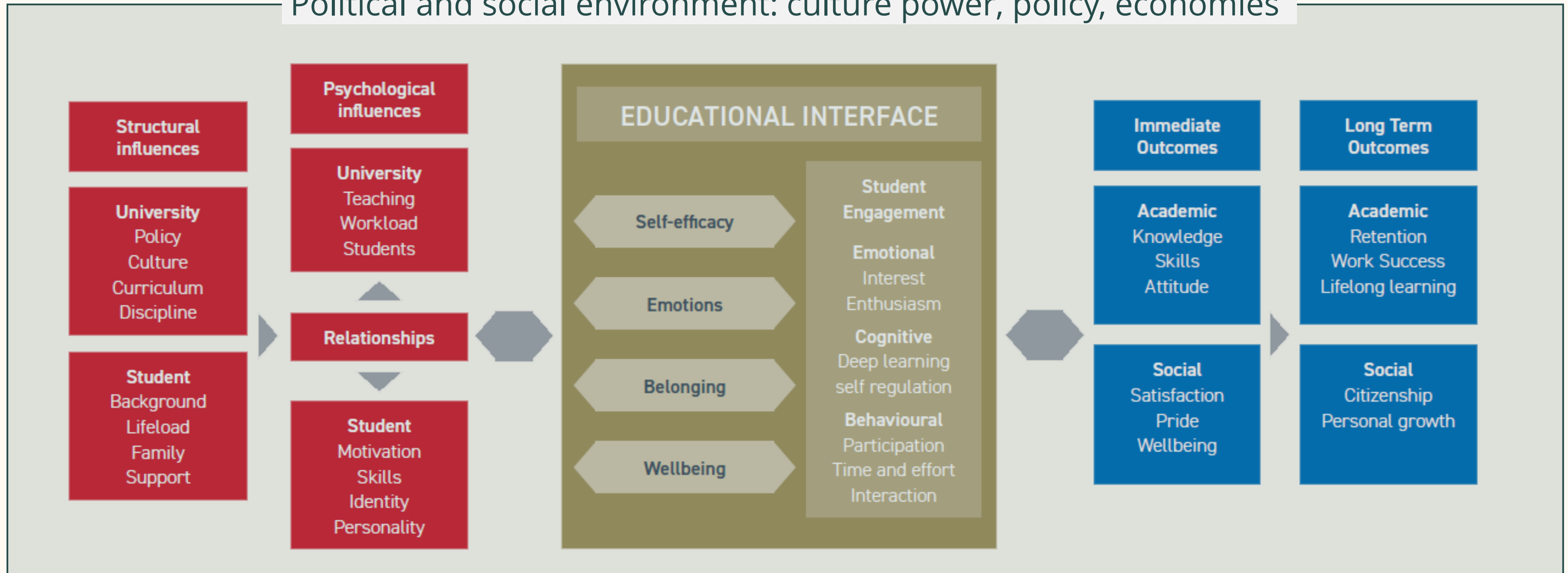


1. Achieving or surpassing a student's own expectations of their academic outcomes
2. Broadening their interests and engagement within their field of study and beyond it
3. Self-efficacy in study, writing and research
4. Gaining personal and professional development through co-curricular engagement/activities
5. Confidence in their capacity to contribute to their communities and/or broader society
6. Meeting or exceeding their career expectations
7. A sense of psychosocial development
8. Stronger sense of satisfaction with life

The Educational Interface

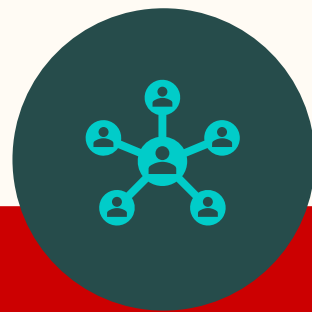
Sociocultural Context

Political and social environment: culture power, policy, economies



Refined conceptual framework of student engagement incorporating the educational interface. Adapted from Kahu & Nelson, 2016, p. 64

Belonging



A feeling that the student matters to other students and that there is a collective commitment to be together.



A sense of indispensability within the system.



A sense of identification/positioning in relation to a group/college community.



A belief that the student is accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by others.

**There's a
reason why
this doesn't
work!**



Your Perspective



Cast your mind back...

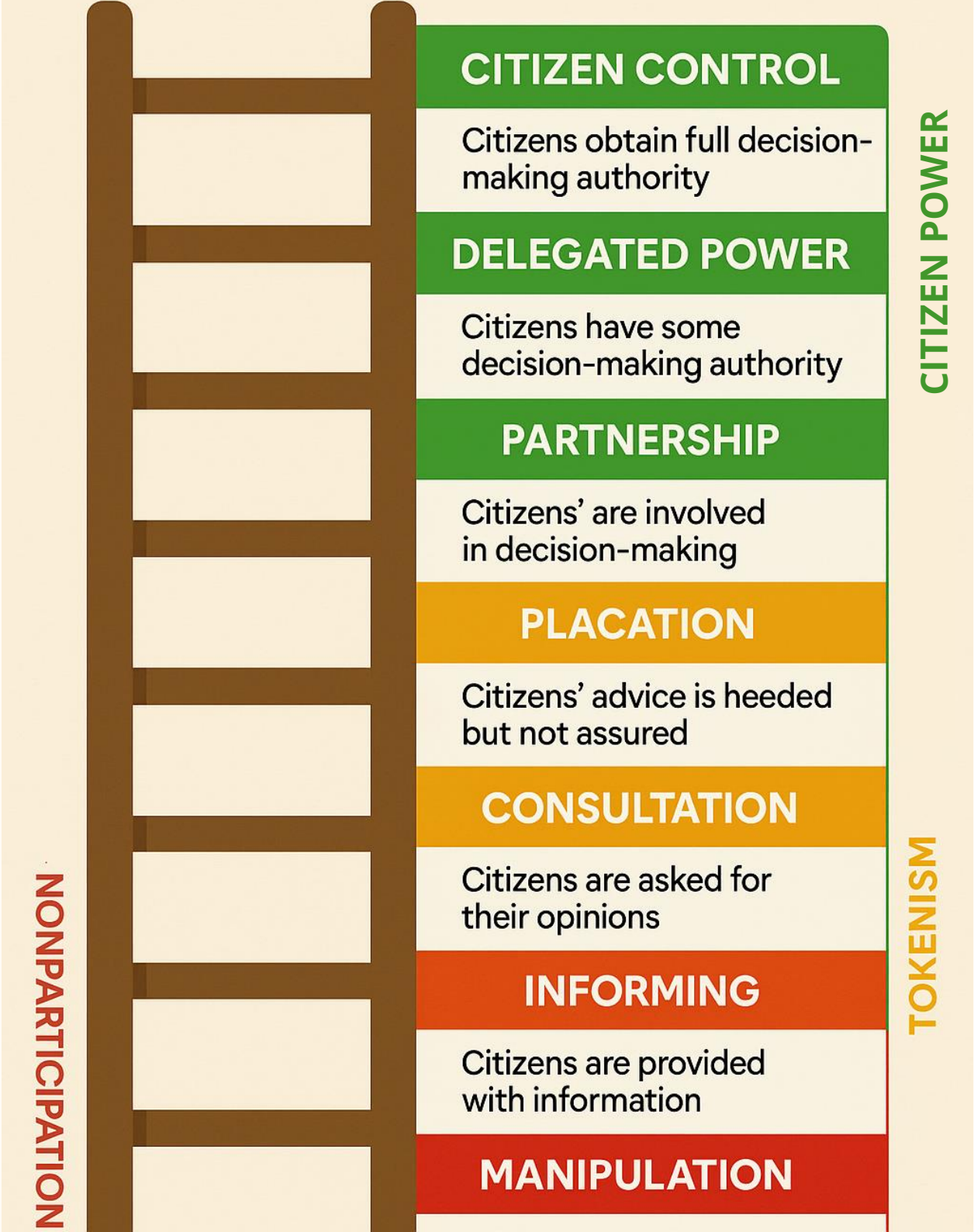
Join at vevox.app

192-863-674

Asking for feedback on something that has already been created

Convening a meeting to update students on recent events

Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation



Having a student rep on your board/panel

Students dictate the agenda / convene the meetings

This is better!



Who do we
need, and why
do we need
them?

How do we
support
experiential
learning?

What are the
required skills?

Safe Space Guidelines ✗

Impossible for organizations to anticipate participants' evolving triggers.

Impossible to guarantee complete safety since **we cannot control people's behaviours or actions** to embed DE&I principles in their actions during and after the conversation.

It does not allow allies and non-marginalized people to **show allyship in action by following a set of guidelines to support accountable conversations** that foster inclusion and equity.

Brave Space Guidelines ✗

An unbalanced onus of bravery of marginalized communities to maintain bravery while sharing lived experiences to ensure allies can grow and learn from it.

Negates the daily bravery marginalized communities need to display to navigate workplaces and society. Also, it does not lighten marginalized communities' "burden of bravery."

It does not allow allies and non-marginalized people to **show allyship in action by following a set of guidelines to support accountable conversations** that foster inclusion and equity.

Accountable Space Guidelines ✓

Places an equal amount of onus for all to behave equitably and inclusively **to foster a deeper understanding of diverse lived experiences in REAL-TIME.**

Creates a **REAL-TIME opportunity for EVERYONE** in the discussion to challenge the conditions that are oppressing marginalized communities by demonstrating accountable and equitable behaviours and actions.

Intent and impact are rooted within accountability to promote actions, thoughts, and behaviours that are equitable and inclusive of marginalized communities.



inclusion factor
EMPOWERING PERFORMANCE THROUGH BELONGING



SAI | STUDENT
AFFAIRS
IRELAND

22nd October 2025

- Free online workshop
- All staff and students welcome
- Keep an eye on your emails for a registration link soon!



List of
VALUES

Accountability	Ethics	Kindness	Self-respect
Achievement	Excellence	Knowledge	Serenity
Adaptability	Fairness	Leadership	Service
Adventure	Faith	Learning	Simplicity
Altruism	Family	Legacy	Spirituality
Ambition	Financial stability	Leisure	Sportsmanship
Authenticity	Forgiveness	Love	Stewardship
Balance	Freedom	Loyalty	Success
Beauty	Friendship	Making a difference	Teamwork
Being the best	Fun	Nature	Thrift
Belonging	Future generations	Openness	Time
Career	Generosity	Optimism	Tradition
Caring	Giving back	Order	Travel
Collaboration	Grace	Parenting	Trust
Commitment	Gratitude	Patience	Truth
Community	Growth	Patriotism	Understanding
Compassion	Harmony	Peace	Uniqueness
Competence	Health	Perseverance	Usefulness
Confidence	Home	Personal fulfillment	Vision
Connection	Honesty	Power	Vulnerability
Contentment	Hope	Pride	Wealth
Contribution	Humility	Recognition	Well-being
Cooperation	Humor	Reliability	Wholeheartedness
Courage	Inclusion	Resourcefulness	Wisdom
Creativity	Independence	Respect	
Curiosity	Initiative	Responsibility	
Dignity	Integrity	Risk -taking	
Diversity	Intuition	Safety	
Environment	Job security	Security	
Efficiency	Joy	Self-discipline	
Equality	Justice	Self-expression	

Values

When selecting your values, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does this define me
- Is this who I am at my best?
- Is this a filter that I use to make hard decisions?

Write your own:

Agendas



No agenda – no meeting

People need to know why they're there, and prepare in advance



Use the OC format

Objective, context, additional reading



Time boxes

Make them tight!



Allow time to review

Next steps, people responsible, support needed



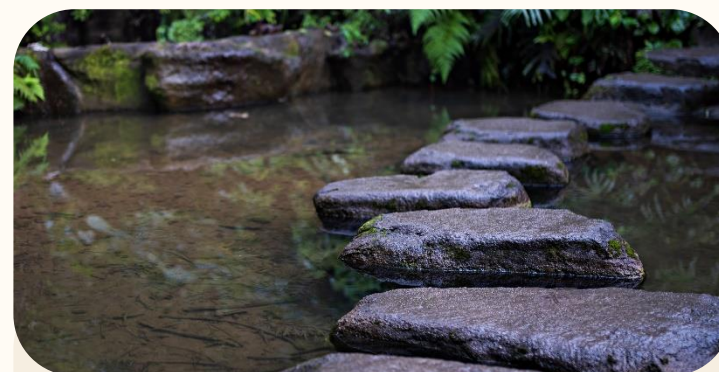
Avoid hanging items

Task reviews don't always belong in meetings

Top Tips



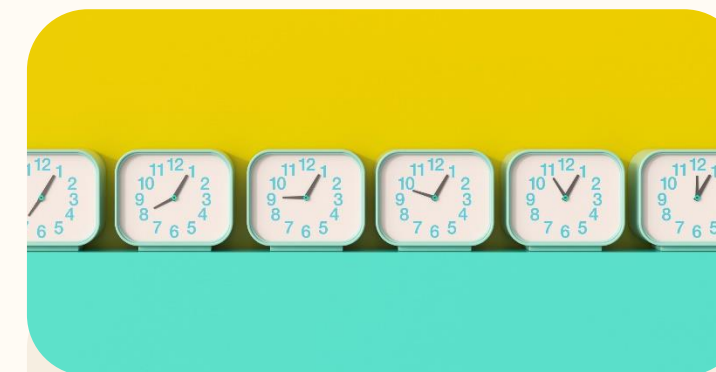
Appoint a facilitator



Sequence the discussion



Visualise the discussions



Time boxes



Work alone, together



Parking lot



Finish with a decision –
vote alone, together



Show, don't tell

Trainer Skills

Communication

- Clear and concise communication
- Not over communicating
- Storytelling
- Listen, hear and respond to trainees

Facilitation

- Working the room
- Being aware of group dynamics
- Leading by example
- Working with another person
- Encouraging involvement

Problem Solving

- Managing disruption
- People showing up late
- Listening and seeking clarity
- Act on what needs to be done
- Call in support if needed.

Time Management

- Understanding the goals of the training
- Awareness allocated time
- Adapting to the pace of the group
- Be flexible with time, but also not go overtime

Learning Environment

- Doing with, not for the trainees
- Provide plenty of chances to practice
- Showing passion and interest
- Create connection to the role and each other.

Case Study 1: Partnership



SCS Student Advisory Board

- Recruited from across student community – selected based on interest and representation.
- Group interviews designed to establish ability to collaborate and willingness to speak out.
- Trained in accountable space, values, running meetings, and strategic planning
- Developed a Terms of Reference – no meeting is quorate if staff outnumber students
- Working on scaffolding experiential learning between meetings

Case Study 2: Delegated Power

Student-Led Mentor Training

- Recruited from existing S2S Mentors
- Group interviews that double as focus groups for training redesign and development
- Trained in facilitation and experiential training delivery
- Replaced staff in the training room – confidence building for new volunteers and for the trainers
- Working on making sure content is delivered consistently





Any Questions?



Thank You!

Ralph Armstrong-Astley
astleyr@tcd.ie



References

- [Ahenkorah, E. \(2022\). 'Safe and Brave Spaces Don't Work \(and What You Can Do Instead\)'. \[online\] Medium. Available at: https://medium.com/@elise.k.ahen/safe-and-brave-spaces-dont-work-and-what-you-can-do-instead-f265aa339aff.](https://medium.com/@elise.k.ahen/safe-and-brave-spaces-dont-work-and-what-you-can-do-instead-f265aa339aff)
- [Armstrong-Astley, R., Flynn, D. D., Dooley, P. B., & Fox, T. \(2022\). *How counselling and peer-led services can optimize student success*.](#)
- Arnstein, S. R. (1969) A Ladder of Citizen Participation., *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 35 (4), 216-224.
- Braxton, J. M. (2006). *Faculty professional choices in teaching that foster student success*. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.
- Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to Lead*. Vermilion.
- Kahu, E. R., & Nelson, K. (2018). Student engagement in the educational interface: understanding the mechanisms of student success., *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37(1), 58–71.
- Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J.C. (2006). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature*. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.
- [O'Farrell, L. \(2019\). *Understanding and enabling student success in Irish higher education*. National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.](#)
- [NFTL Forum Insight Sept 2019: Towards a National Understanding of Student Success.](#)
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2019). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. (2nd ed.). Routledge.