

Developing a whole school homework policy

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Brief Overview of Presentation

This workshop looks at why and how one school is developing a homework policy as part of the SDP process and encourages workshop participants to reflect on current practice in their own setting. Issues considered include rationale, piloting initiatives, getting staff by-in, involving educational partners, managing implementation, evaluation.

Rationale

- SDP groups decision to focus on teaching/learning
- Initial homework policy 1998
 - Not well known or implemented
 - Provided a good starting point
 - Homework club already operational
- Survey of teachers, students, parents



Parent survey

- Survey of parents showed that parents were unsure how to help their children to produce a good standard of homework and that they were not sure if homework was been corrected sufficiently.
- Results presented to staff - prioritised homework policy as an issue for Planning Committee

Getting started

- Previous policy/practice
- Template for homework policy in SDP folder
- Adapt to our school
- Understanding of skills, attitudes and habits we want students to have when doing homework



Involving teachers

- Teachers worked on these issues in groups
 - Homework timetable
 - Monitoring homework
 - Focus on step by step plan
 - Rewards/sanctions
 - Roles and responsibilities
- Involved 1st year management team and year head committee

What's working well?

What could be improved?

Involving parents



- Meet Parents Association
 - Parents need reassurance re helping with homework
 - General communication issues - e.g. choosing subjects
- Keep parents informed - meetings, newsletter

Involving students



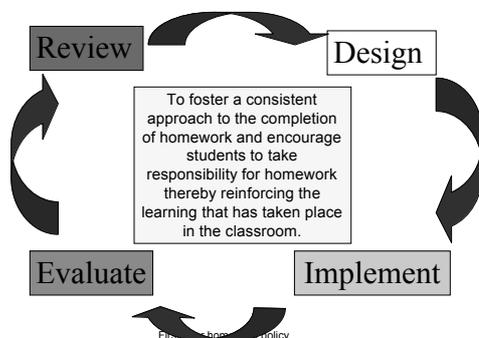
- Discuss attitude to homework
- Purpose of homework
- Student responsibility
- What makes good homework?
- What if you need help?

Implementation

- Copy of Lucan Community College's homework policy
- 1st year initially
- 6 step plan
- Roles
- Constant support in initial phases - SDP committee, year head, management

Review & Evaluation

- Initial review in Dec 2004
 - After initial implementation of homework policy cycle
- Since then
 - Minor reviews by Planning Committee
 - Need for larger review - survey
- Show some slides prepared for staff planning session Jan 2005



Development

- Keep it fresh!
- Extend to 2nd and 3rd year
- Extend to senior cycle
 - Self-directed learning
 - VARK approach



Benefits of homework policy

- Greater awareness of value of purpose and value of homework - students, teachers, parents
- More involvement of students
 - Ask how long should that take
 - Improved understanding of their role re correcting and learning from homework
- More common approaches to homework across the school
- Involvement of partners in process



Challenges

- Delay of rolling out policy across the years
- Personnel involved
 - Communication
 - Variety of implementation
- Keeping it high profile
 - New staff and students
 - Complacency
 - Management role
- Promote implementation
 - Regular update at staff me
 - Subject department agenc
 - Intercom announcements
 - Letters/newsletters to parents



In summary

- Positive experience for our school
- Start of an on-going process
- By-in from all partners is vital
- Role definition - especially year head
- Acknowledgements: management, staff, students, parents of Lucan Community College

Thank you