Festival of Learning 2018

Learner Voice Forum Thematic Report

Delivery Plan

In order to ensure that group size was appropriate to collect an appropriate level of participant feedback and engagement, learners were split by their school and corresponding cluster as per below. Due to its size, the Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen (CCYD) cluster was split into two groups.

- Archbishop
- Brynteg
- Bryntirion
- CCYD (Group 1)
- CCYD (Group 2)
- Cynffig
- Maesteg
- Pencoed
- Porthcawl
- YGG Llangynwyd

Group sizes varied between clusters, with the maximum number of participants per group limited to 12 young people.

Timings

During the course of the Pupil Voice Forum (PVF) there were three separate activities held, each linked to one of the key questions below:

1. What makes you happy in your learning?
2. What makes you happy in school outside of lesson times?
3. What makes you happy outside of school?

The activities were based on three different stations, with groups moving between each table after an allotted time. The exception to this being the Welsh cluster that remained in the same station. This allowed Welsh speaking members of staff to facilitate and scribe the session.

Each activity was scheduled to run for 20 minutes. The breakdown of which is as follows:

- introduction to activity
- activity and discussions
- discussion centred on – what would make them feel happier in…?
- evaluation

Facilitation

Each group required one staff member to facilitate and one person to scribe. Members of the Youth Council were enlisted to support with the scribing for each group; however, with exams and holidays the group was supplemented with additional staff members on the day.

In order to ensure a level of consistency between each of the three activities, respective staff members were provided with a guide for their session and prompts for discussion.

During each of the activities it was imperative that both the facilitator and scribe interact with, and move around the groups to capture all the informal comments in addition to the formal feedback offered up. These have been noted later on in this report under the relevant activity.

Evaluation

After the end of each activity, individuals were asked to evaluate each session by placing a leaf on a tree trunk using their own thumbprints dipped in poster paint. The leaves will be coloured using the following: green (good), yellow (ok) or red (not so good).

Activity 1 – What makes you happy in your learning?

- Group asked create a 'Happy Learner' using a large sheet of paper with a silhouette of a person on that is divided head-to-toe between 'good' and 'not so good'.

- Group asked to write inside the body with 'feelings' and outside the body with 'causes'.

  Inside: happy feelings on good side, not so happy feelings on not so good side.
  Outside: what makes you happy when you are learning? how do you know when you are a happy learner? who can make you feel happy in your learning?

- Discussing the outside words/phrases on the 'not so good' side, group to decide on how to address these. Facilitator and scribe captured actions on post-it notes and covered over words to show they have been resolved.

Young people taking part in the 'Happy Learner' activity.

Feedback

As this was the only activity run as a group, there were duplicate views expressed during each turn. For the purposes of this report, where multiples have been identified these have been counted as a single occurrence for the group. This will mean that the maximum number of responses one single theme will receive will be 10.

Due to the wide variety of responses given, this report will only focus on those that occurred on 4 or more occasions. The other responses have been collated and are available on request.

Good

Other learners

The single biggest factor expressed as making learners happy in school was spending times with their friends. This occurred in 9 of the 10 groups. Some short narrative comments made were:

"Sitting by friends and working together made them happy in their lessons"

"Friendship is one of the best things about school"

Teachers

There were three themes that young people identified as traits within their teachers that made them happy, these being; calm/patient (4), approachable (6) and being full of praise and/or encouragement (5).

"Inspiring lessons encourage you to learn more on the topic"

"Lessons are better if the teachers has time to help you if you are stuck [or] finding it difficult"

Subjects

There are three subjects that multiple groups highlighted as making them happy, English (5), Art (6) and Science (5). The reasons given during the feedback was that they enjoyed story writing in their English lessons, they enjoyed the chance to express their creativity during Art and they enjoyed conducting experiments during Science lessons.

"Art is fun, makes them happy as its hands on"

"Creative writing allows students to have free thought and express themselves"

"Experiments that get everyone involved and that are funny"

Not so good

Teachers

By far the most frequent negative response from the groups was that they thought certain teachers were not engaging (9) which in turn detracted from their enjoyment in lessons. Other feedback included getting told off and/or shouted at (5) and supply teachers (5).

"Best lesson – teachers doesn't talk for a full hour, instead breaks lesson up with activities"

"Teachers who aren't enthusiastic about their subjects"

Actions to resolve: explain more, positive rewards for good behaviour. Self-learning, more homework, teachers to enjoy subject, use of PowerPoint to make lessons more interactive

Uniform

Uniform was brought up by 6 groups as a reason for not being happy in their learning. Narrative surrounding these were that learners felt that their uniform was too uncomfortable and didn't allow them to 'stand out'.

"You don't stand out therefore your friends can't find you"

"Uniforms [are] uncomfortable, too hot in the summer, too cold in winter"

Actions to resolve: more non-uniform days and the introduction of a summer uniform.

Classroom

Two sub-themes that were the most common occurrences within the classroom were; rooms are too hot (5) and class not behaving (4).

"Calm lesson, calm me"

"Lessons that are quiet and no-one is talking when they shouldn't be are often the most enjoyable"

"Lessons that are outside e.g. PE are 'fun', 'amazing' and 'jolly'"

Actions to resolve: learners have suggested having more say in their learning/curriculum will engage them more, resulting in less misbehaviour during lessons.

<u>*Classwork*</u>

Two sub-themes that have emerged under the theme classwork which are: too much writing (5) and classes starting to early (5).

"Lessons could be less than an hour"

"PC/computers are old and slow, WIFI is slow"

Actions to resolve: use of interactive media such as videos and IPads to aid lessons. School to start later in the morning – every suggestion was 10am.

<u>*Other learners*</u>

Two sub-themes that have been highlighted involving other learners are bullying (5) and not sitting with friends (4).

"Active learning – group work, videos, hot seating, speeches from people (presentations)"

Actions to resolve: 'meet the person' events to get to know others in the class. More benches in and around the school grounds to socialise with others. Make bullies have a punishment.

What would make learners happier in their lessons?

- Singing in assembly could be pop songs etc. instead of traditional hymns.
- Lessons starting and finishing on time.
- More challenging work for those who need it.
- Teachers to be more approachable.
- Awareness of extra-curricular clubs and activities.

Evaluation

Activity 2 – What makes you happy in school outside of lesson times?

- Using a mock-up of an Instagram picture frame (called Bridgagram) each individual was asked to draw whatever makes them happy in school outside of lesson times

  Each picture was accompanied with a personalised hashtag that sums the picture up

- Individuals were then asked to feedback to the group on their picture and the meaning behind their hashtag

- Following this, a group discussion on what would make them happier in school outside of lesson times was conducted.
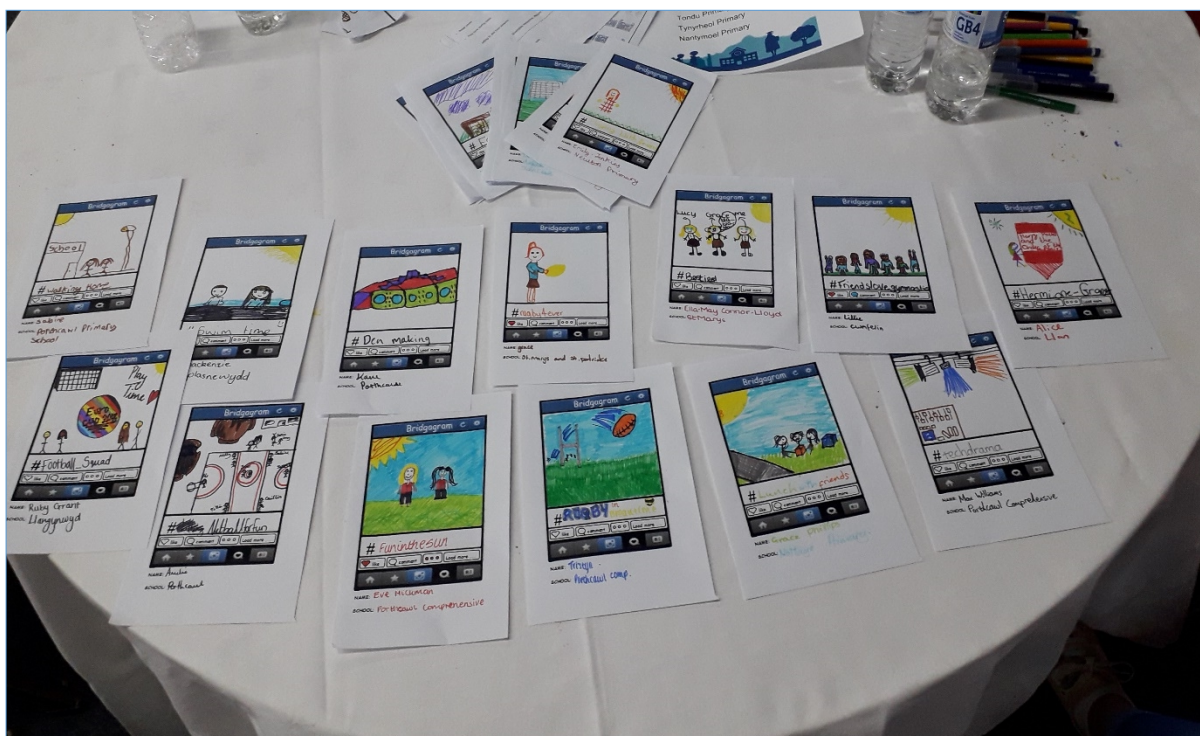
A small selection of work produced by learners during the activity.

Feedback

The feedback from learners has been themed and the score based on the number of occurrences in each. In total there were 105 Bridgagram pictures completed by learners participating in this activity. There are two clear themes that have emerged as influences on pupil's happiness in school, but outside of lessons, these are:

- Playing sport
- Friends

Both of the above can be further broken down into sub-themes and a score attributed to each. These sub-themes and respective scores are:

- Sport
  - Football   (17)
  - Basketball   (16)
  - Rugby   (9)

- o Netball   (8)

- Friends
  - o Playing with friends   (13)
  - o Spending time with best friends   (9)

As part of the feedback given by each young person, coupled with the guided discussions afterwards, there is a lot of narrative captured by the scribes linked to these themes. Examples of which are:

"More time on the field or in the yard"

"More [and] better food in canteen with bigger portion sizes"

"Longer and more frequent break times [with] shorter lesson times"

Including all the other sports, and activities that included socialising with friends not detailed above, the two themes accounted for 87 (or 83%) of the 105 responses.

What would make learners happier in school, outside of lessons?

- More competitive sporting fixtures against other schools (after and during school time)
- Promotion of girls football and rugby teams
- More shaded areas around school, gazebos etc.
- Outdoor shelter and benches for lunch and socialising
- Extra-curricular activities such as Gardening and Drama clubs
- Music being played in yard

Evaluation

Activity 3 – What makes you happy outside of school?

- Using Playdough, groups were asked to build a model that represents something that makes them happy outside of school

- Individuals were then asked to feedback to the group on their model and the meaning behind it

  Pictures were then taken of each model with the group before they are dismantled in preparation for the next group

- Group discussion then conducted to ascertain what would make them happier outside of school
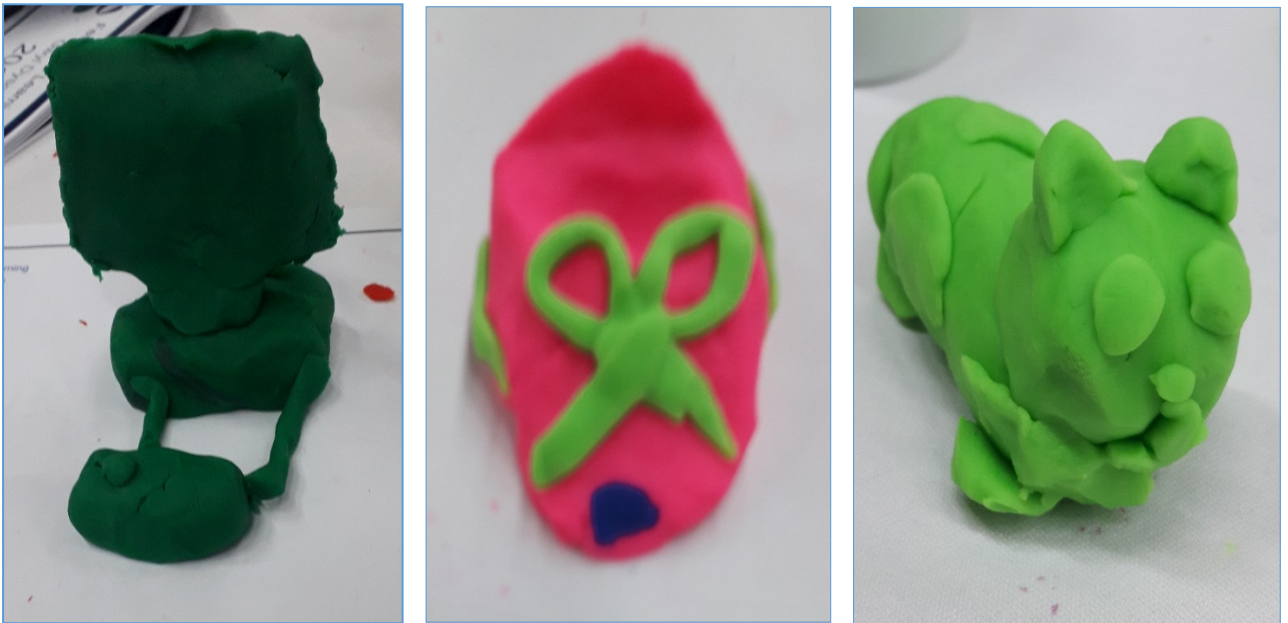
Examples of Playdough models created by learners

Feedback

Like the previous activity, the feedback from learners has been themed and the scored based on the number of occurrences in each. In total there were …. Models made by learners participating in this activity. Again, there are two clear themes that have emerged as influences on pupil's happiness outside of school, these are:

- Sports (32)
- Pets (12)

Sports has been broken down in further sub-themes to detail the various sports (of which there have been 11 different types recorded) that young people participant, the most frequent response being football (9).

Narrative captured during the feedback and guided discussions was:

"play[ing] with friends in the park"

"grown up with rugby, gets your anger out"

"seeing friends [and] being active"

"I've got everything I want and need"

What would make learners happier outside of school?

- More sports clubs
- More things for children to do
- Jobs for younger children

Evaluation