School Self-Evaluation

PDA Conference
15 November 2012

Deirdre Mathews
1. What is SSE?
2. Rationale for SSE
3. What does the SSE process look like?
4. What is expected of schools?
5. Support for SSE
1. WHAT IS SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION?
What is school self-evaluation?

- SSE is a way of systematically looking at how we teach and how our students learn and making decisions about what we want to improve.

Because

- We want to make learning better for students.
- We want to make teaching more rewarding.
- Schools are best placed to examine their own practice and to tell their own story.
SSE is a process that allows schools and teachers to improve outcomes for learners.

- Reflect
- Collaborate
- Gather evidence
- Arrive at decisions about quality (Judgement)
- Direct school improvement
- Improve learning
2. WHY SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION?
Why school self-evaluation?

We know SSE works

- Research here:
  - evidence from DEIS schools
  - pilot project trial schools

- Research in other countries
  - New Zealand, Scotland, Finland, Canada
Why school self-evaluation?

- Part of balanced and integrated approach to supporting better teaching and learning
- Supports the Literacy and Numeracy strategy
- Consistent with DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) (action planning)
- Gives greater autonomy to teachers
SSE encompasses...

Over time schools will address three dimensions

- Teaching and Learning
- Management and leadership
- Support for students

We want schools to start by focusing on teaching and learning
We are focusing on teaching and learning...

Because...

- Teaching and learning is the core work of school
- All teachers want to improve learning for students

Building on and reframing SDP

- SDP helped focus on developing policy, promoted collaboration and dialogue
- SSE will focus more on having an impact on teaching, learning and outcomes for students
The SSE process is a reframing of the school development planning process

It places a greater focus on gathering evidence

It works best when it is integrated into the day-to-day work of the school

It leads to action for improvement
3. WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS LOOK LIKE?
Getting started

• Start small – a limited aspect of teaching and learning
• In first four years: literacy, numeracy and one other area
• Ask simple questions
  – How well are we doing?
  – How do we know? What evidence do we have?
  – How can we find out more?
  – What are our strengths/areas for development?
  – How can we improve?
SSE framework: Teaching and Learning

TEACHING and LEARNING

- Learner outcomes
  - Attainment of curriculum objectives

- Learning experiences
  - Learning environment
  - Engagement in learning
  - Learning to learn

- Teachers’ practice
  - Preparation for teaching
  - Teaching approaches
  - Management of students
  - Assessment
### Learner outcomes
- Students’ overall attainment, with regard to knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects and programmes, has improved significantly in line with targets; and expected outcomes have been achieved.
- Students enjoy learning the subject and have developed appropriate attitudes and dispositions.
- Students can meet the literacy and numeracy challenges of the subject.
- Students at risk of underachieving have made good progress.
- Students’ uptake levels and performance in state examinations compares favourably with national norms, within the school context.

### Learning experiences
- Learning settings are safe, well maintained, visually stimulating and supportive of literacy and numeracy.
- Students have access to appropriate materials, including ICT, to support learning.
- Students are enabled to engage actively in a range of suitably challenging, relevant and interesting learning opportunities.
- Students are given support as needed.
- Students are equipped with tools and skills for learning now and in the future.

### Teachers’ practice
- Teachers prepare thoroughly for lessons; expected learning outcomes including literacy and numeracy development are clearly stated; and necessary resources are in place.
- Expected learning outcomes are clearly communicated; lessons are suitably paced to enable progression in development of knowledge and skills.
- Teaching is focused, stimulating and relevant. All aspects of the subject, including subject-specific language, are thoroughly taught.
- All students are respected; high but realistic expectations are communicated; and efforts and achievements are affirmed.
- A range of assessment methods is used effectively to assess progress.
SSE PROCESS

Sources of evidence

- Assessment data – formative and summative
- Student surveys and reflection
- Parent surveys
- Focus group discussion
- Interviews

- Individual teacher reflection
- Group/subject department reflection
- Whole-school reflection
- Peer dialogue/sharing experience
- Team teaching and review

DON’T COLLECT TOO MUCH INFORMATION!
Analysing data and benchmarking against evaluation criteria

- Check learner motivation, attitudes, engagement in learning, application of knowledge and skills
- Share and compare practice – think and reflect on this
- Examine attainment levels of students: check against national norms, for in-school trends
- Use evaluation criteria to check analysed data against a set of standards
Reflect and draw conclusions

• Reflect on the information you have
• Reflect on how this compares to best practice
• Do the criteria and quality statement help to identify next steps in improvement?
• Can you place practice in this area of work on a continuum from significant strengths to significant weaknesses?
SSE is not about paper work. However schools need to write a concise report

- Report (no more than 2/3 pages) should record
  - Theme chosen for self-evaluation
  - Brief account of school context
  - The findings
  - Summary of strengths (affirm and celebrate)
  - Summary of areas requiring improvement
  - Legislative requirements checklist (for BOM)
### Our School Improvement Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of main strengths as identified in last SSE:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of main areas requiring improvement as identified in last SSE:</td>
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#### Improvement Targets

<table>
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<th>Required actions</th>
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<th>Persons responsible</th>
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<table>
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<th>Timeframe for action</th>
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<th>Success criteria/measurable outcomes</th>
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<th>Review date(s)</th>
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Agreed actions for improvement must be implemented

• Actions
  • At individual level
  • At subject department level
  • At whole-school level

• Monitor progress
4. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS?
Starting the SSE process

Circular 0040/2012

• In year one select one of the following: literacy, numeracy or one other aspect of teaching and learning
  – Over a 4-year period engage in SSE of three of the above
  – A whole-school approach to SSE to be taken with a focus on teaching and learning
  – All teachers engage in SSE of the aspect selected by the school
  – Produce a short SSE report and summary for school community
  – Devise school improvement plan with targets to improve outcomes for students and summary for school community
  – Implement and monitor SIP over three-year period
For example

• Select the area of focus
• Examine records/evidence
• Decide on strengths
• Identify what needs to improve
• Agree the sub-theme from the teaching and learning framework (for example teaching approaches)
My responsibility as a teacher is to:

- Reflect on my own teaching approaches
- Discuss teaching approaches with subject department/colleagues
- Reflect on whether I need further evidence? Views of students? Others?
- Look at the evaluation criteria for teaching approaches
- Identify strengths and areas for development
- Agree at a subject department level the teaching approaches that could be used to further develop students’ learning
## Evaluation Criteria

### Teaching approaches

| Approaches | • Teaching approaches support students in engaging with the literacy and numeracy demands of the subject  
• Subject-appropriate teaching and learning methodologies with a focus on active learning are used  
• Lessons are well structured  
• A range of subject-appropriate approaches is used including  
  -- Guided discussion  
  -- Collaborative and cooperative learning  
  -- Investigative approaches  
  -- Higher order thinking and problem solving  
  -- Encouragement of the students' personal and creative response to the subject |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching approaches</td>
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</table>
Whole staff responsibility

- Subject departments share experience and results of reflection with whole staff
- Ensure evidence is balanced
- Agree further sources of evidence, if not balanced
  - Agree what tools will be used and whose views should be garnered
  - Agree who will gather, collate, analyse and feedback
- Ensure that findings from all evidence gathered and analysed helps draw conclusions/make judgement
- Write report
- Devise school improvement plan
- Implement and monitor across all subject departments

As teaching staff..
Teaching is focused, stimulating and relevant to the students’ learning needs. … Effective subject-specific learning approaches are used. Opportunities for the development of literacy and numeracy skills are well used. Subject-specific language is thoroughly taught. Lessons are well developed in a way that allows for progression of students’ skills, knowledge and attitudes.

All aspects of the subject are thoroughly taught with progression apparent in the students’ learning …. A broad range of activities is provided to enhance the holistic development of the student.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Literacy selected (L and N strategy, STEN results for first-year)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Co-ed school of 700 students. It offers the JC, TY, LCE, LCA, LCVP. Its enrolment has remained static.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Focused on literacy: identified weaknesses in oral work Identified need to change our approaches to teaching literacy across subject departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>A large proportion of students performed well in reading tests A strong staff commitment to promotion of literacy Majority of students interested in reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Areas for improvement</td>
<td>Oral skills of first-year students</td>
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### Extract from school improvement plan

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>At present X% of students demonstrate competence in oral language using school developed test. By Dec 2015, X+10% will demonstrate competence in oral language using the school developed test. …</th>
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| Actions                                                               | Increased emphasis on oral work in lessons  
  • Use of key terminology, role play, structured group work, focused discussion on topics  
  Development of listening skills  
  • Video/audio listening task with accompanying worksheets … |
| Responsible                                                           | All teachers… |
| Timeframe                                                             | Three years for overall target  
  Every term for monitoring |
| Success criteria                                                      | Overall: X+10% of students’ will demonstrate oral competence  
  Ongoing: greater student engagement and confidence and competence in using subject specific terminology …. |
| Review dates                                                          | Overall: Dec 2015  
  Ongoing: end of each term/year |
Strategies agreed in the SIP

• Implemented over a three-year period
• Embed in classroom practice
• Part of day-to-day work
• Progress monitored
5. SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION
Support for SSE

- Publications
- Website www.schoolself-evaluation.ie
- PDST seminars for principal
- Internal collaboration – use experience and expertise in own school
- Professional networks
AND A FINAL WORD....
Lessons from pilot schools

- School self-evaluation works
- Start small and keep it simple
- Involve all teachers
- Include the voice of students (and parents where relevant)
- Only gather relevant information
- Agree strategies and actions for improvement

SSE as part of normal and ongoing practice in the school
Go raibh maith agaibh

Thank you

www.education.ie