



Rolling out Consultancy across Scotland

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what sparqs does

■ training and support

→ provide training for student representatives; workshops for staff and production of resources for students and staff

■ events

→ national conference on student involvement; workshops for staff of students' associations and student officers

■ sharing practice

→ publications on student involvement; benchmarking of representative systems and learning from other countries & sectors

■ consultancy

→ 5 days support provided to each institution in the north of Scotland





Outline

- The history
 - how consultancy evolved
- The geography
 - where and how it currently works
 - the future: how you might be involved
- Your questions





The history

- sparqs founded in 2003, funded by SFC for two years
- 2005: another two years' funding
- 2006: an independent review commissioned to examine the future work and funding of sparqs: The York Report





The history

- York was asked:
 - is sparqs providing a good service?
 - should its funding continue?
 - how should its role develop?
- Numerous institutions, agencies and students interviewed
- Report available from sparqs office





The history

■ York reported

→ is sparqs providing a good service?

→ **yes**

→ should its funding continue?

→ **yes, on a permanent basis**

→ how should its role develop?

→ **a shift from delivery to facilitation...**





From delivery to facilitation

- sparqs' work was largely around training, events, and research
- Rather than only providing solutions from a national viewpoint, it should also be helping institutions to develop their own
- York noted some existing examples:
 - institutions approaching sparqs
 - development offered on specific issues





From delivery to facilitation

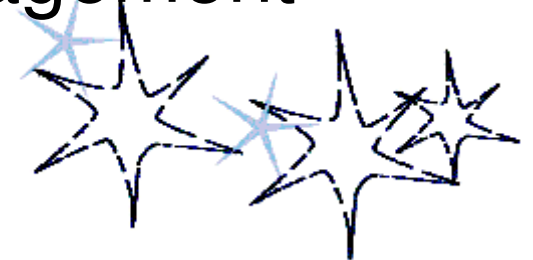
- York Report recommended that this “consultancy” should be:
 - formalised
 - offered across Scotland
 - a core part of sparqs’ activity
- Funding Council agreed; funding provided for a pilot with 20 institutions in 2007-08
- 1 FTE post funded for a year





Why the north of Scotland?

- Institutions furthest from Edinburgh office were traditionally the least engaged
 - both in sparqs' main services
 - and in emerging informal consultancy
- Good range of institutions:
 - size: biggest and smallest
 - cultures: subject specialist, ancient and new universities, different colleges
 - varying levels of student engagement

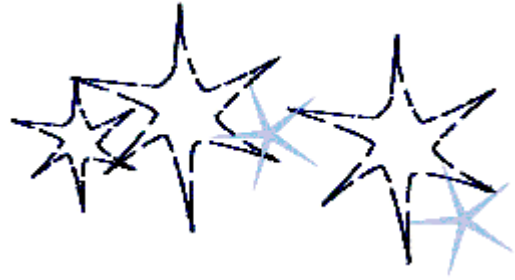




The start of consultancy

- The 20 institutions written to; most visited
- 1 year post funded and later made permanent
- Inverness College agreed to host the new position
- Institutions invited to participate in a scoping meeting, including a card sort exercise...





Definitions of student engagement

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Definitions of student engagement

- Something we are told to do by the funding council

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree



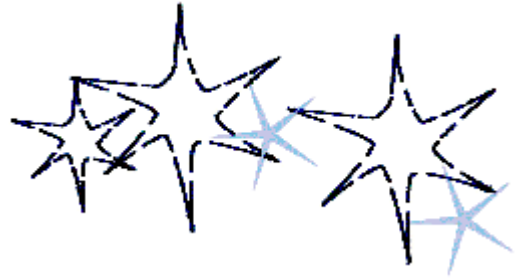


Definitions of student engagement

- The responsibility of the students' association

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Definitions of student engagement

- Undermines the role of the lecturer and academic

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Definitions of student engagement

- The best way of improving the learning experience

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Definitions of student engagement

- A useful factor in shaping staff development activities

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Definitions of student engagement

- Yet another pressure on students' already-precious time

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Definitions of student engagement

- The key to achieving our mission

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Definitions of student engagement

■ Part of the citizenship agenda

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree



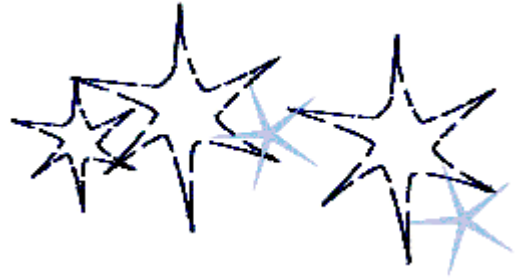


Definitions of student engagement

- A great way of generating involvement in other areas of the students' association (eg societies, welfare, entertainments)

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree



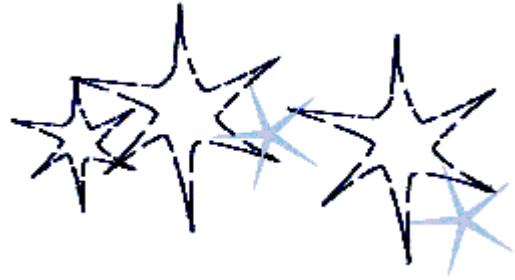


Definitions of student engagement

■ About ticking boxes

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Definitions of student engagement

■ About a partnership of equals

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree



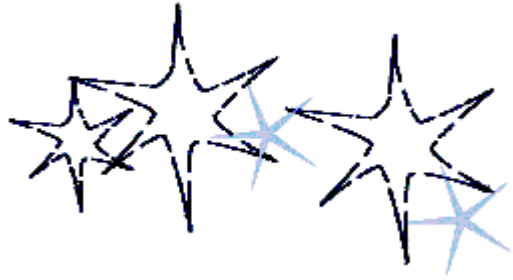


Definitions of student engagement

■ For politically-motivated students

Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Definitions of student engagement

- Central to a good culture of learning and teaching

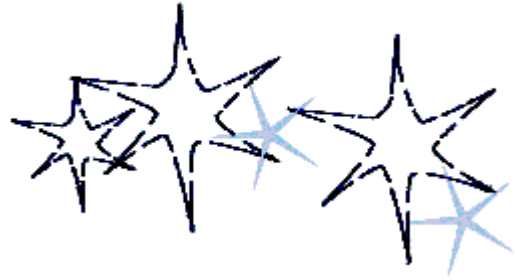
Strongly agree | agree | neither | disagree | strongly disagree





Those are your definitions of student engagement... but what are the outcomes of that engagement? What does it look like?





Outcomes of student engagement

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome



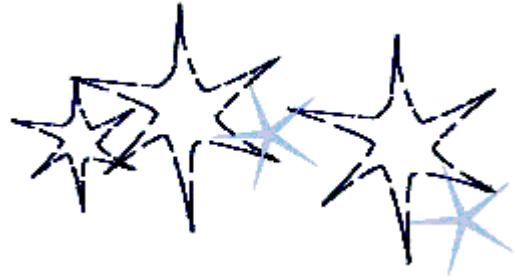


Outcomes of student engagement

- Students being treated as equals

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome



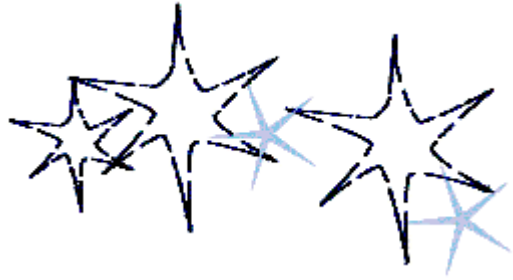


Outcomes of student engagement

- Students making suggestions, not just answering questions

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome





Outcomes of student engagement

- Qualitative, representative input, not just piles of data and survey results

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome





Outcomes of student engagement

- Ideas that staff may never have thought of

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome





Outcomes of student engagement

- An active, respected students' association

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome





Outcomes of student engagement

■ Increased recruitment

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome



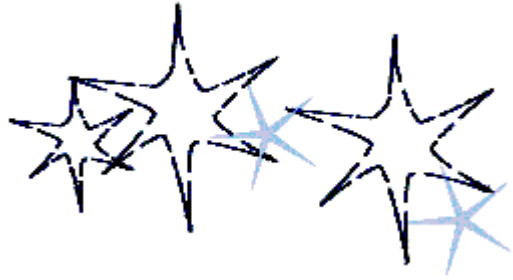


Outcomes of student engagement

■ Increased retention

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome



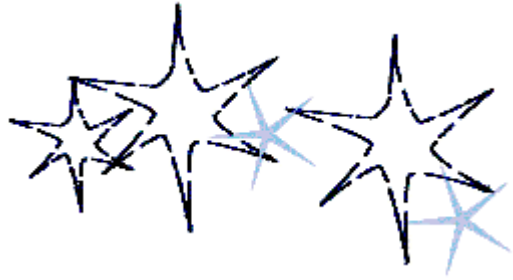


Outcomes of student engagement

- Achievement of excellent graduate attributes

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome





Outcomes of student engagement

- New policies, procedures and practices in teaching and quality management

Key outcome | important outcome | incidental outcome | irrelevant outcome

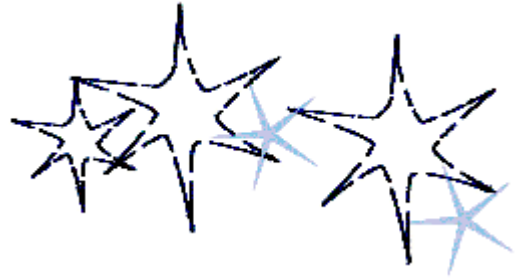




The key outcomes are the ones you are aspiring to create.

What tools would help you achieve those outcomes?

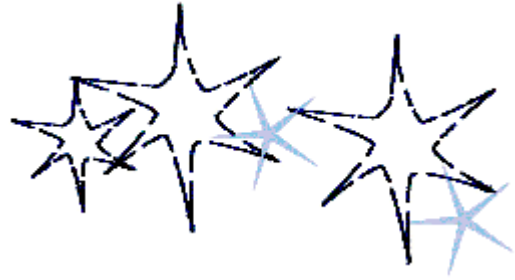




Tools of student engagement

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
we don't do this but could try it | we don't do this and never will



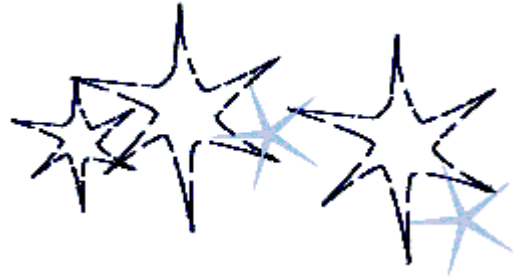


Tools of student engagement

■ Students chairing course committees

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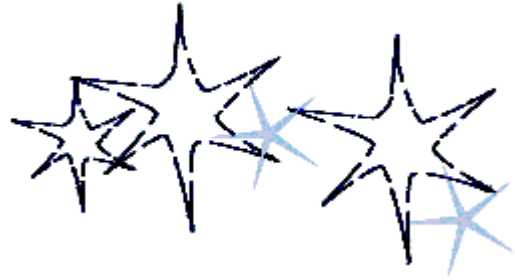


Tools of student engagement

- Senior committees, including your Board, with more than one student on

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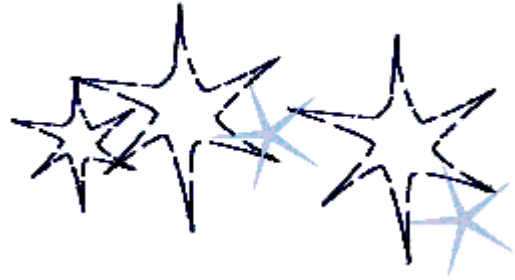


Tools of student engagement

- Students involved in departmental finance decisions

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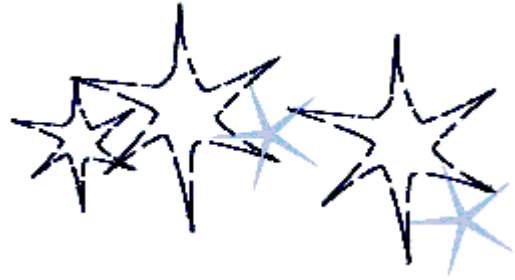


Tools of student engagement

■ Students involved in teaching observation

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
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Tools of student engagement

■ Departmental or faculty representatives

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
we don't do this but could try it | we don't do this and never will





Tools of student engagement

- Dedicated student officers for traditionally under-represented students

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
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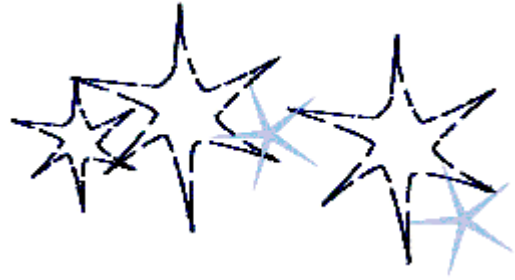


Tools of student engagement

- Clear induction processes, training plans and job descriptions for class reps

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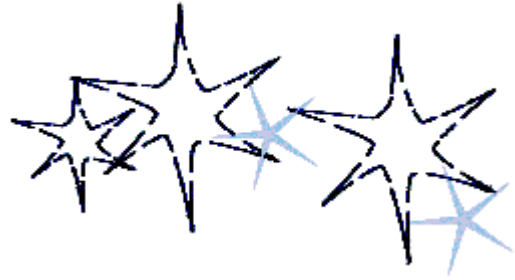


Tools of student engagement

- Dedicated staff support for the students' association

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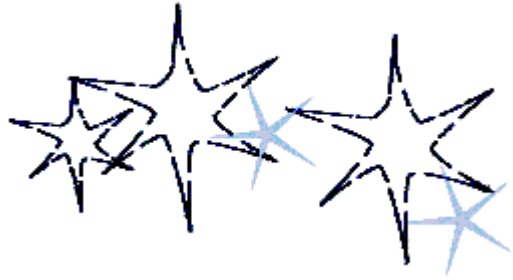


Tools of student engagement

- At least one sabbatical student officer

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
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Tools of student engagement

- Student officers engaged in national activities, eg sector-level discussions

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
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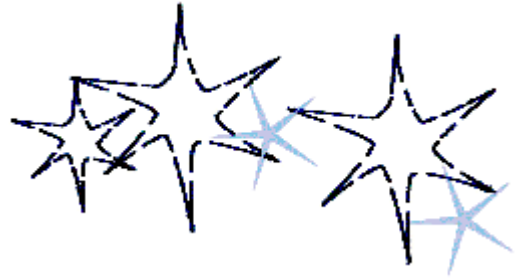


Tools of student engagement

■ Student-only spaces in VLEs

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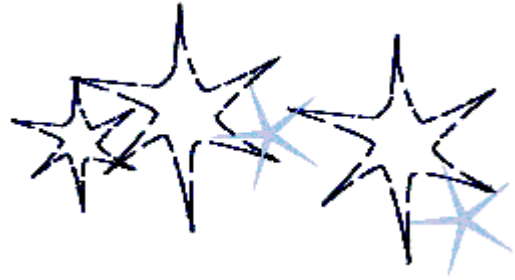


Tools of student engagement

- Staffed message boards or graffiti walls in learning and outreach centres

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
we don't do this but could try it | we don't do this and never will





Tools of student engagement

- Regular meetings between student councils and senior management

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
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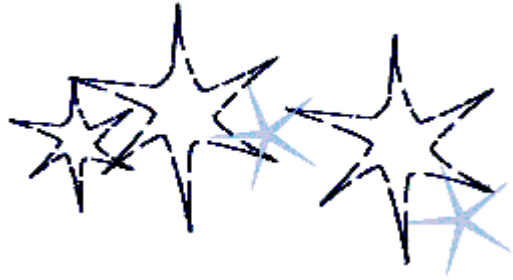


Tools of student engagement

- Student-led focus groups within subject areas

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
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Tools of student engagement

- A tutorial or class discussion dedicated to the learning experience

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
we don't do this but could try it | we don't do this and never will





Tools of student engagement

- Questionnaires that seek praise for the positive, not just criticism of the negative

We do this well | we do this but not well enough |
we don't do this but could try it | we don't do this and never will





The stages

- Definitions of student engagement
 - strongly agree
- Outcomes of student engagement
 - key outcomes
- Tools of student engagement
 - “not well enough” and “could try it”





Some examples

- Creation of a staff member for the students' association in a new, multi-campus HEI
 - discussion began around desire for a sabbatical officer
 - merits explored of starting with a sabbatical vs a staff member
 - institution chooses staff
 - sparqs helps develop role

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Some examples

- Development of embedded, relevant class rep training in a small, subject-specialist institution
 - creation of new, college-specific training materials
 - enabling of college staff to deliver the training





Some examples

- Creation of a class rep handbook and a staff guide to class reps in a college
 - articulation of an opportunity profile for class reps
 - agreement of an ideal “year in the life” of a class rep
 - working with staff and class reps to identify the information each should have





Some examples

- Creation of toolkits for use at school-level in a university

- aims to facilitate locally-relevant answers, not impose them from outside
- staff and students help identify toolkit headings (eg supporting class reps, evaluating course questionnaires)
- sparqs writes toolkits, with midway review involving staff and students

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Some examples

- Review of a university's school officer system

- university had a new, struggling system
- sparqs conducted a "mini-audit"
- identification of good practice
- recommended actions





Some examples

- Review of a university's sabbatical officers' support and induction
 - agreement it could be done better
 - independent review conducted (including survey of past sabbaticals)
 - recommendations for enhancement
 - identification of good practice





Some examples

- Reflection on student feedback process in a small college, exploring:
 - reps' ability to vocalise views
 - how staff receive, use, and respond to that feedback
 - relevant ideas from elsewhere
 - possible areas for enhancement





Some examples

- Section-based work with teaching staff in a number of colleges
 - identification of team strengths, weaknesses and priorities
 - specific research for each team
 - presentations by teams of their development at the end of the year





Some examples

- Revised class rep structure in a small college:

- articulation of clear job description and “year in the life”
- work with staff on value and role of class reps
- separation of academic and social functions of a class rep





Possible format

- One or two key contacts
 - quality manager
 - student president
- Substantive work with small groups of staff or students: training, informing, listening
- Desk-based research
- Presentation of findings





Through the consultancy, you
will find sparqs...

(according to an external evaluation)

- As a critical friend
- To be most useful when you're entirely honest about your student engagement
- Hard work:
 - we will ask difficult questions
 - work to do not just when sparqs visit
- A source of comparison and context
- Eager to learn and listen

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Consultancy

- Encouraged, not forced
- Up to five days
- Not just within one academic year
- About your priorities
- Occasional joint events where common interests arise
 - shared themes and challenges
 - networking for college SSLOs





Consultancy: next steps

- Discussions with Funding Council ongoing
- Possible new staff resource for sparqs
- Formal contact with institutions in spring term to introduce consultancy
- Meetings to discuss possible objectives and areas of work
- The work begins!





Your questions





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