**SPARQs Case Study in Learner Engagement November 2012 – The Chair**

**Cumbernauld College – The Chair**

Cumbernauld College developed a method of encouraging learners to give their opinions on college-related issues in a fun and engaging way. The Learner Engagement Officer had successfully introduced the idea whilst working at Yorkhill Hospital, in order to identify the opinions of young patients. Through the college’s Innovation Team, the concept was implemented within the college, and following a presentation at a SPARQs national conference, it was adopted by a number of colleges and schools.

It is based on the ‘Big Brother’ television format. The student(s) sit in a chair (known as ‘The Chair’) with an anonymous member of staff asking a series of questions in a separate room. The student(s) are recorded by a remote video camera. To break the ice, the questioner and the student(s) engage in some light-hearted activities which may involve answering quizzes on popular culture, singing songs, and wearing hats, wigs and fancy dress costumes selected from a box in the room. In amongst the questions, students are asked for their opinions on matters relating to learning and teaching, and on college support services.

To build interest prior to the week of activities, ‘The Chair’ is displayed in a prominent position in the main college foyer, with an enigmatic sign hinting that something is about to take place.

After each session has been completed, feedback is provided verbally to support and faculty managers, and on completion of the full week of activities, a video is created and made available to staff and students.

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