CATHOLIC VIRTUAL ONTARIO

CVO – GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH

ROLE OF STUDENT SURVEYS:
CATHOLIC EXEMPLARS

Catholic Virtual Learning Resource

Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prayer of Saint Teresa of Calcutta	3
The Role of Student Surveys	4
Survey Data Applications	7
Student Surveys and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expections	8
Interest Survey Version 1	9
Interest Survey Version 2	16
Endnotes	23
References	23

PRAYER OF SAINT TERESA OF CALCUTTA

Dear Jesus,
Help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go.
Flood my soul with Thy spirit and love.
Penetrate and possess my whole being
so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine.
Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with
may feel Thy presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus.
Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others.
Amen.

"This is what Pope Francis means when he speaks about the art of accompaniment. It is about taking the time to walk alongside one another, to listen and to teach, and in so doing, to transform. Our Catholic schools do this on a daily basis as they model the Emmaus experience. Staff practice the art of accompaniment by helping students realize that their own unique story is given greater meaning and purpose in knowing and living the story we share in Christ." — *This Moment of Promise*

THE ROLE OF STUDENT SURVEYS IN CATHOLIC LEARNING COMMUNITIES, UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING AND DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

What we have in common contributes to our humanity. How we differ contributes to our individuality. Catholic learning environments encourage genuine, personalized encounters that celebrate what we share as well as what makes us unique. Created in the image and likeness of God, we are blessed with individual passions, gifts and talents that stimulate meaningful contributions to society and culminate in collective fulfillment.

According to Tomlinson and Imbeau, teaching and learning are most effective and rewarding when they occur through differentiated instruction.[1] This approach assumes that

- students have different learning starting and entry points as well as different learning styles, life experiences and circumstances that impact what they need to learn,
- students learn best when they make meaningful connections between the curriculum and their interests and experiences,
- education serves to develop the capacity of every learner.

Surveys or inventories invite meaningful opportunities for differentiating instruction according to the rich variety of characteristics that students demonstrate. In fact, surveys can address all four areas of learning identified in *Learning for All, K-12*:

- **Content:** what students learn and when the learning will occur; how the curriculum is accessed
- **Process:** the types of activities and tasks students engage with and how they are sequenced
- **Product:** how students demonstrate their learning
- **Environment:** the context and environment in which students learn and demonstrate learning; how learning is structured

Survey feedback acts as an effective bridge between students and course content that produces precise and responsive teaching and learning. When students are empowered with the agency to provide information about themselves through survey responses, they can include as many details as they wish or believe to be helpful, and therefore are in control of their responses. As a tool that can make learning more precise, engaging and relevant, interest surveys respect the inherent dignity of the learner by amplifying autonomy, voice and choice.

"In this way, they learn that the beauty of human relationships touches our soul, seeks our freedom, accepts the difference of others, recognizes and respects them as a partner in dialogue..." — *Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia § 172.*

Survey Planning: Starting Early

Since information from interest surveys can enhance multiple aspects of pedagogy, ranging from instruction through to assessment, learning activities, engagement and relationship building, they are especially valuable to implement at the outset of learning. Once developed, surveys can be edited and adapted from one year and one course to the next, to suit different information needs and goals as well as different implementation times.

Purpose: Getting Helpful and Actionable Information

Before creating a survey, determine a) What information you wish to know and b) Why the information will be helpful. If you are looking for information that will inform a specific decision, consider what is needed to make that decision. Do you want to know the types of social justice topics that interest your students? Do you want to know the different methods and tools they prefer for contributing their thoughts and ideas? What about presentation modality preferences?

Student surveys are meant to be actionable and practical, developed with the intention to follow up in a productive way. When information from surveys is used, students are reassured that their opinion is valued and that completing surveys translates into positive effects.

Questions related to what you wish to achieve through a survey can be framed as a theory of action. A theory of action is a hypothesis that states something specific will be accomplished if a specific action occurs. If, for example, you want to know the types of social justice topics that your students will find meaningful, a student interest survey can inform the types of case studies that get incorporated into a business course.

Theory of Action:

Social justice topics that students find meaningful and are motivated to address will engage students while incorporating transferable skills through embedded Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.

Once a theory of action is determined, steps for implementing the plan can take shape. The development of a student survey can serve as one corresponding action item.

Format: Keep it Familiar

Ideally, survey formats align with the formats of other instructional tools students are already familiar with because they have used them in other contexts. The more comfortable students are when completing surveys, the greater the possibility of receiving honest and helpful information. D2L Brightspace, Google Forms and Microsoft Forms, for example, can maintain surveys and present the data in different ways for interpretation and reporting out on to audiences.

Content: Get Student Input

As essential partners in the teaching and learning process, it's important for students to be involved in the survey process. Just as co-creating success criteria with students improves their engagement in the assessment process, telling students the purpose of surveys in a transparent way inspires motivation and trusting relationships. After students have shared information about themselves through surveys, they will know how much the information is valued when it is referred to during teaching and learning. When students know that their opinions and insights are sought after and valued, mutually respectful relationships among Catholic learning community members are shaped and nurtured.

Make sure that survey questions connect to the information you wish to collect and will result in information that can be used. Responses that cannot produce one or more actions may result in students feeling demotivated to complete future surveys because they do not feel heard or believe that their opinion matters. Also, questions must always make students believe they are safe, and therefore do not create discomfort, trauma or cross boundaries.

"Education cannot be neutral. It is either positive or negative; either it enriches or it impoverishes; either it enables a person to grow or it lessens, even corrupts him. The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful."
– Pope Francis

"A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints." — *Pope Benedict 16th, Address to Teachers and Religious, 2010*

SURVEY DATA APPLICATIONS: INFLUENCE AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Using survey results to inform teaching and learning enhances trust, rapport and influence. Positive relationships between teacher and student and between peers lead to a learning culture that strives towards common learning goals in a shared, sacred learning space. In this way, learners can become more aware of how surveys honour the dignity of the human person and achieve the common good.

Survey information can be used to:

- provide examples and scenarios that are grounded in expressed interests (e.g., statistics related to streaming platforms, sports, games),
- provide explanations of concepts that connect to familiar and favourite activities and topics (e.g, comparisons to and analogies from movies or television shows),
- develop activity and assessment options providing students with the agency to demonstrate learning in a preferred format (e.g., role play game, playlist, anime),
- inform flexible grouping opportunities that honour different preferences,
- gain information about students that they may not think to share or be comfortable sharing through direct communication,
- ensure students feel safe and motivated to learn because their interests and needs are respected and celebrated.

"The school must be the first social setting, after the family, in which the individual has a positive experience of social and fraternal relationships as a precondition for becoming a person capable of building a society based on justice and solidarity, which are prerequisites for a peaceful life among individuals and peoples. This is possible through a search for truth that is accessible to all human beings endowed with rationality and freedom of conscience as tools useful both to study and in interpersonal relationships"
– The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue, § 19

"…if we look at Church history and contemporary experience, we see that from the time of the calling of the apostles to the present day, Jesus Christ, in and through the Sacraments and the baptized, accompanies those who respond to the encounter with him."
— *The Art of Accompaniment*

STUDENT SURVEYS AND THE ONTARIO CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE EXPECTATIONS: TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) is a unique means through which Catholic education educates the whole child throughout adolescence and into adulthood. As transferrable skills, the OCSGEs include competencies and attributes that will help students flourish as contributing citizens throughout their lifetime. When teachers model and incorporate skills outlined in the OCSGEs and students are provided with multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate them, the entire teaching and learning community benefits. Student surveys that reflect an interest in how students wish to learn, for example, empower students to develop into discerning believers and effective communicators. With the agency to express skills and goals, students can develop into self-directed and responsible learners who demonstrate their God-given potential.

Two versions of sample surveys that can be edited to meet the needs of different class structures, learning environments and varying student needs are included in this resource. The explicit connections to the OCSGEs create an opportunity to gather specific and actionable information about students. Inviting students to reflect upon transferable skills will stimulate discernment and critical thinking that can support their witness of and appreciation for God's blessings.

"The first step in education is learning to recognize the Creator's image in man, and consequently learning to have a profound respect for every human being and helping others to live a life consonant with this supreme dignity..."
– Pope Benedict 16th, World Day Of Peace Message, 2012

"Find strength in knowing that Jesus is always at your side, accompanying you… In a world that is sometimes beset with negativity and acrimony, remember your example of life, grounded in faith, is a powerful witness… , and an antidote to the hopelessness that often permeates our times."
– Renewing The Promise, page 17

STUDENT SURVEY: DISCERNING BELIEVER

A DISCERNING BELIEVER formed in the Catholic Faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through work, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living.

1. Name up to three strengths or talents you have and enjoy using and/or sharing with others.

2. How could one or more of your strengths or talents help others now and in the future?

3. What topics are you familiar with or have learned about in other courses that you are interested in learning more about and/or interested in sharing with others?

4. Which of the following do you prefer? Circle all that apply.
   a) learning or trying new things or experiences? Yes / No

   b) learning or trying things you are familiar with? Yes / No

   c) learning or trying a combination of familiar things and new things? Yes / No

5. What else would you like to share about your strengths and talents?

AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR: AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively responding critically in light of gospel values.

1. What are your preferred ways of communicating with others?

2. What are your preferred ways of receiving communication or information?

3. Do you consider yourself to be a better communicator or a better listener, and why do you believe that to be true?

4. When you are having trouble listening or concentrating, what strategies help you overcome that challenge?

5. What else would you like to share about your communication skills and preferences?

STUDENT SURVEY: A REFLECTIVE, CREATIVE AND HOLISTIC THINKER

A REFLECTIVE, CREATIVE AND HOLISTIC THINKER who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.

1. Describe ways in which you are creative, such as how you spend time, complete tasks, solve problems and/or make decisions.

2. Do you prefer being a leader among your peers or do you prefer following someone else's lead? Why is this your preference?

3. Do you prefer tasks that are easily solved, or do you like more challenging tasks, and why is that your preference?

4. Do you prefer to approach problems and make decisions on your own or with others, and why do you have this preference?

5. What else would you like to share about your creativity and how you make decisions or solve problems?

STUDENT SURVEY: A SELF-DIRECTED, RESPONSIBLE, LIFELONG LEARNER

A SELF-DIRECTED, RESPONSIBLE, LIFELONG LEARNER who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.

1. What is your preferred learning environment (e.g., location, noise level, work area, types of learning tools)?

2. What kind of topics and activities do you enjoy spending time on that
   a) are related to course work?

   b) are not related to course work?

3. What would you like to learn and achieve by
   a) the end of this course?

   b) the end of this school year?

4. How do you think your teachers can help you learn and achieve one or more of your goals?

5. Name up to three areas or skills that you would like to develop more or improve upon.

6. What else would you like to share about your preferences for and opinions about learning?

STUDENT SURVEY: A COLLABORATIVE CONTRIBUTOR

A COLLABORATIVE CONTRIBUTOR who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.

1. Do you prefer to complete course assignments and activities alone or with one or more of your peers and why is this your preference?

2. When working on course activities alone, what helps you to be successful?

3. When working on course activities with peers, what helps your shared work to be successful?

4. Which ways do you prefer to show what you have learned? Check √ all preferences.

   - ❒ a single determined format that you must use
   - ❒ written quiz or test
   - ❒ visually (e.g., sketch, drawing, anime — by hand or digitally)
   - ❒ audio recording
   - ❒ video recording
   - ❒ a menu of format options from which you can choose
   - ❒ oral quiz or test
   - ❒ demonstration (live or pre-recorded)
   - ❒ 3-D object or structure
   - ❒ multiple-step project

5. What else would you like to share about how you complete course work and learn?

STUDENT SURVEY: A CARING FAMILY MEMBER

A CARING FAMILY MEMBER who attends to family, school, parish and wider community.

1. Name up to three responsibilities you have at home.

2. Which activities related to school
   a) do you complete now or have tried before that you would like to continue?

   b) would you like to start that you haven't tried before?

3. Which activities that are not related to school
   a) do you complete now or have tried before that you would like to continue doing?

   b) would you like to start that you haven't tried before?

4. What else would you like to share about how you spend your time contributing to your community?

STUDENT SURVEY: A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN

A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

1. If you had the ability to help, which real-world challenge(s) or problem(s) would you want to solve? Why is solving this problem (these problems) important to you?

2. Which technologies (e.g., the internet, social media, apps, chat groups) do you use regularly that help you with daily tasks and activities and how are they useful?

3. How do choices and decisions you make indicate what is important to you and reflect your beliefs and values?

4. What else would you like to share about your beliefs and values, such as social justice goals?

STUDENT SURVEY: I AM A BELIEVER!

I AM A BELIEVER!

What do you like? What are you good at doing?

1. What kinds of things do you like to do:

   When you learn and work at school?

   When you learn and work at home?

2. What kinds of things are you good at doing (your special talents):

   When you learn and work at school?

   When you learn and work at home?

3. How can you use the things you are good at doing (your talents), to help others?

4. Would you like to learn more about things you already know something about? ❒ Yes ❒ No
   What kinds of things do you already know?

5. Would you like to learn about new things that you don't know about? ❒ Yes ❒ No
   What kinds of new things?

6. What else can you share about that kinds of things that you like to do?

7. What else can you share about the kinds of things you like to do and the things you are good at doing (your talents)?

STUDENT SURVEY: I HAVE A VOICE!

I HAVE A VOICE!

How do you communicate (talk, write and listen) to others?

1. How do you like to learn and work with others?
   ❒ By talking ❒ By writing ❒ By drawing ❒ By listening

2. How do you like others to learn and work with you?
   ❒ By talking ❒ By writing ❒ By drawing ❒ By listening

3. Are a good listener ❒ Yes ❒ No ❒ It depends
   How do you know?

4. When you are having trouble listening or paying attention, what helps you to listen better or pay more attention?

5. What else can you share about how you talk, write and listen to others (communicate)?

STUDENT SURVEY: I HAVE IDEAS!

I HAVE IDEAS!

How do you get ideas and solve problems?

1. How do you get ideas for games and other leisure activities? Check all the ways that are true for you.
   ❒ My own thinking ❒ My family's ideas ❒ My friends' ideas ❒ Something I read
   ❒ From school ❒ Movies or shows Computer, online, videogames, board games or other games
   Something else:

2. How do you get ideas for your work at school, like writing, drawing, building? Check all the ways that are true for you.
   ❒ My own thinking ❒ My family's ideas ❒ My friends' ideas ❒ Something I read
   ❒ From school ❒ Movies or shows ❒ Computer, online, videogames, board games or other games
   Something else:

3. I usually like my own ideas more than my family's, friends' or teacher's ideas.
   ❒ Most of the time ❒ Sometimes ❒ Never

4. Do you like to be a leader when you learn and work with others?
   ❒ Most of the time ❒ Sometimes ❒ Never
   If you chose 'Most of the time' or 'Sometimes,' share why you like being a leader.

   If you chose 'Never,' share why you never like to be a leader.

5. Do you like to do things that are: ❒ Easy ❒ Hard ❒ Sometimes easy and sometimes hard
   Why do you like to do things that are easy?

   Why do you like to do things that are hard?

   Why do you sometimes like to do things that are easy and sometimes like to do things that are hard?

6. What else can you share about how you get ideas and solve problems?

STUDENT SURVEY: I AM A LEARNER FOR LIFE!

I AM A LEARNER FOR LIFE!

How do you like to learn and work?

1. I like to learn and work when there is noise around me:
   ❒ All of the time ❒ Sometimes ❒ Never

2. I like to learn and work when it is quiet:
   ❒ All of the time ❒ Sometimes ❒ Never

3. I like to learn: ❒ on my own ❒ with friends ❒ with help ❒ sitting or standing at a table or desk
   ❒ on the floor or carpet ❒ moving around a work area ❒ being still

4. What do you like reading and learning about?

5. What would you like to read and learn more about?

6. How can your teachers help you learn and do work at school?

7. What are some things that you would like to be able to do better at school?

8. What else can you share about how you like to learn and work?

STUDENT SURVEY: I AM A TEAM PLAYER!

I AM A TEAM PLAYER!

How do you like to learn and work with others?

1. What helps you learn and work in the best way you can?

2. Do you like to help others? ❒ All of the time ❒ Never ❒ Sometimes

3. What helps you work and do other activities well with others?

4. What are some ways you can, or would like to help at school?

5. What are some ways you can, or would like to help at home?

6. Which ways do you like to show your teacher, friends and family what you have learned?
   Check √ all the ways you like to show what you have learned.

   ❒ Writing something
   ❒ Drawing, sketching
   ❒ Taking pictures
   ❒ Making a sound recording
   ❒ Creating a game
   ❒ Talking
   ❒ Showing, presenting
   ❒ Making a video
   ❒ 3-D object or structure
   ❒ Project with different steps

   Something else:

7. I like to do my work: ❒ Alone ❒ With a partner ❒ In a group

8. What else can you share about how you like to learn and work with others?

STUDENT SURVEY: I CARE!

I CARE!

How do you show care to others?

1. What jobs do you have at home?

2. What other ways do you show care for your family?

3. Which school activities:
   a) do you do or have tried before that you would like to keep doing?

   b) would you like to try that you have not tried before?

4. Which after-school activities:
   a) do you do or have tried before that you would like to keep doing?

   b) would you like to try that you have not tried before?

5. What else can you share about how you show care to others?

STUDENT SURVEY: I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES!

I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES!

How do you show responsibility and make good choices?

1. What problem is there in the world that you wish could be solved or go away?

2. Which electronics (computer, tablet, phone or other devices) do you use for learning and playing?

3. What kind of learning and playing do you use electronics for?

4. What helps you make good choices at school?

5. What helps you make good choices after school?

6. What else can you share about how you show responsibility and make good choices?

"…Amidst the social turmoil, young people are eager to find solid and enduring values which can give meaning and purpose to their lives. They are searching for a firm place — a high ground — on which to stand. They seek a sense of direction, a goal which will give meaning and purpose to their lives." – *Pope Saint John Paul II*

ENDNOTES

[1] Tomlinson and Imbeau, 17.

REFERENCES

Tomlinson, C. A., & Imbeau, M. B. (2010). *Leading and managing a differentiated classroom.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

"You are important to the world! Your faith, hope, and love are needed to bring about a more just and compassionate Church and world. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you and help you to understand how to use your unique gifts and talents for good. Pope Francis reminds us of the words of Blessed Carlo Acutis: 'everyone is born as an original, but many people end up dying as photocopies.' Be an original! Arise and become who you are meant to be!"
– Pastoral Letter to Young People, The Most Rev. Raymond Poisson

CATHOLIC VIRTUAL ONTARIO

CVO – GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH

Our Mission

Catholic Virtual Ontario provides equity of access for Catholic secondary students to take secondary credits developed and taught by Catholic teachers.

Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

20 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 1804

Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8

Tel: 416-932-9460

www.ocsta.on.ca

© 2024.