



A Comparative Study of Student Voice in Primary Curriculum Decision-Making: Drawing Lessons for Iran from the Experiences of Australia and Ireland

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 29 January 2025 Revised: 21 April 2025 Accepted: 22 May 2025 Online: 07 June 2026</p>	<p>This study employs a comparative analysis to explore the mechanisms through which student voice is operationalized within the primary curriculum decision-making processes of two leading educational systems. Findings indicate that Australia, characterized by a decentralized system, utilizes the "Student Wellbeing Framework" and state-level initiatives such as Amplify to integrate student voice into the school level via wellbeing indicators and skill-based checklists. Conversely, Ireland, despite its more centralized structure, has institutionalized student voice within the policy cycle through the rights-based Lundy Model and the "National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation," focusing on four core elements: space, voice, audience, and influence. While both nations converge on three central principles—the legal status of student voice, its intrinsic link to learning quality, and the promotion of participatory learning environments—they diverge in their degrees of centralization, specific implementation tools, and methods for evaluating participation. This study concludes that the effective integration of student voice necessitates four essential conditions: A transparent legal framework; Robust accountability and feedback mechanisms; Sustainable financial resourcing & A participatory school culture. These conditions offer a strategic roadmap for designing participatory policies and reforming curriculum frameworks in the Iranian context.</p>
<p>KEYWORDS</p> <p>Curriculum Learner Participation Student Voice Student Wellbeing Primary Education</p>	

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the concept of "student voice" has emerged as a pivotal element in enhancing educational quality, capturing the extensive interest of both researchers and educational policymakers. A primary catalyst for this shift is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which asserts that students possess the fundamental right to have their voices heard and to participate in decision-making processes regarding matters that impact their academic lives (Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2018; Quinn & Owen, 2014). Consequently, international legal frameworks have established a global mandate for governments to ensure that educational systems provide robust participatory spaces for students (Fitzgerald, 2024).

Concrete examples of this global trend can be seen in diverse national contexts. For instance, the South Korean educational system has launched the "Democratic Citizenship Education" program, which is centered on student agency and wellbeing in shaping their own futures (OECD, 2024c). Similarly, New Zealand has introduced a new framework titled "Te Mātaiaho", grounded in the principle of "Rangapū Mana Taurite" (Balanced Power Dynamics). This framework mandates that schools engage in a "power-sharing partnership with students," requiring continuous evaluation to demonstrate how student recommendations have tangibly transformed school curricula (Ministry of Education, 2023). Thus, while several global educational systems have made a definitive leap toward prioritizing student voice and its associated constructs—such as agency, power, and wellbeing—the specific strategic frameworks and procedural implementations of this transition vary significantly across different jurisdictions.

Broadly defined, student voice within the curricular process refers to the active participation of learners in educational decision-making and the formal recognition of their perspectives in curriculum planning (Busher, 2012; Quinn & Owen, 2014). It functions as a platform for students to articulate their intellectual concerns and lived experiences while developing critical life skills essential for lifelong learning. This participatory space empowers students to bring their personal inquiries, cultural backgrounds, and prior knowledge into the classroom, effectively reshaping school policy and curricular design (Beane, 2024).

A fundamental strategy for operationalizing this right involves fostering inclusive school climates that ensure all students—including those with disabilities—have equitable opportunities to express their views and participate in governance (Messiou, 2023). Meaningful involvement in school-level decision-making not only bolsters student motivation and engagement but also catalyzes personal and social development (Quinn & Owen, 2014). Furthermore, it facilitates a more responsive approach to the diverse needs of marginalized or underrepresented groups

(Dudley-Marling & Paugh, 2004; Luévanos et al., 2022), a necessity that is particularly pronounced in multicultural and pluralistic societies (Flynn & Hayes, 2021).

The establishment of democratic structures, such as student councils and parliaments, provides a scaffold for authentic participation in decision-making processes (Jones & Bubb, 2021). Consequently, schools, envisioned as learning communities, bear a responsibility that extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge; they must serve as sites for empowerment, mutual respect, and the cultivation of democratic citizenship. By centering student voice and shared decision-making, schools can transform into environments that meet the heterogeneous needs of their learners and prepare them for future complexities (Beane, 2024; Skerritt, 2023). This paradigm shift upholds democratic principles in education, transitioning students from passive recipients of information to active co-constructors of their own learning and institutional trajectories (Mitra, 2018).

Furthermore, the integration of student voice into macro-level curriculum design represents a critical dimension of this participatory imperative. When students are positioned as stakeholders in the design of curricular frameworks, they develop a heightened sense of ownership over their learning, leading to deeper engagement with instructional content (Flynn & Hayes, 2021). Curricular decision-making is inherently complex, necessitated by the delicate balancing of competing perspectives from subject-matter experts, laypeople, and diverse stakeholders (Levin, 2010). This process is fundamentally anchored by three primary pillars:

- **Knowledge:** Aimed at the transmission of essential skills and cognitive competencies requisite for student contribution to the cultural, economic, and scientific advancement of society (Feucht, 2010).
- **Society:** Prioritizing social objectives such as the promotion of cohesion, equity of opportunity, and the cultivation of responsible citizenship (Norwich & Corbett, 2013).
- **The Learner:** Where the curriculum is designed with an explicit emphasis on developing the student's decision-making capacities, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and adaptability (Nehass et al., 2025).

The role of the student is of paramount importance in this triad; the teleological aim of the curriculum is to foster the growth of students' skills for informed decision-making and the effective management of diverse life contexts (Rosen, 2010). As direct observers of the pedagogical process, students offer invaluable insights and feedback regarding the efficacy of curricular implementation and instructional methodologies, uniquely positioning them to identify systemic gaps and

instructional weaknesses (Ahmadi & Yousofi, 2024; Jones & Bubb, 2021). Such feedback loops provide a strategic opportunity for targeted reform and the continuous improvement of both curricular redesign and the broader learning environment.

Recent scholarship underscores that the impetus to integrate **student voice** into curriculum redesign and reform is gaining significant traction globally, transcending the traditional divide between developing and developed nations. As highlighted in the OECD report *Curriculum Flexibility and Autonomy*, diverse governments—ranging from Portugal and Estonia to Colombia—have implemented new legal mechanisms that delegate the authority for content development, and in some cases, formal voting rights for students, directly to the school level (OECD, 2024a). Complementing this, the OECD publication *Student Voices on Curriculum (Re)design*—which curates narratives from a wide geographical spectrum including Indonesia, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Ireland, and Japan—demonstrates that meaningful student participation in curricular decisions is no longer a localized exception but has evolved into a global educational trend (OECD, 2021). Specific national precedents further illustrate this shift:

- Portugal: Since 2018, a network of schools has established systematic consultation methods, allowing students to co-design elective curriculum options and evaluate their instructional efficacy.
- Estonia: Teachers and students have moved toward a model of co-construction, where they collaboratively design instructional units. This includes weekly learning circles where the curricular trajectory is navigated based on learner-led proposals (OECD, 2024a).
- Ireland: Research emphasizes a rights-based approach following the ratification of the UNCRC. This has catalyzed the institutionalization of mechanisms such as student councils and dialogic classroom discourses, aimed at ensuring authentic student engagement in decision-making and educational management (Fleming, 2015; Martinez Sainz et al., 2024).

A review of the research literature regarding the outcomes and implications of student voice in the primary curriculum indicates that its systematic implementation enhances academic engagement, fosters civic competencies, and strengthens students' social bonds (Baroutsis et al., 2016; Fleming, 2015; Martinez Sainz et al., 2024). For instance, a project within Maltese pastoral care settings demonstrated that providing a platform for young children to articulate their perspectives creates a more hospitable and supportive learning environment (Cefai & Pizzuto, 2017). Similarly, research in Australia highlights that leveraging "pedagogical voice" and integrating it with democratic schooling initiatives provides a framework for elevating children's

authentic engagement and participation in selecting instructional content (Baroutsis et al., 2016; Quinn & Owen, 2014).

However, scholars also note that the practical operationalization of these approaches often encounters significant barriers, such as a lack of alignment between administrators and teachers, a superficial or "tokenistic" view of child participation, and the absence of sustainable institutional structures (Gardiner & Ohi, 2023; Skerritt et al., 2023). Furthermore, the effective execution of student voice initiatives requires meticulous planning, teacher awareness of the pedagogical benefits of participation, and the synchronization of school leadership with democratic objectives (Geurts et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2023). These global experiences suggest that when student voice is anchored by transparent legal mandates in high-level policy documents or follows a formalized, institutionalized model, it can transcend mere consultation and symbolic presence. Ultimately, such frameworks facilitate a transition toward a genuine right to co-decision-making in curriculum redesign.

In this context, several nations have endeavored to examine student voice through a multi-scalar lens—integrating macro and micro levels—rather than treating it as a monolithic concept. By identifying the multidimensional nature of participation, these systems have deployed specialized strategies to facilitate student engagement, ultimately disseminating their findings through transparent national reports. Ireland stands out as a high-performing educational system within the OECD, characterized by its commitment to high-quality instruction and the adaptive capacity of its system to meet future challenges. Central to this infrastructure is the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), a statutory body tasked with advising and reporting to the Minister for Education (NCCA, 2017). Through the NCCA's stewardship, educational programs incorporate contemporary, innovative, and effective pedagogical practices, reflecting a curriculum revision process that is both evolutionary and transformative. Since assuming responsibility for curriculum review in the 1990s, the NCCA has ensured that educational revisions remain responsive to the evolving economic, social, and cultural landscape of Irish society (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2024).

The NCCA explicitly values the unique perspectives of children and young people regarding learning, teaching, and the schooling experience, acknowledging their right to active agency in shaping their education (Cook-Sather, 2006). In 2019, the Council initiated student voice projects across twenty pilot schools to field-test the mechanisms of a "future-oriented charter" and to empower teachers to engage in the collaborative co-design of curricula with their students (NCCA, 2019). Since then, substantial efforts by both the Council and the Department of Education have

focused on scaling and refining curricular frameworks through the systematic inclusion of student perspectives.

The Australian educational landscape has undergone a curricular evolution parallel to that of Ireland. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is the statutory body responsible for developing the national curriculum, managing the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), and overseeing curricular monitoring in coordination with the Department of Education (Asgari et al., 2024). In its macro-level policy frameworks, ACARA proposes several core propositions and methodologies that are fundamentally predicated on the inclusion of student voice:

- **Inclusivity of Potential:** Every student possesses the capacity to learn, and the specific needs of each individual are of paramount importance.
- **Foundational Entitlement:** Every student deserves access to the knowledge, understanding, and skills that form the bedrock of lifelong learning and successful participation in Australian society.
- **High Expectations and Differentiation:** Rigorous objectives and high expectations must be established for every student, necessitating that teachers account for individual current learning levels and the diverse trajectories of student progress.
- **Responsive Pedagogical Planning:** Recognizing that student needs and interests are heterogeneous, schools and educators must utilize the curriculum flexibly to respond to this diversity (ACARA, 2025b).

Aligned with these overarching premises and the broader Australian legislative framework, each state and territory is mandated to adopt its own context-specific programs. A prominent example is the educational system of Victoria, which in 2018 published a comprehensive practitioner guide titled "Amplify." This initiative was designed to provide schools with a practical roadmap for empowering students to take an active stake in decisions regarding curricular content, teaching and learning methodologies, and assessment strategies (DET Victoria, 2024).

In the context of Iranian educational studies, student voice has been conceptualized as a vital instrument for identifying pedagogical gaps and enhancing instructional quality; however, its practical integration into the curriculum remains hampered by formidable cultural, structural, and institutional barriers (Ahmadi & Yousofi, 2024). Prevailing power dynamics and cultural sensitivities constitute primary obstacles, where traditional hierarchical structures within

educational environments often marginalize authentic participation and preclude students from assuming agency in the curricular planning process (Ahmadi, 2023; Partovi & Wyness, 2022).

Consequently, student involvement frequently remains symbolic or tokenistic, failing to penetrate macro-level educational decision-making. In the design of curricular frameworks, for instance, student perspectives are largely peripheral, while the voices of policymakers and teachers remain dominant (Ahmadi & Hasani, 2018). This marginalization is often attributed to a lack of professional awareness among educators and officials regarding the theoretical and practical significance of student voice, which results in a failure to cultivate genuine participatory opportunities (Tohidian et al., 2023).

This landscape is further complicated by a dualistic student response: while some learners actively seek transformative roles, others exhibit resistance to such reforms—a byproduct of entrenched cultural and structural constraints (Ahmadi, 2023). While some localized research has attempted to identify the determinants of student voice at the classroom level (Maleki et al., 2023) or develop validated diagnostic checklists based on administrative perceptions (Mohammadi et al., 2021), the realization of meaningful participation faces systemic challenges. These include chronic resource scarcities, procedural inefficiencies, breakdowns in teacher-student communication, and suboptimal school environments, all of which present severe impediments to the institutionalization of student voice (Ahmadi & Yousofi, 2024).

Paradoxically, the Iranian National Curriculum (2012) explicitly acknowledges these participatory dimensions within its guiding principles. Principle 3-3 emphasizes the "active, voluntary, and conscious role" of the student in the teaching-learning and formative processes, while Principle 3-4 underscores the teacher's responsibility in facilitating this activation. Furthermore, Principle 3-10 directly establishes the "solicitation of student participation and engagement" as a foundational tenet. Despite these rhetorical commitments, the persistent marginalization of student voice in the Iranian educational system constitutes a significant systemic challenge. The present study seeks to address this gap by conducting a comparative analysis, thereby offering the robust experiences of advanced educational systems to Iranian curriculum planners and policymakers.

As previously noted, both Australia and Ireland have successfully institutionalized student voice within their curricular decision-making processes through high-level legislative mandates. By synthesizing official reports and policy outcomes from these two systems, this research not only leverages their theoretical innovations and practical initiatives but also addresses the existing empirical void in domestic Iranian scholarship. To this end, the primary objective of this study is to

conduct a comparative investigation of the status and mechanisms of student voice within the primary curriculum decision-making processes of Australia and Ireland. The specific research objectives are as follows:

- To identify the points of convergence and commonalities between the two nations regarding the institutionalization of student voice in the primary school curriculum.
- To elucidate the points of divergence and distinct characteristics of each nation's approach to institutionalizing student voice within their respective primary educational frameworks.

2. Research Method

The present research is a qualitative comparative study employing Bereday's four-stage framework at the macro-analytical (national) level. The study population encompasses global educational systems, from which Australia and Ireland were selected as the research sample through purposive sampling and the "Different Social Systems, Different Educational Outcomes" strategy. The selection of these two jurisdictions was predicated on the following criteria:

- **Contextual Equivalence:** According to the 2022 Human Development Index (HDI), Australia (ranked 10th, HDI 0.964) and Ireland (ranked 7th, HDI 0.950) are global leaders with successful track records in educational reform and curricular modernization.
- **Functional Equivalence:** Both nations utilize national statutory bodies—ACARA in Australia and NCCA in Ireland—to exercise continuous oversight of the curricular process and provide periodic reporting. Furthermore, the availability of authentic primary sources in English facilitated a comprehensive and rigorous analysis of their respective frameworks.
- **Shared Research Focus:** Both nations have explicitly prioritized the integration of student voice within their primary education curricula.
- **Structural Divergence:** The contrasting governance structures of these systems—Australia's decentralized model versus Ireland's centralized structure (Gleeson et al., 2020)—presents a unique opportunity to identify the strengths and weaknesses of different systemic approaches. This comparative contrast is particularly instructive for the Iranian context as it transitions toward more participatory educational paradigms.

Data were gathered via documentary analysis, sourcing information from the official websites of the Australian and Irish Departments of Education; international databases including the OECD,

UNDP-HDR, and World Bank; statutory reports and regulations published by ACARA and NCCA; and peer-reviewed scholarly articles. The data were analyzed and synthesized according to Bereday's model. To ensure trustworthiness and credibility, the findings underwent peer debriefing and were validated by experts in curriculum studies and comparative education. Additionally, the researcher maintained continuous reflexivity and self-monitoring throughout the process, utilizing data triangulation across multiple official sources to fortify the findings.

3. Findings

The findings of this study are presented in accordance with Bereday's four-stage comparative framework: Description, Interpretation, Juxtaposition, and Comparison.

Description

In the initial stage, we describe the operational mechanisms and conceptual status of student voice within the curricular decision-making processes of the selected nations.

Australia

In recent years, Australia has taken substantial strides to bolster student voice within its educational ecosystem. The concept emphasizes the critical importance of attending to student perspectives, preferences, and feedback to cultivate a more engaging and relevant learning environment (Beane, 2024). Within Australia's macro-curricular documents, the provision of opportunities for students to articulate their thoughts, beliefs, and concerns has been institutionalized and continues to expand.

A cornerstone of this approach is the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, which has served as the official national reference for schools since 2018. The framework asserts that student voice is a vital dimension that curriculum planners must address at the national level, emphasizing that students require authentic opportunities to participate in decision-making regarding matters that affect them (Department of Education, 2025b). Crucially, this framework moves beyond mere consultation, mandating that student input leads to tangible changes in policy and practice.

The Wellbeing Framework is anchored by five core pillars: Leadership, Inclusion, Student Voice, Partnerships, and Support. Regarding the "Student Voice" pillar, the central principle is that learners must assume an active role in their own learning and wellbeing while developing essential social and emotional competencies (Department of Education, 2025b). The practical requirements and effective practices for operationalizing student voice in Australia include:

- ✓ Opportunities for Authentic Decision-Making: Students are granted genuine agency in issues directly impacting their learning, safety, or wellbeing, moving past tokenistic consultation.
- ✓ Interactive and Inclusive Environments: Physical and digital learning spaces are designed to facilitate participation for all groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and those with disabilities.
- ✓ Strengths-Based Approaches: Educators are encouraged to use evidence-based data rather than subjective impressions to leverage student talents for leadership and problem-solving.
- ✓ Instruction in Social and Emotional Skills: The framework mandates the explicit teaching of resilience, help-seeking behaviors, and "upstander" behavior (supportive intervention) as prerequisites for effective participation.
- ✓ Co-design of Wellbeing Strategies: Students act as partners with adults in developing strategies for anti-bullying, online safety, and mental health promotion (Department of Education, 2025c).

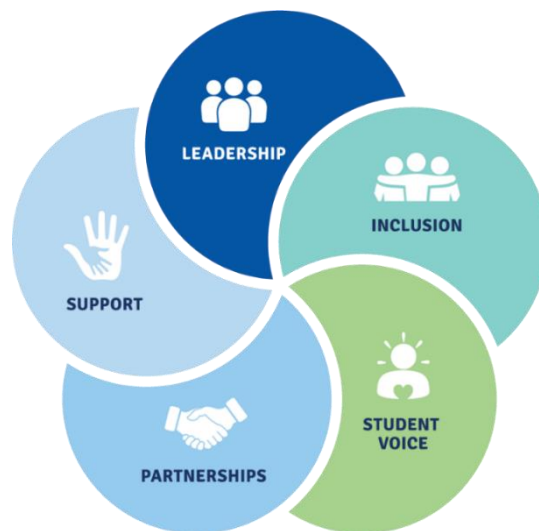


Figure 1. The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework: Five Core Elements of Inclusive Learning Communities (Department of Education, 2025c)

This framework supports principals, school leaders, teachers, students, and their families in cultivating a positive and inclusive learning environment characterized by delegated power and agency. It emphasizes explicit instruction, evidence-based practices, and the active participation of the entire school community, while insisting on rigorous assessment and timely, appropriate early intervention. To operationalize and evaluate student participation systematically within the decision-making process, the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework utilizes three primary instruments:

- School Wellbeing Check: A 25-item diagnostic survey designed to determine a school's current standing across the five core dimensions and to outline necessary strategic actions. This tool facilitates the identification and analysis of "school health" and is accessible globally as a free online resource (Department of Education, 2025).
- Illustrations of Practice: Developed by ACARA, this resource comprises a comprehensive suite of videos and workshop modules. It provides step-by-step demonstrations of successful practices across diverse educational contexts, serving as a pedagogical benchmark for implementation (ACARA, 2025).
- Student Voice Checklist: A skill-based inventory identifying the competencies students require for meaningful engagement—ranging from data collection to negotiation and feedback loops. Supporting documents emphasize that for students to assume an active role in their learning and wellbeing, they must explicitly develop social and emotional skills. Teachers use this checklist to pinpoint specific developmental needs within their student cohort, ensuring that participation is grounded in capability rather than just opportunity (Department of Education, 2025a).

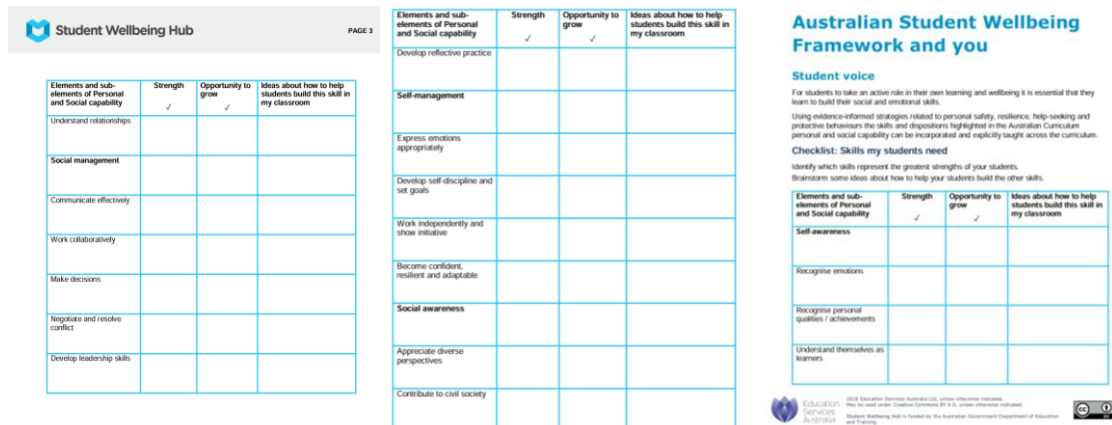


Figure 2. Student Voice Checklist (Department of Education, 2025a)

These instruments and checklists, characterized by their accessibility and accountability, serve as structural guarantees ensuring that student voice transcends symbolic presence. Instead, they facilitate authentic participation in decision-making and genuine empowerment. Furthermore, Australian states and territories are mandated—under high-level frameworks such as the *Student Wellbeing Framework* and ACARA principles—to embed student voice within their specific curricula. A pioneering example is the state of Victoria, which developed the Amplify practitioner guide to promote student voice practices across government primary and secondary schools (Gardiner & Ohi, 2023). *Amplify* provides a strategic vision and a point of departure for prioritizing student voice, agency, and leadership (SVAL).

The guide provides stakeholders with a roadmap for establishing the conditions, practices, and learning environments conducive to student agency. It encourages schools to cultivate empowering environments where active student participation in decision-making enhances both academic outcomes and personal wellbeing. Principals and educators utilize this resource to facilitate rich dialogues, collaboration, and transformative actions. Crucially, *Amplify* assists students in taking "ownership" of their learning trajectories and progress, thereby fostering a positive institutional climate (DET Victoria, 2019). Like other Australian policy documents, this guide is publicly accessible and transparent, ensuring all stakeholders are informed of their rights, responsibilities, and pedagogical expectations.

As noted, *Amplify* is anchored by the triad of Voice, Agency, and Leadership. Its objective is to empower students within these three domains to ultimately improve health, wellbeing, and learning outcomes. Under this model, students are empowered to: Assume ownership of their learning, Make purposeful contributions to their educational environments, and Engage critically

with issues arising in the world around them. Consequently, schools are envisioned as ecosystems that must be "reinvented." In diverse contexts, schools are innovating their methodologies to help learners not merely succeed in standardized testing or secure future employment, but to redesign a pathway for thriving and lifelong learning (DET Victoria, 2019).

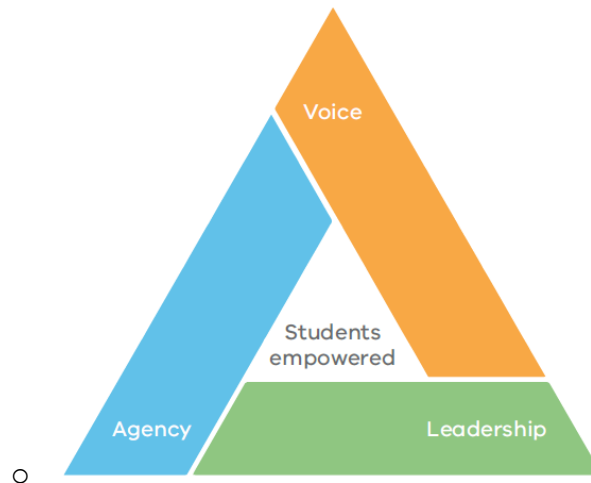


Figure 3. Triad of Empowerment: Integrating Voice, Agency, and Leadership in Student Learning (DET Victoria, 2019)

With the inauguration of the Victorian F-10 Curriculum, the imperative for "lifelong learning" and the necessity for students to develop "core capabilities"—including critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, intercultural proficiency, and personal and social capabilities—have been foregrounded as central educational objectives. These capabilities and skills are enhanced only when they are put into practice, specifically when students are afforded the opportunity to exercise voice, agency, and leadership in the design, development, and evaluation of their own learning (DET Victoria, 2019). When students become stakeholders in their educational journey, they are empowered to self-evaluate their performance and engage in more purposeful dialogues with educators regarding their progress and success—factors which collectively exert a substantial effect size on academic achievement.

Ireland

In the Irish curricular context, student voice refers to the active participation of learners in decision-making processes that shape their learning environments and school culture. A cornerstone of Ireland's recent initiatives is the operational framework developed in collaboration with Professor Laura Lundy of Queen's University Belfast. This framework was specifically

designed to enhance institutional capacity for listening to students and supporting their autonomous decision-making (CYPD, 2024).

This framework represents a synthesis of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and Ireland's National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making. Professor Lundy introduced her model in 2007 to operationalize Article 12 of the UNCRC, which guarantees children the right to express their views on matters affecting them and to have those views exert a demonstrable influence on outcomes. This model has since been adopted as the primary reference framework for child participation not only within national policies (e.g., Ireland, Denmark, New Zealand, and the UK) but also within the strategic documents of the European Union and the World Health Organization (Lundy, 2025).

A comprehensive review of the National Participation Strategy conducted between 2015 and 2020 further solidified the commitment to embedding the voices of children and youth in government decision-making, policy development, legislation, and research. This review emphasized the need for effective leadership to promote participation and the provision of educational infrastructure for professionals working with and on behalf of young people (Re-CYPD, 2024).

In 2023, the National Participation Strategy Council was reconvened, subsequently publishing its Action Plan (2024–2028) in April 2024. This plan redesigned the framework to support meaningful engagement across all government departments and organizations. Furthermore, the establishment of the Student Participation Unit within the Department of Education in April 2023 serves as a pivotal mechanism to elevate youth voice and ensure that students contribute meaningfully to the evolution of departmental policy (Department of Education, 2024). Ultimately, Ireland's National Participation Strategy is anchored in the rights-based participation model developed by Lundy's group, providing a robust national framework for involving children and young people in the decision-making process (Re-CYPD, 2024).

The Lundy group identified the structures, systems, processes, implementation gaps, and extant practices across the entire educational sector (Department of Education (Ireland), 2024). From the outset, the framework's development was characterized by a collaborative ethos involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including strategic meetings with government departments, public agencies, youth representatives, and non-governmental organizations. The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making transcends the mere inclusion of student voice in educational policy and school administration; it is fundamentally

concerned with addressing the lived challenges of children and youth and facilitating their empowerment (Forde et al., 2018). Consequently, this strategy seeks to amplify their voices not only within primary education and formal or informal schooling systems but also within local community contexts, health and social services—where decisions impact their wellbeing—and within the judicial and legal systems.

Throughout the research and development phase, stakeholders provided written feedback on framework documentation, piloted planning checklists and feedback forms, and proposed "best practice" exemplars for inclusion. This multifaceted engagement culminated in a final framework equipped with robust checklists, feedback mechanisms, and illustrative case studies of effective practice (CYPD, 2024). A pivotal component of this work involved extensive consultation with 174 children and adolescents from diverse backgrounds and educational settings—including urban and rural schools, primary and post-primary institutions, and both mainstream and special education classrooms (Department of Education (Ireland), 2024). In this way, student voice was directly leveraged during the macro-level research and decision-making processes that affected them. The Lundy research aligns with the overarching objectives of the National Participation Strategy, which include:

- **Mechanisms for Inclusivity:** Establishing and refining channels to ensure that vulnerable or "seldom-heard" children and youth are integrated into decision-making.
- **Mainstreaming Participation:** Ensuring children and young people are centrally involved in the development of policy, legislation, services, and research.

Under this paradigm, students are expected to have a voice not only at the classroom level—influencing pedagogical approaches and activities—but also at the school level, contributing to school governance, policy formulation, and institutional decision-making (CYPD, 2024). Ultimately, the Lundy model defines four essential, interrelated elements for meaningful participation, which serve as the foundation of the National Participation Framework:

- **Space:** Are students provided with a safe and inclusive environment to express their views? What are their preferred methods for communication?
- **Voice:** How are students supported in articulating their perspectives? Are they empowered to express themselves in a manner of their choosing?
- **Audience:** How do students know their views have been heard? Who is listening, and what is the protocol for accountability?

- Influence: How is it demonstrated that their views have been acted upon? What tangible changes have resulted from their input?

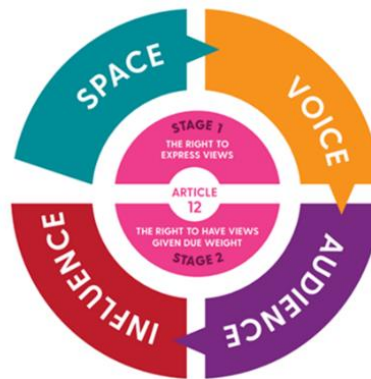


Figure 4. Lundy Model of Participation: Operationalizing Article 12 of the UNCRC (CYPD, 2024)

In this framework, Voice dictates that students must be empowered to articulate their perspectives through modalities that are most meaningful and accessible to them. Space involves the cultivation of conditions that provide safe and inclusive opportunities for students to formulate and express those views. Critically, the element of space extends beyond the mere provision of a physical room or environment; it must be a "safe harbor," free from the fear of reprimand or ridicule, and reinforced by robust child protection protocols. The element of Audience necessitates that student perspectives are heard by individuals with the requisite authority to effect change. Finally, Influence (or Impact) refers to the realization of tangible transformations based on student ideas and ensures that their contributions are acted upon appropriately (CORC, 2025).

These four elements operate in a chronological, continuous, and cyclical sequence: without Space, voice is stifled; without an Audience, voice is futile; and without Influence, institutional trust is eroded. The successful implementation of a participatory curriculum requires each step to serve as a functional prerequisite for the next (Lundy, 2025). Furthermore, this model emphasizes both individual and collective participation in decision-making, whether through face-to-face engagement, digital platforms, or hybrid modalities (CYPD, 2024). The operationalization of these rights will vary for each child and adolescent; therefore, systems must ensure that children of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities are capable of expressing their views and being heard. Regardless of age, they deserve equitable treatment and the full exercise of rights commensurate with any other stakeholder (CORC, 2025).

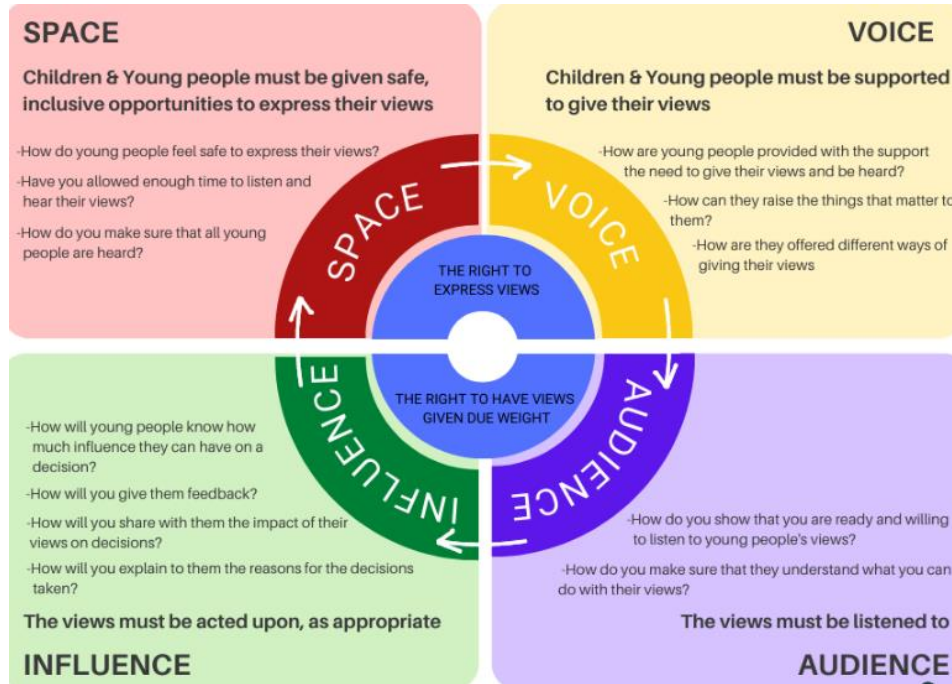


Figure 5. Detailed Schematic of the Lundy Model: Enabling Meaningful Participation through Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence

The Lundy Model incorporates a comprehensive suite of indicator checklists and feedback instruments that have been adopted as the gold standard for monitoring by both the Irish government and the European Union. The absence of such a monitoring phase significantly increases the risk of regressing into tokenistic participation. These evaluative tools provide structural support for the organization, planning, guidance, and effective assessment of child and youth participation initiatives—whether conducted in-person or via digital platforms. Furthermore, they facilitate the integration of student voice into everyday decision-making within "lived-in" environments, providing a systematic guarantee that learner perspectives are authentically embedded throughout the decision-making trajectory (CYPD, 2024).

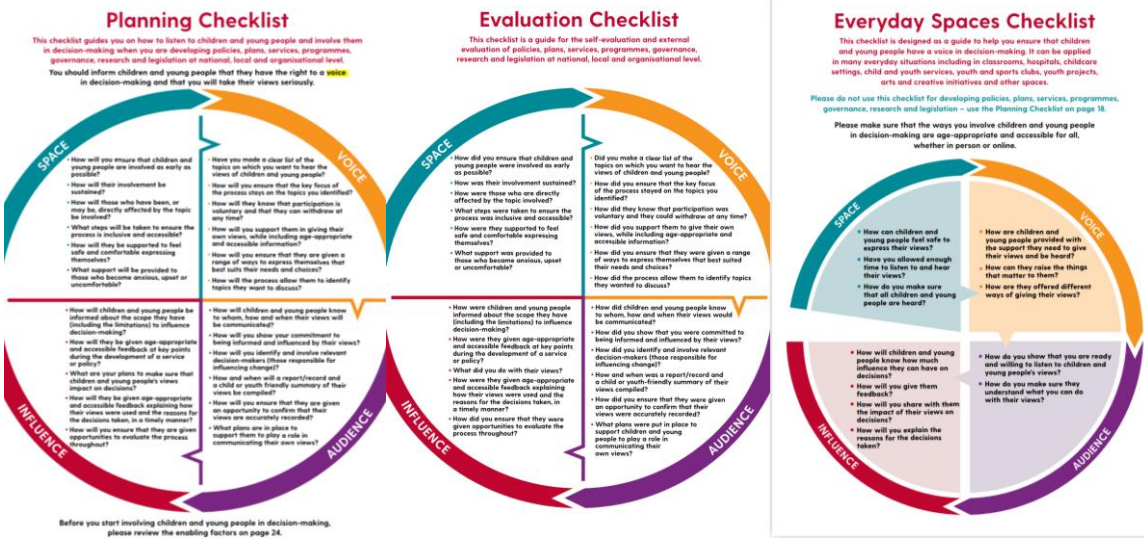


Figure 6. The Integrated Participation Suite: Planning, Evaluation, and Everyday Spaces Checklists

The checklists comprise three primary instruments: the Planning Checklist, the Evaluation Checklist, and the Everyday Spaces Checklist. Collectively, these tools, supplemented by a suite of youth-led feedback forms, provide a streamlined yet rigorously structured methodology to guide decision-makers in the practical application of the Lundy Model and its core operational principles.

Children and Young People's Feedback Form (for groups)
Boy Girl Other I don't know Age ____
Tick the number of stars you would give to everything below. Five stars is the best.

SPACE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I have been listened to from the start
I felt comfortable giving my opinions
I felt safe giving my opinions
A lot of different voices were included

VOICE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I got the chance to give my opinions
I got enough information to help me give my opinion
I got support to have my voice heard
I understood what was being discussed
I could give my opinions whatever way I wanted
I had enough time to talk

AUDIENCE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I know who wants to hear our opinions
I know why they want the opinions of young people
They were honest about what they would try to do with our opinions

INFLUENCE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I know where our opinions are going next
I know how we will be told about what happens to our opinions
I think what we said today will be taken seriously

What were the best things about today? What would you change about today?

The FOOD was... The ROOM was... THANK YOU!

Children and Young People's Online Feedback Form (for groups)
Boy Girl Other I don't know Age ____
Tick the number of stars you would give to everything below. Five stars is the best.

SPACE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I have been listened to from the start
I felt comfortable giving my opinions
I felt safe giving my opinions
A lot of different voices were included

VOICE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I got the chance to give my opinions
I got enough information to help me give my opinion
I got support to have my voice heard
I understood what was being discussed
I could give my opinions whatever way I wanted
I had enough time to talk

AUDIENCE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I know who wants to hear our opinions
I know why they want the opinions of young people
They were honest about what they would try to do with our opinions

INFLUENCE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I know where our opinions are going next
I know how we will be told about what happens to our opinions
I think what we said today will be taken seriously

Were you able to get onto the platform? Was it easy to use?

The ONLINE SPACE was... THANK YOU!

Children and Young People's Feedback Form (for individuals)
Boy Girl Other I don't know Age ____
Tick the number of stars you would give to everything below. Five stars is the best.

SPACE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I was listened to from the start
I felt comfortable giving my opinions
I felt safe giving my opinions

VOICE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I got the chance to give my opinions
I got enough information to help me give my opinions
I got support to have my voice heard
I understood what was being discussed
I could give my opinions whatever way I wanted
I had enough time to talk

AUDIENCE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I know who wants to hear my opinions
I know why they want my opinions
They were honest about what they would try to do with my opinions

INFLUENCE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I know where my opinions are going next
I know how I will be told about what happens to my opinions
I think what I said today will be taken seriously

Is there anything else that would have helped you in giving your opinions?

THANK YOU!

Figure 7. Children and Young People's Feedback Forms

The feedback instruments comprise: 1) Group feedback forms for children and young people, and 2) Individual feedback forms (CYPD, 2024). The Lundy Model serves as a pragmatic tool for transitioning the rhetoric of "student voice" into effective action. Furthermore, Lundy advocates for a feedback process model known as the "Four F's" for consultative or collective decision-making processes. This model dictates that feedback must be: Full (complete transparency), Friendly (accessible language), Fast (timely delivery), and Followed-up (ensuring continuity) (CYPD, 2024). The "Four F's" of feedback, alongside the provision of a safe space, are critical determinants of authentic student participation; though low-cost, these mechanisms are essential for bridging the gap between a student's mere presence in a meeting and their tangible influence on the curriculum.

Interpretation

In the interpretation phase, the described events are linked to broader historical, social, educational, and economic mechanisms to reveal why and how contextual forces have elevated "student voice" from the classroom level to the policy level.

Australia

Australia ranks 7th globally in the 2025 Human Development Index (HDI) with a score of 0.958 (HDI, 2025). This is characterized by a life expectancy of 83.9 years, an expected 20.6 years of schooling, and a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of nearly \$58,000—factors that have heightened societal expectations for "quality through participation" (UNDP, 2025a). This demand for quality was further underscored in the post-COVID-19 era, as reflected in the PISA 2022 report. Despite significant educational disruptions, Australia maintained its 2018 performance levels. OECD analysis indicates that successful Australian schools have increasingly relied on student agency and wellbeing as primary drivers of academic resilience and institutional success (OECD, 2024b).

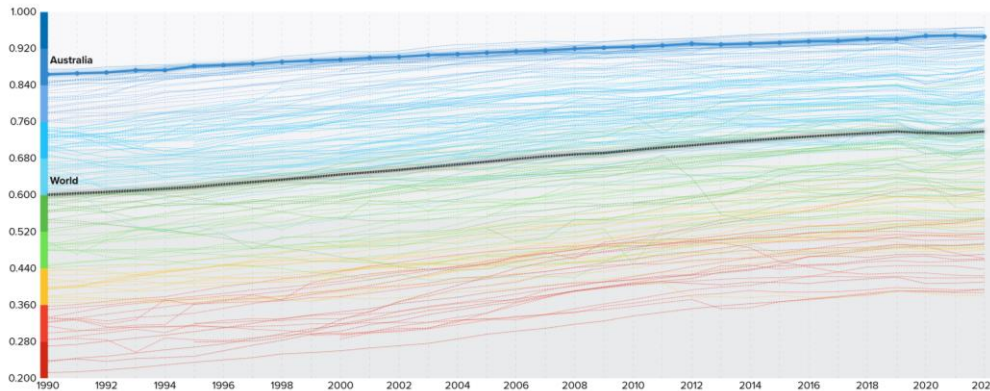


Chart 1. Longitudinal Trends in the Human Development Index (HDI) and Educational Attainment: Australia (HDI, 2025)

Historically, the 2008 Melbourne Declaration marked a pivotal discursive shift in federal policy, moving away from a rigid focus on standards toward a focus on learner agency. It explicitly asserted that student voice is a fundamental prerequisite for both equity and excellence—a trajectory that culminated in the establishment of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the formalization of the national curriculum in 2014 (Barr et al., 2008). ACARA's three-dimensional framework—comprised of General Capabilities, Cross-Curriculum Priorities, and Learning Areas for Foundation to Year 10—was designed under the guiding premise that "every student can learn." The 2025 revisions reinforce this by maintaining the student as the ultimate benchmark for educational quality (ACARA, 2025a).

Australian educational policy is uniquely shaped within the context of "competitive federalism." Since the Constitution delegates educational management to the states and territories, this structure has allowed for the piloting of diverse student voice models to gain local legitimacy and competitive ranking advantages (Cogan, 2013; Power, 2010). Comparative analyses suggest that this diversity is a product of the interplay between federal governance and the pressures of globalization (Thomson, 2021). Within this landscape, Victoria published the Amplify guide to systematically transition schools from tokenistic consultation to authentic participation. In this document, the triad of voice, agency, and leadership has been transformed into a formal school evaluation metric (DET Victoria, 2019).

At the pedagogical level, the alignment of the national curriculum with the Student Wellbeing Framework provides a holistic vision of the "ideal school," where the five dimensions of leadership, inclusion, student voice, partnerships, and support must advance in tandem. To monitor this

progress, the government introduced the School Wellbeing Check (a 25-item diagnostic, including six specific indicators for Student Voice) and the Student Voice Checklist. These instruments provide teachers and students with empirical evidence of when "voice" has tangibly influenced a decision (Department of Education, 2025a).

The social dimension has further accelerated this movement. Ethnic diversity—ranging from First Nations communities to recent immigrants—and a concern for social cohesion compel schools to create safe spaces for marginalized groups. Recent research has particularly emphasized the necessity of amplifying the voices of Muslim and Indigenous learners (Keddie et al., 2019). Economically, the robust financial capacity of the states, bolstered by federal budgetary support for wellbeing and learning technology projects, has enabled the development of digital suites and Illustrations of Practice video workshops. This content makes student voice visible and evaluable from the classroom level to the highest tiers of policy (ACARA, 2025a).

Ireland

Ireland maintains a prominent standing in the 2025 Human Development Index (HDI), ranking 11th globally with a score of 0.949. This ranking is supported by a life expectancy of 82.4 years, an expected 19.1 years of schooling, and a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of approximately \$90,000—metrics that reflect a thriving economy with a strong societal demand for social justice (UNDP, 2025b). According to PISA 2022 reports, Ireland has successfully sustained its status as a "high-performing, low-inequality" system. In the post-pandemic era, the nation has significantly intensified its investment in student agency and wellbeing, with policymakers identifying these two indicators as the primary drivers for continued educational excellence (OECD, 2024b).

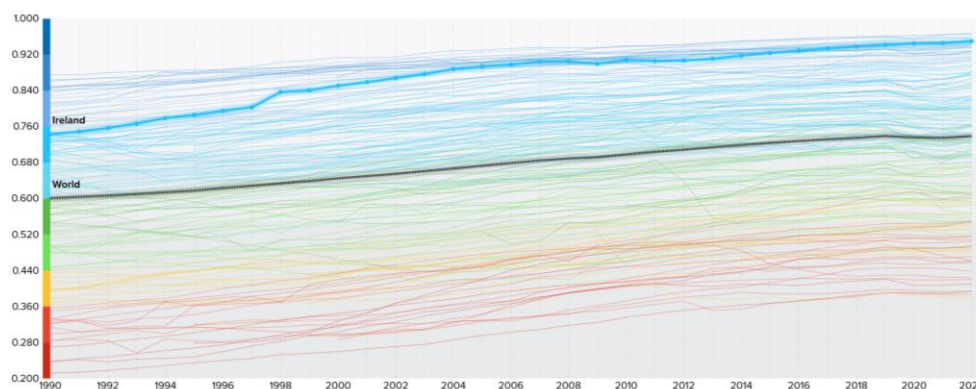


Chart 2. Longitudinal Trends in the Human Development Index (HDI) and Educational Attainment: Ireland (HDI, 2025)

Historically, the foundational culture of "permanent revision" in the Irish educational system was established with the first centralized curriculum in 1971 and its radical overhaul in 1999. This momentum was further accelerated by the 1990 Review Body report and the subsequent formal mandate of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (NCCA, 2017). A transformative milestone occurred in 2007, when Professor Laura Lundy's rights-based model was integrated into national policy to operationalize Article 12 of the UNCRC, effectively elevating student voice from a school-level activity to a statutory and regulatory requirement (Lundy, 2007). This commitment has been consistently renewed and expanded through the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making (2015–2020)* and its 2024 revision (Re-CYPD, 2024).

From a governance perspective, the Irish educational system operates within a centralized framework. This centralized structure enables the Department of Education and the NCCA to function as a cohesive unit in the formulation and monitoring of participation frameworks. The *Student Participation Action Plan 2024–2026* mandates that all schools include empirical evidence of student voice in their annual development plans, which are then reported directly to the Minister (Department of Education (Ireland), 2024). This political centralization led to the 2019 pilot project, *Student Voice – Bridge to Learning*, in 20 schools—a model that has since been scaled nationally (NCCA, 2019).

The 2023 Primary Curriculum Framework (aligned with the *Aistear* early childhood framework) conditions its seven key competencies upon evidence of student participation (NCCA, 2023). Within this framework, the Lundy model remains a constant fixture in lesson evaluation forms and the "Four F's" feedback guide; educators are required to demonstrate precisely how student voice has influenced both lesson content and assessment methodologies (Lundy, 2025). Furthermore, NCCA committees now include student members in the drafting of curriculum statements, and every revision cycle commences with dedicated children's roundtables (NCCA, 2017).

Socially, Ireland's cohesive community and tradition of civic engagement have rendered the "right to be heard" an educational axiom. Empirical research indicates that Irish students perceive their opinions and critiques as central to their civic identity—an identity reinforced by national policy (Forde et al., 2018). The prevalence of "student voice" as a technical term in official documents is a direct result of this rights-oriented culture (Fleming, 2015). Economically, Ireland's robust fiscal capacity and its "prosperity through social inclusion" model allow the state to fund participation at a national scale. Consequently, unlike Australia's diverse state-level projects,

Ireland provides uniform teacher training packages, digital surveys, and Lundy workshops to all schools. This financial centralization has transformed student voice into a primary indicator of governmental accountability (Department of Children, 2024).

Juxtaposition

In the juxtaposition phase, the data from the Australian and Irish educational systems are placed side-by-side to allow for an immediate observation of similarities and differences. The following table aligns key indicators of structure, curriculum, student voice, and learning assessment.

Table 1. Juxtaposition of Student Voice Integration in the Curricula of Australia and Ireland

Category	Indicator	Australia (Federal/Decentralized)	Ireland (National/Centralized)
Educational Governance	System Structure	Decentralized: Each state/territory is responsible for budgeting, school calendars, and adapting the national curriculum.	Centralized: The Department of Education and NCCA establish unified policies, budgets, and curricula.
Primary Education Profile	Cycle Duration	Typically 7–8 years (Foundation to Year 6).	8 years: Junior & Senior Infants to Grade 6.
	Management & Control	State-level diversity in funding and calendars; includes Government, Independent, and Catholic sectors.	Unified state structure; direct oversight by the Department of Education.
Core Curriculum Framework	National Document	Australian Curriculum (V9.0): States are mandated to align their syllabi with this national framework.	Primary Curriculum (1999) / 2023 Revision: A singular national framework for all schools.
	Learning Areas	English, Maths, Science, Humanities & Social Sciences (HASS), Arts, HPE, Technologies, Languages.	Languages; Maths, Science & Tech; Wellbeing; Arts; Social & Environmental; Religious/Ethical.
	Dominant Approach	Competency-based: Focus on critical thinking, digital literacy, and Indigenous (Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander) cultures.	Rights-based & Learner-centered: Focus on active learning and socio-emotional skills.
Student Voice Integration	Conceptual Definition	Authentic participation in decisions regarding content, assessment, and safety, integrated with SEL (Social Emotional Learning).	The free expression of views in a safe environment with a guarantee of influence over outcomes.
	Position in Policy	Integrated within the Student Voice & Leadership dimensions of the Wellbeing Framework.	An overarching principle in the Lundy Model; mandatory across the four dimensions of the policy cycle.
	Stated Significance	A driver for increased motivation, engagement, and a positive school climate.	The foundation for learner autonomy, responsibility, and holistic child wellbeing.
Mechanisms & Implementation	Overarching Strategy	Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (Five pillars, with Student Voice as a core element).	National Participation Strategy (2015–2024) + The Lundy Participation Model.

	National/State Pilot	Amplify (Victoria): A triad framework of Voice, Agency, and Leadership.	Student Voice – Bridge to Learning (Pilot in 20 schools, 2019).
	Instruments /Forms	Social Skills Checklists + School Wellbeing Check survey questions.	Three Lundy Model Checklists + "Four F's" (Full, Friendly, Fast, Followed-up) feedback forms.
Assessment & Reporting	Methodologies	Classroom-based formative assessment + National testing (NAPLAN); Holistic report cards (Academic + Wellbeing).	Continuous teacher assessment + National standardized testing; progress reports covering all learning areas and development.

While both Australia and Ireland strive to provide high-quality primary education that promotes the holistic development of children, this parallel alignment reveals distinct strategic orientations. Australia relies on a diverse array of state-level instruments and a competency-based focus, whereas Ireland utilizes a centralized, rights-based national framework to integrate student participation. This juxtaposition clarifies the fundamental points of convergence—such as the adoption of student voice as a core indicator of educational quality—and divergence, specifically regarding the level of centralization, types of instruments utilized, and overarching curricular approaches. Consequently, this provides a robust foundation for the final comparative analysis.

Comparison

A comparative analysis of Australia and Ireland regarding the decision-making processes and the structural status of student voice reveals a nuanced landscape of educational reform. By examining how these two nations operationalize participation within their unique systemic constraints, we can derive a deeper, more critical understanding of how student agency is institutionalized.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Student Voice in the Curricular Processes of Australia and Ireland

Key Dimension	Australia	Ireland	Comparative Insight
Decision-Making Structure	Decentralized: Decisions are shared between the federal government and 8 states/territories; each state can develop independent student voice documents (e.g., Victoria's <i>Amplify</i>).	Centralized: The Department of Education and NCCA establish a unified framework; student voice is standardized via the Lundy Model.	Decentralization fosters diverse innovation; Centralization ensures national cohesion and universal coverage.
Legal & Operational Frameworks	Australian Student Wellbeing Framework + State documents; Student Voice is defined as one of five core pillars.	National Participation Strategy 2015–2024 + The Lundy Model; mandates the four elements of Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence.	Both utilize high-level mandates; however, Australia is wellbeing-centric, while Ireland is rights-based.

Status in the Core Curriculum	Embedded within "Student Voice & Leadership" and the General Capabilities of Version 9.0 of the National Curriculum.	Within the 2023 Primary Curriculum Framework, student participation is a prerequisite for key competencies.	Both systems treat student voice as a quality indicator, but through different curricular pathways.
Implementation Tools & Mechanisms	Social skill checklists + School Wellbeing Check (25-item survey) + <i>Illustrations of Practice</i> multimedia suites.	Lundy Model Checklists (3 types) + "Four F's" feedback forms + <i>Bridge to Learning</i> pilot initiatives.	Australia focuses on wellbeing monitoring; Ireland prioritizes rights-guaranteeing and transparent feedback loops.
Formality of Participation	Student Councils with varying levels of authority depending on the state; primary focus is at the classroom and school levels.	Formal inclusion in NCCA curriculum committees and mandatory annual reporting to the Minister of Education.	Legal formality is higher in Ireland; operational flexibility is greater in Australia.
Assessment of Impact	NAPLAN + School-based formative assessment; reports include components for wellbeing/participation.	National Standardized Testing + Personal development reports; Lundy checklists specifically monitor "Influence."	Both employ hybrid assessments; however, Ireland explicitly measures the <i>impact</i> of student voice.
Key Challenges & Opportunities	Risk of tokenism in certain states; balanced by high financial and cultural capacity for testing innovative models.	Risk of bureaucratization of the process; however, legal guarantees prevent the marginalization of student voice.	Different paths require a balance between feasibility and authenticity of participation.

Both Australia and Ireland have successfully institutionalized student voice within their respective curricular frameworks, albeit through distinct legislative and policy pathways. In Australia, where school administration is delegated to eight states and territories, this federal structure has fostered the development of localized documents such as the Amplify guide. This guide embeds student participation directly into lesson design, assessment, and school governance. At the national level, the Student Wellbeing Framework defines learner voice as one of the five pillars of a safe and inclusive school, mandating that schools solicit direct feedback from students regarding their learning environments and instructional content.

Conversely, Ireland operates within a centralized system coordinated by the Department of Education and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). Its participation framework is anchored in the Lundy Model and operationalized through the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation*. Standardized checklists and feedback forms provide administrators and educators with empirical evidence of the extent to which students influence school-level decisions and even the NCCA's national curricular documents. Consequently, in both

nations, student voice is recognized not as a peripheral concept but as a primary driver in the redesign and implementation of the curriculum. This principle manifests through collaborative and project-based learning in Australia and learner-centered group activities in Ireland, both aimed at elevating instructional quality and the overall learning experience.

The fundamental distinction lies in their systemic structures: Australia’s decentralized system allows for significant regional diversity. For instance, Victoria’s *Amplify* focuses intensely on student empowerment, while other states may prioritize digital safety or Indigenous perspectives. In Ireland, the centralized governance ensures that participation standards are implemented uniformly across the country. Furthermore, while Australia integrates student voice primarily through wellbeing-oriented tools and teacher competency checklists, Ireland relies on the highly structured protocols of the Lundy Model and formal statutory reporting, which offers a higher degree of national transparency. The following table synthesizes these findings, identifying where each country has established systematic mechanisms for student participation in educational decision-making.

Table 3: Comparative Execution Mechanisms for Student Voice in Australia and Ireland

Dimension of Comparison	Australia	Ireland
Curricular Decision-Making Structure	✓	✓
Centrality of Student Voice	✓	✓
Statutory Bodies Responsible for Curriculum Policy	✓	✓
Established Operational Frameworks	✓	✓
Formal Student Participation in Macro-Level Policy	—	✓
Curricular Implementation Flexibility	✓	—
Instruments for Assessing Participation Impact	✓	✓
Existence of a Standardized Participation Model	—	✓
Emphasis on Collaborative and Participatory Learning	✓	✓

Ultimately, while both Australia and Ireland have successfully transformed student voice into a benchmark for school quality, their underlying implementation logics diverge: Australia utilizes competitive federalism to foster localized initiatives and wellbeing-centric tools, whereas Ireland employs centralized legislation and a legal reliance on the Lundy Model to establish a measurable national standard. In summary, the strategic convergences include explicit high-level policy mandates, robust monitoring instruments, and the recognition of participation as a fundamental right and quality indicator. The structural divergences involve the degree of centralization, the philosophical nature of the approach (Wellbeing vs. Rights), and the formal depth of student voice

within the educational hierarchy. This analysis suggests that Iranian policymakers and curriculum planners can adopt Australia's state-level flexibility for localization and Ireland's transparent, rights-based framework to ensure accountability—a synthesis that facilitates a transition from tokenistic participation to genuine co-decision-making.

4. Conclusion

The present study conducted a comparative investigation of the concept of student voice within the primary curriculum decision-making processes of Australia and Ireland. As a cornerstone of contemporary pedagogical approaches, student voice facilitates active learner participation in both instructional and institutional decision-making. This not only bolsters a sense of responsibility and autonomy but also renders the learning environment more engaging and responsive to individual needs. The results indicate that while both nations have institutionalized student voice as a core curricular element, their structural and substantive implementation strategies differ significantly. The juxtaposition of a decentralized system (Australia) and a centralized system (Ireland) offers a unique opportunity for inspiration and policy design in contexts such as Iran. In Australia, the decentralized structure affords states and territories the autonomy to innovate through diverse local policies. Conversely, Ireland benefits from a unified and transparent framework that ensures systemic consistency across the national policy cycle.

These findings align with the extant literature. Consistent with Mitra (2018), who argues that meaningful participation enhances learner motivation and personal development, our results demonstrate the direct impact of student voice on instructional quality in both jurisdictions. Furthermore, the emphasis by Bourke and Loveridge (2016) on power dynamics and the necessity of redefining the teacher's role resonates with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework. Similarly, the study by Forde et al. (2018) corroborates the role of national policy in stabilizing student participation in Ireland—both points were central themes in our analysis.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the operationalization of student voice in the educational systems of Australia and Ireland is not without significant challenges and systemic impediments. In Australia, substantial barriers persist regarding the implementation of authentic participation (Baroutsis et al., 2016). Chief among these is tokenism—symbolic participation where student perspectives are included only superficially, exerting negligible influence on macro-level educational decision-making (Mayes et al., 2019). Furthermore, the prevailing emphasis on standardized educational benchmarks and the pressure to meet performance targets leave little room for curricular flexibility or the integration of student interests (Gardiner & Ohi, 2023). In

practice, structural and cultural hurdles, such as inadequate teacher training in facilitative participation and persistent issues of inequity, further complicate the democratization of the learning environment (Baroutsis et al., 2016).

Similarly, in Ireland, authentic student involvement in curriculum-related decision-making continues to face multiple challenges (Fleming, 2015). For instance, student councils often serve a merely symbolic function, remaining active in administrative or extracurricular domains rather than contributing to instructional design (Skerritt et al., 2023). Moreover, entrenched school hierarchies and a focus on quantitative assessments make administrators and teachers hesitant to prioritize student perspectives (Martinez Sainz et al., 2024). These factors, coupled with a scarcity of professional resources for educators, have resulted in student voice initiatives that are often fragmented or localized rather than systemically integrated.

Ultimately, drawing from the synthesized experiences of Australia and Ireland, the Iranian educational system can enhance instructional quality by centering active student participation in the curriculum decision-making process. The following recommendations are proposed for reforming the Iranian curricular landscape:

- ❖ **Institutionalizing Student Voice:** Establish legal and executive frameworks to guarantee authentic participation at both the school and macro-policy levels. Iran could adapt models similar to the Lundy Framework (Ireland) and the Student Wellbeing Framework (Australia) to create structured opportunities for student input.
- ❖ **Addressing Cultural and Local Diversity:** Leverage student voice to integrate content related to Iran's diverse ethnic and regional histories, cultures, and languages. This mirrors Australia's decentralized approach, which allows for context-specific curricular adaptations.
- ❖ **Teacher Support and Capacity Building:** Provide specialized training for educators in participatory methodologies and empower them to facilitate student expression. Additionally, diagnostic tools and checklists, similar to those used in Australia and Ireland, should be designed to help teachers identify and foster students' socio-emotional competencies.
- ❖ **Strengthening Participatory Structures:** Reform the role of student councils to move beyond the peripheral, ensuring they have a mandate in school governance and instructional planning. Formal channels should be established for students to provide direct feedback to the Ministry of Education.

- ❖ Developing a Comprehensive Evaluation System: Design assessment instruments similar to the Irish framework that provide continuous feedback on participation levels. This includes transitioning toward project-based and participatory assessments rather than an exclusive reliance on high-stakes standardized testing.
- ❖ Pilot Implementation: Identify select schools as "pilot sites" to implement student voice-centered approaches, allowing for rigorous evaluation and refinement of these models before national scaling.

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