Trinity Access' longitudinal research has found that our core practices are indicative of higher levels in the following outcomes:

- Wellbeing
- Confidence in College Success
- Aspirations and Goals
- Student/Teacher Relationships
- Active Engagement
- Application Efficacy

KEY FINDINGS

MENTORING

PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE

LEADERSHIP IN LEARNING
A whole school approach, collaboration and a community of practice among teachers are key to success when moving teaching and learning online.

Connection before content! We need to prioritise student and staff wellbeing.

When teaching online, interactive live and recorded lessons as well as consistent feedback are paramount in maintaining high student engagement.

Times are changing - teachers need and want CPD to help support teaching and learning in these new environments.
Trinity Access aims to support individuals from underrepresented areas to reach their full educational potential. The Trinity Access (TA) Surveys collect whole-school data from post-primary students and teachers in Dublin based schools. These schools are located within communities where progression to further and higher education is low. The longitudinal study has just completed its 2nd phase of student data collection and looks to investigate the impact of the three TA core practices; Pathways to College, Mentoring and Leadership in Learning.

The ‘Pathways to College’ core practice involves coordinating activities that provide students with a chance to explore post-secondary options. Engagement in this core practice equips students with the knowledge to make informed choices regarding subjects and subject levels for Junior and Senior Cycle in the context of exploring post secondary educational and career options. Thus, the idea of progressing to college is promoted and made visible in the school and community.
MENTORING

The 'Mentoring' core practice involves various type of mentoring programmes designed to foster personal and academic growth amongst all students. It includes, for example, college-focused mentoring, peer-to-peer mentoring and career-focused mentoring. This means that students could be mentored by a range of different individuals such as an older student, a teacher, a university student or an outside professional or expert. Ideally, the mentors come from similar communities and backgrounds to the students themselves, and serve as a role models that students can relate to.

LEADERSHIP IN LEARNING

This core practice involves teachers guiding students in ways that help develop students’ autonomy and self-direction, as well as 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking problem-solving. The model provides a framework for students to develop skills within the context of both teaching and learning in the formal curriculum and engagement in student-led community service projects.
WHO DID WE SURVEY?

303 Teachers

20 TA Linked Schools

Teachers across all TA Linked Schools were invited to participate in the survey. The survey was then extended to all teachers across Ireland. This report focuses on the results from TA schools.

1004 Students

15 TA Linked Post-Primary Schools
The more PTC activities that students engaged in, the higher their...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspirations and Goals</th>
<th>Wellbeing</th>
<th>Student-Teacher Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Efficacy</td>
<td>Active Engagement</td>
<td>Confidence in College Success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6th Years had the highest confidence in college success

92% of 2nd Year students experienced a College Visit

80% of 6th Year students attended a Career Fair

71% of students plan to complete a University degree
MENTORING

Longitudinal findings have shown that having a high quality mentor relationship is indicative of higher:

- Aspirations and Goals
- Student-Teacher Relationships
- Wellbeing
- Active Engagement
- Confidence in College Success
- Student-Teacher Relationships

Nearly half of students had an **Older Student** as a mentor and nearly a third of students had a **Staff Mentor**

Mentor Relationship Quality

- 96% Complete Agreement
- 4% Strong Agreement
- 4% Agreement
- 4% Poor Agreement
- 9% Strong Disagreement
- 9% Complete Disagreement

**Does your school have a mentoring programme?**

- 25% Yes
- 60% No
- 15% Don’t Know

**7%** of students have had a mentoring session since school closures

**Mentor Type**

- Older Student
- Staff Member in School
- Scholars Ireland
- College Student
- Outside Expert
Longitudinal findings have shown that the more LiL activities that students engage in, the higher students' well-being.

Activities that students were more likely to be actively engaged in were:

- Wellbeing Projects (Mental and Physical Health)
- Fundraising (School and Charities)
- Environmental Initiatives

**4th Years** had the highest participation in LiL activities.
LEADERSHIP IN LEARNING

Through the Trinity Access PG Cert, teacher training and CPD, we try to foster the implementation of a 21st century teaching and learning approach in teachers practice. These consist of student-led, innovative pedagogies. Trinity Access research has found that students who have higher exposures to 21st century teaching and learning also score higher in the following areas:

- Wellbeing
- Aspirations & Goals
- Confidence in College Success
- Student-Teacher Relationship
- Student Voice

Higher scores in student exposure to

21st Century Teaching & Learning

positively correlated with higher scores in

Active Engagement

72% of teachers surveyed this year have participated in some sort of Trinity Access CPD or Certificate course.
We now have data to track progress and changes from students between last year and this year. This gives a unique insight into any changes that may have occurred in the last year including the impact of the current pandemic on our students. Teachers also completed the survey online anonymously.

This report represents the voices of teachers and students in schools linked with Trinity Access. The study allows the reader to gain a valuable insight into the thoughts and opinions of those experiencing remote learning first hand. The goal is to use this information to inform school planning and the development of supports and resources for schools in the event of another period of online learning.

A detailed report on both the teacher and student data collected during school closures 2020 is available to download from; www.tcd/trinityaccess

The Research Team aims to use this data to continue to advocate on behalf of Trinity Access Schools.

The Trinity Access Research Team would like to sincerely thank all the students and teachers who participated in the Trinity Access surveys. We hope that our work will allow your voices to be heard.
This section of the report analyses teachers’ perceptions of students’ engagement. Teachers were asked about how often students engaged with online learning as well as what the barriers were to students engaging effectively with online learning.

**1st Year**

Students were reported as being the most engaged. In comparison, just over half of TY students were described as having low engagement.

Low engagement was categorised as less than 30% engagement.

Teachers identified a 'lack of engagement' from students as the largest barrier to teaching and learning since school closures. Historically, DEIS schools have had to combat higher rates of student disengagement than non DEIS schools. The move to online teaching and learning has exacerbated this issue and widened the gap in students engagement between DEIS and non-DEIS schools.

“Students are more likely to give up than ask for help”
The method of teaching used may account for an increase in student disengagement since school closures. Students referenced being more likely to engage in a lesson if it resembled their normal classroom as much as possible. The use of video lessons allowed students to feel connected to their teacher and class group.

"More teachers need to be using apps such as google meets or zoom. Many teachers already do, but some have not engaged with the class at all."
WELLBEING

Each year wellbeing is one of the outcomes that TA researchers measure. We can now track students’ wellbeing from year to year. This year, school closures were unprecedented and a shock for students, parents and teachers. Some students struggled whereas others found positives in the situation.

It’s too stressful. I get stressed out too much and cry almost every day. And I have more responsibilities at home now that I didn’t have before so I can’t keep up with schoolwork

I feel less anxious because I don’t have to answer questions in class, attend school and see other people

3rd & 6th year students had the lowest wellbeing scores.

Female students reported lower wellbeing scores compared to male students

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on students wellbeing. From tracking individual students over time it is possible to see that wellbeing scores have decreased significantly since the same time last year.
I am unable to have a quiet room for the entire day. I do not always get use of the laptop, my brother’s need to use it as well. My family disturb me at times. I have less concentration at home. I get less completed at home despite spending more time working.

I feel that this change has prepared myself for what it may be like in college as the majority of the work is done online.

With the closure of schools on the 12th of March 2020, the teaching community was suddenly forced to enter a new virtual classroom. In the weeks and months that followed, teaching faced its biggest upheaval in recent memory. This change in the landscape presented teachers with a steep learning curve, allowing them the opportunity to discover new methods of subject delivery while also highlighting the need for human connections in the classroom.

**Technology**

1 in 7 students do not have access to a device

1 in 6 students do not have a quiet study space

I am unable to have a quiet room for the entire day. I do not always get use of the laptop, my brother’s need to use it as well. My family disturb me at times. I have less concentration at home. I get less completed at home despite spending more time working.

Email was the most used online platform for both Communication and Sharing Materials with Students

I feel that this change has prepared myself for what it may be like in college as the majority of the work is done online.

**Online Platforms Used by Teachers**

- Email
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Classroom
- Zoom
- Edmodo
- Traditional post
- Telephone
- Social Media
- Schoology
- WhatsApp

![Chart showing usage of online platforms]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Communicate with students</th>
<th>Share material with students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Teams</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Classroom</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmodo</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional post</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoology</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I feel like my learning hasn't made much of progress... Some teachers give feedback but most don't. There is no reflection process. That usually means that after a week I forget what I learnt.

Some students excelled in the freedom that online learning provided them. They reported enjoying the ability to plan their own schedule and what they would study. Other students found that the flexibility left them with a lack of motivation and they called for a return of a structured school day.

I believe working online gave me more freedom to work at my own pace in an environment that was not stressful.

Self Direction

Trinity Access has identified key skills that link to 21st Century Teaching and Learning. These key skills are Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, Self-Direction, Critical Thinking as well as Using Technology for educational purposes. This report shows that online teaching and learning has had a huge impact on how students use these skills.
**Creativity**

For the majority of students, their creative skills remained the same during virtual learning. Some students found that their engagement levels increased as their teachers used new methods of subject delivery. However, for students who were taught via traditional technological methods such as an email, their creativity levels decreased.

Some of the assignments I have been given are much more creative and entertaining than before (e.g. making Spanish short films, creating Powerpoint on Chemistry topic).

**Critical Thinking**

If we had an online meeting (Zoom, Google Meets) in every subject once a week, it would help us to share our ideas and problems.

Critical thinking skills remained the same during online teaching and learning for a large portion of students. Students reported a decrease in the number of times they analysed different aspects of a problem. This may be due to the lack of contact they had with their peers and the lack of opportunity they had to engage in discussions with others.
Collaboration

The key skill of collaboration is a vital part of everyday learning. Students were asked whether practices that promoted this skill had increased, decreased or stayed the same since school closures.

The graph on the left illustrates the drastic decrease in collaborative practices since school closures. Students describe missing this sense of social connection with their peers.

“it’s hard being at home all day and not really being able to talk to my friends and teachers.”

“it is harder to have group discussions on zoom/google classroom calls because there are so many of us.”

75% of teachers reported that their school used a whole-school approach to moving their teaching online.

A Whole-school Approach to the move to teaching and learning online was a significant predictor of higher student engagement.
Communication

How the teaching community communicated with each other changed dramatically overnight with school closures. Teachers suddenly had to navigate new methods of communication with both their students and their colleagues. While teachers managed a new classroom environment, students also had to readjust to a new form of communication. In some instances, the virtual classroom allowed contact to increase and in others long delays in responses led to student disengagement.

There is more one to one time with our teachers where we can get personal feedback

Feedback from teachers

I had a hard time on my homework thinking if my answers are right because there’s less interaction with the teachers.

Communication between teachers and students varied greatly across the board. A portion of students reported more feedback and communication than ever, with the added element of one-to-one feedback. Other students found online learning difficult as a result of reduced feedback which limited their ability to understand topics.

Peer contact between students was greatly hindered as a result of online learning. Students felt the negative impacts of this from both an academic and social point of view.

Communication between teachers and students varied greatly across the board. A portion of students reported more feedback and communication than ever, with the added element of one-to-one feedback. Other students found online learning difficult as a result of reduced feedback which limited their ability to understand topics.
Positive changes have been having to force myself to become more technology focused in my practice. I have had to become more reflective on what I do and don’t know about electronic teaching resources that are available to me.

54% of teachers have participated in some sort of CPD since school closures.

Since school closures, teachers had to rapidly change and adapt their teaching to cater for a new digital classroom. This survey explored the types of CPD teachers have engaged in since school closures as well as the level of support teachers received during this difficult period.

1 in 5 teachers have used Trinity Access' thestaffroom.ie website for support since school closures.
The public announcements regarding education were extremely stressful and schools should have been consulted and informed of decisions that directly affected staff and students.

Teachers were asked about how useful they found various supports during school closures (first graph). Teachers noted in-school support as by far the most useful and criticised the DES for their 'lack of guidance'. Teachers were also asked what kind of supports and training they needed if remote learning was to continue in the future (bottom graph).

Interestingly, teachers found support from social media groups such Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to be particularly useful.

Teachers called for support in relation to meaningful integration of technology and pedagogy for online teaching and learning rather than how to use the technology itself.
WHAT IF SCHOOL CLOSURES HAPPEN AGAIN?

LESSONS LEARNED

01
Prioritise student and staff wellbeing

02
Take a whole-school approach to moving teaching and learning online

03
Foster interactive, live and recorded lessons where possible

04
Develop collaboration and a community of practice among teachers

05
Futureproof - provide training and CPD
Follow up to date TA research on our social media handles

Research Reminders...

- Student consent - please collect this as early as possible in the school year.
- School planning document - use this throughout the year to help integrate the TA core practices into your planning.
- Schedule your data collection (March, April, May 2021)