



Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum

LIFT OFF Pupil Forum

Friday 12th February 2010

Dudhope Castle, University of Abertay Dundee

Retrospective Summary Report

Gary Walsh

Development Worker

LIFT OFF



Introduction

The LIFT OFF Pupil Forum is a group of S4-S6 pupils from LIFT OFF's partner schools in Fife and Tayside. All of the Pupil Forum members have attended Lift Off to Success, LIFT OFF's Summer residential program. The Pupil Forum meets twice a year and the members give up their time during school holidays to attend. It is an opportunity for pupils to provide feedback on LIFT OFF's activities, to contribute to the improvement of our future programs and to voice their opinions on various issues.

The LIFT OFF Pupil Forum aims to:

- Give young people a voice that will be listened to
- Empower young people to make a difference
- Demonstrate confidence in young people by giving them extra responsibilities
- Help in raising the aspirations of young people in Fife & Tayside
- Provide pupil representation for LIFT OFF's partner schools

The main focus of the Pupil Forum on 12th February 2010 was COMMUNICATION. The pupils involved were given communication training relating mainly to working in a group discussion. Pupils were also asked to discuss the launch of LIFT OFF's new newsletter, the LIFT OFF Lowdown, and also to discuss the launch of the LIFT OFF Blog.

In attendance at the Pupil Forum were;

Area	School	Pupil Rep	Year Group
Angus	Arbroath Academy	N/A	
	Brechin High School	N/A	
Dundee	Baldrigon Academy	Kayleigh	S5
	Braeview Academy	N/A	
	Menzieshill High School	Jade	S4
		Heather	S4
	St Paul's RC Academy	Jozette	S4
		Deeana	S5
Fife	Craigie High School	N/A	
	Beath High School	Kelly	S4
	Lochgelly High School	Callum	S4
	Kirkland High School	Kathryn	S4
		Bob King	S5
		Caitlin	S6
	Viewforth High School	Megan	S4
		Mary	S5
		Kirsten	S6
	Perth & Kinross	Woodmill High School	Ben
Blairgowrie High School		Jack	S4

(15 pupils in total)

Also present:

Sarah Morisson	LIFT OFF Manager	Gemma Johnsen	Senior Student Volunteer
Gary Walsh	LIFT OFF Development Worker	Rebecca McLennan	Student Volunteer
Callum Ball	LIFT OFF Development Worker	Rachael Purvis	Student Volunteer
Cheryl Cairns	LIFT OFF Development Worker	Iona Doohan	Student Volunteer

Apologies:

Bethany-Jo	Arbroath Academy S4 Rep
Katie	Brechin HS S4 Rep
Samantha	Braeview Academy S6 Rep

Partner schools not represented:

Arbroath Academy	Craigie HS
Brechin HS	
Braeview Academy	

Summary

This meeting of the LIFT OFF Pupil Forum was very successful. The PF members gave up one of their February days off to attend, which shows once again how committed they are to LIFT OFF activities. As always, we are extremely grateful to them for their efforts. There were also four LIFT OFF Student Volunteers at the event. The contributions made by Student Volunteers to the Pupil Forum cannot be understated and we thank them for their continued support.

The main purpose of this PF meeting was to strengthen communication links with PF members and to populate the new LIFT OFF Lowdown and Blog with content from PF members and Student Volunteers. The outcome of the day was that all PF members and Student Volunteers contributed significantly to the production of a large quantity of materials which will be used for this purpose.

Pupil Forum Agenda

1. **Welcome and introductions**
Contact details and volunteer introductions
 2. **Communication training**
Working in a group, expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, representation, staying in touch
'Disney Strategy'
Survival scenario
 3. **LIFT OFF Developments**
LIFT OFF Blog – Demonstration
LIFT OFF Lowdown – Critique
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4. **Brainstorming**
Blog posts and Lowdown articles
Visuals, recordings, written articles
Studenty chat! Stories, questions and opinions
 5. **Pupil Forum contributions**
Studenty chat! Stories, questions and opinions
Voxur & Radio Waves kit
Blog posting and article writing
 6. **Summary of the last Pupil Forum**
Photos, video footage

1. Welcome and introductions

Sarah welcomed all Pupil Forum members to the event and thanked them for attending. Student Volunteers introduced themselves to pupils. Sarah explained that the main focus for the session was communication. She emphasised the importance of Pupil Forum members staying in touch with LIFT OFF and responding to letters, emails and other forms of correspondence that are sent out to them. PF members were asked to fill out a contact details sheet for LIFT OFF's records.

2. Communication Training

Pupils and Student Volunteers took part in a team building game which is designed to test their communication skills.



Gary introduced the purpose of the communication training by explaining that the Pupil Forum presents an opportunity for PF members to work together in a group, to express opinions, to agree and constructively disagree and to act as a representative for their school. All of these areas demand good communication skills. Gary also emphasised the importance of staying in touch with LIFT OFF.

- a) Gary introduced the pupils to the **Disney Strategy** (see appendix 1). This is a system of communication used in business; particularly when brainstorming an idea.
- b) Gary introduced the **Survival** scenario activity (see appendix 2). Student Volunteers led the discussions for this activity and ensured that the pupils were communicating as effectively as possible.
- c) Gary explained that the communication strategies used during this training session would be referred to during the rest of the day's discussions.



3. LIFT OFF Developments

Pupils were briefed about the development of the new LIFT OFF Blog and the LIFT OFF Lowdown newsletter by Sarah and Callum. It was explained that we would ideally like to have a big pupil and Student Volunteer presence on both the Blog and Lowdown and that PF members would have an opportunity to contribute to this during the course of the day. Pupils were given a copy of the LIFT OFF Lowdown and asked to give their feedback (see appendix 3).



4. Brainstorming

Pupils were asked what kind of subjects they think should appear in the LIFT OFF Blog and Lowdown. The pupils' ideas were collated and will be used for future editions of the Lowdown and for the Blog (see appendix 4, 5 and 6).

5. Pupil Forum contributions

Pupils and Student Volunteers helped to create materials which will be used for marketing, promotion and evaluation purposes.

- Callum (S4), Jack (S4), Kayleigh (S5), Jozette (S4) and Iona (SV) created Voxur footage. The pupils detailed their experiences of Lift Off to Success
- Rachael (SV) and Kirsten (S6) conducted a Student Volunteer & LIFT OFF Core Pupil radio interview



- Kirsten (S6) wrote an article detailing her LIFT OFF experience and the impact it has had on her (see appendix 7)
- Rebecca (SV) wrote an article about University Open Days (see appendix 8)
- Other pupils created some visual and artistic materials (see appendix 9)



6. Summary of the last Pupil Forum

The last Pupil Forum meeting took place in October 2009. Gary showed the PF members some of the video footage and photos from that day.

The LIFT OFF team would like to sincerely thank all of the Pupils and Student Volunteers for their continued support, dedication and sense of fun. The hard work that our Core Pupils and Student Volunteers put into these events is what makes the Pupil Forum possible and such a worthwhile event.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
"Communication is a two-way process"

working in a group – expressing opinions – agreeing & disagreeing – representation
staying in touch

The



Strategy

Some facts about Disney:

- Walt Disney's company has been nominated for more than 200 Oscars with more than 50 wins just in films under the Disney logo.
- As for dear old Walt, he holds the record for most Oscars with 22 in regular categories and four honorary out of his 59 nominations.
- Walt Disney World is located within its own District of Florida and covers an area twice the size of Manhattan.
- If you Google 'Disney', it comes up with 141,000,000 results.

Walt Disney used the following strategy to build his amazing success story:

Imagine three different people: the Dreamer, the Realist and the Critic. Below is a description of their personalities.

Dreamer Dreamers are people for whom all things are possible. They produce the visionary big picture. There are no boundaries, limitations or restraints. Dreamers ask *"What do we really want, in an ideal world?"*

Realist Realists are the people who sort things out. They organise plans and determine what is realistic. They think constructively and devise an action plan. They establish time frames and they ensure an action plan can be started and maintained. Realists ask *"What can we do to make these plans a reality?"*

Critic Critics are the people who pick up on what works and what doesn't work. They test the plan and look for problems, difficulties and unintended consequences. They think of what could go wrong, what is missing and what is good. Remember that a critic is someone who evaluates – not just someone who points out what is wrong. Critics ask *"How effective is this?"*

Most people will have a tendency to think like one of these personalities. Which one are you?

When communicating with others to solve a problem, it is important that all of these views are heard and that nobody takes over.

If a *Dreamer* dominates the conversation - the group will have lots of creative ideas but they will not discuss how to implement them. So nothing gets done! The group might also adopt a cavalier attitude to risk and not consider contingencies or possible failures.

If a *Realist* dominates the conversation – Ideas/solutions are not as creative and therefore not all possibilities are explored. The Realist's desire to 'make things happen' might result in a rushed plan being drawn up with no thought given to possible mistakes.

If a *Critic* dominates the conversation – The group's motivation levels are affected and it is difficult to generate a flow of ideas. Disagreements may remain unresolved due to an extra emphasis on personal opinion and judgment, rather than compromise and solutions.

Instructions for discussion:

- Your Student Volunteer will act as Discussion Facilitator and will ensure that effective communication is used
- The discussion takes place in four sections
 - Section 1 – Everybody in the group is a Dreamer
 - Section 2 – Everybody in the group is a Realist
 - Section 3 – Everybody in the group is a Critic
 - Section 4 – Summary: "What have we achieved?"
- General instructions:
 - Try to listen to everyone's opinions and reasons. Be open to ideas that are different from your own and look for ways that those ideas may complement yours.
 - Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose. If your group gets stuck, go to the next item as the problem might resolve itself.
 - Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict and to reach agreement. Explore the reasons and be sure everyone accepts the solution for the same reasons.
 - Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as majority vote, averages, coin flips and bargaining.
 - Try to include everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can help the group's decision because with a wide range of information and opinions, there is a greater chance that the group will come up with a better solution.

SURVIVAL

A simulation game used in military training classrooms

You and your companions have just survived the crash of a small plane. Both the pilot and the co-pilot were killed in the crash. It is mid-January, and you are in Northern Canada. The daily temperature is -25C and the night time temperature is -40C. There is snow on the ground and the countryside is wooded with several creeks criss-crossing the area. The nearest town is 20 miles away. You are all dressed in city clothes appropriate for a LIFT OFF Pupil Forum meeting. Your group of survivors managed to salvage the items in this list:

ITEMS	YOUR RANKING	TEAM RANKING	EXPERT RANKING	YOUR ERROR POINTS	TEAM ERROR POINTS
A ball of steel wool					
A small axe					
A loaded .45-caliber pistol					
*Can of Crisco shortening					
Newspapers (one per person)					
Cigarette lighter (without fluid)					
Extra shirt and trousers for each survivor					
20 x 20ft piece of heavy duty canvas					
A sectional air map made of plastic					
One quart of 100 proof whiskey					
A compass					
Family-size chocolate bars (one per person)					
*this is solid vegetable oil				YOUR total error points	
				TEAM total error points	

Instructions:

1. Read the list of items and extra information (overleaf) carefully
2. Working individually, prioritise the items listed in order of importance to your survival by filling in the column headed 'YOUR RANKING' with numbers 1 to 12 (1 being the most important item, 12 being the least important). This should be done with no help or discussion from other group members!
3. After everyone has completed the 'YOUR RANKING' column, group members should share their answers and agree upon a ranking of items that best satisfies all group members.

Extra information

Mid-January is the coldest time of year in Northern Canada. The first problem the survivors face is the preservation of body heat and the protection against its loss.

You have just crash-landed. Many individuals tend to overlook the enormous shock reaction this has on the human body and the deaths of the pilot and co-pilot increases the shock. Decision-making under such circumstances is extremely difficult. Shock would be shown in the survivors by feelings of helplessness, loneliness, hopelessness, and fear.

Before taking off, a pilot has to file a flight plan which contains vital information such as the course, speed, estimated time of arrival, type of aircraft and number of passengers. Search-and-rescue operations begin shortly after the failure of a plane to appear at its destination at the estimated time of arrival.

The ranking of the survivors' items was made by Mark Wanvig, a former instructor in survival training for the Reconnaissance School of the 101st Division of the U.S. Army. Mr. Wanvig currently conducts wilderness survival training programs in the Minneapolis, Minnesota area.

Pupil Forum Feedback Session
The LIFT OFF Lowdown

How do you think the Newsletter looks? Any room for improvement?

Group 1:

Colourful, Catchy, Grabs Interest. Don't like black line along the bottom, colour doesn't fit.

Group 2:

Layout good. Like the cartoons & comic strip. Blue bit stands out, maybe better to make important bits blue.

Group 3:

Too busy – but looks interesting as lots to talk about. Attractive – colourful. Good balance of text and pictures.

What do you think of the tone, how could it be improved?

Group 1: Easy to understand. Easy to relate to. Some problem with 'Geddit?!'

Group 2:

Group 3: Casual tone – funny, makes pupils want to read. Little cheesy! But keep it cheery, friendly.

What do you think of the articles; are they the sort of thing you'd want to read?

Group 1: Yes, v. interesting.

Group 2: Like cartoons & comic strips. Short but sweet articles.

Group 3: Cooking – useful, interesting. Using student's experiences a good idea. Not boring teachers, but young people. Interview – someone pupils can relate to (age); idea of what interviews are like. Cooking, finance, etc, not what pupils would usually have read or even thought about. Think they are interesting and useful.

Any specific comments on the articles?

Group 1:

Group 2: Front page – pictures similar to pack (Pupil Forum I assume). Like pictures in this issue. Finance Comic – Can't read, gets the points. Confetti – weird that it is in blue. Ask Aunt Cheryl – good, quite funny. 60 Second Interview – would like to not be a professional. Emma's story good as has done both college & uni. Student Survival #1 very good.

Group 3:

Anything Else?

Group 3: Would like to see 'in the next issue' section.

Blog

- Why do student volunteers volunteer?
- How much time is spent at lectures etc?
- What is it like to move away from home?
- Sports facilities
- Posting privately – click to choose anonymous/public

Lowdown Articles

- Gossip – embarrassing secrets of students
- Fascinating Facts
- What is happening in your area with regards to University/College = Events section
- Candid camera in the life of a student – the truth
- Word searches

Website

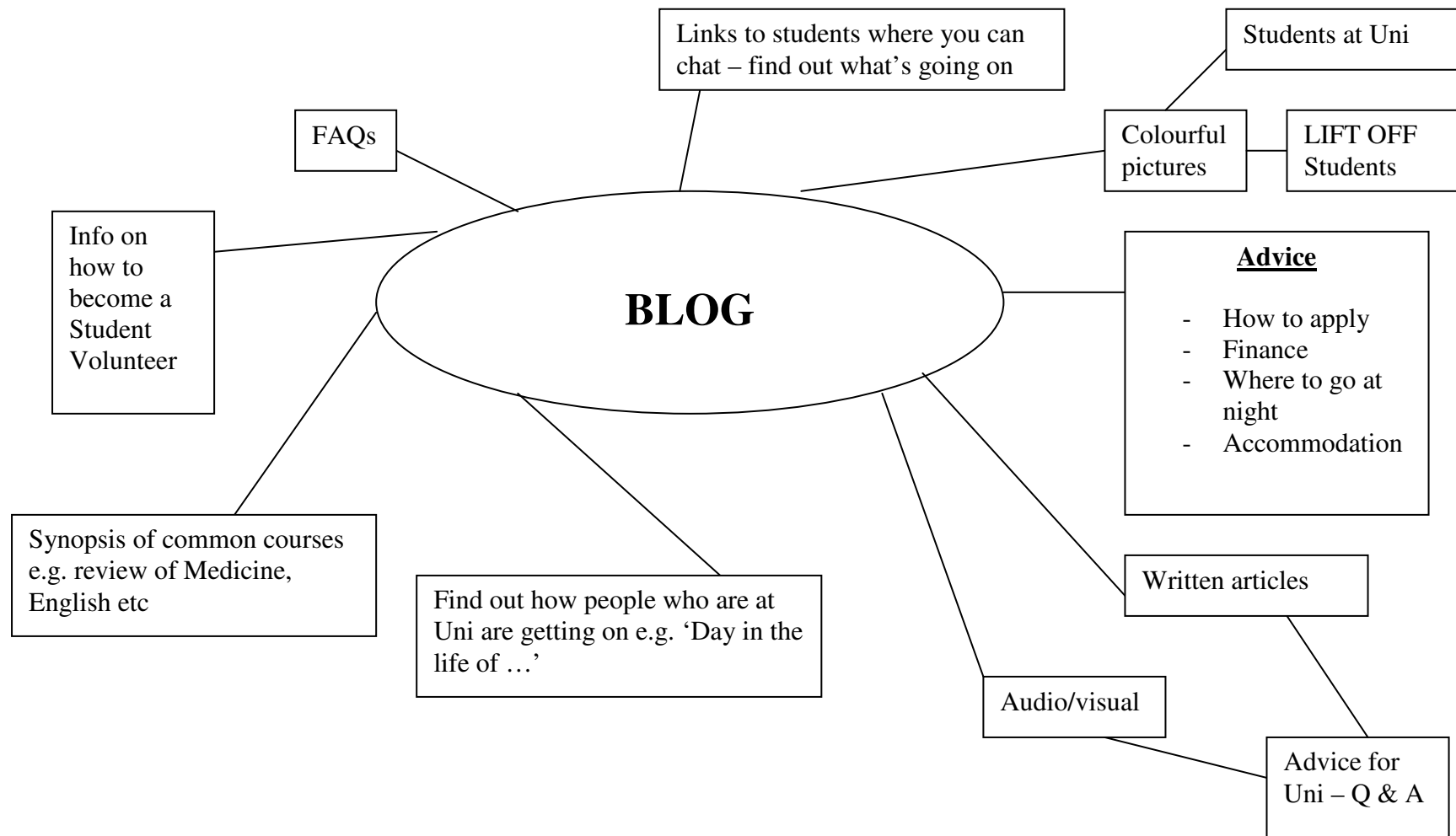
- Games to do with University
- Subjects you can do at University
- Word searches, crosswords

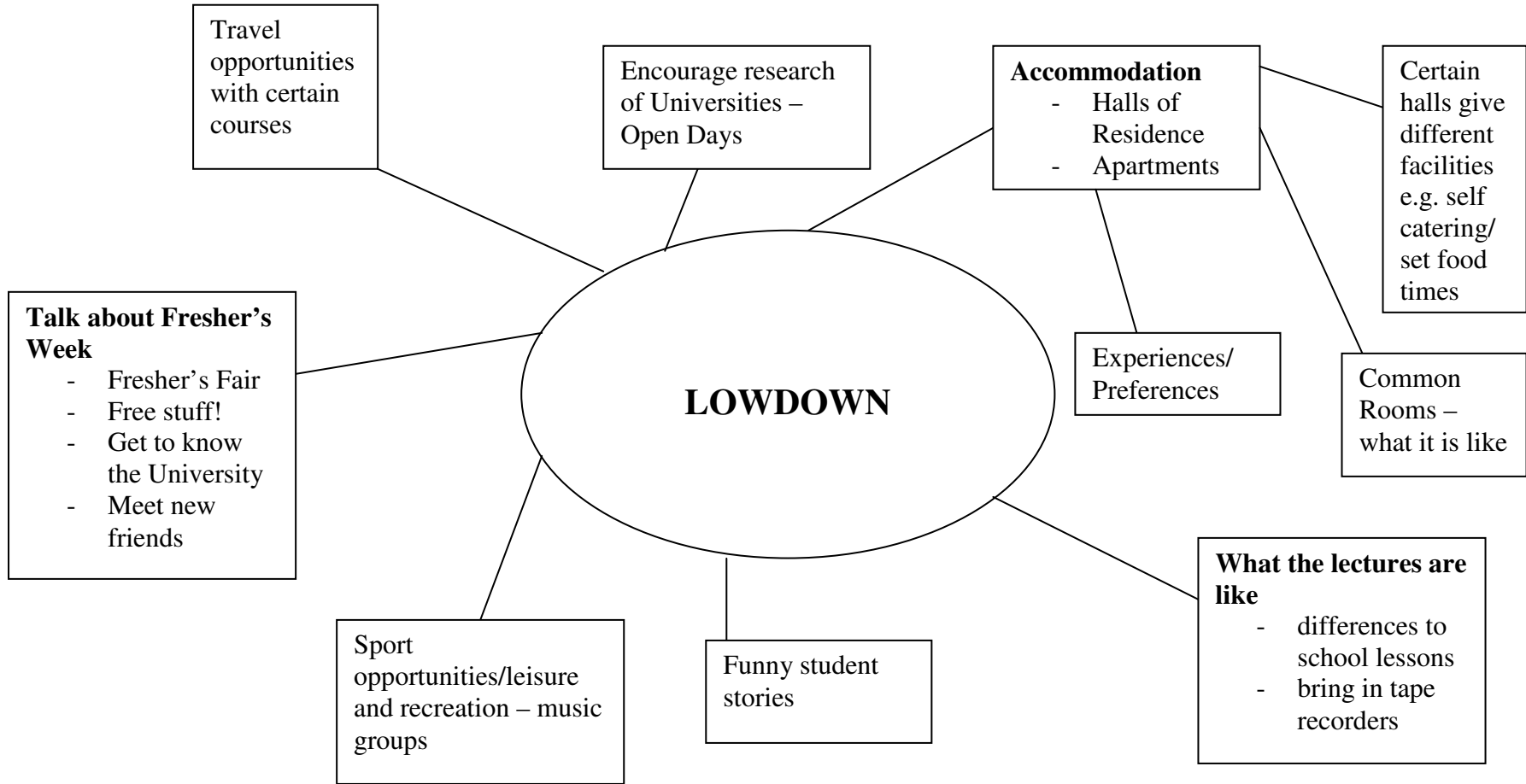
General brainstorming

- Experiences from Pupil Forum and what happens on LO2S
- First days at college/university – advice
- Q & A
- Quiz on how to live as a Student
- Link to Stamford Test and UCAS
- Experience on city life and what each city is like
- LIFT OFF members/students @ open days for those with no idea about University from college
- Cheeky comments in/around the blog and newsletter
- Student discounts (what discounts are available)
- Fresher's Fair information
- Advice for on your first day at College/University
- Quiz about living as students
- Games
- Personal statement help
- More funny stuff like Auntie Cheryl
- Catchy slogan on front to intrigue people
- The Interweb?? Relevant??
- Change links but have all available at all times
- How to apply
- Nightlife
- Student documentary

QUESTIONS for Student Volunteers

1. What accommodation is there away from home?
2. What are the best things about going to University?
3. What are the worst things about going to University?
4. How many holidays do you get?
5. How many weeks would you get off?
6. Where would you find information on open days at University?
7. How long are the classes?
8. Do you have to wear uniform?
9. Why do students volunteer?
10. What happened on your first day?





LIFT OFF – My Experience

by Kirsten

Kirsten is an S6 Core Pupil and LIFT OFF Pupil Forum member

"Summer 2007 was the most memorable summer by far! I attended LO2S in St Andrews and I experienced so many different opportunities that I never knew about.

Meeting new people was so much fun, everyone interacted with everyone and the LIFT OFF students were so welcoming. The members of LIFT OFF are so caring and considerate you wouldn't believe that they were human, ha ha!

Lee Kane was such a character and gosh don't we miss him and Phil, however, we have welcomed along Gary and Cheryl and they are totally brilliant.

Lift Off have helped me so much since 2007. I thought of leaving school in my 5th year. I wanted to take the easy way out when things got tough, and drop my duties of Depute Head Girl, but Sarah and the LIFT OFF team have encouraged me to stay positive, relaxed and happy. Now I totally love my 6th year, I am Head Girl, improving in all areas of the school and college every week and I definitely would not have done it without the help of LIFT OFF!!!

So guys, my advice to you is - want to leave school?? Escape the easy way out?? DON'T!! LIFT OFF and their students are here to help, so get onto www.lift-off.org.uk and sort yourselves out! You never know what LIFT OFF can offer you to help."

University Open Days

By Rebecca MacLennan
LIFT OFF Student Volunteer

Rebecca studies Zoology at University of Dundee

"The best way to decide whether to go to a University is to visit it! Open days are an excellent chance to see a University Campus, talk to staff and students at the University and meet other pupils thinking of applying.

Dundee University holds a general open day each September for people thinking of studying any subjects. After the UCAS application deadline in January, Dundee holds Post-Application Visit Days for specific subjects such as Life Sciences or Law. As well as learning about accommodation, sports facilities, student support services and what to expect in Fresher's week, you will be able to ask both staff and students of your chosen subject any questions that you may have.

Open days generally involve a Campus Tour – often led by students, showing you the teaching and learning facilities, halls of residence, students union and sport facilities. Also, there will be a few talks from different members of staff and current students, about various aspects of studying and living in Dundee.

It's a really great way to get a feel for what the University is like and to help persuade you to go. There is usually a free lunch!!"