

Beyond Feedback: The Student Voice We're Not Hearing



Student Voice from the Kitchen Table

with Joan Broderick RGN H.Dip HP



I want to talk about three hidden realities in Irish Education





Quick Warm Up

One word to describe how YOU felt in the first week of first year?"

Orientation: Peak



That Amazing September Job Story



What are their priorities



Where is This Going?

Finding the Gaps

Academically well prepared - not emotionally, socially

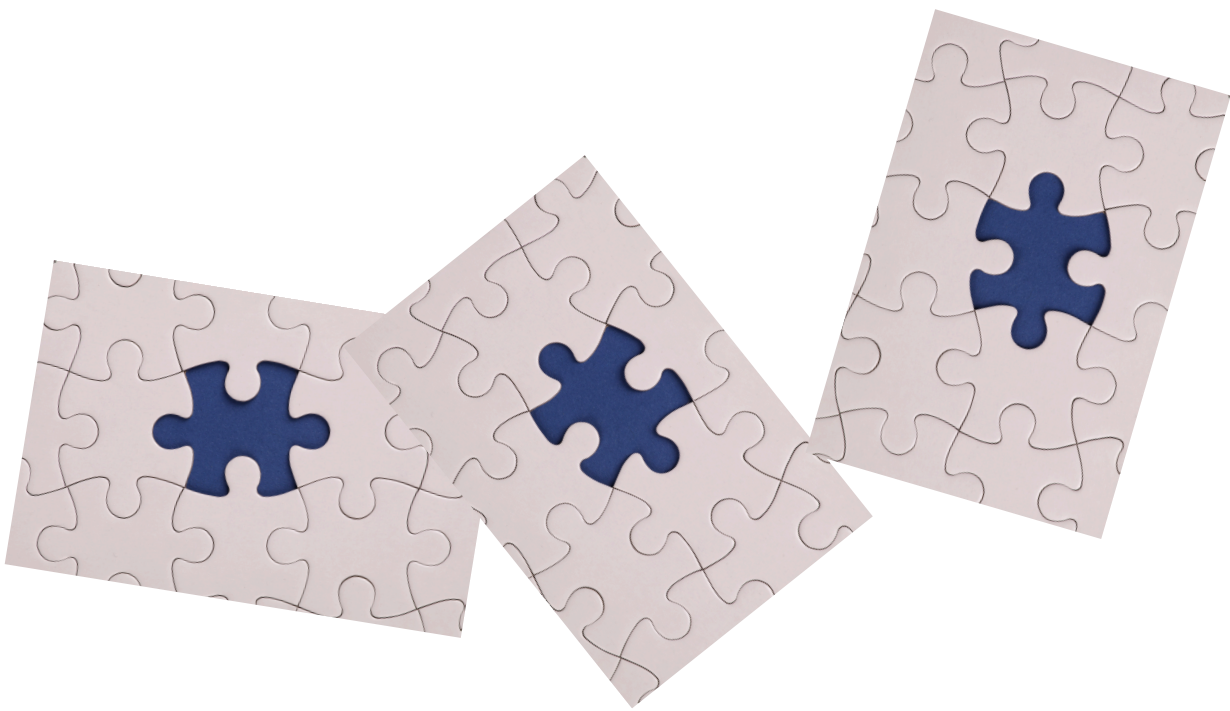
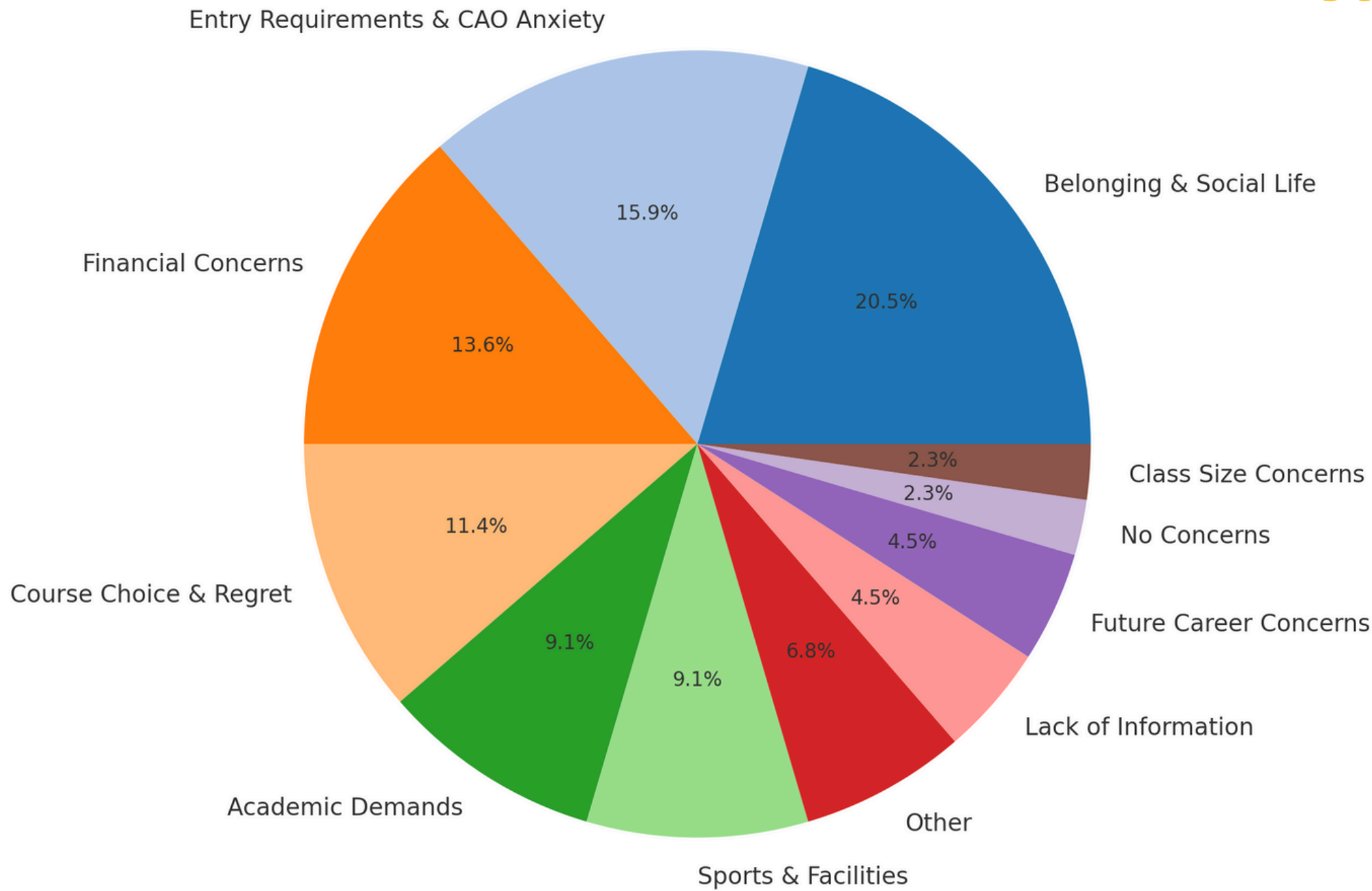
- Time management
- Budgeting
- Loneliness
- Work/hours matter
- Social skills, commuting, family

Commitment/ belonging/what this takes

2nd Level Students Tell Me

One thing I keep hearing from students is about the missing pieces

Grouped Concerns of 5th & 6th Year Students



The Missing Pieces: 1st-Year Undergrads and Students Who Opted Out.

- **SUPPORTS:** I knew the building to go to but not how to get myself in
- **ASKING FOR HELP:** Many waited until the actual crisis point then too late
- **WITHDRAWALS & TRANSFERS:** They thought changing direction = failure
- **STAYING QUIET:** Silence is their survival strategy, until it's too late

The Ad-Hoc Exit Process



**I wasn't fully honest with the college...
in case I wanted to come back.**



True Story

2nd year opted out silently last Feb '25

Extenuating circumstances applied - totally new to the family until I told the student & parent.

These rules are not transparent.

The “Happy Non-Progression-er

- Some students leave and feel massive relief
- They sleep again
- They reconnect with themselves
- They stop pretending
- They rediscover confidence
- They often come back stronger
- Or find something better



What's one thing you think students should know before they think of withdrawing?

Pop it into the chat



Another Hidden Reality:

Pre-school → Primary →
Secondary → FE/Third Level



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Beyond Feedback = Hearing the honest, messy, funny, scared, relieved student voice

Everything I've shared today is student voice beyond surveys.

These are the conversations students have in kitchens, buses, bedrooms, and workplaces.



The Hidden Realities

Recap

- 1. 5000 students and families left with nowhere to turn to ask questions once out of the system**
- 2. Ad hoc exit protocols**
- 3. Lack of Teachers, SNAs and parents' transition programme from Second Level to beyond.**

Thank you — if we listen differently, we can support differently

And that's what student voice mechanisms are all about



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