Analyze the Youth Voice Continuum

CCNETWORK Comprehensive Center Network

REGION 17
Idaho
Montana

Adult Centered ← → Youth Centered ← → Youth Driven

Youth Voice Continuum	No Voice	Dialogue	Involve	Partnership	Leadership	Organizing and Governing
Youth Actions Activities/engagement strategies with appropriate scaffolding to support their developmental and cognitive needs	• Ideas are used without consent[1] • Tokenized or put on display • Adults may claim youth have a voice but in reality, they have little or no voice in actual decision making[2]	• Have the opportunity to ask questions • Ability to give input and offer their opinions • Offer feedback to adults and are fully engaged in activities	• Attend activities and have role in decision making[3] • Articulate action steps to meet learning goals[2] • Involved in planning and implementation of project • Have a formal voice in meetings • Incorporate reflection activities to engage learning and empower action[4]	• Youth-initiated • Contribute to design of lesson plans projects and assignment[3] • Collaborate with teachers and adults • Initiated participation with shared decisions with adult • Co-create environment with youth • Co-produce with youth[5] • Celebrate diverse community allowed to showcase their authentic selves[4]	• Youth-initiated • Plan or co-plan lessons[5] • Lead or co-lead classroom activities and projects[2] • Serve as peer leaders (paid or volunteer)[2] • Empowered as part of shared decision making processes[1] • Prepare to be future leaders • Enterprise – create a business[5]	• Youth-initiated • Identifies problems and generates solutions • Advocates for change in and out of school[5] • Guides group as a leader of change[3] • Make decisions for class or program • Central role organizational structure • Driving program and strategic decisions. • Feel a sense of ownership and understand the work deeply[4]
Adult Actions Behavior required to move along the continuum increasing student voice, choice and responsibility along the continuum	• Manipulation • Decoration • Tokenism[2]	• Answer questions • Respond to feedback • Act upon information • Ensure and articulate youth input and its impact[4] • Adults conduct surveys to gather information about what youth desire[3] • Adults conduct focus groups to gather insight into youth experience and expertise[2]	• Initiated by adults • Allow youth to be the first to speak • Establish routines and protocols for youth feedback, involvement, and engagement • Willingness to listen and learn from youth • Allow youth to struggle and make mistakes in a safe environment[2]	• Collaborate with learners • Value the youth's knowledge • Understand that youth hold expertise in areas adults may not be knowledgeable • Involved in full process and support development of youth goals[2]	• Involved in supports for youth leadership[2] • Prepare youth to be facilitators and co-facilitators[4]	• Involved in supports for youth organizing and governance[2]
Power Dynamic Adults are responsible for the safety of youth and communicate safety needs	• Adults are accountable for all aspects of the process[4]	• Adults involve youth in decision making and provide opportunities for them to take on larger roles[4]	• Adults involve students in decision making and provide opportunities for them to take on larger roles[2]	• Youth and adults share in decision making authority, management, or power[4] • Adults are involved in the full process and support development of youth goals[4]	• Youth takes responsibility for possible outcomes with adult support • Balance of power and leadership[4]	• Youth may make the ultimate decisions with inclusion of adult input and vote[4] • Youth may have an equal vote at the table with community[4]

Note: Numbers correspond with citations in the reference list.

References

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