

Student Voice

There are three components to student voice:

1. Sharing thoughts and ideas in an environment underpinned by trust and respect
2. Offering realistic suggestions for the good of the whole
3. Accepting responsibility for not only what is said but also what needs to be done

Listen, Learn, Lead: The Process of Realizing *Your* Voice

Listen is the part of the Voice Process where we must be intentional and quiet. In order to truly listen to another person, we must be sincere in our belief that everyone has something valuable to share. Thoughtful listening builds trust and respect.



Think about a time when you felt someone was genuinely listening to you. With a partner, discuss the following questions:

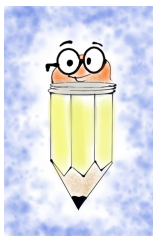
- How did you know they were listening?
- What did it feel like to have your ideas acknowledged?
- Why is it important to build trust as a listener?

Consider a time when you were a supportive friend to someone else. Think about:

- How did you show you listened to your friend's concerns or ideas?
- What did you do to show you truly cared about what they were saying?
- Why does supportive listening show respect?

.....

Learn is the part of the Voice Process where we need to open our minds to new ideas. Learning occurs when we seek out different thoughts and perspectives. We may not all agree; however, we must respect other people's opinions and commit to learning something from them.



In small groups, identify a school issue (e.g. amount of homework, the school discipline policy, school uniforms, cell phone usage, being bored in class) that students and adults disagree on. Have half of the group brainstorm all the realistic reasons why students have one perspective, and the other half brainstorm all the realistic reasons why adults have a different perspective. Next, share something you learned from the other side's perspective.

How do you think your school, community, or country would be benefit from everyone being willing to learn about others' perspectives?

.....

Lead is the part of the Voice Process that involves students working together with adults to take action on ideas. Sitting back and hoping others do the work is not an option. Leading is where students take responsibility for what they say and do. We must all be part of the solution.



Leading is about putting it all together! As a class, select one classroom, school, or community issue that needs to be improved. Together, go through the Voice Process to improve the issue:

- Articulate your concerns
- Gather different perspectives
- Involve a diverse group of students and adults to work together to develop solutions and take action

Reflect and Celebrate!

Discuss what worked well and what could be improved. Use the checklist below to guide your discussions.

- ☐ The voices of a diverse group students and adults were included.
- ☐ Everyone's ideas were respected throughout the process.
- ☐ Students assumed as much responsibility for taking action as the adults did.
- ☐ Our goal was realistic.
- ☐ The end result benefitted the good of the whole.
- ☐ We discussed how the process could have been improved.
- ☐ The accomplishments were celebrated and shared!