



USE WITH:

Individual students, small group, or whole class



GRADE LEVEL:

Middle school or high school



CONTEXT:

Remote friendly

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# Empower Students in the Classroom

Support students in identifying ways they can participate in classroom decisions.

Created by [Search Institute](#)

## Description:

This activity aims to empower students to be involved in classroom decisions. By participating in class decisions, students are better able to share their learning needs and support teachers in designing classroom practices to meet their needs.

Est. time to complete:  
**15 minutes**

## Steps:

1. Share with your students that you will be brainstorming together actions that teachers can take to better include student voices in classroom decisions.
2. Ask. It can sometimes be challenging for students to feel comfortable being involved in classroom decisions, especially when they are not asked how they want to be involved. Ask students: How would you like to be involved in classroom decisions?
3. Listen. Student feedback on lessons is important for ensuring instruction meets students' learning needs. Further, students are more likely to provide feedback if they believe it will be used by teachers to improve instruction. Ask students: Do you have opportunities to provide feedback on each lesson? Do teachers change their instructional practices based on your feedback? Do teachers communicate with you about how they changed instructional practices based on your feedback?

4. Lead. Providing opportunities for students to lead lessons can give students increased ownership over their learning. Ask students: Do you have opportunities to co-design lessons with teachers? Do you have opportunities to lead lessons?
5. Ask students to write down their responses to each question under Ask, Listen, and Lead. Allow students to capture their responses in ways other than writing, such as through art and media. If students find themselves answering "no" to any of the questions, ask them to brainstorm several actions that teachers could take to further involve students in classroom decisions.
6. As a class, have a conversation with students about their responses and the brainstormed actions they identified. Alternatively, consider collecting the individual responses from students and setting up one-on-one time with each student to discuss.

### Tips for Educators:

- Based on students' feedback, identify several actions to implement in your classroom to better include students' voices.
- Consider adding a feedback box to encourage sharing of ideas that may come after the lesson.

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### Inspired by:

1. Mager, U., & Nowak, P. (2012). Effects of student participation in decision making at school. A systematic review and synthesis of empirical research. *Educational Research Review*, 7(1), 38–61.
2. Mitra, D. L. (2009). Collaborating with students: Building youth-adult partnerships in schools. *American Journal of Education*, 15(3), 407-436.
3. Mitra D., Conner J., & Holquist S. (2021). Conditions that enable and constrain student voice(s) in schools. In Peters M.A. (eds) *Encyclopedia of teacher education*. Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-1179-6\\_432-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-1179-6_432-1)

### Related Materials:

This activity was designed based on Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific's "Including Voice in Education: Empowering Student Voice in School Design" infographic.

For more information on involving students in classroom and school decisions, consider reading the full infographic.

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/infographics/pdf/REL\\_PA\\_Including\\_Student\\_Voice\\_in\\_Education.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/infographics/pdf/REL_PA_Including_Student_Voice_in_Education.pdf)