

TEACHING TODAY'S LEARNERS #16



Learner Voice & Choice

You don't have to be fully engaged in a personalized learning environment to provide kids with greater voice and choice in their learning. Meaningful education is one that embraces learner voice and choice. Our classrooms or learning spaces work well when kids have opportunities to find and develop their voice and refine their skills. Opportunities for choice and flexibility assist learners in finding passion, and revelation through their work (see [edutopia's student voice profile](#)).

Voice gives learners a chance to share their opinions about what they believe in. There have been aspects of "school" where learners were not given the opportunity to be active participants in their learning. Some learners, particularly those concerned with extrinsic rewards like grades, may not feel comfortable sharing their opinions. Providing learners with a voice encourages them to not only express their ideas and opinions, but also to own and drive their learning.

Access to technology and social media can allow for unlimited potential for learner voice and choice.

Learner Choice can be facilitated by:

- Giving learners meaningful choice in how to learn and understand content including through videos, text-based resources, hands-on experiments, or human interactions (see UDL's [multiple means of representation](#)).
- Providing learners with opportunities to study topics based on personal interests or tie personal interests to curriculum concepts (see [Interest Fuels Effortless Engagement](#)).
- Being a tour guide of learning possibilities – show learners all the possibilities and then become their guide on the side.
- Giving learners choice to "show what they know"- anything from digital storytelling and developing a multimedia presentation to creating a performance or art work.

Learner Voice can be facilitated by:

- Helping learners find authentic audiences with whom they can share their voice and providing authentic experiences and assessments.
- Giving learners a say in how their school and classroom operate – developing norms, engaging in [Plus/Delta](#) and [Consensograms](#).
- Offering learners options to use their voice in a way that works best for them: Some may want to write, some may want to use art, photos, videos, and others may want to talk.
- Change up your way of thinking (See: [Ways to make your Classroom More Student-Centered](#)).

Learner Voice & Choice

Graphic credit: Jackie Gerstein

The only real education is one that fully embraces Learner choice and voice.

Learner Choice



Give Learners choice in how they want to learn content

Give Learners choices to show what they know-what they learned



Give Learners choice to study topics based on personal interests



Be a tour guide of learning possibilities - show learners the possibilities and then get out of the way

Learner Voice

Give learners an opportunity to use their unique voices to show what they know-what they learned



Voice comes in many forms. Give Learners options to use their voice in a way that works best for them



Help Learners find authentic audiences with whom they can share their voice.



Give Learners a say in how their school and classroom operate - being part of a democratic process.

Education works when people have opportunities to find and develop un-accessed or unknown voices and skills. Opportunities for flexibility and choice assist Learners in finding passion, voice, and revelation through their work. Joshua Block