64 Ways to Amplify Youth Voice and Agency through Partnership

Classrooms

1. **Laugh together daily.**

2. Make learning transparent, with a continuous feedback loop between learners and teachers.

3. **Employ powerful "circle practices" to promote deep dialogue and a sense of community.**

4. **Begin the year by exploring the uniqueness of each person's identity.**

5. **Ask for input from youth from day one (eg. choice in seating options, classroom design, etc.).**

6. Provide books and resources that are both windows and mirrors for all young people.

7. **Weave meaningful choices into curriculum design.**

8. Begin the year with personal stories and shared dreams.

9. **Share your own stories with your students.**

10. Model the way that students can work to overcome their own biases and assumptions by listening for and accepting as truth the stories that other people tell about themselves.

11. **Teach youth about how their brains learn, including effective learning strategies, so that everyone is able to be drivers of their education.**

12. Establish a "language of learning" so that everyone is able to self-assess, monitor and share their learning and provide effective teacher feedback.

13. **Involve learners in decisions about the curriculum, teaching approaches, and assessment strategies.**

14. Task learners to create/design aspects of the physical classroom space.

15. **Create opportunities for youth to design bulletin boards and displays.**

16. Display and honor the work of all learners.

17. **Encourage mistakes as an essential attribute of learning - and model mistake making on a regular basis.**

18. Engage learners in creating and sustaining classroom norms and expectations to ensure a safe and constructive learning environment.

19. **Establish student-led conferences to reflect on strengths and set goals.**

20. Create opportunities for students to lead in the classroom (eg. facilitate morning circle, teach a lesson, etc.).

21. **Encourage learners to be peer teachers and/or tutors.**

22. Support the development of meaningful Personalized Learning Plans, insuring that they are visited regularly and adapted over time to reflect shifting interests.

23. **Create a culture of trust, respect and equity by optimizing opportunities for youth and adults to work together toward a meaningful common vision and purpose, sharing power, voice and responsibility in the process.**

24. Utilize an action research model to drive change.

25. **Believe in the capacity of each and every person's ability to learn (growth mindset) and reinforce this at every turn. Hold high expectations for all learners and address your own implicit biases that limit expectations.**

26. Liberally weave relevance and purpose into the curriculum, reinforcing the capacity of young people as change agents (eg. project-based learning).

27. **Administer a classroom feedback form on a regular basis, to understand the learning experience of every learner, and include a learner self-assessment component to affirm the partnership.**

28. Share the findings of the classroom feedback survey, including stated goals to adapt instruction accordingly. Support learners to set their own learning goals as well.

29. **Do the work you ask of your students along with them.**

Hallways

30. Greet learners — making eye contact and welcoming them into the classroom.

31. **Display student work.**

32. Create opportunities for youth to design bulletin boards and displays.

33. **Visibly honor a wide-cross section of students in hallway choices.**

34. Decorate hallways with quotes that affirm the value and capacity of all students and the importance of equity.

35. **Encourage students to create murals and other artwork that is representative of their community.**

School-wide Infrastructure

36. Create and sustain a representative student government that is committed to promoting equity.

37. Include students on committees (leadership team, curriculum, hiring, etc.)

38. Organize student teams to analyze survey data relating to learning and school climate/health, sharing their findings with others.

39. **Encourage students to use their data analysis to spark action, including assessing the impact of these actions.**

40. Provide space for youth to co-design curriculum

41. **Mobilize youth-adult action research teams to contribute continuous improvement efforts.**

42. Form and support youth-adult teams to implement restorative practices school-wide.

43. **Teach a change paradigm that is strengths-based and solution focused.**

44. Model and teach powerful and inclusive dialogue facilitation skills, and mobilize students as facilitators whenever possible.

45. **Create cross-grade mentoring and tutoring opportunities.**

46. Support courses taught by students, with an adult mentor.

47. **Create a "J Term" option with interest-based learning opportunities offered for a 1-3 week period each year.**

48. Make sure joy is valued and readily evident throughout the school.

49. **Ensure that youth voice, agency and partnership are evident in all pertinent literature describing the courses and the school.**

50. Have a team of students organize and lead school assemblies.

51. **Host regular cross-generational community building school events (food and fun).**

52. Build a regular time during the week where faculty and learners have time together to build a trusting relationship, and where peers regularly support and honor each other.

53. **Create an social media account that features success pictures/stories of youth and adults working together on behalf of change, and instances that reinforce youth capacity as leaders.**

54. Create a consciousness about the impact of rigor, relevance, relationships and shared responsibility as essential to engagement and motivation, with teachers and learners tending to their presence on an ongoing basis.

55. **Have youth as fully valued members of the school board.**

Community

56. Engage community members as mentors, tutors and internship partners.

57. **Provide opportunities and support for youth to present to local decision making groups (Select Boards, Planning Commissions, etc.) on projects that will have a positive impact on the community**

58. Tie the curriculum to community whenever possible, utilizing it as a rich learning context.

59. **Expand the realm of career opportunities for youth by having adults share their professional life stories.**

60. Bring in community members to witness learning accomplishments and provide feedback.

61. **Submit articles to the local paper or utilize social media on a regular basis to capture the desire and capacity of young people to be change agents (ideally written or posted by youth).**

62. Have youth be the initiators and facilitators of community dialogue groups regarding education.

63. **Support opportunities for youth to be initiators of community action to improve the health and well-being of their communities, linking this to academic credit when possible.**

64. Engage community members from a wide variety of education and career backgrounds and youth in dialogue about a successful high school career and the realm of post-secondary possibilities.