

# Incorporating Student Voice in Transitioning into Innovative Learning Environments

Phase	Type		Themes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Early	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration & teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional development & support
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Tool	<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> School structures & organisation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consolidation		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design affordances	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spatial competencies
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design & process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student experience
		<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher experience
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership & change	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology
		<input type="checkbox"/> Pedagogy	<input type="checkbox"/> Time

## What does this do?

Student voice refers to the expression of values, opinions, beliefs, and perspectives of individual and groups of students in a school about aspects of their educational experience that are based on choices, interests, passions, and ambitions. There are various research informed and experience-based models for incorporating student voice<sup>1</sup> into educational experiences—ranging from students as limited partners, to equal student-teacher collaborative relationships to student-led initiatives. Student voice can also be incorporated at different stages of transitioning into new learning spaces—early, during the design of the learning space; implementation, as they transition into the new space; and consolidation, during which educators can use student voice to evaluate the user experience of the space and the learning that happens in it.

## How can it help?

Incorporating student voice into aspects of young people's educational experience leads to an increased likelihood that those young people will experience self-worth, engagement, and purpose in school. The more educators can give their students choice, control, various levels of challenges, and opportunities for collaboration, the greater their motivation and engagement will be. Inviting students to co-design their learning and pedagogy in an innovative learning environment enhances a sense of ownership of the space and develops agency over the 'where' and 'how' of learning. It also creates buy-in and long-term adoption as well as improved student-staff relationships.

## An example in practice

In 2016, Stonefields School in Auckland, New Zealand, started the process of evaluating and redesigning its learning hub into a space that amplifies their vision for teaching and learning. The school values students voice and this was critical in helping the school have a better understanding of how students use and think about their learning spaces. Not only was student voice taken into consideration, but some students even assisted a design thinking inspired process of collecting and analysing data from fellow students. Data from their research was used to inform decisions about the learning hub's redesign. For example, they found that students preferred quiet, warm, and smaller break out spaces because these spaces make it easier for them to collaborate with fellow students. Feedback from students also informed the types and kinds of furniture that went into the learning hub.

Four primary schools under the Catholics Schools Office Diocese of Lismore, in New South Wales, Australia, explored how student voice can encourage pedagogical changes in innovative learning environments. They used a range of data collecting methods including surveys, focus groups interviews, and videos to ask students about learning in innovative learning environments. The educators adjusted their pedagogy based on feedback from data collected. They also invited students to be co-designers of the curriculum and co-creators of the student success criteria.

## Where can I find this?<sup>2</sup>

Examples of school projects incorporating student voice:

Stonefields School: <http://www.iletc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Ten-years-in-ten-minutes-Chris-Bradbeer.pdf>

Catholics Schools Office Diocese of Lismore: <http://www.iletc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NadineSlingsby.pdf>

To read about how one educator from Melbourne, Australia involved her students in setting-up their own learning space, visit <http://mrsfintelmanteaches.global2.vic.edu.au/2017/03/06/students-set-up-their-own-classroom/> [Correct as at 05 May 2020].

1. Cook-Sather, A. (2014). The Trajectory of Student Voice in Educational Research. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 49(2), 131–148.

2. All Spatial Transition Pathway 'Strategies and Tools' are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License and available from [iletc.com.au](http://iletc.com.au)

