

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING STUDENT AGENCY IN INTERACTIVE CONTEXTS



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OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION

1. What is student agency?
2. Why encourage student agency?
3. School practices to nurture student agency
4. Four aspects of student agency
5. Assessing student agency

WHAT IS STUDENT AGENCY?

- Actively contributing to decision-making about education
- A varying quality situated in relationship rather than a quality that a child has per se
- Negotiated with others (teachers, parents, peers ...)
- Sharing responsibility for learning
- Cooperating and considering the agency or position of others

WHY CONSIDER STUDENT AGENCY?

REASONS FOR FOSTERING STUDENT AGENCY

Well-being and achievement	Students exercising agency are likely to have higher levels of well-being and achievement
Sense of control	Strong agency supports students to gain a sense of control. Expressions of powerlessness can interfere with social relationships, learning and wellbeing.
Creation of new niches	Students need to take an active role in shaping current and future learning environments
Relevant and safe activity	Students know what it is like to be them
Children's rights	Children have the right to have a say in decisions about their education.

SCHOOL PRACTICES TO NURTURE STUDENT AGENCY

1. Creating emotionally secure climates for learning
 - Students can take agency when they feel safe and have strong connections with teachers and peers.
 - Nurturing positive and optimistic attitudes
 - Know each child and recognise that students bring a range of expectations of agency to school
2. Negotiating learning directions and activity
3. Linking learning to real life, interests and motivation
4. Supporting reflection
5. Teacher agency

FOUR ASPECTS OF STUDENT AGENCY

Aspects	
Student voice	Opportunities to voice opinions about learning environments and to see evidence that their view has been heard and action taken.
Strategic agency	Skills and strategies required to take agency in a social world.
Personal agency	The personal beliefs and attitudes that support active and sustained participation.
Connected agency	Social awareness and ability and willingness to cooperate.

ASSESSING SENSE OF AGENCY

- Student agency in context
 - Always consider individual student responses within a wide developmental context.
 - Assess in relation to specific situations
- Safe environment first
- Relationship established before conversations about agency
- Ensure students understand the reasons for being agentic/taking an active role.
- Select single or multiple dimensions
- Work together to make decisions about items through conversation rather than questioning

Article: Student agency in interactive learning environments

[Student agency in interactive environments.pdf](#)

STUDENT SENSE OF AGENCY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

[Student sense of agency interview schedule.pdf](#)

CLASSROOM PRACTICES

- [Teaching practice -student agency - discussion sheet.pdf](#)

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