

STUDENT VOICE & CHOICE

An intro to a key PBL Design Element

What is it?

Student voice and choice creates space for students to make decisions about their learning experiences and authentically participate in their education.



Why does it matter?

- Voice and choice strengthens students' feelings of empowerment, engagement, and ownership of their learning.
- Increases students' connection to the content, as well as their self-confidence.



What does it look like?

- Moving from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach to instruction and learning.
- When appropriate, allowing students to make decisions about how they are learning and how they are demonstrating what they have learned.
- Creating space for and placing value on students' backgrounds, interests, and needs.

A Common Misunderstanding

Student voice and choice is too often perceived as a free-for-all approach to instruction, with students choosing to do whatever they want, with learning hopefully happening in the process.

However, voice and choice should be offered within clear boundaries and scale up over time as students become more comfortable with personal freedom and input.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL offers a three-pronged framework for developing voice and choice throughout a project:

- Multiple means of engagement.
- Multiple means of representation.
- Multiple means of demonstration.

Check out the [CAST UDL Guidelines](#) to learn more!

Striking a balance

- **Too much freedom:** Students may be overwhelmed or lost in decision-making.
- **Too much control:** May diminish student interest and engagement in their learning.