

# WELCOME!

This event will start shortly. In the meantime,  
visit us at [OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu](https://OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu)

Setting the Table Together:

**JOY** and  
**POWER** in  
**PARTNERSHIPS**

SEPTEMBER 22,  
**2023**

Hosted by the Ohio Statewide  
Family Engagement Center



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

CENTER ON EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT



# Deepening 'Student Voice': Students as partners in learning and change

Dana Mitra





# Meet the Team

## Presenter

Bringing together research and practice to support the development and implementation of student voice practices across the United States.



**Dana Mitra**

Professor at Pennsylvania State University. One of the foremost scholars of student voice work in the world. Former elementary school teacher and current leadership coach.



**Jerusha Conner**

Professor at Villanova University. Expert on youth activism, student engagement, and student voice. Authored over 40 publications on student activism and student voice. Former high school teacher.



**Samantha "Sammy" Holquist**

Senior Research Scientist at Child Trends. Expert on student voice and continuous improvement. Sammy is especially known for her technical assistance, research, and evaluation services.

# Today's Agenda & Objectives

September 22

12:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (EST)



## Student Voice

- Provide an overview of student voice in classrooms and schools.
- Share a 5-minute video created by students about the experiences with student voice in their classrooms and schools.



## Breakout Sessions

- Student Voice 101: Student Voice in Classroom Decision Making
- Student Voice 102: Student Voice in School Decision Making
- Student Voice 201: Integrating Student Voice into Continuous Improvement



## Practical Tools

- Share practical tools for supporting teachers, school leaders, and students in integrating student voice in classrooms and schools.



# Acknowledging Our Identities and Backgrounds

Working to create spaces where students and adults can partner to address systemic education inequalities.

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We want to acknowledge that we are presenting from the ancestral and current lands of the Erie, Haudenosaunee, Leni-Lenape, Shawnee, Susquehannock, Wahzhazhe, and Dakota Nations.





# OVERVIEW OF STUDENT VOICE





# What is student voice?

- Opportunities for youth to share in the school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers
- Youth and adults collaboration together
- Mutual teaching and learning
- Pupil voice, youth-adult partnerships, youth participatory action research









# 101: STUDENT VOICE IN SCHOOLS





# Schoolwide Secondary Examples

## PFE LUNCHROOM GUIDELINES

### 1. ACT APPROPRIATELY

- Use good manners at all times, keep feet under your table, hands to yourself and walk in our lunchroom.

### 2. REMAIN SEATED

- Remain seated unless given permission to leave your seat.

### 3. NOISE LEVEL

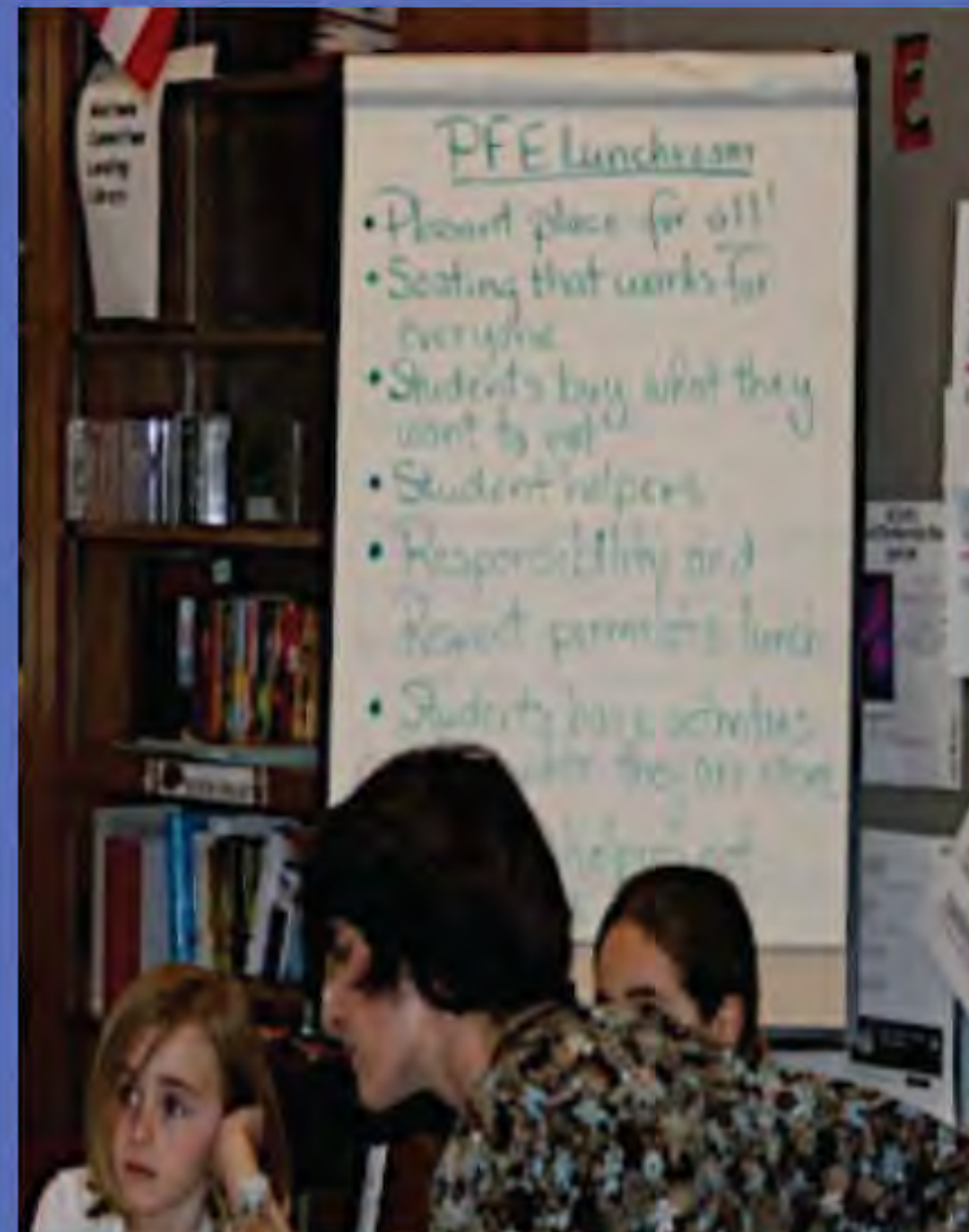
- Use indoor voices to talk to people at your table only.

### 4. RESPECT & COOPERATION

- Respect everyone and everything in the lunchroom (be helpful, cooperate and don't be gross).

### 5. CLEANLINESS

- Clean up your own mess, then compost and recycle.





# Schoolwide Secondary Examples

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- Identify problems with school structure and culture—especially failing students
- Teacher Professional Development
  - My job at the training sessions was “...breaking down vocabulary. Some students may not understand [this reform effort]. So we were trying to put it [the rubrics and the departmental standards] in a way where all students understand. I guess you could say [I was a] a translator...” - Troy Newman, 11th grader
- Strong desire for positive, caring relationships with adults and peers
  - Example: Whitman neighborhood tours
  - “They [teachers] learned where we lived, worked, the different territories, where we stay away from, where people get killed and hurt for being in the wrong areas.” Marcus, 11th grader



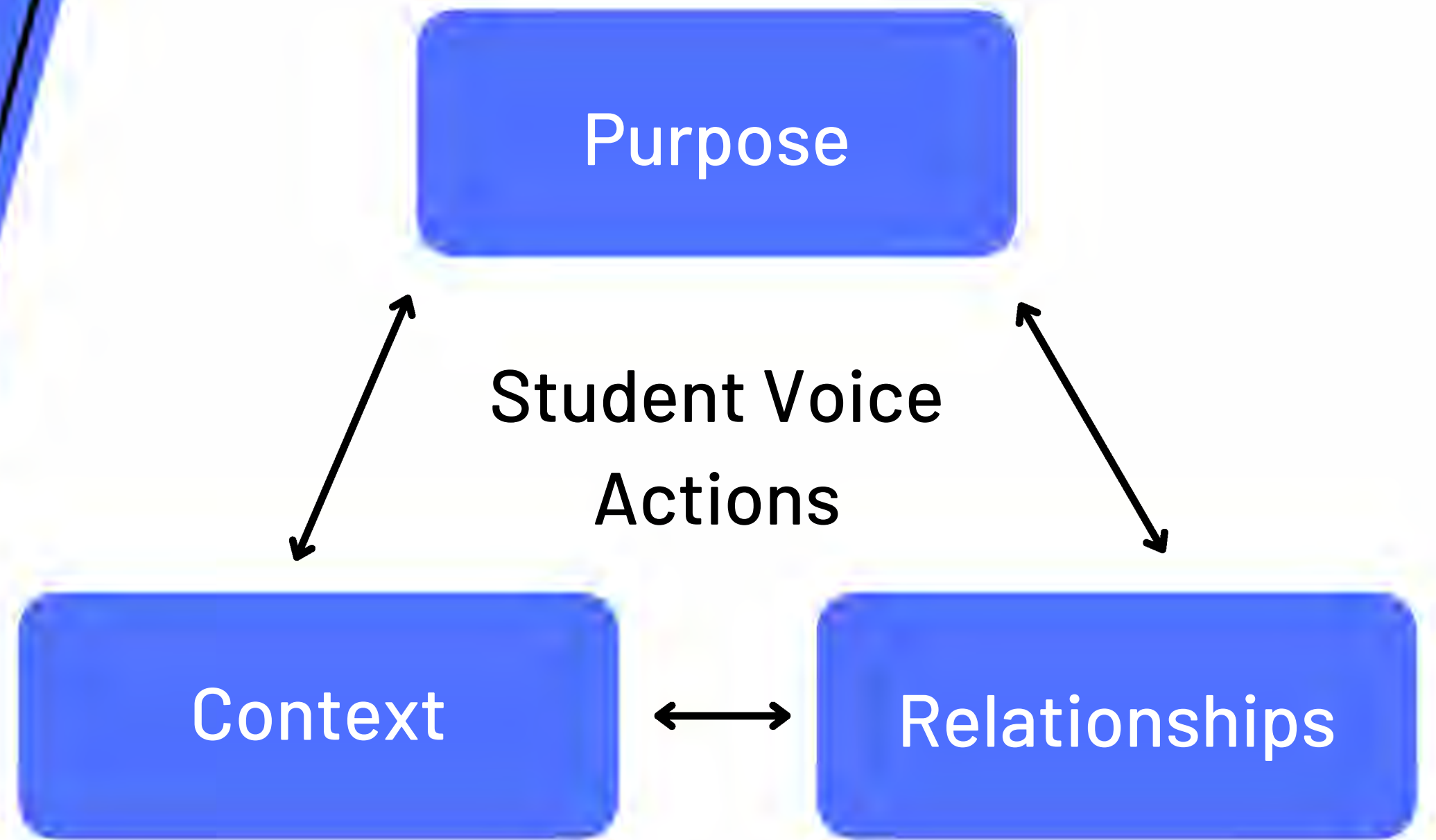
# Intermediary Organizations

- 
- Spark
  - Sustainability
  - Support (financial, training, networking)





# Framework for Implementing Student Voice in Education





# Purpose

Purpose is the intent of the work – from working within current structures to questioning the premise of these structures.

## Modifications of Systems

The first type of change sought occurs by working through systems. These changes are incremental, designed to improve educational practice, often through modifying existing structures.

### Example

Oregon Student Voices's collaboration with the Ethnic Studies Coalition to pass House Bill 2845, which required ethnic studies to be taught in social studies.

## Restructure Systems

The second type of change alter the basic way in which a classroom or school functions. School redesign efforts fit within this category.

### Example

Implement of Vermont's statewide personalized learning policy where teachers and students work together to create personalized learning plans.

## Dismantle Systems

The third type of change question the fundamental structures on which policy are designed and seek to address root causes of systemic inequities embedded in schools.

### Example

Student activist campaigns demand #Policefreeschools (e.g., Philly student union; Black Organizing Project; March For Our Lives)



# Relationships

How relationships are developed between adults and young people are as critical as working toward changes.

## Adult Driven

Youth informing adult decision making making change (e.g., feedback forms, listening sessions).

### Example

Administrators develop students surveys for capturing students' perceptions on schoolwide issues (e.g., school climate).

## Youth-Adult Partnership

Youth and adults share decision-making authority and work together in change efforts (e.g., teachers and students collaborate).

### Example

Administrators and students collaborate to collect and analyze data and make recommendations for schoolwide reforms.

## Youth Driven

Youth leading change efforts (e.g., student activism, student lead groups in schools).

### Example

Students lead school groups tasked with leading schoolwide activities or decisions, such as student council or student equity committees.



# The Six Secrets to More Successful Partnerships

[Read the article](#)

**The 6 SECRETS**  
• TO MORE SUCCESSFUL •  
**PARTNERSHIP**  
*between*  
**STUDENTS & TEACHERS**  
BY DANA MITRA  
STUDENTS AT THE CENTER DISTINGUISHED FELLOW

Youth-adult partnerships can improve decision-making, promote change, and provide opportunities for youth and adults to learn from one another.

- 1. CULTIVATE TRUST AND RESPECT.**  
Be explicit about how and why you're working in partnership.
- 2. CELEBRATE SUCCESSES.**  
Create ongoing rituals to keep motivation and engagement high.
- 3. TEACH HOW SCHOOLS WORK.**  
Help young people to understand how school change happens and how language is used to communicate with authorities.
- 4. CREATE A FLAT POWER DYNAMIC.**  
Design partnership to facilitate shared leadership with youth and adults.
- 5. BUILD AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY.**  
Take care that the group that is big enough to handle the work load but small enough to include all.
- 6. SIGNAL PARTNERSHIP THROUGH VISUAL CUES.** Create a physical space and protected time that looks and feels different than a traditional classroom.

**CREATE A LEARNING COMMUNITY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

Jobs for the Future's Student-Centered Learning Research Collaborative is grateful to the Nellie Mae Education Foundation for their generous support of the Students at the Center Distinguished Fellowship Program

STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE  
www.jff.org



# Context

Student voice practices are heavily constrained by the context (e.g., location and/or environment) in which they exist.

## Learning

The structures and policies in place to encourage student participation in decision making within classrooms.

### *Example*

Teachers and students collaborate to develop classroom norms and expectations.

## Organizational

The structures and policies in place to encourage student participation in decision making within schools.

### *Example*

Administrators and students collaborate to collect and analyze student data and make recommendations for schoolwide reforms to address inequities.

## Policy

The presence of local, state, national, or international policies that encourage student participation in education decision making.

### *Example*

Student representatives on school boards holding equal voting power in comparison to non-student school board members.



# Learning Context

## Dialogue and Diversity

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In the classroom, student voice practices foster:

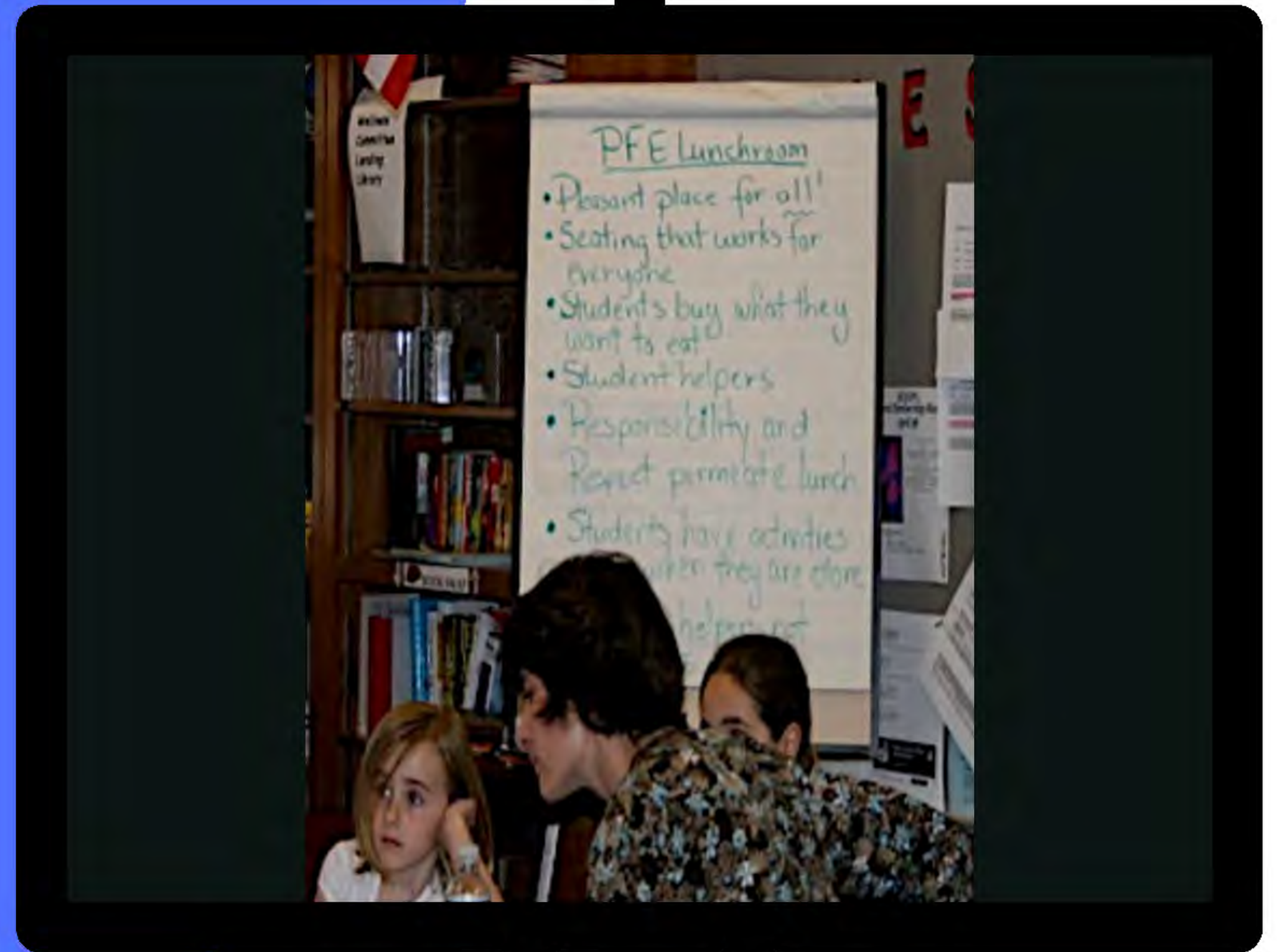
- Student-led inquiry as it arises
  - For example, learning about different ways to recycle (e.g., milk bottles, composting, paper towels).
- Feelings that it's not just about me.
- Understandings about talking across difference.





# Organizational Context

Encourage democratic activities  
in a school-wide learning  
community.







# Policy Context

Creating space for students to shape their learning environments at the local, state, and national levels.

## 1 Youth-Driven

### **Oregon Student Voice**

Youth-led state-level nonprofit with a vision for all students to be authentic partners in making decisions in education. Youth activists have successfully advocated for over 15 education policy changes in the past six years.

[Learn more](#)

## 2 Youth-Adult Partnership

### **UP for Learning**

Adult-led nonprofit that partnered with students to advocate for the passage of and implementation of Vermont's statewide personalized learning policy where teachers and students work together to create personalized learning plans.

[Learn more](#)



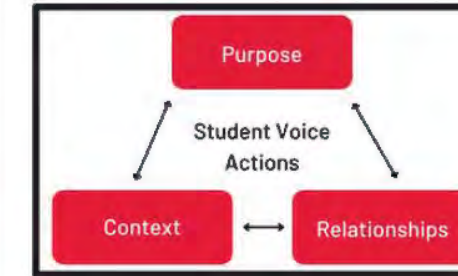
# Activity

- 1 Reflect on the student voice practices that your organization implements or is supporting schools in implementing.
- 2 Write each practice down and place it where you believe it aligns with the student voice framework.
- 3 Discuss the student voice practices. Guiding questions:
  - Are student voice practices concentrated around a particularly purpose, relationship, or context?
  - How do the student voice practices shared promote systemic change?
  - How could your organization support schools in using different student voice practices?

district  
admin 1

school  
admin 3

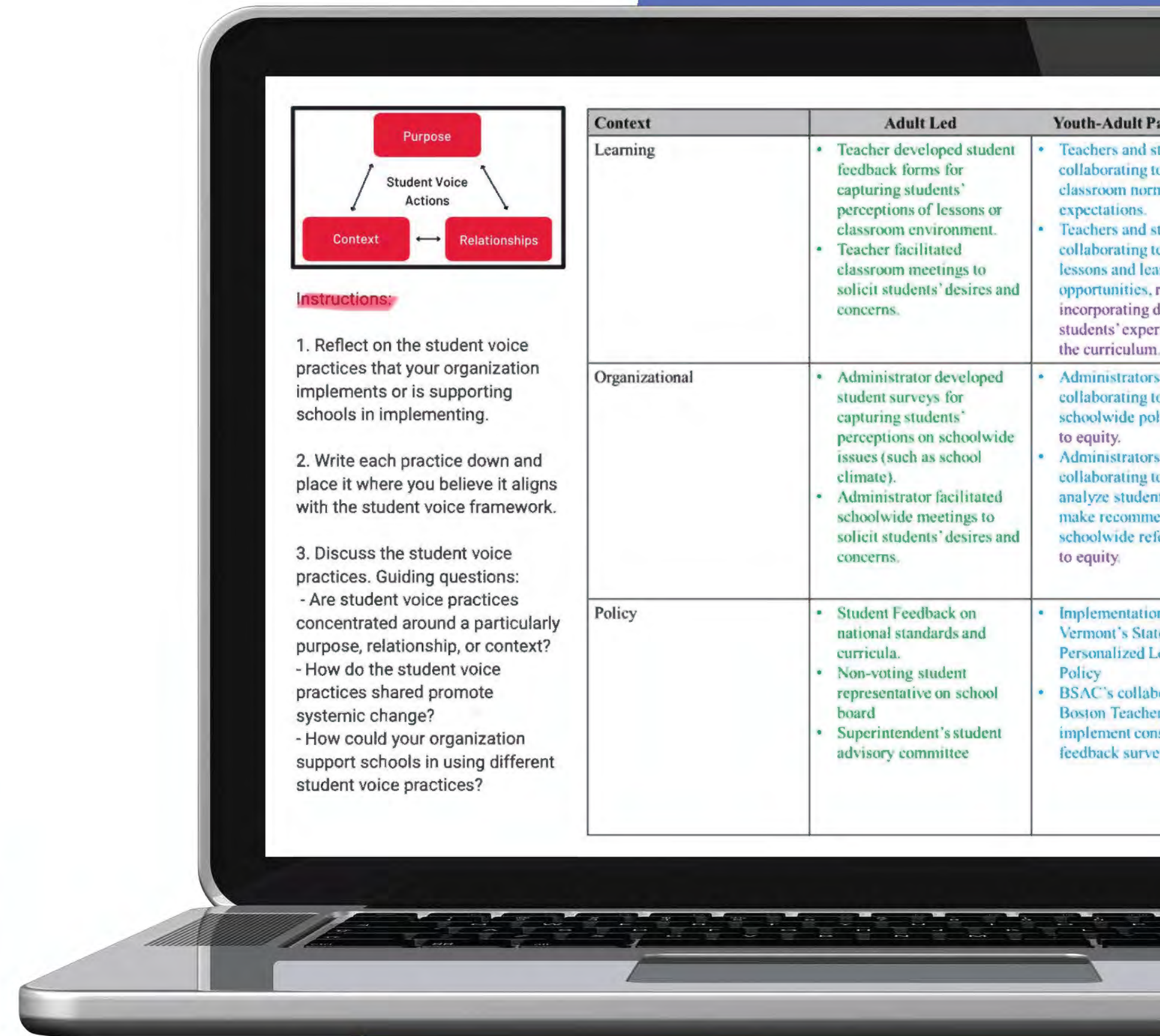
family  
liaison  
2



### Instructions:

1. Reflect on the student voice practices that your organization implements or is supporting schools in implementing.
2. Write each practice down and place it where you believe it aligns with the student voice framework.
3. Discuss the student voice practices. Guiding questions:
  - Are student voice practices concentrated around a particularly purpose, relationship, or context?
  - How do the student voice practices shared promote systemic change?
  - How could your organization support schools in using different student voice practices?

Context	Adult Led	Youth-Adult Pa
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher developed student feedback forms for capturing students' perceptions of lessons or classroom environment.</li> <li>• Teacher facilitated classroom meetings to solicit students' desires and concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers and st collaborating to classroom norm expectations.</li> <li>• Teachers and st collaborating to lessons and lea opportunities, r incorporating d students' exper the curriculum.</li> </ul>
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator developed student surveys for capturing students' perceptions on schoolwide issues (such as school climate).</li> <li>• Administrator facilitated schoolwide meetings to solicit students' desires and concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrators collaborating to schoolwide pol to equity.</li> <li>• Administrators collaborating to analyze student make recomme schoolwide refer to equity.</li> </ul>
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Feedback on national standards and curricula.</li> <li>• Non-voting student representative on school board</li> <li>• Superintendent's student advisory committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation Vermont's State Personalized Learning Policy</li> <li>• BSAC's collabor Boston Teacher implement cons feedback surve</li> </ul>





# Discussion

- 
- How to build a culture where student voice goes beyond small projects?
  - What are the implications of student voice in the current era for students (pandemic, anti-racism, all of it)?
  - How to differentiate between what initiatives should be student-driven and which should not? Is it realistic to think student voice should could and should be involved in all aspects of the work?





# 101: STUDENT VOICE DATA COLLECTION METHODS





# Social Science Research

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Social Science researchers pay attention to the following considerations:

- Validity (how true)
- Reliability (how consistent)
- Generalizability (how representative)





# Equity in Qualitative Research

- Partnering with students to (a) develop research question and questions on protocol, (b) collect and analyze data, (c) identify findings and implications, and (d) devise dissemination strategy can lead to more useful and impactful knowledge.
- Apply a critical perspective to the design and conduct of the research.





# Social Science Methods

## Qualitative (Words)

Focus groups,  
interviews, journals,  
in-depth case  
studies.



## Mixed Methods

Bringing together  
the words and the  
numbers.



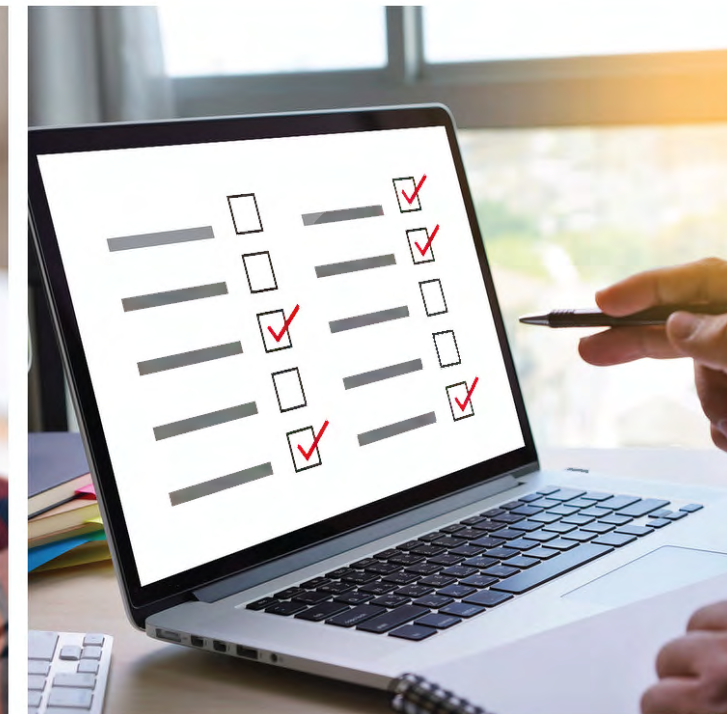
## Quantitative (Numbers)

Surveys with closed  
response options



# Qualitative Data Collection Techniques

- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Observations (using protocol)
- Open-ended questionnaires





# Open-ended questionnaire

## How do you learn? A Questionnaire for Students

Do you like this subject? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What would you really like to learn about in this class?

\_\_\_\_\_

How much homework do you expect? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What's fair for me to expect from you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the way you learn things best.

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel about working in groups? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything that could make this class especially hard for you?

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you think of a way I could help you with this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything else about you that you would like me to know?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding Student Behavior

<i>When we feel . . .</i>	<i>We act like this . . .</i>	<i>How a teacher could change that feeling</i>
Bored	Inattentive, passing notes, playing cards, reading magazines, eating or drinking, talking to friends, giggling, pestering teacher with irrelevant questions	Use curriculum and activities that relate to our interests or call on our strengths
Physically restless		
Insecure about our status among peers		
Upset or worried about personal or family troubles		
Anxious about not being able to do the work		
Unseen and unheard, disrespected or disliked by the teacher		



# Picture Essay

what will make class better?



I want to do  
more writing  
by my self.

How do you feel about class?

April

Page  
Terbait  
###

Science  
Wah

5 senses

See

Smell

Feel

Hear

Stages of water

A B C D E F G  
H I J K L M  
N O P Q R S T  
U V W X Y  
Z

I feel happy in class  
because I like to  
add and subtract.



# Start, Stop, & Continue Form: Teaching & Learning

## Start, Stop, Continue, Midterm Feedback

As we reach the halfway point in the semester, I want to solicit your feedback regarding this course. As students in this class, your feedback is both valuable and critical.

In the spaces below, please tell me what you would like me to start doing, stop doing, and continue doing to better support your learning as we move forward. On the reverse, please let me know what you will start doing, stop doing, and continue doing as we move forward to solidify your understanding of key concepts and advance your learning. Thank you!

Start...

Stop...

Continue...

I will

Start...

Stop...

Continue....

Additional Comments



# Comparing Techniques

	Advantage	Drawbacks	Special Considerations
Interviews	In-depth insight; flexibility to ask follow-ups to build robust understanding.	Takes a lot of time to conduct and analyze data; capacity constraints may mean fewer participants.	Building rapport and trust are key.
Focus Groups	Can involve more students from different groups.	Potential for groupthink.	Skilled facilitation important; unit of analysis is group (not individual students); 3 questions per hour.
Observation	Moves beyond "perception" to evidence of practice.	Observer's presence may have (chilling) effect.	Develop an observational rubric or protocol to guide.
Open-ended questionnaire	Quick method of data collection with large sample size.	Do not have opportunity to seek clarification or ask follow-up.	Technological tools can facilitate.



# Three Examples



What are students' experiences with homework and how can they be improved?



How can we better support struggling students?



What can teachers do to improve classroom instructional practices?



# Three Examples

In-depth  
interviews

What are students' experiences with homework and how can they be improved?

Fishbowl  
Focus  
Group

How can we better support struggling students?

Start-  
Stop-  
Continue

What can teachers do to improve classroom instructional practices?



# Activity

- 1 Reflect on a real-world research question from a school principal.
- 2 Think about (a) the qualitative techniques that were used to investigate these questions and (b) the sampling plan.
- 3 Discuss the following questions:
  - What qualitative techniques would you use to investigate this research question?
  - Who would you collect information from to address the research question? How would you collect the information?
  - How might you apply a critical perspective to the investigation of this research question?

District  
Admin  
1

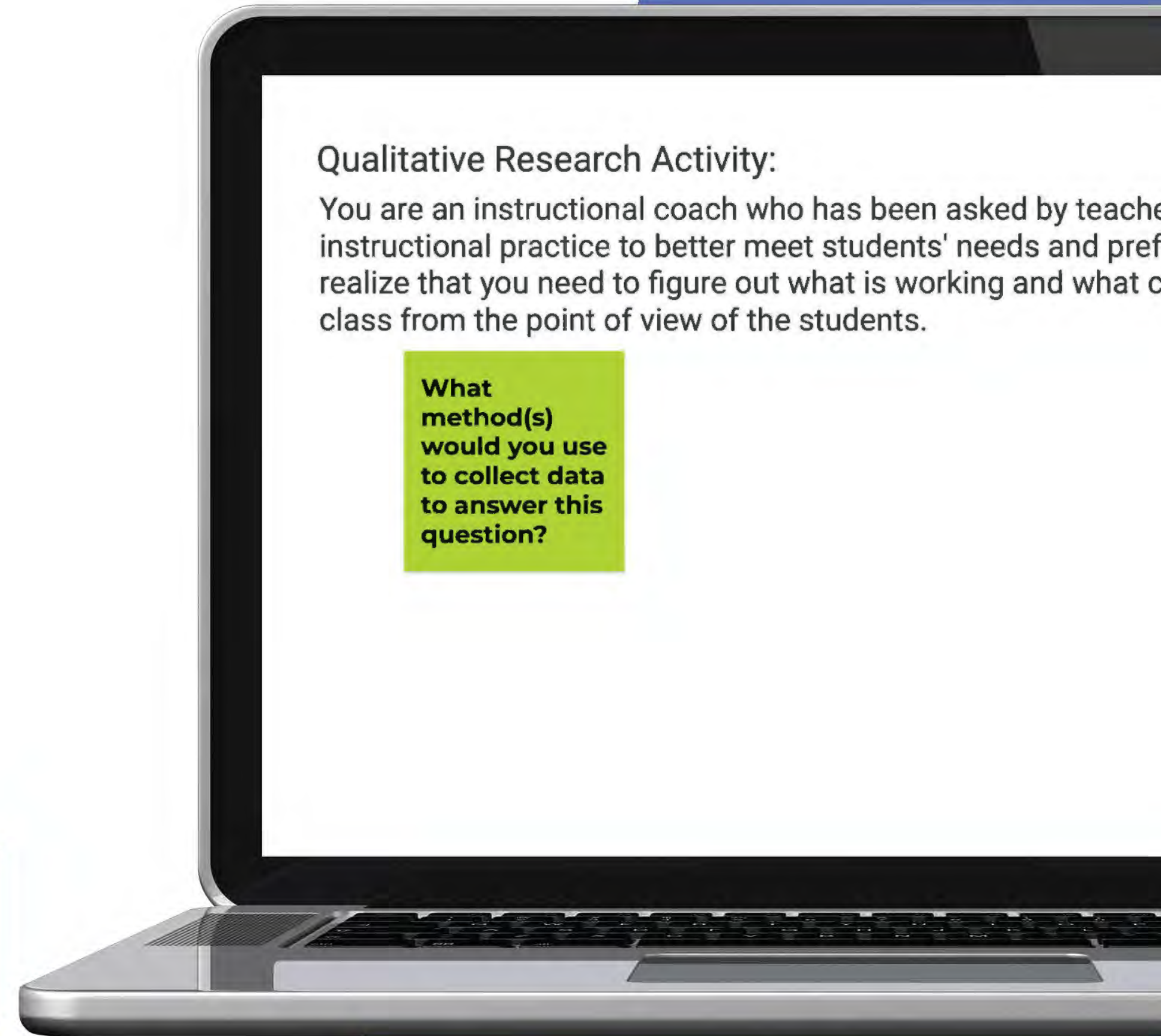
School  
admin  
3

Family  
liaison  
2

## Qualitative Research Activity:

You are an instructional coach who has been asked by teachers to investigate instructional practice to better meet students' needs and preferences. You realize that you need to figure out what is working and what is not in your class from the point of view of the students.

**What method(s) would you use to collect data to answer this question?**





# FAMILY LIAISON DATA GATHERING

You are an family liaison who has been asked to assess family ability to access internet and working computers to complete expected classwork. You realize that you need to figure out what could be improved from the point of view of the students.

**What method(s) would you use to collect data to answer this question?**

**Use orange notes for questions to ask**

**Use green for strategies**

**Student survey**



# Measuring Student Voice Practices

- There are limited evidence-based tools available to quantitatively measure the effectiveness or efficacy of student voice practices within or outside continuous improvement.
- However, there are numerous evidence-based tools to qualitatively gauge effectiveness.

[Qualitative Tools](#)





# 201: STUDENT VOICE IN CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT





# What is continuous improvement?

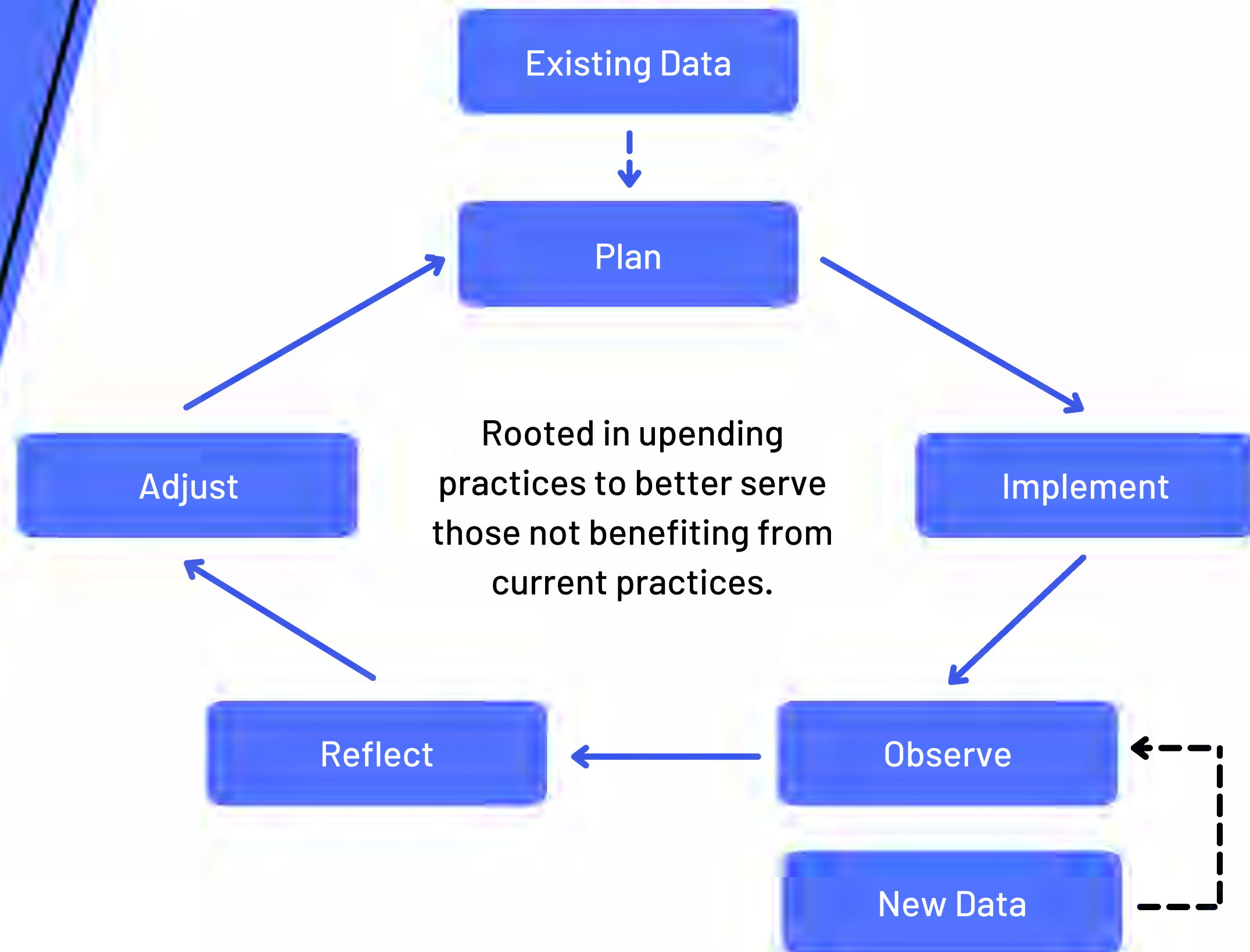
- A cyclical process intended to help groups of people in a system—from a class to a school district or even a network of many districts—set goals, identify ways to improve, and evaluate change.
- Common themes in continuous improvement:
  - Looking at problems as part of a system;
  - Working to improve policies and processes within the system;
  - Repeatedly testing assumptions about causes and solutions; and
  - Involving those affected by changes in deciding what tweaks to make.





# Embedding Equity into Disciplined Inquiry Cycles

Consider embedding cultural responsive education practices and critical participatory action research practices into disciplined inquiry cycles.





# Embedding Student Voice in Continuous Improvement



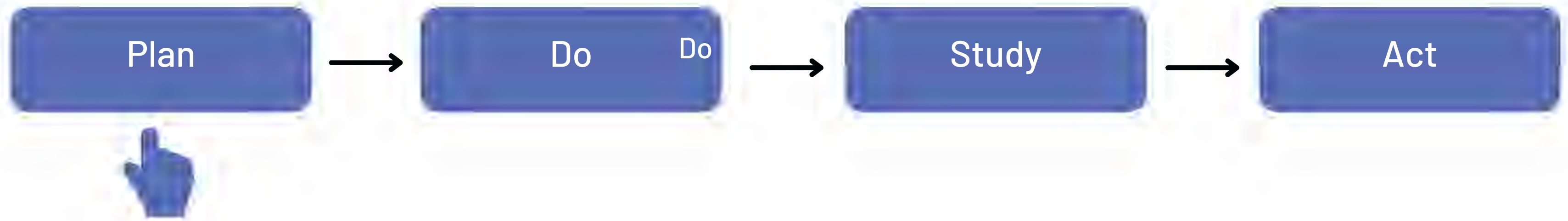
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## *PDSA Cycle Examples*

- Youth-Adult Partnership: Students and adults collaborate to complete PDSA cycles to identify a problem, test a change, and adjust practice.
- Youth Driven: Students complete PDSA cycles to identify a problem, test a change, and adjust practice with limited support from adults.



# Embedding Student Voice in Continuous Improvement

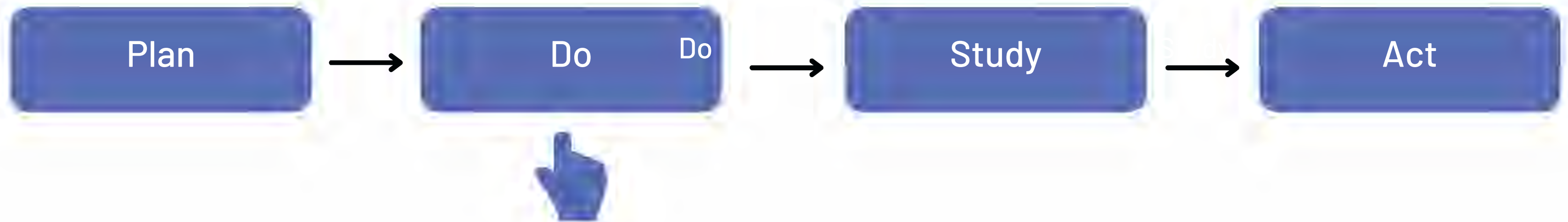


## *Plan Examples*

- **Adult Led:** Teachers and school leaders ask students for feedback on a problem needing change in their school. Adults plan the cycle and data needed.
- **Youth-Adult Partnership:** Students and adults collaborate to identify a problem needing change and a potential solution. Students and adults plan the cycle and data needed.
- **Youth Driven:** Students identify a problem needing change in their school and a potential solution. Youth plan the cycle and data needed with limited support from adults.



# Embedding Student Voice in Continuous Improvement



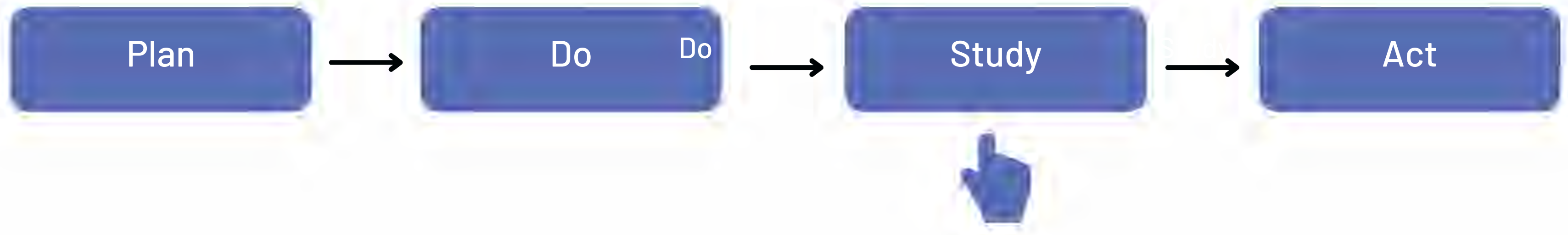
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## *Do Examples*

- Adult Led: Teachers and school leaders test the solution, document any problems, and collect data from students (e.g., surveys, interview, focus groups).
- Youth-Adult Partnership: Students and adults collaborate to test the solution, document any problems, and collect data from students (e.g., surveys, interview, focus groups).
- Youth Driven: Students test the solution, document any problems, and collect data from students (e.g., surveys, interview, focus groups) with limited support from adults.



# Embedding Student Voice in Continuous Improvement



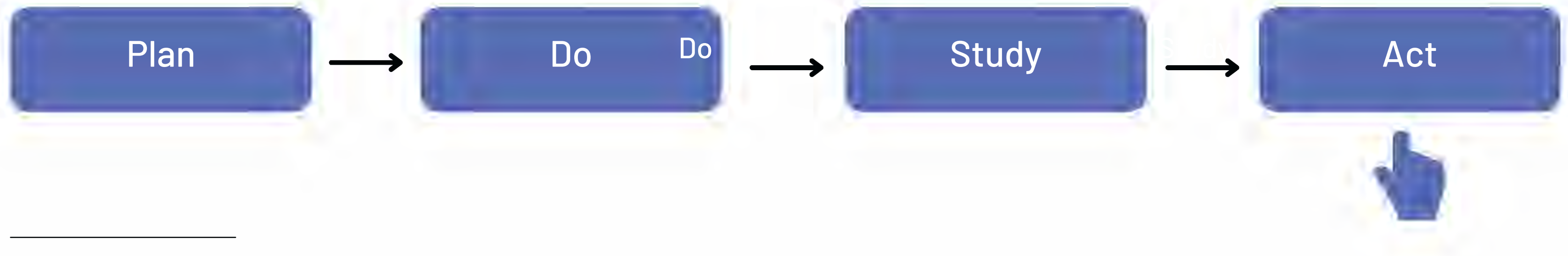
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## *Study Examples*

- Adult Led: Teachers and school leaders analyze the data and examine learning.
- Youth-Adult Partnership: Students and adults analyze the data and examine learning.
- Youth Driven: Students analyze the data and examine learning with limited support from adults.



# Embedding Student Voice in Continuous Improvement



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## *Act Examples*

- Adult Led: Teachers and school leaders decide whether to adopt, adapt, or abandon cycle.
- Youth-Adult Partnership: Students and adults decide whether to adopt, adapt, or abandon cycle.
- Youth Driven: Students decide whether to adopt, adapt, or abandon cycle with limited support from adults.



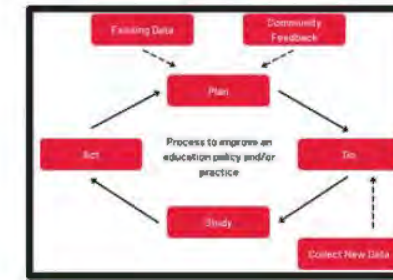
# Activity

- 1 Reflect on the student voice practices that are integrated into the local improvement processes that you support.
- 2 Write each practice down and place it where it occurs in the disciplined inquiry cycle presented. If your cycles does not align with this one, that is okay, place the practice where you think it most aligns.
- 3 Discuss the student voice practices that are used in the local improvement processes. Guiding questions:
  - Are student voice practices concentrated around a particularly relationship or point of the disciplined inquiry cycle?
  - How can student voice practices be embedded to support systemic change?
  - How could your organization support schools in using different student voice practices?

District Admin  
1

School Admin  
3

Family Liaison  
2



### Instructions:

1. Reflect on the student voice practices that are integrated into the local improvement processes that you support.
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Plan

Do

Stu

Entire Cycle



# Discussion

- How do practitioners meaningfully partner with students in Plan-Do-Study-Act or quick learning cycles?
- How can we incorporate the work of national or community student led continuous improvement processes?





# WRAP UP

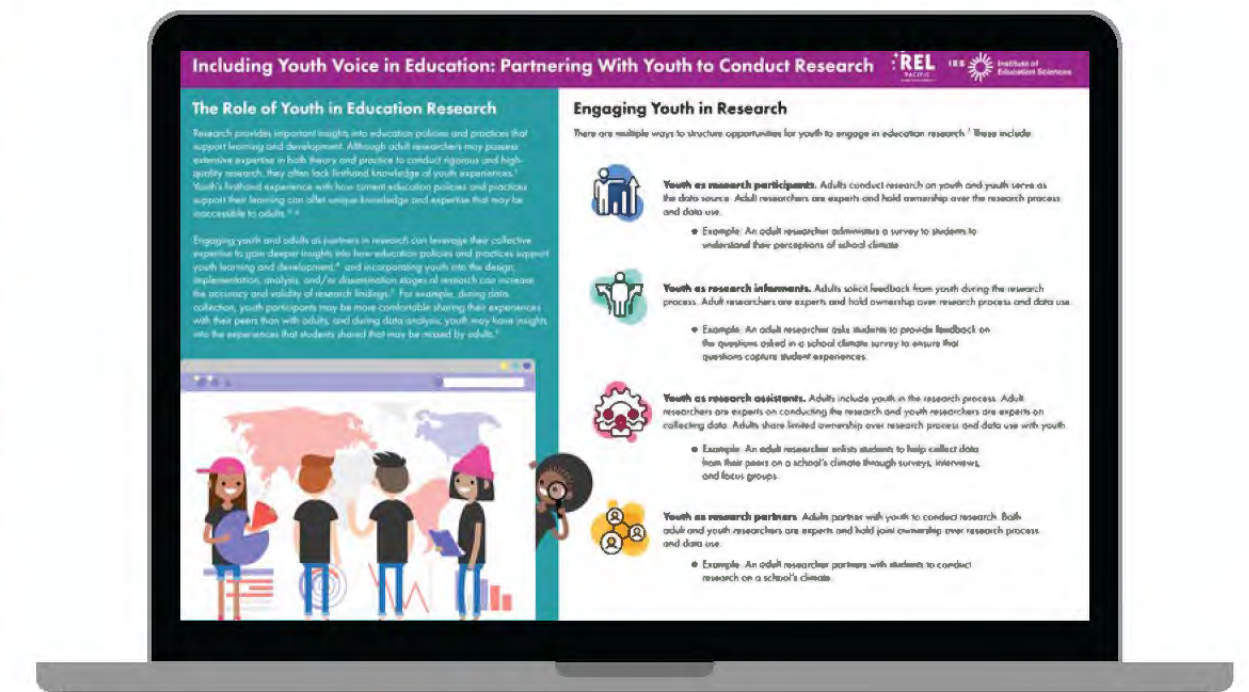
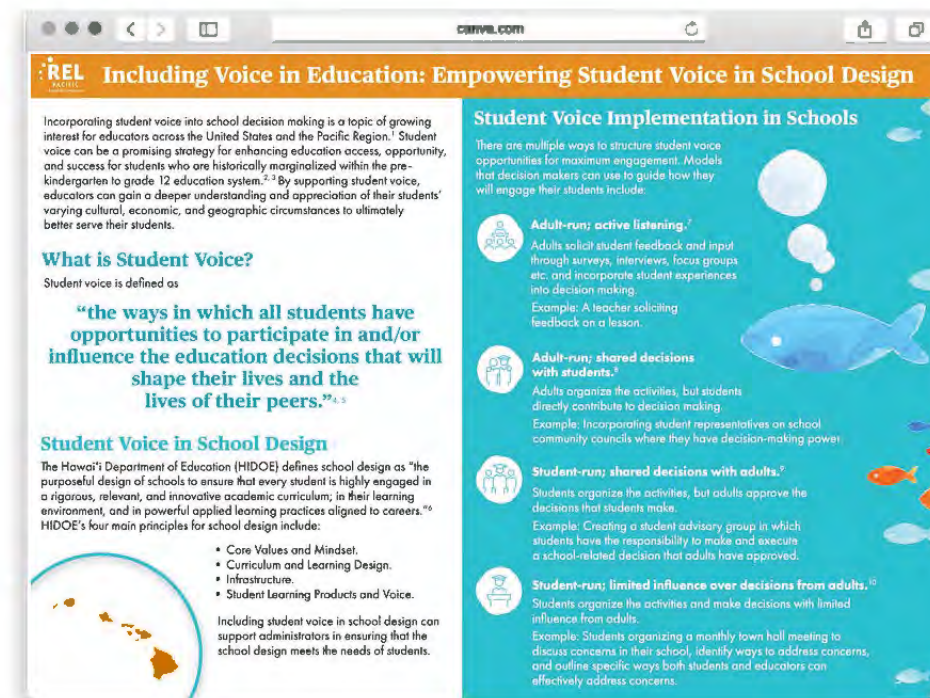
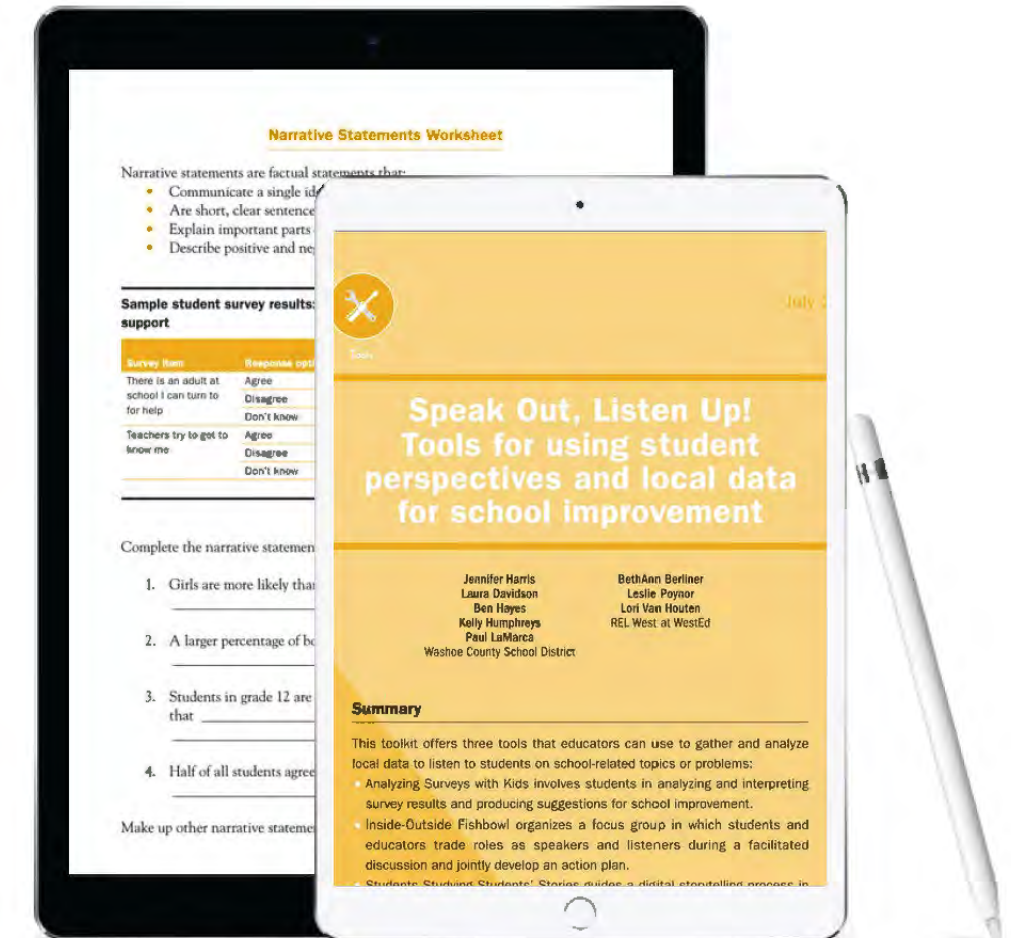
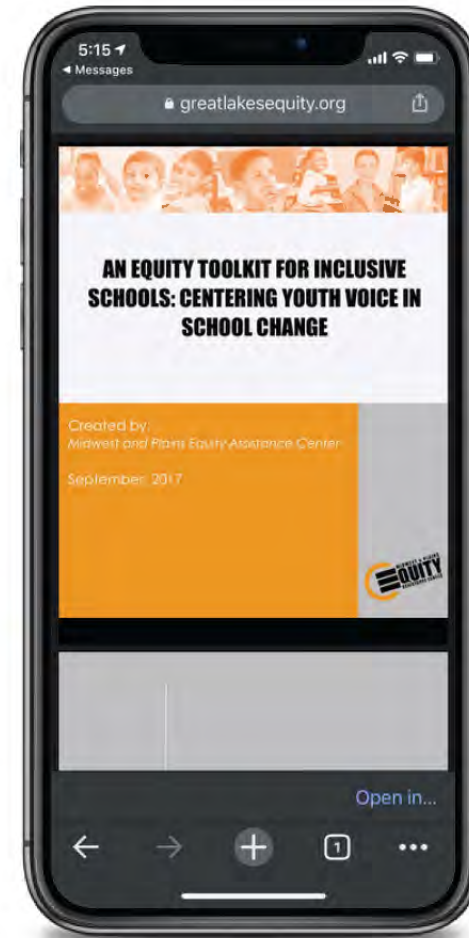




# Resources

Collection of free evidence-based resources on student voice practices.

Click on each picture to access each resource.

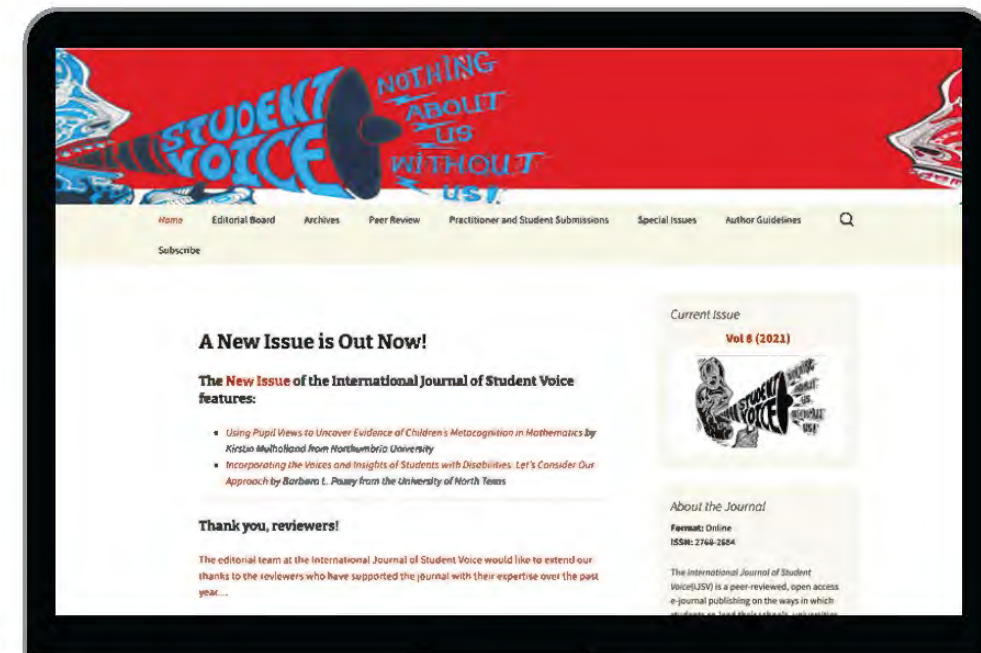
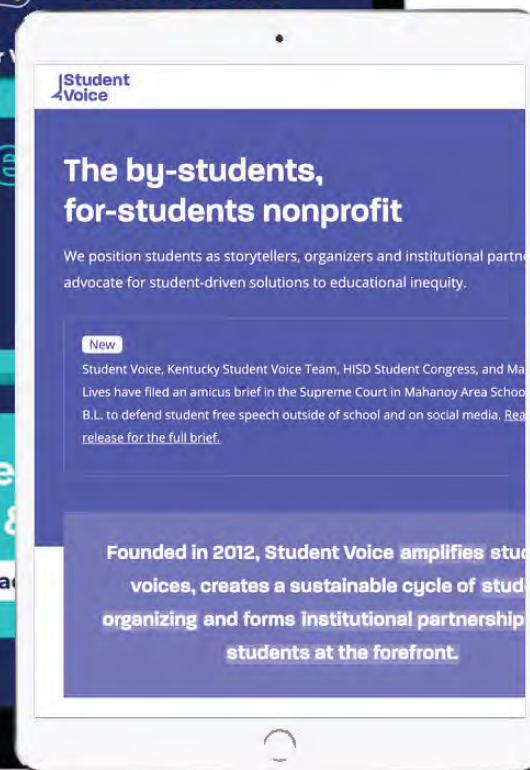
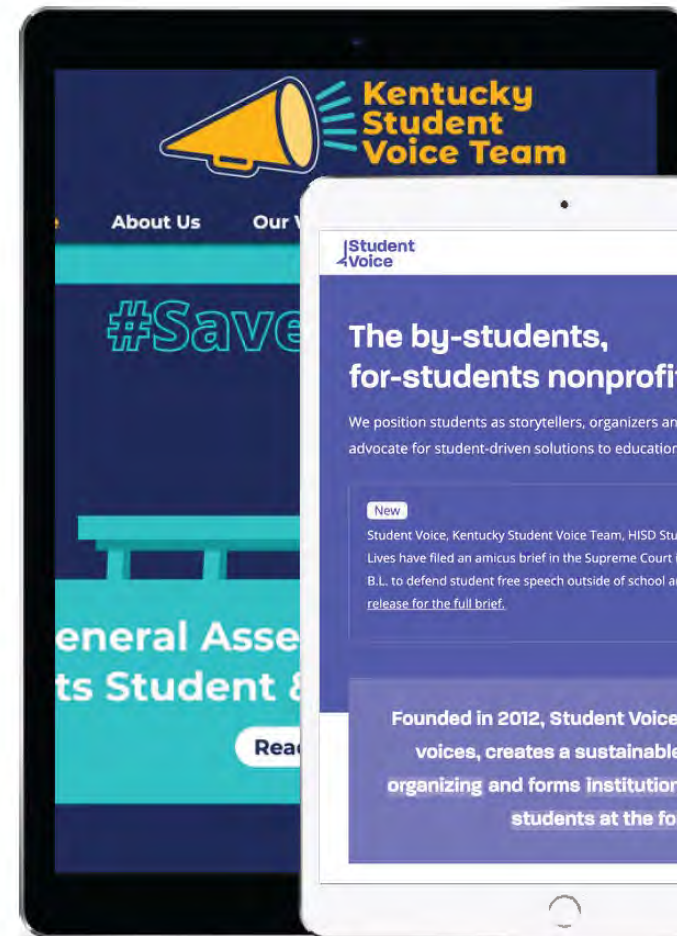
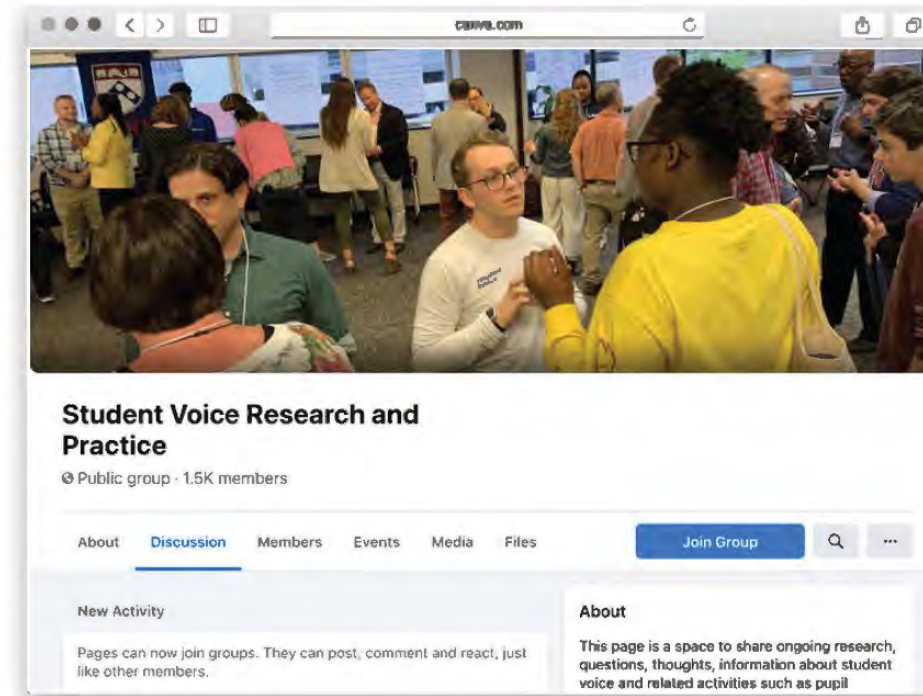




# Communities of Practice

Communities where individuals, classrooms, schools, and other organizations come together to talk about student voice.

Click on each picture to access each community.

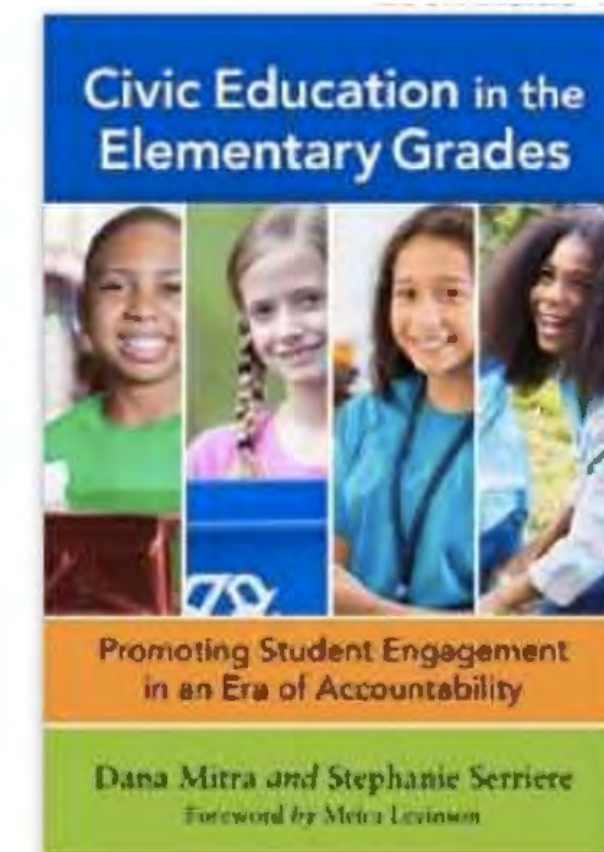
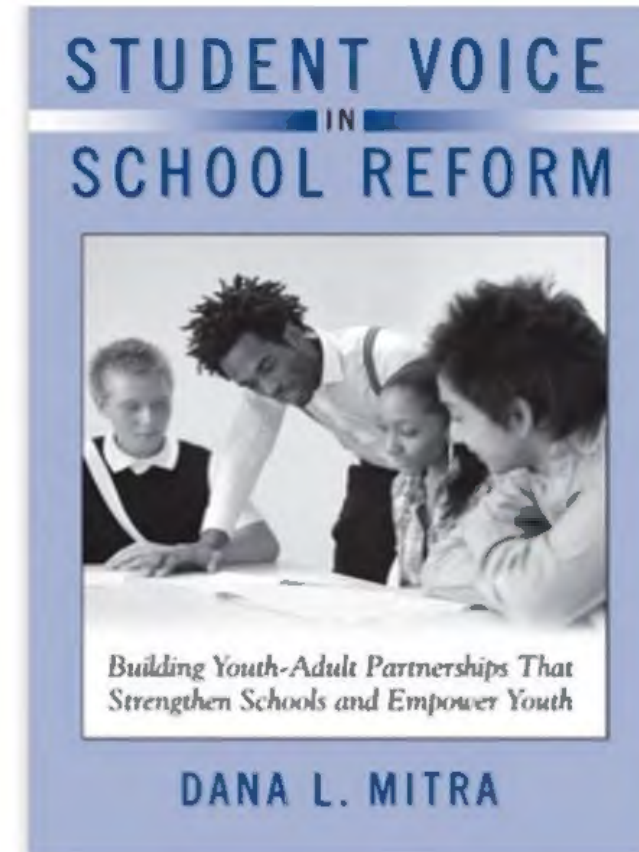




# Dana's research

Collection of free evidence-based resources on student voice practices.

Click on each picture to access each resource.





# Questions

We are happy to answer questions or provide support as you continue to develop and implement student voice practices. Contact us via email at the following address.

**Dana Mitra**

[dana@psu.edu](mailto:dana@psu.edu)







THANK YOU FOR WATCHING!

[OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu](http://OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu)



Ohio Statewide  
**Family  
Engagement  
Center**

—at The Ohio State University—



Ohio Statewide Family  
Engagement Center



[OhioSFEC@osu.edu](mailto:OhioSFEC@osu.edu)



[@OhioEngage](https://twitter.com/OhioEngage)