Survey Question	2. This teacher cares about students' point of view

Australian Professional Standard	Professional Practice Domain Standard 4: Create and maintain safe and supportive learning environments Focus areas: • 1.2 Understand how students learn • 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals • 4.1 Support student participation • 4.2 Manage classroom activities
What does this sound like in the classroom?	"We are the ones in class every day. We have a lot to say. Everyone wants to hear from the teachers and parents, but what about us? Who asks our opinion? Why do we feel shut out, like no one cares what we think?"
Why is this important?	Student voice is about valuing people and the learning that results from engaging student capacities and voices within schools. It involves students being meaningfully involved in their own learning and ensuring that student goals and issues are addressed, with the ultimate aim of improving the engagement and learning of students (Victorian DET, 2007). There is a distinct need for teachers to balance talking to and listening to students, including "listening to their questions, their ideas, their struggles, their strategies of learning, their successes, their interaction with peers, their outputs, and their views on teaching" (Hattie, 2012, p. 186). When schools engage student voice, they create opportunities for students to: • Feel more positive about their school • Feel more positive about themselves (respect and self-worth) • Better manage their own learning • Realise that they can have an impact on things that matter to them (Fielding & Rudduck 2002) There are five dimensions to student involvement in schools: 1. Student involvement in school and community development 2. Students as researchers and co-enquirers 3. Student feedback on teaching and learning 4. Students as peer-tutors 5. Student involvement as a manifestation of inclusion principles. (Victorian DET, 2007)

Student voice initiatives can be anything that promotes student input. This includes students sharing opinions in classrooms, focus groups or student councils all the way through to sophisticated ways of collaborating with adults to improving curriculum approaches to improve educational outcomes (Victorian DET, 2007).

What strategies have been shown to work in the classroom?

As classroom 'conductors', we need to think about who is allowed to speak, who listens and what skills, attitudes, systems and classroom culture is required to express opinions and ideas when it comes to student voice (Fielding, 2001). In addition to talking and listening, teachers need to think about the classroom climate and their relationships with students (Hattie, 2012). Teachers should build positive, respectful relationships with students to encourage them to share their opinions and ideas.

In practice, student voice ranges from the most basic level to sophisticated approaches. At the most basic level, young people share their opinions of problems and potential solutions through student councils or in focus groups associated with school strategic planning. At a more sophisticated level, young people share their 'voice' by collaborating with adults to actually improve education outcomes, including helping to 'improve teaching, curriculum and teacher-student relationships leading to changes in student assessment and teacher training' (Mitra 2004).

Strategies that are successful in the classroom will generally involve consultative processes, whereby the students and teacher work together to create an inclusive 'sharing' framework. Students are more engaged when they see that their opinions are listened to and used to transform pedagogical practices.

Fielding (2001) found that students will tend to adjust their behaviour depending on the context, and that the most disengaged students are least likely to raise their voices. For this reason alone it is important that strategies are employed in the classroom that provide opportunities for student voice, and the space for teachers to show that they care about student opinions. A meaningful discussion requires an environment where students are enabled to engage safely, freely offering opinions, thoughts and experiences without fear of ridicule. Regardless of format, a valuable discussion will be based upon two basic pillars:

1. Respect – all participants, including the instructor, must be respectful of all other participants, the course and the institution. Rude behaviour, such as interruption, ridicule, anger, personal remarks and dismissiveness are disrespectful and must not be tolerated.
2. Responsibility – all participants are responsible for offering thoughtful remarks that are useful and contribute to the goals of the discussion. Reactionary comments, angry responses and inappropriate attempts at humour are counterproductive and disrespectful.

| **What three things can I try in my classroom tomorrow?** | 1. <u>Bulletin boards/Gallery walks:</u> Using A3 or butcher's paper, gather student opinions about a particular issue or 'big question'. They can record these anonymously, but in any case it will allow you to gauge recurring student themes quickly and effectively upon review.
2. <u>Exit slips:</u> The classic exit slip strategy can be employed easily to hear your students' opinions. Ask them to complete the phrase "The one thing that surprised me today was…" or "What I'd really like to know more about is…" or any open-ended statement of your choice.
3. <u>Listen and act:</u> Young people value adults who not only listen to them, but also take action. If you can gather student comments quickly and easily about how they would like the class to unfold, try to implement suggestions in the very next class. |

| **What opportunities are there for collaboration with my colleagues?** | Ask a colleague to observe your class and assess how the students respond to opportunities to comment. This may be as simple as giving your colleague a copy of your class roll on which they can 'tally' the number of times each student speaks or puts their hand up in your class. They will be better able to identify students which students are most/least engaged in the learning activities and contributing to the discussion. You may wish to ask individual students after class to ascertain why they are reluctant to contribute and help them to become more engaged. |

Where can I find out more?

Video
- Defining your 'shining moment'
- Using questioning and discussion techniques
  Building appreciation in your classroom

Referenced articles, books and other great reads
- Hattie, J. (2009) Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement. Routledge.
- Fielding, M. (2001) Beyond the Rhetoric of Student Voice: New Departures or New Constraints in the Transformation of 21st Century Schooling, 2001
- Fielding, M. and Rudduck, J. (2001) The transformation potential of student voice: Confronting the power issues, Conference paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association.
- Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET), (2007) Student Voice: A historical perspective and new directions
- Jones, R. (2013) The Instructor's Challenge: Moving students beyond opinions to critical thinking. Faculty Focus. Retrieved April 2014
- Mitra, D. (2004) The Significance of Students: Can Increasing 'Student Voice' in Schools Lead to Gains in Youth Development, Teachers College Record, Volume 106, No. 4.
- University of Minnesota, Peer Observation Guidelines. Retrieved March 2014
- Blount, J., Napolitano, R. (2014) Leading Classroom Discussion. Iowa State University. Retrieved March 20, 2014