

Controversial issues - Topic 4: Controversial issues and school culture

Controversial issues and school culture – Encouraging the student voice in class

It is difficult for students to join in discussions of controversial issues if they are not already used to speaking publicly in school. Giving students frequent opportunities to talk in class gets them used to expressing themselves in front of others. It helps them gain confidence at speaking in public and become more adept at the process.

The important thing is that students feel listened to when they speak, and that their opinions are respected.

One way to help your staff include ample opportunities for the student's voice in their classrooms, is to create a **checklist** for lesson planning. After using the checklist for a while, the teachers will find that they are following it automatically. You can also use such a checklist for lesson monitoring and evaluation.

Here is an example:

STUDENT VOICE CHECKLIST

In this lesson, are there opportunities built in for students to:

Ask a question?
Express an opinion?
Interact with others?
Make a practical suggestion?
Take a vote?

