

## How can we engage students through facilitating a student-focused learning environment?

### Research evidence

Student focused learning environments have been found to help students create new ideas and materials, talk about their methods for solving problems and take the initiative to interact with teachers and peers. These learning environments include collaborative learning activities, peer teaching, projects and classroom talk that require multiple levels of thinking. Such approaches have promoted students' motivation and engagement with their work and teachers have spent less time than usual managing their students' behaviour.

### Your evidence

What opportunities for classroom decision-making and choice of resources do you or would you like to share with your students? What risks or difficulties does/would this present for you, your school, your students?

You might like to think back to 3-6 recent lessons and consider:

- Who chose the learning activities?
- Who chose and prepared the materials?
- Who chose the seating arrangements?
- Who created the pairs / groups?
- Who checked the work?
- Who decided what follow-up work/homework, if any, would take place?
- Who gave explanations?
- Who decided which questions and problems were explored?
- Who decided what had been learned, and how well?

Are there any patterns in your data? How often did you offer your students responsibility for the task? How did your students respond? Can you identify opportunities where you could have given your students more responsibility? What held you back from offering them more responsibility?

### Next steps

If, on analysis, you feel that there are too many tasks for which you set the agenda, you could look at the content you have to cover to identify opportunities for creating student-centred tasks. These could include: choosing who they work with, planning what they are going to do and deciding which resources they are going to use. It might also be helpful to get an idea of what students think about their engagement in student-centred tasks. You could do this through simple student voice exercises such as using a questionnaire and through analysis of the trajectory of students' performance on assessed tasks.

### Find out more

- Participation anthology RfT and Carl Rogers and classroom climate RfT available at [www.gtce.org.uk/tla/rft](http://www.gtce.org.uk/tla/rft)

### Taster based on evidence in

CUREE (2009) Pupil Participation Anthology: *GTC research for teachers summary*. Available at: [http://www.gtce.org.uk/tla/rft/pupil\\_participate/](http://www.gtce.org.uk/tla/rft/pupil_participate/)