

# WHAT WORKED FOR ME

## EXPERIENCES FROM A SECOND YEAR TEACHER

By: Noah Kim

*Noah Kim is beginning the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of teaching after graduating from RMIT Brunswick in 2017*

### Student voice

In contemporary teaching, the role of the teacher can be increasingly considered as a guiding mentor who provides necessary scaffolds at points of need in order to progress a student's learning. The discourse between a student and a teacher has transformed significantly. As an example, at Featherbrook College we co-construct learning goals with the students based on regular conferences, making sure to ask prompting questions to assist with their learning direction but giving them the agency to decide what they feel is best for their future learning.

A resource called 'Amplify' released by the Department of Education and Training (DET, 2018) provides teachers and students with a clear and shared understanding of effective practices to promote student empowerment. The resource explains three core concepts (leadership, agency and voice) and how schools/teacher can reflect, unpack and refine their understandings in order to 'amplify' student empowerment. As with any other DET document, research is evident throughout the resource, and providing clear links to success and the student outcomes as a result of implementation.

One part of the resource which I highly recommend reading and discussing with your colleagues, is the 'Role of the Teacher' chapter (DET, 2018), which clearly defines what student voice, agency, and leadership should look like in a learning environment. This section makes clear connections to the Practice Principles, further emphasising the interconnectedness of the DET resources. It defines what occurs when students have a strong sense of voice, agency, and leadership, for example: 'negotiate learning goals and assessment'. This is a great tool for self-reflection on practice and can be used to affirm what you are already doing and develop goals for areas of improvement. Furthermore, this section also offers flexible implementation ideas which makes this a resource that you are able to access, unpack and use within your learning environment.

An overall piece of advice when using all of the resources I have recommended throughout the Graduate Teacher Learning Series is to utilise the colleagues around you and unpack the resources as you go. When reading and interpreting these documents, I have found it invaluable to discuss what certain terms mean and engaging in a constant cycle of reflection (FISO improvement cycle) about how we can effectively implement our ideas. Amplify (DET, 2018) has given an example of how to apply the FISO improvement cycle for student voice, agency and leadership. This is extremely beneficial, especially if you have not had much experience with the FISO improvement cycle. It provides you with prompting questions that model what kind of questions you should be thinking about when using the cycle to improve student outcomes. In addition to this, it is critical to schedule time to brainstorm how you are going to assess the effectiveness on the students and whether or not there needs to be improvement. On the flip side of this I also believe it is important to just have a go and throw yourself into the deep end. At times, I have found this to be the most effective way of professional growth because I was able to reflect on lived experience and make immediate changes ready for my next lesson with the students.

## Reference

Department of Education and Training, 2018, Amplify: Empowering students through voice, agency and leadership, viewed 5 June 2019,  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/Amplify.pdf>