Student Voice

Building Youth-Adult Partnerships for School Change
By the end of this session, we will have...

• explored *why* student voice and partnership are essential to change efforts

• learned about three current youth-adult Partnership Vermont change efforts

• been introduced tools and strategies available to elevate student voice and build youth-adult partnerships

• related new insights to your own school communities, identifying next steps to increase student involvement in changed
Quote Marketplace

• Wander around the room to each station and read each poster - in silence (3 minutes)

• Choose one station that "speaks to you" - for whatever reason

• Talk to 2-3 other people at that station about why you choose to be there (3 minutes)
What are the Defining Qualities of Y-A Partnership?

• Dylan
• Clara
• Sally
Voice or No Voice?

That is the question....
Learned Passivity or Helplessness

I must not be
• wise enough
• capable enough
• mature enough...

to have my voice heard and valued. I will become/remain dependent and passive because you don't believe I am ready for anything else...so I must not be.
Playing the Game....

I'll go along with what you want and play by your rules, because I understand that game and can win at it. Unfortunately, you will never really know me nor my full potential, beyond my capacity for compliance. More unfortunate than that, I will never fully know myself....
Make Me!

If you won't value me by involving me, then

________ you! Just try to make me learn!!
Having a voice helps us shift from learned passivity to shared responsibility

I AM
• wise enough,
• capable enough,
• mature enough
to have my voice heard.
I will rise to the high expectations of others, because I have high expectations for myself.
Having a voice helps us shift from "playing the game" to being an integral team player.

I am helping to write the rules to this game! This is much more risky than "playing someone else's game", and means I shoulder much more responsibility....but it is so much more satisfying and revealing of who I am and what I can contribute.
Having a voice helps us shift from "Make Me!" to "We're in this together."

If I am heard and valued, I don't have anything to push back against to prove my worth and place in the world. I can take that energy and use it for better purposes - in partnership with others.
Building Youth-Adult Partnerships for Learning & School Change shifts our school cultures from...

**Learned passivity/helplessness** → **Shared Responsibility**

**Playing the game of school** → **Being an integral team player**

"Make Me!" Position → **We're in this together**

**Essential to authentic implementation of PLPs & PBLs**
The No Voice Scenario... waiting at the train station just doesn't make sense...
Ladder of Youth Voice

8. Youth/Adult Equity
7. Completely Youth-Driven
6. Youth/Adult Equality
5. Youth Consulted
4. Youth Informed
3. Tokenism
2. Decoration
1. Manipulation

Adapted by Adam Fletcher (2011) from work by Roger Hart, et al. (1994)
Communicating School Redesign Class 2014-15: Our Story

Colchester High School
Twinfield Union High School
Otter Valley High School
Harwood Union High School
Hazen Union High School

GOAL: Build public understanding and support for Act 77: Flexible Pathways
We started with researching mental models of education and learning....
Paradigm Shift
Changing Youth Mental Models

- Shared responsibility = compliance
- Teachers as experts; students as passive recipients of learning
- Limited belief in ourselves as independent learners
- Grades and fear of failure motivate us

- Shared responsibility = students as initiators/shapers of learning
- Teachers as facilitators/guides; students as partners in learning
- Confidence in ourselves as independent learners
- Learning opportunities motivate us
YATST fosters engagement in learning by increasing rigor, relevance, relationships and shared responsibility (4Rs) through an action research model.
Learning & the Brain: Mindset, Metacognition & Motivation

Building fluency in the language of learning. When students share the language of learning with educators, they can then partner in its co-creation.
“It is the feedback to the teacher about what students can and cannot do that is more powerful than feedback to the students, and it necessitates a different way of interacting and respecting students”

J. Hattie, 2009
Elevating youth voice and building youth-adult partnerships requires time and intention.
Fail Often to Succeed Sooner….

What does this mean for learning?  
What does this mean for schools?

The students at Champlain Valley Union school contemplated these questions and offered this analogy as food for thought…..
REPORT CARD

Final Grade

F or B
SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER