

# Student agency in interactive learning environments

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## Abstract

Student agency refers to the actions students can and do make to influence their learning. In a rapidly changing world, students are offered new and exciting opportunities for future prosperity but must learn to be active and exercise agency in constructing their niches. Student agency is construed in this article as a variable quality, one that is actively negotiated and context dependent, embedded in students' cultural and temporal milieus. Four dimensions of student agency are proposed, each related to a personal or social understanding, skill or action. They are student voice, strategic agency, personal agency and connected agency. Also presented are seven categories of teacher practice to support student agency that have been drawn from professional publications about student agency. Reflective schedules for simultaneously exploring student agency and teacher practice are included.

*Key words: student agency, teacher practice, negotiated learning, learning environments*

## Introduction

This article places student agency within an interactive context, positioning it as a variable part of a dynamic social system rather than a fixed personal attribute. It considers the nature of student agency, the reciprocal roles of those who exercise and encourage agency in schools, the circumstances that support students to actively assume agency and the relationship between agency and guidance. In the appendix of the article are two reflective tools for Middle School students and their teachers; The Student Sense of Agency Interview Schedule and the Student Agency: Discussion Points for Teachers.

## The call for student agency

The rationale for encouraging student agency is multidimensional, concerning students' learning and development, well-being and rights as children (see Klemenčič, 2015; Kumpulainen, Lipponen, Hilppö & Mikkola, 2013; Proctor, 2014). The widely ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN General Assembly, 1989) delineates the rights of children aged 0–18 and the accompanying responsibilities of governments. It stands to preserve children's interests in terms of survival, development and protection and clearly states that children have the right to be active with regard to decisions that affect them. In short, children in those countries that ratified the Convention hold the right to voice their views with regard to their education, to have their voices heard and to see action resulting from the expression of their views and opinions.

The ongoing transformation from a largely industrial to a technological world provides a compelling reason for promoting student agency. With changing means of connection and global migration, there are new opportunities for innovation amidst a degree of uncertainty about what form the future will take. Many environments, when compared with those of the past century, appear less fixed and predictable (Klemenčič, 2015). While the current circumstances provide new and exciting opportunities for advancement and fulfilment, they also demand that young people acquire the types knowledge, skills and values that enable innovation (Prettyman, Ward, Jauk & Awad, 2012). They must be active in accessing, using, exchanging and creating knowledge. Fostering student agency involves creating solutions in real life situations and supporting young people to embrace uncertainty as they persevere through calculated trial and error. It means helping them find purpose and passion for learning and see learning as an ongoing activity. Agentic activity involves creative experimentation and the development of curiosity in learning environments that extend through schools, homes and communities (see Fullan, 2013; Prettyman et al, 2012).

## Notions of agency

### Agency as a relational and temporal quality

Defining agency has not always been straightforward, particularly given the degree of subjectivity involved in assigning intentionality to participants and the variation of expression of agency across contexts (see Arnold & Clark, 2014). Recent accounts of agency have suggested that it is a discursive practice, one that is dynamic and related to context, portraying agency as a quality that changes in nature and strength as it weaves through social interactions.

Agency is not represented in this article as a quality that a person has per se but one that is actively enabled under certain conditions; it is negotiated and shared among participants in an interactive environment. Active students assume agency in negotiation with adults and peers who simultaneously exercise agency to facilitate student learning (Fullan, 2013). Parents and their children may negotiate agency, continually adjusting the scaffold as young people acquire and create culturally embedded knowledge and skill (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976).

Klemenčič (2015), drawing on social cognition and sociological theories, describes student agency as a combination of the processes in which students relate to past, present and future choices of action and their perceived power to achieve intended outcomes in given situations. Agency is seen as a temporal and relational

quality, with students' reflections, intentions and interactions operating within their cultural, social, and political environments. Others have discussed similar views of the nature of agency. For example, Hilppö, Lipponen, Kumpulainen and Virlander (2015) consider agency to be a 'socially constructed relation between an individual's capabilities, aspirations, and perceived opportunities and limitations to take action with a given practice' (p2). Similarly, Ma and Gao (2010) considered that developing agency meant becoming more autonomous in learning and taking charge of one's own learning through negotiation, providing an illustration of this interaction with tertiary students co-determining syllabi in conference with teachers.

Agency is clearly not a quality that can be understood through personal or social structures alone; it involves the articulation of relations between children and their worlds. This contextualised view of agency reflects interactive perspectives such as those described by Vygotsky (1978), Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Engeström (2001) in which both learner and environment are depicted as active in development. The interactive perspective implies that people as learners are not independent agents of their environment but pro-actively negotiate the active environment (see Bandura, 2001). Obviously, the theoretical perspectives of participants in learning and teaching activity constitute major influences on the nature and extent of student and teacher agency. For example, teacher practices are influenced by the range of perspectives to which they have been exposed in life, training and professional experience.

The views of those involved in creating learning environments for students serve to position the learner as dominantly active or passive in the learning process. To illustrate, interactive theories consider both learner and environment to be active, or interactive. Interactive views contrast with those that position the learner as most active, such as Piaget's (1952) theory of cognitive development, or the environment as dominantly active, for example Skinner's (1938) operant conditioning (see Bowler, Annan & Mentis, 2007). Encouraging student agency, therefore, requires that teachers and students examine, and perhaps challenge, the beliefs they bring to teaching and learning.

Klemenčič (2015) has suggested that the development of student agency relies on six understandings. These are listed and briefly described below.

1. Student Agency is a constructed quality of action and interaction. Student agency is a quality that is developed in interaction with the world.
2. Agency strength depends on the situation. Students who have more knowledge, skill and access to information are better positioned to assume agency. Agency is strengthened through the cultivation of social networks and nurturing of cultural capital.
3. Student agency is temporarily embedded. Students understand their immediate environment through past experiences and future orientations.

4. Children's lives are embedded in unique complex contexts. Unique contexts give rise to unique opportunities and challenges.
5. Student agency is inherently relational. The actions of people with whom students interact influence their aspirations and possibilities.
6. There are three different modes of student agency: personal, proxy and collective. Students may act directly to influence circumstances, access support from other individuals to act indirectly or act as part of a collective.

Understanding student agency means knowing the interactive context of students' learning. Rainio and Hilppö (2016) commented on the propensity of researchers to reduce complex situations to manageable units in order to render them comprehensible. While understanding distinctions and reciprocity between active agents might lead to seemingly coherent understandings, it is possible that important insights are obscured in the process. Rainio and Hilppö suggest that inherent contradictions in multi-perspective situations may indeed be a part of the phenomena under study. Tensions might be usefully examined in order to understand the interactive context.

#### Agency and cultural relevance of learning environments

Agency is a fluid quality developed in context, the interpretation of events and the extent and form of agency assumed by students in the learning environment being socially and culturally mediated (see Rainio & Hilppö, 2016). Students are best supported to negotiate agency in those settings that hold perceived relevance for them and in which they can readily identify with practices and procedures (see Hawkins, 2005; Jackson, 2003; Nasir & McKinney de Royston, 2013; Purdie, Tripcony, Boulton, Lewis, Fanshawe & Gunstone, 2000). Therefore, a fundamental role of schools in relation to student agency is establishing connections with students' families and communities to facilitate the flow and exchange of authentic cultural information. With community, schools may explore what the concept of involvement means in their particular environments and how students can take active roles in learning within and outside of school (see Bouffard & Weiss, 2008; Lopez & Caspe, 2014).

Student voice represents an essential component of student agency. Although parents, teachers and other community members can contribute valuable information about students' interaction in learning environments, it is only students themselves who can provide accounts of their experience of learning (see Kellett, 2010). When students', teachers' and parents' views contribute to the co-construction of learning environments and form a mutually understood platform, the diversity of students' stories and identities can be understood with regard to the cultural settings that students experience. A New Zealand study that sought to understand the connection between cultural identity and perceived aspects of success underscored the need to understand these notions from the students' points of view. Webber (2015) asked Māori secondary school students which aspects of their Māori identity were most important to them. Most students'

responses related to belonging. Knowing who they were and where they came from provided a sense of security. Weber observed that their connection to their whanau, whenua and iwi (extended family, land and tribe) made them who they were. A strong sense of self for the Māori students was generated through connections with others and engaging in shared practices rather than striving for individual success for which many school systems are structured. Studies such as this provide a clear rationale for examining how school systems support their particular students to take an active part in their learning.

## Teachers' roles in supporting student agency

Teachers, irrespective of the modes in which they operate, are agents of change. Their practice, informed by their personal and professional experience, influences the extent to which students are active or passive learners. For example, positive teaching approaches have been associated with agentic activity and student well-being (see Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkings, 2009). In many instances, support for student and teacher agency requires that both teachers and students examine their stories of teaching and learning and their relative roles in the process. Narratives of agency in students' learning and teachers' practice can shed light on past and present events, providing examples of success that can help create supportive emotional climates for learning (e.g. Anderman & Levitt, 2014; Marques, Lopez, Rose & Robinson, 2014; Pekrun, 2014).

Facilitative teachers are those who are active in understanding, encouraging and extending students' capability as they acquire the skills and knowledge required to assume an active role within interactive learning environments (see Fullan, 2013). Negotiated and scaffolded teaching and learning approaches that encourage student agency contrast with traditional, expository modes in which students have been largely passive. Naturally, adults maintain their critical role in transmitting valued and temporally relevant knowledge but support young people to assume agency through an ever-changing scaffold. Sedeghi (2014) observed that when both teachers and students see they have agency in shaping learning within educational systems, they develop a greater sense of empowerment to influence outcomes.

Placing emphasis on the support of student-teacher agency in the co-construction of curriculum and practice demands high levels of commitment, professionalism and courage on the part of teachers. It requires a genuine commitment to encouraging student agency, sound understanding of the rationale for active participation of students, teachers and families and sufficient courage to nurture agency within systems that have not necessarily been designed with agentic students and adults in mind. Rajala, Kumpulainen, Rainio, Hilppö, and Lipponen (2016), observing the common contradiction between agency and control, have suggested that student agency might currently be supported through a balance of classroom management, instruction and active participation. Agency requires attention to the inherent contradictions of agency and control through the provision of opportunity for authentic negotiation.

## Teacher practices to foster student agency

Various writers considering the topic of student agency and active participation have suggested or implied a range of teaching practices for teachers. These practices have been categorised here into seven sections. Names of authors of works that allude to the various practices are provided for those who wish to explore the concepts further. This is by no means a comprehensive list of practices that can promote student agency. The interagency of students, teachers and families is currently the subject of research and much discussion from which we might expect to learn more.

### 1. Negotiating Learning

- Generating options so that students have real and supported choice (*Bandura, 2001; Keeffe, 2015; Klemenčič, 2015*)
- Recognising the uniqueness of children and individualised learning (*Yoon, 2015*)
- Understanding what each child wants and needs to learn (*Sadeghi, 2014*)
- Taking into account children's own aspirations, beliefs and competencies (*Hilppö, Lipponen, Kumpulainen, & Virlander, 2015*)
- Distinguishing between agency in active learning and self-directed learning. Agency implies interaction (*Hannifin, Hill, Land & Lee, 2014*)
- Reframing students' expressions of resistance or questioning as constructive, agentic events (see *Rajala, Kumpulainen, Rainio, Hilppö, & Lipponen, 2016*)

### 2. Linking learning to real life

- Linking learning with valued practices (*Annan, Annan, Wootton & Burton, 2014; Jackson, 2003; Webber, 2015*)
- Reflecting home/community culture in the classroom (*Jackson, 2003; Klemenčič, 2015; Yoom, 2015*)
- Placing emphasis on real problems (*Fullan, 2013*)
- Understanding the broader contexts of students' lives (*Rainio & Hilppö, 2016*)

### 3. Creating and supporting learning connections

- Providing opportunities for learning inside and outside of the classroom (*Klemenčič, 2015*)
- Facilitating chance encounters for learning through increased connections (*Klemenčič, 2015*)
- Creating opportunities for discursive dialogue or meandering conversation (*Arnold & Clark, 2013*)
- Making technology, artefacts and tools accessible to increase connections (*Klemenčič, 2015*)

### 4. Nurturing positive and optimistic attitudes

- Nurturing students' sense of optimism, hope and trust (*Bandura, 2001; Marques, Lopez, Rose & Robinson, 2014; Pekrun, 2014; Usher & Pajares, 2008*)

- Helping students and those who support their learning to view events through appreciative eyes (*Anderman & Levitt, 2014; Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkings, 2009*)

## 5. Supporting reflection on learning

- Teaching and encouraging the use of self reflection skills (*Arnold & Clark, 2013; Klemenčič, 2015*)
- Providing opportunities for self-reflection (*Klemenčič, 2015*)

## 6. Creating emotionally secure climates for learning

- Demonstrating genuine caring about students' learning (*Sadeghi, 2014*)
- Fostering a sense of purpose and passion for learning (*Bruner, 1996; Fullan, 2013*)
- Consistency to allow students to feel secure, to be respectful of one another and ready to learn (*Proctor, 2009*)
- Encouraging students to welcome new challenges and appreciate learning opportunities in the face of less-than-favourable outcomes (*Pekrun, 2014*)

## 7. Fostering teacher agency

- Ensuring teacher agency. When teachers have choice in shaping systems of education they feel valued and are better positioned to commit effort to supporting students' agency (*Sadeghi, 2014*)
- Understanding the parameters within which student agency can be supported (*Rajala, Kumpulainen, Rainio, Hilppö, & Lipponen, 2016*)
- Examining contradictions between agency and guidance/control (*Rajala et al, 2016*)

The features of the learning environment that teachers select to pursue (e.g. emotionally secure climates, creating and supporting learning connections) depend on the unique circumstances of the teaching/learning environments in which they participate.

## Dimensions of student agency

A review of contemporary student agency literature in this study indicated that this variable quality comprises four distinct but related dimensions (see below). The dimensions include the personal qualities and understandings individual students bring to particular events as well as social connections. The dimensions of student agency are: student voice, strategic agency, personal agency and connected agency. Each is briefly described below.

### Student voice

Student voice includes students' perceptions of their power and influence on their learning. It involves students' beliefs about the ways their voices are received and their perceived positioning with regard to decision-making about their learning. The student voice category considers the extent to which students believe that the expression of their views results in positive changes in their educational environments.

### Strategic agency

Strategic agency refers to the skills, knowledge and strategies that students develop and apply as agents in learning. It includes students' awareness of their particular learning environments, the people, settings and relationships that can support their learning and their tools for articulating knowledge in particular settings.

### Personal agency

Personal agency includes those personal attributes required to be active or agentic learners. These attributes include preparedness to take agency and the belief that effort exerted in learning activity will be rewarded with success. This category also considers the extent to which students persevere when tasks are difficult and their propensity to bounce back when early attempts are not successful.

### Connected agency

Connected agency includes students' perceptions of their social relationships in interactive learning. It comprises students' views of the extent to which they are able to work with other people, talk with others about learning, help other people and make learning connections across various settings.

These four dimensions offer one way of thinking about agency within an interactive learning environment although they are not the only means. There are many meaningful ways in which agency can be conceptualised and applied to generate a broad picture of 'agency in context'. For example, Hilppö et al (2015) suggested considering Greima's modalities 'to want to, to have to, to be able to, to know how to' in relation to agency and Klemenčič (2015) found Bandura's dimensions of free choice, optimism, conscious influences and uniqueness helpful in structuring agency. However, despite variations in the categorisation, consistent across much contemporary writing is the notion that student agency operates within the interaction of a person and the social, cultural world. Agency implies a degree of autonomy, an awareness of and concern for the surrounding social environment and the assumption that responsibility for learning is actively shared.

All four dimensions can be explored to understand student agency in a specified context. However, the resulting descriptions of individual student's sense of agency provide a snapshot of just one part of the interactive learning environment. To understand the positioning of agency in classrooms, students' sense of agency must be considered in conjunction with teachers' reflections' on the learning environments they facilitate. Consequent adaptations to teaching-learning interactions would represent increased alignment of student agency and teacher practice.

## Examining student agency and teacher practice

In the appendix to this article are two tools for understanding the interactive learning environment in the school setting: The Student Agency Interview Schedule and the Student Agency: Discussion Points for Teachers. The items on both student and teacher forms have been derived from the works of recent or prominent authors on the topic of student agency and reflect the dimensions of student

agency and teacher practice presented in this article.

The Student Agency Interview Schedule, specifically worded by and for middle school students, has been designed so that it can be completed either in interview with teachers or by students alone. Those working with students outside the middle school range may wish to rephrase statements in order to explore each of the concepts. It is expected that students completing the schedule would have access to the help of adults and that the messages implied in the students' responses would influence the shaping of learning environments. As for any questionnaire requiring a student to share personal or social information, care must be taken to ensure sufficient confidentiality.

The uniqueness of students' and adults' lives means that determining whether or not a person is sufficiently active involves consideration of the unique context. Agency does not operate independently of social relationships, cultural values, levels of trust or familiarity with tools and artefacts. In addition, the degree of subjectivity in agency, that is, the extent to which one feels agentic, and the possibility that a person's judgement may not concur with that of an observer, requires that understanding of agency is generated from the interaction of the actor and the observer. In this case, understanding is negotiated between students and teachers.

For these reasons, the questionnaire and discussion topics at the end of this article are designed to initiate discussion between students and teachers rather than provide an absolute measure of an individual's agency. For example, the Student Agency Interview Schedule may bring to light the areas in which a student feels more or less agentic. This information can be used to inform teaching practices and modify students' approaches to learning. As agency varies across settings, the schedule is intended to facilitate conversation about agency in a particular temporal context.

## Summary

Those students who are able to exercise their right to agency in education are well placed to learn and enjoy high levels of well-being. Student agency is a dynamic quality that is created and shaped as teachers and students negotiate their learning environments and it is influenced by the multiple environments in which children develop. It is not a quality that can be measured in absolute terms or understood in isolation to the agency of others with whom children interact. However, examining the various dimensions of agency with individual students supports understanding of their sense of agency in learning which, in turn, can contribute to the development of educational practices to foster active participation and student agency. Teacher practices that encourage student agency include negotiating learning topics and activity with students, incorporating culturally relevant curriculum and practices, creating positive, emotionally secure environments and promoting quality learning connections between students and other people.

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## Appendices

A: Student Sense of Agency Interview Schedule

B: Student Agency: Discussion points for Teachers

### Student sense of agency schedule

#### For students years 7 and above

The Student Sense of Agency Interview Schedule reflects predominant notions of agency emerging from interactive theory, ecological research and international documents related to the rights of children. It is intended as a guide for talking with young people about their sense of agency in educational settings and their capacity and readiness to support the agency of others. The schedule is intended for exploration of agency in specific learning situations to indicate the relative strength of various aspects of students' sense of agency in particular circumstances. The view of student agency taken in this interview schedule is interactive, based on the assumption that people do not 'have' agency per se but choose to, and are supported to, take agency in specific learning environments.

### Student sense of agency interview schedule

Student Agency Concept		Background references	Statements for Students
<b>A. Voice/Influence</b>			
1.	<b>Share in decisions about learning (a) What I learn</b>	<i>United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child, 1989</i>	<i>I have a say about what I learn.</i>
2.	<b>Share in decisions about learning (b) How I learn</b>	<i>United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child, 1989; Ma &amp; Gao, 2010.</i>	<i>I have a say about the way I learn.</i>
3.	<b>Believe one's voices is heard (a) What I want to learn</b>	<i>United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child, 1989; Ma &amp; Gao, 2010.</i>	<i>Adults know what I want to learn.</i>
4.	<b>Believe one's voices is heard (b) How I learn best</b>	<i>United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child 1989; Ma &amp; Gao, 2010.</i>	<i>Adults know how I learn best.</i>
5.	<b>View that own voice is acted upon</b>	<i>United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child, 1989; Klemenčič, 2015.</i>	<i>People change the way they teach me because of what I tell them.</i>
6.	<b>Awareness of the influence of own actions</b>	<i>Bandura, 2001.</i>	<i>I can change my learning environment</i>
<b>B. Strategic Agency</b>			
7.	<b>Construction of knowledge</b>	<i>Bandura, 2001; Prettyman, Ward, Jauk &amp; Awad, 2012.</i>	<i>I make my own ideas/ I can create my own solutions.</i>
8.	<b>Belief in capability/Skills to succeed</b>	<i>Bandura, 2001.</i>	<i>I have the skills to succeed academically</i>
9.	<b>Use of proxy strategies: Access help from others /Seek information or views of others</b>	<i>Bruner, 1996; Prettyman, Ward, Jauk &amp; Awad, 2012; Ma &amp; Gao, 2010.</i>	<i>I can work out problems when I access help from another person.</i>
10.	<b>Articulation of strategies</b>	<i>Fullan, 2013; Ma &amp; Gao, 2010.</i>	<i>It is easy for me to find the words to talk about the strategies I use.</i>
11.	<b>Envisaging the future</b>	<i>Klemenčič, 2015.</i>	<i>I know what skills I will need in the future.</i>
12.	<b>Reflection on learning/ Intentional interaction/deliberate acts</b>	<i>Arnold &amp; Clark, 2013; Ma &amp; Gao. 2010. Bruner, 1996; Klemenčič, 2015.</i>	<i>I think about my work and make changes to improve.</i>
13.	<b>Use of opportunities to share how one thinks</b>	<i>Ma &amp; Gao, 2010.</i>	<i>I talk about the way I think about learning.</i>
14.	<b>Taking opportunities to share how one feels</b>	<i>Ma &amp; Gao, 2010.</i>	<i>I talk about the way I feel about learning.</i>

C. Personal Agency			
15.	<b>Willingness to operate in unfamiliar environments</b>	Fullan, 2013	<i>I am comfortable when learning activities are new.</i>
16.	<b>Willingness to operate in uncertain environments/experimentation</b>	Ma & Gao, 2010; Prettyman, Ward, Jauk & Awad, 2012	<i>I am comfortable when I do not know what will happen.</i>
17.	<b>Resilience</b>	Jackson, 2013.	<i>I am comfortable when I get negative and positive feedback.</i>
18.	<b>Perseverance</b>	Klemenčič, 2015.	<i>I work hard when a task is hard or boring.</i>
19.	<b>Confidence</b>	Bandura, 2001; Kumpulainen, Lipponen, Hilppö & Mikkola, 2013; Usher & Pajares, 2008.	<i>I am confident about my ability to learn.</i>
20.	<b>Self-efficacy</b>	Bandura, 2001; Usher & Pajares, 2008.	<i>If I try hard I will succeed.</i>
21.	<b>Responsibility</b>	Ma & Gao, 2010.	<i>I take a share of responsibility for my learning</i>
22.	<b>Intrinsic Motivation</b>	Bruner, 1996; Fullan, 2013.	<i>I truly want to learn new things.</i>
23.	<b>Optimism</b>	Bandura, 2001; Jackson, 2003; Seligman, 2001.	<i>I know I will succeed.</i>
D. Connected Agency			
24.	<b>Access to proxy strategies</b>	Bandura, 2001.	<i>I know who to ask to help me</i>
25.	<b>Helping others to learn</b>	Arnold & Clark, 2013; Klemenčič, 2015.	<i>I can help others learn.</i>
26.	<b>Consuming knowledge from external sources</b>	Bandura, 2001; Prettyman, Ward, Jauk & Awad, 2012.	<i>I use ideas from other people and other places.</i>
27.	<b>Collective strategies, collective efficacy and discursive dialogue</b>	Bandura, 2001; Arnold & Clark, 2013.	<i>I can work with a group to find out how to solve problems and find solutions</i>
28.	<b>Social skills</b>	Bandura, 2001.	<i>I work well with other students and people who help me learn.</i>
29.	<b>Perception of links between home and school cultural practices (a) school to home</b>	Jackson, 2003; Klemenčič, 2015; Ma & Gao, 2010.	<i>What I learn at school helps me at home.</i>
30.	<b>Perception of links between home and school cultural practices (b) home to school.</b>	Jackson, 2003; Klemenčič, 2015; Ma & Gao, 2010.	<i>What I learn at home helps me at school.</i>

The Student Sense of Agency Schedule interview/recording sheet with Likert Scale is available in student-friendly PDF form on [www.positivelypsychology.co.nz](http://www.positivelypsychology.co.nz)

## Student Agency: Discussion Points for Teachers

The Student Agency: Discussion Points for Teachers lists teacher practices that researchers and writers have observed to support student agency. The schedule of practices is designed to support teachers and schools identify the strengths in their current learning environments and decide on next steps for extending student agency. Beside each of the practices are sample questions that relate to particular aspects of the practice named. These are suggested conversation starters for teachers wishing to reflect on and discuss particular practices in-depth.

Teacher practices	Background references	Questions for teachers
<b>The nature and place of student agency</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you see when students are active agents of their learning?</li> <li>2. Why do you think it important to encourage student agency?</li> <li>3. What do you see as the role of the teacher in supporting student agency?</li> </ol>
<b>1. Negotiating learning</b>	Bandura, 2001; Keeffe, 2015; Klemenčič, 2015; Sadeghi, 2014	1. What say do students have in the topics they learn in your classroom?
	Hannifin, Hill, Land & Lee, 2014.	2. What say do students have in the way they learn in your classroom?
	Yoon, 2015.	3. How do you find out about the students' aspirations and Interests?
	Rajala, Kumpulainen, Rainio, Hilppö, & Lipponen, 2016	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. What do you think/feel when students resist activities?</li> <li>5. What do you do when students resist activities?</li> </ol>
<b>2. Linking learning to real life</b>	Annan, Annan, Wootton & Burton, 2014; Jackson, 2003; Webber, 2015 Fullan, 2013.	1. How are real life issues represented in your school programme?
	Jackson, 2003; Klemenčič, 2015; Yoom, 2015.	2. What part does culture have to play in supporting student agency?
	Rainio & Hilppö, 2016.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. How do you find out about children's experience of being in the classroom?</li> <li>4. How do you find out about children's lives beyond the classroom?</li> </ol>
<b>3. Creating and supporting learning connections</b>	Arnold & Clark, 2013; Klemenčič, 2015.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What opportunities do students have to connect with others inside the classroom?</li> <li>2. What opportunities do students have to connect with others outside of the classroom?</li> <li>3. What tools do the students have to connect with one another/ with people outside of the classroom?</li> </ol>
<b>4. Nurturing positive and optimistic attitudes</b>	Anderman & Levitt, 2014; Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkings, 2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe your students' learning or classroom programme through appreciative eyes.</li> <li>2. On what platforms of success are students building?</li> <li>3. What opportunities do the students have to experience success in relation to their own goals/ aspirations?</li> </ol>
	Bandura, 2001; Marques, Lopez, Rose & Robinson, 2014; Pekrun, 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. How can teachers encourage students to have hope and optimism for the future?</li> <li>5. How do children learn to trust one another/to trust their teachers?</li> </ol>
<b>5. Supporting reflection on learning</b>	Arnold & Clark, 2013; Klemenčič, 2015 .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you support students to reflect on their learning?</li> <li>2. What skills do students need to reflect meaningfully?</li> <li>3. What opportunities are available for meaningful reflection?</li> </ol>

<b>6. Creating emotionally secure climates for learning</b>	<i>Bruner, 1996; Fullan, 2013; Sadeghi, 2014; Pekrun, 2014; Proctor, 2009</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What steps have you taken to ensure that the classroom climate is emotionally secure for students?</li> <li>2. How can strong teaching/learning relationships be developed between teachers and students?</li> <li>3. What helps to relieve students' stress in your classroom/school?</li> <li>4. What relieves teacher stress in the classroom/school?</li> </ol>
<b>7. Fostering teacher agency</b>	<i>Sadeghi, 2014.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To what extent do you feel agentic as a teacher?</li> </ol>
	<i>Rajala, Kumpulainen, Rainio, Hilppö, &amp; Lipponen, 2016</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. What choice do you have in shaping your classroom programme?</li> </ol>
	<i>Rajala, Kumpulainen, Rainio, Hilppö, &amp; Lipponen, 2016</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. What input do you have into the way the school operates for students?</li> <li>4. What is the relationship between student agency and classroom management?</li> </ol>

The Student Agency: Discussion points for teacher worksheet is available in PDF form on [www.positivelypsychology.co.nz](http://www.positivelypsychology.co.nz)