Empowering Student Voice and Leadership

John McLaverty
jmclaverty@oxfam.org.uk
www.oxfam.org.uk/education
@oxfameducation
@mclavertyjs
A framework - Roger Hart’s Ladder of Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students are part of a political event. They might carry placards with paroles. They wear the colours of a party or a movement.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Students are prepared to appear maybe in costumes carrying flowers or flags. They make an adult event (even a student's rights day) look nice or student friendly.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>A selected group of students (maybe a minority) is given a possibility to represent 'their cause' without having a say, without preparation. They serve to show political correctness.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>A task (for instance community work) is given to students with no choice to agree or disagree. But they are informed and know the cause.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Before a decision is taken, adults consult with students. Their opinion and proposal are taken into consideration.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>A new school yard is planned. Students are not only consulted but can also decide on some of the details.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Students have an idea and voice it. They take the initiative and bring their plans to a result.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Students come up with a need or a plan. They convince adults to support and or finance. Together they decide and realize.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Student-initiated. The decisions are shared with adults.
- Student-initiated and directed.
- Adult-initiated. The decisions are shared with students.
- Students are consulted and informed.
- Students are assigned but informed.
- Tokenism: Symbolic integration (of minorities).
- Decoration: Students are used.
- Manipulation: Students are misused.

Living Democracy
The Role of the teacher
Agreeing goals and overcoming obstacles

Agreeing Goals – *What do we want to happen?*

Stay SMART – *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound*

Overcoming Obstacles – *Bricks and Hammers*

Writing an Action Plan – *Making your plan work in real life*
Keeping the Momentum Going
Conclusion and resources

Oxfam (2023) – Youth Leadership: A brief guide for Y6-Y13 teachers
https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/active-citizenship-skills/youth-leadership/

Roger Hart (1992) – Children’s Participation. From Tokenism to Participation


https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/who-we-are/global-citizenship-guides/

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