

Lost 45s

Read the following reflection and consider ways it may apply to your own career. With a group, discuss how this statement's message impacts how you think about youth voice in your environment.

Sometimes, when I am standing in front of a classroom of students explaining why student voice is so important to schools trying to be successful, I will hold up a small, 1 ½ inch yellow disc that resembles a spiral arm galaxy and ask if they know what it is. None do. Sometimes, even the newer teachers are stumped. A game piece? A kind of paper clip? Those of a certain generation know that this is an insert that allowed people to put vinyl records known as 45s (sometimes I have to explain what they are, too) on a turntable with a spindle so that they could drop down for listening. Imagine being able to listen to five songs in a row without having to get up!

I go on to narrate the history of my access to music for the past 40 years from vinyl to 8 tracks (portable music!) to cassettes (Sony Walkman!) to CDs to iTunes. I conclude by saying that although my current iPod contains my entire music collection, I rarely listen to it because – I take out my iPhone-I listen to music on my phone/Internet/calculator/camera/game thing.

The way I access music has changed five times since I was in middle school. And yet most middle and high school classrooms today look exactly like my middle and high school classrooms. Music hasn't changed (well, the music I listen to hasn't changed), nor have my ears (yet), but the way I access music has changed dramatically. The nature of knowledge hasn't changed and brains are still brains, but the way we interact with knowledge has to change if education is going to be relevant, engaging, and purposeful for our students. Absent student voice, the current state of education is like trying to play a 45 on a smartphone. Even the yellow disc won't help.

-Michael J. Corso *Student Voice: The Instrument of Change, 2014, p.46*

- **What do you do to ensure that youth have voice? What does your organization do?**
- **How can you ensure that youth voices are actively heard?**
- **What is the last thing you changed/implemented/updated as a result of youth voice?**
- **What are some future opportunities for youth voice?**