

## 5 Quick Tips For Building Student Agency

1. **Set clear expectations for autonomy and how you'll check in with students.** It is easier for students to engage when they know what is and isn't going to work. For example, if you've got a reading program where students can pick their own books, let them know what choices they'll need to make and when you'll connect with them to be sure the book aligns with their needs.
2. **Make sure students understand why they're learning what they're learning.** Consider how you're presenting *big ideas* in your lesson planning. Do your students know how it will connect to their daily lives? Are they clear on where the learning path is going?
3. **Build community through culturally responsive practices.** Consider your current learning unit. Consider how you are connecting learning units to your students' cultures. By adopting culturally responsive teaching practice, you create an inclusive environment for learners that helps them connect with the material.
4. **Use formative conversation starters to build student agency within content areas.** When we focus only on delivering class content, we miss critical opportunities to engage and ignite a sense of open-ended possibility that is at the heart of the important content we teach. For example, developing a question-and-answer strategy in your classroom that is primarily used to reveal students' thinking about a topic or concept, with the purpose of guiding your next instructional moves, will help your students build agency and engagement in learning.
5. **Share what works for you with your colleagues.** Collective teacher efficacy is a game changer in learning. When we, as teachers, lean in together to set the conditions, practices and protocols for student agency, students have a more coherent learning experience that reinforces the types of agency, efficacy and empowerment that every student needs and deserves.

Adapted from:  
*Bruno, J. (2021). How to build student agency in your classroom*