

# Youth Voice

*The information in this section comes from the NYLC Advanced Service Learning Participant Manual © 2004. The “Three Factors” concept is referenced to Eric Jessen, Teaching With the Brain in Mind.*

**There are different degrees of Youth Voice in Service Learning. Each is valid; you need to chose which level works for you and your students.**

- 4 Full Ownership.** Participants identify community needs, select a need to be addressed, identify learning objectives, plan project, and execute project
- 3** Participants select from 8-10 already identified agencies to determine need and project
- 2** Adult Leader gives students 2-3 choices
- 1** Adult Leader selects the topic and learning objectives, students chose emphasis
- 0 No Ownership.** Adult Leader identifies need and objectives and plans project

What is Youth Voice/Youth Engagement?

Ownership

Leadership

Empowerment

Youth Voice addresses three key factors that influence the attention a person gives to learning:

Choice

Relevance

Emotional Connection

**Choice**—If we want to see decreased apathy and resentment toward learning AND increased motivation, commitment, and participation, students need to have some say in the content, timing, and process of the learning experience. They need to, at minimum, perceive themselves as choosing their educational experiences.

**Relevance**—Participants need to see how a situation relates to them personally. In order for a learner to learn, they must be able to relate new information to material already learned. Participants must see experiences as relating to themselves and their knowledge.

**Emotional Connection**— Participants must have an emotional connection to the learning experience and have opportunities to interact with others. All of our decisions, on some level, are based on emotions.