

# Amplify Student Voice

BY CONNECTING STUDENTS TO EACH OTHER & THE WORLD

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## **ABSTRACT**

Reluctance to embrace the use of social media in the K-12 classroom and libraries means there is limited research on the extent to which a guided approach to using social media might support students in an educational context. This narrative inquiry study focuses on the Ontario Educational Student Chat (ONedSschat) to determine the extent to which students who were part of the organizing team developed increased levels of student voice and agency. Data examined includes student tweets, archived webinars, interviews with two adult mentors and one student, podcasts and webinars. Teacher-Librarians can play a tremendous mentoring role to amplify student voice by using a contextual approach like #ONedSschat (now #GlobalEdSschat) to connect them to others and to the world.

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## Introduction

The concept of the Ontario Education Student Chat (ONedSsChat), which is a student-led chat for K-12 students, live-streamed on YouTube with real-time participation, was initially created by the ONedSsChat cofounders to address a problem with social media and education. Although social media use among young students was on the rise, use of social media in the context of teaching and learning in K-12 occurred infrequently, which continues to be the case. A comparative study of student social media use among 13 to 17-year-olds from 2012 to 2018 saw a rise from 41% to 89% of students using a smartphone and an increase from 34% to 70% of students aged 13 to 17 who used social media multiple times a day (Rideout & Rob, 2018). In contrast, according to a nationally representative sample of 1208 U.S. K-12 teachers, social media was being used in only 13% of classrooms (Vega & Rob, 2019). As an educator with a literacy background, I understood the potential of using social media, especially Twitter, as a literacy practice (Greenhow & Gleason, 2012) and as an opportunity to embed digital citizenship (Couros & Hildebrandt, 2015) and amplify student voice.

I gathered data by observing and taking notes on the growth of each ONedSschat student member. I compared their voices on Twitter with the voice and agency I watched in the webinars. In addition, I gleaned much by taking notes on student reflections when the students presented at conferences or were guests on podcasts in which they shared perspectives about ONedSschat. Finally, I interviewed two teacher mentors and one student lead. All of these data sources were looked at individually at first, and then together as the full narrative story that evolved over two years. All names were changed and tweets block out the identity of the students to protect their privacy. All data was gathered under the supervision of my supervisors and the Review Ethics Board for Ontario Tech University.

My initial observations led me to focus on the following research questions:

1. To what extent does a contextual approach (ONedSschat) influence student digital citizenship behaviours?
2. To what extent does a contextual approach (ONedSschat) build digital literacy skills in students?
3. To what extent does a contextual approach (ONedSschat) give students voice and agency?
4. To what extent has this contextual approach impacted student leadership in online environments (student digital leadership)?

This paper will focus exclusively on the extent to which #ONedSschat amplified student voice.

### **About the ONedSschat**

The ONedSschat (now GlobalEdSschat) consists of three components: monthly evening meetings, a monthly daytime 30-minute chat, and a follow up slow chat on Twitter. I describe each of these in detail below in order to establish the context of my study.

Once or twice a month, the entire student and teacher team meet to discuss topics and questions to be addressed in the next ONedSschat. Prior to meeting, team members shared possible chat questions on Twitter via a Twitter poll and using a Dotstorming board (a platform that allows participants to make topic suggestions and vote). The students, with teacher mentorship, selected a topic, and began to list questions for the topic. Students and teacher mentors used Google docs to create and record questions. Typically, a teacher lead asked students if a few of the questions could be amalgamated (duplication, wording). Students were then asked to highlight their favourite five questions and these became the questions for the chat.

The process of creating topics and questions was the same for all ONedSschats conducted over the two-year study period. As part of the monthly chat duties, students are encouraged to respond to individuals as well as promote the chat and questions via Twitter, the main platform for communication. Students are also encouraged to think about their answers to the questions for the live panel discussion.

Once a month, at 9:30 am ET in year one and 10:00 am ET in year two, and now at 1 pm ET, one of the teacher leads would share the link for a video stream platform which allows for recording via the YouTube platform. Participating students, who are generally in class, would go somewhere in their school (in the case of my students it was the library) to connect in the live stream approximately ten to fifteen minutes before the chat start time. During the YouTube Live discussion, participants seldomly interact via Twitter or the YouTube Live chat. Rather, they engage in conversations around the topics and questions they had created. Teacher mentors on the team (and in year two, a few students) would bring questions or comments from the YouTube chat or Twitter into the panel discussion by stating the name of the student or class and then bringing in their comment or question. In year two, an expert on the topic of the month was invited to join and add to the YouTube Live discussion. The expert was sourced by any member of the ONedSschat team who had a connection to someone who might be knowledgeable on the topic. The format for the discussion was generally the same month to month: introductions, norms of expected behaviour, question 1 and student responses, question 2 and the student responses. Typically, one teacher mentor moderated the discussion and any other teacher mentors monitored the YouTube and Twitter chats.

After the live-stream, the panel discussion was archived and made available on the ONedSschat YouTube channel and website. All team members were encouraged to respond to

participating classes and students to build upon ideas and keep the discussion going. In addition, two questions were reserved for the “slow chat”- a continued conversation on Twitter that involved a team member staggering the posting of additional questions about the topic addressed for the rest of the month. By mid-month, a new Twitter poll for suggestions is posted for a new ONedSchat and we would start the process again.

## **Literature Review**

My Masters research paper explored the extent to which students felt that ONedSchat gave them voice and agency. It is thus important to define what is meant by student voice. Several studies in higher education have been conducted on student centred learning and the role of student voice. Blau and Shamir-Inbal (2017) examines the role of digital technologies on student voice in an online Master’s education course. They defined student voice as not just listening to students, but valuing their views and treating them as equal partners. They reported positive effects when students functioned as co-designers and co-creators of the course content and their own learning experience.

Lindgren and McDaniel defined student agency as providing choice in their learning (2012). They surveyed 96 graduate students in an online course and reported that increased student agency increased perceived relevance of course material, critical thinking and design skills (Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012).

Ahlquist (2015), who studied college level student leaders and their online interactions, noted that students, even if struggling with self-confidence, used social media as a vehicle to express their voice and opinions. Ahlquist recommended that adults working with students via social media ensure that students be included when creating policies and engaging in dialogue about social media use. They also observed that student leaders received interaction and



guidance from family, peers and their schools, which positively or negatively impacted their college social media behaviour.

Mitra (2018) identifies a hierarchy of student voice in the shape of a triangle with listening at the bottom, collaboration in the middle, and leadership on the top. Mitra defines collaboration as adults and youth working together, whereby adults initiate the relationship but ultimately have the final say in what happens. Collaboration is noted as better than listening whereby students share and adults interpret the information. Mitra (2018) places leadership at the top of the student voice pyramid. In leadership, students make decisions while the adults assist. She clarifies that most examples exist outside of school, but that there is greater benefit to youth and adults alike, if this model was assumed in school transformation. The more students “can assume agency in the initiatives, the more opportunities they have to learn and to grow” (Mitra, 2018, p. 474). For the purpose of this paper, student voice and agency refer to students taking an active role in their own learning by being co-designers in their learning and using their opinions to inspire others or impact change.

### **Results: Student Voice and Agency**

In order to explore the question, *How might a contextual approach (ONedSschat) amplify student voice and agency*, I examined YouTube Live webinars, student tweets, interviewed the two teacher mentors and one student lead. I also looked at the project hashtag, which led me to additional teacher and student perspectives. Three main themes emerged as I listened, read, and viewed the data: students developed confidence in expressing their views, students felt that they were co-designers in their learning, and students felt that they could use their voice to inspire others or impact change.

## YouTube Live Webinars

The YouTube Live webinars exemplified student team members developing confidence, taking an active role in the direction of the conversation, and using their opinions to inspire change. The more frequently the students participated as panelists in our online Tweet and Talk YouTube Live webinars and the longer they were part of ONedSsChat, the more confident they were in expressing their opinions. This was evident when watching the first YouTube Live event, compared to a middle panel and most recent discussions.

In the first Tweet and Talk in October 2017, for example, Seth, one of the founding ONedSsChat student leads who was in grade 7 at the time, had to be prodded several times by the adult moderator. When he did respond, it was with an, “Um, ya” followed by an incomplete sentence. Seth was prompted five times by the moderator and each time, there was a clear hesitancy in what he said and his body language. He did not look into the camera and appeared to be extremely uncomfortable. The other two male students, one in grade nine and one in grade 11, did not volunteer to respond and required adult prompting as well. Of the three female participants in the first Tweet and Talk, Lisa (grade 11), was by far the most confident, and because of this, most of the other students let her do most of the speaking while they nodded in agreement. During the first Tweet and Talk YouTube Live panel discussion on October 17th, the teacher-moderator literally said, “I am going to have to call on someone because there is a moment of silence here.” In December 2018, students demonstrated greater confidence and participated more frequently. They no longer let one person lead the conversation, but rather would build on the ideas shared by others.

Some of the topics lent themselves to students being more forthright with their opinions. The more personal the topic, the more they shared of themselves publicly and the more there was

a sense that they were using their voice to inspire others. By the fourth panel discussion, there was a shift from students solely expressing their own opinions to expressing their opinions to inspire others.

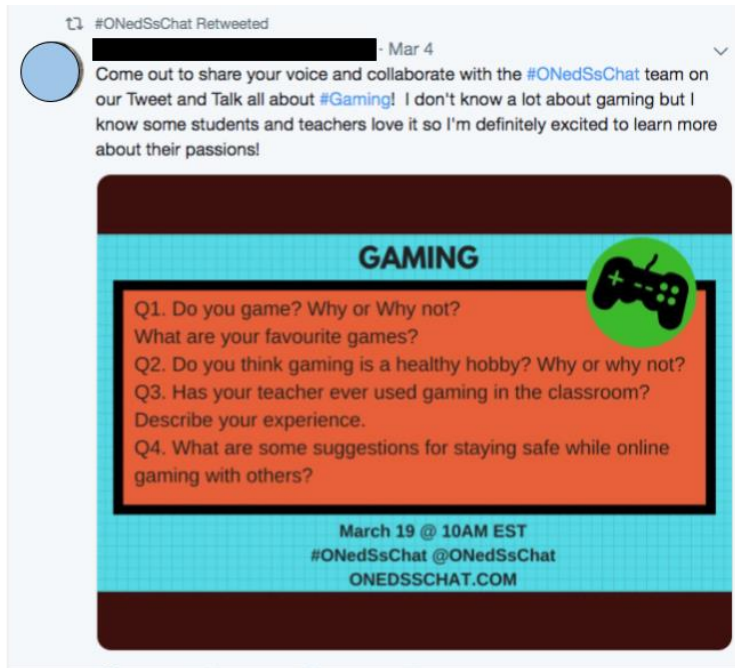
This shift could be seen in several of the Tweet and Talks but especially in the *Pay it Forward* segment on January, 2019. Diana, stated, “We have the power to change someone’s feelings for the better”, then Rosie added, “When you make someone happy, it’s a chain reaction and you can make yourself happy”. Charlotte contributed to the conversation both in English and French, speaking to the importance of building a better world by engaging in acts of kindness. The topic of *Paying it Forward* allowed students on the team to share not just their opinions, but also nuggets of inspiration for the grade 3 students on the panel and the audience at large.

#### Tweets

By looking at student Tweets, I was able to see the extent to which students developed confidence in expressing their views, took an active role by being co-designers in their learning, and used their opinions to inspire others or impact change. Students who had more experience and mentorship in the ONedSschat, and who were members of ONedSschat, used Twitter to reach out to others, articulated ideas and inspired others more than students with less experience with greater frequency.

Students confidently tweeted out to others and experts. One student, Gabriel was confident enough to reach out to a political figure, asking him for help on a project, while Eric used Twitter several times to reach out to Law Enforcement officers. In Figure 1, Diana tweets out an invitation to other students to “share your voice and collaborate with the #ONedSsChat team” on the topic of gaming. What is further significant about this tweet is admission that she does not know a great deal about gaming, but believes she will learn much more by listening to

the perspective of others and thus the invitation for others to share their voices from which she can learn.



*Figure 1.* Share your voice re: Gaming

In other instances, students used Twitter to inspire others. In Figure 2, Adam wishes good luck to other grade 10 students writing the OSSLT, using the phrase, “You’ve got this”, adding a smiling happy face GIF and including the provincial hashtag for Ontario, #onted, to have a broader impact.

Good luck to all other Grade 10 students writing the #OSSLT today! You've got this! #onted

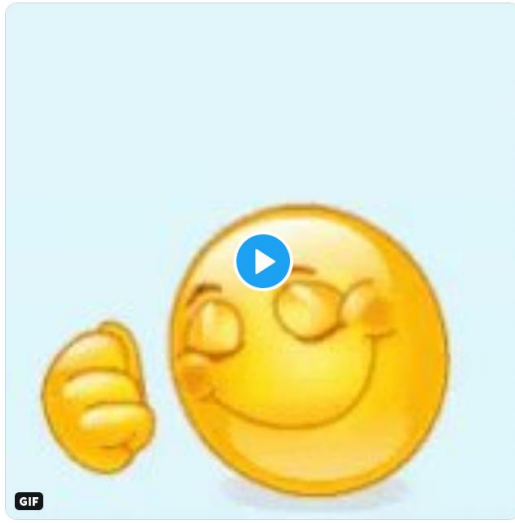


Figure 2. OSSLT encouragement

In Figure 3 Charlotte responds to one of the ONedSschat question prompts with the notion that we have the potential to inspire others who might need a little bit of “sunshine in their lives”.

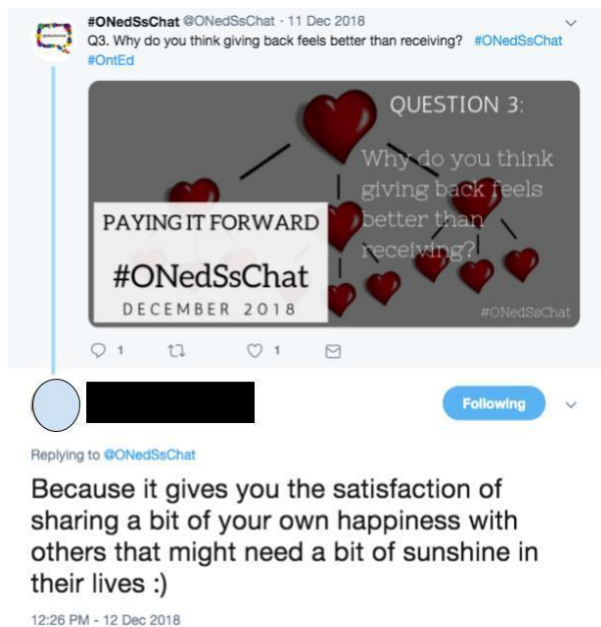


Figure 3. Inspire others

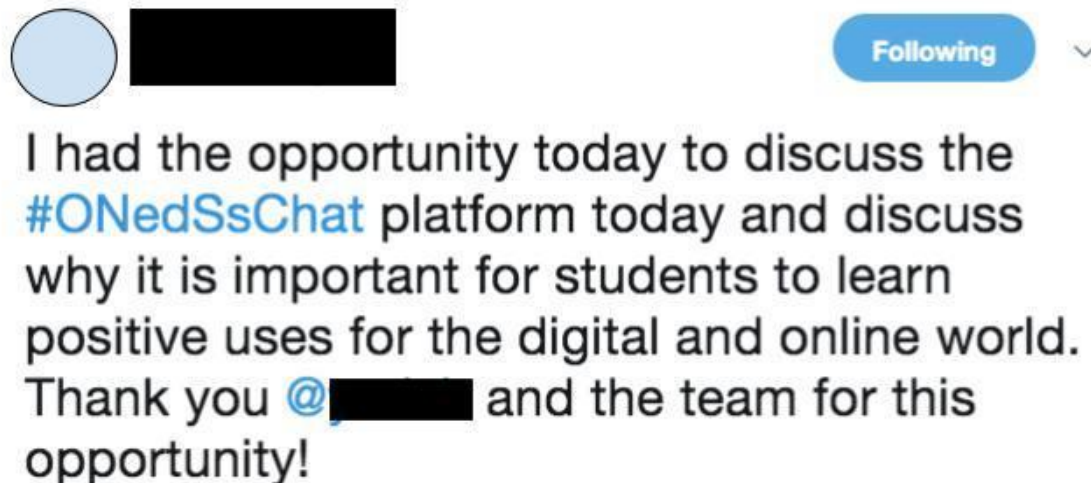
In the same chat, Diana shared via a Tweet, “Little things are so important and can change someone’s day! If you want to pay it forward help someone, smile at someone and give compliments.” In this response, she shares an opinion, but also two ideas for helping to make someone’s day brighter.

In the case of one student, she actually responded to the impact of sharing her voice with others very explicitly. Rosie shared, on Twitter, how she believed ONedSsChat amplified her voice (Figure 4). She expresses that it was a teacher who believed in her voice and who asked her to become a student leader for ONedSsChat. Rosie added how amazing and what an honour it is for her to be able share her voice with other teachers and students.



*Figure 4: Student voice reflection*

In another example, Eric indicated on Twitter that ONedSschat provided him with an opportunity to speak at a conference. In Figure 5, Eric articulated that he was grateful to ONedSschat for the opportunity to discuss the positive uses of social media with a wider audience. His tweet exemplifies confidence in sharing his voice in person as well as online as he thanks the organizers of a district-wide event for the opportunity to share his opinions and ideas.



*Figure 5.* Discussing ONedSschat

The students unanimously felt that the YouTube live platform allowed them to amplify their voices more powerfully than Twitter alone. Emily, reflects on a podcast that ONedSschat is important to her in terms of allowing her to share her voice with other students and gaining the perspective of others. Charlotte, another grade 12 student, stated in a personal interview that she felt like she could articulate her opinions more effectively on Livestream YouTube panel than on Twitter.

Two students, Diana and Seth, took a more active role on Twitter, becoming co-designers, They were given the passwords to the official ONedSschat account so that they could post graphics for our Slow Chat (a Slow Chat is an invitation to respond to questions posed over time, rather than in a finite period of time which is typical of a Twitter chat). The topics selected for the tweets and the questions shared via Twitter were generated by the Diana and Seth themselves, so they saw themselves and their voices in multiple aspects of the Slow Chat experience.

There is also evidence to suggest that students believed they have a responsibility to teach others. This could be seen when Diana's tweet informed students about the importance of detecting fake news during our Media Literacy Tweet and Talk (Figure 6)

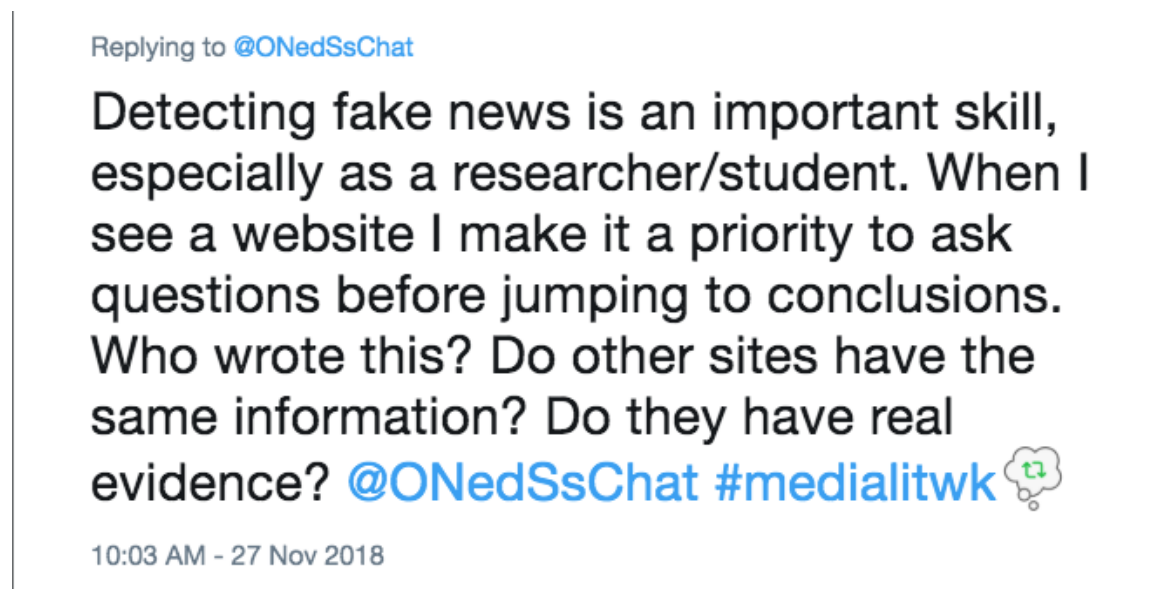


Figure 6 - Fake news

Twitter was viewed as a place for connecting with others and building community by some students in ONedSschat. Eric was the most explicit about his view on Twitter. In a tweet replying to a community services officer (Figure 7), he shared that he thought police agencies should use Twitter to connect with their communities, share important information, spread details about safety events and humanizing police officers.





Figure 7 - Value of Twitter

He further added that Twitter is a great way to connect to network and learn firsthand from people in their chosen career (Figure 8). He even adds how lucky he felt to connect with the officer via social media.



Figure 8- Twitter to connect

### **Amplifying the Voice of Guests and Participants**

There were several layers to students sharing their perspectives. Students on the ONedSchat team created questions and discussed them on panel, but other students were also invited to be guest panelists, while any student could also participate with their classes. Several tweets shared by adults and classes to the #ONedSchat hashtag demonstrated the extent to which student voice went beyond just the ONedSchat team.

In Figure 6 an educator learning about ONedSchat shared, “this IS what amplifying Ss voice is all about - a platform for Ss to build a positive social online presence where they network, learn, develop understanding, confidence.” She expressed her excitement by including

the hashtag, “#micdropmoment”. The tweet is in response to the fact that a few students presented an overview of ONedSsChat at a Digital Citizenship conference and exhibited confidence as they spoke about their perceived benefits of ONedSsChat.



Figure 6. Sample of Chat providing student voice

Student voice was also amplified for student guest panelists and students participating with their classes. Both Figures 7 and 8 show examples of how students shared their opinions and perspectives by being participants and panelists. In Figure 7, a school district invited students to share their voices by tweeting, “We are looking forward to hearing our students’ voices for the final #ONedSsChat of the year.” This tweet refers to fact that students from the District were going to be guest panelists, which is another avenue for students who are not on the team to share their ideas and perspectives.



Figure 7: Invitation for student voices

Another tweet invites other students from the district to share their voices on the important topic of body image. Figure 8 showcases just one example of what class participation looks like. The teacher chose to capture her students' voices and opinions on chart paper and tweet them out as images. Students in the teacher's class could see their ideas captured and published for the ONedSschat team, as well as for the public. Other teachers used a class account and captured their students' voices by using initials or first names.

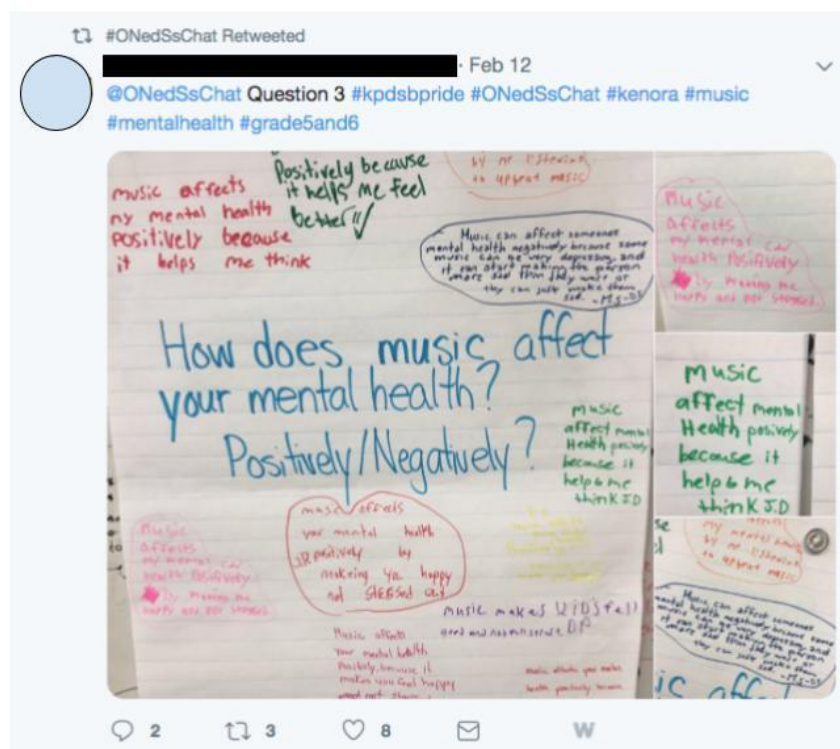


Figure 8: Students sharing their opinions

In Figure 9, a teacher, tweeting from a class account in response to question three on the topic of goal setting, indicated the first name of each student followed by his/her response. In instances where student participants were older, students used their respective accounts to respond to the questions. The multiple entry points for students to share their opinions and perspectives is what provides ample opportunity for students to share their voices with others.

**A3: Tristen says to not get distracted and to set goals that others think are good. Rachelle says don't give up if you don't succeed right away. Also, set a realistic goal!**

10:16 AM · Jan 15, 2019 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Figure 9. Student participation

The extent to which students really did inspire others could also be seen by looking at the #ONedSschat hashtag. As an example (Figure 10), one teacher commented that if it was not for the ONedSschat, his students would not have delved more deeply into the UN's Sustainable Development goals.

**My Ss and I last year would likely not have gone into an in-depth discussion about the UN's 17 Sustainable Goals had it not been for the fact that it was a scheduled @ONedSsChat, which was an engaging way for them to consider their global impact.**

*Figure 10- Sustainable development goals*

### Teacher Perspectives

The other two teacher-mentors and I intentionally encouraged students to use their voices and become co-creators of the ONedSschat process. The monthly procedure for the chat demonstrates the extent to which students were involved in the process:

1. Students, both on our team and beyond, are invited to generate and vote for discussion topics by adding them to our Dotstorming board (a collaborative digital bulletin board).
2. Students on our team and beyond are invited to vote for their favourite topic, which is posted as a Twitter poll in our Twitter feed (the poll lasts 5 days).
3. ONedSsChat Student leads then generate the questions we discuss each month during our monthly team meeting - we brainstorm questions, colour code the questions we feel will generate the most conversation, discuss our differences of opinion, and build consensus. Student Leads take turns designing the chat question graphics we use each month.

Teacher-mentor 1 reflected on our monthly procedures as an opportunity to allow students to discuss topics of interest to them. She commented, “ONedSsChat has created a space for students throughout Ontario to share their voices with one another and discuss topics that are important to them”. She added that each month there is an opportunity for students from across the province or from around the world to share their perspectives and opinions as guest panelists. In a podcast, one of the teacher mentors cites ONedSsChat as an opportunity for students to share their voices, which provide “opportunities for collaboration and bringing their voices to the table for educators to rethink what we are doing in the classroom” (Casa-Todd, June, 2019). She also shared that ONedSschat was an opportunity to see each other from across the province, the country, and in some cases the world. In the #ONedMentors podcast (Daniel, 2019), the host shared that, as a teacher participant and onlooker, she found it fascinating to see how ONedSschat allowed for students to “engage with and add a layer to the conversation” (Daniel, 2019). The depth of the conversation to which the host referred, could be seen primarily in the Tweet and Talks.

Another area where we saw students increasingly develop agency and use their voices more confidently was in creating questions to be used for the Tweet and Talks. This is an area where students were initially given a great deal of support by the teacher-mentors and gradually the support was not needed as students got better and better at asking questions. The procedure consisted of students adding questions to a word document, with the teacher-mentors prodding and prompting so that the questions would be rich enough to elicit discussion. After students engaged in the process for about four meetings, they were able to create questions that were more open ended. The process of creating questions for a topic also took less and less time, as students became more experienced. By May of 2019, it took us half the time to create questions

and therefore some of our meeting time was dedicated to completing other tasks such as scheduling tweets.

Teacher-mentor 2, in a personal interview, agreed that students had both the autonomy and agency to direct the chat by creating questions and share their opinions, but also challenged the idea that students had complete autonomy. He said,

Student leaders had input and final say on most decisions, particularly when it came to topics of discussion, chat questions, and promotional materials explaining the chat and recruiting partners. Students had less voice/agency over organisational/structural decisions (input but less agency on code of conduct, meeting organisation, etc.).

Interestingly, none of the students mentioned that they did not have agency over their own learning at all.

#### Student perspectives

The student interviewed, as well as students who reflected on podcasts, felt that sharing their voice and perspective were a major advantage to being a part of the ONedSschat team. The student lead interviewed commented that, “the chat does a wonderful job at providing all students a way to express themselves and form well-thought opinions”. She also stated that she was able to contribute ideas and opinions when developing monthly topics and creating questions and that she felt she was an active member during monthly meetings. These comments showed that she believed herself to be a co-designer in the process.

Emily, a student who reflected in the podcasts, shared how much she valued the experience of sharing her opinions on topics which she found important. She said that she appreciated the experience of being a student panelist so much that she asked to be on the team. This level of appreciations was true for Gabriel as well, as he was first a guest panelist, and then asked if he could join the team. Emily added a comment about the extent to which she was

hesitant to come into ONedSschat because she did not know what to expect, but noted that, “Chat has become a safe space for me” (Daniel, 2019). She cites the reason for this is that she felt supported, but so too because she was able to learn from others and realize that her perspective matters but so do those of others. The results suggest that, on many levels, ONedSschat created an opportunity for increased student voice and agency.

## **Discussion**

In student interviews and reflections, the following themes came out in terms of the impact of the chat:

- Sharing that they felt like the chat was “bigger” than themselves.
- Recognizing that the power of the chat is gaining the perspective of others (experts, guest panelists, other team members).
- Being able to network and communicate with other students in the world.
- Foster leadership skills in themselves and inspire leadership in others.

The YouTube Live panel was the key vehicle for students to share their voices and perspectives. Each student interviewed on a podcast or in person felt that the experience of sharing their views on topics of their choosing was the most memorable and powerful aspect of being involved in ONedSschat. This reinforces Dana Mitra’s (2018) stance that educational contexts can be transformed when students assume agency in initiatives and when their opinions are not just listened to but valued.

Students and teacher-mentors commented that topics and questions were student-created. In a podcast, Rosie shared that student leaders used a “doodle poll” to elicit topics that students would like to vote on to talk about and Charlotte stated that students had complete choice and



shared in the various responsibilities. Whenever a student spoke of ONedSchat, it was from a “we” perspective; giving a sense of ownership of the process. Blau & Shamir-Inbal (2017) found positive effects on Masters level students when they functioned as co-designers of course content and became co-creators of their teaching learning experience. So too do the results point that students on the ONedSchat team, as young as grade 7, felt like they were co-creators of their own learning, and took on more and more responsibility because felt they had ownership of the project. These results are consistent with a study conducted by Lindgren & McDaniel (2012) who reported that increased student agency resulted in greater perceived relevance of course material, critical thinking and design skills.

All the students who shared their perspectives (interview, podcasts, conferences) said they felt confident in using their voices, but it is evident that not all students used Twitter as a way to amplify their voices as much as they did during the live panel discussions on YouTube Live. In fact, the actual interactions on Twitter for the majority of the student team did not match students’ thoughts and feelings about the power of their voices. This finding reinforces some studies noting the limitations of using Twitter (Gunuc, Misirli, & Obadasi, 2013; Deaves et al., 2019) and merits further investigation as to the actual reason for the discrepancy. Overall, however, the various narratives support that ONedSchat enhanced student voice in action.

## **Educational Implications for Teacher Librarian**

### **Fear Narrative**

The results of this study show that rather than a fearful experience, social media can be used in an educational context quite positively. Fear of inappropriate social media use and specifically of cyberbullying is often a barrier to using social media in school (Teague, 2015;

Jenkins, Ito, and boyd, 2016; Jenkins, 2017). Jones & Mitchell (2016) advocated that cyberbullying and sexting should be replaced by helping youth practice online social skills. The results of this study show the extent to which students believe social media is not just a place to “mess around with their friends” as pointed out by Rosie, but, when used in the context of teaching and learning, can be a powerful mechanism for authentic and relevant experiences to practice meaning-making, and learn digital citizenship (Couros & Hildebrant, 2015; Gleason & Heath, 2019; Gleason & Gillern, 2018).

### **Increased Voice and Ownership**

Increased student voice in an educational setting can help students feel greater ownership towards their learning. The results suggest that ONedSschat engaged students beyond collaborators and were equal partners in co-designing their own learning experience (Blau & Shamir-Inbal, 2017). In student reflections students identified ownership for topics and questions created for ONedSschat. They spoke of the topics as ones which were of interest to them and which would be of interest to other students. This sense of ownership was translated into one student suggesting a Twitter bot, two or three students reaching out to other students and/or adults to help them, and many of the students feeling like they could be positive role models to others. This is consistent with Dana Mitra’s (2018) study of secondary students which links student leadership and student agency to educational transformation. The results also point to the fact that students on the ONedSschat team, as young as grade 7, felt like they were co-creators of their own learning, and took on more and more responsibility because felt they had ownership of the project.

## **Twitter for Communication and Community Building**

Twitter in collaboration with YouTube Live provide an effective combination for communication and learning with other students beyond the classroom walls. Twitter seemed less a platform for communicating and community building than the live panel discussions through YouTube Live. This was evident when one considers that students spoke about ONedSchat in terms of it being a “safe space” and a place of community, asserting how much they enjoyed being a part of the team, but primarily used their Twitter account to tweet or retweet information about the chat. Even the most prolific students in terms of digital literacy skills (created Chat Hack videos, participated in several podcasts and engaged in conference presentation opportunities), did not use Twitter to create community or communicate deeply. Although Gao and Li (2017) found that a one-hour Twitter chat for teacher professional development created a positive community where educators discussed topics and issues to support their learning (2017), the results in this study indicate that a combination of YouTube Live and Twitter is more effective for both learning and community building. These results are consistent with Lao & Herrom (2017) who note that YouTube Live stream can create community especially if comments are read during the event using participants’ names so as to create a connection between viewers and participants, minimizing the digital separation that naturally exists.

## **Participatory Affinity Space Elements**

The elements of participatory culture and affinity spaces provide many benefits for students and should be incorporated into teaching and learning. Traditional educational settings do not naturally create participatory cultures or affinity spaces. Specifically, students are not in

classrooms by choice, neither are they in multi-aged classrooms with people with whom they share a common interest (Gee, 2013). In many cases, in a traditional classroom setting, there is a focus on “knowing” rather than “knowing and doing” (Gee, 2013, p. 175). Adding multi-grade collaboration and moving towards a model where students actively participate in an online chat, for example would be of benefit.

## Concluding Thoughts

It can be concluded, based on student tweets, archived webinars, interviews with two adult mentors and one student team member, as well as podcasts, tweets, and webinars which were publicly available via the #ONedSchat hashtag, that with few exceptions, students involved in ONedSchat for a year or more, believed that their voices mattered. Despite a reluctance to include social media into K-12 educational contexts, it would seem that using a contextual approach such as has positive benefits.

Further research would be needed to see if an approach like ONedSchat made a positive impact only because students were already leaders in their school communities, or if elements of the chat itself: autonomy and voice, scaffolded digital literacy and citizenship skill-building would also be noticeable if students were not leaders offline.

Rosie, in a podcast interview, stated the following when asked about her favourite part of being a part of ONedSchat: “I love watching this chat grow from a tiny little baby growing up to a toddler. I feel like it’s hitting childhood age. It’s so wonderful and cool to me” (Daniel, 2019). The growth she has experienced is that which I use the narrative inquiry methodology to see how the story unfolds.

A teacher, and host of the #ONedMentor podcast, spoke about how excited her grade 6 students were to participate in ONedSchat. She shared that students so seldomly recognize the power of using social media in the context of learning. She eloquently expanded upon what she meant by power:

*Power in weighing in.  
Power in engagement.  
Power in learning from, with, and around each other (Daniel, 2019)*

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