TEACHER STORY GUIDE

What Would Make It Easier to Take Part?

Inspired by Helen Villanueva Vargas, director of Liceo Rural Roca Quemada in Alto Chirripó, Costa Rica.

Before you begin: Consult the appropriate school or district department, secure required approvals, follow school policy, and protect student privacy.

Learning goals

Identify one barrier to a specific activity and propose a change the school can make. Use participation counts and voluntary feedback to decide whether to keep the change.

Context

Villanueva Vargas worked with school staff, students, families, community members, public institutions and partner organizations to connect transportation, lodging and child care with access to secondary school. One student especially valued having days when she could rest instead of repeating the long walk. Her account invites a question that attendance alone cannot answer: What did taking part cost the learner in time or effort?

Suggested adaptation

Editorial suggestion, not the educator's own process: Choose one opportunity, such as an after-school lab. Invite learners to help redesign one detail, such as when the lab is offered. This short trial is a classroom adaptation of the story.

Resources

Activity schedule and tally sheet (required): Record the session, time offered and number attending. Leave out names.

Slips and an envelope (optional): Offer a private way to suggest a change.

Preparation

Choose an activity you can offer twice. Confirm which details you have authority to change and who can help. Invite input from everyone eligible, including learners who missed the last session.

Time and cost (estimates)

Estimate: 15 minutes to plan, 10 minutes for learner input and 10 minutes to review after the trial.

Estimate: $0 using existing supplies, space and staff time.

Implementation steps

1. Describe the opportunity in plain language. Ask: "What would make it easier to take part?" A suggestion is enough. Personal explanations are optional.

2. Share two feasible options. Invite learners to choose or suggest another. Check who might lose access with each option.

3. Try one agreed change. For example, add a lunchtime lab alongside the usual session. Tell everyone eligible how to join.

4. Count participation and ask privately: "What became easier? What is still difficult?" Share what you heard and what you will try next.

Accessibility supports

Offer spoken, written, translated or picture-based responses. Allow learners to pass. Keep feedback open during the school day so learners who miss the activity can still shape it.

Low-tech alternatives

Read the options aloud. Invite a mark beside a printed option or a private conversation.

Assessment

Compare counts for comparable sessions. If you add a session, record each count separately because one learner may attend both. Pair the counts with one reported benefit and one remaining barrier. A single trial cannot establish a lasting effect.

Reflection

Did the change give anyone time back? Whose experience is still missing?

Variations

For learners who prefer concrete choices, use picture cards showing two times or places. For a student council, invite representatives to present the tradeoffs to staff.

Optional AI planning prompts

Copy, fill in the bracketed parts, and always review the output yourself.

AI is optional. These prompts help you plan; they do not describe how the featured educator worked. Review every output for accuracy, bias, and fit with school policy before using it with students.

1 Plan a trial

Suggest two ways to adjust [ACTIVITY] within [TIME AND STAFF LIMITS]. Identify a tradeoff for each.

Teacher check: Verify feasibility with staff and ask learners which option helps.

2 Make a response slip

Write a two-question feedback slip for [AGE GROUP] in [LANGUAGE]. Ask about access without requesting personal details.

Teacher check: Review language, reading level and privacy before use.

3 Interpret the trial

Using [AGGREGATE COUNTS] and [NONIDENTIFYING THEMES], summarize what changed and suggest one follow-up question.

Teacher check: Use only approved, nonidentifying information. Verify the summary and remove unsupported causal claims.

Optional reference: advanced requirements

Route proposals involving transport, lodging or child care to the responsible department for safeguarding, staffing and budget review.

Credits

The work brings together Helen Villanueva Vargas, the school’s teaching and administrative staff, students, families, the community, public institutions and partner organizations. Costa Rica’s Ministry of Public Education documented the project. Teletica reported the student’s account of rest. The trial and optional AI prompts are Champions of Learning editorial adaptations.

Source links

Ministry project profile, May 6, 2026 (Spanish)

Teletica student account, May 6, 2026 (Spanish)