Participatory Pedagogy in Practice: Using effective participatory pedagogy in classroom practice to enhance pupil voice and educational engagement

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2018

Global Learning Programme Innovation Fund Research Series Paper 5
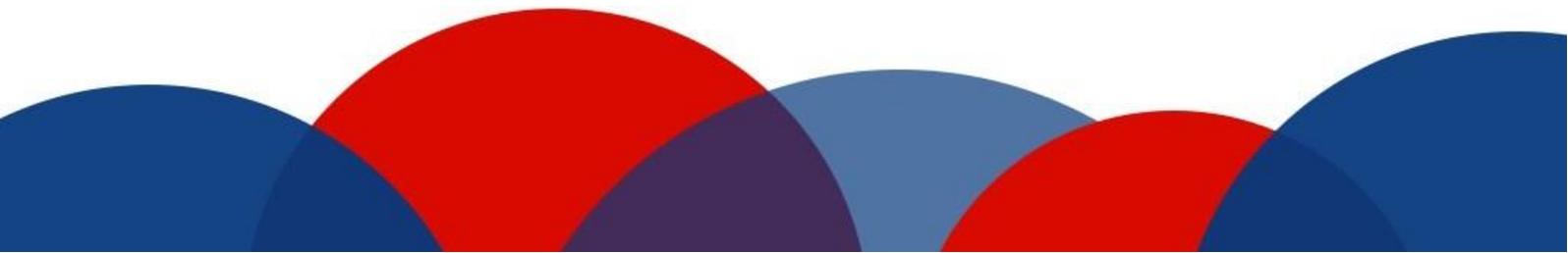
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Using effective participatory pedagogy in classroom practice to enhance pupil voice and educational engagement

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Disclaimer: This paper is written by Jen Simpson, and all content and opinions are hers alone. The author does not speak on behalf of the GLP and its consortium partners.

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1   Introduction

The UK Government requires all schools in England to promote 'Fundamental British Values'. These include democracy, and as Hart (1992) states: '*A nation is democratic to the extent that its citizens are involved*'. My research questions how 'involved' pupils are within schools and how democratic our schools are. Recent findings from Robinson (2014) found that pupil participation in schools is not as effective as believed. Hart (1992) developed a Ladder of Participation to illustrate the levels of participation and non-participation of young people in schools. This has been used for developing and enhancing the work of school councils for many years, though arguably much of the work can still remain around the lower, tokenistic or 'consultation' levels. My research aims to explore pupil participation and voice within the classroom, and within teaching itself.

Education has the potential to be socially transformative when that education system actively recognises and engages the learners as agents for their own learning. James and Pollard (2011) argue that pedagogy could influence social aspects such as increased social justice or economic prosperity. Further to that I would argue that engaging in a transformative, 'participatory' pedagogy utilises critical, creative and collaborative thinking to greater effect, enabling learners to become 'transformers of their world' (Freire, 1968, cited in Robinson & Taylor, 2007: 12).

Through this research I have been able to develop a Participatory Pedagogy Framework based on Hart's 'Ladder of Participation' (1992) and, by incorporating the work of Florian and Linklater (2010), adapt it for use within general classroom practice as an approach to developing pupil voice and engagement in learning.

My paper will endeavour to outline the key aspects of the theory around the development of my Participatory Pedagogy Framework and the initial outcomes from a small-scale action research project exploring the educational effectiveness and practicality of employing the framework in a primary classroom.

The action research focused on four overarching questions answered throughout the paper:

1. What is participatory pedagogy and how does it relate to pupil voice?
2. How can participatory pedagogy be integrated into primary classroom practice and what is the impact?
3. How does the use of participatory pedagogy affect engagement and enjoyment for staff and pupils in a primary school?
4. How does the use of participatory pedagogy impact on pupil voice in a primary school?

2   Literature review

2.1   What is pedagogy?

> It is through pedagogies that education gets done (Lingard, 2007 cited in Hattam & Zipin, 2009: 297).

Pedagogy can be simply described as the 'art or science of teaching' (Alexander, 2004: 13), the 'how' of teaching as opposed to the 'what'. For many though, this definition can be too simplistic and omits some of the important elements and skill of pedagogy.

Pedagogy is seen as having two faces – one focused on the practical concerns of the 'forms and methods of teaching' (Ferretti, 2013 cited in Bourn, 2014: 8) or the actual act of teaching (Alexander, 2004), while the other is concerned with the conceptual meaning or theory about 'children's learning, teaching, curriculum and culture' (Alexander, 2004: 7–8). Educators on continental Europe take this further to define pedagogy as more than the practice and techniques of teaching, referring also to theories of children, and of learning that underpins practice (Husbands & Pearce, 2012). This is something that Alexander argues does not

happen enough or actively within education in England, where the focus is far more on learning. As he states it is 'difficult for teachers to talk about teaching, they prefer to talk about learning' (Alexander, 2004: 9). I might argue that this is due to the watering down of teaching into 'best practice' or basic 'how to' guides prevalent in previous years. Additionally, the educational climate of 'accountability' within England and the focus on the outcomes of the learning such as SAT (statutory assessments) scores negates the need to really discuss concepts behind the approaches and techniques used in the classroom or explore different approaches and alternative outcomes that are not specifically tested. Also, Alexander (2004: 11) considers that pedagogy has been made 'subsidiary to curriculum' suggesting that 'what' is taught has been seen as more important than 'how'. In that case, I think, the constant changes of curriculum over the past decade or so have restricted educators' opportunities to truly consider pedagogy and fully engage in educational discourse around pedagogy. In fact, it can be argued that the very act of problematising or exploring pedagogy has the potential to improve teaching and learning as a whole, and I would propose that many teachers are now ready for this.

I agree with James and Pollard (2011) that teaching must be considered alongside an understanding of how learners learn, and I would go further to argue that a critical consideration of the curriculum, its purpose both educationally and societally, is also important. There is a balance to be found for practising teachers in thoughtful selection of subject knowledge and curriculum, knowledge of methodologies and practices to engage learning, as well as knowledge of the children themselves and their own development. This last could be seen as more significant and occasionally overlooked even though 'pedagogy is about being in a relationship with a child' (Van Manen 1991, cited in Husbands & Pearce, 2012: 4). Recognition of the importance of informal learning as well as formal learning and valuing what a child brings into the classroom with them, 'their language, histories, experiences and voices' (Giroux, 1999b, cited in Robinson & Taylor, 2007: 11) should also be considered an essential element of effective pedagogy.

There are some potential tensions in the above discourse in that there is an expectation on requirements for effective pedagogy to include 'behaviour (what teachers do), knowledge and understanding (what teachers know) and beliefs (why teachers act as they do)' (Husbands & Pearce, 2012: 5). Teachers are expected to weigh up these aspects and then 'select, plan and deploy' the appropriate pedagogies to teach successfully (Stronge et al, 2007 cited in Husbands & Pearce, 2012; 9). However, Alexander (2004) highlights the danger of treating teachers as technicians who merely select and use educational materials designed and created by others, the 'how to' guides mentioned previously, without critical reflection or discourse. Young (2003: 554) argues that the 'curriculum was conceptualised as a selection of knowledge that reflects the interests of those with power' and it is true that there is significant cultural capital and politically-selected knowledge involved in the decisions around schooling in England. This poses a danger to our learners unless approached critically, reflectively and with an understanding of these influences by both educators and learners.

With that in mind, effective pedagogy does have the potential for broader outcomes beyond the classroom. Educational philosophers such as Freire and Dewey viewed education as having the potential to be socially transformative when that education system actively recognises and engages the learners as agents for their own learning. James and Pollard (2011) argue that pedagogy could influence social aspects such as increased social justice or economic prosperity, though I would argue that by engaging in transformative, 'participatory' pedagogy as suggested by Freire it utilises critical, creative and collaborative thinking to greater effect, enabling learners to become 'transformers of their world' (Robinson & Taylor, 2007: 12).

2.2 Participation and pupil voice

> *Teachers are powerless without the participation of the learner (Hart et al, 2004 cited in Husband & Pearce, 2012: 11).*

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that every child has a right to participation: 'a right to express their views, to be heard and to take part in decisions that affect them' (Robinson & Taylor, 2007: 5). The majority of decisions made in schools do affect the pupils, not just those made within the school council or governing boards but everyday decisions made in classrooms. Hulme et al (2011) found that much of classroom participatory practice involved group work and emphasis on working co-operatively. However, the tasks pupils were working on continued to be dictated by the teacher and framed around the curriculum input and output requirements, which I would contend is not true participation.

Even if we consider the school council as a form of pupil participation it is common that in many schools the council do not discuss issues around teaching and learning, rather they can become vehicles to process student complaints, 'consult' on issues and plan fundraising campaigns (Whitty & Wisby, 2007). I would call this 'surface participation', being more decorative or limited to consultation and activity outside the classroom, so as to avoid impacting on 'what really matters', like teaching and learning.

In reality, efforts by teachers to include pupils through attempting more tokenistic or contrived forms of participation, predominately consultation, can result in inadvertently producing negative learning attitudes towards adults 'increasing rather than redirecting disaffection and disengagement' (Hulme et al, 2011: 5). The important element of participation is not simply the gathering of pupils' views and listening to them, it is what impact those views have and what happens to them. Consultation as participation indicates a school that means well and has good intentions towards the pupils. However, if participation goes no further 'up the ladder' towards pupil-initiated action, the impact of the process is minimal. It might be argued that schools make these decisions with the pupils' best interests in mind but I agree with Robinson (2014: 13) that we need to 'make a deliberate move away from these "best interests" debates and decisions in relation to teaching being based only on adults' perspectives, rather than being informed and guided by the opinions and perspectives of children themselves'. For some, deeper participation could be as simple as taking part in learning activities, being active with their thinking, or collaborating with others. Examples of these could be pedagogies or participatory learning techniques such as diamond-nines, role play, or simulation games to name a few. These techniques have been used within global learning for many years and have excellent pedagogical benefits. If used effectively they can have a great impact on learning in a number of ways, however, I question whether this is the participation that Hart (1992) envisioned when designing his ladder of participation or whether it is still teacher-directed, collaborative work with pre-destined learning outcome.

Pupil voice is linked to pupil participation in that through the active listening of pupils' views it has the potential for pupils to participate in the improvement of their school experience. While schools recognise and value the opinions of pupils, the impact of pupil voice may not be so positive, and may be rife with hidden adverse outcomes. In the words of Fielding (2006), 'the initial optimism that it [pupil voice] would challenge fundamental injustices has not been realized' (cited in Robinson and Taylor, 2007; 7). There is a question as to whether schools are really ready to listen and more importantly act on pupils' ideas and comments. Robinson and Taylor (2007: 14) suggest that schools have tended to 'listen to pupils for accountability rather than a genuine interests in the views of the pupils'. If schools approach pupil voice with perceived outcomes to be improving academic achievement or school standards they are in danger of entirely missing the potential of pupil voice as a means of developing personal and social growth as well as de-valuing the process as a whole.

The perception of 'the child' is very significant here, as within education pupils are often perceived as 'inadequately socialised future adults' (Janus & Prout, cited in Rudduck &

Demetriou, 2003: 285) with the resulting view that pupils have yet to 'become' actors in their own right with the capacity to make their own choices correctly about significant aspects of their own learning. This adultism has been suggested as similar to sexism or racism in that the ideology justifies and maintains the oppression of this group whereby the judgements and treatment of the group is justified solely on the grounds of age.

The real challenge with adultism is the fact that everyone has experienced it at varying degrees and therefore it has been normalised into part of the human experience and thus continues unquestioned (Bell, 1995 cited in Haynes, 2015). We, not just educators but society as a whole, need to 'rethink the child, not as an ignorant being, but as a rational agent' (Matthews, 1980 cited in Haynes, 2015: 129). As well as the potential adultism in schools, there is also the potential for teachers to view 'young people as adversaries to be managed' (Cook-Sather, 2007: 391).This process of learning to unlearn an experienced stereotype would be the first step towards success in effective pupil participation, though I recognise that it is also a very big step.

Another controversial aspect of pupil voice is the term itself, in that it can imply 'single voice' for an entire pupil group regardless of their individual experiences and perspectives that influence their opinions and outlook. By ignoring or generalising these diverse views, educators are in danger of listening only to those who they wish to hear, those they agree with or find more palatable, and avoiding listening to those they find offensive or disagreeable and 'to those voices we do not know how to hear' (Bragg, 2001 cited in Cook-Sather, 2007: 394). Thus they reinforce the hierarchies of the school and wider school community.

If we accept that schools are fundamentally undemocratic structures where opportunities for real involvement or participation are rare, then how does this influence or reflect on the society we live in and want to live in? If we instead, uphold the notion of a just and democratic form of schooling, it may lead to a more just and free society: an ultimate goal which both Dewey and Freire believed achievable through education. This is a tall order and methods for achieving this have been discussed and muted before, and the issues around it are complex (especially in relation to a small research project such as this).

Without an over-arching participatory ethos within the school, any strategies that aim to meet the pupil participation 'agenda' are unlikely to work effectively or sustainably. Essentially, perceptions must be changed so that pupils are 'viewed as key stakeholders in the learning process in order to achieve a democratic education' (Ferguson, et al, 2011: 57). The importance of an equal partnership cannot be underplayed if we aim to create a democratically powerful education that is 'forged with, not for, the oppressed' (Freire 1968 cited in Robinson & Taylor, 2007: 13)

Schools may have adopted the format of Hart's Ladder for their 'surface participation' and that is indeed a positive step for pupil voice and participation, however, it is still restricted to the periphery of the school experience and avoids the core focus of classrooms and teaching. I propose a different approach to classroom pedagogy, bringing pupil participation from the edge to the centre through participatory pedagogy.

2.3   What is participatory pedagogy?

What is the 'ultimate goal' of education? For both Dewey and Freire it is 'to attain a socially just and democratic citizenry' (cited in Breuing, 2011: 13). This concern with a pedagogy for society, linking education and the wider social structure together, is at some odds to Alexander's (2004) more specific focus on the pedagogies of the classroom to improve learning for the individual. I would argue that this would depend on your expected 'learning' – whether it is a focus on SAT scores or whether it is about a broader social and personal development.

Participatory pedagogy is a theory of a pedagogical approach or environmental condition of democratic teaching that potentially represents the ideal of democratic society envisaged by

Freire and Dewey: engendering a shift of power, a revising of the hierarchy within schools and the notional view of 'the child'. Participatory pedagogy aims to promote the ideals of equity, equality and co-agency with the aim of modelling this effectively within our classrooms so that it reflects and spreads across the school community and wider society.

2.4 Challenges of introducing participatory pedagogy into the classroom

A major challenge in creating a classroom climate for participatory pedagogy is the existing mindset of the teacher involved: their educational philosophy and view of 'the child', which influences their pedagogical choices. In addition, the participatory pedagogy relationship between teacher and pupil also requires some recognition from pupils themselves of their own capacity to participate and their responsibility to engage seriously. The methods used for introducing the participatory pedagogy follow the 'learning to unlearn' process (Fook, 2006 cited in Simpson, 2016) to encourage a transformative shift in perception and approach and encourage teachers to 'critically evaluate their approaches to teaching and learning' (Hulme et al 2011: 16) this is further explained in the Research methods to follow.

Findings from research in Scottish schools by Hulme et al (2011: 24) found that to truly enhance pupil participation schools required strong 'participatory forms of leadership'. This is a salient point in that for any real, sustainable school change, the support and validation of senior leadership is key.

3   Research methods

This research is primarily concerned with a specific approach to teaching or, more specifically, changing the mindset of individual educators and influencing their subsequent choices of methodologies, practices and classroom management to engage learning.

The study uses qualitative research methods to investigate the potential of participatory pedagogy. It explores four research questions:

1. What is participatory pedagogy and how does it relate to pupil voice?
2. How can participatory pedagogy be integrated into the primary classroom practice and what is the impact?
3. How does the use of participatory pedagogy affect engagement and enjoyment for staff and pupils in a primary school?
4. How does the use of participatory pedagogy impact on pupil voice in a primary school?

In order to explore these questions I gathered baseline data via a Survey Monkey questionnaire for the teachers and an interview with a selection of pupils, followed by two training intervention sessions for the teachers. I ran two training CPD sessions:

- The first aimed to challenge perceptions of the teachers' own approach to pedagogy or educational philosophy and concept of democracy within the classroom. The session incorporated feedback from the pupil baseline interviews as part of the 'learning to unlearn' process.
- The second was to model the participatory pedagogy approach in practice, allowing time for the teachers to discuss their earlier CPD session, opportunities for subsequent reflection and exploring ways to move towards greater participation within their teaching approaches and classroom environment.

Within the limits of this small research study there was backing and endorsement by the head teacher allowing the class teachers some freedom to engage with the research activities. However, ultimately, this was a time-limited research project run in a busy school with many other commitments that could hinder a truly transformative experience. In addition, I would argue that any future trials would require involvement from the whole staff with a range of teaching experience to ensure momentum and support network to enhance confidence and creativity.

3.1 Participants

The focus for the research was on two Year 3 classes (ages 7–8) within a two-form entry, Ofsted Good School on Merseyside serving a mainly white, British community with low Pupil Premium, SEND and EAL numbers. The class teachers were both new to education: one NQT and a second-year teacher both in their first academic year within this school.

The pupils interviewed came from both Year 3 classes and included a mix of gender and ability. I had met them previously in class as school governor through my delivery of Philosophy for Children (P4C) for half a term, which may have influenced their openness to discuss the questions with me. The small sample size limits the ability to generalise on their comments which transfers similarly to the small number of teachers within the study.

3.2 Collection of qualitative data

I used various methods to collect data, including online questionnaires, interviews, transcribing meetings and teacher reflection journals. The initial data was mainly intended to inform the planning of the CPD sessions and the baseline of participatory activities within these two classrooms so that I could design appropriate extensions and suggested ideas for moving forwards. The reflection journals for the teachers were specifically designed to encourage the teachers themselves, as part of the research process, to reflect critically on their pedagogical choices, so that any changes came from reflection on their own practice and were internal not just external and therefore, arguably, more transformative.

Activities and data collection took place over a school term and are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Project activities and data collection

Activity	Date	Related data collection activity
Baseline – teachers (2 participants)	17–24 April 2017	Survey Monkey – gathering participants' initial understandings education, teaching, participation.
Baseline – pupil baseline interview (6 pupils)	26 April 2017	Dictaphone recording of dialogue and subsequent transcription. Comments used within teacher interventions
Teacher training – session 1	15 May 2017	Recorded session; teacher journals handed out.
Teacher training – session 2	22 May 2017	Recorded session
Follow-up teacher interview (2 participants)	Completed WB 17 July 2017	Dictaphone recording of dialogue and subsequent transcription.
Follow-up pupils' interview (6 pupils)	Completed WB 17 July 2017	Dictaphone recording of dialogue and subsequent transcription.

Copies of the two teacher training sessions outline plans can be found in Appendix 1a and 1b.

3.3 Data analysis

The interviews with pupils and training sessions with teachers were recorded and transcribed. The teachers were asked to keep a weekly 'reflection journal' on their activities and impact as well as encouraging pupils to reflect on their experiences. Analysis is related to the participatory pedagogy model for training and application. Tentative conclusions are drawn in the final section.

3.4 Ethical considerations

All participating teachers were made aware of the aims of the research and provided informed consent on the knowledge of their anonymity within this paper and have been labelled A and B for that purpose. The pupils have also been anonymised under labels A–F. In terms of confidentiality, the learning needs analysis was engineered to gather individual responses, without names to ensure privacy. Information on the use of the data and dialogue was provided at the baseline stage and at the training sessions. All electronic data has been stored on an encrypted external hard drive or secure server.

4 Analysis

4.1 'Learning to Unlearn' training model

Following from my previous GLP Innovation Fund research (Simpson, 2016) I opted to utilise the 'Learning to Unlearn' model of training based on a process of critical reflection as proposed by Fook (2006):

- Unsettling or unearthing of fundamental assumptions
- Potential for further reflection of assumptions
- Breakthrough connections are made/recognising the origins of assumptions
- Evaluating assumptions against current experience/experiences of others
- Old assumptions are reframed
- Changes within practice based on new/reconstructed understanding

These steps follow the pattern of deconstructing (unlearning) and then reconstructing knowledge or understanding. In this research, it was:

- Exploring fundamental assumptions on the concept of democracy, specifically democracy in schools.
- Unsettling those assumptions using comments from both their own pupils and educational academics.
- Reflecting on our assumptions and the realities within school/classroom.
- Considering the potential of new/different assumptions or ideals.
- Changing practice based on these new assumptions/ideals.

The training plans for the two sessions can be found in Appendix 1a and 1b. The associated resources in Appendix 4a and 4b.

4.2 Baseline evaluation and building context

The teachers were asked to complete an online Survey Monkey questionnaire, which was designed to elicit their understanding of the concepts of participation and pupil voice, as well as their current classroom practice, and the challenges and the successes they have encountered so early in their teaching careers.

The pupil interview was designed to focus on their learning, what helps or hinders as well as what they enjoy or find challenging within the classroom. They were also asked directly about participating and being listened to by staff at school.

The teachers responded to the question: 'What do you understand by the term "pupil participation" in classroom practice':

> *All children having the opportunity to contribute within class discussion, practical learning and written tasks (Teacher A).*

> *The children can communicate their views and opinions with the class and myself (Teacher B).*

On first reading these seem sound and concise descriptors of pupil participation with key words such as 'all children', 'contribute' and 'communicate' linking very well with the ideal of participatory practice. However, I note on further examination that both statements indicate the action of participation but not the impact of it. What happens with pupils' contributions? What happens with their views and opinions and are these on teaching and learning or issues outside the classroom? These examples could be argued to be 'surface participation'. This is further illustrated by the answers to the next question when they were asked about examples of pupil voice or participation in their own classroom:

> *We do circle time where the children discuss their day or what they have enjoyed doing over the weekend. … We have class votes to decide to ensure that we are showing pupil voice through democracy (Teacher B).*

> *I encourage collaborative learning and participation in class discussion during every lesson. E.g. discussing ideas in groups, asking their own questions to explore a topic further, working in partners, teaching their partner, teaching the class (Teacher A).*

The answers illustrate a disparity between the intention of pupil participation and the reality for teacher B. If pupils are encouraged to communicate or share their views it should be on more significant topics such as their own learning or experience at school. Teachers must also be prepared and should encourage pupils to:

> *Give their opinions and know that what they say will not be held against them, and they should not feel obliged to say what they think teachers want to hear (Robinson and Taylor, 2005: 15).*

Teacher A is more pedagogically focused in her response and covers many of the participatory learning techniques as used in global learning. However, as I argued previously, collaboration is not participation and ultimately who decides on how tasks are completed or run and are pupils influencing these choices?

Teacher A later comments that:

> *I think lessons should be led by pupils. I am there to expand their education and learning not to fit them into a mould.*

This principle closely mirrors that of participatory pedagogy indicating that teacher A already had the potential mindset for the project, if not the practical knowledge of how to get to a point whereby pupils could, in reality, lead lessons.

This is the perhaps the key difference with participatory pedagogy in that it is not just the conscious action of 'allowing' pupils to share views and engage in collaborative activities during specific moments but that it becomes an unconscious and continuous approach whereby pupils' views can impact on the way the learning actually happens, how activities are designed and the form in which their learning takes places.

Among the comments, there were many that highlighted a misconception about the term pupil voice:

> *Some lessons lend more easily to this than others. Pupil voice is often a challenge in Mathematics, however I am developing this further by ensuring we have lots of discussion when reasoning (Teacher A).*

This is one example where the concept of pupil voice is only achieved through discussion or some form of talking rather than the more complex concept of the impact of pupils' ideas and thoughts having the potential to change the direction of learning. It is not so much about giving pupils a voice or chance to speak but listening to pupils via numerous media and acting on the information or enabling pupils to act.

The pupils' comments during the interview were very revealing in terms of how they can share their opinions or thoughts about school and learning. They mainly focused on the school council (SC):

> *Pupil B – The SC are special like pupil A said because they have a role in school… they do like assemblies and stuff just to show like… stop bullying and stuff.*

> *Pupil C – I think the SC make the most of the changes, you can make little changes because of your behaviour, be kind and that would help the SC.*

> *Pupil D – I think everyone should give ideas it's not all to one person to think of all the ideas everyone should get the chance to change something in the school.*

> *Int – Does the SC or your teacher ask your opinions?*

> *Pupil E – I've never... actually I don't think so…*

> *Pupil C – Once?*

> *Pupil A – I never really get asked.*

When asked about their learning in school, they had quite a debate about whether group or individual work was better, agreeing that in fact everyone preferred a different approach. The use of tools such as lollipop sticks to ensure all pupils are engaged or have the opportunity to contribute were perceived and promoted by the Senior Leadership Team as one form of whole class collaboration. However, on discussion with staff and pupils it is questionable whether their use actually improved learning or whether the innate sense of competition and influence of peer pressure created a stressful atmosphere; some pupils thriving though for others a developing sense of dread which could lead to a paralysing of their thinking.

When asked about the actual structure of lessons and whether the pupils 'get involved in what a lesson looks like' and 'who decides on what happens in lessons and learning' the answers included:

> *Pupil B – Teacher A or head teacher (HT), not sure but they choose the topics and lesson we do, they do it in the staffroom.*

> *Pupil E – You don't get to decide yourself – the HT decides or important 'Teacher'.*

Pupil B went on to explain that the previous half term science topic was of great interest to him, he was learning new things and then '*just stopped and now we're doing humans and animals'.* This quick movement between topics was felt to have a negative impact on them even though they did state they were now enjoying their new topic too.

They provided a number of examples where they were participating, such as selecting their class reading book or adding questions on topics they are given. An interesting dialogue around the challenges of learning in class emerged:

> *Pupil A – Say if you want to do something after school, you can't think about it right now, you have to forget about it all and think about what you need to do now… focus on all the questions you've been given.*

> *Pupil B – You've got lots of things to remember, like something for English and Maths and Science, so quite hard to remember.*

Many schools are aiming to move towards a more creative curriculum, which blends the various curriculum subjects in a more holistic manner. Whether that reduces the amount of learning or pressure of the core subjects on pupils is not reflected in these comments. In addition, the opportunity for learning through engaging in pupils' own interests is regularly lost within classrooms in England; yet, to provide individual learning plans based on every child's personal interests could seem a ridiculous and unachievable task. However, child-centred play learning is being done very effectively in Early Years practice in schools and I would question

why this could not be replicated further up our education system, if it proved to benefit learning and enjoyment of learning.

4.3   Using participatory pedagogy as a process and a guide to training

In light of the literature review and research conducted prior to engaging the teachers, I felt it was appropriate to model participatory pedagogy within the teacher training I ran as far as possible. As supported by Aitken and Sinnema (2008 cited in Sinnema et al, 2011:133), engaging the teachers as students to co-construct the 'ideas and sharing of responsibility and power' gave more potential for learning. Rudduck and Demetriou (2003: 276) endorse the 'transformative potential of the participant'. Global learning practice aims for the transformative learning experience, and I felt it was highly significant that the teachers were part of the research and design in the same way as I ask pupils and teachers to be equal partners in teaching. Therefore the CPD and design of the materials was based on:

- 'Research evidence in practice' – using real academic research as part of the learning process and academic quotes to stimulate critical thinking (Appendix 4a and 4b).
- Using the 'learning to unlearn' CPD design based on previous research around social justice mentality (Simpson, 2016).
- Real examples from pupils within school – the earlier pupil quotes are from research school pupils during their interview (Appendix 4b).
- CPD based on the participatory pedagogy approach – the teachers designed, reviewed and developed their own approaches for the research based on discussions and evidence, and around the participation pedagogy 'framework' (Appendix 2a and 2b).
- Reflective practice – both teachers and pupils are part of the reflection of the research, this being both part of the development of the approach and review/evaluation of the approaches (reflective journal Appendix 3). As Van Manen (1991: cited in Donnelly & Fitzmaurice, 2011: 341) states, 'the experience of reflecting on past pedagogical experiences enables me to enrich and to make more thoughtful my future pedagogical experience'. This is hoped for both teacher and pupil.

4.4   Participatory pedagogy diagram

I re-designed and adapted Hart's (1992) original Ladder of Participation into a framework that might work within the classroom (Appendix 2a with descriptors in Appendix 2b) and utilised some of the core concepts of 'transformability' put forward in an excellent paper on inclusive pedagogy by Florian and Linklater (2010).

The participatory pedagogy framework became a 'target board[2]' (see: Appendix 2a for diagram and Appendix 2b for descriptor information). In the centre is a 'YinYang' symbol with 'pupils and teacher' to illustrate the co-agency of both teacher and pupils. As Hart et al (2004: 11) state, 'teachers are powerless without the participation of the learner', essentially reiterating the need for high-quality relationships within the classroom as a basis for effective pedagogy. As Pollard (2007, cited Robinson, 2014: 9) argues: 'the relationship between teachers and pupils is the basis of the moral order of the classroom, and this establishes the climate in which teaching and learning takes place'. Relationships that are based on trust, the potential of 'everybody' and understanding of co-agency (Florian and Linklater, 2010: 372) have the true potential to create a powerful and productive classroom climate. The concept of 'co-agency' relies on the premise that the 'responsibility for learning is shared between teacher and learner' and is illustrated thus within the centre of the participatory pedagogy framework as well as being part of the descriptors for each stage. In addition, this sharing of responsibility also demands that teachers trust the pupils' commitment to learning and that pupils trust they will be listened to thoughtfully and professionally. Florian and Linklater's (2010: 372) 'ethic of

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[2] If I took this forward I would prefer to design a 'Spiral' to illustrate the aim to move towards the centre to achieve full participation but recognizing this happens as a process.

everybody' highlights the importance of teaching for all, not some, and that the equity comes from the 'participation of the community'.

The participatory pedagogy framework places more emphasis on the 'trust' and 'co-agency' aspects as a means of altering the dynamic of the traditional classroom and as a teaching approach, though the 'ethic of everybody' could be represented within the cyclical framework.

4.5 Participatory pedagogy in practice

Participatory pedagogy is not about total 'freedom of learning' in the sense that pupils can do whatever they want to without consideration of impact to others or consequences on their own learning (Beista, 2017). Instead it aims to provide a framework for how both pupils and teachers approach teaching in the classroom.

Teachers expressed concern during the second teacher twilight that pupils would decide the topics of the curriculum or opt out of learning. It is clear that schools cannot deviate from the prescribed curriculum and expectations, however, it was clarified that how a school or class teacher approaches that curriculum can be decided. As Wall (2012, cited in Robinson, 2014: 8) highlights, the factors primary pupils considered supportive to their learning included lessons that 'move away from teacher-directed activities, to pupils having opportunities to take ownership of their learning', as well as clear 'learning goals and success criteria'. Both of these factors can be engaged within the restrictions of the curriculum. In point of fact, I consider it vital that pupils understand their own responsibility for achieving learning goals and their own accountability in the process: something which has, to my mind, become increasingly neglected within our current education system.

The teachers were introduced to the participatory pedagogy 'target' framework, and asked to match the descriptors to the titles (Appendix 2a and 2b) in order to really engage and begin to conceptualise the various levels of participation. During further exploration of resources, including case studies from the National Teacher Research Panel (Attard, 2008) and materials from Participation Works and 'Participation, spice it up!' (Shepherd, 2002) from Save the Children as well as discussion of ideas, the teachers began to design 'choice afternoons/sessions' to explore the potential of the framework, aiming to move towards the centre of the framework.

Initially the process included:

- Introducing the pupils to the learning outcomes/objectives for a future lesson, gathering pupil ideas and thoughts on how they would prefer to learn/explore that objective and demonstrate their learning.
- Teachers' preparing/organising resources to meet the various pupil ideas/thoughts.
- Lessons taking place, pupils deciding on how they met their objective and learning outcome.
- Reflections for whole class, what went well, even better if, etc.

5 Research findings and reflections

In order to reflect carefully on this small research project, it is important to return to the original research questions

- **How can participatory pedagogy be integrated into the primary classroom practice and what is the impact?**

The design of the participatory pedagogy framework provided a 'scaffold' for the teachers to refer to when planning and also to use as a reflection tool when considering how participative their practice or classroom is. In reality, and on review of the reflection journals, the teachers did stick very closely to the concept of 'choice', which did not particularly expand or develop within the short time-frame of the study. For example, pupils chose who to work with on a task,

or pupils could choose between three options for a task. This was something they felt was different from their 'general practice':

> *I have learnt that with taking ownership of choice, the children are far more motivated and engaged. I will definitely deploy elements of choice into future teaching practice (*Teacher A).

> *They felt they 'would definitely apply this "teaching and choice" idea to other lessons' (*Teacher B).

Pupils were asked both by the teachers themselves and within the interviews with me to reflect on some of the 'choice' sessions in class. The feedback was very much teacher-framed in that all pupils had a set of questions to reflect on, which resulted in very similar responses around who they had in their working group, working with friends, and smaller or larger groups.

Although the teacher feedback is very positive and indicates a change of practice and approach, I recognise that these were very small steps in terms of moving towards full participatory pedagogy and understand there is a need for further support, training and collation of examples and ideas for creating a fully participative classroom and equitable teaching approaches.

With that in mind, there were also reflections on the impact on the quality of the work produced by the pupils during the 'choice' sessions. In most subjects, such as in Maths and Science, it was considered that it *'was just a good as before'* although:

> *The quality of the work (mainly English) was not as good but the engagement was there, if we'd had more time the quality would've built back up.*

As a new approach to teaching there must be an allowance for impact both positive and negative as all participants work through the process. I consider that engagement is a significant factor in the success of any new approach, and without pupil support the pedagogy would go nowhere. The dynamic change to that of a democratic classroom, or to be more specific a classroom built on the ethics of participative democracy, aims to move away from a 'behaviourist' approach to learning and towards a 'relational' approach: less 'carrot and stick' and more a 'we do it because we want to' method of engagement. As Beista (2011) argues, democracy cannot be taught but needs to be experienced, felt and reflected upon, therefore our classrooms must be democratic in order to aspire to democratic teaching and learning. However, I do acknowledge that there is a great deal more thinking and exploration of how the participatory pedagogy would 'look' in the reality of a classroom, going beyond 'choice' sessions and how to ensure that quality of work can be supported to develop and improve and even excel within a classroom climate of 'trust, co-agency and the "ethic of everybody"'.

- **How does the use of participatory pedagogy affect engagement and enjoyment for staff and pupils in a primary school?**

There were some concerns from the teachers about changing their approach to the teaching in class, however, their reflections indicated their change of opinion:

> *I thought it would be quite stressful but it was much easier than I thought… you have an easier time as a teacher as they [the pupils] want to do it.*

As indicated in that quote, the pupils were perceived, by the teachers, to be more motivated and engaged during the sessions as they 'want to do it'. This research supports the findings of the DfE document, 'Listening to and involving young people' (2014: 1), which claims:

> *Young people involved in participative work benefit in a range of different ways. Increased confidence, self-respect, competence and an improved sense of responsibility have all been reported by young people who contribute in school. Schools also report increased motivation and engagement with learning.*

Teachers in my research reported that they would use this approach again:

> *(I) would do this as a choice again as it meant they [children] were all working on a design they were passionate about.*

> *The pupils were really motivated; they seemed to want to do well, especially during the reflection bit with their peers.*

> *The whole choice idea… they [pupils] had more ownership and were more engaged.*

When the teachers were asked what they had learnt from the process, they commented:

> *Children feel more invested in their learning when they have taken ownership.*

This is very positive feedback from the teachers, and to some extent indicates a potentially transformative experience whereby the teachers will change their practice and approach. However, only further follow-up evaluations and reflections would be able to prove this claim. The thoughts from the pupils are somewhat more varied, with much debate on whether or not they enjoyed working in groups, pairs or on their own, though they did confirm they were pleased to have the choice, even if they made the wrong one on reflection. I wonder if their responses were more reserved as the change in teaching approach was not so marked for them; they were still essentially following teacher-directed activities but with a choice of activity and working method. More creativity, 'freedom' or input to teaching might have supported a more transformational experience for the pupils. How that would affect the teachers – would the positive feedback continue or recede – would be a very interesting further study.

- **How does the use of participatory pedagogy impact on pupil voice in a primary school?**

The evidence suggests that the participatory pedagogy framework raises pupil motivation and engagement with the potential for opening a space for pupil voice, in this instance the opportunity to make their own choices and learn from those. With more time, development and practice, it could be hoped that this engagement and motivation could be harnessed and nurtured into co-agency and a belief in their own ideas and opinions especially on their own learning. In order for any school to really engage with new approaches or skills the support of SLT (senior leadership team) is crucial:

> *Being allowed [by SLT] to have a go was really helpful, we could be creative and really have a go.*

Realistically, there would need to be further study and research into this approach with willing and supportive SLT backing.

I must admit to a fundamental flaw in a key aspect of this research, which has been spotted and acknowledged during the reflection process. The teachers were provided with CPD sessions based on the 'learning to unlearn' process in order to challenge their assumptions about the teacher/pupil relationship and democratic structures of the classroom with some recognisable success. However, the same should have been conducted with the pupils themselves. They too have ingrained assumptions about the disparate roles of teacher and pupil, and in order for co-agency to exist, the two 'groups' must experience a fundamental change in those assumptions to move together towards the centre of participatory pedagogy.

6   Conclusions and recommendations

This small research study has provided tentatively positive results for the participatory pedagogy framework as an approach to teaching and classroom relationships.

I would suggest that methodologies such as Philosophy for Children (P4C) embody this framework and support the teacher towards a transformational move to a facilitator of learning. Further research into the links between the P4C approach and participatory pedagogy would be highly beneficial.

Additionally, further study on the use of and impact of the participatory pedagogy framework is required in order to confirm some of the above findings and explore other 'avenues' and opportunities for the approach. This could be with a variety of age groups to begin to explore the potentials of participatory pedagogy at each key stage, or with educators with a range of teaching experience. Much more research and creative design is required to provide teachers with example and specific approaches of participatory pedagogy for use in the classroom; these would need to be trialled and reflected upon critically to ensure their effectiveness.

Going forward I would suggest the following:

- Develop the Participatory Pedagogy Framework design into a spiral.
- Consider further CPD activities and methods for supporting participatory pedagogy in the classroom and curriculum.
- Design a pupil session(s) to support 'learning to unlearn'.
- Whole-staff training and exploration of the approach.
- Focus week(s) where all staff try the approach across school (at the various levels).
- Reflections as part of the learning/development process.
- Further review of the school council and pupil voice across the school.

I hope this paper initiates a re-thinking of the fundamental structures of our classrooms, schools and society. Some may question whether this is truly required within our school system and believe that pupils already have adequate pupil voice. The school in the study was recently (Feb 2018) inspected by Ofsted, and one comment within the report stands out:

> *The group of Year 6 pupils who spoke with a member of the inspection team said they sometimes feel that adults do not listen to them. However, other evidence shows that leaders provide opportunities for pupils to express themselves through, for example, the school council. They also provide older pupils with roles of responsibility, such as looking after younger pupils as 'buddies'.*

The quote is illustrative of the perception of pupil voice or participation within education in England and also indicates the great challenge involved for those of us who wish to see a true change of mindset and pedagogical approach. It may be that the change is required from a strategic, governmental position to 'allow' teachers the freedom to change their practice though, in reality, I believe it will come from the classroom: those teachers with the courage and creativity to see their world, and those in it, differently. From those classrooms the pupils will begin to make the real changes that will impact beyond the classroom, school and into society itself, because children are part of society, now and in our future. Though it is recognised in much educational research that there are no 'magic bullets' (Muijis, 2010) I propose that participatory pedagogy can, at least, be part of the figurative armoury.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1a

Participatory Pedagogy
Thurs 18 May – session 1
3.45pm–5.30pm

Have baselines to hand to drive back to previous assumptions

Intro (5 mins)

- Objectives of this session and the next.
- Outline how info to be used – anonymous, but will be recorded on Dictaphone for writing up. This is very informal – it will become clearer as we go along as to why.

Warm-up (15 mins)

- What is Democracy? 2 mins to jot down words or a statement
- Share academic quotes on democracy (particular focus on democracy and schools)
- Which quote do you relate to most? Which is the least?
- Is our society democratic? Are schools? Is your classroom? Do we need to be?
- Do these quotes back up or complicate your thoughts?
- Add in a few quotes from Part B – re. power in schools – what do you think now?

Ladder (25–30mins)

- Introduce the Ladder of Participation – sort the statements and descriptors and place on the ladder.
- Ask reasoning and whether they can provide examples from their own practice (not necessarily this school).
- Share the Harts and Shiers ladder examples – gather feedback via dialogue.
- Where might they place whole-school initiatives? Classroom practice? Curriculum planning?
- Hand out Transcript A – does this change opinions about where on the ladder?
- Share some Part C quotes – which resonate? What are your thoughts?

Participatory pedagogy – how would it 'look'? (30 mins)

- How do we create that 'better fit'? Or alter the 'power' dynamics within the classroom?
- Hand out Transcript B – differences/similarities? Where on the Ladder?
- How do you really 'manage' learning at present? Where on the Ladder?
- Yin Yang model – how to create conditions for this – what would it 'look like' – 'nothing is neutral' in learning or life.

Reflection journal – intro (10 mins)

- This week, more like a diary of your thoughts as you consider this session, observe your classroom and your action in practice.
- Consider aspects of the classroom practice which could be more open to participation, pupil democracy etc to bring next week.

7.2   Appendix 1b

Participatory pedagogy
Thurs 27 May – session 2
3.45pm–5.30pm

Have baselines to hand to drive back to previous assumptions

Intro (5 mins)

- Review the reflection journal – gather thoughts
- Implications for next term

Introducing the participation target board (25 mins)

➢ Adaptation of the Ladder
➢ Fewer 'stages' and more focusing on pupil/teacher relationship and classroom 'culture' or 'climate'
➢ Explore the target board via the quotes – consider examples for each stage (classroom ones).
➢ Aim is to stay somewhere in the circles moving towards the centre.

Planning for next term (25–30 mins)

o Time to plan ideas and approaches for next term from various stages.
o 3x articles to look at, couple of resources, and example ideas.
o Reflective elements also – pupils need to practise their participation and skills/responsibility for learning.
o Consider P4C as a form of participatory pedagogy – how can you plan that in and ensure progress?

Reflection journal – next steps (10 mins)

- The following 4 weeks after half term are open to you – highlight any 'barriers' e.g. SRE. Think small at first maybe and build up – give it a go.
- Final review and baselines could happen in the final week if need be, will need to interview the pupils again.

7.3   Appendix 2a

Participatory pedagogy framework diagram
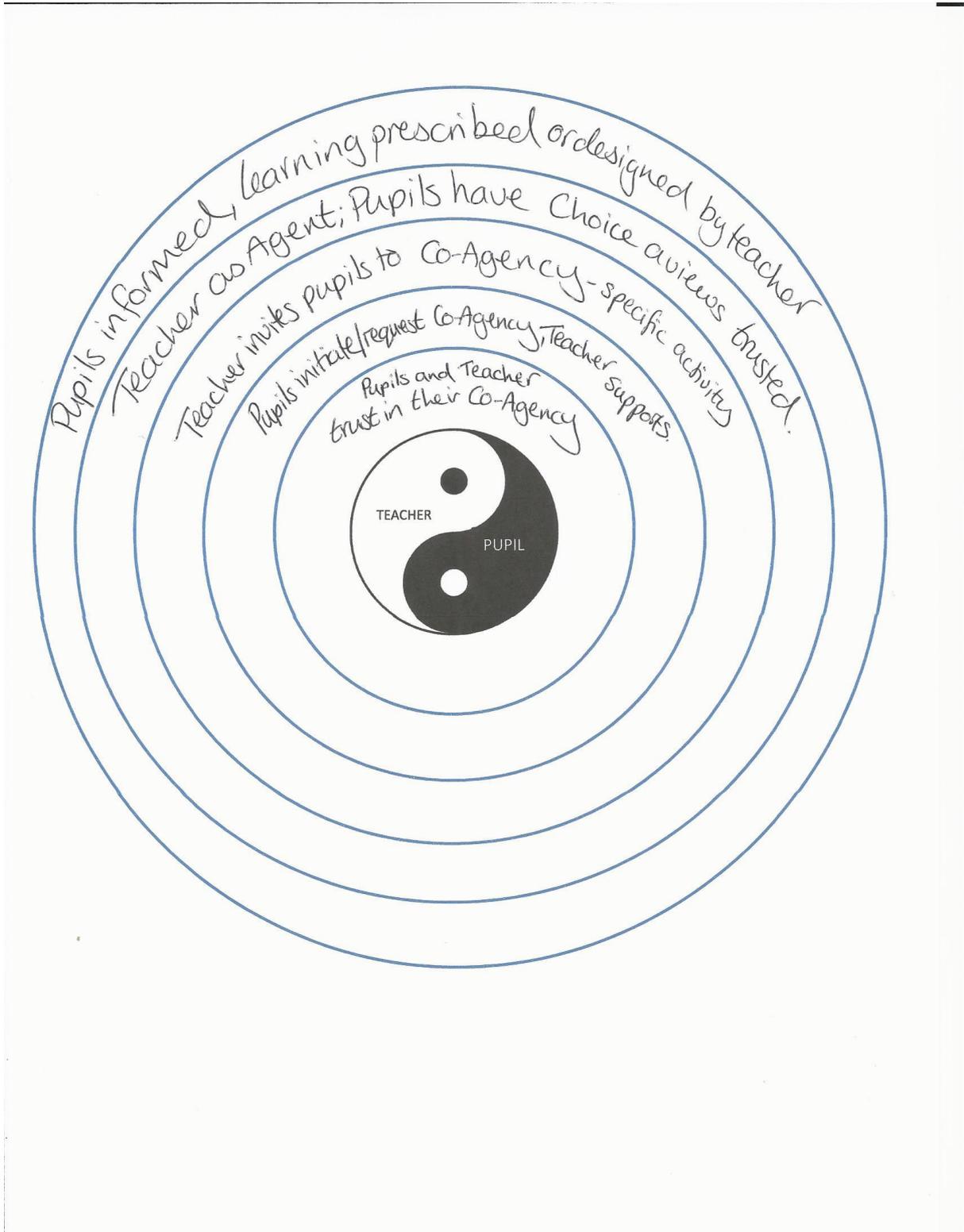
7.4   Appendix 2b

Participatory pedagogy framework with descriptors

Pupils and teacher trust in their co-agency *(on specific learning/activity)*
Responsibility for learning is shared equally between teacher and pupil. Teachers trust pupils to engage and make meaning from their learning experiences; pupils trust that teachers respect their autonomy and capacity to learn.

Pupils initiate/request co-agency and teachers provide support and trust *(on specific learning/activity)*
Pupils recognise opportunity to lead/design their own learning and trust their choices/action will be respected and supported by teacher.

Teacher invites pupils to co-*agency on specific learning/activity*
Teacher recognises opportunity for pupils to lead/design their own learning and engage in co-agency.

Teacher as agent, pupils given choices and trust their views are respected on specific learning/activity
Teacher designs the learning with options for different approaches for pupils.

Pupils informed, learning prescribed or designed by teacher alone, outcomes predetermined
Teacher designs the learning activities, creates the learning activities and informs pupils with expected outcomes for all.

*(on specific learning/activity) – can be removed so relates to whole classroom approach/practice.

7.5   Appendix 3

Reflection journal
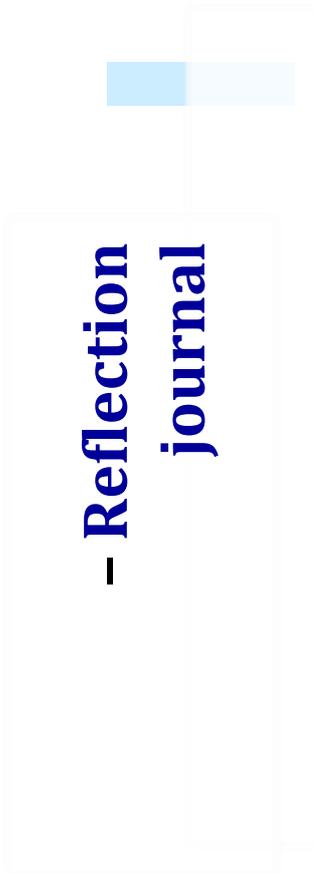
– Reflection journal

'The experience of reflecting on past pedagogical experiences enables me to enrich and to make more thoughtful my future pedagogical experience' **Van Manen, 1991: 2015**

Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal

Week 1 – Reflect and observe (yourself, your classroom, your pupils)

Your reflections on the session:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning from week beginning 5 June:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)
What do you think the pupils have learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor – you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning from week beginning 5 June:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)
What do you think the pupils have learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor – you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning from week beginning 12 June:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)
What do you think the have pupils learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor - you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning from week beginning 12 June:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)
What do you think the pupils have learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor - you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning beginning 19 June:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)
What do you think the pupils have learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor – you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning beginning 19 June:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)
What do you think the pupils have learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor – you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning beginning 26 June:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)

What do you think the pupils have learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor – you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

**Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal**

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning beginning 26 June:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)
What do you think the pupils have learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor – you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

**Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal**

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)
What do you think the pupils have learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor – you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

**Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal**

Brief of activity/classroom change/learning:

Reactions:
What happened?
What did you feel at the time? What do you feel on reflection?

Learning:
What have you learnt? (about pupils, your practice, your values, skills and knowledge)
What do you think the pupils have learnt?

Transfer:
The 'So what?' factor – you have this information, skill etc – what will you do with it?
What might you do differently/the same?
What next?

Innovation Fund 2 – Participatory pedagogy
Reflection journal

Reflections overview

Please provide reflections on the past 6 weeks of the project:
Some suggestions – What has most surprised you? What has been challenging? What has worked well and why? What didn't and why? What, for you, are the key aspects of learning from this? What might you do in future practice? What would be the key elements you would like your colleagues to understand?

Thank you

7.6 Appendix 4a: Quotes

Part A

'*Both Dewey (1916) and Friere (1985, 98) believed that the ultimate goal of education was to attain a socially just and democratic citizenry.'* *(*Brewing, M., 2011, p. 13, *Problematizing critical pedagogy*)

'*A nation is democratic to the extent that its citizens are involved.'* (Hart, R., 1992)

'*Students must be viewed as key stakeholders in the learning process in order to achieve a democratic education.'* *(*Ferguson, 2011: 57)

[Pupils need] *'an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process.'* (Government Guidance on promoting Fundamental British Values, 2014)

Part B

'*The existing power structures within schools serve to silence pupils' voices… evidence of the reality of more participative practices and democratic ways of working with pupils in matters relating to teaching is rarely actualised beyond the rhetoric of many schools.'*
(Robinson, C., 2014; p. 15, Cambridge Primary Review Trust research survey 2)

Pollard (2007) argues – *'that the relationship between teachers and pupils is the basis of the moral order of the classroom, and this establishes the climate in which teaching and learning takes place.'* *(*Robinson, C., 2014; p. 9, Cambridge Primary Review Trust research survey 2)

'*If the school council does not go beyond and take on issues of teaching and learning and the conditions of learning, then it can become merely a way of channelling student complaints.'*
(Ruddock and Demetrion, 2003, p. 285)

Part C

'*In our view, school improvement is about enhancing engagement through achieving a better fit between young people and the school as an institution.' (Ruddock and Demetrion,* 2003, p. 275)

'*We think education is about **helping people understand how things work** and **how to challenge and change** them for the better' (*Citizenship Foundation website, acc. 17 May 2017)

'*Young people involved in participative work benefit in a range of different ways. Increased confidence, self-respect, competence and an improved sense of responsibility have all been reported by young people who contribute in school. Schools also report increased motivationand engagement with learning.'* (DfE, Listening to and involving young people (2014))

7.7   Appendix 4b: Quotes

'Rudduck (2006) for pupils to have a voice in school, teachers and students need to be able to see each other differently. Teachers need to…believe that pupils can offer insightful comments that make a difference and both parties need to believe they can have open and constructive dialogue about their work' (Robinson and Taylor, 2007: 12).

UNCRC (1989) gives children a right of participation, that is, a right to express their views, to be heard and to take part in decisions that that affect them.

'They [Schools] need to move beyond a simple eliciting of student perspectives to a real attempt to involve and engage students as active agents of change.' (Fielding, 2001).

'Pupils are an initiating force in an enquiry process, it is likely that pupil voice work will lead to change which will enhance pupils' experience of schooling' (Robinson and Taylor, 2007: 14).

'Decorative, consulting students on a one-off basis as a quick source of info is so widespread a practice that the deeper purposes and potential for transformation may not be thought about' (Rudduck and Demetrion, 200: 279).

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About the author

Jen Simpson qualified as a primary teacher, later joining Cheshire Development Education Centre (CDEC-Developing Global Learning) as an Education Officer. In 2014 she was appointed as a Local Advisor for the Global Learning Programme (GLP) for Cheshire and Merseyside. Completing an MA module with the UCL Institute of Education on Global Development followed by two research projects for the GLP Innovation Fund. She is also trained to Level 3, Advanced Facilitator in Philosophy for Children (P4C), a passion which she has developed over many years and led to a new role in 2017 as Assistant National Training Manager for SAPERE, the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education. Her research interests centre on pedagogy, pupil participation, social justice and considering methods for influencing teachers' practice and enjoyment in teaching.

About the Global Learning Programme

The Global Learning Programme (GLP) in England was a government-funded programme of support that is helping teachers in Primary, Secondary and Special schools to deliver effective teaching and learning about development and global issues at Key Stages 2 and 3. It was delivered by a team of organisations with complementary experience in supporting development education, the wider development sector and peer-led CPD for schools. For further information on the Global Learning Programme in England go to: www.glp-e.org.uk Information about the GLP in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland can be found at: https://globaldimension.org.uk/chooseglp

About the Development Education Research Centre

The Development Education Research Centre (DERC) is the UK's leading research centre for development education and global leaning. DERC conducts research on Development Education and Global Learning, run a masters' degree course, supervises doctoral students and produces a range of reports, academic articles and books. Further information on the centre go to: www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe-derc

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