

Student Voice and the International Curriculum: connections, contexts and spaces

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Declaration

I Rohan Skene substantiate that the work produced in this thesis is my own. In the instances where information has been derived from other sources, I can confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between student voice and the international curriculum and the significance of this relationship for learning in secondary schools. Framed within a social realist epistemology and employing individual and focus group interviews to gather teacher and student perspectives, this work employs an interpretive research approach, underpinned by established work on student participation and wider concepts of the curriculum and curriculum design.

Curricular developments within a growing international secondary school sector, an under-realisation of the recognised benefits of greater student-teacher collaboration and a deficit in research available on the relationship between student voice and the international curriculum created the need to explore these notions further. Three European international schools are researched and contrasted, each one distinctly offering a linear, constructivist or mixed approach in delivering the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) or International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) secondary curriculums.

This study confirms that the authentic engagement of students and teachers in learning conversations is similarly problematic in an international context as in a national one. However, impediments to student voice can be negotiated through the creation of a shared space where pedagogical dialogical encounters are encouraged and where teacher and student interior authenticities are affirmed. Such a space can be theorised as the zone of dynamic collaboration embracing Shulman's (1986) concept: pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). The emergent research perspectives also suggest that whilst student voice activities can be achieved in both linear and process curricular designs, a constructivist approach to curricular design, as represented by the IBMYP may positively promote student voice due to its less prescribed nature. This thesis makes a theoretical contribution to closing the gap between student voice aspirations and real, practical collaborative outcomes.

Table of Contents

Reflective Statement	1
Module 1. Foundations of Professionalism in Education	1
The Role and Responsibility of the International School Teacher in the light of Globalisation.....	1
Module 2. Methods of Enquiry One (MOE1)	2
Theoretical and Conceptual Issues in Educational Research	2
Module 3. International Education.....	3
The Global University Rankings: In the Competitive Knowledge Economy	3
Module 4. Methods of Enquiry Two (MOE2).....	4
‘Growing into Grade Nine’, Knowledge and Learning in the International Curriculum: Pupil perceptions within Transition	4
The Institution Focused Study (IFS)	5
Student Voice and Student Councils: Perceptions and Power Relationships	5
Thesis	6
Student Voice and the International Curriculum: connections, contexts and spaces	6
Looking Ahead	7
Reflective Statement References	9
Acknowledgements	10
Chapter One: Introduction	11
Chapter Two: Literature Review	19
Introduction	19
2.1 Student Voice: Terminology, Concepts, Theories	19
Student Participation and Consultation.....	19
Student or Pupil Voice	24
2.2 Contemporary Context	28
Recent Issues, Debates and Questions	28
Collaboration and Consultation	28
Student Voice – Contemporary Context.....	30
The Child, The Student, Drivers	30
Student Voice Research	35
Power, Authority, Identity	35
Teacher Voice	41
2.3 Curriculum: Terminology, Concepts, Theories.....	43

Curriculum- A Macro-Definition	43
2.4 Knowledge and Curricular Constructions	47
Knowledge and the Curriculum	47
Debates concerning Curricular Designs	50
2.5 International Dimensions	57
International Schools and International Mindedness.....	57
International Curriculum Research.....	59
2.6 Previous Research on Student Voice and the Curriculum	64
2.4 Key Findings from The Literature Review	69
Chapter Three: Methodology and Theoretical Perspective.....	73
3.1 A Statement about the broad nature of the data I am seeking to obtain	73
3.2 Theoretical Perspectives.....	76
3.3 Methodology	82
Research Method Rationale and Implementation.....	82
The Research Phases	83
The Institutions.....	89
3.4 An indication of some of the limitations and ethical considerations encountered with the methodology and ways that these were solved	92
Comparative Factors and Ambiguity	92
Balance	94
Time and Resource Management.....	95
Other Ethical Contemplations	97
Chapter Four: Research Results.....	100
4.1. Data Analysis Rationale	100
4.2 Focus group and Interview Outcomes.....	102
4.3 The Wider Notions.....	131
Second Level Codes	131
School Culture Reciprocity.....	132
Student and Teacher Relationships	133
A Pedagogical Focus for Student Voice.....	135
Chapter Five: Meta-Analysis	138
5.1 Aims	138
5.2 Discussion	140
The Learning Relationship- Power and Connections	140

The Unconstrained Curriculum.....	143
Pedagogically Focused Student Voice.....	145
Student Voice Perceptions: Participatory or Perfunctory.....	147
5.3 Meta-Analysis Key findings.....	150
Chapter Six: Conclusion	154
References	162
Appendices	176
Appendix One	176
Appendix Two	177
Appendix Three	178
Appendix Four	179
Appendix Five	180
Appendix Six	181
Appendix Seven	183
Appendix Eight.....	185
Appendix Nine	186
Appendix Ten.....	189

Reflective Statement

This is a reflection on how the EdD course has contributed to the growth in my professional understanding and knowledge from commencement in October 2010 until the concluding phase in April 2016. I will outline and explain the linkages between each of the four taught modules and my work within them and how they assisted in the development of the Institution Focused Study (IFS) and thesis stages of the programme.

My background as a secondary school teacher and interest in School Effectiveness and School Improvement (SESI) especially the role of student voice and the impact of the curriculum in this area has had a profound impact on my approach to and journey along the doctoral pathway. These influences and interests are evident in the notions I have explored in the taught modules and remain as evident threads upon which my studies are grounded.

Module 1. Foundations of Professionalism in Education

The Role and Responsibility of the International School Teacher in the light of Globalisation

The first taught module allowed me to question notions of 'what is a professional' and challenged me to engage in critical writing and thinking beyond what I had developed in my master's studies. This module enabled me to explore notions of the new educational professional with a particular focus on the characteristics of an international school teacher. The international educational sphere has become a key aspect of my doctoral studies and a major part of my professional life, having worked as a teacher in Australia, the UK and Germany. A critical look at the theories and

current thinking on globalisation, international schools and professionalism was completed in this module in an attempt to draw out areas of connectedness in the way international school professionals have or may have changed in the light of the challenges of supercomplexity (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996, Hargreaves, 2000, Barnett in Cunningham 2008: 206). I gained new insights into what might constitute the make up of a globally minded rather than an international teacher and was compelled to consider that education professionals in 'global cities' like London are also on the forefront of this new professionalism. My conclusion that the changing supercomplex professional landscape calls for 'new professionals' who are interactive, creative and willing to re-define their roles has contributed to my understanding of teacher voice and teacher agency; two areas that have had relevance for my IFS and thesis.

Module 2. Methods of Enquiry One (MOE1)

Theoretical and Conceptual Issues in Educational Research

I thoroughly enjoyed working on this unit finding it thought-provoking and fascinating in terms of the theoretical perspectives forming the basis of sociological research. I discovered the literature on knowledge and the curriculum and the construction of knowledge, particularly the work of Michael Young (2008) and social realism absorbing. I began questioning the notion of knowledge as a discoverable body and as a purely subjective or an actively changing social product and the question then arising about how to construct a curriculum of knowledge and to what ends? My research proposal and design focused on a consideration of curriculum design within the context of student transition and based within a constructionist epistemology and drew upon student voice as a key methodological element. My research question was formulated

so as to gather student and teacher perspectives on teaching, learning and knowledge and how these inform curriculum planning. I have employed a similar approach to the research conducted in Methods of Enquiry two (MOE2), the IFS and the thesis. The work in MOE1 helped in the development of my research design in MOE2, informed discussions about globalisation and internationalisation, enabled me to think deeply about the meaning and purpose of knowledge and assisted in deciding the forms of curricular construction to investigate in the thesis.

Module 3. International Education

The Global University Rankings: In the Competitive Knowledge Economy

In the third module I decided to investigate an area that I was unfamiliar with but that had piqued my interest during the course programme. The university league tables and the global market for tertiary education connected with my interest in the underpinning concepts of knowledge and the ensuing curricular provision and held some common thematic threads with my Foundations of Professionalism assignment. My work centered on a critical look at the main university ranking systems existing within the landscape of globalisation and internationalisation. I proposed that there is a need for some form of global league table to create meaning for learners but that the present system needed review and adjustment. I continued to base my work within the context of globalisation and drew from the ideas of researchers in this area, in particular the work of Marginson (2004, 2007, 2009). I found the literature on education as a public versus private good, universities as status creators and brand identities and the burgeoning

competitive nature of the world market in university education interesting and informative. I gained a new insight into the political/economic drivers of internationalisation and was interested in the emergence of the neo-liberal 'market' ideology with its questions about the ultimate purpose of human capital as a key driver and its ramifications for the growth in technical-instrumentalist curriculum thinking.

Module 4. Methods of Enquiry Two (MOE2)

'Growing into Grade Nine', Knowledge and Learning in the International Curriculum: Pupil perceptions within Transition

In the final taught module MOE2, I employed aspects of my research design from MOE1 to explore student voice, the international curriculum and student transition within an international school. The assignment was an enquiry based upon the collected field data in the style of a grounded research project and embedded within what I began to understand at the time as a social realist methodology. In it I aimed to actively engage students and teachers in dialogue about learning using focus groups and unstructured interviews. The research methodology and theoretical foundation used in MOE2 continues to underlay and impact the research that I have done since as I find it useful, successful and knits with my concepts of knowledge and knowing. I found that however widely the curriculum is defined it was evident that it had a profound effect on student transition and that pupils possessed a clear feeling of ownership over their learning. A question that emerged from this study was: how might teachers respond to consultations and what barriers exist between authentic pupil

voice and authentic teacher action? This question helped shape the research questions for both the IFS and thesis.

The Institution Focused Study (IFS)

Student Voice and Student Councils: Perceptions and Power Relationships

With the IFS I explored the use of a student council as the main driver for a fledgling student voice initiative at a European International school, looking particularly at the impact of the student voice initiative and the main influences upon it using student and teacher perspectives. Using an interpretive approach that drew on the social realist theoretical perspective that I had been developing since MOE1; I gathered data using semi-structured interviews with four students and two teachers. I found that the student voice initiative acted as a catalyst for there to be a subtle but sustained shift in the culture of the school and revealed that the power relationships between student elites and the main student body are influential in much the same way as teacher to student power imbalances tend to be. The IFS helped me refine my qualitative data gathering methods and highlighted to me the complicated power relationships issues when dealing with teacher- student relationships.

The IFS concluded with two questions: once the conditions for building and sustaining a successful student voice initiative are created what improvements in teaching and learning might be realised by the school and how does a change in the curriculum model adopted impact student and teacher consultative conversations about teaching and learning? It was these two questions that were formative for forming the focus of my thesis.

Thesis

Student Voice and the International Curriculum: connections, contexts and spaces

The thesis is an amalgamation of the professional understanding and knowledge that I have developed throughout my progression on the EdD and brings together various themes and concepts explored in the four taught modules and the IFS. The notions of student voice, curriculum design and their relationship originated from in my master's dissertation and interest in SESI and were added to and enriched by the EdD work. Greater understanding of International educational dimensions, aspects of student transition in the middle year's transition and school power dynamics developed during the module and IFS work and contributed to the formulation of my thesis focus. My theoretical, epistemological and ontological understanding evolved significantly during this time so that I feel comfortable taking a social realist position and using a constructivist and interpretive approach when conducting research. The place of knowledge in the curriculum and the major conceptualisations and notions of the school curriculum, most notably powerful knowledge, have been a particular area of personal professional growth and interest during the creation of the thesis (Young, 2008, 2015, Kelly, 2009).

The thesis through the comparison of the experiences of students and teachers in the three international schools under study has relevance for current debates about curriculum design and learning. It makes a suggestion that improved learning experiences may be fostered through greater empowerment of teacher

and student voices within a pedagogical content knowledge zone of dynamic integration and makes a contribution in terms of the parameters within which learning conversations should take place which has implications that go further than the schools in the study sample (Shulman, 1989)

Looking Ahead

Rather than a finalisation, I feel that the thesis is consolidation of the work that I have done on student collaboration and the school curriculum since my interest began in these areas in 2008 as part of the master's programme and continuing into the doctoral studies and a springboard to working more in the field both professionally and academically. I aim to foster student voice programmes within the local international schools (something I have already started) and to develop networks to interconnect and share within this network and possibly further afield within the association of European international schools. Academically I will be sharing my research findings with the IBO research unit (Jeff Thompson Award) and aim to publish and present my findings at one of the IBO world conferences with the desire of conducting more research especially in the field of curricular notions and the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) aspects of student voice (Shulman, 1989).

Although it has been a challenge to manage time, work, family and academic commitments over the past five years I can state that the Doctor of Education (International) programme has been a thoroughly stimulating, affirming and rewarding one. I know that the skills and professional understandings that I have experienced will not only endure but will continue to create new knowledge

creation opportunities.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This study is based on the understanding that benefits to learning can be gained from student voice activities, that sustained, shared conversations about learning can lead to improved classroom experiences. This work is also grounded in the belief that student voice activities suffer from an image or perception problem where the envisaged beneficial results of such initiatives often either fall short or fail to make any significant impact in secondary schools, that is a disconnection between ideal and action. My intention is to explore the dynamic between these two fundamental understandings using the research context of international schools and differing curriculum designs. In situating my study in international schools I can make comparisons with established research, predominantly from national western systems and explore differing middle school curriculums, as there is greater freedom to develop the international curriculum when contrasted to national systems. I aim to come to some conclusion about how student voice can be theorised in a way in which its purpose and outcome is more grounded so that the participants are more able to make meaning together.

Twelve years ago I was introduced to student voice through an initiative being launched at an inner London school and found the comments and suggestions coming from the students to be insightful and valuable. It felt both revolutionary and also evident to me that one way of engaging secondary students and improving teaching and learning was for students and teachers to collaborate in some way and for this to lead to a change in practice. To engage in meaningful conversations together about how students learn best and to use this as one of the ways of promoting school effectiveness and improving school practice seemed radical to me at the time. It has been my experience that most other teachers have had similar

'Damascus moments' when sensing the benefits of engaging in deep student voice initiatives.

It would be imprudent for a doctor not to consult their patients before dispensing a prescription or for a lawyer to fail to listen to their clients before representing them in court. Why then do teachers and educational administrators habitually over-look or dismiss the provision that students can make to discussions about teaching and learning? Students are 'expert witnesses' who can offer valuable insights and perspectives into what goes on in the classroom and at schools in general (Cook-Sather, 2002). They have a vested interest in any changes or improvements to classroom practice and for this among other reasons they should be able to more actively participate in school related dialogue and decisions. It was this realisation that set me off on a voyage into student participation research that has thus far culminated in doctoral studies and this thesis. In this research paper I continue to work within the field of student participation (student or pupil voice) and notions of the wider school curriculum, especially the connections that exist between them as new understandings of childhood sociology emerge in our changing globalised world. Recent thinking on school leadership and educating students for the twenty first century places an emphasis on teacher-teacher and teacher-student collaboration with the formation of a new learning partnership as a high priority (Fullan, 2014). The creation of visible learners who are actively engaged in their learning as co-constructors or co-determinants is also seen as a powerful and positive factor adding value to a learner's educational experience (Hattie, 2012). I am interested in the questions surrounding what makes a school effective and hope that my work can contribute to narrowing the gap between the description of what an effective school should look like and the prescription for real action. I build upon the research that I

have completed in prior studies and now look at the concept within a wider comparative international schooling context.

The journey towards my research questions began during my School Effectiveness and School Improvement (SESI) Masters studies at the Institute of Education, London (IOE). I was inspired and influenced by two IOE academics delivering the taught programme, Dr. Caroline Lodge instilled a passion for student voice and Dr. Jenny Houssart introduced me to an area that I had considered rather dry: curriculum theory and design. Since this time my area of research interest has been based upon these notions with a particular interest on the relationship between them. The fact that there is a dearth of research exploring the dynamic between the two areas is another factor that has prompted my research interest, culminating in the research questions stated below. My thesis title is: *Student Voice and the International Curriculum: connections, contexts and spaces* and my main research questions are:

1. *What are student and teacher perceptions about student voice engagement in the context of three European International Schools with differing curriculum designs?*
2. *What connections, if any exist between student voice engagement and curriculum design in these schools?*

Through the analysis of student and teacher perceptions on student voice from within differing curriculum and school culture settings I intend to explore and draw findings on the perception problem from which student voice seems to suffer. In terms of curriculum design, my interest lays particularly in the contrast between curriculums as 'aims and objectives' based (Tyler, 1949) and those that are process

based (Stenhouse, 1975) and the variants and combinations among these forms. Of particular interest were the questions raised within this comparison about knowledge, power and conceptions about human behaviour (Kelly, 2009). My MA dissertation was titled "*Pupil Voice and the Curriculum; Connections, Disconnections and Interplay*" and the key research questions were: how does the curriculum impact upon pupil voice and how are teachers and pupils engaging in 'talk' about curriculum issues? I found that secondary school students were energised by both the prospect of and the actual taking part in conversations that were likely to have an impact on the curriculum that they would be experiencing. A further finding was that teachers in subjects that are less restricted by the rigidity of 'outcome' based linear curricular designs were more likely to have the political will to be more open to enable pupil participation to play some part in the teaching and learning of their subject e.g. creative arts, and physical education. I concluded that there is a mutual relationship between pupil voice and wider notions of the curriculum that signal the need for wider and deeper interaction between the two. I discovered that pupil voice initiatives can generate a need for a change in the direction of the curriculum and that curricular modification could create a need for student voice (Skene, 2009). I went on to explore these concepts further in the Doctorate in Education (International) Institution Focused study (IFS) titled "*Student Voice and Student Councils: Perceptions and Power Relationships*" (2009) and did so within an international secondary school setting. My key IFS questions were: What has been the impact of the student voice initiative on the school from the perspective of teachers and students and what were the main influences on the 'students as researchers' project undertaken by the school's student council? The major findings from this ten-month study were that whilst the fledgling student voice project did not have an immediate

influence on teaching and learning, it acted as a catalyst for a subtle and sustained cultural shift in the secondary school climate, but that student voice impacts on the written curriculum itself were negligible. I found that the use of the student council revealed some interesting and influential power relationships between student elites and the main student body; similar to teacher and student power imbalances and that these power dynamics need to be considered when educational professionals become involved in pupil consultation. A major recommendation from the IFS was that the use of a student council in student consultation projects has its place but that alternative structures such as specially constructed student run teaching and learning groups that view students as active partners in their learning should be created and utilised (Skene, 2013). I adopted this idea and have put it into practice over recent years within a student led student-as-researchers (SaR) project that has had positive learning outcomes at my current school.

There has always been an attraction for me to travel, teach and learn and this is what initially made me move from the Australian education world into the UK education system in 1997. My transition from the UK national schooling system to the international educational sphere in 2009 was essentially for family reasons but was also influenced by this attraction to travel, teach and learn which has been influential on my educational and professional outlook. As an international educator I have become aware of the similarities between teaching in a multi-cultural, diverse international school and an equally diverse state school in a 'global' city such as London. To a great extent international secondary schools are free from the national strictures of league tables and rankings and are relatively free to choose and design the curriculum that best suits their student body and community.

The two main curricular systems that I am interested in exploring are the secondary school International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP or MYP) and the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). These two systems are prevalent in international schools and can be viewed as relatively representative of the two forms of curriculum construction that I seek to investigate. I am interested in these middle year (grades 9 and 10) curriculums as exploring them allows us to enter the curricular debate between a process versus an outcome or linear based one. The three international schools that I am basing this comparative study on share the fact that the IBMYP and IGCSE are or have been until recently important to the educational instruction of their 14-16 year old children. All of the schools in this study are situated in the southern part of Germany (Bavaria) and serve a similar community base of roughly 20% to 25% nationals and 75% to 80% from the international community generally linked to the industrial economic base in the area. School A has the IGCSE as its middle year programme, school B (which was also the focus school for my IFS) recently abandoned the IGCSE in favour of the IBMYP and School C has adopted a combination of both IBMYP and the IGCSE.

The broad issue or problem that I am investigating in practical terms is the realisation that student and teacher participative interactions are not as fully utilised in informing teaching and learning as they might be (Rudduck and Flutter, 2000, Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, Lodge, 2008). Within this overarching issue the question about what major influences promote and suppress student voice initiatives emerges. Ultimately the answer to the question about what improvements to teaching and learning can be realised once the right conditions for building and sustaining student voice programmes have been established, is of great significance and this is an area

where little research has been done. This thesis explores these issues in an international school context and utilises the predominant curricular forms available to compare and comment on whether there is some influence on the promotion or suppression of student voice due to the curriculum regime chosen in the middle school years. To examine the problems outlined above, the need to collect and explore the opinions and views of students and teachers is fundamental.

The theoretical framework on which my research is based is constructivist and interpretive and the data collected qualitative in nature. Concepts of knowledge are challenging in that there is on-going debate about the ways of conceiving it and my own comprehension of what knowledge is continues to evolve. I am interested in exploring the opinions, views and conduct of individuals who are interacting and creating meaning within a contemporary social context and who are interacting within both a historical background and a conceptualised one. This approach utilises multiple pupil viewpoints to construct meaning, making unsuitable the use of quantitative methods where an objective reality is to be proven (Robson, 2010). In terms of ontology I am not searching for an objective reality of knowledge (whether it exists or not) but rather I feel fortified in recognising that some form of 'evolving' truth exists. Young's (2008) 'social realist' view of knowledge interests me as it suggests that human knowledge is not absolute but rather is socially constructed and best understood through a study of the social and sociological contexts from which it is constructed. Therefore this study employs a realist ontology and my understanding of the overlapped social construction of meaning leads to my adoption of an interpretive epistemology.

To this end my use of student focus groups and teacher interviews will garner significant qualitative data for analysis to inform discussion. This thesis is therefore

constructed from my collected field data from the three international schools and underpinned with the established academic research in the areas of student participation and curriculum design.

My aim is to explore the perceptions of teachers and students using curriculum conceptions in different international school contexts to theorise why student voice has an image problem and discover ways for clarification so as to overcome this perception predicament.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature on student voice, the curriculum and international dimensions, crucial to this thesis. Proportioned into six sections 2.1 concentrates on definitions of student participation, moving from the broader notion of student consultation to collaboration and then to my own definition of student voice. Section 2.2 explores student voice in a contemporary context investigating the recent research on the concept, drivers, teacher voice and issues of power, authority and identity. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 are focussed on the curriculum, at first developing a macro-definition of the curriculum and the interconnections between pedagogy and the curriculum, especially pedagogical content knowledge, then discussing the role of knowledge and finally debates surrounding curriculum theory and design. Section 2.5 analyses the concepts and forces impacting international schools and investigates the international curriculum research focussing on the two key international curriculums relevant to this study (the MYP and IGCSE). Section, 2.6 converges the two major fields of study for this thesis, 'curriculum' and 'student voice' discussing the contemporary research that has been conducted in this arena before a summary of the most significant findings from chapter one are presented in 2.7.

2.1 Student Voice: Terminology, Concepts, Theories

Student Participation and Consultation

Student Participation

The recognition of secondary students as important educational stakeholders beyond the traditional passive student role and the need to include them more in the educational life of the school is not a recent phenomenon. There has been a history

of interest in pupil 'viewpoints' in the UK, North American, Australian and European educational systems (Nordic countries in particular) going back to the 1960's and 1970's (Lodge, 2005). Nonetheless, the notion of student participation in the life of the school can be interpreted broadly. At one end it could simply mean 'bottoms on seats' suggesting that mere compliance with basic school rules may indicate that students are participating at school. At the other, more enlightened end of the spectrum, student participation refers to the dynamic interaction between students and teachers on a wide range of school issues including classroom teaching and learning thus creating new meaning about learning through dynamic dialogue (Fielding, 2001). This recognises that students can play the role of expert witnesses through their unique perspectives and valuable insights into what happens in the classroom and therefore should be able to participate more in school related decisions (Cook-Sather, 2002). The concept of student participation is indeed a broad one supporting and incorporating the related notion of student consultation and encompassing student voice, student researchers and student councils.

The use of students in participative projects or having students complete research within their own schools are worthy activities; however, it is by delving into the reasons behind these activities that we determine how rich and empowering the individual activity really is or can potentially be. If the emphasis is purely related to performance so that improved test results increase a school's standing in league tables or inspections, then the aim of improved student capacities as learners is absent. That is, a focus purely on performance will diminish student performance but an emphasis on learning will augment both learning and performance. The degree to which a school is engaged in participatory endeavors can be interpreted and defined through the use of some established constructive tools. Hart's (1997) metaphorical

ladder (appendix one, table one) was originally devised to measure the degree of youth participation with adults in social projects. Used in the classroom context it provides a basic continuum describing an ascending scale of pupil manipulation, decoration, tokenism at one end and moving towards more consultative and child initiated activities towards 'full' participation at the top rung. This model provides an informative starting point for teacher awareness but offers little in terms of deeper analysis. Lodge (2005) devised a matrix to help decipher the underlying politics and thus the impact of any particular student participatory activity (appendix two, figure one). In this matrix Lodge makes a distinction between student participation purposes that are forms of instrumentalism thus viewing the use of students to meet organisational effectiveness needs in contrast to the involvement of students in order to help in their human development. As such this matrix tends to be more helpful than Hart's Ladder assisting not only gauging the depth of participation but also the extent to which student collaboration is apparent. Lodge (2005) contends that in the dialogic sphere students are active participants in their own learning, exploring opinions with others and it thus requires engagement, openness and honesty. It is in this quadrant that learners start to become masters of their own learning, defining direction and gaining insight from fellow learners. The predicament for schools that are engaging in student participatory endeavors is to acknowledge why the school is undertaking the activity or activities, what real impact this will have or is intended to have on student's learning and to what extent do power differentials impact the process.

Fielding's (2001) series of nine question clusters (appendix three, table two) can assist a school community in understanding the degree to which participation is taking place and the relative worth and purpose of the participatory undertaking.

These nine questions enable an institution to ask what structures, attitudes, systems and cultures are in place (or are missing) to sustain student consultation and what the implications are for action. They have formed the skeleton of my own thinking when constructing a set of student focus group questions. They were devised during Fielding's pioneering work with his 'students-as-researchers' project (SaR) where the aim was to move away from the often manipulative forms of student consultation to a more radical approach as per previous projects such as Campbell, Edgar and Halsted's (1994) 'students-as-evaluators' project and the more recent children-as-researcher work of Mary Kellet (2005, 2011) at the Open University's Children's Research Centre (CRC). Fielding's concern that teachers who were increasingly engaging in student participation projects may lose sight of the transformative nature of the initiatives within a climate of school accountability.

If we are to avoid the dangers of developing increasingly sophisticated ways of involving students that, often unwittingly, end up betraying their interests, accommodating them to the status quo, and in a whole variety of ways reinforcing assumptions and approaches that are destructive of anything that could be remotely considered empowering, then we have to explore approaches that have different starting points and have quite different dispositions and intentions.

(Fielding, 2001:124)

The nine question clusters cover speaking, listening, attitudes, systems, spaces, action and the future, enabling a school to develop an interrogatory framework to overview, scrutinise and promote student participation. However, as a tool they are limited by the rigor and extent to which the researcher brings them into effective action. Nevertheless, they go beyond being a useful determinant of the depth of student participation activities and along with Lodge's Matrix enable an analysis of the motivations, power realities and sustainability of student collaboration initiatives such as student voice to be attempted.

Student Consultation or Collaboration

Beyond student participation the notion of student consultation or collaboration 'raises the bar' implying that two-way conversations are taking place between teachers and students about school matters and that there is an expectation that those conversations are leading to some form of action or reform (Flutter, 2007). Student consultation can be seen as both something to aim for in schools as a 'tool' in an ethical quest towards empowering young people and promoting active citizenship. Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) like Fielding (2001) warn us of getting 'too caught up' in involving students in adult-designed participative research methods uncritically as it may erode away at the agency that these 'expert witnesses' may hold. That is, students appear to have a voice but it is used to promote a particular view or focus of the adult researcher, thus twisting the age-old adage so that in such circumstances students become 'heard but not seen'. There can be student participation without consultation but not consultation without participation (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007).

The very notion of 'empowerment' implies that, without aid and encouragement from adult-designed 'participatory methods', children cannot fully exercise their 'agency' in research encounters. In this way, advocates of 'participatory methods' risk perpetuating the very model that they purport to oppose

(Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008: 503)

Traditionally students have been consulted in token ways where their opinions on topics other than teaching and learning such as dress code, lockers and facilities have been sought. Whilst student views are important in these 'comfort' matters the purpose and structure of the consultations are firmly controlled by the adult and thus limited to 'decoration'. A key point here is to consider what aspects of teaching and

learning are discussed if and when authentic 'voice' activities take place? Is it centered more on the pedagogy or content issues and to what extent and level of richness?

The establishment of a student school council is often viewed as a good way to involve students in consultative accomplishments and to develop democratic practices however it is frequently a minority activity where many young people are excluded from the proceedings (Lodge, 2005). Even those who are involved may be undermined by the restriction of their ability to engage in a dynamic generative form of conversation where they are the determinants of the conversational direction. The 2007 MORI Survey examined the views of secondary pupils from over 100 UK schools. Pupils surveyed agreed that having a school council was a worthy idea but that only 7% of the conversations involved input into staff recruitment or decisions based around the classroom and 5% into the curriculum (Whitty and Wisby, 2007a).

Student or Pupil Voice

In this section I will draw upon the various ideas around the notion of student voice to construct my own working definition for this study. I use the terms student voice and pupil voice interchangeably. Student voice is an idea embedded in the wider concept of student participation and then within student consultation conceptions and thus it is open to different interpretations (Flutter, 2007, Lodge, 2008). However, by its very nature it is integral to consultative notions of student involvement and fundamental to student-as-researchers (SaR) and other student consultative projects, that it is much like the metaphorical egg in a soufflé mix; it binds the rest together to give a truly meaningful experience of student consultation. Without true and authentic student voices the attempted process of pupil consultation is flat and dull; it fails to be

transformative and may do little more than become a form of instrumentalism (Fielding, 2001). Pupil voice is an essential ingredient giving a sense of form and direction to the practical notions of student consultation.

Whilst student participatory activities in schools have occurred for some decades in various degrees in Europe, North America and Australasia, the realisation of student voice as a rich form of dialogue has become more broadly accepted in recent times. The use of student perspectives in the U.S.A and U.K began in the 1990's among the school improvement movement and became the 'flavour of the month' for a while in UK public educational policy in the mid 2000's (Thompson and Gunter, 2006, Cook-Sather, 2006). As student voice becomes more widely used it may be in danger of losing its specific meaning, especially as teachers and policy makers increasingly view student voice as 'good' and 'doing student voice' as insightful and useful. However the delivery of the student voice activity varies greatly in its implementation and effect. It is therefore, important to state what the common themes are that run through this term and construct a clear definition (Hadfield and Haw, 2001, Lodge, 2008). Student voice in its most simplistic form can mean the process of allowing young people to speak about their school with the expectation or hope that someone is listening. Hargreaves (2004) takes this further by adding that those who are speaking need to be actively listened to otherwise the purpose of 'having spoken' is defeated; that is, the voices are authorised in sustained, meaningful ways and that tangible evidence, not just promises, result from it. Cook-Sather (2006) states that students have a legitimate perspective and opinion and thus have the right to have their opinion respected and listened to and condenses this thought into the words 'rights, respect, listening'. Macbeath, Frost and Pedder (2008) contribute a further dimension to the definition of student voice by

rationalising that dialogue is not just about speaking and active listening but that it goes further into the realisation of and benefits from shared meaning and mutual awareness between student and teacher. Quaglia and Corso (2014) add an interesting facet to our definition of student voice by stating that student voice is not about actively opposing something (sit-ins, walk-outs) but instead is about proactively advocating through participation the greater good of learning and that this collaboration has a longer term impact on student aspirations and achievement.

With respect to inclusivity there has been criticism of using the term 'voice' metaphorically to represent student views and voices. This view contends that the complexities of authorship in written forms are not represented and that the term does not acknowledge the complications of individuals' subjectivities, of context, and of relations of power (Kamler, in Cook-Sather, 2006). However, whatever the term applied, an underlying idea of student voice is that of authentic experience; that is an individual whose basis for understanding an issue is embedded in their experience of the issue over theory or training: an 'interior authenticity'. I feel that this genuine experience is shared by both students and teachers and creates a place where real dialogue leading to transformation can take place.

There is a caveat to 'doing student voice' and a warning to schools that the impact of misguided, 'tokenistic' student voice measures can be worse than doing nothing and that initiatives serving adult designs could have a 'toxic' impact on the school culture reinforcing and reproducing the role of students as the less powerful (Alderson, 2000, Lodge, 2008). A gap exists between what the student voice work is aiming to achieve (normative ideal or image) and the actual practical achievements, given the systemic authority hierarchies that constrain these possible accomplishments. Due to this 'image problem' there have been calls for a re-thinking of the theory behind

student voice work from an idealistic, emancipatory one to one more focused on the micro-benefits gained at an individual student, teacher and class level (Robinson and Taylor, 2007, Taylor and Robinson, 2009). Placing student voice within post-modern ideas that could fortify practice but also create more complexity and dissuade practitioners due to the many subjectivities involved. The popularity of student voice leading to 'surface compliance' i.e. a quick response focusing on 'what to do' rather than on 'why do it?' was explored by Rudduck and Fielding (2006) who then developed three issues for determining and developing credibility: power relationships, authenticity and inclusion. These issues direct the pupil voice movement towards a sea change in thinking about notions of childhood, genuine two-way interaction and disaffection among pupils.

Schools may well feel obliged to be seen to be 'doing it'—taking it on board without having the time to think through why they want to do it, how it fits with other initiatives within the institution's development plan and scheme of values, and what the personal and institutional risks are

(Rudduck and Fielding, 2006: 228)

Lodge (2008) emphasized that student voice should not be indiscriminately embraced by teachers in an uncritical manner, homogenised or romanticised in any way. Critical thought and planning must precede any student voice action, as its destabilizing impact on the status quo can be considerable.

My definition of the term student voice is nestled within the understanding that such activities are both beneficial to and misunderstood in schools from the previous research done in this area as outlined above. Student voice implies that sustained conversations about learning take place between the two parties that have a shared but differing interior experiential authenticity in education, namely the students and the teachers. That these activities if sustained should lead to some transformation in

the pedagogy of the classroom so that new experiences in learning emerge for both student and teacher. The significance of this definition can be directly linked to my research questions in that power differentials need to be navigated and a common ground be created before pupil voice activities take place so that such undertakings are entered into with the best chance of a positive outcome.

2.2 Contemporary Context

Recent Issues, Debates and Questions

Collaboration and Consultation

There has been a renewed emphasis among educational researchers on the value and importance of collaboration and consultation at all levels within schools in order to facilitate effective learning (Hargreaves, 2000, Fullan, 2014). We are told that the new economy requires creativity, entrepreneurship and global competencies and that schools should review whether they are preparing students with 21st Century skills that enable the young to aspire toward and reach their personal and professional goals (Zhao, 2014, CBI/Pearson, 2015). The 2008 economic credit crisis, high youth unemployment, many western educational systems ranking low on comparative world league tables (PISA) and an age of globalised super-complexity have called into question how schools are cultivating the talents needed for the future (Bourn, 2010, Zhao, 2014). Despite some serious issues over measurability and rigor, the use of international comparisons can assist national schooling systems to see themselves in the mirror of educational results and opportunities from the world's higher ranked school systems. Key characteristics of highly regarded and sometimes the highest performing educational systems is the reliance on high quality personalised learning experiences and professional learning community collaboration across the entire school system (Schleicher, 2014). New learning

partnerships between teachers and students and between teachers and teachers and also the wider school community are being re-defined to create new pedagogies for deep learning outcomes where all parties can share and learn from each other (Fullan, 2014). This thinking has spread so that there is a wider agreement that teachers should be focusing on collaborative processes that make learning and thinking public and shared or what Hargreaves (2000) called the move from the age of the autonomous professional into the age of the collegial professional.

There are challenges involved in setting up and sustaining professional learning communities in secondary schools so that they are done in authentic rather than technocratic ways. These include the difficulty to create shared meaning not only in the traditional departments but throughout the whole staff and the involvedness of nurturing the social capital from outside the school which depends on the quality of internal and external networks (Stoll and Seashore Lewis, 2007). Evans (2012) notes that schools are full of congeniality but that collegiality is problematic due to the culturally ingrained characteristic of conflict avoidance as well as personal and structural obstacles.

However, like links in a chain, the strength and sustainability of an organisation's ability to form collaborative relationships is a function of the human, societal and decisional capital that already exists and that has the potential to strengthen (Fullan, 2014). Underlying the establishment of a professional community is the core assumption that the objective is not to improve teacher morale or technical skill but to improve student learning and to focus on the relationship between teacher practice and the student (Stoll and Seashore Lewis, 2007). Creating and enhancing effective learning and effective learners should be at the core of any collaborative learning initiative in secondary schools. Watkins, Carnell and Lodge (2007) reinforce

the idea that active collaboration within learner agency (student responsibility for learning) and meta-learning are essentials for effective learning among students. This concept of constructive learning is continued by Lodge (2012) who sees learning as moving from reception (learning is being taught) to construction (learning is individual sense-making) to co-construction (learning is building knowledge with others).

If co-construction and collaboration are being given a re-birth among academic scholars to facilitate effective learning and school improvement where is the place of student participation and consultation in this drive?

Student Voice – Contemporary Context

The Child, The Student, Drivers

There has been a sea change in thinking about children as a group and as individuals and their place and perspective in the world in their own right and not only as a reflection of the adult world (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008). The rapid pace of social change over the later part of the twentieth century has signaled a reconsidering of notions and the conditions of contemporary childhood thus rendering a modernist sociology of childhood inadequate for late modernity. Prout (2011) in searching for the 'excluded middle ground' between three notions of childhood: children as agents versus children as social structure, childhood as social construct versus childhood as natural and childhood as being versus childhood as becoming, stresses the need for greater relationality. That is, a re-thinking of the child to adult identifications, relations and associated constructions of childhood and adulthood is required and that these are far from fixed so that both child and adult are considered partial 'becomings'. From this we can detect that there is a need for

adults in general (teachers, parents, researchers) to not speak too readily and too presumptuously on behalf of young people and that student views emerge through interplay, networking and democratic agency (Fielding 2001). This harmonises with the earlier paradigm shift in the social study of childhood namely that children should be studied for and in themselves, not simply as a means of understanding the adult world and that researchers should be attentive to the peculiarities and specificities of individual childhoods (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008). Kellet (2011) would argue that research planned, conducted and analysed by children themselves as student researchers offers the best insight into the complex world of the school student.

Three other drivers for the recognition of the significance of young people's voices have been: 1) the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), 2) the promotion of democratic principles in society and 3) the recent market-led consumerist approach to education. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity children are capable of and have the right of freedom of expression on all matters affecting them (article 12). Article 28 and 29 of the convention recognise the child's right to education and that the education develops the child to the fullest extent. The U.N convention has coincided with a change in the sociology of childhood that recognises a shift in the notion of the child from being a passive to a more empowered one.

Running through most of these articles is the principle of participation, which to a large degree is dependent on the child acquiring a range of skills including social skills and skills of communication and judgment; the aims of an education compatible with the principles of the convention must be to empower the child by providing opportunities to practice and develop these skills of participation.... Listening to pupils' opinions and needs may well have implications for the school as a whole.

(Osler, 2006:147)

The convention sets a global standard that is invariably open to national ratification, interpretation and international cooperation and thus is a necessary but not sufficient driver for universal compliance. The promotion of democratic principles in schools in the western world has been driven by the idea that students cannot learn democratic values without the experience of democratic school practices and the concern over the high level of political apathy among young voters in western societies (Lodge, 2005). Some national school systems have citizenship education as part of the curriculum and the widespread use of student councils or student governments is proffered as 'democracy in action' that can enhance the quality of democracy in the long term (Whitty and Wisby, 2007a). The UK Department for Education's CELS Report into citizenship education found that citizenship education had a positive influence on personal attitudes towards civic duties and personal efficiency but that greater teacher training and some initiatives to tackle the broader social, political and cultural challenges to citizenship were needed (Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy and Lopes, 2010). There are some convergent themes here with Dewey's idea of the 'common school' where differing cultural backgrounds are more cohesively incorporated into enriching school communities with the shared concern for the common good (Pring, 2007). However, critics of the common school model claim that a radical re-think of the underpinning theories of community are required if common schools are to have any real impact on the 'democratic mindedness' of tomorrow's citizens (Fielding, 2007).

Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) and Whitty and Wisby (2007a) contribute a further driver for pupil consultation viewing students as the main stakeholder group thus requiring schools to be more inclusive and offer more opportunities for involvement. The 'personalisation' driver claims that students have a right to active participation in

their education as consumers of this education with the aim of improving the quality of this service with inevitable links to school improvement. This view of students in consumerist terms is apparent in the additional use of student voice surveys in UK's Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment or PISA study (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, Quaglia and Corso, 2014). Nonetheless the view of students as consumers rather than participants in schools and the disquiet generated by the thinking behind the economic juggernaut that is the neo-liberalist commodification approach to education has been criticised from many quarters for its instrumentality. The consumerist approach is supported more through advocacy than evidence as a way of linking personalisation to student voice through personalised learning (Whitty and Wisby, 2007a). The claim is that personalised learning has the potential to move beyond a consumerist model to one of co-construction, an approach that is epitomised in the work of Leadbeater and Hargreaves. Assessment for learning is viewed as an essential part of personalised learning by assisting schools in achieving their missions of helping all students reach certain learning standards as a result of tapping into the confidence, motivation and learning potential that resides in every student. "Putting the wants and needs of individual learners at the heart of the system" (Leadbeater, 2004: 6). Hargreaves (2004, 2006) gives evidence from his work with 200 head teachers that the personalisation of learning through co-construction can have positive effects but that only 11% of the participants rated it as their most developed.

it is no coincidence that schools are reporting rich effects from the development of student voice, especially in the more radical versions that elicit student voice to improve the character and quality of the teaching and learning that take place

(Hargreaves, 2006: 19)

Whitty and Wisby (2007a) include another argument for pupil voice; that of school improvement, where the focus is on what can be gained by involving students in discussions on teaching and learning. The formulae may seem simple, that involving students in conversations about learning leads to improved engagement and steers better academic achievement, behaviour and emotional wellbeing. However, we must pay heed to a warning from Davies et al (in Whitty and Wisby, 2007a, p. 24) who suggest that although a positive link is apparent between pupil voice and school improvement the relationship is unproven empirically. This is echoed by Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) who in the absence of evidence from a representative survey claim with confidence from field research that the potential impact of pupil consultation will allow students to: feel more positive about school, have more positive perceptions of teachers, develop a stronger sense of ownership over the school, reflect on their learning, develop new skills (communication, research) and develop a stronger sense of self. These benefits will only be realised after careful introduction, through sustained ways and in time as mutual trust deepens between student and teacher and traditional power relationships are re-defined (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007).

A key feature of successful schools is the ability of teachers and students to form good and rewarding relationships and the positive impact this has on teaching and learning and student engagement (Brighouse and Woods, 2013).

Certainly if a pupil has no meaningful relationship with any teacher, one does feel sorry for them..it will be unlikely that school will have much use to them.

(Brighouse and Woods, 2013: 7)

The impact on the emotional wellbeing of students is an interesting consideration as students need to feel safe and appreciated in order to achieve and that

simultaneously being involved in student consultation activities leads to feelings of appreciation, trust and support, thus enhancing emotional wellbeing in schools. Quaglia and Corso (2014) bind these two features together to create their USA based 'aspirations framework' that uses student voice initiatives to relate deep learning with student self-worth, engagement and purpose. The aim is to create opportunities for students to feel that they belong to a school, are exposed to role models among the teachers and have the chance to take responsibility and leadership so as to be inspired about the future. This programme differs from others as it is based on empirical data through the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations (QISA). In a survey of 56 877 American school students their work shows that that 61% of middle school students say that they have a voice in their school but that this drops to 31% by twelfth grade. Students seem to experience less 'voice' the longer they are in school and this seems to correspond with the 2012 PISA study where student engagement falls dramatically from its highest point in first grade to a low in tenth grade before recovering a little in the senior years (Schleicher, 2014).

Student Voice Research

Power, Authority, Identity

Contemporary research into student voice activities in schools, despite being of varying focus, depth and international context has two commonalities. The first is the realised value that is inherent in the process of student dialogue with students, teachers and the school; the second is the overarching difficulties with the processes that accrue due to the historical imbalances in the enduring, complex power relationships inhabiting the connection between students and teachers. Schools can be viewed as 'caught up' in the complicated and unequal nexus of the cultural, economic and political organisations in which they co-exist and at the same time

through this association, reproduce and preserve these inequalities through entrenched operations (Apple, 2013). The pivotal role of teachers as political figures and the notion of dialogue between teacher and student, central to student voice conceptions, was initially theorised by Freire (1968). He viewed the importance of dialogue not in the technique itself but in the empowering and transformational possibilities it offers to the participants both teacher and student. Key to this is that each player brings differing and valuable identities, experiences and voices to a 'space' that has been influenced by social, economic and historical contexts and that recognition of these contexts, in this 'space' makes social transformation possible. Foucault's post modern view of power conceptualizes power not as something possessed by institutions and wielded oppressively against groups and individuals, as Freire does, but rather power is realised in the way that institutions and individuals relate and interact and thus how individuals position their voice and affirm their identity (Foucault, 1980). The postmodern perspective is less helpful to functional student voice initiatives but does help to shed light on the complex and malleable nature of student voice undertakings. That is, the constant revision of the little narratives (*petit recits*) that take place in the classroom highlights the subjective nature of student voice (Lyotard in Taylor and Robinson, 2009). Although it is not a complete language, Freire does provide a language to understand and engage the authoritarian forces inhabiting education. Critical pedagogy has emerged from Freire's social justice pedagogy incorporating student voices as part of teacher's critical awareness of their agency and that of the students within the societal strictures in which they operate and choose to conscientiously or unwittingly enforce. The curriculum is viewed as an important conduit for critical pedagogy when opportunities for interdisciplinary knowledge and multiple literacies are developed

(Giroux, 1999). If student empowerment is a key aspiration of pupil voice it is important to look at the impact of power imbalances on student voice projects.

It must be noted that teachers have an intellectual differential to students in terms of their experience and knowledge of the world and this differential is the foundation of teacher and students relationships in schools. Fielding (2001) attempted to affect this imbalance through the use of students-as-researchers (SaR) in his renowned project at Sharnbrook Upper School. Fielding (2001) advocates the need for a radical structural change in the way schools view and communicate with pupils, asking questions about how the school included or excluded student voices based on who was asked, about what and how? This radical approach recognised the need for a sea-change in the power relationships between, teachers and pupils and required the aims of the school to transcend an atmosphere of accountability (especially the UK and USA) into that of democratic agency. However, it may not be a question of how to change and reduce the power relationships but rather of recognising and negotiating within the existing power relationship spaces and this is what his nine clusters of questions tend to point one towards. That is a less radical and more pragmatic notion of power reconstitution be adopted by utilising Shulman's theory of pedagogical content knowledge (appendix five, figure three). The notion of a space within teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) where content knowledge, current class cultures and wider pedagogical notions could create a platform from where teachers are confident to interact (maybe for the first time) in dynamic dialogue with students.

Thomson and Gunter (2006) found that a 'student-as-researchers' project was both transformative and disruptive especially if approached through a 'rights' rather than a 'school standards' discourse. Although they conducted their research in a successful

secondary school with the support of a progressive head teacher they experienced difficulty and hindrance from both teachers and students about power play.

At Kingswood, and through our work with students, we are enmeshed in a tangle of issues which require us to continually negotiate practices which frame students' and staff experiences in ways that are simultaneously transformative and oppressive.

(Thomson and Gunter, 2006: 854)

These same questions of exclusion were addressed by Lodge (2005, 2008) who inquired about what extent students were regarded as active participants and for which purpose their voice was being used? Lodge (2008), always with a school improvement agenda in mind questioned the use of student councils as possible instruments of compliance and control where institutional purposes are dominant and political structures did not favour dialogue. How much impact or value a student council undertaking will have on school improvement will depend partly on how well the initiative gains sufficient status to be afforded whole school respect (Whitty and Wisby, 2007a). Cook-Sather's (2002, 2006) work in the USA conveyed that power relationships remain a barrier to authorising student voices and that a change in the adult mindset is required but there needs to be the ability for all students to play an active role in schools; for schools create the opportunity for all students to have a say and that schools develop procedures to establish sustained, routine ways to be responsive to students. Hadfield and Haw (2007) like Lodge question the role of student councils in dialogic pupil voice criticizing them for the small numbers of pupils involved and the evidence of the prevailing agenda of the school (the voice of the teachers) rather than the pupils.

Arnot and Reay (2007) cite Bernstein's notions of pedagogic discourse to consider the sociology of pedagogic voice to warn us that the voices we hear may be created

by the pedagogies rather than the voices needed to change the pedagogies and thus institutional inequalities are reproduced. If this is so then caution is required in assuming that power imbalances can be addressed through the elicitation of student talk and that a number of voices be critically recognised when collected by researchers: classroom talk, subject talk, identity talk and code talk. Another inherent power and identity issue with student consultation is the marginalisation of certain voices and the absence of disaffected voices in the consultative process, especially where the youth forum may attract and be attractive to the more verbally able members of the student body (Flutter, 2007). It was for this reason that I concluded that a student-as-researcher (SaR) initiative should not be made up of the student council members but rather a separate and independent student group to facilitate the voices of those marginalised or ignored. I also noted that the traditional power relationships that existed between teachers and students were being mirrored in the interactions between the student council executive and the rest of the student body (Skene, 2013). Kellet (2011) recognises that the relationship between student researcher and student participant is new territory where a number of power dynamics are at work e.g. older with younger, articulate with less articulate, rich with poor and children deemed to have official status (like a student council executive) with those who have none.

Similar power interactions have been recognised by Robinson and Taylor (2013) in their study of two students as researchers (SaR) projects. They questioned the transformative nature of students-as-researchers initiatives due to the overt and hidden forms of power relationship constructs including the researching students with the researched students, embedded in schools and that these can re-inscribe pedagogic control. However, it is imprudent to assume that all teachers want to

maintain the status quo (though some will want to) and that all students wish to challenge it. Advances in education can and have been made by radical teachers who have themselves challenged the existing state of educational affairs.

Cremin, Mason and Busher (2010) found that there were clear differences in the visual output (photographs and scrap books) that students who were categorised as either engaged or disaffected produced at the end of a pupil voice project at an urban secondary school. Thus highlighting that 'pupil voice' cannot be treated as singular or as having a presumed homogeneity for all students and that performance raising initiatives tend to engage the 'engaged pupil' to a greater extent than the disaffected pupil. Flutter (2007) brings a breath of spring to the discussion by finding that pupil voice strategies can be transformative experiences for both teachers and students and concentrates on their positive effect on teacher development. The research insists that the learning relationship changes with a re-shaping of the dynamic between pupil and teacher relationships and that pupil voice strategies be introduced sensitively and gently.

The seminal work of the Teaching and Learning Research Programmes (TLRP) Consulting Pupils about Teaching and Learning Project (TLRP) reported by Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) contends that secondary schools will benefit where there is a radical re-think about the power relationships between teachers and students and a genuine appreciation of the contribution students can make to classroom teaching and learning. A fundamentally important and almost self-evident claim arises from the TLRP and it is that good human relationships based on trust, respect and consistency must not be undervalued in schools, regardless of the structural relationship that has been imposed. This is given support from the work of Morgan (2009) who concluded that pupils enjoyed being consulted and value feedback and

that teachers can take heart from this finding. Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) have been criticised for pursuing a short-term personalisation agenda and for accepting uncritically the fundamental structures and characteristics of schools rather than aspire to the social justice ideals of the democratic school (Burke and Grosvenor, 2003). However, at the heart of their idea is the need to deal with the deep structures of schools as they are and the values they imbue to elicit a longer term change in the way the power relations between pupils and teachers are understood (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007).

Teacher Voice

Teacher voice and student voice are closely connected concepts as the empowerment of students can be effectively achieved through teacher empowerment. However, there is fear from the teaching body that one of the voices that could be marginalised is the 'teacher voice' and that a change in the power relationships will undermine teacher authority. "The argument runs that if too great an emphasis is placed on the pupil voice, there may be some risk that the teacher voice is silenced" (Flutter, 2007: 350). Bragg (2007) noticed in a two-year study of a pupil voice project in a primary school that the demands placed on teachers of having their 'professional identities' challenged was difficult for them despite the programme resulting in a positive re-defining of their professionalism. "Teacher voice has to be developed alongside pupil voice for the dialogue to be truly meaningful within a whole-school situation" (Bragg, 2007: 516). The pupil voice approach can be both difficult and rewarding for teachers, as it is catalyst for change, encouraging teachers to explore their own practice and think about what happens in the classroom (Flutter, 2007). The place of teacher voice in national educational reform agendas is noted by Trippestad (2011) in his rhetorical critique of the experience of

Norway's educational reforms of the 1990's. In this he warns of the dangers of national reforms by governments who "ignore the competence of teachers and ... marginalize the logic of the classroom in governing and reforming an education system" (Trippestad, 2011: 641). In examining of the U.K's 'Importance of Teaching' white paper, Trippestad (in Ellis and Orchard, 2014) again affirms the need for teacher voice and classroom experience to be included in the reformation of teaching and learning. He states that if this is not accomplished the multifarious machinations of teaching and learning as a complex social, historical and cultural phenomenon will be obscured by simplistic economic cause and effect reform policies. Teachers naturally want their opinions and feelings heard and understood; is it then not reasonable to expect students to want the exact same consideration (Quaglia and Corso, 2014)? The notion of teacher voice in the context of student voice is not one of teacher disaffection and power loss but rather that of experiential differential where the role of the teacher as a learned professional individual with authority and acquired wisdom that students recognise is essential in student voice activities.

Two items that are necessary for a school to build and sustain a commitment to student voice are: a school culture that values and listens to teacher voice and a culture of enquiry among teachers. Teachers as social individuals are restrained by and conform to the power relations that dictate the societal ideological power structures that surround them, much akin to the students themselves but negotiate them in ways different to students. It would seem that student agency is linked to teacher agency as they interact and refigure in the school landscape of power relations. However regardless of the power constructions, in terms of dialogic

interaction it would seem logical that there cannot be student voice without teacher voice (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007).

2.3 Curriculum: Terminology, Concepts, Theories

Curriculum- A Macro-Definition

The idea that a curriculum is what students 'do' or maybe what is 'done to them' each day at school is a common conclusion. Notions of a written syllabus plan or the content found in textbooks is another common conception of what the word curriculum represents, due probably to a nostalgic view of most people's schooling in the pre-professional age (Hargreaves, 2000). Kliebard (1996) suggests that a widely held view would be that at a fundamental level the curriculum is what is to be taught and what teachers do is teach the curriculum content. It is my argument that such a definition is inadequate in its usefulness and depth and to holistically answer the question a macro definition of curriculum is required. The wide definition as adopted by Kelly is: "the curriculum is the totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provision made" (Kelly, 2009: 13). Such a definition should not be misinterpreted so that it encroaches on the very idea of 'schooling' as it emphasizes at its core the centrality of the teacher's position to learning provision whether intended or not.

Our definition must embrace all the learning that goes on in schools, whether it is expressly planned and intended or is a by-product of our planning and practice.

(Kelly, 2009:11)

Curriculum and Pedagogy: Borders and Crossings

The explicit curriculum is transferred through structured objectives, subjects and assessments whereas the implicit curriculum is subtle and powerful having more to do with the way things are learnt through the thousands of incidents and interactions that occur through the way people are when they teach and learn and engage with one another (Eisner, in Quaglia and Corso, 2014:158). The idea of the implicit curriculum overlaps substantially with notions of the 'hidden curriculum'. Husbands (2008) uses curriculum theory to construct a four-tier model of curriculum types: 1. Formal (prescribed) 2. Planned 3. Delivered 4. Hidden. The prescribed curriculum is often statutory, coming from a national government or educational board whilst the planned curriculum is specific to an individual school and adapts the prescribed curriculum with the school's specific learners, resources and ethos. The planned curriculum (sometimes called a written curriculum) differs from the delivered curriculum as students do not always receive or experience what has been planned on a formal level. Finally the hidden curriculum contains the implicit and sometimes unintended messages that a school conveys about knowledge, achievement and societal constructs.

The borders and boundaries of the delivered or experienced curriculum and the hidden curriculum offer a rich area of interaction where individual experiences and power negotiations between students and teachers thrive (appendix four, figure two). In this way students function much like the border-crossers described by Giroux (1997) moving and struggling between differing physical, social and cultural contexts. Kelly (2009) maintains that the influence and role of the teacher is central to the planned curriculum (and subsequently the delivered curriculum) as teachers will adapt and change the planned curriculum to suit their own personal and local purposes. Thus teacher's competence and moral purpose are paramount and

fundamental in a discussion of curricular planning and to the process model in particular. The curriculum must inspire teachers if it is to be used by them to inspire students (Bruner, 2009). The proposition arises that if relationships and interactions as well as the role of the teacher are fundamental to curriculum construction what is the role of the pupil in this dynamic and how can these curricular 'crossing points' empower or suppress student voices?

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

The role of the teacher to curricular provision and construction is an important one leading to a poignant juncture in terms of the connections and boundaries between the two. Young (2015) stresses that there is an operational distinction between the existence of the written curriculum and the existence of pedagogy in educational institutions. The curriculum should embody the aims and goals of the school in terms of 'powerful knowledge' whilst the pedagogical aspect must be about the mechanisms of teaching and learning performed by the teachers as professional experts. Young (2015) asserts that these two are distinct and thus the role of student consultation has no place in curricular design but instead does have a place in pedagogy. We can negotiate this dichotomy made by returning to the ideas of Shulman (1986) which I believe points the way to a middle ground by re-contextualizing the borders between curriculum and pedagogy. Shulman's idea of 'pedagogical content knowledge' (PCK) hypothesises that teaching involves a specialised kind of knowledge that exists in the center ground separate from subject content knowledge and curricular knowledge where applications of the school curriculum are fused with professional expertise to fill a "missing paradigm" and transform subject matter knowledge for the purpose of teaching.

Particular form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability...the most useful forms of representation..the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanation, and demonstrations-in a word, the ways of formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others

(Shulman, 2004: 4)

Shulman's curiosity in debates centering on the apparent partition of a teacher's professional role as either subject knowledge specialist or pedagogic expert, without the notion of the two forming an indistinguishable body of understanding led to his re-positioning of these into a new interpretation (Shulman, 1986). The notion of 'pedagogical content knowledge' signifies the zone of interaction where teacher voice and student voice can combine to create real, dynamic, dialogic impact and is similar to the decidedly teacher influenced boundary suggested by Kelly (2009) between the planned and hidden curriculum, that is the delivered curriculum inhabiting an area amidst the explicit and the implicit curriculum (appendix four, figure two). Criticisms of a static view of PCK center upon re-definitions of the concept in terms of subject specifics and its inter-disciplinary utility. Bednarz and Proulx (in Depaepe, Verschafel and Kelchtermans, 2012) believe that in a classroom context PCK is a 'knowing to act' inherently linked to and situated in the dynamic act of teaching. Others have criticized Shulman's definition as too narrow adding two other components: 1. Teacher's knowledge of students and 2. Teacher's understanding of the social, political, cultural and physical environments of the learning space (Cochran, King and DeRuiter, 1991). Whilst the traditional model of PCK remains uniquely the province of teachers, this new conceptualization opens new ground for student knowledge to merge into a new conceptualization of PCK.

PCK can be demonstrated pictorially as a Venn diagramme with circles expanding with experience where subject matter (content) knowledge intersects with

pedagogical knowledge. The addition of a third category: knowledge of student learning creates a dynamic zone of interaction for dialogue to take place (appendix five, figure three). I feel that the term 'concepts' can be placed alongside the term 'content' in the subject matter sphere in order to broaden the idea that it is not just subject content knowledge that teachers possess but higher order conceptual subject understandings as well.

2.4 Knowledge and Curricular Constructions

In this section I explore theories on 'knowledge in the curriculum' before examining the ideological debates around curriculum design and its currency for the theoretical perspective of my research

Knowledge and the Curriculum

Considering what knowledge is dominant in the school curriculum and how this knowledge is created serves as a reminder that we are dealing with ideologies rather than eternal truths (Kelly, 2009).

For once we recognise the problematic nature of human knowledge, we must also acknowledge that in making decisions about the content of the curriculum we are dealing in ideologies rather than eternal truths

(Kelly, 2009: 33)

Young (2008, 2013) concentrates on questions of what knowledge has been deemed relevant in our system and how this has evolved. He makes the claim that there is a crisis in curriculum theory requiring a re-thinking of sociology in educational terms in order to answer to the questions; what is worthwhile knowledge and what are the implications to curriculum design? He does so by making the claim that questions about curriculum theory should not originate from the learner but from the learner's entitlement to knowledge.

the question that teachers are faced with becomes limited to 'is this curriculum meaningful to my students?' rather than 'what are the meanings that this curriculum gives my students access to?' or 'does this curriculum take my students beyond their experience and enable to envisage alternatives that have some basis in the real world?'

(Young, 2013: 106)

In considering Bacon's maxim 'knowledge is power' it seems that the major conceptualisations of the school curriculum encapsulate knowledge to enable young people to wield power due to the access it provides to society's debates and concerns (Wheelahan, 2008). Establishing the purpose of the curriculum can be seen as a careful balancing act between the principles of transmitting knowledge, developing useful skills and producing rounded individuals for a democratic society. Incorporated within this dynamic is the realisation that the curriculum can be susceptible to the most dominant and influential social group or ideology in a nation state manipulating and determining what kinds of knowledge are available in the curriculum (content and principles) (Bernstein, in Kelly 2009: 47).

The two main ideologies that exist in the view of knowledge in the curriculum debates are the neo-conservative view and the technical-instrumentalist position that have the notion of 'knowledge as power' at their core. The neo-conservative stance is a traditional approach that places knowledge within subject disciplines where a body of knowledge, a 'gold standard' of timeless truths are transferred from the 'knowers' to the 'soon to know' through introspective activities. Neo-conservatism corresponds with the 'content model' of curriculum providing an argument for education of itself and not just a means and provides a way of maintaining standards and conditions for innovation (Wheelahan, 2008, Young, 2008, Kelly, 2009). Freire (1968) called this the 'banking model' of education, where knowledge is deposited in an individual's head. Knowledge is lifted above the notions of the everyday (profane)

or practical to the theoretical (sacred) providing a sense of insularity where for pedagogical significance the curriculum is divided into disciplines (Moore, 2000). Neo-conservatives claim a drop in standards can be blamed on the second ideology, namely the technical-instrumentalist conviction where thinking is in concurrence with the 'curriculum as product' approach. Technical-instrumentalists believe the curriculum should address what the evolving knowledge-economy (K-economy) needs in terms of skills and competencies (Young, 2008, Kelly, 2009). The new boundary-less character of modern economies impacted as it is by globalisation and the importance of Twenty-First Century skills for human capital should be reflected by a level of hybridity where subject borders are permeable and knowledge chosen through the principle of relevance. This vocational and practical approach reminds us that the employability of society's young people is a major economic goal that is imposed upon the educational structures that exist in society and that: "knowledge not perceived as professionally relevant is accorded low status by students, memorized if needed for examinations but rapidly forgotten there-after" (Eraut, 2010: 120). Postmodernist and constructivist ideas have little to contribute in terms of bringing the knowledge debate into the curriculum. Post modernism claims that the subjective nature of knowledge as a construct results in all views of the curriculum being flawed but does not offer any alternative objective solution to curriculum creation and therefore has no practical consequence for curricular construction (Moore and Muller, cited in Young, 2008: 5). Forms of constructivism which are based upon the process of socially constructed meaning are thus embedded in the tacit, everyday, applied elements of meaning and the boundary between the everyday and the abstract then evaporates and with it the ability of students to discern and breach these knowledge boundaries (Wheelahlan, 2008).

Regardless of the ideological standing and despite the sociological stance taken, it is clear that the place of knowledge in curriculum construction is paramount and that the overall importance of knowledge in education should not be taken for granted but should exist at the heart of any educational discussion.

Education should be founded on the disciplines of knowledge because they provide a framework of criteria and principles of procedure and a means of justifying these.

(Stenhouse, 1975: 93)

Debates concerning Curricular Designs

I turn now to investigating the major curricular constructions that have arisen in the Twentieth Century and how they have attempted to seek meaning within and contributed to curriculum theory. Tyler (1949) despite formulating his ideas after the momentum of some early twentieth century curricular thinking provides a sound starting point for an overview with his four curricular elements stated as four questions:

1. *What educational purposes do we wish to attain (objectives)?*
2. *What educational experiences will help achieve these purposes (content)?*
3. *How can these experiences be effectively structured (methods)?*
4. *How can we determine that these purposes have been attained (evaluation)?*

(Tyler, in Kelly, 2009: 20)

In this we have what has been referred to as the “linear model” which provides a simple formulae for curriculum planning and opens up the possibility of adopting a number of planning models or forms, each reflecting a different educational ideology of knowledge and humanity and society. In essence a linear model is one where

content and skills are transferred by the educative process that is followed by assessments to ensure that the transmission of knowledge has occurred.

The 'curriculum as content and education' as transmission model' is based on an absolutist epistemology where the notion of the 'intellect over the senses' bestows some bodies of knowledge with the inalienable right to be part of the school curriculum that is a 'gold standard'. Proponents of this curricular rationale use elements of a foundationalist framework to argue that self-evident truths arising from philosophical, psychological or cultural foundations should be included in the curriculum (Scott, 2014). Thus the true value of the curriculum is recognised in the knowledge itself to a greater extent than how the learner approaches and interacts with this knowledge. Young (2013) would give some support to this view with the advocacy of his context-free 'powerful knowledge' idea. Although meant to empower those without the cultural capital to access 'powerful knowledge', this may disaffect some sectors of society (class, economic, ethnicity) who do not value the culture that is reflected in the curriculum or who have access to a form of curricular knowledge that falls short of being dubbed 'powerful' (Kelly, 2009).

We saw there that to view knowledge as being in some sense God-given, independent of the knower, as sui generis, is to approach the problem of the status of human knowledge by studying knowledge itself rather than the social context and the social relations within which it is produced

(Kelly, 2009: 57)

The content model can be justified via the argument of education as an end in itself rather than a means and the 'tradition' element gives endorsement to the need to maintain standards in society that endure as a means of maintaining established norms and providing the stable conditions for innovation. This form of curriculum design could also be viewed too inefficient and elitist to provide the necessary skills

and qualifications to the majority of a nation's young people and the issue then would be one of inclusion and access to the knowledge contained in the curriculum (Young, 2008, 2015). However, if such knowledge is arrived at via an inclusive, democratic and rational process there would be grounds to claim that the content model may not be elitist and irrelevant to societal sectors.

The content-based curriculum in its purest sense preserves tradition, where learners acquire an organized body of information and prescribed skill within well defined, stable subject boundaries (Ross, 2000). Basil Bernstein's typology of curriculum types uses as its structure frame and classification and introduces the possibility of a thematic curriculum to exist within a curriculum as content model. Frame defines the teacher-pupil control over content transmission and classification defines the strength of subject boundaries. Two possible types of curriculum exist according to this framework, a collection code type and an integrated code type (Bernstein cited in Ross, 2000: 99-100). The collection type is typical of a curriculum that is clearly defined by subjects, a fixed timetable, summative assessment and limited pupil choice while the integrated type is more thematic, flexible with greater pupil choice and multiple mode assessment. Ross (2000) raises the question why has curriculum changed so little in western democracies from the collection model? It may be that the move away from an established content or product model with its rigid boundaries to a more flexible integrated curricular 'type' is hindered by the prevailing power relationships that prefer to keep students compliant and emphasises the delivery of the curriculum to a group and not on the learning of the individual (West-Burnham, 2009). Young (2015) advocates for the necessity for boundaries and borders in the curriculum in terms of the creation of knowledge. In this way boundaries assist students to understand a knowledge limit and therefore the need

to break through the boundary through the learning continuum or the 'ascent of the student'. Boundaries also assist teachers in their professional capacity to order the curriculum and to plan the learning in some substantiated way where students are co-creators of knowledge as is the aim of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1997)

Student passivity could be endemic in the content model as the ultimate product is a student behaviour required to meet an objective and therefore the moulding of humans in accordance with a 'blueprint' in contrast to a child-centered 'progressive' approach. Structurally it requires the breaking down of aims into goals and into objectives, assuming that learning is linear rather than developmental (Kelly, 2009)

The focus of this approach to educational planning, then, is essentially on the modification of pupil behaviour, and the success of such a curriculum is to be gauged by an assessment of the behaviour changes the curriculum appears to have brought about in relation to those it was its stated intention to bring about

(Kelly, 2009: 72)

Hirsch (1999) rejects the indulgences of the mid-twentieth century's 'progressive education' movement and calls for a return to content driven curricula with what he refers to as the teaching of 'cultural capital' in terms of literature, history, mathematics and so forth. This stand has mainly been in response to the widening achievement gap between American high school graduates and those of other industrialised nations and what are perceived as the failures of American progressive education. Such a position gives support to the content curriculum as a provider of basic skills, providing clear basis for evaluation and the provider of a clear sense of purpose. A return to a scientific-management tradition in American education is naturally rejected by the proponents of the 'child-centered learning' tradition who believe that learning is a continuous process where the development of understanding rather than the acquisition of knowledge is the aim. Some current

supporters of Dewey and Bruner's constructivist thoughts recognise that the explicit curriculum holds an important place but that a curriculum that develops student's intellectual capital in terms of critical thinking skills, virtues and values should be the ultimate educational aspiration (Giroux, 1997, Ritchhart, 2002, Gardner, 2011).

The 'curriculum as product and education as instrumental' is a curricular design based on the objectives approach or 'technicist' view which began with the progress in science and technology in the early twentieth century. This approach perceives education as a 'means to an end' where aims, targets and goals in the fashion of a scientific or employment related purpose have relevance to the instrumental aims of a national economy. This model assisted Tyler (1949) in formulating his aims and objectives framework and Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives gave further support for this view of curriculum through the classification of objectives as cognitive, affective and psychomotor. This view of the curriculum is often associated with the technical-instrumentalist advocates, who remind us that the curriculum is inevitably related to the economy in that the employability of youth is a major outcome of all national educational systems (Young, 2008). Both the curriculum as content and curriculum as product models place the emphasis of a lesson not on the learning experiences of individual students but with the overall instructional 'flow' of the lesson, that is how well it is proceeding to its intended end whilst maintaining order (Hargreaves, 2010). Instrumentalism can be defended in that it is aspirational in the sense that the wider goals or aims of society be encapsulated in the curricular content and pedagogy of today to meet the visions for the future (Scott, 2014). Once again the question needs to be asked; who is setting the vision of the future and for what purpose?

An amalgam of the content and product models creates the 'combined model' upon which it can be said that the U.K national curriculum is based. This model might appear to give the best of both worlds however; Kelly amusingly describes it as giving "the worst of both" (Kelly, 2009: 84). The curriculum content is prescribed and delivered in 'bite-sized chunks' with attainment targets (objectives) thus risking the cultural disaffection of the content model and the instrumentalism of the product model.

The 'pragmatist philosophical' ideas of Bruner, Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky, amongst others have contributed to the thinking behind a third type of curricular form, the 'curriculum as process' model. This model leads to a rejection of a knowledge base as a root for curriculum planning and the use of 'aims' by emphasising the processes that underpin the education and that these processes are based upon human development stages experienced by young people (Kelly, 2009). The ideas of Stenhouse (1975) have been crucial in the conceptualisation of the process model. Stenhouse suggested that aims and objectives be replaced with general educational principles that underlay the particular curricular activity. An example of this would be Rath's list of 'inherent worth' criteria that represent a formulation of behavioural objectives that are accessible to students and teachers.

All other things being equal, one activity is more worthwhile than another if it permits children to make informed choices in carrying out the activity and to reflect on the consequences of that activity..... All other things being equal, one activity is more worthwhile than another if it asks students to engage in inquiry into ideas, applications of intellectual processes, or current problems, either personal or social
(Rath, in Stenhouse, 1975: 86)

Children are viewed by proponents of the process model as human beings with a history and anticipated future rather than 'empty vessels to be filled' and who thus are entitled to control over their destinies with a sense of individual empowerment

through active learning as the social landscape of childhood (and adulthood) changes (Kelly, 2009, Prout, 2011). Elements of student voice are seen here in the process form of curriculum in that pupils should have the right to comment on and contribute to a 'truly' democratic curriculum along with other interested partners such as parents. Governments are not comfortable with the process model as it is expensive and difficult to centrally control. A stark criticism of the process model is that its strengths depend on the creative energy and quality of the teachers who are delivering and planning the curriculum, a poignant view that remains relevant to the present day (Stenhouse, 1975, Kelly, 2009).

The major weakness of the process model of curriculum design will by now have become apparent. It rests upon the quality of the teacher. It is also its greatest strength.....Any process model rests on teacher judgment rather than on teacher direction. It is far more demanding on teachers and thus far more difficult to implement in practice, but it offers a higher degree of personal and professional development. In particular circumstances it may well prove too demanding

(Stenhouse, 1975: 96-97)

It would seem that any debate about curriculum design includes the key discussion about the centrality of the role of the teacher within it. Where teacher voice and student voice connect and weave within the curriculum debate is something that I believe is of great significance. The curriculum debate is not restricted to national schooling systems and the varying degrees of autonomy that they have in deciding the structure and design of the curriculum they deliver. It also crosses over to the ever-growing international schooling arena. Free from national league tables, a national curriculum, rankings and other trappings of national accountability, it would seem that schools that purport to be international have more autonomy over choosing the curriculum best suited to their mission, student and teacher population and community.

2.5 International Dimensions

International Schools and International Mindedness

I am investigating three secondary schools that not only purport to be international in nature but that adhere to an international curriculum, providing either the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) or the International Baccalaureate Middle Year Programme (MYP) as part of the middle school programme of study.

A rudimentary definition of an international school includes the prerequisite: a curriculum that should be a distillation of the best content and the most effective instructional practices of the national systems (Terwilliger in Hayden and Thompson, 2008: 21-22). The freedom that international schools have in terms of choosing a curriculum free from national strictures and unfettered from national accountability in terms of league tables and ranking regimes is significant. International schools are less likely to make curricular decisions based upon these considerations and perhaps be more open to initiatives such as student voice. This does not mean that other issues of accountability do not exist, such as the pressures exerted by the parent body or the owners of 'for-profit' international schools, the pressures of global capitalism and a variety of cultural contexts may take the place of national restrictions. Given the growing number and range of international schools (recently estimated at 4000 with 50% in Northern America) attempts to categorise them using static characteristics has its limitations (Hayden and Thompson, 2008). Given this, a school should not necessarily be deemed to be international due to its international student population or location as there needs to be a more fundamental attachment to international principles and philosophies in the make-up of the school before the term 'international' is bestowed. Dower (in Abdi and Schultz, 2008: 39) states that

global awareness, as global citizens should be one of these guiding principles, whilst Hill (2000) suggests that the term 'internationally minded' should be employed to describe a school instead of 'international' as it is rooted in the philosophy of international understanding rather than reliant on the composition of the pupil or teacher base.

The term internationally minded (IM) is subjective and it is thus difficult to specify a conclusive definition to relate to a school. In short it could refer to the ability to 'understand the other' however, a comprehensive definition for international mindedness could encompass elements of international awareness and an appreciation for different beliefs, customs and values and the willingness to recognise potential conflicts as well as the ability to take further action in order to further positive internationally minded principles (Walker, 2004, Duckworth, Levy and Levy, 2005, Dolby and Rahman, 2008, Hayden and Thompson, 2008). A criticism of IM is that it must be more than a idealized mindset but rather a real-world mindset that reaches beyond the immediate world through perspective taking and communication, where students see themselves as actors in a global matrix and take action in a creative, ethical and critical way. Walker (2004) argues that international mindedness is at the heart of international education by advancing the idea that globalisation creates tension between human diversity and human unity.

Cultural difference is what makes sense of most people's lives; and there is little evidence that the onward march of globalisation is reducing the world to a state of cultural uniformity

(Walker, 2004: 3)

Duckworth, Levy and Levy (2005) emphasise that the individual in our definition of international mindedness refers not just to students but to adults as well. This confers the idea that globally minded students need to be taught by globally minded

professionals in a diverse, insightful, open minded and emotionally intelligent learning community and view international schools as global agents of change (Bagnall, 2007). Such a reflective environment would seem to be a rich base from which activities such as student voice could form and flourish. However, the view that international mindedness must be the remit of the international sphere exclusively is being eroded by the advent of national systems taking on international curriculums like the IBO or aspects of them (English Baccalaureate). In global cities such as London and Hong Kong the need for professional teacher competencies to include global perspectives is important (Steiner, 1996). Half of the 5000 entries for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education made in 2013-2014 were from within the UK (Cambridge International Examinations, 2014). Hargreaves (2000) suggests that the impact of the forces of globalisation in terms of economics and communications are re-defining all (not just international) teachers as post-modern professionals in a world that is in a state of flux and fraught with de-professionalising forces. In this case it may be better to conceptualise all schools in the future whether international or national through a common set of frames for example moral, political, leadership, learning and cultural in order to understand an institution's philosophy and to be able to make effective school comparisons.

International Curriculum Research

Globalisation has been a significant driver in the growth in international education and whilst forms of international schooling have existed for centuries it has been in recent decades that these global drivers have accelerated (Marginson, 2008). Globalisation as a force has synchronised financial markets, encouraged greater foreign direct investment and the spread of English as a common language medium, augmenting the flow of people, ideas and capital within and across national borders

(Marginson, 2004). Neo-liberal political and economic ideology has propelled the market-driven spread of globalisation and this raises questions about the form of curricula through international education that is being transported around the world as possible 'cultural imperialism' (Unterhalter and Carpentier, 2010). If international education and international schools as we currently define them are embedded in a 'individualist' western liberal humanist philosophy; we must be cognisant of the local contexts in which international schools are situated especially in countries whose culture is embedded in an eastern philosophy (Tamatea, 2008). This is not to say that western held educational beliefs are wrong or alternatively that East Asian nations with Confucian conceptions of teaching and authority where pre-professional notions of teaching exist should be dismissed or uncritically transposed to the west (Hargreaves, 2000). Indeed traditional Confucian notions of teaching and learning may dismiss western student voice ideas as incongruous in an eastern context.

The rapid growth in international education has been a major driver in the development of international programmes of secondary school study that are available to international schools. An area of unprecedented growth exists in the provision of curriculums available to students in the middle years of secondary schooling. The two main programmes on offer are the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the International Baccalaureate's Middle Year's Programme (IBMYP). Both programmes are now well established world-wide serving a broad range of both national and international educational institutions.

MYP Versus IGCSE

The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) is one of twelve programmes and qualifications administered by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). The IGCSE is the largest and fastest growing middle year's curriculum for 14 to 16 year old students in the world (traditionally grades 9 and 10). Indeed, the Cambridge prospectus states that it is "The world's most popular international qualification for 14 to 16 year olds" (Cambridge International Examinations, 2014: 11).

The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) offers a continuum of four educational programmes for students aged 3 to 19 years in more than 3,900 schools, teaching over one million students worldwide. It developed the Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) for 11 to 16 year old students in 1994 aiming (like all IBO programmes) to encourage personal and academic achievement and has at its core the aspirational notion of creating a more peaceful world by means of intercultural understanding and respect. It is now implemented by 1117 schools in 95 countries (IBO, 2014).

The IGCSE is a two-year programme traditionally viewed as a linear curriculum with links to both the UK's General Certificate of Education (GCSE) and A-level programmes of study (Ellwood, 1999). It attracts over 750 000 entries each year from 140 countries and over 5000 schools including 2500 in the UK, only eleven schools in the UK offer the IBMYP (Cambridge International Examinations, 2014). The IGCSE has prescribed syllabus content where assessments take place at the end of each course based upon assessment criteria with most of the subjects obtaining the majority of these marks from external examinations and externally moderated coursework (Cambridge International Examinations, 2014).

The five-year Middle Year Programme is underpinned by a constructivist ethos where learners are viewed as independent makers of knowledge and thus has more in common with the IB Primary years Programme (IBPYP) than the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) (Guy, 2001). The programme relies on continuous internally based assessment methods grounded in subject specific criteria in rubric form utilising teacher judgment and the mandatory external moderation of assessment samples, although the recent changes herald planning for future implementation of an optional external assessment (e-assessment) in the final year (IBO, 2014). The introduction of external examinations in the MYP could be viewed as undermining the educational philosophy of inclusive student centered learning.

Whilst comparative studies have shown that the content across IBMYP and IGCSE specifications is broadly similar and that age 14-16 student performance and engagement for the most part is comparable, students in IBMYP schools have a more pronounced awareness of non-scholastic attributes such as international mindedness, critical thinking and citizenship self-efficiency (Wade, 2011, Wade and Wolanin, 2013, Sizmur and Cunningham, 2013). The emphasis on global learning and cultural awareness within a more inclusive environment and a de-emphasis on standardized testing and its positive motivational impact on students when compared to students in more traditional prescriptive curricular schooling at state level (Sillisano, 2010, Sizmur and Cunningham, 2013) This international mindedness element of the IBMYP impels Guy (2000) to question whether the IGCSE can be placed at the same level as the IBMYP in terms of stature as an international curriculum and also cites the requirement for schools to become accredited to offer the IBMYP. Guy (2000) also questions the compatibility of the IBMYP and IGCSE curricular hybrid model that is apparent in some schools stating that the mind-sets

required by teachers to deliver the programmes and the constructivist nature of the IBMYP limits a successful intertwining of the two. Guy (2000) uses the notion of MYP teachers being able to identify and utilize student 'learning styles' to give support to the independence of the MYP. The use of learning styles is now generally discredited as a pedagogical foundation due to it being based upon fundamentally flawed research (Learning and Skills Research Centre, 2004). This hybrid however, is supported by Ellwood (1999) who views the holistic 'process' stance of the IBMYP and the well-defined 'objective' structures of the IGCSE as being complementary. A hybrid model that requires students to complete IGCSE external examinations and the personal project succeeds in the aim of setting high expectations but may impose additional unnecessary and perhaps harmful burdens on students (Guy, 2001).

The IGCSE and the IBMYP do share the commonality of discipline based structures and frames and that schools that have created purely thematic IB Middle Years Programs have not created a coherent curriculum in the true essence of the guiding IBO principles. The IBMYP is not a thematic, purely interdisciplinary programme but rather one that is subject based that promotes thinking and learning by accentuating meaningful subject links through areas of interaction (Armstrong, 2000). Although it only makes up one of a number of criteria (criteria A) and is not prescribed, content and knowledge is still an integral component of each of the eight MYP subjects. The IGCSE is less flexible in terms of content and offers a range of subjects for balance, whilst the IBMYP is less prescriptive, balancing the interrelationships between disciplines to offer a 'holistic curriculum' (Guy, 2000, Sizmur and Cunningham, 2013). However, the implementation and sustainability of any meaningful curriculum that promotes inquiry, interrelationships and wider conceptual thinking be it IGCSE

or IBMYP ultimately relies on the forces of creativity and inspiration among the teachers who are at the forefront of delivering these programmes within their particular social, political and cultural frames of reference.

2.6 Previous Research on Student Voice and the Curriculum

Research on initiatives that explore the connections between student consultation and the curriculum continues to be rare. This has been the case since I began looking at this area in the mid 2000's and was one of the reasons that I decided to research further into this relatively unexplored area of interest. Most of the research explores the connection between student voice and its impact on teaching and learning in the wider definition of curriculum. In this way the previous research explores student consultation forms and the boundary between the formal curriculum and pedagogy which can be formalised as Shulman's (2004) pedagogical content knowledge (PCK).

Brooker and Macdonald's (1999) formative study used a feminist and post-structuralist analysis to investigate how student voice was used in evaluation procedures for a senior physical education (PE) syllabus in Australia. They found that student voice had been marginalised due to positioning both in terms of the way student voice was framed conceptually: a homogenised/single entity voice and framed systemically: at the end of the process when significant decisions had already been made. Similarly, the framing of student voices at the end of the curricular design process is criticised in the CIDREE report (2006), where a number of European curriculum development agencies limited the role of pupils to that of reviewers of pre-constructed curriculum or used one-way questionnaires to gather pupil views. This is significant in subjects such as PE and the Arts where the

influence of student consultation can amplify and add value to the learning experience in ways not often realised in the more traditional core subjects (Skene, 2009).

While the curriculum supposedly exists to serve the interests of learners, their preferences, if sought at all, are marginalized and their voices are mostly silent in curriculum making. This marginalisation of student voice is of particular concern in such subjects as physical education (PE) in which the essence of the subject is closely linked to the interests and culture of learners

(Brooker and Macdonald, 1999: 84)

Young (1999) incorporates a similar notion in his 'curriculum of the future' where he sees the need for a re-think about what knowledge exists and should exist in a relevant senior secondary curriculum. The process of social stratification which enables society's power wielders to imbue school curriculums with their views of knowledge needs to be questioned if the curriculum is to be meaningful to learners. Young (1999) calls for the need to position student voice in the re-contextualisation of the current school curriculum so that the learning experiences of students are heard. This sea change in how student voice should be positioned within curricular initiatives is echoed by Quicke (2003) who argues for an inclusive 'interactionist' approach where the individual student is not treated as an 'add-on' to comment on a pre-existing curriculum but rather is involved in the process of developing an appropriate curriculum within a multiplicity of 'active' voices in a social context. In doing this students will move from having a narrow or conservative view of their learning and what their learning could be to a broader, more reflective one. This idea is continued by Kinchin (2004) who through an experiment designed to explore the epistemological gap between teachers and students with regard to perceptions of teaching and learning, used concept cartoons to gauge whether secondary students (12 and 14 year olds) preferred an objectivist or a constructivist classroom. It

transpired that his anticipated conclusion that students preferred a constructivist approach in the classroom enabled the emergent fact that students could give meaningful insight when talking about teaching and learning but that the dialogue needed to be two-fold. Teachers needed to be open, to 'have the courage to be constructivist' in their dialogue with pupils for student voices to have an impact on the curriculum and that this may be challenging to most teachers (Kinchin, 2004). It appears that a constructivist style curriculum may promote student voice more than other forms.

constructivist ideas need to be introduced using constructivist principles. Students need to be able to construct their own framework for teaching and learning, starting from what they know, and we should not be surprised if pupils' current views of learning are conservative

(Kinchin, 2004: 309)

Inspired by Fielding's (2001) 'students-as-researchers' work (SaR), Thomson and Gunter (2006) monitored a small group of secondary students as they progressed from 'consulting pupils' to 'pupils as researchers' in a UK comprehensive school. Part of this study witnessed students explore teaching and learning issues, review aspects of the key stage three and four curriculum and construct a series of lessons about bullying for year 11 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. The project uncovered the important need to understand that the experiences of teachers and students were embedded in varied discourses that often challenged the ability of both parties to engage in 'active' and 'authentic' voice initiatives together. Indeed the notions of the impact of disparate power relationships and the difficulty to commit to the notions of a truly democratic school were apparent. This study found that teachers may listen to content suggestions from students but are reluctant to implement them. The framing of student voice in a standards or school improvement discourse where the teacher invites or allows pupils to be involved in

consultation as opposed to a rights discourse where the student can expect to be involved is where many of the projects involving student voice and curriculum are placed (Thompson and Gunter, 2006).

Many of the early forms of student involvement in curricular consultation are nestled within a standards and improvement discourse, thus underpinning the effort as tokenistic (Hart, 1997, Thompson and Gunter, 2006, Flutter, 2007, Biddulph, 2011). Flutter's (2007) work on the effect of pupil voice on teacher development promoted the benefits to a change in the teacher mind set; many of the initiatives undertaken were done with authentic voice being apparent but not utilised to the fullest extent by the teacher participants. This was a feature of the work of Bragg (2007) who found that student enthusiasm for a project exploring a 'healthy school' curriculum was hindered by teacher reluctance to become fully engaged in the project; due to the feeling that their voice was being marginalized and that their identity as teachers threatened to an extent (Bragg, 2007).

The General Teaching Council for England commissioned the 'Influence and Participation of Children and Young People in their Learning (IPiL) project in 2008. It examined participative practice in 26 schools (primary and secondary) in six regions in England over a period of six months. The project espoused the need for students to not only have a say in curriculum delivery but should also be able to influence what goes to make up the curriculum. There were 5 projects in which curricular issues were the main focus; two on homework, two on pupil choice, one on literacy across the curriculum, one on PE. These projects make up a small number of the overall number and this is significant in itself (MacBeath, Frost, Pedder, 2008).

Hargreaves (2004) agrees with the critics of community and voice who cite that such initiatives are futile unless there is a real recognition of the innate power differentials.

there are no spaces, physical or metaphorical, where staff and students meet one another as equals, as genuine partners in the shared undertaking of making meaning of their work together. Until and unless such spaces emerge transformation will remain rhetorical rather than real

(Hargreaves, 2004: 309)

Even teachers who seem open and enthusiastic about student voice initiatives find that when it comes to changes in the curriculum the 'recalcitrant realities' of accountability, performativity and surveillance in most UK, North American and Australasian educational systems and the obligations imposed by centralized systems stifle the student voice efforts (Hargreaves, 2004, Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, Cremin, Mason, Busher, 2010). It is perhaps in this area that international schools are able to overcome to some extent this centrally imposed obsession with targets and external accountability.

Biddulph (2011) examined the dynamic of student curriculum agency in the co-construction of a UK secondary geography curriculum among seven schools in years nine, ten and twelve. The project considered Arnot and Reay's (2007) pedagogic voice types where "voices created by the pedagogies rather than the voices needed to change the pedagogy" are elicited (Biddulph, 2011: 387). The Young People's Geographies project (YPG) is significant and unique as it was in essence a curriculum-making project that directly involved students in the process allowing them to take ownership in collaboration with others. Biddulph recognised the inequality constraints implicit in student-teacher voices and elicited the identity talk structure to overcome this. The use of pedagogic processes such as fieldwork, emotional mapping and presentations where social bonding, humour and casual talk

flourished allowed different voices to be heard and personal geographies to materialize. However Biddulph contends that though the project was a success such undertakings are still mired in the culture of performativity and institutional constraint.

In many respects curriculum as a concept is characteristic of school knowledge, and adult school at that, and under current modes of school organisation the curriculum remains very much in the hands of teachers. Relinquishing some curriculum planning responsibility to students was a risk that participating teachers were willing to take, but nonetheless the curriculum is ultimately their responsibility, not that of the students, and it would require a radical shift in thinking both in education policy and on the part of schools for this to change.

(Biddulph, 2011: 393)

In considering the cases of student voice and curriculum research outlined in this section there is the need to take the wide view of curriculum. The area of rich interaction does not appear to occur in the formal, written curriculum but rather in those pedagogical areas where student voice and teacher expertise and voice merge, intermingle and transform.

2.4 Key Findings from The Literature Review

There are several literature review key findings that are significant for this thesis and these are interwoven in the section below.

There is a significant amount of research that recognises the benefits of student consultation and collaboration especially if it takes a dialogic form and is focused on teaching and learning (Lodge, 2005, Fullan 2014). These benefits can be longer term having an impact on student feelings of belonging and future achievement (Cook-Sather, 2006, Hattie, 2012, Quaglia and Corso, 2014).

Teachers have a strong influence on the level of student agency and the degree of inclusivity that turns student participation into a richer form of student consultation (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, Bragg, 2007, Trippestad, 2011). The ability to

overcome factors that hinder teacher 'buy-in' will assist in any student consultation operations and are especially important at the introduction stage (Fielding, 2001, Cook-Sather, 2006, Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, Macbeath, Frost, Pedder, 2008). There cannot be student voice without the existence and efficacy of teacher voice as this is an essential driver of student voice initiatives that are based on shared meaning through interior authenticity (Flutter, 2007, Hadfield and Haw, 2007, Lodge, 2008).

Power differentials between students and teachers create the most significant barrier to transformative SV discussions being initiated and sustained (Friere, 1968, Fielding, 2001, Thompson and Gunter, 2006, Arnot and Reay, 2007, Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, Robinson and Taylor, 2013). Issues of tokenism, student marginalization, inclusion and the impact of both teacher to student and student to student power imbalances both explicit and implicit need to be considered before undertaking student voice initiatives. Failure to do so may be more detrimental than not engaging in student voice activities at all (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006, Fielding, 2006, Flutter, 2007, Lodge, 2008).

The formal, explicit, prescribed curriculum forms the basis of most school's planned (or written) curriculum but consideration must be given to the importance of the role of the teacher as expert professional in transforming the planned curriculum into the delivered curriculum (Stenhouse, 1975, Kelly, 2009, Young, 2015). The notion of 'pedagogical content knowledge' signifies the zone of interaction where teacher voice and student voice can combine to create real, dynamic, dialogic impact and is similar to the decidedly teacher influenced boundary between the planned and hidden curriculum i.e. the delivered curriculum (Shulman, 1986, 2004, Young, 2008). In understanding how the curriculum is to be constructed educators need not

consider what students want but rather what knowledge they should be entitled to and that this is often affected according to the prevailing ideological view of society (Young, 2008, Kelly, 2009, Scott, 2014).

The process or constructivist approach to curriculum design differs to the content model in that the emphasis is on creating individual learning experiences rather than the delivery of content. This is significant given the recent views on the new sociology of the child as an individual with a history and anticipated future and the success of the process curriculum relies on the role and quality of the teachers involved (Dewey, 1938, Stenhouse, 1975, Prout, 2011).

As globalisation causes the number of international schools to expand it is important to establish that there are certain characteristics distinguishing them from national schools: international mindedness, freedom from national strictures and the distinct possibility that a significant proportion of international teachers imbue certain characteristics of global citizens (Walker, 2004, Duckworth, Levy and Levy 2005, Bagnall, 2007, Dolby and Rahman, 2008, Hayden and Thompson, 2008).

There has been an emphasis on co-construction within schools as collaborative learning communities where the core assumption is not to improve teacher morale but to improve student learning and to focus on the relationship between teacher practice and the student (Hargreaves, 2000, Kinchin, 2004, Bourn, 2010, Fullan, 2014, Zhao, 2014).

A key feature of successful schools is the ability of teachers and students to form good and rewarding relationships and the positive impact this has on teaching and learning and student engagement especially in the middle years of schooling (grade

nine and ten) when student engagement reaches its lowest point (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, Schleicher, 2014, Quaglia and Corso, 2014).

The International Baccalaureate's Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) and the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) are representations of a grade nine and ten content based linear curriculum and a process based constructivist curriculum respectively. Whilst similar in many respects student in the MYP seems to have better developed critical thinking skills and international mindedness.

There are negligible documented examples of student voice having a significant impact on the written curriculum's content knowledge. When a wider view of the curriculum is taken into account the opportunity for this impact increases despite resistance from teachers to make significant changes to curricular content based upon student discussions (Brooker and Macdonald, 1999, CIDREE, 2006, Thompson and Gunter, 2006, Bragg, 2007, Biddulph, 2011).

Chapter Three: Methodology and Theoretical Perspective

3.1 A Statement about the broad nature of the data I am seeking to obtain

I aim to contribute to the work that has already been done and is currently being done in the field of school effectiveness and school improvement (SESI), particularly how learning can be positively influenced in secondary schools. My academic curiosity remains embedded in the curriculum and student voice and I wish to add to the work that I have already done in these areas and hope that it has wider implications for the school improvement arena.

My aforementioned research confirmed some of the benefits and barriers already attributed to student voice initiatives and uncovered some additional interplay between the curriculum and student voice programmes. In my MA dissertation I found evidence that secondary subjects that are more constructivist in nature tend to be more receptive to student collaboration and that subjects where the learning pattern was more linear in nature were less so. I noticed that a mutual relationship existed between the curriculum and student voice and I was inspired to investigate this relationship further in a constructivist curricular environment. In light of the evident connection between the curriculum and the learner's voice I concluded by asking what might be the benefits to schools of a greater degree of interaction between teachers and students within the curriculum (Skene, 2009). The institution focused study (IFS) in which I investigated the impact of a fledgling student voice initiative on the culture of an international secondary school, found that student voice undertakings can have a positive, albeit subliminal or unintentional impact on the culture of the school and that the school climate must be open and encouraging of

such undertakings. Another key finding was that power relations between students can act as an obstacle to positive participation akin to traditional teacher-student power imbalances and that teachers need to be mindful of this if student councils are being utilised as the main conduit for student voices. An intriguing issue arose as the study progressed where the interviewed teachers suggested that the move away from a content driven curriculum (IGCSE) towards a constructivist one (IBMYP) was allowing greater engagement in dialogue about teaching and learning with the pupils (Skene, 2013). In both of these studies it was clear that students were engaged by the opportunity to be involved in 'voice' endeavors but that the projects were often focused on issues other than learning and hindered by power inequities. Nevertheless, these studies helped to clarify that links do exist between student voice and the curriculum and open the way for these links to be now considered in a comparative international context.

Tangled within these links are some complicated connections that open wider educational questions about curriculum design and its impact on learning, the power relations that exist in schools, the resultant impact on teacher and student relationships and the organisational culture in which schools are rooted. This thesis unpacks these ideas, which can be complicated and difficult to conceptually relate. Therefore I have directed my attention to three international schools that share some common characteristics of locality and philosophy but also differ significantly in the middle year's curricular provision. My focus therefore is to compare the significance of how international schools engage in student voice in the context of different but comparable international curricular designs. The emphasis is further concentrated on the middle school age group of 14 to 16 year old students (grade 10) as the final

year of school before the post-compulsory education years. Thus the focus of this thesis is a comparative study that attempts to answer the research questions:

- 1. What are student and teacher perceptions about student voice engagement in the context of three European International Schools with differing curriculum designs?*
- 2. What connections, if any exist between student voice engagement and curriculum design in these schools?*

It is thus necessary to unpack this further and to investigate three specific aspects of the research questions as part of the overall analysis.

Perceptions: Participatory or Perfunctory

Firstly, it is crucial to compare the similarities and differences in how each school perceives its engagement in forms of student-teacher participation and interaction and to what degree.

Student Voice

There is the need for a look at what drivers and barriers to student voice exist in each school and to what extent do they impact upon the participatory process.

The Curriculum

Finally, the international curriculum design at each school and its impact on teacher and student perspectives of 'voice' will be addressed.

My research is qualitative in character and I continue to seek the perspectives, opinions and experiences of teachers and students who are engaged in teaching and learning in the schools of interest. I employ a system of data gathering and analysis that is constructivist and interpretive in nature and which is one that I

believe I have effectively used in the past study projects. This constructivist method is valid and useful as it allows me to gather multiple perspectives which are the result of many individual constructions of meaning and aligns with my social realist approach which acknowledges that a real world exists but that it is one where knowledge is socially constructed (Robson, 2010). I have used two data gathering methods to garner my data: individual and paired teacher interviews and student focus group interviews and have employed a 'coding' approach to identify key themes or patterns for analysing this data. This approach utilises an open, axial coding method and a reductive analytical approach. Open coding allows me to examine the research gathered in the form of the written transcripts and identify the key, common emergent ideas; this permits me to create two codes which will assist in making links between the initial key ideas and link it at a conceptual level (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). A qualitative method design allows for each method to enhance the validity of the other and thus enhance and enrich my understanding from a variety of perspectives. When dealing with human opinions, perspectives and issues of knowledge in education and the curriculum, the question of what knowledge is and how it is conceived becomes apparent and it is now to those epistemological matters that I now turn.

3.2 Theoretical Perspectives

Contemplating the theoretical perspective of this investigation has been interesting and perplexing, embroiled as it is in interweaving notions of the human perception of truth, perceptions of the constructs of knowledge in the school curriculum and the need to clarify the significance of the existence of how human knowledge is created. Thus I am dealing with issues of knowledge, what constitutes knowledge and what the implications are in terms of the curriculum and the genuine aims of education as

a whole. I am still wrestling with my own interpretation of how knowledge is created but have reached some level of personal clarity upon which I feel confident to ground my study in an epistemological consciousness. I will look firstly at the epistemological debates that underpin this work and then the issues of knowledge in the school curriculum.

I have reached my theoretical perspective through a reflective process of consideration and dismissal of positivist, empirical approaches and a consideration and rejection of purely interperativist methods. Bacon's statement "knowledge is power" arose as the world was emerging from the mysticism of medieval times where mankind began to consider the existence of an absolute discoverable truth through scientific means. A purely positivist viewpoint which views humans as mainly passive objects in a world where an infallible truth has been pre-determined divinely does not seem useful to me or relevant to my thesis topic and for the most part has been discredited by social scientists. If there is not an absolute truth to be discovered this raises the question: what does knowledge mean?

Perhaps knowledge in its rawest form is simply what a dominant or influential group of people decide is true and if so thinkers such as Foucault suggest that this group will be able to impose their idea of truth on the majority (Rabinow, 1991). For Foucault power and knowledge are inextricably and necessarily interdependent and that a site where power is realised is also a site where knowledge is produced. This is in contrast to Bacon's much quoted maxim and opens the way for debates about who has control of knowledge, who has access to it and who is denied access to this powerful knowledge? If iterative views of power and knowledge are to be taken on board it raises the profound notion that if knowledge creates power and power creates knowledge; which powerful groups are creating this knowledge and for

whom? In this there is not a re-contextualisation of the notion that knowledge is a socio-historical construct or that the existence of an ideology can contaminate any pure sense of truth but rather that power and knowledge are necessarily linked.

The problem is not changing people's consciousness's-or what's in their heads-but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth. It is not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time

(Foucault, 1980: 133)

Post-positivists seek a middle ground but this too requires the acceptance that one reality exists and it is the duty of researchers to thus find this truth (Robson, 2010).

The relativistic approach to social science which has a number of branches is of significance to this thesis, as it does not dismiss the notion of an absolute truth but recognises that the use of natural science methods to explain that human behaviour is imperfect (Robson, 2010). Relativism's most extreme form, post-modernism denies the possibility of any objective knowledge at all but recognises that the individual experience of those who interact in and interpret the world constitutes a form of truth. This idea is part of the post-modern argument of 'voice discourses' which suggests that those groups that hold power in society can make claims to assert their knowledge and therefore all forms of experience should account within a sociology of education. The problem with the 'voice discourses' view is that it does not shed any practical light on how a sociology of knowledge in education can be constructed or make any claims about what kinds of knowledge may be important for society (Moore and Miller in Young, 2008: 6).

A social realist approach provides an attractive alternative to the extremes of both positivism and relativism and in its approach the possibility of understanding and then modifying mechanisms gives it an emancipatory dimension. Realist thinking

views social research as a combination of actions and outcomes within contexts that relate to the mechanisms involved. This approach is concerned with the actions and reactions by humans in terms of their embedded existence in the layers of social reality (Robson, 2010). Lawson (1997) a critical realist, believes that scientific objects exist independent of humans; he uses the failure of economic theory in proving constant conjunctions to argue against the use of positivist methods for social research. "Knowledge is a social product, actively produced by means of antecedent social products" (Lawson, 1997: 25). Past attempts to explain science through experimentation are unreliable according to the realist approach as such experiments are isolated under the restricted conditions of experimental control (Brant and Panjwani, 2015). Gray (2003) insists that knowledge and ways of knowing in social science are not certain in the world and that we cannot know beforehand what we are going to discover through social research as there is no true story of the event, but rather many perspectives to be considered.

Within this epistemological debate, Young (2008) moves from a social constructivist to a social realist position and in doing so rejects the post-modern approach as having no consequence for creating a useful and up-dated sociology of education.

The problems arise when knowledge is taken to be 'always' and 'only' identical with 'interests'. If this is accepted there are only different interests and no good grounds for preferring one interest to another. It is a form of 'criticism in the head' or 'in the armchair'- a kind of academic radicalism of no consequence to anyone else.

(Young, 2008: 27)

Young (2008) draws upon the theories of knowledge creation of Durkheim, Vygotsky and Bernstein to construct and defend a social realist position in the sociology of education. He stresses the importance of recognising the borderlines that exist between everyday, tacit knowledge and theoretical, abstract knowledge and the

inherent value that students gain from realising and navigating these borders. In seeking a middle-ground, he proposes that knowledge be accepted for what it is: a social and historical construct without sliding into the excesses of relativism. I am in accord with this view of knowledge being constructed and given meaning through the subtle and complex processes within the structures of society, such as gender groups, social classes, professional communities and specialists. That this refined and complicated process creates the foundations of what can be called the delicate interpretation of truth, gives social realism some basis for claims to objectivity. Knowledge has properties that transcend its producers thus providing erudite insights on the world even if it is branded by the marks of those who produced it (Wheelahan, 2008). Eraut (2010) gives support to this stance from his considerations of professional knowledge from an epistemological standpoint in that discarding theories and thoughts until they be proved true and valid would derail our process of finding meaning through knowledge.

The truth of some of the best known and most used theories, such as Keynes' theory of macroeconomics and Freud's theory of personality, is still hotly debated. Newtonian mechanics is now regarded as only approximately true. To treat such theories as outside the domain of genuine knowledge would make thinking about the world virtually impossible

(Eraut, 2010: 6)

Young (2015) makes the interesting claim that a truth is not a truth forever but is only the best truth we have until another one materializes and thus supersedes the former constructing new truths. This then makes us question whether an ultimate truth may ever be reached or if rather a continual process of refinement propels us on the eternal journey toward truth.

Not a single truth anymore, but a plurality of truths, each appropriate to its real, each fallible, but each subject to continuing refinement and improvement.

Never perhaps reaching the Promised Land of Pure Ultimate Truth, but over centuries moving steadily in the right direction

(Gardner, 2011: 37)

I find that this concept of socially constructed uncertain certainties has practical appeal for my studies and my viewpoint, although how do we know that, as Gardner (2011) puts it we are 'moving in the right direction'. It is the social realist view that has implications for the curriculum and my research into it, as this approach is a way of negotiating the competing ideological views of what knowledge the school curriculum should be comprised of and puts knowledge at the centre of the debate as the "historically located collective achievement of human creativity" (Young, 2008: 36). These different theoretical viewpoints lead me to appreciate that knowledge is continually being socially constructed and exists in some formal, pure state beyond social awareness. I feel reassured in the understanding that knowledge is in a constant state of over-layering and re-invention and much like sediment on a riverbed settles at some stage as a layer of stability until the next paradigm-shifting event muddies the waters, creating a new layer.

For my purposes the existence of different curricular designs in my three research schools and the different experiences that each school has with student voice will lead to different outcomes in terms of teaching and learning. The realist approach allows me to take into account the history of the different designs and approaches and an awareness that each school will be subject to differing behaviours, aims, backgrounds, experiences, loyalties and motivations from the teachers, students and the school climate. This feeds comfortably into my research questions which are not seeking to proclaim that a particular curriculum design or school is performing better than the others or that a particular curricular construction is preferred but rather a

look at what works best for each school's context given the particular conditions and what the implications of this might be for other schools.

3.3 Methodology

Research Method Rationale and Implementation

My research design is nestled within a naturalistic approach and based upon a social realist view of knowledge creation where I wish to gather and explore teacher and students perceptions of student voice and the curriculum given the varying contexts and with an emphasis of creating new knowledge from the process. The data gathered will be qualitative in kind due to the interpretive and subjective nature of the methods employed. This approach utilises multiple pupil viewpoints to construct meaning, making unsuitable the use of quantitative methods where proof of an objective reality is the objective (Crotty, 1998, Robson, 2010).

As with my institution-focused study (IFS), a constructivist approach presents a useful strategy that while malleable in nature provides some structure for action to explore my supposition that some correlation does exist between curriculum design and the student voice dynamic. My research results will be compared to the major areas of significance from the literature and from this new discussions and ideas will emerge. Some aspects of Grounded theory appeal and augment my study as it also gives me some basis for an analysis form and technique but in its most natural state is not wholly appropriate for this study. Thus this investigation borrows some aspects from Grounded theory having a core category or concept (curriculum-student collaboration) placed within the interpreted conceptual categories. There is also the aspect that the codes that I will use to interpret the data are partially pre-determined (focused-codes) and also will emerge from the data as first and second level codes.

However my theory will not necessarily appear wholly from within the coded qualitative data as I will be using some pre-determined ideas and theories from chapter two. The project is rooted in the collected field data from which I will be able to focus on the relationships between the core concept and the other related concepts (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This constructivist approach is not only useful but it takes into account the voices of the participants emulating the student voice spirit of shared but differing interior experiential authenticity in education, so that new experiences in learning emerge for both student and teacher within a navigated, common ground.

The Research Phases

I employed a combination of individual teacher interviews, one paired teacher interview (School C) and student focus groups to gather the field data. The use of open, semi-structured interview questions allowed flexibility in my data gathering especially within the focus group dynamic where the emphasis was on the sharing of views and experiences between the participants to create insightful, rich data (Miller and Brewer, 2003). In this way I could re-direct the focus of certain questions as per teacher and student responses or to the level of interaction that certain questions elicited. The set of semi-structured questions for the student focus groups remained static but the forays into uniquely school-based responses differed as I expected. If a student response elicited further unpacking I would use a prompt question such as *'oh, that is interesting tell me more about that'*, to encourage and induce. Similarly the teacher questions were also static but again differed according to further exploration and teacher elaboration.

The teacher and student questions are provided in appendix six and appendix seven. The planning and execution of the research for this thesis has taken place over the time period of twenty months from October 2013 until April-May 2015 and developed in three phases.

Phase One

Phase one began in earnest some months after the conclusion of the Internally Focused Study of school B in June 2013 and consisted of gathering information about the ten international schools in the adjacent regions of Bavaria, Baden-Wurttemberg and Franconia to decide upon which ones would be suitable to include in this research project. I wanted to incorporate a number of schools that shared some commonalities with my IFS subject school in terms of IBO world school philosophy and culture and curriculum types being implemented. Other practical factors such as the ability to readily and actively travel to, communicate with and be responsive with each school were also considerations that were taken into account when deciding on the number of and which schools to include.

I decided that a total sample of three schools would suit my time frame, resource base and research objectives and thus the two schools: school A and School C were chosen due mainly to the significance of their differing curricular combinations. It was important to include a school that had been delivering the IGCSE for some time (school A) and vital (and unique) to find a school that delivered a combination of both (a hybrid MYP- IGCSE- School C). This hybrid mix in school C was important as it enabled greater curricular comparisons to be made and linked directly with the focus of my study and complemented school B with the MYP and school A and its IGCSE. These schools also shared status as IBO world schools having the IB Learner profile

at the heart of their programmes, an embedded Creativity, Action and Service programme (CAS and AS), shared missions of international mindedness and a commitment to the needs of an international community.

I then made contact with and visited the Director of school A and the senior school head teacher of school C to explain the focus of the investigation and to gauge whether they would be willing to take part in my project and if so, to identify which teachers to make contact with in the two schools. I wanted to have access to experienced members of staff who were involved in teaching and planning 14-16 year old student's school curriculums and who had possibly contributed to some aspects of student consultation in the schools. I would be relying on these teachers to assist in the formulation of the student focus groups in phase 3 of my thesis research plan. The Director of school A put me in contact with the upper school principal, the student council coordinator/grade 10 geography teacher, a pre-IB (grade 10) economics and business teacher, and the Middle School coordinator (grades 6-8). In school C the upper school principal put me in contact with the ATL (IB Approaches to Learning) coordinator and an MYP geography teacher.

Phase Two

Phase two consisted of conducting interviews with the teachers in each school to gather some extensive data about the nature of student voice at each institution and to find out more about how the grade 10 curriculum is designed and implemented. I interviewed five teachers at school A, two teachers and school C and one teacher at school B. The teacher interviews at school A were completed as one-on-one conversations whilst teachers at school C were interviewed as a group of two. The teacher interviews served two purposes: the first was to gather teacher perceptions

and opinions and the second was to assist in identifying students to take part in the focus group research as part of phase three. The teacher questions were semi-structured to ensure a degree of flexibility but all teachers were asked questions based upon similar themes namely: perceptions of a good school and what makes a good teacher; experience with student voice; experience with the incorporation of student voice at the school in question; the curricular design in the school with an emphasis on the middle years; the role of the student council; learning conversations and the impact of the curriculum with student consultation (appendix six). I was interested in 'stories being told' and interpreting understandings from these stories and I was therefore not concerned with the number of teacher interviews conducted at each school rather the quality of the data available. With this in mind I felt that the disproportionate number of teacher interviews at each school was justified as the quality of data collected was rich. My contact at School A created a schedule for the day where five teachers had been made available for me to interview. Rather than limit this opportunity I interviewed all five teachers where under other circumstances I may have restricted my choice to two or three teachers.

My 'insider research' knowledge at school B allowed me to choose a teacher to interview who I was confident had the knowledge and experience of the middle years programme and would give balanced, unbiased perspectives. The teachers that I was put in contact with at the other schools also proved to be knowledgeable, experienced and richly diverse in their perspectives. Although it was a possibility I did not feel that further interviews were warranted at the three institutions.

Phase Three

For the phase three student focus groups, students were sampled using a strategic sampling method, the aim being to gather a range of opinions and experiences represented rather than just a representative sample of grade ten secondary students. I had successfully used focus groups before and found that the advantage of student empowerment, enjoyment and the gains from group dynamics complemented and re-enforced the benefits of student voice itself. In this I was aspiring to be working within the dialogic quadrant (bottom right) of Lodge's student participation matrix (appendix two, figure one). The disadvantages of using focus groups include the limited number of questions that can be asked and that the results in themselves cannot be generalised if not representative of the wider population. I believe that a degree of theoretical generalisation can be applied to the student focus groups due to the clear representative nature of the grade 10 microcosm and when the focus group results are carefully triangulated and contrasted with the teacher responses and key literature findings (Robson, 2010). The key contact teachers in the two schools (school A and school C) were asked to select seven to eight students from grade 10 who represented a range of academic abilities and an equal gender mix. The request also included the students who had been at the school for at least two years and that one member of the school's student council be included. In this way I tried to make sure that the selected students would not just substantiate my argument or counter it but would offer a well-rounded pool of opinions.

Participation in the focus group was voluntary with students given an opt-out letter to be read and then returned by parents if they did not wish for their son or daughter to take part in the focus group (appendix eight). The letter outlines the aims of the research including the anonymity of the participants and how the information

gathered will be used. There were no families who opted out, which was encouraging and I found that all pupils were engaged and most contributed actively throughout the focus group interview. My use of an opt-out letter as opposed to an opt-in letter was due to my considerations of free consent and the gradual process I had set and been following. By the time I began the interview process any one of the individual students involved had been asked three times for their free consent, once verbally by my contact teacher at the school, once by letter home and again before the process began when I invited students to not feel obliged to take part if they felt that 'on the day' they didn't want to. A student was also free to leave the process at any time if they felt uncomfortable and this was articulated. I also spoke to the contact teacher individually before meeting the students to find out if there were any issues that had arisen since the return or non-return of the opt-out letter. In this way I am confident that all participants gave voluntary informed consent without duress before the research began (BERA, 2011).

I conducted a single sixty to seventy minute focus group interview session with each group of students in school A and C between the months of May and October 2014. These were audio recorded and immediately transcribed in the following two to three days, a seating plan using numbers rather than names was used to assist with identifying the student voices to provide a written record of the focus group interviews to analyse later. The audio recording enabled me to concentrate on the focus group discussion in real time rather than multi-tasking. The focus group and teacher interview at school B took place in January-February 2015 and followed a similar planning and implementation format. As these arrangements were made in the institution where I am currently employed it was easier to orchestrate and benefitted from the advantages of insider research such as my familiarity with

institutional structures and staffing and the ability to work with a degree of relative flexibility.

The semi-structured student questions were essentially concentrated on a number of common themes: perceptions on what makes a good school and good teacher, the impact of the student council on learning, questions about talking with teachers about learning, the impact of the grade 10 curriculum on learning conversations with teachers and an awareness of student voice initiatives and involvement therein (appendix seven). The common themes within the teacher questions and within the student questions will assist in data breakdown and coding and support with the information analysis (appendix eight). I maintained a respondent rather than informant interview typology and follow the key ideas from my main research questions (key codes) that are underpinned by the theory underlying student participation and the broader concept of curriculum (Robson, 2010).

The Institutions

The three schools at the centre of this study are all non-profit schools located within a sixty-kilometer radius of each other in the southern area of Germany. The mission statements of each school whilst varied, share similar qualities and aspirations each aiming to create learning communities that are globally minded, forward looking and academically successful. Whilst they differ in the size and the number of years that they have been established each one has been in existence for at least ten years (the oldest for forty-nine years) and are registered with the International Baccalaureate Organisation as a provider of at least two of the four possible IB programmes of study. Drawing students from families employed in the chiefly industrial and service based industries in and surrounding the two major cities in this

area of Europe. The student population is mainly international in nature with approximately twenty percent of the students classed as home country nationals. Nestled within an area of economic growth despite the present economic downturn, each school has experienced growth in recent years with School B experiencing considerable growth in student numbers and facilities. All three schools have a history of promoting and facilitating a school council made up of elected students however, school B has had a longer history of promoting student voice as an institutional goal and this needs to be reflected in any consideration of results in this area.

School A

School A has the smallest student population of the three schools with a total enrollment of 340. It was established in 2005 and employs a staff of fifty teachers to teach the IBPYP, IGCSE and IBDP courses of study. The school is registered with Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) to deliver the IGCSE programme to the grade nine and ten students and has its own school based curriculum in grades six, seven and eight based in part upon a constructivist philosophy. School A is separated into four sections: the early years, the lower school, the middle school and the upper school which encompasses grades nine to twelve. A school council has existed at school A for some time and is based on democratic principles where elected student representatives act on behalf of students from grade six to twelve. The school has been growing gradually each year and has recently built a new refectory and auditorium.

School B

School B established in 1991 with a current student population of 1028 has experienced rapid growth with a large number of structural, management and curricular transitions over the last four years. This has included the development of a second primary school campus, the merging of the middle and upper schools into a secondary school and a major change in senior school vision and leadership. The school is authorised by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) to deliver the IBPYP, IBMYP and IBDP avenues of learning with status as an IB World School. School B had offered the IGCSE as the main grade nine and ten curriculum up until May 2013 and now delivers a purely IBMYP course of study from grades six to ten. The school has had a history of student voice initiatives beyond the scope of the democratic function of the school council since 2012. In that year a student directed code of conduct was formulated and the first 'student-as-researchers' (SaR) project was undertaken. Since then a regular student voice action group has been in place and presents to the teaching staff at least once in the academic year.

School C

The institution I denote as school C is the oldest institution in the study having been established in 1966 and has the largest student enrollment, currently 1200 students. It is separated into the junior (early-grade 5), middle (grades 6-8) and senior school (grades 9-12) and is currently building a new performing arts centre. This school is authorised as an IB World School offering the International Baccalaureate Primary Years, Middle Years and Diploma Programmes. Interestingly the school offers the IGCSE in grades nine and ten alongside the MYP thus allowing a student the opportunity to gain both the MYP certificate and an IGCSE certificate at the end of grade 10. There are only a small number of students who take up and complete this qualification combination in any given year (less than five percent) however the

school maintains this to satisfy parental wishes and to safeguard an area of ambiguity in national educational stipulations. The middle and senior schools have a well-established student council structure where a student representative forum meets each week to discuss student views and to plan events such as 'spirit days'.

3.4 An indication of some of the limitations and ethical considerations encountered with the methodology and ways that these were solved

Comparative Factors and Ambiguity

The qualitative nature of this investigation presented a number of methodological issues. The first major issue was to ensure that the data I was gathering was relevant to and useful for a comparative study. Although I wanted to capture as many views and perspectives as possible within my research means I needed to maintain steadfast threads of commonality for comparison purposes. Importantly there are common questions and themes running throughout the student focus group and teacher interview questions based upon the five key notions (appendix six and seven). I insisted that the students who formed the focus groups shared some common features and attributes. The three focus groups were composed of between six and eight grade ten students (ten percent of the actual grade level population) with an equal mix of genders, a range of academic abilities and at least one student who represented the national student population. It was also important that most of the students had been at the school for two years or more so as to give a comparative opinion of past courses offered at the school. It was also beneficial that a student who had arrived at the school within the last academic year was included in the focus group and thus able to bring a recent knowledge of outside experiences with him or her. This mix of students contained threads of comparability and

furthermore prevented the conversations from being dominated by those students who are mostly viewed as the 'more engaged' in the current systems and therefore gave voice to some students who may not normally be given the chance to give voice to their views (Lodge, 2008). During the focus group conversations I was aware that one or two pupils could dominate the discussions and I ensured that as many voices as possible were encouraged to contribute by careful group dynamic management. I had control over selection of the teacher interviews at school B but was necessarily reliant on the contacts at the other schools. I was able to communicate with these contacts via email and face-to-face meetings to ensure that the teachers being made available would be well placed to offer rich data. Respondents were selected for their abilities to illuminate and give meaning to the major issues I wished to explore and not purposively to collect a content of data that would comply with my hypothetical notions (Barbour, 2001).

On occasion the interview and focus group sessions shifted from the set question themes as the interviewees began responding about unexpected topics that were of relevance and interest to them. The dynamic of nature of focus group research often encouraged students to contribute to these topics in a self-propelling manner and I utilised this energy using prompts to encourage the interviewees to expand their responses (Robson, 2010). Although I welcomed as much data as possible and aimed to consider all responses in the data analysis phase of this research I did at times need to steer the conversation back to the question to hand. This dynamic and level of diversity gave richness and multiplicity to the data gathered.

Balance

Another concern that I had was the act of balancing the quantity of collected data so that the amount of data was digestible within my analytical timeframe and was of a substantial volume to provide useful and relevant quality data for my research needs. I recorded and transcribed all of the collected data myself and found that transcribing it especially assisted me in deciding whether there was a richness and utility to the information. After three focus group sessions of one hour each and several teacher interviews of approximately thirty minutes each I found that I had near to six hours of recorded transcript information to transcribe and process. The second balancing consideration concerned the dynamic of the focus groups themselves in ensuring that there was an equal and indeed ethical consideration of views and voices. I pre-empted this by being aware of the quieter students as the discussions ensued and specifically called upon them for their views as the moment called for or directed an opening question towards them and waited for a response. There will always be the more articulate and prominent student voices that arise from any grouping and one of the key cautions in any student voice activity is being aware of the disaffected and/or silenced voices (Flutter, 2007, Lodge, 2008). By actively eliciting the more quiet students I believe that the discussions do represent a diversity of opinion. An important consideration is that the wider themes and common viewpoints that arose from the focus groups were shared themes and opinions. I was able to gauge this by the reactions from students when such themes arose e.g. collective head nodding or shaking and common utterances of 'yes', 'aha' or 'no'. Such emotive elements are hard to appropriately capture in a transcript but I could remember such occasions in each focus group and the audio sound track was of assistance here. There are fifty-five student quotes used in the research results chapter and of these twelve are from

school A students, twenty-four from school B and nineteen from school C. Student BS1 is quoted six times, BS5 seven times and CS1 six times. There may appear to be an imbalance in the use of student quotes especially students BS1, BS5 and CS1, however I feel that the disproportionate use of student quotes where the articulation of a key idea is made so that it is representative of the general feel of the group and is done so in a way that is clear or humorous (use of metaphor or anecdote), adds to the quality of the analysis rather than be a cause for ethical concern.

Time and Resource Management

One of the major obstacles I faced with this multi-site style research project was the act of managing relations, communications and physical visits to the two external schools. The situation was compounded by the fact that each school was naturally driven by its own priorities and objectives and that I could not reasonably expect that the added burden of my own research expectations would take precedent in any significant way. I approached the two schools through the senior management contacts in each that I had previously established in prior professional capacities and their charitable assistance and cooperation enabled me to make valuable forays into the research at each school. I visited the two senior contacts at the schools in question and introduced my research aims before proceeding with any further research plans. I had for some time been hoping to build up a network between the local international schools so that student voice initiatives could be planned and shared and fortuitously the nature of my research topic assisted in facilitating this desire. At present there have been some advances in this area with an activity planned at school C and I was invited and took up the opportunity to give a presentation to staff at school C to introduce the student voice project as a possible

initiative. I feel that this added dimension has helped in moving this endeavor away from a personal research project and into something more. I found that there was a high degree of cooperation among teachers when I visited the schools and found that this level of interest was sustained throughout the research process. I also pre-empted the impact that teacher bias elements may have had on the perspective gathering by being mindful of this during the interview stage through the occasional use of counterpoint questions e.g. 'can you see any benefit to e-assessment?' I am cognisant of the influence that bias may have on the research process and have factored this into my analysis but I am also aware that the nature of this qualitative data gathering process will be peppered and enriched with varied views, standpoints and indeed biases.

As a senior manager at school B, I enjoyed a degree of flexibility in terms of time management and concentrated on conducting and completing the visits to the two external schools before focusing on my own institution. Finding the time to confirm contacts, conduct research and travel to and from the schools was challenging but not unduly so and I feel that I was able to do this without disrupting the personal schedules of those working at the subject schools to any vast extent or to my own schedule. In terms of funding I was assisted in applying for and being granted a Jeff Thompson Research Award from the International Baccalaureate Organisation's research department in 2014 to support IB related research. My inclusion of the MYP as an integral part of this study and the fact that the research is being conducted in the context of international schools and international school curriculums assisted in the granting of this award which contributed to travel and other research costs. With the granting of the Jeff Thompson Award comes the obligation to publish my results on the International Education Research Database (IERD) which will support one of

the aims of my research namely to contribute to the established work on student voice and curriculum connections and to add to the volume of school effectiveness and improvement research on offer.

Other Ethical Contemplations

Two further ethical issues of import that impact upon this study are the concerns of anonymity and insider research and for guidance in these matters I have referred to and adhered to the British Educational Research Association's Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2011). When dealing with young people it is important that they have the assurance that any information procured from them has their informed consent and will not be used in a way that is harmful or infringe upon their privacy. I made sure that all student participants had been given an opt-out letter prior to the focus group sessions, addressed to their parents that explained the purpose and process of the research. I decided that due to the complications of the multi-site research context and the previously established quality assurance of the teachers involved in choosing the students that an opt-out letter was both appropriate and justified (appendix eight).

Before I began the focus group and teacher interviews I explained how the information would be used in my research and that all participants would remain anonymous and that only I as the chief researcher would listen to and analyse the ensuing conversations. The interviews were conducted in a private office or classroom spaces with the use of an old fashioned cassette mini-recorder. To place students at ease and elicit free-flowing responses, I always started the student focus groups with a friendly, ice-breaker style question to initiate a more relaxed atmosphere. I found that this atmosphere was not forthcoming until ten minutes

into the focus group interview, once students had grown accustomed to me and were convinced that my intentions were as I explained. A teacher from either school A or C was in the room for the first ten minutes of the focus group interview to be a familiar face before leaving of their own accord.

The interviewees are not identified in the transcripts and are denoted as AT1 for teacher 1 at school A and AT2 for teacher 2 and BT1 for teacher 1 at school B and so forth. The students involved in the focus groups are represented in the transcripts as AS1, AS2, and AS3 etcetera for students 1, 2 and 3 at school A and BS1, BS2, BS3 for students 1, 2 and 3 at school B and so on for school C. These have been numbered as appropriate and I have included text from the transcripts in the form of quotes. I have also tried to keep the identity of the schools anonymous and have attempted as much as possible to remain ambiguous about their location and identity (Papageorgi and Owen 2011). I conducted the interviews mindful of the agreed protocol I had outlined to my research contacts and carried out the sessions aware of the values of respect, full disclosure and equity (BERA, 2011).

Insider research enabled me to have a deep understanding of the historical, developmental and political context of school B and I could use this knowledge to the most effective extent in consideration of my research aims (Robson, 2010). It was for this reason that I was able to complete one teacher interview at school B having approached the interviewee due to their knowledge, experience and impressive professional and ethical standing. There was no need to complete a further interview with another school B colleague after contemplating the depth, quality and substance of the data gathered from this interview. As part of the secondary senior management team I was aware of my possible 'dual role' influence on the gathering of views from both teachers and students and did not want respondents to simply tell

me what they thought I wanted to hear. (BERA, 2011). I had planned to have a colleague perform the interviews however I felt that it was important that I conduct them in order to probe and to recognise nuances and asides that perhaps a colleague may not have. I had established a recent history of conducting research in the school and therefore some students and certainly my colleagues were used to seeing me perform this function objectively.

Throughout the research process I have attempted to perform a number of balancing acts; balancing data depth with breadth; balancing quantity versus quality; balancing objectivity with familiarity and balancing time with commitments. The outcome of these balancing operations can now be assessed in the next chapters where I analyse, discuss and conclude this research project on how learning can be positively influenced in secondary schools.

Chapter Four: Research Results

4.1. Data Analysis Rationale

My approach to understanding the primary research is interpretive and situated within a social realist understanding of 'how we know' and 'what we know' in terms of knowledge. My understanding that real world objectivity exists although our understanding of it is socially constructed through historical, social and professional means underlays this analysis. In this I am cognisant of the existence of some form of 'evolving' truth and thus a realist ontology and the overlapped social construction of meaning which leads to my interpretive epistemology (Young, 2008). Associated with this is my understanding of the significance of Bhaskar's (2008) idea of layered reality to my research style. The proposition of layered realities harmonises with the idea of there being real, actual and empirical domains where reality can exist through enduring structures and generative mechanisms but that we may not necessarily be aware of it until we seek meaning through reflection in the outcomes or emergences of the experiences to hand.

Rather than meaning manifesting from my gathered data and my interpretation of this data to create new knowledge, I am seeking to re-apply these manifestations to real existing structures and ideas in a retroductive manner in order to make some connections between the phenomena under study and its implications to the wider domain. To execute this approach I employ an axial coding method where I draw out the key themes that I have called 'emergent ideas' or level one codes from the phenomena under study that relate to each other. These common emergent ideas come from the student and teacher perspectives recorded in the primary research transcripts. The transcripts were analysed for key related themes using colour coding and then summarised in a research analysis summary table (appendix ten, table four

and table five). The key themes or codes assist in creating second level two codes that I call the wider concepts representing more conceptual notions. It is from a comparison and synthesis of these second codes or wider concepts and the key findings from the literature review that I will perform two-way deductions about the connections and disconnections between student voice and curricular forms and trace the generic relationships back to the key phenomena (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, Morse and Niehaus, 2009, Robson, 2010).

In my interpretations of the collected data I need to remain aware of the possible influence of the 'double hermeneutic' that is, my interpretation of pre-interpreted interpretations. This is relevant to my social realist methodological strategy as I am dealing with "forms of life which, in turn, are webs of meaningful, pre-interpreted activities and relationships" (Giddens, 1982: 20). As such I need to adhere to my analytical structure of coding level and be mindful of the complex processes with which I am dealing with to remain objective. The threads and linkages with the key literature findings used in chapter five's meta-analysis will also assist with this objectivity.

I have conducted this analysis using student focus groups as the initial basis of informative data and have then layered the teacher's perspectives over this to enrich and inform. The data gleaned from the schools informs the themes and can be employed as a basis of comparison. I do not conduct the analysis using the schools as the overarching structure but rather the key phenomena or themes as these provide the interlinks and relationships required to assist in shedding light on my research focus.

The contrast between my approach and a purely grounded theory approach is the emergence of the key themes through the construction of my semi-structured questions in the focus groups and the interviews rather than a purely emergent method. The semi-structured questions are direct at times e.g. 'what makes this a good school?' and are less so in other moments e.g. 'has anyone else felt like that?' (appendix seven). I employed this method to draw as much data as possible on my preconceived areas of focus and correspondingly to make possible forays into unintentional areas. The transcription that I conducted was an interpretative process in itself as oral discourse was translated into another narrative form, namely written discourse. I was aware of the need for these transcripts to be reliable and valid and transcribed them as holistically as possible with expressions of laughter and including frequent repetitions like uhmms and pauses to add a level of emotional colour (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Some of the information informs my research focus areas directly and some of it sheds new light on what students say, what they wish to say and intriguingly what they don't say.

4.2 Focus group and Interview Outcomes

From the collected primary research five key themes or 'phenomena under study' are explored in the conversations, encouraged by the semi-structured questions. The retroductive process threads and swings between these existing notions and the emergent first and second level codes. My approach to retroduction or abductive reasoning can be observed in the axial coding process as outlined in the coding tree in appendix nine. The second level codes that arise from this analytical activity are combined and contrasted with the established findings from chapter two's literature review in the meta-analysis

1. What makes a good school?

2. A good teacher- characteristics
3. Impact of the student council
4. Notions and impact of the curriculum
5. Student voice

The five broad themes listed above, provide a clear structure for enquiry and relate directly to my research questions. Phenomena one and two appertain to the important formal and informal relationships that abound in schools between teachers and students within the school culture. Phenomena three enables me to explore how student councils as a common feature of schools, contribute to an understanding of student participation and collaboration. Importantly for research question two, the impact of the possible reciprocal influences of student voice on the curriculum and the curriculum on student voice are explored in phenomena four. The fifth and final broad theme: 'student voice' enables further exploration of student voice drivers and obstacles.

A Good School and a Good Teacher

Student and teacher perspectives on what makes for a good school and a good teacher provides a apt starting point for this analysis and therein affords the opportunity to gather useful information and act as powerful comparator questions. It is notable that such questions tap into the key issues that are at the heart of student participation, to wit the interaction between the student and teacher within the context of the school environment, the nature of all interactions in the school that create the school culture and the ever-present impact of power constellations.

1. A Good School

The students responded to the questions 'Is this a good school and what makes it a good school' with enthusiasm. There was widespread agreement among students that the school in which they were currently enrolled was a good school and gave various reasons as evidence. Some systemic factors such as good quality facilities, engaging out of class events (sports and outdoor activities) and smaller classes were given as reasons and were usually punctuated with an unprompted comparison with other schools in the state or national system. A common idea threading throughout the responses was the friendly and welcoming nature of the school and that students felt a sense of 'belonging'. This shared feeling of belonging was due to a sense of open respect and the overall international 'climate' of the school.

Because it is so much more open even compared to other international schools it is open toward other nationalities, other backgrounds...and even sexuality and I think that that is very important, those are things I know in the public system were extremely lacking and other international schools I have been in weren't as open and this was also due to the cultural environment

(BS5)

Another shared notion was the interaction with teachers either individually in a learning capacity in class e.g. individual attention or in a more friendly 'non-teacher' capacity.

In my old school teachers and students were enemies but here they are more like friends as most teachers take account of your personal life as well and that you have different interests and things and ways to spend your time, it is a good school

(CS3)

Having a good relationship with the teacher was the most common response to 'what makes this a good school?' among the students and was viewed as the prime reason for the school being regarded as such. I find it interesting that a question where the answers could have been very broad converged on the common idea that a good relationship between teachers and students was the most cited characteristic of making a school 'good'. This is an important outcome as it highlights the magnitude of the interaction of the student with the teacher as a prime reason for a

student's feeling of belonging at a school and is a similar finding in established student voice research (Quaglia and Corso, 2014).

Not all teachers touched directly upon what makes a good school although when they did it was focussed upon the quality of the school leadership and the learning relationship with the students.

You'd need an open-minded and visionary leadership in order to do that I think, umm you'd have the willingness to lead change where necessary but not just for the sake of it and you want to be responsive to the changing needs of the students in terms of the their education, what they need to be prepared for, I guess it is different for every generation isn't it?

(BT1)

We had a teacher here last year and the year before where we ended the contract who was teaching a subject and was getting 5's and 6's but he was teaching exclusively for the exam and it was really quite shocking

(AT1)

Teacher AT2 who had previous experience of a school that had been facing significant challenges expressed the importance of student involvement to prevent a 'them and us' culture from forming. In doing so teacher AT2 brings to mind this issue of an open culture creating and possibly being created by student participation.

It was a 'them and us' culture and it was a very difficult culture at the time for various reasons, so in essence it was really me feeling that we have some student involvement in decision making and it had its real strengths

(AT2)

It is clear that two key ideas emerge from this data and that form the initial first level codes, these are:

1. The significance of school climate or culture
2. The impact of student and teacher relationships on school culture

Both teachers and students agree that a student-centred individual learning focus appears to create a relationship between the teacher and the student that is positive

and of significance. It is now this second emergent idea: 'a good teacher' that I now turn my attention to as key theme.

2. A Good Teacher

Are you the teacher or are you my teacher?

The theme 'a good relationship' bridges both the 'good school' and 'good teacher' fields and is the most popular reason for a student to consider an individual to be a "good teacher". There are a number books based upon the top ten (or twenty) attributes of a good teacher according to students of all ages and indeed the quality of the relationship between teacher and student figures prominently. The qualities attached to a good relationship in this study were both emotional and professional. The emotional attributes such as: the teacher is: friendly, approachable, open and caring are fully understandable on a human level and similarly attributes such as: quick to anger, shows favouritism and seems bored were universally salient in my focus groups as negative characteristics. It was poignant that when giving personal accounts about teacher interaction, most students were emotive referring to teachers they liked as 'my' or 'our teacher' and those they liked less were referred to as 'the teacher' but that in almost all cases the relationship connected to some extent on classroom learning rather than on the relationship as an end in itself.

It is not just my teacher, it is that we can all see the person in our teacher, our teacher is not just there to teach us materials

(AS2)

Everyone thinks of my teacher as a friend on their side

(CS5)

The professional attributes related very specifically to the act of learning and similar pedagogical concerns. The attribute: 'teachers who are passionate about their

subject' was mentioned in the focus groups repeatedly as a significant factor in influencing whether a student is engaged in a subject or not.

I've had teachers who have had this passion and not necessarily take joy from seeing students learn but from just giving information and I've had teachers who do both, who love teaching and seeing the reaction and in both combinations that works really well, but you do need to love what you are doing, like in medicine you can't have a doctor who doesn't like what he is doing otherwise the patient will suffer as well

(BS5)

And also the opposite can happen if you have a really good teacher you can suddenly like a subject that the year before you really hated

(BS2)

From teacher passion appeared the attributes of: dedication to the pupils, having a very good subject knowledge, having high expectations and working above and beyond e.g. giving up a lunch hour to help with mathematics. Another professional quality that was highlighted was that the teacher should be a learner as well and be able to take criticism. A noteworthy perspective mentioned by students in school A and school B was that teachers in international schools seem to be comparatively different to national system teachers. Students commented that they are special in some way, perhaps more open-minded from having been exposed to different cultures and perspectives which they possibly carry with them. It could also be that the comments align with a teacher comparison between independent or private school settings and public or national ones.

A lot of the teachers we find really great because they have not only been in the school for all of their career but they have also been in other parts of the world, so maybe for them it is also maybe something new every year with different students and especially coz it is an international school lots of students bring lots of different cultures and ideas so for the teachers it is also interesting

(BS1)

What is special about teachers in international schools is that they are paid to do their job but they also do extra that's what makes them more special or more interactive with us, they do the extra which they don't have to do

(AS5)

The good relationship with the teacher was tempered by the student's firm conviction that there is definitely an imbalance in the power relationship between students and teachers but that this was deemed as not necessarily a bad thing in terms of the professional learning relationship. Students in all three schools expressed the need to trust knowledgeable teachers who had authority and control in order to advance the classroom learning. They wanted the power imbalance to exist for positive learning purposes and outcomes and felt that this added to a good relationship. Whether this view is itself a manifestation of the inherent hidden or covert power relationships and the resultant expectations is a matter for further consideration. Perhaps there is a difference between how student-teacher relationships are viewed by those other than teachers and students (contractual) and how they are viewed by the students and teachers themselves (covenantal).

The teachers they have the experience, the knowledge to lead us so why should we change their way of thinking coz we rely on them, I trust them that they know what they are doing, I don't think we really should change that balance

(AS2)

And in the end it is always twenty-four against one or something so there needs to be

(BS3)

There needs to be a certain imbalance between students and teachers

(BS8)

The possible upside to having a power disparity was mentioned by the teacher interviewed at school B and touches upon the idea that teachers have a greater degree of experiential capital and acquired expertise than the students.

As a student you have someone who is there to look after you and is concerned about making you a better learner and is going to manage you and guide you that is one of the good things and as you get older those supports that you get are gradually taken away every year...Yeah it is important, it is like a nurturing role that's what a teacher has and you can't say we are even, coz you're not how can you manage a class of 25 kids when you are all even

(BT1)

When asked about what the outcome of having a good teacher, students in school A insisted that the effectiveness of a teacher will be gauged by how well students do in tests and assignments whilst in schools B and C students did not mention summative assessments but instead gave examples of how learning techniques were influenced by good teaching.

Yeah I think the teachers at the school are really great they make what you learn in school fun, ahh they have different methods, presentations, group activities and I think that they take every single student into account and see what they still need help with, they just try and push you so that you do your best in school

(CS1)

There was little reference to what makes a good teacher by the teachers themselves although the stabilising effect that a structured, experienced teacher can bring to students was articulated. Teacher AT2 explained the positive effect of having himself, an experienced teacher, take over a course that had undergone some recent teacher instability at school A enforced the idea that power imbalances can have positive outcomes.

There have been ups and downs at the school and there needs a bit of stability and the teacher struggled to deliver the DP courses and the students were looking for someone who was a little more experienced, so I have come to tidy up a little bit.... they were eager to learn but just needed some structure and building confidence by the teacher as they were disillusioned...they felt a little lost they were craving structure so I tried to provide it

(AT2)

Teachers said that a good relationship with students can promote further learning goals especially in terms of eliciting student views. The fragility of the relationship was also touched upon emphasising the need for teachers to be mindful of the magnifying impact the explicit power imbalance can have on teacher defensiveness and everyday interactions.

The relationship that I have with the students as a teacher, as a coordinator enables me to get a feel and the students will tell me directly anyway if they do not like a lesson

(AT3)

Once a kid told me that my students thought I was moody, a bit unpredictable, and that was hard to hear because I felt like I was expressing my critical feelings when half the class turned up without homework, and they saw that as me being moody, so that was interesting and it has always made me think ever since but I would still be critical if half the class turn up without their homework but maybe you try and explain it in a better way

(BT1)

When looking at the key phenomena of a good teacher it is apparent that three important emergent ideas appear from this data and which form the second of our level one codes. The first two have clear links with the type of relationship that exist between teachers and students and link again to the 'good relationship' attribute of a good school outlined earlier.

The Student Council

Discussions about the role of the school council were easily generated and figured prominently in the focus group sessions as one of the common school attributes that they share. Replies from the students seemed to elicit three very different response types with regard to the international schools in the sample group. School A students had a robust and positive attitude toward the role of the student council; school B students were frustrated with the role their student council were performing; school C students were unconcerned and relatively indifferent about their student council,

viewing it as doing an acceptable job. These attitudes seem significant in light of the similarities in the student body demographics and the long histories each has had with student democracies and therefore requires some unpacking.

In all three schools the student council was based on the premise of democratic representation where class representatives were elected by their homerooms at the start of each academic year and joined a larger body of students who met once a week; each council had a chairperson or president and were coordinated by a designated teacher. The democratic notion of active representation seems to be established in all schools and acknowledged in school A and school C but not in school B where its value may have been eroded.

Or the things that they have apparently been involved in like the school dress code which I heard that the school council was very heavily involved in one or two years ago and I didn't notice any difference and honestly if they did represent us which again I just heard second hand is that they didn't represent us well not only what I think but when I talk to others, boys and girls different grades that what we wanted wasn't represented

(BS5)

Students in school A offered many examples of active representation and were the only school where there was a consensus that teacher-student dynamics at the school had at times been influenced to some degree by the student council and that the teachers had even appealed to the student council on occasion to take action.

An example the teachers complain that the students leave their bags by the entrance of the doors because when we have a break here we leave our bags and go outside and the teachers complained that they were in the way and so the student council talked about it and so now we have introduced these cupboards that you can put your bag in to save space and there is no bags in the way and no excuse

(AS2)

In most cases the active representation involved 'comfort' matters to do with the environment e.g. school food, lockers or school spirit which seemed to be the most

important perceived function of the student council e.g. school spirit days. These 'comfort' matters seemed to be important to the students and this is conveyed in the data.

They always attempt to raise school spirit...you can sign up for different things, some people do forest walks or sports and generally they want to take into account the wants of the students and bring that to the teachers

(CS1)

This was not seen to be a major issue in school A or C but was a bone of contention in school B.

And to quote our last president they just tried to shove spirit down our throats and that is exactly what it feels like

(BS4)

Students at a school where the emphasis on school spirit was undoubtedly linked to a charity or event were more supportive of the school council's spirit days. This was very evident in school A where the linking of school spirit to events such as 'raising and giving week' and 'make a difference day' were viewed as important and an example of what I have called 'active spirit'. I believe 'active spirit' is school spirit that is generated from a source of merit or significance and is thus based on some real meaning that has some broader purpose for students e.g. raising money for a specific charity.

The whole school going out and helping the community and things like that so we try and make something happen and be a school where everyone can work

(AS6)

It seemed that 'active spirit' was missing from or had been miscommunicated at school B. It may be the case that the form it took was not appropriate or lacked a certain appeal to the student sample selected in the focus group. In this aspects of how the climate or school culture can impact upon and be impacted itself by the complicated political relationships that abound in schools emerges.

I think spirit is important but changing things that the students really want is more important and maybe spirit will come from that if everyone is really more

happy with the school, like I hear people complaining all of the time and if everyone was really happy with what was happening then I think spirit would come from that

(BS5)

Perhaps the smaller student population size of the school A had an enabling impact on the positive use of 'active spirit'. Spirit for spirit's sake was viewed as hollow by those in the school B focus group revealing a sense of apathy and/or distrust. There was general agreement that the school council had very little influence on teaching and learning within the schools. As previously mentioned only school A students had experienced some aspects of this as a reality in the school, although the examples given centred on the pedagogical student-teacher relationship rather than learning conversations.

A teacher has problems with some certain classes, for example umm that year it was with our class... the others he was also loud with them but they didn't complain because for them it wasn't a behaviour thing, but when it is issues with teachers either it is a whole school thing or then it is just a single class and the student council rep talks to the teacher

(AS1)

Students in school B despite having a longer history with student voice did not link the impact of the student council to their learning in any way.

I think it stands more for the sports officer, I'm not trying to put it down by any means but how does that affect our learning? The only thing that that person does in my opinion is tell us what our school achieved regarding sports... if we really want to make a change in the way that we are learning we need someone who stands in place for that

(BS1)

It seems that it is more about school spirit and events like St Valentine's Day and not about the actual learning

(BS3)

When the existence of a student-led student voice initiative was mentioned as existing at school B the students did not seem to have been affected by it personally. They did display enthusiasm and the desire for it to hold a more prominence in the school, feeling that it may make the school council more relevant to the ordinary student.

I'm in a volleyball team with one person who is doing student voice and on the train ride back home she talked to us about like... the school and what they do in student voice and what she would like to change and what she does and I thought that was pretty amazing and I thought that she could have been in the student council and I felt that she could've made a difference and what she was saying I completely identified with that and I don't get why she was not in the student council

(BS3)

For student voice maybe to also actually show the students of the school that something is happening, maybe just briefly share any achievements with them to make them appreciate what is happening because usually for them it would just appear that change has happened and they would be happy that it did but they wouldn't know who is behind it and how much effort it takes

(BS1)

From the tone of the comments it would seem that there is an expected distinction in school B between the function of the student council and the function of a student-as-researchers (SaR) based student voice group. When asked about the relationship that students had with the members of the student council there was a general 'us and them' attitude in school B and C whilst in school A the relationship was more collegial.

Well if the student council took part in it the teachers would pay more attention to it and uhm and probably change things quicker

(CS5)

It should be people who really care about the school not just people who want it on their C.V

(BS4)

Whilst subtle, the general apathy toward school B and C's student council may reveal the issues of the power imbalance between student council members especially the student council executive, mirroring the same power unevenness evident between teachers and students. This confirms that schools are riddled with hidden power play manifestations and that these become more explicit when student council-student relationships are examined instead of the more acknowledged student-teacher relationships?

Two factors seemed to have a positive influence on the effectiveness of the school council in school A. These were the fact that the members of the school council were

given some form of training and that the role of representative was firmly enmeshed in the fabric of the school. The member of the school A focus group who had been involved in the student council was erudite on this area.

We meet every Wednesday lunch time and we have training and I have had it once now and I think we are going to do it throughout the year, one school day of training....students can go up to me and tell me their concerns and I'll try to raise it... we work together on that and try to find a solution

(AS6)

The teacher in charge of the student council in school A and a teacher in the same school who had previous experience of that same role in another school both held firm views on the role of the student council and the role of the teacher coordinator; especially in terms of student empowerment and that there be a philosophical foundation to the function of the student council.

There is some campaigning and writing up of a personal statement linked to the school's mission statement reflecting the school's philosophy, there is a day of leadership, communication, teamwork training and the focus is to define the purpose of the SCsometimes it is their own voice rather than the voice of the homeroom and this is something that I must remind them about... listen, plan, act, reflect is the mantra

(AT5)

There is a strong vision and level of governance shown by AT5 as the coordinator of the student council and this seems to have gone some way to the success of the student council at school A.

This is in contrast to the teacher at school B who seemed to share the same level of unfamiliarity as the students in the focus group.

I don't know what they do really and I'm not sure if the kids do either

(BT1)

School B and C students did not refer to or mention the role of the student council teacher coordinator during their focus group discussions. Of note is that School B with the more developed history of student voice whilst delivering a constructivist MYP curriculum has a student council with the least favourable reputation of the three. In school C with the curricular mixture there is a generally positive perspective

on the role of the student council though they are not overly enthusiastic. School A with the more linear curriculum has a positively viewed student council that seems to be engaged in 'active spirit' oriented initiatives. In all schools the effect of the student council on learning is not profound but the basis of students being listened to and then approaching teachers exists, although issues may still centre on the relationship that a class has with a teacher rather than specific outcomes of pedagogy.

The key level one codes that are developed from this data are that in the study the student perspectives on the student council's role, reputation and function displays:

1. The student belief that the student council has an impact on 'comfort' matters but little to negligible impact on student learning
2. The sense of 'active spirit' being a factor in student council success
3. For student council effectiveness: the need for systemic support from a guiding teacher and training
4. The existence of student council-student power imbalances

The second and third emergent codes: 'active spirit' and teacher agency or support are characteristics that are key to gauging the success and effectiveness of student councils. The need for a school to have student participation activities that mean something to the lives of the students is an important aspect that has emerged from this student council research.

4. The Curriculum

Whilst a definitive denotation of 'curriculum' can be elusive there appeared to be a common understanding from the students that the term curriculum related to what they were taught (content) and to some extent, how they were taught (pedagogy).

Beyond this there was no elaboration or any deeper understanding of the term from the students, although this need not be a significant issue. The terms curriculum and syllabus were used interchangeably in the discussions by all students and the idea that the curriculum was something that teachers have to teach so that students did not fail their tests was a collective one. Students in schools B and C had a keen sense of the difference between a curriculum based around the MYP constructivist model with one based on the IGCSE content model. The general feeling was that the over-riding difference with students doing the IGCSE was that they had a lot more content (stuff) to learn and that they were examined on their understanding of this content. School B students also commented on the greater emphasis of research and reflection in the MYP rather than being “spoon fed”. At school C with the IGCSE-MYP combination, students who were MYP students only (the vast majority of the grade 10 population) seemed relieved that they were not ‘burdened’ with the extra amounts of work.

It is different as they do different tests and teaching is exactly the same

(CS5)

They get different packets and material in general. I'm glad I am not doing the IGCSE

(CS3)

School C pupils mentioned that content/knowledge is only one criteria in the MYP and that reflecting, documenting and investigating occur in all subjects including the Arts. Despite this there was general agreement that the content in the MYP classes at school C was largely dictated by what the IGCSE students needed to learn.

And also our textbooks they are similar to the ones or to the content that will be in the IGCSE especially for geography, on the cover it says for IGCSE material

(CS2)

This view was supported by the teachers in school C who agreed that a system with IGCSE content in an MYP philosophical framework was inevitably driven by the content and that the issue of the need for 'more time to cover content' was key.

When I ask the kids what they would like to cover content wise I get a whole load of ideas. I would like to teach more conceptually as is the MYP philosophy but the content is dictated. There needs to be a culture shift for this to happen the teacher needs to have the confidence to let go. The teacher may feel threatened to cover all of the content

(CT1)

There are hints from CT1 that considerations of lesson content may be a discussable topic with students but not under the present content regime. This begs the question whether school C teachers and administrators have contemplated a review of the IG-MYP hybrid programme in favour of one or the other. Some elucidation on this issue is provided by CT2 and is framed within the notion that historical and external factors are at play such as parent stakeholder pressure and national qualification recognition.

The IGCSE qualification should be phased out but we need baby steps because of external reasons. I think we should keep the IG framework e.g. research and essay plans. For example we should spend more time on how do students do a geography display ask them what is a good display? Allow them the freedom to do a display. This will empower the students

(CT2)

In school B students were reflective about the differences in the two programmes revealing that whilst appreciating the flexibility and other aspects of the MYP e.g. research, teamwork and discussions, the IGCSE enabled a broader understanding of content rather than the deeper MYP approach.

We are taught less factually and less in a "this is what you need for the test" type of way, it is closer to real life and real world... I think that we could focus a little bit more on some factual knowledge once in a while and I do think that we are a little bit behind in that area

(BS5)

This deeper understanding that they labelled 'structured learning' implied that students were not totally confident with an enquiry based learning model sometimes seeing it as 'soft' and would periodically appreciate the reassurance of the didactic-style teacher. This view however was tempered by student comments which broadly established that less fact learning exposed their classes to shared discussion and shared learning on a scale beyond what they had experienced or could imagine experiencing in a content driven curriculum.

the IGCSE, it is very much the teacher gives you every bit of information that you need to learn, how you need to answer every question, tells you everything, very much spoon fed, whereas in the MYP you have to come up with stuff on your own, you have to do everything yourself, but a happy medium would be the best

(BS7)

I remember those fixed lesson plans from the national system, if we were too slow our teacher would get quite upset and we would have to do it all for homework, because she had a fixed lesson plan and we had to get to a certain point or else

(BS2)

Students in school A stressed the importance of 'getting through' content and on examination performance and grades as a measure of success in the IGCSE in preparing them for the IB Diploma programme. For them the end goal was seen to be important and certainly coloured the types of learning that they valued e.g. practice examination papers. There was an undeniable feeling that the students and teachers were under pressure to digest the IGCSE prescribed curriculum.

I personally would always refer how and what part of the class, how this is related to the test we will write in March.... because that whole process that is very important, because that's what counts

(AS1)

the teachers have to get through the syllabus and don't have three years to do it but two and we have exams and everything and there's more pressure

(AS7)

However, despite this view there was a thread of understanding woven into the school A focus group conversations that valued the view that the methods of learning and the processes at play were important rather than being able to pass a test. Teacher AT3 expressed the view that in the formative years of the school's existence the IGCSE helped in the validity of the school's programmes in order to establish their reputation to external stakeholders. This teacher also echoed the comments from AT1 and AT4 that the thematic curriculum currently being delivered in grades six to eight was more in line with the way the school would like to be delivering the learning.

When we started off we were a really small school and we had to prove ourselves to the community...So IGCSE was one way in which we could say 'we can prepare your sons and daughters as well as any other school'. That became a focus we had to make sure that they passed or they got grades that were of use to them and that we got to develop a culture of trust with the parents and this was a focus and this is now an issue because exam preparation does clash with other ways of seeing curriculum...now that we are strong enough we can move away from it and be confident

(AT3)

School A students appreciated a process style subject they had experienced in grade nine called 'Global Perspectives' which was non-IGCSE and non-tested and introduced students to essay writing, elements of theory of knowledge and research skills. They also valued the decision to fuse two IGCSE subjects, English Literature and First Language English into one subject in order to emphasise the attainment of skills.

Last year we had a subject called global perspectives...where it was not IGCSE not IB it was no subject and the grade was just in your report and didn't really mean anything and it was a mixture of geography and English where you chose your own topic and we had these models and we learnt how to do note taking and we had this extended essay and it extended our

knowledge because we chose our own problem and we had to develop it...but we don't have it anymore

(AS1)

Students in school A and C regarded the courses they were doing as fundamental in preparing them for the next step, the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP). The use of formal testing and the ability to choose subjects based on their interests were given as key factors to prepare them for a programme that is viewed as more rigorous when compared to the current middle year's programmes. Teachers in the same schools had mixed views on this issue with most agreeing that the examination skills gained, helped students with the IBDP but that the need to be on the 'content treadmill' was restrictive and isolating.

I think that the IGCSE prepares students better for the DP, the main obstacles are the gap between grade 10 and grade 11 content and the expectation gap between 10 and 11. Exam writing skills are a major issue as well. Students who purely do the MYP which is the majority of them are not great at formal examinations

(CT2)

I think that MYP students do better at DP. The step up demands that they are producing quality work and that they are not just kept working in the content, assessment treadmill. Besides the IBDP is changing and becoming more conceptual which feeds from the PYP and MYP. So the emphasis becomes 'do you understand' rather than 'have you learnt?'

(CT1)

Students in school B recognised the benefit from experiencing formal examinations but seemed relieved that they were not part of the trial year of MYP e-assessments planned to begin in May 2016. Teacher views at school B stressed that there was too much emphasis on recall and content in the IGCSE and that the MYP assisted students in having more higher order thinking skills which are assessed in a number of ways.

I've worked a little bit with IGCSE at this school when I first started...they are too content heavy in science and there is too much emphasis on recall and not enough emphasis on problem solving, so for example a question that would be worth a level one or two in the MYP would be worth an A grade question in the IGCSE's which I think is just amazing (laughs)

(BT1)

The introduction of the MYP e-assessments were viewed in a balanced way by the school B teacher where the positive aspects of competitiveness and rigor were acknowledged. However the teacher's general view was that final examinations were contradictory to the ethos of a constructivist curriculum such as the MYP as BT1 passionately expresses:

they have been taught that exams means serious and that on-going coursework not so serious there is still that view, even though that is really old fashioned...So if you say to a kid "I'm giving you a test next week on Friday at 11 o'clock and it will be on this, this, this, this and this" I can guarantee you that my grades will be better than if I say "show me your ideas about these concepts, choose how you want to do it but you need to come up with a way of showing me your understanding of these ideas by next Friday",...On the other hand I am finding the e-assessments... pretty soul destroying because they are contradictory to the ethos of the programme, of course it is going to be about content and... if you come from a school where people have tried to teach in a really creative open minded way and gone for depth and conceptual understanding but you might not have taught everything on that content list, then of course you are at a disadvantage

(BT1)

Again the importance of the role of the teacher in delivering any of the curriculum designs being considered, in order to maximise the learning experience was clear within the teacher comments.

I am a believer in quite guided enquiry, ... you can't say "oh kids we are going to learn about magnetism, off you go", you really must guide and structure it you need to have a really good knowledge of the content yourself so you where they have to go with it and you know learning experiences that are going to open new doors for them and support existing knowledge

(BT1)

So yes it comes down to the teachers just like with anything else and because the way that the IGCSE syllabus is presented, the danger if there is nothing in

place in the school to direct the pedagogy then there is the danger that it will be taught in a very isolated, single discipline sort of way, but real rich learning is not necessarily happening and when we come to measuring learning

(AT1)

Despite being a broad area there are some definitive ideas and concepts developed in the analysis of student and teacher conversations about the curriculum. Students and teachers have very clear perspectives on the concept of a content/linear curriculum and a constructivist/process curriculum and their place within it. They have distinct views on what constitutes the positives and the less positive aspects of each type of curriculum and how these transform into the local school contexts. A key finding from this data is that there seems to be a yearning from the schools to move from a more content-driven to a more process-driven curriculum but that the internal and external constraints are complicated, creating a conservative approach to change.

When looking at the key phenomena of the curriculum it is evident that three important level one codes emerge from of this data:

1. There is an appeal in all three schools to imbue a constructivist style curricular approach to learning
2. An understanding of the fundamental importance of the teacher in the success of the learning regardless of the curriculum being attempted
3. The impact of external factors on decisions about the curriculum is dependent on the individual school's vision, culture and external considerations

Student Voice

The over-arching understanding shared by the students in all three schools was that student voice is about having conversations with the teachers about their classroom

experience. It is no surprise that the indications of what kinds of conversations are taking place and what aspects of classroom experience are being discussed depended on the context experienced by teachers and students in the schools. I approach the research analysis in this section by considering and presenting the research from school B, School C and school A respectively.

Students in school B seem to value collective rather than individual conversations with teachers utilising a range of mediums including: whole class discussions and collective submissions including emails and surveys. Despite the feeling that the teacher/student relationship was good, the belief was that students felt more comfortable talking to other students about learning than talking directly to teachers. The topics discussed in these participative, student voice conversations covered a range of issues including: suggestions about filling in subject MYP content gaps, feedback from a unit covered, elaboration on interesting topics and the gains from listening to peer problems and perspectives.

Sometimes... people are afraid in front of the class to raise an issue so I don't know maybe before the discussion people got to submit something that they want to discuss and then the class gets to discuss it even if that person doesn't want to join

(BS3)

Students felt that the use of structured end of unit surveys and reflections had been used more prevalently by teachers in school B in the years prior to the focus group interview. Despite this perceived decline in their use the benefit from them had been appreciated by the students as was the impact of being listened to regardless of there being any actual implementation of change as the following student conversation thread shows:

BS5: and even if our suggestions are not implemented it gives us the feeling of having an impact which I think for young people is quite important as we often feel like we don't have any say in what goes on

BS1: we need that psychological effect even if it is nothing

BS5: yes we need it

BS8: it is like sitting in the car and even if there is cold air blowing at you in the middle of winter you turn it up higher because you think it is going to be warm, it is the psychological effect in a way

BS5: yeah (laughs) that's really good metaphor (General laughter)

There was a clear belief that the use of student voice conversations were beneficial and that students in school B would like a greater opportunity to talk with their teachers. As outlined in the previous section on student councils, the understanding that a student voice research group (SaR) existed in the school surprised some members of the focus group prompting the thought that such initiatives need to be promoted, shared more readily and kept 'alive'. A review of the way that the students-as-researchers initiative is structured may be a way of sharing and promoting students' views and generating dialogue more prevalently in school B.

The teacher interviewed at school B believed that student voice undertakings were worth doing regardless of the type of curriculum implemented but made a point of saying that a constructivist form of curriculum lent itself more towards student teacher dialogue than a linear form.

Anytime you offer with students to sit down at the table and talk about their own learning and how it can be improved, how their time at the school can feel more worthwhile to them is something worth doing and it doesn't matter what you are trying to teach them or what the subject is or what curriculum it is or how much time you've got you should do it...constructivist style teaching lends itself more to student voice because you have an emphasis on setting your own goals, of taking charge of your own learning you know you decide on elements of the pathway and you decide on elements of the product as a constructivist learner,

(BT1)

Teacher BT1 also touched upon the barriers to effective student voice undertakings of which power relationships figured prominently.

No one likes getting critical feedback really, you can say that you value it but you know nobody really likes it (laughs) so there will always be that defensiveness so that is a big barrier ...umm I think there is the barrier that the kids don't believe that it will be acted on that they think it is lip service and teachers don't really want to chance anything or won't

(BT1)

In summary, the research from school B shows that the students welcomed student voice initiatives but that they would like the opportunity for greater collaboration with teachers. This collaboration was viewed as more effective if done collectively or via a student voice group. There was the view that formal student voice activities need to be actively promoted and 'kept alive' in the culture of the school and that there was a psychological benefit from engaging in SV even if the impact was not overtly evident. Thus being engaged in student voice activities was seen as important regardless of any impact from the delivered curriculum.

Students in school C confessed that there was not any real structured system of student and teacher learning talk happening at the institution, insisting that it is left up to an individual teacher's preference. This was supported by comments from the school C teachers. Students initially cited friendly, non-subject conversations that seem to have more to do with relationship building than classroom learning and short-term informal student consultation style conversations that tended to be used by teachers to modify lessons (quality control in Lodge's matrix appendix two, figure one). There was no doubt that the students respected and trusted their teachers in terms of their learning welfare.

They kind of gauge what your face looks like...if you are squinting and staring at your paper...it depends on the teacher because I have several teachers

that are really good at helping me and then there are others that are too busy or forget about the questions that we ask...every teacher is different with that

(CS4)

There are no real school wide student voice initiatives, teachers ask for feedback at the end of units but this is an individual thing, it depends on the teacher and class and it can be used for planning at the end of a unit e.g. what worked

(CT1)

Students gave examples of some school C teachers giving end of unit feedback sheets and of students experiencing forms of participatory conversations in learning support, homeroom, ethics classes and from school counselors. Whilst this form of on-going informal consultation appears fixed to some degree at school C, it seems that in-depth teaching and learning conversations are not necessarily taking place. Students seemed concerned with upsetting or unduly criticising their teachers with what they viewed as complaints and suggested that conversations about changing subject topics would be unfair on the teachers.

I think that teachers are open or at least most are open if you criticise them as long as it is not in an offensive way...last year we umm, to my German teacher umm complained about the fact that we do so much on Nazi Germany and we did that in 8th grade and the year before and it is always repeating and I would want to have a topic change and I think that she did take it seriously although that doesn't mean that she is gonna change the entire curriculum because of that

(CS1)

Maybe it is only you who wants to learn a particular thing and not the rest of the year group don't want to learn about it and they wouldn't change it just because you don't want to learn it

(CS6)

Although the general thinking among the school C focus group was that student voice conversations could centre on changing subject content (what students want to learn), there was also the belief that this was not possible due to the constraints of the IGCSE curriculum, parental pressure and universities. It is significant that

students are contemplating subject content discussions with their teachers although how likely these conversations will lead to unit content change is in doubt.

If they are just very focussed on the curriculum and what they need to teach us students, so basically, I have not had the experience of being asked what I would like to learn

(CS3)

I don't think the teachers really have the power to change what I would like to learn because they have to follow a certain programme

(CS4)

They don't want to teach you what you want to learn because they know all of the things that the universities want you to know...and they think that this is the way of doing it and they don't consider what we think

(CS6)

I think the teachers have all of their units planned and it would be more work for them to change everything...and also the teachers have to follow the parent's interests as they are the people who pay (laughs)

(CS1)

For the students of the school C focus group there seemed little scope in the future for student voice activities to have much of an impact on the school. Although the idea of engaging teachers through a collective initiative through the student council seemed to be an interesting prospective rather than just the actions of the 'little people'. School C teachers seemed similarly non-committed to a greater emphasis on student voice despite recognising its possible benefits and hinting toward the need for a culture shift.

Yeah so it depends on the official then the entire thing would be more successful because if there are little people involved then I guess teachers would see the importance of it

(CS1)

If the student council took part in it the teachers would pay more attention to it and probably change things quicker

(CS5)

I doubt that the students could engage in student voice activities for example researching and presenting about teaching and learning. We could still do student voice in either the curriculum evaluation process or as part of the 'reflective practitioner' process. This would be good practice and why should we not ask the kids to reflect on the teaching and to reflect on 'how do you assess your own learning

(CT1)

Overall the student and teacher responses from school C suggest that any student consultation that takes place is done on an individual teacher, informal basis and that such activities were viewed as worthwhile by the students, although these conversations may not necessarily be about learning activities that they find motivating or productive. There was the view from students that conversations centred on the issue of content change rather than pedagogy seemed unrealistic and were sceptical about the success of such conversations given their traditional experience of the "teacher in charge". Despite this understanding among teachers and students about the possible benefits of student voice activities there was the view that a culture shift was required at the school for greater collaboration to ensue.

In school A the student understanding of student and teacher conversations initially clustered around conversations either about general banter e.g. football or about subject content clarification required to pass examinations. However, as the conversations continued examples of non-content learning conversations emerged including the formal use of school-wide end of year student surveys.

There was a time in maths when our teacher would give us many surprise quizzes, the whole class wasn't happy about it and so he talked to us, a few individuals and asked why and the reason behind that, why we don't like it and what we could do to make it better and some said it brings it out of context and everything and so he decided not to give us surprise quizzes but tell us and so things like that they improve on and listen to us

(AS7)

We also had a survey last year at the end and most teachers gave them out if they wanted to and there were questions like if we like the way of teaching or

how they could improve and what they could do better and stuff like that....this year in our maths class she started by referring to the feedback sheets and talked about which problems could be improved, how she will improve and if we like it

(AS3)

Although the surveys were a generic version taken from the Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching Project (MET) rather than being bespoke, there was general agreement among students that they had made a difference. Interesting aspects of this formal feedback is that the feedback sheets are centrally collated by the head of the upper school and teachers are encouraged rather than mandated to use them as a teaching and learning tool.

The school has a standard example that we can use. It got strengths and weaknesses, uhm has tried to standardise it but sometimes it can be a little bit too complicated, too easy for the kids just to put yes or no, you don't get a lot of feedback, it works better when you ask less questions and they are more open ended thus letting the kids just give you their thoughts rather than making it more structured- looking for too many things

(AT2)

We use student surveys designed by the Bill and Melissa Gates foundation and teachers are meant to be using these, we introduced them this year, twice per year and we allowed teachers this time the choice of which class they wished to solicit the feedback from. However, having introduced that as a tool we found that some of the students were really not clear about what some of the questions were asking

(AT4)

Teachers at school A whilst excited about further student voice opportunities in grades nine and ten, expressed that the less flexible the curriculum is in terms of content and assessment the more difficult rich student collaboration becomes.

The IB is more flexible in terms of teacher interpretation and given the amount of content that has to be covered in IGCSE there is less freedom and the IG textbook is the textbook and it allows you to cover the syllabus and there is less creative freedom and the IB just lends itself to this more, and easier for me to work something out and I think the students own learning ability it is more overwhelming at IGCSE level than the more mature IB students so it is a risk and you have to be selective with the IGCSE resources that you share

with the students . Thus there are different learning levels between a grade 9 and a grade 12 student in the two different curriculums

(AT5)

In summary, school A students were keen to take part in student voice type conversations with their teachers and gave the example of how formal surveys had been positively received and had made a difference in some classes. Students found it difficult to be completely open to the idea of commenting on lessons and had some difficulty believing that it is acceptable to comment on teaching and learning when the idea of the responsible, professional teacher is the traditional view.

In terms of student voice four level one codes have surfaced from the focus group research and are outlined below.

1. Students value the opportunity to formally and informally interact and engage with teachers and that this is of greater value if there is a focus on learning and a school culture that values such interactions
2. In schools where the curriculum content is prescribed, teachers and students viewed this as a barrier to richer student voice undertakings
3. The influence of power imbalances where students found it difficult to engage in conversations that they understand as possibly undermining the professional credibility of teachers
4. At a fundamental level student voice initiatives that are student led seem to be viewed more positively by students but that teacher 'buy in' is vital for success

4.3 The Wider Notions

Second Level Codes

An analysis of the sixteen level one codes or emergent ideas allows me to construct the second level codes that are the wider conceptual notions. I will compare these to

the key findings from the literature review in the next chapter, the meta-analysis in order to conduct deductions with respect to my main research and sub research questions. The first level codes emerging from the research data provide me with a fertile source of material and upon analysis lead to the creation of three wider notions for consideration. These are outlined below and in appendix nine in the form of a coding tree (table three).

1. School Cultural Reciprocity- the reciprocal nature of the relationship between school culture and a school's openness to student voice
2. Student and Teacher Relationships- the profound importance of the student teacher relationship and the negotiating of power imbalances in terms of its impact on:
 - a) School culture
 - b) Teacher advocacy of student voices
 - c) The curriculum implemented- curricular design overridden by teacher and student relationships.
3. A Pedagogical Focus for Student Voice- giving meaning to student and teacher interactions

I will unpack each one before moving onto the meta-analysis.

School Culture Reciprocity

From the level one codes it appears that the school culture has a profound impact on how the curriculum and student consultative projects are viewed. It is the values underpinning the school climate that determines what is regarded as important and of little import to the school in its short and longer-term operations. For student participation, consultation or student voice projects to thrive at a school there must

be buy in from the school community and for it to be instilled in some way in the culture of that organisation. This instillation into the school culture may take some time and will impact on the sustainability and longevity of student voice. A school that values status or external considerations such as parental concerns to a significant extent is likely to have a less open attitude toward student collaboration. Similarly the valuing of teaching and learning in a culture coloured by accountability may not facilitate student participation beyond Hart's (1997) ladder's fourth rung 'children are assigned and informed' (appendix one) or beyond Lodge's (2005) 'compliance and control quadrant' (appendix two). The impact of the student teacher relationships within the school has a reciprocal or two-way effect on the culture both affecting it and a result of that culture. The valuing of community service through 'active spirit' projects undertaken by the student council could be an outcome of a school culture that holds democratic ideals in high regard. The creation of good teacher-student relationships based on mutual trust leads to a sense of empowerment and belonging among students and is fostered by a school culture that cherishes these values. The key idea coming from students is that a good school has good relationships between teachers and students as a fundament. The impact of the school culture can also stifle student voice initiatives and create a conservative approach to curriculum change in the short to medium term. I find that the field research points to the idea that a school that values the impact that student consultation has on learning will be a school where student voice undertakings will eventually thrive.

Student and Teacher Relationships

It seems clear from the teacher and especially the student responses that passionate teachers who have a mutually respectful relationship with their students are fundamental in ensuring: the success of curriculum delivery regardless of the type of

curriculum prescribed and are a driving factor for a positive school culture. Supportive and proactive teachers who advocate for student consultation are a vital factor in the success or otherwise of student council and student voice undertakings and classroom learning. However I realise that these findings, especially the later point may appear to be circular in nature. The more crucial question would be how can teacher advocacy and teacher voice be influenced and informed so that teachers are more open and willing to experiment with student consultation? That is: if teacher agency or advocacy is important how do teachers become agents for student voice? In exploring this question I must consider the types of barriers that may prevent teachers becoming advocates of student voice.

The existence of both apparent and hidden power relationships between students and teachers as barriers is noteworthy; rather than continuously debilitating the ability of teachers and students to critically respond to learning situations and engage in meaningful dialogue it defines and has the power to redefine the relationship and as we have seen students seem to both recognise and accept it. This is not to make light of the fact that the existence of unequal power relationships between teachers and students and even students and students can be a significant barrier to student consultation. Given that teachers are almost always going to be older and have greater intellectual capital than their students, it is unreasonable to expect the power differential to ever be equal. It is noteworthy that whenever we deal with notions of hierarchical power in an educational setting there are inherent or hidden imbalances and that student voice initiatives are a consequence of but also may have some longer-term impact on these political imbalances. The issue is whether teachers deploy this power differential as an enabling or disabling force in the classroom.

The time and content pressures with curriculum delivery and the lack of support structures in the school including leadership backing will impact upon teacher agency for student voice. There was a degree of appeal among teachers and students for constructivist style curriculums and prescribed content was viewed as a barrier to student voice undertakings. However, these understandings are framed within the influence and importance that teachers have on over-riding any curricular obstacles that are in existence. Focus group feedback suggests that the idea of the global teacher with aspects of international mindedness may be a factor in fostering teacher agency but what exactly these attributes are is not keenly defined.

An interesting fact that emerges from the primary data is that students value a good relationship with their teachers but that this is very much learning based rather than personally based. Any personal traits need to contribute to a learning relationship rather than a purely platonic relationship.

A Pedagogical Focus for Student Voice

From the primary data it appears that at the schools where a prescribed content curriculum is delivered limitations exist that inhibit the ability of teachers to indulge in student voice conversations to the extent to which they would like. Students seem to be aware of these constraints and there appears to be a correlation between the type of curriculum and the type of learning enabled by the curriculum design. Despite a desire for and a willingness by the schools to develop more constructivist curricular models the constraints of external pressures and internal factors may make this a longer term prospect at best. The pressures of the 'content treadmill' in the IGCSE in schools A and C did appear to be reflected as a constraint on possible student voice accomplishments; school B where the curriculum content is not

prescribed by an outside authority is nonetheless still restricted to some extent by the need to deliver content especially in the light of new MYP assessment modifications.

Reliance on the student council as the only instrument for student voice in an institution appears misguided given the research evidence that its impact on teaching and learning was negligible in school's A, B and C. Such forays into student voice or students-as-researcher activities may only amount to discrete, isolated events if solely the preserve of a student council or Student Voice group. Students seem empowered by the opportunity to talk about learning and students in schools A and B even expressed a desire to engage in conversations about the types of unit topics they would like to be learning in their grade 10 MYP classes. These discussions appear to be modifying classroom content via the student teacher dialogue in the short term to cater to students learning needs rather than being a transformation of the written curriculum. Such conversations are leading to pedagogical adaptations and in a wider sense curriculum changes.

A solution may be that rather than participate in dialogue centred on changing the core content the conversations should focus on where teaching and learning and the delivered content fuse in the classroom that is to say, the idea of a pedagogically focussed approach. This seems especially important in the early years of any student voice initiative at a school given the barriers that impact the initiative. I think it important to not discount an osmotic border where content knowledge and delivered content cannot one day become a point of active discussion among students and teachers. Especially if teacher and students view the learning relationship that they share as a convental bond rather than a contractual agreement

where the relationship is susceptible to being broken by one or both of the parties involved.

Chapter Five: Meta-Analysis

5.1 Aims

This chapter focuses upon the key understandings from the literature review and the three, second level codes that emerged from the analysis of the primary research first level codes. Continuing within a social realist theoretical position, I conduct a meta-analysis comparing these two sets of information; enabling me to contrast my primary research findings with established research and contribute to the formulation of my chapter six conclusion. This meta-analysis is underpinned by a social realist notion of an 'evolving' truth and facilitates further links and relationships to shed light on my research questions:

- 1. What are student and teacher perceptions about student voice engagement in the context of three European International Schools with differing curriculum designs?*
- 2. What connections, if any exist between student voice engagement and curriculum design in these schools?*

In doing so I am conscious that the literature review and the primary research have been created from secondary and primary processes, distinct from each other, but with shared common conceptions and foci. In this way I am able to compare the findings emerging from teacher and student perceptions from my field research with pre-established emerged perceptions from the recognised literature in order to provide some grounding to the ideas and themes coming from the field. The process of combining the two sets of information will allow patterns and threads to emerge and furthermore combine the findings from a number of researchers enabling the

results to have wider stakeholder relevance other than on the three schools in the study or international schools as a whole.

Both collections of information are qualitative in nature and concentrate upon the shared notions of middle years secondary curriculum design and wider concepts of the curriculum including linear and constructivist models. The conceptual links of teaching and learning, power relationship imbalances and school culture are omnipresent in both.

The themes of school culture, the teaching role, forms of democratic voice in schools, school councils, curriculum and student voice were explored in the student focus groups and teacher interviews, encouraging sixteen level one codes to be deduced from the primary data recordings and transcripts. These were summarised to form three level two codes via a process of two-way deduction where common themes, links and ideas were recognised (appendix nine, table three). Similarly the literature review investigates notions of student consultation, student voice, teacher voice, the curriculum and the place of knowledge in curricular constructions and international dimensions of schooling. The second level codes: school culture and student voice reciprocal relationship, the import of the teacher-student relationship layered with power variances, cultural impacts, teacher advocacy and thirdly the desire for pedagogically focused student voice collaborations, have been arrived at through a retroductive approach and combined with the key literature findings from chapter two.

These two sets of information combine to create an inclusive set of meta-findings summarised under four headings and discussed in the subsequent section:

1. The Learning Relationship-Connections and Power

2. The Unconstrained Curriculum
3. Pedagogically Focused Student Voice
4. Student Voice Perceptions: Participatory or Perfunctory

5.2 Discussion

The Learning Relationship- Power and Connections

Power

Ideas about the learning relationship between students and teachers are dominated by the influence of power imbalances and the call for a re-think of the way that school structures enforce these imbalances (Fielding, 2001). Findings from the student perceptions in the focus groups confirm that these variances exist in international schools and that there is a sense of inevitability about the existence and impact of them in the learning relationship. Students and teachers in the study felt that there needed to be the presence of the power imbalance for schools to function and learning to take place. If power imbalance is inevitable the challenge is to move away from the mind-set that causes schools to entrench the cultural and political forces in which they are positioned and utilise difference as a driver for dialogue (Apple, 2013). The whole notion of international mindedness among international schools is one directed to exploring and celebrating difference. Dialogue is at the centre of student voice actions providing a space for the coming together of those with differing histories, experiences and power status to make transformations (Freire, 1968). Much rests on the teachers for whom the power scales are favorably tipped when compared to students and on whom the responsibility rests to make concessionary exertions. In this realisation is perhaps the notion that the covert forms of power realities in which both students and teachers interact will always

remain and that the overt forms may be accessible to some degree of modification. These hidden forms of power relationship constructs may re-inscribe pedagogic control over both students and teachers (Arnot and Reay, 2007, Robinson and Taylor, 2013). The use of student council members to conduct students-as-researchers style initiatives may also reinforce the covert forms of power play as student-to-student relationships mirror the teacher to student ones (Kellet, 2011, Skene, 2013). One of the main barriers to student voice is not the explicit but the covert power imbalances that are a result of the institutional culture. A change in the mind-set of one of a small group of teachers through exposure to the benefits of student voice on learning may be a form of overt power adjustment. On the positive side we are ultimately dealing with human constructs of identity and truth; transformations in explicit power relationships may eventually transform the hidden ones within the school culture. Key understandings from the literature review insist that any changes to the student-teacher learning relationship requires a sensitive and gentle approach to its re-shaping (Bragg, 2007). It may not therefore be a question of overcoming power imbalances but rather recognition of which ones can be modified over time.

Connections

Summations from both the literature review and the primary research corroborate the importance of the bond that exists between a student and his or her teachers in the course of their time at school (Brighouse and Woods, 2013, Quaglia and Corso, 2014). The analysis of the focus group data suggests that this connection requires a level of two-way respect and openness to be considered a 'good relationship'. It should be based upon the development of the child's learning rather than only on the plutonic nature or purely performance driven aspects of the connection e.g. improved

examination scores. This connection has wider implications to the success of and the degree of student agency in student voice undertakings. The data infers that a level of advocacy for student voice activities from teachers and the school may assist in fostering a climate where 'learning relationships' can grow. How deeply embedded these activities become will depend on the teacher views on the educational effectiveness and practicality of the student voice enterprise and the culture of collaboration that exists in the school (Hargreaves, 2010).

The influence that teachers have on the success of dialogic student voice activities can be considerable leading to the idea that student voice cannot exist and build in any sustainable way without teacher buy-in to the process. Teachers who may feel isolated and 'not listened to' by leadership or other colleagues are likely to not be proponents of student voice undertakings and a commitment in schools to 'teacher voice' may be required (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007). In all three schools students were familiar with informal, individual student consultative practices undertaken by teachers in isolation and whilst these are important and widespread, they may not generally center on teaching and learning and need some level of formal structure and leadership backing to ensure their sustainability (Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, Stoll and Seashore Lewis, 2007).

The focus on learning manifested itself in the way students felt about teachers who were passionate about their subjects and who instilled a love of their subject 'above and beyond' any personal character traits. The focus groups overwhelmingly found dispassionate and seemingly 'bored' teachers demotivating and deduced that a 'fantastic teacher' can be a 'fantastic guy' but a 'fantastic guy' is not necessarily a 'fantastic teacher' and thus it is important for teachers to develop both a good relationship and communicate a love of learning with their students.

For example music, I love music but also my teacher, I feel that he is a fantastic guy, he likes all of us in the class... it is just a good relationship between the student and the teacher and then you want to work with them and you want to learn from that person

(BS1)

There was little evidence that school council undertakings in each school were effectively linked to teaching and learning and this is supported by established research (Whitty and Wisby, 2007a, Lodge and Reed, 2008). In the absence of such a focus the school council that appeared most effective was the one where 'active spirit' was prevalent. Thus 'active spirit' that had tangible links to meaning and outcome gave significance to the actions of the student council and thus in a sense was itself a form of co-construction of learning (Stoll and Seashore Lewis, 2007, Fullan, 2014). The significance of the teacher's role has resonance in the success of the student council where an appropriate level of governance and guidance seemed to have some influence on student perceptions of a well-regarded student council and one whose relevance was questioned by the students. Of note is that the least regarded student council (school B) had the more developed student voice history. However, students in school B were decidedly more positive about their interactions with the student-as-researchers group member, giving further evidence that the actions of student voice and student councils are mainly distinct functions and that separate student voice and student council groups may prove to be effective. Similarly relying on a student voice group as the main and sole impetus for a student voice initiative may relegate the programme to discrete, one-off events.

The Unconstrained Curriculum

School A with the IGCSE programme has a linear, content-based curriculum in grades nine and ten where content and skills delivery culminates in final written

examinations. Although still in the early years of implementation, School B delivers an example of an IBMYP constructivist curriculum where the emphasis rests upon enquiry, interdisciplinary learning and assessment through process. School C has an amalgam of the two delivering IGCSE content within an IBMYP curricular structure where most students are assessed via MYP criteria and a small minority through final IGCSE examinations. It was significant that contributing teacher perspectives in each school suggested wider school aspirations to offer a more constructivist and process led curriculum than currently offered.

In schools A and C the major barrier to teacher and student dialogue was not the relationship between them rather it was the need for teachers to deliver curriculum content and for students to cover this content. The need to learn the content and pass the examinations was of prime importance to students and teachers in school A. In school C the requirement to teach IGCSE content was purported to be the major impediment although the examination aspect was less of a concern. In school B the major barrier to student voice seemed to be the perception that the student voice initiatives and innovations of the past had been superseded by other concerns and that the initiative needed an injection of awareness raising to 'keep it vibrant'. It would appear that all student voice undertakings require time, commitment and 'buy-in' from teachers, students and leadership alike but that the need to cover prescribed content as in a linear style curriculum is a significant impediment to student voice undertakings.

The teacher is regarded as key in transforming the national and prescribed curriculum into the delivered curriculum, inhabiting that space where core curricular knowledge and pedagogical knowledge infuse and blend as pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and striding the interval between the explicit and the implicit

(hidden) curriculum (Shulman, 2004, Husbands, 2008, Kelly, 2009, Young 2013). It is in this center ground where student voice and teacher voice have the opportunity to grow and interact and where transformations in pedagogical content rather than curricular content occur (Young, 2015). This underscores the fundamental importance of the teacher in the success of a student's learning regardless of the curriculum being attempted and regardless of whether the actions are conscious or outcomes are intended. The variation of overt power plays will allow teachers to 'open up' to student dialogue in the PCK zone of interaction. However, when considering the effective implementation of a constructivist curriculum design, evidence from the literature review and the primary research strongly support the view that the success of such a curriculum is strongly linked to the role and quality of the teachers acting within it (Stenhouse, 1975). Thus a curriculum unconstrained by a conscious fear of content accountability and unrestricted by a narrow notion of student and teacher content conversations might be the fertile source of rich learning discussions.

Pedagogically Focused Student Voice

The degree of influence and interaction that student consultation has on the concept of the curriculum will depend on how widely or narrowly that term is defined. Explicit curricular definitions that include the formal written curriculum or prescribed, statutory curriculum (IBO and UK national curriculum) are less likely to be influenced by student input. Whilst wider definitions which include experiential and relational aspects such as the planned and delivered curriculum are more likely to be influenced due to the wider pedagogical notions involved (Kelly, 2009, Martin 2014). The literature review revealed that there are very few documented examples of student voice initiatives having a significant impact on the development of the written

curriculum in a neo-liberal, western context and that most attempts to do so have often been nestled within a standards and improvement discourse thus tarnishing the effort as tokenistic (Brooker and Macdonald, 1999, Thompson and Gunter, 2006, Flutter, 2007). My primary research data presents no evidence of student voice interactions having a substantial impact on the IGCSE curriculum content in either schools A or C. There is however evidence in school B that student voice has had an impact on aspects of classroom teaching and learning and the suggestion that MYP content has been modified albeit in the short term via student feedback. Evidence from School A's students and teachers shows that pedagogical modifications have occurred based upon student feedback and the use of communal student surveys. Therefore from this information I feel that the ability for student voice endeavors to have an impact on teaching and learning is more likely, regardless of the type of curriculum design implemented, when it concentrates on teaching and learning methods that is, more pedagogically focused. In addition, the more translucent and flexible the border is between prescribed core knowledge and classroom teaching and learning experiences, the more likely it is that student voice and teacher voice can interact to produce new learning encounters (Shulman, 2004). This dynamic can become more effective when it is coupled with a style of curriculum where the emphasis is on creating individual learning experiences rather than content transmission. In such a circumstance we can again see the relevance and importance on the relationship between the teacher and the individual students. This situation is given validation by Young (1999, 2015) who believes that students should not necessarily be involved in the construction of core curricular knowledge but rather have a role to play in voicing their learning experiences in the re-contextualisation of curriculums.

Student Voice Perceptions: Participatory or Perfunctory

The level to which a school shows how actively it listens to students' views, takes these into consideration and makes beneficial developments depends on the degree of influence that factors such as the school curriculum, school culture and historical factors possess (Hargreaves, 2004, Cook-Sather, 2006, MacBeath et al, 2008). As international schools all three of the focus schools are unrestricted by the nuances of national accountability such as UK Ofsted inspections or national ranking regimes impacting upon them as external constraints (Fielding, 2001). I chose them from among other international schools as they all appear to share aspects of international mindedness in their cultural make-up and in the very least as part of the IBO philosophy with the IBO learner profile at the heart of their curricular programmes (IBO, 2014). Whilst I interviewed students from grade ten I feel that I can establish with some confidence that these perceptions are representative views from which to make assertions about wider secondary school frameworks. School A has a highly effective and regarded student council demonstrating that the school has a real commitment to student participation in school life. Students are entrusted with initiating and discussing issues that relate to the school environment but there is also evidence of shifts into discussing classroom activities including pedagogy. Moreover the drive for formal student feedback in the form of surveys as initiated by the upper school leadership team, whilst facing some application issues, demonstrates an on-going duty to student consultation. School B with the longer history of student consultation demonstrates a further commitment to involving students in dialogue about the classroom. The use of the students-as-researchers (SaR) group to perform student-led research and to then feedback to the teaching staff according to a formal schedule is encouraging evidence of a dedication to

student voice. School C does not have a well developed student voice programme but does have a long history of student government, where teachers have the flexibility and freedom to collect student feedback on an individual basis in their classes if they wish. Teachers at school C felt an affinity with involving students in teaching and learning discussions but felt that the school 'was not yet ready' for such a responsibility. Schools A and C may want to consider appointing a keen member of staff as a student voice coordinator to assist in the fostering of such endeavors. Such a move may be necessary but not sufficient in creating a collegial attitude to sustained voice projects.

The IGCSE content based linear curriculum's demands on teacher time to cover content and for pupils to pass examinations is given as one of the main reasons by school A and school C as a barrier to deeper student consultation. International schools have a greater autonomy over choosing a curriculum best suited to their mission and learning community and with this in mind there must be other external factors preventing international schools from segueing from one curriculum to another. School A demonstrates a willingness to move to a more constructivist curriculum through it's Global Perspectives subject, a thematic grade six to eight curriculum and comments from senior leadership. School C adopted the IBMYP curriculum some time ago but still offers the possibility of gaining the IGCSE certificate for its grade nine and ten students. In light of this study I would advocate that school C may wish to weigh up the benefits received from offering the IGCSE and the MYP together with the possible detriments and consider the MYP as a stand-alone course. I suggest that this happens with the caveat that school C planners are mindful that school B students felt that an element of wider, richer content was missing from the MYP. It would appear that historical factors e.g. standing and reputation and

constraints from external factors e.g. parental pressure and national qualification requirements play a part in these curricular choices. A shift in the mind-set of teachers and management is given as another barrier to greater adoption of student consultation interests at school C. Comments from the teachers at the school indicate that a sea-change in the culture of the school was needed before a change in the direction towards student voice could be fulfilled.

I have seen it work really well in the UK with students involved in the teacher hiring process and student council. But it is not to the same extent here

(CT1)

It is more of a school culture thing and need to be infused into the fabric of the school

(CT2)

The change in the culture will need to start with a vision from the leadership then flowing to and enthusing the teachers. Some teachers may not know how to promote student dialogue so that learning rather than performance is promoted and this may require training of staff and students (Lodge, 2005). The notion of student voice has slowly infused into the culture of school B to a significant extent and student participatory activities have strengthened to become more consultative and centered on teaching and learning. Conceptions of student voice and a democratic school now exist in school B's long-term planning strategy and as responsibilities in the job descriptions of senior and junior management posts. The barrier in this instance is that whilst significantly embedded in the fabric of the school the day-to-day machinations of student voice need to be kept relevant through communications and a student voice group as distinct from the student council. There was the feeling among students and teachers at school B that the MYP as a constructivist form of curriculum lent itself more towards student voice than did a content centered

curriculum. An absence of the pedagogical pressures from end of year examinations was given as one of the main reasons for why more conversations between teachers and students can occur.

5.3 Meta-Analysis Key findings

Six key understandings emerged from the comparison of the literature review data and the primary research data from the international schools in the meta-analysis. These have developed as the most significant factors in terms of the drivers, barriers and direction of student voice activities in international schools with differing curriculums and shed light on the connections between student voice activities and curricular designs. My work confirms key findings from previous research as outlined in the literature review and assists in theorising student voice in a way in which its purpose and outcome is more grounded and points towards ways in which student voice engagements could be implemented and embraced to a greater extent in both international and national schools. These six key findings are summarized in this section with the confirmed student voice or curricular research notions stated firstly followed by the theories exhumed by this research that explore a new way forward for student and teacher voices.

The first understanding is that the relationship between the teacher and the student is of prime importance for student voice and that the utility of this relationship is based on improving the capacity to promote learning rather than one based on performance and/or congeniality that is significant (Fielding, 2001, Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007, Stoll and Seashore Lewis, 2007, Brighouse and Woods, 2013, Quaglia and Corso, 2014). Therefore student and teacher dialogue can only occur in that space that promotes sustained conversations about real learning where teachers feel confirmed and students feel affirmed.

The second area of significance is that teacher advocacy is needed to support and drive student voice and that this relies on a teacher's critical willingness to be open to learning conversations with students and is dependent itself on encouraging opportunities, a supportive school culture and visionary leadership (Fielding, 2001, Lodge, 2005, Flutter, 2007, Bragg, 2007, Trippestad, 2011). This supportive culture may take some time to develop but needs to value dialogue with teachers (teacher voice) for dialogue with students (student voice) to take hold and flourish. This area of interaction must recognise the unequal power differentials that exist and overcome the explicit imbalances by promoting a space where teachers are fortified by their pedagogical and content understandings and are thus encouraged by this to sustain pupil collaboration.

Thirdly, the existence of unequal teacher-student power differentials is inevitable in educational institutions and that these can be hidden (covert) within the school culture or revealed (overt). Hidden power structures are ambiguous, difficult to identify, change and may create voices that are a result of the pedagogical culture rather than being the voices needed to change pedagogies (Fielding, 2001, Cook-Sather, 2002, Hargreaves, 2004, Thomson and Gunter, 2006, Lodge, 2008, Arnot and Reay, 2007, Taylor and Robinson, 2009, Robinson and Taylor, 2013). The transfer of power imbalance perceptions from students to students involved in student councils or students-as-researchers projects may be a consequence of these hidden imbalances. The overt unequal power relationships can be alleviated to some extent when the learning conversations centre on pedagogical discussions rather than content discussions. It is in this arena that teachers feel confident, students feel substantiated and both feel that positive learning outcomes are being encouraged and realised in such a space.

The fourth key understanding is that whilst student councils are a common feature of the international schools, the role of them in teaching and learning dialogue seems on evidence to be minimal (Lodge, 2005, 2008, Whitty and Wisby, 2007a). Reliance on them as the sole agent of student voice in a school may have minimal consequences and consideration of separate student voice constructions is worth contemplating. Such an understanding is significant in highlighting that student voice commitments cannot only take place as discrete activities by specialised groups where the outcome is generalised. For student voice to overcome its 'image problem', school wide and sustained conversations need to take place where teachers know and understand their classes and students have good relationships with their teachers. The outcome of these conversations must be meaningful and specific to individual learners.

Fifth, the relationship between student voice engagement and curriculum design has two layers. On one level in terms of a two-way relationship there is little evidence that student voice dialogue impacts upon the written curriculum in any significant way (Brooker and Macdonald, 1999, CIDREE 2006, Thompson and Gunter, 2006, Bragg, 2007, Biddulph, 2011). Where there has been some evidence of this namely in school B such an impact can be classed as pedagogical where short term subject topics are melded and adopted to suit a particular group of learners rather than the longer term content knowledge and concepts being transformed (Young 2015). On a second level, content coverage and examination pressures are perceived by teachers and students as major barriers to starting and sustaining student voice initiatives in schools where linear, content-based curriculums such as the IGCSE are being delivered in the middle years of schooling. This finding is unique in that there are no previous research findings to draw upon in this area. This key understanding

suggests that in international schools, where there is arguably greater freedom to develop middle year's curriculums than in national systems the opportunity for student voice conversations increases where the limitations of content heavy linear curriculums are absent. However, the impact that a curriculum type has on successful student voice engagement is secondary to the other major impacts on student voice namely, student teacher learning relationships, teacher advocacy, overt and covert power variances and a pedagogically directed dialogic grounding.

A final key area of significance is that rich and deep student voice connections can be made in the area where core curriculum knowledge and teacher expertise (pedagogy) connect and fuse. This finding is fundamental as it serves as a firmament to most of the other major meta-analysis findings and significantly contributes to answering student voice 'image problem' conundrum. This reactive space known as 'pedagogical content knowledge' brings teaching and knowledge together with student voice as a catalyst to create a different awareness of learning (Shulman 1986, 2004). This infers that any curriculum form can be implemented that encourages (or stifles) student consultation however the research indicates that such interactions are more likely to have some impact when nestled in a process curriculum structure where individual learning journeys are nurtured.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The meta-analysis findings now assist in the creation of conclusions on what connections exist between student voice and the international curriculum and what these connections mean for teachers and students faced by differing international school contexts. This concluding chapter contributes to a new understanding of how student voice undertakings may find a space for the participants to co-construct meaning together and thus overcome the disconnection between ideal and action.

Student voice activities centre on teachers and students coming together in a shared space (physical or metaphorical) where sustained conversations about learning take place between these two parties who have a shared but differing interior experiential authenticity in education. That these activities if sustained should lead to some transformation in the pedagogy of the classroom so that new experiences in learning emerge.

The contribution to knowledge that this thesis makes is a theory about a space defined by knowledge, pedagogy and the wider curriculum where teachers and students can bring their interior authenticities in order to make new meanings about learning. To construct this theory a number of predetermined student voice and curricular findings are confirmed by my primary research in the meta-analysis. The significance of this is that international school environments face the same issues as non-international schools when attempting to launch or perpetuate student voice projects. Obstacles and drivers that impact student voice initiatives in non-international school cultures have practical applicability to international ones. I will explain these confirmations before moving on to my theory about how pedagogical

content knowledge has a place in shedding light on my research questions in the final conclusion section (Shulman, 1986, 2004).

International schools share a characteristic with national schooling systems in that student participation is taking place however, student voice activities focused specifically on learning are not widespread either as functions of the student council or as a separate student voice group. Schools must consider why they wish to undertake or why they are undertaking student voice activities. The focus is on student learning welfare, that is improving the capacity of the school to promote learning rather than 'decoration' or 'comfort' issues then student voice can contribute positively to the central purpose of the school: a learning community. For student voice initiatives to have relevance to a school's central aim of learning they must appeal to a teacher's sense of professionalism and entice them to take part. This can be achieved by presenting student voice activities in a way that emphasises that it is embedded in a teacher's expert understanding of their classes, subject specialist knowledge and professional pedagogical insight.

My research confirms the established view that there is a reticence in schools to fully embrace student voice endeavors due to the perceived upset that it can cause to the school's status quo. These can manifest in the forces impacting each school's unique culture and vision and the ever-present power imbalances. The prospect, implementation and sustaining of student voice activities in a school can seem risky, uncomfortable and difficult and this view was apparent in all three schools. It was clear that the research participants were very much cognisant of the role that the elements of the school culture play on teacher-student learning dialogue. A new way of approaching student voice that positions it in a way that limits risk and uncertainty can be achieved by re-defining within a pedagogical zone of collaboration where

teacher voice is integral and there is an understanding that catalytic overt power variances that can be identified and negotiated.

A common theme in the findings is the vital nature of sustaining good student-teacher relationships regardless of the international or national setting in which a school is situated. These good relationships will positively impact learning if pedagogically based rather than based on performance and/or congeniality. Exposure to such initiatives is a key factor in negotiating overt power structures and in the launch of dialogic activities between teachers and students. Schools A and C with the least experience of student voice viewed it as more problematic than the other school, whilst the more experienced school B faced challenges in maintaining a meaningful student voice programme for progressive impact. Hadfield and Haw (2007) and Lodge (2008) found that it is safer for teachers to avoid perceived criticism and engage in deep and lengthy conversations about topics other than learning and claim to be 'doing' student voice. The key to developing good relationships among students and teachers is sustained mutual activity and this can be achieved if student voice initiatives are viewed as accessible, understandable and workable. Student voice activities that are nestled within a pedagogical framework will be viewed as achievable because of the clear links between ideal and action.

Notions of the curriculum are key to my study and offer new insights into student voice and the curriculum's two-way connections. There is little evidence from the research in chapter four that student collaboration efforts have had a major impact on the written curriculum and the 'powerful knowledge' it encapsulates in the middle years of secondary schooling. Where influences have occurred these have been pedagogical in nature impacting short term teaching strategies and on topics that assist in the movement towards the overarching concepts and knowledges. I

conclude that student voice activities can be introduced and flourish in any curricular style, regardless of its design if the focus for the undertaking is to improve learning and is embedded within a school environment that supports this focus and understands the impediments. In terms of the curriculum and its impact on student voice initiatives, given the covert power issues in most schools and established content coverage constraints of linear curriculums; a school with a constructivist curriculum similar to the IBMYP may find student and teacher interactions more accessible. This was the case in school B where the curriculum is process-led in nature with less emphasis on content delivery and the assessment of this content. Where the curriculum is overarched by external examination, assessment constraints and accountability concerns such as the IGCSE in schools A and C, the connection between the curriculum and student consultation is more problematic, even in an international environment where there is greater flexibility in this arena.

The perspectives of international students and teachers and the literature available on student voice and the curriculum lead me to one final claim before my definitive conclusions. This thesis supports the idea that the obstacles to student voice abound in a number of tangible and intangible forms and that the energy required in overcoming these barriers itself requires a theoretical gateway and pathway to transform aspirations into real outcomes. This theoretical strategy needs to place the participants in a space that transcends international or national school contexts where the influence of the barriers to student voice are lessened, the drivers encouraged and the rewards can be realised. For this to occur a space for transformative collaboration where both parties feel affirmed and encouraged and where the conversations have real and not just aspirational impact needs to be theorised.

The zone of interaction, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) identified by Shulman (1986, 2004), where teaching expertise and knowledge merge to feed learning conversations lays the foundation for an idea about a dynamic space for new meanings to be co-constructed (appendix five, figure three). Teaching styles, class topics, use of technology and pedagogical experimentation can all make up this rich area of interaction as long as the focus is on issues that are directly related to learning and student learning needs. In this zone of dynamic interaction core content knowledges that exist as fundamental curriculum truths should not be molded by student voice as espoused by Young (2013, 2015), but rather the delivered and experienced curriculum can be transformed by dialogue through its pedagogic and osmotic nature (appendix four, figure two). Teachers operate in this space where their professional expertise is being recognised and celebrated rather than being viewed critically or threatened and teacher advocacy for student voice dialogue can be sustained. This new zone of dynamic integration will help to close the gap between student voice ideals and student voice realisations.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge based Zone of Dynamic Collaboration

From the pre-determined findings confirmed by this study and the inductive reasoning applied, emerges a theory about developing a pedagogically grounded student voice zone of collaboration, relevant to schools that are contemplating, planning or are engaged in student voice projects, regardless of international or national context. A zone of dynamic integration must be situated in a space that builds upon the 'good' pedagogical learning relationship between students and teachers. It is this relationship that is the building block of any non-tokenistic, student-teacher dialogue and a crucial ingredient in the formation of what teachers and students regard as a 'good' school culture. This space respects the explicit

power imbalances that exist between teachers and students and rather than allow it to disrupt the collaboration it fortifies it by affirming and confirming a teacher's special understanding of their subject content, student learning in each unique class and over-arching professional understanding of pedagogical wisdom. The participants operate within the more immediate explicit power relationships that are understood and negotiable. Teachers are thus working from a place where their special understanding of their subjects and classes is recognised, making them more likely to immerse themselves and in time, possibly becoming advocates of student voice undertakings. Students recognise these power imbalances as powerful affirmers of their position as learners and teacher's positions as adults with experiential and intellectual differentials that enable knowledge to be produced by them. Both parties gain from the situating of the dynamic in a pedagogical content knowledge space that brings their unique interior authenticities together and where power differences are negotiated and understood as vital aspects of the process. An example of a teacher overcoming an overt power variance may be in their first steps at eliciting feedback on their teaching style in one of their lessons, thus overcoming an element of defensiveness. The impact of the covert power relationships may be inevitable and remains as a key and necessary layer within a hierarchical educational structure of which members of the community need to remain mindful. An area of dynamic collaboration that is nestled within a pedagogical content knowledge foundation enables student voice initiatives to be sustained as on-going conversations between teachers and their students rather than relying solely on one-off or discrete activities by student voice groups or the school council.

Student Voice Engagement and the Curriculum- Two-way Connections?

The pedagogical content knowledge zone of interaction idea assists in making sense of the connections that exist between student voices and curriculum design. In terms of this two-way effect, student voices could impact the curriculum when nestled in a pedagogical space where voices, pedagogy and concepts meet and transform the learning conversations. Teachers are reluctant to implement student content suggestions to any major extent but are open to pedagogical conversations centering on the classroom experience of their learners. This suggests to me that a space where pedagogically based student voice conversations are encouraged is the gateway to widening these discussions and for a deepening of these conversations to evolve in time.

The type of curriculum being taught and experienced at an international or national school has some impact on the ability of student collaboration to take place but it is not the only or deciding factor. In the middle years international curriculums explored, the constructivist style seemed to have the ability to promote the initiation of dialogue and offer the possibility for students to propose suggestions on MYP learning topics to a greater extent than the prescribed-content, linear model (IGCSE). Although this relationship is significant and this study contributes to a new understanding of this connection, successful student and teacher collaborations that are pedagogically based will supersede the often stated obstacles associated with differing curriculum designs, such as time, content and accountability concerns. Therefore it is not the form that the content takes within a curriculum that has bearing of the likely success of student and teacher collaboration, but rather the ways that the discourses that emerge from the curricular constructions enable pedagogical discussions to burgeon between students and their teachers.

This thesis is significant in suggesting that a new way of approaching student voice engagement be considered by schools. The theorisation of a pedagogically grounded zone of dynamic collaboration is relevant through its acknowledgment of the practicalities, cultural contexts and power realities that secondary schools face. It is necessary as it provides a way to open and embed student voice into the culture of the school and to support those student voice initiatives already being undertaken. Students and teachers can meet in this space not as equals necessarily but as genuine partners in creating shared pedagogical meaning together. I would hope that this work assists in the creation of a space where student voice activities sustain, flourish and transform learning and as Hargreaves (2004) implores a space emerges that is no longer 'rhetorical' but 'real'.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Table One

Hart's Ladder (1997)

	Stages	Participation
8	Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults	Degrees of Participation
7	Child-initiated and directed	
6	Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children	
5	Consulted and informed	
4	Assigned but informed	
3	Tokenism	Non-participation
2	Decoration	
1	Manipulation	

Hart R (1997) Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice Of Involving Young Citizens In Community Development And Environmental Care for UNICEF

Appendix Two

Figure One

Lodge's Matrix 2005

Approaches to student involvement in school improvement

	Purposes		
	Passive	Passive	View of Children's Role
	QUALITY CONTROL	SOURCE OF INFORMATION	
	Functional Institutional	Community	
View of Children's Role	COMPLIANCE AND CONTROL	DIALOGIC	
	Active	Active	
	Purposes		

The matrix has an X axis representing purpose (functional to community) which is cut by the Y axis representing the view of the child's role (passive to active) and thus creating four quadrants: quality control (top left), source of information (top right), compliance and control (bottom left) and dialogic (bottom right).

Lodge, C. (2005). 'From Hearing Voices To Engaging In Dialogue: Problematising Student Participation In School Improvement, *Journal of Educational Change*, 6 p131

Appendix Three

Table Two

Michael Fielding's Nine Questions

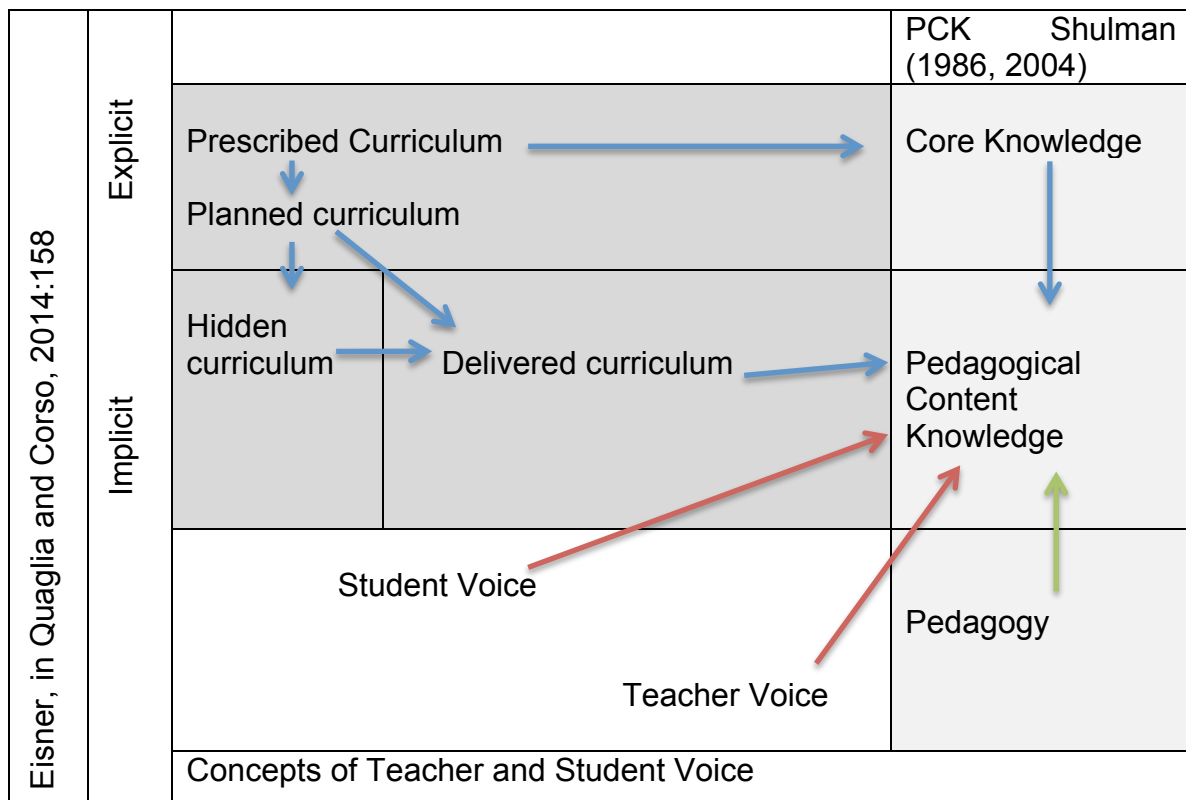
1. *Who is allowed to speak, to whom, about what?*
2. *Who listens, why and how are they listening?*
3. *What skills are required and what support is provided for their development?*
4. *What attitudes and dispositions are needed to transform skills into meaningful realities?*
5. *What systems are needed to sustain this kind of work?*
6. *What kinds of organisational culture need to be developed to enable Student voice to thrive?*
7. *What spaces, both physical and metaphorical are needed for participants to make meaning together?*
8. *What are the implications for action?*
9. *What are some of the key considerations to take into account in helping Student voice to be and become a significant part of the process of communal renewal?*

Fielding, M. (2001). Students as Radical Agents of Change, *Journal of Educational Change*, 2.2 pp123-141.

Appendix Four

Figure Two

Curriculum Zones of interaction

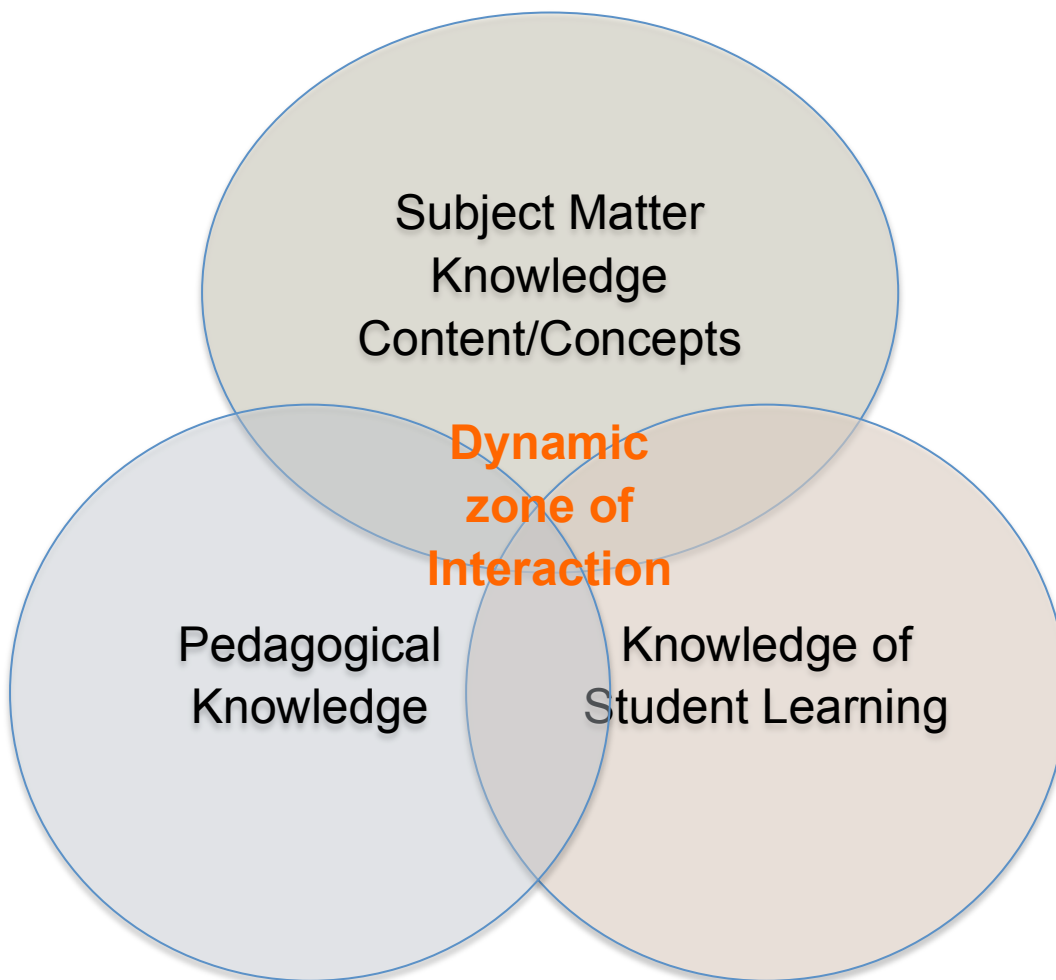


Skene, R. (2014)

Appendix Five

Figure Three

Pedagogical Content Knowledge Shulman 1986



Skene, R. 2015

Shulman, L (2004) *The Wisdom of Practice: Learning and Learning to Teach*, San Francisco: Josey-Bass

Appendix Six

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Outline of major role/responsibilities
2. How long as a teacher? School X? Elsewhere?
3. What makes a good teacher?
4. In what ways do you as an educator engage with pupils about classroom practice/teaching/learning?
5. What topics are discussed?

What benefits have you witnessed? What benefits can you foresee?

What can have been/ could be the potential problems?

Have you witnessed colleagues engaging in such SV activities?

6. In what ways does the school have initiatives that engage with pupils about class room practice/teaching/learning
7. What topics are discussed?

What benefits have you witnessed? What benefits can you foresee?

What can have been/ could be the potential problems?

Grades 9 & 10?

8. What role does the student council play at the school?

9. Do you think that the curriculum has an influence on the ability to engage students in conversations about T&L?

MYP/IGCSE/ DP/ other

Why do you think that is?

9. Possibility of starting a SV project at the school?-opinions?

10. What place does student feedback have in curriculum design?

Appendix Seven

Student Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Is this a good school? How do you know? What makes a good school?
2. What makes a good teacher? What do good teachers look like at school X?
3. You are all in grade 10 doing the MYP/IGCSE/Mix What is this like?
Have any of you had experience of other types of curriculum? Tell me about these- how do they compare to the MYP/IGCSE/Mix?
4. I understand that you have a student council, what impact does it have on school life? What impact does it have on your learning?
5. Do you talk to your teachers?- when you do (in class, out of class) what do you talk about?
6. Do your teachers ask you about how you would like to learn?
7. What situations might encourage you to talk to your teachers more about learning?
8. Would you like more say in what you are learning?
9. Would you like more choice in what you are learning?
10. Do you think the MYP/IGCSE/Mix helps or hinders your ability to talk to your teachers?
11. Does the MYP/IGCSE/mix give you opportunities to interact with teachers to talk about how you want to learn or how you learn best?
12. How does this differ from previous programmes/courses you have experienced?

13. If given the chance would you like to do some research about what students think about how they learn best and worst in the classroom?
14. What forms of SV are you aware of here at school X?
15. How do you learn best?

Appendix Eight

Opt-Out Letter

XX/XX/2014

Dear Parent,

Bavarian International School e.V.

Schloss Haimhausen

Hauptstraße 1

D-85778 HaimhausennGermany

Tel. +49 (0)8133/917-0

Fax +49 (0)8133/917-135

www.bis-school.com

Doctoral Research into Student Voice & Curriculum

My name is Mr. Rohan Skene and I am the IBDP coordinator and Secondary School Assistant Principal at the Bavarian International School.

As part of my Doctor of Education studies I will be undertaking a research project into student voice and the curriculum

For this I will be conducting a 1-hour focus group interview where I will engage in conversations and gain important pupil views on the notion of student voice and its impact on teaching and learning

I would ideally like to form a focus group of six pupils from Grade 10 at ISA. The session will be held at school by myself and with all six pupils present. The anonymity of the pupils will be maintained and all research materials gathered will remain confidential. I propose to complete the focus group interview on Monday 13th October 2014.

The results of this research will be included in a thesis to be completed by June 2015.

The aim of this undertaking is to investigate whether there is a significant link between student participatory undertakings and curricular form.

If you do not want your child to participate please sign below and return it to Mx XXX who will forward it to me.

Please contact me at the school details above if you would like any further information.

Best wishes

Rohan Skene

Assistant Principal

Name of Pupil: _____

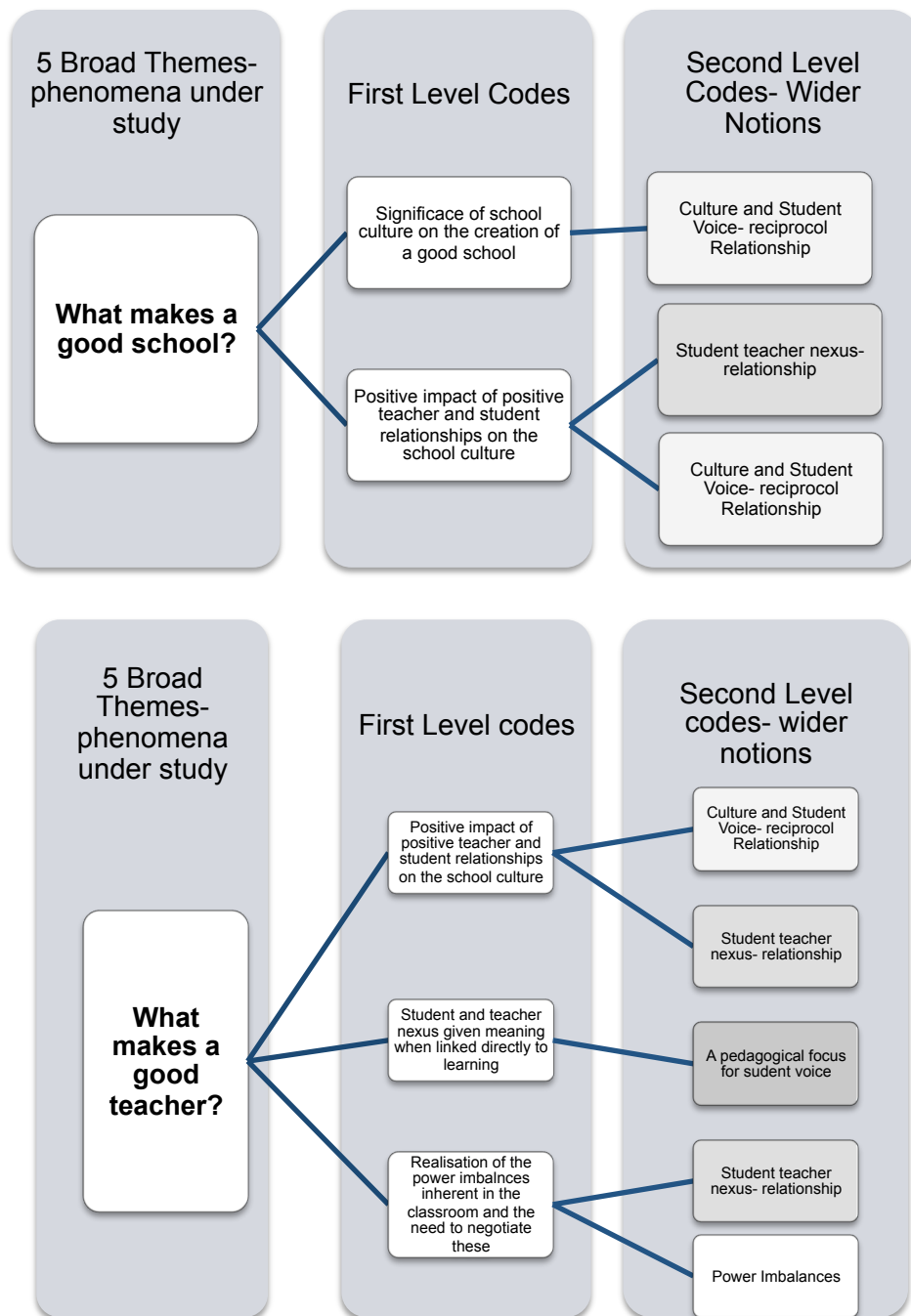
I do not want my child to participate in the focus group interviews.

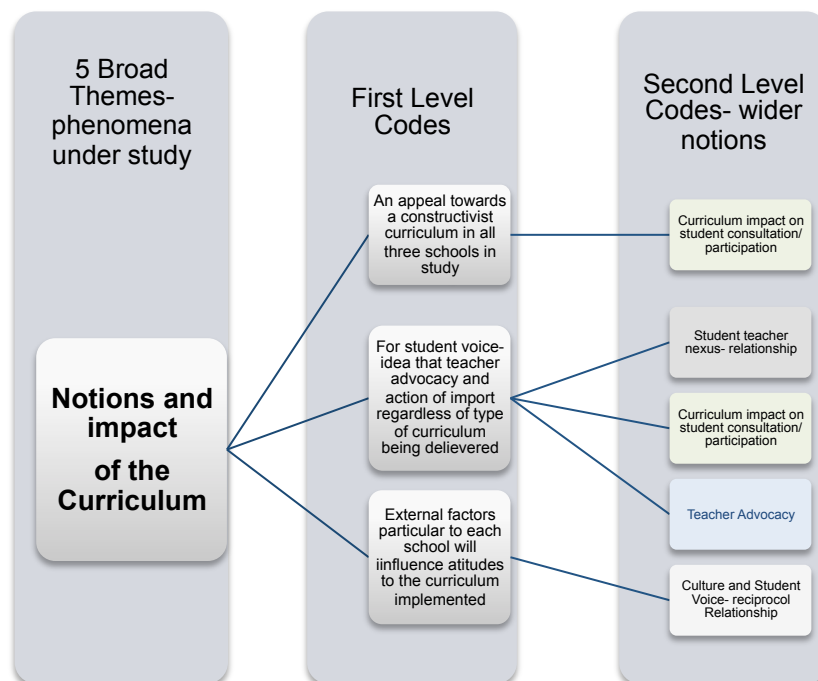
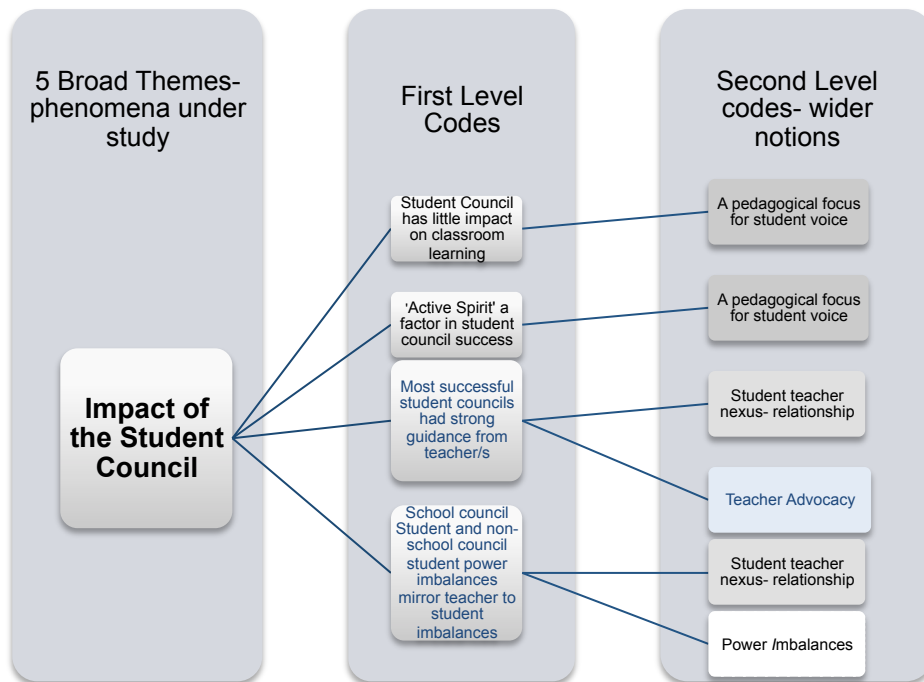
Signed _____ Date _____

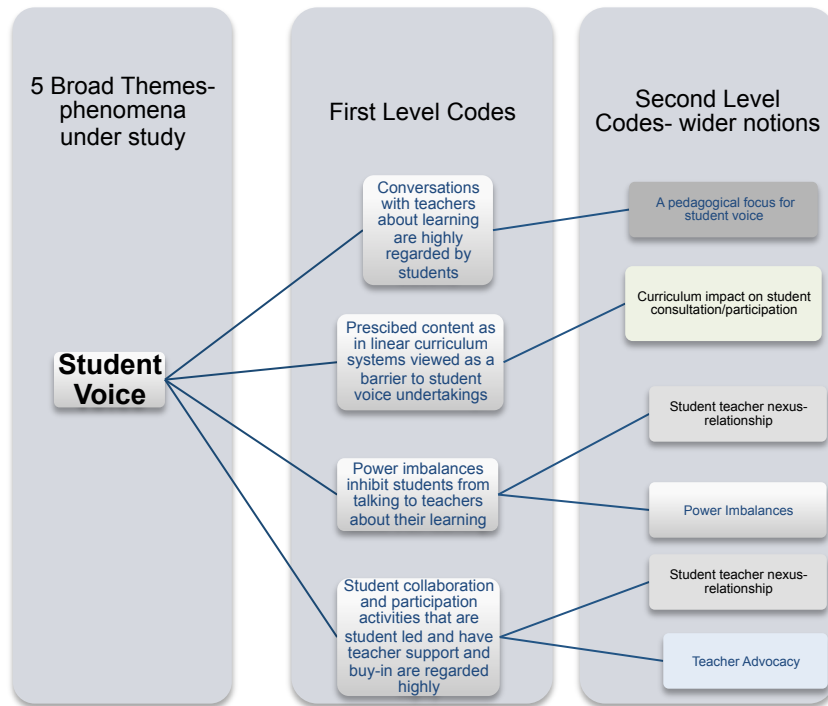
Appendix Nine

Table Three

Coding Tree – Broad Themes- First Level Codes- Second Level Codes







Appendix Ten

Table Four and Table Five

Research Analysis Summary Table

Table Four Focus Groups- students

School A

Theme	Emergent Idea	Perspectives	Wider Concepts	Notes on big concepts
A good School	Teaching focused on students Good relationship with teachers	Small classes Individual attention Opportunity for student feedback with the teachers (Student Council)	Culture/climate Democratic principles	A learning emphasis based on individual attention Student council volunteered as a reason for why the school is a good school
A good teacher	Dedicated teachers Go beyond the normal expectations Passionate teachers Teachers are knowledgeable Trust- good relationship	All of the attributes that related to a good teacher were learning based- giving help (dedicated), doing a huge amount of work (making a website) High expectations were also mentioned Teachers attributes were likened to the IB learner profile- caring, open minded etc.	International School compared to national School (negative) Engaged learners International teacher Power imbalance Good Teacher/student relationships	Interesting much of the attributes of a good teacher related to how these attributes make the learning better Acknowledgement that international teachers may be different. “We see the person in our teacher” Effectiveness of the teacher gauged by how well the students have done on tests or assessments and the term reports
Student council	Democratic SC members get training Emphasise	Democracy in action and some extensive training given to those elected to the SC- SC coordinating teacher has a key role here	Active representation Active spirit	I got the sense that students were very happy, even proud of the SC. Key role of coordinating teacher

	<p>spirit in the context of charity</p> <p>Active representation</p> <p>Environment</p> <p>SC has some impact on learning</p>	<p>Active spirit linked with “making a difference” day etc.</p> <p>Students would rather approach students than teachers directly</p> <p>Teachers have approached the SC to have issues solved</p> <p>Some actual and positive examples of how the SC has changed the school environment (food, bags)</p> <p>Examples given where students were approaching SC to raise issues with individual teachers</p>	<p>Democratic training</p> <p>Impact on learning</p>	<p>The training seemed to have a very positive impact on the students ability to perform in the SC</p> <p>Effect on learning is not profound but the basis of students being listened to and then approaching teachers exists- issues may still centre around relationship that a class has with a teacher rather than specific outcomes of pedagogy</p>
Curriculum	<p>Content Vs Process</p>	<p>Students expressed the desire to talk to teachers about learning that will help them pass assessments and exams they also felt the need to trust and respect any power imbalance that assisted them in “getting through the syllabus”</p> <p>Students viewed conversations to do with what is taught as less important than</p>	<p>Type of talk affected by the type of curriculum</p>	<p>Informal teacher talk welcomed but talk that strayed students too far from the path of IGCSE exam preparedness was not as welcome.</p>

	<p>Examinations</p> <p>Process style subject from G9 “global perspectives”</p> <p>IBDP</p>	<p>how material is taught.</p> <p>End goal seen to be important and colouring the types of learning, P-SATs and practice examination papers – students recognise the value in going “off the path” and not always doing examination questions</p> <p>Global perspectives was a non-IGCSE subject which was not tested but introduced students to essay writing, elements of knowledge theory and research skills was well received by students</p> <p>There is a view that the MYP/IGCSE is preparing them for the IBDP which is more work, offers subject choice, requires time management, balancing work with home and will be more motivating</p>	<p>Non-prescribed content</p> <p>Process Vs Linear curriculum</p> <p>Forward Looking- IBDP- University</p>	<p>A new innovation in the school where English Literature is no longer an IGCSE subject and is rather infused into the First language English course and taught with an emphasis on preparing students for the IBDP</p>
Student Voice	<p>Talk with teachers- need to differentiate from general (friendly) talk and talk about learning</p> <p>Talk about learning impacted by</p>	<p>Students saw general or friendly chat (talk) to be an important way to build up the good teacher/student relationship that they find very important</p> <p>Students said that they talk to the teacher about what to learn for the examination</p>	<p>Good teacher/student relationship</p> <p>Type of curriculum impacts upon the talk that is taking place</p>	<p>Students believe talking with teachers is worthwhile but are convinced that too much student voice will detract from the goal of completing the IGCSE and moving onto the IBDP</p> <p>Surveys were generic Bill gates Foundation surveys and not necessarily tailor made for School A</p>

	IGCSE curriculum	(IGCSE) and other assessments		
	Formal Student feedback	The school had a programme last year where student surveys were handed out – most teachers handed these out and students report some changes due to the feedback e.g ski slope model		
	Power imbalance- them and us	Students expressed the need to trust that the teachers knew what they were doing and could act as knowledgeable guides- especially in terms of getting through the content of the IGCSE	Power imbalance and it's positive impact	

School B

Theme	Emergent Idea	Perspectives	Wider Concepts	Notes on big concepts
A good School	Culture	Open-respect culturally Sense of belonging (feel at home)	International School compared to national School	When asked about what makes a good school students immediately compared to public system Sense of belonging and openness was important
	Good Teachers		culture/climate	
A good teacher	Passion	Openly enjoys teaching Shows knowledge and fosters learning	Engaged learners	Students gave evidence of losing interest in a subject they loved due to the teacher and vice versa
	Knowledgeable Experience of	Open mindedness to other cultures Teacher needs to be a learner as well- can take criticism	International teacher International mindedness	Agreement that international teachers are different

	<p>other cultures</p> <p>A good relationship</p>	<p>Good relationship- not afraid to approach but relationship is added to by power imbalance</p> <p>Dislike- emotional (anger) favouritism</p>	<p>Life-long learner</p> <p>Power imbalance</p> <p>Good Teacher/student relationships</p>	<p>Unequal relationship works- has to</p>
Student council	<p>Little impact on learning</p> <p>Role of Student Council</p> <p>Power imbalance- them and us</p>	<p>General agreement that SC does not impact learning and not viewed a function- sports officer and publicity officer</p> <p>Alternative suggestions were of similar structure (prefects) but involved those who were passionately interested in the learning aspect</p> <p>Focused on 'spirit' and environment Spirit is not enough- Spirit is good but it must be attached to something 'real'</p> <p>Apathy among G10 –did not want to elect a class representative</p> <p>View that SC are elite who are doing it for ulterior purposes- e.g. University applications</p>	<p>Student council body Vs Student Voice functions</p> <p>Active Spirit- spirit that is attached to or comes from relevant activities or ideas</p> <p>Awareness of democratic responsibility</p> <p>Realisation of the potential benefits of SV</p>	<p>Popularity contest Need for additional body to represent the learner's voice It is viewed as a badge and not a responsibility</p> <p>When SV rep did engage with students they thought it was pretty amazing</p> <p>SC you never know what goes on behind the scenes Need to fill gap between wanting spirit and creating spirit- acknowledgement that it is a joint effort</p>
Curriculum	<p>Content Vs process systems</p> <p>Student seem</p>	<p>Value seen in MYP approach Less facts was generally seen as a good thing and reflection, justification reason- however students expressed wish</p>	<p>Constructivist curriculum Vs Linear curriculum</p> <p>International Vs</p>	<p>Can boil down to understanding the benefits of investigation/reflection/reason Vs assurance that spoon fed content and skills are correct</p>

	<p>to have clear awareness about the disadvantages and advantages of one system over another (even if they have only been taught the MYP)</p> <p>Less need to cover facts can encourage and generate class debate and discussions</p>	<p>that some broader content be explored rather than deeper in fewer areas</p> <p>Students not totally confident with fact finding themselves and like reassurance of the teacher</p> <p>Students saw the value in teachers being willing and able to go engage in discussions that were subject related but not directly connected with the current unit. Also the time to draw opinions and work from other students was seen as a major benefit of the MYP</p>	<p>national systems</p> <p>Power imbalance- a good thing</p> <p>Constructivist curriculum Vs Linear curriculum</p> <p>Teacher is key in these curricular changes</p>	<p>A happy medium suggested</p> <p>Value of tests in IGCSE recognised but general feeling that too many is a bad thing</p> <p>Less fact learning may open classes up to shared discussion and shared learning on a greater scale</p> <p>Unknowns are introduced more readily (maths)</p>
<p>Student Voice-collaboration with teachers</p>	<p>Students desire for more opportunity to talk with teachers</p> <p>Student voice will fade if not kept alive (especially formal)</p> <p>Collective Vs individual talk</p> <p>Students feel</p>	<p>Different types of talk- individual talk in the class about help/clarification is good and power imbalance assists this</p> <p>There is a difference between individual voice and collective voices</p> <p>Formal SV will fade whilst informal may continue</p> <p>Collective Vs individual talk</p>	<p>Power imbalance- a good thing</p> <p>Initiatives need to be kept alive</p> <p>Individual and collective voices have equal benefit but are</p>	<p>Achievements or actions of SV need to be shared with the student body</p>

	<p>more comfortable talking to other students about learning than directly with teachers</p> <p>Being listened to has benefits</p>	<p>Call for SV body to talk more with students</p> <p>Beneficial psychological impact even if suggestions are not implemented</p> <p>Students don't want to be seen to be criticising the teachers- collective rather than individual</p>	<p>not used equally</p> <p>Student council body Vs Student Voice functions</p>	<p>Students are acutely aware that not all student suggestions can be implemented</p>
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School C

Theme	Emergent Idea	Perspectives	Wider Concepts	Notes on big concepts
A good School	<p>Good teacher/student relationship</p> <p>Good facilities</p> <p>Out of class activities</p>	<p>“friendly”</p> <p>Students seemed very happy with being at the school- strong sense of belonging due to teacher interest in their lives</p> <p>Students believe the facilities are better here than in other schools especially national system schools</p>	<p>School climate/culture</p> <p>Comparison with National system schools- better facilities</p>	<p>Climate of school given as a major factor</p>
A good teacher	<p>Good relationship</p> <p>Differentiated learning techniques- individual focus</p>	<p>Friendly and open relationship with the teachers</p> <p>Teachers who care about you and work with you on an individual basis</p> <p>Teachers who were viewed as giving less individual help were viewed in a positive light in that they were seen as helping students be more independent</p> <p>“a friend on their side”</p>	<p>Good teacher and student relationship</p>	<p>A learning emphasis based on individual attention</p> <p>A good teacher goes beyond the expected- gives up their lunch hour to help (maths)</p>

		An active teacher is good- not 'boring!'		Subjects mentioned- Maths, History
Student Council	Democratic Active representation Spirit- main SC role	There is generally a positive perspective on the role of the student council although not overly-enthusiastic The school council is mainly involved in generating or celebrating school spirit. There is a council box for ideas and complaints Suggestion of using the Student council in a student-as-researchers project viewed as possibly being more successful as students felt teachers would listen to this "little people involved"	Democratic school Need for teacher involvement in a SC students-as-researchers project Power imbalances	It seems that the school has a long tradition with the SC Recognition that the voice of the student council would count more than a small group of random students
Curriculum	Students in a mixed IGCSE, MYP curriculum- majority are not doing the IGCSE Content/linear Vs Process	Focus group students feel relieved that they are not doing the IGCSE Extra amounts of work- in terms of "packages" are apparent and IGCSE students cover more content Students showed understanding that MYP content/knowledge is one criteria and that reflecting/documenting/investigating occur in all subjects even Arts. Teacher focus on curriculum (see student defns of curriculum) as reason why he had not been asked how he likes to learn Defns of curriculum- the programme, rubrics, subjects, "it is what teachers have to teach so that we don't fail our tests!" All students are taught together,	Constructivist curriculum Vs Linear curriculum Awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of each system Content of IGCSE colours the MYP	"I'm glad I am not doing the IGCSE" Student acutely aware of the different curricular approached of the IGCSE and MYP. Interesting that MYP students

	IBDP	<p>IGCSE students have modifies examinations/test</p> <p>Students in MYP use textbooks written for the IGCSE</p> <p>There is a view that the MYP/IGCSE is preparing them for the IBDP which is more work, offers subject choice and is a gateway to leaving school</p>		have tests to comply with IGCSE but the frequency of these tests is not indicated.
Student Voice	<p>Formal Vs informal chat</p> <p>Any student collaboration is purely an individual teacher driven idea</p> <p>Collective Vs individual talk</p>	<p>Some confusion over informal chat and learning 'talk'.</p> <p>Examples given of formal student feedback in the form of surveys- how do you work best?- feedback at the end of units- not all teachers do this</p> <p>Students have experienced forms of SV in learning support and in their homerooms and Ethics classes</p> <p>Students express that they enjoy these SV opportunities</p> <p>SV associated with the short term- students asking for help in the class room and then receiving it from the teacher</p> <p>Students don't want to be seen to be criticising the teachers- collective rather than individual- example of too much Nazi in History from grade 7,8.</p> <p>Content seen as rigid once all 'English' teachers decide on it</p> <p>Students seems keen to engage in a students-as-researchers project but felt the likelihood of success or impact was low- students felt that teachers had a plan and they trust them to stick to it- also said they</p>	<p>School culture</p> <p>Sustainability of Student voice forays</p> <p>Individual teachers discretion</p> <p>Constructivist curriculum Vs Linear curriculum</p> <p>Power imbalance- students accept this and trust teachers</p>	<p>SV needs to be infused into the fabric of the school</p> <p>Students were concerned that if teachers were to consult and take on board student suggestions it would create more work for them and parents may be upset</p> <p>Teachers restricted by content</p> <p>Rigidity of content seen as</p>

		have too much work to do- extra work for them or doubted that the endeavor would have much success	to do the professional thing (duty) Stakeholders- parents	fair as different classes all studying different topics seen as not fair General sense of hesitation among the students for ability to influence “what if taught” Wishes of parents raised by students as one reason why students having more say would not work.
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Table Five Teacher Interviews

Teacher interviews

School A

School A	AT1	AT2 Econ/Bus	AT3 MS coord	AT4 US Pr	AT5BStud council/Geo
Curriculum	IGCSE content restrictive- changed structure of Eng so no Eng Lit- leading to DP prep in terms of skills Relies on teachers X2 Trade-off between	Need to play catch up after taking over from another teachers- cram in content rather than trying to EXTEND them more	Freedom experience in G6,7,8, in creating a new curriculum- humanity themed and fishbone—6 to 9 working well- students are making	IGCSE is viewed by pupils as sitting exams and a non-examinable subject Global Perspectives is not seen as important (student did see the values in it)	

	disciplines and not teaching in isolated way Vs rich learning not coming from isolation		<p>connections and feedback is encouraging- a lot of work</p> <p>BUT need right teachers in place (so didn't consider the MYP)</p> <p>Pressure from national families to do the IGCSE for the equivalent German "middle certificate"</p> <p>Early years needed the IGCSE- prove themselves- now doubts that it prepares students any better for the DP other than preparing them for taking exams</p>	Issues about how well the IGCSE feeds into the DP.	
Student voice	Excited by prospect and linked this with empowering students- what is working for you. What is not working what could be working better- despite the fact that they	Has used techniques- strengths weaknesses LEARNING STYLES to bring disillusioned kids back Has used the	INTERESTING POINT- the older students get the less they want to learn from teachers Student surveys- getting feedback has	Formal student surveys have had some teething problems- results collected by teachers themselves and some degree of reporting back to US principal	T&L not a focus of the SC – when it has been it has been grievances about a teacher- when they do arise brought to his or coordinators attention

<p>are doing well in the system</p> <p>Results system Vs Learning</p> <p>Has invited students to assist in planning lessons in drama- students seemed keen</p>	<p>school surveys but thinks less more open ended questions would provide better SV- he thinks the students don't think they are being listened to- "tipping point"- data overload tends to be a problem- no practical changes</p> <p>SV needs to be infused in the school culture- us and them</p> <p>Used SC policies as a stamp</p> <p>Use of students on the expulsion board required a lot of confidence by the administration</p>	<p>been problematic- relies on informal feedback as his classes are small but it interrupts the flow of his lesson-</p>	<p>SC used to make up deficit in outdoor Ed in G9 by making the tree planting activity a G9 activity only</p> <p>After G10 exams a planned experiential learning thematic curriculum planned- to prepare for DP and is more in line with the school's mission- lots of ideas math lab, lab skills, Geog field work</p> <p>Ownership of learning and changing the metaphor</p> <p>IBDP coordinator exit interview from DP</p> <p>As with AT3 view AT4 sees older students as a little problematic with attitude, behaviour etc.- sees issues here for SV- perception gap here</p>	<p>Uses own SV feedback method of stars (what's good) and wishes (improvements) at the end of a unit e.g. use of student geographies to teach Geo rather than textbook case studies</p> <p>IGCSE restricted by content and textbook "is the textbook"- does more feedback in IBDP</p>	
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School C

School A	CT1	CT2
Curriculum	IGCSE content in the MYP philosophy- IG dictates content when asked for feedback at	Thinks the IGCSE should be phased out but needs baby steps, students need to be

	<p>unit end students generally ask for “more time” when asked about content- loads of ideas but restricted</p> <p>IGCSE prepares students well for the DP- exam skills</p>	<p>empowered more- but likes some aspects of the IG</p> <p>Thinks MYP prepares better as students raised above content skills treadmill- IBDP is now changing – more conceptual</p>
Student voice	<p>No school wide SV initiative</p> <p>Informal- teachers ask for feedback at the end of a unit- depends on teacher</p> <p>Needs to be infused in school culture Believes students should not reflect on teaching but reflect on own learning</p> <p>IT platform in Geog assists in getting student feedback</p>	<p>Has seen it work well in other schools- hiring SC etc. enthusiastic</p> <p>Positive for constructivist approach</p>

School A	BT1
Curriculum	<p>IGCSE too content heavy- too much emphasis on recall</p> <p>MYP can be complicated- can be done poorly Good teacher skills knowledge, guiding etc. vital for effective MYP</p> <p>Constructivist style lends itself to SV</p> <p>MYP assists students in having more higher order thinking skills, assessed in a number of ways</p> <p>MYP and DP compatible due to older students and expectations of those students</p> <p>MYP tests- some elements good- more schools may be attracted (competitive), exam factor BUT exams are contradictory to the ethos of the MYP</p>
Student voice	<p>A partnership with students SV worth doing regardless of subject or curriculum- motivates and empowers students</p> <p>Barriers to SV- teacher defensiveness (teacher voice), time, lip service- will anything be done? Validity of some ideas</p> <p>SV researchers- viewed still tainted with brush of “let me tell you what is wrong”- combative, over reactive, closed minded</p>

