

*GTC Seminar*

**Personalising Learning:  
Putting pupil voice into practice**  
*29<sup>th</sup> November 2007*

**ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN  
PUPIL / STUDENT VOICE**

**Professor Michael Fielding**

*Institute of Education, University of London*

*m.fielding@ioe.ac.uk*

# Range of Student Voice Activities

## *Peer support*

- \* Buddying systems
- \* Peer tutoring
- \* Peer teaching
- \* Circle time

## *Organisational change structures*

- \* School councils
- \* Student governors
- \* Students on appointment panels
- \* School Improvement Plans *e.g.* draw-and-write
- \* Healthy Schools
- \* OfSTED
- \* ECM

## *Engagement with T & L*

- \* Lead-learners
- \* Classroom observation
- \* AfL
- \* Student co-researchers
- \* student-led learning walks
- \* 'Students-as-researchers'
- \* Dept development plans
- \* Evaluating work units
- \* Classroom consultation

# Student Involvement Typology

	<i>Classroom</i>	<i>Unit / Team</i>	<i>School</i>
<i>Pupils / Students as</i> <b>Data Source</b>	Individual performance data	Samples of pupil / student work	Pupil / student attitude surveys
<i>Pupils / Students as</i> <b>Active Respondent</b>	AfL lead learners	Team agenda + pupil perceptions	Appointment panels
<i>Pupils / Students as</i> <b>Co-Researcher</b>	Developing independent learning	CPGS 'History Dudettes'	Joint review of rewards system
<i>Pupils / Students as</i> <b>Knowledge Creator</b>	What Makes a Good Lesson?	Is playground buddying system working?	Low level bullying
<i>Pupils / Students + Adults as Co-authors</i> <b>Joint Enquiry</b>	Co-plan Maths Lesson	Develop unit /department research lesson	Staff + pupil / student Learning Walks

# Student / pupil voice & **Students**

- Develop capacity to **reflect on learning** → greater **control over how you learn + how to improve it**
- **Respected**, listened to + taken seriously → **positive sense of self**
- Views **make a difference** to how things are done in school + classroom → **change agency**
- New capacity to take on **roles + responsibilities**
- Sense of **belonging** - more positive membership of class + school
- See **teachers differently**

# Student / pupil voice & Teachers

- Being **positively surprised** by students → more open perception of young people's capabilities and attitudes
- Experiencing + enjoying a **different way of working** with students → **renewed sense of excitement** in teaching
- **Positive agenda for improvement** → insights that help their professional development
- **Seeing positive changes** as a result of student voice engagement

# Student / pupil voice & **Schools**

- A practical **agenda for change** that teachers + **pupils can identify with**
- Better **engagement with school and school learning** (students + staff)
- Enhanced **mutual respect, trust + recognition** between pupils and teachers
- Improved **teaching + learning**
- Developing a **distinct ethos and identity for the school**
- Developing the school as a **learning organisation / community**

# Puzzles about personalisation

- 1 **Ahistorical** - prisoners of the present
- 2 **Superficial** - no intellectual hinterland
- 3 **Insular** - legitimises timidity
- 4 **Individualistic** - marginalises common good
- 5 **Hyperbolic** - 'transformation'
- 6 **Misleading** - re-branding contested practices

*Above all else*

**There is no coherent or compelling account  
of how we become persons**

# Ongoing challenges (1)

## Current context - teacher tensions

- Conflict between responsiveness to pupils and the nationally imposed agenda
- Pressures of time + curriculum coverage
- Lack of institutional support
- Beyond pockets of isolated practice (role of LA + national + international networks)
- Consumerism or democratic agency? *e.g.*  
“You’re no good, no bullet points, too much thinking, not thick enough files”

# Ongoing challenges (2)

## Using students?

- Refusing the role of ‘quality assurance donkeys’
- Ventriloquising predictable outcomes / teacher approved ideas
- ‘Beating up’ teachers?

# Particular Challenges (1)

## Inclusion

### *Examples*

★race ★gender ★class ★labelling / ‘ability’ ★SEN

### *Responses*

- ✓ Inclusive SAR team + focus on marginalised / under-represented groups
- ✓ *Learning Without Limits* (Hart et al 2004 *esp* Ch.2)
- ✓ COPS (Council of Portsmouth Students)
- ✓ Negotiated / co-constructed curriculum
- ✓ Girls’ groups (Cruddas 2001)
- ✓ Seeing young people differently
- ✱shadowing ✱team teaching ✱residential
- ✱community ✱clubs

## Particular Challenges (2)

# Competing / diverse views

### *Examples*

- ★ Arnot & Reay research (class, gender, race)
- ★ teachers feeling threatened
- ★ parental concerns

### *Responses*

- ✓ previous slide on 'inclusion'
- ✓ No blank cheques, but guaranteed serious response
- ✓ Scaffold approaches with colleagues
- ✓ 'Transforming learning' (Hay McBer)
- ✓ SAR parents' evening

# Particular Challenges (3)

## Tokenism

### *Examples*

- ★ QA ‘donkeys’ (students)
- ★ general exhortation (teachers)

### *Responses (students)*

- ✓ systems
- ✓ ‘permanent provisionality’
- ✓ examples of action taken / serious response

### *Responses (staff)*

- ✓ School support through team / department

## Particular Challenges (4)

# Trust / dialogue

- ✓ Formal spaces + occasions for dialogue
  - ★ student / student
  - ★ student / staff
- ✓ Informal spaces + occasions for dialogue
  - ★ student / student
  - ★ student / staff
- ✓ Develop relationships *through* student voice
- ✓ New ‘public’ spaces: make meaning together
  - ★ Haywards Heath College, East Sussex
  - ★ Bishops Park College ‘Research Forum’

# Creative Renewal or Radical Change?

<p><i>Orientation</i></p> <p><b>Personalised</b></p>	<p><i>Creatively unsettles</i> <i>the system to</i></p> <p><b>Renew it</b></p>	<p><i>Aspiration</i></p> <p>Takes a <b>different slant</b> <b>on existing</b> <b>assumptions</b>, often inspired by new developments in business</p>
<p><i>Orientation</i></p> <p><b>Person centred</b></p>	<p><i>Radically challenges</i> <i>the system to</i></p> <p><b>Transcend it</b></p>	<p><i>Aspiration</i></p> <p>Exposes and <b>challenges</b> <b>deep assumptions</b> and <b>offers alternatives</b>, often rooted in radical traditions</p>

# Two approaches to student voice

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Orientation</i></p> <p><b>High Performance Learning Organisation</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Example</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PERSONALISATION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Functional / Personal relation</i></p> <p><b>Personal for the sake of Functional</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Orientation</i></p> <p><b>Person Centred Learning Community</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Example</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PERSON CENTRED EDUCATION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Functional / Personal relation</i></p> <p><b>Functional for the sake of Personal</b></p>
<p><b>Instrumental use of trust and relationships</b></p>	<p><b>Mutual trust, care and respect</b></p>
<p><b>Multiple managed opportunities to listen to student views of what staff are interested in</b></p>	<p><b>Reciprocal listening resulting in emergent foci and wide-ranging agendas</b></p>
<p><b>Students-as-Researchers explore e.g. Y8 disaffection</b></p>	<p><b>Students + teachers develop exploratory pedagogy together</b></p>

# The necessity of narrative

## *Students*

- Diaries + journals (paper + digital)
- Negotiated / co-constructed curriculum
- Self-managed learning groups
- Small support groups ('counter-publics')
- The arts

## *Staff*

- Action learning sets
- Pairings / critical friendships

## *Shared*

- Trips / residentials / new traditions (sbor!)
- New, multi-vocal public spaces *e.g.* from students in staff meetings to Bloom's school council

# St George-in-the East, Stepney

- 1 **Clear set of views and values**, not about ‘learning’, but about **how we become persons**

*e.g.* ‘Our Pattern’ – each person feels

- ✓ they count / are wanted / have a contribution to make to the common good
- ✓ the school community is worthwhile

*Also*

- ✓ no competition, no prizes, no marks, no punishment, no streaming

- 2 **Emergent curriculum within communal context**

★ school study ★ elective activities

- 3 **Weekly Reviews** - espec pp 49-50, Also 58-59, 74, 114, 118  
of **TO SIR WITH LOVE** – E.R.Braithwaite

- 4 **Radical school council** + supporting structures and cultures

# **Bishops Park College, Clacton**

- Schools-within-school
- Centrality of relationships (85 students max)
- Thematic teaching in integrated teams
- Rich, often negotiated, sometimes emergent, sometimes multi-age curriculum
- No streaming / setting / ability labelling
- No discipline policy (ethos commitment)
- Equity through continuity + depth of relationships in an inclusive community
- From occasional voice to on-going dialogue

# Taking 'student voice' seriously (1)

## Purposes + Values

- **Why** is this work being **encouraged / resisted**?
- **In whose interests**?
- How does it connect with **policy contexts**?

## Power + Control

- Who is allowed to **speak**? About **what**?
- Who gets **heard**? By **whom**?
- Who is **listening**? **Why**?

## Capacities + Attitudes

- How are the **appropriate skills** developed?
- How do people **regard / care for each other**?
- Are they **taking it seriously**?
- Do some people feel **threatened**?

# Taking 'student voice' seriously (2)

## Systems + structures

- Appropriate **systems and structures**?
- **Public /communal**, as well as smaller, more intimate **spaces to make meaning** of recommendations and **decide what should be done**?

## Action + Responsibilities

- What actually **happens**?
- **Who** decides?
- Who has **responsibility for embedding** the change?
- How do we **hold** ourselves / each other **to account**?
- How is the change **monitored** and **evaluated**? By **whom**?