Student Voice / A descriptive case study of student voice in an international French school: power issues in a complex, real-life setting

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Version: Redacted Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher’s website:
http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.00013d21

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Student Voice / A descriptive case study of student voice in an international French school: power issues in a complex, real-life setting.

Dissertation ¹
Submitted as part of Module E822
Masters Multi-disciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth
12022 words

By:
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02 September 2021

¹ To protect the anonymity of participants, avoid unintentional gender bias and in recognition of the code of practice of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018, item 2), all singular pronouns will be referred to as ‘she’ irrespective of preferred or biological categorisation.
Abstract

This cross-cultural study explores student voice by gathering experiences from multiple perspectives and revealing the related power issues. A multi-modal methodology was chosen comprising Critical Discourse Analysis, surveys and interview methods. It was structured by questioning the three dimensions of student voice: how it was conceptualised by students, teachers and the school organisation, how it was practised, and what the impact of those experiences was. The evidence illustrates the presence of sovereign and disciplinary power as defining student voice but it is suggested that power can be negotiated to support innovative practice such as classroom councils.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The starting point for this inquiry was an interview conducted during module EE831 (The Open University, 2019a). A student was asked if her opinion had been sought about learning, teaching or any aspect of school life in the seven years that she had attended the school. She had not, and from the perspective of an educational researcher the absence of student voice was problematic. Sourced in this values judgement, the interview left its mark and reflections on how this was possible prompted this enquiry.

The assumption of this original judgement was that students in schools are being denied opportunities to express themselves due to an imbalance of power between students and teachers. This critical stance is encouraged by a developmental approach to education which, according to Alexander (2008), is common in English primary schools. It seeks human flourishing (Robinson and Taylor, 2007) and sees language as a social practice (van Dijk, 2001). Following this discourse, encouraging student voice is an ‘ethical responsibility’ (Taylor and Robinson, 2009, p. 171), the intimation being that it is irresponsible not to. Yet, one should not assume all values are universal. Cohen (2008), following Foucault, states that in the context of education there is no ‘universally appropriate way to teach’ (p. 10). To claim ownership of the right way belongs to a ‘regime of truth’ (Foucault, 1980, quoted in Cohen, 2018, p. 10) that is merely a collection of norms we have adopted as our own. In the light of
this it should be clear that creating a space for student voice is not the definitive right way, rather it is the Anglo-American way. It is the ethical responsibility of a researcher to bear this in mind and not make assumptions.

The unique environment of the enquiry is a French school based in Europe. The French education system has evolved a distinct model from that of the English-speaking world. Cornu (2015) explains that the teaching unions fought until 2008 to maintain the classic approach inherited from the Enlightenment. This views the nature of knowledge as external which requires a transmission model of teaching (The Open University, 2019b). This in turn requires an expert and is the reason that subject knowledge and didactics are valued over pedagogy (Cornu, 2015). Alexander (2008), states that *la pédagogie* was dismissed for being too psychological. Efforts to modernise teacher training have since succeeded but the present setting has many teachers who have spent their entire careers there and will only have known pre-2008 approaches.

The setting is part of a network of French schools established throughout the world to spread French culture (AEFE, 2021). They are centrally run by the National Education Department in France which mandates curriculum content and the rules that prescribe school life. The French-trained teaching corps is complemented by native language practitioners of differing nationalities of whom the researcher is one. The staff have to find a place in a long-standing setting with its own cultural pre-set of ‘the way we do things around here’ (Deal, T.E., and Kennedy, A., 1983, quoted in Stoll, 1998, p. 9). The headteacher who oversees this organisation has a typically administrative role. However, it is her responsibility to propose a development plan, and its preparation was an opportunity for research.

As part of the plan, it was agreed that the researcher would assist a teacher in setting up a classroom councils project. Classroom councils were developed by Freinet, a democracy-minded Frenchman (1979, cited in Edelstein, 2011), and are a familiar mechanism at primary level. They are normally organised into three parts: a time to congratulate or give thanks to peers; a time to air complaints and resolve conflicts; a time to make propositions. The councils are organised and lead by the students, even for the younger classes\(^2\). As part of the project

\(^2\) An example of French classroom councils can be found on YouTube (DFIE, 2015).
these would feed into newly organised school council. The latter previously met infrequently, if at all.

However, this initial project failed when all school councils were abruptly cancelled by the headteacher due to scheduling problems. This was a clear display of absolute power and disregard for the year 4 class working on the council project. Its consequence was to return the present study to its critical theory roots. It evolved to become an enquiry that sought to understand the student voice experiences in the school and probe how they related to power issues.

To commence responsibly, this investigation needed to be grounded in knowledge of the thinking and previous research on student voice. Chapter 2 will provide this by informing the three dimensions of the topic: the concepts, the practice and its impact, as well as the power issues this raises. These three dimensions have framed the resulting study using the following research questions:

1. *How is student voice conceptualised by students, teachers and the school organisation?*
2. *How is student voice experienced in practice by students and teachers?*
3. *What is the impact of the experiences described?*

In chapter 3 of this dissertation, the process that led to the chosen research design will be explained and the importance of ethics highlighted. Chapter 4 will detail the steps taken to collect the data, which will be presented and analysed. The fifth and final chapter will discuss the power issues identified and the implications for the school, practice and how to develop the topic for future research.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review of Student Voice Discourse**

This chapter will first present a summary of the preliminary search and its general results. A review of those results will be structured by the research questions, and pay particular attention to how the literature conceptually relates power issues to voice. Points of interest that can inform the future study design will also be noted.
The hunt for literature began within the Open University library using the search term ‘student voice’. That millions of items were found testifies to the significance of the topic. The search was then refined to peer-reviewed journals only, the period restricted to between 1990 and 2020, the focus limited to primary before being expanded to include secondary school, and then qualified to include teacher voice and articles from French-speaking countries. A total of sixty relevant articles were selected which will form the basis of the review.

The general trends in the results were examined. The majority of the articles were from sociology and childhood-oriented journals rather than those aimed at teachers, teacher-training or leadership. After a flurry of studies enthusing about the theoretical potential of student voice at the turn of the century (for example, Rudduck, Chaplain, and Wallace, 1996), the literature became more evaluative (Seale, 2010). How to interpret student voice evolved thematically from being used by teachers as a social-developmental tool, as in O’Loughlin’s 1995 study, and an instrument that promotes improved outcomes, for example, MacBeath, Demetriou, Rudduck and Myers (2003), to being a more empowering mechanism whereby the students internalise its potential and become Students as Researchers (SAR) such as Bahou’s (2011) research. A study of the added dimensions in the articles revealed that both pedagogical, philosophical, sociological and ethical issues were related. This substantiality was a validating factor for the study.

On comparison, it was noted that fewer papers featured student voice at primary than at secondary level (although this is less true for more recent research such as Clark, 2011) and those using multiple perspectives were also less frequent. Only Edelstein (2011) referred to classroom councils in UK schools. Some French articles mentioned Freinet but none were found on the topic of student voice and French primary schools. Instead the search results directed the researcher to the French National Education Department. These gaps in the literature signified an opportunity for research.

In terms of research design examples, they ranged from mixed methods, for example, Pulis (2018), to single case qualitative studies such as Quinn and Owen (2016), and surveys, for example Alderson (2000). Such variety indicated that the topic leant itself to being explored by different paradigms. This flexibility was welcomed by a beginner researcher who preferred to explore freely the possibilities of research and not feel bound to follow the examples of
those more conversant with its types. The eventual decisions about paradigmatic position of this study will be explained in chapter 3.

Clearly, the volumes of literature indicated that the topic was rich and worthwhile. Fortunately, there were still gaps unexplored that this cross-cultural study on voice could fill. The review of the selected articles will be structured by addressing the research questions.

- **How is student voice conceptualised by the literature?**

In her theoretical compendium, Cook-Sather (2006) traces the narrative of student voice to the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 (UNICEF, no date). This encouraged a view of children as competent beings (Montgomery, 2018) which was adopted and endorsed by educational theorists (Cotmore, 2004). The UNCRC expects educational institutions to be responsible for ensuring students’ views are expressed and, importantly, listened to (Kellet, 2010). Robinson and Taylor (2007) observe that one cannot be heard if no-one is there to listen, and in the context of a school this implies the presence of the teacher. The key to effective voice work for McIntyre, Pedder and Rudduck (2005) is teacher belief in the importance of what students have to say.

That this should need emphasising might surprise many practising teachers. Alexander (2008) confirms that it is culturally common practice for the focus to be first and foremost on students in the UK. He remarks that the catchphrase ‘we teach children not subjects’ was still a familiar slogan in 2008. For those who share such beliefs, the UNCRC codifies cultural norms that are uncontested. However, because a discourse is dominant does not signify universality. As Montgomery (2018) explains, critics condemn this legislation for not acknowledging the ‘lived realities of children’s experiences’ (p. 62). It is an example of these realities, not the universalities, that interests this research.

The convention inspired a student voice movement (Noyes, 2005). This movement had an agenda to bring about change in schools (Rudduck, 2007). Good and bad practice was identified. Good practice, according to Fielding (2007), was a more ‘humane’ approach to education (p. 323). There was an evangelical tone to the research voice: O’Loughlin’s (1995)
is on a ‘mission’ (p. 115). However, Fielding seemed to be failing the mission in 2001 since he expressed ‘absolute outrage’ and a sense of ‘betrayal’ (p. 49) at the lack of progress. Rather than being rewarded by a quality pedagogy, Silva (2001) reported students having to ‘battle’ for inclusion (p. 95) and research ‘strives’ to support the cause (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 8). The fervour is understandable since student voice was expected to challenge the structures of schooling and remedy the social justice problems present therein (Robinson and Taylor, 2007). One suspects that this conception of student voice had travelled quite far from the reality of school life.

Aside from the UNCRC, this discourse on student voice stems from the belief expressed by Robinson and Taylor (2007) and following Giroux, that school should be a ‘lived experience of empowerment’ (p. 11). Although they admit that students may have a range of institutional issues to contend with before succeeding, they neglect, in Arnot and Reay’s (2007) view, the realities of power issues in schools. Arnot and Reay (2007) suggest that power is relational, and indeed it is an empty concept when acting in isolation. Students are not inherently empowered in school due to their status and youth. Bahou (2011) developed a theory that students could achieve empowerment through it being shifted to them from another source. She explains that power can shift to be ‘with’ students rather than ‘over’ them hierarchically, or only ‘within’ them, from a sense of their own capacities (p. 7). This theory recognises power as decisive in realising student voice.

A more radical conception of student voice is offered by critical theory. This is also connected to power since it is an emancipation discourse that believes power is external, oppressive and, like all villains, should be challenged (Freire, 2000). The goal is more subversive than simply sharing classroom power; it is to overturn classroom transmission models whereby teachers deposit knowledge into receptive students that Freire portrays as a ‘banking’ system (Schweisfurth, 2013). For critical theorists, students’ passive role is the result of oppression maintained by undemocratic structures. Student voice when expressed through dialogue and the dialogic method can challenge customary monologic pedagogy (The Open University, 2019c). The goal is to teach students in a way that improves school, and also contributes to ‘re-culturing’ (Fielding, 2001b, p. 106) and restructuring society (Mannion, 2007; Arnot and Reay, 2007). This is an assumptions-based objective. It ignores contexts, and the attitudes, feelings and desires of those within whose lives will be overturned. In fact, the banking model
closely resembles the French approach to pedagogy, explained in the introduction, which has been defended and is admired by its supporters for its high academic standards (Cornu, 2015). Re-culturing is not likely. Cook-Sather (2006) warns that forcing cultural change can harden resistance and trigger further power struggles. There is much evidence for this with the cultural and military wars waged and lost by the West in the last twenty years. Clearly critical theory is too political and oversimplifies power issues into oppressor and victim, whereas power is more complex and intricate (Taylor and Robinson, 2009).

- **How is student voice related to practice in the literature?**

Leaving aside the visions of structural change in school or cultural change in society, the literature also discusses models for the practice of student voice in schools. One of these is student consultation. Rudduck and Flutter (2000, cited in Fielding, 2007) assert that this has rewards both for students, teachers, and schools as a whole. Flutter and Rudduck (2004) state that with their insider knowledge as ‘consumers’ (p. Xi) students are uniquely positioned to inform improvements, particularly the standards of teaching and learning (Thomson and Gunter, 2006). In Garrett and Shortall’s 2002 study, teachers gained empirical data with which to evaluate and extend their own capacities. In fact, consultation is an example of teachers learning from students, especially from those who habitually communicate the least (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006; Flutter, 2007. The literature on this aspect of student voice, such as Thomson and Gunter’s (2006) study, provided inspiring examples of the insights gained from student voice consultation.

However, its limitations need bearing in mind. Rudduck and Fielding (2006) and Bahou (2011) express a concern about authenticity. Bahou uses Hart’s (1992) typology of participation to underline that student voice at its worst can be manipulative and decorative. Hohti and Karlsson (2014) find voice can be ambiguous and Robinson and Taylor (2007) claim that students can be asked to confirm decisions that have already been made. Cruddas (2001) suspects students do not actually feel free to express themselves. An example of Hart’s (1992) superior student voice is the SAR model. SAR is an inspiring approach to consultation which has been tested, for example by Fielding (2004), and is reviewed enthusiastically in the literature.
Considering the theoretical and ethical strength of SAR with its student-centred research design was a promising option for this study. However, the access required to accompany students for a SAR project also made it impracticable. Neither was a researcher-led, school-wide consultation an option since leadership rejected this method for its lack of utility. The possibility of a researcher-led survey with a focus on a sample class remained as an alternative and succeeded in gaining the support of the setting.

Aside from consultation, practising student voice in the classroom as part of an ‘education for citizenship’ (Biesta and Lawy, 2006, p. 65) occupies much of the discussion in the literature. Ideally, school should be a community democracy within which students ‘have a say’ about life (Bahou, 2011, p. 3) and experience decision-making (Whitty and Wisby, 2007). Brown, Croxford and Minty (2017) suggest this should be integrated into the organisation through instruments such as school councils which enable student voice to be heard effectively. According to Cook-Sather (2006), Flutter (2007) and Edelstein (2011), councils are an opportunity to embed vital inter-relational skills such as cooperation and collaboration. As explained in the introduction, although school councils at primary level in France are uncommon, classroom councils are familiar and are a culturally acceptable venue for voice practice.

However, the literature warns that voice mechanisms such as consultations and councils provoke power issues. Quinn and Owen’s (2016) case study finds evidence that council representatives can abuse the power devolved to them; Cook-Sather (2006) observes they themselves can be manipulated to become enforcers of school rules. These are examples of how ideals are compromised in contact with reality. Taylor and Robinson (2009) observe that this is the determining influence of power. Following Foucault (1963, cited in Balan, 2010), they suggest it has been misconstrued by critical theorists and instead of being external and oppressive from the top down, power is present and constantly exerting a regularising force. This is not exclusively oppressive; it can be productive (Cohen, 2018). It can lead to students asserting themselves, although not always as researchers would expect. Indeed, Thomson and Gunter’s (2006) consultation of students voices found they wielded a conservative power through consistently supporting teachers and their environment, including setting and exams.

It was of interest for this research to realise that, according to Thomson and Gunter (2006), the dominant discourse will dictate student voice. Kehily (2018) explains that these discourses
manifest themselves in patterns of attitudes and behaviour that are markers of a culture. Thus, care should be taken when introducing practice that challenges this culture.

- **What is the impact of student voice according to the literature?**

The beneficial impact of student voice work is well documented in the literature which links the thinking to Vygotsky (1978, cited in James, 2006). He developed a sociocultural theory of learning by arguing that language and environment were key to development of identity. If learning is accepted as a social process then schools should be ‘communities of participants’ (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004, p. 135) that encourage these identities to develop. Ranson (2000) explains that once voice work has stabilised identity, the next step is agency. Bahou (2011) claims enhanced capacities from participation can foster a sense of agency that is lacking in a traditional school experience. Mitra and Serriere’s (2012) case study finds the participants showed an increased self-belief, or ‘civic efficacy’ (p. 743). An unsupportive environment according to Somekh (2001, quoted in Noyes, 2005), leads to ‘failing’ identities (p. 538).

However, schools are complex communities and Ellsworth (1992, cited in Taylor and Robinson, 2009) explains that teachers on whom students rely cannot always sustain their own agency in the face of intricate power relations. Indeed, the literature plots the impact of student voice practice as less linear and the effects more unpredictable. For example, Arnot and Reay (2007), Ivinson (2018), Taylor and Robinson, (2009) and Silva, (2001) all warn that certain pupils dominate participation which actually perpetuates social inequality. MacBeath, et al. (2003, cited in Flutter, 2007) concur that the voices of the already articulate, those with the appropriate cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1985, cited in Reay, 2006; Silva, 2001) benefit most. The result is disenfranchisement instead of inclusion and agency. This can again be understood in the context of power relations. If power is circulating, it can flow towards self-realisation and agency as the study by Quinn and Owen (2016) shows. However, if it is unwisely negotiated it can flow in the opposite direction and cause harm. Its influence is variable, but its presence is a constant.

Reviewing the literature provided ideas on what information is needed to answer the research questions and how that information can be gathered. It also added depth to the
thinking on power issues and voice in preparation for this study. Clearly the concepts behind student voice are motivating: it can potentially benefit both students and teachers, and possibly the school. However, to assume that there will only be the benefits we expect is to disregard the volatility of power and its unpredictable influence on student voice.

Informed by this review, the thoughts on this study will turn to considering which design would be most appropriate for its realisation.

**Chapter 3: Research Design**

This chapter will detail how design decisions for this research were made. This includes an exploration of the conceptual framework that underpins the approach and an explanation of the methodology and its methods. How these methods were set up and pursued ethically will be detailed with the precision that is required of respectful research (BERA, 2018, item 1).

- **The case study quandary**

Case studies come under different guises in the literature. They appear as *approaches* for Wells et al. (1995), as *strategies* for Mills, Durepos and Wiebe (2009) and Verschuren (2003), as *genres* for Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013), as *processes* for Merriam (1998, cited in Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013), or even as a *methodology* in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018). In fact case studies lend themselves to all these terms since they can be positioned at different points along the research journey. As an approach, the entry point of an enquiry, a case must be bound (The Open University, 2020a; Wells et al., 1995). Setting boundaries provides the answer to the question ‘what is this a case of?’ (Thomas, 2011, quoted in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 378). The case of this study is focused on student voice, and it is bound by considering the power issues that define its experiences.

There is a consensus that case studies as an approach are appropriate for studying a phenomenon in its natural context, in this instance a school. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) and Stakes (1995, cited in Farrugia, 2017) maintain this context should be unique,
which is a simple criterion to meet since degrees of uniqueness can be found in every educational setting. In this case, its cross-cultural status makes it interesting. However, for scientific researchers such as Yin (2003, The Open University, 2020a) being interesting might not settle the representation issue which plagues case studies. In their defence, Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) suggest case studies represent real-life complexity. Thus, focused, bound and context-driven, this research has the characteristics of a case study approach.

It is when considering the type of approach that the consensus fails since the names differ or are ambiguous. For example, Thomas (2011, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018), discusses experimental, exploratory, explanatory or descriptive types. Yet Hammersley, Gomm and Foster (2009) consider an experimental type can also be explanatory. On reflection, an inconsistent classification system is unsurprising: if cases are distinguished by being unique, this quality will arguably be reflected in the designs. Indeed, all research can essentially be seen as exploratory, and many study types are encouraged to be descriptive (The Open University, 2019d). Ultimately a descriptive study would best suit researcher capacities. Descriptive is no less powerful a type: Waller (1934, cited in Hammersley, Gomm and Foster, 2009) claims that concepts are perceived through descriptions. Essentially, organising any other type considering the lack of budget, limited access, and tight time frame, is not feasible.

There appears again to be little agreement in the literature about what is variously known by Hammersley, Gomm and Foster (2009), as purpose, or by Thomas (2001, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) as approach, or by Bassey (1999) as the form of these descriptions. This is due to differing conceptualisations of how theory relates to case study. Mills, Durepos and Wiebe (2009) contend it should extend current theory. Hammersley, Gomm and Foster (2009) argue that its value is in generating new theory through, for example, uncovering causal links or making comparisons. Yet this requires a multi-case study which is not feasible, nor should it be an obligation. In fact, Grandy (2010) urges researchers to resist the pressure of theory generation all together. For Merriam (1998, cited in Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013) it is the case, not its outcome that is important. Stakes (1995, cited in Farrugia, 2017) claims they are a valuable opportunity to gain intimate contextual knowledge. Contexts is, after all, what stands case studies apart. Indeed, findings from independent research do not necessarily have to be applied elsewhere or be used to
embolden theory. Instead, the role of case studies can be viewed as reporting back on real-life contexts. This might not contribute to theory, but it makes a humbler claim of providing ‘exemplary knowledge’ (Thomas, 2010, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 390) that could be used as ‘a springboard for reflection’ (Farrugia, 2017, p. 10). This recalls Schön’s (1983) appeal forty years earlier for reflective practice. In this way, case studies, rather than adding to theory, bring life to theory. In what manner this aim will be achieved depends on the paradigmatic position adopted.

- Paradigmatic positioning

A paradigm is a set of assumptions that play a directional role in research (Grix, 2002). Once the nature of reality (ontology) and how we can know that reality (epistemology) have been established, how to conduct the research and what to be attentive to is clarified for the researcher and can be judged by the reader (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). According to Grix (2002) our positioning is dependent on history, culture, and the personally held values which affect our conception of the world. In the nineteenth century, the urge to explain this world from a positivist paradigmatic position took hold of European research thinking. Rooted in the ontological conviction that there was a single reality governed by universal laws (Hammersley, Gomm and Foster, 2009), its epistemology determined that these laws were external from the researcher and could be predicted, tracked down and explained by theory. The proviso of this natural science methodology was that objectivity be preserved. This kept the researcher apart from the research and not interfering with the process (Corbetta, 2003); data was thus decontextualised (Hamilton and Corbett-Whitter, 2013). Post-positivism introduced the concept of probability and relativised what the human mind was able to know about external reality, although it maintained the assumptions about process. Its methodology enables a wide range of people to be reached and can provide valuable numerical information such as identifying the number of classroom councils held. However, how an individual experiences the councils remains unknown. For this, subjective knowledge is needed.

Corbetta links Dilthey to the emergence of subjectivity (1883, cited in Corbetta, 2003). Hammersley, Gomm and Foster (2009) credit Waller (1934) with observing that in social
research we are investigating ourselves and any claims to objectivity are flawed. Waller terms this ‘sympathetic insight’ (Hammersley, Gomm and Foster, 2009, p. 3) and it belongs to an interpretivist worldview. Grix (2002) explains the interpretivist’s world is various and changing, with reality being perpetually constructed from individual, lived experiences. The key to the interpretivist epistemology is accessing multiple subjective perspectives of experience and studying how they interact. This radically changes the meaning of knowledge to include thoughts, feelings and intentions. It is precisely the data that is needed to comprehend the experiences of student voice in the school. How to gather this subjective evidence conceptually is the role of methodology.

- **Case study as a methodology**

To render a detailed description of student voice and capture the complexity of the related power issues, a broad and flexible framework, or methodology, is needed. The questions can be informed by both quantitative data and qualitative data; the goal is the thickness (Geertz, 1973) of the description, not the type of data yielded. However, such a methodology would span the ‘paradigmatic divide’ (Milla, Durepos and Wiebe, 2009, p. 3) since quantitative data is associated with positivist research and qualitative with interpretivist. Focusing on this division has occupied the literature since Kuhn issued his seminal work on paradigms ‘The Structure of Scientific Revolution’ in 1962. He argued that new paradigms which opened up different possibilities for study were so powerful and integral to our understanding of the world that they dislodged any previous ones (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010). This uncompromising stance by a thinker whom Creswell (2010) refers to as “the major architect of the paradigm discussion” (p. 54) was perhaps a factor in the so-called “paradigm wars” (Bryman, 2006, p. 111) and a reason why researchers have not agreed to disagree. For example, Pring rails against those who ‘falsely assume that there exists a single reality’ (2015, quoted in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 390). Yet this affirmation is an ontological position and not, as James (2015) points out, truth. Such certainty smacks of single-minded positivism, is the antithesis of interpretivism, and goes against the inquiring spirit of research (The Open University, 2019e). Indeed, following Kuhn’s lead and limiting research options would be to reduce opportunities for knowledge gathering.
When researching a methodology compatible with all data types, mixed methods research seems a plausible fit. However, its reliance on pre-determined designs (Creswell, 2010) limits choice and its positioning as an outcome-oriented methodology is at odds with case study aims. Narrative methodology as explained by Daiute (2014) and used by Mooney and O’Connor Duffy (2014) is a persuasive alternative. With its emphasis on the perspectives of individuals (Clandinin, 2006) and its focus on the impact their experiences (Bell, 2002) it corresponded perfectly with this study’s theoretical assumptions. However, concerns about needing a multi-perspectival base of evidence and that this would lead to combining several methodologies as well as narrative, pointed to a more apt solution: case study as a methodology.

Although referring to case study as a methodology is contested (for example, Costley, Elliott and Gibbs, 2010), it nevertheless has its entry in Mills, Durepos and Wiebe’s 2010 Encyclopedia and the definition complies with how this investigation needs to be conducted. Unlike mixed methods, it imposes no design frames. It can support a broad base of perspectives needed to develop a complex understanding of experiences (Frey, 2018). It is flexible (Mills, Durepos and Wiebe, 2010) and the methods can thus be tailored to the questions and the context. The data yielded can be both qualitative and quantitative (Frey 2018) and this methodology allows data types to remain separate thus dispensing with awkward integration (Mills, Durepos and Wiebe, 2010).

A methodology that uses qualitative data has to contend with criticisms of how to judge the quality of that data (Bryman, Becker and Sempik, 2008). Clearly applying ‘scientific world’ criteria to the ‘social world’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1986, p. 15) lacks a meaningful rationale. Connelly and Clandinin (1999, cited in Bell, 2002) suggest that research should be judged on the terms given by the researcher but this is unlikely to be acceptable to all audiences and the research has to be convince readers to be useful. Transparency is a general criterion that can enable an audience to assess research. To add to this the Open University (2019e) offer validity, reliability and generalisability adapted from Frey (2018). As ‘commonly used’ criteria (The Open University, 2019e) these should also be recognisable and acceptable. However, generalisability is not appropriate for a case study which, as seen earlier, is representative of real life and not applicable to all life. This last criterion will not be used. Its place will be taken by reflexivity (Bryman, Becker and Sempik, 2008) which demands that a researcher, rather
than apply external criteria (Hammersley, 2008) reflect critically on a methodology and its shortcomings. These reflections also need to be ethical. Ethics will be fundamental to how this methodology sets up its methods.

- Methods

Once the literature review has proved investigating student voice experiences is a study worth undertaking (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 12) and the methodology has been chosen, attention should turn to methods and how they can answer the research questions. After learning of the aptitude of critical theory for detecting power issues, it was decided that a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of a school leaflet would be performed to see how student voice was conceived at institutional level. Following the successes of consultation noted in the review, surveys were chosen to add information about its conception and practice in the classroom. Finally, the epistemological importance of accessing individual perspectives would enquire into its conception, practice and crucially, the impact of these experiences, through interview. The data from all three methods will be examined for latent power issues. For the methods to yield the most interesting data, as wide a range of participants as possible was needed. Once research turns to investigating people’s lives, an awareness of its ethical implications is vital (Oates, 2019).

The Open University (2020b) recommends one should be ethically vigilant at all stages of research. Familiarity with the codes of practice laid out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) is essential. BERA items will be cited where relevant. Prior to the study, researcher sensitivity to ethical problems was heightened by attending the ‘Becoming an ethical researcher’ course (The Open University, 2020c; appendix 2). During the study a personalisable ethical grid assisted the quality criterion of reflexivity. This is adapted from the model proposed by Stutchbury and Fox (2009) and is a guide to the four dimensions of ethical concerns that affect the research environment and consequential, moral and relational issues. Points from the grid will also be cited and it can be found in its entirety in appendix 3.

The study was set up according to the framework set out by BERA (2018, item 12). The headteacher agreed to perform the important role of gatekeeper (BERA, 2018, item 11).
Following this, the teacher participants were indirectly approached by means of a presentation on the original project about classroom councils. Participation was thus solicited without pressure being exerted (BERA, 2018, item 9). Care was taken to keep the language accessible at all times to avoid creating semantic barriers (BERA, 2018, item 10; Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 3). To remain sensitive to potential social discomfort (grid point 22), volunteers were asked to contact the researcher privately following the presentation. A year 4 teacher offered to be the focus class for the classroom council project. The researcher remained mindful of the commitment this signified for the teacher and was at pains throughout the research to ensure it did not extend beyond what she was willing to do (grid points 2 and 22). In the spirit of reciprocity recommended by the grid (point 17), the researcher worked with the teacher on a collaborative project which culminated in a display in the school entrance (grid point 11). Other teachers volunteered to participate in the student voice research and to ensure they had all the information needed before making the commitment, it was explained what this would imply (BERA, 2018, item 10, grid point 15). The information and permission documents that were given (BERA, 2018, items 3 and 8) can be found in appendices 4, 5, 6 and 7. Interviewees were notified that clarifying interviews would take place but that withdrawal was possible anytime regardless of this (BERA, 2018, item 31). It was explained that the raw interview and survey data would be made available on request (grid point 19). Arrangements for when and where to conduct the interviews and surveys were suggested by the participants. In total six teacher participants completed the survey and were interviewed. Two were from a UK/US background, and four were French nationals.

Bucknall (2014) cautions researchers that special care must be taken when studies involve children (BERA, 2018, item 23). For instance, given the power inherent in the social positions of teachers (BERA, 2018, item 20) the researcher made no direct requests to the students; they were only approached indirectly via their own teacher. The focus class agreed to the survey and were given the information sheets and informed consent forms (BERA, 2018, items 3 and 8) so that the final decision could be taken with a responsible carer (BERA, 2018, items 8 and 24). There was a right to withdrawal specified (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 15), but since the survey was anonymous it could not be withdrawn after completion. The survey took place during the last classroom council session with the focus class. They were returned
to the students after copies were made and became part of the school display on the project (grid point 11).

The interviews were more delicate to arrange. This time the students were selected in advance by purposive sampling. Two students were from the focus class and were native speakers of English. The year 5 and 6 students had both been class representative and although not native, had a high level of fluency. This fact would facilitate establishing an easy rapport (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 21) based on a mutual language of communication. These students were given the information sheets and consent forms for minors to take home and consider (BERA, 2018, items 8 and 24). The documents for both surveys and interviews with minors can be found in appendices 8, 9, 10 and 11. The students all accepted and chose a setting for the interview and which adult they preferred to be present. The maximum time spent with students interviewees was 15 minutes. The possibility of accessing the resulting raw interview data was explained to the interviewees (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 19).

In addition, permission was sought and given from leadership to use the school’s official documentation which, although is publicly accessible, was not created for research purposes (BERA, 2018, item 12). This will not be appended to safeguard the anonymity of the setting (BERA, 2018, item 50).

A total of 25 surveys were returned and 10 participants were interviewed (the adults were all met with twice) none of whom will be identifiable in the final report (BERA, 2018, item 41; Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 2). Only written fieldnotes were taken during the interview sessions; no audio or visual recordings were made in order to make the respondents feel at ease. Legally storing data is an important ethical responsibility (BERA, 2018, item 50; grid point 8) and codes of practice were followed. The fieldnotes, copies of the surveys and the analysis of the school leaflet were stored securely on the researcher’s personal computer to which access was protected by a specific password (grid point 19). These will be kept for as long as the research text is available. The raw data was processed and its analysis and findings will be presented in chapter 4.
Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

To manage the presentation of the data, this chapter is structured according to the method used. Each method will be presented, and the data collection, its analysis and the meaning this generates will be explained. An evaluation of the quality of each instrument in terms of the transparency of its analysis, reliability and validity will follow. The data will be reflected on critically to satisfy reflexivity commitments. The conclusions drawn from the findings will be detailed in chapter 5.

The presentation will begin with the CDA and evidence from the surveys and interviews will follow.

- **CDA of the school promotional leaflet**

  The headteacher and the committee that runs the setting are jointly responsible for producing an annual leaflet on the school. On first view it is striking for its absence of pictures and detail in core areas. For instance, the ‘teaching approaches’ are listed as ‘differentiated instruction, active-learning, personalised learning, etc.’ The ‘etc.’ is a telling example of ‘vagueness’ (van Dijk, 2001, p. 104). When discussing pedagogy one might expect a school to communicate with passion rather than indifference. Contrastingly, one is struck by the regularity with which certain key word re-appears. A brief frequency analysis confirms this impression.

![Frequency of Key Words](image)

*Figure 1*

*Source: School leaflet (25 May 2021)*
The word school is used more frequently than the words students and teachers combined. These surface examinations can shed light on how the school presents itself, and who is absent. However, van Dijk (2001) compares discourses to icebergs (p. 114) whose depth will be missed if the underlying core is ignored. Bringing the meaning of language to the surface requires a complex instrument such as Halliday’s (1985, cited in Bloor and Bloor, 2013) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) that deconstructs text at the level of clause. Halliday recognised that word choices related to each other in a Transitivity system which meant the words selected or omitted had a profound effect on the meaning made. The pillars of this system are the Process (verb group), Participant (noun group), and Circumstance which provides context. The SFG approach can be sued to illuminate critical discourse analysis (CDA). Van Dijk (2001) explains CDA reveals how the language choices of the powerful manipulate the worldview of the most vulnerable. As seen in the literature review, critical theory links language and voice to issues of oppression and agency. Thus, a method specialising in uncovering ‘who holds the power’ (Elhaggagi and Rix, 2021a), is a perfect fit for revealing the underlying conception of student voice and how this relates to power. The analysis will expose how the power discourse is conveyed by studying the meaning of language patterns and differences (Kehily, 2018).

The analysis shows that a long list of Attributes and Values is connected to few Relational Processes. Furthermore, Figure 2 shows that some of these Processes are incomplete due to absent partner Participants.

Proportion of Complete or Incomplete Relational Processes compared to Attributes and Values

![Figure 2](source: School leaflet (25 May 2021))
The incomplete Relational Processes result in disconnected text as in Extract 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Circumstance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attribute</td>
<td>Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The highest standards</em></td>
<td><em>for your children’s success</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 1

The unconstructed clauses dissociate the setting from its Attributes. This pattern of relational dysfunction makes it unclear for the audience to whom the Attributes belong. It is possibly the opposite of the message the text wishes to convey.

Conversely, Verbal and Mental Processes have their corresponding Participants and are securely connected as Extract 2 demonstrates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sayer</td>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>Receiver</td>
<td>Verbiage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Membership of the ... network</em></td>
<td><em>allows</em></td>
<td><em>any student from an approved school</em></td>
<td><em>to receive a high-quality education</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 2

Whilst ostensibly drawing attention to attributes and values, the brochure communicates more effectively when explaining the rules. Indeed, the evidence points to school activity being more in the mind than in the classroom. For instance, there is only one complete Material Process connected to teachers; it is more common for them to be absent or replaced by the setting as seen in Extract 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Core-Circumstance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Recipient</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>X (setting)</em></td>
<td><em>educates</em></td>
<td><em>your children</em></td>
<td><em>from the age of three</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 3

The school as the main social actor is a recurrent pattern throughout the text which as Rahal and Vadeboncoeur (2013) observe is clear evidence of dominant positioning. The setting even
interposes itself between the teachers and the students; it is present where the students logically should be as Extract 4 shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Circumstance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>contribute</td>
<td>to this environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 4

Revealingly, students are never Actor Participants except when referred to as children, as in this example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents and children</td>
<td>get</td>
<td>to know each other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 5.

What little place the students as learners occupy in the text, the CDA exposes to be without agency. These are unsettling findings.

As Bloor and Bloor (2013) explain, there is language and there is the experience of its meaning which CDA can reveal as entirely different. In this text it shows that the ‘manipulative intent’ (Given, 2008, p. 148) is being thwarted by another narrative of unclaimed claims and a dominant setting that behaves like a sovereign power which is disconnected from its subjects. Sovereign power was for Foucault (1980, cited in Lilja and Vinthagen, 2014) a model from medieval times which nevertheless functioned by allowing power to circulate within a network and thus be productive (Cohen, 2018). However, the analysis reveals there is no network since relational links are broken. The power remains concentrated on the school or setting and its community is neglected. Students and teachers are excluded, denied a voice, and their agency is undermined. The absence of students indicates their voice is not conceived of as important.

Indeed, with so few human Participants this analysis presages what the reality of its social structure might be. Rahal and Vadeboncoeur (2013) claim such power imbalances have repercussions for experiences at human level.
On evaluating this method, CDA through transitivity has been an insightful perspective for identifying how power circulates in the site. Unfortunately, the complexity of SFG renders errors due to researcher inexperience possible. This could damage the reliability of the analysis (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 23). At the same time, if the errors had been numerous the coherent patterns might not have been found. Furthermore, the fact that SFG is a transparent and verifiable system the examples can be cross-checked. This adds validity to compensate for unreliability. An example of the analysis is in appendix 12.

To be ethically fair, it could be argued the school is not responsible for the content. Further evidence of a more subjective nature is needed before concern about the social implications is justified. This will be provided by the data from the survey method.

- **Surveys**

Surveys have the advantage of ethical inclusivity which also serves the methodology that is looking for wide-ranging results. Logically as well as ethically a study about student voice should hear from students: they are the ‘expert witnesses’ (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004, cited in Bahou, 2011) of their own experiences. They also provide ‘meaningful results’ (The Open University, 2019f). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) suggest they are too often dismissed as a scientist’s tool despite their aptness for descriptive purposes. They will be used in this study to ‘capture a snapshot’ (Elhaggagi and Rix, 2021b) of how a sample of students and teacher feel about student voice practice at the level of the classroom.

A simple survey instrument that respected both the students’ age and time constraints was adapted for the year 4 focus class. It comprised six statements, to be rated by the students on a scale of options that used faces instead of words. To add descriptive power and the clarity that Ashton (2016) recommends, a space was provided alongside each statement for any additional comment. A comparative dimension to this method was added by giving the same survey to a sample of teachers. The research process was explained to the teachers during the preliminary meeting and the surveys were done following their return of the consent forms. Copies of the surveys are in appendix 13 and 14.
The data collection process was more cautious with the students. The class was given the student voice survey at the end of the classroom council project. Following reflections prompted by the grid (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, point 17) its purpose was explained in advance as well as its voluntary nature (point 15). To encourage meaningful responses, it was conducted as a class activity with the statements read aloud and the students given the opportunity to ask any questions. The results from both samples were first studied separately and then compared to explore the discourse using the same approach of identifying patterns and differences (Kehily, 2018) as for the CDA. The findings are based on 19 student surveys and 6 teacher surveys. The resulting numerical data is presented graphically below in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, and evidence from the textual data appears in the analysis.

Figure 3.1
Source: Student Voice Survey given to students (11 June 2021)
Initial comparisons show a varied distribution of results. Focusing primarily on the students, the majority supported classroom council, were generally aware of their rights and had a positive experience of speaking. A comment indicated an interest in greater agency: ‘I can do stuff from time to time’ (Student A, Survey, 11 June 2021). Here was evidence of the self-belief that is a benefit noted in the literature. Another comment revealed an awareness that the classroom councils expanded the opportunities for talk that were not just about learning: ‘We can talk about what goes on at school’ (Student B, Survey, 11 June 2021). However, the pattern of expanding possibilities breaks when the focus moves to interacting with students’ voice. The chart shows they do not feel listened to, at least some of the time, which is borne out by this comment ‘When I say something, no-one listens’ (Student D, Survey, 11 June 2021). As Cook-Sather (2006) observed, without listening, student voice is not meaningful and the chart shows the students are aware of a cultural environment that in practice does respect what they have to say.

From the teachers’ perspective, some patterns are the same. There are shared beliefs in rights and particularly to have an opinion. However, views of interacting with student voice are different. From the teachers’ perspectives, the students are listened to, and perhaps this refers to in the classroom. Yet, the majority are in agreement with the students that they have no voice and their opinions are ignored.
One remark indicates that the system is to blame for this: ‘We don’t have the right conditions for listening’ (Teacher A, Survey, May 2021). Indeed, there is a pattern of absent teacher agency in the data which recalls the findings of the leaflet. Instead of setting up more student councils, the setting is expected to provide the organisational impetus for practice: ‘There are no school-wide standards, no procedures for student voice’ (Teacher B, Survey, May 2021). Although this comment suggests it is the cultural norm: ‘Voice is minimal in the French system’ (Teacher C, Survey, May 2021). The data is ambiguous. It is unclear if the lack of voice procedures is problematic.

The power issue in this data seems to be its absence rather than its presence. The students feel unlistened to, their opinions unattended to and ultimately voiceless. However, despite these experiences, they see themselves as active agents, keen to talk, participate in councils and assert their rights. The classroom council project appears to have demonstrated the empowering benefits of voice work such as increased confidence and new capabilities being realised. Yet the literature also highlighted how student agency was inter-related with that of the teachers. In this case student voice aspirations might not be realised. Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015) define agency as “something that people do” (p. 3) and the teachers outside of the classroom seem inactive. The dominant discourse is to lay blame on the system or school, which as suggested by the leaflet might not be supportive.

When evaluating this data there are clearly quality issues with the samples. Despite efforts to shore up reliability, the honesty of self-reporting methods is always in doubt (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977, cited in Sturgis and Luff, 2020). The findings are not that decisive, partly since the added comments that were supposed to add clarity were ambiguous. There are also validity issues. The unequal numbers of the two sample groups challenges the validity of making comparisons. Furthermore, it is possible that the teacher sample was biased it was drawn from volunteers as explained in chapter 3 who are likely to consider student voice practice as a problem at the school. Bias can clearly distort a small-scale study.

However, the real concern prompted by the data is ethical (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 13). Due to the classroom project, the students have been encouraged to believe in the possibilities of student voice practice: that they have rights and a voice and a mechanism for its expression in the classroom council. Yet reflexivity points to the possibility that these expectations might not be met by other teachers in the school. Their lack of interest in
classroom councils might be evidence of this. Just as power had generated agency, it could produce a feeling of powerlessness and cynicism in the students if their voice is ignored.

To understand the ‘orientation, attitudes and beliefs’ (The Open University, 2020c) of both students and teachers about all three dimensions of student voice, interviews were held.

- **Interviews**

Interviews were conducted to provide insights into all three research questions but inform particularly the third regarding the impact of experiences. Roulston (2010) offers a typology of interviews and a ‘do interview talk’ (p. 209) type using normal conversational skills was chosen. Although informal, these interviews are not ‘social encounters’ (Marvasti and Freie, 2017), and it would be unethical to treat them as such.

The form was unstructured and ‘informant-led’ (Clark, 2011). To solve ambiguity issues that affected the previous method (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 23), the adult participants were approached a second time as part of a ‘back-and-forth process’ (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, quoted in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 643). This also served to fulfil the researcher’s obligation to be transparent with treatment of the data (grid, point 19). The sheet created for taking fieldnotes and analysing the interviews can be found in appendix 14.

The Open University (2020d) states the analysis of unstructured interviews is complex. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) admit the process can be ‘messy’ (p. 644), and part of the challenge was deciding how to bring together, order, and structure the data. The chosen procedure was inspired by Wellington’s (2015, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) suggested steps. This comprises separating the data into units of meaning, then merging units according to the themes that emerge. As with the other methods, the search was for patterns and differences across the perspectives in a dynamic process of comparison. The most salient themes were brought together and presented below under structuring categories that mirrored the research questions. This evidence will be summarised using diagrams and tables and discussed for the power issues it reveals.
Conceptions of Student Voice

Each participant offered their own interpretation of student voice (the year 4 students agreed on their answers together). They are presented in the following diagram, Figure 5.

![Figure 5](image)

*Source: Student voice interviews (May 2021)*

What is striking is the cultural divisiveness of the topic and how it neatly exposes differing discourses related to student voice. For the French teachers the dominant discourse is about systems and thinking. For example, the year 5 teacher’s linked her interpretation to Vygotsky (1978, cited in James, 2006) and the theory that ‘language frames our capacity to think’ (p. 10). The Anglo-American literature had expanded on this and emphasised the importance of language to build social relationships. However, the social dimension was considered less important by the teacher who thought the playground fulfilled that role.

The pattern of laws and rules was found in the discourse of the year 2 teacher for whom student voice was related to cognitive development that followed the stages developed by Piaget (1936, cited in Alexander, 2008). This theory of childhood has been described by Montgomery and Tatlow-Golden (2018) as promoting universal laws which leave no room for
difference. For the year 6 teacher, student voice was that of an exemplary citizen, and for the year 5 and 6 students, voice was related to its management. In line with Thomson and Gunter’s (2006) findings, they were supportive of the institution and evoked the rules as important. Here was evidence of a social control discourse that reinforced Foucault’s (1995, cited in Cohen, 2018) theory of disciplinary power. As seen earlier, this power is present everywhere and is detected here in the participants’ narratives as rules and norms.

Only the year 4 teacher who had done the council project broke the cultural pattern and interpreted student voice as allowing individuals to speak their mind. This places the students in a more agentic position and the feeling of agency was echoed by the two English-speaking students from her class who believed in student voice as a superpower. As regards the Anglo-American teachers, instead of talking about society, their discourse was about community and participation. This neatly linked back to practices familiar in the literature (for example Rudduck, 2007) and also evoked a different, less legally binding power dynamic.

- **Student Voice in Practice**

The evidence of practice discussed during the interviews has been summarised in the table below. It should be noted that the students and teachers from years 5 and 6 are not from the same class.

### Table of Experiences of Student Voice Practices from Perspective of Students and Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Year 2 Teacher</th>
<th>Year 4 Teacher</th>
<th>Year 5 Teacher</th>
<th>Year 6 Teacher</th>
<th>English Teacher</th>
<th>English Teacher</th>
<th>2x Year 4 Teacher</th>
<th>Year 5 Student</th>
<th>Year 6 Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Council</td>
<td>Classroom Council</td>
<td>No Classroom Council previously done as younger children judged incapable</td>
<td>Regular Classroom Council</td>
<td>No Classroom Council</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Classroom Council Project</td>
<td>Classroom Council, Previously a representative</td>
<td>No Classroom Council, Previously a representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Practice</td>
<td>Release student speech (libérer la parole)</td>
<td>Release student speech (libérer la parole)</td>
<td>Philosophy debates, Stories from literature</td>
<td>Ideas box, The representatives must be exemplary and follow the rules</td>
<td>Pair work</td>
<td>Project work</td>
<td>Eating in silence in the canteen</td>
<td>Having lunch with the headteacher instead of a meeting</td>
<td>Having to enforce the rules of discipline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29
Figure 5 shows the experiences that the participants spontaneously shared during interview. Although the examples are few, they are revealing. There seems again to be a cultural divide with the Anglo-American understanding of voice being for active learning practices and the French cultural approach to voice for more controlled learning. For example, French teachers are expected to release student voice (libérer la parole). This entails students as young as six acquiring public-speaking skills through teacher guidance. The year 5 teacher was especially enthusiastic about the philosophy debates for this purpose. She was also passionate about finding opportunities for students to express themselves freely. This teacher referred to herself as a ‘weirdo’ and declared feeling oppressed by the common culture of silent classrooms: ‘They think I’ve failed as I don’t have total silence’ (Year 5 Teacher, Interview, 15 June 2021).

There was more evidence of stabilising disciplinary power and incidents of power being abused. For instance, the year 6 teacher commented that the council representatives had to uphold the rules of school or risk forfeiting their right to a voice. These high expectations will favour the students of high capacity as the literature observed (Noyes, 2005). Other examples demonstrate treatment of class representatives that recall the lower degrees of participation of Hart’s (1992) typology. The year 5 student had had a council meeting during a meal and the year 6 student had been asked to enforce the rules and reprimand the class. This last is a practice expressly denounced in the literature (Cook-Sather, 2006). None of these experiences took place with teachers that are still at the school.

The Impact of Power on Student Voice Experience

Given that the student voice work recounted by the students was disappointing, their impact was predictably negative. The role of council representative was understood to be tokenistic: ‘It’s the teachers who decide anyway’ (Student A, Interview, 18 June 2021). Tellingly, only those who had done the council project but had no experience of being a representative showed enthusiasm. However, the guided approach to student voice being ‘released’ was
recognised as fulfilling practice by the year 2 teacher who commented that students’ voices relaxed after speaking.

Contrastingly, the English teachers who encouraged student voice in their practices had a different experience of its impact. Their classrooms were noisy which contrasted uncomfortably with the surrounding silence, and caused them to doubt their capacities. Both admitted that they struggled with behaviour management and identified this as a lack of respect from the students: ‘they treat the class like a joke’ (English Teacher 1, Interview, 18 June 2021). These teachers, who were both experienced, clearly forsook credibility by not adopting the customary approach. Kehily and Montgomery (2018) explain that culture guides us to understand the world, so it can be expected that breaking with an accepted practice that made sense has a destabilising effect on the students. Despite the unsatisfactory result the English teachers persist with their communicative methods and active learning approach since this is in keeping with their values and knowledge.

Foucault’s (1995, cited in Cohen, 2018) disciplinary power is notably pervasive in the school and its circulation is helped by both students and teachers. This has a repressive impact on student voice when viewed from a student agency perspective. However, the students instead acquire different skills, for example formal public speaking which is of importance in French culture, and it enables the school to function and allows the teachers to teach. The challenging experience of the English teachers demonstrates how effectively the system works and how problematic it can be to challenge norms established through disciplinary power.

When evaluating this method there are obvious concerns about the large number of interviews that were brief due to time constraints and perhaps of dubious quality due to researcher inexperience (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 6). Roulston (2010) points out that the centrality of the researcher in this method makes it particularly vulnerable to poor data collection. Fortunately, strategies such as member-checking (Mooney and O’Connor Duffy, 2014; Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid 23) not only serve an ethical purpose to verify that subjectivity has not led to misinterpretation, they also correct errors of incompetence and help reliability. The least reliable evidence came from the two students who were interviewed together. When one offered an opinion the other agreed which plainly indicated they influenced each other.
The key quality issue with interview data is the lack of transparency of the data collection, and process. Following Hammersley’s (2008) advice to use a researcher’s judgement, quotes have been selected to support the claims that appear ‘reasonable’ (Hammersley, 2008, p. 8). If the claims are coherent with the findings from the other methods then that judgement can be seen as coherent.

The biggest threat to this data is bias. The insider researcher is herself an English teacher at the school and has experiences similar to those of her peers. Given (2008) cautions that a researcher’s a priori critical stance can lead to poor research. Reflexivity pointed to another reason to include a range of perspectives from French teachers. The research aim was to uncover the reality of the student voice experience, not confirmation bias.

Chapter 5 will draw together the findings and summarise the power issues that have emerged from the analysis of student voice.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This final chapter will consider the reality of student voice in the school and how the type of power identified affects its conception, practice and impact. The implications and how they can be construed constructively as required by ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018, item 62; Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid point 12) will be discussed. Finally, a proposal for developing this research will close the dissertation.

• Sovereign Power

The critical analysis exposed a positioning of the school that recalled Foucault’s (1990, cited in Lilja and Vinthagen, 2014) theory of sovereign power. His rationale was that top-down power functioned due to a social contract with a community such as a school or a classroom (Cohen, 2018). However, the community is manifestly absent in the analysis of the leaflet. Furthermore, as seen in the literature review, for power to be productive it should be circulating through the community which one suspects is not the case in view of the relational
dysfunction detected by the analysis. These findings are concerning. Wodak (2001) and van Dijk (2001) warn that power dominance becomes stabilised and accepted as a received reality when reproduced at institutional level of which this leaflet is an example.

As observed in chapter 4, the headteacher and the school committee were perhaps not ultimately responsible for the leaflet. It would be advisable that they take a more active role in its replacement. A constructive impact of these findings would be to start a discussion about a more meaningful approach and offer directions about how to centre the focus on students and teachers and include their voices (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid points 10, 11). In addition, and following advice from Taylor and Robinson (2009), the findings could also be a tool for discussions with the head teacher about the power relations currently lacking at the school, and how this might inhibit productivity in the setting. This might need to be handled sensitively (grid point 1) but is ethically important to prevent power inequalities from being embedded in the culture as ‘the way we do things around here’ (Deal, T.E., and Kennedy, A., 1983, quoted in Stoll, 1998, p. 9).

- **Disciplinary Power**

The French approach to teaching has been confirmed as being surprisingly distinct from Anglo-American understandings of effective pedagogy. For French society, Alexander (2008) identified that the collective was valued above the individual and this is reflected in its educational system and how learning and teaching is practised. Control matters, universalities such as rights and national values are the norm, and the ideal is held up to be pursued. However, it can be argued that this French ‘right way’ with a focus on grammatical precision by the year 2 teacher, the public speaking with the year 4 teacher, and the philosophy debates with the year 5 teacher, is resulting in a quality education.

The investigation described the education system of the school as normalised by disciplinary power (Foucault, 1990, cited in Cohen, 2018). This circulates between colleagues, marginalising the ‘abnormal’, or non-conformists such as the year 5 teacher. It also circulates between the students for whom the cultural discourse, as Kehily and Montgomery (2018) explains, is how they have been taught to see the world. They have learnt to repress their voice and as agents of disciplinary power they dutifully raise their hands and obey the rules.
When a different pedagogical model is introduced such as pair or group work, it is the teachers who are breaking the rules by, not the students. Indeed, the students can be viewed as resisting what is, in effect, another form of power, that of the communicative approach which aims to oblige participation.

Understanding how disciplinary power impacts the students could benefit the English teachers for whom the lessons are such a challenge. This theory will be relayed to them with a view to the findings being used as ‘a theoretical tool’ (Taylor and Robinson, 2009, p. 164) for reflecting on their practice in the setting.

- **Negotiating power**

  As seen in the literature review, if power is circulating, it is in flux, and can thus be negotiated (Balan, 2010). Lilja and Vinthagen (2014) assert that change can occur through resistance and following Foucault suggest ‘reverse’ discourse (p. 115) as an example of productive resistance. They explain that this appropriates the dominant discourse for its own ends, and referring this back to the school, classroom councils could be a focus of resistance. They are an accepted mechanism which is ritualistic and formal, and so part of the dominant discourse; they are also effective vehicles for student voice and examples of innovative practice. As stated in chapter 2, classroom councils appear little in the literature. Witnessing the growing agency and enthusiasm of the focus class as they learned about and practised holding councils has convinced this researcher that her ultimate ethical responsibility is to use the findings to encourage propagation of their use in the school. Negotiating with the disciplinary power would use the results of the student survey as evidence to enable the inclusion of classroom councils in the school development plan. This would detail their procedure to discourage power abuse and fix them structurally into the system as the teachers desired.

- **Future Research**

  This research has been an opportunity to learn about a particular setting and explicate the absence of student voice that was its inspiration. It has offered a theory for the functioning of the school, and as a real-life setting has generated ‘exemplary knowledge’ (Thomas, 2010,
cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 390) that could inform teaching decisions and contribute to improvements. It has also highlighted classroom councils as innovative practice. However the data from the survey is limited. To develop this research a new survey could probe how students themselves want to benefit from having a voice. It is noticeable that the concept is discussed between adults and little input is from children. In addition, convincing the headteacher to allow it to be conducted school-wide would broaden the evidence base and assist validity (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, grid 20).

As seen in chapter 3, case studies are contextual and as such are not generalisable. However, examples from practice can be, and French-style classroom councils in Anglo-American contexts could be a practice worthy of further investigation.

Postscript: Narrative Critical Reflection

My learning journey started seven years when I began a teaching job without being a teacher and a Masters in Education without being a researcher. Thanks to the knowledge and experience I have accumulated over these years I can now act like a teacher and I think like a researcher.

Thinking like a researcher means thinking in a way I had not done before. It requires evaluating the world critically whether it be theory from articles, the assumptions others make or one’s own assumptions. Indeed, I have learnt that questioning oneself is where researcher learning really starts. As I mentioned in the reflection grid point 4, I repeatedly refer to Unit 12.3 of EE831 (2019e) in my TMAs since I find it is a creative starting point for an investigation. As for critiquing articles, my analytical skills have improved from struggling to deconstruct one article in the first year to handling over 60 articles for this EMA’s literary review. However, my ability to relate theory to practice in writing texts still needs work as noted in reflection point 2.

Of benefit to myself are the high standards which I have learnt are key to research: claims need to be made clearly, considered ethically for implications, supported robustly, expressed succinctly, and with an awareness of how these sit with the claims of others. This requires
knowledge as well as practice. As newcomers we have no field and easily take the wrong path. For example, as mentioned on page 15, the EMA’s methodology was to be narrative. As I explain, my lack of experience posed a problem and furthermore the methodology needs of the case were pointing away from narrative as a more experienced researcher might have already seen.

Being able to make a positive contribution, further understanding, even in a small way, is part of the ethical role of a researcher that makes the field meaningful. The importance of ethics has been a key transformation (reflection grid point 3). It can also be a lonely role since despite the forums, no other person has the same dilemmas. In the case of this EMA, the original study was cancelled as explained on page 4. However, determined to use the opportunity to benefit the community and not simply withdraw, the focus of the research changed to focus on what had caused the study to fail. Power and its issues became the lens through which student voice was examined.

Many positive experiences gained from this masters course contributed to this EMA. E854 supplied the idea of CDA, and SFG as an insightful tool. Its topic of student voice was discovered in EE831 and the study was informed by the different theories of education and pedagogic approach that I am now conversant with. Then, preparing for and finishing the dissertation module of E822 is the greatest academic achievement I have made, irrespective of what the result will be. On a personal note, I was told at university that my education had failed me; as with the cancellation of the study it has been a pleasure to defy assumptions and transform a failure into a completion.
References


The Open University(2020d) ‘Unit 7.2 Collecting data by interviews’, E822: Masters disciplinary dissertation: education, childhood and youth. Available at: https://learn2.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=1705876&section=2.3


Appendix 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Effect on my dissertation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1) Academic Target**  
*for TMA: to improve skills in ability to effectively apply module ideas and frameworks to professional practice and settings* | For TMA 01 of this module I was given feedback that assessed I had ‘adequate understanding of how research and enquiry create and interpret knowledge’. This observation accompanied by a C bare pass gave me clear directions on where I needed to improve and the determination to do so. | This was the impetus I needed to focus on the link between the theory that I was learning and the reality of practice that I wanted to research. As I think ideas through by writing I took OU advice and started a research journal. This helped to prompt reflections and my thoughts to evolve. It was with great satisfaction that I had feedback from TMA 02 that stated the understanding had now become ‘thorough’. |
| **2) EMA development:**  
*considering how to develop my project in order to bound the focus of my dissertation* | In the comments section from my tutor of TMA 02 it was clear that my focus area was too broad. An aspect of student voice had to be settled on and several ideas were offered for reflection: what is a true student voice; what is the reality of voice; what is the power of voice | I am grateful to my tutor for steering me away from too broad a topic which would have been unmanageable due to a lack of focus. Again it was reflecting on the theories I was learning about and the issues that were inhibiting student voice in the school that led to the EMA being meaningful. The suggestion of ‘power’ struck a chord and after researching Foucault and his key ideas I knew I had a focus. The realisation that assumptions about power were just that, assumptions, was revelatory. |
| **3) Personal development:**  
*growing awareness of ethical implications* | Participating in a discussion on a Tutor Group Forum on ‘Planning ethical research’ brought awareness of the complexity of ethics once one starts to think of participants’ interests and not just those of the research, and the researcher | One of the long-lasting effects left by the masters will be a reflex to consider the implications of one’s actions. The Ethical grid (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009), which is referenced heavily in the research design chapter number 3 of the EMA, was an invaluable guide for reflexivity. It might have helped me to be more cautious about running a classroom council project in a school that held few of these events. Learning to think ethically has developed me personally. |
| **4) Critical Analysis Evaluation: the emerging researcher** | Working on evaluating conclusions from module EE831 module EE831 | Maintaining a critical disposition and ‘Questioning everything’ (Unit 12.3, EE831, 2019) was a key aspect to my argument in the EMA and I think I have used it in every TMA for the past two years. For me it sums up the humility combined with the curiosity one should have to conduct research. The only frustration is, as commented a contributor in a TGF activity, there is no final answer. |
Appendix 2

Statement of participation
Antoinette Wyllie
has passed the free course including all mandatory tests for:

Becoming an ethical researcher
This free course explored the ethics of planning, carrying out and reporting research which involves human participants.

Issue date: 4 January 2021
### Appendix 3a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Question to consider</th>
<th>Your thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External/ ecological</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>What are the values, norms and roles in the environment in which I am working and are they likely to be challenged by this research?</td>
<td>• It should always be borne in mind that different values and norms stem culturally from our worldview. All worldviews have their advantages and disadvantages so avoiding the assumption that what is different is inferior is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>What is the relationship between the group/individual I am working with and the institution as a whole? How does it affect the participant(s)?</td>
<td>• Interviews: No-one should be identifiable. I should be mindful of the trust that has been placed in me to not reveal who any source may be in the final research report. • Particular delicacy is needed to relay the comments of colleagues that could be seen as critical of others or the institution. Doing so could be problematic for the social relations of that participant • Consideration that participants have other priorities than this study should prevent me from pressuring anyone to collaborate. This is particularly the case with teachers with whom the researcher organised a two-month project on rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>How might my work be viewed/interpreted by others in the institution? How will the language I use be interpreted?</td>
<td>• The language should always be respectful and not create barriers to understanding by being overly academic. • Academic language can be exclusive and be used to create a power imbalance. • Observations of supposed shortcomings should always be presented respectfully with a view to making recommendations rather than a catalogue of damning evidence; for example the CDA results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes of practice</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Have I worked within the British Educational Research Association guidelines? Are there other relevant codes which might also be applicable? Am I aware of my rights and responsibilities through to publication?</td>
<td>• Mindful research must comply with codes of practice • The BERA code was applied • Rights and responsibilities as a researcher were clear following becoming an ethical researcher course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency/use of resources</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>How have I made efficient use of the resources available to me, including people’s time?</td>
<td>• Lack of experience has impacted the efficiency with which the research was carried out. • The researcher’s time was the least efficiently managed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantity of evidence on which conclusions are based

| 7 | Have I got enough evidence to back up my conclusions and recommendations? | • Multiplicity of evidence sources resulted in too much evidence. • Disparately sourced evidence was a challenge to integrate |  |

### The law

| 8 | What legal requirements relating to working with children do I need to comply with? Am I aware of my data protection responsibilities? | • Price permission has been acquired for the research from the school. Since I was an employee, proof of no criminal record had already been given. • All data were stored on a password protected computer at the home of the researcher. • Permission for Surveys: Informed consent and information sheets were given and collected from both under 18s and adult participants. All participants agreed to take part. Only one child decided not to complete the survey. • Permission for Interviews: Informed consent and information sheets were given and collected from both under 18s and adult participants. All participants agreed to take part. |  |

### Risk

| 9 | Are there any risks to anyone as a result of this research? | • This is worth bearing in mind always, but no risks have been noted. |  |

### Consequential/ utilitarian

**Benefits for individuals**

| 10 | What are the benefits of my doing this research to the participants? Would an alternative methodology bring greater individual benefits? | • The CDA analysis results will be offered as advice to the headteacher for the next leaflet • More students could have been interviewed, not merely the English-speaking |  |

**Benefits for particular groups/ organisations**

| 11 | What are the benefits of my doing this research to the school/ department? Could there be increased in any way? How will I ensure that they know about my findings? Is my work relevant to the school development plan? | • The project is specifically linked to the school development plan. • The benefit of the CDA analysis is a list of recommendations about how to communicate in preparation of the next school leaflet. • Surveys: The benefit was to give a class the opportunity to participate collectively and for all the children to express themselves and not just the habitual class leaders. • Surveys was part of classroom council project. Display in School entrance |  |

**Most benefits for society**

| 12 | Is this a worthwhile area to research? Am I contributing to the ‘greater good’? Is it high quality and open to scrutiny? | • The literature review has pointed to fundamental issues of student voice such as agency and respect that would classify its investigation as worthwhile. • Examples of analysis of CDA are included in the report, diagrams summarise full extent of survey and interview data |  |

### Avoidance of harm

| 13 | Are there any sensitive issues likely to be discussed or aspects of the study likely to cause discomfort or stress? | • The classroom council project might have raised unrealistic expectations of student voice possibilities in the school. The students might be disappointed. |  |
## Appendix 3b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits for the researcher</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>Am I going to be able to get enough data to write a good thesis or paper? Am I aware of my publication rights? What might I learn from this project? Will it help in my long-term life goals?</th>
<th>• Study should help the researcher to understand her own setting more honestly which should help reflection on practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Deontological               | 15 | Avoidance of wrong – honesty and candour: Have I been open and honest in advance with everyone who might be affected by this research? Are they aware that they can withdraw, in full or in part, if they wish? | • The researcher has not knowingly dishonest in explaining the research and its effects.  
|                             |    | Fairness: Have I treated all participants fairly? Am I using incentives fairly? Will I acknowledge everyone involved fairly? Can I treat all participants equally? | • No incentives were used apart from the researcher giving their personal time to help organise the rights project. |
|                             | 17 | Reciprocity: Have I explained all the implications and expectations to the participants? Have I negotiated mutually beneficial arrangements? Have I made myself available when those involved might wish me to be? Are the participants clear about roles, including my own, as they relate to expectations? | • Survey and interviews: In exchange for this data the researcher organised a two-month student voice project with a focus class to promote classroom councils in the school. This included an introduction to the UNCRC [200], deliberation on how to run a classroom council, training in different roles, holding debates about improvement, observations of other councils and reporting back to the class. The project was made into an end of year display shown in the entrance to the school.  
|                             |    | • Staff were aware of the research since a presentation was made to encourage colleagues to participate. |
|                             | 18 | Tell the truth: If there is any need for covert research, how will I deal with this? What will I do if I find out something that the participants/school/department do not like? How will I report unpopular findings? | • Rather than report unpopular findings, criticisms should be expressed constructively |
|                             | 19 | Keep promises: Have I clarified access to the raw data and how I will share findings including at publication? How will I ensure confidentiality? | • The full analysis of the CDAs is available to the school.  
| | | Do the most positive good | 20 | Is there any other way I could carry out this research that would bring more benefits to those involved? | • A survey of the whole school would have been more enlightening but was expressly forbidden by the headteacher. |
| Relational/Individual       | 21 | Genuine collaboration/trust established: Who are the key people involved? How can I build a constructive relationship with them? | • As an insider researcher I have relationships with most of the students and teachers in the school.  
| | | Avoid imposition/respect autonomy | 22 | Am I making unreasonable or sensitive demands on any individuals? Do they appreciate that participation is voluntary? | • Adult participants volunteered confidentially to avoid any social aggravation following a presentation  
| | | Confirmation of findings | 23 | What steps will I take in my methodology to ensure the validity and reliability of my findings? Can I involve participants in validation? Will I report in an accessible way to those involved? | • CDIA Reliability: There might have been errors in the analysis but these were not important enough to prevent overwhelming patterns from being found and undermine reliability  
| | | | | • CDIA Validity: Based on SFG and with examples that are fully available to be verified ensures validity.  
| | | | | • Survey Reliability: Unverifiable evidence. Possible that the same survey would be completed differently by the same person at a different time  
| | | | | • Survey validity: limited data  
| | | | | • Interviews Reliability: adult interviews were member-checked  
| | | | | • Interviews Validity: possible threat to validity due to researcher inexperience |
| Respect persons equally    | 24 | How will I demonstrate my respect for all participants? Have I treated pupils in the same way as teachers? | • Care was taken to treat the children with the same courtesy and respect as the adults.  
| | | | | • Due to power imbalance the researcher never directly approached potential child participants but requested their help indirectly to avoid pressurising them |
Appendix 4

E822 Ethical Appraisal Form
Masters: Education, Childhood and Youth

NB: it should be noted that The Open University is unable to offer liability insurance to cover any negative consequences students might encounter when undertaking ‘in-person’ data collection. It is therefore very important that you follow appropriate research protocols not least in seeking Gatekeepers’ permissions to undertake any data collection within your setting and adhere to ethical principles for the safety of yourself and your participants.

Because ethical appraisal should precede data collection, this form should be included with TMA02 for those developing a Small-Scale Investigation and included as part of the submission for the EMA for those submitting an Extended Literature Review and Research Proposal.

Fill in section 1 of this document with your personal details and brief information about your research.
For section 2, please assess your research using the following questions and click yes or no as appropriate. If there is any possibility of significant risk please tick yes. Even if your list contains all “no” you should still return your completed checklist so your tutor/supervisor can assess the proposed research.

### Section 1: Project details

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Student name</td>
<td>Antoinette Wyllie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Project title</td>
<td>A case study describing a school council initiative in an international French primary school: the transformative power of student voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Supervisor/tutor</td>
<td>Dr Ellesar Elhaggagi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>Masters in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Masters in Childhood and Youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
f. MA pathway (where applicable)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 2: Ethics Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Does your proposed research need initial clearance from a ‘gatekeeper’ (e.g. Local Authority, head teacher, college head, nursery/playgroup manager)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Have you checked whether the organisation requires you to undertake a ‘police check’ or appropriate level of ‘disclosure’ before carrying out your research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Have you indicated how informed consent will be obtained from your participants (including children less than 16 years old, school pupils and immediate family members)? Your consent letters/forms must inform participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Will your proposed research design mean that it will be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)? If so have you specified appropriate debriefing procedures?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 You must agree to comply with any ethical codes of practice or legal requirements that maybe in place within the organisation or country (e.g. educational institution, social care setting or other workplace) in which your research will take place. If required an appropriate level of disclosure (‘police check’) can obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (England and Wales), Disclosure Scotland, AccessNI (Northern Ireland), Criminal Records Office (Republic of Ireland), etc.

4 This should normally involve the use of an information sheet about the research and what participation will involve, and a signed consent form. You must allow sufficient time for potential participants to consider their decision between the giving of the information sheet and the gaining of consent. No research should be conducted without the opt-in informed consent of participants or their caregivers. In the case of children (individuals under 16 years of age) no research should be conducted without a specified means of gaining their informed consent (or, in the case of young children, their assent) and the consent of their parents, caregivers, or guardians. This is particularly important if your project involves participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children under 16 years, people with learning disabilities, or emotional problems, people with difficulty in understanding or communication, people with identified health problems). There is additional guidance on informed consent on the Masters: Education and Childhood and Youth website under Project Resources.

5 Where an essential element of the research design would be compromised by full disclosure to participants, the withholding of information should be specified in the project proposal and explicit procedures stated to obviate any potential harm arising from such withholding. Deception or covert collection of data should only take place where it has been agreed with a named responsible person in the organisation and it is essential to achieve the research results required, where the research objective has strong scientific merit and where there is an appropriate risk management and harm alleviation strategy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Does your proposed design involve repetitive observation of participants, (i.e. more than twice over a period of more than 2-3 weeks)? Is this necessary? If it is, have you made appropriate provision for participants to renew consent or withdraw from the study half-way through? 6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Are you proposing to collect video and/or audio data? If so have you indicated how you will protect participants’ anonymity and confidentiality and how you will store the data?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Does your proposal indicate how you will give your participants the opportunity to access the outcomes of your research (including audio/visual materials) after they have provided data?</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Have you built in time for a pilot study to make sure that any task materials you propose to use are age appropriate and that they are unlikely to cause offence to any of your participants?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Is your research likely to involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. adult/child relationships, peer relationships, discussions about personal teaching styles, ability levels of individual children and/or adults)? What safeguards have you put in place to protect participants’ confidentiality?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Does your proposed research raise any issues of personal safety for yourself or other persons involved in the project? Do you need to carry out a ‘risk analysis’ and/or discuss this with teachers, parents and other adults involved in the research?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS or the use of NHS data?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you answered ‘yes’ to questions 12, you will also have to submit an application to an appropriate National Research Ethics Service ethics committee (http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/).

6 Where participants are involved in longer-term data collection, the use of procedures for the renewal of consent at appropriate times should be considered.
Appendix 5

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education, Language and Sport

Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’

Student Voice Research Project

Survey Information Sheet for Post-18 Participants

Introduction

As part of a masters level qualification in Education with the Open University, I have an opportunity to design a small-scale investigation which will generate findings relevant to and of value to practice settings. This year’s module E822 is ‘Multi-disciplinary dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’, and I have proposed is to study student voice in the school with a focus on the classroom council.

What is the aim of this survey?

The aim of the survey is to gather information from a number of participants on this aspect of education, childhood and youth studies and is designed to contribute to knowledge and practice in my chosen area of specialism. I will use the information to answer the following research questions:

1. How is student voice conceptualised by students, teachers and the school organisation?

2. How is student voice experienced in practice by students and teachers?

3. What is the impact of the experiences described?

Who is conducting the research and who is it for?

The survey has been agreed with my tutor to be an important part of this project. I will be analysing the data collected and reporting my findings in the dissertation I submit to the University as my final assessment for my masters qualification.

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been chosen as your experiences and opinions would contribute to revealing information about the perceptions of and provision for student voice in the school.

If I take part in this research, what will be involved?

I invite you to complete a survey by questionnaire which is estimated to take no longer than 10-15 minutes. This is to be completed on paper [date] and I would appreciate the return of the questionnaire by [date]. This has been agreed with the organisational leadership [deleted]
for reasons of anonymity]. Please feel free to ask me any questions about the survey in advance of offering your consent to participate.

**Will what I write be kept confidential?**
Your participation will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). No personal information will be passed from me to anyone else. Your survey will be stored safely in our professional setting as agreed with the senior leader overseeing the safe conduct of this research. However, if you disclose anything during your survey which I consider means that you might be unsafe or have been involved in a criminal act, because this is a safeguarding concern, I will need to pass this immediately to the organizational Designated Safeguarding Officer. The anonymised records of the survey will be stored securely on password protected devices and the original notes and recording will then be destroyed. I will be submitting an analysis of the data collected from the surveys as part of my dissertation submitted as the end-of-module assessment. I can confirm that neither you as an individual nor the setting will be identifiable in any of these reports and presentations. Your contribution will be recognised by a pseudonym and you can suggest what name should be used. Any other real names referred to during the survey will be removed and renamed.

**What happens now?**
The study will take place over a period of 14 weeks from the 15 March to the 18 of June (with three weeks excluded for the holidays). After reading this information sheet, please review and complete the consent form for your participation. This is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw your consent at any point up to two weeks after the survey. As soon as you let me know you wish to withdraw, any data collected will be destroyed.

**What if I have other questions?**
If you have any other questions about the project, I or my tutor would be very happy to answer them. Please contact me on my school email, contact the head who is acting as gatekeeper, or my tutor who is supervising the study.

**Researcher :** Antoinette Wyllie  
**Gatekeeper: [deleted for reasons of anonymity]**  
**Supervising University Tutor: Ellesar Elhaggagi**

Thank you.

Antoinette Wyllie
Appendix 6

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education, Language and Sport

Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’

Student Voice Research Project

Survey Consent form for Post-18 participants

Please indicate YES or NO for each of the questions below and return the completed form by [date] to Antoinette Wyllie [school email] or leave in reception for my attention.

Have you read (or had read to you) the information about this survey?  YES  NO

Has someone explained this survey to you?  YES  NO

Do you understand what this survey is about?  YES  NO

Have you asked all the questions you want?  YES  NO

Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?  YES  NO

Do you understand it is OK to stop taking part at any time?  YES  NO

Are you happy with how your data will be stored?  YES  NO

Do you understand that your and any other real names as well as any identifiable information will be removed from what will be shared after the survey?  YES  NO

Are you happy to take part?  YES  NO

If any answers are ‘no’, you can ask more questions. But if you decide not to take part, please let me know and don’t complete the form.

If you do want to take part, please write your name, sign and add today’s date

Your name  ___________________________

Signature  ___________________________

Date  ___________________________

Please return this form by email or to school reception.

Thank you for your help.

Antoinette Wyllie
Appendix 7
Faculty of Wellbeing, Education, Language and Sport
Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’
Student Voice Research Project
Interview Information Sheet for Post-18 Participants

Introduction
As part of a masters level qualification in Education with the Open University, I have an opportunity to design a small-scale investigation which will generate findings relevant to and of value to practice settings. This year’s module E822 is ‘Multi-disciplinary dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’, and I have proposed is to study student voice in the school with a focus on the classroom council.

What is the aim of this interview?
The aim of the interview is to gain an individual’s perspective on this aspect of education, childhood and youth studies and is designed to contribute to knowledge and practice in my chosen area of specialism. The aim is to answer the following research questions:

4. How is student voice conceptualised by students, teachers and the school organisation?

5. How is student voice experienced in practice by students and teachers?

6. What is the impact of the experiences described?

Who is conducting the research and who is it for?
The interview has been agreed with my tutor to be an important part of this design to allow me to include the perspectives of a selected participant in addressing the research questions. I will be analysing the data collected and reporting my findings in the dissertation I submit to the University as my final assessment for my masters qualification.

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?
You have been chosen as your experiences and opinions would be highly valuable in helping to consider a topic which is considered to have value for your setting and others like it.

If I take part in this research, what will be involved?
The interview is intended to last no longer than 10-15 minutes and at a place which I will negotiate with you and others in the setting to be mutually convenient. I would like to ask your consent to make written notes during our discussion. Only I will have access to these. I do not need to share them with the University or in this practice setting. I will write up and anonymise the interview before sharing any part of this with my tutor or make it part of the final dissertation. Your contribution will be recognised by a pseudonym
and you will be asked if you would like to suggest what name should be used. Any other real names referred to during the interview will be removed and renamed.

What will we be talking about?
The focus of the interview will be to find out your perceptions of and the provision you make for student voice in the school.

Will what I say be kept confidential?
Your participation will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). No personal information will be passed from me to anyone else. Your consent form will be stored safely in our professional setting as agreed with the senior leader overseeing the safe conduct of this research. In the case of my notes of the interview, these will be kept confidential and typed up as soon as possible. However, if you disclose anything during your interview which I consider means that you might be unsafe or have been involved in a criminal act, because this is a safeguarding concern, I will need to pass this immediately to the organizational Designated Safeguarding Officer. The anonymised records of the interview will be stored securely on password protected devices and the original notes and recording will then be destroyed. I will be submitting an analysis of the data collected from the interviews as part of my dissertation submitted as the end-of-module assessment. I can confirm that neither you as an individual nor the setting will be identifiable in any of these reports and presentations.

What happens now?
The study will take place over a period of 14 weeks from the 15 March to the 18 of June. After reading this information sheet, please review and complete the consent form for your participation. This is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw your consent at any point up to two weeks after the interview. As soon as you let me know you wish to withdraw, any data collected will be destroyed.

What if I have other questions?
If you have any other questions about the project, I or my tutor would be very happy to answer them. Please contact me on my school email, contact the head who is acting as gatekeeper, or my tutor who is supervising the study.

Researcher: Antoinette Wyllie [email deleted for reasons of anonymity]
Gatekeeper: [name and email deleted for reasons of anonymity]
Supervising University Tutor: Ellesar Elhaggagi [email deleted for reasons of anonymity]

Thank you.

Antoinette Wyllie
Appendix 8
Faculty of Wellbeing, Education, Language and Sport

Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’

Student Voice Research Project
Interview Consent form for Post-18 participants

Please indicate YES or NO for each of the questions below and return the completed form by [date] to Antoinette Wyllie [school email] or leave in reception for my attention.

Have you read (or had read to you) the information about this interview? YES NO
Has someone explained this interview to you? YES NO
Do you understand what this interview is about? YES NO
Have you asked all the questions you want? YES NO
Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand? YES NO
Do you understand it is OK to stop taking part at any time? YES NO
Are you happy with how your data will be stored? YES NO
Do you understand that your and any other real names as well as any identifiable information will be removed from what will be shared after the interview? YES NO

Please note that a follow up, clarifying interview is likely.

Are you happy to take part? YES NO

If any answers are ‘no’, you can ask more questions. But if you don’t want to take part, please let me know and don’t sign your name.

If you do want to take part, please write your name, sign and add today’s date.

Your name ___________________________
Signature ___________________________ Date ____________________

Please return this form by email or to school reception.

Thank you for your help.

Antoinette Wyllie
Appendix 9
Faculty of Wellbeing, Education, Language and Sport
Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’
Student Voice Research Project
Survey Information Sheet for PRE-18 Participants and their guardians/parents/carers

Introduction.
I am currently studying on the Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’ at the Open University in the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education, Language and Sport. My studies are being supervised by a personal tutor and I am following research protocols recommended by the University which have been approved by the head teacher at the school. I am using a range of ways of collecting information to study student voice in the setting with a focus on the classroom council. Performing a survey is part of this small-scale investigation.

What is the aim of this survey?
The aim is to help me better understand the topic so I can share my findings with others and provide evidence for changing practice.

Who is conducting the research and who is it for?
The survey has been agreed with my tutor to be an important part of this project. I will be analysing the data collected and reporting my findings in the dissertation I submit to the University as my final assessment for my masters qualification.

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?
You have been chosen because the survey enables me to hear what students themselves have to say about student voice in the school.

If I take part in this research, what will be involved?
The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes and will take place in the classroom with myself and your form teacher. Permission has been given from [gatekeeper name deleted] for the survey. I will not share my notes with those at the University or others in this practice setting.

What will the survey be about?
In the survey there will be questions about what you think about the citizenship project that we have done in class and you will be invited to draw a picture of your experience of student voice in the school. I can share the questions with you in advance, if you would like to see them.
Will what I write be kept private?

Your survey will be stored safely in our professional setting as agreed with the senior leader overseeing the safe conduct of this research. However, if you disclose anything during the research which I consider means that you might be unsafe or have been involved in a criminal act, because this is a safeguarding concern, I will need to pass this immediately to the organizational Designated Safeguarding Officer. The anonymised records of the survey will be stored securely on password protected devices and the original notes and recording will then be destroyed. I will be submitting an analysis of the data collected from the surveys as part of my dissertation submitted as the end-of-module assessment.

What happens now?

The survey will take place during next week’s English lesson. After reading this information sheet with your parent/carer/guardian, please read and complete the consent form. This means that you and your parent/carer/guardian sign your and their names and the date to say you are all happy for me to perform the survey. Whether you agree or not is entirely up to you and your parent/carer/guardian, as the invitation is for you to take part voluntarily. You can change your mind until the day of the survey. Since they are anonymous, once completed, it will not be possible to extract your information from the survey.

What if I have other questions?

If you have any questions about the study, I or my tutor at the University would be very happy to answer them. Please contact me or contact my tutor using the information below.

Researcher: Antoinette Wyllie [email deleted for reasons of anonymity]

Gatekeeper: [name and email deleted for reasons of anonymity]

Supervising University Tutor: Ellesar Elhaggagi [email deleted for reasons of anonymity]

Thank you.

Antoinette Wyllie
Appendix 10

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education, Language and Sport

Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’

Student Voice Research Project

Survey Consent form for Pre-18 participants and guardian/parent/carer

Please indicate YES or NO (put a cross or circle the face) for each of the questions below and return the completed form by [date] to Antoinette Wyllie [school email] or leave in reception for my attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you read (or had read to you) the information about this survey?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has someone explained this survey to you?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand what this survey is about?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you asked all the questions you want?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand it is OK to stop taking part at any time?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you happy with how the information you give us will be stored?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand that your and any other real names as well as any identifiable information will be removed from what will be shared after the survey?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you happy to take part?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If any answers are ‘no’, feel free to ask for further information. However, if you don’t want to take part, please just let me know (as soon as practical) and don’t complete the form.

If you consent to participate, please write your name, today’s date, and the name of your guardian/parent/carer, who should add their signature. Consent can be withdrawn up until the day of the survey. Since this is anonymous, it will not be possible to extract your information afterwards.

Your name ________________________   Name ________________________
(Child)        (Guardian/Parent/Carer)
Date           ________________________   Signature ______________________
(Guardian/Parent/Carer)

Return this form by email or to school reception

Thank you for your help.

Antoinette Wyllie

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Appendix 11

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education, Language and Sport

Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’

Student Voice Research Project

Interview Information Sheet for Pre-18 Participants

What is the aim of this interview?
The aim of the interview is to hear what you have to say about student voice at the school.

Who is conducting the research and who is it for?
This interview is part of my studies on a masters-level course at The Open University in which I am carrying out a small-scale investigation. I am using a range of ways of collecting information to gather information to answer the questions:

7. How is student voice conceptualised by students, teachers and the school organisation?
8. How is student voice experienced in practice by students and teachers?
9. What is the impact of the experiences described?

This is aimed to help me better understand and develop the topic and to share my findings with others for whom the findings will be relevant to changing practice.

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?
You have been chosen because your views would be valuable in answering the question set for the study and I hoped you might be prepared to talk to me about your opinions and experiences.

If I take part in this research, what will be involved?
The interview should take no more than 15 minutes and I will make sure that I have checked with your teachers that when and where we talk is the most convenient for you and them. Our conversation will not be recorded but I will make notes about what you say. Permission has been given from the gatekeeper [name deleted] for me to invite you to this interview. I will not share my notes with those at the University or in this practice setting. In any part of the interview which will be shared with my tutor or form part of the final dissertation report you and anyone else you name during our discussion will be referred to by a false name (pseudonym) and you will be asked if you would like to suggest what name I use.

What will we be talking about?
In the interview I will ask you questions about what you think about the citizenship project that we have done in class as well as your experiences of student voice in your school life. I can share the questions with you in advance, if you would like to see them.

Will what I say be kept private?
Your participation will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). No personal information about you, such as contained in your consent forms, will be shared more widely. In the case of my notes of the interview, these will be kept private only to me and typed up as soon as possible.
However, if you let me know anything during your interview which I consider means that you might be unsafe or have been involved in a criminal act, because this is a safeguarding concern, I will need to pass this information immediately to the organisation’s Designated Safeguarding Officer. When I make anonymised records of the interview, as outlined above, these will be stored securely on password protected devices and the original notes will then be destroyed. I can confirm that neither you as an individual nor the setting will be identifiable in my submissions to the University or any presentations I make of my findings to interested audiences.

**What happens now?**

After reading this information sheet with your parent/carers/guardian, please read and complete the consent form. This means that you and your parent/carers/guardian sign your and their names and the date to say you are all happy for me to set up a time and place for the interview. Whether you agree or not is entirely up to you and your parent/carers/guardian, as the invitation is for you to take part voluntarily. You can change your mind later and withdraw from the study by letting me know and I will destroy the information (consent forms and interview files) I have created. This will be possible up until the time I am using your information as part of my assessment form the 1st of July 2021.

**What if I have other questions?**

*If you have any questions about the study, I or my tutor at the University would be very happy to answer them. Please contact me at [email] or contact my tutor [removed for reasons of anonymity].*

**Researcher**: Antoinette Wyllie [email deleted for reasons of anonymity]

**Gatekeeper**: [name and email deleted for reasons of anonymity]

**Supervising University Tutor**: Ellesar Elhaggagi [email deleted for reasons of anonymity]

Thank you.

Antoinette Wyllie
Appendix 12

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education, Language and Sport

Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’

Student Voice Research Project

Interview Consent form for Pre-18 participants and guardians/parents/carers

Please indicate YES or NO (put a cross or circle the face) for each of the questions below and return the completed form by [date] to Antoinette Wyllie [school email] or leave in reception for my attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you read (or had read to you) the information about this interview?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has someone explained this interview to you?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand what this interview is about?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you asked all the questions you want?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand it is OK to stop taking part at any time?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you happy with how the information you give us will be stored?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand that your and any other real names as well as any identifiable information will be removed from what will be shared after the interview?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you happy to take part?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If any answers are ‘no’, feel free to ask for further information. However, if you don’t want to take part, please just let me know (as soon as practical) and don’t complete the form.

If you consent to participate, please write your (child’s) name, today’s date, and the name of your guardian/parent/carer who should add their signature.

Your name: ______________________________________________________ Name: ______________________________________________________
(Child) (Guardian/Parent/Carer)

Date __________________________ Signature __________________________
(Guardian/Parent/Carer)

Please return this form by email or to school reception.

Thank you for your help.

Antoinette Wyllie
Appendix 14

My Voice, My Right  Classroom Council Project  Ma voix, mon droit  Enquête sur la voix de l’élève

Student Voice Survey

Read and tick the box under the face. Write here if you have something to say about this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At school ...</th>
<th>☑</th>
<th>☑</th>
<th>☑</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I have the right to say what I think.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 I am listened to when I speak.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 I can give my opinion on what goes on.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 my opinion is respected and taken into account.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 classroom councils are taken seriously.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 I have a voice in my school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My drawing of a classroom council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tick the most appropriate response about the students at the school</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Please write any additional comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students have the right to say what they think.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students are listened to when they speak.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students can give their opinion about what happens in school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Their opinion is respected and taken into account.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Students take part in classroom councils.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Students have a voice in this school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My thoughts on the Classroom Councils Project:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My Voice, My Right
Student Voice Interview

Interview Fieldnotes Sheet

Interview reference: ______

Perspective of: _______________ who holds classroom councils Yes....... No....... In school since: _______________

Date: _______________ Place: _______________ Start Time: _______________ Finish Time: _______________

Clarification Interview Yes ....... No....... 

Date: _______________ Place: _______________ Start Time: _______________ Finish Time: _______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fieldnotes 1</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Analysis Themes</th>
<th>Fieldnotes 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview Fieldnotes