Pupil Participation and Pupil Perspective: 'carving a new order of experience'

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ABSTRACT *School improvement, as Ruth Jonathan (1990, p. 568) has said, is not merely a matter of 'rapid response to changing market forces through a trivialised curriculum', but a question of dealing with the deep structures of school and the habits of thought and values they embody. To manage school improvement we need to look at schools from the pupils' perspective and that means tuning in to their experiences and views and creating a new order of experience for them as active participants.*

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores four related observations that stem from our work on pupil participation and perspective.

- In a climate that respects the market and the consumer it is strange that pupils in school have not been seen as consumers worth consulting. We need to understand more about why we haven't taken account of the views of pupils and why the situation is now beginning to change.
- In our efforts at 'school improvement' we need to tune in to what pupils can tell us about their experiences and what they think will make a difference to their commitment to learning and, in turn, to their progress and achievement. We should recognise, however, that there are difficulties in directly eliciting pupils' views of some aspects of schooling; for instance, their views of 'the curriculum'. Pupils are often ready to comment directly on 'bits and pieces' of the curriculum—content that does or does not engage them, for instance—but they have no basis for comparing the present with any earlier version of 'the curriculum' nor, usually, any systematic sense of curriculum possibilities. They may say that they would like more group work or more opportunities to use their own ideas, but for the most part pupils have little overall sense of how differently learning *might* be structured and handled and what different values alternative approaches might represent. However, there is a lot in what they say *incidentally* about particular lessons that we can recognise,

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and use, as a commentary on the curriculum and on the assumptions that underpin it.

- In our experience pupils do not have much to say about the curriculum as Young (1999, p. 463) defines it: 'the way knowledge is selected and organised into subjects and fields for educational purposes'. Rather, they talk about forms of teaching and learning that they find challenging or limiting and, importantly, about what we have called (Rudduck *et al.*, 1996) the *conditions of learning* in school; how regimes and relationships shape their sense of status as individual learners and as members of the community and, consequently, affect their sense of commitment to learning in school.
- We could do more to help pupils develop a language for talking about learning and about themselves as learners so that they feel that it is legitimate for them actively to contribute to discussions about schoolwork with teachers and with each other.

PUPIL PERSPECTIVE AND PUPIL PARTICIPATION

Children's Rights

In order to understand attitudes to pupil participation and pupil voice we have to look briefly at the progress of the children's rights movement. Children's rights have mainly, but not exclusively, been argued for by adults on behalf of pupils whereas 'pupil participation and perspective' suggests a stronger input by pupils themselves and a readiness among adults to hear and to take seriously what they have to say. We also need to see in what arenas—social and welfare and/or education—the debates have been pursued.

The children's rights movement has 'a rich and substantial heritage' (Franklin & Franklin, 1996, p. 96). Activity has been high profile at different times and for different reasons but because, Proteus-like, the movement has changed its concerns and its constituencies, its impact has not been cumulative. The movement has been most at risk from those who hold traditional views of the place of the child in school and in society.

The first formal Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1924 focused on support for children who lost families and homes in the 1914–1918 war; the next Declaration came 35 years later. The main concerns of such initiatives were conditions *outside* school but there have been some attempts to focus directly on young people's experiences *in school*. In the early 1970s there were two initiatives worth mentioning in this brief sketch, one taken by young people themselves. In autumn 1972 the outcome of a national conference for the National Union of School Students (NUSS, a group formed, for a short time only, within the NUS) was a policy statement which, according to Wagg (1996, p. 14) 'must rank as one of the most uncompromising and idealistic statements of liberation philosophy ever seen in British educational politics'. What is interesting, as we

suggested above, is that pupils themselves focus more on aspects of school organisation than they do on curriculum. The document called for:

> The speedy abolition of corporal punishment and the prefect system, and ... an increase of student responsibility and self discipline in schools.
>
> All forms of discipline to be under the control of a school committee and all school rules to be published.
>
> ... the abolition of compulsory uniform ... , students having the right to determine their own appearance at school.
>
> ... free movement in and out of the school grounds and buildings during break, lunch time and free periods.
>
> ... school students of all ages to have a 'Common Room' and to have facilities of relaxation similar to those enjoyed by teachers and sixth-formers. (in Wagg, 1996, pp. 14–15; there were 27 items in all)

It is interesting to see which proposals have been acted on and which still reflect the concerns of pupils in the 1990s.

Three years later Lawrence Stenhouse, director of the controversial Humanities Curriculum Project, drew up a statement of the 'demands' that pupils should be able to make of the school and the expectations that they could justifiably hold of it. The work was commissioned by the then Schools Council, but the Council refused to give the principles its imprimatur and it was published not by the Council but by the author some years later (Stenhouse, 1983). These are some of the items that Stenhouse thought would make a difference to young people's experience of school; they are similar in focus and spirit to those of the NUSS document:

> Pupils have a right to demand:
>
> - that the school shall treat them impartially and with respect as persons.
> - that the school's aims and purposes shall be communicated to them openly, and discussed with them as the need arises.
> - that the procedures and organisational arrangements of the school should be capable of rational justification and that the grounds of them should be available to them.
>
> Pupils have a right to expect:
>
> - that the school will offer them impartial counsel on academic matters, and if they desire it, with respect to personal problems.
> - that the school will make unabated efforts to provide them with the basic skills necessary for living an autonomous life in our society.
> - that the school will do its best to make available to them the major

public traditions in knowledge, arts, crafts and sports, which form the basis of a rich life in an advanced society.
- that the school will enable them to achieve some understanding of our society as it stands and that it will equip them to criticise social policy and contribute to the improvement of society.

The activities of the early 1970s, characterised by Franklin and Franklin (1996, p. 96) as the struggle for 'libertarian participation rights', took schools as the arena for action and the discourse was essentially about empowering students. The International Year of the Child in 1979, according to Franklin and Franklin, re-centred the children's rights movement on child protection and relocated it in the social and welfare arena. It was the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 that brought the issues of protection and participation together: the right of young people to talk about their experiences and be heard and to express a view about actions that might be taken in relation to them, was seen as a basis for protection. According to Freeman (1996, p. 36) this was 'the first convention to state that children have a right to "have a say" in processes affecting their lives'. It proposed that 'the child who is capable of forming his or her own views' should be able to 'express those views freely' in all matters affecting him or her, 'the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity' (see Freeman, 1996, p. 36). Freeman comments:

> The right enunciated here is significant not only for what it says, but because it recognises the child as a full human being with integrity and personality and the ability to participate freely in society. ... The views of children are to count (in relation to) decisions ranging from education to environment, from social security to secure accommodation, from transport to television. (1996, p. 37)

Winter and Connolly (1996, p. 40) remained sceptical, saying that the right to express an opinion was 'largely confined to social services intervention' and could be overthrown by appeal to adult judgement on the grounds of 'acting in the best interests of the child'. And Lansdown (1994, p. 37) commented, wryly, that despite the national rhetoric of pupil voice there was no attempt to elicit the views of pupils 'about testing and the National Curriculum ... and how schools are run'.

> Franklin and Franklin summed up the situation in the mid 1990s in this way:
>
> The UN Convention ... has offered a rallying point. ... it also offers a programme of proposals designed to empower children and young people. The future of children's rights ... is uncertain in the current political climate with its emphasis on retreating from any progressive policy. But the hope must surely be that in ... the next phase, children will be the key political actors, seeking to establish their rights to

> protection but also their rights to participate in a range of settings which extend beyond the social and welfare arenas. ... The future is open. (1996, p. 111)

We shall see if their optimism is well founded.

Constraints on the Development of Pupil Participation and Perspective

Progressivism and politics

The children's rights movement has been criticised for being tarred with the brush of progressivism—as offering young people rights without responsibility; part of the weaponry was the perceived contribution of progressive and child-centred practices to the lowering of educational standards. Hodgkin confirms the force of this perspective: ' ... the phrase "child-centred" has negative connotations. It has become associated with *laissez-faire* forms of education which ... (it is said) failed children, neither equipping them with the basic skills nor giving them a confident approach to learning' (Hodgkin, 1998, p. 11). Offering children a voice was seen, according to Wagg (1996, p. 17), as part of the leftist agenda that promoted such things as 'anti-racism, anti-sexism and "peace studies"', while traditional values and images of children were being sidelined.

It seems that governments have not seen children's rights as a vote winner. The caution of central policy makers is evidenced by Franklin and Franklin (1996, p. 103) who claim that 'when the Polish government initially suggested a Convention on Children's Rights in 1979, the British Government suggested that it was unnecessary'. And 10 years later, according to Lansdown (1994, p. 37), the government was slow to endorse the recommendations of the Convention, with the then Department of Education and Science (DES) claiming that it already 'fully complied with the Convention and that there was therefore no action required to achieve compliance'. The terms of the Convention were in fact ratified in 1991, but as Franklin and Franklin (1996, p. 103) observe, 'the word should not be mistaken for the deed' for the principles were to some extent in conflict with the image of the supremacy of the family that the Tory party, then in power, was projecting: the 'emphasis on children's rights does, by default, begin to undermine the traditional familial relationship between parent and child' (Winter & Connolly, 1996, p. 36).

Ideologies of childhood

There is a legacy of public perceptions of childhood that has made it difficult, until recently, for people to take seriously the idea of encouraging young people to contribute to debates about things that affect them, both in and out of school. Even the 1989 Convention elicited familiar counter arguments: according to Lansdown (1994, p. 42), children were portrayed as 'lacking morality, as being

out of control and lacking the experience on which to draw for effective participation'.

Freeman (1983, p. 8) reminds us that 'childhood' is a social construct. In the tenth century, he says, 'artists were unable to depict a child except as a man (*sic*) on a smaller scale' and the concept was 'invented' as a distinct period in about the 17th century by the upper classes 'who alone had the time and money' to support it; later, the trend 'diffused downwards through society' (Prout & James, 1997, p. 17). When 'young people' were given a form of attire that marked them out as children and that set them apart from adults, childhood became associated with ideas of innocence or natural waywardness and, consequently, with the need for formalised induction and discipline.

The most enduring assumption, and one that has shaped policy and practice in many aspects of life, has been that childhood is about dependency; what Gerald Grace (1995, p. 202) calls 'the ideology of immaturity'. Hart (1992, p. 8; cited by Holden & Clough, 1998, p. 27) saw children as 'the most photographed and the least listened to members of society'; a character in an Anthony Powell novel (quoted in Silver & Silver, 1997, p. 5) described pupils as 'uneasy, stranded beings'. And Oakley (1994, p. 23), following the sociologist Ronald Frankenburg, comments on 'the derogatory tone' of the term 'adolescence' which perpetuates the idea that teenagers, rather than being actors in their own right, are still 'people who are *becoming* adults'.

Outside school, as James and Prout (1997, p. xiv) have said, 'the conception of children as ... inadequately socialised future adults, still retains a powerful hold on the social, political, cultural and economic agenda'. Morrow and others have demonstrated the selective visibility of young people in relation, for instance, to surveys of domestic labour where 'children (are rarely mentioned) as sources of assistance in their homes ... except to a minimal extent in the literature on (girls') socialisation where such work is seen entirely as role rehearsal for future adulthood and not intrinsically useful or valuable in any way' (Morrow, 1994, p. 134). James and Prout (1997, p. xv) offer further evidence: they mention six problems concerning the visibility of children which were highlighted in a document presented to the UN World Summit on Social Development by The Save the Children Fund:

> ... a failure to collect child specific information; lack of recognition of children's productive contribution; no participation of children in decision-making; the use of an inappropriate 'standard model of childhood'; the pursuit of adult interests in ways which render children passive; and lack of attention to gender and generational relationships.

In the 1980s Freeman, professor of English Law, offered a swingeing critique of the status of children in our society, pointing to the anomalies and inconsistencies that the system has constructed:

> Children have not been accorded either dignity or respect. They have been reified, denied the status of participants in the social system,

> labelled as a problem population ... . (Freeman, 1987, quoted in Davie, 1993, p. 253)

It is time to review our notions of childhood and take account of recent work in sociology which argues that 'childhood should be regarded as a part of society and culture rather than a precursor to it; and that children should be seen as already social actors not beings in the process of becoming such' (James & Prout, 1997, p. ix). In such a framework, the idea of pupil participation and pupil perspective may be more acceptable than it has been in the past.

Pupil Participation and Pupil Voice: its legitimacy in the 1990s

Although bruised by association with 'progressivism' and in tension with traditional notions of the child as dependent on the family and the school for socialisation into adulthood, the issue of pupil participation survives. What is giving it legitimacy at the moment?

The closely observed school studies published by Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970), at a time when pupil participation issues were highly controversial, 'gave a powerful impetus to interest in children's views of their everyday life' (Prout & James, 1997, p. 19). Since then there has been a succession of studies which have attempted to highlight the importance of seeing school from the pupils' perspective. Such studies have helped to keep the issue alive. And although the force of the United Nations Convention has been relatively slight in mainstream education, it is there to be invoked as an additional source of legitimacy.

However, it is the school improvement movement that has provided the most striking opportunity for teachers, researchers and policy makers to work on a common agenda of concern and it is in this context that the issue of pupil participation and voice is being most obviously addressed.

The school improvement movement

Lateral security is provided by trends in other countries where researchers, over the last decade, have been asking some pointed questions. In the USA, Erickson and Schultz (1992, p. 476, quoted by Levin, 1995, p. 17) point out that 'virtually no research has been done that places student experience at the centre of attention'. In Canada, Fullan (1991, p. 170) has asked, in relation to school reform: 'What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered ... ?'. In Sweden, Andersson (1995, p. 5) has said that 'politicians who decide about school reforms and the teachers who run the classrooms seldom ask how the students themselves perceive their school'. Levin (1995, p. 17), from Canada, notes that while the literature on school-based management 'advocates more important roles for teachers and parents ... students are usually omitted from the discussion'. And Nieto (1994, pp. 395–396), from the

USA, brings the issue of pupil perspective firmly into the school improvement frame:

> One way to begin the process of changing school policies is to listen to students' views about them; however, research that focuses on student voice is relatively recent and scarce.

She points out that pupils' perspectives have, for the most part, been missing 'in discussions concerning strategies for confronting educational problems' and she also says, importantly, that 'the voices of students are rarely heard in the debates about school failure and success' (p. 396). This view is echoed by Suzanne Soo Hoo (1993, p. 392) who says: 'Traditionally, students have been overlooked as valuable resources in the restructuring of schools'. Nieto adds a cautionary note, explaining that a focus on students 'is not meant to suggest that their ideas should be the final and conclusive word in how schools need to change'; to accept their words as the sole guide in school improvement is 'to accept a romantic view of students that is just as partial and condescending as excluding them completely from the discussions' (Nieto, 1994, p. 398).

Patricia Phelan *et al.* (1992, p. 696), also from North America, argue that it is important to give attention to students' views of things that affect their learning, not so much factors outside school but those in school that teachers and policy makers have some power to change. And in the UK we, along with other researchers, have argued that pupils are our '*expert witnesses*' in the process of school improvement (Rudduck, 1999a). This position, especially since it is commanding so much support from teachers, seems to be one that does not offer the kind of threat that derailed the movement in earlier years.

Pupils *are* observant and have a rich but often untapped understanding of processes and events; ironically, they often use their insights to devise strategies for avoiding learning, a practice which, over time, can be destructive of their progress. We need to find ways of harnessing pupils' insight in support of their learning. Pupils' accounts of their experiences of being a learner in school can lead to changes that enable pupils to feel a stronger sense of commitment to the school and to the task of learning; and commitment can lead to enhanced effort and enhanced levels of attainment. But what is our motivation? Are we 'using' pupils to serve the narrow ends of a grades-obsessed society rather than 'empowering' them by offering them greater agency in their schools?

Citizenship education

Young argues (1999, p. 463) that the curriculum is 'a way of asking questions about how ideas about knowledge and learning are linked to particular educational purposes and more broadly to ideas about society and the kind of citizens and parents we want our young people to become'. His observations are timely given the resurgence of interest in citizenship education and its potential for endorsing the idea of pupil participation and pupil perspective in school.

The recent Report of the Government's Advisory Group, *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools*, argues the need for citizenship education to be part of the formal curriculum:

> We unanimously advise the Secretary of State that citizenship and the teaching of democracy ... is so important both for schools and the life of the nation that there must be a statutory requirement for schools to ensure that it is part of the entitlement of all pupils. (1998, p. 7)

The most challenging, and easily glossed over, dimension is the need for pupils to learn about citizenship in a structure that offers them *experience* of the principles of citizenship. The benefits of citizenship education, the Report says, will be to empower pupils to participate effectively 'in *society*' and 'in *the state*' as active, informed, critical and responsible citizens' (p. 9; emphasis added), but it doesn't say '*and in the school*'. Harold Dent (1930, p. 15), 70 years ago, believed that every school could offer young people 'a developed and sane comprehension of how the affairs of a community are managed'; but, he said, 'pupils will learn not by talking about civics—a futile process—but by living civics' (see Rudduck, 1999b). This view is echoed in the nineties by Hodgkin (1998, p. 11): 'Democracy ... is not something which is "taught", it is something which is practised'.

The next step is to build more opportunities for pupil participation and pupil voice into the fabric of the school's structure. But it takes time and very careful preparation to build a climate in which both teachers and pupils feel comfortable working together on a constructive review of aspects of teaching, learning and schooling. Many schools may rely on their school council but we know that these only work well if they are the centre—and symbol of—school-wide democratic practice. If the school is not ready for pupil participation then a school council can become a way of formalising and channelling students' criticisms; an exercise in damage limitation rather than an opportunity for constructive consultation. And the agenda of schools councils often do not roam far outside the charmed circle of lockers, dinners and uniform.

We should not fudge the issue by taking pupil performance in tests and examinations as proxy for school improvement but accept the simple logic that school improvement may, after all, be about *improving schools*, their organisational structures, regimes and relationships; in short, 'the conditions of learning'. This, after all, is what the pupils tell us. The changes we are talking about 'will not happen by accident, good will or establishing *ad hoc* projects. They require new structures, new activities, and a rethinking of the internal workings of each institution ...' (Watson & Fullan, 1992, p. 219, quoted by Fullan, 1993, p. 96).

PUPILS AND THE CURRICULUM

As far as pupils are concerned, it is not evident that we have learned the lessons of the curriculum development movement of the 1970s. Two things became

clear (see Rudduck, 1991). First, the concept of 'relevance' was invoked to persuade us that the content of the curriculum would appeal to pupils but it was often an adult view rather than a pupil view of what was meaningful for young people. Second, there was little attempt to discuss with pupils why changes to content and pedagogy were being made. Teachers went on training courses that justified and helped them to cope with the break from traditional ways of working; pupils had no such support and they could respond by using their collective power as a class to resist or subvert the innovation. An alternative to imposed change through the authority of the teacher is to explore the need for change with the pupils themselves—what Ted Aoki (1984) called 'a communal venturing forth'; the discussion of purpose, he said, was a precondition of working effectively together. In the same spirit, Stenhouse saw 'standards' not as benchmarks imposed from 'outside and up there', but as criteria developed and shared by the working group for judging what counts as quality in their work together (see Rudduck, 1997; Stenhouse, 1967).

Aoki and Stenhouse were writing about opportunities for consultation on aspects of curriculum work in the 1960s to 1980s. But what about in the 1990s? Meighan (1988, pp. 36–38) has argued that even within the framework of a National Curriculum there *are* spaces for pupils to have an input. He distinguishes between a 'consultative curriculum', a 'negotiated curriculum' and a 'democratic curriculum'. A consultative curriculum, he says, is based on an imposed programme, but regular opportunities for learners to be consulted are built in. Feedback is reflected upon by the teacher and modifications may be proposed. In the negotiated curriculum, 'the degree of power sharing increases': what emerges 'is an agreed contract ... as to the nature of the course of study to be undertaken'. The negotiation 'constitutes an attempt to link the concerns and consciousness of the learners with the world of systematic knowledge and learning'. Finally, there is the democratic curriculum, 'where a group of learners write, implement and review their own curriculum, starting out with a blank piece of paper'. The challenge is to identify opportunities for participation, at the consultative level at least, within the framework of the National Curriculum.

What lies behind Meighan's categorisation is an awareness that what matters to pupils is that they feel that they have a stake in school and are respected enough to be consulted. Teachers can often construct choices for pupils within most courses of study, but listening to what pupils have to say about the '*conditions of learning*' in school is also important (see Rudduck *et al.*, 1996). Our recent interviews with pupils in primary and secondary schools across the country (see Rudduck & Flutter, 1998; Flutter *et al.*, 1998) confirm that pupils are interested in changing structures that cast them in a marginal role and limit their agency. Pupils of all ages ask for more autonomy, they want school to be fair and they want pupils, as individuals and as an institutional group, to be important members of the school community. Policy makers may think about school primarily in terms of lessons and formal learning, but for pupils school is a holistic experience: it is about lessons, it is about what happens

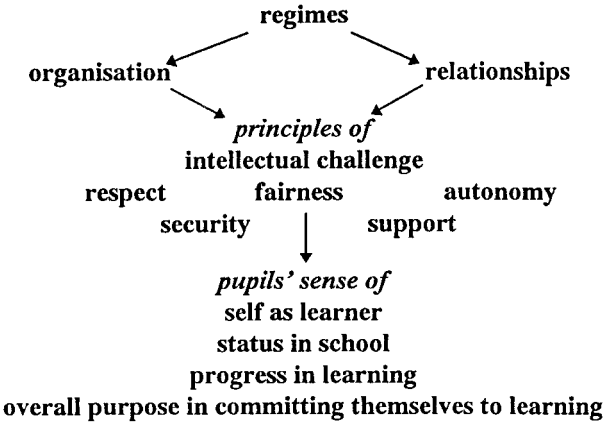

FIG. 1. The conditions of learning in school.

between lesson and it is about the regimes that define who and what matter to the school.

From our interview data we were able to construct a model of the things that affect pupils' commitment to learning and their identity as learners (Figure 1). The regimes of school, which embody values operating through structures and relationships, shape pupils' attitudes to learning and their view of themselves as learners. The more that the regimes are changed to reflect the values that pupils call for (intellectual challenge, fairness, etc.), the stronger pupils' commitment to learning in school is likely to be.

When talking *directly about learning in the classroom*, as opposed to these over-arching concerns, pupils also have a lot to tell us that is worth hearing. They can, for instance, explain which of their classmates they work well with in different subjects and which they don't like working with (and yet teachers rarely elicit and use this information). They are capable of working on the problem of noise in the classroom (pupils in a primary school came up with a set of voice levels for different situations, each colour coded for easy memorisation; they ranged from pale blue, for the quietest whisper to the teacher when others are working, to red, the playground voice). Pupils affirm the excitement of problem solving tasks and tasks that allow them to use their own ideas. They can often explain what levels of difficulty they find productive in different kinds of task.

We interviewed boys who were judged to be underperforming and they had a lot to say about changes that would help them. They told us that they *do* read but that the kind of reading that they like (technical journals, often using highly specialised vocabularies) is not valued in school. They said that they like to learn skills that can be used in everyday situations (such as map reading for family outings). Boys said that they prefer small challenges that can build up to something large (an essay, for instance, that is structured around a series of short, well-defined sections). They told us that they like to be active in class and

that they like team work and work where oral contributions count and not just writing (see Rudduck & Flutter, 1998).

The pupils we interviewed seemed to be, although using very different words, as concerned as Young is about the curriculum as a product of the way in which knowledge is socially stratified. Their comments confirm Young's view that the curriculum is characterised by:

- the superiority of subject-based knowledge;
- the under-valuing of practical knowledge;
- the priority given to written as opposed to oral forms of presenting knowledge; and
- the superiority of knowledge acquired by individuals over that developed by groups of students working together. (Young, 1999, p. 468)

CONCLUSION

Teachers are very aware of the difficulties of engaging all pupils in learning and know that schools have changed less in their deep structures in the last 20 or 30 years than young people have changed. As Nieto (1994, pp. 395–396) says: 'Educating students today is a far different and more complex proposition than it has been in the past'. We need to recognise the implications of this change. Out of school, many young people find themselves involved in complex relationships and situations, whether within the family or the peer group. Many carry tough responsibilities, balancing multiple roles and often finding themselves dealing with conflicting loyalties. In contrast, the structures of secondary schooling offer, on the whole, less responsibility and autonomy than many young people are accustomed to in their lives outside school, and less opportunity for learning-related tensions to be opened up and explored. This traditional exclusion of young people from the consultative process, this bracketing out of their voice, is founded upon an outdated view of childhood which fails to acknowledge children's capacity to reflect on issues affecting their lives.

We should recognise pupils' social maturity and experience by giving them responsibilities and opportunities to share in decision making. Hodgkin (1998, p. 11) recalls the lessons from industry where productivity went up as a consequence of worker participation schemes: good ideas were used, workers felt that they mattered and they understood more about the enterprise as a whole and their part in it. She concludes:

> The fact is that pupils themselves have a huge potential contribution to make, not as passive objects but as active players in the education system. Any (policy) concerning school standards will be seriously weakened if it fails to recognise the importance of that contribution. (Hodgkin, 1998, p. 11)

Policy makers are beginning to see the wisdom, or prudence, of taking account of pupils' experiences of learning (the QCA has recently commissioned

work on pupil perspectives on assessment, on different curriculum subjects and on the National Curriculum; the Department for Education and Employment has emphasised the importance of the pupil perspective in many of the research projects that it is funding). Teachers up and down the country are finding ways of tuning in to pupils' accounts of learning in school, and they say that they find pupils insightful, measured and constructive. Consulting pupils need not be threatening, provided that teachers and policy makers genuinely see 'the pupils' world as worth becoming engaged with' (Sleeter & Grant, 1991, p. 67).

In conclusion, we cannot do much better than to urge readers to think about the two categories that Young offers us, Curriculum of the Past and Curriculum of the Future; Curriculum of the Future reflects the values of participation and perspective that feature so strongly in our own research on pupil voice. Young identifies the key features of the Curriculum of the Past as follows:

- it embodies a concept of knowledge and learning 'for its own sake';
- it is almost exclusively concerned with transmitting existing knowledge;
- it places a higher value on subject knowledge than on knowledge of the relationships between subjects;
- it assumes a hierarchy and a boundary between school and everyday knowledge, thereby creating the problem of the transferability of school knowledge to non-school contexts.

He invites us to contrast this with a Curriculum of the Future that expresses:

- a transformative concept of knowledge which emphasises its power to give learners a sense that they can act on the world;
- a focus on the creation of new knowledge as well as the transmission of existing knowledge;
- an emphasis on the interdependence of knowledge areas and on the relevance of school knowledge to everyday problems. (Young, 1999, pp. 469–470)

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NOTE

The quotation in the title is from the work of Maxine Greene.

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