Action Research Design for an International Boundary Crossing Study to Improve Student and Teacher Participation in School Processes and Practices to Improve Well-Being, Learning and Learning outcomes

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Abstract: This special section of the Italian Journal of Sociology of Education focuses on the dissemination of the first stage of an international pilot action research project. The research focuses on improving teacher and student participation in institutional processes and practices to improve learning and learning outcomes. The research team includes professional researchers from Higher Education Institutions working in partnership with secondary schools. The pilot is to test the quality dimensions of the research design to inform a larger research project for which the team is seeking funding. This paper focuses on the research design, shared aims, and methodologies that were developed and applied by the research team for all the cases in this journal including: England, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Russia. The paper also reveals some tentative findings. Overall, the findings that are important for education leaders and managers reveal committed pedagogical relationships require participation and commitment of all agents in the rehearsal of power sharing and the politics of democracy. However, within an agenda of performativity and standardised curriculums there is little time for developing pedagogical relationships. The evidence also reveals that the characteristics that participants most valued regarding their relationships within their community and of their institutions included trust, respecting the self and the other, agreeing to disagree or resolving conflict peacefully, and recognising diversity through inclusive practices.

Keywords: ethical, improvement cycle, epistemologies, hypotheses testing, theories of change, knowledge to action strategies

Introduction to higher education and institution and school partnership inquiry

This special edition journal of Italian Journal of Sociology of Education focuses on the dissemination of the first stage of an international pilot action research project. The pilot study seeks to test out the quality dimensions of the research design to inform a larger research project, for which the team is seeking funding. The first stage of the action research focuses on understanding teacher and student participation in institutional processes and practices. The second stage will look at the development of change strategies developed by the leadership and management teams of the schools, which will be disseminated at the British Educational Leadership and Management Society Annual Conference (2014). The third stage will be to repeat the first stage of the action research to find out the impact of the change strategies, which will be reported at the European Conference for Educational Research (2014; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019). The aim of the research is to understand and enhance participation in school processes and practices to improve learning and learning outcomes connected to the young peoples' realistic dreams for future life styles. These dreams will necessarily mean participation in the cultural, economic and political societal systems of production and exchange. The reason we are focusing on both learning and learning outcomes is because we will be able to address the 'how and why questions' in terms of impact of the action research on learning by analysing qualitative narratives, and we will be able to address the 'what' questions in terms of impact of the action research by analysing quantitative statistics for learning outcomes for example of exam success (qualifiers).

This paper focuses on the research design, shared aims, and mixed methodologies that were developed and applied by the research team for all the cases in this journal including England, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, and Russia. The pilot action research project has five main objectives that are explored over three stages. The first stage explores three objectives. The first of these objectives is to investigate how and why cultures, practices, and leadership systems influence the participation of different stake-holders in decision making in the institution. Second, to consider the ways in which teachers and students engage with different participatory processes. Third, to identify what characteristics of participatory institutions are of most value. The objective of the second stage of the action research is to document the change strategies the school leadership and management team develop from the evidence of the first stage. This may or may not be done in partnership with the Higher Education Institution. The objective of the third stage of the action research is to reveal the impact of the change strategies. This focuses on what the leaders, managers,

teachers, and students value about the change strategies and how and why the change strategies have made things better for them.

Here the focus is on improved participation and its impact on improved learning, improved educational outcomes and improved connections between students' learning and their aspirational realistic future life styles. This journal focuses on the findings that address the first three objectives of the first stage of the action research. Research that addresses the second and third stages of the action research is currently taking place. Findings that address the third stage of the action research will be presented at the European Conference for Educational Research (2014).

The research is important because Kaba (2000, p. 21) argues there is a gap in the literature regarding secondary school students' individual perceptions of their participation once they have been given a role in the process. Thus the research into each stage of the development of evidence informed change strategies, and their impact, will potentially have many beneficiaries including educational leaders, managers, and policy makers in Europe and overseas. The research will also enable local innovations that improve participation, learning and learning outcomes within and between schools and colleges to go to scale. This will be made possible because in the fuller research project a tool box will be published on a bespoke open access website that will include all data collection tools, step by step methodologies, findings from rich, deep and full international cases and recommendations for beneficiaries. This approach enables good practice to be disseminated, adapted and adopted to build capacity in educational systems. Moreover, Higher Education Institutions will be well positioned to be appointed to mentor/support schools develop research inquiry cultures and languages.

Educational leaders with doctorates can also act as consultants and mentors to support the development of schools' and colleges' research informed cultures (Taysum & Slater, 2014). Such work may join up with the teaching profession's Continuing Professional Development agendas (CPD) that may or may not link to credits at Masters level. This has significance for the Bologna process, where teachers can explore themes from this research in their institutions and take Masters level modules in different European countries to bring new alternative perspectives through knowledge mobilisation to their institution. Bologna is reaching beyond its European borders as learners build credits towards gaining a full Masters degree. Other Credit Transfer Schemes such as the European Transfer Scheme (ECT) and a new common transfer scheme for 2013-2014, which includes Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, China, Japan, and Korea (ICEF Monitoring, 2013) are also supporting knowledge mobilisation and exchange that may underpin building capacity in exploring the themes that emerge from this research.

The terms leadership and management are used in the journal, and therefore defining leadership and management is important. Leadership is about developing vision and mission to inform leadership systems that bring people together within those systems (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). Management on the other hand focuses on implementing processes and practices within the system. For example, as part of a neo-liberal agenda Ball (2004) affirms that schools can formally or informally engage with selection strategies to manage their position in the league table. A high position in the league table is a mechanism that enables schools to manage the selection processes of high quality students who are most likely to improve the school's examination performance (qualifiers). The research team understands that the fuller research project will need to examine the definition of these terms more closely in each context. The team also refer to schools and colleges when the research was conducted in schools. This is because the team recognise that the findings may have implications for colleges of further education which are vital institutions within different educational systems (Pring et al., 2009).

This pilot study focused on comparing the young and older generations' attitudes to knowledge, skills and experience in their institutions' communities for full participation in economic (budget), cultural (values, behaviours and traditions) and political (engagement with power) systems of production and exchange. The age of the participants are therefore on a continuum in the research. Towards one end participants may have experience of the teaching profession and changes in policy and underpinning ideologies that span the last forty years (Taysum, 2012a). Towards the other end of the continuum participants may be Newly Qualified Teachers, and at the end of the continuum will be the young people. The intergenerational participation is important to understand and will be further explored in the fuller bid.

The fuller research will examine where there are attitudinal differences in terms of alignments or misalignments in participation in school processes and practices. These insights will generate new understandings about how different forms of participation influence learning, and learning outcomes. The research will also reveal the way young people understand how their participation in school processes and practices with community members with different life styles shape their hopes for, and realistic acquisition of future life-styles. The research participants represent not only different ages, but different genders, different geographical, socio-economic, ethnic, religious, cultural, and historical backgrounds with different traditions. Further the members may have disclosed or undisclosed disabilities, and/or be Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Transgender (GLBQT). Thus our pilot study has revealed that the research engages with intersectionalities which leaders and managers need to understand and engage with on a deep level to bring about authentic participation in school processes and practices (Lumby, 2014).

These findings have implications for the fuller research which will enable us to understand on a deeper level how young people are rehearsing participation in schools for participation in society as adults.

The kinds of participation the research will focus on is their rehearsal of cultural, economic and political systems of production and exchange in school, and how this might prepare them for engaging with inclusive societies in sustainable ways as adults. To achieve this the fuller research bid will need to include more community members including governors', parents', public sector organisations involved in the school community, and employer engagement including Small and Medium Enterprises in the locality and networked to the institution via Information Communication and Learning Technologies and the World Wide Web.

The cases presented in this journal aim to reveal the importance of facilitating critical discourse of transcultural challenges and diversities by engaging with different nation states' evidence of participation in schools' processes and practices. The authors invite the readers of ESEM to consider the implications for European citizens who have moved into, and now live in European communities and European citizens who now live outside Europe. Thus the fuller research bid will need to consider identity and the definition of a European citizen in a Europe that is globally networked. To achieve this successfully, International partners are vital for the Globalised European action research project to bring meaning to globalised cultural, economic and political systems of production and exchange. The research is conducted from the foundation of partnerships between HEIs and schools in the compulsory education sector, with implications for colleges of further education, and is based on school improvement, and critical discourse (Frost et al., 2000).

The papers in this journal report the first stage of the action research and examine the role of Higher Education Institution/School partnership research and the kinds of impact it can have on learning achievement and outcomes. Learning and learning outcomes underpin future young peoples' future lifestyles characterised by individuals operating in inclusive communities and engaging with economic, cultural and political systems of production and exchange. Yinger (2005), head of the Carnegie Foundation, argued that high quality research designs need to improve tools for the reading and analysis of educational research. The tools need to connect with educational theories and satisfy questions raised about the purpose of education. This kind of thinking can guide the improvement of educational work, and has the potential to improve implementing education policy ethically, and with moral purpose.

Watts and Imig (2011) suggested that education research linked to action serves as the meeting place between professional identity in "the profession-

al tribe" and academic identity shaped in the "academic tribe" with a focus on improving learning and learning outcomes to equip young people for full and healthy cultural, economic and political civic engagement. The aim of bringing the tribes together is to form a common peer group and channels, or networks for the collection of materials or a repository with an elected council acting as caretakers (Day, 2011).

The action research project constitutes a "partnership inquiry" where the professional researchers work with educational leaders/managers who are researching professionals. The approach is in contrast to researchers being 'participant observers' (Wolcott, 2008). The educational professionals including leaders and managers that research their own work do so locally and can give an insider's research viewpoint. The professional researcher's involvement from the partner Higher Education Institution on the other hand, provides a fresh pair of eyes and a systematic approach to addressing research questions.

The professional researcher may act as the school's secretary, supporting their inquiry into practice, and providing literature that sheds light on the research questions. Bringing together these two perspectives can provide a complicated challenge (Mills, 2010), or can provide a highly valued partnership. The partnership needs to facilitate collaborative engagement with ethical dilemmas and problems that also relate to reliability, trustworthiness of the research, and validity (Oancea & Furlong, 2007). The collaborative work in the partnership needs well-grounded reasoning and the ability to find strategies for agents to distance themselves from their research, and objectify the findings. Additionally, the agents of the partnership need to agree boundaries to the research, and not raise unrealistic hopes in those participating in the research for the change it might achieve. Taking this approach helps the research remain grounded and the people involved can have faith in its processes, practices, conclusions, and recommendations to enhanced participation in school processes, and improved learning and learning outcomes connected to young people's future aspirations for life styles.

Rudduck (1973) claimed that before beginning research, a 'network of understanding people', who are willing to act to change the existing reality should be formed. The research can therefore be an important aspect of Continuing Professional Development for educational professionals (Day, 2011). Rudduck (1973) developed a research framework in Michigan University Centre for Research on Utilisation of Scientific Knowledge that aimed to lead innovation on the basis of the analysis of 4,000 studies concerning innovation and change in different fields of action in the US. In the framework Rudduck suggested, the researcher constitutes the external developer and stimulator of the innovation within the specific context. Thus the researcher in their role of 'school secretary' can present competing conceptual

frameworks to the educational professionals and leaders and managers can reflect upon these to inform their decision making. In this framework the educational professionals including leaders and managers are not another 'object' or 'subject' of the research, rather they are the receiver of a service.

The role of the principal researcher is to coordinate activities that best serve the educational managers/leaders to develop and implement change strategies, and lead change in the education field. The strategies are therefore evidence informed and when connected to a cyclical process of inquiry are sustainable. When using the same data collection tools for the inquiry, participating schools and colleges can share their findings on an open access website and review what worked in other local and/or European/Global cases. Such practices form foundations for an international methodology through which the field of education can be developed. In these cases, the research issue is usually the 'passion point' that can be identified in discourse between colleague researchers from different geographical locations (Thomas, 2009; Robinson, 2009).

Partnership research to inform better community participation

The nation states have been self-selecting because members of the research team are committed to developing an understanding of engaged participation in school processes and practices for school improvement. The team has grown organically through funded research projects (Department for Education, Innovation and Skills, and the Russian National Training Federation, 2006-2008; British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society Doctoral Research Interest Group Seminar Series, 2010-2011) and meetings at international conferences. However, an important aspect to building the research team was all members' commitment to facilitating critical discourse of transcultural challenges and diversities by engaging with nation states outside Europe. Thus for the readers of

The Italian Journal of Sociology of Education, the effects of global priorities and practices can be understood in a European context. The professional researchers and researching professionals are also committed to improving the educational experience of students that prepare citizens for full engagement in economic, cultural and political systems of production and exchange. The research therefore engages with Symonds, et al (2011) report on meeting the challenge of preparing segregated young Americans for pathways to prosperity and the challenge to prepare young people in the UK for pathways to prosperity since in the UK 1, 026 000 16 - 24 year olds were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) (Life long learning UK, 2011) in a globalised European context. Indeed all the papers in this special edition journal identify areas that might be improved resulting in enhancing

students' pathways to prosperity. Thus the tentative findings here presented inform the larger bid that will investigate how participation shapes students' identities (Phoenix, 2010) and equips them to form communities as adults that address the many intersectionalities that challenge inclusive societies.

An interesting dimension to this research is that the cases presented in this journal represent diverse cultural, economic and political contexts underpinned by different ideologies. These ideologies are located within Europe and beyond Europe and are undergoing various kinds of reforms and/or growth often related to agendas for sustainable living (Taysum, 2012b). Further, within multi-cultural societies a classroom in a European context may be multicultural. Educational leaders/managers in Europe have the potential to learn much from cases of participation in school processes and practices that are located outside Europe. Therefore, what participants say in these cases may enable all those with an interest in education to critically analyse and reflect upon how participation in institutional processes and practices impact student outcomes in terms of: their well being (UNICEF, 2007) in relation to: war and society: education: the family; relations between the sexes; law and order; poverty; people and work; living in cities; and race relations (Stenhouse, 1983, p.212), learning (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007; Pring, 2007; Noddings, 1994; Bateson, 2002) extra-curricular choices with or without adult role models (Stenhouse, 1983), the objective realities of constructing identities that students hope for (Bourdieu, 2000), the chance to contribute to a dynamic, vibrant and fair environment in their educational institution, and to apply such civic engagement to environments beyond educational settings. By bringing together a range of different cases from very different contexts and including different cultural, economic and political dimensions, alternative accounts of participation that are intergenerational, and intersectional can be faithfully represented (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995) and promote knowledge exchange.

Learning from European and International cases of community participation – a mixed methods approach

This section contains more than one case and Yin (2009) calls this a multiple-case design. A multiple-case study design enables engagement with individual schools and groups of individual schools. The case studies are intended to provide leverage for other cases. In other words connections, principles and characteristics that emerge from the findings have implications for other educational institutions in other settings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The Principal Investigator, liaised with the research team to enable everyone to be aware of milestones within the action research, to share the progress of the team, instigate critical reflection, and celebrate successes.

The team drew on policy documents, and education acts located within economic, cultural and political eras (Hodgson & Spours, 2006). We anticipate that in the fuller research bid, mapping different eras to evidence from participants of different generations will enable us to explore intergenerations and intersectionalities to develop robust theories of participation.

Each nation state represented in this section has had, or will have its socio-historiography from 1944 to the present day published in the Italian Journal of Sociology of Education (2012; 2014; 2017). These papers explore how and why the current education policy in each nation state is in place by analysing what informed it, and identifying and critically analysing any major shifts in education policy since 1944. The development and publication of these policy papers were the starting point of this research project. The research team will return to these papers at the end of the project to reflect on whether aspects of policy in the past resonate with the project's transformative innovations to improve patterns of participation and learning, and what we can learn about this in relation to developing understandings of policy memory (Hodgson & Spours, 2006).

A mixed methods research design using both qualitative and quantitative data was used to optimise both the breadth and depth of validity and trustworthiness of the research (Oancea & Furlong, 2007). Taysum and Iqbal (2012) argue historically it has been challenging to bring nation states together to engage with international qualitative comparative analysis of processes and practices of participation. The reason for this is because nation states' rules are rooted in their complex histories, and their variable forms of capital, values and behaviours, cultures, economic structures, religions, politics and ideologies. Further Warnock (2006) argues it is difficult to bring nation states together in qualitative academic research because international peer reviewed journal articles require a sharp focus when comparing many countries' evidence. Statistical reportage lends itself to this kind of forum. Where quantitative data present knowledge on 'what is happening' in a snap shot view as found in the Programme for Institutional Student Assessment (PISA), it cannot address questions focusing on 'how' and 'why' it is happening, or propose change strategies for improvement. This is problematic for professional educationalists, including leaders and managers who need to understand what participatory processes and practices exist, and their impact on learning and learning outcomes, and how and why they exist. This kind of knowledge can facilitate the development of evidence informed change strategies to enhance participation leading to improved learning and learning outcomes. Therefore the action research uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to inform the change strategies, and to reveal their impact.

The sample for each pilot case was chosen from each population in context (Bryman, 2008). The practical application of the sampling was developed in partnership with each school. Access was dependent on the school providing opportunities for teachers and students to take part in the research. The team would like to thank the schools involved in the research for organising spaces and times for participants to take part in the research during the very busy school day, and for the financial cost this incurred to free up staff from their professional duties. Each team developed relationships with their school, and began to develop understandings based on trust.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were developed as tools using Rudduck and McIntyre (2007, 176) five values: 'that are to do with openness, attentiveness to the views of others, mutual respect and support'. The five values include:

1. Advocacy by institutional leaders[1];
2. Enabling structures and practices;
3. A school culture that values and listens to all staff;
4. A culture of inquiry and research among teachers;
5. A tradition of pupil involvement in decision-making'.

The questions also drew on the text Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) 'Improving Learning through Consulting Pupils' London: Routledge. There was an interview schedule for the teachers and one for the students. When the interview schedules had been developed they were shared with all team members. The team discussed the form of words and the interview schedules were refined so that they aligned with different cultural contexts. The prompts and probes were carefully considered. Prompts asked the participant about a particular theme, and probes encouraged the participant to say more about a particular theme, or to provide a concrete example of what they had just described (Denscombe, 2007). Professional researchers from India, Israel, Kazakhstan, and Russia needed to translate all the data collection tools into their respective first languages, collect the data, and then translate the data back into English to share with the team and disseminate the findings in this journal. The translation element added an extra burden onto these researchers because the pilot research study was unfunded. The team's grateful thanks go to these researchers for their extra commitment to the project.

Narrative analysis was used for the semi-structured interviews. The themes from the five values (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007) were highlighted in each text. A table was then created for each value with columns that

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[1] The first theme will be addressed in the second and third stage of the research when the educational leaders and managers develop and implement change strategies that promote participation.

contained all the quotations within that particular theme. There were different tables for students and teachers. Quotations that best summarised each column on the table were highlighted along with any dissenting views with a view to including these quotations in the paper for dissemination. It is important to note that themes that emerged that did not fit in with the Rudduck and McIntyre framework were identified and additional columns added to the tables to include the new themes. Such themes included how students understood their learning connected to their imagined future life styles, and how they imagined their future cultural, economic and political (civic) engagement with society.

The team developed analysis papers from the interview findings that began to compare and contrast the findings from the different cases with Rudduck and McIntyre's five values and a literature review relevant to each particular nation state. These analysis papers were shared amongst the team and the following themes emerged that mapped to the five themes:

- decision making in the school and in the classroom (mapped to theme 2 'enabling structures and practices');
- what students and teachers found helpful in their learning with a focus on developing pedagogical relationships that may be hallmarked by trust and respect, (mapped to theme 2 'enabling structures and practices', theme 3 'a school culture that values and listens to all staff' and theme 5 'a tradition of pupil involvement in decision making');
- what learning opportunities help to move students closer to the life narratives they want in terms of future career, and aspirations for civic engagement (mapped to theme 2 'enabling structures and practices');
- what learning opportunities help students with the ways they want to get involved with their community (mapped to theme 2 'enabling structures and practices', theme 4 'a culture of inquiry and research among teachers', and theme 5 ''a tradition of pupil involvement in decision making');
- and for teachers what opportunities they have for Continuing Professional Development and the time they have for critical reflection on their practice (mapped to theme 2 'enabling structures and practices').

Developing Questionnaires

A more nuanced questionnaire was developed using the themes above that mapped back to the five values. The questionnaire enabled us to test out the findings from the interviews and make some tentative generalisations to inform the school leaders' and managers' change strategies. The questionnaires aimed to yield descriptive statistics from consulting large numbers of teachers and students, though for the pilot stage numbers were limited in each case study.

The questionnaires used a Likert scale (Denscombe, 2007) using a response categorisation system of: 'rarely, sometimes, often and nearly always' (Robson, 2002). The questionnaires were constructed collaboratively within the team. The questions were clustered using the themes above that mapped back to the Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) five values and to the research questions. Each team also ensured that the language of each questionnaire was culturally relevant and meaningful to their context. The questionnaires were then piloted for each case study.

The findings from the piloting were analysed. Descriptive statistics were used for three reasons. First, to summarise the key points, address the themes above, and more particularly identify characteristics that enable the extent to which participation and consultation had occurred. Second, to provide a statement of understanding of the research. Third, to present a position in time, which will be very useful when the data collection tool is re-administered after the intervention strategies have been implemented (Newby, 2010). The team created spreadsheets that created graphs on Excel for each question. When team members input their findings on the Excel spread sheets the graphs for each question were automatically created. In addition, the questions were asked in clusters, and one graph represented the data for each cluster of questions (please see The Republic of Ireland case which provides details of the clusters and their component parts). Another reason for using this approach was to enable the data collection tools and analysis to be standardised for ease of comparative analysis. Further, the team were able to pilot the process end users would use to download the action research tool box and apply it in their own context to develop a culture of inquiry to underpin action for school improvement (Stenhouse, 1983).

Reflecting on the findings the team decided that the fuller research project will engage with the formal, the non-formal and informal aspects of school life. Therefore the fuller project will include documentary analysis of logs or research diaries of research participants, and observations to gain a deeper and fuller understanding of what is happening. Further, Brock and Alexiadou (2013) argue this kind of depth is crucial for comparative research.

Ethical framework

All participants gave informed consent to take part in the research, In addition, parents also gave consent that their children could take part in the research. The participants were given assurances of confidentiality and anonymity and the right to withdraw from the research at any time. All research conformed to the British Educational Research Association ethical guidelines (BERA, 2011) and the ethical codes of conduct for each nation state and Higher Education Institution.

Relevance for IJSE readers

The series of pilot cases presented in this special edition focus on the findings from the students and teachers. The findings are crucial for the leadership and management teams, who will use them to develop the change strategies to enhance participation in school processes and practices (Taysum, 2012c). The strategies as text, will require interpretation when they are implemented in situations that are not expected (Ball, 2004). Thus educational leaders and managers, teachers and students will need to be flexible and use initiative, and creativity where values and behaviour are informed by first principles of the evidence, or research. Using Information and Learning Technologies to support the development of forums to discuss issues that arise with the implementation of change strategies may be an important aspect to this research. The research team will need to add questions to the data collection tools to explore this issue. Therefore it is important that educational leaders and managers share the change strategies with teachers, and students, and ensure understandings of first principles of the research are in alignment to inform appropriate actions in unexpected situations (Haydon, 2012).

The importance of Information Communication Technologies (ICT)

The team's communication was supported by Information, Communication and Learning Technologies including skype meetings, emails, telephone calls, and software for sharing documents and ideas. The team also had face to face meetings at conferences such as: European Conference for Educational Research, the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society, and the American Educational Research Association during the development of the pilot project. The team's intention is to build on these initial communication systems through planned video conferencing, virtual conferencing, and a bespoke website with software that will enable collaboration. Funded research will legitimise official timetabling of meetings and research in the working day of researchers. As indicated above, the team would also like to explore using Information, Communication and Learning Technologies to support community participation with their partner schools.

Initial findings from shared methodologies

Overall, the findings reveal the pilot of the first stage of the research does address the research questions and that the research design is fit for purpose (Oancea & Furlong, 2007). Initial findings from the cases reveal that participants believe committed pedagogical relationships enable participation, which improves learning and learning outcomes. There were patterns of involvement in decision making, but these needed to be taken to scale because

there were differences in participation within each school. The evidence also reveals that the characteristics that participants most valued regarding their relationships within their community and of their institutions included trust, respecting the self and the other, resolving conflict peacefully, and recognising diversity through inclusive practices. The second and third stages of the research will enable the team to understand if sustained community participation of this kind leads to improved learning, and improved learning outcomes. Further the team can generate new understandings about how rehearsing decision-making within community democratic power structures enables students to articulate how they might transfer these skills to begin to address societal challenges when they are adults.

Developing theories of participation

In the early stages of this pilot study the team have begun to develop tentative theories of participation. Building pedagogical relationships that will facilitate high quality learning are characterised by trust, respecting the self and other, resolving conflicts together peacefully, and recognising diversity through inclusive practices which are found in what Habermas (1979) calls ideal speech. Participation characterised by ideal speech is an important element of well being and mental health as identified by a report by the United Nations Children's Fund in 2007. The report positioned Great Britain as the worst country amongst industrialised nation states for children to grow up in (Unicef, 2007). Habermas argued ideal speech can be constrained and replaced by distorted speech. Distorted speech may occur when there is a desire that conflict should be avoided within collaboration because there is no time for peaceful reconciliation of differences. Reasons for a lack of time for collaboration might be from a pressure to adhere to a standardised agenda, or curriculum (Ball, 2004). The conflict between having time to build relationships, and meeting standardised agendas or curriculums may lead to fear, which can increase stress in a classroom. The increased stress may in turn begin to increase the misrecognition that has occurred between stakeholders, which is further compounded by distorted speech because there is no time for ideal speech within rushed pedagogical relationships (Hornby et al., 2003).

In top down hierarchies, ideal speech (Habermas, 1979) can also be constrained through structures that privilege particular agents who drive through particular agendas. Thus educational leaders/managers can develop enabling structures for ideal speech and advocate for ideal speech. However, leaders and managers need to be convinced that making space for ideal speech and building relationships characterised by trust, respect, peaceful conflict resolution, and recognising diversity through inclusive practices is going to be good for students' learning and their learning outcomes. This

is because schools are judged by their students' performance in national 'qualifier' examinations. The fuller research project will enable the team to identify the importance of these characteristics for enhancing participation leading to improved learning and learning outcomes. Further the fuller research will reveal how developing these characteristics may enable individuals to rehearse addressing societal challenges together, and rehearsing full engagement in cultural, economic and political systems of production and exchange. The findings are therefore closely linked to the ways in which young people are able to learn with older generations within the school and wider community to face societal challenges whilst building future sustainable and equitable life styles.

Concluding Comments

These local and particular pilot cases are important because they may have some potential to be generalised within each case, but cannot be generalised beyond the case, and are not meant to represent a nation state's education system in any way. However, initial findings do provide cases for school and college leaders, managers and readers of IJSE to critically reflect on. The fuller research, if funded, will enable larger and more in-depth cases to be developed and will provide a tool box on an open access website for school/college leaders and managers to download and apply in their own schools and colleges. Such research has the potential to inform fuller community participation in school which may improve learning, and learning outcomes, and rehearse the kinds of participation that will be required for full cultural, economic and political engagement in glocal communities, to realise young peoples' aspirational life styles for sustainable and equitable societies.

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