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UCL Institute of Education

Students as Researchers into their own Classroom Climate:

How appreciative inquiry changes perceptions.

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Contents

Abstract

A group of 22 male Year 9 (9th Grade) student researchers (SRs) from an outer London comprehensive school took part in an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) using interviews and classroom observations to explore the ways in which fellow students help each other to learn and enjoy classes. The data gathered by the SRs raised their awareness of existing supportive behaviours and acted as a stimulus for them to create 'dream school' posters describing what a school would be like where students fully supported each other's learning and enjoyment.

The SRs' perceptions of the support that students were giving each other in the classroom were measured before and after the AI using the Collaborative Classroom Climate (CCC) questionnaire, developed for this project using selected items from the Classroom Life Measure (Johnson & Johnson, 1983)and What is Happening in This Class? questionnaire (WIHIC) (Fraser, Fisher, & McRobbie, 1996).

The study found that participation in the AI resulted in a significant and positive shift in the SRs' perceptions of CCC. A model describing the mechanisms underlying this shift is proposed with a description of the conditions under which these mechanisms operate.

This IFS highlights some of the issues of running an Appreciative Inquiry in a UK secondary school and the impact on students of acting as researchers into their own classroom climate. The findings are of interest to school leadership teams who want to use AI as a tool for student voice and school improvement, those working with students as researchers, and leaders who wish to encourage a collaborative classroom climate in their schools.

Institute of Education, University of London

Degree of Doctor in Education (EdD)

Institution-Focused Study: Examination Entry Form

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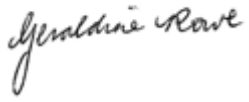
Signature of candidate:  I confirm that I have read and understood the institute's Code on Citing Sources and Avoidance of Plagiarism. I confirm that this Report is all my own work and conforms to this Code.	Date: **30/1/15**

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Background

The purpose of this research is to gather evidence to test out the hypothesis that when students are involved as researchers, one of the most notable and important outcomes is the resulting change that the experience brings about in the student researchers' own perceptions.

This topic is of particular relevance to leaders of UK schools due to the prevailing interest in student voice and the growing popularity of 'students as researchers' initiatives in our schools. Two other topics are prominent in this study and also have relevance for those influencing the direction we are taking in our schools: the way in which students help each other to learn and enjoy school – sometimes referred to as 'building successful learning communities' (Duchow, 2014); and Appreciative Inquiry, an action research paradigm recognised for its value in the world of organisational development (Cooperrider, 2008), but yet to be fully explored by those involved in school transformation.

Research involving children and young people has in the past treated them as the object of that research rather than the *agents* conducting it. However, over the past decade, there has been a definite shift from 'research on' to 'research with', and 'research by' school students (Brownlie, Anderson, & Ormston, 2006). It is now accepted that children can be taught to undertake research both as co-researchers and as researchers in their own right, selecting topics and research methods for themselves (Kellett, 2005a). The range of topics that students have researched is growing and includes for example student views on ICT policy (Davies, 2011), bullying (Thomson & Gunter, 2008) and the opinions of students about teaching and learning (Morgan & Porter, 2011). These examples are typical of many I found, where students ask other students for their views. Nevertheless, to my knowledge this IFS is the first study where students researched the collaborative behaviours of their peers, and the first to investigate the effect of being a student researcher, and so I am hopeful that my research will add something new to the field.

Early in my IFS planning, I presented a poster for the 2014 Institute of Education Poster Conference describing this study. This poster was entitled ‘Classroom Discipline: whose responsibility’ followed by the question: ‘What would lessons be like if students shared responsibility with their teachers for building a successful learning community in the classroom? Through discussion with conference delegates my focus became more specific and concrete and shifted from being about the behaviour of students towards each other in classrooms, to being about the effect that involvement in an AI had on student researchers.

In the following sections, I draw together the largely separate fields of collaborative classroom climate (relating this to the development of democracy in schools), students-as-researchers as an extension to the concept of student voice, and appreciative inquiry and identify the links between these three ingredients of the present study.

Collaborative Classroom Climate

My interest in democratic and collaborative classrooms came about as a result of my work as an Educational Psychologist (EP). An important part of my role as an EP is to work with teachers to find new approaches to help individuals or groups of children to make progress socially, emotionally, and academically. I have found that when I raise the concept of using peers as a resource to help a child, teachers are usually more than willing to consider ways in which the other students can contribute to interventions, recognising that although these students may lack the skills of their teachers, they can offer their classmate more of that valuable resource: time (Topping, 2009). Peer support is a much underused resource, in my experience.

However, some of the most dramatic changes for both individual students and their classes have come about when I have used an approach known as *A Circle of Friends* (Forest & Pearpoint, 1992, in Newton & Wilson, 2003) with children who for a variety of reasons have been rejected or neglected by their classmates.

Following discussion and consent from the 'focus' child and his/her parents, a forty minute session is run with his or her class in the child's absence, in which I explore with the class how they perceive the 'focus' child and invite them to come up with a list of the things they could do to support him or her. Highly personalised ideas emerge for ways to support the child: 'We could save him a place in the lab.', 'We could text her to ask if she's had a good day', 'We could lend him a pen but talk to him about how he could remember his own things'; 'We could say "keep going, it's only ten minutes until break"'; 'We could say "sorry" for all the nasty things we have said to him on the past'. Following the class session, a group of four to five volunteers meets the child with the lead adult to talk with the child about what was said in this session, and to hear and react to the child's response. Following this, the group, including the child, meet once a week, usually up to six or eight times, to discuss what they have been doing to support each other and to discuss what else could be done to assist the pupil.

This intervention works by reframing the child for their peers, unleashing their communal creativity, mobilising them to 'do their bit' to help the child feel wanted, encouraged and valued, and to step in when they start to see signs of a potential problem arising. The power of this approach has been recognised by others such as Frederickson and her co-researchers (Frederickson, Warren, & Turner, 2005) who not only found similar effects from this intervention but also confirmed that the power of the peer group to influence individuals in positive ways has been either ignored or highly underestimated. In its own way, *A Circle of Friends* creates a particularly supportive collaborative community around the child and all participants seem to benefit from the experience, with reports of improvements in communication, empathy, and awareness of each other's strengths (Barrell & Randall, 2004).

The reliability of this approach to encourage children and young people to step forward and help each other motivates me to continue its use. Although some outcomes are more remarkable than others, the positive outcomes are well-documented (Barrell & Randall, 2004; Frederickson et al., 2005). My experience

using *A Circle of Friends* over many years led to me asking the question, 'If children and young people have this potential to help each other in such practical and impressive ways when their support is 'unleashed', why can't they be doing this all the time?' The answer is that they *are* doing *some* of these things *some* of the time, or they wouldn't be able to come up with a list so readily. However, either children are unaware of the potential power they hold to be able to help their classmate, or there is something in the culture that is holding them back. I like the term 'unleashed' as it suggests that there is a natural inclination that is somehow being restrained by the culture. This view is shared by Anarchist theorists, who believe that the human tendency, if unrestrained by authority, is to offer each other mutual aid, and that this tendency can flourish in the right circumstances (Suissa, 2006).

Democracy in schools

The 'right circumstances' in which collaboration and mutual aid can thrive have been found, I suggest, in those schools where the ideal of democracy has been a driving force. My views on democracy in schools have been influenced by the work of Professor Michael Fielding who has been one of the key figures in this field (Fielding, 2012). The model of a culture of collaboration and mutual support in the classroom has interested many educationalists (GTC, 2008). Democratic practices are prevalent in those schools that have been described as taking a 'progressive' stance. The famous psychologist and educational reformer John Dewey, comparing 'traditional' and 'progressive' education, commented that although the progressive approach was viewed by outsiders as 'simple', it required more skill and planning than traditional approaches, suggesting that the required level of commitment and persistence was maybe too demanding for some :

> 'the new education is…in harmony with the principles of growth…But the easy and the simple are not identical, To discover what is really simple and act upon the discovery in an exceedingly difficult task….it is easier to walk in the paths that have been beaten than it is, after taking a new point of view, to work out what is practically involved in the new point of view.'
>
> (Dewey, 1938:20)

Dewey also noted that ‘for one child to help another in his task has become a school crime’ (1915:16); an indicator, perhaps, of the long-lived resistance to democratic approaches within school culture.

In the final chapter of his book ‘Freedom to learn for the 80s’, the psychologist Carl Rogers concludes although the ‘radical’ schools such as those described by Fielding did not have a great record for sustainability, this was due not to any weakness in the schools’ own philosophy or organisation, but rather to the general culture within which they existed. Their demise was hastened, in Rogers’ view, by the threat that these schools posed to other less democratic organisations around them and also by the difficulty of finding replacement head teachers who were willing to share power with students in this way (Rogers, 1983).

Over the period of the past 40 years I have seen a shift towards a more equitable balance in the power relations between teachers and students. I would argue that the many changes in the general culture of schools in the UK since the 1960s point towards the possibility of a greater symmetry of power and responsibility in the classroom between the teacher and the students: the abolition of corporal punishment - perhaps the most symbolic change in the power relations between teachers and students in my lifetime; the highly important Convention on the Rights of The Child (UN General Assembly, 1989); an expectation that group work, discussion, and collaboration now form an important part of classroom learning; the accessibility of knowledge via the internet alongside high levels of technological competence of even very young children; and a developing shift away from the assumption that ‘learning=being taught’ to a focus on the types of classrooms where students take responsibility for their own learning (Watkins, 2004, 2009). It is becoming almost commonplace to see students acting as learning partners (SALP) coming into lessons and then sharing their impressions with the teacher (Fielding, 2011:62).These changes suggest to me that many teachers would now be willing to try out more democratic approaches and that the time is right to consider the importance of creating truly collaborative cultures in our schools and classrooms. This gives me hope that, forty or fifty years on, the presence of such structures

would be seen as positive examples of excellence in our schools, rather than a threat to the establishment. As Professor Fielding wrote so succinctly,

> 'We need to return with respect and joy to the radical traditions, to the prefigurative practices of education which hold up to us more generous, more fulfilling possibilities of the realities of democracy as a way of working, living and being together'
>
> (Fielding, 2011:73).

I am persuaded by my reading of the history and opinions around democratic schools and collaborative classrooms that these ideas have a lot to offer schools for the present era. For those of us that see the task of turning our schools into democratic institutions as a Herculean task we can begin by getting our own 'little bit of Gucci' that is collaborative classroom culture. The approach I am introducing in this IFS – that of students conducting their own research into collaborative climate - could be viewed as the ultimate expression of democracy and power negotiation in schools.

The Need for a Focus on Collaborative Classroom Climate

One of the salient features of the democratic schools previously referred to was the way in which students took responsibility for making decisions that affected other students, such as agreements about who was acting responsibly enough to be allowed access to certain activities or equipment. There is much about these schools that gave students the impression that it was 'their school' and that they had both a choice in how it was run, and a responsibility for having made these choices. They also felt at home there (Field, 2012). There is much research to support the idea that if students feel a sense of belonging, safety and mutual support in their classrooms, they are likely to behave more responsibly, have fewer mental health problems, retain more and achieve better (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; OECD, 2000; Willms, 2003). In particular, the perception of a high level of peer support is associated with higher levels of affective engagement in school (Estell & Perdue, 2013; Malecki & Demaray, 2002), and democratic school practices have been identified as playing an important role in developing a sense of community (Vieno, Perkins, Smith, & Santinello, 2005).

In the past decade, much has been written about the gains that can be made when students are encouraged to become responsible for their own learning. Chris Watkins, in his article, 'Learners in the Driving Seat' summarises these gains as:

> 'greater engagement and intrinsic motivation
> students setting higher challenge
> students evaluating their work
> better problem-solving'
>
> (Watkins, 2009:29)

Watkins goes on to describe how, in order for learners to 'drive' their own learning, some traditionally accepted classroom practices need to be revised, especially those that give the clear message that the teacher is in charge of the learning. In a similar vein, others such as MacAllister (2014) are of the opinion that schools give the students a message that the teachers are also in charge of students' *behaviour and discipline*, rather than the students themselves sharing responsibility for, or 'driving' the culture of the classroom.

There are a number of approaches that formalise the ways in which students can be encouraged to influence each others' behaviour, which are more or less deliberate in character: in-class strategies such as The Good Behaviour Game (Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969) and The Raise Responsibility System (Marshall, 2012); classroom organisation (Marzano, 2003) and school-wide initiatives such as peer mediation initiatives (CRESST, 2015).

Although there is some evidence that the in-class strategies can improve classroom behaviour they all tend to require the teacher to introduce a system that includes time-consuming surveillance and contain implicit reminders that the teacher is still "in charge" of and somehow responsible for students' behaviour. In my opinion, this mismatch between student responsibility for learning and teacher responsibility for classroom discipline is illogical, needs addressing, and could provide the opportunity for a revolutionary rethink about how classroom discipline is perceived. This is particularly relevant when considering the ways in which schools prepare young people for future leadership (Riley, 2013).

Despite the fact that the concept of active student participation in schools is now pretty uncontroversial, students are, typically, invited to participate in discrete, selected activities, rather than their full participation being embedded in the everyday life of the school. When asked how student participation is enacted in a school, most teachers will point out 'initiatives' such as their anti-bullying discussions or their playground buddies, school councils and peer mentor systems, but fail to identify explicit endeavours to create a collaborative classroom culture.

If we look more closely at those democratic schools described by Fielding, we see high levels of collaboration and the development of the skills that are required for students to play their part. My experience using *A Circle of Friends* convinces me that many students have both the capacity to identify the needs of their classmates and the motivation to offer them assistance.

Description of Collaborative Classroom Climate

The terms 'culture' and 'climate' have subtly different meanings (Gruenert, 2008) and so I need to clarify the way I am using these terms: the culture is 'the way we do things around here' and the climate is 'our perception of how it feels to be here at present'. However, the differentiation between these two terms is not crucial for this study.

My own definition of Collaborative Classroom Climate is broadly construed: I view CCC as the individual's perceptions that they and fellow students in their classes are helping each other. In a similar vein, Tardy (1985) defined five aspects of social support: direction; disposition; description-evaluation; and network. In a paper entitled "A little help from my friends', Sulowski et al categorized the different types of social support thus:

> Emotional support consists of feeling taken care of or valued (e.g., a student feels as if his or her teacher really cares about him or her) and instrumental support involves receiving time and resources (e.g., a peer spends time helping a friend on a project). Appraisal support consists of receiving instructive feedback (e.g., a teacher provides helpful feedback to a student), whereas informational support simply

> involves providing needed information (e.g., a teacher provides a student with information on how to apply to college)
> (Sulkowski, Demaray, & Lazarus, 2012).

A comparative study (Romi, Lewis, & Katz, 2009) looked at a similar group of supportive behaviours as well as how individuals took responsibility for their own behaviour. Their results showed that even the best behaved students in Australian and Israeli classrooms were highly unlikely to do anything to improve the behaviour or learning of their classmates, a concept the researchers referred to as 'communal responsibility'. Their Chinese student counterparts were slightly more likely to intervene if classmates were not behaving well in class, or struggling with their learning. The researchers put this difference down to the respect that students in China show their teachers – they didn't mention respect towards each other, which I found interesting as this could be a sign that a balanced power relationship between teachers and students is not a necessary condition for peer support to thrive. They also found that boys and girls were as likely as each other to assist their peers; there was no distinction based on gender in peer support within the classroom.

Remi et al. found the lack of motivation to offer support to peers 'disturbing' especially as all three of these countries place a high value on preparing their students for democratic citizenship. My observations in the many classrooms I visit in the course of my work lead me to believe that peer support is happening in UK schools, but has yet to be identified in published research. I also share the belief of anarchist theorists (Deleon, 2008) that there is a natural drive to interact and help each other and make the kind of choices which help build a learning community (Wenger, 1998) in the classroom that can enhance the enjoyment and learning of all when it is in action and may even help to reduce what I describe as the 'asymmetry of classroom discipline'.

I used the search terms '*democratic classroom'* and then *'building learning community in the classroom'* to find a definitive list of what behaviours might constitute a strong CCC. Through this search I identified an Education Board in

Washington, USA, where Building Successful Learning Communities (BSLC) appears to form an important part of continuing teacher development (Duchow, 2014). Not only have they listed the behaviours which they expect to see in a collaborative classroom, but they also train and assess teachers on their ability to create such a culture in their classrooms. It is not clear from the paper how they compiled this list.

Duchow identifies the characteristics of such classrooms as being those where:

- Students become responsible for assessing the physical surroundings as well as the language and behaviour required in order to create and maintain a safe learning environment, (both physical and emotional, for self and others).
- Students … make note of, and make adjustments for other student's special needs in a respectful way.
- Students assume responsibility for high quality by initiating improvements, making revisions, adding detail, and/or helping peers.
- Students contribute to extending the content and help explain concepts to their classmates.
- Students may have some choice in how they complete tasks and may serve as resources for one another.
- Students formulate many questions, initiate topics, and make unsolicited contributions.
- Students themselves ensure that all voices are heard in the discussion.
- Students exhibit respect for the teacher and contribute to high levels of civil interaction between all members of the class. The net result of interactions is that of connections with students as individuals.
- Students contribute to the management of instructional groups, transitions, and the handling of materials and supplies.
- Routines are well understood and may be initiated by students.
- Students take an active role in monitoring their own behavior and that of other students against standards of conduct.

- Students contribute to the use or adaptation of the physical environment to advance learning.

(Duchow, 2014)

This list is a useful reference for CCC. However, I felt that some of the classroom components described in this list, such as 'Students contribute to the use or adaptation of the physical environment to advance learning' are highly unlikely to be present in classrooms of the school I was to use for this study, so would not be a suitable source of items for the CCC measure for this IFS.

Measures of CCC

Although it has been recognised that teachers and students share some perceptions of classroom climate, it has been recognised that students are best placed to make judgments about classroom climate, as they have spent a great deal of time in a wide range of classrooms (Chell, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2010). Interestingly, the age at which children can make and express these judgements is a topic I have not yet come across.

As I was interested in instruments that measured student perceptions of classroom climate, I started with Fraser's historical perspective on 20 years of classroom climate work (Fraser, 1989). His study explored six different measures and of these there were 2 measures suitable for the age group in my sample, younger secondary school pupils: the Learning Environment Inventory (LEI) and Classroom Environment Scale (CES). Measures of social support contain items that are similar to those for classroom climate measures but tend to measure what *other people* do. For example, the Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale CASSS (Malecki & Demaray, 2002) only offers statements about other people: 'My teacher helps me when I'm upset…'. Similarly, My Class Inventory (Fisher & Fraser, 1981) and the Classroom Life Measure (Johnson & Johnson, 1983) include statements such as 'In my class everyone is my friend'. Fraser in his measure: What is Happening in This Class (WIHIC) includes statements about the behaviour of both the participant and others e.g. 'I carry out investigations to test my ideas', 'In this class I get help from other students' (Fraser, 2007). I decided, like Fraser, to ask

questions to measure perceptions not only of what others did to help the student, but also, what they did to help other students. Another measure I came across, instrument, The Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI) (Dwyer & Bingham, 2004), measures a sense of connectedness in university classrooms in the US. It initially appeared that this was a suitable instrument for my purposes. However, although the CCCI measures the students' sense of connectedness in university classrooms in The States, the questions all refer to what *other* students do, rather than also including questions about the respondents' perception of *their own behaviours*, so in the end I decided to adapt items from two of the most suitable surveys: The Classroom Life Measure (CLM) (Johnson & Johnson, 1983) and What is Happening in This Class? (WIHIC) (Fraser et al, 1996). I selected these because they were appropriate for the age group and experience of the SRs; had previous validity of items; were likely to reflect the characteristics of some classes in the IFS school; and contained a mixture of items referring to their own behaviour and that of others.

Students as Researchers

I view Students-as-Researchers (SR) as an important activity within the context of student voice and school improvement, and others have given a variety of reasons why SR benefits students and their schools. The acceptance of active student participation in schools has developed to include student participation in school improvement, and I believe that the concept of 'students as researchers' offers an important contribution to this field. Previously, the cases that have been made for involving students in research have been built around arguments for: enabling students to fulfil their rights as children; providing adults with alternative perceptions; learning new skills; practicing democracy; and increasing attainment. I suggest that very little has been made of the case that can be made for the positive impact that taking on the SR role can have on the students' own attitudes and perceptions.

Much has been made of how enabling students to have a voice prepares them for active citizenship in adult life. I have two issues with this: firstly, that citizenship

lessons on their own can have minimal impact unless mediated by a democratic classroom culture (Perliger, 2006), and secondly, I believe, as Swain, that students are more motivated by activities they perceive to be related to their present situation. Swain questions the whole notion that participation is a 'preparation for something else'. He quotes Gribble (1985):

> 'What you should do at school is not prepare for life, but live…pupils' interests, preferences and enjoyment are of paramount importance and they, of course, require a process of pupil participation.'
>
> (Swain,1988:6).

In my MOE1 I proposed that 'by using action research, as opposed to other methods of inquiry, we turn the spotlight on student participation' (Rowe, 2013) and so I planned in this IFS to follow the example of Kemmis and McTaggart (1992, in Cohen et al., 2007) who describe the best action research as being participatory and collaborative, and add my own proviso that where students are going to have to live with the consequences of research aimed at improving their schooling, they should be personally involved in that research.

Student Research as a Form of Student Voice

The idea of getting students to carry out research in their own schools is not a new one. I have been interested in the active role of students for many years and in the late 1990's fellow Educational Psychologist (EP) Allan Fuller and I set up a national Pupil Participation interest group for EPs. Through this group we collected articles and examples of ways of gathering pupils' views about themselves, their own needs and preferences and their schools, with the aim of updating our own professional practice. At this time the need to seek and report on children's views was being highlighted by the DfES (Children and Young People's Unit, 2002) and there was also an increase in interest in pupil participation and voice, school councils and the involvement of pupils in school improvement. Although this was not a new phenomenon, it was not until the late 1990s that pupil involvement became a generally accepted part of school improvement (Pickering, 1997). The form that pupil involvement took was initially through the setting up of student

forums and councils and the use of surveys and questionnaires designed by adults to collect pupils' views. I first heard about students as researchers in 2002 when I came across the work of the ESRC Network Project run by the University of Cambridge. Since that time there have been many conference presentations, papers and books written about students as researchers, both giving advice on training and administration of this approach (e.g. Alderson, 2001; Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Fletcher, 2005) and researching the outcomes of such projects (e.g. Melton, Ben-Arieh, Cashmore, Goodman, & Worley, 2014).

Purpose of Students as Researchers

Arguments for involving students in democratic processes at school include preparing them for the future, giving them experiences that make them look more attractive to future universities or employers. Harber provides an overview of the evidence to support the claim that "there is (also) evidence that listening to pupils, encouraging their participation and giving them more power and responsibility… can enhance school effectiveness and facilitate school improvement" (2010:40).

Studies describe the impact of increased student involvement as being: a greater sense of political efficacy (Ehman, 1969); a decrease in racist comments and incidents (Welgemoed, 1998); increased trust between teachers and pupils and improved relationships between the school and the wider community (Davies et al., 2005); improved A-level and GCSE examination grades (Bäckman & Trafford, 2006; Hannam, 2001); better behaviour and attendance and less delinquency (Rutter, 1979). The methods used to measure the impact of pupil participation in these studies has often been discussion with students and teachers (Davies et al., 2005), surveys gathering perceptions of the impact of school practices (Harber, 2010), or links made between a school's increased participation and improved exam results (Bäckman & Trafford, 2006). In a study that examined over seventy studies of pupil participation, chiefly in the UK, Yamashita et al (2010) could not find any school that, having increased pupil participation, decided to go back on that practice, which suggests that there was a general satisfaction with the outcomes.

The purpose for encouraging students to carry out research, as distinct from giving them general ‘student voice’ opportunities, has been identified as being a way of teachers and students ‘re-seeing each other’ (Fielding, 2012); of helping primary school children with their school work and confidence and informing their teachers (Springate & Lindridge, 2010); for teaching children research methods and sharpening their critical skills (Kellett, 2005b); to offer students a way of changing the school (Fletcher, 2005); and as a way of involving students in the production of knowledge - they move from being representatives of the student body, to active agents in school policy and practice (Thomson & Gunter, 2007).

The literature contains many references to the way in which student research provides adults with significant and otherwise obscure information that somehow help them to make improvements to the school, but little about students changing their own behaviour and attitudes as a result of the experience of being a researcher.

Impact of Being a Researcher

My experience told me that engaging students in a piece of participatory action research would be likely to have a constructive effect on them. In this section I outline the literature that reinforced this expectation, describing what others have written about how the experience of conducting research impacts on the researcher.

My impression is that the process that goes on when we ask students to become observers (and researchers) of others is similar to the process that goes on with Reflecting Teams (Andersen, 1987): the students can observe and listen in greater depth when they do not have to think about how they are going to respond. For many school students, and especially for my IFS participants, the only time that they are asked to reflect on behaviour is when they are in trouble and are in the position of having to defend themselves or admit error. I predicted that in observing and interviewing other students and taking note of what they did and said without the demand that they make a response, student researchers would be able to

listen and observe in a new, deeper, way. Aware that change can go either way, the affective dimension of the researcher experience is one that I wanted to understand better.

The study of the effects of the research on those conducting it is a rather neglected area in research despite acknowledgement that participating in research can result in personal development (Haynes, 2006). Indeed, Russell & Kelly went as far as to say that carrying out research contributes to 'the creation… of a new self' and they conclude that this can , in part, be down to the 'pleasure that researchers feel' (Russell & Kelly, 2002:40). They reflect that as researchers:

> 'We are educating and being educated; we are learning about ourselves as well as others. We are changed by many aspects of the research process: through engaging in real conversations, through what we learn in the course of listening well, through participation in a process that allows new creations to occur, and through our own reflexivity. As researchers, we come away with new understandings, the origins of which are not entirely clear to us. Our very participation in the research endeavour changes us.'
>
> (Russell & Kelly, 2002:43).

I was unable to find any research relating specifically to the impact on *student* researchers of carrying out that role, so I looked for literature relating to their adult counterparts. Although I was searching for papers on *positive* effects of research on the (adult) researcher, the papers I found all related to *negative* effects, such as the risks to researchers' mental health from investigating bereavement and violence and other distressing material (Bloor, Fincham, & Sampson, 2007). Similar commentaries, such as those of Hubbard et al. (2001), conclude that the research process can arouse a range of negative emotions within the researcher, with warnings and reminders about 'vicarious traumatisation' (Bloor et al., 2007). Having read these accounts, I hypothesized that if researching morbid topics seemed to lead to arousal of negative emotions in the researcher, then perhaps researching affirmative issues using an *appreciative* paradigm would probably result in the opposite effect on researchers, and leave them more empowered, optimistic and energized by the experience. Documentation describing the use of

mood induction methodologies in psychological research (Gilet, 2008) supports this hypothesis.

The only reference I could find describing *positive* outcomes for the researcher was in a blog entitled 'How My Research Changed My Life' by an Australian PhD student who described how

> 'Doing research is an emotional as well as an intellectual occupation. It involves feelings, as well as thinking. We make every effort to keep our feelings from influencing the results but we can't keep ourselves from being affected personally by the work and results of the research…. .The act of observing my participants and analyzing the data they provide has changed my attitude towards them'
>
> (Pitcher, 2012)

This strengthened my resolve to look for positive changes in a group of student researchers, and confirmed the choice of Appreciative Inquiry as my methodology and collaborative classroom behaviours as the topic for the student research experience.

An important reason for getting students to research what other students are doing is that the experience of observing and reflecting can help them to change their perceptions and behaviour. I am unaware of any studies looking specifically at the effect of carrying out research on the students themselves. I hope that the present study will make a small contribution to filling this gap in the literature.

Appreciative Inquiry

Having confirmed that I was going to engage SRs to investigate CCC, and aware that the effect on the SRs could go in either direction, I wanted to minimise the negative and accentuate the positive impacts, and identify an action research technique that suited the collaborative nature of the topic. I also wanted to choose an approach which would minimise the risk of opening up a subject that could not be satisfactorily contained and concluded within the timescale of the IFS. The approach would have to be able to be adapted in the light of any events cropping

up in the school requiring a change of plan - working as I do in schools, I know all too well how the best laid plans can go awry in this environment. Given these requirements, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was an obvious choice for me.

AI was developed as an action research tool for use in organisational development (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987, in Cram, 2010). The technique enables participants to reflect upon the best of existing practice, imagine what might be and generate new ideas to promote organisational improvements.

AI seemed to me to be the ideal approach for a number of reasons, the first being that I was already familiar with the framework. Although I had not carried out a complete AI, I had, in the past, borrowed aspects of the AI philosophy to good effect in my work with individual students and groups of school staff. I wanted the opportunity to become better acquainted with the AI method as it is an approach that works well when the phenomenon to be measured is not an obvious one, and needs 'searching out' – as CCC appears to be. Focusing as it does on the collection of examples of positive experience, AI was likely to lead teachers and students to embrace rather than reject the principles of CCC, hence leaving them more likely to adopt these ideas in the future. In addition, the authors and practitioners of AI acknowledge that this is an approach that has no set 'manualised' version (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003) and so lends itself to adaptation and creativity – an essential element for a study taking place in a busy secondary school carried out by a relatively inexperienced researcher. Finally, I wanted to use it because very few other people are using AI in school settings in this country and so this study would contribute something new to the field.

This relatively recent form of action research was conceived by David Cooperrider and his supervisor Suresh Srivastva when Cooperrider was a doctoral researcher studying business development (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Cooperrider developed AI as an alternative to the then ubiquitous 'problem-solving' model. He wanted to replace an approach which, amongst other things, often left members of an organisation feeling as though they had problems, with an approach that helped

them to become excited to discover that the material for future transformation was already present in the organisation. By searching out the best of what was already present in a company he found that creativity was unlocked and a newfound energy fuelled the development and growth of that organisation. By its very nature, AI typically involves people at all levels in an organisation and as such can be seen as a democratic or even anarchist approach, in that the very people who are to enact the changes are involved in the AI and are invited to contribute their own experiences and 'dreams' to the process of achieving a desired future for the organisation (Grant & Humphries, 2006).

The researcher facilitating an AI helps people within the organisation to explore their own experiences and perceptions of what has worked well in the past and bases future plans on these findings. The relatively small number of published examples of school-based AI have shown this form of participatory action research to be a good way of increasing student engagement and stimulating a heightened sense of community (Bushe, 2009). I was inspired further by Cooperrider's video in the Thought Leaders in Learning series on YouTube, which contained the following quotes: "going after yesterday's problem is probably the wrong place to put our major attention. We don't eclipse our old problems until we design the new" (Cooperrider, 2013).

Despite an unfamiliarity with this approach amongst the school leaders with whom I work, there are already some documented examples of positive outcomes from use of AI in state schools in the UK (Adamson, Samuels, & Willoughby, 2002; Shuayb, 2014; Willoughby & Tosey, 2006). I made contact with Glyn Willoughby, who at the time of the study Imagine Heathside, an AI carried out in a UK state secondary school, was the head teacher of that school and employed Neil Samuels as an AI expert to carry out an AI Summit (a 'Summit' is the name given to a complete AI cycle) in his school. I found Glyn highly encouraging as I planned this study.

One of the few other published studies using AI in UK schools is that by Maha Shuayb who was commissioned by NFER to research the practicalities of using AI with UK school students (Shuayb & Sharp, 2009) . Once again, I contacted Maha to find out how her AI had gone, and to find out a little more about the detail of her study, in two UK secondary schools. Each school was invited to select 12 students to be trained in conducting AI interviews on the topic of 'community cohesion' using questionnaires designed by the research team, who also ran three group workshops over a period of six months. The workshops covered 1) Training participants to conduct interviews; 2) 'Discover, Share and Design' workshop where the students share their positive stories they had collected and start to plan how community cohesion could be improved; 3) 'Share, Design and Deliver' workshop, where students met with Local Authority representatives to present and discuss their plans.

Maha described how she found that students in her study struggled mainly with nervousness and with such skills as note taking and probing and had trouble in the interviews keeping the students focused on the positive. There is no prescribed framework for carrying out an AI as this is still a fairly 'young' technique and is still being developed (Hammond, 1996), however, the 4-D methodology of Discover (find the best of what is already happening), Dream (what *might* be), Design (how could this happen) and Deliver (put this plan into action) is the most commonly used approach (Bushe, 2011).

I was aware that as this was new territory for both me and the school, that we may have to find alternative ways to address the final two stages: Design and Deliver, so prepared to combine the later steps into a 'Dream and Design' workshop and negotiate the Deliver approach with the school and the SRs when we reached that step. I mapped out the following actions onto a typical AI plan:

1. **Discover**: Get the SRs to explore the positive experiences of classroom collaboration first with each other and then by observing and interviewing other students. Plan in sessions on interviewing and observation and research ethics for their own research.

2. **Dream and Design**: Group workshop to create a “preferred future”, what a school would look like where all students were helping each other to enjoy and learn.
3. **Deliver**: this is where the ideas are made a reality by agreeing practical strategies to turn the design into action, finding a way that would give the SRs recognition for their work and ideas, and potentially provide a resource that the school could use for future staff or student development.

Summary of Research Aims

The primary aim of this study was to determine whether taking part in an appreciative inquiry as student researchers (SRs) resulted in a change of SR perceptions and behaviours. To accomplish this goal, I needed to construct a measure to demonstrate that changes in perception of CCC were related to experience as a student researcher. In order to be able to understand any shift in the CCC ratings, I decided to run a focus group with the SRs at the end of the study to hear what they had to say about their experience.

Accordingly, I hypothesized that following a period as researchers there would be an increase in the SRs perceptions of the level of collaborative behaviours in their classes and this increase might also be accompanied by an increase in their own collaborative behaviours.

In the past, AI has been used to ‘lift the lid’ off employees to reveal the personal strengths and energy to take an organisation into a more positive future. It is my hope that I will be able to show in this IFS not only that CCC is present, if a little obscured, but that the process of AI possesses many of the characteristics that psychology has identified as being conducive to positive change of perceptions.

Design

The final design took the following form: Scoping Group; CCC Questionnaire (initial); Discovery Workshop; Interview and observation training sessions; SR

Interviews and Observations; Dream and Design Workshop; CCC Questionnaire (final); SR Focus Group.

This IFS employed a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2003) enabling the SRs to explore CCC through an AI, and assisting me in my search for an explanation for any resulting shifts in their perceptions. A group of Student Researchers (SRs) took part in a piece of participatory action using an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) framework, resulting in qualitative data. The quantitative portion consisted of a single group pre- and post-test design comparing responses to a CCC questionnaire completed by SRs before and after the AI.

Prior to the AI, an Initial Scoping Session explored the feasibility of using this approach with the SR group and confirmed that the topic and methods were suitable for this particular group. Following the AI, a Final Feedback Group enabled debriefing to take place and was an opportunity to gather SRs' comments on the AI process. Table 1 below shows the schedule for this IFS.

Table 1: IFS Schedule.

Dates	**Phase**	**Activity**
Jan – Feb 2014	Recruitment; Baseline measurement (QStart)	Negotiation of project and timetable with Senior Leaders. Recruitment of participants; Initial scoping session. Design and completion of initial CCC Questionnaire
Mar – May2014	Appreciative Inquiry	First Appreciative Inquiry (AI) 'Discovery' workshop, including training in observation, interviewing and ethics. Meetings to support SRs trouble-shoot any problems arising with observations and interviews; Second AI 'Dream and Design' workshop
Jun 2014	Assessment questionnaire (QFinish) and feedback group	Second CCC questionnaire completed by SRs; Final Feedback Focus group meeting. Analysis of data

The Setting

The setting for this study was London High (not its real name) a large mixed state secondary school in a multi-racial area of outer London, where I was employed one day a week as a Consultant Educational Psychologist. Whilst the choice of school was opportunistic (Cohen et al., 2007), I was satisfied that this was a fairly typical example of a UK state comprehensive school. In light of this, my findings, particularly those relating to the institutional aspects of carrying out school-based research, could be generalised to other schools in that sector.

Participants

The participants were 22 Year 9 (9th Grade) 13-14 year-old boys identified as a group who needed additional support for their attendance or behaviour. This group was already working with a Learning Mentor a couple of times a week to improve their engagement in school. There was no equivalent group for girls running at the time of this study. This project fitted in with the group's school engagement programme and it had already been established that they could be withdrawn from lessons for group work.

The decision to select these boys as student researchers (SRs) for the AI is supported by Cooperrider's finding that when less-experienced and lower status members of an organisation were used to interview more experienced colleagues, a better quality of data and a 'special energy' was generated (Bushe, 1995). I also felt that if the AI worked with this group of students, it could work with any group!

Ethical Issues

Before starting the study, I obtained ethical clearance from the Institute of Education. A priority was to ensure that students would not feel coerced into taking part in this study and I discussed the proposed method with a group of students in a neighbouring secondary school before embarking on the project, including seeking their advice on how to talk to students about consent. They suggested that

I should reiterate during the course of the project that participation was voluntary and any of them were free to opt out or suggest changes to the process at any time. I followed the advice and found that even those SRs who did not appear to be highly engaged in the discussions said that they were enjoying the experience and preferred coming to the sessions to being in class. There was a small group who always turned up early and a couple of SRs at the other end of the scale whose attendance at school was problematic and were absent for part of the project. Their absence did not prevent them from rejoining the project on the days they attended, as they were keen to remain in the group.

All the SRs would have been working with the Learning Mentor during these periods and so participation in this study did not affect the amount of time they were spending in their subject lessons. As the SRs were to conduct research of their own I included a section on Ethics in their 'Discover' workshop, and although I had to simplify the presentation of the ethical issues, they all seemed to understand and appreciate the ethical issues involved, reminding each other if names of interviewees crept into the discussion. In this workshop I described the ethical practices I had to adhere to as a researcher in this IFS, such as maintaining confidentiality, anonymity, and minimising harm to participants, to illustrate the care they themselves would need to take with their own participants. They understood that no identifiable personal data would be used when reporting the findings of the study.

As well as getting the signed consent of the SRs, I designed a consent slip for them to use with the individuals they interviewed and a badge to identify them as Student Researchers (See Appendix 1 for slip and badge). For the classroom observations, the Learning Mentor gained the consent of the subject teachers to observe in their lessons, but we decided not to seek the consent of every student in those classes as the observation data consisted of anonymised observations of normal classroom activity. I saw the task of managing expectations as an important one, and one student in particular asked on two separate occasions, "Remind me

why we are doing this?" and expressed a view that any change in school as a result of their research was 'a high hope'.

All SRs were given an outline of the research (Appendix 2) so that they could make a judgement for themselves about the value of offering their time to this study, and signed a consent form after this had been discussed. No SR opted out of the invitation to give consent despite repeated reminders that this was not compulsory. As the study was carried out in the school during school hours, and the researcher was a part-time member of the school staff, separate parental consent was not sought. However, students were given an extra copy of the outline of the research and student consent form for their parents.

Procedure

Initial Scoping Meeting

My first meeting with the group of Student Researchers (SRs) took place in a classroom and lasted 40 minutes, assisted by the Learning Mentor. The meeting had a number of purposes:

- to enable me to meet the boys, outline the project and describe what 'consent to participate' entailed . I wanted to leave some time between describing the project and enlisting consent, so although I described the concept of consent at this meeting, I waited until the first AI workshop to get their consent, to give them a 'cooling off' period. (see Appendices 3 and 4 for the parent/teacher information sheet and consent form);

- to find out whether they had any interest in the topic I had selected for the study;

- to gauge the level of literacy, comprehension and analytical skills, and commitment to the concepts from the SRs in order to pitch the workshops at the right level; and

- to establish the 'culture' for the rest of the project, i.e. one where their views would be listened to and respected and kept confidential, and where we would be encouraging each other and be free to express ideas without fear of ridicule.

I introduced the project in the following way:

> 'I am here to invite you to take part in a project looking at the ways in which students help each other to learn and enjoy lessons. I will be asking you later if you want to take part, but first I am interested in hearing your ideas about some issues about how students treat each other in class.
> Some researchers (Postman, 1996) argue that now that we have the internet as a source of information, we no longer need teachers and classrooms. Do you agree? Would you prefer to learn always on your own, always in classrooms, or a mixture of the two? Why? Please discuss and write down some of your thoughts on the flipchart paper on the tables in front of you. (Their ideas and reasons were then shared, explored further and noted).
>
> We have all experienced times where students wrecked a lesson and others where students helped it to go well. Can you discuss this and come up with examples of the types of things students can do in both these cases? (Discussion followed).
>
> You said that students know what to do to help or hinder a lesson. You also said that one of the reasons you gave for wanting to learn 'in classes' rather than 'always on your own' was that you want to help each other. Why would you want to do this? How would you do it? (Discussed and shared between groups).
>
> 'When we meet again next week, I will be asking you if you want to take part in this project. It is voluntary and you can stop being part of it whenever you want to. It will involve doing some interviews and observations but we will help you to do these things. What you say will be kept confidential, that means that we will use your ideas, but won't say who said what. And if you don't want your ideas included you can say so.' Questions were then invited and responded to.

Immediately following the Initial Scoping Group, the Learning Mentor and I met to discuss the project plan in the light of the SRs' responses to the session. Using an approach influenced by Framework Analysis (Rabiee, 2004) we considered each of the following questions in turn:

> Do the students understand the purpose of this study? Do they show an interest in it? Do their skills (literacy, debate) match the design of the study? Do the points they raised require us to alter our design?

We agreed that, during this session, it had become evident that the boys placed value on students supporting each other in school and had opinions about this topic. They supported the idea of learning in the company of others vs. working independently on a computer, for example, and they could provide arguments why it was worth putting effort into supporting other students in a class such as, 'If one student goes down they pull the rest down with them' and, 'When you help another student you are helping yourself in the long run'. Most importantly for this study, the SRs could describe the ways in which students can make or break a lesson and provided examples of how students can make a difference to the enjoyment and learning of others in a class. We agreed that the SRs had engaged well in the discussions and appeared to have an interest in talking part in the study. They worked well in groups of 4-5 and those who scribed performed the job adequately, conveying the ideas in legible writing on flipchart paper.

The main adaptation that I decided to make to my previous plans, following this session, was to be more directive in the workshops, at least initially, as the boys found it easier to respond to questions which could be answered with a list. As a group, they also worked better when instructions were brief and when the time they had to spend on responding was clearly defined (e.g. 'you have 2 minutes to come up with ….'). We decided to keep to our original plan but be prepared to amend details as we went along if needed.

The CCC Questionnaire - QStart

Having studied a range of measures of classroom climate, I constructed a rating scale adapting items from the two measures of classroom climate that appeared to have most relevance to this study: Classroom Life Measure (CLM) (Johnson & Johnson, 1983) and What is Happening in This Class? (WIHIC) (Fraser et al., 1996). I named this new instrument the Collaborative Classroom Climate (CCC) questionnaire. As the SRs completed the questionnaire twice, I have chosen to refer to the first completion of the questionnaire, pre- AI, as QStart, and the post-AI completion as QFinish.

The items selected for this questionnaire were chosen because they appeared to measure aspects of classroom behaviours that reflected a collaborative classroom climate. Items included those which focused on what the participant did to interact with or show concern for other students: 'The way I acted in lessons helped other students to enjoy school'; the actions of others towards him: 'Other students in this class wanted me to do my best schoolwork'; and generic statements that suggested collaboration: 'When we worked together in small groups, everyone cooperated to complete the assignment'. 12 items were adapted from CLM and 6 from WIHIC. As the WIHIC and CLM ask participants to respond 'in general' their items are all present tense. As I was asking about the participants' experiences 'of the past week', I changed the tenses to reflect this. As there were more items relating to succeeding at schoolwork than about enjoying lessons, I added two items of my own: 'The way I acted in lessons helped other students to enjoy school'; and 'The way other students acted in lessons helped me to enjoy school'.

Appendix 5 contains a copy of the CCC questionnaire and records the source of each item.

The first two questions on the CCC were:

1. Who would you say is responsible for a class running well and the class discipline?

2. Please say how much influence the people below have on student behaviour and concentration in a lesson? (Students could respond on a scale from 1-5 for both teachers and students 1= “no influence” to 4= “a great deal”).

For the remaining 20 items, the SRs responded to the measures on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (c*ompletely false*) to 5 (*completely true*).

I deliberated about whether to include a midpoint in my Likert scale. As "the decision would seem to depend on the level of 'uncertain' responses one is willing to tolerate" (Matell & Jacoby, 1972, in Garland, 1991) I decided that I wanted to allow participants to record uncertainly so used a 5-point scale. I reworded the items to fist my instruction for the participants to ‘think back over the lessons they had been in during the past week and consider each statement in turn’.

I piloted the questionnaire on three Year 9 students from another school to check clarity of items and ease of use, and adapted it in the light of their comments by including a reminder of the scale key on the second page.

The questionnaire was first completed by the SRs right at the start of the first AI workshop (QStart) and again at the end of the study (QFinish).

Statistical analysis of pre-AI questionnaire (QStart) data

I used Cronbach Alpha (N=20) on the QStart data to test the internal consistency of the items. The resultant Alpha of 0.83 was acceptable - values between 0.7 and 0.9 are regarded as satisfactory (Greene & D’Oliveira, 1982), showing that there was reasonable internal consistency between items.

An exploratory data analysis of the QStart data (N=20) identified that there were no obvious outliers. Although there was a slight positive skewedness, the distribution was roughly normal and so I decided to use parametric statistics for analysis.

The Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Discovery Workshop

The AI 'Discovery' workshop was held in the school's main drama studio. Having described the session plan, I introduced the first CCC questionnaire (QStart) by saying that it was a way for me to find out how they had helped or been helped by other students during the past week. Although I asked the SRs to put their names at the top, I made it clear that this was in order for me to be able to match up both their questionnaires but that their names would not be used to identify their responses. The SRs sat in relative silence at tables to complete the questionnaire. They did not confer and only asked questions to be reassured that they had understood the directions. Although I said that I would help anyone who wanted it read out to them, nobody asked for this - I understood from their Learning Mentor that receiving assistance to read subject lesson materials was a familiar practice for some members of this group.

Once the questionnaires were completed, I gave a brief PowerPoint presentation outlining of the study.

Two sixth formers I had invited to help in this session then modelled the use of two questions with additional prompts, to interview each other about positive experiences they had had at school, and how other students had contributed to their enjoyment or learning.

The SRs then interviewed each other in pairs using the same questions:

1. Can you tell me about a time here when you felt most excited and enthusiastic here? It may have been in the classroom, maybe not.

2. What were other people doing that helped you to enjoy this activity? What were you doing that helped others to enjoy it?

A selection of these SRs then fed back to the group, following which I described the two research methods they could choose from to gather information from other students in their year: interviews or observations. We discussed how they might go about recruiting students to interview, when and where to interview them, and we role-played ways they could describe what the research was about. The Learning Mentor said that he still needed to get permission from teachers to observe in their classes, so it was agreed that the boys would get on with interviewing other Y9 students while this permission was being sought - see below for detail on the observations.

Interviews

It was agreed that in the coming fortnight the SRs would interview at least one person each, and they could do this in pairs if they preferred to, although we would still like each boy to have at least one interview experience. We discussed how the boys would approach other students to ask them to be interviewed and they felt that break and lunch times would be best. The Learning Mentor and sixth formers said that they would be available to offer assistance to the SRs if they needed it.

Although I gave each student a notebook and pen to use for their interviews, it became clear that they would be helped by having a form that they could complete as they asked the questions, so I designed one that evening and emailed copies to the Learning Mentor who gave these out to the group the next day (see Appendix 6 for a copy of the interview schedule). I had not initially intended the students to interview teachers but when they suggested that they do this, I accepted that this might help add to their awareness of the impact of students' behaviours on each other and so agreed to this, and adapted the question format accordingly. Their suggestion also showed that they were starting to take some ownership of the project, which I welcomed.

The session concluded with a discussion about research ethics, which the boys grasped well, and the final task was to decide whether they wanted to take part and sign the consent forms. All of the SRs present signed the consent forms, even

though we gave them the option not to and made it clear that participation was not compulsory. I checked that the SRs were clear about what they were to do and the Learning Mentor agreed to supervise and support the SRs over the coming weeks.

The interview schedule I subsequently designed, which was explained and demonstrated to the SRs by their Learning Mentor in one of their scheduled lessons with him, included two introductory questions typical of those used in Appreciative Inquiry to set a positive tone to the interview, followed by questions relating to collaborative classroom behaviours:

> 1: (Student) Think about the best teacher you have had at this school. Tell me about a time when you were having a brilliant lesson in their classroom.
> (Teacher) Please can you tell me a story about the class you most enjoyed teaching?
>
> 2: Please will you tell me about a time when you felt most excited and enthusiastic here at this school? It may have been in the classroom or not.
>
> 3: Can you tell me about a time when another student helped you to learn or to enjoy a lesson here at this school? What did they do or say that helped you?
>
> 4: Can you tell me about a time when you helped another student to learn or to enjoy a lesson here at this school? What did you do or say that helped them?
>
> 5: If you had three wishes for how other students could make lessons even more enjoyable for you, what would they be?

One week later I met with the Learning Mentor to find out how things were going and found that although they were able to interview each other in the Discovery workshop, they were struggling to carry out the interviews; students were not interested in being interviewed and the SRs did not have any practice in approaching people to request this. The Learning Mentor agreed to identify some teachers and other Y9 students for the SRs to interview at a given time, to overcome the problem they had had finding people willing to be interviewed. This

worked much better than the less formal arrangement and resulted in some fully completed interview forms.

Observations

There had been some difficulties arranging the classroom observations due to sensitivities from staff about the number of classroom observations that were happening in the school, unrelated to this study. Fortunately the Learning Mentor had engaged the interest of a small number of subject teachers in the project and they agreed that the SRs could observe in their lessons, once they understood that it was the students, not the teachers, who were being observed. The observations took place in the following subject lessons: Englishx5; Dramax2; P.E.x1; Spanishx2.

The prompts on the observation schedule were chosen to help the observers to look specifically at behaviours that related to students taking an active part in helping a lesson to be enjoyable and worthwhile for fellow students:

Observe the students in the class and write down:

Something that helped the lesson get started on time
Something that encouraged another student to work well
Something that made this a happy and fun lesson
Something that kept people safe and comfortable
Something that helped another student to be more successful
Something that helped the teacher to do a good job
Something that showed that respect for each other's ideas
Something that showed caring or kindness for each other

The SRs carried out and reported on a total 11 classroom observations and interviewed 32 students and 8 teachers between them. All SRs in the group carried out interviews but only 8 were able to observe in classes due to logistical difficulties. Some of the SRs worked alone but most preferred to work in pairs, especially where they lacked confidence in taking notes. All SRs were supervised by the Learning Mentor during classroom observations.

I considered involving the SRs in the analysis of the interview and observation findings as they were the prime owners of that data, and decided that the most practical way of doing this in the time available was to encourage them to exchange and read each other's sheets prior to the Dream and Design session, so that they would be familiar with each other's data before designing their Dream School posters.

The 'Dream and Design' Workshop

Following the interviews and observations the SRs attended a one-hour Dream and Design workshop. Once more this was held in the main drama studio, which was an ideal venue as we could spread out, make as much noise as we wanted to, and the boys could consume the snacks whilst we talked. The SRs were helped to form four groups and given sets of thick marker pens and large (A0) sheets of plain paper which we taped to the floor. They were instructed to discuss what they had heard and seen during their interviews and observations and to use these ideas to design some large Dream School posters describing what school would look like if students were really taking responsibility for helping each other to enjoy and learn. The boys quickly started talking, drawing and writing in their groups and produced four posters to illustrate their ideas, which they used to give a verbal summary to the other SR groups.

The Final Feedback Group

I arranged a meeting for all the SRs to debrief them and gather information about their experience of the research, using the questions below as a framework:

- What do you think this research has been about?
- Is this an important issue for you and your fellow students or not at all?
  If it why or why not?
- What has the experience been like for you so far, being a SR?
- Have there been any *first times*, such as, 'This is the *first time* I have interviewed anybody… this was the *first time* I have sat in a lesson that wasn't *my* lesson….the *first time* I've done a project like this'?

- What have you learnt from taking part in this? Have you gained any new skills? What have you learnt about yourself/other students/teachers/the school?
- Has it changed the way you think or act in class?
- How well do you think that Mr C and I organised it? Did we do things well or could we have done things better or differently?

As this session progressed it became clear that the SR group of 22 was too large to enable them to respond in any depth and I decided that I needed more detailed information, so I invited a small group of 7 SRs to a further 1-hour meeting the following day while the discussion was still fresh in their minds. This group of SRs was selected with help from their Learning Mentor using the following criteria: they had appeared the most engaged; and most had contributed to this session although one had said very little, but had shown interest during the other workshops and in discussions with the Learning Mentor between sessions. I met this group the next day and we spent one hour in discussion, which was recorded using a table-top audio recorder.

The CCC Questionnaire - 'QFinish'

The follow-up questionnaire was administered to the SR group by their Learning Mentor in a classroom, post-AI. Although I was not present, we agreed that this should be administered with the explanation that this was to look once again at their experiences of mutual student support over the previous week. Completed questionnaires were collected up by the Learning Mentor and given to me when I visited the school a week later. I understand from the Learning Mentor that once again the SRs completed these in near silence and without asking for help.

Data Analysis

The data to be analysed consisted of completed questionnaires, the SRs' interview and observation records and a transcription of the Final Focus Group discussion. Table 2 is a summary of the analysis applied to each stage of the project.

Table 2: Outline of activity, data and method of analysis for each stage of the IFS.

Stages of project	**Activity**	**Data**	**Analysis**
Pre-AI Questionnaire	QStart completed by student researchers	Responses on a Likert Scale and some written responses	Descriptive statistics; Cronbach Alpha
AI	Students learn about AI and carry out interviews and observations	Handwritten responses to a set of predetermined prompts/questions Posters of 'Dream Schools'	Thematic Analysis. Comparison of poster content with interview/observation data.
Final Focus Group		Transcript of discussion	Selection of quotes to illustrate CCC questionnaire data
Post-AI Questionnaire	QFinish completed by SRs		Paired sample t-test; Cohen's *d*

The CCC Questionnaires

At the end of the project, analysis comparing the QStart and QFinish questionnaires was carried out on the data relating to the 16 of the 22 SRs who returned both questionnaires.

The responses to the 20 scaled questions were totalled for QStart and then for QFinish to give two CCC scores for each SR, representing their perceptions of CCC before and after the AI experience. I used a paired samples t-test to compare these total scores. I then compared the SRs responses on QStart and QFinish to the question, 'How much influence the teacher and the students have on student behaviour and concentration in a lesson?' I measured the effect size using Cohen's d.

AI Data

The SRs' interview and observation records consisted of brief sentences written under each question. For example:

Interview Q: Can you tell me about a time when another student helped you to learn or enjoy a lesson?
A: Working with pastoral staff doing one to one or group work

Observation point: Please write down examples of something you see a student doing that encouraged another student to work well.
A: They saw other students working well.

All SRs' data from the interviews and observations were collated into a single document (Appendix 7) and I made a record of the written content from the four Dream School posters (Appendix 8).

The primary objective of this study was to seek information about how being a researcher affected the SR perceptions of CCC. The purpose of the interviews and observations in the AI Discovery phase was to provide the SRs with stimuli for the Dream and Design workshop where they designed their Dream School posters. Accordingly, the analysis of the AI data was designed not to develop a theory of CCC, but rather to understand how the experiences of the SRs contributed to any subsequent shifts in their perceptions; I was more interested in the effect of gathering the data on the SRs than I was in the data as a record of what is happening in classrooms. I viewed the data collected by SRs as a valuable record of what they heard, saw, wrote down, discussed and reflected on in the course of the study.

As I was studying the data, I made the decision to look for the themes that the students perceived as being conducive to learning and enjoyment and what message this might give to the SRs about CCC being controlled by the teacher, by the students or by other external factors.

My aim in coding the AI interview and observation data was to become familiar with the content and divide it into a manageable number of themes to make it easier to compare this data with the Dream School poster content (see below). If I had been

seeking to develop a theory of CCC, which was not the purpose of this study, I would have analysed the data differently.

I read and re-read the interview and observation data for themes related to student contribution to enjoyment and learning. As the *changes in student perceptions*, rather than the CCC behaviours described by this data were my main focus, I chose not to go into the latent themes but to stick to describing the semantic content with some additional interpretation. My approach was to assign a code (occasionally two codes if the response warranted it) to each response. Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) on the collated the interview and observation data, I carried out a response by response analysis to get a feel for the data. I gave a one or two word code to each sentence (open coding) resulting in 35 codes.

I left this analysis 'to rest' while I looked at the SRs' 'Dream School' posters and the transcript of the final feedback group, as I wanted to see how these related to the AI data. Having reflected on these transcripts, I returned to the AI data and condensed the codes down from 35 to the following 6 after several reductions:

Excitement;
Consideration of others;
Assistance;
Better communication;
Discipline; and
Issues not determined by students.

I then set out to analyse the extent to which the SRs' Dream School characteristics, as represented by the written content of the posters, related to their observation and interview data, and whether the SRs had introduced other distinct features into their Dream School descriptions, which appeared to be independent from the AI data.

Final Feedback Group

I transcribed the audio recording from the Final Feedback Group discussion (Appendix 9). This discussion did not lend itself to thematic analysis as, whilst I had a set of key questions to ask them, I also wanted to give the SRs the freedom to take the discussion where they wanted to in the time available.

Results

CCC Questionnaire Results

Following the AI there was a positive increase (M = 10.31, SD = 10.96) in the SRs' perceptions of CCC (Paired Samples T-test). This increase was statistically significant, t (15) = 3.76, p < .001, one-tailed. Further, Cohen's effect size value (*d* = .94) suggested a high practical significance.

Prior to the AI, the SRs viewed teacher influence (tinf) and student influence (sinf) as equal, t(15)=1.046, p=.312 and this response did not alter as a result of the AI experience - the questionnaire responses at the end of the study showed no significant difference again between the perceived influences t(15)=.522 p=.609.

Responses to the open question, '*Who would you say is responsible for a class running well and the class discipline?*' were interesting: QStart responses indicated that SRs considered teachers as responsible (N=14) compared to students (N=5). On the repeat QFinish, fewer students identified teachers as solely responsible (N=7), none named students as being solely responsible (N=0), but a new category emerged, "Students and teachers" (N=11) as being identified as responsible for a class running well. The number of cells with zero or low expected frequencies meant that I was unable to carry out formal statistical analysis on the data from this question. Although I was not present when the second questionnaire was completed, I checked with the Learning Mentor that the boys had not collaborated on their answers and it appears that they had not. However, this new idea of

‘shared influence/responsibility’ is one that was reflected in the selective Feedback Group’s discussion, and is discussed later in this report.

In summary, the analysis above indicates that there was a significant and positive shift in the SRs’ perception of CCC following the AI experience, and that the SRs’ perception that students and teachers have an equal influence on classroom behaviour remained unchanged by the AI experience.

The SRs’ AI Interview and Observation Results

Analysis of interviews and observations identified several themes. These are displayed with their sub-themes in Table 3. Some themes only applied to the interviews (Int) and others only to the observations (Obs). The main themes were: Excitement (Int); Consideration of Others (Obs); Assistance; Better Communication (Int); Discipline; and Issues not determined by students.

The Dream School Posters

The posters provide a fair representation of the discussion that was going on in the Dream and Design workshop, and my main observation was that the needed reassurance that their ideas were valuable enough to record. The written content of the 4 posters is included verbatim in Table 4.

Table 3: Themes and sub-themes from SR interviews and observation data.

Student Interviews	Teacher Interviews	Classroom observations
Excitement: First day; novel/unusual experiences; personal and peer success; fights; certain teachers; Enjoyment with students outside lessons; **Encouragement:** Reminders of rules; helping them to look to the future; giving them reasons to work that make sense. **Assistance:** Strategy and technique; modeling; shared equipment; explain and interpret; break work down; taking care of new students. **Discipline:** Reminders to follow rules and behave. **Issues not determined by students:** Extra-curricular activities-enrichment week; practical subjects.	**Excitement:** Concerts/shows; when students help each other/are eager to learn; class fun and humour; discovering and nurturing student talent/progress. **Encouragement:** Students working collaboratively; teachers reaching out to each other and feeling like a team; students respecting each other; having ambition and being open-minded. **Assistance:** Students offering to help; Sharing planning and advice with colleagues; support for new staff; co-teaching. **Issues not determined by students:** Relating work to everyday life.	**Consideration of others:** No messing around/interrupting; paying attention; sharing equipment. Working as a team; fun; talking to each other; enthusiasm; getting along; helping the teacher; medium noise. **Encouragement:** Positive responses to each other's successes and failures; looking after each other. **Assistance:** Hinting the answers; showing them what to do; **Discipline:** Everyone focused; having right equipment and ready or the lesson. **Issues not determined by students:** High teacher expectations; the classroom environment and resources; recognition of successful work; seating arrangements.
Students' 3 wishes: **Consideration for others:** Be quiet when others are trying to work; be sociable and kind; **Better communication:** Answer questions, talk about work, more listening to each other. **Issues not determined by students:** Assignments, school policies and the way in which the curriculum is delivered.	**Teachers' 3 wishes** **Encouragement**: Have a try if you hate it or think you can't do it; don't worry about mistakes; be nice; ambition; motivation; dedication; respect each other; aim to complete all work to the best of your ability; be open-minded; don't be afraid to be different;. **Better Communication**: listen to the teacher and other students; be polite; be positive; ask more relevant questions; engage in class; understand that it's their future;	

Table 4: Written elements of SR ‘Dream School’ posters.

Group 1	Cooperation: working together No calling out People coming to lessons on time and ready to learn Everyone focused Group discussion: it allows all the students to share ideas Everyone has pens and equipment Everyone completing work Everyone hand in homework on time Multi-culture Helping each other Cohesive learning: everybody working together Everyone putting their hand up
Group 2	Risk Cooperation Open-minded Sharing ideas Cohesive Learning Group Discussion Respect Change Teamwork Collaboration Multi-Culture Hard Work Ambition
Group 3	Teamwork Massive Astroturf Pitch If everyone had iPads for link books and all the teachers would watch movies and you could wear whatever you want If everyone was like Marc A school that’s good for the environment Hard Work
Group 4	Clean School no rubbish Everyone has equipment Kids want to learn Kids are always listening School of Excellence A gym to use only for students Astroturf Best behaviour

Nearly all of the poster content could be linked back to data collected during the AI interviews and observations, with a few exceptions. There were some elements of the Dream School that did not appear in the AI data collected. These were: *Multi-culture; Cohesive Learning; Change; A school that’s good for the environment; wear whatever you want; iPads for link books; all the teachers would watch movies; Clean School no rubbish; School of Excellence; A gym to use only for students.*

These additional elements could be considered to fall into two categories: continuation of the list of desired resources and approaches that started in the interviews but also suggests the development of higher order values being picked out by the SRs from the data. Interestingly, Group 2’s poster reflected a number of

ideas that can be attributed directly to the teacher interviews, namely: *Risk, Ambition, Respect and Open-mindedness.*

Final Feedback Focus Group Discussion

The transcript of the Final Feedback Focus group discussion with the 7 SRs selected from the main group offered insightful examples of what the SRs had gained from the AI experience. They claimed to have learnt new skills such as interviewing and appreciated that this is harder than it appeared, and were frustrated to encounter a lack of cooperation from some students they tried to interview.

> '*Well we've learnt...I guess we have learnt new skill.. about how to interview each other. Rather than just …. I thought it'd be easier. But most of the time they don't want to cooperate… I dunno. Some people had an opinion but a load of them just 'oh yeah…nothing exciting happened. Never had a favourite lesson"*

They learned that not everybody wants the same thing from a classroom and that there are some students who just don't want to learn – a sense of frustration with other students was evident in some of the final focus group responses:

> *'it's the students that need to change'; 'It didn't sound like they enjoy it. Everything is negative for some people. The kids are always negative about school'*

There was some analysis of what is going on for the pupils:

> '*Cos some kids like really want to learn and haven't really come from a good place and wanna like do something because they don't want to be like how their mum or dad's turned out. And then obviously there's some kids that just hate school and think that it's juts a waste of time and disrupt the class because they can't be arsed ..and some kids are like 'on and off'.'*

They showed ambivalence about if and how student motivation can be influenced:

> *S: (interrupting) if they don't like school then no-one can change that*
> *S: … It is the teacher's job.*

S: For example if there's a class, yeah, nobody wants to learn and everyone messing around then why should you work so you just mess around with them so it always includes the environment as well. The people around you… If they're messing around that makes you want to mess around. But if everyone wants to do work you'd just be like okay just let me do work.
S: But if you see other people messing around it doesn't mean that you have to mess around. You can just put your head down and focus.

It was interesting to hear what the boys had to say about the things they had seen or heard during the AI that had affected them. Although interviewing teachers had not been part of the original plan, the experience of hearing a teacher's point of view about what lessons they enjoyed and what they considered helpful behaviours was mentioned as being influential in the formation of their own subsequent views.

Perhaps the most telling part of the final feedback group meeting was one student's response to the question, 'now that you've been researchers do you go into class thinking any differently about how you affect the class yourself?'

'Yeah. I actually do. When I was in the class and interviewed one of my teachers, the teachers was I'd like it if the students listened more. And if they were open minded as well and that they didn't distract the class and when I interviewed some students, I can't remember what it was like what could other students do to make the class more enjoyable, a lot of people said if people didn't make as much noise and they were quiet and it makes you think like, ah you're stopping people from learning innit, because if you're making noise they can't focus on what they want to do, they're going to be like in your conversation. They're going to be more interested in what you're doing than their work.'

And in response to my question, 'so when you started thinking that way did it change what you thought about classes?'…

'You realise that, one person, that every time I think Oh I shouted out, every time I shout out, well not at the moment, when I come back to the session I think every time I shout out that's one thing that a person in my class missed out on because I was making noise or something like that'

Another student added:

> *'It has changed me. It's changed my view of what I think. My view of what I see what I do to affect my class.'*

Still looking for details that might help to explain any changes in perception, it was interesting to hear the boys say that the act of being chosen to carry out the research in the first place may itself have had an impact:

> *'You took us out of lessons which gave us a bit of hope. Like, this is going to be enjoyable…. You had faith in us cos you could have done this with Y7,8 or y10…'*

In summary, the SRs' responses to the CCC Questionnaires indicated that there was a significant and positive increase in perception of CCC as a result of the AI experience. Key aspects of other data in the study indicate that this was founded on genuine shifts in perspective. The experience of carrying out research did not alter the SRs' original perception that both students and teachers *influence* classroom climate. However, there was some limited evidence that students started to view the *responsibility* for creation of CCC as being, if not the teacher's responsibility, then a joint venture between teachers and students.

The Final Focus Group discussion gave examples that could be used to explain the shift in SR perceptions: in discussing the subtleties of classroom interactions, student perceptions and teacher roles, they made links between what they had seen and heard during the AI and their attitudes towards teachers and their fellow students.

Discussion

This IFS investigated what happened when students research their classmates' collaborative classroom behaviours using an Appreciative Inquiry framework. Through this investigation, I was attempting to answer two questions and perhaps to serve research on both AI and Students as Researchers by opening up a new

path of inquiry. Firstly, did participation in an AI lead to a more positive perception of CCC? Secondly, what mechanisms can explain that shift in perception?

The results showed that the experience of taking part in an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) action research project brought about a significant and positive shift in student perceptions of Collaborative Classroom Climate, as measured by their responses on the CCC questionnaire.

Caution is called for in making claims about the results of this study, as this was the first time that I had led an AI and the first time that the SRs and their mentor had taken part in any such project. Although I had exchanged emails with Glynn Willoughby (Willoughby & Tosey, 2006) and Maha Shuayb (Shuayb, 2014) about their experiences, I did not have their training in AI nor did I have a professional research team to work with, and at times I wished that I had been able to take part in an AI as an observer or participant before leading one (I did attempt to do this, but was unable to find such an opportunity in the time available). Students unused to discussion found it hard and so many of the skills involved in this AI approach were new to them. Although there were some SRs who showed early competence at interviewing and observation, I believe that the majority of them would have benefitted from more training and practice in these skills and I would plan to do this in a future study.

Despite these limitations, there were a number of positive outcomes from the project. Firstly, it showed that it is possible to carry out an Appreciative Inquiry and maintain the interest of a group of what might be called ‘students at the margins’, amidst the turmoil and unpredictability of a busy high school. This observation supports the findings of Pascarella and Terenzini (2005 in Trowler & Trowler, 2010:7) who concluded that whilst engagement in the educational setting (their work was in higher education) benefitted all, those who benefited most were students from minority or disadvantaged backgrounds.

Secondly, the topic of collaborative classroom climate certainly appeared to be one that suited the action research paradigm and enabled the SRs to reflect on the intricacies of relationships within a classroom. Following their AI experience, they were able to debate with greater sophistication the balance of power and responsibility within their own classrooms. The topic also gathered some interesting responses from the teaching staff interviewed by the SRs which suggests that there is scope for further research involving teachers more fully than the present study permitted.

Thirdly, and arguably the most important outcome, was the resulting positive change in SR perceptions of CCC following their AI research activities. This is a discovery that invites questions about the mechanisms underlying the changes brought about by this 'SR experience'.

Theory of Student Researcher Perception Shift (SRPS)

Even if the experience of being interviewed had caused a shift in the behaviours of those interviewed, which is doubtful given the relatively short and superficial nature of the SRs' interviews, it is unlikely that the changes in CCC scores reflected changes in the actual *behaviours* of students, or indeed teachers, in the SRs' classes, with only around 32 of the 150 students in the SRs' school year being interviewed. It is much more probable that the SRs' *perceptions* had shifted as a result of their AI experience.

I have reflected on the results of this IFS in an attempt to understand and explain the mechanisms underlying this Student Researcher perception shift (SRPS) and to put forward a tentative theory. My hypothesis is that there are four main mechanisms underlying the SRPS in this study, which I refer to as information, identification, 'topic loyalty' and increased self-worth. I have also used the results to define the predisposing conditions that accompany these four mechanisms.

Information

Through the AI, SRs both uncovered new knowledge and started to see old knowledge through a new lens. Exposure to new ideas and discussion over a period of many weeks led to the SRs holding a wider more nuanced view, so that they started to see the many shades of interpretation that can be made of a single situation. The SRs recorded repeated instances of positively-phrased interview responses such as ‘He helped me to understand’ or ‘He encouraged me to get on with my work’. Through repetition of questions about positive interactions and a concentrated period hearing about examples of students helping one another the SRs’ perception of classroom climate was altered. Analysis of the SR’s ‘Dream School’ posters and feedback session reinforced the impression that seeking out and finding examples of supportive student behaviour increased the SRs’ impression of how widespread these behaviours are.

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) provides a useful framework for considering the SRPS, explaining how the AI experience would have created and strengthened both descriptive norms (more people are doing this than I realised) and inductive norms (this CCC is a good thing, and if I do, I will gain approval from both students and teachers) around the behaviours being researched. Caldini advised that

> ‘only by aligning descriptive norms (what people typically do) with injunctive norms (what people typically approve or disapprove) can one optimize the power of normative appeals’
>
> (Caldini, 2003)

By using an appreciative framework for the SR, this ‘aligning’ was built into the process. A positive SRPS may not be guaranteed if another research paradigm was being used, where both positive and negative examples of behaviour were being investigated, and so this mechanism may only be valid in the context of an appreciative approach.

Identification

The SRs had the chance, maybe for the first time in their school lives, to talk to teachers ‘off curriculum’ as it were, and observe in classes without the demand that they participate in the class. Interviewing teachers and observing classes gave SRs the opportunity to stand back and view students and teachers from a new perspective. This led to greater empathy with teachers accompanied by a more sophisticated analysis of the responsibilities and choices required of and available to both teachers and students.

Bandura theorised that an individual is more likely to copy another if they perceive that person to be similar to themselves (Bandura, 1977b). Although there was evidence that these SRs were influenced by what they heard and saw other students doing, I was surprised to discover the strong impact that interviewing teachers had on the SRs. One explanation for this was that in interviewing teachers about their own feelings and experiences of helping and being helped by others in the school, they became more ‘human’ to the students and this helped the students to view their teachers as being more similar to themselves than they had previously perceived them to be.

By observing and interviewing teachers and other students, their sense of affiliation with these people increased, making it more likely that the SRs saw the new norms emerging as applying to themselves also, leading to a greater awareness and valuing of their own collaborative behaviours. Nadeau, in describing anthropological research, points out that researchers identify with those they research, sometimes to such an extent that they can lose their objectivity (Nadeau, 2010). Even if the SRs had not consciously noted the behaviour of others in the class, there is some evidence that merely *perceiving* the behaviour of others leads to *imitation* of those behaviours, which has been called the Chameleon Effect (Chartrand, Bargh, & John, 1999). With reference to Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development, we can surmise that if an individual engages in discussion of moral issues with another who is already at a higher level of moral development they will

gravitate towards that upper level as long as there is some attachment or perception of similarity with the other (Kurtines, Gewirtz, & Lamb, 2014). Interestingly, Kohlberg challenged teachers to create democratic classrooms where teachers and students could engage in intergenerational learning so that this moral shift might be facilitated. Kohlberg created the 'just community' approach with three alternative schools in the US in order to develop the kind of democratic school community that he believed would promote good moral development (Power, 2013). This kind of 'intergenerational learning' has been identified previously (Fielding, 2011) but the psychological processes underpinning this learning are not made explicit in the literature.

Topic Loyalty

By agreeing to take part in the CCC research and putting time and effort into it, the SRs took ownership of that topic, just as I had done, and CCC became 'o*ur* topic'. It would not be surprising therefore if they felt a form of 'loyalty to the cause' and became champions for CCC, thus increasing their 'affective' learning. Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957) would explain how by choosing a research topic or signing up to volunteer as a participant, one is investing emotionally in the activity, immediately increasing its perceived value. Further time and effort would therefore be likely to strengthen their commitment to the research topic.

Increased Self-Worth

By maintaining focused engagement in a specially designed project, the SRs felt valued and trusted. 'Novelty' was identified by the SRs as a characteristic of exciting and enjoyable school experiences, and taking part in this AI was a new experience, as was working with an adult (the researcher) who wasn't their parent or teacher. The novelty of the situation appeared to help them to pay more attention, and as this activity was not one they had tried and failed on before they may have viewed it as a fresh chance to be successful. It is generally accepted that increased student engagement leads to a more positive view of the

educational establishment and their position in it (Trowler & Trowler, 2010) and I believe that this improved self-concept contributed to the SRPS; as a result of being ‘specially selected’ as a group, and having ‘special treatment’ the SRs felt increasingly more positive abut themselves and so rated their own perceptions more positively. The SRs described the project as enjoyable and satisfying and for some, it was the most engaged they had ever been in a school-based project, according to their Learning Mentor. Bandura (1977) found a strong connection between perceived self-efficacy and behavioural changes. ‘The experience of positive emotions broadens people’s thought-action repertoires and contributes to human flourishing’ (Fredrickson, 2001:218) and so it would not be surprising if the act of searching out positive examples of classroom interactions served the same purpose for our SRs. I believe that research changes students because it ‘empowers’ them. Kincheloe describes empowerment students through the research experience as ‘awakening their ability to make meaning, to understand that they can know more and that they are capable of more than they had previously imagined.’ (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998:228-229). It was probably my observation of this ‘awakening’ in the SRs that I found the most exciting element of the IFS.

Enabling Conditions

In reflecting on this project, I have identified two conditions which seem to be important for the SRPS mechanisms above to operate effectively: freedom from coercion and for the SRs to have a positive predisposition to the concept being measured

Freedom from Coercion

In the IFS project I had been careful to minimise the risk of SRs personal vulnerability to judgement, as part of my ethical stance. There is evidence that perceptions are most easily shifted when the motivation for making that shift is not linked to external control (Ryan & Deci, 2000). By placing SRs in a position of being ‘volunteer’ researchers, they were in a good position to objectify the

construct they were researching. By this I mean that personal defensiveness about the topic was removed as there were no judgements made on whether or not the SRs were themselves behaving in a helpful or supportive manner towards others, nor was this referred to at any time throughout the project. The research into CCC was not 'about them' and this freed them up to stand back and take in the new information. There were no reminders or suggestions that they should be more co-operative or mutually supportive in their behaviour towards other SRs. In fact, it is possible that the more I reminded SRs of the voluntary nature of the project, and their freedom to opt out, the more committed they became to the 'cause'.

Gordon (1976) found that individuals who volunteer for therapeutic treatment were significantly more likely to engage more rigorously and rate the effectiveness of that treatment more highly than those who had no choice in the treatment. Gordon suggests that by freely choosing to invest time and effort in the treatment, volunteers may have a propensity for a positive outcome bias. The finding that volunteering brings with it a source of bias is supported by later studies (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1974). In a similar way, a positive SRPS may depend upon the *voluntary* nature of the SR involvement. Once again, cognitive dissonance is at play (Festinger, 1957). The implications for this are to recognise a) the role that 'volunteer status' has on outcomes, and b) that if research became included in the school curriculum, the voluntary nature of the research, or the SR's perception of such, might disappear.

Positive Predisposition to the Concept being Measured

The behaviours in question need to be positive, perceived as good by the SRs. In the Initial Scoping meeting, it was clear that the SRs were able to put forward an argument for why it was worthwhile to put effort into helping a classmate to succeed. The fact that the SRs viewed the CCC topic positively fits in with theory about the Halo effect (Thorndike, 1920) which describes how an initial favourable impression can lead to a cognitive bias causing the individual to attend to evidence that supports that initial positive impression at the expense of evidence that would contradict it. It is important to keep in mind that the AI, by its very nature, seeks out

positive examples. Use of a less affirmative research approach would not necessarily result in the same perception shift, nor fit the pattern of mechanisms and conditions described above.

Future Research

Several times during the study I asked myself whether I had chosen the right participants as SRs, as they were challenging to work with and some of them held back in the discussions or 'messed about' and held up proceedings from time to time. However, I decided to take the view that if an AI could work with these boys, then it could work with anyone, and stopped worrying. In the end, far from being disappointed with them, the more opportunities they had to talk about their experiences, the deeper and more sophisticated their contributions became.

Emeritus Reader in Education, Chris Watkins, has described meta-cognition as 'the engine of learning' (Watkins, 2004) and he defines a learning community as one that learns about itself (Watkins, 2004). There is great potential for working with students to develop what I, like Foster (2014), describe as a 'communal meta-cognition' regarding the culture and climate of their own schools and classrooms. There is much scope for future research to find ways that school students can explore these important aspects and take a role in shaping their own school experience.

Both Willoughby and Shuayb included school staff in their AI, as full participants not just as interviewees as I did. The contribution that the SR interviews with teachers made to this study leads me to believe that a much fuller involvement of all teaching staff would enhance a future study. One idea would be to involve teachers more fully in an AI, focusing on similar CCC issues, but exploring the steps that teachers can take to encourage this CCC in their own classes, using Duchow's framework (2014). Very little has been written about schools by children themselves and when they are involved in research it is rarely about what goes on in the classroom (Springate & Lindridge, 2010).

This IFS has made a modest but not insignificant contribution to the field of students-as-researchers and classroom climate and I plan to explore one or both of these issues further in my thesis. At this stage, I consider that my first task will be to seek out schools or individual teachers who are making a conscious effort to share classroom responsibilities with students, and find ways that students as researchers can illuminate and uphold the benefits of such a culture.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: SR badge and peer consent slip

Official Student Researcher

Name:_____

Supervised by Mrs G. Rowe
Educational Psychologist

I am part of a project to carry out research into the experiences of students helping and encouraging each other in lessons.

All information will be treated as confidential unless you or someone else would be at risk.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact Mr C.

Consent form for interviews:

Name:

Date and place of interview:

I agree to be interviewed by _____as part of the Classroom Community research project. Any information I give will be treated confidentially, unless to do so would put me or others in danger.

Appendix 2: Student Information sheet

Student Involvement in Classroom Discipline

January – June 2014

Would you like to help our Educational Psychologist, Geraldine Rowe, to carry out a research project that will last a term and a half?

We need 12 students to train as student researchers with a professional psychologist.

The research will explore what a classroom might be like if students shared responsibility for discipline with the teacher.

Benefits to you:

- It will be fun! You will get to know other students
- You will get some practical research experience
- Help others to value the support students offer each other
- Play your part in school improvement
- Help teachers to trust students more

Support from school staff for this study:
Mrs H and Ms G will be the school contacts

How much time will it take?

- Around six Wednesday or Friday morning breaks starting with a "Finding out" session (you may decide as a group that you want more of these meetings).
- Two 2-hour workshops, one to train you in the skills and one to explore together what we find out during the research (the exciting bit!!)
-

What you will get from Geraldine:

- Drinks and snacks at the meetings
- Training in how to carry out real-world research
- Help to do a preparation for staff
- Supervision for the student research group
- Your name on the final Report to the school Senior Leadership Team.

If you are interested, please let Ms H know. **Geraldine Rowe,** *Educational Psychologist.*

Appendix 3: Parent/teacher information sheet

Student Research Proposal for London High School
Information for Teachers and Parents

Using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) [1] to find out how students can influence each others' pro-social and pro-work behaviours in the classroom.

Benefits to school:
High-profile approach as evidence of student voice;
Motivated group of student researchers;
Increase active student involvement creating a positive culture for learning;
Reduce over-reliance on teacher-led classroom discipline.

Benefits to students:
Awareness of how research plans are designed and executed;
Sense of empowerment through being heard and valued;
Contribute to school climate enhancement;
Improved relationships and trust between students as they come together to discuss greater shared responsibility in the classroom.

From School:
SLT commitment to the study

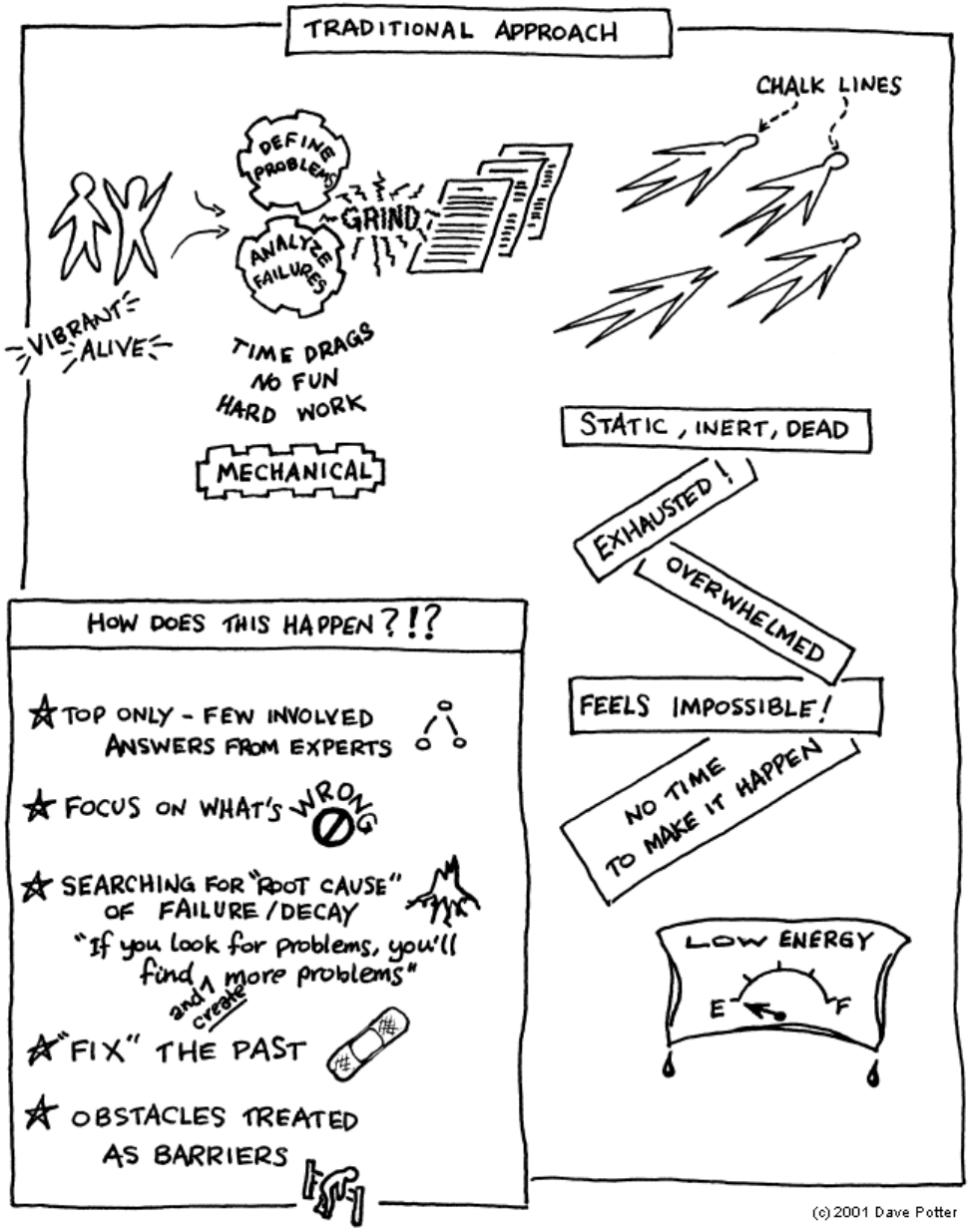
- Key member of staff to liaise with researcher
- Weekly 1-hour sessions with 8-10 student researchers over 2 terms

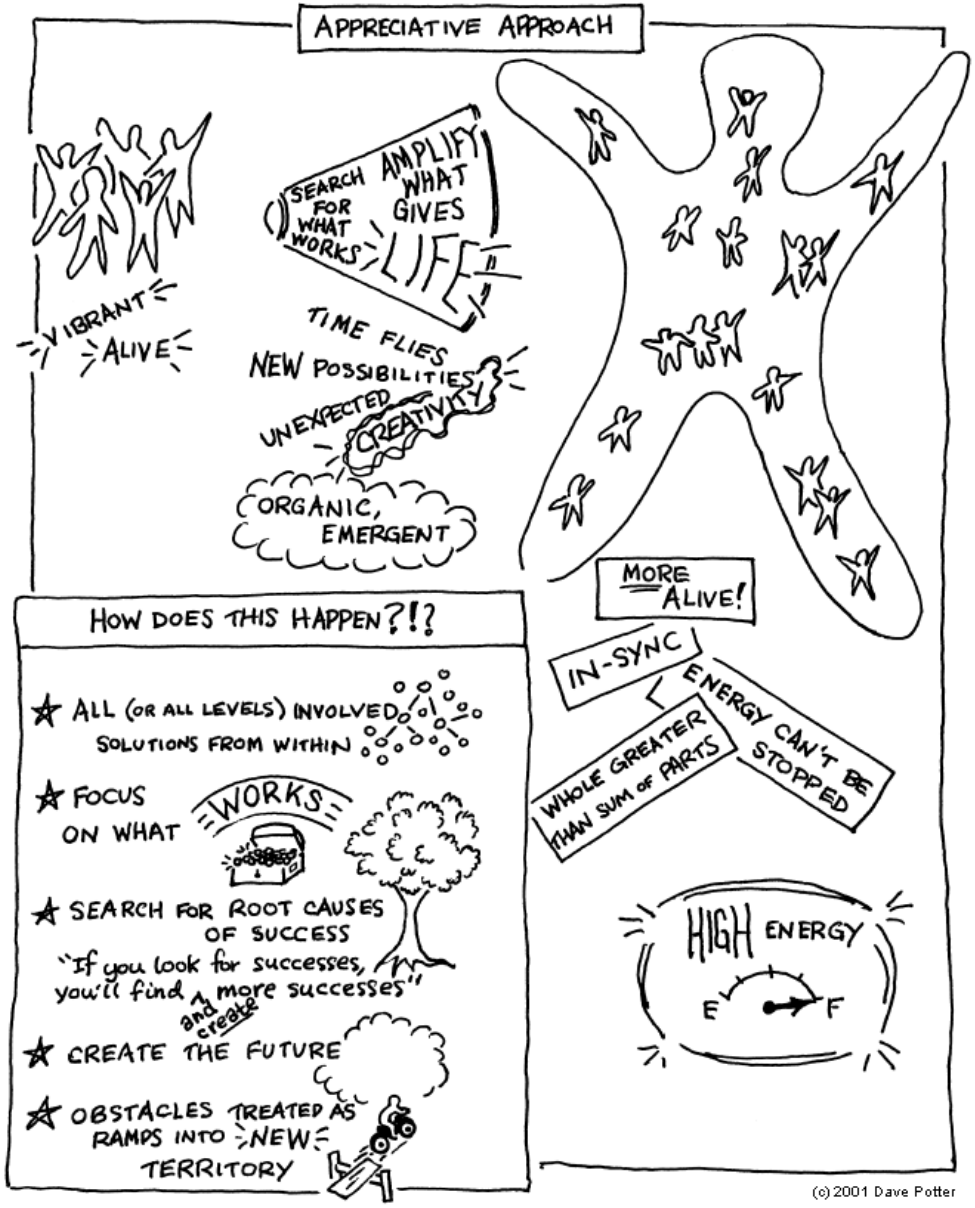
From Researcher (Geraldine Rowe):
Training input to student team

- Communication with Key staff throughout the process
- Supervision for the student group
- Written report on the study for school use

- This research will be supervised by Professor Andy Tolmie, The Institute of Education

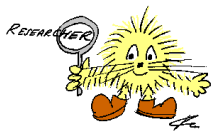
[1] **4 phases of AI: discover, dream, design, and destiny.**


TRADITIONAL APPROACH
CHALK LINES
DEFINE PROBLEMS
ANALYZE FAILURES
GRIND
VIBRANT ALIVE
TIME DRAGS
NO FUN
HARD WORK
MECHANICAL
STATIC, INERT, DEAD
EXHAUSTED!
OVERWHELMED
FEELS IMPOSSIBLE!
NO TIME TO MAKE IT HAPPEN
LOW ENERGY
E
F
HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?!?
TOP ONLY - FEW INVOLVED
ANSWERS FROM EXPERTS
FOCUS ON WHAT'S WRONG
SEARCHING FOR "ROOT CAUSE" OF FAILURE/DECAY
"If you look for problems, you'll find more problems"
and create
"FIX" THE PAST
OBSTACLES TREATED AS BARRIERS
(c) 2001 Dave Potter


APPRECIATIVE APPROACH
VIBRANT ALIVE
SEARCH FOR WHAT WORKS
AMPLIFY WHAT GIVES LIFE
TIME FLIES
NEW POSSIBILITIES
UNEXPECTED CREATIVITY
ORGANIC, EMERGENT
MORE ALIVE!
IN-SYNC
WHOLE GREATER THAN SUM OF PARTS
ENERGY CAN'T BE STOPPED
HIGH ENERGY
E
F
HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?!?
ALL (OR ALL LEVELS) INVOLVED
SOLUTIONS FROM WITHIN
FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS
SEARCH FOR ROOT CAUSES OF SUCCESS
"If you look for successes, you'll find more successes"
and create
CREATE THE FUTURE
OBSTACLES TREATED AS RAMPS INTO NEW TERRITORY
(c) 2001 Dave Potter

Leading education and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

Appendix 4: SR Consent form



Students can make lessons go with a swing!

Dear Student,

As part of my university studies I am planning a study to look at how students help each other to get along, have fun and learn in the classroom. I would like to invite you to take part in this research. There will be a group of about 12 student researchers helping me in the project with other students contributing as the project develops. The project will take place over the 2014 Spring term and the first half of the summer term and will include:

- 2 half-day workshops;
- Up to 6 shorter meetings;
- Research that you and others in the group will plan together and carry out with my support. This might include a small number of interviews with other students, designing a questionnaire or giving out a survey;
- You may have the choice to be part of a presentation to a small group of staff at the end of the project.

If you agree to join this research group, you are free to leave at any time and have the information you have contributed removed from the project.

All information from the research will be written so that the person who said it cannot be identified. At a later date I will use the information from this research in a report as part of my university studies and the information may be used in future research and possibly included in a published research journal. I do hope that you will agree to take part and to share your valuable experience.

Kind regards,
Geraldine Rowe, *Educational Psychologist,* London High School

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Statement of Consent: I am aware of what this research is about and agree to take part. My taking part in this research is voluntary and any information I give will be kept private. I understand that I can drop out from this research at any time and have back any information I have already given. Any questions I had about the research have been answered.

Signature of Participant: **(Print name)**

Email: **Date:**

Appendix 5: The CCC Questionnaire with item sources

Questionnaire for Y9 student research project

Name and form: Date: **Start / End** of project (delete one)

Who would you say is responsible for a class running well and the class discipline?

_____

Please say how much influence the people below have on student behaviour and concentration in a lesson?

1 = No influence **2** = A little **3** = Quite a lot **4** = A great deal

- The Teacher 1 2 3 4
- The Students 1 2 3 4

Please circle the number that indicates your level of agreement with the statements below.

- If the statement is **completely false**, circle number **1**.
- If the statement is **false much of the time**, circle number **2**.
- If the statement is **sometimes true and sometimes false**, circle number **3**.
- If the statement is **true much of the time**, circle number **4**.
- If the statement is **completely true**, circle number **5**.

Key to Source of items: **CLM** Classroom Life Measure; **WIHIC** What is happening in this class; **GR** author's own item.

In the past few weeks:

1	Other students asked to see my work. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5
2	Other students helped me to learn. **CLM/WIHIC**	1	2	3	4	5
3	I cared about how much other students learned. **CLM (adapt)**	1	2	3	4	5
4	Other students in this class wanted me to do my best work. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5
5	Students cared about how much I learned. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5
6	Other students in this class wanted me to come to class every day. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5
7	In my classes, other students really cared about me. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5

8	Other students in this class cared about my feelings. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5
9	When we worked together in small groups, everyone cooperated to complete the assignment. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5
10	When we worked together in small groups, people made sure that everybody's ideas were included. **CLM (adapt)**	1	2	3	4	5
11	We learnt more when we worked together. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5
12	I did not do as well in school as I would have liked to. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5
13	I knew the names of all students in my classes. **WIHIC**	1	2	3	4	5
14	I helped other class members who were having trouble with their work. **WIHIC**	1	2	3	4	5
15	I explained my ideas to other students **WIHIC**	1	2	3	4	5
16	Students discussed with me how to go about solving problems. **WIHIC**	1	2	3	4	5
17	I was asked to explain how I solve problems. **WIHIC**	1	2	3	4	5
18	I could have got along with the other students better than I did. **CLM**	1	2	3	4	5
19	The way I acted in lessons helped other students to enjoy school. **GR**	1	2	3	4	5
20	The way other students acted in lessons helped me to enjoy school. **GR**	1	2	3	4	5

- If the statement is **completely false**, circle number **1**.
- If the statement is **false much of the time**, circle number **2**.
- If the statement is **sometimes true and sometimes false**, circle number **3**.
- If the statement is **true much of the time**, circle number **4**.
- If the statement is **completely true**, circle number **5**.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Appendix 6: AI Interview Schedule

1: (***Student***) Think about the best teacher you have had at London High. Tell me about a time when you were having a brilliant lesson in their classroom.

(***Teacher***) Please can you tell me a story about the class you most enjoyed teaching?

2: Please will you tell me about a time when you felt **most excited and enthusiastic** here at London High? It may have been in the classroom or not.

3: Can you tell me about a time when **another student** helped you to learn or to enjoy a lesson here at London High? What did they do or say that helped you?

4: Can you tell me about a time when **you** helped another student to learn or to enjoy a lesson here at London High? What did you do or say that helped them?

5: If you had **three wishes** for how other students could make lessons even more enjoyable for you, what would they be?

Appendix 7: Combined Observation and Interview data

Observation Data

1. Something that helped the lesson get started on time

Strict teacher
They already had their PE kits on
Everybody sat in their seats
Everyone took their seats
The teacher was quite firm

2. Something that encouraged another student to work well

Everyone was focused so no-one can mess around or anyone to mess about with.
The surrounding people listened to their ideas
Kept each other occupied
They are having fun and talking to each other also they listen to their teacher and are having fun.
Everybody else doing well inspired them to do well
They saw other students working well.
the teacher saying that his class is the best
They were able to sit freely e.g. lying down, sitting cross-legged
Getting all the question correct and keep going
Showing them how to do that part then carrying on
Encouraging them when they got a good hit or shoot

3. Something that made this a happy and fun lesson

They are all working together and having fun. They was also making jokes.
They was all working well. They was getting full rounders (?)
They were being creative and all working together
It was practical. They all seemed happy with each other.
The teacher is funny
Students worked together
It was a practical
Using tablets to play work-based games
Engaging in lesson and giving answers. Talking.
PE as a whole

4. Something that kept people safe and comfortable

Everyone had the right equipment
They was all behaving and sitting in their seats.
They was not messing around
They was all doing their work and talking also they was not messing around.
They had their shoes off so they must feel comfortable together.
The teacher walks around the class offering support
That the teacher was constantly walking around
There was many posters around that made them comfortable

No messing around, straight on task.
No fighting with and without equipment
Health and safety good/ no sharp/harmful objects which would intentionally hurt someone.

5. Something that helped another student to be more successful

No distractions, everyone focused
They was helping each other and doing the work.
They was encouraging each other.
Giving each other hints towards the answers.
They were working in groups. When they wasn't doing well the teacher pushed them
The teacher spoke to them in Spanish so they would learn it better.
That one of his peers were praised which made him more determined
They had deadlines to meet
Giving the other person in the pair a hint for the answer
All kids behaved and participating
Keep getting good hits

6. Something that helped the teacher to do a good job

Students paying attention
He was encouraging the students They was shouting and making jokes
She was helping anyone that got stuck and showing everyone what to do.
When she was talking the class was silent.
The students are not loud they are working at a medium noise level.
The children were enthusiastic
She expected better of the students they were pushed to do better.
Controlling the class with minimum noise and helping students
Going along with them and keep going.
Participating in rounders. Encouraging, shouting, clapping.

7. Something that showed that respect for each other's ideas

They wasn't making fun of each other.
They was communicating and working as a team.
They sat there, had fun and was quiet when the teacher asked them to be quiet.
When people were performing, the class was listening.
They're not talking over each other.
People were quiet while others spoke
When people were singing the other members of that class were silent and didn't laugh.
Not saying that the ideas was bad but keep going if it was wrong.

8. Something that showed caring or kindness for each other

No-one was interrupting other person's ideas.
They was all mature and they didn't hate (?) on each other.

They were all working and a team.
They looked after each other and let each other play on the iPad and they weren't being greedy.
A student helped the teacher carry the piano around the class.
Nobody was laughing at each other if they said something wrong.
A student helps another student to answer the question which he was stuck on.
Someone helped the teacher move the piano.
Encouraging them to keep going even if they were wrong or doing something bad/wrong.
If they got out they would be like it's cool.

Interview Data

1: (***Student***) Think about the best teacher you have had at London High. Tell me about a time when you were having a brilliant lesson in their classroom.

(***Teacher***) Please can you tell me a story about the class you most enjoyed teaching?

Miss C. holding the snake
Mr H took them to the computer room and it was live
Drama with Mr W when we were acting
Mr W doing football and he joined in. 'it was live'.
PE – enjoyed the lesson
Mr B because he makes maths fun
Miss C – students: when I had to hold a snake in the great hall. The lesson was geography.
PE in the playground/ Music: we made our own music.
Miss O – Y7 because it was really fun to teach.
Miss S
PE with Miss O
Mr C. Making the Young Leaders' movie.
When we have teacher student banter.
Fitness with Mr W.
All the lessons with Mr I.
Mr H all the time because it was always an interactive lesson.
Mr K in the media lesson.
Mr G
Miss C. This year.
Mr K
Media learning about making DVD covers and what they need to include.
When I cooked food.
Miss F
Miss F when she gave us a free lesson.
Ms W in her class we did group activities.
Mr I. The lesson was funny and we always helped each other learn.

Mr G/ Xmas.
Mr H Mr P and in the MUGA
Miss B because she gave us chocolate
Mr B – he knows how to connect with students and make jokes.

Teachers:

Y13 because hard work and fun
In Science when all the students was enjoying the lesson and helping each other.
Because he engaged in the lesson; I enjoyed teaching 8AHO
I most enjoy teaching classes which are eager to learn , and who are willing to try new things. It's always a nice lesson when students help each other.
When my Y9 GCSE class broke in to song
My Y9 GCSE class because it is full of different personalities.
My Y10 class because there is always a good atmosphere and they are supportive and work well together.

2: Please will you tell me about a time when you felt **most excited and enthusiastic** here at London High? It may have been in the classroom or not.

Thorpe Park, with all his friends
When we had a school cup final and I scored
When we had the Harrow cup final and we won
First come to HEHS, excited about a new school, new friends.
In a PE lesson
Thorpe Park for enrichment week and it was fun 'cause I was with all my friends.
I haven't had any exciting experiences yet at HEHS.
In the MUGA – we played football.
All the fights
iPad usage in maths
Scool sows
Enrichment week.
Enrichment week
Enrichment week
When Mr P gave me money
When I first came to HEHS.
To learn about the aspects of media.
I felt excited on the enrichment days. There was lots of activities to participate in, which was very exciting.
Never
Never
Whilst I'm learning because everyone is great at HEHS.
Never
When we were doing fitness and we had to complete a 12m course.

MUGA
When I got Vivos in assembly. When the first time I went in the MUGA. When I moved up a set in English.
When I first joined school
First time at barristers (?)
Our first football final at HEHS.
First day I came into the school. New people, new classes.
When the canteen first opened and it was fresh.
When I found out that we had mentoring every Friday period one because I will learn how to manage my behaviour.
The first lesson on the first day in Year 7.

Teachers:

All school concerts and shows
When I see people having fun.
When I see people enjoying my lesson and having fun.
When students produce the best work.
I feel excited and enthusiastic when students hand in coursework, and when I see they tried really hard.
When I saw a Y7 girl perform an amazing long jump technique.
Seeing the levels of progress in the test results; seeing them work well in creative lessons and showing off different talents.
When we got the number of students doing A Level.
When working with the most hard-to-reach young people and seeing them develop their behaviour.

3: Can you tell me about a time when **another student** helped you to learn or to enjoy a lesson here at London High? What did they do or say that helped you?

He didn't like the teacher so his friend helped him get on with the work.
When I was finding a science lesson difficult a student help me understand it by going over it with me.
When I was struggling with my maths work and a student helped me.
Mush, in Geo didn't like the teacher or lesson and he encouraged him to put his head down and work. Told him a couple of questions.
In Geography some kid told him to sit down
No comment
When one person in my class encouraged me by telling me to get on with work.
No – a student helped me but it was personal.
K in PE
I am blind and H helped me to read
Im independent
A student helped me with ICT work.

They helped me with my behaviour.
Never
F in science
S helped me with my work when I didn't understand it.
in maths helped me understand.
B helps me in maths lesson. For certain subjects that I am not confident in.
I have never been helped
No
I – she helped me to learn – she re-explained the work to me.
Maths helping understand.
When I didn't understand a question my friend explained it to me.
They told me to shut up
When E helped me with Geography. In Maths when I was confused and J explained it to me.
K in Y9 in maths
B gave a maths answer
They read the question to me and helped me understand it.
J science, helped couple of questions.
He gave me some advice on how to get a better grade
The read through the questions with me and helped me step by step.
When friends help figure out answers in a more approachable way than teachers.

Teachers:

Did homework with a lot of friends
Yes, by getting another student to explain science to them in a better way.
Giving them praise
I enjoy teaching when students make an effort and when they respect each other. It's nice when students offer to help.
Miss L gave me good advice for a tough y10 class.
Mr W observed some of my lessons and gave me advice to give positive praise in lessons.
The most supportive member of staff I work with is Miss H because she makes me feel like I am a part of everything – she doesn't make decisions alone.
Working with pastoral staff doing one to one or group work.

4: Can you tell me about a time when **you** helped another student to learn or to enjoy a lesson here at London High? What did you do or say that helped them?

Told another boy to "Shh" and do the work.
In a maths lesson a student in my class was finding decimal hard and we showed him the easy way to do it and he ended up enjoying it.

In PE when they didn't know how to throw a ball properly and I showed them how to.
T in tutor, new to tutor so he introduced him to the teachers and other classmates because he went to this boy's middle school.
he told him to be quiet and face forward in French.
Hel helped S in PE because it was fun.
Told them to get on with work and encouraged them by saying there is a test coming up so if you get a good grade you will realise when you do the work you will achieve.
I told the person to concentrate.
K in PE
H is colour blind and I told him what colour his pen is
A in PE
Res Mat: Helped a student make a product.
It's only one hour.
When I gave S a pen.
S in maths
Helped T enjoy the lesson by explaining it to him.
when I helped S.
I played basketball with Y7 and 8 students after school frequently which is a fun and interesting experience for the other students and I.
No-one needs help as I am in set one
Yesterday
I help students everyday at HEHS. I am great.
Help people in computer science
When I gave my friend a pen so they could continue with their learning.
They told me if I did the work lunch time would come quicker.
In PE when they couldn't get the technique right and I showed them how.
T – I encouraged him in PE
Gave B an answer
I helped a student by explaining the task and helping them to do the task.
H Spanish, helped on a few questions.
E helped another person to get a better grade.
I help T all the time with his work.
I always explain and break down questions for other students as teachers are busy with other students sometimes.

Teachers:

Yes, in music.
When I related it to everyday life.
I aim to help students gain the best grade they can.
I share my planning with miss Q
When we double up practical lessons with another teacher's group.
I mentor new teachers and I watch lessons and give feedback so they can improve.

Working side by side supporting my knowledge to enhance theirs on behaviour or life skills.

5: If you had **three wishes** for how other students could make lessons even more enjoyable for you, what would they be?

Allow others to learn; answer questions; do work.
Got along in lessons; behaviour; head down.
Practical lesson; everyone cooperates; everyone behaves.
Teacher should be more interactive; get on with work and not distract; no comment.
Be quiet when trying to work; stop distracting when I'm trying to work.
They could be quiet.
Go outside; less homework; no centralised detention.
Low level disruption; less lesson time; less assignments in English.
Communication; less HW; no behaviour codes.
More interact; talk about work; fun.
More interactive; independent learning; no long convo's.
Stop long conversations.
Listen to me; money for encouragement; more interactive.
More interactive; more group work; more computer time.
Be sociable; be kind.
To interact with me more as I am very approachable; sometimes when we have a test coming up I would like the students to concentrate so I can as well; try harder.
Less HW; less lessons; less bullying.
…
Friendship; equality; love.
Be sociable; kind; understanding.
If they could be quiet when asked to; if they would be more entertaining; if they didn't act hyper.
Food; drink; sharing.
Group talking; consideration for other people's learning; talking about work and not other things.
no bad behaviour; peaceful lesson; no rudeness.
Use more technology in education; use more resources; make lesson shorter.
Focus; listen; cooperate.
Teamwork; help; fun.
Group work; everyone behaved; everyone had a pen.
Make less noise; work together; listen to teacher.
less talking; more support from classmates; more listening to each other.

Teachers:

Give a go; don't worry about mistakes; be nice.
More outside activities to do with science; more experiments; more trips.
Ambition; motivation; dedication.
Respect each other; Aim to complete all work to the best of your ability; be polite.
Listen; be open-minded; be positive.
Listen more; ask more relevant question; don't be afraid to be different.
Engage in class; listen to teacher and other students; have a try if you hate it or think you can't do it.
listen; understand that it's their future; ask relevant questions.

Appendix 8: Text of SRs' Dream School Posters

Group 1	Cooperation: working together No calling out People coming to lessons on time and ready to learn Everyone focused Group discussion: it allows all the students to share ideas Everyone has pens and equipment Everyone completing work Everyone hand in homework on time Multi-culture Helping each other Cohesive learning: everybody working together Everyone putting their hand up
Group 2	Risk Cooperation Open-minded Sharing ideas Cohesive Learning Group Discussion Respect Change Teamwork Collaboration Multi-Culture Hard Work Ambition
Group 3	Teamwork Massive Astroturf Pitch If everyone had iPads for link books and all the teachers would watch movies and you could wear whatever you want If everyone was like Marc A school that's good for the environment Hard Work
Group 4	Clean School no rubbish Everyone has equipment Kids want to learn Kids are always listening School of Excellence A gym to use only for students Astroturf Best behaviour

Appendix 9: Transcript of Final Feedback Group

GR: Yesterday when we met with the larger group, and realised that in that size group some people didn't want to take part, so we identified you boys as people who had something to say, and we wanted to get more depth on student views about being researchers and looking in classrooms and classroom discipline – whether it is the students' job or something that teachers do to students , and that kind of thing. (GR went over the sort of questions in her mind…) 1:20

What do you think this research has been about?

Is this an important issue for you and your fellow students or not at al?

If it why or why not?

What has the experience been like for you so far, being a researcher?

Have there been any "first times". Like this is the first time I have interviewed anybody?

Or the first time I have sat in a lesson that wasn't my lesson?

The first time I've done a project like this?

What have you learnt from taking part in this? Any new skills? What have you learnt about yourself/other students/teachers/the school?

Has it changed the way you think or act in class and how well do you think that Mr C and I organised it? Did we do things well or could we have done things better or differently?

So that's the range of questions so if we start at the beginning what do you think this research has been about?

S: Positive things about learning… about the learning environment and the school.

GR: do you want to say anything else about that?

S: Just that …Things that like help it or stop it from happening…in the classroom

MC: What has this been about for you?

S: Well we've learnt...I guess we have learnt new skills (MC just speak for yourself..) about how to interview each other. Rather than just …. I thought it'd be easier. But most of the time they don't want to cooperate.

GR So it's not the questions, it's getting them engaged in the first place?

S: Yeah, it's just half the people I asked …

MC: have you learnt anything about the content, about what the people have been talking about?

S: I dunno. Some people had an opinion but a load of them just "oh yeah…nothing exciting happened. Never had a favourite lesson…

GR: Were these people you approached or had they been set up for you?

S: Some of them were just the group.

MC: So do you have any view on their views?

S: It didn't sound like they enjoy it. Everything is negative for some people. The kids are always negative about school. 4.47.

GR Do you think so?

S: Yeah, most of the time.

S: 'cos they don't want to come to school for six hours a day. They find…they think it's a waste of the day…

S: 'cos when they're at home

S: They're always negative

S: They're bored….

S: But when they're at home..

S: ….but they need it…

GR: They're bored at school, but they need it?

S: Like who said that we've been here for long enough last year, like

GR: you think it's time to go?

S: Yeah, man.

GR: how many years have you been in school then?

S: A lot

S: an awful lot

S: and there's more to come..(laughing)

GR: are you looking forward to next year?
MC: tell her what you're doing next year…the skills centre thing.

S: I'm doing the skills centre

S: I'm not doing it

S: S doesn't want to do it.

S: Skill centre, what's the skill centre?

MC: basically you can go to get extra GCSEs like building and ..

MC: It's more practical

S: basically it's an apprenticeship?

S: yeah, like electrician and plumbing …

MC: that's what M is looking forward to…

S: I might even get into plumbing.

(Talk about learning more about skill centre)

S: (resurrecting the original discussion) is the research so we can find out new things …new things to make things better for people?

GR: Yes, it is about finding new ways of making things better,

S: will it actually work though, or …

GR What we think it is about is that in a lot of classrooms it's …people see the teacher as the person who controls behaviour, and learning in the classroom, but in fact, going back to that very first meeting we had, you told me that students can either make a lesson go well or they can make a lesson go really badly if you set your minds to it, and you told me what you do. Do you remember?

S: So could a teacher though.

GR: yes, but a teacher can plan a really good lesson and the pupils can make it go really well by cooperating and …

S: (interrupting) but what some people think is good is not good for others.6.38

S: Yeah, not everyone likes the same stuff.

GR: That's right.

S: Like most people like experiments, but then remember the last time we did an experiment someone in the class just said, 'It's too much effort I just want to write..

S: (interrupting) and then once when teachers say, 'We're going to play a game this lesson but it's not actually a game it's just like…

GR: (interrupting) work in disguise?

S: Yeah, and it's just like Oh that's dead, man. We've waited all this time to play a game and it's not even a game.

S: Or a video and it's about a minute long

S: (interrupting) 'and this video's going to be really good and educate you' and it's about a minute long and you're like oh that's crap.

S: what was the question again:
GR: What do you think this research is about?

S: I think it's about what's happening ….find out what's happening in classes these days, an' that….basically what he said.

GR: Yes, to be a fly on the wall and get people's views.

MC: Yes, S is so keen on the research that he had to take it home to sleep with in, that's why he's not brought it back..(laugh)

S: but for you lot isn't it to see what we think...about other people?

S: So you see what we think so you can improve it.

GR: Yes

S:…and find ways to make it better…is that what it's about?

GR: Yeah.

S: First question: what has the research been about....for me?

MC: for you, yeah.

S: It's been about getting to know my environment, what like how the classes are and doing lessons and all of that. How they behave and the type of a vibe that makes a good lesson and what makes a bad one.

GR: What I would hope in the future in schools is that pupils have more control over lessons and take a more active part in them so they also help the lesson to go well so at the end of the lessons pupils would think it's been a great lesson because everybody's contributed their ideas – all the things you've been telling us – good things you've seen. People contributing their ideas, they've supported the teacher, they've made it dun for everybody. They've kind of encouraged everybody to have a good time while settling down to it and not messing around. And then the teacher can actually get on with just giving things to the students and helping them when they need the help, but the students are taking a more active part in the teaching. So I wanted to see whether this is something that is going on already or it is something that needs really changing in schools? What do you think? Is going on a lot or do think that schools need to change big time to make the students take more part in things and enjoy school more?

S: it's the students that need to change. 9.32

GR: So it's the students who need to change?

S: Yes. They know that if they do good in school they'll get far, an' that, but they just say oh no I can't be bothered.

S: (interrupting) they need to do that old thing and bring back grammar schools

S: This was a grammar school

MC: how would that help?

S: Cos the pupils that want to go and learn…

S: Yeah

S: …can go and learn. Cos some kids like really want to learn and haven' really come from a good place and wanna like do something because they don't want to be like how their mum or dad's turned out. And then obviously there's some kids that just hate school and think that it's juts a waste of time and disrupt the class because they can't be arsed ..and some kids are like 'on and off'.

S: if they enjoy school…

S: (interrupting) Cos you know kids, yeah, they all know the difference between bad and wrong

S: yeah..

S: Some kids are clever as well, man…but they choose to do all the bad stuff. No-one's forcing them to, they just do it themselves and that's why

MC: (interrupting): why do they choose that?

S: maybe friends…you never know. Or sometimes

S: It'd make them want to change like if they come to school init? If they liked coming in.

GR: so what would have to happen to make them like coming in?

S: You can say what you would like to happen in school, but that would just be unrealistic.

GR: what unrealistic things would you like to happen?

S: Some people say I would like to be paid for coming into school and something like that. There are not many realistic things that would make people want to come to school.

MC: Money came up quite a lot in discussion.

S: You would never get paid because you get a free education …

S: there are some kids that don't want to come to school because like say they haven't done something, or they didn't attend a Det (detention) and then they don't want to come to school because then they know that they will get into trouble. So if like, if the consequence wasn't, if they knew the consequence wasn't bad, or if they knew there could be like a compromise between the teacher and the student then they would be like, they would come to school just to make the compromise.

GR: so if they knew that they weren't always going to be punished when they made a mistake, or missed something or forgotten to do their homework,…

S: Yes..

GR: (interrupting)…. and they could have a proper discussion with the teachers, you think that they would come in and make a compromise. They'd come in but they'd stay away otherwise?

S: It is true – long time. I stay away sometimes to avoid getting detentions. Some days, I come in late on purpose …

GR: to avoid getting a detention?

S: ..like if I've forgotten a piece of homework I'll try to go to C--- room or something or I'll try to bunk a lesson if I ain't done my homework...

GR: because you get punishment if you don't attend the lesson?

(The students all start talking at once so GR has to ask them to talk one at a time)

S: They don't even give me homework anymore and when I do I don't do it anyways. I've never eve done homework since I've been in this school.

GR: Why not?

S: Yeah why?
GR: do you think that it is a good thing that they have low expectations of you now?

S: I don't really care. Cos I find it hard to do it at home anyway so ….obviously I feel as well that we do enough work in school so why do we have to do homework at home

S: (interrupting) they don't explain the homework..

S: (interrupting)...at home 'cos that's when I want to chill and do what we want to do cos we spend six hours a day anyways. And like my Nan says, you've just had two days off and you can't have another day off - that was the weekend

S: and sometimes they don't explain correctly like my science teacher, yeah, she cannot teach ... will just fling me the sheet and tell me to do it at home. Like about some atoms and molecules. Last week she gave us the sheet and as we were going out we had to take one.

S: (interrupting) She doesn't explain…

S: She didn't tell us how to do anything….

S: (interrupting) and then she just drops us with a test, man, and she'll go over it like she's reading it to herself …

S: (interrupting) ...you can't find out anything…

S:….and sat at her computer and reading out everything

GR: Going back to the idea of students helping each other, to learn and explaining things to each other and encouraging each other to not mess around and actually to get on with it, that's important to us adults but is it important to you, or do you see that as nothing to do with you?

S: but would it make a difference? 14.44

S: Yeah, that would. For me, for me yeah, it's important but to certain people some selfish people ….

S: (interrupting) if they don't like school then no-one can change that

S:… it is the teacher's job .

S: For example if there's a class, yeah, nobody wants to learn and everyone messing around then why should you work so you just mess around with them so it always includes the environment as well. The people around you. If they're messing around that makes you want to mess around. But if everyone wants to do work you'd just be like okay just let me do work.

S: But if you see other people messing around it doesn't mean that you have to mess around. You can just put your head down and focus.

S: but what I was saying is like yeah, there shouldn't be like sets and stuff because there's like people in my classes that don't want to learn, yeah, and it just messes up the whole thing .

S: Yes, that's kind of true. They should make...

S: (interrupting) ….people who don't want to learn, put them all in one class and they can sit there and throw paper at each other all lesson.

S: if they did mixed ability sets that'd be better.

S: (general agreement from others)
S: because people of higher ability ..

S: can help..

S: can help the lower ability people cos they'd be sitting next to someone who's learnt really …so the teacher wouldn't have to explain

S: (interrupting) they should mix it…

S:… to every single student what to do like other students can help students.

GR: so it's shared

S: and there should be more people in each class…

S: When students are…when they have the potential to be a really good student but they don't have the motivation, when they see other students in their class working well then they might think that, oh I don't want to be the only person that's bad, let me try and work harder. 16.15

GR talked about definition of Low ability …not all people in bottom set are 'low-ability' they are just not achieving very much cos they've turned themselves off.

S: I think that putting kids into sets can make them feel worse about themselves. Obviously you get put into set five you just don't want to (others agree) you think what's the point, I'm not going to ..

GR: (interrupting) so it's demotivating?

S: yes it's like downgrading and it's making the students feel worse.

MC: Do you agree B?

S: Yeah, I guess.

S: especially when you get put with Miss B.

S: And there should ne more TAs in the lesson as well. In half my lessons I need a TA

S: (interrupting) I don't like them

(all students talk at once about TAs)

S: They're there to assist the teacher …

S: only the TA's I like

S: I need TAs in more lessons…

GR: what do the good TAs do?

S: They go round and help everybody

S: the bad ones just stick with one student and annoy that student. The guy in PE he just sticks with M and H just in the corner and he talks about something that's just not related to the lesson.

S: yes, he talks about football

S: yes, football…

GR: so you think it is better if they go round everybody?
S: no,, they just ..It's in the name 'teaching assistant' they're there to help the teacher

S: this one TA is more clever than our actual teacher. Sometimes when the teacher can't control the class that's the reason why the TA is there but the TAs don't really help. They just sit there and act like they're students. they like ..

S: (interrupting) the last time she jumped in her phone got broken so

S: I think that if a teacher needs a teaching assistant then they shouldn't be a teacher. Because they should know how to control their class.

MC: Do you think it's all about controlling classes? What about helping students?

S: The teacher should set the task and then say to the students that that anyone who needs should come to the front and help them and then if they still need help and everyone else gets it, they can focus on the one student if they need more help than anyone.

S: some teachers spend so long explaining what we're doing and stuff that you just go off task..

S: (interrupting) you get so bored, like at skills centre on Friday he kept talking and talking for like an hour and a half man, and I just wanted to do something different. And then obviously there's only fifteen minutes left to actually do work and you don't do anything in there anyways.

S: and teachers lose books all the time..

S: and they blame

S: so like all the work you've done and I say how am I meant to revise from my book if you've lost it?

GR: so going back to who controls the class and you've been talking just now about a teacher can't control a class or a teaching assistant helps to control the class, but P said early on that you can choose whether you behave well or badly

S: (interrupting) so students are not stupid, yeah, they will do in the class what the teacher allows them to do. They will go as far as the teacher allows them to go.

S: if the teacher lets them sit there listening to music they're not going to stop.

GR: in some classes I go into, it looks like the students think they are doing the teacher a favour by working and by not messing about. But in fact they are only here for themselves. But they're doing themselves a favour. But sometimes it looks like the teacher is having to putt them towards the learning and they just don't want to do anything but ..

S: (interrupting) yes, but that's because they have to come to school so much. They *forget* that they're coming for themselves. 21.56 Because they're coming every day and it's getting boring

S: I think the teachers….if the student don't want to learn, let them.

S: if people just don't want to learn, get rid of them

S: People do want to learn and teachers are worried about people that don't want to learn. That's their job

S: and I'm on and off as well so that's kind of peak. So say one lesson I was off and I didn't really want to do anything and I got kicked out of that lesson for the whole thing and say I wanted to learn for the next lesson but I wasn't allowed because I've been put as one of those people who don't want to learn.

GR: Right

S: sometimes I want to learn and sometimes I'm just not in the mood to.

GR: is the answer to be given a fresh chance every day?

S: Yeah

S: Not really, but yeah…I might be in a bad mood

GR: but if you are in a bad mood on Monday should they give you a fresh start on Tuesday?
S: It wastes time

S: they hold grudges. If you have maths first period one day and the next you have it on period one, they should put what happened behind them yesterday. So like if I was bad in that lesson on Monday, on Tuesday they should be cautious about how they treat me but they shouldn't act as if I've already made a mistake but don't like keep me out of he picture like do it to a certain extent, but don't pressure the student and make him feel like, aw, I don't want you to be in this lesson but make he student feel like you want him to learn but you're still a bit annoyed so if you work hard that might change.

GR: yes, they're human beings too and they're still a bit annoyed about yesterday

S: I've heard some teachers say, you're not allowed back in my class until next week, but they might have just had a bad day and start again tomorrow.

S: I sometimes think that students don't understand that teachers are like humans as well, like teacher have to have patience…

S: (interrupting) patience, I was just about to say that – it must be hard not to just…

S: (interrupting) they take a lot of abuse…

S: some teachers are too young as well…

S: I know some students are totally and utterly rude to teachers

S: teachers have to take it but at the end of the day they are still getting their ‘grands’

GR: and teachers can’t swear at students

S: (interrupting) some do though (others agree)

S: Miss X just cries

S: Oh my days!

MC: now that you’ve been researchers do you go into class thinking any differently about how you affect the class yourself?

S: Yeah. I actually do. When I was in the class and interviewed one of my teachers, the teachers was I’d like it if the students listened more. And if they were open minded as well and that they didn’t distract the class and when I interviewed some students, I can’t remember what it was like what could other students do to make the class more enjoyable, a lot of people said if people didn’t make as much noise and they were quiet and it makes you think like, ah you’re stopping people from learning innit, because if you’re making noise they can’t focus on what they want to do, they’re going to be like in your conversation. They’re going to be more interested in what you’re doing than their work.

GR: so when you started thinking that way did it change what you thought about classes

S: you realise that, one person, that every time I think Oh I shouted out, every time I shout out, well not at the moment, when I come back to the session I think every time I shout out that’s one thing that a person in my class missed out on because I was making noise or something like that

GR: that’s very perceptive of you, very good. Can I just

S: I thin that another way that teachers could help students who don’t want to learn, learn is that some students they just want to get out of a less so if the teacher had a trade system where they got five praises if they answered five questions then they’d be let off early from class by five minutes

S: but they can’t do that.

GR going back to what Mr C said, has anyone else changed what they think or do as a result of having been a researcher? Has it affected how you see classrooms at all?

S: In lessons I talk al lot – in all my lessons. I talk and talk and talk. They kick me out

MC: and now tell me it’s not your fault (laughter0

S: it’s not always my fault. Other students ...sometimes what happens is, they will know you’re a talker and then the day you’re not talking and then there’s talking they say aw you know what, you have to get out.

S: they always catch me on my best day, like.

GR: so since you have been a researcher has it changed what you think about what students do in the classroom?

S: it has changed me. It's changed my view of what I think. My view of what I see what I do to affect my class.

GR: and are any of you noticing new things as a result of being a researcher? Do any things stand out more?

S: Yes. I stand out more, because I am the champion in maths and he was the former one. So I've been focusing ore and answering questions so now *I* help *him*.

GR: so are you helping people more?
S: Yes

MC: He just wanted to tell us that he is champion in maths

GR: well, that's really good.

S: it's times tables and he did 50 questions in one minute 54 seconds.

S: when I was the champion, I did 60 questions in one minute 27 seconds. so

S: he's better (laughter).

S: it wasn't being a researcher that changed my perspective but when I was bad and I'm not really bad anymore I used to see more things that I didn't notice before. And sometime you hear people say you feel sorry for the teacher, sometimes, but obviously you're the person who goes to school so if you can change each lesson…

MC: What made you change?
S: You

MC: It was, do you reckon?

S: Yes, you and Miss A and Miss F and one time I started going to lesson and being good and I thought it's not really that bad what, …I spent so long being bad 'cos I thought it was a better thing to do but yeah.

GR: That's good, I'm very impressed.

S: I've changed my views as well. I do my work now. Before I didn't used to do a lot of work like complete the work in class but now I do.

S: but sometimes they have to make the lesson interesting because if it's a boring lesson I won't focus cos I mean you've got to keep me like ...interested.

GR: so it still sounds like it's the teacher, not you who has to keep it interesting. 31.29

S: I know that there's things partly curriculum and you have to learn them, but they could make it a little bit more, you know, interesting, you know enthusiastic and enjoyable.

S: also, I've noticed that there's two types of teacher that we get. Teachers who tell you off because they see potential in you, and then you get teachers who you think are good teachers cos they don't tell you off and those teachers are like they teach the good kids and they help them but they wont help the children who have potential or need a bit more encouragement. They just leave them as they are.

S: some teachers just need to be more firm. Keep order. But there needs to be a balance …

S: (interrupting) definitely.

S: ..cos I've got a certain teacher, yeah,

MC: (interrupting) what do you mean by balance?
S: right you've got everyone on task and where they should be but you still allow them to like talk during class and stuff like that.

S: like Mr X, he's the best teacher.

S: and like Mr Y, you do good work but he lets us talk to our partners so ...

S: obviously if you don't finish your work in his class there'll be a punishment but if you do everything he asks you to do, your life will be easier.

S: but some teachers like my maths teacher, she can't control the class. And she's struggling.

GR: and the other question is what do you think about the way that Mr C and I organised this research? Did we do any things well?
S: yeah. You took us out of lessons which gave us a bit of hope. Like, this is going to be enjoyable.

S: you picked the right students

S: you should have done this from the start. Done one session with all the students and then just picked us out. Because the whole time everyone was just talking.

S: it was hectic…

S: I know this doesn't matter but I always get taken out of lessons that I want to be in

GR: It does matter, I'm sorry that was the case.

S: I've got maths next and I don't really want to go..

MC: what did you mean by the right students?
S: you picked us, didn't you? The best students in the school.

GR: yes, La Crème de la Crème

S: yes, out of all your students the Y9 boys are the ones.

GR so is there anything we didn't get right? If we were to do this again with a different group what would we need to do differently?

S: I know what we should do. You know the first one when you came in, we did the sheets, them big sheets? You had faith in us cos you could have done this with Y7,8 or y10…

S: (interrupting) and so we could remember it

S: …another way you could make it better like, is if we all go to Costas to sit down and …(laughter) ...have a little coffee or smoothie, that would be nice.

GR: we did give you drinks and popcorn and biscuits.

GR: so you're saying that when we sat down and you had pens and sheets you felt more focused?

S: yes. Cos you said to make them look nice we took a bit longer

(boys talked about the filming with MC and not wanting to be in the assembly when it gets shown. MC and GR thanked boys and lesson ended)