Student Voice in Education

CIDREE YEARBOOK 2019

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Consortium of Institutions for Developing and Research in Education in Europe

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CIDREE is a network of educational organisations involved in curriculum development and/or educational research, set up in 1991 to establish closer working relationships at a European level.

Contents

President's Foreword

LUC WEIS,
President, CIDREE 2018–2019
Director of SCRIPT

Who would have guessed in September 2015 at the CIDREE expert meeting in Stockholm, where members were exchanging on pupil participation, that their discussions would not only lead to the Erasmus+-project "Student Voice – the BRIDGE to Learning", but would as well emerge into a CIDREE Yearbook and its accompanying launch conference in Ljubljana in November 2019? Yet again, the evolution of this exchange between CIDREE members – from expert meeting to project and further on to yearbook and conference – on a topic of uttermost relevance, is a vivid proof of the added value of the networking formats CIDREE offers its members. And it has led to policy decisions that contribute to educational systems throughout Europe.

Who would have guessed at the time that today the voice of youth is loud and is heard? It is the voice of young people that reminds us vehemently how important it is to act in order to preserve our world. They constantly remind us that there is no alternative world we can simply switch to when the time comes. Educational systems have to react wisely but fast. Learning platforms need to be created where young people are supported to become responsible, autonomous, resilient members of a world community that needs to find solutions to problems man has created and continues creating. If we want to further develop a sustainable society model where humans and nature are central, then the young citizens need to learn how to use their voice to clearly formulate their ideas and thoughts to be convincing. They need skills that enable them to apply and generate knowledge so that they become vectors of change. Top down instruction cannot be school's answer to that challenge.

The CIDREE Yearbook 2019 shows a persuading variety of good practice examples where students are given a voice and are listened to. Not only when it is about organising school events, showing guests around their school, or when students participate in first aid or peer mediation teams or run a school newspaper: Student voice also gets heard in formal learning and evaluation contexts. The contents, objectives and formats of learning are actively and rationally negotiated in and outside the classrooms and this becomes a part of the learning process. Metacognitive knowledge and skills that are key to understanding the world as it is, must be trained. The message is: We should advise policy makers to listen to student voice, to create contexts that allow student voice to resonate, to rethink evaluation systems by strengthening formative assessment and to revise curricula so that they reflect that ambition.

In its 29th year of existence, this Yearbook shows that CIDREE remains an important voice in Europe and contributes to the educational discourse. It will be remembered as a strong argumentation for student voice, which 12 articles from 12 different European countries lead into. My sincerest thanks go to all the authors who have contributed to this unique book.

Last but not least, and on behalf of all CIDREE members, I would like to thank colleagues from the National Education Institute from Slovenia (ZRSŠ) for the coordination and editing of the Yearbook, and especially Ada Holcar Brunauer, the Yearbook's editor.

Editorial Introduction

Ada Holcar Brunauer

THE THEME OF THE CIDREE YEARBOOK 2019

The theme of the CIDREE Yearbook 2019 is Student Voice in education. In an era of increased accountability and greater focus measuring student outcomes, student voice represents significant and growing movement in education. Instead of a top down, teacher directed approach to learning, the student voice approach encourages students to play an active role in planning, learning, as well as contributing to the development of school practices and policies. This significant philosophical shift requires all stakeholders to embrace the belief that there is something to learn from every individual regardless of age, culture, socioeconomic status, or other qualifying factors (St. John and Lori Briel, 2017).

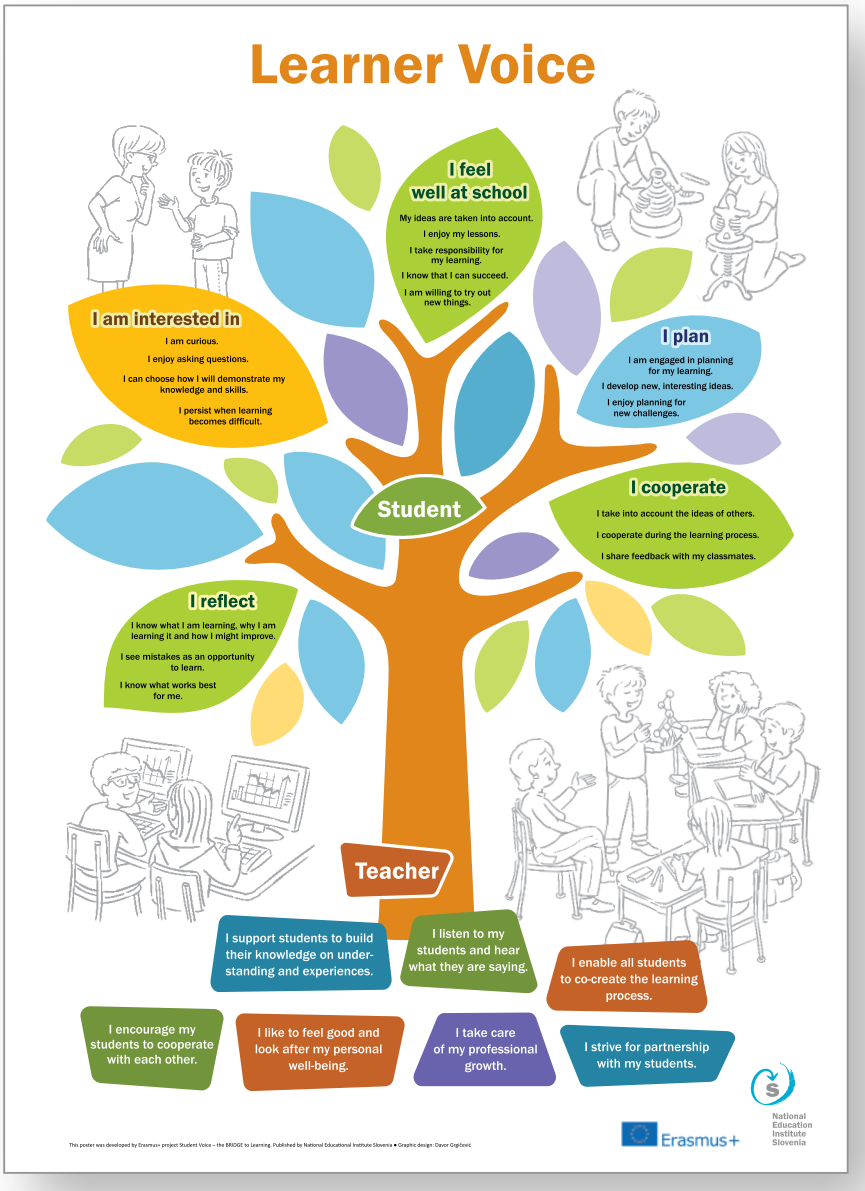
This Yearbook provides an insight into Student Voice from several European countries. Throughout the twelve articles, sets of authors from diverse backgrounds and specialisations, offer perspectives on promoting student voice in the widest of education contexts. Across many articles, there is a clear focus on pedagogy allowing students to engage and participate meaningfully in their own learning. In other articles, the focus is more on the representative space, which includes representative councils or groups encouraging students' active participation in adopting democratic principles across the schools. In the third group of articles, there is a key focus in supporting student voice at system level with a clear policy intention aimed at ensuring students' voice is heard in the classrooms and beyond.

The articles explore the diverse challenges faced by educational stakeholders in different school environments preparing students for the challenging world of the twenty-first century. Student voice helps meet the objectives of developing the interdisciplinary skills which are a key aspect of the newly developed 21st century curricula. In this curriculum students are supported to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, physical, personal and social wellbeing, relationships with others as well as taking on a role in the local, national and global community (Manefield, 2007).

Throughout the Yearbook, the international contributions allow us to gain insight into the perspectives of policy-makers, administrations, committed teachers and engaged learners, all actively participating in their schools, communities and the education system. They actively contribute to decision-making processes and collectively influence outcomes by putting forward their views, concerns and ideas. Student voice not only allows students to engage and participate meaningfully in their own learning, it contributes to building leadership, confidence and other skills that ensure student wellbeing.

LEARNER VOICE POSTER

The Yearbook also includes a Learner Voice poster, which was developed by the Erasmus+ project Student Voice – the BRIDGE to Learning in which five European countries (Hungary, Ireland, Scotland, Slovenia and The Netherlands) participated. The poster presents the characteristics of a supportive learning environment in which students are more likely to develop a confident voice and a capacity to engage effectively in life-long learning. It articulates actions teachers can take to engage students as strong agents in their own learning, by including them in curriculum planning, in setting goals and in the assessment process. This partnership approach is a shift towards creating strong collective responsibility for learning progress and school improvement in which all participants – students and teachers take the role of a learner.



A GLIMPSE INTO THE YEARBOOK

Authors of twelve European nations have contributed articles to the Yearbook 2019: **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Norway, Scotland, Slovenia, Sweden and The Netherlands**.

Below you will find a short introduction to each of the articles that are included in the CIDREE Yearbook 2019:

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Student Voice throughout Entrepreneurial Competence: How to be Entrepreneurial in School Systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The authors focus on student voice throughout active participation in school project activities on the topic of entrepreneurial learning. The functioning of the student council and schools has been clarified in the article, as well as the way in which students can achieve mutual support and cooperation in joint activities with teaching staff, school management and parents. Student voice is recognizable as a part of the work of the student councils in Bosnia and Herzegovina that promote the development of self-initiative and entrepreneurial competence throughout teamwork, responsible behaviour, constructive cooperation, decision-making and problem solving.

Estonia

Students' Involvement in Improving School Environment in Estonia

The article describes national satisfaction surveys launched by Estonian Ministry of Education and Research in 2015 aimed at providing an overview of students, teachers, and parents' satisfaction with different aspects of school environment and aspects of students' motivation. The article describes the process of data collection and explains the type of feedback given to schools. The authors conclude the article by emphasizing the importance of giving students, teachers and parents a voice or a chance to express their opinions through the national surveys.

France

How to Mobilize Visual Arts as a Form of Citizen Expression

The article highlights developments in French education to promote collective work between stakeholders and researchers in education. The article outlines the background and development of a research project in which six classes of Year 10 students have used graphic objects created on a digital map of their territory for defining a city of tomorrow, expressing some kind of political representation of the territory. The authors reflect on the importance of students developing cognitive processes through visual arts and how the principles of student voice can be taken forward as part of effective classroom practice.

Hungary

Does Student Voice Comply with the Centralised National Core Curriculum at the Classroom Level?

The authors describe a case study on a secondary vocational school in Budapest, where the project implementation resulted in strengthening student voice and increasing the learning outcomes of the engaged students. Three schools were involved in ERASMUS+ Project Student Voice – the Bridge to Learning, each trying to find their own path to student voice. The authors identify some clear recommendations for increasing students' motivation for learning and empowering them to perform at a high standard.

Kosovo

Addressing the Voice of Students in Official Documents and the Challenges of Implementation in School Practice in Kosovo

The contribution from Kosovo gives us a national perspective on how well student voice is addressed in school policy documents and how well students' rights and consideration of their voice is respected in decision-making processes in classrooms. Analysis of educational documents and policies in Kosovo satisfactory address student voice in decision-making bodies. The authors provide initial reflections based on policy implications of their analysis – suggesting that policy makers and teachers should reflect carefully on how the implementation of laws and by-laws could be better embedded in classroom practice where school culture and the quality of school management play a crucial role.

Luxembourg

Student Voice in Education

This article highlights some concrete examples of initiatives undertaken in Luxembourg to enhance student voice in primary and secondary schools. It starts by discussing how classroom learning and assessment provide an important place for student voice. The article also describes the class and school councils as another promising path to help students share their opinions. Student voice in the context of school and classroom management is then illustrated in the *School Futures* project which supports the development of 21th century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication skills. The article then outlines several projects and initiatives showing how students in Luxembourg schools can be supported to become fully responsible citizens, with the ability to contribute to sustainable development in the society of tomorrow.

Ireland

Learner Voice in Irish Education – towards a Common Approach

In this article, education officers from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment set out how Ireland is taking learner voice forward in the early childhood, primary and post-primary sectors. The article reflects on how efforts are being made to move away from teacher/practitioner dominated practices to encouraging a situation where all learners are provided with the opportunity to have a voice in the learning process. The authors demonstrate how the NCCA is focusing more proactively in supporting schools/settings to review and reform their practices through the provision of greater clarity in curriculum documents and in exemplifying and sharing examples of learner-centred practices.

Norway

Student Voice in Norway and the New Norwegian Curriculum

The contribution from Norway gives us a national perspective on how students are given voice in Norwegian schools. Norway has a long tradition of emphasising student voice in primary and elementary schools, with their first student council being established in 1919. The authors analyse the new curriculum in which empowerment of individual students is emphasized, as well as the ambition that students should be given opportunities to find solutions the development of knowledge, understanding and cooperation. The article highlights the importance of practicing skills in critical thinking and reflection as means of developing deeper learning. The authors conclude their article with number of helpful reflections on how giving students' agency can empower them to become self-directed learners.

Scotland

Learner Voice to Learner Participation – Scotland's Journey

The article highlights developments in Scottish education in the last 20 years of promoting learners' participation in issues that affect them across the education system. The authors describe milestones that have marked key points in this journey and explore them from different perspectives within formal education and beyond. The authors describe how in the past, schools created Pupil Councils and committees to encourage the learner voice by empowering representative learners to influence curriculum activity and how this has evolved in many schools to involve all learners in school improvement as well as expanding their involvement in local, national and global issues.

Slovenia

Student Voice and Formative Assessment

This article presents some findings from Erasmus+ project *Student Voice – the BRIDGE to Learning* through Slovenian practice. 78 participants from nine schools joined the project. The authors describe the school culture in which student voice flourishes. Findings of the research show that involving students in curriculum development encourages them to take ownership of their learning and that open and trustful relationships enable them to freely express their views in classrooms. The authors conclude the article by presenting a model of formative assessment to enhance student voice showing the elements, which are essential for student voice to flourish in a classroom.

Sweden

Participation and Influence in the Classroom – Capacity Building for Teacher´s Facilitation of Student Voice, Motivation and Learning in Sweden

The article reflects on the ways that children and young people can be encouraged to participate more actively and meaningfully in their education – and how this can become an important driver for increasing student voice and motivation for learning. The authors draw on a review of mainly Swedish research about children and young people's participation and influence in school. Swedish education policy provides space and encouragement for learner participation – however there are a number of challenges in ensuring that this is realised. The article highlights a number of gaps and key themes in the research literature, including the need to reconsider traditional teacher-learner roles. It also highlights the impact that effective participation can have on children and young people, teachers and the whole school.

The Netherlands

From Participation to Voice: Developing Student Voice in Dutch Education

The article reflects on the ways student voice is embedded in school practice in the Netherlands. The authors outline specific concerns about the developments in this field which seem to have been underdeveloped in the last years. The article describes the efforts made to improve the development of student voice in theory and practice in Dutch education, with an emphasis on classroom curriculum development. The authors present experiences, results and tools based on a PhD research involving six schools of lower secondary education and Erasmus+ project Student Voice – the BRIDGE to Learning and conclude the article by helpful reflection on the crucial role which teachers play in improving the quality of education.

CONCLUSION

This introduction highlights that one of the most powerful tools available to influence academic achievement is helping students feel they have a stake in their learning. To feel motivated to do something and become engaged in its activity, students (like adults) generally need to feel they have a voice. Numerous examples from research have shown that the more educators give their students choice, control, challenge, and opportunities for collaboration, the more their motivation and engagement are likely to rise (Toshalis and Nakkula, 2012).

The aspiration of the ongoing work described in this CIDREE Yearbook of 2019, and the insights shared by our contributors into their fields of expertise will hopefully provide grounds for discussion and reflection. In particular, it is hoped that all those involved in shaping education - policy makers, researchers and practitioners across Europe and beyond will find the Yearbook a useful resource to inform their thinking in taking forward developments in the area of student voice.

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Organization of the Articles

Across all of the articles three clear themes emerge:

STUDENT VOICE IN PEDAGOGY

STUDENT VOICE IN THE REPRESENTATIVE SPACE

STUDENT VOICE AT SYSTEM LEVEL

While it is recognised that a number of articles cover more than one theme, it has been decided to organise each article within the theme where there is the strongest focus. It is intended that this thematic approach will enable the readers to compare articles within themes while allowing for a holistic understanding of student voice across all three themes.

STUDENT VOICE IN PEDAGOGY

How to Mobilize Visual Arts as a Form of Citizen Expression

student voice

FRANCE

la parole des élèves

Authors

Virginie Ruppin

Virginie Ruppin, Ph.D., is a professional researcher associated at the Politics Cultures and Education ECP Laboratory (3th axis: Arts Education), a lecturer at Lyon 2 University since 2005, and an art teacher collaborating at "Léa" Prospective and Citizenship at IFE-ENS-Lyon. Her Ph.D. thesis, under the direction of Alain Kerlan, focused on Artistic and Cultural Practices in Elementary School, on the gap between teacher intentions and implementations, with a complex theoretical framework associating justification (Boltanski L.), academic form or schooling (Vincent G.), objects (Latour B.) and worlds (Derouet J.-L.).

She has authored a number of scientific and professional papers on the construction of artistic teaching situations with or without intervening artists, the modes of transmission of visual arts in a socio-didactic perspective, on the use of digital technologies in the teaching of visual arts in primary and secondary schools.

She has participated in scientific symposia in France, Switzerland, Canada, Belgium, and delivered workshops and conferences on interdisciplinary digital innovative approaches to artistic teaching.

Sina Safadi-Katouzian

Sina Safadi-Katouzian is a Ph.D. student in social anthropology at the Interdisciplinary Institute for Contemporary Anthropology at the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris.

His work explores the social and political organisation of a neighbourhood in Orléans and focuses on relations between inhabitants, citizens and public space. He discusses issues of everyday practices, citizenship and political subjectivity.

At the ENS-IFE, he coordinates a collaborative research project between teachers, researchers and urban planners, on geography and citizenship.

Aurélien Zaragori

Aurélien Zaragori has a Ph.D. degree in Contemporary History and is a teacher of History and Geography in a junior high school, the Collège Paul Eluard in Vénissieux, in the Academy of Lyon. He is one of the coordinators of the collaborative research project 'LéA Prospectives – Territoire de Lyon – Réseaux d'établissements' and participates both in the research team and in the educational implementation.

Abstract

This contribution analyses how visual arts allow students to express themselves as citizens of their own territory while engaging themselves as actors of their learning process in geography, arts and languages. Based on a transdisciplinary approach and a stimulating collaborative research space between education stakeholders and researchers, it examines how six classes of year 10 have used graphic objects created on a digital map of their territory for defining a city of tomorrow, then expressing some kind of political representation of this territory. In this respect, visual arts are thus to students both a way to express their own vision and to confront their points of view. The verbalization that follows visual arts work leads students to explore this cognitive process and give a new sense to the whole activity.

Presentation of the research context

In 2017, an associated educational centre (LéA) was created in Lyon around the teaching of foresight and the citizenship processes that this approach can generate. This LéA centre is one of the thirty-four existing ones supported by the French Institute of Education - Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon (IFE-ENS de Lyon). Called Prospective - Lyon territory - Establishment Network, its aim is to create a collaborative research space. Indeed, the objective of such a system is to promote collective work between education stakeholders and a team of researchers on issues related to education. In this particular case, urban professionals (architects, model makers and urban planners) participate in the discussions to bring their particular perspective of the construction of a territory. This co-construction space aims to study how the foresight approach can generate learning situations related to moral and civic education. Territorial foresight is a more or less formalized tool for the analysis of spaces and related social phenomena that raise the stakes of collective participation in the evolution of a territory (Barthes et al., 2019). The foresight approach is composed of several steps: carrying out a territorial survey in order to identify specific issues, and then develop plausible scenarios for the future.

The foresight approach has a history that needs to be explained in a few words. Territorial foresight in France was, first of all, an approach mobilized by experts commissioned by state institutions in order to build strategies at the national level. A recent impetus has been given to consider this approach as an approach that allows learning, leading to a transition from territorial and urban engineering to school pedagogy.

Teachers and researchers from the Lille academy have thus undertaken a reflection on the mobilization of the foresight approach in their teaching. The aim was to renew the teaching of geography by inviting students to investigate a geographical area in order to consider its possible futures and position themselves in relation to the identified social issues. This approach places students in a posture of personal construction of geographical knowledge and skills. One of the persons in charge of this project, Natalie Malabre, academic and regional pedagogical inspector, considers that the teaching of this approach allowed "the pupils to absorb the specific problems of the spaces and to understand the territorial dynamics of the work better"(2017). The productions of this Léa centre can be consulted on the Geography and Prospective site.

The collaborative research featured in this article continues this work, especially by extending the reflection on how to make student voice audible.

The stakeholders and actors involved in this three-year long research project are part of different fields: education, research, and spatial/urban planning. Presented in the following way for heuristic reasons, these actors belong to different spheres:

- From primary school teachers to university staff, spanning a whole range of subjects, such as social studies (history, geography, and civics are taught by the same teacher), French, foreign languages (German and Spanish) and arts (plastic arts and music);

- Researchers coming from various disciplinary fields: geography, political science, history, educational sciences, and anthropology;
- Planners being town planners, architects, model makers or working in an urban mediation association.

This collaborative research group currently brings together 35 teachers, 4 urban professionals, and 6 researchers. 20 classes are concerned, that is about 500 students, mostly from 10-year-old to 15-year-old students, all located in the Lyon region (Lyon 4, Vaulx-en-Velin, Vénissieux, Villeurbanne, Dardilly, and Artemare).

In the wake of this research project, which gave rise to a particularly rich reflection, it gradually became obvious that by identifying "specific social problems", such as difficulties in mobility, social or academic inequality, in the territory and projecting themselves into possible futures, students found themselves in various situations that led to challenge their own representation by confronting it with those of other actors of the territory. Quasi-ethnographic investigation (being there, observing, describing) in the immediate area requires a very personal experience of communication and interaction between the investigator and local people, giving themselves the right and freedom to speak. It appeared to us that this survey approach allows students to question their daily practices and the way in which they themselves participate in the social and political organization of the territory. This activity gives rise to skills to listen to and observe the complexity of territories, the diversity of their fabric (Collectif Léa de Lyon, 2018) and thus the polysemic character of citizenship (Clarke et al., 2014, p. 9). Thus, we focus in this article on one strand of the research questions developed, by insisting on the richness of the transdisciplinary approach to favour the emergence of modes of expression other than the oratorical ability, constituted as central in a whole piece of political philosophy. By experiencing visual arts, it is also a question of encouraging plural artistic expressions on questions related to life in a territory.

The French school curriculum

The use of the foresight approach is now well integrated into the secondary school curriculum. This is the case in secondary schools (*collèges*) in year 7 (*sixième*, with 11-year-old pupils) where it can be used in the theme "Living in a metropolis", but also in year 10 programme (*troisième*, with 15-year-old pupils) proposing to work on urban areas that can be used to "develop territories to reduce inequalities". Other uses applied to the geographical approach of local territories can also be deepened in the Sixth Form.

The experiment proposed here deals with data collected in six classes of year 10 (*troisième*).

In visual arts, it is in the context of representing a local space situated in the vicinity of the secondary school:

- to get students to understand that a sensitive approach of the architectural work mediated by the human five senses can lead them to an authentic aesthetic experience that goes beyond mere vision, and brings new readings of the space;
- to raise the question of the added value of a space lived, perceived and felt by all senses more than only by the visual image of this space.

From an arts teaching perspective, students understand by their practice and verbalization in class that:

- an artwork can address all the senses and not just the sight;
- the sensations feed on the personal experience of the spectator;
- any experience of an artwork is unique for the spectator who experiences it.

Key questions and research hypotheses

On the one hand, this project allows students to reflect on the production of knowledge, on the question of geographical data produced and the ways of representing them plastically, in particular with the support of digital tools and on the other hand, on what happens in the learning development when school disciplines are linked to each other, what knowledge flows between professionals of the urban planning and digital design professions, geography teachers, languages and visual arts and students who learn from them.

We will be able to deepen how the oral part (explication and verbalisation) requested from students and the technical part (mastery of the software) can be articulated to the dimension of the making of the plastic practice.

It is a question of questioning the "power of the maps". Brian Harley (1988) believes that the map is a graphic object that has a language and can therefore be considered as a text providing knowledge and thus becomes an object of power. According to the author, the abstract nature of the map tends to make the social dimension of the territory it represents disappear. By mobilizing the map as an intermediary object allowing not only to communicate between the disciplines but also between actors, the experimentation conducted considers the map as an object of "cultural poaching", i.e., an unexpected reclaim of using the map (de Certeau, 1990), making it possible to become a vector of democratic education: How can visual arts, geography, music education and languages mobilize a digital tool to make the plurality of actors that make up a geographical territory co-inhabit this graphic object? How can the restitution of students' territorial inquiry mobilize art as a modality of political expression? What does the artistic resource concerning architectural spaces mean, what political discourse does it allow that a more "classically" scientific study does not allow? What place does student voice possess in this type of a complex experimental device and what are its contributions in an anthropological approach favouring an artistic and linguistic approach to say and report on politics?

More specifically, in lower secondary education, working on the concept of "local territory" in eography, on perceptual spaces in the visual arts, on language spaces in foreign languages, there are questions that question the transversal notion of territory, the place of the mapped object (its norms, its possible transition to the status of artistic object) and that of the digital tool. They also develop the central notion of active participation of the students as main actors of their learning process. And how can student voice, here considered in a broad sense as students' expressions and the learning outcomes, generated by an artistic mapping project, test the social and the political representation of the students.

Our hypotheses are that the visual representation of an imaginary space would allow the expression of a political representation of the student that would not be expressed using only the oral or written language but also a visual aid to facilitate dialogue. According to Gilles Pasky (2013, p. 13), the use of the participatory map, on the one hand, facilitates the contribution of the greatest number of people without the usual relationships of domination, which are more present in verbal communication, and on the other hand, disrupts the hierarchy of knowledge by blurring the line between external and theorized knowledge and implicit and embedded knowledge. Therefore, the voice of the student heard and/or collected in writing would thus be increased, supplemented by another language dimension – that of the expression of a reflexive creative plastic practice of the student engaged in a two-dimensional and digital production. Secondly, it tests the possibilities that confronting data, collected spatially and verbally, and plastic representations would allow a space for discussion to emerge among students living in the same territory, contributing to the

development of a situation that generates the effort of testing their citizenship (Gayet-Viaud, 2011).

Thus, student voice is apprehended as a tool and considered a common ground to:

- identify the major economic, societal and environmental issues of the city of tomorrow, at the neighbourhood level of the student;
- participate and to express oneself by the voicing, the writing and the plastic expression;
- think and debate, transforming the "collège" during their last year of study there (*troisième*, age 15) into a laboratory of reflection, confronting students' points of view and shedding light on the thoughts and challenges of today;
- question teachers' practices and their own representations about the territory in which they teach.

Research methodology

The experiment presented here is part of an interdisciplinary collaborative research project and focuses on the part of this study: the mobilization of a geographical reflection produced and expressed (verbally and in written form) by secondary school students as part of the foresight approach on their territory, in visual arts and languages (German and Spanish).

The students were involved in different pedagogical activities:

- urban ballad: in the city with the students;
- pictures of the neighbourhood: with a camera;
- artistic representation of a future city;
- written explanation of the artistic and architectural choices of their neighbourhood: on a form accompanying the drawing;
- numerical modelling work in a computer room: with a special software;
- verbalization in geography;
- "express your feelings about your experiential space in modern languages": creation of word clouds.

The team of researchers proceeded to:

- a collection of the students' words and writings: on a paper;
- class observations: with pupils working;
- photographs of students' artistic productions;
- monitoring of collective verbalizations;
- a follow-up of the numerical modelling work on computer;
- a transcript and analysis of student interviews.

This collective contribution bears a testimony especially here on a multidisciplinary research design, articulating not only geography, arts and politics but also educational sciences and anthropology. Our experimentation fundamentally apprehends the study of the relationship between art and politics from the angle of artistic intervention and its contributions to anthropological practice and theory.

Field of experimentation

The empirical data mobilized in this article come from one of the experiments set up in a *"collège"* located in a "zone d'éducation prioritaire". Eight voluntary teachers in year 10 of secondary school (*troisième*, 15 years old) participated in experimenting with the interdisciplinary teaching device entitled "My city and me" and in gathering recordings of students' expressions at each stage of the project's progress. These teachers are associated with the collection of data and share their interpretation as they are involved in the work of interpretation and analysis with the researchers. Their contribution is significantly relevant to the potential effects of the research device on their practices while allowing researchers to shift their understanding by confronting a different view.

Student voice: a rewarding complex analysis

Verbalization situations in visual arts courses are part of the student's formative evaluation. When a student verbally presents his or her work to the teacher, explaining it, he/she describes and tells what he/she did in his/her plastic practice. This verbalization is based on the methodology developed by Pierre Vermersch (1998). Following those principles, the arts teacher focuses in questioning on the description of the production and the analysis made by the student, taking care of considering, in a secondary way, any elements related to inappropriate comments or judgments.

The teacher involved in the experimentation is initially trained in the method of collecting verbal data (words, key words, oral expression) from the student. On the basis of this material and the interaction with their teacher, the student knows if he/she has or has not met the success criteria defined by the teacher on the work requested and how it can be improved. Indeed, the teacher asks how the work was done, what types of buildings were drawn, what building materials were chosen and for what reasons (plastics, environmental ...), and what housing, cultural and recreational goals underlie the drawing project. If the student responds vaguely to a single question among those mentioned above, one may wonder if he/she has thought about getting his/her product. Conversely, a student who does not fully master the architectural plastic codes but who describes and adequately explains his/her work can be valued for his/her work. The place of student voice is thus central here; at the same time it can support advice and improvement of the practice and the artistic production, and value a student who had difficulties in the realm of visual realization.

Each activity and teaching sequence offered to students (production of texts in foreign languages and geography, artistic production in visual arts) served as a support for oral explanations and verbal expression. We noticed that sometimes the reading of the plastic productions exceeded the student's capacity of expression, as if he/she was not able to fully reflect on all his/her choices. In a more positive way, one could argue that the artistic practice became a language of its own and a material in itself, completing and augmenting the languages used to express students' voices. The technical and discipline-specific vocabulary can be a real obstacle for students to fully express themselves, especially for at-risk students facing major difficulties in school or who have recently arrived in France.

In addition to the class observations and audio recordings of computer sessions, conducted by the group's teachers and researchers, we have synthesized diaries kept by the teachers during the sessions in which they took part. Those documents record essential and sometimes subjective information. Their analysis will be combined with the reflexive character of teacher's focus groups on their practice analysis; those interviews were conducted during teacher groupings That took place at internal meetings organized within the *"collège" (secondary school)*.

For the teachers of any discipline, having only the production (written trace or plastic production) at their disposal, the product of the cerebral activity of the student is generally insufficient to have access to the progression of his/her thought, to the cognitive process.

The oral explanation of the work brings the teacher complementary elements and uncovers, reveals procedures most often hidden to the learner.

The teacher, while developing an empathic and active listening, puts questions to students without knowing in advance the answer to his/her question: "How did you conceive your city of the future? What architectural references did you summon in your work? What materials did you choose? What is essential for you to represent in your neighbourhood of the future?"

The student accompanies his/her plastic production with a written description of what he/she has achieved and most of the time completed verbally during the verbalization phase. As indicated by Thierry Piot, "The word of the master is second compared to that of the student. In other words, we focus less on knowledge than on the process of building knowledge and competence of the student."

Gathering students' words allows, on the one hand, knowing what are the knowledge and abilities mobilized by a learner, and on the other hand, highlighting the difficulties encountered during the process of production development.

To compensate for the difficulties, teachers involved in the Léa collaborative research project tried to develop a whole pedagogical scenario in order to put the students in a position of success:

- A progressive approach, putting the student in action in the sense of Jacques Ardoino, in project pedagogy with:
- a certain number of pre-requisites (understanding the usefulness of perspective, the functions of buildings, the effects of materials),
- an exploration phase and a focus on artistic culture (imagining a city of the future, the perspective of buildings, knowing architects and innovative buildings),
- a reinvestment phase of these concepts in the problem of his/her own neighborhood in 2100 and
- an extension in the computer room on the digital three-dimensional modelling of their buildings inserted in their own neighbourhood, modelled in the *"MT3D"* software designed by an Ifé-ENS engineer.

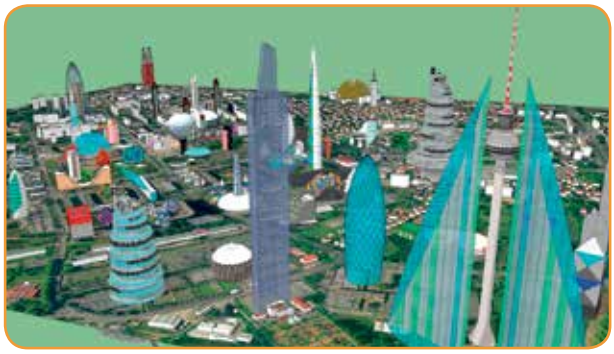

Figure 1, 2, 3 and 4. Examples of screenshots, student computer

The difficulties lay in the reinvestment of the futuristic lines and shapes studied in the exploration stage as students had to imagine their own neighbourhood of the future. Students seemed to have more reservations about creativity and difficulty in imagining the future of a familiar space. Taught students agreed that there would be no change, and therefore they did not see why they needed to imagine a future neighbourhood in the future.

Sometimes, students find themselves in lexical and semantic registers that are too weak and far away from the school culture, so that they do not allow them to meet their teacher's expectations.

In diagnostic assessment, most students were able to draw a ruler's perspective and pencil in their notebooks; nevertheless, many students did not capture this reminder and reinvest it importantly in the phase of exploring the future city of their choice – within their project to create their neighbourhood in 2100. A major difficulty was to mobilize all prior knowledge, to solve, by the procedures learned in group, how to classify the new phase of creating their own neighbourhood in the future. Thus, the teacher was given plastic productions, sometimes without any reinvestment of the notions and concepts seen previously.

The verbalization phase could be a teaching tool used to point out the lack of reinvestment and student's own language limits. Indeed, mastering a narrative competence (Altet, 1996) on one's own school production requires a period of adaptation.

Conclusion

The reflexive student voice gathered in the phase of verbalization allows students to dispose of scaffolding and to enter and explore their own cognitive process. Students, as active participants of their learning process and as spect-actors of collective achievements (Barbozat 2007), become the authors of cognitive dynamics. Indeed, by knowing how to conceptualize the school situation, the student, by the description of what he/she does, opens a potential space of awareness (Piaget, 1974) of the configuration of the school activity, leading him/her to a new sense of activity. To do this, it seems essential that the success of the effective and efficient taking student voice into account should be based on the mobilization of each teacher reflecting on their individual practices in the classroom.

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Does Student Voice Comply with the Centralised National Core Curriculum at the Classroom Level?

student voice

HUNGARY

tanulók hangja

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Abstract

Eszterházy Károly University Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development has taken part in the Erasmus+ Student Voice – the Bridge to Learning Project, in collaboration with other four member institutions of CIDREE. This paper gives an overview on the student-centred education through Hungarian eyes. It is a case study on a secondary vocational school in Budapest, where the project implementation resulted in strengthening student voice and increasing the learning outcomes of the engaged students. Their active and effective participation in planning, researching, creating and assessing their own learning process motivates them to a much greater degree and empowers them to perform at a high standard. The school example shows that allowing students to shape their own learning process enhances their success and can promote higher achievement in their studies while all recommended curricular themes are treated during the process.

"Children learn what they live"
(Nolte)

Children are not reverse adults. They have their own worldview. Their childhood activities and experiences influence the development of their personalities, beliefs, attitudes and skills. If they live with encouragement, they learn confidence. If they live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those around them. We can justify Dorothy Law Nolte's poem with some evidence on the connection between learning style and learning outcomes. When students get choices in their learning, they engage in deeper, richer learning, display more on-task behaviour and their learning environment becomes more collaborative. "Research shows that when students are given autonomy in their learning, they are more likely to better develop their 21st century skills in critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, creativity, grit, perseverance, and time management. These are some of the most sought after skills for employers." (Kaput, 2018, p. 16.)

Our students need to face the future, be able to navigate its uncertainty. They are members of the global, information-based digital society while their parents and teachers root in the world of the 20th century. Can these adults prepare this young generation for an effective life in the 21st century?

What changes do we need in education?

It is no doubt that teachers are the key elements of education, and their quality is a strong connection with the quality of education (Barber and Mourshed, 2007). But in the 21st century school, teachers need to become facilitators of each student's effective personal learning. This new role of teachers requires transformation in their working style. The quality of teachers is a necessary element of the quality education, though it is not enough. Any change in education can be sustained if it influences the daily practice of the teachers and the whole school culture at the same time (Hopkins, 2001).

Although changes are necessary elements of improvement, people are afraid of them since they force them to leave their comfort zones. Keeping this fact in mind, it takes time to achieve sustainable changes in education and a system-level change. Any changes in education can be sustainable if the goals are clear and the implementation has a balance of pressures and supports (Creemers et al., 2007). Market mechanisms, external evaluation and accountability and external agents are the main elements of pressure, whereas school autonomy, financial maintenance, favourable working conditions and local backing are typical elements of support.

According to N. Emerson (Bridge expert meeting, Ireland, 2017), the biggest danger of the realization of any educational reforms is that their ship of change sails purposefully across the sea, but it only ruffles the smooth surface and does not touch the bottom. So to say, the educational reforms sometimes fail to reach the classroom level, the teachers and their students although they should stir up the depths.

Our hypotheses are that student voice at classroom level, with devoted teachers working in partnership with their students, can exist even in a centralised educational system.

The context of the 'bridge' in Hungary

Hungary has a three-level and two-pole content regulation of public education. The National Core Curriculum (NCC) declares principles, overall goals, development tasks and key competences that should be developed by the public education and the specific aims, learning outcomes and the learning content of the subjects in ten different areas of cultural domain. The so-called National Framework Curricula or syllabi ensure their implementation. They give concrete guidelines for teachers, taking into consideration the characteristics of the pedagogical work phases. Schools develop their own local curricula based on the framework curricula. The local curriculum contains at least 70% of the framework curricula while the rest of its content is based on local elements. Supporting the personalized learning and focusing on the real needs of each student is an important pedagogical paradigm.

The 'bridge' in Hungary

The Erasmus + Student Voice project had three partner schools in Hungary: two primaries with age group of 7-14, and a secondary school with students aged 15-19. Based on their own understanding, the three schools gave different focuses on their activities in student voice aspects, such as to find new perceptions to personalized classroom management, to increase learning outcomes and support personalised student development and to develop student-friendly assessment.

Input research

To help the implementation of student voice principles, a small qualitative and quantitative research was carried out in the spring of 2017, trying to explore how the school leaders, the teachers and the students interpret the concept of student voice. The empirical research showed that each school was at different stage of student participation, and they had different motivations to participate in the project.

The teachers preferred to strengthen the student voice mostly in out-of-lesson school situations. Student debates and decisions in classroom situations seemed to be less tolerable in the secondary school. Student voice is rather important at the individual level and in personal questions, but not in the learning process.

According to the students, in order that a school functions well, it is important that teachers encourage students to express their opinions. Other important considerations took account of students' individual abilities and providing for student councils to work effectively. Interestingly, homework, teaching methods, and the shaping of lesson content by students seemed the least important for students. They do not intend to influence the process of their own studies (Imre et al., 2017, Bron et al., 2018).

The national conference in August 2018 made it clear that the partners put three different focuses on student voice. Although (1) learning intentions, success criteria, and learning outcomes, or (2) student-friendly assessment or (3) personalized classroom management meant different routes for different schools, they followed a complex approach at classroom level that covered all three aspects.

What is student voice for the secondary school participants?

In our case study, we show a story of our participating secondary vocational school, where significant changes happened due to student voice approach. We would like to share our educational experience, the pleasure we gained, the struggle we survived and the achievements we reached in partnership with our students during the period of the last two years.

About the school

It is specialised in economics. It has 800 students with 110 teachers and it aims to provide the students with high standard academic knowledge, language competencies and professional skills in economics. Its management supports educational culture shift and tries to focus on student-centred education. They want to improve students' personal qualities, key competencies, social skills and environmental awareness. The school activities aim at training young people to communicate, negotiate and debate both in Hungarian and in foreign languages to protect their interests and to become successful citizens in their future careers.

At the beginning they used the definition of the BRIDGE project, developed jointly by the project partners. Student voice 'is taking a collaborative, inclusive approach to developing enhanced student voice in our classrooms and across our schools. Our students and teachers feel empowered, develop a range of skills, and are supported in becoming self-directed learners and active citizens. As part of this process, our students play a meaningful role in collaborating with their teachers in shaping the curriculum and culture at class and whole-school level.'[1]

It means for us to allow learners to choose the way they want to learn. The students take an active role in the process of their own learning, from goal setting and planning through problem solving and creation to self- and peer assessment and testing. The active student participation empowers creativity and critical thinking, deepens knowledge and understanding, promotes problem solving, and teamwork, enables students to face the continuous changes in their lives; namely, it enhances their future awareness.

1 http://voiceofstudents.eu/node/40603

Active student participation in defining learning intentions and success criteria

Many educators in Hungary believe that the prescriptive national curriculum, centrally setting the learning goals, contents and requirements, restricts teachers to respond to their students' individual learning needs at classroom level. Many actors of education tend to understand them as unavoidable disasters which have to be completed, and fail to invite students to collaborate in designing their own learning process. It means that teachers rarely ask their students why to learn certain contents, why they are useful for them. The strongest argument to the "why" question is "because you need it for the final exams".

What to learn?

Although the Framework Curriculum defines the competencies and the themes through which the competencies are developed, it still offers teachers flexibility. In the case of English as a foreign language, e.g., there are four basic skills (understanding, talking, communication and writing) to improve and ten common broad topics (e.g.: Personal data and family, Human and society, Environment, School, etc.) In the subject of British-American culture there are universal topics, like geography, economy, society, etc. The universal themes give teachers flexibility of choices. For example, during the first two introductory lessons in the USA culture, US general facts can be discussed by several optional topics from which students can freely choose a topic. On the base of their choices, study groups can be formed and each of them works on a different topic.

Another example for implementing the student voice idea is the local school curriculum of Hungarian Language and Literature for the first year of secondary education, which contains a drama project finishing with a drama performance. The preparation starts with choosing a play to perform. Students can suggest novels, short stories or films to stage. In our two cases, there were four plays suggested and then the students voted which one to work on.

In other subjects, the curricula seem much stricter in the content area, but students can make their voices heard in 'why'- and 'how'-areas of the learning process.

Why learn?

To begin with, we used the Irish model (Focus on Learning, 2015) to define aims, learning intentions, success criteria and outcomes. We asked our students why learn the given contents, why improve the skills, why they are useful for their future life. When we ask our students why is it useful for them to gain knowledge and understand the given topic, we give them a chance to form their own learning goals. They forget about the final exams, and start to think about themselves, about their lives, and their motivation enhances. The learning intentions should reach all students; they should be clear, achievable and time-limited. That links to the purpose and context of learning of NCC. It focuses on what to learn by completing a certain task.

How to include students in co-creating learning intentions?

The students decide on the learning intentions quickly and easily via simple questions and answers.

Let us take some examples from English, Culture, Maths and Drama classes (Table 1).

Table 1. Learning intentions and cognitive success criteria

Activities based on curriculum	*Teacher's questions*	*Students' answers*	*Success Criteria*
Past Tenses (Simple, Continuous, Perfect)	What are the narrative tenses used for?	To be able to speak about past events, to tell a story.	I can read a narrative text using different types of past tenses. I can do the grammar tasks in the workbook accurately. I can speak about a past event fluently, using past tenses in the right way/ with some mistakes.
Give a speech on food.	Why is it important to be able to speak about food?	Various topics mentioned, from healthy diet through the history of fast food to allergies and food intolerances.	I can speak about our chosen topic fluently, clearly and logically, using the right vocabulary.
Trigonometric functions	Why learn trigonometric functions?	We can count the inclination angle of a straight slope. We can interpret what 6% grade means on traffic signs.	I remember what I have learnt before. I can recognise the trigonometric concepts in everyday tasks. I can calculate the missing side length or angle in a rectangular triangle. I can calculate the inclination angle of a straight slope. I can interpret what 6% grade means. I can calculate the length of the journey on an incline. I can interpret the relations between the trigonometric functions. I can judge how complicated a trigonometric task is.[2]
Drama	Why is it good for us to set up a play?	Great opportunity to overcome our stage fright, gain self-confidence; to try out acting while having fun together; spend a lot of time together working on the same task.	I can accomplish my individual task at high standard on the stage or in the background: invitation cards, posters, decoration, costumes, etc.

2 Trigonometric success criteria precisely coincide with the levels of deep thinking. (Bloom taxonomy)

How to involve students in creating success criteria?

The second stage of the process is to invite students to decide what they need to do in order to achieve their learning goals, how they recognise they have achieved them, what the success criteria are besides earning good grades. The students and the teacher together define the personal goals and the success criteria using Bloom's taxonomy (Figure 1).

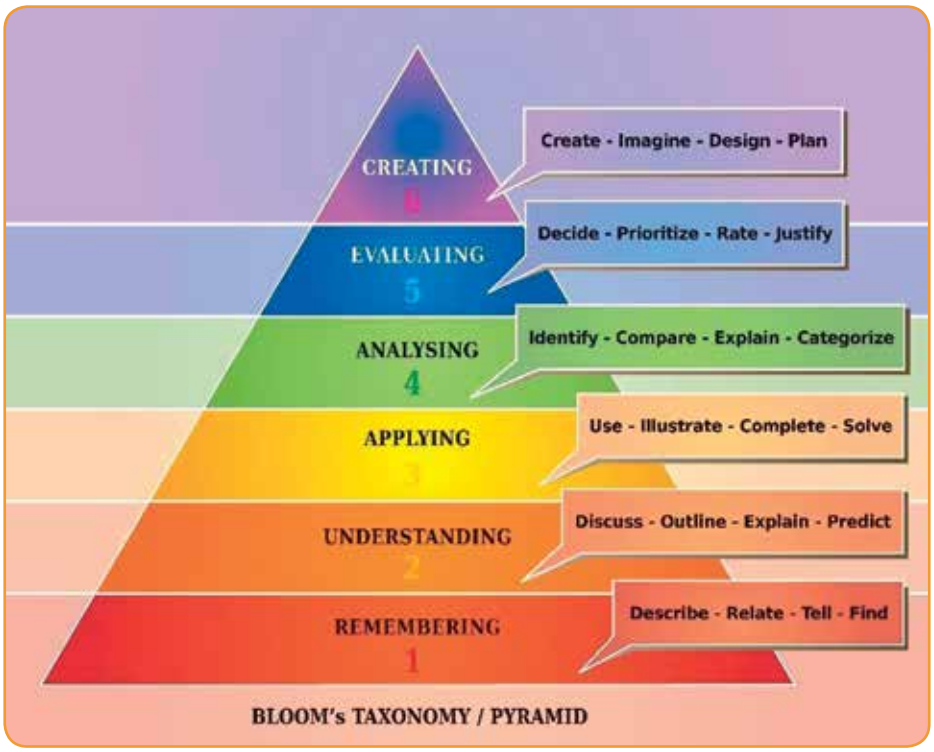

Figure 1. Bloom's Taxonomy (https://www.shutterstock.com/hu/image-vector/blooms-pyramid-taxonomy-illustration-educational-tool-303931496?src=mp0keN-EBRJwPZUE4QYLSw-1-0)

The students are responsible not only for their learning products but for the process as well. They take a journey from the lower order thinking skills to the higher order ones, from remembering to creating. They do research, find information, distinguish important pieces of information from less important ones, they describe and explain their findings; identify a problem to solve and they are able to outline the way how they plan to solve it; and finally, they create their final production in which they show the results of their learning process. Their work is not only about thinking and creating, it is also about working together as a team, which is also challenging. Therefore, the evaluation has elements of the realization of teamwork and the quality of the learning product as well. In a team, everybody takes the responsibility for their own tasks and completes them, nobody works instead of someone else; if someone needs support from others, the person gets it; the joint work is balanced and the atmosphere during the project is positive. The final product can be a presentation, a text, a poster, infographics, an interview, a video clip, a drama performance or a student-made test.

How to work?

I. Students designed the learning process on the base of Jansen's bicycle (Figure 2.)

We used the Jansen's bicycle to plan the process of learning, which takes 7 or 8 lessons of 45 minutes.

The front wheel:

1 Introducing the theme, creating groups of 3-4, getting to know each other's strengths, assigning roles and responsibilities (leader, secretary, speaker, designer, etc.)

2 Understanding the problem to be solved, activating prior knowledge.

The chain:

3 The next stage is planning the process. The teams, involving all team members, divide the sub-research topics.

4 Individual learning. The students do the investigation, find information, explain, compare, analyse, prioritize and justify their subtopic. Finally, they share their knowledge with the group members and integrate their individual results to create the final product.

The steering wheel:

7 Teacher reflects on students' learning experiences, how the goals have been attained, and how the process fits into the context of achieving the long-term curriculum goals.

Figure 2. Jansens' Bicycle (van der Laan and Bron, 2018.)

The back wheel:

5 Presentation: Each group reports on their findings and activities to the class. All learners are involved in the process.

The luggage carrier:

6 Assessment to which degree a group has reached the success criteria. The learners themselves reflect on their own personal development and the group performance, the process and the final product, what they think of the result and what they found difficult, easy or fun. The whole learning process is completed with student-made, stress-free testing.

II. Student-led study groups

Many hands make light work, as the proverb says, but working in groups has several risks and challenges. To begin with coordination: to coordinate group activities, to make decisions collectively, to integrate each member's contribution into the final product takes much more time than individual work. If the coordination is less efficient, the group fails the deadlines, the final work is poorly integrated and the motivation decreases. Furthermore, motivation matters considerably. Free riders and social loafers threaten the group effectivity and lower its productivity. On the other hand, due to the collective accountability, some groups tend to loaf

away their time and miss the deadline. Free riding and loafing can also lead to moral conflicts within the group, which might end up with breaking up. During our process, it happened only once when we failed the conflict resolution and one member left the group. The disappointed student could not keep the deadline and her group mates complained about hindering their work. The student felt the complaints were unfair as she had told her mates about her delay but they did not accept her excuses (Her peers told her: "deadline is deadline"), so she left the group and terminated the course. As she was over 18 and the subject was optional, she had the chance to give it up. The productivity of the broken group plummeted, the final presentation fell into parts and the offended student lost the knowledge and the skills she could have acquired or improved in the further phase of the course. Consequently, we have to empower our students with strong conflict resolution strategies, which also takes time and preparation. There might arise some intellectual problems as well, for example groupthink, such as the conformity of thinking, accepting the view of majority, insisting on information all members share and fail to recognise special, relevant information; enhanced commitment to their original plans and imaginations even when they are ineffective.

To avoid the above-mentioned risks, we applied the following strategies:

- set up a strict time management and project schedule,
- keep the group size to 3 - 4 people,
- ask students to assign roles and responsibilities within the group (CEO/manager/leader, speaker, secretary, digital designer, etc.) and establish group norms,
- help each other and give positive reinforcement,
- communicate honestly and openly,
- try to resolve conflicts immediately

Group reflection, 10th grade

S1 The work was a little bit separate. This means that everyone researched their own topics. After we had done the research, we selected what to put in our presentation. Finally, we worked as a group, so there was cooperation too.

S2 We did a great job and we worked together easily. It was a bit hard to get S3 to do his job, but finally we made him do it. I liked this project and the group was nice.

S3 As the others have mentioned, I didn't really work with them, although I did my work just in time as they did. The others did a great job, even if S1 worried so much.

III. Assessment

1 Self- and peer assessment

Self- and peer assessment are as important parts of the learning process as working on the curriculum content, doing research or producing a presentation. They empower students to

assess independently their own and their peers' progress; their motivation and objectivity are enhanced. There are two categories of assessment in our project work in subjects English and Culture: giving feedback on the learning process (task completion, asking for help, giving help, team spirit) and on the product (main and subpoints, clear, logically built, informative, confidence in the topic, fluency, use of English). During the assessment, students justify their viewpoints. For example, if someone says the presentation was very informative, the person should mention at least two new details that he/she learnt from the presentation.

Student's reflection on teacher's work, 10th grade:
"Learning from you is still a wild and a bit chaotic experience. When I mean wild and chaotic, I don't think of it as something negative, but as the most positive experience I've ever got in years spent in school. The creative ways you're teaching and helping us is what I appreciate the most about you. You're helping us be a bit more open to the world, and break out of the boring everyday teaching methods other teachers are trying to force down our throats. You've made civilization a subject for me I enjoy learning and am excited about. I'm thankful."

2 Testing – Student-made, stress-free testing

The learning process becomes fully completed by testing. Working with students to develop their own tests is a very powerful way to help them understand what the success criteria are, and the teacher has a strong role in guiding them to reach the final goals. Student-generated tests motivate them to work hard on question development and give feedback to the teachers how well students understand the material based on their questions and answers. Another advantage is that the students can submit their questions at an early stage of learning so that reviewing is continuous.

In the case of English and Culture project work, testing has an even more significant role since the students work on different subtopics and we expect them to be familiar with the whole content in complex. Therefore, the final stage is setting up the test together with the students covering all subtopics; facilitate them to learn all the contents and personalize their own learning assessments. We use an interactive forum, an online Google Excel, which is open to the entire class, to create tests (in English and Culture). The students submit a number of questions and model answers, the classmates can comment on them, the teacher can check them and suggest the scores on the level of their complexity. The students receive all the test questions and they can make up their own tests according to the guidelines which determine the rules how to edit the test. For example, they have to answer at least three questions from each subtopic, but they cannot answer more than three questions from their own topic. The questions range from the easiest to the more complex ones, but scoring limits are designed, so that good grades can be reached answering at least one or two more complex questions. The students are familiar with the rating of the test in advance, therefore, they can count how many questions and what type of questions they should answer to reach the desired mark. On the very first occasion, simple fact-based questions (Who? What? When? Where?) were submitted, relating to the

lowest levels of Bloom's taxonomy. The students had to be influenced to ask more complex questions with more complex answers. By the second occasion, the students' questions had improved a lot. The number of factual questions dropped and "why" questions, contrasting and comparing mini essays, increased.

In Maths assessment called Happy Maths Test the students and the teacher produced the Maths tests in collaboration. The process started in March 2017 in less successful classes. The students sent their questions with the detailed model answer to a Facebook group. The teacher checked and gave scores for each task and then the students voted whether they would like to have the task in the test or not. It showed the students' preferences and gave feedback to the teacher what problems meant difficulty for the students as well. Those problems that received very few votes needed more practice. The 13 most popular questions, with different numbers, were selected for the test. As students are familiar with the rating, they do not need to answer all the 13 questions to get the best mark, therefore, they can edit their own test.

3 The outcomes of Happy Maths Tests

The students took part in two diagnostic assessments in Maths. The first one was at the beginning of their secondary school studies (grade 9), the second one the next year, when the questions aimed at the lower standard of the final examination. The 11th grade measurement called 'mock Matura examination' aims at a higher standard of the Matura exam. In the first two grades the students do Maths in whole classes (more than 30 students in a class), then in the 11th grade, the classes are divided into two groups. B class was taught Maths via student voice approach until the 11th grade, but due to the group division, only the B Group 1 continued working with the student voice approach, the other one was taught in the traditional way. Students who were learning Maths via student voice approach for the second year achieved much higher results than those who were doing Maths in the traditional way (Figure 3).

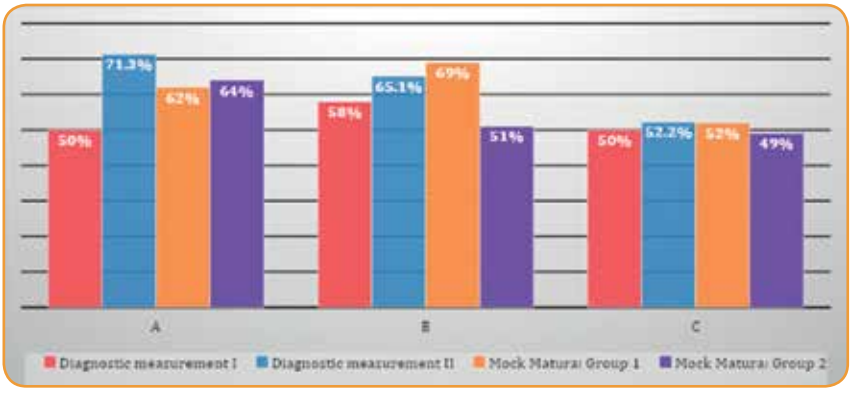

Figure 3. The improvement of learning outcomes in Maths comparing student voice and traditional groups.

Comparing A, B, C groups, we can conclude that those students who were taught Maths through student voice approach (B Group 1) improved more effectively while other groups improved to a lesser degree (A) or stagnated (C). (Bron et al., 2018)

Other significant achievements of the student voice effectiveness are shown in Figure 4. In this graph, we can see the development of the two weakest 10th grade groups when student voice approach started. They started with a very low starting point in their 10th grade and by the final exams, both groups accomplished a great improvement and according to their Math Matura results, they ended in the first place in their school.

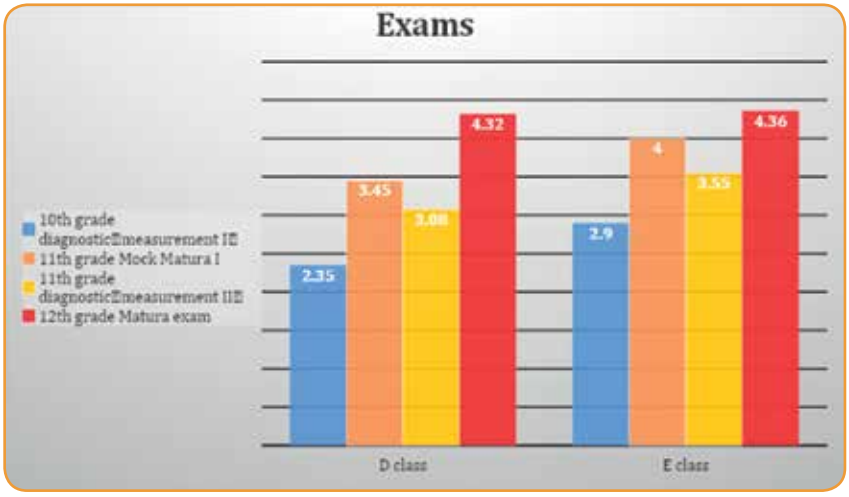

Figure 4. The improvement of learning outcomes in two student voice classes

Strengths and challenges

The school example shows that allowing students to shape their own learning process enhances student success and can promote higher achievement in their studies while all recommended curricula themes are treated during the process. Their active and effective participation in planning, researching, creating and assessing motivates learners to a much greater degree, and empowers them to perform at a high standard. Working in partnership with students as stakeholders in their own learning supports their future development and enables them to be effective in their adult life. Learners recognize the intellectual growth and the needs for further developments. The bases of the approach are open, constructive and permanent dialogues between teachers and students, and confidence that they are able to complete their task without teacher's continuous supervision.

Allowing students to choose the way they want to learn means treating them equally responsible for the success of their study, which is at the heart of the method.

The biggest tension among teachers regarding the student voice approach is that they will not be able to meet the requirements of the three-level Hungarian curriculum content regulation. Innovative, student-centred approaches such as cooperative learning, project work or gamification are time consuming activities and take significant time from the content coverage. The challenges of student engagement are to find the balance of student personal and social development with the development of core skills and knowledge prescribed in NCC.

The student voice approach is a big challenge for the learners as well; most of them are used to teacher-centred way of learning, permanent control and supervision. Some of them get

confused by the freedom and responsibility they must cope with, but most of them enjoy being an independent learner, "being kept on a long leash", as one of them mentioned.

To conclude, the case study shows that the Centralised National Core Curriculum and student voice approach are compatible if the activities are supported by the teachers and the students and are carried out in their partnership.

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Student Voice and Formative Assessment

student voice

SLOVENIA

glas učenca

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Abstract

This paper presents some findings from Erasmus+ project Student Voice – the BRIDGE to Learning through Slovenian practice. Student voice is acknowledged in the literature as an opportunity to empower students to participate meaningfully and collaboratively in improving their experience of school, encouraging their engagement in learning and improving teacher-student relationships. Five agencies with the task of developing and supporting national curricula for general education from countries across Europe participated in the project: Hungary, Ireland, The Netherlands, Scotland and Slovenia. The overarching aim of the project was to increase the role of the student in their education. This article presents selected results of Slovenian practice answering the question how to promote students' participation where all students have a voice and opportunities to play an active role in classroom practice decisions which affect their learning through formative assessment. The findings of our project show that students who participate in learning as co-creators of learning processes benefit in a range of different ways: their engagement, motivation, confidence and self-esteem are increased; students take greater responsibility for their learning and relationships with students and teachers are improved.

Introduction

Findings of the Erasmus+ project *Student Voice – the BRIDGE to Learning* presented show that students' engagement is increased when they participate in learning as co- creators of learning processes. Students' engagement in school can be seen as a disposition that allows one to learn, work and function better in a social institution (PISA, 2010). The PISA survey found that significant proportions of students have low levels of engagement at age 15, which limits their capacity to benefit from school and constrains their potential in the future. One in four students feels that they do not belong to school. The PISA findings suggested that particularly the school climate can make a significant difference (OECD, 2003).

School and classroom environment is influenced by many factors; an important one is student- teacher relationship. OECD School Research (OECD, 2013) about what makes schools effective found out that effective learning requires an orderly and co-operative environment, both in and outside the classroom (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). In effective schools, academic activities and student performance are valued by both students and teachers (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Sammons, 1999; Taylor, Pressley & Pearson, 2002). The school climate encompasses not only norms and values but also the quality of teacher-student relations and the general atmosphere (OECD, 2013). How does the classroom climate vary, e.g., the degree of discipline among students, the quality of the relationship between students and their teachers, the values promoted and shared between teacher and student and among the students themselves; and how does it affect teaching and learning? Gamoran's research (1993) has found that students, particularly disadvantaged students, learn more and have fewer disciplinary problems when they feel that their teachers take them seriously and when they have strong and affective bonds with their teachers (Crosnoe, Johnson & Elder, 2004). Through these positive relationships, communal learning environments are created, and adherence to norms conducive to learning are both promoted and strengthened (Birch & Ladd, 1998).

Same findings of the Erasmus+ project *Student Voice – the BRIDGE to Learning* discussed in this article show that students who participate in learning as co-creators of learning processes take greater responsibility for their learning and relationships with students and teachers are improved. The teacher's choice of learning strategies is extremely important to stimulate a positive classroom climate.

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) investigated major sources of variance in students' achievement. Hattie (2003) discusses principals' influence on the school climate. Principals who create a school with high student responsibility rather than bureaucratic control, psychologically safe and focused on discussion about student learning have positive influence. Teachers account for about 50% of the variance of achievement.

For over 30 years Russell Quaglia (2016) and his team at the *Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations* have been collecting information about what education stakeholders think, believe, and feel about their schools. The data from these surveys have shown that certain conditions must be present in school for students to reach their fullest potential. They found out that students who are meaningfully engaged and feel that what they are learning will benefit their future are 14 times more academically motivated. On the other hand,

43% of students think school is boring. There are many more findings, which show that teacher's abilities in teaching and the relationship between student and teacher have huge influence on students' achievement and academic motivation.

Hattie (2003) wrote about five major dimensions of excellent teachers. Expert teachers can:

- identify essential representations of their subject,
- guide learning through classroom interactions,
- monitor learning and provide feedback,
- attend to affective attributes, and
- influence student outcomes.

Each of these five dimensions are even more detailed and structured. So, excellent teachers are able to:

- have deeper representations about teaching and learning,
- adopt a problem-solving stance to their work,
- anticipate, plan, and improvise as required by the situation,
- identify what decisions are important and which are less important,
- create an optimal classroom climate for learning,
- deal with the multidimensionality of classrooms,
- classify learning scenarios more dependent on existing context,
- monitor student problems and assess their level of understanding and progress,
- provide relevant and useful feedback,
- develop and test hypotheses about learning difficulties or instructional strategies,
- have high respect for students,
- be passionate about teaching and learning,
- engage students in learning and develop their students' self-regulation, involvement in mastery learning, enhanced self-efficacy, and self-esteem as learners,
- provide appropriate challenging tasks and goals for students,
- have positive influences on students' achievement (Hattie, 2003, p. 5–10).

To achieve all of the listed characteristics and abilities, it is very important that every child, every student has a voice and every teacher hears that voice. But being engaged does not also mean having a voice. Engagement is the result of teacher's activity planning. Student voice has a much greater meaning, it means building a partner relationship between student and teacher and teachers taking student feedback into account in planning teaching and learning activities. In recent years, the term 'student voice' has been increasingly discussed in the school reform literature as a potential avenue for improving student outcomes and facilitating school change (Fielding, 2001; Mitra, 2003; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). In practice, student voice ranges from the most basic level to sophisticated approaches. At the most basic level, young people share their opinions of problems and potential solutions through student councils or in focus groups associated with school strategic planning. At a more sophisticated level, young people share their 'voice' by collaborating with adults to actually improve education outcomes, including helping to 'improve teaching, curriculum and teacher-student relationships and leading to changes in student assessment and teacher training' (Manefield, 2007).

In seeking to make student voice in assessment more meaningful, Lundy (2007) suggests a four elements of approach model with a rational chronological order:

- Space: students must be given the opportunity to express a view.
- Voice: students must be facilitated to express their views.
- Audience: the view must be listened to.

- Influence: the view must be acted upon, as appropriate (Lundy, 2007).

Student voice activities can create meaningful experiences for youth that help to meet fundamental developmental needs, especially for students who otherwise do not find meaning in their school experiences (Mitra, 2004). Studies have found that students improved academically when teachers construct their classrooms in ways that value student voice especially when students are given the power to work with their teachers to improve curriculum and instruction (Oldfather, 1995; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000 in Mitra 2004).

Quaglia (2016) found out that when students believe that they have a voice and that teachers are willing to listen and learn from them, they are seven times more academically motivated. In the Erasmus + project *Student voice – the Bridge to learning* we engaged student as co-creator of the learning and teaching process in daily classroom practice. In our project formative assessment student voice flourished because student actively engaged in their learning. If the teacher is willing to listen and hears students the full potential of the student voice will be reached in the classroom and learning will become visible.

Our research shows the potential of formative assessment embedded in everyday classroom practice in answering the following questions:

- How to provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views?
- How to provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children's views?
- How to ensure that children's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate?

Hattie (2003) stresses that learning and teaching become visible when teachers see learning through the eyes of students and help them to become their own teachers. At the same time student voice helps teachers to become evaluators of their own teaching.

Dylan Wiliam (2011) provides five strategies which are being core to successful formative assessment practice in the classroom:

1. Clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning intentions and criteria for success.
2. Engineering effective classroom discussions, activities, and learning tasks that elicit evidence of learning.
3. Providing feedback that moves learning forward.
4. Activating learners as instructional resources for one another.
5. Activating learners as owners of their own learning.

If students know what they are learning, what they should know and be able to do to be successful, then student voice becomes alive in the classroom. Students should evaluate their progress and achievement, assess their peers and give them feedback. The most important in student voice is what teachers do with feedback received from students. Giving students voice is not just an activity for special occasions or work groups but it means changing the whole learning and teaching process in everyday classroom practice.

The study

Of particular importance in this project was the voice of the individual student by which every individual is able, with confidence, to express his or her point of view, opinions, ideas, suggestions, worries and concerns which relate directly to learning and teaching. The question posed by the research was how to promote students' participation where all students have a voice and opportunities to play an active role in decisions which affect their learning through formative assessment.

Research method

In the research we wanted to explore and construct the student voice model together with students and teachers, with the aim of, not merely obtaining generally valid rules, but to determine various constructed real classroom situations. Therefore, we chose qualitative research as the basis for this enquiry. In addition, we used the action research method, as we did not only describe and explain the situation, but we also changed it and showed the process of change (Phelps and Hase, 2002). The action research stage was followed by a result analysis in the form of a multiple case study. Teachers planned and carried out four to six action cycles. During and at the end of each action cycle, teachers were encouraged to write down their reflections in their personal plans. It was expected that qualitative analysis of the results of each action cycle would lead to understanding of the specific features of assessment-related experiences, and that this understanding would enable a deeper understanding of the student voice model.

Participants

78 participants (69 teachers and 9 head teachers) from eight primary schools and one secondary school joined the project. We started with a group of willing teachers having the support of head teachers, on a limited agenda of innovation. These become the foundations on which we have built more challenging developments and draw other colleagues into the venture. Schools had a vision of where they might be when all the stepping stones are fully in place, embedded in the culture and daily life of the school. This case study shows how schools progressively developed student voice and formative assessment over a period of three years' time (September 2016 to January 2019).

Materials for analysis

Throughout the time of the project teachers used a teacher's personal plan as a tool to direct teaching and learning process according to student voice and formative assessment principles. Teachers selected an educational problem based on the goals related to student voice to improve their individual pedagogical practice. Teachers then framed a more specific, personally relevant question. Then they drew on resources to advance their professional learning, planned how they might take up ideas and enacted them in practice, monitored progress towards goals, and made adjustments as needed. The teacher's personal plan also enabled teachers to record various notes, findings, considerations and reflections about the lessons and discussions with students.

Teachers conducted interviews with pupils as a part of their personal plans. The interviews were written down and later transcribed. The transcription was divided into units of meaning and openly coded (analysed, studied, compared and categorized) using the inductive approach. Each unit was marked with the consecutive number of the interview (e.g. I1), followed by information about whether the statement was made by a girl or a boy (F – girl, M – boy).

In the middle of the project the teachers, students and parents were given a four-point scale (*strongly agree, agree, disagree*, *strongly disagree*) questionnaires to get feedback about how well student voice and formative assessment were embedded in classroom practice and where the classroom practice could be improved in these areas.

Procedure

The study was carried out in two stages – an action stage and a comparative stage.

The action stage

Action research enabled teachers to study and solve identified problems. The analysis of previous action cycles showed that inviting students to co-create success criteria, give more direct and open feedback, in the form of their evaluations or suggestions, create a partnership between the teacher and the class, or the teacher and the student, so that teaching-and-learning were co-constructed were seldom used in classrooms, although this is where student voice and formative assessment most closely overlap.

At the beginning teachers defined a number of action cycles. Each of the planned cycles lasted on average one semester. With the first cycle concluded, teachers carried out an evaluation. It included qualitative analysis of the above mentioned materials.

In the analysis we used methods of qualitative coding focussing on the attribution of concepts to empirical descriptions and distributing related concepts into categories axial coding. Based on this methodology, the action measures for the next cycle were established. During the first few cycles the teaching process was mainly focused on embedding student voice through aspects of formative assessment. In the cycles which followed the focus was also on inviting students to provide feedback and suggestions on how the teaching could be improved. Based on this approach a (multiple) case study was carried out in an attempt to develop a grounded theory.

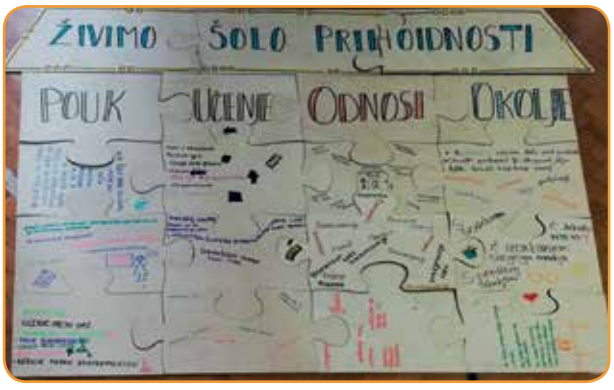

Photo 1. Student Voice School – where teaching and learning are co-constructed with students

Comparative stage

After the action stage was concluded, the comparative stage followed. During this stage, comparison of the analyses of pedagogical process and cycle outcomes was carried out. The work dynamics of action cycles were analysed along the timeline. Observation of qualitative differences between the processes of the cycles was also carried out, with a focus on uncovering answers to the research question.

Findings

During the first cycles the teaching process was mainly focused on embedding student voice through aspects of formative assessment which enabled students to play a more active role in their learning. In the cycles which followed the focus was on students developing self-regulatory skills and on inviting them to provide feedback and suggestions on how the teaching could be improved.

Involving students in curriculum development encourages them to take ownership of their learning

Student voice and formative assessment have considerable impact on blurring the distinctness of teacher and student roles. Students sometimes took on a teaching

Photo 2. Student Voice School – where students work with each other – listen to one another and respect different views

role what was necessary if teachers were to learn about students' needs, learning preferences and their strengths/ weaknesses.

Students were invited to co-construct all aspects of education – teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment. As part of the formative process, students co-created learning intentions and success criteria, designed learning and teaching experiences, were involved in self-assessment and peer assessment and received quality feedback about what, how well and how much they have learned.

Teachers encouraged students to take on responsibility for their own learning. This helped them to move forward in their learning, to identify what they needed to do next and to decide who could help them build up their knowledge, understanding and skills. The reorganised teaching process, based on formative assessment strategies and student voice approaches, also had a great impact on students' interest in learning.

By being involved in self-assessment and peer assessment, students constructed their knowledge for themselves instead of just accepting it from others. In this process, they were gradually assuming responsibility for their learning and critically judged the received knowledge. This enhanced their interest in creating success criteria which they shaped together with the teacher at the beginning of each assignment.

The analysis of the teachers' personal plans showed that self-assessment and peer assessment were useful for learning and understanding the learned content which is also reflected in the following comment from a teacher:

> ***"Peer assessment encouraged us to cooperate with each other. This improved our understanding of the learning. Instead of competing we started collaborating with each other (I 3, M)."***

Students developed positive attitudes towards peer assessment. The development of positive viewpoints was the result of the way feedback was provided: the point was not to judge the value of the work done, but to offer concrete suggestions as to what could be further improved, upgraded or changed. During action cycles students were receiving formative feedback and descriptive assessments, which gave them the possibility to constantly improve their learning process. However, they sensed that peer assessment is a skill they would be able to use later in their lives, which is reflected in the following comments from students:

> ***"Sincere evaluation of our work, without judging each other, was an experience I have benefited from it the most and will take it on into my life (I 26, F)."***

> ***"It was important to evaluate our own work and to receive descriptive comments from our classmates who told us what to improve and how to do it (I 15, M)."***

Student voice flourishes in school culture which sustains of community of learners where teaching and learning are co-constructed and where teachers learn as well as teach. Students

give more direct and open feedback to teachers and peers, mentor other students as well as learn for themselves.

The analysis of students' questionnaires in which they have marked a four-point scale (*strongly agree*, *agree, disagree strongly, disagree*) about how well student voice and formative assessment were embedded in classroom practice showed that around 20% of students (247 out of 1400) who answered the questions believed that they were fully involved in co-creation of all aspects of education – teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment.

Table 1. Students' involvement in formative assessment.

	Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Together*
Teacher's feedback specifies what I have achieved, what I need to do and how to improve.	84 (35%)	113 (47%)	35 (14%)	11 (5%)	243 (100%)
I am willing to participate in and take responsibility for my learning.	110 (45%)	104 (43%)	25 (10%)	4 (2%)	243 (100%)
We discuss learning intentions and success criteria with our teacher and we agree them together.	69 (28%)	118 (49%)	48 (20%)	8 (3%)	243 (100%)
Our teacher asks questions to encourage us to think and explore.	94 (39%)	110 (45%)	34 (14%)	5 (2%)	243 (100%)
Our teacher asks questions to encourage our creative and critical thinking.	69 (28%)	112 (46%)	41 (17%)	21 (9%)	243 (100%)
Our teacher often encourages us to ask questions.	82 (34%)	81 (33%)	57 (23%)	23 (9%)	243 (100%)
We are encouraged to give feedback to each other.	83 (34%)	109 (45%)	32 (13%)	19 (8%)	243 (100%)
I take ownership of my learning and I am more engaged in thinking about my own learning.	83 (34%)	106 (44%)	36 (15%)	18 (7%)	243 (100%)
We work with each other – listen to one another and respect different views.	82 (34%)	93 (38%)	53 (22%)	15 (6%)	243 (100%)
Our teacher invites us to provide feedback and suggestions on how her/his teaching might be improved.	89 (37%)	101 (42%)	40 (16%)	13 (5%)	243 (100%)

The teaching process, based on formative assessment strategies and student voice approaches had a great impact on students' interest in learning, so it is not a surprise that students marked as *strongly agree* areas which refer to how many questions they can ask during the lessons, to the importance of questions encouraging creative and critical thinking, to be able to work with peers, to be able to discuss and revisit learning intentions and success criteria with teachers and to take ownership of their learning.

Open and trustful relationships enable students to express their views in classrooms

Students expressed points of view, opinions, ideas, suggestions, worries and concerns which related directly to learning and to teaching, on matters of learning, curriculum content and how teaching could be improved. Teachers strived for student-teacher and student-student dialogue not only in relation to the learning content, but also about approaches to learning, the development of metacognitive strategies that direct a student's planning and the organisation, implementation and evaluation of their own work. Students felt they were valued and trusted; each student had a voice and was encouraged to express him or herself in open ways. Students actively built up their knowledge, skills and attitudes, with teachers encouraging them to explore and establish links between the learning intentions and their own interests and involving them to co-create success criteria. At the beginning of each learning cycle students were encouraged to work in pairs or groups. Group work stimulated the communication between students and encouraged problem solving and evaluation of different views. It also focused on the importance of students' explanations and how they attempted to communicate their ideas rather than correct answers.

The following statements by students show how they appreciated their voices to be heard:

> ***"My voice and the voices of my students are important to us. They tell us about our knowledge, this way we see how much we know and what we are able to do (I 16, M)."***

> ***"Exchanging opinions and views, analysing our work helps us to have more ideas and to be more creative. It is important that teachers trust us and want to hear our ideas (I 5, F)."***

Students were expected to be constructively critical of the whole of their school experience, what changed the general culture of the school, establishing that this is the natural way in which students are treated here what shows the following statement:

> ***"Everyone has a right to express what he or she thinks – this is crucial for our progress (I 36, F)."***

These activities affected teachers by making them generally more responsive to student voice and its potential value, both in what it says and in how it improves relationships.

The analysis of students' questionnaires showed that students believed that they were valued and trusted and that each student had a voice and was able with confidence, to express him or herself in open ways.

Teachers provided students with tangible evidence, that their voice is having a real effect and making a difference. Students offered suggestions being asked in interviews and diagrams about different ways of teaching and organising lessons.

Table 2. Students' voice.

	Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Together*
I am heard and feel my views are valued in my classroom.	77 (32%)	109 (45%)	47 (19%)	10 (4%)	243 (100%)
We respect each other.	52 (21%)	111 (46%)	55 (23%)	25 (10%)	243 (100%)
Teachers provide opportunities for self-assessment and to think how we learn.	93 (38%)	105 (43%)	33 (14%)	12 (5%)	243 (100%)
Our teacher pays attention to the needs of all pupils.	79 (33%)	89 (37%)	53 (22%)	22 (9%)	243 (100%)

Conclusion

The results of the study confirm the importance of working simultaneously on both formative assessment and student voice which were developed in parallel. Teachers involved in this study saw how each supports and strengthens the other.

The role of the teacher changes from presenting knowledge to promoting dialogue, from an "expert" to a "facilitator". In terms of the student it is important to create learning situations which encourage students' active learning, evaluation of the learning processes and allows them to search for new and different ways of learning. Within the context of formative assessment, students take responsibility for their own learning and, with the help of self-assessment, peer assessment and formative feedback, develop a self-regulative attitude towards learning.

In the context of formative assessment and student voice in this research study the teachers' attitude and values towards student voice played an important role. The values teachers hold about learners and learning are crucial factors in the extent to which the potenital of formative assessment can be realised (Hayward, 2014). Teachers believed that the responsibility for learning was on students, while their role was to create a learning environment in which teaching-and-learning were co-constructed with students. Students felt valued and trusted by having a voice and were able to express themselves in open ways. A model of formative assessment to enhance student voice was created by showing the elements which are essential for student voice to flourish in a classroom as shown by the following Figure 1.

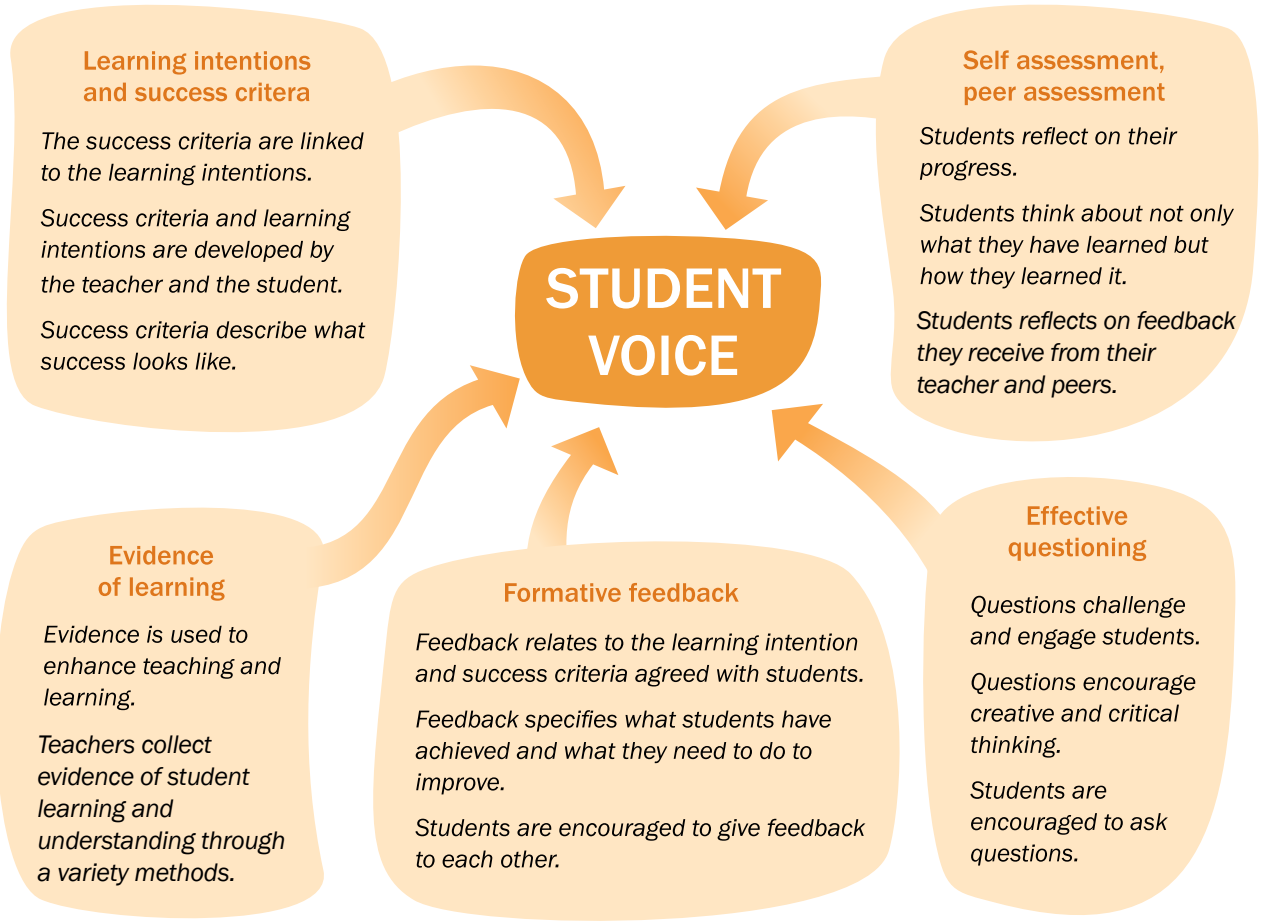

Figure 1. A model of formative assessment to enhance student voice

Finally, in order to change teacher's attitude or viewpoints regarding student voice, there is a need for further training of teachers in this respect. Teachers need to engage in a process which allows them to see the value of formative assessment and student voice. Without such professional development teachers are unlikely to change their practice formed by previous training and experience.

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Participation and Influence in the Classroom – Capacity Building for Teacher's Facilitation of Student Voice, Motivation and Learning in Sweden

student voice

SWEDEN

elevinflytande

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Abstract

This article presents an overview of how participation and inclusion have developed as ideas in steering documents and in pedagogical practices in Sweden. Attention is paid both to the historical context and to the policy level. It also presents some results and indications on the current state of participation and inclusion in Swedish schools. Issues that are discussed include effects on teaching and learning and on student attitudes. The chapter also presents a national programme for competency development that serves to raise teacher awareness and knowledge in these issues. The content and the didactical design of a module, specifically developed in order to address teachers' work with students, influence and participation in the classroom module is also presented.

Introduction

Conceptions of democratic values, student influence and participation have had a substantial impact on policies that govern the schooling system and on the Swedish school debate since the early 20th century. However, these conceptions and the norms, values, attitudes and competences underpinning them, have changed over time (Rönnlund, 2011, p. 15; Skolverket, 2016b, p. 63; Skolinspektionen 2018, p. 4).

Student influence is a multifaceted concept. It refers to classroom practices, the working environment in school and formal as well as informal decision-making processes (Skolverket 1998, p. 5), and is essential for both academic achievement and well-being (Skolverket, 2016b). Democratic forms of work also prepare pupils for active participation in society (Skolverket, 2018a, p. 7) and they require a school climate characterized by trust, inclusion and understanding of the importance of student influence and participation – both with respect to the preconditions and prospects for students' school performance and as future citizens (Skolverket, 2015c, p. 19–20).

The current national curriculum for compulsory school, Lgr11, states that:

> The democratic principles of being able to influence, take responsibility and be involved should cover all pupils. Pupils should be given influence over their education. They should be continuously encouraged to take an active part in the work of further developing education and kept informed of issues that concern them. The information and the means by which pupils exercise influence should be related to their age and maturity. Pupils should always have the opportunity of taking the initiative on issues that should be treated within the framework of their influence over their education (Skolverket 2018a, p. 13).

The Swedish National Agency for Education, The National Agency for Special Needs Education and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate have adopted a common model that serves as a conceptual framework.

The model identifies six relevant aspects:

1. *sense of belonging*: students' formal entitlement to be part of a class or group and students' informal right to feel that they belong to the class/community,
2. *accessibility*: accessibility to environments and objects, as well as feasibility of content, language and codes for social behaviour,
3. *collective action*: joint activities are carried out by pupils,
4. *recognition*: pupils are acknowledged, respected and accepted,
5. *commitment*: refers to the pupils' desire and interest in participating in activities and
5. *autonomy*: pupils' influence on teaching and learning (Skolinspektionen 2018, p. 4).

The model can be used as a tool for observations and analysis on an individual, group and school level, and it provides a framework for establishing a common participatory culture.

Dedicated attempts to achieve comprehensive inclusion imply working methods that apply

to all aspects of the participation model (Skolinspektionen 2018, p. 5). A report by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate shows that schools vary in their capacity for realizing this. Accessibility is the most common way to carry out participatory measures, but by itself insufficient (Skolinspektionen, 2018, p. 5). Teachers who create good conditions for participation organize their teaching in a flexible way and they are conscious of the fact that all aspects of participation are dependent on each other (Skolinspektionen, 2018, p. 7). Since participation is an important variable for pupils' learning and progression, there is a risk that an inadequate – or lack of – adaption of participatory practices obstructs pupils' development. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate thus states, on the basis of observations and interviews conducted in 23 representatively selected schools that student autonomy needs to be improved. They state that teachers need to take the pupils' perspective into account more actively when preparing their lessons. Additionally, teachers also need to develop the pupils' understanding of and influence on their own learning and progression. Lessons which are organized in a way that enable substantial pupil influence also involve the pupils in different parts of instruction; pupils' opinions are taken into account in the phases of preparation and evaluation, and the pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their learning and are kept informed about goals and targets in terms of new knowledge and insights (Skolinspektionen, 2018, p. 8, 41, 43).

The steering documents by themselves are of course no guarantee for changes in practice. Experiences have gradually evolved into quality requirements and expectations shared by stakeholders such as policy makers, teachers, principals, pupils and parents. The ambitions are high and although the classroom climate in Sweden is generally regarded as very open, several investigations have shown shortcomings (Skolverket, 2009, p. 46; Rönnlund, 2011, p. 22; Giota, 2013, pp. 46–47; Skolverket, 2016b; Skolverket, 2017a, p. 64–65; Skolinspektionen, 2018). As part of a response to meet these challenges, the Swedish National Agency for Education (NAE) has designed a didactic training programme called Students' participation and influence in the classroom. The programme aims at improving student participation and influence in the classroom and forms a part in one of several National school development programmes that the NAE develops, administers and implements on commission by the government.

In the following section we give an overview of how participation and influence have been addressed historically in the Swedish educational context in order to give a background to the present discourse, situation and the measures that have been taken. It also describes the design and content in the programme Pupils' participation and influence in the classroom.

Background/ History

The American pedagogue John Dewey and the Swedish writer Ellen Key have both been very influential on the debate on education and democracy in Sweden. Both advocated students' rights and challenged the authoritarian teaching methods that dominated the classrooms in the early 20th century. Key criticized the school for suppressing rather than developing the children's natural gifts and argued for instruction methods based on the children's own observations (Selberg 2001, pp. 50–52). Dewey's philosophy of pedagogy is often described as "learning by doing" and the base for instruction should be children's interests, needs and unprompted activities, rather than objectives that were set beforehand. Many of his ideas would later influence national curricula and school commissions during the 1940's and

1960's (Selberg, 2001, p. 50–52; Giota, 2013, p. 20; Burman, 2014, pp. 185–191).

The endeavour to democratize the school grew during the second half of the 1940s, boosted by the traumas after the Second World War and the expansion of a modern welfare society. Democracy, equality and right to education for all were highly promoted. The vision was a universal school where teaching should support individual development. Classes were ideally regarded as working communities where students would learn how to cooperate through group work (Selberg, 2001, p. 56–57, Giota, 2013, pp. 22–23).

Civic education was introduced as a subject in the 1950s in grades 4–9 in order to raise the pupils' critical awareness about propaganda. Students' right to exert influence was introduced in the curriculum as a recommendation in the 1960s. At this point, student influence primarily aimed at serving the interests of the student community. Students were encouraged to engage in class- and school councils, to which the national curriculum Lgr 62 also referred. The student councils dealt with issues concerning school meals, holidays, school dances, athletic competitions, excursions and homework, and were mainly considered as a student right that would increase their engagement in association activities outside the school (Rönnlund, 2011, p. 22). In the 1980s, the role of class- and school councils expanded to a forum for students to practice democratic skills while at the same time supporting their understanding of democracy (Rönnlund, 2011, p. 22). In addition, an important legal shift took place when students' rights to participate and exercise influence were prescribed by law in the School Ordinance from 1979, the National Curriculum Lgr 80 and the Education Act from 1985 (Giota, 2013, p. 62–62).

In the beginning of the 1990s, the Swedish school system underwent the most comprehensive reform since the 1940s as it transformed from one of the world's most regulated school systems into one of the most deregulated (Giota, 2013; OECD, 2015). It started with the municipalisation in 1991, which implied a shift in responsibility from the state to the municipal level. This new regime gave more freedom for schools to adapt to local conditions in order to meet the directions and goals expressed in steering /governing documents. The underlying idea was that widening of local responsibility would increase diversification of teaching methods. The national teacher-training programmes were also reformed in order to promote diversity in teaching methods and didactic approaches. The municipalisation reform was followed one year later by the school voucher system, which opened for the establishment of private/independent schools. The state retained its control by setting targets and objectives that the municipalities and independent schools were expected to meet.

Following the 1990s, government commissions showed shortcomings in the realization of student influence and participation – despite its legal recognition (Rönnlund, 2011). In response, the national curriculum of 2011 emphasized student influence and participation even more. Unlike the previous national curricula, Lpo 94 for Compulsory School and Lpf 94 for Upper Secondary School, it contained few concrete pieces of advice on behalf of more general indications in order to increase teachers' autonomy and control over the classroom (Skolverket, 1998, p. 6–7; Skolverket, 2009, p. 44; Rönnlund, 2011, p. 23; Giota 2013, pp. 10, 47).

Student influence and individualization

Tightly intertwined with an aim for an inclusive democratic school with a high degree of student influence and participation, individualization has

also been promoted. Giota (2013) shows how a close relationship between democratization and individualization has meant that they have often been regarded as each other's prerequisites. In the 1920s, individualization and democratization were regarded as tools to create a modern, universal school that utilized every single student's needs. In the 1940s and 50s, individualization was considered the ideal starting point for instruction and its main task was to equip the pupils with the skills required for lifelong learning, as well as to educate responsible and democratic citizens. In the 1962 curriculum for compulsory school, individualization meant adapting to the student's interests and needs, and very detailed directions were given to the teachers on how to do this. Likewise, the 1980 legislation on student influence and participation went hand in hand with a stronger emphasis on individual student's needs and interests (Giota, 2013, p. 50–53).

The 1994 national curricula emphasized responsibility and student influence (Giota, 2013). Pupils were regarded as individuals with a right to self-realization rather than as members of the society (Vinterek, 2006, p. 117–119). This marked a shift away from the conception of democracy outlined in the 1980 curriculum, which emphasized democracy as a collective and political concern (Skolverket, 2009, p. 46; Englund, 2005). Flexible and varied teaching practices with a focus on the individual pupil would raise the general standard and improve the results (Skolverket, 2009, p. 44). The teachers were responsible for ensuring that all students were given substantial influence on the content of education, on the applied working methods and models (Giota 2013, p. 49).

However, individualization not only referred to students' rights, but also implied more responsibility on the individual student for his or her learning and participation (Vinterek, 2006, p. 117–119). The underlying ideas stated that an increased trust in students' ability to take responsibility for their own learning while at the same time making them more involved, would promote their willingness to participate and exert influence, empower their status and in the end, improve their skills and knowledge (Giota, 2013, p. 46–47, 97–98).

This approach is also visible in the current curriculum Lgr 11:

> Democratic forms of work should also be applied in practice and prepare pupils for active participation in the life of society. This should develop their ability to take personal responsibility. By taking part in the planning and evaluation of their daily teaching, and being able to choose courses, subjects, themes and activities, pupils will develop their ability to exercise influence and take responsibility (Skolverket 2018a, p. 7).

Rönnlund (2011) interprets this shift as an echo of a market orientation that has affected the educational system. While the goals in previous steering documents aimed to foster future *community-building citizens* (Englund, 2005), the new steering documents more or less intentionally assume a *market-oriented citizen* (Rönnlund, 2011, p. 23). Researchers in the field claim that deregulation and market adaption reflect a political and ideological shift that is also visible in the curricula. In other words, the interpretation of what student participation means has moved from collective and political concern to an individual concern (Skolverket, 2009, pp. 46–47).

Some indications suggest that learner-centered exploratory methods have become more common on behalf of teacher-led instruction, perhaps to a larger extent in Sweden when compared to other countries (Echazarra, 2016, Skolverket, 2016a). The OECD advocates varying teaching methods adapted to the situation, the pupils' needs and knowledge levels. Too much emphasis on individual work may prevent students from training their collaborative ability, which is central for working life both today and in the future

(Schleicher 2018, p.63–64). It also means that the pupils will benefit from teachers' competence and specific knowledge to a lesser extent (Vinterek, 2006, p. 119–122; Rönnlund, 2011, p. 21; Giota, 2013, p. 10). Many researchers claim that more responsibility on the pupils for their own learning has increased the importance of home support, which consequently has had a negative impact on equity (Skolverket, 2009, p. 44). When student mostly surfaces in forms of work such as essays and homework and to a lesser extent affects the content of lessons and classroom practice, it may serve to restrain rather than create room for students' desires, curiosity and own interests, and may accordingly lead to negative effects on the learning outcomes (Vinterek, 2006, p. 15; Skolverket, 2009; Giota, 2013).

Some have brought forward the combination of decentralization, the voucher system and the implementation of individualization as a conjunction of factors that would explain Sweden's decline in international large-scale student assessments such as TIMSS and PISA, and to the impaired equity on school- and student level (see for instance: Skolverket, 2009; SOU, 2014; SOU, 2017, p. 35; OECD, 2015; Skolverket, 2018c).

Student influence in the classroom

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate states that despite the indications of a healthy state of democracy in Swedish schools in general, classroom activities often lack a comprehensive perspective on how democracy, subject teaching and work with norms and values are connected. A common misconception is that democracy and fundamental values have little to do with the traditional school subjects, and hence should be treated separately (Skolverket, 2016b). When this is the case, they are often treated in an ad-hoc fashion by committed individual teachers. There is thus room for improvement in terms of systematization and long-term perspective. The levels of actual influence and participation held by pupils are to be improved by hands-on training in integration of democratic practices and subject knowledge. Further factors for success include elaboration of a critical approach that explicitly highlights various norms, standards, traditions and perspectives that influence classroom practices as well as school- and societal cultures (Skolinspektionen, 2012). It also requires measures to achieve a school climate characterized by trust, inclusion and understanding of the importance of student influence and participation – both with respect to the preconditions and prospects for students' school performance and as future citizens (Skolverket, 2015c, p. 19–20).

The Swedish School Commission of 2015 (Skolkommissionen) noticed that Swedish pupils report relatively negative experiences of the learning environment when compared internationally (SOU, 2017, p. 35, 44, 248). When the 15year olds in PISA 2015 were asked about their sense of belonging in school, the majority reported high levels of belonging. But this sense of belonging has decreased in the OECD in general and in Sweden in particular. Even if the majority of students report a good relationship with their teachers, about one fifth state recurring unfair treatment by their teachers. Boys feel more unfairly treated compared to girls in Sweden, as well as in the OECD. In addition, students with an immigrant background more often experience unfair treatment by teachers and the gap between this group and students with a non-immigrant background is larger in Sweden compared to the OECD average (OECD, 2017; Skolverket, 2017c.)

The latest attitude survey conducted by the NAE (Skolverket, 2019) asked a set of questions relating to the extent to which pupils wished

to exert influence on their education, and the extent to which they felt they actually could. Perhaps surprisingly, the survey shows that the wish for influence peaked in 2003 and the possibilities to exert influence peaked in 2009, and both have since been in weak decline. Pupils with an immigrant background report that they can exert influence on classroom work to a higher extent than those with Swedish background.

In ICCS 2016, six out of ten Swedish 14year olds report that they actively participate in school council related activities, which is above the international average. Somewhat contradictory, opportunities to formal participation are not very highly regarded among Swedish students (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon et al., 2017; p. 86; Skolverket, 2017a; p. 61–62.) This discrepancy between values and opportunities may have a natural explanation:

The better the opportunities to participate are, the more they might be taken for granted. Another possible explanation might be the mandatory aspect that encompasses participation and influence in Sweden. Since they are not only privileges but also obligations, they might not entirely be regarded as benefits by the Swedish students. ICCS also ask the Swedish students to estimate their level of influence on schedule, regulations, changing class and changing school, teaching material, the school council and the organization and content of the instruction. On a scale of 1–10, the result on most questions varies between 3 - 6,5. Areas that the pupils experience highest influence on are: changing school, followed by the school council and the organization and content of teaching, while they report the lowest influence on teaching material and on the schedule (Skolverket, 2017a; p. 63).

The latest attitude survey conducted by the NAE shows that:

The obstacles for student influence and participation are – at least partly – due to the school context itself. The goals and objectives in the national curriculum are not necessarily equivalent with the students' individual interests (Vinterek 20016, p. 117–119). Student participation and influence also challenge the traditional roles of teachers and students to a certain extent, which may entail the need to re-examine teacher and student roles, which in turn will have an impact on the relations in the classroom (Skolverket, 2016b, p. 34). Åkerström (2014) points out three circumstances that make schools a rather special arena for student participation:

1. when education is compulsory, children and young people have no choice but attending. Especially unprivileged students and students without academic motivation might regard compulsory schooling as nothing more than a burden,
2. school is an arena for controlling and shaping children and young people in accordance with certain ideals of citizenship as desired by the state. In Sweden and the Nordic countries, this ideal is to foster children and students to become reflective, responsible and flexible citizens of democratic societies. Some researchers claim there are no other arenas besides school with a larger impact on children's everyday life, and
3. school occupies students' life. Children and young people not only spend a lot of time at school, they also devote an important part of their life outside of school to school related work, with the consequence that young people's activities have become increasingly separated from adults' activities. In response to this, children's and young people's contributions to the society have been hidden/concealed/restricted within educational institutions (Åkerström, 2014, p. 33–34).

Student voice

Although there has been a substantial debate on influence and participation in Sweden, the concept of "voice" as such has not been very salient. Rather, "voice" has been seen as a function of exerting influence, which in turn has been interpreted by some to mean partaking in classroom councils etc. Others have seen the choice that pupils make to the gymnasium school (upper secondary school) as an expression of voice.

The most elaborated educational approach explicitly drawing on the concept of "voice" was developed in the 1990s and drew, among other things, on the political theory of deliberative democracy as it was conceived by Jürgen Habermas and the methodology developed in the so-called "frame-factor theory" by curriculum theorist Ulf P. Lundgren in the 1970s. This resulted in an approach towards education and instruction that both presented arguments for deliberative practices in the classroom and rules that could be applied in order to ensure that those practices matched criteria for deliberation (i.e. a kind of "true" communication, free of asymmetrical power relations), and thus preconditions for exertion of student voice (Englund, 2007). The approach never resulted in actual policies or large-scale initiatives and may have had its biggest impact inside the field of educational research. There are, however, empirical results suggesting positive effects of deliberative practices in civics, particularly in vocational programmes (Andersson, 2012).

The National School Development Programmes

The National School Development Programmes were launched in 2016. The programmes organize different kinds of resources for teachers, head teachers, headmasters and school leaders according to a set of overarching themes. Use of these resources is voluntary in principle; however, some are tied to state grants and in that case, participation is mandatory. The largest bulk of resources concern competency development and follow a similar model which is based on peer learning among teachers and has a strong support in research on school improvement and professional development. The resources for competency development provide the participants with learning materials (which form the base for peer learning through group discussions), from which new insights and working methods that later are tested and applied on real classroom situations are derived and finally evaluated.

Common for all the national school development programmes is that they are

1. based on *fundamental values* as expressed in the Education Act and the curricula Lgr11 and Gy11. Their *content* is based on the *curricula* Lgr11 and Gy11, *scientific basis* and *proven experience*.
2. Mutually, the programmes also *comprise the whole range of school governance*; the state represented by the NAE, the school providers, as well as the teachers and principals.

3. With reference to scientific evidence for a strong correlation between improved skills and a high level of student participation, all programmes should carefully *consider student participation*. From this perspective, one could argue that student participation is evident in all the national school development programmes, regardless of the topic of the actual programme (Skolverket, 2015b, p. 6).

4. In order to facilitate the implementation for the schools, all programmes are based on the same design that guarantees *consistency* and *clarification*, which is necessary for the facilitation and feasibility for schools to select programme(s) and to prepare themselves. At the same time, the model makes room for *flexibility,* regarding both content and implementation, which makes it applicable on various topics such as mathematics, organization and leadership, science and fundamental values, by which the latter includes the programme *Students' participation and influence in the classroom.* Flexibility is also required in order to adapt to eventual changes in curricula or new research findings and in order to consider local conditions and needs, which requires flexibility in terms of rate and range (Skolverket, 2015, p. 15).

The national school development programmes follow four fundamental guidelines. In order to (1) *improve equity*, the programmes should be coherent, distinct and share a common ground, and be easily accessed by the school providers and schools. This is the reason why all programmes are found on a common website; https://larportalen.skolverket.se/#/. Secondly, they should *strengthen schools' and school providers' work with quality assurance and quality development* through long-term processes towards targeted and prioritized goals. In other words, the school provider should use the local work with quality assurance and development as a starting-point when implementing the national school development programmes and analyse the requisites for development, (3) The national school development programmes are *characterized by a holistic approach on school's mission*. Consequently, fundamental values, reliance, participation, inclusion and respect are therefore considered as essential preconditions for a successful implementation. Finally (4), the national school development programmes should *empower the profession/professionals*. The programme is built upon trust in the profession and presupposes that the profession – teachers, principals and local policy makers - has the capacity and the desire to improve their tasks. Each programme therefore contains a part that is directed towards principals and/or school providers (Skolverket, 2015c, p. 6–7).

The didactic model

Most of the content for competence development within the national school development programmes is organized in modules, which in turn are divided into different *parts* that should be followed chronologically. Each part is divided in different *steps* (Moment). In *Step A,* the participants take part of the material individually. Then the group gathers in *Step B* for a joint discussion and planning. After that, the participants carry out a teaching activity in *Step C* and finally, the group is gathered again in *Step D* for evaluating the activities that took place in Step C. The estimated time is 45-60 minutes in Step A, 90-120 minutes in Step B and 45-60 minutes in Step D, while Step C is included in the regular teaching.

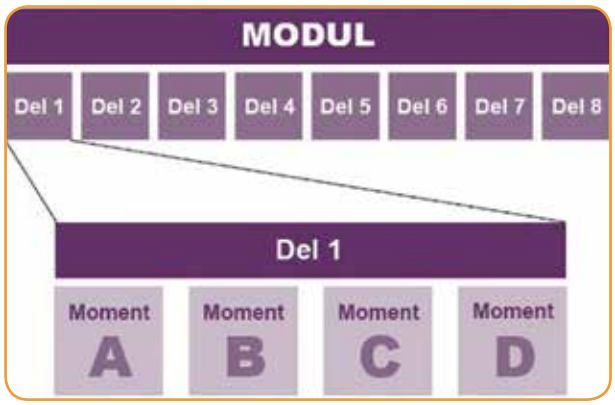

Figure 1. The module Student Participation and Influence in the Classroom

The programme *Fundamental values* is divided into two semi programmes: *Students' participation and influence in the classroom* and *Promotion of equal treatment,* by which the former is in focus in this article. The target groups are principals, teachers and other school staff in compulsory school and upper secondary school. The objective is to empower the schools' work on student participation and influence with focus on classroom activities, practices by providing teachers and other pedagogical staff, with scientific based material in order to improve their understanding of the importance of this work and how it can be applied (Skolverket, 2015c, pp. 19–20).

The programme *Students' participation and influence in the classroom* is based on the report *Participation for Learning*, which was originally written in Swedish, but later translated into English when the NAE hosted the CIDREE expert meeting on this topic in Stockholm in 2015.

The topics of the module's eight parts (each including the aforementioned steps) are:

1. Participation and influence; What is that and why is it important?
2. Students' view of participation and influence;
3. How to use students' thoughts, questions and experiences in instruction;
4. Forms of work that favour student influence;
5. Conversations that improve student participation;
6. Student participation in a formative process;
7. Student feedback and teaching progression;
8. Sustainable student development and influence.

A brief summary of the content, didactic approach and methods chosen for each step in the module

Part 1: Participation and influence; what is it and why is it important?

The objective in this part is to introduce and raise the participants' awareness of different forms of student participation and of its importance. In the first step, they individually read two articles which they are then asked to reflect upon according to some questions. In the second step, they discuss the articles with their colleagues with the help of questions. They are also given guidance in how to map their participatory teaching practices. This activity aims to give the participants an insight into when, where, how and for what purpose the students are given the opportunity to participate. The mapping is conducted and put together in step 3 and concludes with a self-reflection on the situation and the participants' own achievements in this area. In the final step 4, the participants gather together for a follow-up where they discuss the results from the individually conducted mappings and discuss areas for development that can be brought into the following parts.

Photos 1 and 2. Students co-operating with the teacher and learn from each other.

Part 2: Students' view of participation and influence

In part 2, participants are given the opportunity to deepen their understanding of formal influence and social participation. They are also asked to investigate the pupils' understanding of participation and influence in the classroom. A better understanding of the benefits of student participation and influence on instruction, in combination with increased insights of students' experiences of participation, will facilitate teachers' professional development and refinement of teaching methods.

In the first step, teachers read a text that elaborates on the importance of participation and student influence on instruction from a student perspective. They also watch a film in which teachers and students share their experiences of applying the principles of participation and influence in the classroom. The second step is devoted to joint discussions based upon the material in step 1. The discussions should revolve around questions such as: How do they as individuals and a group understand the concepts of participation and influence, the roles and responsibilities of adults in school, how participation is divided among students and how the staff can act in order to improve students' sense of belonging and engagement etc. With support from each other, the participants also prepare themselves for a student survey with the objective to gain more information about their experiences of participation and influence in school with extra focus on instruction. This activity aims at extending the teacher- student perspective.

The student survey is conducted and compiled in step 3 and submitted and discussed in the 4th and final step. The discussion should then revolve around comparisons between the students' and teachers' view of the possibilities for participation and exercise of influence, and around reflections on the teachers' roles and responsibilities.

Part 3: How to use students' thoughts, questions and experiences in teaching

Part 3 aims at developing the participants' understanding of the importance of adapting to the students' experiences, motivations and prerequisites when planning for learning activities, and to take the conditions at their schools into consideration.

An article and a film where teachers and students elaborate on the subject are presented, and the participant then moves on to a group discussion that is focused by means of questions provided. The next sequence asks the participant to use reflections from the article,

the film and the discussion to plan and deliver a learning activity within the classroom. The participant is encouraged to observe and take notes during the delivery. In the last sequence the participants are asked to have a group discussion where they evaluate their respective activities, provide peer feedback and exchange reflections on the part as a whole.

Part 4: Working forms that favour student influence

This part introduces the participants to efficient working methods that favour learning via participation and influence. Examples on the methods are given, grounded in research and proven experience, and offer a repertoire of different methods, but also highlights challenges.

An article in the first sequence presents the content described above. It is then followed by a focused group discussion after which the participants are asked to prepare a learning activity where they apply some variant(s) of participatory practice(s). Observations are made during and after the delivery of the activity, and they are then asked to have a group discussion where they evaluate their respective activities, provide peer feedback, elaborate on possible consequences on their forthcoming teaching and learning activities and exchange reflections on the part as a whole.

Part 5: Conversations that improve student participation

Part 5 focuses on collective reflection and classroom dialogue as instruments to increase student participation and learning. The objective is to provide teachers with opportunities to reflect on how teaching and learning can be developed by framing and improving dialogue as a formative practice.

In part 5 and the following two parts, the mutual exchange of teacher feedback and student response is the central theme. Productive feedback is seen as a continuous flow where the teacher seeks to ask productive questions which the students respond to and the teacher then acts upon.

As before, there is an article that discusses these issues and also three films that show examples on classroom dialogues in year 3, 6 and 9. Forms of dialogues that are introduced include Socratic talks, deliberative discussions and philosophical problems as reflective starting points and instructional talks with metacognitive questions. As before, the participants are asked to discuss the content, plan and deliver a learning activity and conclude by sharing reflections and giving feedback to each other.

Part 6: Student participation in a formative process

Feedback is further explored in this part. It introduces teachers to reflection tools, on how they can give feedback to students and how students can be more involved in a formative process. This part also demonstrates how students can strengthen their self-reflection, meta-cognitive strategies and agency and thus improve their learning. The participants are offered to try out methods for development of dialogues with students on issues such as goals and quality, concepts and models for feedback, feedback starting in the students' perspective and self-assessment and self-regulation practices.

The format is the same as above.

Part 7: Student response and teacher's development of learning activities

Part 7 offers deepened insights into working methods in order to increase student response in a formative context. This part also offers opportunities for the participants to reflect upon

the impact of student response on learning activities. Participants are also given the opportunity to collect and receive response from students, lead discussions with students on their thoughts and to use the information; this generates in planning and delivery of learning activities.

In addition to an introductory article, there is also a recorded conversation between students and a teacher on these issues. The classroom activity that the participants are asked to undertake stresses the importance of analysing the climate and culture within the classroom in order to ensure a productive outcome. The part concludes as above.

Part 8: Sustainable participation and influence

In the concluding part, the participants discuss ways in which the school work in the area ensures long term continuity and equity in the work with students' participation and influence in teaching.

The part also highlights how local quality development can be systematized on the individual- (teacher), group- (a team of teachers) and school level. Participants are also given the opportunity to summarize and reflect on their learning during the semester, and to look ahead and plan for increased participation and student influence in their forthcoming teaching.

Evaluation

There is a pay-off between the open format (it is free to use and easily accessible on the internet) of the module and the possibilities for evaluation. Questionnaires, for instance, tend to be self-recruiting when administered through an open webpage. The NAE has thus far neither undertaken any comprehensive evaluation of how the module is perceived by the participants, nor on its effects on teacher practices and student participation and influence. On the other hand, the didactic design and the content of the module have undergone thorough processes of quality assurance, both within the NAE, by researchers in the field and among practitioners. Webpage statistics indicate well over 50.000 visits since it has been released.

Conclusion

As shown in the overview, the adopted didactic approach stresses two core factors: reflection and practice. This is very much in line with influential ideas on what constitutes the knowledge base for the teaching profession in general (Schön, 1984). Reflection is thus supported by content and approached at two levels, first the introductory content that is presented in articles, films etc. and which the participant is asked to think about and reflect upon with support from focused questions that come with the content. On the first level, reflection is carried out individually. The participant then brings these reflections to the next level where discussions among peers who have all carried out the same procedure means that this discussion serves to bring new perspectives into consideration, and thus re-examination of one's own lines of thought.

In order to connect reflection with action, the next step means taking these thoughts and experiences and transforming them into practice. By this stage, it may be useful to remind the participant that this process is a complex one. Not only do the ideas that the reflections upon the content have brought about need to be clearly formulated and operationalized into manageable activities, the participant also needs insights into the specific context – the classroom – in which they are to

take place. The instructions to this step stress the importance of careful preparation and remind the participant to plan for observations during the delivery of the activity, something which is important for the concluding step, but otherwise easy to forget. It may also be important to remind the participant of the fact that it may be necessary to consider other factors such as well-being and social dynamics when planning the activities. The concluding step may well be the most important one, in that it gives a structure for collegial processes of peer learning that may be scaled up in the school. Some participants sometimes tend to think that they are "done" once they are through with the learning activity, but this is not the case. As Helen Timperley (2011) has shown, continuous professional learning is often the key to successful promotion of student engagement, learning and well-being.

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From Participation to Voice: Developing Student Voice in Dutch Education

student voice

THE NETHERLANDS

de stem van de leerling

Authors

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Abstract

Student voice encompasses the right for learners to express their opinions, access people who influence decisions and actively participate in educational decision-making processes. Interest in the role of students in their own education is an international trend (Sinnema and Aitken, 2013). In the Netherlands, student voice means working in partnership with students that will enable them to become more self-directed learners, responsible and democratic citizens. Enhancing student voice increases the development of ownership, relevance of learning and it contributes to the democratic qualities and 21st century skills.

Student voice is not well developed in Dutch education. The related notion of student participation is wider known and practiced in Dutch education, but developments in this field seem to have stagnated (Bron, 2014). This article describes the efforts made to further the development of student voice in theory and practice, with an emphasis on classroom curriculum development. Experiences, results and tools presented are based on a PhD research involving six schools of lower secondary education and an Erasmus+ project Student Voice – the BRIDGE to Learning.

Introduction

Student voice is a relatively new concept in Dutch education; however, student participation is widely used. The concept of voice as the term is used in this paper is more than speaking - it is the effect embodied in the act of access to decision-making processes. Here the overlap with the concept of student participation becomes apparent: in the student participation discourse influence is regarded as crucial. Definitions of participation always include the aspect of students' direct involvement in decision-making processes. In this introduction, the concepts of voice and of participation that we consider largely overlapping are elaborated. We will present arguments for student voice in education, providing the basis for a rationale for the use of student voice. After that we present some models for student participation that we find relevant for student voice as well. In this contribution, we focus on the Dutch situations and the efforts made by the National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO) to stimulate developments in the Netherlands. Four tools for student voice that were developed and used in the BRIDGE project are described, as well as their use in the participating schools. We end the article in section three with conclusions and challenges we encountered in promoting and supporting student voice in the Netherlands.

Understanding student voice in the Netherlands

The concept 'student voice' is internationally used to indicate a way of thinking that strives to repositioning students in educational research and reform. The way of thinking is premised on the following convictions*: young people have unique perspectives on learning, teaching and schooling, that their insights warrant not only the attention but also the responses of adults: and that they should be afforded opportunities to actively shape their education* (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 383).

Thomson (2011) defines 'student voice' as the right for learners to express opinions, access people who influence decisions and exercise active participation in educational decision-making process. Lundy (2007) uses four aspects of student voice in relation to the article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- Space: children must be given the opportunity to express a view;
- Voice: children must be facilitated to express their views;
- Audience: the view must be listened to;
- Influence: the view must be acted upon, as appropriate.

These definitions make it clear that 'student voice' is much more than simply 'speaking one's voice'. There must also be somebody listening and acting upon what was said: voice can have an effect. Cook-Sather (2006) tried to capture the central aspects of 'student voice' as sound, presence and power, indicating that students have a voice in the sense that they can speak up and share their thoughts, opinions and experiences; that they are given a platform to speak and be listened to and that they actually can influence their situation, in this case their learning process. The term student voice largely overlaps with student participation. In the Netherlands, the use of 'voice' is limited but increasing, while participation is more commonly used, often in a more formal sense: participation in councils for example.

Arguments for enhancing student voice

Young people today have greater economic power, social maturity and access to information and knowledge derived from the ever–increasing media culture. Yet, many schools still provide few opportunities for them to express their views constructively and contribute meaningfully to shaping learning and school life. For decades, student participation in the Netherlands has had two faces. On the one hand, there is the formal student representation in school councils consisting of staff, parents and students, as well as the opportunities offered by schools to set up a student council in school. On the other hand, there is the informal participation in the form of day-to-day interaction between students and teachers. This relation is less hierarchical and students in general have opportunities to voice their thoughts and opinion. Since the introduction of citizenship education in 2006 the Netherlands, like many countries, has been searching for ways to stimulate the development of democratic principles and attitudes and providing opportunities for student participation. The notion that democracy is important and should be nurtured in our society and schools is widespread, with the emphasis shifting towards acting in the democratic process and practising fundamental democratic ideas, such as expressing and exchanging viewpoints based on equality, cooperation and negotiation, participating in decision–making processes and accepting decisions made collectively.

Bron and Veugelers (2014) presented five arguments for giving students a voice in education. These arguments help deepening the thinking about why we want to put time and effort in realising forms of student voice. The five arguments are listed in Table 1.

Arguments can vary per situation and country. In the UK, for example (Bron, 2018), the ratification of the Rights of the Child was an important argument for improving the student voice. In the Netherlands, the educational motive is

Table 1. Arguments for student voice in education

1. Normative argument	Young people are entitled to the right to have a voice in matters that affect them.
2. Developmental argument	Children and young people are developmentally ready to participate, as they often assume more responsibility and autonomy outside school than allowed within.
3. Political argument	Inviting students to participate in their education changes the power paradigm, providing opportunities for voices that are often marginalised to speak and for those who customarily hold positions of power to listen and hear.
4. Educational argument	Participation in negotiating and decision–making processes has educational benefits, contributing to the development of citizenship and 21st century skills.
5. Relevance argument	Involving students in their own education improves the relevance of education.

important in the perspective of developing democratic citizenship qualities. In addition, the school is seen as a site to experiment with and practise citizenship roles and responsibilities, suitable for certain age groups. This stems from the idea that students are citizens now and not citizens in waiting. Here the developmental argument is visible. The tools presented in this chapter include other arguments as well. In one tool, a ladder for student participation is used. Here the political argument is paramount. In the curriculum negotiation tool, the educational argument in table 1 is combined with the relevance argument: the educational offering becomes more relevant to students when they are involved in decision-making about their own education.

Levels of participation

Describing levels of participation is considered to be an interesting element in the theory of student voice. Distinction between levels of participation is very helpful when choosing realistic forms of participation attuned to particular situations. The three participation models presented in this article help to determine divisions of power and the impact participation can have on the level of student voice. One model in particular (the ladder of Hart) has become very influential in the Netherlands. It is translated into Dutch and has even led to the development of an educational tool for schools (Otter, den, 2015).

Shuttle (2007) developed a participation model consisting of five levels of learner engagement. The different degrees of learner engagement are:

- Inform: learners are informed about decisions;
- Consult: learners are consulted to support decision-making;
- Involve: input from learners into decision-making is sought;
- Collaborate: decisions are shaped in partnership with learners;
- Empower: there is ownership of decisions by learners.

Another five-level model is that of Shier (2001):

- Children are listened to;
- Children are supported in expressing their views;
- Children's views are taken into account;
- Children are involved in the decision-making process;
- Children share power and responsibility for decision-making.

This model has features of a matrix because each of the five levels distinguishes between three elements: openings, opportunities and obligations. It gives practitioners the opportunity to analyse their own situation and determine their present situation and what might be the desired end. This gives the model the characteristics of a user- friendly flowchart. Furthermore, level two in this model: children are supported in expressing their views, suggest that students are likely to need support. Yet, it also suggests that voice is something that can be supported, developed and learned, making voice an aspect that needs a place in the curriculum.

Hart's "ladder of youth participation" (1992) is often used to indicate different levels of children's participation in decision-making (Figure 1). The ladder starts with a minimal engagement of students in decision-making, moving upwards towards a greater influence. It consists of eight levels, ranging from non–participation (green colour), such as manipulation, to youth initiated shared decisions with adults (yellow colour). Although the hierarchical aspect can be criticized, it is still helpful in creating awareness of the extent of desired student participation.

In the Netherlands, this ladder has been an inspiration for use in educational contexts. Marianne den Otter (2015) developed an educational ladder, based on this ladder of youth participation. The educational ladder provides information on the level of direct involvement by

Figure 1. Ladder of participation

students on curriculum issues and educational activities. It helps teachers to decide through collaborative decision-making at which level student participation in the classroom or at school level is most effective. This tool is available in Dutch and English (http://burgerschapindeschool.nl/student-voice).

Enhancing student voice in classroom situations

There are different ways that promote and support student voice at school- and classroom level. In the Netherlands, many schools are characterised by an informal culture where students can speak their voice, with relatively low teacher centred classrooms where teachers guide the learning of subgroups working on tasks. It is important that schools view student voice from a broader perspective than the informal classroom conversations. The starting point of promoting and supporting student voice is the development of a school-specific rationale which is related to the mission and aims of the school and to the arguments of why student voice is important (Table 1). Schools differ in the way they promote and support student voice, depending on their pedagogical practices, educational concepts, and social-cultural demography. Another way of enhancing student voice is empowering the teacher and supporting him/her in translating the school specific rationale to the practice at classroom level. The continuous professional development approach supports teachers in promoting and implementing student voice. An example of this

could be the use of a spider web as a tool to rethink the possible role of students in different aspects of education, such as assessment, creating better learning environments, the use of learning support materials.

Involving students in curriculum development

An aspect of teachers' professional development that needs more attention is curriculum competence. In a qualitative research in six schools of lower secondary education (Bron, 2018) it became apparent that teachers lack competences in curriculum development; the sense is that they hardly reflect on the relevance of the content of their lessons. If teachers are regarded and regard themselves as deliverers of the curriculum instead of actors in curriculum decision-making, then textbooks decide the curriculum content. If we regard the curriculum as a process and teachers and also students as actors in curriculum development at school and classroom level, then teachers are professionals and students are participants. It requires the curriculum to be seen as an inspiring framework that gives direction and is open for further elaboration in the local context with a certain student population.

The *curriculum intentions model* (Bron, 2018) provides a visualisation of the teacher and student curriculum intentions and what they are based on. This model (Figure 2) takes the process curriculum as given and puts curriculum negotiation in the centre. It requires teachers to be explicit about their intended curriculum and to help students become aware of their intentions as well. The teacher intentions are based on the teacher's knowledge of external curriculum requirements as well as the professional knowledge and experience a

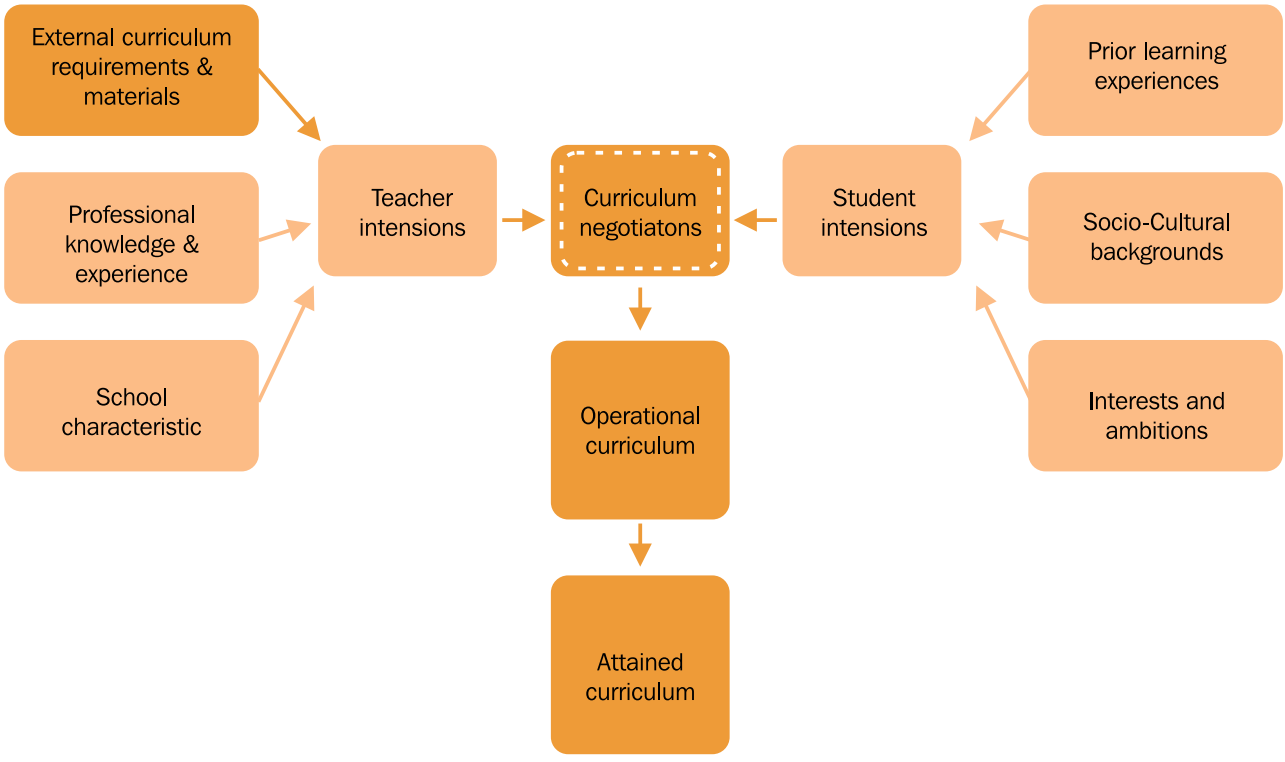

Figure 2.The curriculum intentions model

teacher has developed. The third factor is the school characteristics: what the school expects of its teachers based on the school philosophy on life and/or pedagogics. The student brings prior learning experiences, both in and out of school, backgrounds and ambitions and interests. The intentions of the students and the teacher meet in a negotiation about the curriculum. Out of the decisions made in this negotiation follows the operational curriculum leading to learning: the attained curriculum. For more details see the curriculum negotiation tool in section 2.3.

A continuous professional development approach

One of the key features of enhancing student voice is the role of the teacher. In taking this forward, its aim is to develop student voice through a shift from top–down policy implementation to a more horizontal approach with a strong dimension of school collaboration at school and classroom level. This continuous professional development approach places schools at the centre of the learning journey and empowers teachers to take the student voice forward in a way that is most useful/ appropriate for their unique local context.

Figure 3 shows the Dutch journey to enhanced student voice, based on this collaborative teaching and learning model. The journey for teachers starts on the left hand side of the figure, with the important stop at teachers' learning. This is a starting point in the process of involving students in the design of their own education and learning process. The teachers' journey includes several stops, but the destination of the journey is clear: enhanced student voice. The journey of learners starts on the other side of the figure; their starting point is student participation. Their journey also includes several stops, and leads to the same destination as the teachers': enhanced student voice. Teachers and students will meet each other at the stop in the middle, i.e., classroom collaboration.

At the teacher level, they learn how to collaborate and develop a culture in classrooms where the shift of responsibility in learning moves from the teachers to the students. In working towards this collaborative model, teachers are supported by research and opportunities to explore new ideas and also by sharing practices with schools and experts. Especially the involvement of partners/experts in enhancing the process and implementation of student voice is very useful. In the Netherlands, there are several experts in this area, ranging from educational professionals, to (human) rights education experts. It also includes organisations involved in fostering democratic citizenship and organising dialogue with students. Working in partnership, sharing experiences and developing strategies for implementation leads to a stronger and more collective understanding of student voice, leading to support the implementation of student voice at school level.

At student level, right hand side of the figure, all students learn how to participate in curriculum development, particularly in the process of goal setting, assessment, including self–evaluation. Their involvement leads to an increase in the development of ownership, the relevance of their learning and contributes to the democratic qualities.

At the level of classroom collaboration, the use of tools (curriculum negotiation, participation ladder, Jansen's bicycle) supports students and teachers to work together and implement student voice in the classroom, in a way that is most useful and appropriate for the classroom context.

The spider web is a tool which is actually an example of a continuous professional development approach, and therefore less suitable to be used at classroom level. Using the spider web helps to develop the reasoning about all kinds of aspects of schooling and education

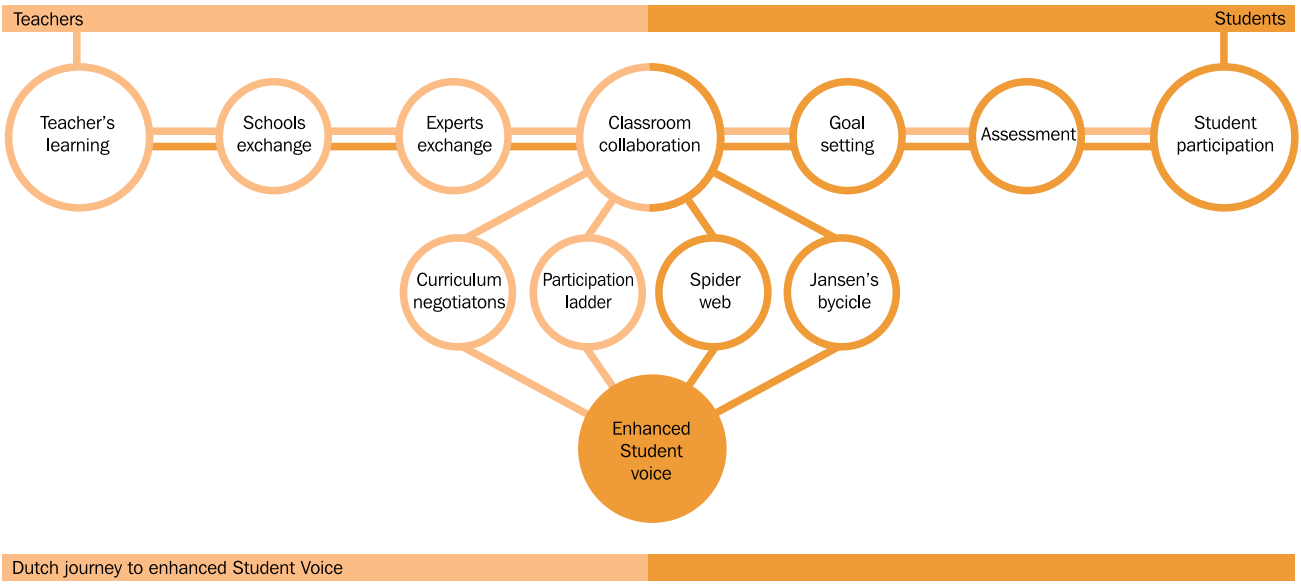

Figure 3. Dutch journey to enhanced student voice

at school level that are suitable to involve students. It supports schools in formulating a school policy and rationale on student voice.

Tools on student voice

The National Institute for Curriculum Development in the Netherlands developed different tools as a part of models on student participation, providing teachers' support in giving students a voice and the power to express their views constructively. The tools offer ways to improve student participation in decision-making processes regarding their own learning process and in experiencing democratic citizenship practices. Although specific aims differ for each tool (Table 2), the overarching aim is the same: increasing the role of (all) students in their education.

The tool for the *curriculum negotiation method* is aimed towards increasing the relevance of the curriculum for the students and developing their democratic qualities. It has been used in secondary schools, and at a later stage, also in primary schools in the Netherlands. One of the key issues arising from the Dutch example is that the curriculum negotiation method can work, especially in secondary schools: students are developmentally ready and the method leads both in terms of curriculum input and in terms of learning effects to better results. The success of the tool depends on whether the curriculum is regarded as something which is open for discussion and improvement and if teachers have a certain level of control and ownership over the curriculum they offer. This is a prerequisite for allowing students to co-construct their curriculum with their teachers.

The *educational ladder of student participation*_ aims to create awareness on the desired level of student participation. It helps teachers to decide through collaborative decision-making at which level student participation is most effective. This tool consists of eight steps ranging from non-participation to full participation of students as partners in the decision-making process. It is designed to answer the question: 'Where do students stand on the educational participation ladder?' Different manifestations of student voice can be related to these levels of participation, depending on how the activity is organised and how power is distributed.

Table 2. Goal description of tools on student voice.

The curriculum negotiation method

- To involve students in decision making about their curriculum.
- To increase the relevance of the curriculum from a student perspective.
- To develop democratic qualities amongst students.

Educational ladder of student participation

- To determine the current level of student participation in educational activities.
- To create awareness for educators on the desired level of student participation

Learning, using the principle of Jansen's bicycle

- To create awareness of pedagogics of awakening prior knowledge by learners.
- To involve students in creating and shaping their own learning process.

The spider web: framework for assessing student participation

- To develop school policy on student voice and participation.
- To involve students in various aspects of education.

More information: http://burgerschapindeschool.nl/student-voice

The levels of participation are specified to the extent students are allowed to talk about their education and what influence they have on their learning goals, pedagogy, school and social events or physical aspects of the school. The inclusion of all students is a prerequisite for achieving the aim in this process.

'Jansens's bicycle' is a didactic model, based on the principle that learners are curious and have prior knowledge on specific topics. It believes in the importance of awakening prior knowledge by learners as input for the involvement in their own learning process. Teachers collect this information and use it as a way of involving learners in the determination of the content of their own education. Jansen's bicycle consists of seven phases, each reflecting a certain step in the involvement of learners in the learning process. The principle of Jansen's bicycle is very useful if teachers want to involve students in creating and shaping their own learning process.

The *curricular spider web* is a useful tool in rethinking student involvement at different levels, related to the curricular spider web of educational aspects. The following questions support schools in formulating a school policy and rationale on student voice and participation:

- Why is it important to give students a voice in education?
- Toward which goals are students at your school learning through student voice?
- How does the school organise student voice: in the class, with peers ...?
- What is the role of the teacher in the process of enhancing student voice? Is it the task of one specific teacher or is it the responsibility

of a team/the whole school?

- Which materials are used to facilitate the process of student voice?
- Are the learners randomly grouped? Do they volunteer?
- Where (location) does student voice take place? Is it part of the regular curriculum or is it an extra-curricular activity?
- What is the time slot allocated to SV and/ or is there a specific time set aside or is it integrated in the regular time schedule?
- How does the school assess learners? In a summative, formative way?

Conclusions on critical issues or challenges on promoting student voice

To put student voice into practice requires a paradigm shift moving away from standardization and textbook dominance. In such a context, teachers function as professionals with well-developed curricular and pedagogical competencies. Teachers require professional development if they are to construct clear goals -based on external curriculum requirements, professional knowledge, experience and school context- while at the same time working with these goals, creatively based on students' input. Students too need to shed their passive roles to become actors, negotiating and designing their own education and become at least partly responsible for it. They do so by developing proposals for learning questions they want to address or suggest criteria for evaluation of group work. This requires teachers to be allowed and stimulated to develop ownership and students to be trusted to be involved in the shaping and reshaping of their education, including the operational curriculum.

Our experiences with the participating schools have shown that student voice as operationalised in the four tools can be workable, but was sometimes demanding for the teacher. These demands included classroom management; taking a coaching role and demanding greater thinking about the curriculum. Classroom management was demanding especially in the lessons co-designed with students. Often the student input did not completely correspond with the textbooks, so additional materials had to be found and selected by students and teachers. This also raised challenges for assessment and evaluation. During the lessons, teachers had to take more of a coaching role and let things develop within the groups of students. This change of roles proved difficult for some of the teachers who wanted to have control of what the students were doing and what directions their thoughts were taking. Teachers must have trust in their students' abilities and develop their connoisseurship (Eisner, 1994) to know when to intervene and when to clarify.

Most teachers did not have a clear vision of what the essence of teaching a certain theme were. Curriculum thinking will develop as teachers are challenged to think about their own curriculum more often and explicitly. The spider web tool and the curriculum negotiation tool both focus on this aspect. This point certainly deserves more attention in the preparation of new teachers, in-service training for current teaching staff and forms of continuous professional development. In the Netherlands, a large curriculum reform "Curriculum.nu" is underway, inspired by examples from Canadian provinces that put teachers in the lead as opposed to experts outside of schools (Curriculum.nu,

2019). This is an indication that teachers are being seen as important stakeholders in curriculum reform. A theoretical basis about curriculum development, as well as practical experiences are necessary to ensure this role is fulfilled adequately, leading to improved curriculum confidence amongst teaching staff.

Limitations of student voice

There are at least three limitations of student voice in schools. The first is that students are only allowed to influence rather safe issues such as school decorations, lunch choices or school outings. The second is that voice is limited to a form of 'representation' where a few engaged students are invited to participate and are regarded as speaking the voice of all students. In this situation, critical voices or marginalised students can be left out. A third limitation is the risk of tokenism (see tool participation ladder): students are not really listened to in the sense that something will be done with their input or suggestions or no clear feedback of what is being done with the student voice is given.

These limitations are always real, but in the way we introduced the tools these limitations are reduced. First of all, three tools are about curriculum development. The curriculum is not a safe issue' like school decoration, but is a real and not an imaginary issue affecting the students. Nevertheless, there is the risk that only some of the subjects deemed of lesser importance are open to negotiation. But even then, the curriculum negotiation process is still valuable. The drawbacks of representation are tackled because all students in the class participate in the process and not a select group. This is an important difference to many models of student participation in which a select group, like a student council, gets to participate. Still, within the whole class there is the risk of marginalising critical voices and care needs to be taken in considering the way students are invited to participate in class in order to ensure that a diversity of students are meaningfully engaged. This is especially important if we consider student voice an example of developing citizenship qualities.

Goodlad and Su (1992) mention three additional traps when lessons are organised around the interests and input of students.

1. Schools have a role in society and society has expectations of that role. The expectations are for some part described in specifications (external requirements) at the societal (macro) level of the curriculum. If schools do not comply with these specifications they might be criticised or worse.
2. It is not easy to identify the depth of students' interests. Interests might change regularly. 3) "It is unreasonable to expect students to express interest in something they know nothing about" (Goodlad and Su, 1992, p. 336). Therefore their perspectives are not necessarily broadened by education, and they may struggle to show interest in unfamiliar content.

These are traps to consider and be wary of. Certainly schools have a role in society. The external curriculum requirements and also the school policies are included in our curriculum model for negotiation presented in chapter one. Our experiences with the participating schools have shown that for the most part the teachers did not need to correct the students' input to cover external requirements. Much depends on the room allowed for student influence in education. Regarding the second and third point that Goodlad and Su (1992) put forward, our experiences with schools have shown that when students exchange ideas and cooperate, their scope of knowledge is broadened: together they produced word webs on their prior knowledge that reflected more prior knowledge than expected by their teachers (Bron, 2018). In this qualitative study it became apparent that not all topics are suitable for student voice. Students must have prior learning experiences and interest in the topic.

Role of the teacher

In the participating schools it became apparent that the role of the teacher is crucial in more ways than one starting with the way the teacher used the student voice tools. The question remains if teachers themselves have enough 'voice' within their schools and within the educational system. Is there enough trust in teachers' professionalism also regarding the curriculum and assessment? Or are teachers regarded as deliverers of an overloaded curriculum dictated by textbooks and strong test regimes? In democratic societies with a well-trained teaching staff, one might expect that teachers will have, or will claim, a degree of ownership over their operational curriculum as it is offered in classrooms.

The current emphasis on the role of the teacher in improving the quality of education makes ownership by teachers even more relevant: do we see a role for the teacher in adapting aspects of teaching, the curriculum or assessment? And can teachers accommodate different needs of students that become apparent through student voice?

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STUDENT VOICE IN THE REPRESENTATIVE SPACE

Student Voice Throughout Entrepreneurial Competence: How to be Entrepreneurial in School Systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina

student voice

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

glas učenika

Authors

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Abstract

This article presents student voice throughout active participation in school project activities on the topic of entrepreneurial learning. The manner of functioning of the student council and schools has been clarified, as well as the way in which students can achieve mutual support and cooperation in joint activities with teaching staff, school management and parents.

Student voice is recognizable as a part of the work of the student councils in Bosnia and Herzegovina that promote the development of self-initiative and entrepreneurial competence throughout team work, responsible behaviour, constructive cooperation, decision-making and finding the best solutions.

Introduction

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), strategic documents in the field of education had been developed that started activities on improving the quality of education, and one of the goals was the inclusion of the entrepreneurial competence in education systems. By following changes in education, self-initiative and entrepreneurial competence imposed itself as the area of education through which students will strengthen their ability to present their opinions and attitudes and advocate for changes in school surroundings, as well as the changes in local community.

In 2011, the Agency for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education, on the basis of the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning — the European Reference Framework, conducted a survey and mapping, which resulted in determination of the key competences and life skills in primary and secondary education in B&H. Unlike the eight key competences recognized in the European Framework, the Agency has determined ten key competences for Bosnia and Herzegovina, adding physical-and-health and creative-and-productive competences in the existing framework. The key competences have been developed for all teaching subjects in Common Core Curriculum, and they need to be developed through defined indicators. Their determination depended on the specifics of each individual subject.

Thereafter, the Strategy for entrepreneurial learning in education systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2012-2015 was developed with the Action Plan that defines strategic actions necessary to develop an awareness of the need for active involvement of entrepreneurship in school systems. The strategy is supported by the introduction of entrepreneurial learning into existing subjects and related to all levels of education, which resulted in the continuation of activities in this area.

The Agency for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education (APESE) developed the common core curricula for cross-curricular area defined on learning outcomes in 2015 which included three components - entrepreneurship, career orientation and anti-corruption, which is not related to the establishment of new courses, but should be developed in the context of regular classes in various subjects, curricular and extracurricular.

Recognizing global trends, the student council supports project activities related to the development of entrepreneurial competence, fully aware that entrepreneurship is not just about establishing a business, but also the ability of an individual or a group to turn an idea into action. This mode promotes teamwork and connects teachers and students.

When acquiring knowledge and developing skills and attitudes of entrepreneurship, students are trained to navigate the complex conditions of life and work effectively, recognizing their potential by building up the persistence and perseverance in achieving the goals (APESE, 2015). In order to implement defined learning outcomes in this area successfully, the Agency has developed guidelines for the implementation of the common core curricula for cross-curricular area, defined on learning outcomes which will enable an integrated teaching approach in developing the competences, which means joint work of teachers of more subjects in order to achieve the goals more efficiently, or in order to achieve some general curricular goal. This can be the theme, activity or skill that teachers treat from the perspective of their subject (APESE, 2015).

The student council in Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the positive examples of encouraging the development of self-initiative and entrepreneurial skills, through teamwork, responsible behaviour, constructive cooperation, decision-making, and finding the best solutions. The student council represents a mechanism that enables students to be more involved in the process of making important decisions for them and ensures that the student voice is heard.

Development of self-initiative and entrepreneurial key competence in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The active participation of the student council on the development of self-initiative and entrepreneurial key competences in B&H preceded the drafting of the Strategy for entrepreneurial learning in education systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2012–2015 with the Action Plan.

By analysing the strategy, and using defined key competences and life skills for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the agency started activities on the development of the common core curricula defined by learning outcomes, which included the development of the common core for comprehensive development programmes in preschool education and common core curricula for eight pre-defined educational areas that include all subjects in general education.

One of the eight defined education areas is the cross-curricular area which elaborates in detail the components of entrepreneurship, anti-corruption and career orientation, giving the possibility of including other topics if needed. The entrepreneurship component, learning outcomes and associated indicators are defined for: the end of preschool education (5/6 year-olds), the end of grade 6 (8/9 year-olds), the end of grade 6 (11/12 year-olds), the end of the nine-year education (14/15 year-olds) and the end of (upper)secondary education (18/19 year-olds).

It should be pointed out that the entrepreneurial competence is included in learning outcomes and associated indicators for all eight educational areas and subjects within these areas, which ensures its development from preschool education until the end of secondary education, encouraging the connection of subjects through the entire curriculum and emphasizing active learning and the development of critical thinking.

By developing the common core curricula defined on learning outcomes, the agency has laid the foundation for further development of entrepreneurial competence in education systems and school, for which relevant ministries of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina are in charge. In this way, through active participation in student councils, students are encouraged to develop creativity, innovativeness, self-conceptualizing conclusions, to take risks. Generally, all these actions are the underlying characteristics of entrepreneurship.

Table 1. Learning outcomes and associated indicators integrated for entrepreneurship – example of indicators for the first learning outcome by student age (APESE, 2015, p. 6).

Domain 1: INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL RESPOSIBILITY				
Component 1: Entrepreneurship				
Learning outcomes:				
1. Explores entrepreneurial activity in different aspects of life. 2. Analysis forms and processes in entrepreneurship. 3. Assess and propose features of entrepreneurial action in different contexts of learning and living.				
Indicators of domain skills by age for the:				
End of preschool education (5 to 6-year-olds)	End of third grade (8 to 9-year-olds)	End of third grade (8 to 9-year-olds)	End of nine year education (14 to 15-year-olds)	End of secondary school education (18 to 19-year-olds)
1a. Names personal interests. 1b. Recognizes situations realized on the basis of his idea.	1a. Describes entrepreneurial activity in the immediate anvironment (e. g. classrooms and school).	1a. Explains entrepreneurial activity of people from immediate environment.	1a. Explains the difference between the term entrepreneur and act as an entrepreneur.	1a. Analysis different forms of entrepreneurial activity in relation to personal and social goals. 1b. Estimates resources for entrepreneurial action to make decisions in different situations. 1c. Links entrepreneurial activity with the development of an individual and society. 1d. Recognizes the entrepreneurial potential in itself, and develops the skills of entrepreneurial action.

Entrepreneurial schools

The partnership, mutual support and cooperation, including joint activities of teachers, school management, pupils and parents are necessary for the successful functioning of an entrepreneurial school, which involves the integration of entrepreneurial key competence into various activities at the school (student projects, different events in schools, team planning, preparation of school development plans, etc.).

As described in The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 3, entrepreneurial schools should help students to develop their talents, taking their personality, abilities and strengths into account. Such schools are developing activities within the curriculum, but also outside of it, keeping in mind the development of the students' capacity to innovate, develop critical thinking and develop teaching strategies that enable the application of acquired knowledge in everyday life.

> ***"The school promotes and develops permanent and dynamic partnership of schools, parents and the communities in which they live, in all matters of importance for the role of schools and the interests and needs of students." (Council of Ministers, 2003)***

The Agency for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education conducted the training of 150 teachers through modules on learning outcomes, new teaching preparation and financial literacy, all within the South East European Center for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECEL) project activities (Ministry of Civil Affairs of B&H, 2016).

Student voice through the work of student councils

One of the ways of increasing the integration of students in the process of making important decisions for them and fully ensuring the right on active participation of students in school is the work of the student councils. The idea of establishing such a council has come to life more than 20 years ago and the activities were intensified in the last 10 years thanks to the initiative of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina that have cooperated extensively with the students, pedagogical institutes and relevant ministries of education across the country (CIVITAS and OSCE B&H).

As a result of their work, manuals were designed to enable active participation of all participants in the educational process, especially students, to react actively as individuals who know where they are going and who are able to reach their goals in society. This can be achieved by encouraging conversations and discussions on different topics in order to nominate different topics concerning the curricular and extracurricular activities.

Article 54 of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which refers to the Student Council, defines the following:

Taking into account the age of students, the school helps them establish a Student Council, whose function is to:

- promote interests of the school in the community which the school is located in,
- represent attitudes of students to the school board,
- encourage the involvement of students in the school, and
- inform the school board about its positions when necessary or at the request of the school committee, on any matter related to the operation and management of the school. The method and procedure for establishment and operation of Student Councils shall be determined by the school general acts (Council of Ministers, 2003).

Working in the student council is not simple and requires dedicated engagement. Manuals for the work of the student council explain the function, mode of establishment, operation, and introduce students to the basics of project management, explaining how to write a project proposal and secure funding (OSCE B&H, 2009).

The adoption of the Framework Law entailed the modification of existing regulations and other internal regulations of the school's work and guaranteed the establishment of student councils in all schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The council allows students to actively participate in the work of the school through regular meetings with the teachers, Parent Council, Teacher Council, discussions, round tables, extracurricular activities, information, and conflict resolution, and through various project activities, which means they can discuss any topic regarding the quality of school process or participate in the work of school and local community.

For the successful functioning of this council, it is necessary to prepare the annual work programme and rules of procedure which are obliged to inform the school management and all students in the school, bearing in mind that the student council is the body that represents all students in the school. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the proper person who will lead the council, who should be a motivated, communicative and responsible person. The process of electing the president of the student council is carried out in such a way that each class elects representatives to the council and then all representatives elect the president, vice president and the secretary general. However, the structure is not necessarily the same in all schools and is subject to change. The student council work is supported by the teacher-coordinator and school advisors.

It is important to note that the students, through the work of this council, have the opportunity to develop various project activities and proposals and provide a source of funding for the successful implementation of school projects. Relying on the trends in European countries and the rest of the world, young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina started to be actively engaged with the community thus ensuring the networking of schools, active participation in school projects and cooperation with school and local community.

An example of good practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina is certainly the engagement of pilot schools that were included in the scenarios of learning about entrepreneurship as part of the test phase, which entailed maintaining the preparatory workshop with teachers and principals of the pilot schools, parents, students, employers, representatives of pedagogical institutes and the relevant ministries of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Europe Aid, 2011).

The students, in cooperation with teachers, had the opportunity to devise a multitude of scenarios through a variety of topics, such as: flood protection, creating a school magazine, creating and selling jewellery to charity, arranging the school yard, raising awareness about the importance of healthy eating, designing furniture, making teaching aids for teaching, etc.

Through the realized activities, the students became familiar with the concept of entrepreneurial learning and actively participated in the discussions, presenting

new ideas and initiative, which represented a completely new way of working and the possibility of taking responsibility for their work.

Some of the project activities required the provision of financial resources for the implementation in which the students showed creativity, pragmatism and determination in achieving goals, which ensures their long-term proactive approach to everyday life and work.

An example of Student Council activities in developing the entrepreneurial competence – Primary school Nova Bila

Primary School Nova Bila was actively involved in the project *Learning about entrepreneurship* from the beginning of implementation, ensuring regular participation in the trainings and workshops. The introduction of entrepreneurial learning in their school was gratefully accepted by teachers of technical culture, geography, biology, computer science and other subjects.

The president of the Student Council held a meeting with students where they worked out a joint plan of action in order to realize students' ideas through extracurricular activities that included introducing students and parents to the project of entrepreneurial learning and organizing the international UNESCO camp in their school, as well as landscaping the school park.

The success of the project was achieved thanks to the active work of the Student Council that established excellent cooperation with the Parent Council and local community. At the school, students had the option of giving suggestions for changes in the school curriculum, school environment and local community environment through the identified shortcomings they considered should be eliminated. All proposals were transparently published on the school bulletin board and were constantly updated with new ideas.

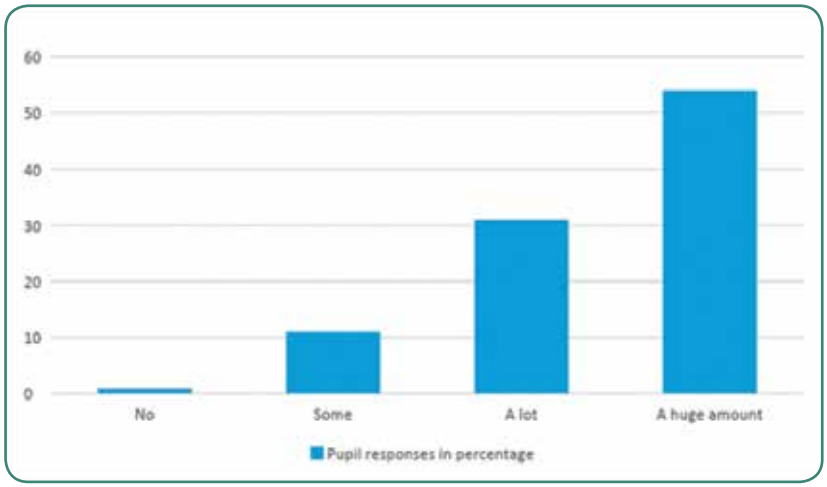
In the part of the school project related to the organization of the school park, students developed and identified potential partners for implementation and developed complete financial structure of the project. The entire project was implemented through five carefully designed workshops where students had the opportunity to present their ideas. Lecturers were positively surprised by the mind-set of children and their resourcefulness and reflections in the part related to the provision of financial resources, which was only possible in cooperation with the local community.

Students were taught how resourcefulness, confidence, planning, organization, determination, perseverance and moderation were important for the development of entrepreneurship, as was the active participation of students in the school work. Based on the experience from the project activities mentioned above, the students realized the importance of developing entrepreneurial competence and the possibility of their influence on the change in the school programme and the school environment, and they demanded the initiation of entrepreneurial competence in school curricula which was not recognized at that time.

Primary School Nova Bila was one of 17 schools that participated in the test phase during which all pupils had to fill in the questionnaires. The study includes 332 questionnaires that consisted of eight questions, with two questions referring to lessons learned from the project activity.

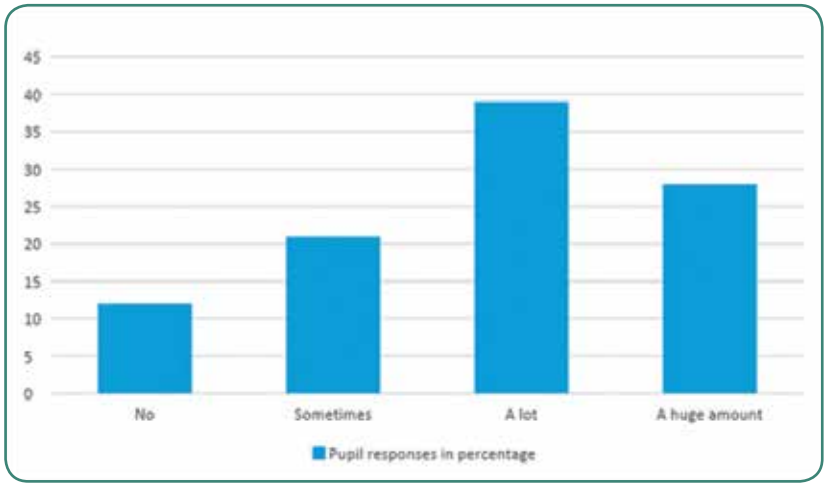
Here are the most interesting students' answers:

Did you learn new, useful things in these lessons? (EuropeAid, 2011, p. 50)



Graph 1. In their answers, students stated that through this process they learned about: perseverance, confidence, creativity, determination, entrepreneurship, how to change the way of thinking, listen and respect others; how to plan, think in an innovative manner and actively participate.

Have the entrepreneurial scenarios changed something in your way of thinking?
EuropeAid (2011, p 51)



Graph 2. In their answers, students stated that through this process they learned about: facing the reality, changing attitudes towards school, perseverance, encouraging ambition and gaining greater self-confidence.

Conclusion

The establishment of the student council ensured more active participation of students in school life, not only in the teaching process, but also in developing projects. Also, students' attitude towards the school changed for the better, implying responsible behaviour and greater involvement. Throughout project activities through which entrepreneurial competence is developed, pupils have recognized its importance and the potential to influence changes in the school curriculum, school environment and the local community environment.

The student council is one of the very important bodies that has a prominent role in the work of the school and strengthens students in their development and respect for the work, helping them to actively participate in the society and community.

The stated activities presented through the development of self-initiative and entrepreneurial competence are just one of the possibilities how to connect the work of student councils with teachers and local community in a successful way. The benefits of the project activities are multiple and have initiated changes in the further development of educational policies, on which some designated pilot schools notified the relevant ministries of education while other schools indicated they would use new learning methods regardless of any support, stating all the benefits and greater motivation of students.

In this regard, it is necessary to set the continuous operation and development of student councils to ensure the sustained engagement of students in all the processes in and out of school.

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Students' Involvement in Improving School Environment in Estonia

student voice

ESTONIA

õpilase hääl

Authors

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Abstract

Estonia has been conducting comprehensive education satisfaction surveys since 2015. The aim of the national satisfaction or well-being surveys is to give students, as well as teachers and parents, an opportunity to actively participate in the development and improvement of the school environment. Their feedback is a valuable resource that helps to shape the environment to be more in line with their needs. It is also a way for students, teachers and parents to voice their opinions and have a say in what goes on in schools. Schools get personal feedback reports and they use the information to initiate change and improve the learning environment for their students.

Introduction

According to PISA 2015, Estonian students show very good results in Science, Mathematics and Reading and rank among the top performers from other participating countries. Estonia was also among the countries where students reported relatively high levels of life satisfaction. According to PISA 2015 results, Estonian students' average life satisfaction on a scale of 0-10 is 7.5 whereas the OECD mean is 7.3 (OECD, 2017). Despite the international recognition, the public opinion periodically reflects the idea that students in Estonia have low levels of school enjoyment.

Satisfaction with school is an important aspect of student well-being in general. As students spend significant amount of time at school, their experience of school, either positive or negative, clearly influences their general well-being. Studies have shown that student satisfaction with school is related to their psychological well-being, engagement in the learning process, truancy and dropping out of school (Ainley, Foreman, & Sheret, 1991; Reyes & Jason, 1993). Students with positive school experience or students who are more satisfied with school show higher internal motivation to do homework (Cock & Halvari, 1999) and achieve better results (Lewis, Huebner, Reschly, & Valois, 2009).

In Estonia, developments and funding in education until 2020 are determined by the "Lifelong Learning Strategy"(The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy, 2020, 2014). One of the main goals of this document is to increase the satisfaction and well-being of different lifelong learning participants. Because of this goal, the Ministry of Education and Research launched national satisfaction surveys at every level of formal education. No previous regular large-scale studies were administered in Estonia that would explore the quality and availability of learning, therefore a comparable overview was missing about the satisfaction with education of different target groups.

The goal of satisfaction surveys is to give the opportunity to its most important participants - students, teachers, parents – to take part in shaping and developing the school environment through giving feedback. Feedback supports the development at state, local government and school levels and draws attention to areas where some change or improvement would be necessary to implement. Satisfaction surveys provide information on the strengths and weaknesses of study and educational work at different levels of education, in that way helping to guide the development of the learning process and to support the needs of learners. Most frequently, schools use the feedback for internal evaluations and during the preparation of school development plan. School management analyses the results of the satisfaction survey in collaboration with different target groups to set common goals which would help to bring about changes in the school environment. The feedback not only helps to acknowledge the existence of the problem but also leads schools to implement specific activities to change the school environment (changing learning processes, improving the quality of physical environment, joining school-based anti-bullying programmes, improving communication with students, etc.).

The first satisfaction surveys were administered in 2015; the feedback was collected only from students in general education schools. By the end of 2016, the University of Tartu developed a new framework for assessment of educational satisfaction. It was the base for the development

of satisfaction surveys for all levels of education, starting from pre-school education up to adult training. New satisfaction surveys were introduced in 2017, new target groups were added, and the assessment of well-being at national level was introduced not only in general education but also at other levels of education.

The pilot studies were administered in 2017. Starting from 2018, educational satisfaction surveys have been administered in all kindergartens, general education schools and vocational schools (see Table 1).

In the past, many educational establishments also asked their students, teachers and parents in one way or another to give feedback about their studies and school environment. The drawback of school-based surveys is that they do not provide comparable feedback at the national level. Locally compiled school surveys are often of low quality even if they consider the specifics of the school. The national satisfaction surveys are based on the analysis of scientific literature and similar past studies. Every year, the questionnaires are thoroughly analysed and their psychometric properties checked. The surveys are constantly developed by considering the feedback from the schools. Nationally administered surveys allow the comparison of results among different educational establishments, as well as they save time and money for the schools. Centrally set surveys have gradually begun to replace the local questionnaires that have so far been prepared and conducted by the individual educational establishment.

Description of the assessment instrument

Well-being is a complex construct that can be measured by applying different theories and approaches. The Estonian national survey addresses satisfaction as subjective well-being of the individual. Diener, Oishi and Lucas (2003, 2009) have defined subjective well-being as a person's cognitive and affective assessment of one's own life. Therefore, the assessment of satisfaction includes both – a cognitive and an emotional component. The respondent's subjective assessment of satisfaction describes their emotions and a cognitive rating related to their environment, but does not describe the objective characteristics of the environment.

The factors that are measured by national satisfaction survey can be divided into three broader categories: motivational or internal

Table 1. Target groups of educational satisfaction studies according to the levels of education.

KINDERGARTEN	GENERAL EDUCATION	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
	4th grade students (10-11 years old) 8th grade students (14-15 years old) 11th grade students (17-18 years old) All students from adult gymnasium schools	All students
All teachers	All teachers	All teachers
All parents	Parents of basic (primary) school students (Grades 1 to 9)	

motivation factors, within-school factors, and out-of-school factors. Depending on the level of education and the target group, studies measure different aspects of the main categories, but overall, the assessed aspects fall into three broader categories.

As a motivational factor, the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs – autonomy, self-efficacy/ competence and relatedness – is assessed for both students and teachers. Parents rate the satisfaction of their child's basic needs. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the satisfaction of these three basic needs is accompanied by higher internal motivation and better mental health; poor satisfaction of these factors leads to decreased levels of motivation and well-being. Internal motivation as a construct describes a person's natural tendency to be interested in things, to explore and discover; motivation is the force that makes one move forward. Different environments, including the school environment, can either support or inhibit the growth of an individual's internal motivation and affect the overall experience of well-being.

Autonomy is a person's opportunity to decide and make choices and through this, influence the surrounding environment. Studies have found that students with limited autonomy are less interested in studying, and as a result, they learn less effectively (Hofferber, Eckes & Wilde, 2014; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987). Relatedness describes a person's relationship with important others. Lack of relatedness and a sense of security, both with other students and with teachers, inhibit internal motivation and coping (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Good relationships great a supportive learning environment where a person feels safe to express opinions. Self-efficacy is a person's assessment of one's ability to manage certain tasks. For example, positive feedback and recognition give students a sense of competence, increase their self-efficacy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Satisfaction surveys ask different questions where students estimate how much control they have over their own learning; the extent they believe they can manage the tasks given at school and how well they get along with other students and teachers.

While participating in the learning process, students may develop both positive and negative attitudes towards learning, which depends on each student's individual experience. Most often these attitudes are shaped by the classroom climate and teachers' activities. The more choices the environment offers to students and allows them to make their own decisions the higher is the students' engagement in the learning process, which leads to more effective learning and higher academic achievement (Hofferber, Eckes & Wilde, 2014; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987). On the positive side, the study measures students' motivation to learn (self-directed learning) while on the negative one, it assesses the sense of cynicism and exhaustion that increase when students lose motivation.

Self-directed learning describes student's greater inner motivation and the ability to set objectives for one's own learning, direct the behaviour and control it. Self-directed students are ready to make more of an effort to achieve their goals, therefore they are also more likely to be more effective (Kikas et al., 2016). One prerequisite for the development of a self-directed learner is enough satisfaction of the basic needs. Exhaustion and cynicism arise from too much workload, time pressure and lack of resources. In a school environment, student exhaustion is associated with excessive tension and tasks that are too difficult, losing interest in school work and finding it pointless (Kikas et al., 2016). Cynicism and exhaustion can intensify when students experience fatigue; they start doubting their activities and notice a decline in inner motivation.

As internal school factors, the study gathers information on different aspects of learning and working environments; the respondent evaluates both the social and physical sides of the environment. Students report, for example, on the classroom discipline and school bullying; teachers, on the other hand rate, for example,

the school management's style and availability of digital tools at school.

In addition, the study includes questions on characteristics of teaching that would help to reveal the social aspect of the school environment. Both students and teachers rate the implementation of the child-directed teaching methods in their school. The concept of learning is: understanding the goals and methods of learning, as well as determining the roles of the participants in the learning process (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018). According to the new child-centred concept of learning, subject knowledge and skills are complemented by no less important cross-subject skills such as collaboration, critical thinking and self-management. Self-managing students are not only able to define their needs and goals but are also able to find ways to implement them, evaluate the results and be responsible for their choices and actions.

A change in learning concepts requires a change in ways that learning and teaching takes place. Important key words that characterize these changes are individual, activity-based and diverse learning, collaboration, increased decision-making and freedom of action. These changing teaching methods and didactical approaches support the growth of student autonomy, sense of self-efficacy and relatedness.

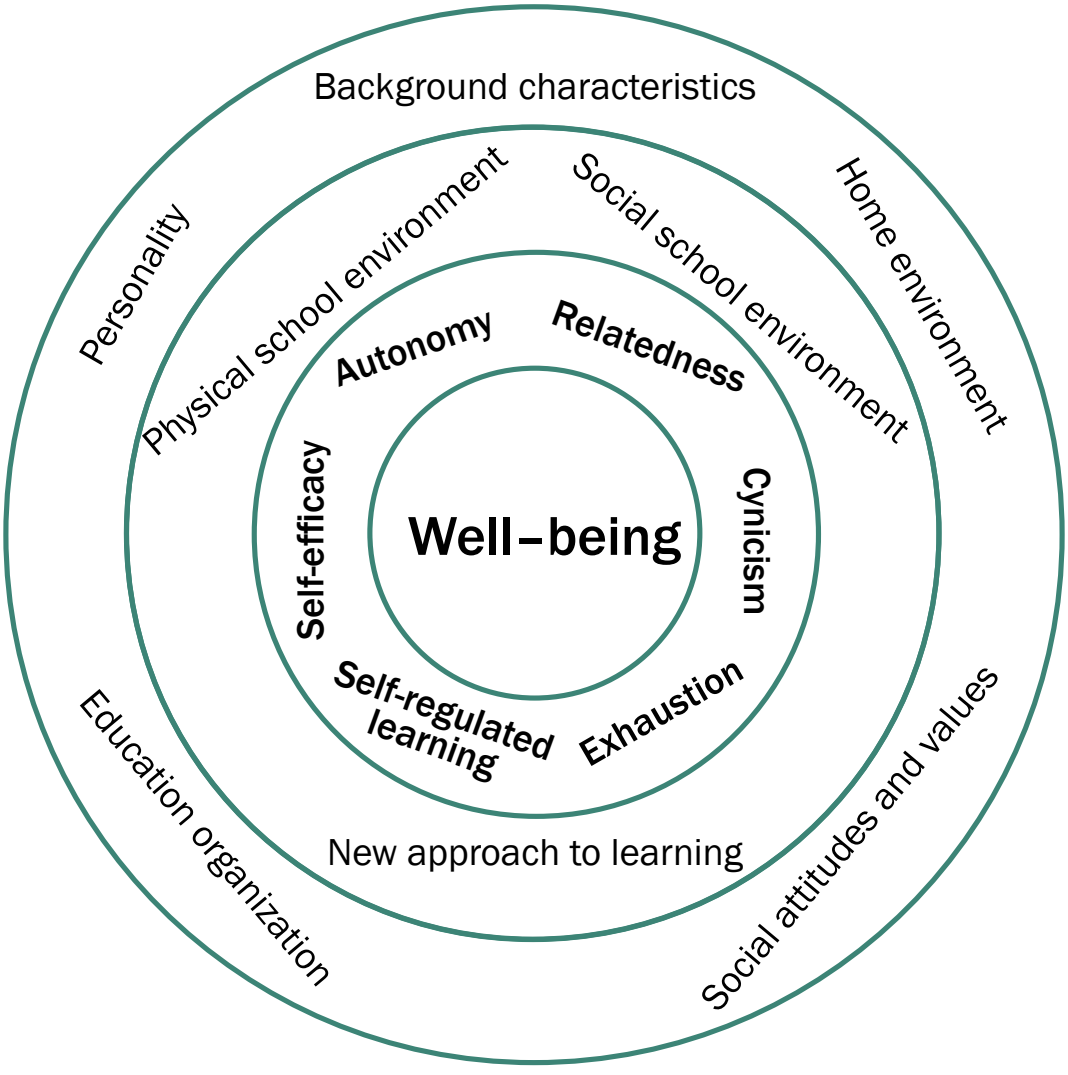

Figure 1. Aspects/areas assessed in the educational satisfaction survey.

For example, teachers allow students to make choices and express their dissenting opinions; select tasks that are interesting for the students; encourage students to help and instruct each other and recognize the participation and endeavour of both, the results of successful and less successful students.

Different aspects of school satisfaction that the school does not have influence on are considered as outside-school factors. Those include different external components such as expectations of the society, legislation, local government support of school, student's home environment and aspects describing family support. In addition, different background information that could affect the satisfaction with school is collected from the respondent. The background information does not only collect data about the gender and age of the respondent but it also assesses certain personality traits or characteristics that play an important role in experiencing the subjective well-being (Diener, 1999). The overview of the educational satisfaction survey and the assessed aspects are seen in Figure 1.

Data collection

National educational satisfaction survey is administered in Estonia every year. Data from students are collected every spring, data from teachers and parents every three years. Everybody from the target group is expected to participate; there are no restrictions for participation. For example, in 2018, around 72% of all 4th grade students, 69% of 8th grade students and 56% of 11th grade students from general education schools participated in the survey. 50% of teachers from all general education schools and approximately 20 000 parents of basic school students participated, which is about 16 students per parent.

Data are collected online, using web-based survey environment called LimeSurvey. At the beginning of the data collection, all schools receive personal web-based links. Students are advised to fill in the questionnaires at school in their computer class; teachers and parents can do that at time and place suitable for them during the data collection period. The school is required to appoint a coordinator who finds appropriate time during the data collection and administers the questionnaire to the students in their school. During the data collection period different methods are implemented to help motivate target groups with low participation rates. All respondents are anonymous – it is impossible to link a certain student with any of the received responses.

Participation in this national survey is voluntary, every educational establishment can decide on their participation. Every school that participates in the satisfaction survey receives a feedback report where the school's results are compared with the mean result from all participating schools. Repeated participation allows schools to monitor change over time. Schools and kindergartens are motivated to participate in the survey as they get a personal feedback report that they use in conducting school self-evaluations and making development plans.

Analyses and feedback

School-based feedback reports are sent to schools about three months after the end of the data collection period. All participating schools with at least five respondents in one target group receive a personal feedback report. Results of students (as well as teachers and parents) are presented in mean scores or in percentages. The report contains the comparison of the results

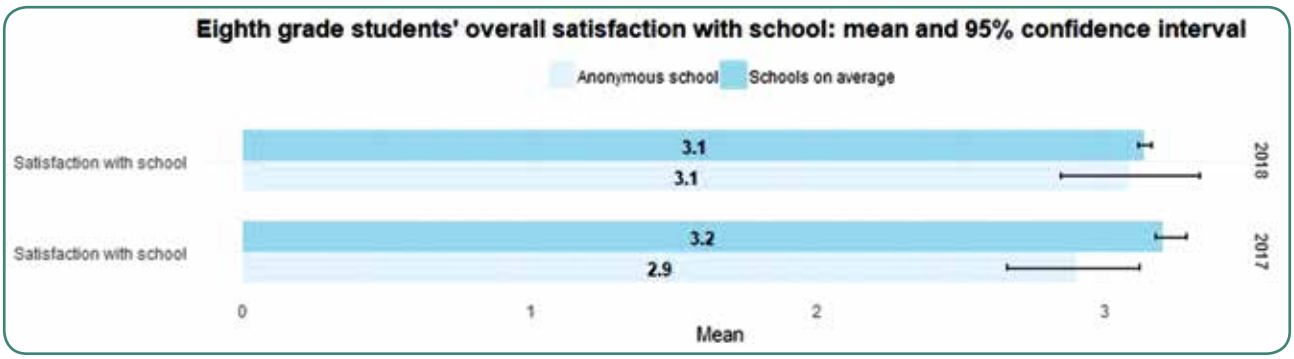

Figure 2. Example of 8th grade student mean results about satisfaction with school and 95% confidence intervals.

of the school with the overall mean score of the respective target group. That allows monitoring of the survey aspects and the degree to which the ratings of the school in question differ from the general picture in the country (Figure 2). In addition, all schools that already participated in the survey in previous year receive reports containing information compared to their results from the year before. This allows the schools to follow up or check whether the changes or improvements carried out in the school environment are reflected in the target groups' responses.

School-based feedback reports can be quite long (approximately 50 pages) if all target groups of the school participated. In addition to the student and other target group results, the feedback report contains the description of the general theoretical framework, it describes the importance of well-being, how and what was assessed in the study, gives explanations about the presentation of the results and guidelines as to what should be considered when reading the report.

In addition to the assessment of different aspects of satisfaction with school, all participants have the possibility to give their school also an open-ended personal feedback. Students, teachers and parents can write their thoughts about positive as well as negative aspects of the school. This enables the respondents to clarify their answers or point out other important aspects or subjects that were not included in the survey. Each written target group feedback is a part of the school feedback report. To ensure the anonymity of respondents, hints of specific individuals and situations are removed from the written feedback.

The aim of the feedback report is to provide schools with different information about the teaching quality and give them an opportunity to systematically monitor their students' well-being and thriving in schools and kindergartens. Feedback helps to observe the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning, it helps to guide the development of the learning process in educational establishments and encourages all participants to exchange information and cooperate. The school-based feedback reports are informative for both educational establishments and the local government by drawing attention to those areas of the school environment that different target groups are not satisfied with. In addition, the feedback from national satisfaction surveys also contributes to the development of educational policies.

The feedback report is primarily a tool for schools and kindergartens that helps to identify the opinions and needs of different participants and to determine the problematic areas of the school environment. By giving feedback, students, teachers and parents can, although indirectly, participate in helping to shape the environment that they or their children are part of. It offers the opportunity for students, teachers and parents to participate in developing the learning environment in the sense that the

needs of each target group would reach the people who initiate change. The school-based feedback report draws the school management's attention to the problematic areas that should be examined further (e.g., what are the specific sources of dissatisfaction) and thus look for ways to improve the well-being in this area.

Initiating change should not solely rest on the schools' management. All schools are encouraged to share feedback with their students, teachers and parents. Sharing the results can help to raise awareness of possible problems and thereby contribute to improving the situation and finding solutions. Students, teachers and parents may not only recognize the possible problems of the school environment but can also take more responsibility in changing or shaping it. In many cases, the school management involves different target groups in analysing the results of the survey and implementing changes. With participating in these processes, students take greater responsibility for their own learning and improving the environment. Schools have reported changes in learning processes, improving communication with students, general school rules and regulations, dealing with bullying, dealing with students with special needs and so on. Thus, the national satisfaction surveys can help in involving all parties in the educational process and change it according to their needs.

Conclusion

In 2015, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research launched national satisfaction surveys that are aimed to provide an overview of students', teachers' and parents' satisfaction with different aspects of school environment and to monitor the change over time. In recent years, satisfaction surveys have also been carried out among other levels of education (kindergartens, vocational schools) besides general education. The surveys are administered every spring. Data from students are collected every year, data from teachers and parents every three years. The study measures different aspects of students' motivation, students' ratings on the social and physical aspects of the school environment and out-of-school factors (e.g., home environment, the local government support). The results of the satisfaction surveys show that students are satisfied with most of the measured aspects. The highest overall satisfaction with school is seen among 4th grade students; it drops in the 8th grade and starts to increase again among upper-secondary students. The results show that students are less satisfied with physical activities offered by schools (physical activities incorporated into lessons as well as activities available during recesses); they note the lack of collaborative skills taught by teachers and the lack of association between the materials being taught and everyday life.

Every school that participates in the satisfaction survey receives a personal feedback report where their results are compared with the mean result from all participating schools. When possible, the school results from the previous year are also added for comparison. The main purpose of conducting the comprehensive national satisfaction surveys is to offer schools a qualitative assessment tool that gives the most important participants of schools – students, teachers and parents – an opportunity to take part in shaping and developing the school environment through giving feedback. By participating in these surveys, schools give their students, as well as teachers and parents, a voice or a chance to express their opinions and needs. According to the feedback collected from students, they are very pleased that they have a possibility to give feedback and have a say in what goes on in schools. Although the feedback report is primarily a tool for schools that helps to identify the opinions and needs of different participants, it is also informative for the local government by pointing out the aspects of the school environment which

different target groups (students, teachers and parents) are not satisfied with. In addition, the feedback from national satisfaction surveys also provides an input for educational policy makers.

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Addressing the Voice of Students in Official Documents and the Challenges of Implementation in School Practice in Kosovo

student voice

KOSOVO

zëri i nxënësve

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Abstract

The main focus of this paper is the analysis of approved legal documents and educational policies as well as the level of addressing student voice in them. The second focus is the level and quality of implementation of these policies in school practice in Kosovo. From the results of this analysis we will propose special recommendations for policymakers and schools.

The focus was on public schools, level of education: grades 1-9, whereby the level of education grades 1-9 is mandatory.

Particular focus was put on addressing student voice in official documents and the quality of their implementation in school, especially the respect of students' rights and consideration of their voice in decision-making. Analysis of educational documents and policies in Kosovo proves a satisfactory address of student voice in decision-making bodies. The Law (2011) and administrative instructions drawn up and approved in Kosovo respect international conventions that outline the rights and obligations of students. The main challenge of Kosovo society, including educational institutions, remains the implementation of laws and by-laws in practice. This does not happen in all schools, it depends on the school culture and the quality of school management.

Introduction

Existence of school and the education system would have no meaning and reason for existence without the presence of students. The very existence of students, as well as the purpose of the national policies of any country, including Kosovo, determines the construction of the education system. The construction of the education system orientates the paths of development and the proper education of the new generation of the country. Since the main goal of the education system is to nurture the younger generation, there is a need of quality construction of that system in line with the needs of the younger generation. An advantage of the current education system is that it is based on experiences and international conventions on global level, two of them being the Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Protection of Children. This element is highly represented in all educational policies drafted by relevant Kosovo institutions such as the Parliament, laws and the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) administrative instructions.

According to the Law (2011), each school in Kosovo should establish a student council. The main purpose of establishing the school council is to represent students' interests in school bodies. In addition to the student council, other non-governmental organizations have been formed, focusing on the protection of students' rights. One of them is the Kosovo Youth Centre (KYC), which deals mainly with the awareness of high school students about their rights. This organization aims to include students from elementary and lower secondary schools as part of their activities. So far only a few schools have been involved in their campaigns.

This article addresses two main aspects through which students' rights and listening to their voice are dealt with in Kosovo schools, i.e.,

- the rights and responsibilities of students in official documents drafted by state institutions such as the laws, administrative instructions and school regulations;
- what is the opinion of student representatives regarding the opportunities offered to them in expressing their opinion and decision-making. To verify the addressing of the students' rights in the education policy, the analysis of these documents was done by identifying all the points in which the students are provided with the legal aspect. In the second part, students' thoughts on listening to student voice in school life are reflected.

Understanding of student voice in Kosovo

After the independence of Kosovo from the communist system, as well as under the influence/assistance of many international organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, etc., campaigns and trainings on empowering and protecting the rights of children and students were organized in Kosovo. Such trainings focused mainly on the protection of the rights of marginalized children and children of minorities. Empowerment of students' rights and their participation in decision-making is mainly done through support in drafting legal acts. There are two main organizations that have helped in this regard, the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the U.S.

Agency for International Development (USAID). Their main support was the empowerment and addressing the student voice in the school board and the student council. This has been addressed especially in the trainings for the school board and in some schools also for the student council. The local youth organizations, with the support of international organizations such as GIZ, USAID, UNICEF and Save the Children, have organized sporadic campaigns on specific aspects of democratization and European integration. These activities include mainly students of higher age, such as high school students, and fewer elementary and lower secondary school students.

Traditionally, in Kosovo as a part of the Balkan countries, there still is an approach to teacher-student ratio like: 'the student must listen to the teacher ...' never the teacher must listen to the student. This can be seen in school regulations when determining the rights and responsibilities, almost all use the imperative form: learner ... or student is prohibited ... and fewer promote the rights of speech, participation in decision-making, etc. So let us see how and at what level the student rights are addressed in the education documents and policies drafted by the Assembly of Kosovo and the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST).

Addressing the student voice in educational state policies

The hierarchy of educational policies, as elsewhere also in Kosovo, is regulated by the constitution, laws, administrative instructions, regulations and special decisions.

The education system is regulated by the Law on Pre-University Education and other specific laws. Addressing students' rights, including listening to their voice, thoughts and speech, is based on international conventions that regulate global human rights and children's issues in particular.

Based on the legislation and documents governing the education system in Kosovo, student voice has been addressed in all areas of quality assurance in education, such as school management and leadership, school culture and environment, teaching and learning, professional development, teacher and student performance. In the guidelines that include the stated areas of quality, one of the aspects of representing student voice is their participation in the evaluation of performance in each of these areas. Therefore, the involvement of students in the school performance assessment process provides it with the opportunity to identify students' deficiencies and challenges, both in school management and in the overall work and life of students at school, such as in teaching, success, school culture, free activities etc.

Students have the right to be represented in the school board as the highest advisory and decision-making body in school. By the Law (2011), it is envisaged that at the school board there should be 1-2 representatives of students selected by the students of the same school. Representation in the governing board is foreseen to be made only by lower secondary school students (grades 6-9) but not by elementary or primary level, grades 1-5 (MEST, 2011, p. 14). The method of selecting students' representatives in the school board is democratic.

They are elected by a secret ballot held by school students. In this way, students' representatives have the opportunity to be informed about important developments in their school, to represent the views of students on decision-making processes of the school and be part of important processes that occur at school, such as the design and implementation of school development plans and regulations,

performance evaluation of school, preventing school dropout and non-enrolment of children in school, use of budget and other funds of the school, the approval of extracurricular activities, health promotion at school level, the dress code decisions, the adoption of textbooks and other school materials, as well as other important issues that have to do with school.

The role of students in designing the school development plan is informative and consultative. In this regard, students collaborate on curriculum selection, courses or complementary activities, extracurricular activities, organizing their day at school, on homework, uniforms, student canteen, etc. Their greatest contribution is in assessing school performance where student voice is expressed in all areas of quality development in school. Students are a part of the evaluation of school performance as a direct source of information, the selection of which is made with the criteria set out in the guidelines for the evaluation of school performance (KPI, 2016, p. 15).

The data collected by students and other stakeholders during the school performance evaluation process are used to compile a school development plan or a plan for improvement, which is used to design the school objectives and priorities.

The Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo (2011) obliges each school to establish a student council which should consist of a student selected from each class who is elected each year by a secret ballot. The role of the student council is to work on improving the teaching environment, working conditions and interests related to the health, safety and wellbeing of students and to represent the student voice at the school board (MEST, 2011, Article 18, p. 25).

The establishment of student council creates opportunities for students to acquire management skills, communication and organization, which will be of particular interest in their future. The students take responsibility for projects and demonstrate that they can manage such projects. Moreover, the contribution of the student council in the development of school policy on certain issues can have major benefits for students and the school. School policies are likely to be most successful if they are accepted by all partners within the school (MEST, 2006, p. 7).

Students or their representatives, through representing bodies, raise their voice for issues dealing with school culture and environment, so that other school objects and spaces they use are accessible, safe, healthy and friendly to all students and other school staff.

They are also involved in ensuring the inclusion and support of all students in the learning process, improving and advancing teaching and learning practices.

Based on students' perceptions on teacher's performance, students participate in the planning of teachers' professional development, reflect on their achievements in mastering the key results of the competences and expectations placed in the core curriculum, on involvement in extracurricular activities, management of the personal progress, and on carrying out social responsibilities in the classroom, school and community.

The student council sets its own objectives which may be:

- To increase communication between students, school officials and parents,
- To promote a favourable environment for education and personal development,
- To promote social relationships and mutual respect among students,
- To support school officials in school development,
- To represent the interests of students as well as their major concerns (according to Kosovo Youth Council, 2015, pp. 7–8).

The Kosovo Youth Council (KYC) is a youth association consisting of students of all levels of education who represent the interests of

students at the country level. They promote students' ideas, rights and freedoms, but also help students when those rights are violated or denied by anyone in or outside school. The work of the Kosovo Student Council is at its beginning, but with the aim of extending to all municipalities in Kosovo. Based on the discussions with the members of the Kosovo Youth Council (2019) we noted that they have a critical approach to the status of students' rights and their representation in decision-making bodies in schools. They also praise the representation of students and their voice in state documents and policies, but not their promotion in school practice. Therefore, according to them, in many schools this remains to be desired.

According to the legal basis, the council has assigned students tasks such as:

- Work with staff, school council and parents at school
- Communication and consultation with all school students
- Inclusion of the largest possible number of students in the student council activities,
- Planning and managing the activities of the council for the whole year,
- Management and reporting for each received funding (MEST, 2006, p. 20).

In addition to the student council, formed under article 18 of the Law on Pre-University Education (2011), other groups of pupils can be formed at school, which deal with various activities of interest to the school, pupils and the community. Such groups can be established within the student council, but have specific goals at school. Their activities should be based on law and complement activities that cannot be fulfilled by the student council alone. Therefore there are cases where students are also organized in groups, councils, committees and other clubs that are focused on issues of a narrower scope such as sports, art, environment, human rights, sciences, school papers, etc. (KEC 2010, p. 8). In these clubs and activities, students mostly represent their school rather than the voice of their peers. The good of the activities is to promote their development and skills.

Direct addressing of students' rights and voices should be made in the school internal regulations. These regulations describe students' rights and obligations, but also prohibit what they should or should not do. In the regulations that have been analysed, most of them are formed like the following example:

> *To elect and be elected in youth organizations, school and other bodies, and has the right to take part in knowledge competitions, sports and culture, which can even be rewarded (Regulation NN school, p. 2).*

These formulations are taken from the law and administrative instructions that govern the rights of students in school.

Results from research with students

Based on the survey conducted by GIZ (2012) regarding the school uniform as a compulsory policy, 65% of students say that this is an obligatory school policy (Bejko, 2012, p. 29). In terms of informing students by the school management, 31% of students stated rarely or they do not receive information from school leaders. In addressing students' complaints to the school management, only 31% of students included in the sample (N = 603) stated that their complaints are taken into account (Bejko, 2012, p. 35). From the same research, it also

turns out that 79% of students declare that their class is represented at the School Student Council (Bejko 2012, p.5). In the sample selected for the study (M = 12), students from urban and rural schools were included. Students were members of the school student council.

To the question: *Are you satisfied with student voice in school, or are your proposals, ideas, and thoughts taken into account in decision-making? If your answer is 'Yes', please justify in a few words. If your answer is 'No', please justify in a few words,* the student responses were as follows:

To be satisfied with the representation of our voice in this school there are many reasons. One of them is respecting our voice as learners, where every our request is taken into account and according to the possibilities, it is also realized. There are also cases when there is a lack of transparency from the teacher's part. (Y.J. & L.H., from a village school).

Two members of the student council from a village school stated that. In their further reasoning they say that students' demands exceed the possibilities of the school, and therefore cannot be fully realized. It is important to have this detail when mentioning the lack of transparency by some teachers. The school, according to the Law (2011), is obliged to respect and consider the thoughts and proposals of learning when they relate to their life, work, and well-being at school. These include students' proposals for free activities, respect for students' rights, school rules approval, and so on.

Another student states to the same question that *"students have the right to express their useful opinions about the school and about their personal problems"*, but without specifically illustrating the school benefits and personal problems (Xh. M, urban school). Another student from the same school gives meaningful answers to the same question:

As a school student I am satisfied with the rights provided to us by the school. Although there are sometimes pupils who feel somehow discriminated, they often express their dissatisfaction, but not publicly (by the same urban school).

An important element here represents the expression of satisfaction about respecting their rights, though there are students who complain, yet not publicly. This means that not all aspects and not all students have the freedom of expressing their free thought.

From the same school, students have also given other opinions on the same question about expressing free thought and consideration of their thoughts and ideas. But that is not evident from actual cases in which the decision was based on students' opinions or suggestions. To our knowledge, there are many such cases in schools. Not all teachers are willing to respect the thoughts and suggestions of their students. This is largely related to the culture and tradition of the school.

In our school, I believe that in some cases student voice is respected, but there are obviously other cases where certain students are not respected and also their words are ridiculed by their peers (N.G. Pr.)

Such a statement shows that not all students feel to have the right to free expression of thought. Next sentence illustrates various violations of human rights, but also exclusion of all the activities and decision-making at school.

We do everything that student voice would be heard in our school, but this is not

done, even by some teachers and school leaders. I believe that if the voice and opinion of students were heard and taken into account, we would be able to achieve greater success. (E.Ç.Pe).

This statement by one of the members of the student council indicates that the school does not have full confidence in the ideas of its students. This also shows the students' confidence that if the foundation was to be respected and their voices heard, the school could have better achievements.

These were some thoughts of students, members of the student council in school, who were included in the sample. There were also other students who spoke superlatively of listening to their voice and taking into account their proposals in decision-making.

Most of other opinions given by the students, members or the chairperson of the student council, expressed satisfaction with their position in school. Their voice is heard and their thoughts are respected.

To the question: In which school body are you elected? How were you chosen? How much are your proposals taken into account? Can you give any examples?, the student responses are different:

I was elected president of the student council at the beginning of this school year. I was elected at a meeting held by the heads of the students of all classes, together with the school principal and some other teachers who all gave their proposals for chairperson and members of the Student Council. Our proposals are taken into account, for example when we create various artistic programmes at school, our opinions are always heard on where to place the programme, what is the focus, etc. (A).

The question seeks to identify the democratic procedures for selecting the chairperson of the school council. Based on this statement, it can be seen that the rules for appointment of the chairperson of the student council have not been observed. On the basis of the Law on Pre-University Education (2011), chairperson of the student council shall be elected by a secret ballot, by the representatives of all classes.

Democratic election would have been made if the school director hadn't attended the meeting, and the freedom to elect had been left to the students.

I was elected by the director and by the chairpersons of classes 6,7,8,9 for school presidents. And I am very happy to be in charge of this position. (AY, FK).

This indicates the inadequate practices of imposing the choice of chairpersons of the student council. So the director elects or appoints the chairperson of the council rather than students by secret ballot as required by law.

As a chairperson I was elected by a secret ballot of students, class representatives.

As a member of the mediation group, now being one year on the position, I could join after I had completed the necessary training in this field. My ideas and proposals as chairperson of the student council are taken into account in most cases. They are reviewed, along with the idea of the council participants, and then a decision is made what to do in certain cases (N. G. Pr.).

This is an example of selecting the president of the student council in accordance with legal requirements. This was not the only case. There were also cases from other schools, rural

and urban, where the chairpersons of student councils were appointed according to the law.

To verify whether students are informed of the legal basis which the students council works on, i. e., Law on Pre-University Education (2011), article 18, paragraph 2: The role of student council is working on improving learning environment, working conditions and interests related to health, safety and welfare of pupils and to make representations to the governing board (MEST, 2011, p. 25), the question 'How do you apply this legal obligation to school?' was put to them.

The students were not able to mention accurately how this legal obligation is applied by the school and its students. All the students included in the sample, asked about this, answered almost the same: the law is applied in school. There are cases where the legal obligation mentions the issue of cooperation with the school principal or even certain teachers. Some cite the legal obligation of participation in the management of school board meetings.

Conclusions

Analysis of educational documents and policies in Kosovo proves a satisfactory address of student voice in decision-making bodies. This is confirmed by the Law on Pre-University Education (2011), involving compulsory education, where article 18 clearly addresses the legal liability of each school to strengthen student voice, namely students' right to participate in decision-making bodies, being chosen and elected members by students. With this law, and with administrative instructions, this right is clarified.

The main challenge of Kosovo society, including educational institutions, remains the implementation of laws and by-laws in practice. This does not happen in all schools, it depends on the school culture and the quality of school management.

In the school internal regulations, student voice is focused solely on the obedience and the secretive submission to the school authority and the teacher; this is very much present in internal regulations. In designing regulations, students do not participate at all, even though the Law (2011) guarantees it.

Regulations are more about demands and prohibitions for students, and less about enabling the opportunities for student voice. The regulations that we analysed all have a structure and content. There are more prohibitions and demands on students than the rights and obligations of school and teachers towards the learners.

Recommendations

As it is well-known in Kosovo, the hierarchy of responsibilities regarding students' rights begins with schools, the Municipal Education Directorate, the Ministry of Education and the student organizations. Based on the findings of the analysis of relevant documents, as well as on the interviews of the pupils involved in the sample, we recommend the following:

For schools

- Schools should strictly apply article 18 of the Law on Pre-University Education (2011), especially in the following aspects: continuous informing of students about their legal rights and obligations that schools and teachers have towards them;

- Students should be given the opportunity to participate in decision-making, especially at meetings where their rights are touched or addressed;
- Election of the student council should be performed in a democratic manner as provided by the law;
- Students, through their representatives, should participate in drafting school behaviour and functioning policies and rules. If students themselves propose rules of action in school, they will feel as their owners and will respect them.

For the Municipal Education Directorate (MED)

- Monitor schools in terms of respect for students' rights, especially the aspect of democratization and student participation in decision-making.
- No regulation should be approved if students' representatives and their clear proposals were not part of that regulation.
- Promote students' rights continuously by making them a part of decision- and policy-making.
- Promote and support the formation of student organizations, both at the school level and at the municipal level.

For the Ministry of Education

- In the context of school performance assessment, priority should be given to the implementation of laws and sub-legal acts, especially to the aspect of respecting student rights;
- To continuously promote the importance of student participation in decision-making. Control student counselling processes if they are made in accordance with the law.
- To organize awareness campaigns to promote the rights and student voice in all aspects of school operations where the law allows.

For student councils

- Demand the right to express your voice. Seek continually to be part of policy making in your school.
- Organize awareness campaigns on students' rights and obligations, based on laws and conventions; this should be a part of the student council daily activity in each school.
- Change the traditional way of thinking "the student should listen to the teacher" into: teachers should also listen to the voice of their students. This should be a part of your daily effort.

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Student Voice in Education

student voice

LUXEMBOURG

d'stëmm vun de schüler

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Abstract

This article will provide some concrete examples of initiatives undertaken in Luxembourg to enhance student voice in primary and secondary schools. It starts by discussing how classroom learning and assessment provide an important place to student voice. Some insight is provided into the work with portfolios and innovative assessment methods in Luxembourg. Focus is next placed on the introduction of class and school councils as another promising path to help students share their opinion. Student voice in the context of school and classroom management is then illustrated in the *School Futures* project which supports the development of 21th century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication skills. The article then outlines several projects and initiatives showing how students in Luxembourg schools can be supported to become fully responsible citizens, with the ability to contribute to sustainable development in the society of tomorrow. These projects include the introduction of a new curriculum subject called *Life and Society* and the recent creation of the *Centre for Political Education*. The article ends with a national initiative, showing how Luxembourg tries to give young people and children a voice, empowering them to take a position in crucial issues for the future.

Introduction

On 7th June 2015, a referendum held in Luxembourg proposed three constitutional amendments to the voters. One of them concerned the lowering of the voting age to 16 years:

> ***"Do you approve the idea that Luxembourg youth aged 16-18 should have the right to optionally register on electoral lists in order to participate as voters in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies, the European elections, municipal elections and referendums?"***

Although the referendum was non-binding, the government declared they would adhere to the result. All three questions, including the one giving young people a formal and institutionalized voice in the national elections, were ultimately rejected by voters by 80,87% (Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, 2015). Although it appears that the modern society in Luxembourg concedes an important place to the viewpoints of children and young people, the voters seemed nevertheless to have drawn a red line in expressing their scepticism to allow the adolescents to elect the political representatives of their country. In the context of student voice in education, one cannot help wondering what teachers and educators would think of this referendum question.

Historically, the society of Luxembourg and of the rest of Europe was characterized by a hierarchical form of living together of adults, youth and children. Generally speaking, decisions made by adults were indeed often unilateral and usually did not consider the input of children and young people. In education, school governance and instruction in the classroom similarly did not find much interest in valuing and calling upon the voices of their students. Adults expected students to duly respect and obey both instructional and leadership decisions. This expectation was even considered as one of the main educational goals. Lenz & Gardin (2018) state that one of the main missions of school was to educate citizens in matters of religious, civil and moral virtues.

Today however, a general societal change can be observed in the relationship between the hierarchies within many domains such as labour, church or administrations. As a result, there is a shift to a more liberal and democratic way of communication and coexistence. Moreover, a change is also noticeable in the relationship between adults and younger generations, moving from a purely top-down setting to one with a rather even-level communication. Besides, the international *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC)* survey in 2014 (Heinz, Kern, Residori, Catunda, Van Duin & Willems, 2018) focused on the well-being and lifestyle of students aged eleven to seventeen. Students in Luxembourg were asked to rate four statements regarding the quality of communication within their family, by assigning a score from 1 (poor quality) to 5 (good quality). Concerning family communication, results showed a lower score for older students compared to the younger students. Over 80% of all students gave good ratings with scores of 4 or 5.

With the seemingly increasing importance given to the voice of children, different authors have brought attention to the fact that within family-education, children get too often too much power over their parents (Bueb, 2010). Parents are therefore asked to stick to their educational responsibilities and not systematically give in to the wishes and demands of their youngsters (Winterhoff, 2008). To add to this trend, evolutions in new technologies, such as the

growing importance of social networks, provide young people of today with the opportunity to express their opinion, more or less publicly, at every moment of the day and night. Many examples from the sixties to this date show that children and adolescents are not afraid anymore to raise their voice and stand up for their rights and opinions, both in the family context and in public. The case is illustrated in the thousands of young people, inspired by the 16-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg, making their voices heard in early 2019 and participating in student strikes across the world to increase awareness about global warming.

One can therefore argue that societal and technological changes have created an environment which allows people in general, and the younger generation in particular, more freedom, opportunities and possibilities to express themselves and make their voices heard. Yet, as mentioned at the beginning of this article, there seems to remain, at least in Luxembourg, some hesitation to concede a more formalized and institutionalized voice to the younger by giving them the right to participate in elections. But then again, we know that life and work in schools often mirror the general surrounding mood and norms adopted by society, while simultaneously influencing the way that society is developing through the education it provides. These changes hence beg the question of how student voice will influence the evolutions, challenges and opportunities that are emerging in the education sector and the schools in Luxembourg.

In this article, student voice will be viewed from several perspectives and will underline the objective and ideas underlying the pedagogy that gives students a voice in Luxembourg. It will provide some concrete examples of initiatives undertaken in favour of young people in primary and secondary schools.

To start with: *How does classroom learning and assessment that give an important place to student voice, help students achieve better learning outcomes and enable teachers to meet the expectations that schools face nowadays?*

To this effect, some insight will be provided into the work with portfolios and innovative assessment methods in Luxembourg that put students at the heart of the action and reflection.

Next *How do school and classroom management, by creating a space for student voice, support the development of 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication skills?*

In addition, *How do students grow up to become fully responsible citizens with the ability to contribute to sustainable development in the society of tomorrow?* The reader will discover here a range of projects and initiatives undertaken in Luxembourg schools, such as the introduction of a new curriculum subject called *Life and Society* and the setting up of the project *School Futures.* Finally, the article touches upon the national initiative involving the recent creation of the *Centre for Political Education*.

The emphasis of student voice in learning and assessment

The concept of student voice as a strategy to promote school improvement and the quality of instruction has grown increasingly popular in recent years. The idea of giving students a voice within classrooms is linked to the conviction that students will learn more if they feel responsible for their own achievements and are allowed to co-decide their learning strategies. From a

philosophical stance, the will to give students a voice at school reflects the efforts undertaken by teachers to differentiate and personalize their teaching to meet the very specific needs of every student.

In Luxembourg schools, the language of instruction and communication is the first way to address this need. Giving students a voice literally means allowing them to use their first language to express themselves at school. With 64,9% (MENJE, 2018) of students in elementary school using first language at home that is different from Luxembourgish, the question of language use in education is a crucial one in Luxembourg. Today, teachers and educators, especially in the early childhood and preschool levels, are required to help children to develop language skills in Luxembourgish and in French. At the same time, they need to value and consider various other first languages spoken in the classroom. Consequently, attributing a voice to students means valuing their different cultural backgrounds, learning modes and conditions of the students – which in the end implies taking students seriously.

Generally speaking, instruction methods can be characterized by the degree to which student opinions, perspectives and preferences are listened to and included. This englobes the how, what, when and where to learn. The objective of such methods that respect the perspectives of students is to create a school where students succeed more and teachers' work is more effective and sustainable. In this perspective, giving students a voice at school is not simply a *nice to have* option or some kind of extraordinary approach; it is rather a necessary condition to make any learning possible and effective. Unlike other countries, the Luxembourgish legislation on schooling requires teachers to differentiate their instruction. As teachers obviously cannot always know precisely what is best for every student, they need to talk to their students, listen to their reflections and give them some choice and freedom to take decisions for their own learning project.

Although the student evaluation in Luxembourg is still strongly influenced by teacher-centred approaches, there are increasing attempts to give children more room for their perspectives. The *International School* within *Lycée Michel Lucius (ISML)* provides an interesting example of how students of any age can play an active part in the assessment of their progress in school. The *ISML* is a state school and located in the heart of Luxembourg's capital. It responded to Luxembourg's fast evolving, highly cosmopolitan and international population, by creating an English language international stream in 2011. Nearly a decade later, the *ISML* has grown into a diverse and high-quality international public school serving over 700 students of more than 70 nationalities. An international English-medium curriculum is taught throughout the school, leading to international GCSE qualifications and culminating in GCE A-Levels. With its rapidly growing international student population, the *ISML* opened a new feeder primary school for its established secondary school in September 2017 (LML, 2016).

At the *ISML*, teachers continuously strive to take the learners' voice in feedback sessions on board. Students are encouraged to express themselves on their development, to set personal goals for their learning and to reflect on their progress at the end of each term. "At the *ISML* we place the student in the centre of learning, which we see as a cyclical process that includes assessment," says Pascale Petry, director of the school. The Head of the *ISML* Daniel Redinger adds: "Therefore it is a natural and crucial step for us to value our learners' voice, not only during classroom learning but also in a formalized document such as the school report. They are, after all, the principal actors in their own learning."

At the *ISML*, students are regularly asked to write down a short text on how they consider their own learning progress. The text reflecting the personal perspectives on learning achievements and future goals is integrated in the formal school report at the end of the term. To prepare the meeting with parents, teachers sit down

with every child to listen to their reflections. Asked about how he judges the fact that their teachers consider students' voices on learning assessment, James (3c) says: "We didn't do it at my old school. It feels good because it's like respect". His classmate Liam (3c) adds: "If we don't talk, we don't learn. We learn by sharing our thinking". Cameron (3c) explains how being heard by teachers enhances learning: "I think it's good because I want to improve on different things in my learning. Having a voice helps me improve. It's developing. I think about what I need to do. That's what development is."

Students can express their points of view in evaluation, reflection and feedback on learning through the use of portfolios. This method encourages students to express themselves on their own learning process and development of competences. It is an approach that, though not compulsory, is strongly promoted by the Ministry's *Department for the Coordination of Educational and Technological Research and Innovations* (SCRIPT). It is a means for teachers to provide space and time to listen to students. Working with a learning portfolio develops and supports children's ability to think about their own learning, to take their own learning actively into their own hands and to demonstrate this in their learning portfolio. The ability to judge their own work and performance can be taught to children from very early on. They learn to look closely at their work and reflect on their progress as researchers, authors, experimenters and artists (Grace & Shores, 1998). Gradually, children learn to formulate learning goals under the guidance of the teacher.

Teachers, students and not forgetting parents, are collectively reflecting on the learning process and discuss questions such as:
What did I learn?
What was important to me?
What was easy or difficult for me?
Where do I need help?
Which tasks do I manage well on my own?
What else do I have to repeat?
What are my most common mistakes?

A portfolio is an expression of a child's personality. It reflects individual goals, paths, strengths and particularities of the child. It shows the child's progress over time, the extent to which skills and abilities have developed (SCRIPT, 2017).

Student voice in school and classroom management

Another promising path to help students share their opinion is the introduction of class and school councils. A considerable number of teachers in Luxembourg have over the last few years decided to share their leadership with their students by setting up a classroom management strategy based on participation and shared responsibility by all.

A class council is in fact an integral part of living together in a class. Set up on the first day of the school year, the class council is then used preventively. Students view the council as a natural part of classroom life that is much more than just a tool for crisis. The council provides a room where students congratulate each other, they have the opportunity to apologize, to make suggestions and of course, to resolve conflicts as well. It is also important for the class council to meet on a regular (weekly) basis. This reassures the students of its effectiveness and enables the council meeting to become a solid ritual. If they were to be unsure as to whether the class council would meet or not, the credibility of the council would be put into question.

Class councils can be held independently of the age of the students and address the support

that students need. Although younger children may need more support because of their age, it does not necessarily imply that this is impossible or that their opinions cannot be heard. It is often very surprising what younger kids have to say (Lamy, 2019).

Nevertheless, the class council should not turn into a courtroom. Consensus is important and carries far more weight than the vote. Clearly, the class council can only be fully effective when the teacher takes the students seriously. This should not only be the case during the class council meetings but all the time. The teacher should also rely on a participatory and cooperative class leadership.

Schools can also adopt a whole school strategy to give children a voice. An interesting example is *Eis Schoul*, a public primary school in Luxembourg. By law, this specific school's mission is to develop new forms of learning and teaching and to operate according to the principles of inclusive pedagogy. In *Eis Schoul* children live together in multi-age groups in cycles 1 to 4 (from pre-school to primary level) and all children are welcomed with their diversity. They learn, each at their own pace, to become autonomous and responsible. They are offered the space to interact with others and to assert their opinion while respecting that of others. Therefore, interaction with others and the outside world is an important aspect. The children learn to structure their language and their thoughts, to express themselves in public, to argue and to assert their opinions within a class council and to represent their group in the pupils' parliament. Children are also regularly invited to participate in theatrical performances, educational outings and excursions (Eis Schoul, 2017).

Ben Wagener, the president of the teachers' committee, underlines that the introduction of morning discussion groups and of councils at class level, as well as the holding of the pupils' parliament, all help children to develop their own opinion. He argues:

> ***"We want our students to have an opinion and to express their views. We intend to foster the idea of a democratic debate in our school, that's why we give our students the right to participate at different occasions."***

Marc Hilger, teacher in a cycle 3 class, adds that in order to be coherent, it is also important to always give students the right to bring in their view within the classroom on a daily basis. He says:

> ***"That's how we give our students the feeling that their voice matters, and that they are allowed to participate actively in the organization of life in the school and thus be part of the society."***

Even the youngest in cycle 1 (3-5 years old) are asked to participate in the daily morning round and to bring in their views. Anne Munhowen, teacher in cycle 1, is convinced:

> ***"The morning discussions allow teachers to know their students better by getting a very clear view on how the children use their voice and how good they are in expressing themselves in different situations."***

Henar (11 years), student in cycle 4, is happy to take part in the class council and the pupil's parliament, because she can "express herself and there are always good discussions on different points of view." Jan (11 years) compares the situation to other schools and is happy to notice that in *Eis Schoul*: "A lot of good students' ideas don't just remain fantasies, but they very often become reality."

Giving students a voice and respecting the perspectives of young learners on their own performance at school is clearly a powerful strategy to improve learning outcomes and to help students become autonomous and lifelong learners. Learning to learn, developing the competences to put your thoughts into words

and becoming confident enough to raise your voice, are all skills that take time and require the support of educators and adults. Developing a personal opinion on society, having a clear self-perception, knowing how to use your voice to contribute to social debates and taking responsibility for your actions, are all crucial objectives of personal development that schools should support. In Luxembourg, several reforms and projects are currently in place today to boost the development of these 21st century skills. The aim of the initiatives is to give students more space and time to reflect on issues that matter and to express themselves on these issues.

Student voice for the future

Looking forward into the future with regard to student voice, researchers in Luxembourg are exploring teaching methods and communication approaches that promote the integration of systems thinking and dialogue learning in the school curriculum. This is being undertaken in the *School Futures* project where researchers of the University of Luxembourg, in collaboration with SCRIPT, are developing new approaches to sustainable school development by introducing concrete changes in teaching, learning and the learning environment in cooperation with students, teachers and the school leadership in three secondary schools in Luxembourg. It sends a strong message that we do not have to endure the future, but that we may influence it to a certain extent and take the future into our own hands. Even with only three schools in the project so far, new insights will be gained on ways that schools can help students learn to confront complexity. The aim of *School Futures* is firstly, to exchange on experiences in 'relational' teaching and learning or 'systems thinking'. Secondly, the quality criteria and approaches for evaluation of this type of learning will be reflected upon. Researchers set up a collaborative process for sustainable school development by developing methods for thinking in terms of complex systems and open futures. Students and teachers engage together to develop learning concepts, methods and teaching materials for future–oriented systems thinking in class or interdisciplinary projects. This project places student voice at the centre for the development of school projects and school development proposals. The project further addresses whether and how a collaborative approach to create collaborative conceptual system maps is likely to support students in acquiring the necessary skills to tackle complex problems. Initial conclusions show the emergence of a range of problem-solving styles and strategies that are documented in the three schools. It suggests that in-class reflection is beneficial for learning about diverse types of complex problems and emotions, experienced when confronted with complexity (University of Luxembourg, 2018).

Through the participative creation of concrete school projects or a school vision in three very different schools, *School Futures* makes concrete suggestions on how teaching and learning should change, so that future generations are fit for the future. This creates a creative space for experimenting with future-orientated teaching approaches and contents. Important skills, such as future-oriented networked thinking and interdisciplinary cooperation in various groups, are stimulated by the cooperation in this project. Concrete methods, such as the creation of complex mind-maps, the systematic discussion of different perspectives and hypotheses, the anticipation and the comparison of different scenarios for the future, provide the opportunity to enhance the voice of students in the classroom.

The project *School Futures* and the lessons learned in the project are part of Luxembourg's efforts to meet the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* (UN-SDG) and to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills

needed to promote sustainable development. It is not enough to ask students to use their voice actively and to take responsibility by participating in social debates. In addition, educators need to support students to acquire the necessary skills and attitudes to do so.

Student voice in the new curriculum subject Life and Society

As schools in Luxembourg mobilize themselves to give their students a greater voice in their learning, an important curriculum reform initiative was also introduced to provide students with a further opportunity to bring their voice into learning. This space refers to a new subject, *Life and Society*, introduced in 2016-17 in all classes of secondary education and from 2017-2018 onwards in elementary education. It replaced the former subjects "Religious and Moral Instruction" and "Moral and Social Education".

Life and Society is based on life and experiences of students. Living together in social communities or preparing for it is the core of this new subject. Coexistence in a society characterized by the diversity of languages, cultures, beliefs and religions is demanding. It presupposes a high degree of openness, criticality and commitment of its members. Since the Luxembourgish society, like other Western European countries, is characterized by an increasing linguistic, cultural, religious and ideological pluralization at the beginning of the 21st century, *Life and Society* strengthens coexistence and cohesion in a multicultural society (MENJE, 2017).

Life and Society is expected to contribute to the development of competences that enable children and adolescents to find their place in the society in which they live, and to participate constructively and critically in the social discourse. This means that living together is both the starting point and the horizon of the new subject. The competence fields of the new subject are: a tolerant approach to diversity, critical commitment to moral-ethical questions and dedicated commitment to significant issues of life and society.

Life and Society is, like the Luxembourgish school as a whole, committed to ideological and religious neutrality and to universal human rights. School lessons can and should be part of this complex coexistence. The objective is that students are able to orient themselves and communicate in a multicultural society. They should be able to contribute responsibly in a democratic society.

"Students learn to deal with arguments independently and consistently and to weigh arguments in their respective horizon of experience. The confrontation with other arguments presupposes criticism as well as self-criticism. It reflects learning during school time on how different perspectives may be viewed and correlated, says Luc Weis, the director of SCRIPT. The subject of *Life and Society* prepares for life in an open society and teaches fundamental aspects of democratic coexistence, thus contributing to political education. The progression of learning in the subject of *Life and Society* means a gradual qualification for justified judgments and actions and thus for one's own orientation.

The empowerment of student voice for participation in social life

Stepping out of school to participate in social life, society requires young people to be prepared to contribute to a democratic way of living – a responsibility that the political evolutions in the western world expect of school. Reaching the UN-SDG for Luxembourg is not an end in itself. Democracy and our way of living together in a liberal and free society are also at stake. Student voice thus comes into play in national youth policies which target the promotion and support of social and political engagement of young people.

The latest *National Report on the Situation of Young People in Luxembourg* provides an interesting analysis of the degree and nature of social and political engagement of young people in Luxembourg (Ministry of Family and Integration & University of Luxembourg, 2015). The conclusions of the report underline the responsibilities of the educational sector and once more show the importance, especially in Luxembourg, of giving a voice to children and adolescents.

The report (MFI & UL, 2015, p.47) begins by explaining how important social engagement is for the personal development of young people. Better social and personal skills, as well as wider knowledge and abilities enable them a smooth transition into working life. They can then take up professional roles and responsibilities in an association or organization. Young people develop attitudes and values, such as tolerance, open-mindedness, interculturalism and critical thinking. Altogether, social engagement brings personal fulfilment and a sense of belonging to society.

According to the same report, Luxembourg nevertheless has to deal with some major challenges. The country has the highest number of young people in Europe registered as members of a club or an association (for example music-society, sports-, leisure- or benevolent clubs), and taking part in its activities, but a far smaller proportion of them are also actively involved in their club (data records from Eurobarometer 319a, 2011). Furthermore, Luxembourg clubs and associations lose many young members during the transition phase (MFI & UL, 2015, p. 44). Young people in Luxembourg do not politically engage as much as the average young European, with little change in this trend during the period of transition (unlike social commitment) (MFI & UL, 2015, p. 45).

When it comes to social commitment in Luxembourg, there are big differences among the generations. The very high social commitment among the older generation does not carry on to the same extent by the younger generation. This situation is more marked in Luxembourg than the European average.

Another major problem and therefore a challenge is the fact that the young Luxembourgers' social participation depends on the money, education, time and social networks available to them as individuals (MFI & UL, 2015, p. 45). This is part of a general trend where engagement clearly depends on social background, education and migration background (Civic Voluntarism Model of Verba et al., 1995).

A vast majority of politically and socially committed young people do have Luxembourg nationality, and many come from homes with

a high standard of education and a high level of interest in social engagement. Young people who do not have Luxembourg nationality are significantly under- represented. Analysis of secondary data also shows that family has a big influence on the development of political interests and political attitudes among adolescents and young adults. Young people are more often interested in politics themselves if they grew up in families where politics was discussed.

The report, moreover, points out that a "striking feature is the frequent very low level of interest in politics by adolescents and young adults of foreign nationality. Because Luxembourg is a country of high immigration, the question arises as to how this group can be more involved in the country's democratic processes" (MFI & UL, 2015, p. 46). Schools will have to address this issue, which implies a considerable challenge for Luxembourg. Educators and teachers will have to contribute to enable as many young people as possible to become involved as active citizens in our society.

A Centre for Citizenship Education to value student voice

With these general trends identified, in October 2016, the Luxembourgish government created the *Zentrum fir politesch Bildung* (ZpB) or the *Centre for Citizenship Education*, as a symbol of its strong belief in the value of all young people voices and in their participation in public and political life.

As an independent foundation, the *ZpB*'s missions are to strengthen existing efforts and to launch new initiatives related to citizenship education in Luxembourg. It is funded by the Ministry of National Education, Children and Youth, which also contributes to its operation by providing offices and staff. Although many activities address the general public, there is a special emphasis on children, young people, teachers and educators (as multipliers).

The work of this Centre is based on three pillars. *Learning* is the first one, which produces educational material, offers workshops and promotes contests and trainings related to citizenship education. *Understanding* is the second one, which organizes debates, conferences, screenings and visits. *Participating* is the third pillar, which accompanies formal and non-formal structures in their process of building and strengthening the democratic structures.

> ***"Citizenship education is not only about knowing, but also about doing. This means that participation is one element, and the first step to participation is raising your voice, expressing an opinion. Hence, citizenship education is about giving citizens a voice from a young age on and helping them to raise their voice,"***

says Michèle Schilt, the assistant director of the *ZpB*. The *ZpB* seeks to create a network of actors in the field of citizenship education and collaborates with other stakeholders as much as possible. It is still a very young organization, but its team is fully committed to making a significant contribution to the development of active and informed citizenship in Luxembourg and beyond. "The slogan of *ZpB* is *Learning and Living Democracy*. We want to make sure that at those places where we find children and young people, they can express their opinion, campaign for their rights and help shaping their surroundings. Yet, this also depends on the adults' attitude. This is why *ZpB* works most of all with multipliers to show not only why it is important and interesting to let children

and young people participate and to listen to them, but also how they can do this," says Marc Schoentgen, the director of the *ZpB*. "Education is the backbone of democracy," said the Prime Minister Xavier Bettel in 2016 when the new *Centre for Citizenship Education* was launched. Youth must be able to understand the contexts and develop a critical attitude to current events in order to take part in the debates that animate society. Indeed, the OECD notices that "It has never been as easy to access information, express one's opinions and reach out to fellow citizens as it is in today's digital world. Yet key processes for democratic decision-making in our societies, such as voting, are declining" (OECD, 2019, p. 40).

The Luxembourgish government has set itself the goal of getting more young people to participate in the democratic debate.

> ***"We need young people who are involved, who are interested in what is going on around them,"***

continued Xavier Bettel. "Democracy is the only form of government that can be learned, and this learning is done from childhood on, in everyday life," said the Minister of Education, Claude Meisch. Learning and living democracy are closely linked. "If we want adults who participate in society, who exercise full responsibility and civic rights, we must give them the opportunity from an early age." It should be noted that one of the major projects of the *ZpB* is the promotion of class councils, referred to earlier in this article.

Student voice – a voice of hope for greater participation

Luxembourg has undertaken much effort in education, and is still striving to give young people and children a voice and to empower them in taking position in crucial issues for the future. It is hoped that this will one day enable the young generations to ask for a new referendum in Luxembourg to grant them the right to participate in national elections. Perhaps they will then succeed in convincing adults that young people have a voice that matters. After all, as Cédric (10 years), a student in Cycle 4, says: "It's about our life and our way, it's not only about the grown-ups' future, so we should have our word to say." Maybe teachers, educators and adults should take this to heart, considering that "children are 20% of the population and 100% of our future" (author unknown).

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STUDENT VOICE AT SYSTEM LEVEL

Learner Voice in Irish Education – Towards a Common Approach

student voice

IRELAND

guth an scoláire

Authors

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Dr. Mary Daly has worked in the area of early childhood in Ireland in a number of different capacities over the past 18 years. She has been with the NCCA for the past decade. Her work there involved the development of Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009), and the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide (www.aistearsiolta.ie) online resource to help improve the quality of curriculum practice. Recently she has worked on the development of Mo Scéal reporting templates to share information about children's learning and development as they move from preschool to primary school. Mary has a B. A. in Early Childhood Studies from University College Cork and in 2002 she completed a Ph. D. which focused on the emotional, social, moral and spiritual development of the young child. In 2004 she published a book based on her Ph. D.

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Abstract

In this paper, education officers from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) set out how Ireland is taking learner voice forward in the early childhood, primary and post-primary sectors. The NCCA is the statutory body in Ireland that advises the Minister for Education and Skills on matters in relation to curriculum and assessment for early childhood education, and for primary and post-primary schools.

The paper will outline the work being undertaken by NCCA in developing curriculum and the connection with learner voice. This can be seen in the development of *Aistear, the early childhood curriculum* and in the work on a redeveloped primary curriculum and in the Senior Cycle review. The paper will also importantly highlight the use of learner voice in day-to-day teaching, learning and assessment and NCCA's role in this. This can be seen clearly at early childhood, and in the early years of post-primary education, in the work on student voice through the Junior Cycle Framework and through international projects. It is our contention that developing learner voice in classrooms and settings is more likely to provide a sound foundation for authentic reflective voice when students are asked to contribute in the representative space in the context of curriculum development at school/setting or national level.

The paper will outline how efforts are being made to move away from teacher/practitioner dominated practices to encouraging practice where all learners are provided with the opportunity to have a voice in the learning process. The paper will demonstrate how the NCCA is focusing more proactively in supporting schools/settings to review and reform their practices through the provision of greater clarity in curriculum documents and in exemplifying and sharing examples of learner-centred practices.

Policy context for learner voice in Ireland

Like other jurisdictions that have ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), Ireland acknowledged its obligations through a series of policy actions including a new government department, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in 2011. In 2012, the Irish constitution was amended following a referendum to strengthen in law the rights of children to have their views considered in matters affecting them. In 2014 Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014–2020 was published. Indeed, this policy framework outlines six goals to achieving its aim and goal three is dedicated to the voice of the child. In 2015, the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making (2015–2020)* was launched. These developments provide a background to increasing engagement with learner voice in education at all levels in Ireland.

Broad overview of learner voice in curriculum reform/ practice in early childhood, primary, junior cycle and senior cycle

Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and learner voice

For early childhood promoting learner voice is done mainly through promoting a child-centred approach in teaching and learning which gives voice to the child. *Aistear*: *the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is for all children in Ireland from birth to 6 years (NCCA, 2009). *Aistear* is the Irish word for journey and early childhood marks the beginning of children's educational journeys. The Framework is premised on an understanding of children as being active in shaping and creating their own lives. This perspective supports the inclusion of children's voices in decisions which affect them. To this end, the NCCA used a portraiture study to facilitate children as partners in developing

the Framework more than a decade ago (NCCA, 2007; Daly, Forster, Murphy, Sweeney, Brennan, Maxwell & O'Connor, 2007; Daly, Forster, Murphy & Sweeney, 2008).

Aistear encourages adults to listen to, and respond to the views of babies, toddlers and young children. It describes the types of learning that are important for children using four interconnected themes of *Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating* and *Exploring and Thinking*. The Framework also provides guidelines on supporting children's learning through partnerships with parents, interactions, play, and assessment. Very importantly, *Aistear* is underpinned by 12 principles of learning and development. The principle which has the most relevance here is the principle of children as citizens. Each principle is presented using a short statement and is followed by an explanation of the principle from the child's perspective, again giving voice to the child.

The principle children as citizens is very much evident in the curriculum approach advocated by *Aistear*, that is, an emergent and inquiry-based curriculum. An emergent curriculum evolves as choices and connections are made by the children as they discover the world around them. There is an emphasis on child-led learning. The practitioner shares control with the children; and their actions, play, ideas, and conversations guide the curriculum. This type of curriculum uses children's and practitioners' interests, questions and experiences as starting points for curriculum planning. In partnership with children, practitioners identify ideas or inquiries that become the focus for learning.

Aistear was widely welcomed by the early childhood sector when published in 2009, not least for the agency it placed with the child in directing and facilitating their own learning and development and through the promotion of learner voice so early in children's educational journeys. Due to better economic conditions, recent years have seen a significant increase in government investment in the early childhood sector in Ireland. In the past decade we have seen the introduction of a fully funded preschool programme of education for children aged 2 years and 8 months to 5 years and 6 months. This is commonly known as the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE). Early childhood settings which provide this programme on behalf of the Government of Ireland must commit to implementing the principles of *Aistear*.

Primary level: A context of curriculum redevelopment

At primary level, the NCCA has begun a significant process of curriculum review and redevelopment. This is the first time in twenty years that teachers, school leaders, children and parents have had an opportunity to consider the type of curriculum needed for the next decade. The work has commenced with the development of a new Primary Language Curriculum, a new Primary Mathematics Curriculum and the review and redevelopment of the curriculum. Before teasing out how these developments contribute to learner voice, we will outline how the current curriculum describes its vision of the child and their learning. In this way we will try to demonstrate the journey that the NCCA is taking at primary level in supporting children's voices in their learning. In doing so, it will describe not just how curricular approaches may support classroom practices that empower children, but how the use of consultation with children on curricular developments can support the construction of "discourses of respect, empowerment and citizenship in schools" Busher (2012, p. 113). Therefore, the sections on the primary curriculum below briefly highlight ways in which learner voice is supported within the curriculum and informs the process of curriculum development.

Junior cycle and learner voice

The importance of learner voice in Ireland is also recognised in major curricular reforms currently

happening at lower secondary education (Junior Cycle reform). The vision for junior cycle places students at the centre of the educational experience and the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (Framework, 2015) has been designed as a means through which this vision can be realised.

The *Framework for Junior Cycle* highlights how authentically listening to students' voices needs to be at the core of junior cycle provision if schools are to ensure that all students are engaging in a programme that best suits their needs. This 'authentic' listening goes beyond the superficial question and answer sessions but aims to develop a deeper understanding and promote higher order skills in students. 'Authentic listening' also involves the teacher listening to learn from answers pupils/students provide-particularly when the wrong answer is provided. The introduction of a learning outcomes-based curriculum coupled with significant changes to assessment provide the richest avenues through which students' voices are placed at the core of learning and teaching in the classrooms.

Senior cycle and learner voice

Senior Cycle caters for students aged 15 to 18. It includes an optional Transition Year Programme (TYP) which immediately follows Junior Cycle and provides an opportunity for students to experience a wide range of educational experiences, with an emphasis on co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and projects, including work experience placements. Most students progress to follow a mainly academic Leaving Certificate programme for two years, while a small minority opt for a vocational pathway called the Leaving Certificate Applied, also for two years.

In autumn 2018, the NCCA commenced a comprehensive review of the Senior Cycle experience. The review was intended to allow all stakeholders to develop a shared vision for what Senior Cycle should be and to help shape a curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of all learners for years to come. The review is intended to build on aspects of Junior Cycle reform as described above, including the increased emphasis on learner voice as a feature of learning and teaching. The review commenced with a comprehensive survey of schools and focused on hearing the views of teachers, school leaders, parents and students. The review is significant in the scale of the student consultation that took place, with approximately 2,000 students having their voices heard. The type of views expressed by students will be considered later in this paper.

Policy trends in primary developments

The 1999 Primary School Curriculum advocates a child-centred approach to learning that celebrates the uniqueness of each child. While the concept of learner voice may not have been prevalent at the time, the curriculum supports child-centred pedagogical approaches that emphasise child agency. Curricular reviews by the NCCA in 2005 and 2008 found that while teachers demonstrated a strong degree of ownership over child-centred theories, this contrasted with limited teacher ownership of child-centred methodologies and approaches.

A key development in primary education since the introduction of the 1999 curriculum has been the *Aistear Tutor Initiative* which began in 2010. In this initiative the NCCA has worked with regional education centres to support primary teachers to bring the enquiry-based and emergent learning approaches that are at the heart of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* into the infant classes (the first 2 years) of primary schools. This process encourages practices that build on the

child-centred focus of the 1999 curriculum and see children as leading their own learning. Their interests and curiosities provide the starting point for learning rather than the content of subjects or disciplines.

Primary Language Curriculum/ Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile

The first significant development in the ongoing process of redeveloping the entire curriculum has been the development of the Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile, which will be published in Autumn 2019. This signals a number of key changes which are pertinent to the area of learner voice and the way in which children engage in their own learning. Specific learning outcomes from the curriculum such as *'motivation and choice'* and *'requests, questions and interactions'* provide a curricular space in which children are given an opportunity to express their own opinions and interests, make decisions, guide their own learning and have a genuine voice in their own learning at a micro level.

Incorporating learner voice in curriculum redevelopment

The Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile has been the first development in a broad process of curriculum redevelopment at primary level. While this curriculum demonstrates how the potential for supporting learner voice in the classroom can be described in a curriculum, NCCA colleagues involved in the primary sector have also engaged with children in a consultative capacity in all curricular projects in recent years. Consultations on proposals for a curriculum in Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics (2016), consultations on the draft Mathematics Curriculum and the draft Primary Language Curriculum/Curclam Teanga na Bunscoile all listened to the voices of learners in primary schools as a key component in supporting curriculum development.

In these instances, the NCCA worked with children in a number of primary schools in order to hear their opinions on key ideas in the drafts. This aspect of the work focused on listening authentically to the voices of children and ensuring that learners were one of the voices informing these developments. Overall, the main themes that emerged from the data collected in these various consultations may be summarised as follows:

- Children's understanding of the purpose of school and of learning
- What children like to learn
- How children like to learn

Younger children tended to see school as 'a place to learn' and 'a place to have friends'. Their feedback included:

- *'If we didn't come to school, then basically no-one will know anything'*
- *'Téimid ar scoil chun foghlaim agus chun cairde a dhéanamh'* (We go to school to learn and to make friends.)

As they became older, understandings of the purpose of school are more nuanced as their perspectives became more future-oriented. This was summarised in the quote: *'Is féidir linn post a fháil agus airgead a fháil agus teach a cheannach'* (We can get a job and buy a house [as a result of going to school]).

When talking about what they liked to learn and how they liked to learn children consistently demonstrated preference across consultations for active methods of learning in which they had choice and engaged with others. Some of the feedback we have heard include comments such as:

- *'We like working in groups because you get to learn more'*
- *'Through acting and debates; Talk about it more often in groups; Maybe more projects or presentations'* (when asked how they would like to learn about Religions, Beliefs and Ethics).

The implications of these findings for redeveloping the Curriculum are that its content, structure and methodologies need to take account of the cognitive development of children through the primary school phase, as well as their interests, motivation and choices.

It is important to note the limitations and challenges of these processes. As the modes of listening to children's voices were qualitative in nature, the numbers of children that were involved were comparatively small and were not representative of the entire primary population. Equally, working with very young children presented challenges in how to listen in a genuine and authentic way on matters that could seem very removed from their day-to-day lives. As the process of curriculum redevelopment continues to move forward, a key challenge will be to continue to listen to learners and to strive to improve the means of listening.

Policy trends in post – primary developments

Junior cycle: promoting formative assessment

In Ireland, learners are encouraged to develop 'voice' in the representative space, for example, in curriculum development. However, there is growing consensus that learner voice is best supported, by encouraging a culture in the setting/classroom which allows learners a voice through a process of feedback, peer-review, questioning and self-reflection.

In Junior Cycle, as part of their daily practice, teachers assess students' learning by observing and listening as students carry out tasks and by considering how they respond to questions. An important aspect of the new ways of working in Junior Cycle is to encourage greater dialogue between teachers and learners with a greater emphasis on encouraging learner voice. This process of greater engagement is being fostered through a focus on learning intentions, success criteria and feedback and learner self-reflection. Teachers use learning intentions and success criteria as the basis for providing feedback to help students plan their next steps in learning. Students are encouraged to reflect on how they are progressing in their own learning and provide feedback to their teachers. In developing the capacity for self-management and self-awareness, students are learning more confidently and will be better prepared to meet the challenges of life beyond school.

Senior cycle review: school-based consultation

The most significant policy trend at senior cycle is the major review which the NCCA commenced in autumn 2017 with an exploration of international perspectives, followed in 2018 by a school-based review process. A series of questions were designed by the NCCA in close collaboration with the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), a state body which conducts research and analysis to inform social and economic policy planning and development. These questions were explored with teachers, parents and students in a representative sample of schools across Ireland. Learner voice was at the centre of this consultation process. In accordance with policy developments mentioned earlier in this paper, students' views on Senior Cycle were considered and acknowledged.

An interesting feature of this approach is that it allowed for Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle students to talk about teaching and learning with each other in the same forum and allowed for younger students to discuss aspects of Junior Cycle reform which had impacted

positively on their learning with older students. Initial feedback from schools about these learner voice sessions was positive about the provision of these opportunities for discussion and reflection to take place with students about classroom practice. Furthermore, the review featured a series of national seminars attended by teachers, parents and students from the participating schools as well as other educational partners. Again, learner voice was a strong feature of these events, with students taking part in panel discussions based on the ESRI findings and participating in discussions with other stakeholders.

What did students say?

Feedback from students was rich and varied and covered a wide range of issues relating to the senior cycle experience. The following excerpts from feedback offered by students give a flavour of the kinds of views expressed. For instance, this quotation is from a student who believes that student wellbeing should be taken seriously:

> ***"I think that wellbeing should be taken more seriously ... Because I think your self-acceptance and confidence and all is a big part for your Leaving Cert and your career after school. So, I think it should be taken more as a serious subject, like English and maths is."***

Another student supports a more imaginative approach to the range of subjects offered:

> ***"I'd like to see maybe new subjects coming in, like, if drama was to come in as a subject, it's done in Australia, it's done in England, if that was brought in as a subject then I think more people would – like, people would express themselves through theatre in a way."***

This student has interesting views about how vocational or trade-focused training could be adapted in Ireland:

> ***"Even the state could make – like the way they do in Germany, they have exam schools but they also have trade schools ... they have, like, different exams for different people who want to do trades. So, not a lesser version of the Leaving Cert but it's a different kind of Leaving Cert, where it's more based on just trades. And it's kind of woodwork and metalwork and whatever they want to do."***

The following reflection on the nature of teacher-student relations in senior cycle is offered by a student:

> ***"I think, in particular, when you are in the sixth year, that the teachers are kind of talking to you as though you weren't a child anymore. The teachers have more respect for you and they can have a conversation with you... I think it helps with the teaching if you have a good relationship with the teacher and you're on good terms with them."***

While these quotations are just a small sample of what students said, they do illustrate the deep thinking that students demonstrated during the senior cycle review.

Models for change

Increasingly NCCA is focussing on how collaborative learning at policy, school/setting and classroom level, can address the complex nature of educational change. NCCA seeks to address the challenges associated with successful policy implementation by seeking to build collaborative networks across and within the groups of the partners involved, recognising that practitioners/teachers, policy-makers and researchers can all learn from one

another. Furthermore, NCCA aims to develop relationships among practitioners/teachers, children/students and policy-makers based on openness, trust and support where all participants have genuine ownership and are engaged in the change process.

Participation in international projects

One of the drivers for Learner Voice in Ireland has been an Erasmus Project – *The Bridge to Learning*. Ireland is one of five European partners in this project- which aims to develop different models of working in partnership with students in schools and in classrooms. Ireland is taking a collaborative approach to the project and is working with nine schools and over thirty teachers.

Much of this collaborative work involves supporting these teachers and their schools as they develop learning and teaching approaches that enable students to take a central role in their own learning. Tracing the project journey to date reveals key learning on what enables a culture of learner voice in learning and teaching in classrooms and schools, particularly on the impact a collaborative approach has on teacher professional development and its effect on learners' voices in the classroom.

Working with schools and settings to change practice in learner voice

The diagram below shows the model that teachers in Erasmus project schools in Ireland

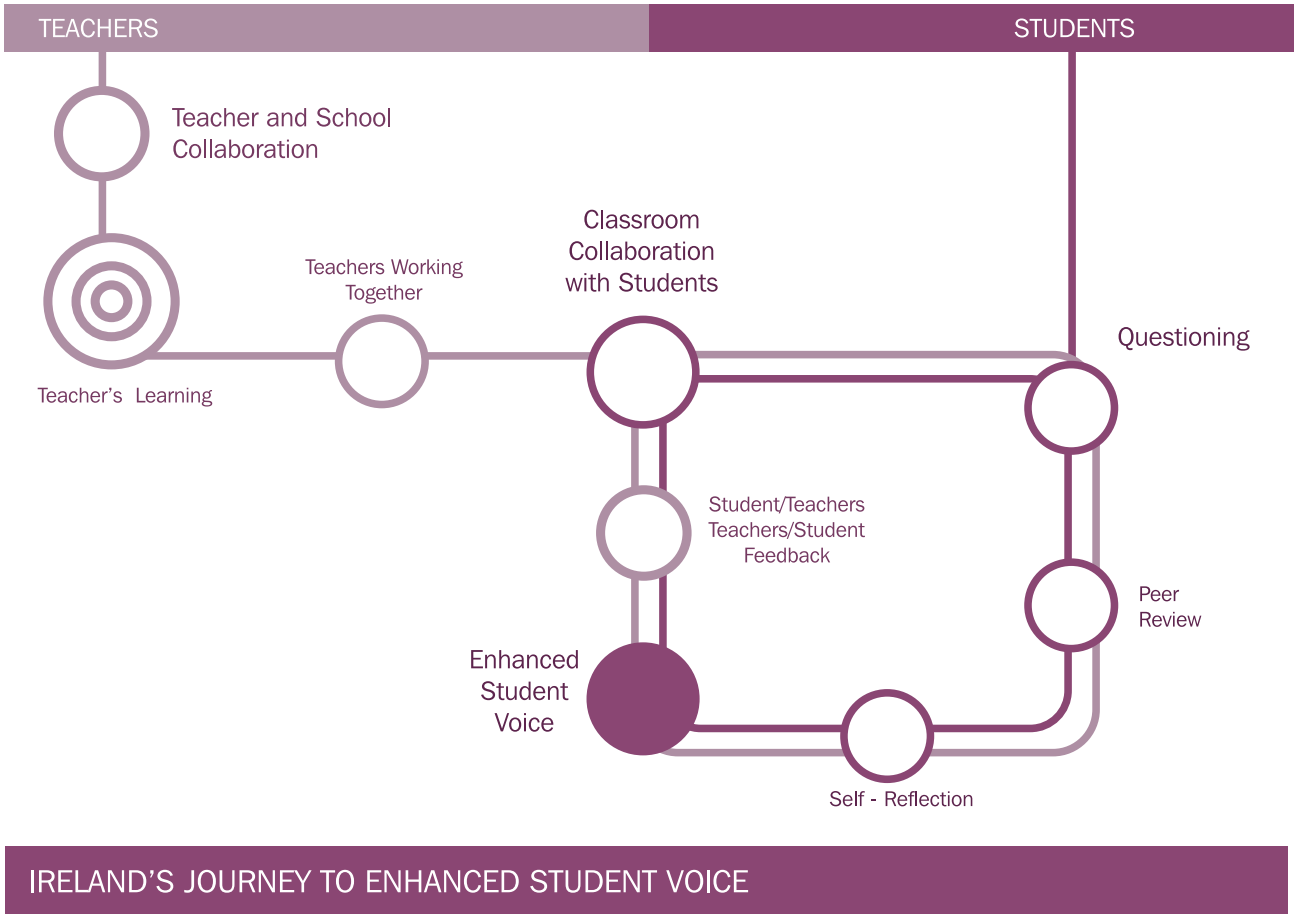

Figure 1: Ireland's journey to ehanced student voice

are being encouraged to adopt, so as to take forward the development of learner voice based on a model of collaboration with other teachers and their students to enhance learner voice based on a collaborative learning model. Teachers collaborate to develop a culture in classrooms where the shift of responsibility in learning moves from the teachers to the students. As a result, all students in a class are involved in working with their peers and teachers in a process of feedback, self-evaluation and questioning aimed at delivering enhanced learner voice.

The aim of the Erasmus Project in Ireland was to develop a collaborative culture within and across schools that would, through formative assessment strategies result in enhanced learner voice. Such cultures were not established quickly, but early indications are that the approach used has started to build teaching effectiveness, student confidence and some signs of improved student achievement.

Moving towards cultural change in classrooms and how teachers work together meant that policy-makers have needed to understand the local context as the project was developed in two clusters of schools at opposite ends of the country.

Setting out the vision and anticipated benefits of the project for the participating teachers was an important first step. Teachers resist change that they do not fully understand. The key to achieving this change was structured peer interaction across and within the project schools. In planning for building collaborative learning cultures, research (Hayward and Spencer 2010) has shown that teachers develop their practice best when learning from each other. However, it takes time to build trust across all the partners before effective collaboration can be achieved. Similarly, the changed dynamic in the class between teachers and students based on the development of trust, takes time and requires students to understand the rationale for the changes in pedagogy.

The impact of the Erasmus Project on teachers' pedagogy is best illustrated from the voices of teachers themselves, as indicated here:

I liked the notion that we could start from our own context and also work collaboratively with other schools. After that first day, I returned to my classroom and quickly realised how much of my lessons were dominated by my voice. I was quietly embarrassed. I started a journey of activating student voice within my classroom and on a wider school basis.

My work has been enriched by this process. I stepped out of my comfort zone and asked the students to reflect on how they learned in my lessons (I assured them I wouldn't be offended) and I became more conscious of the relationship between us that is conducive to learning. I became more relaxed; the reality of their experiences informed my lesson preparation. I initiated more peer conversations, we designed success criteria collaboratively, my colleagues observed and recorded my lessons. I embraced it to see what the outcome would be, and I have nothing but positive feedback to report. Student voice has been embedded in my practice. It is not tokenistic; it is meaningful and honest.

Conclusion

In Ireland, we are developing curricula which firmly place the learner at the centre and emphasise the value of learner voice as part of the learning process. This has meant a move away from an understanding of learner voice as a process where a small select number of pupils/students have their voice heard in the representational space. In many ways, this shift reflects the principles as set out in *Aistear* where children are valued as key partners in the learning process and adults are encouraged to listen to, and respond to the views of babies, toddlers and children.

While there is a clear policy intention aimed at ensuring learners' voice is heard, both in the early childhood setting and the primary and post-primary classroom, it is acknowledged that the challenge of implementation in practice will involve a significant change in practitioners' and teachers' pedagogy. The approach that is most likely to lead to enhanced learner voice is one where practitioners and teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice and take on small-scale developments related to enhancing learner voice and subsequently share their experience with other teachers in a collaborative context. Such professional learning in communities of practice is best supported at a local level with a supportive school leadership and a range of well-structured tools which allows early childhood practitioners and teachers to reflect on and implement changes to their pedagogy which is most appropriate to their local context. If this practice of encouraging learner voice in pedagogy becomes rooted in practice then learners are more likely to become authentically and meaningfully engaged in discussions about learning, teaching and assessment in the representative space.

In conclusion, the Irish experience suggests that the genuine embedding of a culture of learner voice in an early childhood setting or school must begin with experiences where learners feel that they have a meaningful voice and sense of agency in attending to their own learning. In this way, learner voice in both settings and schools moves beyond a form that is merely decorative or tokenistic towards a culture where the voices of children and young people are listened to, where their views are considered and where they are involved in decision-making processes. NCCA is seeking to provide space for learner voice as a key part of our curriculum review processes but this approach will only be successful if it is taken forward in tandem with teachers/practitioners who recognise the development of learner voice as a key part of their pedagogy.

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Student Voice in Norway and the New Norweigian Curriculum

student voice

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Abstract

How does the ongoing Norwegian curriculum renewal emphasize student voice and an active student role in primary and secondary education? What is the knowledge base for this and what is the context of student involvement in Norwegian Schools, both historically and in the current situation? These are key questions to be answered in this text. Norway has a long tradition of emphasising student voice in primary and elementary school, and our first student council was established as early as 1919. Today we are implementing the renewed curriculum where empowerment of individual students is emphasized, as well as the ambition that students should experience that they can find solutions through knowledge and cooperation. An aim in the new Norwegian curriculum is that students should practice skills of critical thinking and reflection, and the concept of deeper learning has become central for student learning. We mainly draw on theory of student voice and analyses of the new curriculum, in addition to brief examples from contemporary classroom studies.

Introduction

In this article, we describe the key concept of student involvement in Norwegian schools, and how the ongoing Norwegian curriculum renewal emphasizes student voice and an active student role in primary and secondary education. We will also refer to brief examples from relevant contemporary classroom studies to illustrate the trends we discuss. We understand student voice as giving students in primary and secondary school the ability to influence learning on different levels as to include policies, programmes, contexts and principles. Still, we find most of the students' influences in Norway on the classroom level; their own and their peers' learning being the main contribution.

If we want to nurture our students to grow into lifelong learners, into self-directed seekers, into the kind of adults who are morally responsible for their own learning – these are all ambitions we find explicitly highlighted in the Norwegian curriculum – then we need to give them ample opportunities to practice making choices and reflecting on the outcomes (Vattøy & Gamlem, forthcoming; Cook-Sather, 2002). In this context, responsibility means owning and reflecting about choices, one's failures and successes — small, medium and large. We believe that an excellent learning environment should be student-focused, consider the variations in the student group, their different ways of learning and needs for individual differentiation (Idsøe, 2014). Further, students should experience that their perspectives matter and are included in the classroom discourse and in the daily management of the school. To reach this goal students need to be able to share their ideas, and their ideas need to be sought out carefully, in planned ways. Students who feel comfortable sharing their voices seem to increase motivation for schooling and grow into positions of leadership. Connecting students' experiences and areas of interest to the work with school subjects is therefore important and may contribute to strengthening motivation, self-efficacy and acknowledgement (Smith, Gamlem, Sandal, & Engelsen, 2016).

Research has found that many students seem not to believe that their school experiences have any real-world relevance, leading to disaffection and withdrawal from school life (NOU 2016, p. 14; Zyngier, 2008). The focus on student voice in education helps to open more space for students' perspectives. Student voice allows students to share who they are, what they believe in, and why they believe what they do. The term student voice thus describes students' ability to give input on what happens within the school and classroom from their point of view (Fletcher, 2017). Specific types of activities that can engage student voice include learning by teaching, educational decision-making about school policies, school planning, learning and teaching evaluations, educational advocacy, and student advisories for principals and superintendents (Fletcher, 2005). Meaningful student voice must be inclusive, giving the premise that everyone has a membership. A challenge might be to find a balance between too much and too little adult participation. Too much adult involvement might hamper student voice and fail to involve students as true members and problem-solvers. Too little involvement might lead to lack of engagement by the students, and their voices will become diffused, ineffective and exclusive.

The extent to which there are dialogues that open for students' perspectives has been discussed as vital to students' experiences of school (Bru, Stornes, Munthe, & Thuen, 2010; Gamlem & Smith, 2013). An ambition

for students in Norway is to let them know and experience that their expertise, opinions and ideas are valued in all aspects of school life. Student voice in schools thus permeates from students participating in small group classroom conversations to students partnering in classroom curriculum design as task and strategies or establishing school norms and policy. Student voice is a phenomenon that has been present over a century in Norway; what makes it noticeable is the willingness of educators and others to listen to student voice (Fletcher, 2017). In Norway, there is willingness to involve and listen to students. For example, to get a hold on students' perceptions on schooling, an annual student survey "Elevundersøkelsen", is conducted from 5th grade (students aged 10 years) to 13th grade. In this survey, students' perceptions of learning environment, teacher support and well-being in school are looked for. Students are for example asked to give information about bullying at school or how they perceive the teachers' feedback to enhance their learning. The results from this survey, although limited, are further being used for school improvement by school owners and teachers. In many ways, the survey allows students to anonymously provide direct feedback on a range of topics concerning their experience of being a student at that particular school and in their particular classroom.

Why student voice is important

Today, student voice in the educational process is seen as important in Norway, and a growing body of literature emphasizes student engagement and responsibility, in contrast to stimulus-response models that control students from the outside with different forms of external motivation. There is never a one-size-fits-all method to promote students' use of voice and choice. It is always contextualized to teacher and student lives and experiences. However, sometimes schools and teachers might oversimplify voice and choice to what students create in their project, or simply forget that there are many possibilities to engage, invite and listen to students.

Student engagement is designed to strengthen student empowerment and responsibility (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000; Charney, 1991; Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Pöysä, et al., 2018; Vattøy & Gamlem, forthcoming). Approaches to work with educational responsibility might emphasize strategies for building involvement, giving students choices, increasing the value of effort, setting students up for success, making success visible, and creating multiple opportunities for improvement. Decision-making, autonomy, relevance, valuing students' opinions, and meaningful interactions are considered as crucial components of a learning environment that enhances learning and student engagement (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000; Eccles et al., 1993; Gamlem & Munthe, 2014; Smith, Gamlem, Sandal, & Engelsen, 2016). Students having to express voice in their learning evidence is one great option for engagement and responsibility, but more opportunities to create engagement and student-centred learning are needed (Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Vattøy & Gamlem, forthcoming). The key element of student voice in teaching signals important shifts in both teacher and student roles. Teachers need to engage their students in dialogues, investigate how their students think and understand, so they can better support the development of understanding, and function as scaffolds as their students become active learners who learn to set their own goals and assess their learning and needs (Andrade, 2010; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Gamlem & Munthe, 2014; Smith, Gamlem, Sandal, & Engelsen, 2016).

Vattøy and Gamlem (forthcoming) conducted a study in mathematics and English lessons (n=178 lessons) in five elementary schools (grades 8th-10th) in Norway. Participants were 18 teachers and their classes. All lessons were video recorded. An aim of the study was to analyse teachers' regard for adolescent perspectives in teaching and feedback dialogues

with students. Teacher–student interactions show low quality scores of regard for adolescent perspectives, and the mathematics lessons have consistently lower scores of quality than the English lessons. The results indicate that attention to adolescent perspectives seems to be a neglected aspect in classroom teaching in elementary school. We argue that through developing a teaching practice with an emphasis on adolescent perspectives the school might help create space for students to be more active participants in the learning process, and we might see innovative teaching practices emerge.

The integration of student voice from primary – through secondary school

Voice and choice of students depend on factors such as age level, content, type (e.g. survey or student councils) and many others. One of the principles guiding student voice is that student achievement and engagement will increase when students have more ownership of their school community. In Norway, each school from primary to secondary has a student council. The first student council in Norway was established on March 6, 1919 (Hareide, 1972). Student council became statutory and obligatory for each school in 1964. These councils are regulated by law today and give the students a possibility to get ownership of rules, activities and content in own school (KD, 1998). In the Education Act following paragraphs are stated:

- The students are to participate in the planning and implementation of the work for a safe and good school environment. The student council may appoint representatives to attend to the pupils' interests vis-à-vis the school and the authorities in school environment matters. If there is a working environment selection or similar body at the school, the students can meet up to two representatives when the committee deals with issues that concern the school environment. Representatives will be called in to meet with the right to speak and the right to have their say recorded. They shall not be present when the committee deals with matters that contain information covered by statutory obligation to provide information. (KD, 1998, §9A-8)

Further, the student council is expected to be informed about important issues for school environment – and can express their perceptions of quality or need for improvements. The law expresses how students' rights can be seen due to school environment:

- The collaborative committee, the school committee, the school environment selection, the student council and the parents shall keep informed about everything that is important for the school environment, and as early as possible to cope with the work on school environment measures. They have the right to access all documentation that applies to the systematic work for a safe and good school environment and has the right to comment and present in all matters that are important to the school environment. (KD, 1998, §9A-9)

The student councils at Norwegian schools are also an important arena for learning about democracy and a significant part of moral development. These councils come through dialogue, reflecting on experiences, and looking at how our behaviour affects others. We refer to the theory of Kohlberg (1989) to explain our theoretical position, since there seems to be

a lack of research on student councils in the Norwegian context.

Another powerful forum for supporting democracy and moral development is the class meeting. There is a tradition of holding regular class meetings in elementary and secondary school in Norway, but these are not regulated by law anymore. Still, schools in Norway have a tradition to conduct these meetings, and questions from the class meetings might further be sent to the schools' student council to be solved. Everyday activities and conflicts—e.g. who gets the soccer field during recess, how to deal with bullying or stealing—provide the content for learning, shared decision-making and problem solving in class meetings. During the meeting, students might learn democratic participation through discussions and that their fellow students might have different beliefs than themselves. This is achieved through several different methods in different age groups and contexts. For example, from primary school students learn to take turns and listen and express own points of view, how to make I-statements, how to support what they say with argumentations, and as they get older also how to evaluate an idea critically, without attacking the person who gave it. Students also experience that the majority will often be heard, and when such meetings happen on a regular basis, each student should be able to experience what it is like to be a part of both a minority and a majority in different matters – and the idea of democracy and democratic citizenship.

New Curriculum and student voice

From 2020, students in primary and secondary schools in Norway will be introduced to a new curriculum. The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training will be renewed. Teachers, school leaders, researchers, policy makers and student organisation have discussed and defined what will be essential for promotion of future skills. Further, the student organisation is also represented in an expert panel selected by the Ministry of Education and Research to discuss what types of exams are needed in the renewed curriculum and what type of exams and summative assessment are perceived as useful and relevant by the students in Norway. Students in Norway meet their first examinations in 10th grade.

The New Curriculum (renewal of the existing one) is a subject renewal which includes all subjects in primary and lower secondary education and the general subjects in upper secondary education. The subject renewal aims to provide a curriculum that prepares students for the future, by making the subjects more relevant in terms of content, and give clearer priorities. The coherence across specific school subjects from today's curriculum should also be improved. The subject renewal shall strengthen the development of the students' in-depth learning and understanding.

The core curriculum is an important factor when defining the intended room for student voice in Norway (Norwegian Government, 2018). On its 19 pages, the core curriculum elaborates the core values in the objectives clause of the Education Act and the overriding principles for primary and secondary education and training. It comprises an introduction as well as three chapters: 1. Core values of the education and training, 2. Principles for learning, development and education of young people and 3. Principles for school practice. The core curriculum gives direction for the teaching and training in each subject and across subjects. There are some aspects we would like to highlight as particularly relevant to the topic of student voice.

First of all, the teaching and training are explicitly linked to promoting belief in democratic values

and in democracy as a form of government. The core curriculum states that education:

> shall give pupils an understanding of the basic rules of democracy and the importance of protecting them. Participating in society means respecting and endorsing fundamental democratic values such as mutual respect, tolerance, individual freedom of faith and speech and free elections. Democratic values shall be promoted through active participation throughout the entire learning path.

Active participation is thus highlighted as a prerequisite for the development of democratic values, which in turn will require schools to encourage students to participate in a range of decision-making and democratic discourse. Further, the core curriculum highlights the following when it comes to student participation:

> Pupil involvement must be a part of the school practice. The pupils must participate and assume co-responsibility in the learning environment which they create together with the teachers every day. Pupils think, experience and learn in interaction with others through learning processes, communication and collaboration. The school shall teach the pupils to demonstrate good judgment when they express themselves about others and shall ensure that they learn to interact in an appropriate way in varying contexts.

Today's traditional subjects (e.g. mathematics, social sciences) are retained in the New Curriculum, but the goals and content will be renewed. An aim is that students should develop their competencies in critical thinking and reflection, and deeper learning is emphasized. Metacognitive approaches to instruction have shown to increase the degree to which students will transfer to situations without the need for explicit prompting since they become more self-regulated (Andrade, 2010). Further, the cognitive- and metacognitive strategies teachers use to enhance students' understanding and engagement in work with instructional content are important for student learning (Zimmerman, 2000). Student voice can allow students to explore their passions and feel honoured for their ideas and opinions, which further might raise student engagement in learning (Pöysä et al, 2018; Vattøy & Gamlem, forthcoming). In the New Curriculum, there will also be room for more creativity, and a clear ambition is that students should "learn how to learn" – and develop their approaches to own learning processes and development, rather than the traditional, rote learning by memorization that has been identified as a problem in a range of studies.

In many ways, the new core curriculum defines student participation as key factor, as we can see from the ambitious quotes above. Students should, through education, be empowered to understand the connection between actions and consequences and how they can find solutions through knowledge and cooperation. But what does this look like in practice? What do the Norwegian teachers actually do to include their students? While there are no suggested didactic methods or approaches in the curriculum, and while Norwegian teachers have the freedom and autonomy to use the methods they find suitable, we see these newly phrased ambitions in direct relation to student voice. We cannot imagine how students could meet the ambitions of the new curricula without a shift in what it means to be in the student role, and while the concept of student voice has been a part of Norwegian education policy for a long time, the new curricula reinforce and strengthen this idea. This is perhaps most evident where the core curriculum emphasizes that students should influence every aspect of education that is relevant to them (KD, 1998). As we see it,

most of the decisions made during a school day – concerning assessment, teaching methods, content and work formats – fall into that category.

For students to develop competencies and skills that will be valuable to meet the unknown future, students will need to learn to learn and work with approaches to deeper learning in order to be able to transfer skills, procedures and knowledge from one task to open-ended assignments where solutions are not known (Smith, Gamlem, Sandal, & Engelsen, 2016; Norwegian Government, 2018; Rogne & Gamlem, 2017). Not only can voice and choice create more engagement in learning, but giving students agency can also empower them to become self-directed learners and enhance their learning. In Norway, the schools (and teachers) have autonomy and responsibility to decide on content and strategies for facilitating student learning. Teachers are obliged to follow the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education, but how they will do this is up to them to decide.

Individualization and student voice

Are individualization and student voice the same? Several studies have shown how western schools around the world have moved from a more collective approach targeting the class, to a more individualistic approach where the teacher attempts to guide each individual student (Bergqvist, 2012; Biesta 2005; Popkevitz). This is also a trend in the Nordic countries, as emphasized by Klette et al (2017) and also by Carlgren et al (2006), who explain how this change is "reframing the meaning and content of schooling. The idea of the educated citizen seems to have been replaced by the separated individual responsible for his/her own life (p.303)". Scholars have also argued that the introduction of educational technologies such as 1:1 tablets can increase individualization (Selwyn, 2016; Blikstad-Balas & Davies, 2018). Our point is that while the preferences of each student may be taken into account and tailored to, for example, a specific app (Selwyn, 2016) or a choice on which individual tasks to solve (Dalland & Klette 2014), this does not necessarily mean that student voice is strengthened in the classroom. As we mentioned in the beginning, student voice has to be understood as giving students the ability to influence learning on different levels as to include policies, programmes, contexts and principles. In order to do so, they must be heard, not only by themselves when making individual choices, but in the social context of the classroom.

Conclusion

In this article we have presented several approaches to how students are given voice in Norway. Not only can voice create more engagement in student learning, but giving students agency can also empower them to become self-directed learners and to see the needs and values of future skills and education. Voice and choice can also allow students to explore their passions and feel honoured for their ideas and opinions.

In Norway, we have had a rather long tradition of emphasising student voice from primary through secondary school and the first student council was established in the early 1900 century. Student participation in class meetings and the school council might be a valuable experience for understanding the idea of democracy and democratic citizenship. Further, the ongoing

Norwegian curriculum renewal emphasizes student voice and an active student role in primary and secondary education. Students' rights are regulated by law and give the students a possibility to get ownership of rules, activities and content in own school (KD, 1998). Still, the challenge seems to be that students are given more responsibility in the classroom, perhaps without more actual possibilities to impact the ways teachers teach, how they assess students and other crucial matters in education. It is a paradox that while student voice is considered so important in the Norwegian policy documents, classroom researches tend to show that the quality of classroom discourse and opportunity for student talk is limited (Andersson-Bakken, 2014; Klette et al, 2017). Students seldom report that they have high influence on choices in the classroom (Roe, 2019) and student perspectives seem to be a neglected aspect of the teaching and feedback dialogues (Gamlem & Munthe, 2014; Vattøy & Gamlem, forthcoming).

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Learner Voice to Learner Participation – Scotland's Journey

student voice

SCOTLAND

guth an oileanaich

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Abstract

Scotland has been on an exciting and rewarding journey for over 20 years. The journey has taken us from merely talking about recognising the learner voice to promoting learners' participation in issues that affect them across the education system. This article describes milestones that have marked key points in this journey and explores them from different perspectives within formal education and beyond. In the past, schools created Pupil Councils and committees to encourage the learner voice by empowering representative learners to influence curriculum activity, changes to local services, and school improvements. Over the years, this has evolved in many schools to involving all learners in school improvements and expanding their involvement in local, national and global issues. It has also extended learner participation beyond the scope of decision-making groups to empowering learners to lead their own learning, the learning of others, and active participation in school evaluation. This article sets out the ambitions, achievements and stages of that journey. It considers learner participation at Scotland level, at school level, and at learner level. It also outlines the development of learner participation beyond the school stages.

Introduction

"Scotland is fortunate to have a rich and vibrant civil society which does amazing work with and for children and young people. Their views and experience must inform the decisions we make today if we truly want to make a better Scotland for tomorrow."

Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland

(Children's Parliament, 2017, p5)

Context

The Scottish Government's vision is that Scotland is the best place for a child to grow up, with opportunities for all in Scotland to flourish. An integral part of that vision is the recognition of, respect for and promotion of children's human rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified in 1991 by the UK government, is a cornerstone in the development of the learner voice in Scotland – and now learner participation. The Scottish Government has subsequently built children's rights into legislation through the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Scottish Government, 2014), which places a duty on all Scottish Ministers to take any steps which might secure a better effect in Scotland of the UNCRC requirements. This includes obtaining the views of children to inform their future plans.

The Scottish Government's Programmes for Government, published over the last three years, place increasing emphasis on learner participation. The 2018 – 19 Programme (Scottish Government, 2018) saw a significant increase in the number of areas and expectations in relation to learner participation, which went well beyond education. These included:

- the role of children and young people in the Task Force on Children and Young People's Mental Health Improvement;
- the introduction of a Scottish Learner Panel to be chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills;
- further work to increase the effectiveness of the UNCRC in Scotland; and
- a commitment to continue to engage young people directly in policy-making.

Developing learner participation at Scotland level

The education policy landscape in Scotland to promote and embed learner participation has developed over the last 20 years. One of the key policies in this area is Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) which spans the ages of 3-18. Curriculum for Excellence supports children and young people to gain the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities which underpin the four capacities required for life in the 21st century. Children's rights, embedded in the UNCRC, are at the heart of CfE.

"The purpose of the curriculum is to help children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (the four capacities). The framework therefore puts the learner at the centre of the curriculum." (Education Scotland, 2008, p11)

These skills support children and young people to gain the knowledge, attributes and capabilities which underpin the four capacities.

Since its inception, one of the strongest messages associated with CfE has been that it has *the learner at the centre.* In order to realise fully the capabilities and attributes listed under the four capacities, a shift was required to increase the focus on learners' involvement and engagement in their education in different ways. This included, for example:

- increasing learner participation by children planning their own learning and next steps;
- extending opportunities for pupils to lead their own and others' learning; and
- empowering pupils to evaluate and improve their own educational settings, as well as their local and wider communities.

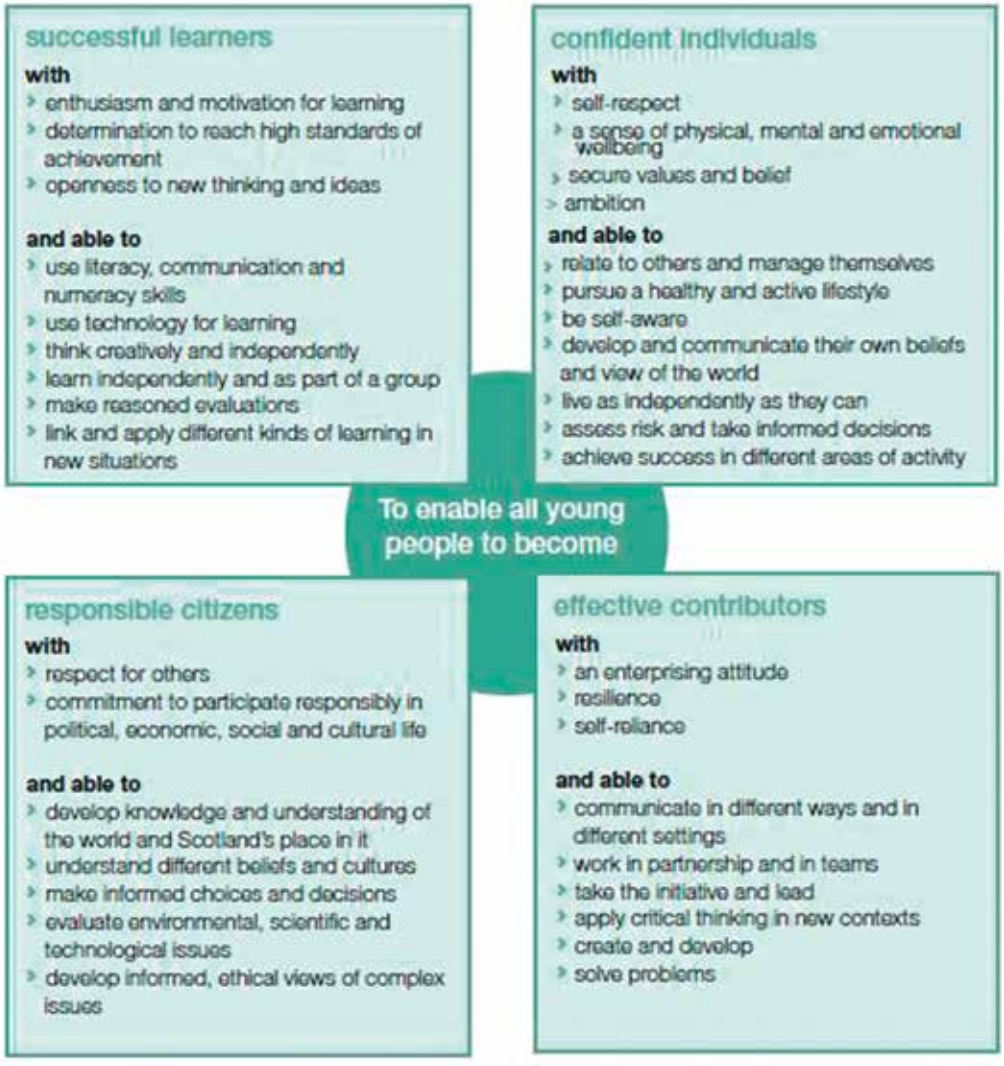

Figure 1. The four capacities. (Education Scotland, 2008, p22)

Developing learner participation at school level

Authentic participation of children and young people within school improvement requires the development of a culture and ethos amongst everyone involved in the school community that:

- recognises the benefits of learner participation;
- understands fully what is meant by the term 'learner participation'; and
- provides many opportunities for learner participation to take place within different contexts.

There is now considerable evidence from research supporting the view that addressing learner participation helps effective policy-making, enhances school life and improves a range of outcomes for learners. In particular, research published in 2015 by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (University of Stirling, 2015) highlighted a strong correlation between schools' approaches to learner participation and levels of achievement and attainment.

A joint project between Education Scotland and the University of Stirling provided further guidance to educational establishments. *Learner Participation in Educational Settings* (Education Scotland, 2018) provided illustrations of good practice to help establish a clear Scottish definition of learner participation, with accompanying principles and examples of the scope of participation within educational settings.

> *'Learner participation in schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings includes all of the ways in which children and young people engage in practices and dialogue with educational staff, parents, carers, and community members to create positive outcomes and changes.' (Education Scotland, 2018, page 2)*

The resource emphasises that participation should be about matters that affect children and young people so that they see participation as relevant. They should also feel that it is not tokenistic, but has a purpose and that their views will be heard and valued.

The resource scopes out four 'arenas of participation' which outline all the places in which participation can take place. Participation is extended beyond the scope of decision-making groups to, for example, children giving their opinions on aspects of lessons including the content and delivery. The four arenas are:

- learning, teaching and assessment e.g. within the classroom or other learning environments;
- opportunities for personal achievement e.g. in volunteering;
- decision-making groups e.g. in Pupil Councils and eco committees; and
- wider community e.g. within local community projects or more international areas of focus.

Initial evidence from the pilot and consultation with schools indicates that further clarity on what is involved in participation is welcomed. Schools are able to identify more readily the different areas in which they have already established effective practice and take this forward to develop practice more widely in a range of settings.

Developing learner participation in school self-evaluation

Scotland has a strong culture of self-evaluation. This has been supported and actively promoted by the *How good is our ...?* set of guidance documents, the first of which was published in 1996 and structured as a set of Quality Indicators.

How good is our school? 4th Edition (Education Scotland, 2015) includes a streamlined framework of Quality Indicators. As in previous versions of *How good is our school?,* these Quality Indicators inform school self-evaluation and are also used by Her Majesty's Inspectors for school inspections, ensuring that there are shared expectations of standards and quality. There are a number of significant changes in the 4th edition of the *How good is our school?* framework. In this version the focus is on collaborative approaches to self-evaluation, the analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data and the impact on learners' successes and achievements. One of the most relevant changes in considering learner participation is an increased expectation that establishments use collaboration and partnership within, between and beyond schools to secure improvement that impacts positively on every child and young person in Scotland. There is also a clear message that children and young people should be actively involved in self-evaluation and school improvement.

> *'Pupil participation is a strong feature of our approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. All stakeholders, including children and young people, have a shared ownership of this evidence and use it to plan continuous improvement,* (Education Scotland, 2015, p19)

Many schools are developing their own mechanisms for enhancing learner participation in school improvement. For example High Schools in East Lothian recognised that their existing Pupil Council model was limited in its effectiveness at involving learners in the wider life of the school, and responded in different ways. Ross High School developed a new model with a Junior Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team to complement the work of the Pupil Council and focus more on school improvement. Team members go through an application and interview process, and have been involved subsequently in learning and teaching evaluation, support for school activity such as parental engagement, and in recruitment of new staff.

In 2018, schools were provided with further practical support to involve children and young people fully in their learning and school improvement. The *How good is OUR school? A resource to support learner participation in self-evaluation and school improvement (*Education Scotland, 2018) was developed to support learner participation in school self-evaluation. Education Scotland engaged extensively with children and young people across Scotland prior to the production of this innovative resource. Workshops were used to identify the aspects of school life over which they felt they should have some direct influence. The themes are linked to the quality indicators in *How good is our school?* and form the basis of the resource:

- our relationships
- our learning and teaching
- our school and community

- our health and wellbeing
- our successes and achievements.

The framework is designed in such a way that children and young people can take responsibility for leading aspects of self-evaluation and contribute evidence to support whole-school self-evaluation. Education Scotland is developing a *Young Leaders of Learning* programme to empower children and young people to be involved in this process (see Case Study 1).

Learners' participation in leading their learning in schools

In 2015, the importance of providing learners with opportunities for leading their learning was extended in *How good is our school? 4th Edition* in the Quality Indicator 1:2 Leadership of Learning with a very clear message about improving outcomes for children through enabling them to lead their own learning. Very good practice is illustrated as:

> *'We provide a wide range of opportunities and support to ensure children and young people can take responsibility for their own learning, successes and achievements. Our learners are developing the necessary resilience and confidence to enable them to make decisions about their own learning and to lead others' learning. They demonstrate this in a range of learning contexts within the school and community. Children and young people value the professional advice and expertise of school staff and others who support their learning and decision-making. They actively engage in communication and discussions about their next steps and* contribute *to planning learning pathways which meet their needs and aspirations.* (Education Scotland, 2015, p22)'

Portmoak Primary School has recently been praised by Education Scotland for highly-effective practice in its approach to developing children as leaders of their own learning. The school's improvement journey began with learners recording their learning and teachers identifying evidence of this progress, then sharing with learners and parents. Over seven years, these arrangements have evolved and now children are able to talk about themselves as learners more confidently. Decisions on the direction of travel have been shaped by the voice of learners and families. The school is using *Learner's Journey Jotters* that include individual targets, reflections on their learning, examples of work, photographs and records of the children sharing their learning with their teachers. The current focus at Portmoak Primary School is to use digital tools to enhance the sharing of learning between home and school. A resource, *Learning is better when children talk about their learning* (Education Scotland, 2019) has been created to share this excellent practice and to encourage other schools to reflect on their own journey and identify their strengths and areas for development. Case Study 2

provides another illustration of children leading their learning at Middleton Park Primary School.

This expectation was reinforced in 2016 in the Early Years setting with the same Quality Indicator 1:2 included in *How good is our early learning and childcare?* (Education Scotland, 2016). It illustrates very good practice as follows.

> *'Children are consistently encouraged to choose and lead interactions in their own learning in play and in real-life contexts. They are becoming increasingly confident in interacting with others, discussing possibilities and reasoning out answers to a self-satisfying conclusion within an exciting range of indoor and outdoor learning experiences. Taking very good account of children's age and stage of development, practitioners are flexible and responsive in their approach as they encourage children to discuss and plan their learning, enjoy their successes and share their achievements'. (Education Scotland, 2016, page 14)*

A practice exemplar, (Education Scotland, Jan 2018) shows how staff at Auchlane Nature Kindergarten plan children's learning with them to ensure it is meaningful and relevant. The children's words, ideas and suggestions are all recorded in large floor books together with photographs, drawings and adult observations. These are then analysed to plan the future learning. Documenting the learning in the large floor books ensures that children have ownership of their learning and makes their voices visible across all aspects of learning.

Learner participation in Scotland's colleges

In Scotland, learner participation thrives beyond the school sector. Scotland's colleges have long-established and well-embedded approaches to learner participation. The maturity of these approaches illustrates highly effective practice from which schools can learn (see Case Study 3). Scotland's colleges are providers of post-compulsory (post-16 years old) education and vocational training to about 240,000 students across the country each year.

In 2008, a radically new set of arrangements to ensure quality in the college sector was introduced. These arrangements focused greatly on the quality of the learner experience and learner participation. At that early stage in the journey, colleges focused on two main aspects of learner participation. They were required to consider the question: *How well are learners engaged in enhancing their own learning, and the work and life of the college?* Through this question, colleges evaluated themselves on how well they engaged learners at course level and at whole-college level in the co-creation of their learning experience. Learners were encouraged and enabled to engage in decision-making in all areas of college operations, and colleges acknowledged and acted upon learners' contributions.

Over the following eleven years, learner participation in colleges has become more refined and effective. Such is its importance in colleges that the Scottish Funding Council also

funds an organisation called *sparqs*[3] (Student Partnership in Quality Scotland), which provides support to college learners, at all levels of engagement, in shaping the quality of their learning experience.

In 2006, HMIE (a predecessor organisation of Education Scotland) began to include a college learner in teams of inspectors when colleges were being reviewed. These Student Team Members soon became a well-established feature of college reviews. They continue to be well regarded by colleges and they make a significant contribution to learner participation across Scotland.

Learner participation outwith formal education

Youth participation, the practice of young people leading, negotiating, influencing and being partners in decision-making, is integral to youth work practice in Scotland. Scotland is one of only a handful of nations in Europe that has a discrete National Youth Work Strategy (YouthLink, 2014) which was developed jointly by the Scottish Government, YouthLink Scotland, Education Scotland and the youth work sector. Rights and participation are key priorities in the current 2014-19 strategy. It has a clear ambition to 'put young people at the heart of policy' which includes requirements for local and national participative opportunities to empower young people to engage effectively in decision-making.

Youth work supports young people up to the age of 25 to express their voice and play an active and positive role in their communities. The essential and definitive features of youth work in Scotland are that:

- young people choose to participate;
- the work must build from where young people are; and
- youth work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process. *(YouthLink Scotland, 2006, p2)*

High quality youth participation is characterised by meaningful and effective engagement, where young people are supported and resourced to participate and where barriers to participation have been removed. Active measures are taken to hear the views of all young people including children and young people with disabilities and those affected by inequality as a result of poverty, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or identity.

Year of Young People

Another milestone in supporting the development of learner participation in Scotland was Scottish Government's Year of Young People[4] (YoYP) in 2018. The aim of YoYP 2018 was to inspire Scotland through its young people: celebrating their achievements, valuing their contribution to communities and creating new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and globally.

3 Student Partnership in Quality Scotland https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/index.php

4 Year of Young People 2018 https://yoyp2018.scot/

"Year of Young People put the spotlight on 8 to 26 year olds, giving them new and powerful ways to express their creativity, skills and talents on a global stage." (Year of Young People, 2018)

Throughout the Year, there was a particular focus on planning activity which addressed the six key themes as identified by young people during the planning of the Year – Participation, Education, Health and Wellbeing, Equality and Discrimination, Enterprise and Regeneration and Culture.

YoYP also created a wide range of opportunities to co-design projects with young people themselves and work in collaboration with partners in the third sector.

The youth work sector has played a big part in the success of YoYP and is central to continuing to lead and influence the development of inclusive and meaningful youth participation as a legacy of the Year. Youth work partners will work with Scottish Government to develop a new youth work strategy from 2019. The Government is also committed to developing a Participation Framework.

Scottish Learner Panel

In autumn 2018, The Scottish Learner Panel[5] was established by the Scottish Government and supported by Young Scot, Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament. The panel of 30 children and young people, aged 3 to 18, is providing a more structured approach to gathering young people's perspectives on national policy. The Panel's work, which has been focusing on wellbeing, learning and participation, will be collated and will inform future options for the role of the Panel as well as influencing a range of policies. The Panel, or an appropriate evolution in the method and approach, is expected to be a long-term legacy of the Year of Young People. In addition, young people once again played a role in shaping the priorities and content for the 2019 Scottish Learning Festival, the main annual set piece professional learning event for teachers, practitioners and the education sector, with around 4,500 attending over two days.

Scottish Government policy leads will continue to monitor and review the quality and extent of learner participation in shaping and influencing specific policy areas.

Conclusion and reflections

Learner participation is a strength of Scottish Education, and present in many forms. Evidence demonstrates that learner participation has a significant, positive effect on young people's achievement. Scotland's young people have increasing opportunities throughout their time in early learning, primary and secondary school, at college and in the community to have genuine participation in shaping their own learning, in developing the curriculum offer in their educational settings, and in shaping local and government policy.

This system change has been very well supported by strong political backing. The Scottish Government provides empowering guidance and training materials to strengthen learner participation to facilitate the growing excellent practice that is established and emerging across all educational sectors. One

5 Scottish Learner Panel https://www.syp.org.uk/scottish_learner_panel

recent example is the publication of a Refreshed Narrative[6] for Curriculum for Excellence which will have a renewed emphasis on the four capacities, reinforcing the importance of learners being at the heart of education from ages 3-18.

Recently, Education Scotland has offered a creative approach to capturing the needs and wishes of learners, of all ages, using "Imagine If ..."[7] questions and creativity skills activities for learners and practitioners. This is proving to be very effective in generating rich discussions around improving the curriculum, founded on the voices of learners.

Some schools have also been taking a 'Service Design' approach to ensure that their learners are fully involved in the co-design of their curriculum. The purpose of Service Design in education is to establish best practices for designing services according to both the needs of learners, parents and partners and the competencies and capabilities of the practitioners. This has involved learners, practitioners and partners working together to identify barriers to success and to then create solutions in an open and collaborative way.

Scotland is proud of its journey from recognising the importance of the learner voice to promoting effective learner participation across the education system and beyond. Policy makers, national agencies and practitioners have created a very strong platform to develop the learner voice further across all sectors of learning in Scotland and to ensure that the effective practice that has been identified is shared and adapted to provide a consistent high quality of learning participation across all educational settings.

6 www.scotlandscurriculum.scot

7 Imagine if ... https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/imagine-if-approaching-the-curriculum-creatively

Case studies

Case study 1 – Young Leaders of Learning programme

As part of the Scottish Government's programme, Education Scotland is developing a Young Leaders of Learning programme. The aim is for children and young people to be able to increase their engagement in the process of improving outcomes in schools and develop how we listen to their views.

The aim is to support schools' own self-evaluation activities as young people will be able to share practice and become more familiar with the language and processes of school improvement. Schools involved are taking part in reciprocal visits, working in teams of two or three. The aim of the visits is to identify strengths, and potential areas for improvement which pupils from the host school take forward with the senior leadership team.

The programme has been trialled in Aberdeen where 16 primary schools and three secondary schools are involved. They have focussed on the theme of 'relationships' and have identified many areas of improvement for their own and other schools around matters such as playground improvements, rewards and sanctions, and improving pupil voice and leadership. Feedback has been positive. Pupils engaged in the project have reported that their confidence has improved and schools are listening to their views and implementing changes. Supporting staff have also had the opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues in other establishments, and to reflect on their own practice.

A 'training for trainers' approach is being developed to create a toolkit of resources for

staff to use in their own schools. This will build capacity within local authorities and enable them to build, extend and sustain the programme nationwide.

https://youtu.be/x3kssuVlV_8
https://youtu.be/q8eiLQolclA

Case study 2 – Planning for real

This case study details the leading role of Primary 7 (the final year of primary education in Scotland) children at Middleton Park School in transforming two outdoor play spaces during 2018/19.

The children began with an investigation about how the early years children were using the existing outdoor spaces. They observed how the children played and the spaces they used the most. They used their observations to inform their design and worked with their class teacher and outdoor specialists to create draft designs.

These were tested with the early years children and work then began in measuring the designated areas and calculating the resources that would be required. The Primary 7 children took responsibility for collating the lists of resources and writing business letters and emails, phoning businesses and working with Outdoor Specialists and Environmental Services to seek funding and to source free and recycled resources.

As the resources started to arrive in school, the Primary 7 children became part of the workforce to install and create their designs. During their final term in Primary 7 they were able to enjoy observing the younger children playing in their spaces and to evaluate the success of their work.

This initiative involved the Primary 7 children in planning, delivering and evaluating one of the school's improvement plan priorities. It empowered the children to be leaders of their learning and to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in real contexts. This way of working involved the children in creating sustainable solutions to improve their own school's grounds and to leave a lasting legacy in their school and their community. The children have recorded their journey through films and their work will be shared across Aberdeen City schools through a document called 'Naturalising your outdoor space on a budget.'

https://vimeo.com/277312669
https://vimeo.com/294323034

Case study 3 – Learner engagement at Forth Valley College: an example of excellent practice

Forth Valley College is one of Scotland's leading and highest performing colleges. It has a very active Student Association (SA), which is run solely by students – two full-time elected sabbatical officers, as well as a number of elected voluntary officers. The SA team works very closely with college management in a spirit of true partnership to influence college decision-making in a variety of ways. Its focus is to improve the quality of students' experience, both within and outwith the classroom. The Student President and Vice President are members of the college Board of Management (which governs the college), where they contribute fully to Board business. Officers are also active members of internal college committees and working groups, which provide a very effective vehicle for consultation on college strategies and plans. In recent years, the college and the SA have worked together to achieve Fairtrade status (the first college in Scotland to achieve this); implement a Carers' Charter to support

student carers; and to enhance support for the increasing numbers of students experiencing mental health issues.

The SA also supports the recruitment of around 300 class representatives each year from across the college and provides these representatives with comprehensive training and support for their role. Class representatives meet together at Student Council meetings, bringing the voice of all students whom they represent. A member of the college's Senior Management Team attends these meetings, which provide an opportunity for the representatives to give feedback on the wider student experience and give ideas and suggestions for enhancing college services.

Empowering students to influence and co-create their learning is very important to the college. Key to this success are the *Listening to Learners Focus Groups*, which are held twice each year with every class. A carefully-designed set of questions focuses the discussion on the quality of students' learning. The focus groups are facilitated by a member of college staff in collaboration with the Class Representative. This routinely leads to changes that enhance learning for those specific students. For example, the students influence the pace and sequence of learning, assessment schedules, learning activities and the use of technologies to support and enhance learning.

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LUXEMBOURG

d'stëmm vun de schüler

FRANCE

la parole des élèves

student

tanulók hangja

HUNGARY

NORWAY

elevens stemme

zëri i nxënësve

KOSOVO

SWEDEN

elevinflytande

de stem van de leerling

THE NEDERLANDS

glas učenika

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

voice

IRELAND

guth an scoláire

õpilase hääl

ESTONIA

glas učenca

SLOVENIA

SCOTLAND

guth an oileanaich