

ENSEC 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference, Izmir, Turkey

*Conference sub-theme*

Emancipatory research:

children and young people as partners in research

*9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2009*

**The radical potential  
of student voice:  
creating spaces for restless  
encounter**

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## The radical potential of student voice: creating spaces for restless encounter

- 1. Adults and young people as partners in research**
2. Emancipation or enervation?
3. On the poverty of high performance schooling: retrieving education as human flourishing
4. Creating spaces for restless encounter
5. Innovation is not enough: why we need our radical traditions

# Range of Student Voice Activities (1)

## *Peer support*

- \* Buddying systems
- \* Peer tutoring / listening
- \* Peer teaching
- \* Peer mediator
- \* Circle time (same year / mixed age)

# Range of Student Voice Activities (2)

## *Organisational reflection + renewal*

- \* School / student councils
- \* Ideas booths      \* Graffiti walls
- \* Listening posts   \* Mixed-age Circle Time
- \* Student teams
- \* Working party reps   \* Student governors
- \* Student ambassadors   \* Tour guides
- \* Appointment panels
- \* Junior Leadership Team
- \* School Improvement Plans / policy writing

# Range of Student Voice Activities (3)

## *Teaching & Learning*

- \* AfL
- \* Lead-learners
- \* Students as Learning Partners
- \* Students-as-co-researchers
- \* Students-as-researchers
- \* Student-led learning walks
- \* Evaluating work units
- \* Dept / Unit development plans

# Range of Student Voice Activities (4)



## *Classroom consultation*

*(with your own class  
+ throughout the school)*



- \* Classroom observation (including SALPs)
- \* Video recording \* Drama / role-play
- \* Questionnaires \* Logs / scrapbooks
- \* 'Transforming learning' \* Drawings
- \* Focus groups \* Interviews
- \* Suggestion boxes \* Diaries
- \* Photos \* Collage
- \* Learning Review Meetings

# Range of Student Voice Activities (5)

## *Community engagement / citizenship*

### \*RRR (Rights Respect Responsibility)

- \* commitment to international work
- \* whole community involvement in

### \*Student Action Teams

- ✓ *Learning & Teaching*
- ✓ *Environment*
- ✓ *Citizenship / Political Voice*
- ✓ *Student Health & Welfare*

+ Student reps in

- Town Council*    *District Youth Council*
- Regional Youth Council*

### \*Youth Council /Parliament

### \*Child-to-Child projects

## Key Assumptions of *Students as Researchers*

- 1 Young people and adults often have quite **different views of what is significant or important** in their experience of and hopes for **learning**
- 2 Even when they identify similar issues as important, they can **mean quite different things** by them
- 3 These **differences** are potentially a **source of creativity** rather than unproductive conflict
- 4 If we **start from students' questions** (as well as, or even instead of, teachers' questions) and **support their capacity to pursue their enquiries**, we often find that **new knowledge emerges** about learning, teaching + ourselves as teachers + learners
- 5 For this process to be productive and engaging, we need to **create conditions of dialogue** in which we listen to and learn from each other in new ways for new purposes

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## ***Student voice***

### **five key questions for teachers**

#### **1 Purposes and values**

*‘Why are we doing this?’*

- **Why** is this work being **encouraged / resisted**?
- **In whose interests?**
- **Who benefits + why?**

#### **2 Power and control**

*‘Whose voices are heard mostly clearly?’*

- Who is allowed to **speak**? About **what**?
- Who gets **heard**? By **whom**?
- Who is **listening**? **Why**?

*Student voice*  
**five key questions for teachers**

**3 Capacities and dispositions**

*‘What skills and attitudes do we need to develop to make this work?’*

- How are the **appropriate skills** developed?
- How do people **regard / care for each other?**
- Are they **taking it seriously?**
- Do some people feel **threatened?**

*Student voice*  
**five key questions for teachers**

**4 Systems and structures**

*‘How will the school support people committed to pupil voice?’*

- Do we have appropriate **systems and structures** that **support people who are interested?**
- Are there **public /communal**, as well as smaller, more intimate **spaces to make meaning** of recommendations and **decide what should be done?**

## *Student voice*

### five key questions for teachers

#### 5 Actions and responsibilities

*‘Does anything actually change?’*

- What actually **happens**?
- **Who** decides?
- Who has **responsibility for embedding** the change?
- How do we **hold** ourselves / each other **to account**?
- How is the change **monitored** and **evaluated**? By **whom**?

## *Student voice*

### **six cautions for academic researchers**

1. **Resist re-description** in line with your own interests
2. Beware the **impulse to control**
3. Make sure you question the **correctness of how things are done** at present
4. Acknowledge your own **discursive location** / position of **power**
5. Make yourself **open to criticism**
6. Be aware of the dangers of **unwitting dis-empowerment**

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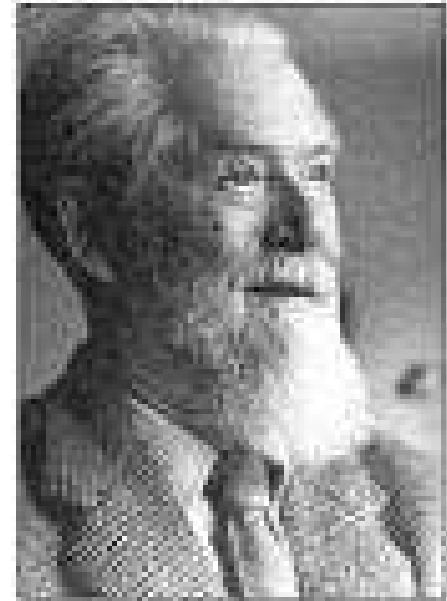
# Back to Basics: *relationships and human flourishing*

## Functional relationships

- Instrumental, get things done

## Personal relationships

- Develop our humanity
- ➔ What is the relationship between the functional and the personal in creative, just societies?



# The Functional & the Personal

- They are **opposites** with a tension between them
  - They are **inseparable** and limit one another
  - They are **essential to one another** and form a unity
- 
- Any attempt to **fuse** them or absorb one into the other will fail because they are opposites
  - Any attempt to **separate** them will fail because they limit one another
  - Any effort to run them **parallel** with one another **without relating them** will break down because they form an essential unity

# The Proper Relation between the Functional and the Personal?

- The **functional** is for the sake of the  
**personal**
- The **functional** is transformed by /  
expressive of the **personal**

# Organisational & Communal Orientation of Schools

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Impersonal Organisation</b> <i>Efficient</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The <b>Functional</b> marginalises the <b>Personal</b></i></p>	<p>Community / relationships get in the way of organisational purposes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Affective Community</b> <i>Restorative</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The <b>Personal</b> marginalises the <b>Functional</b></i></p>	<p>Community / relationships have few organisational consequences</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>High Performance Learning Organisation</b> <i>Effective</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The <b>Personal</b> is for the sake of the <b>Functional</b></i></p>	<p>Community / relationships a useful tool for organisational purposes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Person Centred Learning Community</b> <i>Morally &amp; instrumentally satisfying</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The <b>Functional</b> is for the sake of the <b>Personal</b></i></p>	<p>Organisation exists to promote community / relationships</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Participatory democracy</b> <i>Enabling democratic living together</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The <b>Person</b> is constitutive and expressive of the <b>Communal</b></i></p>	<p>Inclusive community / relationships the basis of radical democracy</p>

# Personal relations and contemporary schooling

## High performance schooling

The *personal* is for the sake of  
the *functional*

Instrumental use of trust +  
relationships to improve  
performance / retention

- 'Have a nice day'
- More tutorials to raise test scores
- Creativity + Every Child Matters to boost standards

## Person centred education

The *functional* is for the sake of  
the *personal*

Mutual trust, care + respect  
inform + enhance more  
wide-ranging achievement

- Genuinely engaging
- Personal encounter at the heart of daily work
- Education in and for a democratic society

## 2 approaches to student voice

### High performance schooling

- Use of SV to increase performance
- Technologically + emotionally sophisticated
- Multiple managed opportunities to listen to pupil views within tightly managed staff framework

### Person centred education

- SV as exploratory partnership
- Emotionally authentic, technology informed by concern for persons
- Reciprocal listening resulting in emergent foci and wide-ranging agendas

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*New Developments in Student Voice: Shaping schools for the future*  
**BEYOND STUDENT VOICE TO DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY**

## **Radical inclusion**

*involving those whose voices are seldom heard*

- **Rehearsing for reality – young women’s ‘space to deal with ourselves’**

*(London Borough of Newham)*

- Teenage Parents Program (TAPP)  
*(Canada)*
- COPS, creativity and the absolute necessity of inclusion *(Portsmouth)*
- Student autonomy at *Harding House School (Buckinghamshire)*

## Radical inclusion

*involving those whose voices are seldom heard*

- 1.1 How can schools co-create with disadvantaged young people a *range of 'spaces where they can deal with themselves'*?
- 1.2 How can we ensure those spaces do not become *ghettoised*?
- 1.3 How can we find out more about whether some safe spaces unwittingly foster *dependency* and others are more able to *bridge to other groups* and wider 'public' spaces, cultures and practices in schools?
- 1.4 What does this kind of '*bridging*' look like and feel like?

## Radical inclusion

*involving those whose voices are seldom heard*

- 1.5 What does it require of those on *both sides of the 'divide'*?
- 1.6 How do we help dominant assumptions, cultures, + practices within schools to be *more open to alternative perspectives and understandings*?
- 1.7 How might we create circumstances, occasions and ongoing practices that *help individuals and groups to re-see each other*?
- 1.8 How might this apply within the *student body, between students and staff, + between students, staff and community*?

# Students as learning partners (SALP) (1)

- Voluntary scheme
- Teacher invites (via the school co-ordinator) 2 or 3 students she normally teaches to work with her
- Students trained in observation techniques, interpersonal skills and inducted into the values of the scheme
- Focus on learning not teaching
- Phase 1 - Usually 3 observations + debriefing
- Phase 2 – further observations on new strategies

## Students as learning partners (SALP) (2)

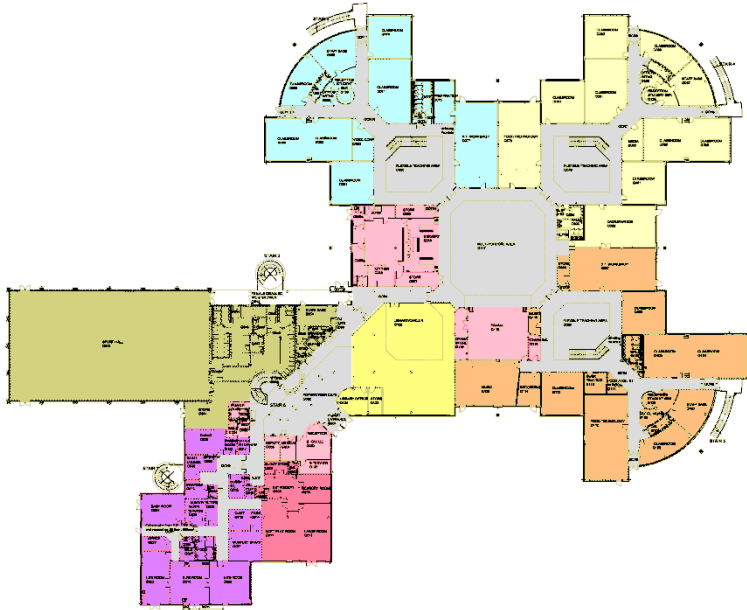
- Fresh insights from both perspectives
- Depth and range of mutuality
- Students as advocates *e.g.*

### *Example A*

- Considerable research / secondary learning
- Create worksheets and suggest new ideas

### *Example B*

- Small focus group + after lesson dialogue
- Students engage others in class especially those having difficulty / disaffected
- Led to much more exploratory pedagogy



## Bishops Park College, Clacton

*3 Small school communities in one* supported by

- Small classes of no more than 25
- Students taught by no more than 5 teachers
- Teachers teach in 2 year groups only
- No segregation – all fully mixed ability
- Most lessons taught within a ‘school’
- Specialist teachers supported by AST’s

# Bishops Park College Research Forum

## *Research Forum members*

- ✦ Governor (1) ✦ Parents (2) ✦ Staff (5 – one from SLT)
- ✦ Students (12 year olds x 2; 15r year olds x 2)
- ✦ University researchers – John Elliott + Michael Fielding

## *Initial remit*

- ✦ co-develop evaluation strategy + sounding board for on-going data-gathering + interpretation
- ✦ Develop College's own Evaluation Framework

## *Emergent developments*

- ✦ advocacy group ✦ community engagement

## *Student co-led*

- ✦ Student research teams ✦ Set up focus groups
- ✦ Video-based research themselves

## *Re-seeing / Intergenerational learning*

- ✦ Mutual advocacy of / delight in intergenerational learning

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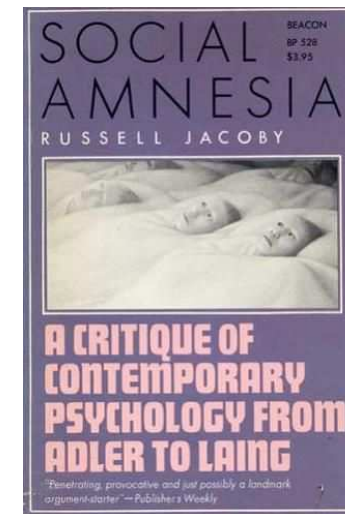
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# Thinking back and thinking at all

Society remembers less and less faster and faster. The sign of the times is thought that has succumbed to fashion; it scorns the past as antiquated while touting the present as the best. Society has lost its memory, and with it, its mind. **The inability or refusal to think back takes its toll in the inability to think.**

*Source*

**Social Amnesia:  
a critique of conformist psychology**  
Russell Jacoby  
1996



## Prefigurative practice

‘rather than waiting until all the necessary social engineering has been done ... this approach ... suggests that education through its processes, the experiences it offers, and the expectations it makes, should **prefigure**, in microcosm, **the more equal, just and fulfilling society** ... Schools should not merely reflect the world of which they are a part, but be critical of it, and **show in their own processes that its shortcomings are not inevitable**, but can be changed.’

Roger Dale

# Reclaiming the radical traditions

*Within* **your own countries**

*Within* **Special Needs / Inclusion** *e.g.*

*Private sector*

- ◆ Homer Lane (who profoundly influenced A.S.Neill) ◆ David Wills ◆ George Lyward
- ◆ Tony Weaver

*SEN Public sector*

- ◆ Howard Case

*Within* **mainstream public sector**

- ◆ E.F.O'Neill ◆ John Watts ◆ Pat Daunt
- ◆ Mike Davies ◆ **Alex Bloom**

# DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES

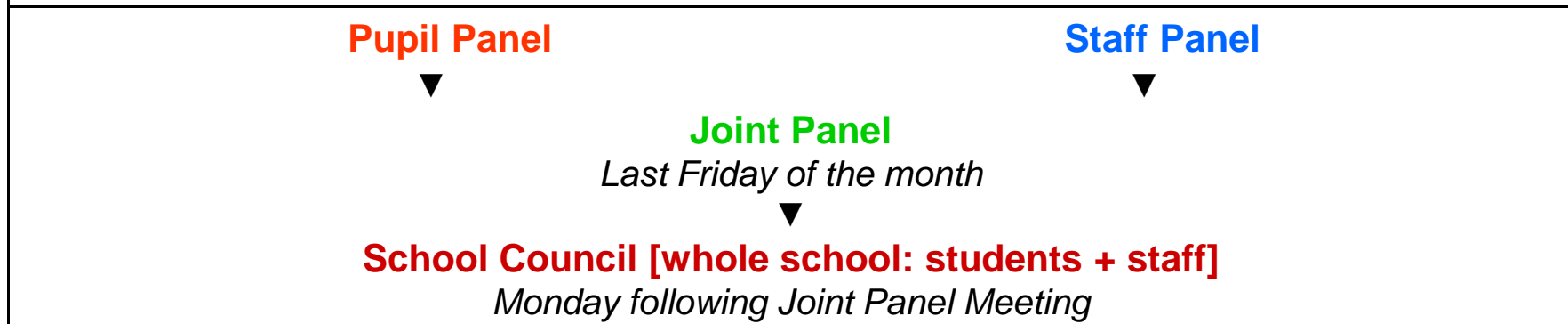
St George-in-the-East Secondary School, Stepney, London (1953)

Staff	Students	School
<p><b>Staff Panel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff (about 10)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pupil Panel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head Boy / Girl</li> <li>Deputy HB/G</li> <li>Secretary</li> <li>Form Reps</li> <li>Headteacher</li> </ul>	<p><b>Joint Panel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Panel Member</li> <li>Head Boy / Girl</li> <li>Chairs of Pupil Committees</li> <li>Headteacher</li> </ul>

## Weekly Meeting Schedule

<p><b>Form Meeting</b> <i>Monday Morning</i></p>	<p><b>Pupil Committees</b> <i>Ongoing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ dance</li> <li>★ tidy</li> <li>★ meals</li> <li>★ social</li> <li>★ sport</li> </ul> <p><b>Pupil Panel</b> <i>Friday Morning</i></p>	<p><b>Staff Panel</b> <i>Monday lunchtime</i></p>
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## Monthly Meeting Schedule



# DEMOCRATIC RELATIONSHIPS

St George-in-the-East Secondary School, London (1953)

*Individual significance + communal contribution*

- ★ 'the child must feel that ... he does count, that he is wanted, that he has a contribution to make to the common good'

*The community's capacity to inspire commitment*

- ★ 'the child must feel the school community is worthwhile'

***From fear*** ➡

'Fear of authority, fear of failure,  
fear of punishment'

➡ ***To friendship***

'Friendship, security and the  
recognition of each child's worth'

***From exclusion*** ➡

- × No competition
- × No marks / prizes
- × No streaming / setting
- × No punishment

➡ ***To inclusion***

- ✓ emulation / ipsative striving
- ✓ intrinsic motivation + communal recognition
- ✓ all ability, sometimes mixed-age grouping
- ✓ restorative, communal response

# DEMOCRATIC LEARNING

St George-in-the-East Secondary School, London (1953)

## Communal frameworks for individual + group learning

- ✓ **School study** (agreed theme) e.g *Man's Dependence on Man*
- ✓ **Thematic day conference** where work is shared
- ✓ **Residential camps**
- ✓ **Learning in the community**

## Negotiate what you learn

- ✓ **Mixed age Electives** (choose what to study after taster session)

- |                          |                    |                    |            |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|
| ★ Art                    | ★ Book-binding     | ★ Creative writing | ★ Debates  |
| ★ Drama                  | ★ Dramatic reading | ★ Fabric printing  | ★ French   |
| ★ Housecraft             | ★ Italic writing   | ★ Literature       | ★ Music    |
| ★ Mythology              | ★ Needlecraft      | ★ Poetry           | ★ Puppetry |
| ★ Recorder playing       | ★ Weaving          | ★ What's on?       | ★ Woodwork |
| <i>Student initiated</i> | ★ Extra Maths      | ★ Extra English    |            |

*Non-groups group* \* absorb into existing group \* include in new activity

- ✓ **Each class approaches School Study differently – internal negotiation**

## Learn with + from each other (*students + staff*)

- ✓ **Relationships with class teacher**
- ✓ **Individual Weekly reviews**
- ✓ **Form meetings**
- ✓ **(Whole) School Council / School Meeting**

St. George-in-the-East

## Whole School Council Meeting (1)

- Bloom underscores the **aims of the school** and **everyone's contribution to it**
- 'Tremendous applause'
- Head Girl on the **purpose of the School Council**
- Each of the 8 **classes** (2 in each year) **report on their learning** in the last half year
- 3 randomly chosen **staff to answers questions**



## Whole School Council Meeting (2)

- 'He complained that the PT [physical education] was ill-conceived and pointless, and the routine monotonous; he could see no advantage in doing it; a jolly good game was far better. Apparently, he was voicing the opinion of all the boys, for they cheered him loudly.'

E.R.Braithwaite *To Sir With Love* 1969 [1959] p.105

- **Student / staff exchanges** *on the*
  - ✓ nature and possible justification of **compulsion**
  - ✓ necessity of recognising differences in **need + capacity**
  - ✓ importance of **thinking about** and **helping others**
  - ✓ relationship between **school** and **wider society**  
particularly with regard to preparation for adult life
- **Bloom** 'closed the proceedings, **expressing his pride in all the children and his deep appreciation of their efforts**' *To Sir With Love* p.106