

Looking out from the inside: supporting school improvement through student-led inquiry work

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Abstract

This paper explores the potential of student-led inquiry work to support school improvement. Drawing on the activity of Students as Researchers groups in two Hertfordshire secondary schools, it begins by discussing the impetus for schools to listen to students. It suggests that challenging students have a specific input to make. It moves on to explore emergent issues in student-led inquiry work, highlighting the significance of power relations. An examination of the potential impact of student-led inquiry work on school improvement leads to an investigation of a model of joint student/teacher-led development work. The paper concludes with some suggested implications of this study for school leaders.

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Students often have clear views about what needs to be done to improve their school. These views can be inappropriately expressed or based on unrealistic expectations of the power of school leaders to effect change. This does not, however, negate the level of understanding which they so often demonstrate. The potential of Students as Researchers (SAR) projects is beginning to be realised as schools search for ways of capitalising on young people's understanding of the world of the classroom. The SAR initiative provides a structure for students' voices to be heard and a means by which they can contribute to institutional change (Fielding and Bragg, 2003.)

This paper focuses on the authors' experience of leading Students as Researchers groups in two Hertfordshire secondary schools. We acted as external consultants, leading the students through a series of weekly inputs on how to plan and undertake a student-led inquiry project. An in-school co-ordinator supported the process in each school. The project at Sir Frederic Osborn School was also supported by David Frost and Gregor Sutherland from the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

Data was gathered from a number of sources. We made field notes during our weekly sessions with the students and during planning meetings with the in-school co-ordinators of the Students as Researchers groups. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Headteacher in each project school. An initial questionnaire was completed by a sample of members of the Students as Researchers groups in both schools (18) and followed up through small group discussions (10). This data has been used to inform and shape the process of developing understanding documented in this paper. Names of personnel within the schools have been fictionalised. Since this research was undertaken, the Headteacher at Sheredes School has moved on to a second headship.

Childhood and student voice – who is listening?

Historically, the state of childhood has been a shifting phenomenon. Evolving theories about how young people develop have caused numerous re-assessments of what it means to be a child (Hadfield and Hawe, 2001). In 2006, young people have a more highly developed sense of entitlement and greater economic power in the world

than ever before, yet children's capabilities in school are widely underestimated (Oakley, 1994, cited in Rudduck and Flutter, 2004; Rudduck, 2004). Moreover, children see themselves as increasingly marginalised. Many young people we have worked with have a very clear understanding of what it means to be a child.

No one talks to you when you are a child.

(Sheredes School – Student A)

No one listens to you unless you shout.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student E)

(Adults think) you don't know what you're talking about if you're a child.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student G)

It appears that for some students, school is a place where their failure to have yet reached adulthood renders their views irrelevant. Childhood is conceptualised almost as a state of limbo, a place to wait until you become an adult and really count. The possibility of challenging this perception through student-led inquiry work was a key driver of our work in the project schools.

Improving schools - why involve children?

The philosophy underpinning the new OFSTED arrangements raises the expectation that student consultation will be a regular feature of schools' self-evaluation processes (DfES, 2004a). This mandate reflects a view of children's rights which has been developing for some time. Article 12 of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child placed in law the rights of young people to be consulted about matters which affect their lives (UN, 1989). It is not unusual for such rights, though morally robust, to remain in reality outside the pragmatic consciousness of schools. In this case, the current Government's stated focus on education has led, in the 'Every Child Matters' Green Paper (DfES, 2003), to concrete proposals for ensuring that children's interests are both acknowledged and acted upon. The expectation within the National Curriculum Citizenship framework that children participate in decision-making and the running of the school (QCA, 2000) demonstrates how such policy might impact at local level.

A tokenistic gathering of student opinion in order to fulfil external requirements would be an understandable response to this centralised drive for student involvement. However, there is a rising determination amongst school leaders to provide both the opportunities and support for students to articulate their views.

Some Headteachers feel that OFSTED has forced student consultation on them. I actually welcome the fact that OFSTED values student consultation, although we didn't learn much from the OFSTED questionnaire.

(Headteacher, Sheredes School)

For some Headteachers, investigating the potential of student consultation has resulted in important new insights into how students' perspectives can help their schools move forward in the quest for effective teaching and learning. Faced with increasing external scrutiny, it is understandable that teachers might fear the views of yet another potential critic, the students themselves (MacBeath *et al.*, 2003). Teachers' possible concerns are understood but not shared by the Headteachers in the project schools.

I wanted teachers to realise that students have something important to say about teaching and learning and it's not just criticism.

(Headteacher, Sheredes School)

We have to use learners more to help us to understand teaching and learning.

(Headteacher, Sir Frederic Osborn School)

For these school leaders, student participation is about more than asking children their opinion. Instead, it offers the potential for teachers and students to work in partnership to develop their understanding of teaching and learning, leading to whole-school improvement. For this partnership to be effective, it needs to include a range of voices from within the school community, rather than a select few.

Exploring the terminology

The terminology used to describe the gathering of students' perspectives is diverse and potentially misleading. Student *participation* appears to be an overarching term which describes the plethora of overlapping strategies aimed at empowering students. Student participation actively involves students in decision-making, in evaluating

their own learning and in taking on positions of responsibility within the school (Demetriou and Rudduck, 2004). The Government guidance *Working Together: giving children and young people a say* characterises student participation as providing opportunities for young people to develop ways of ensuring that their views are heard and recognised, encouraging them to

become more active participants in their education, including planning and evaluation of their own learning. (DfES, 2004b:2)

Student *voice* is now an accepted term within schools and the one most often used by Headteachers when referring to student participation initiatives.

At Sheredes School there is a tradition of students being given a voice.
(Headteacher, Sheredes School)

In this context student voice is used to mean any initiative which allows them to express their views with the expectation that someone will listen although not necessarily respond. Hart's (1997) ladder of participation, which models escalating levels of student involvement, would locate such initiatives on Step 2.

Student *consultation* focuses on discussions with students about things that matter in school, be they past, present or future practices and initiatives. Students' opinions are borne in mind as part of a wider perspective although still not necessarily acted upon (Sutherland and MacBeath, 2006).

Student *research* could be seen as a development of participation, where students identify something which matters to them, rather than simply comment on concerns raised by others. In models which highlight the research process rather than potential impact, it is the opportunity for children to develop the capacity for inquiry which is seen to be of value (Kellet, 2005). Their agency is enhanced through the pursuit of topics of interest to them. In a school improvement model, students' purpose is to use data from their research to illuminate a chosen issue. Support by teachers is fundamental if students are then to use this data to bring about change (Fielding and Rudduck, 2002; Sutherland and MacBeath, 2006; Demetriou and Rudduck, 2004).

Terminology caused difficulties for the students in the project schools, particularly the notion of seeing themselves as researchers. The word ‘research’ brought to mind either a highly refined process of hypothesis, investigation, analysis of data and production of findings or, alternatively, “looking something up on the internet”. In reality, student research projects fit neither of these categories. Given the false assumptions arising from the terminology, it might be more accurate to frame students’ voyages of discovery as student-led inquiry or even development work.

There appears then to be no full agreement over the use of terminology in the literature or indeed in the minds of students themselves. In this paper we use the term *student participation* as an overarching term encompassing student input to school self-evaluation and improvement at a variety of levels. *Students as researchers* is used to describe inquiry work undertaken by students which has the potential to impact on school improvement. Students frame projects which discover what other students do, think and feel. They create knowledge about teaching and learning and go some way towards interpreting this knowledge for their peers and teachers. However, without the support of teachers the full impact of their work will not be realised. We use the term *student/teacher-led development work* to describe this joint development activity which we now believe to be pivotal in empowering students’ to contribute to school improvement.

The Students as Researchers project

This paper explores our experience of leading Students as Researchers groups in two secondary schools.

The Sir Frederic Osborn School, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire

Sir Frederic Osborn School is a mixed 11–18 comprehensive of approximately 1,000 students. The social and economic circumstances of the students are below average but standards are rising. In 2003 OFSTED described the school as “emerging from a difficult period”. As part of the drive for improvement the school has developed a number of student participation initiatives. They have an active Student Parliament, made up of student representatives from Years 7–13. The school devoted an in-service training (INSET) day to a staff/student conference where staff and all sixty

members of the Student Parliament undertook joint strategic planning for 2006/7. The Headteacher is keen to develop this collaborative working to involve not only the most articulate and gifted students but also the more challenging young people within the school.

Sheredes School, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire

Sheredes School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school with just over 900 students on roll, situated in South East Hertfordshire. The school draws students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds in Hertfordshire and Essex but is judged overall to have a below average intake. The school was deemed by OFSTED to have 'serious weaknesses' following an inspection in June 2005 and is making strides to overcome its challenges. The Headteacher acknowledges the part played by student participation initiatives in this improvement. There is an established School Council and students have been trained as interviewers in order to play an active role in the staff appointment process. Students have recently been trained as lesson observers and a Students as Researchers group initiated. The Headteacher believes that these initiatives are instrumental in moving the school forward and enabling students to become involved in conversations about teaching and learning. The school has an inclusive approach to Students as Researchers and encourages the more challenging students to join with the able and talented in taking part in the project.

The aim of the Students as Researchers groups in the project schools was to develop students' awareness of their ability to influence school policy and practice in a positive manner. We were interested to learn more about students' and Headteachers' views on this potential for group members to influence school improvement priorities, processes and outcomes. We sought to explore factors which affect the impact of student-led inquiry work on school improvement.

The issue of inclusiveness

It is not enough to ensure that we involve children in improving their schools. We need to reflect critically on which children we are involving and why. Whether what is said is heard depends not only on who says it but also on how as style and language

are critical determinants of listening (Fielding and Rudduck, 2002; MacBeath *et al.*, 2003). The Headteachers of the project schools are well aware of this potential imbalance in student voices heard in their schools.

Although we have a well-developed Student Parliament, the nature of students who volunteer tend to be confident and articulate.

(Headteacher, Sir Frederic Osborn School)

We were keen to have a Students as Researchers programme because up until now student voice has been ad hoc and unstructured with the danger of only the keen and interested being listened to.

(Headteacher, Sheredes School)

Aware of this potential for social inequalities in classroom talk (Bernstein, 1996) and in the profile of students involved in such initiatives, we were keen to ensure that all project school students had the opportunity to become members of the Students as Researchers groups. Students joined the groups through a number of routes. Some responded to a whole-school poster campaign, others were nominated by their Head of Year, with the remainder being individually approached by the in-school co-ordinators. We tried to avoid the temptation to work only with those students whose voices we wanted to hear, (Black-Hawkins, 2005), who we knew would be co-operative (Monahan, 1999), articulate (Hadfield and Hawe, 2001) and produce a polished final report we could all be proud of. Instead we attempted to include more challenging students within the Students as Researchers groups.

Our previous work with challenging students has demonstrated to us their potential to reveal insights into teaching and learning from the perspective of non-conformity. We also believe the involvement of a representative group of students to be key to authentic and sustainable student involvement in the school improvement process. It is interesting to note that none of the students nominated by Heads of Year fitted the 'challenging' criteria, despite us making this a clear basis for selection, nor did these students self-nominate through the poster campaign. Instead they responded to an individual approach from the in-school co-ordinators. Comments from this cohort on their initial feelings about being part of the group are therefore particularly interesting.

I think I'm lucky that I got in it. I feel I'm good at these things. Most lessons I don't like so I don't do it. It's like having views on things and it makes you feel more important.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student A)

It makes me feel important because it's the first one.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student B)

The inclusion of more challenging students within the group was also seen as critical in terms of the general student body's perception of the project's worth.

It's so important to have Ryan in the group. The kids will see him in assembly and think, 'Wow, if he's doing it it's worth listening to.'

(In-school co-ordinator, Sir Frederic Osborn School)

Securing the continued attendance of more challenging students became an early difficulty in one of the project schools. It nevertheless remained an important factor in the potential of the students' inquiry work to impact on school improvement. Teachers, parents and governors needed to be convinced of the ability of all students to contribute to the school's development rather than just the select few. We therefore persevered in encouraging all group members to see the project through, even if it meant working around football training. When they did attend, all students were reflective, thoughtful and a delight to work with, in contrast to the behaviour of some of them in lessons. We sought an explanation for this phenomenon from the students themselves.

'The teacher decides' – a perspective on power relations in schools

Students who offer significant challenges to teachers in lessons worked productively and, sometimes, independently in the Students as Researchers group. These students had a straightforward explanation for their positive disposition.

This is real learning. Not like what we do in lessons... You don't have views on things in normal lessons. We do work and that's it. We don't have a choice. The teacher decides.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student B)

Being a member of the group gave me a slight position of power, the ability to change something.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student H)

Students thus appear to have a clear understanding of the significance of power in the dynamics of a school and an equally clear view of who usually holds it: the teachers. Even structures such as the School Council, ostensibly with students at its centre, are viewed by some students as having agendas which are dictated by the school (Hadfield and Hawe, 2001). This is true of the project school students who see power as residing with one set of individuals – teachers - and denied to another - themselves. Townley (1994), following Foucault, uses a re-definition of the nature of power to question this viewpoint. Power is perceived as exercised rather than held. Its status as a commodity to be possessed by teacher or child who use it to suit their own purposes, is challenged and replaced by an understanding which rests on a different set of assumptions.

For Foucault, power is associated with practice, techniques and procedures. It is relational, not a possession.

(Townley, 1994:7)

It is argued that the practices, procedures and techniques which feed power do so through their capacity to create knowledge. This knowledge, formed from the accumulation of data through such practices as classification, examination, monitoring and recording, can be subsequently used as a means of control. This argument offers a fascinating insight into the potential power dynamics of student participation initiatives. Providing the means for students to tell us more about themselves could be viewed as a pragmatic step to allow adults to know, and thus control, students better. In this construct, the rhetoric of student inquiry as a process of discovery may be re-interpreted as one of classification – I am this type of student and you are this type of teacher.

Student understanding of these power dynamics was reflected in their response to the initial decision-making process regarding their choice of inquiry topic. We were clear with the children that the choice of topic was theirs but that we would offer guidance on whether we thought their suggestions were practical. Some students were tentative in grasping this opportunity.

We could choose anything we wanted (to research) within reason.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student J)

Implicit doubts around freedom of choice seem to be raised by this student – what would be ‘within reason’ and who would decide? Students are clearly used to working within parameters drawn by teachers nervous about extending the scope of student comment (Fielding and Rudduck, 2002). This was particularly true of the older students in the SAR groups in both project schools.

I hope it will (be acted on) because it is an issue affecting everyone. However, there is only so much you can change.

(Sheredes School – Student D)

For other group members, the degree of freedom offered was articulated enthusiastically, as if to assure its veracity.

You could choose anything you feel strongly about.

(Sheredes School – Student E)

We were allowed to choose anything we wanted within school or outside of school but affected in school.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student C)

Fielding and Bragg (2003) view student inquiry work as allowing students the opportunity to escape from a dominant identity of the passive and powerless objects of adult decision-making and become instead creators of knowledge in their own right. This is what we hoped to scaffold in our work with the project schools. In reality, students showed themselves able to choose a topic which interested them and could plan how to investigate it. They seemed, however, to be unable to undertake the empirical aspects of their work without significant teacher assistance. The need for teachers to support the process of student inquiry became gradually more apparent. Some teachers understandably found this a demand too far.

The teacher hasn't played all the music because we've had to have quiet lessons so I can't see what people think.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student K)

Interestingly this student, although frustrated at lack of progress on his data collection, was sympathetic towards the teacher's need to ‘get on’. He appeared to understand

the time pressures on teachers whose freedom to decide what goes on in their own classrooms has been gradually reduced by the need to follow the prescriptions of national policy and local initiatives. Watkins (2005) argues that this reduction in the decision-making freedom of teachers and their students can be combated by restructuring the world of the classroom into a learning community. Such communities, he holds, engage children in using evidence in scholarly ways, much as Students as Researchers programmes attempt to do. The limited student/teacher collaboration in our programme acted as a barrier to progress and ultimate impact. The development of a student/teacher-led community of learning thus emerged as significant in empowering students to have real impact on whole-school improvement in the project schools.

School improvement - students as agents of change?

Children have always been at the centre of judgements made about schools and their capacity to improve. ‘Answers’ to one of the central questions posed in school effectiveness research – can we measure the difference that schools make? – rely on analysing outputs in terms of student attainment. Schools themselves customarily view students as simply respondents in data gathering exercises. Where students are used as a data source in this way, it is the teachers’ response to issues raised by that data which allows student input to school improvement. Student-led inquiry work seeks to overturn this construction of students as passive respondents, empowering them instead to re-construct themselves as knowledge-creation agents (Bragg and Fielding, 2005). The response of teachers to the knowledge created through such work is again crucial.

Children in the project schools interpret the right level of teacher response as validating what they have discovered and, by extension, their own position as bona fide knowledge creators.

I think the teacher will take up the learning style if she likes it.

(Sheredes School – Student F)

Moreover the potential impact of student projects is viewed to be in some ways dependent on the attitude of senior staff.

I have also learnt that senior staff can really help our project.
(Sheredes School – Student E)

*I don't know if anything will change. I think it could because Mr. Jones
(Deputy Headteacher) had views on it and liked the ideas.*
(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student A)

Comparatively little research has been undertaken into the impact of using children's ideas to develop both individual teachers' practice and whole-school policy (Pedder and McIntyre, 2006). The majority of studies have concentrated on student decision-making in areas such as fundraising, homework and the school canteen (Ekholm, 2004) rather than on analysing the contribution which students can make to the knowledge-base underpinning fundamental decisions by school leaders. Research which has investigated opportunities for students to contribute meaningfully to school life has found limited scope for such activity (Wyse, 2001 cited in Bragg and Fielding, 2005). It has been suggested that the possible causes of this lack of influence are over-ambitious projects, coupled with insecure planning and staff changes (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004).

The more challenging students in the project schools perceive the imperative to maintain the status quo as a pivotal factor, limiting the impact of their work.

Some of the teachers might listen but they think they are doing everything right already. I don't think anyone will change what they are doing.
(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student B)

The need to deconstruct the myth that teacher knows best (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004) is again underlined. Teachers might *think* they are right because they are not generally challenged except in ways which can be negated by being labelled as disruptive. This belief is perhaps unwittingly compounded by the commercialisation of the language of education. Constructing students as 'clients' may ostensibly allow them the right of comment but in fact this is often restricted to answers to closed questions on the service received rather than the right to be part of a free-ranging discussion on how to develop that service.

Project school students are aware that adults listening to them authentically (Fielding and Rudduck, 2002) is the first step towards acting on what they say (Johnson, 2004).

They will only make a difference if people are willing to listen to you.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student D)

Students vary however in their views as to whether listening will lead to action. The more challenging students present as confident in their insights into the difficulties of securing teachers' attention.

Teachers only listen to you when it benefits them.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student F)

For others, their more positive experience of school allows them to retain their faith that their voice will be heard.

The projects will get certain issues addressed because Miss. Smith (Headteacher) involves the whole school and listens.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student L)

The Headteachers in both project schools are clear that collaborative working between students and teachers holds the key to using student understanding to impact on school improvement.

Next year we are going to build Students as Researchers projects into the school plan. Projects will be given a budget so that students take responsibility for what they plan to do as a result of their research.

(Headteacher, Sheredes School)

We have to use learners more successfully to help us to develop our understanding of teaching and learning. There's a recognition that we (students and teachers) need to work together on this.

(Headteacher, Sir Frederic Osborn School)

So what would this level of student involvement mean in practice? The potential for students to develop as change agents in the school improvement process is dependent on school leaders enabling teachers and students to develop a collaborative way of working outside the constraints of a content-led curriculum (Rudduck and Flutter,

2004). This level of collaboration is currently the exception rather than the norm. Students and teachers would need to work as partners, initiating and supporting one another's projects at levels towards the top of Hart's ladder of participation (Hart, 1997) in order, collectively, to build understanding (Fullan, 1992). For the Headteachers and students of the project schools this as a logical next step.

The next stage of development for us would be to have teachers and students undertaking project work together.

(Headteacher, Sir Frederic Osborn School)

I think we would have more chance of things changing if teachers worked alongside us because it would be someone you know and could talk to.

(Sheredes School – Student B)

The unfortunate linking of student voice with the inspection process – where students could potentially talk about teachers rather than engage in a dialogue with them – does little to promote this development (Fielding and Rudduck, 2002). Indeed, some teachers may remain critical of the notion of listening to students, let alone involving them in planning and decision-making processes (Stoll and Fink, 1996). Developing a shared change agenda would take not only a shift in perception but also systematic staff development to assure collegial understanding of the principles of partnership working (Johnson, 2004).

When there is a joint conversation about what students value and what they believe could be improved and developed, then the school has moved forward.

(Headteacher, Sheredes School)

Children in the project schools are actually not asking for the final say (Roche, 1999 cited in Flutter and Rudduck, 2004). They are asking for a dialogue with adults which leads to a balanced viewpoint being taken on board. They are, moreover, fully aware of the difference between partnership working and decision-making (Monahan, 1999).

It would be the teachers who would get to decide.

(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student C)

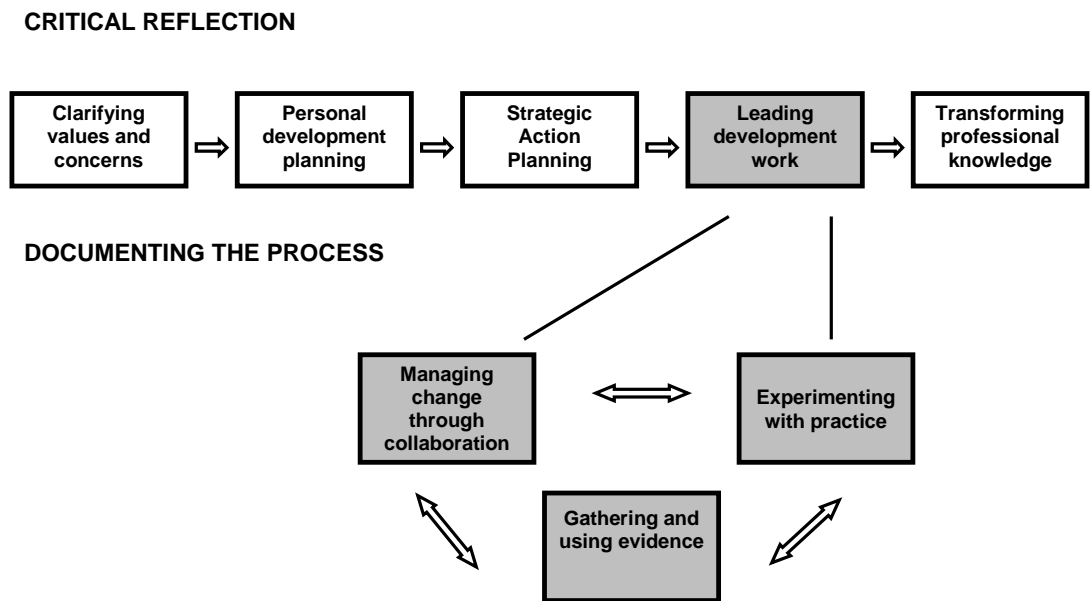
Accepting that students should have a voice might mean taking account of what students tell us about teaching, learning and schooling when developing our agenda

for change (MacBeath *et al.*, 2003). This pre-supposes however that children’s agendas align with those of staff and governors. This is not always the case, particularly when, as in the project schools, children are encouraged to pursue their own interests in their inquiry work. In this respect, much could be learnt from the Sharnbrook School story where all research and development activities are joined under one umbrella rather than vying with one another for impact as isolated activities (Black-Hawkins, 2005).

Students and teachers: partners in leading development

Frost and Durrant’s (2003) framework for teacher-led development work offers a useful starting point for re-conceptualising a programme of joint student/teacher-led development activity.

Figure 1.1 *Teacher – Led Development Work: a framework*



Source: Frost and Durrant (2003:23)

In this model, the process of teacher-led development work is expressed as a series of elements. Teachers identify their values and concerns, centred on teaching and learning. They develop these into a personal agenda for action which itself leads to a strategic action plan. Teachers then undertake a process of leading development work which includes experimenting with practice, gathering evidence and managing change

through collaboration. A transformation of professional knowledge is the desired outcome.

In our Students as Researchers groups, students were able to reach the 'Leading development work' element with minimal support. In some cases, they were successful in getting teachers to experiment with practice, although the teacher who was unable to comply with the student's music-playing schedule is an example of the limitations of progress at this stage. Managing change through collaboration and transforming professional knowledge appeared to be beyond the children's remit and capabilities. They did, however, produce formal written reports describing their inquiry work, together with powerpoint presentations to share with peers, teachers and governors. The knowledge they accumulated could undoubtedly be used by others to support a change management process.

Collaborative working with teachers appears then not only to be the logical next step but also a potentially transformative one. Fielding (2004) offers a 'students as co-researchers' model as an effective structure for such joint working. Although the research agenda originates from the teacher, teacher and children work together to gather and interpret data and to develop new teaching and learning practices. Our work in the project schools suggests that this model might be usefully adapted to address the potential power imbalance still further.

Implications for practice

This reflection on the work of two Students as Researchers groups provides a challenge to the assumption that students can act as only limited partners in school improvement. It suggests instead that children have the potential, through student-led inquiry work, to impact positively on school improvement if they are empowered through:

- an acknowledgement by the school community that students can play a major part in the leadership of the school
- a recognition of the potential for student contribution to the school improvement planning process

- an openness on the part of adults within the school to listen to what all children have to say about school improvement issues, however challenging those children might be in the day to day life of the school
- a recognition of the potential restrictions of power structures on this capacity to lead change
- the development of structures which support joint student/teacher-led development work programmes

The end of the story is not yet known. Nevertheless, the impact of the Students as Researchers project on student self-esteem in the project schools is already apparent.

I am more confident now and can talk in front of lots of people.
(Sheredes School – Student E)

I am growing with every meeting.
(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student G)

Indeed, for some of the more challenging students, the effect of participation in the Students as Researchers project appeared to promote a positive self-image in contrast to the impact of other school experiences.

It makes you think when people say you are no good, I did that (the SAR project) so that can't be true.
(Sir Frederic Osborn School – Student C)

We must wait to see the degree of impact on school improvement from the students' projects undertaken to date. Bragg and Fielding (2005) suggest that student-led inquiry, particularly when undertaken in collaboration with teachers through joint student/teacher-led development work, has clear potential to provide a new level of support for a school's development as a learning organisation. We believe this potential to be enhanced through a new student/teacher-led development work model. Here the agenda would arise from students' and teachers' common interest. They would formulate an appropriate approach to facilitate their jointly-led development work. Through challenging the conventional student/teacher relationship, this model

has the potential to transform professional knowledge by scaffolding the development of the school as a learning community.

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