

Patterns of Partnership:

a study of the democratic classroom practices of
3 UK primary teachers

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Democracy and Schools

- In 'Democracy and Education' (1916) John Dewey outlined how schools and teachers can play a significant role in the protection and freedom of the individual and maintenance of a stable and democratic society. He argued that as society becomes more 'civilised' there is a greater need to ensure that the notions of citizenship are transferred from one generation to the next through a formal system of education. In the centenary year of the publication of this classic work, my thesis will examine the beliefs and experiences that prompt teachers to offer their pupils democratic experiences as outlined in Michael Fielding's Patterns of Partnership typology.

Democracy and Classrooms

- It would appear that there is a need for research to find out why such a gap exists between the espoused benefits of a lived democracy in our schools and perceptions about current practice. I am investigating how and why teachers who *are already using* democratic approaches are motivated to do so, and how they deal with such constraints.
- I hope that my research will contribute to the development of more widespread democratic practice in schools.

My Research

Fielding's Patterns of Partnership

Teacher perspective:

- Practice in the 'common school'
- Meaning for teachers
- Facilitators and Inhibitors

Patterns of Partnership (Fielding 2012)

How adults listen to and learn with students in schools

<p><i>Instrumental dimension</i></p>	<p>6. Intergenerational learning as Lived Democracy Shared responsibility for the common good</p>	<p><i>Fellowship dimension</i></p>
<p>High performance schooling</p>	<p>5. Students as Joint Authors students and staff decide joint course of action together</p>	<p>Person centred education</p>
<p><i>through</i></p>	<p>4. Students as Knowledge Creators students take lead roles with active staff support</p>	<p><i>for</i></p>
<p>market accountability</p>	<p>3. Students as Co-enquirers staff take lead role with high-profile student support</p>	<p>democratic fellowship</p>
	<p>2. Students as Active Respondents staff / student dialogue to deepen professional decisions</p>	
	<p>1. Students as Data source staff use information about student progress / well-being</p>	

Desired outcomes from this research

- **Teachers:** to 're-see' their democratic practices
- **Head Teachers/ Governors:** schools as systems
- **Teacher educators:** Beliefs and practices
- **Governments:** classroom/democracy links



What Carl is doing

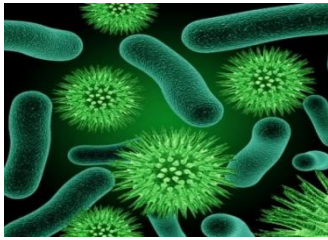
- Clear messages: 'Have a voice', 'Community is key'
- Encourages and responds to Pupils' initiatives
- Teaches the skills
- Redistribution of time
- Behaviour and curriculum: 'I shape it so they drive it'
- Changing perceptions to allow Voice to develop

Meaning

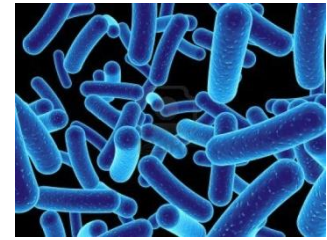
- Teachers and pupils are fellow human beings
- Openness:
 - ‘always give them a reason for what you want them to do’
 - open to questioning and suggestions
- Freedom:
 - to respond to opportunities
 - to make and change plans
- Teacher authority is used to enable pupils to exercise their own authority:
 - he recognises and promotes their rights
 - acknowledges, improves and draws on their civic skills
 - gives them the power to influence
 - Pupils can ‘have the last word’

Purpose

- ❖ It feels good – meets psychological needs:
 - Love and belonging
 - Fun and enjoyment
 - Freedom
 - Power and self-worth
- ❖ Teaches them:
 - ❖ ‘To be nice people’
 - ❖ Tolerance
 - ❖ Criticality
 - ❖ Communication
- ❖ Builds community resilience
- ❖ ‘Why force 30 people to do something they don’t want to do?’



Influences



Facilitating

- Beliefs and values
- Own upbringing and school
- Influential teachers
- Pupils' responses
- Colleagues
- External affirmation

Inhibiting

- Culture of external control
- Colleagues
- ITT
- Parenting styles
- Ofsted
- National Curriculum
- Pupil skills/ perceptions

Thank you for your interest in my research

Please get in touch to discuss further or to offer
your own ideas

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